



Human Rights Now

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Human Rights Now Annual Report of 2007-2008

This is a translation of an excerpt of the 2007-2008 HRN annual report

Acknowledgements

Many thanks for your kind supports for *Human Rights Now*.

We marked the 2nd anniversary of the establishment of Human Rights Now (HRN) on July 28th, 2006. Since our establishment, we have been working on various projects, such as foreign policy / ODA and human rights, violence against women, transitional justice in Cambodia (the Khmer Rouge trial), sending fact finding missions overseas, human rights education and so on. In the next term, we would like to develop these activities further, and contribute to strengthening the worldwide human rights organizations network. In addition to the activities above, we also provided United Nations human rights bodies with information about the human rights situation in Japan. In order to make our appeals more widely heard, we are striving to acquire greater influence in domestic and international society. In order to achieve this purpose, we plan to strengthen the organization both in membership and budget.

Your continued support is most welcome.

Koki Abe

President

Human Rights Now

Kazuko Ito

Secretary General

Human Rights Now

Part1. Project Report

I. International Assistance Project (Transitional Justice project)

HRN supports societies which try to overcome the past legacy of gross human rights violations by assisting and monitoring the processes of Transitional Justice. In particular, HRN monitors and assists the activity of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC).

1 ECCC

The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) was established to bring justice for human rights violations such as crimes against humanity committed during the regime of the Khmer Rouge (April 1975 to January 1979) by trying those who were most responsible for the violations; it started its operation in 2006. Since the summer of 2006, HRN has been closely monitoring and assisting the activity of the court.

2 Advocacy activities regarding the human rights of victims

Upon consultation with local NGOs in Cambodia, HRN worked for the realization of victim's participation in the ECCC process.

HRN has underscored that the participation of victims is the most important element in the Transitional Justice in order to achieve justice and reconciliation toward re-building Cambodian society.

Regarding the Transitional Justice in Cambodia, in particular, ECCC process, HRN published an opinion paper; "Justice for Victims"

([http://www.ngo-hrn.org/project/JusticeforVictims\(HRN-Japan\)english.pdf](http://www.ngo-hrn.org/project/JusticeforVictims(HRN-Japan)english.pdf)).

This paper included an explanation of recently established international standards regarding victims' participation as well as the necessity of the participation of victims in the Cambodian legal context. In the same report, HRN recommended that the ECCC introduce a system of victim's participation. In the same year, HRN visited the ECCC as well as local NGOs in Cambodia in order to carry out advocacy activities.

3 Accomplishment of activities

On June 12th, 2007, an ECCC judicial conference adopted internal rules which include provision for a formal system of victim participation, and the establishment of judicial power for ordering reparations for victims. Most of the new rules related to victim participation and reparations are line with the

recommendations made by the HRN's opinion paper. ECCC launched a judicial investigation of five suspects in July 2007, and four suspects were arrested between September and November in 2007. During the course of the investigation, the victims were able to start participating in the judicial procedure.

4 Current activities

Based on this achievement, HRN continues its effort to make the victim participation system operate effectively, by contributing research papers as well as advocating the establishment of victims' units, etc. In the course of carrying out this monitoring activity, HRN conducted field research in Cambodia in November 2007, and lobbied the Japanese government which has been a donor of the ECCC.

II. International Assistance Projects (Women's rights project)

1. Aim of the project

Serious violence against women continues to be perpetrated throughout the Asian region. This violence includes acts such as honor killings, forced marriage, human trafficking, the commercial sexual exploitation of children, domestic violence, sati, dowry, etc. In light of these circumstances, HRN established a women's rights project in 2007. This project is aimed at the elimination of violence against women in Asia through research, fact-finding, policy recommendations, advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns. These activities are based on research and investigation with local NGOs. HRN intends to send a research mission every year to one country within Asia to survey the human rights situation and consult with local NGOs.

2. Plan of activity

As its first activity, HRN will send a research mission to India in 2008 (September 12th to 22nd) to investigate the situation of violence against women and the activities of NGOs.

In this mission, HRN plans for its investigative team to visit cities as well as rural areas and to meet with local government officials and NGO staff in order to research the situation of violence against women, as well as to discuss the implementation of a newly enacted domestic violence act in India, among other things.

