



New Japan Women's
Association

Japanese Women Today

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Humanity Faces Two Existential Threats: Nuclear Weapons and Climate Change End the War, Stop Military Buildup, Break away from Neoliberalism to Save People and Planet

Protecting Lives and Livelihood Must Be the Priority of Government Policies

Almost 7 months have passed since a magnitude-7.6 earthquake struck the isolated Noto peninsula in western Japan on January 1. Lifeline utilities are still to recover, many destroyed or damaged houses are yet to be demolished, some 1,400 people live in shelters, and those who have moved in to the temporary housing units or continued to live in the damaged houses receive no relief goods including food. Frustration and criticism are mounting over the government's too slow response.

The Noto situation highlights how the neoliberal policies to shift public to private spending, promoting self-responsibility of individuals have made remote communities vulnerable, especially to disaster. Anyone living in Japan, disaster-prone country, can be victims of earthquake, flood, or volcanic eruption at any time, and the government should focus its effort on improving measures for disaster prevention, emergency relief and reconstruction, with adequate funding. In order to build a disaster-resilient communities, it is vital to break away from neoliberal policies the Japanese government has implemented in the best interests of big corporations, revising labor laws to replace regular workers by non-regular workers including in the public sector, and curtailing spending on social services and welfare. As a result, Japan remains the only major economy where income has failed to rise in real terms, with women being the hardest hit. It is time to shift to a new, fair economic model that will benefit people and planet. It is time to end privatization and reclaim public services. "Leave No One Behind" principle must be at the core of all government policies.



Suzu city, Ishikawa Prefecture, one of the areas hardest hit by the New Year's Day earthquake. Demolition work has fallen far behind the schedule, hampering the recovery efforts (July 19)



With the money donated from its members all over the country, New Japan Women's Association (Shinfujin) head office organized a visiting tour to Noto, bringing fresh vegetables, pastas, daily commodity and summer clothes, etc. Local residents showed up and spoke about how they have been struggling. They were happy not only for gifts, but also for the opportunity to share their stories (July 19)



Osaka Shinfujin members marching with chants, "No Casino!" "No Kansai World Expo 2025!" "Relief for Disaster-hit Area Comes First, Not Casino, Not Expo!"

2nd Meeting of the State Parties to TPNW

Russia's aggression against Ukraine continues with President Putin repeatedly making nuclear threats, and Israel is committing genocide in the occupied Palestinian territory of Gaza, destabilizing and heightening the tensions not only in the areas but globally. Military blocs are reinforced, more and more depending on nuclear deterrence as seen in the NATO's Washington Summit Declaration. Every year, the world's military spending reaches a record high. A vast amount of money is being wasted on weapons, when it has to be used instead to accelerate climate crisis response, to close the income gap and to bring the world back on track to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.



In the time of multiple crisis, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons casts a light of hope. The political declaration adopted at the 2nd Meeting of State Parties explicitly rejects the narrative of nuclear deterrence, and the State Parties are committed to working harder to achieve universality and to strengthen the effectiveness of the treaty.

Shinfujin's representative delivered a statement at the gender segment of the 2MSP.

Statement of the New Japan Women's Association to the Second Meeting of State Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

1 December 2023

Emiko HIRANO

Vice President, New Japan Women's Association

Mr. President,

Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to speak on behalf of the New Japan Women's Association at the Second Meeting of the State Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

After World War II, women in Japan gathered around the common cause of the adherence to the war-renouncing Article 9 of the Constitution and the elimination of nuclear weapons, based on the deep remorse over the war of aggression Japan waged against other nations and on the painful experience of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Since its founding 61 years ago, the New Japan Women's Association has been working in communities nationwide for nuclear abolition, opposition to war, and advancement of gender equality. The association has submitted to the United Nations a total of 16,720,000 signatures in support of the petitions, including the one initiated by the Hibakusha, calling for banning and eliminating nuclear weapons. We are confident that along with the Hibakusha and the citizens around the world, we contributed to the adoption and entry into force of TPNW.

TPNW acknowledges the disproportionate impact of nuclear weapons on women and girls. Female Hibakusha endured unspeakable sufferings from discrimination and stigma, being denied marriage and job opportunities. Many of them experienced repeated miscarriages and stillbirth, and even those who gave birth without any complications have lived with anxieties about the health of their own, and of their children and grandchildren for the rest of their lives. One of our members, a Hiroshima survivor, says that the Hibakusha cannot escape the atomic bombing until they die. Another member, also a Hiroshima survivor, told us that she was so excited to join the association because now she could campaign for nuclear abolition together with women all over Japan. She also said that after she and her colleagues started to compile a collection of Hibakusha testimonies titled "Burnt Like Fallen Leaves" every year, her hatred towards the United States changed into hatred of war, and she became a committed nuclear abolition activist. These female Hibakushas' courage has inspired the rest of us, and working together, we have empowered each other.

