

Truth behind the Human Rights Situation in Japan, Worst Human Rights Abuser

Indictment by the Institute of International Studies of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

The wounds, which militarist Japan inflicted on the peoples of Korea and several other countries by committing hideous inhuman crimes against them in the last century, have not been healed, and the mankind ardently wish to see such unhappy history not repeat itself any longer.

However, until today, which has witnessed changes of centuries and generations, Japan has not yet made an open-hearted self-examination of and sincere apology for those crimes; instead, it still distorts the history, negating or justifying its crimes.

It is an intolerable mockery and challenge to international justice and human conscience that Japan, which tries in every way possible to evade redressing its past, styles itself an "advanced nation in human rights" though it is beset with serious human rights issues concerning evils and immorality and goes to the lengths of picking a quarrel with the human rights performance in other countries in collaboration with the UN Human Rights Council.

The Institute of International Studies of the DPRK has probed to the bottom the desperate human rights situation in Japan, a "democratic state ruled by law," and expose to the world that, in view of the principles and standards of international law, Japan is the worst human rights abuser as it is devoid of even an iota of justification and qualifications to talk about human rights.

1. Basic Human Rights of the People Trampled Underfoot under the Authorities' Misrule

To ensure that the people enjoy a free and equal political life and a rich and diversified material and cultural life is an obligation of each state and a universal principle observed in guaranteeing basic human rights in the world.

However, Japan is mercilessly trampling underfoot the rights of the working masses under the signboard of "material prosperity" and "rule of law."

This evil rule against the people finds its most vivid expression in the realm of guaranteeing their political freedom and rights.

Paragraph 3, Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates, "The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in...genuine elections."

Party politics in Japan is infested with group fighting, grouping and regrouping and corruption, which set aside the people's will and rights and aim at seizing power, and all political parties, in and out of power, are dyed with Rightist, conservative ideas, extremely restricting the elementary political freedom of the people.

During the general elections in 2014, the turnout of voters was only 52% and an opinion poll found that more than 40% of the voters supported no political party. The people's

nonconfidence in politics, the highest in the world, is a testimony to the political system of Japan, where privileged circles cut a wide swathe.

It is inconceivable that the people's will is reflected in politics under such social system, and an election is, from the outset, a medium for political fraud to deceive the people.

Extreme is the violation of freedom of speech and expression.

Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provides for the freedom of thought and conscience and its Article 19 freedom of expression.

After its defeat in World War II, Japan revived the former notorious ideological police (special secret-service police) and renamed it security police and reorganized the Special Investigation Department in the days of U.S. military occupation into the Public Security Investigation Agency, empowering these law-enforcement organs to oversee the people's ideas. The laws on civil servants, protection of defence secrets, broadcasting, wiretapping and protection of specified secrets and other laws and regulations that run counter to Japan's Constitution restrict and violate the freedom of speech and expression.

What arouses serious concern is that Japan's mass media have been reduced to a tool of politics that manipulates public sentiments through invention of information and dissemination of misinformation in favor of the ruling circles. To take into consideration the fact that in the past Tojo and Hitler deceived their peoples and led them along fascist lines by abusing mass media, this situation is not oriented simply to the struggle for or maintenance of power, but is pregnant with the danger of bringing catastrophe to humanity.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1966 defines the people's rights to employment, enjoyment of just and favorable conditions of work and equal remuneration for the work of equal value without distinction of any kind.

But in Japan which pursues labor policies that give precedence to the interests of conglomerates, violations of the human rights, unique to the Japanese society, such as overworking death, power harassment, wage gap and unemployment, are rampant and the people's right to survival is being threatened constantly.

A 24-year-old girl recruit of the Tentsu Advertising Company, unable to bear the long working hours, committed suicide in December 2015 after leaving a note which reads, "My body and soul are torn to pieces." This reveals the true nature of Japan's labor system, in which one "cannot but work until breathing the last."