III. International Assistance Projects (Projects on fact-finding and announcements of human rights violations)

The purpose of this project is to send a fact finding mission to areas where serious human rights violations have taken place, and to investigate those violations with the cooperation of local NGOs. In addition, we want to announce the results to the world, and to conduct various advocacy activities to

stop these human rights violations.

1. Situation in the Philippines

Since 2001, hundreds of human rights activists and social activists have been killed in the Philippines. In February 2007, Phillip Alston, UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, visited the Philippines and released a press statement, which stated that the Rapporteur found the involvement of the military elements in those killings. At the same time, the Philippines government announced its commitment to put an end to extrajudicial killings. However, extra-judicial killings have not abated, but rather increased since government of the Philippines' announcement. Upon request from civil society in the Philippines, HRN sent a fact-finding mission to the Philippines in 2007 and released a report in 2008.

1) Summary of the fact-finding report

From 14th to 22nd of April 2007, HRN sent a fact-finding mission to the Philippines. The fact finding mission carried out interviews with witnesses and families of victims, and held meetings with officials from the Philippines government regarding extra-judicial killings and forced disappearances.

The fact-finding mission investigated 15 cases of extra-judicial killings, with 33 victims and 3 cases of forced disappearances with 9 victims. In many cases, witnesses clearly testified that the military were involved in the killings after being labeled by the government as "enemies of the state". Also the mission found that the government failed to investigate the killings and allowed perpetrators to enjoy impunity. Those victims are lawyers, human rights activists, trade unions leaders, clergymen, and city council members who had defended the human rights of citizens of the Philippines. Thus, those killings have frightened people and intimidated society as a whole. Moreover, the extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances have undermined freedom of speech and, ultimately, democracy in the Philippines. After the mission, HRN held a press conference in Manila and Tokyo, lobbied the Japanese government and Philippines government (through the Embassy of Japan in the Philippines) and participated in various awareness-raising campaigns. With information provided by NGOs in the Philippines and media reports, HRN also undertook follow up action in the abovementioned cases and released a final report in March 2008. This report contains eighteen recommendations to the Philippine government, concerned non-state actors, the Japanese government as a main aid donor to the Philippines, and the international community. The report was published both in Japan and in the Philippines, and sent to the relevant states working on the Universal Periodic Review of the Philippines at Human Rights Council in 2008. Some recommendations of the report were ultimately accepted by the Philippines. Positive result includes the fact that the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines announced the establishment of a state of the scientific research centre in order to strengthen the capacity to conduct forensic investigations. The chairman of the Commission also investigated conditions of detained citizens who were interviewed by HRN. Since the mission, the numbers of extra judicial killings have decreased, but the fact remains that investigation and

prosecution on past killings is still insufficient.

2) Future activity

Extra-judicial killings continue and thus, HRN is closely monitoring and continuing to carry out campaigning on this issue.

2. Situation in Myanmar

1) Human Rights situation in Myanmar

On 27th of May 1990, a People's Assembly (Pyithu Hluttaw) election was held on the basis of the multiparty systems. The National League for Democracy (NLD), chaired by Aung San Suu Kyi, won 392 seats of 485 seats. However, the military government has refused to recognize the result of this election and announced the indefinite extension of the transfer of power. It introduced a roadmap for democratization, claiming that a new and stable constitution has to be created prior to the transfer. While the military government (hereinafter, SPDC) called a constitutional referendum, which the NLD boycotted, and has continued the process to establish a new constitution, it has suppressed pro-democracy movements such as the NLD. Human rights abuses, such as military oppression, forced labor and rapes against ethnic minorities have also continued. Democratization movements have been brutally suppressed and more than 1,800 pro-democracy activists have been imprisoned and tortured as political prisoners. In September 2007, democratization movements flourished among Buddhist monks and citizens. Although the movements were reported prominently all over the world, the military government (SPDC) brutally cracked down on the movement. Upon request of a Myanmar human rights group, HRN commenced monitoring and advocacy activities on the human rights situation in Myanmar.

2. Fact-finding

HRN sent fact-finding missions to Mae Sot, on the Thai-Myanmar border twice in this term.

