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## Setsuko Thurlow and the *Hibakusha* of Hiroshima and Nagasaki Voted the "2015 Arms Control Person of the Year"

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(Washington, D.C.)—Setsuko Thurlow and the *Hibakusha* of Hiroshima and Nagasaki received the highest number of votes in an online poll to determine the 2015 Arms Control Person of the Year.

Setsuko Thurlow and the *Hibakusha* of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were nominated for their unyielding dedication to sharing first-hand accounts of the catastrophic and inhumane effects of nuclear weapons, which serves to reinforce the taboo against the further use of nuclear weapons and to maintain pressure for effective action to eliminate and outlaw nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons testing.

August 6 and 9, 2015 were the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As a young schoolgirl, Thurlow was close to the hypocenter of the atomic blast at Hiroshima. Miraculously, Thurlow was rescued and survived despite being “blinded by the flash, flattened by the hurricane-like blast, burned in the heat of 4000 degrees Celsius, and contaminated by the radiation of one atomic bomb,” she said in a 2015 opinion piece on [The Huffington Post](#).

By sharing their first-hand experiences of the atomic bombings, Thurlow, who now resides in Toronto, and many other atomic bombing survivors like her, have played a critical role in raising awareness of the human consequences of nuclear weapons use and prodding governmental leaders to take concrete action to end the nuclear threat.

“There were many deserving candidates for this year’s award, each of whom engaged in compelling and courageous work in 2015 that has helped make our world safer,” said Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association.

But, he added, “it is very fitting that 70 years after the atomic bombings of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, our online voters chose to honor those who experienced the horrors of nuclear weapons and who have worked so hard and so tirelessly to ensure nuclear weapons are never used again as the ‘2015 Arms Control Person of the Year.’”

“Setsuko and the diminishing number of surviving *Hibakusha* are an inspiration to those who seek a safer world and a reminder of why the pursuit of a world without nuclear weapons is so important,” Kimball said.

Nine other candidates were nominated by the staff of the Arms Control Association for their significant achievements and contributions to reducing the threats posed by the world's most dangerous weapons in the past year.

The runner-up in the vote for the 2015 Arms Control Person of the Year is the collective group of EU High Representative **Federica Mogherini**, U.S. Secretary of State **John Kerry**, and Iranian Foreign Minister **Javad Zarif** and the **members of the technical and political negotiating teams** of the European Union, China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. They were nominated for successfully negotiating the historic July 2015 [Joint Comprehensive Place of Action](#) that establishes a strong and effective formula for blocking all of the pathways by which Iran could acquire material for nuclear weapons and for promptly detecting and deterring possible efforts by Iran to covertly pursue nuclear weapons in the future, in exchange for the removal of nuclear-related sanctions against Iran.

Coming in at third place is the **Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Fact-Finding Mission in Syria**, which has established the critical facts regarding the ongoing use of chemical weapons by combatants in the conflict. These investigators put their lives at risk to ensure the international community

knows the truth behind the use of chemical weapons in the conflict zones of Syria and Iraq. The group issued three reports in 2014 that concluded with a high degree of confidence that chlorine had been used in attacks on three villages in northern Syria. In 2015 it continued to investigate [additional claims](#) that chemicals have been used as weapons by both the government of Syria and non-state actors.

The list of all 2015 nominees is available online [here](#).

The online poll was open between December 8, 2015 to January 5, 2016.

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Past winners of the "Arms Control Person of the Year" are: Austria's Director for Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament [Ambassador Alexander Kmentt \(2014\)](#); [Lassina Zerbo \(2013\)](#); [Gen. James Cartwright \(2012\)](#); reporter and activist [Kathi Lynn Austin \(2011\)](#); Kazakhstan's Deputy Foreign Minister [Kairat Umarov and Thomas D'Agostino](#), U.S. National Nuclear Security Administration Administrator ([2010](#)); [Senator Richard Lugar](#) (R-Ind.) ([2009](#)), Norway's Foreign Minister [Jonas Gahr Støre](#) and his ministry's Director-General for Security Policy and the High North Steffen Kongstad ([2008](#)); and U.S. [Reps. Peter Visclosky \(D-Ind.\) and David Hobson](#) (R-Ohio) ([2007](#)).

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