



## Nuclear -Free, Peaceful and Just World Is Possible Women's Grassroots Actions and Solidarity Make a Difference

### Disaster Measures First, Not Casino Abe Government Should Resign Now

Record-breaking torrential rain that hit the western part of Japan early July devastated the region, claiming more than 200 lives and leaving tens of people missing in 14 prefectures. Many people in the region, especially those who barely survived and remain in evacuation shelters, face difficulties and uncertain future. New Japan Women's Association (Shinfujin) members all over Japan, including those living in the disaster-hit areas, are doing their best to render assistance to the survivors.

While people in the disaster-stricken areas were desperately calling for help and assistance, Prime Minister Abe Shinzo and his ruling coalition devoted themselves to, of all things, enacting a bill authorizing the opening of casino resorts and to revising the Public Offices Election Law to add six seats to the House of Councilors to "bail out" incumbent lawmakers of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party who cannot run from their rural constituencies in the next upper house election due to the electoral reform to fix the vote-value disparity.

None of the Cabinet members including Prime Minister took political responsibility for the falsification, cover-up and fabrication of official documents regarding the cronyism scandals involving school operators Moritomo Gakuen and Kaken Educational Institution linked to Prime Minister. They even suppressed the truth about the sexual harassment by a finance official. The Abe Cabinet refused to summon neither Kake's director Kake Kotaro nor Prime Minister's wife, Abe Akie. Moreover, they forcibly extended the latest regular Diet session to railroad a series of controversial legislation through the Diet, such as a package of bills for "work style reform", which will only to increase deaths from overwork by deregulation

of work hours, as well as a bill to approve the ratification of a new pact for the Trans-Pacific Partnership known as TPP-11 without the United States, which will destroy Japan's agriculture.

In "Disaster Archipelago" Japan, what is needed most for people's security is not military buildup but enhanced assistance for disaster survivors, and urgent measures to address the challenge of climate change, earthquake, and volcanic eruptions.

Despite all the scandals and his unpopular policies, Prime Minister Abe has shown no sign of stepping down, because of his obsession to have the Diet initiate constitutional amendment targeting at war-renouncing Article 9, and also to win a third-term as the Liberal Democratic Party's head in September. PM Abe and LDP lawmakers were under fire for attending a drinking party amidst torrential rains that eventually caused widespread death and destruction in the west, and it is said that the party was for PM Abe to secure support for his re-election. "This is how Japan, the country that devastated you, is shaped" – these are the words of the mother who lost her beloved daughter to exhaustion from excessive overwork. Let us share her anger and grievance to hold the Diet, political parties and lawmakers that steamrolled the package for "work-style reforms" accountable.



Shinfujin national office staff members collecting donations for disaster survivors in the western part of Japan July 11, 2018

## Historic Chance for Achieving Peace in Northeast Asia

The Abe administration and the media have made negative comments on the summit meeting between the United States and Democratic People's Republic of Korea, misinterpreting the epoch-making significance of this event that marked beginning of a process towards peace, defusing a hair-trigger situation with the risks of nuclear war higher than ever.

Following last year's adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the South-North Korea Summit in late April and the first-ever US-North Korea summit in June have offered hope for a nuclear-free, peaceful world and Northeast Asia. We heartily welcome these developments. The leaders of the two countries agreed to work together, and they have continued dialogues and diplomacy. The international community is called for to cooperate in promoting the progress of the agreement despite difficulties. US President Donald Trump announced the cancelation of joint US-ROK military exercises set for August, and even referred to the withdrawal of US troops from ROK.

If things proceed toward the end of the Korean War and the normalization of US-DPRK relations, the situation concerning peace in the Korean Peninsula, Northeast Asia and the world over will be changed dramatically, marking a major turning point in history.

It is time for Japan to stop preparations for war and shift to preparations for peace, making the best use of Article 9.

The Abe government has deliberately inflamed "threat from North Korea" to use it as an excuse to railroad the national security legislation/war laws, to push ahead with the construction of a new base offshore Henoko in Okinawa as well as deployment of Osprey aircraft and Aegis Ashore missile defense system, to boost



As scorching summer temperatures pose threat to life with dozens of people have died from heat illness, Shinfujin petitioned the Education Ministry to increase subsidies to enable schools to install air-conditioners in classrooms. Only 40% of elementary, junior high and special support schools are air-conditioned, and children's lives are at stake. Vice Minister Niwa Hideki met with them (on the extreme right)

military spending to a record level, and to adversely revise Article 9. All these attempts that have escalated tensions are now groundless. Obviously, PM Abe's exclusive reliance on military options has failed.

Also, the rationale for US military presence in Japan and the Japan-US Security Treaty should now be called into question. The Korean War was unleashed by US-Soviet confrontation that divided the country into two after the end of Japan's colonial rule. The Japan-US Security Treaty was concluded amid the war. The negative view of the Japanese government and the media toward the US-DPRK agreement is not unrelated to a notion that "Japan-US Military Alliance is always a top priority", which is deeply rooted in their mindset, and it is time to do away with it.

