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Hiroshima Marks 80 Years Since Atomic Bombing with Renewed Call for Nuclear Disarmament

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Thousands gathered in Hiroshima on Wednesday to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombing that devastated the Japanese city during the final stages of the Second World War. At exactly 8:15 a.m. – the moment the bomb struck on 6 August 1945 – a solemn moment of silence was observed at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, where representatives from 120 countries and territories were in attendance.

The bombing, carried out by the United States using a uranium-based device nicknamed “Little Boy,” killed approximately 78,000 people instantly. The explosion unleashed

temperatures estimated at 4,000 degrees Celsius and spread deadly radiation, leading to tens of thousands of additional deaths by the end of that year. Hiroshima, a major supply base and military headquarters during the war, was selected in part due to its geography, with surrounding mountains expected to amplify the bomb's destructive force. Three days later, a second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, prompting Japan's formal surrender on 15 August 1945.

In a speech during the ceremony, Hiroshima's mayor, Kazumi Matsui, issued a stark warning to world leaders about the continued existence and proliferation of nuclear weapons. "Among the world's political leaders, there is a growing belief that possessing nuclear weapons is unavoidable in order to protect their own countries," he said, specifically pointing to the United States and Russia, which together hold roughly 90 percent of the world's nuclear arsenal. Matsui expressed concern that such thinking undermines decades of international efforts toward peace-building and disarmament. "To all the leaders around the world: Please visit Hiroshima and witness for yourselves the reality of the atomic bombing," he urged.

Attendees at the ceremony included representatives from nuclear powers such as the United States and Israel. Although Israel has never confirmed nor denied possessing nuclear weapons, its presence at the memorial was noted during the milestone event. The inclusion of a record number of international delegations underscored the global significance of the anniversary.

Tourists and residents alike reflected on the parallels between past and present. Yoshikazu Horie, a 71-year-old visitor to the memorial, voiced concerns about current global tensions. "It feels more and more like history is repeating itself. Terrible things are happening in Europe... Even in Japan, in Asia, it's going the same way, it's very scary," he said. "I've got grandchildren and I want peace so they can live their lives happily."

Survivors of the bombing, known as *hibakusha*, have historically faced social stigma and discrimination, with unfounded fears that they carried contagious illnesses or could pass on genetic damage to offspring. Their numbers have steadily declined, falling below 100,000 for the first time this year.

Japan, the only nation to have suffered a nuclear attack, continues to state its commitment to nuclear disarmament. However, it remains outside the United Nations treaty aimed at banning nuclear weapons, neither signing nor observing the agreement. The anniversary, marked by both remembrance and reflection, serves as a reminder of the

devastating consequences of nuclear warfare and the importance of preserving peace through measured global cooperation.