1) First mission

The first mission was carried out from 13th to 17th of September 2007. Three HRN members visited Mae Sot, and carried out interviews with an organization assisting political prisoners and groups of ethnic minority and women. The HRN members interviewed former political prisoners regarding the condition of political prisoners, arbitrary arrest, detention and treatment. HRN members also carried out interviews with members of an ethnic minority group about how ethnic minorities have been persecuted and with a women's group on how the violence by the military and economic poverty has affected the lives of women.

2) Second Mission

Following the crackdown in Myanmar in September 2007, HRN sent a second mission to Mae Sot between February 8th and 14th of 2008, in order to investigate human rights violation, during and after the crackdown, and also to investigate conditions in refugee camps on the Thai-Myanmar border. The second mission included lawyers, a Member of Parliament, and journalists. In Mae Sot, HRN

carried out interview with 7 Myanmar monks and 8 civilians, all of whom had fled to Thailand in order to avoid being arrested by the Myanmar military government for taking part in these demonstrations in September 2007. HRN found that the SPDC had committed various human rights violations against the peaceful demonstrators, such as killings, assaulting, arbitrary arrest and detention, even though the demonstrators were exercising their right to freedom of expression peacefully. In the Mae Sot refugee camp, HRN researched the situation of human rights violations of minority refugees, such as the Karen ethnic group.

3) Report publication

On 6th of April 2008, HRN published a report titled, “Human rights situations in Myanmar and the road to democratization – a report of the fact finding mission on the border of Myanmar and Thailand, a half year after the Saffron Revolution”, which was based on the fact finding missions to the Thai-Myanmar border mentioned above, and in the same report published policy recommendations for international society as well as Myanmar’s military government.

(<http://www.ngo-hrn.org/active/b.pdf>)

4) Symposium

HRN organized several awareness-raising events on human rights situation in Myanmar.

In April 2008, HRN organized a symposium on the situation in Myanmar with groups such as the Myanmar people's Community in Japan, the Japanese Trade Union Confederation at Aoyama Gakuin University. The program of the Symposium includes a report session of the HRN fact-finding missions, as well as discussion on the democracy and constitutional referendum in Myanmar. Three members of parliament participated and gave speeches to this symposium. Approximately 300 people attended at this symposium and it was broadcast on Japanese news.

5) Announcement of statements, Appeals towards the United Nations, and Advocacy activities etc.

In the wake of the military government’s crackdown of demonstration in September 2007, HRN signed the “Open Letter to the President of Human Rights Counsel in September 28th, 2007”. This was a joint open letter to the President of the UN Human Rights Council, submitted by HRN together with other 70 Asian NGOs to request a conveying of special session of the UN Human Rights Council to address the situation of military oppression in Myanmar. Ultimately, the Human Rights Council held an emergency session to address the situation in Myanmar and a resolution on this matter was adopted. In addition to this, HRN has issued several statements on human rights situation in Myanmar, which include the two statements below.

- May 24th 2008: Statement “For the conference of donor countries – What should the international Community, including Japan, do for victims of the cyclone in Myanmar?”
- June 5th 2008: Statement “Protest against the extension of the house arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi and the referendum carried out by the military regime”

HRN is also engaged in lobbying the Japanese government as well as members of the Japanese

Parliament about the human rights situations in Myanmar.

IV. International Assistance Project (Oversea Human Rights Education Project)

In order to support the progress of human rights, HRN is involved in various human rights training and education programs in the Asian region.

1 In connection to Myanmar

Since September 2007, HRN has supported the “Peace Law Academy”, a private school for legal education for Myanmar’s youth, which is located in Mae Sot, Thailand on the Thai-Myanmar border. The aim of the school is to teach the rule of law, human rights, democracy to the youth, in particular the ethnic minority youth, of Myanmar. The educational program includes international human rights and humanitarian law, a comparison of constitutions and legal systems, principles of democracy etc. In the current political situation in Myanmar, most youth are not familiar with a sense of “human rights” or “democracy”. Thus, HRN supports the school together with Myanmar’s exiled lawyers group, to educate and empower Myanmar’s youth, who will promote human rights and democracy in Myanmar in the future. However, because of the halt of funds last year, continuing this educational activity faces significant challenges. Thus, HRN calls upon Japanese civil society for financial support for this school by setting up a “Foundation for future lawyers”. HRN also plans to send lecturers to the school.

