

—A letter to Pope Francis—

Pope Francis,  
Apostolic Palace  
00120 Vatican City

His Holiness, Pope Francis,

We are the Korean atomic bomb victims and their following generation. Please encourage us with your words of consolation and peace!

His Holiness, Pope Francis,

Most of the Korean atomic bomb victims were forcefully mobilized due to Japan's illegal colonial rule, and have had to bear the double and even triple hardships of exposure to radiation due to the US' dropping of a-bombs along with neglect from the Korean government. The number of Korean atomic bomb victims is around 100,000 (of which 50,000 dead in Japan). However, due to imperial Japanese's discrimination of colonial citizens, even the remains of the dead were not recovered, let alone the treatment of the injured.

Most of the surviving Korean victims returned to Korea, they had to pass away in pain from the aftereffects of the bombing, amid poverty, ill-treatment and also neglect of the Korean government. Their descendants are dying or struggling against diseases, without being recognized the heredity from the atomic bombing.

Even 74 years after the exposure to radiation, there have been neither full investigation on the impacts to Korean victims by atomic air raid nor any apology and compensation. They have never received a proper attention from the international society. We would like to examine the responsibility of the US and Japan regarding the damages incurred to Korean victims due to the use of inhuman atomic bombings by the US.

His Holiness, Pope Francis,

We believe that it is a common desire of human beings to completely abolish

nuclear weapons that could bring extinction of mankind and the Earth. Even at this moment, the US, Russia and other nuclear-weapon states are retaining 12,000 nuclear weapons capable of destroying humanity dozens of times.

Especially, the Korean Peninsula is an area of the highest chances of a nuclear war in the world. If a nuclear war occurs in the Korean peninsula, our nation in north and south will be completely destroyed.

On July 7th, 2017, the UN General Assembly, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons(TPNW) which defined the use of nuclear weapons as illegal for the first time in history was adopted. It is such contradiction that the Korean government has not joined the TPNW, even with the highest risk of nuclear weapon use and openly pursues denuclearization on the Korean peninsula.

We hope all nations to join the TPNW to abolish all nuclear weapons. And we hope there will never be a use of nuclear weapons again.

His Holiness, Pope Francis

We, who have directly suffered from exposure to radiation from the atomic bombs and unknown hereditary diseases, will be in the frontline for the denuclearization on the Korean peninsula and realization of the nuclear-free world. We hope that you will hold us with your warm hands of consolation and encouragement.

Nov. 24th, 2019

Lee Gyu-yeol, President of Korea Atomic Bombs Victim Association