

Japanese Non-State Actors' Under-Recognised Contributions to the International Anti-Nuclear Weapons Movement

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Abstract

Since the 1950s, Japanese non-state actors in the international anti-nuclear weapons movement have disseminated the dangers of nuclear weapons, tied to Japanese experiences of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Coming from the only country that has experienced nuclear attacks, they provide much needed evidence of the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons. These actors include survivors of the atomic bombings, commonly known as hibakusha, who have initiated and persistently maintained the humanitarian focus on nuclear discourse for decades. This paper examines their contributions to eyewitness testimonies on the impacts of nuclear weapons and their efforts leading to major milestones in international efforts for nuclear abolition. It also focuses on the roles played by the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organization (Nihon Hidankyo) and the Japan Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (JALANA), which made tremendous contributions facilitating the success of the World Court Project in the 1990s and the Humanitarian Initiative in the 2010s that led to the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Non-state Japanese contributions were, unfortunately, under-recognised, and the successes of international nuclear abolition were often attributed to other international actors. Hence, this paper recognises the contributions of non-state Japanese actors in sustaining the international anti-nuclear weapons movement and achieving the nuclear ban treaty.

Keywords: Non-state actors, Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, *Hibakusha*, Nihon Hidankyo, Japan Association of Lawyers against Nuclear Arms

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1. Introduction

Since the United States' (US) atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, there have been consistent calls for a nuclear-weapon-free world, including the first resolution urging for nuclear disarmament made by the United Nations (UN) in January of 1946.¹ In Japan, non-state actors have been active in the anti-nuclear weapons movement since the 1950s, even at the international level, though their contributions remain relatively little-known. The term "non-state actors" is used in reference to individuals and organisations who are distinct from state authorities, yet are involved with international networks wielding power substantial enough to influence the political landscape.² This paper examines the contributions of these key actors, especially the survivors of atomic bombings (commonly known as *hibakusha*³), in framing the international nuclear abolition efforts from a humanitarian perspective. We must also recognise the contributions of nuclear test victims – e.g., the Marshall Islanders affected by US weapon tests from 1946–58.⁴ While the Marshall Islands' state authority is a member of the UN Human Rights Council and actively campaigns against nuclear fallout, it is the *hibakusha* and not their government at the forefront of Japanese anti-nuclear efforts.

Such movements have considerable currency in the academic literature on global peace and disarmament.⁵ But the key role of Japanese non-state actors has not been taken as seriously in scholarly research as they should be due to their massive and decades-long efforts. Regardless, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists once featured Frances Crowe for her activism in peace movements against nuclear weapons and nuclear energy.⁶ Magno emphasises the role of a Catholic group in the US called the Plowshares,⁷ which uses biblical language as a strategy to emphasise the need to protect humanity from the threat of nuclear weapons. Feminist groups, too, have played a part in the anti-nuclear weapons movement. Branciforte posits how La Ragnatela Women's Peace Camp was established in 1983 to protest NATO's plan to deploy cruise missiles in Sicily, offering women a voice to discuss conflict and peace while propagating feminist discourses on nuclear disarmament through its global links with women's peace groups.⁸ Ruff explains how the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) was established in 2007, and to what extent it transformed the disarmament landscape into a transnational one when negotiating the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). With unprecedented support from governments

¹ Peter Buijs, "How Physicians Influenced Dutch Nuclear Weapon Policies: A Civil Society Case Study," *International Relations Journal*, Vestnik of Saint Petersburg University 14, no. 4 (2021): 476, accessed April 14, 2022, <https://irjournal.spbu.ru/article/view/13029/8964>.

² Daphne Josselin and William Wallace, "Non-State actors in World Politics: A Framework," in *Non-State Actors in World Politics*, ed. Daphne Josselin and William Wallace (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 3-4.

³ Japanese words lack plurals in the English sense.

⁴ "Pacific Island Used in Nuke Tests Urges People to Remember History," September 7, 2020, *Kyodo News*, accessed April 25, 2022, <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/09/a869a4c7bb25-pacific-island-used-in-nuke-tests-urges-people-to-remember-history.html>.

⁵ Greta Jones, "The Mushroom-Shaped Cloud: British Scientists' Opposition to Nuclear Weapons Policy, 1945–57," *Annals of Science* 43, no. 1 (1986): 1-26; Jacob Nebel, "The Nuclear Disarmament Movement: Politics, Potential, and Strategy," *Journal of Peace Education* 9, no. 3 (2012): 225-47; Christoph Laucht and Martin Johnes, "Resist and Survive: Welsh Protests and the British Nuclear State in the 1980s," *Contemporary British History* 33, no. 2 (2019): 226-45; Rebecca Davis Gibbons, "The Humanitarian Turn in Nuclear Disarmament and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons," *The Nonproliferation Review* 25, no. 1-2 (2018): 11-36.

⁶ "Frances Crowe, 95-Year-Old Antinuclear Activist," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 70, no. 6 (2014): 1-9, doi: 10.1177/0096340214555076.

⁷ Paul Magno, "The Plowshares Anti-Nuclear Movement at 35: A Next Generation?," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 72, no. 2 (2016): 85-8.

⁸ Laura Branciforte, "The Women's Peace Camp at Comiso, 1983: Transnational Feminism and the Anti-Nuclear Movement," *Women's History Review* 31 no. 2 (2022): 316-43.

and international civil societies, ICAN promoted a humanitarian context for the elimination of nuclear weapons.⁹

While western activists and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been mentioned, the literature on their Japanese counterparts is scarce. Tomonaga Masao,¹⁰ a medical doctor and *hibakusha* from Nagasaki, has been vocal and active in scholarly literature. As part of the Eminent Persons Group established by then foreign minister Kishida Fumio, Tomonaga published an article on the group's recommendations to the Japanese government to promote bridge-building measures between states that support TPNW and those that oppose it.¹¹ After the TPNW's entry into force in January 2021, a greater divide between nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states emerged. Consequently, Tomonaga has stated that civil society must not rely on *hibakusha* activism alone.¹² Undeniably, Japan's anti-nuclear activism, which is implicitly connected to the role of *hibakusha*, is robust due to the city-to-city diplomacy supported by the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as global ambassadors for nuclear abolition.¹³ However, the Mayors for Peace campaign launched in 1983 by the two mayors, which has linkages with over 8000 cities, has scarcely been acknowledged by the international community. Miyazaki insists that the TPNW's entry into force would not have been possible without the collaboration of the mayors and *hibakusha* with the larger transnational civil society network.¹⁴

While making the point that current academic literature underestimates the role of Japanese non-state actors' contributions to the anti-nuclear weapons movement, this paper also focuses on the roles played by the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organization (Hidankyo) and the Japan Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (JALANA) in international efforts for the World Court Project (WCP) in the 1990s, as well as the Humanitarian Initiative in the 2010s, as these are preludes to the TPNW. Interviews with our key informants, which include *hibakusha*, representatives from Japanese organisations, and experts on anti-nuclear weapons issues, provide first-hand information and insights, highlighting the eyewitness testimonies of survivors as particularly crucial to the discourse.¹⁵

Compared to its peers worldwide, the Japanese anti-nuclear movement has a unique characteristic – it regards helping *hibakusha* as a main objective.¹⁶ Collectively, Japanese organisations and *hibakusha* play a central role in the movement's humanitarian framing. While their contributions have been generally acknowledged by insiders – i.e., prominent persons and international organisations – they receive far less recognition than they deserve¹⁷ because most of their contributions occur behind the scenes. More often than not, the success of international nuclear abolition is attributed to other international actors, particularly ICAN,

⁹ Tilman Ruff, "Negotiating the UN treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the Role of ICAN," *Global Change, Peace & Security* 30 no. 2 (2018): 233–41.

