



## **To avoid a future catastrophe, we must act today.**

*Talk given by Rafael de la Rubia, Coordinator, World March for Peace and Nonviolence, in Hiroshima on the occasion of the anniversary of the first nuclear bomb.*

On August 6, 1945 at 8:00 am, the world's first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, on the orders of President Truman of the United States of America. On August 9, 1945, the second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. In seconds the two cities were devastated and thousands of people were killed in an instant. In the following days, many more people, who were further away from the centers of the explosions, also died; and today the few remaining survivors still suffer the effects of radiation, which have also been passed on to the following generations. Days later the Japanese Empire surrendered, marking the end of the Second World War.

The authors of that massacre tried to justify it by claiming that it was necessary to force the surrender of the enemy in order to avoid worse evils. But the reality is that this monstrous act created a much bigger danger because the nuclear technology that was unleashed has spread and multiplied until now it threatens the existence of all of humanity.

The United States tried to maintain a nuclear monopoly. Nevertheless, in 1949 the Soviet Union detonated its own nuclear bomb. Since then, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan and North Korea have developed nuclear weapons. There are also undeniable suspicions that Israel possesses these weapons of mass destruction. Some 26,000 nuclear warheads threaten the world today.

Although it's encouraging that the leaders of the U.S. and Russia have once again put nuclear disarmament on the negotiating table, we cannot forget that we are living in a highly dangerous moment. The danger stems not only from the irresponsible interests of the nuclear powers but also from the madness of violent groups with possible access to nuclear

material of lesser magnitude, and the real risk of accident that could set off a devastating conflict.

To avoid another nuclear catastrophe in the future we must act today. We must create awareness of the need to reduce tensions and build cooperation between peoples.

Let's build a common force in the World March for Peace and Nonviolence, demanding of decision-makers:

- global abolition of nuclear weapons
- the immediate withdrawal of troops invading occupied territories,
- the progressive and proportional reduction in conventional weapons
- the signing of non-aggression treaties between countries, and
- the renunciation by governments of the use of war as a means to resolve conflicts.

The World March for Peace and Nonviolence is a call to the personal conscience of every one of us; to raise our voices together. It's the moral thing to do and it's what we need to do in this difficult moment in which we live.

The horror of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has not been consigned to history. The images of pain and absurd death continue to live in our consciences. But at the same time they feed our profound aspiration for a world where this atrocity will never be possible again.

Today we remember the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; both to honour their memory and to strengthen a worldwide movement that is open and diverse, that rejects all forms of violence and affirms the human being as the highest value.

*August 6, 2009*