



Human Rights Now

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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

Email info@hrn.or.jp

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Speaker: Armi Javier

Thank you, Mr. President.

Human Rights Now is deeply concerned about serious labour and human rights violations against foreign technical interns and trainees in Japan. In 1993 the Japanese government launched a programme called “Technical Intern Training Program” to provide foreign interns and trainees in Japan a vocational opportunity in Japanese industries. However, they have been exploited as labour force.

Alleged human rights abuses by employers against technical interns and trainees under the programme include labour exploitation, sexual harassment, physical violence, confiscation of identification documents and forced overwork. In April 2017, it was reported that at least 30 interns and trainees died in 2015, including seven during work, eight by cardiac arrest, brain disease and other diseases, and two by suicide. Our investigations also reveal that many interns are paid less than minimum wage.

We welcome the passage of an act to protect technical interns and trainees, which came into effect on November 2017, as well as the establishment of the Organization for Technical Intern Training to further protect them. However, we received numbers of claims that violations of workers’ rights continues.

Mr. President,

We call on the Japanese government to take strong measures to protect workers from slavery-like conditions per its obligations under ILO conventions.

In order to end labour exploitation, we also call on all Japanese corporations using technical interns in their supply chain, to establish and implement strong human rights due diligence in accordance with UN guiding principles.

Thank you.