

# Nobel Peace Prize 2024 sadly tarnished by a regrettable slip-up

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<https://cclj.be/le-prix-nobel-de-la-paix-2024-helas-terni-par-un-triste-derapage/>

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For 25 years I have been fighting against the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the world.

I am therefore delighted that the Nobel Committee has awarded the 2024 Nobel Peace Prize to the Japanese organization Nihon Hidankyo “for its efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, and for demonstrating through personal testimony that nuclear weapons must never be used again”. This grassroots movement brings together survivors of the nuclear bombs dropped by the USA on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

On hearing the news, Mr. Toshiyuki Mimaki, co-chairman of Nihon Hidankyo, stated:

“It has been said that, thanks to nuclear weapons, peace will be maintained throughout the world. But nuclear weapons can be used by terrorists. And, for example, if Russia uses them against Ukraine, and Israel against Gaza, it won't end there”.

On X (formerly Twitter) he added: “In Gaza, bloodied children are being held. It's like Japan 80 years ago.”

By making such remarks, Mr. Toshiyuki Mimaki is discrediting his organization: to equate Vladimir Putin's threats to use nuclear weapons in his war against Ukraine with what is happening in the Middle East makes no sense whatsoever. Comparing the ordeal suffered by innocent civilians in Gaza with that suffered by the populations of Hiroshima and Nagazaki as a result of the two nuclear bombs dropped by the Americans in 1945 is absurd.

Let's recall a few facts.

On several occasions, and again recently, Moscow has used the nuclear threat to dissuade the West from providing military aid to Ukraine, which is desperately trying to repel the Russian invasion. At the same time, on September 25, Vladimir Putin changed Russia's doctrine on the use of nuclear weapons, stating that he could use them in particular in the event of a "massive launch" of air attacks against his country.

On the other hand, it's true that in early November 2023, shortly after the appalling massacre perpetrated by Hamas against Israeli civilians on October 7, an ultra-nationalist Israeli minister suggested that using the nuclear bomb against the Gaza Strip in the ongoing war against Hamas was "an option". Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office reacted swiftly, issuing a communiqué denouncing the statements as "out of touch with reality". Mr. Netanyahu also suspended the minister's participation in government meetings "until further notice". In response to the outcry, the Minister posted a message on X (formerly Twitter) stating that his "statement about atomic weapons is metaphorical".

As is well known, Israel has long practiced a policy of ambiguity with regard to its nuclear arsenal, whereby the country neither denies nor confirms possession of nuclear weapons. For decades, Israel has maintained that it will not be "the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East".

It is therefore shocking that Mr. Toshiyuki Mimaki's first reaction to the announcement of the Nobel Prize was to compare the situation in Gaza with that in "Japan eighty years ago", rather than worrying about Russian threats, North Korea's nuclear weapons development and Iran's nuclear program.

With regard to the latter, it is worth recalling that since the Islamic revolution of 1979, Iran no longer recognizes the existence of the State of Israel (referred to as the "Zionist Entity") and calls for its destruction. As long ago as December 14, 2001, at the University of Teheran, former president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani threatened Israel with nuclear annihilation and declared: "The use of a single nuclear bomb in Israel will destroy everything". Since then, Iran has become a nuclear threshold state capable of producing such a bomb in the near future.

Preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons around the world is a vital issue of our time. This is the sixth time that the Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to a

person or institution fighting for this goal<sup>1</sup>. Unfortunately, this goal seems further away than ever.

The priority today is to increase the investigative powers of International Atomic Energy Agency's inspectors and strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and not, as Mr. Toshiyuki Mimaki has done, to indulge in dubious and inappropriate comparisons.

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<sup>1</sup> - Linus Pauling, in 1962, for his campaign against nuclear weapons testing.  
- The International Association of Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War in 1985.  
- Józef Rotblat and the Pugwash movement in 1995 for their efforts to reduce the role played by nuclear weapons in international politics and, in the longer term, to eliminate them.  
- IAEA and ElBaradei in 2005 for their efforts to ban the use of nuclear energy for military purposes and to ensure that nuclear energy is used for peaceful purposes in the safest possible way.  
- ICAN International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons for its work in drawing attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of atomic weapons, and its groundbreaking efforts to achieve a treaty ban on such weapons.