¹⁰ Surnames are listed first, in line with an announcement by the Japanese government in 2019.

¹¹ Tomonaga Masao, "Can Japan Be A Bridge-BUILDER Between Deterrence-Dependent States and Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty Proponents?," *Medicine, Conflict and Survival* 34 no. 4 (2018): 289–94.

¹² Tomonaga Masao, "Voices of Nagasaki after 75 Years," *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament* 4 no. sup1 (2021): 276–83.

¹³ Miyazaki Hirokazu, "Hiroshima and Nagasaki as Models of City Diplomacy," *Sustain Sci* 16 (2021): 1215–228.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1218.

¹⁵ Glenn D. Hook, "Evolution of The Anti-Nuclear Discourse in Japan," *Current Research on Peace and Violence* 10, no. 1 (1987): 32.

¹⁶ Makiko Takemoto, "Nuclear Politics, Past and Present: Comparison of German and Japanese Anti-nuclear Peace Movements," *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 3, no. 1 (2015): 91.

¹⁷ Akiko Naono, "Ban the Bomb! Redress the Damage!: The History of the Contentious Politics of Atomic Bomb Sufferers in Japan," *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 6, no. 2 (2018): 223–24.

which won the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize following the adoption of the TPNW.¹⁸

It is prudent to begin delving into our topic by first examining the way in which the nuclear abolition social movement's objective is framed. Framing calls attention to a single issue, underscores the importance of a collective narrative, and transforms negative events into feelings of grievance or injustice.¹⁹ When framing accentuates a common interpretation (i.e., a collective action frame),²⁰ it can persuade relevant stakeholders to take action.²¹ A common interpretation or narrative that legitimizes the activities of social movement organizations is known as a collective action frame. A collective action frame's main objective is to change the framing of an issue such that the source of the problem is identified.²² This framework helps us understand the extent to which Japanese non-state actors have contextualised the nuclear abolition movement through a humanitarian perspective. The mobilisation of eyewitness testimonies from survivors and victims lends credence to a distinct narrative underscoring the humanitarian consequences, thereby providing justification for a ban on nuclear weapons. In identifying the source of the problem as the need to ban nuclear weapons due to their humanitarian consequences, the movement is put in the opposite position of the Japanese government, which is against TPNW.

2. From the 1950s Onward: Eyewitness Testimonies

Abolition efforts have been built on the basis of nuclear weapons' catastrophic humanitarian consequences, attested by eyewitness testimonies.²³ Unfortunately, the Japanese government had only protested once²⁴ – a protest was sent through the Swiss government on 10 August 1945, claiming that the then-new bombs were against international laws regulating hostilities in armed conflict.²⁵ After Japan surrendered on 15 August 1945, the US-led occupation eventually resulted in close bilateral security relations starting in 1951,²⁶ which made it impossible for Japan to support the TPNW despite calling for a world without nuclear weapons. It is against this backdrop that Japanese non-state actors have raised the issue instead, urging policymakers to take action. Since 1957, one year after Hidankyo's formation, *hibakusha* have consistently warned that nuclear weapons and mankind cannot coexist,²⁷ stressing their catastrophic humanitarian consequences and immorality.

Hidankyo's credibility²⁸ as the moral authority in framing the humanitarian discourse was established immediately – it remains the nationwide *hibakusha* umbrella group, and all its officials and members are *hibakusha*. Hidankyo was formed when there was overwhelming

¹⁸ "Anti-Nuclear Campaign ICAN Says Nobel Peace Prize A 'Great Honor,'" *Reuters*, October 6, 2017, para. 1, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nobel-prize-peace-ican-idUSKBN1CB128>.

¹⁹ David A. Snow, Rens Vliegthart, and Pauline Ketelaars, "The Framing Perspective on Social Movements: Its Conceptual Roots and Architecture," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, ed. David A. Snow, S. A. Soule, H. Kriesi, and H. J. McCammon, 2nd ed., (New Jersey: Wiley Blackwell, 2019), 396.

²⁰ Robert D. Benford, and David A. Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 613.

²¹ Silpa Sathesh and Robert D. Benford, "Framing and Social Movements," in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology* Vol. 2, ed. by George Ritzer and Chris Rojek (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2020), 1-5.

²² Benford and Snow, "Framing," 616.

²³ Kurosaki Miyako, "A 75-year Rally against Nuclear Weapons Brings the World Closer to Justice," *All Things Nuclear*, January 15, 2021, para.1, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://allthingsnuclear.org/guest-commentary/a-75-year-rally-against-nuclear-weapons-brings-the-world-closer-to-justice/>.

²⁴ Sasaki Takeya, JALANA's President, interviewed by the author, Hiroshima, October 23, 2018.

²⁵ Arthur Booth, "Atomic bombs and human beings," *International Social Science Journal* 30, no. 2 (1978): 385. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000028972>.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 379 and 386.

²⁷ "Hiroshima Peace Activist Vows to Continue Nuke Ban Campaign after UN Treaty Adoption," *The Mainichi*, July 10, 2017, para.3, accessed December 8, 2021, <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20170710/p2a/00m/0na/014000c>.

²⁸ Benford and Snow, "Framing," 621.

public support for *hibakusha* and the nationwide “ban-the-bomb movement”²⁹ following a nuclear fallout incident in 1954 involving a Japanese tuna fishing boat ironically named *Daigo Fukuryu-maru*, which literally means, Lucky Dragon No. 5. Prior to this, *hibakusha* were marginalised³⁰ for over a decade, particularly during the US-led occupation, during which authorities censored all relevant reports related to atomic bombs.³¹ But the Lucky Dragon Incident led to the 1955 First World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs, finally providing a platform for *hibakusha* to speak out,³² share their experiences, and call for nuclear abolition.³³ Other *hibakusha* were motivated to follow suit,³⁴ thus the conference was a clear indication that the newly-minted domestic anti-nuclear weapons movement had a global aim,³⁵ which explains its decades-long efforts contributing to the international movement. From the beginning, *hibakusha* have framed their messages in terms of “severity”, “urgency”, “efficacy”, and “propriety” (the four common frames in the anti-nuclear weapons movement) to encourage action with one voice,³⁶ stressing the necessity of collective change.

