

Oral Statement at the United Nations Human Rights Council by the governor of Okinawa

Item 3: interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order -Interactive Dialogue

18 September 2023

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Haisai gusu-yo-.
I am Denny Tamaki, Governor of Okinawa, Japan.

I am here today to ask the world to witness the situation in Okinawa, where the concentration of American bases threatens the peace, and prevents equal participation in decision-making.

Okinawa covers only 0.6% of Japan's total land area, but 70% of all the U.S. military bases in Japan are concentrated on our small island.

Furthermore, the Japanese government is imposing the construction of a new American base in Okinawa by carrying out land reclamation work on our precious sea area. The reclamation work proceeds despite the fact that it was clearly opposed by Okinawan voters in a democratically-held referendum.

We are afraid that the build-up of military capabilities will increase tensions in the areas around Japan. This goes against the Okinawan peoples' aspirations for peace.

We, Okinawans, call for stronger diplomatic efforts by the governments concerned to embody in our region the "Right to Peace," adopted by the 2016 U.N. General Assembly.

Thank you very much. Nife-de-bitan.