

IPPNW has issued the following statement in response to the murder of Nagasaki Mayor Iccho Itoh.

The Mayors For Peace website (www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/index.html) contains a statement from Hiroshima Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba.

Letters of condolence and appreciation may be sent to hisho@city.nagasaki.lg.jp.

An Open Letter from International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) to the Murderers of Mayor Itoh of Nagasaki

On Tuesday, April 17, 2007 you killed a man who was apparently an obstacle to your criminal enterprises. We wonder if you have any idea what you have taken from the world.

Mayor Iccho Itoh was born only two weeks before the atomic bombing of Nagasaki by the United States on August 9, 1945. Defined by that monstrous act of war along with the other hibakusha of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, Mayor Itoh devoted his life to making sure that nuclear weapons would never be used again. Without rancor or ill will, he quietly and persistently went about the business of campaigning for the elimination of nuclear weapons from the world. He wanted Nagasaki to be seen across the world as a place that had stared death in the face and come back to life; as a place that, reduced to radioactive cinders by war, had risen as a champion of peace and a symbol of hope. You snuffed out his life because he refused to sanction the institutionalized greed and violence on which you thrive.

On November 7, 1995, Mayor Itoh pleaded with the International Court of Justice to "bring strength and hope, not only to the citizens of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, but to all the peace-loving people of the world" by declaring the possession of nuclear weapons to be a violation of international law. The abolition of nuclear weapons, he told the judges, "will contribute more than anything else to the repose of the souls of the 214,000 people who perished in the atomic wastelands of Nagasaki and Hiroshima 50 years ago."

For the past decade he had worked tirelessly as vice president of Mayors For Peace to help rally the support of mayors around the world for a treaty to ban nuclear weapons by the year 2020. Speaking at the United Nations in May 2000, he said that the people of Nagasaki and Hiroshima were not motivated by "hatred or resentment over events of the past. Our only reason is our clear knowledge, gained from the miserable experience of the atomic bombings 55 years ago, that nuclear weapons are inhumane tools of indiscriminate, mass destruction that violate all rules of international law." At the 2005 Review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, Mayor Itoh led a Mayors For Peace delegation through the streets of New York, followed by tens of thousands of people who shared his vision of a future in which nuclear war was no longer a possibility.

What you have not taken away from us through this cowardly act--what you could never take away--is our determination to fulfill Mayor Itoh's vision. For more than 25 years, IPPNW has stood with the people of Nagasaki and Hiroshima and with all people who renounce nuclear weapons and the culture of war and violence of which nuclear weapons are the ultimate, though not the only, instrument. We stand with them now in condemning you for this single act of violence, with a single gun, against a single man who stood for something far greater than the agenda for which you killed him. As physicians, medical students, and health professionals committed to nuclear abolition and to a peaceful world, we pledge to see Mayor Itoh's work through to a successful conclusion.