As the laws on labor standards, labor safety and hygiene, minimum wage, dispatch of workers and other labor-related laws and regulations are centered on conglomerates, 38% of the entire working population are part-time workers and Internet cafes are turned into shelters for the destitute people.

A handful of wealthy people, numbering 40, possess assets valued at 15.4 trillion yen, whereas the "working poor" living on the earnings under the poverty line number 17 million, the number of poor households reached 1.46 million in 2012, and the differential in the yearly income between the employers and employees was 100 times at the maximum and 44 times

on average in the fiscal year of 2014, typical examples of the phenomenon of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer.

The much-advertised "social welfare" policies are resourced by taxpayers' money and insurance, so the working masses enjoy the benefits of these policies at the expense of their own earnings; some of them exist in name only owing to the discriminating and money-oriented measures of the government.

Abandoning its duty for social security stipulated in Article 25 of the Constitution, the Japanese authorities put "The universal healthcare/pension insurance for the whole nation" into operation by force, abolished free medical service for the elderly, introduced excise duties and gradually raised the tax rates. The working masses have to pay not only taxes and insurance but other miscellaneous levies.

The budget for the fiscal year of 2016 witnessed reduction of the appropriation for social security by 170 billion yen, while the appropriation for national defence, which had increased over the past three years, reached 5 trillion yen. The attempt to build Japan into a "war state" with the taxpayers' money is threatening the lives of its total population of 100 million.

In Japan, notorious for suicide, 24 025 persons committed suicide in 2015 alone, 66 persons a day on average. What arouses serious social concern is the rapidly increasing rate of suicide among the young people, most of whom take their own lives out of despair for social and economic reasons and unrest and anxiety for their future.

It is a mockery and deception of the fair opinion and the international community that Japan, which tramples underfoot the working masses' elementary rights including their political, social and economic rights, makes much ado about "provision of human rights" and "social welfare."

2. Ill-fated People Vulnerable in Society

To protect women, children, the elderly and the disabled is a legal and moral obligation of a state and society, and it is a major criterion by which the level of civilization of the relevant country is judged.

But in "advanced" Japan, the women, children, elderly and disabled, the most vulnerable strata in society, are victims of all social evils.

Though it ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1985, Japan turned a deaf ear to the several recommendations given by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 2003 and 2009. The law on the promotion of activities by women enacted in 2015 lacks fundamental measures for improving the status of women, like supporting their upbringing of their children, eliminating sexual discrimination and banning discrimination in employment and pay; by virtue of this law, women have to plunge themselves into the profit-centered, free competition to "support" the businesses in the latter's efforts for "self-help."

Women account for 70% of the part-time workers, and the children, who are denied access to nurseries, numbered 1~3 million as of March 2016, far exceeding the statistical figure published by the government. Among the 144 countries dealt with by the World Economic

Forum in its Gender Gap Report for 2016, Japan ranked 111th in the women's rights situation.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted in November 1989 stipulates that a child shall be entitled to special protection and assistance, and that the child should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding. However, in Japan violation of the rights of the child is an incorrigible social evil.

About 90 000 cases of child abuse were reported in the period between March 2014 and late March 2015, and the children that suffered extreme ill-treatment in 2015 numbered 28 923. The number of ill-treated children grew more than seven times in the last 15 years.

In order to mitigate the social concern for the aggravated child abuse, the authorities amended the "law on child welfare" in May 2016. The amended law only stipulated increasing the number of child abuse consultation centers, falling short of taking fundamental measures for improving the environment. The sexual assault against children, reported in 2015, numbered 1 938 cases.

What makes the matter more serious is the fact that the youth and children, the future of society, have lost hope for their future and fall into an abyss of crime and degeneration.

The sacred school campuses have been reduced to theatres of violence, devoid of ethics; teachers' ill-treatment of students and students' violence against teachers totaled 224 540 cases in the academic year of 2015.

