

**Global Voyage for a Nuclear Free World :  
“I Was Her Age” and Hibakusha Project Activities and Events  
in ports during Peace Boat's 87<sup>th</sup> Global Voyage**



**Singapore – April 13**



Discussion with youth in Singapore

Singapore was important as the first port of call for the Voyage for a Nuclear-free World because of the importance to the project of acknowledging Japanese military aggression and crimes during World War II. The project participants visited the National Museum of Singapore and Memories at Old Ford Factory (MOFF), a museum at the site where the British surrendered to the Japanese army. A permanent exhibition gallery developed by the National Archives of Singapore focuses on life during the Japanese Occupation.

At the Japanese Association of Singapore, Hironaka Masaki gave his testimony. Onboard the ship, a testimony session was held with local youth in cooperation with UN Association of Singapore. Miyake Nobuo spoke of his experiences and Youth Communicator, Hashimoto Akihiro, who is an actor, gave a short performance to engage the youth in the story. This was followed by deep and thought-provoking discussions between the survivors and the youth.

In Kochi, a meeting was held at the council hall under the auspices of Mayors for Peace network in close association with Kochi City and SEEDS India. The victims of the nuclear bombings were honoured with a candle light vigil led by Major Archbishop Cardinal George Alencherry and Mayor of Kochi, Tony Chammany declared "Kochi shall join the city of Hiroshima in its fight to abolish nuclear weapons. We will wholeheartedly support, promote and ensure cooperation between our two cities".

At YMCA Kerala Region headquarters, a permanent Peace Pole bearing the message "May Peace Prevail on Earth" was planted and Hiroshima survivor, Miyake Nobuo, and Nagasaki survivor Mitamura Shizuko shared their personal testimonies at a Peace Congress. Finally a flame from the Flame of Peace at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park was officially handed over to Dr. Thomas Mathew, the 2020 Vision Campaigner to install at Kochi, India. The flame is a monument to the victims of the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima. It has burned continuously since it was lit in 1964, and continue to burn until nuclear abolition has been achieved.

**Kochi, India – April 27**



A candle light vigil honoured the victims



The Peace Congress at YMCA Kerala

**Piraeus and Athens, Greece – May 13**



Miyake Nobuo addressed the Hellenic Parliament



Survivors met with the President of the Parliament

Activities in Greece were organized thanks to support of local partners, Panos Trigazis, President of PADOP and Maria Arvaniti Sotiropoulou, President of the Greek Affiliates of IPPNW. At the port, the Hibakusha were greeted by the Vice Mayor of Piraeus, the Minister of Shipping, Regional governor and many representatives of WWII resistance organizations, peace groups and children from a local school. Mitamura Shizuko gave a speech mentioning the peace flame sent from Greece to Nagasaki and Aaron Tovish, the International Campaign Director of 2020 Vision Campaign asked the City of Piraeus to join Mayors for Peace.

The Hibakusha and Youth Communicators were invited to a special meeting at the Presidential Palace with the President of the Hellenic Republic, Prokopis Pavlopoulos. The President said the "Hibakusha's experiences are the most important aspects of deciding a new nuclear policy." The highlight of the day was a special session at the Hellenic Parliament during which Zoi Konstantopolou, President of the Parliament, introduced the eight Hibakusha and three Youth Communicators to over one hundred parliamentarians and 40 students. Miyake Nobuo told the Parliament "to ensure that such nuclear suffering never occurs again anywhere in the world, we appeal not only for nuclear disarmament, but for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Even one nuclear weapon is too many."



### Catania, Italy – May 15

The team of Hibakusha and youth coordinators were welcomed in Catania, Italy by Mayor Enzo Bianco at City Hall. Hiroshima survivor Ito Masao spoke about the current threat of nuclear weapons and Aaron Tovish, from Mayors for Peace, asked the mayor to join this network. The Mayor took the visitors to the balcony of City Hall where he hung both the banners of Mayors for Peace and Peace Boat Hibakusha Project from the balcony for the duration of the time that Peace Boat was docked at Catania. From City Hall, the group went to Vespucci School to meet 300 students, parents and teachers. There was a cultural exchange with music from the school's choir and orchestra and the Hibakusha shared Japanese music with the audience. Ito Masao gave his testimony of his experiences in Hiroshima to the children and adults followed by a thought-provoking discussion with all those present.