Fujimori Toshiki, Hidankyo’s assistant secretary-general,³⁷ explains that *hibakusha* strive to highlight the disastrous short- and long-term impacts of nuclear weapons to raise global awareness of their humanitarian consequences.³⁸ From 1957–78, 12 overseas visits were arranged by Hidankyo, most of which involved one *hibakusha* being sent out per visit. Since 1980, the organisation has arranged overseas trips for *hibakusha* annually (usually a few such trips to different events).³⁹ In total, 685 *hibakusha* participated in 175 overseas visits arranged from 1957–2019.⁴⁰ Fujimori, being a *hibakusha* himself, frequently travelled to bear testimonies against nuclear weapons. However, since early 2020, these overseas visits have been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In short, Hidankyo aims to succeed by influencing international political and legal bodies. Hence, the five nuclear powers (China, France, the US, Russia and the UK) under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the UN have been targeted specifically. Hidankyo has maintained regular engagements with the UN since its first trip there in 1974.⁴¹ As early as 1975, it submitted a petition to the UN calling for an international treaty to ban nuclear weapons completely.⁴² At the first UN Special Session on Disarmament in 1978, 41 *hibakusha* from Hidankyo were among the 500-strong Japanese delegation⁴³ – the biggest overseas delegation present – and submitted about 19 million signatures calling

²⁹ Naono, “Ban,” 224 and 226.

³⁰ Tachibana Seiitsu, “The Quest for a Peace Culture: The A-Bomb Survivors’ Long Struggle and the New Movement for Redressing Foreign Victims of Japan’s War,” *Diplomatic History* 19, no. 2 (1995): 336.

³¹ Hook, “Evolution,” 36.

³² Tachibana, “The Quest,” 336.

³³ Peter J. Kuznick, “Nagasaki and the *Hibakusha* Experience of Sumiteru Taniguchi: The Painful Struggles and Ultimate Triumphs of Nagasaki *Hibakusha*,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal - Japan Focus* 18, issue 16, no. 1 (2020): 8, accessed April 17, 2022, <https://apjif.org/-Peter-J--Kuznick/5447/article.pdf>.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

³⁵ Hook, “Evolution,” 37.

³⁶ Benford and Snow, “Framing,” 617.

³⁷ Designations of key informants were accurate at the time of interviews.

³⁸ Fujimori Toshiki, email message to the author, September 26, 2017.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Hidankyo, “Chronology of *Hidankyo*’s International Activities,” para.25, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://www.ne.jp/asahi/hidankyo/nihon/english/about/about2-01.html>.

⁴¹ Hidankyo, “History,” para.9, 18–19.

⁴² *Ibid.*, para.8.

⁴³ Naono, “Ban,” 239.

for nuclear abolition.⁴⁴ Hidankyo has persistently submitted petitions and signatures to the UN since, and it also speaks at UN events, participates in its NGOs' meetings, organises exhibitions, and participates in NPT Review Conferences to consistently remind states of the threat of nuclear weapons.⁴⁵ Millions of signatures have been collected by Hidankyo over the years, demonstrating not only the moral authority of *hibakusha* but also their persistence in maintaining the anti-nuclear weapons sentiment among the general public.

In its efforts to influence the five nuclear powers, Hidankyo sent delegations to each of them in 1985 in conjunction with the 40th anniversary of the atomic bombings, petitioning for nuclear abolition.⁴⁶ To support allies, Hidankyo works closely with other organisations such as ICAN,⁴⁷ Peace Boat, and Soka Gakkai International,⁴⁸ often accepting requests from organisers of anti-nuclear weapons events worldwide to be either present or serve as guest speakers. Additionally, Hidankyo was involved in a series of demonstrations in several European countries in the 1980s, which gathered 100,000 people to protest US and Soviet missile deployments.⁴⁹

The eyewitness testimonies given by *hibakusha* concerning the widespread deaths, injuries, and long-term physical and psychological impacts caused by the atomic bombings have formed the basis of the humanitarian framing of nuclear weapons.⁵⁰ Tomonaga has highlighted their extreme effects – e.g., heat rays and radiation. Eyewitness testimonies tell how scorching heat burnt practically everything and everyone, to the extent that rivers were filled with bodies because victims had jumped in to escape the heat or simply to drink.⁵¹ In addition to their physical injuries, *hibakusha* suffer lifelong sickness, risk developing illnesses as a result of radioactive exposure, and live with the bombings' psychological impact (e.g., survivor's guilt).⁵² The invisible scars are equally as painful as the physical ones.

Eyewitness testimonies thus form a unique trait of Japanese contributions by providing a human face to the discourse. Yanagawa Yoshiko, who survived Hiroshima at 16, testified about seeing “a living hell that went beyond description” after crawling out from the ruins of her school building.⁵³ She also shared regret about simply fleeing for her life, ignoring injured people calling for help, and decided to speak publicly about her experience so that the tragedy would not be repeated.⁵⁴ These testimonies carry a high degree of moral authority and are considered the most effective way to raise awareness about the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons. It would not be an over-exaggeration to say that *hibakusha* are the soul

⁴⁴ Lawrence S. Wittner, “The Forgotten Years of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1975-78,” *Journal of Peace Research* 40, no. 4 (2003): 448.

⁴⁵ Jeff Kingston, “Atomic Bomb Survivors Nominated for Nobel Prize,” *The Japan Times*, August 1, 2015, para.5, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2015/08/01/commentary/atomic-bomb-survivors-nominated-nobel-prize/#.Xh2HFMj7SyI>.

⁴⁶ Hidankyo, “History,” para.13.

⁴⁷ “No Move *Hibakusha*,” *Pressenza New York*, March 27, 2017, para.1, accessed April 17, 2022, <https://www.pressenza.com/2017/03/no-more-hibakusha/>.

⁴⁸ “Peace Boat In New York: Advocating for A World Free Of Nuclear Weapons At The Un And Beyond,” *Peace Boat US*, October 29, 2019, para.2, accessed April 17, 2022, <https://www.peaceboat-us.org/peace-boat-in-new-york-advocating-for-a-world-free-of-nuclear-weapons-at-the-un-and-beyond/>.

⁴⁹ Hidankyo, “History,” para.12.

⁵⁰ Tomonaga Masao, interviewed by the author, Nagasaki, October 18, 2018.

