

## **Statement to the 70th Commission on the Status of Women**

**October 10, 2025**

**New Japan Women's Association (NJWA)**

The New Japan Women's Association (NJWA) was founded in 1962 and works nationwide with the goals of abolishing nuclear weapons, advancing gender equality, promoting the rights of women and children, and building solidarity with women around the world for peace.

### **Resisting Xenophobia, Misogyny, and Backlash**

Thirty years after the Fourth World Conference on Women and forty years from its ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Japan still lags far behind international standards on women's human rights and gender equality. Women in this country are now faced with the spread of xenophobia and misogyny, along with a new surge in backlash.

Women perceive that bad politics lies at the root of the difficulties and hardships they are enduring. Declaring that "the personal is the political," they are raising their voices for livelihoods, for peace, and for gender equality, to drive political change. Particularly, in the movement demanding a system to allow married couples to choose separate surnames, women saw an opportunity in October 2024, when the ruling party, which had opposed such system, lost its majority in the general election. They expanded their coalition and intensified lobbying efforts on Diet members, creating a situation where the bill was debated in the Diet for the first time in 28 years.

The movement came under fire from the right-wing groups who seek to revive reactionary, patriarchal family values, saying that "families will be destroyed" and "children will suffer." During the July 2025 House of Councillors election, the leader of a political party who is a member of the Diet, stated in public that the cause of the declining birthrate lies in women's advancement into society. He said, "Promoting gender equality was a mistake," and "Having children is a contribution to the State," emphasizing women's role in childbirth. He and like-minded people blamed foreigners for rising crime and stagnant wages, fueling discrimination, division, and xenophobia through falsehoods and hate speech. These far-right candidates, both women and men, gained support from those dissatisfied with the current politics and obtained seats in the Diet. As a result, women's percentage in the Lower House increased from 25.5% to 29.4%, but the rise of female lawmakers who deny gender equality and sexual diversity cannot be seen as progress.

The rise of the far-right, which champions xenophobia, stems from the expansion of non-regular employment, economic hardship, and a sense of stagnation with no clear future in

sight. At a time when it is urgent to change neoliberal policies that have prioritized corporate profits, widening inequality and poverty, as well as patriarchal systems and laws that perpetuate discrimination, these forces diverted people's attention from critical issues like soaring rice prices, inflation, and massive military expansion that destroys livelihoods, to broaden popular support. These far-right forces who advocate for Japan's military buildup and even nuclear weapons possession, reject the dignity of the individual and fundamental human rights guaranteed by the Constitution, as well as sexual diversity. Xenophobia will incite hostility toward other nations, which could lead to war. During the election, women across the nation raised their voices in protest, declaring, "We won't tolerate discrimination and division," "I decide how I live," and "Let us create a society that excludes no one." Their actions and calls spread a wave of solidarity. Now, women continue to act together to change the very nature of society itself.

### **For the Future of Humanity and the Earth—A World Without Nuclear Weapons and War**

Eighty years from the end of the Second World War, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the founding of the United Nations, the world stands at a critical crossroads between war and peace. Violations of the Charter of the United Nations, international law, and international humanitarian law continue unabated. As moves to counter with force are intensifying, and global military spending has reached record highs, weighing on the budgets for livelihoods and social security in every country. Against this backdrop, threats to use nuclear weapons have been made, attacks on nuclear facilities have been carried out, and the moves to reinforce nuclear deterrence are on the rise. As the women's organization from the only nation to have suffered atomic bombings in war, we cannot accept these acts for any reason whatsoever. The accelerating climate change and nuclear weapons are existential threats to humanity and the planet. We call on Japan and all nations to join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, to redirect funds from military spending to climate crisis measures, and to unite efforts to achieve the SDGs. Above all, we urge that every possible effort be made to immediately stop the genocide in Gaza.

The New Japan Women's Association upholds, as the starting point of the post-war era, the Charter of the United Nations, which proclaims "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war," and the Constitution of Japan, which vowed never again to wage war based on the remorse over the war of aggression the country waged and its colonial rule in Asian neighbors. We express our resolve to act in defense of life and the Earth, and to build a peaceful, just, and sustainable society.