Project banners were hung from City Hall

### Motril, Spain – May 18



Students at a High School in Motril

The participants on the Hibakusha Project were presented with an olive tree of peace by city hall representatives and a representative of the Japanese embassy in Madrid on their arrival at the port of Motril, Spain. Mayor of Motril, Luisa Garcia Chamorro, who joined the Mayors for Peace network on Peace Boat's visit to the city the previous year, greeted the Hibakusha at the High School where they were to give a testimony. Maria Jesus Cuevas Vicentes, director of the Francisco Javier de Burgos Institute of Secondary Education, facilitated the Hibakusha presentation to the students. Mitamura Shizuko gave her testimony with the help of the youth communicator, Hashimoto Akihiro. The students already had good background knowledge of this subject and engaged well with the Hibakusha, asking questions about the impact of the bombs including, "Why were Hibakusha discriminated against?", "Do you believe, if atomic bombs were not dropped, there would have been even more casualties after the U.S. Army landed the mainland of Japan?" and "How has Japan changed in the last 70 years?"

### Lisbon, Portugal – May 20



After visiting the Jeronimon Monastery (Mosteiro does Jeronimos) and the Lisbon Story Centre, where the group met Mr Azuma Hiroshi, the Ambassador of Japan to Portugal, the Hibakusha Project was welcomed at City Hall. Carlos Manuel Castro of the city of Lisbon spoke about the importance of passing on the message of peace to the younger generation. Morita Hiromitsu gave his testimony to a group of young school children and their teachers and parents. Youth Communicator, Suzuki Keina helped make the testimony more accessible to the young audience and explained what happened in Nagasaki. They then exchanged gifts of orizuru (paper cranes) and origami and explained to them the meaning behind the crane.



Hironitsu Morita with Carlos Manuel Castro



Exchanges with children and youth were an integral part of the "I was her age" project as Hibakusha passed on their personal experiences of the inhumanity of nuclear weapons to the next generation. Children, their parents and teachers were motivated to join the movement for a global ban on nuclear weapons.

## Gonfreville L'Orcher, France – May 23



The Hibakusha were presented with the Medal of the City



Children and youth met Hibakusha and took part in a football match.

The survivors from Hiroshima and Nagasaki were welcomed by the city of Gonfreville L'Orcher which is an active member of the Mayors for Peace Network and were presented with the Medal of the City by Mayor Jean-Paul Lecoq and Mr Philippe Rio, the Mayor of Grigny (Essonne).

The survivors gave testimony to students at Gustave-Courbet High School and Mr. Youth Communicator, Hashimoto Akihiro gave a presentation explaining the atomic bomb's three unique characteristics; heat ray, blast and radiation. They then met with young people of Teltow and the youth council of Grigny where a mural had been painted in honour of Peace Boat and the survivors. In the afternoon, a meeting was planned on the lawn of the sports complex during which Hibakusha Horie Soh took the kickoff of the friendly international football match. As the Mayor bid farewell to the Hibakusha he told them "Know that in Gonfreville L'Orcher, you can always count on us and on our commitment to fight against nuclear weapons"

In Bruges, the Hibakusha and Youth Communicators met Deputy Mayor Philip Pierins Alderman and Mr. Maurice Bebruyne, President of the Veterans Association of Bruges at the City Hall before visiting the monument of those who died during World War II. They then travelled to Ypres, where the Western front line of the Allies against German Army during the WWI were based for more than 4 years and visited several cemeteries such as Tyne Cot Cemetery and Australian soldiers Cemetery. The City of Ypres is a member of the Executive Conference of Mayors for Peace and Ypres Mayor, Jan Durnez, is Chairman of the 2020 Vision Campaign.

The following day, the Hibakusha Project participants were welcomed by the Vice Mayor of Ypres at the In Flanders Field Museum. Hironaka Masaki's testimony was broadcast on a TV news program the following morning. The group visited Menin Gate where more than 40,000 lost soldiers names are carved into the marble walls. They lay down a wreath as part of the Last Post memorial ceremony held daily for those who died during World War I. Finally the group travelled to the capital city, Brussels which plays a major role in the EU and NATO and met Deputy Mayor, Ahmed El Ktibi and the head of office, Geoffrey Guerrite After several media interviews, a testimony session by Kamata Hiroe was held at the largest square in Brussels.