⁵¹ Egashira Chiyoko, “From Memories of Darkness and Hardship: Up Until the Day Shiroyama Primary School was Closed,” in *The Light of Morning: Memoirs of the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Survivors*, trans. Brian Burke-Gaffney (Nagasaki: Nagasaki National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims, 2005), 28.

⁵² Egashira, “From Memories,” 27.

⁵³ Yanagawa Yoshiko, “Yoshiko Yanagawa (Female),” *Memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Messages from Hibakusha*, 2005, para.1, accessed December 9, 2021, <http://www.asahi.com/hibakusha/english/hiroshima/h00-00007e.html>.

⁵⁴ Yanagawa, “Yoshiko,” para.3.

of the international movement, having resolutely testified for decades, thus maintaining the momentum of the anti-nuclear weapons movement.⁵⁵

Hibakushas' indispensable contributions are acknowledged by experts and prominent figures in the field. Professor Kurosawa Mitsuru of Osaka Jogakuin University points out that *hibakusha* efforts were the precedent for the humanitarian approach against nuclear weapons, which began in the 2010s.⁵⁶ In 2015, the then UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, commended their 70-year advocacy and challenged those who doubted the need for nuclear abolition to listen to *hibakushas'* stories.⁵⁷ Iwasaki Makoto, executive director of the Hiroshima Peace Media Center, points out that *hibakusha* have inspired the international campaign,⁵⁸ a viewpoint shared by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) president, Peter Maurer, who has stated that the world maintains a hope of nuclear abolition largely due to survivor contributions.⁵⁹ Professor Hirose Satoshi, vice-director of the Research Center for Nuclear Weapons Abolition (RECNA), also confirms that the most significant contributions by non-state actors leading to the TPNW are *hibakushas'* testimonies.⁶⁰ This was especially so in Hidankyo's early phases, when most people, including the Japanese, were still largely unaware of the scale of the atomic bombings due to US censorship. *Hibakusha* do not call for revenge or hatred, but only a nuclear-weapons-free world, thus demonstrating a humanitarian angle and message.⁶¹ According to Akiba Tadatoshi, Hiroshima's mayor from 1999–2011, calling for world peace is one of *hibakushas'* three extraordinary contributions, in addition to their strong resolution to live on and their contribution to the prevention of a third use of nuclear weapons.⁶²

Among the prominent *hibakusha* in Japan and at the international level was Taniguchi Sumiteru from Nagasaki. Although he survived the atomic bombing at 16 and spent nearly two years in a hospital, Taniguchi suffered from radiation-related illness and pain daily until his passing at the age of 88 in August 2017.⁶³ Yet, he still joined anti-nuclear weapons activities starting as early as the 1950s, when they first emerged in Japan, becoming a core Hidankyo leader. Often taking the lead in these activities, Taniguchi participated in 396 protests against nuclear weapons and testing.⁶⁴ He gained international fame as an atomic bomb survivor in 1970, when a photograph of him, taken in September 1945 and showing his severely burnt back, was publicly released from the US archives.⁶⁵ Sergeant Joe O'Donnell, the young US Marine who took the photograph, was affected by Taniguchi's suffering, declaring that he

⁵⁵ Mark Clapson, "Commemoration and Controversy: Remembering Air Raids and Their Victims Since 1945," in *The Blitz Companion: Aerial Warfare, Civilians and the City since 1911*, ed. Mark Clapson (London: University of Westminster Press, 2019), 209.

⁵⁶ Kurosawa Mitsuru, interviewed by the author, Osaka, October 24, 2018.

⁵⁷ Ban Ki-moon, "70th Anniversary of the Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki," August 6, 2015, para.3-4, accessed April 15, 2022, <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/articles/2015-08-06/70th-anniversary-bombings-hiroshima-and-nagasaki>.

⁵⁸ Iwasaki Makoto, interviewed by the author, Hiroshima, October 23, 2018.

⁵⁹ Magnus Lovold, "Courage, Responsibility and the Path towards A World without Nuclear Weapons: A Message to Youth," August 21, 2019, para.5, accessed April 16, 2022, <https://blogs.icrc.org/law-and-policy/2019/08/21/courage-responsibility-path-towards-world-without-nuclear-weapons/>.

⁶⁰ Hirose Satoshi, interviewed by the author, Nagasaki, October 19, 2018.

⁶¹ Kingston, "Atomic," para.9.

⁶² Akiba Tadatoshi, "Postscript: The Survivors," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 61, no. 4 (2005): 63.

⁶³ Motoko Rich, "Sumiteru Taniguchi, 88, Who Survived Nagasaki to Become Activist, Dies," *New York Times*, August 31, 2017, para.1-2, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/31/world/asia/taniguchi-nagasaki-atomic-bomb.html>.

⁶⁴ Rich, "Sumiteru," para.19.

⁶⁵ Tanaka Miya, "Hibakusha Memoir 'The Atomic Bomb on My Back' to be Published in English," *The Japan Times*, July 23, 2020, para.13-14, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/07/23/national/history/hibakusha-memoir-english/>.

“would not take other pictures of burned victims unless ordered to do so”.⁶⁶ Taniguchi often used this photograph to directly show his audience the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.⁶⁷ To contribute to policy and legal changes, he actively joined key international events, including the NPT Review Conferences in 2005, 2010,⁶⁸ and 2015,⁶⁹ speaking there to urge governments and civil society to work towards their total elimination. Taniguchi’s lifetime devotion made him a frontrunner for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015.⁷⁰ He still travelled to Malaysia to speak at the “Coalition of Younger Generation Say ‘NO TO WAR’” symposium in March 2016,⁷¹ despite having been admitted to the hospital for two weeks in the previous month⁷² – it was his last overseas trip before succumbing to cancer in 2017.⁷³

Watanabe Rika, the international coordinator of Peace Boat’s *Hibakusha* Project, attests that such personal stories are the strongest messages of the movement.⁷⁴ The testimonies of *hibakusha* often touch the hearts of listeners, who readily agree because they only want to ensure that no one else will suffer similarly. Their testimonies also detail the long-term physical and mental effects, forcing listeners to consider the impact of more powerful nuclear weapons today. Such narratives have motivated individuals such as Suzuki Keina⁷⁵ of the International Signature Campaign in Support of the Appeal of the *Hibakusha* for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons (or *Hibakusha* Appeal),⁷⁶ who stated that his life changed after meeting *hibakusha*, thus demonstrating the effectiveness of eyewitness testimony.⁷⁷

3. 1990s: Contributing to the World Court Project

The advisory opinion on the threat or use of nuclear weapons issued by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1996, a result of the WCP, was a significant milestone, and one in which Japanese non-state actors played a key role. The WCP was a bold plan initiated in 1992 by three international NGOs – the International Peace Bureau, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), and International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (IALANA).⁷⁸ Specifically, the ICJ was asked whether or not the threat or the use of nuclear weapons was permitted under international law. As the WCP received crucial contributions from the Japanese anti-nuclear weapons movement (particularly JALANA and Hidankyo), it continued to receive support from international initiatives and grow tremendously through such contributions. This helped ensure the WCP’s success, which in

⁶⁶ Susan Southard, *Nagasaki: Life After Nuclear War* (New York: Penguin Books, 2016), 125.

