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A-bomb Testimony of Sakuma Kunihiro in Oslo

Kunihiro Sakuma

Chairperson, Hiroshima Hidankyo (A- and H-Bomb Survivors Organization)

Hiroshima Survivor

My name is Kunihiro Sakuma. I come from Hiroshima. On August 6, 1945, the atomic-bomb attack was made on Hiroshima. I was 9 months old at the time. My house was 3 km west of the blast center and was a one-story wooden house. I was sleeping on the porch and my mother was doing laundry when the bomb was dropped. My house was severely damaged by the blast: It was tilted, the walls collapsed, and roof tiles and windowpanes were scattered. Fortunately, it remained somehow livable. My mother carried me on her back and evacuated the area. On the way, we were exposed to the black rain containing radiation.

At the time, there were about 350,000 civilians, soldiers and Koreans in Hiroshima. By the end of that year, about 140,000 people who were within a 2-kilometer radius of the hypocenter were killed by the blast, heat rays, and radiation from a single atomic bomb. The blast instantly devastated the whole city of Hiroshima. The heat rays caused conflagrations. They were pressed to death under the collapsed buildings. They were burned to death and they died from effects of high doses of radiation. In such a hell, my family members were fortunate to have narrowly survived.

However, 10 years later, when I was 11 and 12 years old, I had to be absent from school for about two months in a row due to health problems. I suffered from liver and kidney problems, both of which made me feel sluggish; I had no appetite, and even as a child I was afraid that I was going to die. The pain is still traumatic for me when I get sick. My mother, who also suffered from black rain, was diagnosed as breast cancer in 1963 and underwent an operation. She continued to suffer from illnesses of unknown causes, and died in 1998 after repeatedly getting in and out of hospital. Even today, 79 years after the atomic bombing, there are still people like my family members whose deaths are thought to be caused by the effects of A-bomb radiation.

I have been working as a volunteer to provide counseling for Hibakusha. Hibakusha are still suffering from cancer, leukemia, thyroid diseases, myocardial infarction, etc. Their suffering and mental scars have continued to agonize them. The atomic bombing of 79 years ago is not a matter of the past. We have appealed to the world, "Never again". The Hibakusha are still suffering physically and mentally. Nuclear weapons are an absolute evil and inhumane weapons.

On October 11, 2024, the Nobel Committee announced that the Nobel Peace Prize would be awarded to Nihon Hidankyo. The news was transmitted around the world, and was widely known throughout Japan. We were very happy and moved by the decision.

The Nobel Committee says that the Hidankyo "members have worked tirelessly to raise awareness about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of using nuclear weapons. Gradually, a powerful international norm developed, stigmatizing the use of nuclear weapons as morally unacceptable. This norm has become known as the nuclear taboo." We are very happy that our efforts over the years have been recognized.

As long as we Hibakusha are alive, we want to appeal to the world about the inhumanity of nuclear weapons and see with our own eyes the day when nuclear weapons are eliminated.

I was very encouraged that the Norwegian government hosted the International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in 2013. Nuclear weapons cannot protect peace and security of peoples of the world. I hope that all of you will take the lead in the struggle for the elimination of nuclear weapons.