



Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister,
Mr. Gen Nakayama, Minister of Defense,

Statement of Protest against Security Bills: Protect Article 9!

The YWCA of Japan demands the withdrawal of the Security Bills and expresses strong protest against the current administration's attempts to establish these laws.

The YWCA of Japan bears in mind the regret from the time of World War II, as it could not stop the war and was eventually pushed to cooperate with the Government in carrying out war. After the World War II, it has made a new start, returning to its Christian basis and pledging to work for peace so that there would never again be a war.

The previous Civil Code under the previous "Constitution of the Empire of Japan" used to limit the human rights of women; when the current Constitution of Japan was established in 1947, it liberated the women who had been oppressed under the family system. At the time, we believed that the most important thing was for women to raise their voices and take action toward "A peaceful world without war".

On 1951, the YWCA of Japan, together with many women including Raicho Hiratsuka, a famous pioneer of Japanese feminism, published the "Statement of Requests by the Women of Japan, an Unarmed Country, regarding the Peace Process". The then President of the YWCA of Japan has stated in a newsletter article that "We are determined to protect the 'Non-Military' and 'Non-belligerent' policy stated in the Japanese Constitution".

The YWCA of Japan has always supported the current Japanese Constitution which is based upon constitutionalism, which values the dignity of individuals and prevents abuses of state power; the YWCA of Japan has continued its activities placing special pride upon the spirit of the Article 9 which denounces all military forces and war, in the belief that this spirit is the path to true international peace. In 2009, the YWCA of Japan issued "The Apology for the Asia-Pacific War, and the Resolution for Commitment to World Peace", and reaffirmed its commitment to promote nonviolent peacebuilding work in collaboration with the YWCAs around the world, especially YWCAs of the Asia Pacific region.

However, the current Japanese Administration has drifted away from the spirit of the Article 9, ignored the principle of constitutionalism and went forward with a cabinet decision to change the interpretation of the Japanese Constitution so as to allow Japan to exercise collective self-defense on 1st July 2014, and on 14th May 2015, forced through a cabinet decision to submit Security Bills to the Diet. These bills are currently being discussed at the Diet- If they are passed, this country which has placed its basis on the principle of eternal peace would totally change shape. All the proposed changes, including the revision of "Self-Defense Forces Act" and an establishment of an "international peace support bill", lead towards the exercise of arms outside of Japan, which is forbidden by the Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution.

On 30th April, 2015, Prime Minister Abe promised at the U.S. Congress to establish these laws by summer, before the bills were even submitted to the Japanese Diet. This is a stark disrespect towards the Diet. Also, the attempt to hastily force through the bills without listening to the People's voices when the majority of the Japanese people oppose changing the Article 9, is a profound deviation from the principle of democracy, and is fundamentally against the idea of constitutionalism.

The YWCA of Japan, which has sincerely walked the path of nonviolence and peace in collaboration with YWCAs around the world, strongly protests against the set of actions by Abe Administration that violate the Japanese Constitution, and demands the withdrawal of the Security Bills.

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