

THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

Japan must act upon UPR to combat racial discrimination

PRESS RELEASE

16 November, 2017

The Government of Japan must bring the recommendations from the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) to effective action against racial discrimination. The International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR) urges the Government of Japan to fully cooperate with rights-holders and take swift measures to implement UPR recommendations to protect indigenous peoples, minorities and other vulnerable population from racial discrimination.

Since the establishment of the UN Human Rights Council in 2006, this year Japan has entered the 3 cycle of the UPR to review its progress in implementing the previous UPR recommendations. On the 14th of November, the Government of Japan presented its report before other UN Member States to introduce measures taken based upon the previous recommendations. 106 countries took the floor to put forward a comment and/ or recommendation to the Government.

IMADR welcomes over ten recommendations on the adoption of a comprehensive anti-discrimination law issued from the Governments of Australia, Botswana, Germany, Honduras, Ireland and others. We endorse the specific recommendation from Austria, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Portugal and the State of Palestine on ensuring the right to education for all children without discrimination. Yet we are deeply concerned by the Government's negative response that rejected the allegation of discrimination against ethnic Korean children in their access to the "Tuition Waiver and Tuition Support Program for High School Education". It needs to be pointed out that the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and other human rights treaty bodies also expressed concerns on the abovementioned issues and made recommendations to the Government of Japan. We ask the Government to draw specific attention to the Kazakhstan's recommendation to recognize the CERD's competence to receive individual communications from victims of racial discrimination.

The Government of Japan has declared to uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights by voluntarily putting itself forward to be a Member State of the UN Human Rights Council. The Government must demonstrate this commitment by taking concrete and effective actions based on the UPR recommendations to promote the country's human rights standards. However, we regret that the Government failed to sufficiently implement the UPR recommendations from the previous two cycles. The Government's lack of will to cooperate with civil society, in particular indigenous, minority and other discriminated communities, is a long-standing concern in implementing recommendations from the UN human rights mechanisms.

In order to fully comply with its human rights obligations, IMADR urges the Government of Japan to accept and implement the recommendations on concrete measures against racial discrimination including: adoption of anti-discrimination law; establishment of an independent national human rights institution; strengthening efforts against hate speech; non-discriminatory application of the “Tuition Waiver and Tuition Support Program for High School Education”; effective measures on violence against foreign, minority and indigenous women; ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; and prevention of human rights violations in the “Technical Intern Training Program”. IMADR requests the Government to ensure a meaningful cooperation with civil society, especially those affected by racial discrimination, for implementation of the abovementioned recommendations.