⁶⁷ Southard, *Nagasaki*, 285.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 284.

⁶⁹ Akitoshi Nakamura, “Photo Gallery: Ground Zero Nagasaki.” *International Review of the Red Cross* 97, no. 899 (2015): 551.

⁷⁰ Obata, “*Hibakusha*,” para.4.

⁷¹ Salleh Buang, “A Difficult, But Worthy Cause,” *New Straits Times*, March 3, 2016, para.15–16, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://www.nst.com.my/news/2016/03/130782/difficult-worthy-cause>

⁷² Obata Eisuke, “*Hibakusha*: Paving the Way Toward the Abolishment of Nuclear Weapons,” *The Mainichi*, May 11, 2016, para.19, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20160511/p2a/00m/0na/010000c>.

⁷³ Rich, “Sumiteru,” para.11.

⁷⁴ Watanabe Rika, interviewed by the author, Tokyo, September 6, 2017.

⁷⁵ “A-Bomb Survivor Toshiki Fujimori Urges Nuclear Haves and Have-Nots to Join Hands on Abolition,” *The Japan Times*, December 9, 2019, para.6, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/10/11/national/atomic-bomb-toshiki-fujimori-nuclear-haves-have-nots/>.

⁷⁶ *Asahi Shimbun*, “*Hibakusha* Group Awarded Prize for Work to Ban Nuclear Weapons,” March 18, 2021, para.3, accessed December 9, 2021, <http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14279688>.

⁷⁷ Kate Dewes, “Hiroshima and the World: Inspired by *Hibakusha*,” *Hiroshima Peace Media Center*, February 23, 2009, para.2, accessed April 1, 2022, <http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=19698>.

⁷⁸ Mike Moore, “World Court Says Mostly No to Nuclear Weapons,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 52, no. 5 (1996): 40.

turn resulted in the 1996 ICJ advisory opinion on the legal status of nuclear weapons.⁷⁹

The involvement of Japanese lawyers began in 1989 when a group attended IALANA's assembly in The Hague. Determined to work towards nuclear abolition, they formed the Kanto Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms in August 1993, which later evolved into JALANA in August 1994, serving as IALANA's local affiliate in supporting the WCP. Sasaki Takeya, its president, explains that the founding assembly in Hiroshima was attended by 20 lawyers and scholars, including himself as moderator.⁸⁰ JALANA grew to include 300 lawyers as members.⁸¹

Since the ICJ only accepts cases or requests from governments or certain UN bodies, WCP campaigners first tried to convince the World Health Organization (WHO) and like-minded governments to ask for an advisory opinion.⁸² These actors strongly supported their campaign, so two requests were submitted to the ICJ: (1) a 1993 WHO resolution inquiring whether the use of nuclear weapons violated international law in general, and the WHO constitution specifically, in terms of such weapons' impact on health and the environment; and (2) a 1994 UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution asking if "the threat or use of nuclear weapons in any circumstance [is] permitted under international law".⁸³

In parallel, supporters of the WCP worldwide, including Japanese organisations, launched extensive public campaigns and attained remarkable achievements, including collecting millions of signed Declarations of Public Conscience, 11,000 signatures from legal fraternities, documents proving 50 years' worth of "citizens' opposition to nuclear weapons", and endorsements by more than 700 citizen groups⁸⁴ – all even before the 1995 oral hearings began. Sasaki highlights how the newly formed JALANA swung into action immediately,⁸⁵ working closely with *hibakusha* and other members of civil society to collect signatures for the Declarations of Public Conscience. These declarations were based on the Martens Clause from the preamble of the 1899 Hague Convention (II) and the 1907 Hague Convention, which states how "the dictates of the public conscience" are required for situations not covered by existing rules of international humanitarian law (IHL).⁸⁶ JALANA and its partner organisations collected and shipped⁸⁷ over three million signatures from Japan that formed the majority of the four million signatures collected worldwide,⁸⁸ thus illustrating strong domestic support and the enormous efforts put into the signature drives in Japan. Furthermore, JALANA sent related books and audiovisual material, including photographs and videos, to the ICJ library and judges to highlight the disastrous humanitarian consequences.⁸⁹ Such concrete evidence evoked public conscience regarding the weapons' inhumanity and illegality.

Crucially, JALANA worked with IALANA to find ways for the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to testify at the ICJ, which could only accept statements from governments or international organisations. But the US-aligned Japanese government was obviously not

⁷⁹ Dewes, "Hiroshima," para.7–8.

⁸⁰ Sasaki, interview.

⁸¹ Okubo Kenichi (JALANA secretary-general), interviewed by the author, Hiroshima, October 23, 2018.

⁸² Moore, "World," 40.

⁸³ *Ibid.* 40.

⁸⁴ Dewes, "Hiroshima," para.7–8.

⁸⁵ Sasaki, interview.

⁸⁶ Rupert Ticehurst, "The Martens Clause and the Laws of Armed Conflict," *International Review of the Red Cross* 37, no. 317 (1997): 125 and 128.

⁸⁷ Sasaki, interview.

⁸⁸ Dewes, "Hiroshima," para.8.

⁸⁹ Sasaki, interview.

willing to submit statements from the two mayors. Hence, in 1995, JALANA and IALANA found a willing partner in Nauru, which was ready to apply the testimony of Hiroshima's mayor to the ICJ. A lawyer representing Nauru's government contacted Sasaki, who was heavily involved in the WCP and believed that the mayor of Hiroshima would go to the ICJ if Nauru applied for a testimony.⁹⁰ In a strategic move, JALANA informed the Japanese government of Nauru's plan. In mid-September, an appointment between JALANA and the Japanese foreign ministry was cancelled that very day by the ministry, which applied for testimonies from the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the ICJ instead.⁹¹ Nauru's intentions likely left the Japanese government with no other choice – Japan would have been in an even more awkward position internationally if the Hiroshima mayor were to testify due to Nauru's intervention.⁹²

The Japanese government appeared to have (superficially) changed its stance by allowing the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to testify due to strong domestic public pressure.⁹³ It even unsuccessfully pressured both mayors in a desperate move to make them speak in line with the government's stance. But the mayors were determined to speak out for the people and were clear about their goals of abolishing nuclear weapons.⁹⁴ At the oral hearings, the mayors made powerful statements and presented photographs showing the consequences of the atomic bombings. Also present were more than 50 *hibakusha* supporting the WCP.⁹⁵ While most people may not know what went on behind the scenes, JALANA was delighted that it had contributed to and made possible the strong testimonies of the two mayors at the ICJ.⁹⁶

JALANA's hard work, and that of other organisations worldwide, resulted in overwhelming global backing for the WCP, seen in the huge number of documents sent to the ICJ. On 8 July 1996, the ICJ ruled on both requests – it was unable to give an advisory opinion to the WHO request because the question involved the use of force and (dis)armament, i.e., it was beyond the WHO's public health scope.⁹⁷ However, with the second request, the ICJ concluded that “the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law”, but was unable to decide if their threat or use was lawful or otherwise when a country's existence was threatened.⁹⁸ Nonetheless, its decisions were an unprecedented achievement for all actors working towards the WCP, including Japanese non-state actors.