Amid the aging of Hibakusha, the New Japan Women’s Association attaches importance to passing the atomic bomb experiences on to next generations. We organize sessions to listen to the stories of Hibakusha, and hold atomic bomb photo exhibitions to raise awareness of the facts about atomic bombing among the public. Recently we focus our effort on exhibiting pieces that local high school students painted listening to the Hibakusha victimized in Hiroshima. Our members in different chapters hold exhibitions of these paintings in public spaces including schools and libraries. Some school authorities appreciate our offer as an opportunity for their students to receive peace education, and teachers and students help the preparations. The paintings are so powerful that the audience of all ages learn horrible damage of nuclear weapons and they begin to wish to abolish these weapons of mass destruction. Inspired by those peace activities, young women become members of our organization.

We regret that the government of Japan, the only country that suffered the wartime use of nuclear weapons, is yet to sign or ratify the TPNW, and is absent from this meeting even as an observer. On the other hand, so far almost one and a half million people have signed the petition calling on the Japanese government to join the treaty. Of these signatures, 445,000 were collected by our members. Facing the heightened risk of nuclear weapons use, the Group of 7 nations summit under Japan’s presidency announced that nuclear weapons were necessary. Ignited their anger by the statement, women are raising their voices, “We never allow nuclear weapons to be used.” We believe that women’s grassroots activism is the power to defeat the myth of nuclear deterrence.

The existence of nuclear weapons itself is a threat to humanity and the planet. The only way to eliminate nuclear risk is to eliminate nuclear weapons. While we gather at this meeting, our members are out on the streets in Japan, collecting signatures urging Japan to become a party to the TPNW. They are voicing against nuclear weapons and against war. We look forward to working with you all, so that we can achieve a world without nuclear weapons as soon as possible.

Thank you for your attention.



Throughout Japan, Shinfujin members organize A-bomb photo and painting exhibitions in public facilities, schools, temples and outdoor, inviting Hibakusha and/or other war survivors to share their stories with local people including children. They also actively participate in the annual Peace March, in the signature collecting for the petition calling on the government to join the TPNW.

1,565,317 signatures have been submitted to the government since the campaign started in October 2021. And of the total, more than 405,000 were collected by Shinfujin members

Women Resist the Attempt to Turn Japan into a War-Capable Nation

The slush funds scandal, cozy relationship with the cult group, and failure to deal with the worsening economic situation, Prime Minister Kishida’s approval rate has hit the record low. However, Kishida is implementing what his predecessors planned and what he himself agreed with the US President Biden to elevate the defense ties between the two countries to unprecedented level.

Just recently, the Japan-US defense and foreign ministers’ meeting decided to strengthen expanded nuclear deterrence, including with nuclear weapons, which is unacceptable for no reason whatsoever for the only country that suffered the war-time use of nuclear weapons. The ministers also agreed on a policy to reorganize to U.S. Forces in Japan to be a joint military command, with Japan’s Self-Defense Forces placed under the command of the US military. In the last Diet session, Kishida and his party pushed the enactment and revision of laws aiming to turn Japan into a war-capable nation. They even revised the guidelines to lift a ban on the export of lethal arms.

Japan is ranked 118 among the 146 nations in terms of gender equality, because of the low representation of women in politics, and of the gender gap in economic participation. The massive military buildup will make it even more difficult for Japan to advance gender equality. Many women, especially of younger generation, are becoming more and more aware that the government policies are the major obstacle to peace and gender equality. Through Shinfujin’s outreach efforts, those who have been forced into silence with no one to talk about their suffering are coming forward and find a safe place in Shinfujin’s local groups. We are not alone, and united in sisterhood, we have the power to change the status quo.



“To who are you serving, people of Japan, or US government?” “How long do we have to endure the suffering because of the US military presence?” Shinfujin Okinawa Chapter members protesting the national government for not having reported the kidnapping and rape of underaged girl by the US military serviceman to the Okinawa Prefectural government. They said, the national government kept the case secret to avoid negative impact on the local people’s sentiment against the US military presence, which is totally unforgivable. Shinfujin members all over Japan have staged protest in solidarity with Okinawa sisters.



The New Japan Women’s Association (NJWA or Shinfujin) was founded on October 19, 1962. About 115,000 members are organized in some 8,000 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 800 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 174,000 readers.

Shinfujin is a member of the Japan Federation of Women’s Organizations (Fudanren) and the International Women’s Year Liaison Group (comprising 33 major Japanese women’s organizations.) It holds special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

NJWA Leadership (elected at the 31st National Convention)

President:	YONEYAMA Atsuko
Vice Presidents:	ISHIHARA Kazu, NISHIKAWA Kyoko, HIRANO Emiko, TAKASUGI Shun
Secretary General:	YUIGAHAMA Naoko
Deputy Secretary General:	MAKI Yuko, WATANABE Satsuki

