



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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REFERENCE:GH/SP

9 March 2012

Excellency,

I write to inform you that in the course of its 80th session, the Committee considered, on a preliminary basis, under its early warning and urgent action procedure, information submitted by non-governmental organisations on projects concerning the construction of new U.S military bases in Okinawa.

The Committee is particularly concerned about the proposed constructions of a military base on the Henoko/Oura Bay despite the reported massive public protest and condemnation by the Ryukyans/Okinawa, an ethnic group, and other Japanese residents of Okinawa claiming that such construction would seriously affect the environment of the area and their condition of life. The Committee is also concerned at the proposed construction of six U.S helipads in Takae, which is constantly opposed by the residents of Takae and other municipal assemblies in Okinawa, due to the inevitable environmental hazards to the Yambaru forest, one of the richest areas of biodiversity in Japan located by the Takae area. The Committee is further concerned that no discernable action has been taken to engage with the people of Okinawa in the development of the mentioned projects.

The Committee draws the attention of the State party to its previous concluding observations (CERD/C/JAP/CO/3-6, para. 21) in which it raised concern over the persistent discrimination suffered by the people of Okinawa. In the same observations, the Committee reiterated the analysis of the Special Rapporteur (E/CN.4/2006/16/Add.2) on contemporary forms of racism that the disproportionate concentration of military bases on Okinawa has a negative impact on residents' enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.

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The Committee requests the State party to provide information on the actual situation concerning the two projects and the measures taken to protect the rights of the ethnic communities living in the area.

In accordance with Article 9(1) of the Convention and article 65 of its Rules of Procedure, the Committee would be grateful to urgently receive information on the issues and concerns as outlined above before **31 July 2012**.

Allow me, Excellency, to reiterate the wish of the Committee to continue to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Government of Japan, with a view to promote the effective implementation of the Convention.

Yours sincerely,

Alexei Avtonomov
Chairperson of the Committee
on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination