

OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT PUTIN AND THE PEOPLE OF RUSSIA:

## We want Russia to be great again

*The Hiroshima/Nagasaki bombings were illegal – not a precedent for launching a nuclear attack.  
The existence of Russia is not under threat - but will be if Russia starts a nuclear war.*

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Dear President Putin and the people of Russia,

We oppose Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, violations of international humanitarian law in the war, threats to use nuclear weapons and annexation of parts of Ukraine.

However, we warmly greet Russian citizens as friends. We do not support any threats to the nation, territorial integrity or culture of Russia. We are confident that our governments also have no intentions to undermine, occupy or destroy Russian territory, people, culture or social well-being, but wants to see Russia become again a respected, important and highly valued member of the international community.

Russia has a unique spiritual and civilisational heritage of which it is justly proud.

However, we are extremely concerned about Russian threats to use nuclear weapons. There is no justification for Russia, or any nation, to threaten a nuclear war or escalate to a nuclear war.

The USA nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki did not provide a precedent for the use of nuclear weapons – and especially not for the first use in any conflict. The nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were affirmed as illegal by the Tokyo District Court in 1963 (Shimoda Case).

In addition, the threat or use of nuclear weapons was affirmed as generally illegal by the International Court of Justice in 1996, with the only possibly exception being a case of *self defence when the very survival of a state is at stake*. The very survival of Russia is **not** threatened in this war. It would only be threatened if Russia launched a nuclear war and then might face nuclear retaliation for such an unwarranted, illegal and suicidal act.

If anything, the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki demonstrated the inhumanity of the use of nuclear weapons and helped establish the principle that '*a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.*'

This principle was reaffirmed in the Russia/USA Summit in Geneva in June 2021 and by the five nuclear-weapon states party to the NPT in January 2022. **It remains true.**

We recall the message from former Mayor of Hiroshima Tadatoshi Akiba in March this year, endorsed by over 100,000 people, urging Russian and other world leaders ‘*to immediately declare the disuse of nuclear weapons in this conflict!*’

Mayor Akiba reminded us all that the use of nuclear weapons in this, or any other, conflict “*would mean that billions of people would have to continuously witness the living hell that was experienced by the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki 77 years ago.*”

Mayor Akiba asked: “*If you [President Putin] have any imagination left, think about what the world will look like, what people will witness, and how people will be narrating the historical tragedy out of such action...*”

Dear Mr President and people of Russia,

Russia has been a great and respected nation in the past. We want to join again in celebrating an end to the war in Ukraine and a renewed relationship of peace and friendship with Russia. This will not happen, indeed our countries and civilization itself might not remain, if Russia launches a nuclear war.

Thank you

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