In Aichi Prefecture a 17-year-old high school student hacked a 65-year-old man to death with a knife and ran away with his wallet. In Yokohama a 15-year-old boy killed his mother and grandmother with a knife. Recently, the Chiba District Court imposed a life prison sentence on a 19-year-old girl for burying her schoolmate alive. Besides, juvenile crimes, officially registered in 2014 alone, numbered 48 361.

This is a picture of the despair of Japanese youth and children outside the protection by the state and society.

Japan exceeded the limit of "older oldest society" set by the UN, with the elderly more than 65 years old numbering 33 million, or 26% of its total population, as of October 2014. However, instead of taking measures for their living, the authorities regard their living expenses like pension and medical expenses as the primary item in the reduction of budget expenditure; worse still, they are abusing their pension reserve, a lifeline for them, as speculative funds. As a result, the rate of the elderly living under the poverty line is 34.3%; 10.47 million persons, or one-third of the aged population, are living with such small supplementary allowances that they are unable to get a medical check-up, let alone enjoy the benefits of rest home and other facilities.

This situation has given rise to the social problem of increasing rate of crimes committed by the elderly; the criminal cases involving the elderly aged over 65 numbered more than 23 600 in the first half 2015, according to the statistics published by the Police Agency, far exceeding the number of crimes committed by the youth and children in the same period.

The "silver crimes" committed by the elderly, including violence, bodily harm and murder, are in most cases the outcome of loneliness and abject poverty; many of the elderly

experiencing difficulty in living are committing crimes to find a "free shelter" in prison. The prisons are filled beyond their capacity with the aged criminals.

This is the real situation in the "country of the long-lived" which claims that it guarantees generous treatment for the "welfare of the elderly" and their livelihood.

In 2007 Japan signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2006, but it did not take practical actions on the plea of domestic circumstances. Only in June 2013, in anticipation of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, Japan cobbled together the "Act on the Elimination of Discrimination against the Disabled" and had it adopted at the Diet in January 2014. However, in one year till March of 2014, 2 266 disabled persons suffered harassment by their families and at the rest homes across the country.

In July 2016 a man, 26, called Uemats, burst into a facility for the disabled in Sagamihara, Kanagawa Prefecture, and cut down the inmates with knife, shouting "You, disabled must die." This terrible incident left 19 dead and 26 injured. It was an inevitable outcome of the authorities' inadequate measures for the welfare of the disabled.

The above facts offer a glimpse of Japanese society in which the vulnerable sections in society--women, children, the elderly and the disabled--are falling prey to the law of the jungle, receiving no protection from the state.

3. Desert of Human Rights Where Racial Discrimination and Contempt for Other Nations Are Deep-Seated

Equal treatment and respect for all human beings without distinction of any kind, such as race, sex and religion constitute an important principle for the protection of human rights, which is stipulated in Article 1 of Chapter 1, Article 13 of Chapter 4 and Article 55 of Chapter 9 of the UN Charter, Article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other international instruments.

Having ratified the UN Charter in December 1956, the International Convention on Human Rights in 1979 and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in 1995, Japan is placed under clear obligations as to the elimination of racial discrimination. However, instead of adopting relevant measures, it has encouraged discrimination against and contempt for ethnic minorities as its state policy.

In November 2005, the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan noted, in his report to the UN General Assembly, that Japan should address the problem of discrimination against ethnic minorities, Chinese and other immigrants. Also, at the Third Committee of the General Assembly, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights called upon the Japanese authorities to enact a comprehensive law on the prohibition of racial discrimination against minority groups such as the Ainus and burakumin. All this shows the severity of racial discrimination in Japan. The Ainus, indigenous inhabitants of Japan, had settled in and around Hokkaido, and developed their own culture, language and customs. Owing to the assimilation policy pursued by the successive governments there now remain about 24 000, a small proportion of which are estimated to be able to speak the Ainu fluently. This is because many

of them decided to conceal their identity in fear of unequal treatment.

