

Hate Speech in Japan

In Japan, minority communities have been the target of “hate speech” by the extreme right-wing group “Zaitoku-kai.” a civil organization advocating to disallow privileges being granted to Korean residents in Japan. It has also been a serious problem for many years that prominent politicians continue making remarks or statements that may impair the dignity or deny the human rights of minority communities, especially Koreans, Chinese and migrants. There is no legal means available to directly ban the announcement or dissemination of racially motivated statements or speeches in Japan. In response to such serious, racially motivated attacks, victims have successfully taken matters to civil court for defamation, or penal court for charges of damage to property.

IMADR Japan Committee and the Japan NGO Network for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination jointly held rallies in Tokyo and Osaka in late November 2012 to raise awareness of and strongly protest the grave problem of hate speech. Those involved in hate speech cases, such as victims and lawyers, were invited to report on their experiences, and human rights researchers were invited to present their analyses of the issue. Rally participants also shared their opinions. Based on these interactions and discussions, an appeal entitled “Standing up against Hate Speech in Japan – Statement and Recommendations” was drafted and approved, then sent to the relevant institutions.

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