

22nd January 2016

The Norwegian Nobel Committee

Henrik Ibsens gate 51

Oslo

Norway

Dear Members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee,

I would like to nominate for this year's Nobel Peace Prize: Mayors for Peace, together with the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Mayor of Hiroshima, Mr. Kazumi Matsui, is President of Mayors for Peace; the Mayor of Nagasaki, Mr. Tomihisa Taue, is Vice-President of Mayors for Peace.

Since its foundation in 1982, the international NGO Mayors for Peace has rapidly established itself as probably the most dynamic and important organisation in the global campaign for the abolition of nuclear weapons. It cannot be a cause for surprise that this organisation, which aims to raise global public awareness of the need to abolish nuclear weapons, was initiated by the Mayor of Hiroshima.

The current membership of Mayors for Peace approaches 7,000 cities in 160 countries. Some 1,600 cities in Japan are members, representing 92% of all municipalities in the country, a strong indication of the overwhelming desire of the Japanese people to see a world free of nuclear weapons. The country with the second largest number of members is Iran (800). The common denominator explaining the popularity of the organisation in both countries is that they have been victims of the use of weapons of mass destruction, resulting in a widespread determination among their citizens to work for their elimination worldwide. Just as the *Hibakusha* of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are playing a vital role in the success of the organisation in Japan, so do the survivors in Iran of the chemical attacks that were launched by Iraq during the long and atrocious war in the 1980s.

The abolition of nuclear weapons remains an urgent task for the world community. Those many individuals, movements and organisations all over the world passionately devoted to this cause are truly among the foremost "champions of peace" that Alfred Nobel wanted to honour and encourage. Those "champions" are nowhere more in evidence than in the two Japanese cities that suffered the devastation of the atomic bombings in August 1945. Only a short time after their destruction, both cities decided to rebuild themselves as cities of peace. Since then they have acted as a magnet and inspiration for peace workers everywhere. This helps to explain the successful development of Mayors for Peace, under the leadership of the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, into a powerful global movement for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Such factors today as the proliferation of nuclear weapons (cf. DPRK), modernisation of the nuclear arsenals of several powers, and the failure of the latest Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference (2015) do not allow any optimism – as the President of Mayors for Peace eloquently stated in his January 2016 New Year's Greeting.

Over the years, your Committee has honoured several individuals and organisations for their exemplary efforts to bring about a world without nuclear weapons. It is a matter of some puzzlement and regret that, more than seventy years after their destruction, the cities and citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, including prominently their *Hibakusha*, have not been similarly honoured. A prize to Mayors for Peace, and to the Mayors of the two founding cities, is timely, and would be greatly welcomed throughout the world by the countless organisations and individuals who are passionately committed to this great cause.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Peter van den Dungen

Lecturer/Visiting Lecturer in Peace Studies, University of Bradford, UK (1976-2015)

Visiting Fellow, Norwegian Nobel Institute (2000)