After the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People at the UN General Assembly in September 2007, the Japanese Diet passed a resolution recognizing the Ainus as Japan's indigenous community in June 2008. The authorities ensured that a museum of the Ainu culture was built in June 2014 as a space symbolic of "national co-existence with the Ainus", and a meeting for the execution of the Ainu policy was held in May 2016 with a view to inheriting the traditional culture of the Ainus. Through the display of the leftovers from the Ainu culture, which it had obliterated by itself, Japan is scheming to advertise its "cultural diversity" and attract tourists. This bespeaks the selfish, egocentric disposition of the race-hunting nation.

Burakumin, denoting the humble people such as butchers and undertakers in the pre-"Meiji Restoration" era, have been segregated as the dregs of society, and they have long been subjected to inhumane treatment and contempt.

The successive Japanese authorities, by enacting such acts as the law on measures for assimilation (1969) and the law on measures for regional improvement (1986), have persisted in facilitating the social isolation of these people, shifting the blame on the Buraku Liberation Union and other civilian organizations championing their rights.

Discrimination against the foreigners and members of minority groups who are staying or residing in Japan is more serious.

According to the MIPEX rankings of the policy for the abolition of discrimination against foreigners, published by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Japan gained 14 points, the lowest, of 100 points in 2010 and 22 points in 2015, ranking 37th among the 38 countries under investigation.

Under the Foreigner Internship System, Japan accepts, on an annual basis, about 100 000 foreign workers for 70-odd sectors including agriculture, fishing and manufacturing. This system, characterized by poor working conditions, overtime labor and discriminatory wages, is castigated as a hotbed of modern-day slave labor and corruption by international human rights watchdogs.

The Declaration on the Human Rights of Individuals Who are Not Nationals of the Country in Which They Live, adopted as a resolution of the 40th UN General Assembly, stipulates the rights to safe and healthy working conditions and to fair wages equal remuneration for the work of equal value without distinction of any kind. In March 2015, however, the Japanese authorities set the Foreigner Internship System as part of its economic growth strategy and extended the period of internship from three to five years, thereby encouraging modern-day slave labor.

In its May 2005 report on human trafficking, the International Labor Organization dubbed Japan as an international hub for dealing in women. It also pointed out that foreign women, who entered Japan with artistic expertise, have become "sex slaves" and those from Southeast Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe were smuggled into Japan by criminal organizations to be employed in the sex industry.

The majority of illegal immigrants in Japan, totaling 200 000, are women engaged in the entertainment industry. As there exists no legislation prohibiting human trafficking and criminal organizations work hand in glove with government organs, brothels of foreign women are scattered throughout the country.

As explained above, a political climate prevails in Japan, in which the authorities, intoxicated by the "superiority" of the Yamato nation, discriminate against ethnic minorities and other nations, conniving at and fostering all social evils.

4. Violation of Human Rights of Koreans Resident in Japan, Epitome of National Chauvinism

Hostility towards the Koreans resident in Japan, which finds expression in discrimination, suppression and violence against them, is the epitome of national chauvinism.

Though living in Japan, they are overseas citizens of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; they are fully entitled to enjoy democratic national rights, exercise the rights recognized by international law and customs, and lead a happy life.

Koreans resident in Japan are those who were taken to Japan for forced labor or military conscription during its colonial rule of Korea, as well as their descendants. So the Japanese authorities bear the legal and humanitarian responsibility for the protection of their fundamental human rights, such as the rights to existence and development, as they have yet to make apology and reparation for their past crimes.

Japan committed atrocious crimes against the Koreans: massacring during the September 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake; drafting tens of thousands for many secret construction projects, including the underground air raid shelter of the Matsushiro Headquarters, before their defeat in the war and burying them alive after forcing slave labor on them; blowing up in August 1945 the Ukishimamaru carrying thousands back to their native country.

The sweat and blood shed by the Korean victims are still permeated throughout Japan.

Instead of making an apology to the Korean people for the A-class crimes, the Japanese authorities have clung to the absurd policy of hostility towards the DPRK, maltreating and oppressing the Korean residents in Japan and violating their democratic national rights. In everyday life they force indescribable agony upon them and violate their human rights.