## Bruges, Ypres and Brussels, Belgium – May 24-26



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The wreath laid for those who died in World War I

## Gdansk, Poland – May 27



Children in Poland listened intently to the testimony

In Gdansk, Poland, the Hibakusha Project participants took part in a testimony session and exchange with young students at the European Solidarity Centre, hosted by the City of Gdansk. The Centre commemorates the Solidarity Movement which was the beginning of the movement towards democracy in the 1980s. Over four hundred children and youth listened intently to the words of Miyake Nobuo, assisted by the Youth Communicator, Manami Iwamoto. The session was broadcast live on the website of the Solidarity Museum. There was also a discussion between the Hibakusha and those who had helped to make the Solidarity museum a successful commemoration site.

In Stockholm, Sweden, in a visit coordinated by Svenska Lakare mot Karnvapen (SLMK), the Swedish affiliate of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), the Hibakusha visited two different high schools. At Danderyds High School Morita Hiromitsu gave testimony of his experiences in front of a young audience. The group later participated in a specially organised tour of the Nobel Prize Museum with emphasis on the Nobel Peace Prize. The Hibakusha also visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs where Hiroshima survivor, Kamada Hiroe, asked why Sweden has not yet endorsed the Humanitarian Pledge to work for the prohibition of nuclear weapons on the basis of their catastrophic humanitarian consequences.

### Stockholm, Sweden – May 29



A special tour was organised at the Nobel Museum and the Hibakusha visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs



### St.Petersburg, Russia – May 31



The project members visited the Nagasaki Peace Bell

The Hibakusha had a discussion with local NGO representatives and journalists, coordinated by Andrey Ozharovsky from Russian NGO called Bellona. The whole group paid a visit to Piskaryovsky Memorial Cemetery to learn the tragedy of Leningrad Siege and its firmness, courage, surprising strength of spirit of the people. Morita Hiromitsu and Mitamura Shizuko, two Hibakusha from Nagasaki, rang Nagasaki Bell. City of Saint Petersburg hosted a testimony session, where Mitamura Shizuko talked her experience being supported by a Youth Communicator, Iwamoto Manami, and there was a music exchange between Russian students learning Japanese and the Hibakusha.

The Hibakusha were welcomed in Helsinki, Finland by NGO representatives and members of civil society. A meeting organised by the Finnish Peace Union was held at the "Peace Station" which serves as a meeting place for local groups. Horie Soh gave his testimony and discussed ideas for peace education and youth engagement with the local activists. They learned about the Peace School which uses drama and arts for peace education for children and plans to make scenarios of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

### Helsinki, Finland – June 1



Meeting at the Peace Station

### Wamenmunde, Hamburg and Berlin, Germany – June 3-4



Horie Soh participated in an event in Berlin

In Germany two events were held. Part of the group travelled to Hamburg where they met survivors of the Hamburg air-raids at St. Nikolai Church Museum. The war survivors from Germany and Japan gave testimony of their experiences to a large group of students. After the session, both survivors enjoyed dinner together and exchanged their feelings and lessons.

In a separate event, Hibakusha Horie Soh travelled to Berlin for an event held in collaboration with the Heinrich Boll Foundation and ICAN Germany. A panel discussion with Susanne Baumann, Deputy Federal Commissioner for Disarmament, Arms control and Nonproliferation, Agnieszka Brugger, Security policy spokesperson for Bündnis 90 / Die Grünen, and Martin Hinrichs of ICAN Germany analyzed the NPT Review Conference which had just concluded in New York. Discussion between the political and technical experts, Horie Soh and audience participants examined the role of the humanitarian initiative in New York and in the current global debate, the position of Germany, and the next steps towards abolition.



## Bergen, Norway – June 6

Peace Boat participants joined the Hibakusha and Youth Communicators in their call for a nuclear-free world in Bergen, Norway. Their performance of taiko (Japanese drumming) in the main square opened the public event organized by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) Bergen and supported by the City of Bergen. Participants took part in a parade with local campaigners to the public library for a testimony session, "Art for Peace" exhibition, origami workshop and story-telling. Erland Horn of the City of Bergen welcomed the Hibakusha and Kotani Takako gave her testimony supported by youth communicator, Suzuki Keina. A statement regarding the Humanitarian Pledge was submitted to Bergen City Council.



Taiko drumming started a public event

## Reykjavik, Iceland – June 10



Hofdi House, the site of the 1986 Reykjavik Summit

Höfði House, built in 1909, is best known as the location where the Reykjavik Summit was held in 1986 at which presidents Ronald Reagan of USA and Mikhail Gorbachev of the USSR met to bring an end to the Cold War and discussed a reduction in nuclear arms. It was the most fitting place for the participants of the Hibakusha Project to meet with the Mayor of Reykjavik, Dagur Eggertsson, and have a testimony session with local children and their parents. Hironaka Masaki gave a moving account of his personal story to both children and their parents after which the children learned how to fold paper cranes whilst their parents learned more about the cruelty of his experiences as part of the 'I Was Her Age' project.

