

January 28, 2017

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 2017 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 71 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 had made clear, the risk of nuclear war is as great as ever. The doomsday clock now stands at two and a half 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.

Sincerely,

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