



Human Rights Now

7F Creative One Akihabara Bldg. 5-3-4 Ueno
Taito-ku, Tokyo, JAPAN 110-0005
<http://hrn.or.jp/eng/>

Phone: +81-3-3835-2110 Fax: +81-3-3834-1025

Email info@hrn.or.jp

29th Human Rights Council

Agenda item 3: SR on rights to freedom of expression

Japan: Excessive Interference of the Government / Ruling Party to the Media and Journalists

Human Rights Now expresses concern over recent actions by the Japanese government which have threatened the freedoms of press, expression, and the right to access information.

The 2013 Secrecy Act allows the Japanese government to block public access to information designated as a state secret, while providing criminal penalties for those who disclose such secrets. While the Secrecy Act excludes news coverage under certain circumstances, the terms are vague enough to allow arbitrary interpretation. Consequently, the Secrecy Act has a chilling effect on the press freedom.

It is also concerning that the Japanese government has openly made demands on news organizations. In November 2014, the LDP asked all major broadcasting companies for fair and neutral reporting, particularly on political matters. This year, the LDP summoned executives from TV Asahi and NHK, accusing them of bending the truth.

The government has also used the Broadcast Act, which requires broadcasters to be politically neutral, to threaten media organizations. After meeting with TV Asahi, for instance, the LDP cited the government's power to revoke licenses for reporting that distorts the facts.

These actions undermine the freedom of the press. HRN urges the Japanese government to amend the Secrecy Act pursuant to ICCPR Article 19 and to stop interfering with the media. HRN asks the international community, OHCHR, and the Human Rights Council to recommend that the Japanese government improve the situation regarding freedom of expression. Also, we ask the UN special rapporteur on the freedom of expression to conduct a fact-finding mission to address the aforementioned issues. .