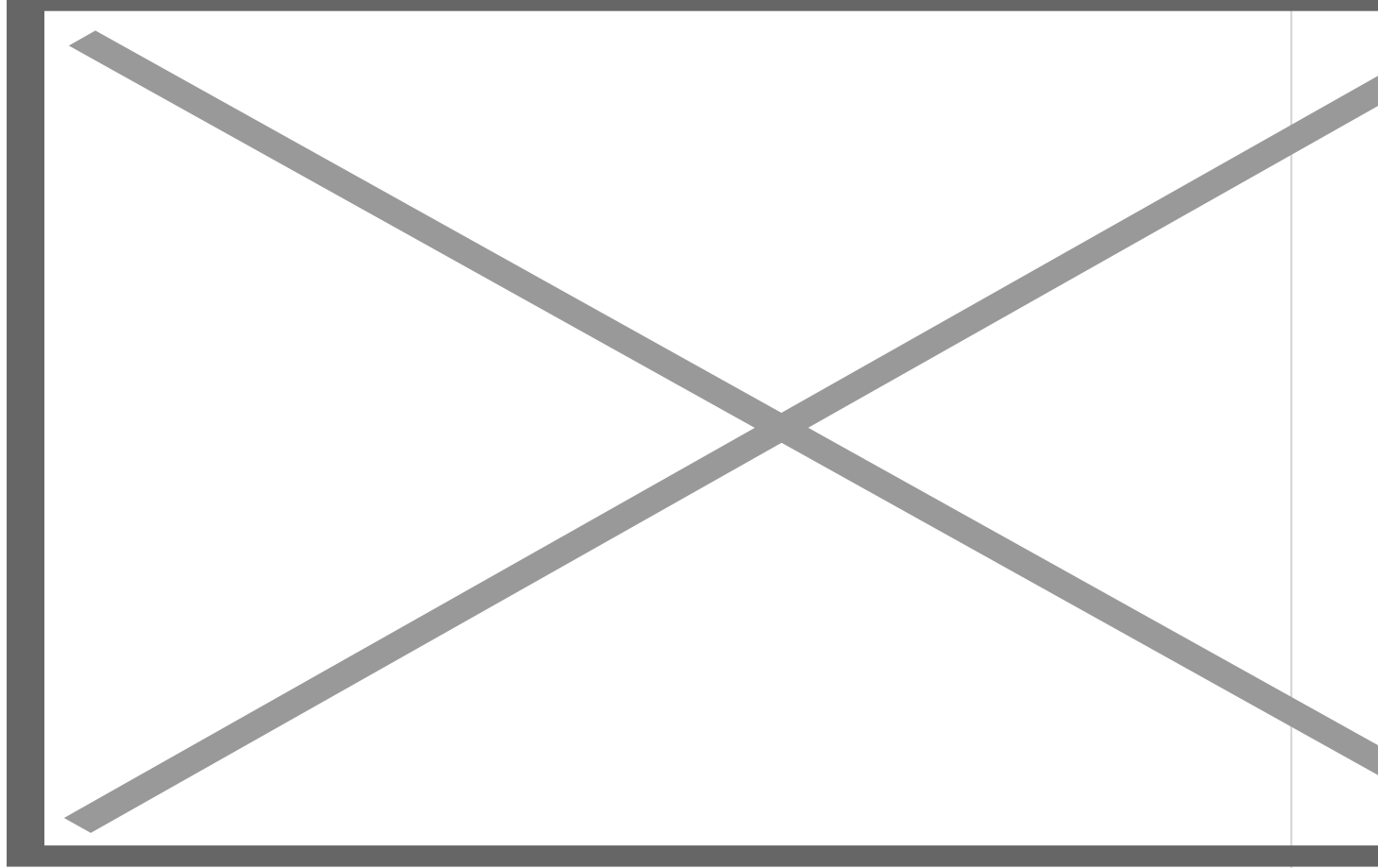


Hiroshima marks 77th anniversary of criminal U.S. atomic bombing

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Hiroshima marks 77th anniversary of U.S. atomic bombing as Guterres warns of growing nuclear threat

Tokyo, August 6 (RHC)-- The Japanese city of Hiroshima has marked the 77th anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombing during the World War 2. The ceremony began with a silent prayer at 8:15 a.m. on Saturday, at the exact time when the bomb was dropped.

Hibakusha, young peace activists, Japan's Prime Minister, local authorities, and UN chief António Guterres all attended the ceremony.

"Humanity is playing with a loaded gun," said Guterres, who became the first UN chief to attend since his predecessor Ban Ki Moon in 2010. Guterres warned of the growing threats in the Middle East, the crisis in Ukraine and the Korean peninsula while describing the horrors endured by the Japanese city.

"Tens of thousands of people were killed in this city in the blink of an eye. Women, children and men were incinerated in a hellish fire," said the UN chief, adding: "The world must never forget what happened here. The memory of those who died, and the legacy of those who survived will never be extinguished."

Survivors were "cursed with a radioactive legacy" of cancer and other health problems, he said, noting: "Three-quarters of a century later, we must ask what we've learned from the mushroom cloud that swelled above this city in 1945."

The mayor of Hiroshima, Kazumi Matsui urged nuclear powers of the world to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki to personally witness the consequences of nuclear weapons. "I want them to understand that the only sure way to protect the lives and property of their people is to eliminate nuclear weapons," he said.

The Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings that marked the end of the World War 2 after the surrender of Japan, killed approximately 220,000 people when the United States dropped the Little Boy and Fat Man at the respective cities, making U.S. the only country to use weapons of mass destruction during a war. At the present time around 13,000 weapons of mass destruction are possessed by countries all over the world.

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