It was a historic success in that the ICJ accepted statements and evidence from non-state actors including individuals, *hibakusha*, and victims of nuclear tests.⁹⁹ It was also the only time thus far that the ICJ deliberated on the legal status of nuclear weapons. While the Japanese movement contributed significantly to the WCP, this movement also grew tremendously in strength through its involvement in the WCP. Thus, strong grounds were established for the anti-nuclear weapons movement and for like-minded governments to pursue a ban treaty.

⁹⁰ Sasaki, interview.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Masami Nishimoto, “My Life: Interview with Former Hiroshima Mayor Takashi Hiraoka, Part 15,” *Hiroshima Peace Media Center*, November 5, 2009, para.5, accessed April 19, 2022, <http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=23439>.

⁹³ Dewes, “Hiroshima,” para.8.

⁹⁴ Nishimoto, “My,” para.6–8.

⁹⁵ Dewes, “Hiroshima,” para.8.

⁹⁶ Sasaki, interview.

⁹⁷ International Court of Justice, “Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 1996,” 1996: 228, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/95/095-19960708-ADV-01-00-EN.pdf>.

⁹⁸ ICJ, “Legality,” 266.

⁹⁹ Dewes, “Hiroshima,” para.7.

4. 2010s: Strengthening the Humanitarian Initiative

The decades-long lack of progress on disarmament resulted in renewed efforts from anti-nuclear weapons activists and state governments in the 2010s to divert the discourse from traditional security to the humanitarian consequences instead.¹⁰⁰ Later known as the “Humanitarian Initiative”, the goal was to achieve a ban treaty from a humanitarian perspective, with or without the participation of nuclear powers, by building upon the solid ground established by *hibakusha* over previous decades. Particularly, this reframing of nuclear weapons was inspired by successful campaigns banning landmines in 1997 and cluster munitions in 2008 that focused on the humanitarian consequences of the weapons with the aim of de-legitimising them.¹⁰¹ The momentum was further encouraged by positive developments in 2009, particularly Barack Obama’s 5 April speech in Prague that called for a nuclear-weapons-free world.¹⁰² In September 2009, the UN Security Council Summit endorsed a resolution on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation for the first time.¹⁰³ In April 2010, the ICRC strongly urged governments to focus on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons and their legality under IHL, questioning their compatibility with the rules of war¹⁰⁴ and amplifying the humanitarian reframing.¹⁰⁵ The world’s only three-time Nobel Peace Prize recipient,¹⁰⁶ the ICRC, provided a powerful moral voice owing to its first-hand experience together with the Japanese Red Cross (JRC) in providing relief to victims of the atomic bombings. Furthermore, it is effectively the “guardian” of IHL, which limits suffering in armed conflict due to its unique mandate stemming from the Geneva Conventions.¹⁰⁷ The ICRC’s strong stance also represented that of the entire Red Cross and Red Crescent (RCRC) movement worldwide. Oyama Hiroto, deputy director of the Office of the President of the JRC, confirms that the RCRC was subsequently approached and consulted by more states and civil society groups on the issue.¹⁰⁸ After all, not only did the movement play a significant role in promoting IHL, but JRC hospitals have been treating *hibakusha* since 1945. In parallel, the ICAN mounted intensive public campaigns against nuclear weapons by working closely with *hibakusha* and survivors of nuclear weapons tests to provide powerful eyewitness testimonies.¹⁰⁹ Several prominent organisations in the Japanese movement were also part of the ICAN network, including Mayors for Peace (ICAN’s first international partner in 2006, one year before its official launch).¹¹⁰ Another Japanese organisation, Peace Boat, is a part of ICAN’s International Steering Group and coordinates ICAN’s campaigns in Japan.¹¹¹

The humanitarian reframing of nuclear weapons stemmed from non-state actors and

¹⁰⁰ Alexander Kmentt, “The Development of the International Initiative on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons and Its Effect on the Nuclear Weapons Debate,” *International Review of the Red Cross* 97, 899 (2015): 68.

¹⁰¹ John Borrie, “Humanitarian Reframing of Nuclear Weapons and the Logic of a Ban,” *International Affairs* 90, no. 3 (2014): 626.

¹⁰² Kmentt, “The Development,” 684.

¹⁰³ Julian Borger, “Obama Hails Historic Resolution to Rid World of Nuclear Weapons,” *The Guardian*, September 24, 2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/sep/24/nuclear-weapons-un-security-council>.

¹⁰⁴ Kmentt, “The,” 682–84.

¹⁰⁵ Borrie, “Humanitarian,” 640.

¹⁰⁶ David P. Forsythe, *The Humanitarians: The International Committee of the Red Cross* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 2 and 292.

¹⁰⁷ Kmentt, “The Development,” 684.

¹⁰⁸ Oyama Hiroto, “How the Red Cross Has Been Playing Its Role in a Humanitarian Approach towards the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons,” *Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation* 71 (2014), para.4, accessed April 19, 2022, <http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/hpcf/heiwabunka/pce071/English/14E.html>.

¹⁰⁹ Dimity Hawkins, Dave Sweeney, and Tilman Ruff, “ICAN’s Origins - From Little things, Big Things Grow...,” *International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons*, October 2019, para.20, accessed December 9, 2021, https://www.icanw.org/ican_origins.

¹¹⁰ Hawkins, Sweeney, and Ruff, “ICAN’s Origins,” para.27.

¹¹¹ Kawasaki Akira, email message to author, November 20, 2018.

influenced like-minded state governments, many of which were already supportive of earlier campaigns against landmines and cluster munitions.¹¹² When international momentum pushed for the organisation of three conferences in 2013–14 (in Oslo, Norway; Nayarit, Mexico; and Vienna, Austria, respectively) focusing on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons, *hibakusha* played a crucial role in the discourse.¹¹³ Hidankyo prominently participated in all three of the conferences by sending *hibakusha* to testify. Victims of nuclear tests also spoke to strengthen the argument.¹¹⁴ The voices of survivors, shut out from security-based nuclear discourse, were instead at the centre of the humanitarian discourse.¹¹⁵ Ultimately, the three conferences gave legitimacy to *hibakusha* and victims of nuclear tests for their unilateral message of banning nuclear weapons due to the humanitarian consequences.

