

## A Government Agency Tolerates Sexual Harassment in the Workplace in Violation of the Human Rights and Labor Rights of Workers

Ms. A has worked for 9 years at a government agency as a non-regular counseling staff. (A non-regular worker is someone who is not working full-time or under an indefinite-term contract.) She was working on a 1-year contract, which had been renewed 8 times. Her employer refused to renew her contract in March 2011, and she lost her job. She is currently thinking of bringing her case against the government to court.

The cause of her non-renewal of contract was an incident of sexual harassment in her workplace. The offender was her direct superior, and the victim was her colleague, also a non-regular worker. Ms. A was subject to many forms of harassment from the management of the agency, for bringing the sexual harassment to the attention of the person responsible in the workplace, as well as for supporting the victim.

Ms. A found that it was frightening to think that even though the 1-year contract had been renewed numerous times to the extent that the employment was continuous, the employers would feel free to dismiss anyone who they did not like.

She is an unmarried single parent, and is raising a son, who is currently in the first grade of the senior high school. Since she faced increasing costs for raising her son, including education costs, she attended school after work and on weekends since 3 years ago, to improve her skills in supporting employment. She has also acquired qualifications. Nevertheless, her pay was not raised, and a year later, she lost her job. She now faces poverty, despite all the efforts she has made.

The non-renewal of the contract is the ultimate disadvantage for the single parent. The deprivation of the right to work causes great damage, which in the end will affect her son. He has been ill in hospital in summer 2011, and still needs medication.

The counseling work she has been doing requires accumulation of experience, as well as networking. She has also been doing other work, such as organizing seminars for people looking for work, as well as for the staff. In Japan, there are many people in specialized and expert positions, working as non-regular employees, who are being used and thrown away at the employers' whims, like disposable workers. This is wrong.