

Final Remarks

Toshinori Yamada,
Lecturer of International Law, Meiji University, Japan

This concludes the second session and we will move on to the Closing Remarks.

How was this IALANA webinar "LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING AHEAD: Give Justice to Nuclear Victims!".

In the first session, we heard from Japanese and Korean lawyers, focusing on litigation to bring relief and justice to Hibakusha in their respective countries. We were also able to share the current status of the damage caused by the U.S. hydrogen bomb tests in the Marshall Islands through video testimonies.

Although the theme of the session was to look back at the past, it is clear that nuclear damage is by no means a thing of the past. Hibakusha from Hiroshima and Nagasaki are still alive not only in Japan but also in Korea and DPRK. The victims of the Bikini nuclear tests are still filing lawsuits against the Japanese government in Japan seeking redress. What we reviewed in the first session was the efforts made through lawsuits filed in the past, but the damage that needs to be remedied is still ongoing. There are victims of nuclear tests all over the world. The scope of these victims has not yet been determined. The issue of second and third generation victims of radiation exposure is a clear indication of this. Therefore, it must be recalled that the relief for these victims is also not "adequate" in the present situation.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which entered into force in January 2021, imposes on states parties the obligation to provide relief to victims and to remediate the environment as a "shared responsibility". The challenge is how to operationalize this mechanism in the future. If this mechanism is well operated, it may lead to relief not only for victims of TPNW parties, but also for hibakusha around the world.

It is important to note, then, that there are norms and procedures in existing human rights law and environmental law that facilitate victim assistance and environmental restoration. These are already functioning, apart from TPNW.

One of the issues to be discussed at the upcoming meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons will be how to establish a mechanism based on the Treaty. Kiribati and Kazakhstan have already stated that they are preparing a working paper to that end. It will be necessary to organically link the TPNW mechanisms with those in human rights law and environmental law. Through such a device, the norms contained in the TPNW may be able to substantially affect non-parties outside the TPNW. This is an important issue, given that countries with large numbers of hibakusha, such as Japan, Korea, DPRK, the United States, and China, will not be participating in the TPNW in the foreseeable future.

Hibakusha around the world are paying close attention to this meeting. I hope that the

discussion in this webinar has contributed in some way to the future efforts of those of you attending today. If you have any further questions or would like to share information about today's content, please do not hesitate to visit the IALANA or JALANA websites.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the speakers for this webinar and the audience for their participation. I would also like to thank the interpreters for their long hours of work.

Thank you all very much.