

**Hiroshima on the 5th of August, in the Forum II:
Towards a world without war and nuclear weapons - International solidarity
among parliamentarians and citizens**

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Dear friends, dear citizens of Hiroshima, dear colleagues,

Let me start with a little story I'd like to share. The city I come from is Berlin. I was born in East Berlin. In the street I live there grow Japanese cherry trees. A lot of them. These trees lead the way to a little park. In that park there is a little wooden hut, decorated with Japanese ornaments. Beneath the roof of this hut there hangs a huge bell. And it is called peace bell.

This peace bell has been a present of the Japanese state to the former GDR. Each year - since I was a child - people gather in the park, surrounding the little hut, and on the 6th and 9th of August the bell rings and people commemorate the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

I have been there many times myself.

So being here in Hiroshima today is truly a deep honor. In this very city that marks one of the darkest chapters in human history. We gather to remember the unspeakable suffering of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to honor the lives lost, and to say clearly: **Never again.**

But commemoration is not just about memory. It is also about responsibility.

The Global Order at a Crossroads

Right now we are living through a time of profound international instability. The erosion of **international law**, once a foundation of our global order, is accelerating. Conflicts over markets, resources, and geopolitical dominance are intensifying from Ukraine to the Middle East, from Kashmir to the South China Sea.

Great power rivalries are reemerging: with the **decline of US hegemony**, the rise of China, and the ambitions of powers like Russia; which all contribute to renewed tension and militarization.

Meanwhile, NATO is investing massively into new weaponry and technology, and Japan is breaking with decades of pacifist policies.

Jean Jaures, the famous French socialist has said: capitalism carries war within itself like a cloud carries rain. And that metaphoric description is still right: Profit-driven militarism is fueling the arms race. And in this race, it's the arms manufacturers who win while people, democracy, and peace lose.

Once a symbol of post-war pacifism, Japan is now undergoing its largest military buildup in decades.

And the national security strategy adopted in 2022 breaks with the Japanese self-defence only principle.

In Europe, we are seeing the same logic at play. NATO's 5% spending target, calls for nuclear armament, and the European Defence Union, all this is being framed as "security".

Meeting with Mark Rutte, where he was reporting back from the latest NATO summit. My question: Who is going to pay? Up to you politicians...

Let's be clear: The EU is determined to make its entrance at the world theatre stage and to "return to power politics."

While at the same time Hospitals go underfunded. Schools crumble. Social programs are cut.

A new wave of austerity policies will follow military spending. Austerity hollows our society from within and feeds the far right.

Militarism and authoritarianism go hand in hand.

And my country Germany, is contributing to it. Germany continues to host US nuclear weapons. It refuses to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, citing its commitment to NATO's so-called "nuclear deterrence."

But this is not what the German people want. You have to know, that two out of three Germans want Germany to join the treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons. More than 80% want US nuclear weapons removed from German soil. Yet the government continues to ignore the will of its people.

My party, Die Linke, is proud to be the only **peace** party in the German and the European parliament standing up against this.

Profiting off war

Humanity – again – is at a crossroads. Let us not pretend this development is accidental. War is good business.

Under its new defense strategy, Japan is set to become the **third largest military spender in the world**, after the United States and China.

In Europe, defense spending is increasing higher than ever.

War is huge business for the arms industry and corporate interests. (We see that every day in war torn Ukraine).

What Must Be Done

We need a different path. We are aiming at **a Europe without weapons of mass destruction**.

We must reject the logic of bloc confrontation between the US, China, and Russia. Instead, we need a revival of a commitment to disarmament and a foreign policy rooted in diplomacy, not domination.

Security, sovereignty and freedom need long-term guarantees that only a world peace order based on international law can provide.

Civil Society

As internationalists, we reject imperialism: whether it comes in Western or Eastern form.

Citizens must come first. We want to build a society that values justice, healthcare, education. A society that is investing in peace, not war.

We strive for solidarity that puts people before profits and that stands up for a different world.

We fight for a world where security and social justice go hand in hand.

Memory as Responsibility

MOMAT/ Hiroshima peace panels, Iri and Toshi Maruki,

As emblematic as Guernica. Even though these pictures depict the most brutal horrors of war, they carry the message of peace.

Dear friends, those who survived the concentration camps in Europe (like my grandfather), and all those who suffered terribly from WW2 in Europe are now only

few in number. Their motto “never again. No more fascism, no more war” is not a relic of old times. It is an obligation for socialists in Europe nowadays.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki are not only tragedies of the past. They are warnings to the present and the future.

The hibakusha—those who survived the bombings—are now also few in number. We cannot let their warning die with them.

As long as people continue to walk down the street in Berlin with the cherry trees and gather to commemorate the victims of the atomic bombing here in Hiroshima.

It is **our responsibility** to continue to walk the political way

- To build a world without nuclear weapons.
- To end the arms race.
- To stand together, across borders, for diplomacy, nonviolence and peace.

I look forward to learning from all of you today and finding ways we can come together and build bridges across cultures and nations. Thank you for inviting me here.