

MESSAGE for August 6, 2023 – Hiroshima Day Rally
2023 World Conference Against A & H Bombs
Corazon Fabros

Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak at this gathering today and with deep appreciation and gratitude for more than 3 decades of engagement, friendship and solidarity with the Japan peace and justice movements, that Nihon Gensuikyo has nurtured in me and for many peace activists and movements throughout Asia and the Pacific and the world. Warm greetings!

We live in dangerous times. The covid pandemic has made our lives worse and oftentimes unbearable. But we continue to gather not only because there is so much work and challenges that we face but because we know that it is always the important thing to do in moments of crises, and the continuing wars of aggression in our region and in many parts of the world. This gathering that we do every year provides the opportunity for us to collectively take stock of the lessons we learn from the past; to understand the current situation we are in so that we can muster the courage to move forward in the right direction.

The Hibakushas, the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, who we honor as our inspiring compass in holding the World Conference every year, continues to inspire us with their determination to ensure that Hiroshima and Nagasaki will not ever happen again. I am also happy that more and more young peace movement leaders are taking on more active roles in organizing and making our gatherings possible. The energies, enthusiasm, skills and commitment that they bring are vital in our continuing work for now and in the future.

The Asia and the Pacific has been for a long time a Theater of War, and sadly, continues to be so, where communities suffer the impacts of colonialism, militarism, patriarchy and the rise of fascist and authoritarian regimes. These issues converge in ways that should strengthen our unity, work towards inclusivity, respect and solidarity, providing us with the capacity to care for each other especially for those who suffer persecution and human rights violations because of the work that they do in the midst of the continuing militarization that are happening not only in Ukraine, as we witness the increasing militarization in the Pacific islands including the Philippines, and here in Japan especially Okinawa. Yet, we also bear witness to the increasing and continuing courageous struggles in these places that bear witness to the reality that organizing peoples

movements in the frontline of our struggles, to create a critical mass, is key to a resistance that gives hope for a victory to carry us forward.

In the Philippines, we face a resurgence of a government accommodation of U.S. expanded EDCA (Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement) putting back on track and highlighting “the significance of the bilateral defense relations between the Philippines and the US in light of new and emerging challenges that confront our Nation.”

China’s rise as economic and military power, its aggressive military actions in the West Philippine Sea is an urgent concern in Southeast Asia and the rest of Asia and the Pacific. This situation challenges the unity and cooperation among the ASEAN that brings to the fore the need for the serious implementation of the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty.

For us in the Philippines, we will hold on to our determination and aspiration expressed in our Constitution (the reason for the Philippines ratification of the TPNW): THE PHILIPPINES, CONSISTENT WITH THE NATIONAL INTEREST, ADOPTS AND PURSUES A POLICY OF FREEDOM FROM NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN ITS TERRITORY” And with the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone Treaty (1995) and the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by the United Nations.

(To close, allow me to lift lessons from struggles in the Philippines:

1. SOLID ORGANIZING at the national level and local communities.
2. Involve ALL SECTORS for a broad, popular struggle.
3. Wage a CULTURAL STRUGGLE to SIMPLIFY and popularize our message;
4. Initiate LEGAL PROCEEDINGS in courts as well as initiate/lobby for LEGISLATIVE efforts to institutionalize victories. People Power!
5. Initiate campaigns locally and internationally against the financing and support of harmful nuclear energy technologies, and weapons of war.
6. Activate world-wide networks for INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY;
7. Creatively expose and critique the continuing rise of military spending and the weaponization of our laws, education, governance and social structures;
8. POPULARIZE development alternatives that respect and uphold life, dignity and human rights.)

Finally, on behalf of the Nuclear Free Philippines as well as the International Peace Bureau and the Asia Europe Peoples Forum, I express our commitment to support the campaigns for the implementation of the TPNW; the reduction of military spending; the opposition to foreign military bases, the Korea Peace Appeal Signature campaign and peace in the Korean Peninsula and the important work of formulating a common security policy that involves social movements and governments, across sectors and regions.

No more Hibakusha! No to nuclear weapons! No to War! And yes to justice, to a life sustaining climate and to people's health and human rights!

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And International Peace Bureau

Note; Highlighted – NOT TO BE READ