

## Peace conference: message from Yurii Sheliashenko, Ukrainian Pacifist Movement (26 mei 2022)

Dear friends, thank you for giving peace a chance at this conference. Peace and solidarity in Europe and worldwide is a powerful dream, but it was turned into a wild delusion of crushing common enemy at any cost which already faces nightmarish risks of protracted bloodshed, food shortages, hyperinflation, economic and ecological crisis, and unthinkable but still seriously planned nuclear war. I think people gathered here understand that peace and solidarity means a need for immediate ceasefire and comprehensive peace talks to find common ground between Ukraine and Russia, between East and West. We are all living on the same planet, and therefore we must find a common ground. But some people are apparently living on a different planet, where deadly weapons and refusal to negotiate somehow brings peace, while distrust and hatred somehow creates solidarity.

Differences between these planets are differences between the progressive culture of peace and nonviolence and archaic culture of war and violence. On the planet of peace the people are talking, on the planet of war the crowds are fighting. But I assure you it is the same planet, the war is just a dark side of it, along with propaganda of war with its unrealistic images of existential enemies and heroic killers defending their country. On the dark side there are a lot of efforts to turn all people into armies through propaganda of war in media and education, military recruiting and mobilization campaigns, corruption and pressure multiplying hawks and harassing doves.



We need to develop the bright side of our planet, strengthen the peace movement to turn belligerent crowds into peace-loving people. We need to build a nonviolent society without enemies and without borders dividing people, a society based on conscientious objection to military service, on refusal to kill or commit any other crime, on restorative justice, universal skills of soft-power self-organization and conflict management. We need peace science and education to learn effective practical methods of nonviolent life. We need media peace and cyber-peace to maintain nonviolent discourse, to shed light into violent darkness on all sides instead of dragging humankind into one-sided darkness. We need a peace economy to invest in peacebuilding instead of self-destruction. Military patriotic upbringing and conscription is common evil of Russia and Ukraine which escalated the conflict and led to the war, and it should be condemned and prohibited by international law as well as such immoral practices as repressions against peace movement in Russia and total military mobilization of population in Ukraine with no respect to sanctity of conscience, personal choices to avoid direct or indirect

participation in war. We should challenge the stereotype of military victory insisting on historical truth that all efforts to conquer absolute power were failed painfully no matter how self-righteous conquerors were, that nobody can win everything even under pretext of good cause, that all power should be reasonable and fairly shared and, therefore, we can't and don't need to win, we can and need to win-win. I wish all Europe will speak in one voice that war is a problem, not a solution. Let's refuse to kill and build peace on Earth together.

Wish you peace and happiness.

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