2. China and North East Asia

1) Due process training for Chinese judges and legal professionals around North East Asia

The Asia Human Rights Commission, an international human rights NGO based in Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China), has held periodic consultations for Chinese judges, scholars and legal profession in North East Asia on due process of law in criminal justice. HRN members often participate in these consultations and serve as lecturers.

From August 21st to 24th in 2007, HRN Director Mr. Yasushi Higashizawa and Secretary General Ms. Kazuko Ito participated as lecturers in one of these seminars, entitled “Seminar for the rule of law and due process in East-Asia” which was held in Seoul. Mr. Higashizawa and Ms. Ito gave a lecture on the recent reform of criminal justice, with a focus on the human rights problem in the course of criminal investigation in Japan. HRN hopes that these seminars and consultations lead to fair trials and respect for human rights in criminal justice in the Asian region. Participants of this meeting were mainly from People’s Republic of China, Republic of Korea and Japan.

2) CPRDC’s study tour on public interest litigation.

From August 20th 2008 until August 26th, HRN will receive seven lawyers from the Center for

Protection of Rights of Disadvantaged Citizens(CPRDC), based in Wuhan University, in People's Republic of China. The seven lawyers are planning to visit Japan to study Japanese legal practice, and are professors or lecturers at Wuhan Law School. This study tour will be conducted as a part of the CPRDC Project, with the aim of researching the experience of public interest litigation conducted in the Asian region both in theory and practice.

In Tokyo, HRN will provide the Chinese lawyers with opportunities to exchange opinions with Japanese lawyers who have experiences of public interest litigation, especially litigation related to environment, pollution, and consumer-related issues. Also, in Hokkaido, HRN will take those Chinese lawyers to a free legal counseling service organized by local lawyer groups (Kitami City), as well as set up meetings to exchange opinions and information with local lawyers. HRN hopes that this project will contribute the development of public interest litigation in Asia region as well as lead to the formation of new networks of public interest litigation in the region.

V. Research and Dissemination Projects for promotion and protection of human rights (diplomatic policies/ development assistance and human rights projects)

HRN has set up a “Diplomatic policies/ development assistance and human rights” project for mainstreaming human rights in Japanese diplomatic policies and ODA policy. There are some cases in which ODAs have caused the deterioration of human rights situations in the recipient countries. However, if ODAs are utilized effectively in the context of human rights, they may contribute to the promotion of the human rights of people in the recipient countries.

The aim of this project is to make policy recommendations to the Japanese government so that the ODA is used effectively as a tool to promote and protect human rights. HRN has also suggested the implementation of human rights-centered policies in diplomacy. In this term, HRN has focused on advocacy toward the revision of the “Environmental and Social Consideration Guidelines” set by JICA and JBIC.

1. Towards the revision of the JICA and JBIC “Environmental and Social Consideration Guidelines”

1) Revision process of the “Environmental and Social Consideration Guidelines”

In October 2008, Overseas Economic Operations in JBIC and JICA were integrated. Also, International Financial Operations (IFO) in JBIC will be integrated into the Japan Finance Cooperation (JFO). While JICA and JBIC had “Environmental and Social Consideration Guidelines”, as a result of the structural reform of these institutes, and they have prepared for a revision of those guidelines since 2007. With regard to the reformed JICA, an expert committee consisting of NGOs, public servants, business sectors and researchers, was established to discuss a revision of the guidelines. The committee conducts general discussions regarding the guidelines in consultation with NGOs. A similar committee was also established with regard to the JFO in JBIC and the reform of the institution has also been discussed.

2) HRN's Proposal

Since 2008, requested by NGOs such as Friends of Earth, Japan and Mekong Watch, which participated in a process of revision of the guidelines, HRN has joined in advocacy for the revision of the guidelines. HRN submitted proposals and recommendations to JICA and JBIC and also made oral statements at the consultations, underscoring the importance of the human rights perspective in aid policy, and also called for the mainstreaming of human rights in the course of development projects and gave some speeches when related themes were discussed. In a proposal, HRN requested that;

- Labor rights be included explicitly in the new guidelines;
- Before the commencement of a project, the present human rights situations as well as the influence of projects on human rights be examined in holistic manner;
- Human rights, such as minority rights and the freedom of speech, be considered and guaranteed in consultation with stakeholders; and
- The aspects of corruption which impede democratic process and good governance be fully considered.