Furthermore, DPRK is the only country Japan has not apologized or compensated for the damage caused by Japan's colonial rule. The two countries still have no diplomatic relations. The abduction of Japanese citizens can find a solution only through bilateral dialogues to deal comprehensively with various issues including the development of nuclear weapons and missiles as well as the settlement of historical issues. This kind of efforts will lead to the normalization of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The decisive force that worked behind the current move proceeding in the Korean Peninsula is people's power that brought down the corrupt government to replace it with a new one. Likewise, people's movement in nuclear-weapons states and their allies, especially Japan as the only country that suffered the atomic bombing during the war is the key to early entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons with 50 states becoming parties to the treaty. As of today, among the 59 states that signed the treaty, 13 have ratified it.

The New Japan Women's Association has "five objectives" as founding principle, and most of them are related to peace with one of them upholding "Japan's independence and democracy". We are aware of the important role we can play as a women's organization committed to abrogating the Japan-US Security Treaty, a root cause of Japan's political subordination to the US unparalleled in the world that brings all the sufferings to the nation.

## Women's Power to Lead Public Opinion

Women's voice has led the public opinion in Japan, protesting PM Abe's runaway policies and denouncing the sexual harassment by the former finance official. LDP leaders and lawmakers have repeatedly made remarks that lack awareness of and sensitivity to human rights, such as "women should have at least three children," "raising infants and toddlers is a job for mothers", and "being better off without having children is a selfish idea". A female nationalist lawmaker close to PM Abe is now under fire for calling LGBT couples "unproductive" and so potentially unworthy of investment from the taxpayer. Women beyond political affiliation are staging protests against LDP nationwide, including in front of the party's local offices.

While the "#MeToo" movement spread out globally and the international community takes a step forward to conclude a convention to ban sexual harassment, the New Japan Women's Association organized an urgent symposium to explore ways to eliminate harassment, its members are visiting convenience stores in their respective communities to ask for not selling porn magazines. We are working to create social consensus from the bottom on defending women's rights.

In Japan, women, citizens and opposition parties are uniting around the shared goal of changing the government. Backed up by the citizens' voices, opposition parties jointly submitted bills on various issues including on enhanced child and nursing care services, on withdrawal from nuclear power generation, and on revising the civil code to enable the married couple to have different family names. The House of Councilors' election scheduled for



5000 people gathered in front of the LDP Head Office in Tokyo protesting LDP lawmaker Sugita Mio for her remarks discriminating sexual minorities July 27, 2018

next summer will be a great opportunity to replace the anti-people Abe government with a new one that stand for people's demands. Empowered women are the key players to pave a way toward a hopeful future.

## Two Peace Signatures Can Make a Difference

Together with all citizens and groups working to realize a nuclear-free, peaceful, just and sustainable society at home and globally, the New Japan Women's Association continue collecting signatures in support of two peace petitions: No Article 9 Revision under PM Abe which aims to collect 30 million signatures, and the Hibakusha Appeal for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. We have gathered more than 930,000 signatures of a total of over 1.5 million for the Article 9 petition, and more than 950,000 for the Hibakusha International Appeal. Signature campaigns provide us with great opportunities to reach out and have conversations with people in communities, who have the power to make a difference.

The New Japan Women's Association (NJWA or Shinfujin) was founded on October 19, 1962. About 133,000 members are organized in some 9,000 groups in workplaces and communities all over the country. Shinfujin has a head office that unites chapters working in all the 47 prefectures and branches in 900 municipalities.

Under the five objectives, Shinfujin works to realize all kinds of women's demands concerning such issues as women's rights, equality with men, better working and living conditions, measures to support child-care, education, environmental protection, peace and abolition of nuclear weapons. The five objectives are:

- Protect the lives of women and children from the danger of nuclear war
- Oppose the adverse revision of the Constitution and the resurgence of militarism
- Work together for better living conditions, extended women's rights and children's well-being
- Win genuine national independence, democracy and emancipation of women
- Join hands with women around the world for building lasting peace



Shinfujin is opened to all women who agree with the above five objectives, irrespective of their thought, creed or political background. It publishes a weekly paper "Shinfujin Shimbun" with 220,000 readers, and a monthly magazine "Josei & Undo" ("Women & The Movement").

Shinfujin is a member of the Japan Federation of Women's Organizations (Fudanren) and the International Women's Year Liaison Group (comprising 35 major Japanese women's organizations.) It holds special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

## Celebrating the First Anniversary of the Adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, Shinfujin Members Organized Peace Wave 2018 throughout Japan

Signature drives to gather support for the Hibakusha Appeal for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons with a call for the Japanese Government to Sign and Become Party to the Treaty, A-Bomb Photo Exhibitions, Peace Parade...



**Tokyo** Branch members took actions in communities. In Shinjuku, 120 joined the Hibakusha collecting 330 signatures



**Saitama** Fukaya Branch members dressed in summer kimono



**Chiba** Nagareyama Branch put up A-bomb photos and collected signatures



**Oita** After walking in the Peace March, members appealed to the public in front of the railway station



**Nagasaki** Led by the Hibakusha, members walked in the city to the Peace Park



**Yamagata** Yonezawa Branch members collected holding Shinfujin banner calling for Japan's Becoming Party to the Treaty



**Nara** Younger members gathered to commemorate the 1st anniversary of the treaty's adoption



**Shimane** Matsue Branch held the A-bomb photo Exhibition, children also came to sign the petition