

**Joint Oral Statement of the 37th Session of the UN Human Rights Council**

**Item 6 - UPR Outcomes - Japan**

**16 March 2018**

**Delivered by: Budi Tjahjono**

Thank you, Mr. President.

All Okinawa Council for Human Rights, Franciscans International and International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism take note of the Government of Japan's response to the UPR recommendation regarding the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights for the people of Ryukyu/Okinawa. Also, we deeply regret the denial by the Government of Japan of the people of Ryukyu/Okinawa as indigenous people and the rejection of recommendations on the adoption of a comprehensive anti-discrimination law.

Okinawa hosts more than 70% of the U.S military facilities in Japan, and the people of Ryukyu/Okinawa have been suffering from serious human rights violations caused by the existing U.S military bases. A string of incidents involving the U.S. military highlight that the right to life, as well as the right to physical and mental health of the residents, have been severely infringed.

The UN Human Rights Committee and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) have also expressed concerns regarding the situation of the people of Ryukyu/Okinawa and made recommendations to the Government of Japan. However, the Government of Japan has failed to take any effective measures to implement these recommendations. On the contrary, they have been pushing for the construction of a new U.S military base, without prior consultations with the people of Ryukyu/Okinawa. We are deeply concerned that the construction of a new U.S. base is causing even further severe human rights violations.

We express our concern about the Government's statement to reduce the policy budget for Ryukyu/Okinawa's development if there is continued opposition to the U.S. military base construction.<sup>1</sup> This clearly violates the people of Ryukyu/Okinawa's economic, social and cultural rights. In fact, the Government budget plan for Fiscal Year 2017 had a substantial reduction of approximately 180 million US dollars (20 billion yen), about 6% compared to the initial budget for Fiscal Year 2016.

Therefore, we urge the Government of Japan to do the following:

1. To ensure and take concrete steps towards the full enjoyment of the economic, social and cultural rights of the Ryukyuan/Okinawan based on the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).
2. To adopt anti-discrimination law and legislation which prohibits discrimination based on ethnic identity, including the people of Ryukyu/Okinawa.

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> Statement made by Mr Yosuke Tsuruho, former Minister of State for Okinawa and Northern Territories Affairs, said that progression in the construction work of a U.S. marine base at Henoko will be influencing the amount of the Okinawa development budget. "Development measures and base issues in Okinawa are certainly linked together," Minister Tsuruho said on August 4, 2016, in his first news conference as the Minister.