Opinion
Guest Voices
The city of Nagasaki, Japan, with buildings in ruins, four years after the U.S. detonated an ato

The city of Nagasaki, Japan, shows scant signs of recovery four years after the U.S. detonated an atomic bomb over the city Aug. 9, 1945. (OSV News/Milwaukee Journal Sentinel files, USA TODAY NETWORK via Reuters)



by John Dear

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This week, "The Nonviolent Jesus Podcast" welcomes Ivana Hughes, president of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, one of the leading advocates for nuclear disarmament. And on Oct. 30, President Donald Trump announced he wants to resume nuclear weapons testing, violating the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which has been ratified by 178 nations.

From 1951 until 1992, the U.S. exploded a nuclear weapon in Nevada on average every 18 days — 928 in total. But thanks in part to the Nevada Desert Experience, through which 25,000 activists have committed civil disobedience in the Nevada desert, the bombing stopped. Although the U.S. signed, but never ratified the treaty, it has abided by it since 1992.

Hughes is a senior lecturer in chemistry at Columbia University. She serves as a member of the Scientific Advisory Group for the United Nations to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, a committee of 15 experts from around the world

who advise the states on scientific issues related to the treaty.



Ivana Hughes is president of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation. (Courtesy of Nuclear Age Peace Foundation)

Hughes obtained her doctorate from Stanford University, where she was an American Heart Association Predoctoral Fellow. She has been a faculty member at Columbia University since 2008 and was awarded the Lenfest Distinguished Columbia Faculty Award for 2020. Her work on the radiological conditions in the Marshall Islands has been covered widely. Her writing has appeared in The Nation,

Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Scientific American, Truthout, Common Dreams and elsewhere.

"The threat of nuclear war is absolutely enormous," she said. "It could happen at any time. It could happen in a matter of minutes. We've been really lucky that nuclear war has not happened. There have been many, many close calls."

The United Nations' Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted on July 7, 2017, and entered into force on Jan. 22, 2021. As of today, 99 nation states, over half the U.N., have signed the treaty and called for nuclear disarmament.

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"This is a process that will continue however long it takes to eliminate nuclear weapons," Hughes said. "Of the three weapons of mass destruction, both chemical and biological weapons have been internationally outlawed. We're working to get nuclear weapons treated the same way."

"Until we stop investing in weapons and military warmaking," she continued, "we're not going to be able to address other challenges we have. Our elected representatives need to know that the general public cares about nuclear disarmament. So if you care, let them know."

Listen to the full episode here.

This story appears in the **The Nonviolent Jesus Podcast** feature series. View the full series.