

January 17, 2019

Members
Norwegian Nobel Committee
The Norwegian Nobel Institute
NO-0255 Oslo, Norway

Dear Nobel Peace Prize Committee Members,

I would like to nominate Nihon Hidankyo for the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize. No organization or individual is more deserving. For more than 60 years, Hidankyo members have struggled valiantly to prevent nuclear war. They have been the world's conscience as well as its living memory. They have refused to let the world forget what happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki 73 years ago. The history of those crimes against humanity has been inscribed on their bodies. But, as they have made clear, the real crime goes deeper than their collective physical and psychological suffering, terrible as that has been.

The real crime of the atomic bombings is that they began the process that has threatened to end all life on our planet—a threat that continues unabated to this very day and grows closer by the moment. That is why Hidankyo's struggle to rid the world of nuclear weapons has been so unrelenting, heroic, and necessary. Hidankyo members understand what is at stake. They have transformed their personal suffering into an appeal for all humanity.

Most people who have been wronged seek revenge. Hibakusha activists, by channeling their personal anguish into leadership in the global fight for peace and nuclear abolition, have transcended victimhood. Sadly, many of them will never realize the goal of seeing nuclear weapons abolished in their lifetimes. But without their tireless effort to make the world remember the horrors of nuclear warfare, those weapons may have been used in warfare again. For all we know, we may owe the very fact that our species endures today to the role Hidankyo members have played in never letting the world forget what nuclear war is and what will happen if it is ever unleashed again. Awarding Hidankyo the prize would be our way of recognizing their extraordinary contribution to world peace and of thanking them, in the name of all humanity, for their moral example. It would also help reinvigorate the fight for nuclear abolition at a time when the sense of urgency has largely disappeared even though, as the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* has made clear, the risk of nuclear war is as great as it has ever been.

Ongoing conflicts between the United States and North Korea, the United States and Iran, the United States and Russia, India and Pakistan, and India and China, among others, attest to the timeliness of Hidankyo's message. The

Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists' ominous Doomsday Clock now stands at two minutes before midnight and the latest scientific evidence confirms our worst fear that the threat posed by nuclear winter is not only real, it is actually greater than experts understood when they released the initial studies in the 1980s. Led by the United States, all 9 of the nuclear powers are spending vast sums to modernize their nuclear arsenals. The goal is to make the weapons more efficient and more usable. Given the spirit of achieving universal disarmament and eradicating war in which Alfred Nobel initiated the prize, I can think of no group that is now or has been in recent memory more deserving. I hope the committee will have the courage to do the right thing no matter which countries may feel affronted by the implicit criticism of their actions in dropping atomic bombs on an overwhelmingly civilian population as the Second World War was already reaching its conclusion.

Sincerely,

Peter Kuznick
Professor of History
Director, Nuclear Studies Institute
American University
Washington, DC