3). Future Activities

Participation in discussion and consultation with expert committees will be our primary activity in this project in the near future. Also, HRN aims to advance substantive proposals on development policies related to economic and social rights. HRN intends to create a network of researchers and scholars in the field to increase research capacity.

2. Other activities

HRN publishes statements and requests the Japanese government to take initiatives to solve issues in case of serious human rights violations taken place in Asia. HRN Secretary General, Ms. Kazuko Ito, reported on a comprehensive proposal regarding human rights diplomacy at a "Public forum for UN reform" organized by Japanese NGOs and the Japanese government in August 2008. In addition to this, HRN participates in NGO-MOFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan) policy-making consultative meetings on ODAs and in such meetings also requests the adoption of human rights viewpoints in ODA policies by using case studies.

VI. Research and Dissemination Projects for promotion and protection of human rights (domestic information service projects)

1. Activity related to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

HRN provided the United Nations with information about human rights situations in Japan when the Japanese human rights situation was reviewed at the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in the UN Human Rights Council. The UN Human Rights Council created the UPR in order to review the

human rights situations of all member states in 2008. Together with the Asian Legal Resource Centre, HRN provided information about human rights situations in Japan on issues such as the death penalty, criminal justice, comfort women, discriminations against foreigners, refugees, forced use of the national flag and song, and weakening of protection of economic and social rights. Information provided by HRN and other NGOs was compiled as the “Summary of Stakeholders’ Information” by OHCHR and much of the information provided by HRN was included in the Summary.

*Summary of stakeholders’ information

http://lib.ohchr.org/HBR/Documents/Session2/JP/Japan_summary_A_HRN_WG6_2_JPN_3.pdf

In the course of the UPR, Japan has received various recommendations and accepted some of the recommendations. HRN will concentrate on monitoring the Japanese government’s follow-up of the recommendations to improve domestic human rights situation.

2. International Human Rights Precedent Project

This project is to introduce international human rights standards to the Japanese public by translating and summarizing precedents of human rights treaty bodies through the HRN website. This project focuses on four treaties, namely the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Convention against Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Decisions made by the respective treaty bodies with regard to individual communications will also be translated. Around 50 such cases have already been uploaded on the HRN website and HRN has gained positive responses from users and scholars.

In June 2008, a resolution demanding the ratification of the Optional Protocol of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was unanimously adopted by the Japanese Senate. It is anticipated that Japan will ratify additional optional protocols.

Therefore, this project is expected to increase in importance and HRN plans to expand this project in the future.

While this project started from latest cases regarding Asian countries at the entry point, HRN plans to expand the scope of the cases by lifting the limitation. Moreover, HRN plans to improve the database system to be more accessible and useful to the public, and publish the work as booklet and/or information packet in the future.

3. Website renewal plan

In order to inform HRN’s various activities more broadly and in more detail to the public, it is necessary to update our website contents. In fact, the large numbers of people who apply to be a member, intern, volunteers and participants of the events come to know about the activities of HRN through the website. The website is one of the most important tools of publication of our work. Thus, HRN plans an overhaul of our website in order to attract more attention to our activities. Members

and specialists have set up a team for HRN's website overhaul and will effectively plan the overhaul.

4. Education and awareness raising activity in Japan

HRN organized and held various events and seminars as listed below in Part II. At the same time, volunteers and members of HRN have expressed their wish for self-study groups about international human rights law. Consequently, voluntary study meetings commenced in May 2008 and two meetings were held. In addition, Secretary General, Kazuko Ito gave the lectures listed below, the topics of which were related to the activities of HRN.

