



Statement on the planned construction of a new military base in Henoko, Okinawa

We, the YWCA of Japan (Young Women's Christian Association of Japan), are an international NGO where, upon a Christian foundation, women from around the world exceed the barriers of language and cultures and work together to encourage women's participation in society and to realize a peaceful world where human rights, health and environment is protected. The movement began in Great Britain in 1855, and nowadays, 25million women are working in more than 120 countries throughout the world.

As a national body aligning with the World YWCA movement, we held the annual Central Committee meeting online on 23rd-24th May 2020, and discussed and determined the direction of the national movement. We take this occasion where representatives from throughout the country come together, to once again bring our thoughts to the situation surrounding military cases in Okinawa, and release the below statement.

On 26th March 2020, "Bankoku Shinryo Kaigi", an expert meeting on the U.S. Military Base issue established by the Okinawa Prefecture, handed its set of recommendations regarding the consolidation and reduction of U.S. military bases in Okinawa to the prefectural Governor Denny Tamaki. In these recommendations, the meeting clearly states that the relocation of the Futenma Airbase to Henoko, Nago city, is difficult to be completed due to technical and financial issues as soft ground is found in the sea area planned for landfill. While this has been pointed out before, this formal recommendation by the expert meeting, headed by Kyoji Yanagisawa, former Assistant Chief Cabinet Secretary (in charge of security and risk management) with background as a defense bureaucrat, needs to be taken seriously. As the recommendations state: "The Japanese Government should once again recognize that the original purpose is the prompt elimination of the risk from Futenma Air Base and its termination, rather than the construction of a new military base, and swiftly create concrete strategies to enable this purpose", the Government should stop insisting on the relocation to Henoko which is now impossible, and devise a solution by going back to the original goal of eliminating the risk of Futenma Airbase which is known to be "the most dangerous base in the world". Further refusal to think, by insisting that "Henoko is the only solution", is unacceptable.

Every time we see the media coverage of plans being cancelled due to "difficulty in gaining local approval" such as the planned U.S. base relocation to Kemacho, Kagoshima Prefecture, and the deployment of Aegis Ashore in the Self Defense Force exercise area in Akita Prefecture, we are saddened and outraged by the double standard and discriminatory nature of this country, which continues to ignore the will of the Okinawan people. The popular will of the people of Okinawa against the

new base in Henoko is clearly shown, election after election including two gubernatorial elections. Moreover, in February 2019, more than 70% of the voters said “No” to the construction of a new base in Henoko, in a prefectural referendum focused on the Henoko issue. As a democratic state, the Government’s folly of ignoring a clear popular will and insisting on a plan which has already realistically failed, cannot be overseen. We take the words of Governor Denny Tamaki at the 1st anniversary of the referendum seriously, in which he said: “Our democracy itself is at stake”. We are committed to further elevating our movement, in order to inspire a nation-wide discussion, as well as delivering our message globally by utilizing the YWCA network.

24th May, 2020

Central Committee Participants, YWCA of Japan