## La Guaira and Caracas, Venezuela – June 22-23

The Hibakusha Project was hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Venezuela. The group visited the resting place of the late President Hugo Chavez at the Cuartel de la Montana and laid 1000 folded paper cranes as a symbol of peace and respect on the mausoleum. At the Teatro Principal in Caracas, Miyake Nobuo gave his testimony and spoke about the importance of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, (1967) which created the first Nuclear weapons-free Zone. Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Asia, Middle East and Oceania, XoaN Noya and Vice-Minister for Europe, Calixto Ortega were in attendance. A Peace Ceremony followed with performances from Peace Boat participants and local artists.

The next day, a ceremony unveiling a mural commemorating the 70th anniversaries of the atomic bombings was organized by Jorge Luis Garcia Carneiro and Maria de Garcia, Governor and First Lady of the State of Vargas followed by a visit to the headquarters of the national youth orchestra, El Sistema. The Hibakusha Project members were invited to the Casa Amarilla to meet with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Delcy Eloina Gomez Rodriguez. The Minister told the Hibakusha "It must have been a long 70 years of sadness, pain and hatred for you and you have been struggling not to repeat it. Please count on us, Venezuela. We strongly believe that the most important message for you is that we promise not to allow it to happen again".



Meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs



Unveiling of a mural commemorating the bombings



Media interviews, local campaigns, large scale events and high profile meetings were used to highlight the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons

A testimony session for United Nations related representatives was held at the "City of Knowledge" site, a former military base now a centre for learning and culture, near Panama City, Panama. Together, Peace Boat and the UN marked 70 years since the atomic bombings and the establishment of the UN. Morita Hiromitsu spoke of his personal experiences in Nagasaki. Martin Santiago, Regional Coordinator for the UN in Panama told the audience; "The abolition of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons continue to be fundamental priorities for our organisation. For this reason, we applaud the work of Peace Boat which, through global education programmes such as this, is seeking to raise awareness about the dangers posed by nuclear weapons and foster public support for nuclear disarmament."

**Panama City, Panama – June 26-27**



With Martin Santiago, Regional Coordinator for the UN

**Puerto Quetzal and Antigua, Guatemala – June 30- July 1**



Members of CCP for Resilience onboard the ship



Santa Apolonia joined Mayors for Peace

Members of the NGO, Community Practitioners' Platform (CPP) for Resilience, came onboard the ship while it was docked in Puerto Quetzal, Guatemala to hear a testimony from Kotani Takako. She tells the story of her younger brother during her testimony and uses ventriloquism to enact her brother's voice.

The project participants travelled to Antigua where an event was held at the Centro de Formacion de la Cooperacion Espanola where Hironaka Masaki shared his experiences of the bombing of Hiroshima at the age of 5. This session was co-organized by Guatemala Foundation and ECPAT Guatemala. The Mayor of Santa Apolonia, a town near Antigua joined the Mayors for Peace network after hearing from the Hibakusha project participants. The testimony session was followed by an exchange and discussion with participants asking how they can be involved in the movement for abolition.

**Honolulu, USA, July 12-13**



The participants were invited to Honolulu City Hall

An exchange and cultural even held onboard the ship while it was docked in Honolulu, Hawai'i, introduced project participants to a Hibakusha organisation for Hibakusha living in Hawaii, Malama Hibakusha. The United Nations Association Honolulu Charter, families of people affected by Micronesia nuclear testing and children's music and theatre group were in attendance. It included a moving performance by Ohana Arts.

The following day the group visited Pearl Harbour where the Pacific sphere of the World War II began. The Hibakusha Project participants were invited to Honolulu City Hall. They thanked the Mayor of Honolulu, Kirk Caldwell for attending the Peace Ceremony on August 6 in Hiroshima last year and pairing Hiroshima and Honolulu as sister cities. They met Vice Mayor, Mr. Keiji Amamiya, who attended this year's peace ceremony in Hiroshima. Finally, the group visited the Punchbowl Cemetery where more than 20,000 soldiers are laid who lost their lives during the two World Wars, the War in Korea and the War in Vietnam.



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