

## A MESSAGE OF PEACE AND SOLIDARITY FROM THE RUSSIAN COAST OF THE BALTIC SEA

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Dear participants of the conference!

Thanks, Gensuikyo for the excellent organization and the opportunity to discuss our plans for common future without nuclear threats!

I greet you from the Russian side of the Baltic Sea. It is 7,500 km from Hiroshima and 1,000 km from Kiev, Ukraine.

In Ukraine, according to many politicians with whom I agree, there is a confrontation between Russia and NATO. Therefore, this has global consequences, and not only for 41 million Ukrainians and 145 million Russians.

I have many friends in this wonderful country. My wife is 50% Ukrainian. My father was wounded in 1944 during the Second World War and was hospitalized in Ukraine. Ukraine has become my pain which I have been experiencing daily for the last 5 months. To me it looks as if my right hand is attacking my left hand and trying to break it. It's absurd and insane!

Now, after 77 years, the tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki could be repeated in Europe. It is difficult for us to imagine its consequences. Russian atomic scientists are proud to say that back in 1961 they tested a thermonuclear bomb with a yield of over 58 Megatons. This is 10 times the total yield of all the explosives used by all nations in World War II, including the atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Many countries today possess nuclear weapons capable of destroying human civilization many times over. And this scenario is more real than ever.

The geopolitical situation has changed radically since the invasion of Ukraine by Russian troops. In April, the Baltic Peace Movement, including our and about 10 Russian NGOs sent an appeal to the President, Parliament, and Government of Finland. We asked to organize an International Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2025 in the spirit of a similar Helsinki conference in 1975. We suggested too, that Finland should not join NATO until the results of such a conference are summed up in 2025. But our initiative was not heard.

Neutral Finland and Sweden, neighboring Russia, have decided to become members of NATO. This means that the whole Baltic Sea region has become a confrontation zone between NATO and Russia. About 100 million people live here in 11 countries.

So far, the military is only discussing what type of nuclear weapons and under what scenario could be used in the Baltic region. But in fact, on March 4 Russia already used a new type of nuclear weapon in Ukraine. For the first time in world history, the Zaporozhye nuclear power plant was seized with the support of heavy military equipment. Such actions are forbidden by the Geneva Convention and IAEA resolutions, but this is today's reality!

Zaporozhye NPP is the largest NPP in Europe with 6 reactors of total capacity of 6 GW. Dozens of tons of plutonium-239 is contained in spent nuclear fuel on the territory of this nuclear power plant. If extracted, it can be used to make several thousand bombs like those dropped on Nagasaki. But there is no need to retrieve this plutonium! Destroying such a nuclear power plant, even with a non-nuclear weapon, means detonating a dirty atomic bomb. Plutonium with a half-life of 24 thousand years and other long-lived radionuclides could contaminate many thousands square in Europe.

The Zaporozhye NPP is now run by Ukrainian specialists under the control of the Russian military. The International Atomic Energy Agency confirms that it is impossible to guarantee its safety under such conditions. Zaporozhye NPP has effectively become a Russian military base that cannot be attacked because of the dangers of its destruction.

What happened in Ukraine means that countries that have nuclear power plants on their territory can become nuclear victims in a military conflict with countries that do not have nuclear weapons.

The main conclusion from this story is that there is no distinction between so-called military and peaceful nuclear technologies. They are all dangerous.

So, I support the main message of the conference with a small but important addition: "*Together with Hibakusha, let's create a just and safe world free of nuclear weapons and nuclear power plants.*"

Unfortunately, in Russia right now, civil society cannot influence the military escalation.

In the first weeks of aggression in Ukraine more than 1 million 200 thousand citizens of Russia signed the petition "AGAINST WAR". Students, professors, and graduates of Russian universities spoke out against the war. In many major cities there were numerous protests in the streets. In the same time the Kurchatov Institute in Moscow, the developer of the first Soviet atomic bomb, supported the "special military operation in Ukraine" on March 4.

But within a few weeks the situation changed radically:

- All Russian independent media have been shut down.
- Total propaganda of the war is on state TV channels.
- New laws have been passed that prohibit public criticism of the war (including by MPs); violators must pay hefty fines or/and go to prison.
- There is no independent judiciary; the courts are politically biased.
- The judgments of the European Court of Human Rights are not implemented; the President of Russia has signed a decree to this effect.
- Facebook and some other social networks are blocked.
- Men aged 20-60 are in my city invited to sign a contract to take part in a so-called "*special military operation*" in Ukraine; the monthly fee is 300,000 yen or 2,200 US dollars. This is three times the salary of schoolteachers.
- representatives of non-governmental organizations cooperating with partners from other countries are given the status of "foreign agent" and they are deprived of some of the civil rights provided for in the Russian Constitution.

Dear conference participants!

To fight effectively, peace activists should unite with Hibakusha, as well as with environmental, human rights, climate change, and other organizations. We have a common goal - to preserve our living planet!

To fight more effectively, it is advisable for the Peace Movement to unite with Hibakusha, as well as with environmental, human rights, climate, and other NGOs. We have a common goal - to preserve our living planet!

And last, but not least: at present politicians in Russia and Western countries are forming an image of an enemy in the countries of their political opponents. They see in it an opportunity to consolidate the society inside the country. But can we in Japan, Ukraine, Russia, and other countries be enemies? We are neighbors on our common planet Earth.

Let us hold hands and act together for the health of our living planet!