- Lecture meeting sponsored by Waseda University Student Group of "Model United Nations' "Millennium Development Goals and gender"
- Human Rights Day lecture meeting sponsored by the United Nations Students Associations of Japan
- Seisen University Open College "Activities of Human Rights NGO beyond the border"
- To-to co-op lecture meeting "Activities of Human Rights NGO beyond the border"
- Lecture meeting sponsored by Chuo University International Law Society "Challenges of Human Rights NGO beyond the border"

Part2. Events and Seminars organized by HRN

HRN is actively engaged in awareness raising campaign of human rights.

Events and seminars held by HRN in this term are as follows

- 20th July 2007, HRN First Assembly & Anniversary talk event

Ms. Miyako Maekita, Ms. Kanae Doi(HRN), and Mr. Khoki Abe(HRN)

(Otemachi cafe)

- 9th September 2007 "NGO Festival in Ueno 2007"

(Sponsored by NGO Festival Acting Committee: participating organizations included Oxfam Japan, Japan International Volunteer Center, Africa Japan Forum, PSC, ACE, Free the Children Japan, Japan International Center for the Rights of the Child, Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines, Jumma Net, Share. All of these have their headquarters in Maruko Building, HRN's headquarter office building)

HRN also held a talk session on Myanmar and exhibition of photographs (Talk session by Ms.

Chochoai, Photographs by Mr. Soichiro Koriyama)

(Maruko Building, Taito-ku, Tokyo)

- 30th September 2007 "Peace for Myanmar • candlelight vigil for victims" (Joint hosting : Candle memorial ceremony executive committee, Amnesty International Japan, Peace Boat, etc

- 15th October 2007 Report Session of Thai • Myanmar human rights fact finding mission, entitled "Why did the Myanmar people stand up?" (Aoyama Gakuin 13University)

Ms. Johanna Stratton (HRN), Ms. Masami Ishida(HRN) and others

●29th September 2007 Symposium “International Cooperation and Gender”

Attorney.Yoko Hayashi(Attorney at Law, Member of CEDAW) Professor Nahomi Wakasugi,
Ms. Seiko Ishigro(UNFPA), and Mr. Toshiro Ueyanagi(Attorney at Law)
(Organized by HRN student group, Waseda University)

●2nd December 2007 Human Rights Day · Parade “Human Rights and Freedom in ASEAN!”

(Joint hosting: Amnesty International Japan, Joint Action Committee of Myanmar Community in Japan
and MIGRANTE-JAPAN, etc)

●12th December 2007 “Report session of field research in Cambodia on the Khmer Rouge Tribunal ”

Mr. Shimpei Yamamoto(HRN) and others

●6th April 2008 “Symposium for democracy in Myanmar –Current human rights violation and turning
point for democratic activities –” (Joint hosting: Joint Action Committee of Myanmar Community in
Japan, Japanese Trade Union Confederation, Aoyama Gakuin University Human Rights Society,etc)

Speakers, Mr. Masaharu Nakagawa(Member of Parliament) Mr. Azuma Konno(Member of
Parliament) Mr. Yoshinori Suematsu(Member of Parliament) Mr. Nobuaki Koga (Japanese Trade
Union Confederation), Professor. Kei Nemoto(Sofia University),

Mr. Satoshi Nagajima (Ministry of Foreign Affair), Mr. Shogo Watanabe(Attorney at Law), Ms.
Kazuko Ito(HRN), Ms. Mami Ishida(HRN), Ms. Kyoko Osaka(HRN) and others
(Aoyama Gakuin University)

●6th July 2008 (Sunday) “Think current situation of Myanmar and Filipinos living in Nagoya”

(Joint hosting, HRN, Amnesty International Japan, Philippines Information Center, and Nagoya
NGO center)

Part3. Attendance in meetings and others

Following HRN’s establishments, members have attended various NGO meetings in order to expand
HRN’s network. Meetings attended are listed below. Acting members of HRN served as resource
persons or speakers.

