

Declaration for the Future

The use of force by major powers in defiance of international law threatens the right of people around the world to live in peace. In Japan, xenophobic sentiment is becoming apparent in various areas of society, and baseless discourses targeting ethnic Koreans, immigrants and refugees is fuelling xenophobia.

We have long fought against discrimination based on ethnicity, nationality or social origin. We have urged the government to implement the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and today, we are here together with two experts from the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the representative of Korean NGOs to discuss about our struggle and strategies to eliminate racial discrimination.

States have a duty to establish a national human rights institution, to enact a comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation, and to adopt the individual complaint mechanism, with a view to realising a society where human rights of all people are respected, protected and promoted. However, in Japan, none of these essential components are not in place. With the inadequate legal framework to prevent discrimination and exclusion by public authorities, as well as violence and exclusion in the private sector, minorities find themselves in a situation where their human rights are not being protected.

Exclusion of Korean high schools from the “high school tuition free” program has been exercised since 2010. For political and diplomatic reasons, the Government of Japan has for many years continued to deny the right to education of the children of ethnic Koreans—now in their fourth and fifth generations.

In Okinawa, there is a constant stream of gender-based sexual violence committed by US military personnel stationed there. The system for the Japanese police to detain US military personnel who have committed crimes is also inadequate. While the PFAS was found in tap water in the central part of Okinawa Island with the indication that it was from nearby US military facilities, no investigation has been carried out.

Under the repeated amendments to the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act — not on the ground of the international human rights standards—the forced repatriation of refugees and irregular migrants, has accelerated, and a system for revoking permanent residency status is scheduled to be implemented in April 2027. Furthermore, ‘issues of foreigners’ are being discussed in the public sphere as if they were long-standing social problems; this is influencing local government policies, with measures such as the reward for reporting of irregular migrants or the idea of reinstatement of ‘nationality clause’ as a condition for civil service employment. Hate speech and hate crimes have expanded its target to Kurds, Muslims, people of African descent and irregular migrants in general, putting minority children at risk.

Although the ‘right not to be discriminated against’ was upheld by the Supreme Court in the ‘National Buraku Survey Reprint’ case, there is still no law prohibiting Buraku discrimination. Despite the state recognition of the Ainu as Japan’s indigenous peoples under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, narratives claiming that ‘there is no Ainu any more’ continue to be disseminated both

online and offline. These are just a small fraction of the issues we can never condone.

Racial discrimination against Buraku, the Ainu, people of Ryukyu and Okinawa, ethnic Koreans, immigrants, and refugees goes against to the international community's values of dignity and equality. To build a society where no one is denied to exist, we strongly urge the Japanese government to enact a comprehensive anti-discrimination law based on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, to establish a national human rights institution and to adopt the individual complaint system.

17th March 2026

All participants in the 'Multifaceted Approach to the Elimination of Racial Discrimination'