



To: Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan

### **Protest against the State Secret Bill forced through**

YWCA of Japan strongly protests against the Japan's State Secret Law that threatens three principles of the Japanese "Peace" Constitution. Despite thousands of strong opposing voices from local and global communities, the ruling coalition forced through the bill in both the House of Representatives and the House of Councilors without enough discussion.

The areas of "secret" are still vague in the Law. Government's unfavorable information such as regarding nuclear power plants including Fukushima and regarding over a hundred of US-Japan military bases and facilities across Japan may be kept complete secret although these are the kind of things that severely affect citizens' daily life and future. With this law, citizens' right to information and freedom of press will be restricted further despite the fact that these rights are guaranteed by the Japanese Peace Constitution. Furthermore, privacy of public servants as well as all citizens will be violated by the State's application of so called "qualification evaluation system" to whoever "may be handling specified secrets". Because the "specified secrets" themselves are concealed, it could be up to the State to decide the target person to watch for.

Towards the State Secret Bill, you must have received the great majority of opposing voices through the Public Comment and Public Hearings, and from various quarters including mass media and entertainment, lawyers, scholars, and NGOs. Even the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights urged you to listen to the concerns from home and abroad. However, total of only 68 hours were spent on the discussion of the bill at the two Houses and then it was forced through. Your action of making light of the public consensus and steamrolling the bill are complete denial of democracy.

The State Secrecy Law reminds us of the notorious pre-World War II Maintenance of Public Order Law. It kills our accessibility to fair information, covers our eyes and fills our ears and disables us to make a right decision for every action in our daily life. We shall never forget about the past where our freedom of speech and thoughts were strictly controlled and then the state went straight ahead to the militarism under the pre-WW II law.

The YWCA of Japan founded over 100 years ago went through the War in its history. Ever since the end of the World War II, we have been working thoroughly to realize the world where human rights are guaranteed. Our pledge is based upon our regret that our service to society was strictly prohibited under the military regime during the War.

Again, we strongly protest against the State Secret Law that has opened the door for Japan to become a nation who can conduct war again. The use of force is prohibited by the Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, the supreme law, that we urge the Japanese government to immediately repeal the Law.

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Naoko Matano, President, Mikako Nishihara, General Secretary, YWCA of Japan