The authorities defined Chongryon (General Association of Korean Residents in Japan) as an institution to which the Act for the Prevention of Sabotage is applicable, though it is a legitimate organization of the DPRK's overseas citizens that respects the laws of Japan and does not interfere in its internal affairs. They crack down upon and vilify Chongryon, keeping its affiliates and their members under constant surveillance and shadowing and plotting against them.

Frequent police investigation of Chongryon's affiliates, shooting, arson and assaults by rightwing hooligans, and violence to Korean students—all these hostile acts are committed with the connivance of the authorities.

Article 1 of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, adopted in December 1992 by the UN General Assembly,

stipulates that States shall protect the existence and national, ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities, encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity, and adopt appropriate legislative and other measures to achieve those end.

Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights clearly defines the right of everyone to a nationality.

However, the Japanese authorities are denying the citizenship of Koreans resident in Japan: they treat as a common noun the word "Korea" in the Nationality column of the foreigners' registration card, and dub the legitimate permanent residents as stateless, as part of its attempt to naturalize them.

On account of this citizenship issue they have deprived those Korean residents of their political rights. Worse still, they discriminate severely against them in their economic and cultural activities, especially in such realms as employment, school enrolment, residence and marriage, pension and health insurance.

As for the re-entry permit system for Koreans resident in Japan, "re-entry" is out of the question in the light of international law and customs and the people's legitimate residence. It is a duty that devolves upon the Japanese authorities.

For unjustifiable excuses and conditions the authorities disallow the re-entry of Korean residents after a visit to their homeland, hampering such fundamental humanitarian activities as meeting relatives and visiting their birthplaces and ancestral graves.

The right to education is one of the important human rights that have a direct bearing on human dignity. In particular, the right to national education of Koreans resident in Japan is stipulated by the international instruments, which Japan has already ratified, including international human rights covenants, the UNESCO convention against the discrimination in education and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This right fully accords with Japan's domestic laws such as the Constitution and the Fundamental Education Law.

However, the Japanese authorities pursue an unfriendly policy towards the children of Koreans resident in Japan, refusing to recognize their right to national education.

Korean University and all other Korean educational institutions in Japan obtained official authorization in the period between April 1968 and January 1975. They have all observed Japan's laws and regulations in management and teaching contents. Though social evils are rampant in Japan, they have striven hard to defend their national character and train their students into true human beings. Even Japanese experts praise these schools as exemplary, legitimate bases for the Koreans' national education.

The Koreans are on an equal footing with the Japanese when it comes to taxation, but the Japanese authorities had the subsidies for the Koreans' schools left at the discretion of autonomous bodies. They also impose taxes on the donations to the Koreans' schools from Koreans. They intentionally excluded these schools from the list for the higher education support system, which had been enforced on April 1, 2010, thereby wreaking havoc on their educational environment and impeding the building of their material foundations.

The authorities resorted to vicious schemes in trying to obliterate the national education of

the Koreans and repress their national spirit; armed police, under cover of armored vehicles, broke into the Koreans' schools and demolished furniture; rightwing reactionaries and other hooligans pounced upon Korean girls, tearing their traditional costumes with knives and blocking their way to school.

These egregious abuses of human rights, which have continued century after century, threaten the lives of the Koreans in all parts of Japan.

The international community vehemently denounces the Japanese authorities for clinging to institutional and administrative measures to restrict and violate the Koreans' democratic national rights and persecute and crack down upon them.

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The above facts give a glimpse of Japan's deplorable human rights situation, showing that its crime-ridden history continues.

On the international arena Japan makes much ado about other countries' "human rights issue." This is a foolish, cunning trick to bury its heinous crimes into oblivion and cover up its own human rights situation.

Conscientious peoples around the world, who love justice and treasure human dignity and rights, should sharpen their vigilance against Japan's despicable schemes and join hands with each other to bring Japan, an A-class criminal state, to trial and mete out a severe punishment to it.

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