

Nagasaki Day Rally – August 9

Corazon Fabros

Nuclear-Free Philippines Coalition

Minasan, Ohayo gozaimasu!

I would like to express my deepest respect, appreciation and gratitude on behalf of the peace and justice movement in the Philippines as well as from the International Peace Bureau for your unwavering commitment to the cause of peace, nuclear disarmament and nuclear abolition and express our continuing solidarity and support.

These are challenging and difficult times here in Japan, in the Philippines and practically in the world over. In the midst of the pandemic, we saw the rise of repressive and authoritarian regimes here in Asia and the Pacific. In the Philippines, one of the leading lights of the peace and justice movement Dr. WALDEN BELLO, was arrested on cases of cyber libel for his vocal critique against the current Vice President and daughter of the former president. The strengthening of the neo-liberal policies has made peoples' lives more difficult and oftentimes unbearable, as these policies prioritize military spending rather than peoples' human needs: food, health, education, shelter, social services... This year alone Global Military spending has reached 2.3 trillion US dollars (it is extremely difficult to express that in Japanese yen). I only know that, that tremendous amount of money could feed the hungry, heal the sick, shelter the homeless, send many children to school so that the world becomes a better place to live in. In the midst of the pandemic, we condemn the military expansion in Asia Pacific, the increasing military exercises and war games risking people's lives and environment and the ever-increasing abuse and rape of women that can only come from a situation of military activities and war. We express our deep concern for this skewed sense of government priorities and express a strong challenge to keep their promises to serve the people and take the path of diplomatic, peaceful and just solution as a way forward in resolving conflict.

Despite the difficult times, we are able to gather in person and online today! I am grateful to have this opportunity to express my thoughts as we bring to a close the 2022 World Conference Against Atomic & Hydrogen Bombs – the sole conference that focuses on the important work towards the abolition of nuclear weapons and war every year, without any let up. To be part of this conference for more than 30 years has been truly a wellspring of knowledge, strength, inspiration and hope for me. I TRULY HOPE, YOU ALL FEEL THE SAME. And I hope that we will never give up, that we continue to challenge ourselves to do more, to live productive and meaningful lives for the abolition of nuclear weapons and war, not only for ourselves but for the future generation who will continue the work, that we have inherited from those who came before us, as a fitting response to the continuing call of every Hibakusha "Never Again Hiroshima! Never Again Nagasaki! No More War!

Let us continue to strive for unity, cooperation and solidarity across sectors, issues and interests. Ultimately, we only have ourselves to sustain us in our struggle. Our victory depends on our power as a people's movement. Let us create that critical mass that is a crucial component of an effective and powerful campaign. To the younger generation who I see in bigger numbers this year, the future of the peace movement beckons your commitment and dedication. And to my sisters whose heartwarming leadership have been profoundly felt, through the quality of your presence in greater numbers and passion to fight the continuing discrimination, misogyny and marginalization, I salute you! No women, No Peace!

I cannot end this message without expressing a call for continuing solidarity with the peoples of Okinawa, especially during this period, as they face a very important election. I pray that VOTE FOR PEACE will prevail and the power of the people will fire up their decades of resistance against the onslaught of military activities that is known all over. Let us continue to be inspired by the Okinawan spirit of NUCHI DU TAKARA (Life is precious). Let us support the continuing resistance of the Okinawan people and take to heart their struggle as our own.

BEGUN KITCHI IRANAI!

THE ONLY WAY TO WIN IS TO NEVER GIVE UP!

WE SHALL OVERCOME!