

When I was in 5th grade, war began in my mother's home country, Ukraine. Every day, I saw the news: buildings destroyed, children crying, families running. Two of my uncles became soldiers. My mother was always worried and afraid. Even though we were in Japan, our hearts were in Ukraine.

On December 25th, 2023, something terrible happened. We got a phone call. My mother's brother had died in the war. I cried all night. I couldn't sleep. I couldn't smile. But then I went to my mother and held her hand. We cried together. We talked. That moment changed me. I realized that war doesn't just hurt people on the battlefield. It hurts families. It breaks hearts.

War is more than fighting. It destroys homes, dreams, and love. It takes away peace, which is a human right.

Goal 16 of the SDGs says we must build peaceful societies and protect all people. But every day, in Ukraine, Gaza, and other places, peace is still broken. Many children have lost their lives. Many mothers cry, like mine did.

When I was in first grade of junior high, I spoke about my uncle in front of my class. I was afraid. I thought people might not understand.

But they did. They listened. Some cried. And I felt stronger. I felt hope.

More than 60% of the students at my school have roots in other countries. We come from many places. We speak different languages. We have different traditions. But we are all classmates, and we share the same classroom. That day, I realized we are more alike than different. We all feel pain. We all hope for peace. And we all want to be accepted.

Mother Teresa once said, "If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other." We do belong to each other. Even if we come from different countries, we can feel each other's pain. And we can share each other's dreams.

Maybe you think war is far from your life. But peace begins with you.

It begins with your heart, your thoughts, your kindness. When you learn about other countries, you grow your understanding. When you talk to people with different stories, you grow your heart. When you care about others, you help peace grow. You can make the world better. You can choose peace in your words, in your actions, in your dreams. Someday, you might meet someone like me. Someone who lost family in war.

If you listen with care, if you say, "I'm here for you," you give hope. I still cry sometimes. But I also hope. Someday, I want to walk in the sunflower fields of Ukraine. I want to hug my family and say, "We are together again." And I want you to believe this too: Peace is not a dream.

Peace is possible. If we believe it—together

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I Want Peace to Come to Ukraine