At the Oslo conference, Tomonaga Masao shared Nagasaki University's research done in 1995 on the psychological states of *hibakusha* – they still suffered post-traumatic stress disorder even after 50 years, in addition to the negative impacts on their physical health, financial situations, and social relations.¹¹⁶ Tanaka Terumi, Hidankyo's secretary-general, shared his personal experiences in the hope that the world could understand the catastrophic consequences.¹¹⁷ In a media interview upon returning home, Tanaka asserted that these conferences were moving in the right direction by focusing on the weapons' inhumanity.¹¹⁸ Meanwhile, JALANA, which had been working closely with *hibakusha* for decades, submitted its recommendations to the Oslo Conference to confirm the inhumanity of nuclear weapons.¹¹⁹ The Nayarit conference strengthened the humanitarian perspective by allocating one whole session to testimonies of *hibakusha*, including that of a teenage girl who was affected by third-generation consequences.¹²⁰ At the Vienna conference, an 82-year-old Hiroshima *hibakusha* based in Canada, Setsuko Thurlow, made a moving speech urging the world to start negotiating a ban treaty. After surviving the bombing at 13 while most of her classmates perished, Thurlow has been speaking globally on the issue for decades.¹²¹

As rightly summarised by the chair of the Nayarit conference, the Humanitarian Initiative was at “a point of no return”, having received pledges from like-minded governments to proceed towards an international treaty.¹²² The first conference had involved 127 states, which increased to 146 and 158 states at the next two conferences respectively,¹²³ clearly indicating increased support from states for such “reframing”.¹²⁴ Collectively, these conferences led to an unstoppable momentum. The contributions of *hibakusha* were affirmed by the ICRC when its president, Peter Maurer, stated in 2015 that *hibakushas'* testimonies pointed to all aspects

¹¹² Borrie, “Humanitarian,” 629 and 637.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 633.

¹¹⁴ Kmentt, “The Development,” 697.

¹¹⁵ Elizabeth Minor, “Changing the Discourse on Nuclear Weapons: The Humanitarian Initiative,” *International Review of the Red Cross* 97, no. 899 (2015): 717.

¹¹⁶ “After the Atomic Bomb: *Hibakusha* Tell Their Stories,” *International Review of the Red Cross* 97, no. 899 (2015): 511.

¹¹⁷ Fujimura Junpei, “Interview with Terumi Tanaka, Head of the Japan Confederation of A- and H-bomb Sufferers Organizations, On Nuclear Disarmament Conference in Oslo,” *Hiroshima Peace Media Center*, March 25, 2013, para.2, accessed April 19, 2022, <http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=20442>.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, para.5.

¹¹⁹ Sasaki, interview.

¹²⁰ Rebecca Johnson, “Banning Nuclear Weapons: Point of No Return,” *Open Democracy*, February 19, 2014, para.6, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/banning-nuclear-weapons-point-of-no-return/>.

¹²¹ Shervin Taheran, “Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons Conference in Vienna,” *Arms Control Now*, May 15, 2015, para.9–11, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://www.armscontrol.org/blog/2015-05-15/humanitarian-impact-nuclear-weapons-conference-vienna>.

¹²² Johnson, “Banning,” para.2.

¹²³ Kmentt, “The Development,” 689, 692 and 696.

¹²⁴ Minor, “Changing,” 716.

of the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons, which was the focus of these conferences.¹²⁵ Significantly, Peter Buijs, chair of the Netherlands' IPPNW, described the Humanitarian Initiative as an "ICRC-inspired Human Impact of Nuclear Weapon's Approach, linked to *hibakusha*-experiences".¹²⁶ Likewise, the ICAN also acknowledged that it was humanitarian framing that led to the TPNW.¹²⁷

5. Towards a Nuclear Ban Treaty

Despite opposition against the humanitarian reframing from nuclear powers and countries under the US nuclear umbrella,¹²⁸ the Humanitarian Initiative led to an unprecedented diplomatic process aiming to negotiate a nuclear ban treaty. It was then that Hidankyo spoke during the general debate on disarmament efforts of the First Committee of the UNGA in October 2016. Its deputy secretary-general, Fujimori Toshiki, handed over 564,240 signatures to the chair, Ambassador Sabri Boukadoum,¹²⁹ all collected through the aforementioned *Hibakusha* Appeal, the signature campaign calling for a treaty to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons.

At the same time, the Peace Boat strategically timed its voyage to reach New York in October 2016 to help build momentum ahead of a UNGA meeting that was expected to vote on whether nuclear weapons should be banned.¹³⁰ A series of activities were arranged for *hibakusha* arriving aboard the Peace Boat. Morikawa Takaaki from Hiroshima spoke on a panel discussion at the UN while Fukahori Joji from Nagasaki talked about his experiences with students at the UN International School.¹³¹ Clifton Truman Daniel, the grandson of President Harry S. Truman, the US president who had ordered the use of atomic bombings, attended the events in New York as one of the supporters of *hibakusha* and the nuclear ban treaty.¹³²

The ambivalent Japanese government finally made its stance clear on 27 October 2016, voting *against* a UNGA resolution to begin negotiations for the ban treaty in that coming March.¹³³ Japan voted similarly when the UNGA passed a resolution in December 2016 to organise a multilateral conference from 27–31 March 2017, and from 15 June–7 July to negotiate a ban treaty.¹³⁴ On 27 March, Japan appeared to clarify its position that it could not participate in the negotiations on the grounds that the absence of participation by nuclear-weapon-wielding states was unlikely to lead to the elimination of nuclear weapons.¹³⁵ Japan,

¹²⁵ "Seventy Years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Reflections on the Consequences of Nuclear Detonation," *International Review of the Red Cross* 97, no. 899 (2015): 556.

¹²⁶ Buijs, "How Physicians," 478.

¹²⁷ Gibbons, "The Humanitarian," 33.

¹²⁸ Minor, "Changing," 717.

¹²⁹ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), "Handing Over of Signatures in Support of the "Appeal of the *Hibakusha*" for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons," October 7, 2016, para. 1–3, accessed December 9, 2021, [https://www.un.org/disarmament/update/handing-over-of-signatures-in-support-of-the-appeal-of-the-*hibakusha*-for-the-elimination-of-nuclear-weapons/](https://www.un.org/disarmament/update/handing-over-of-signatures-in-support-of-the-appeal-of-the-hibakusha-for-the-elimination-of-nuclear-weapons/).

¹³⁰ Seana K. Magee, "*Hibakusha* Join Activists at U.N. Event in Calling for Nuke Ban Treaty," *The Japan Times*, October 22, 2016, para. 1–2, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/10/22/national/hibakusha-join-activists-u-n-event-calling-nuke-ban-treaty/>.

