



Paper crane project

Sending 1,000 paper cranes to every president and prime minister worldwide

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

ICAN youth campaigners from Hiroshima have launched a project to send 1,000 hand-folded paper cranes to the leaders of every UN member state – a total of more than 190,000 cranes. In return for this gift, they are seeking a message of support for a treaty banning nuclear weapons. They believe that more needs to be done to ensure that no other city ever experiences the horrors of nuclear weapons. Responses to their appeal will be published on the ICAN website.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

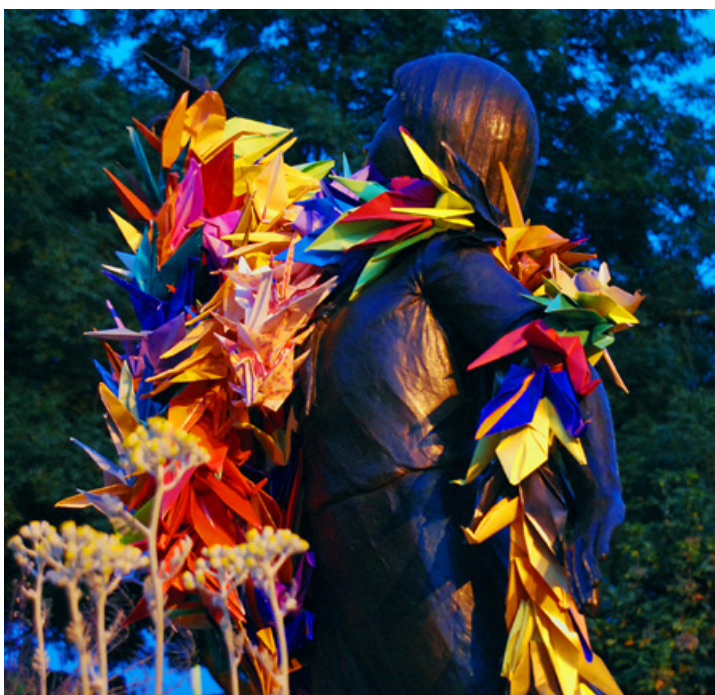
The youth campaigners are from various high schools in Hiroshima. Their efforts are being supported and funded by the ICAN office in Melbourne, Australia. People in more than 80 countries will assist with the delivery of the cranes to their president or prime minister. In some cases, they will meet directly with the leader and even deliver cranes of their own in addition to the cranes from Hiroshima.

WHY PAPER CRANES?

Paper cranes are a traditional Japanese symbol for good health. Since the US atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, they have also come to symbolize support for a nuclear-weapon-free world. The two bombings claimed more than 210,000 lives by the end of 1945. Many more have died from radiation-related illnesses in the decades since. We hope that this project will help to demonstrate the overwhelming support worldwide – from leaders and the public – for negotiations on a treaty to outlaw and eliminate all nuclear weapons.



Members of the ICAN Hiroshima Youth Committee at the launch of the project in Hiroshima on 21 August.



OUR LETTER TO WORLD LEADERS

6 August 2012

Your Excellency,

Sixty-seven years ago, a single nuclear bomb destroyed our city in a flash. Buildings were crushed. The whole city was reduced to ashes. Tens of thousands of innocent people were killed instantly. Many more died in the days, weeks, months and years that followed.

Today, people are still suffering from the physical and emotional scars. We hope you will visit Hiroshima as soon as possible to see with your own eyes the horror of nuclear weapons.

As youth from Hiroshima, we are deeply concerned that our future is still being threatened by close to 20,000 nuclear weapons. We are writing to you and other leaders to ask for help in eliminating this threat. We enclose a gift of 1,000 handfolded paper cranes – each one a prayer for a peaceful, nuclear-free world.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called on the family of nations to negotiate a nuclear weapons convention at the earliest possible date. Here in Hiroshima we are working to build support for his call. We humbly request that you send us a message of support for a global treaty to outlaw and eliminate nuclear weapons.

We plan to display your message, along with the messages that we receive from other presidents and prime ministers, in our city and online to inspire people everywhere to work for a global nuclear weapons ban.

We fear that unless governments and individuals do more to rid the world of these horrible weapons, another city might one day suffer the same fate as our own. As youth peace ambassadors, we feel we must do everything in our power to keep that from happening – which is why we are seeking your support.

Yours sincerely,

ICAN Hiroshima Youth Committee

CONTACT US

Please email hiroshima@icanw.org if you have any questions about this project.

We have also sent 1,000 paper cranes to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon informing him of our initiative.



SADAKO'S STORY

Sadako Sasaki was two years old at the time of the US atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Despite being just 1 kilometre from the centre of the blast, she survived the immediate effects. However, 10 years later purple spots started to form on her legs as a result of radiation sickness from the bombing.

She was diagnosed with leukaemia, a cancer of the blood. While in hospital, she learned that, according to Japanese legend, if she folded 1,000 paper cranes she would be granted a wish. She started out folding dozens of cranes each day.

When she ran out of paper, she used medicine wrappings and whatever else she could find. But then her condition worsened and she could only manage to fold one or two a day. Sadly, she died before reaching her target of 1,000 cranes. Her friends folded the remainder after her death.

Sadako now symbolizes the impact of nuclear weapons on children. A memorial has been built in Hiroshima to honour her and all other child victims of the nuclear bombings.