



YWCA Festa in Okinawa Appeal

This year is the 70th anniversary since Japan lost the 2nd World War. 70 years ago, Okinawa was used as a scapegoat to protect the mainland Japan, and as a result, one out of four residents of Okinawa were killed in the ground battle. After the war, Okinawa was given away to the U.S. by the Japanese Government, in exchange to Japan's "independence", and the land of the people of Okinawa were forcibly taken from them using bayonets and bulldozers. It was only after 27 years that Okinawa was returned to Japan. However, the wishes of the Okinawan people to come under the peaceful Constitution of Japan were not fulfilled; The U.S. bases remained in the same places where they were imposed on Okinawa, and even now, 74% of U.S. bases in Japan locate in Okinawa, which consists of only 0.6% of the Japanese land.

Beginning with the Nago Mayoral election in January 2014, the Okinawan people have repeatedly expressed "NO" to the construction of the new military base, through all the recent elections, namely the Nago City Assembly election, the Okinawan Governor election, the Okinawan Prefectural Assembly election and its by-election, Naha City Mayoral election, and the latest National Lower-House election in December 2014. Despite this, the National Government is ignoring democracy and forcing through the construction of the new base. Violence and repression against protesting citizens by the Japan Coast Guard, the police and the riot police is continuing.

The YWCA of Japan's statement "Protest Against the Forcible Coastal Reclamation for a New Military Base in Henoko" received voices of sympathy and support from YWCAs around the world. Military bases destroy safety and security of women and children. The fact is clear from testimonies of women in Okinawa, as well as throughout the world, and is proven by history.

At this time, we once again learn from Okinawa in many ways: the super-partisan "All Okinawa" movement, the attitude of the people who never give in or give up, and the non-violent action. We resolve to stay connected with Okinawa, in each of our own places and areas.

We will commit in advocating the Japanese Government to listen to the voice of Okinawa, so that the burden on Okinawa will be eased, and the decision of the Okinawan people will be realized. We stand against the construction of the new military base in Henoko bay and the construction of the helipad in Takae, and call for the cancellation of the deployment of the fighter vessel "Osprey" and the closing of the Futenma Airbase. We will work together until the day when every military base is abolished.

16th February 2015

Participants of YWCA Festa in Okinawa