¹³¹ Magee, "*Hibakusha*," para. 3 & 13.

¹³² *Ibid.*, para. 15.

¹³³ Akimoto Daisuke, "The Nuclear Weapons Prohibition Treaty and The Paradox of Japan's Nuclear Identity," *Journal of International & Global Studies* 9, no. 2 (2018): 60, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1402&context=jigs>.

¹³⁴ Akimoto, "The Nuclear," 60.

¹³⁵ Kurosawa Mitsuru, "The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons: Its Significance and Challenges," *Osaka University Law Review* 65 (2018): 8, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://ir.library.osaka-u.ac.jp/repo/ouka/all/67739/oulr065-001.pdf>.

the nuclear powers, and their allies claimed that the TPNW risked weakening the NPT.¹³⁶ Their “defensive engagement” manifested the moral authority of the non-state actors and like-minded state actors in the humanitarian reframing.¹³⁷ Despite the Japanese government’s boycott, Kawasaki Akira, an ICAN International Steering Group member and Peace Boat executive committee member, pointed out that *hibakusha* continued to work hard to ensure the success of the conferences (from March until July 2017), thus contributing tremendously to the TPNW’s adoption.¹³⁸ It is noteworthy that the conferences were open to participation by international organisations and civil society, thus signifying the centrality of non-state actors in the nuclear abolition discourse.¹³⁹

On 7 July 2017, the last day of the second round of negotiations, the TPNW was adopted by 122 states. The treaty was opened for signatures on 20 September 2017,¹⁴⁰ and entered into force on 22 January 2021, 90 days after the 50th ratification.¹⁴¹ It is the first multilateral treaty which comprehensively bans nuclear weapons, including their development, testing, production, manufacturing, possession, stockpiling, transfer and use or threat of use.¹⁴² Thus, the Humanitarian Initiative has succeeded on the first step towards nuclear abolition by officially declaring these weapons illegal. Together, it has successfully shifted the narrative of the discourse away from security, emphasising humanitarian reasons instead. Of exceptional significance was the collaboration between *hibakusha* and the international movement.¹⁴³ For Japanese advocates, the TPNW has had tremendous significance on their work. The treaty’s adoption and the awarding of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize to ICAN, which also dedicated the prize to *hibakusha* and victims of nuclear tests,¹⁴⁴ was an emotional moment for Japanese advocates for nuclear abolition, which has enhanced domestic momentum.¹⁴⁵

The *Hibakusha* Appeal collected 13.7 million signatures worldwide between April 2016 and December 2020, including 1,497 signatures from present and former heads of Japanese local governments.¹⁴⁶ These achievements impressed the International Peace Bureau into awarding the 2020 Sean MacBride Peace Prize to Hidankyo’s Tanaka, the campaign’s initiator.¹⁴⁷ Despite its government’s negative stance, Hidankyo remains committed to its struggle and constantly looks for opportunities to pressure the government. When the TPNW entered into force, Hidankyo launched a nationwide signature campaign to pressure the government into joining the treaty.¹⁴⁸ Note that for its decades-long advocacy, Hidankyo has

¹³⁶ Kurosawa, “The Treaty,” 17.

¹³⁷ Minor, “Changing,” 719.

¹³⁸ Kawasaki, email.

¹³⁹ Kurosawa, “The Treaty,” 7.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁴¹ Buijs, “How Physicians,” 478.

¹⁴² UN, “Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons,” 2017, 3, accessed December 9, 2021, https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/2017/07/20170707%2003-42%20PM/Ch_XXVI_9.pdf.

¹⁴³ Kurosaki, “A 75-year Rally,” para.7.

¹⁴⁴ Reuters, “Anti-Nuclear,” para.7.

¹⁴⁵ Tanaka Masato (senior reporter of *Asahi Shimbun*), interviewed by the author, Osaka, October 24, 2018.

¹⁴⁶ Kubota Tsuyoshi, “*Hibakusha* Appeal Network Collects Final Tally of 13.7 Million Signatures Calling on Countries to Join Nuclear Ban Treaty,” *Hiroshima Peace Media Center*, January 14, 2021, para.1&5, accessed December 9, 2021, <http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=103119>.

¹⁴⁷ International Peace Bureau, “Sean MacBride Peace Prize Ceremony 2020/21,” para.1, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://www.ipb.org/news/sean-mac-bride-peace-prize-ceremony-2020-21/#:~:text=On%20March%2C%2017th%202021%2C%20the%20Appeal%20of%20the%20Hibakusha>.

¹⁴⁸ Mizukawa Kyosuke, “Seven A-Bomb Survivors’ Groups Initiate Signature Campaign to Call on Japanese Government to Ratify Nuclear Ban Treaty,” *Hiroshima Peace Media Center*, March 23, 2021, para.4, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=104602>.

been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize several times since 1985.¹⁴⁹

Magnus Lovold, the ICRC arms policy adviser, asserts that it is hard to imagine the creation of TPNW without persistent *hibakusha* efforts stressing the weapons' devastating impacts.¹⁵⁰ Kawasaki underscores such efforts, which, together with those of nuclear test victims, have created a global *hibakusha* movement emphasising the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.¹⁵¹ The TPNW's preamble has recognised *hibakusha* for promoting the principles of humanity in their calls for nuclear abolition.¹⁵² But beyond that, *hibakushas'* tremendous contributions are unfortunately not necessarily recognised by the general public.

6. Conclusion

Japanese anti-nuclear weapons actors have collectively played an indispensable, though largely invisible role in calling for a world without nuclear weapons, demonstrating the humanitarian consequences of these weapons. The 2010s Humanitarian Initiative diverted the discourse away from security and towards humanitarian consequences, a core message that has been iterated by *hibakusha* from the beginning. The sending of *hibakusha* abroad by Hidankyo since the 1950s has established a credible international humanitarian framing to push for a nuclear ban treaty. Similarly, JALANA's contributions to the ICJ advisory opinion on nuclear weapons are little known to the general public. Their persistent efforts have inspired and helped maintain international momentum, ensuring that the atomic bombings are not just stagnant historical events but active discussion topics. No anti-nuclear weapons discourse can possibly be held without discussing Hiroshima, Nagasaki, or *hibakusha*, even while being overshadowed by the Japanese government's opposition to the TPNW, and while international players are often credited for such abolition efforts. This paper demonstrates that the Japanese anti-nuclear weapons movement is an under-recognised pillar of strength and a source of inspiration for the international anti-nuclear weapons movement.

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¹⁴⁹ Kingston, "Atomic," para.1.

¹⁵⁰ Lovold, "Courage," para.3.

¹⁵¹ Kawasaki, email.

¹⁵² UN, "Treaty," 3.

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