I. Overseas lectures/speeches

21-24 August 2008 “Search stage on the rule of law · Eastern Asia seminar related to due process”
Organized by Asia Human Rights Commission

II. Domestic meetings, forums and symposiums

- 1st August 2008 Public Forum for the UN reform

Organized by Japanese NGOs and Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- 6th September 2007

The second regular policy -making consultative meetings on ODA in 2007

Organized by Japanese NGOs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- 12th January 2008 “Khmer Rouge Court and second thought of Cambodian genocide”

Organized by Tokyo University Comparative Genocide Research Society

- 3rd May 2008 “International seminar: Peace building-Case studies of the Philippines”

Organized by The Asia Foundation Japan office

• 6th March 2008 “Peace and human rights to think at international standards - lawyers lead the world” Organized by the Japan Young Lawyers Association

Part4. Reports and Statements

HRN issued various reports and statements to address human rights situations, including the statements and reports below.

I. Information and reports provided to the UN organizations

HRN, together with Asian Legal Resource Centre, provided OHCHR with information about human rights situations in Japan for the UN Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

“Open Letter to the President of Human Rights Council” September 28th, 2007

This is a joint open letter to the President of the UN Human Rights Council, submitted by HRN with other 60 Asian NGOs, which requests for a special session of UN Human Rights Council to address human rights situation in Myanmar.

II. Reports and Opinion Statements

- February 1st 2008, “Proposal for a revision of the JBIC (Japan Bank of International Cooperation) environmental and social consideration guideline – from the perspective of human rights” (submitted to JBIC)
- April 4th 2008, “Human rights situations in Myanmar and a road to democratization – a report of the fact finding mission on human rights on the border of Myanmar and Thailand, half year after the Saffron Revolution”
- April 6th 2008, “Philippines – A report of the fact finding mission regarding to the extra-judicial killings and forced disappearance of human rights activists ”
- April 10th 2008, “Proposal for a revision of the JICA /JBIC, environmental and social consideration guideline – from the perspective of human rights” (submitted to the new JICA expert committee)
- July 2008, “Mass Victims Litigation Practice – A proposal of participation of ECCC (Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia) victims – Suggestions For Victims’ Participation at the ECCC

Part5. Organization and Administration

I. Membership and others

There are 440 regular members (including 54 student members), and 70 supporting members of Human Rights Now (HRN). During this term, HRN published newsletters three times, periodic mail-magazines and notice of the events and actions to the all of the members. Furthermore, in order raise awareness about the organization and to gain support from non-members, HRN sent mail magazines to non-members as well.

II. Office

Since establishment, HRN’s office has been located in Maruko-Building 3rd Floor 1-20-6, Higashi-Ueno Taito-ku Tokyo 110-0015 JAPAN.

III. Organization Administration (including situations of volunteers and interns)

In April 2008, HRN received the status of an NPO and became a nonprofit organization under the *Law to Enhance the Activity of Non-Profit Organizations*.

Board Meetings were held three times in 2007 and the administration and policy of HRN was discussed at these meetings. In between these meetings, members discussed issues via email and made decisions through that medium. There are 20 office staff members, including the Secretary General. Pro bono lawyers contribute to most of the activities. Executive meetings were held once or twice a month in 2007.

For the daily operation of HRN, there is one part-time executive officer (more than 20 hours a week), and HRN is recruiting volunteers all the time.

For this term, HRN would like to note that there is a foreign law firm that participates in the activities of HRN for pro bono cases. We are planning to expand our relations with law firms who wish to undertake pro bono work.

Furthermore, especially for the Women’s Rights Project and the International Precedent Project, we would like to note that many young researchers and scholars are participating in HRN’s projects. HRN actively accepts interns. In this term, we accepted not only Japanese students but also 5 students from Columbia University School of Law for this term. With regard to domestic students, HRN accepted students from Waseda University and Aoyama Gakuin University. In each project, project meetings are held and interns and other participants participate in the meetings.

Volunteers are divided into translation volunteers and publicity/ event volunteers. There are about 10 people in each section.

In the next term, we are planning to hire one more part-time executive officers and work to strengthen the publicity, fund-raising and expansion of the membership base.

We hope that members who have had various working experiences with us will continue to offer their experience and enthusiasm in future projects.

IV List of board members

1. Board of Directors of the Human Rights Now

Kohki Abe (President of HRN, Professor of Law, Kanagawa University School of Law)

Kazuko Ito (Secretary General of HRN, Attorney at Law),

Chihiro Ito (Journalist),

Makoto Ito (Principal of the Ito cram school),

Toshirou Ueyanagi (Attorney at Law),

Susumu Oishi (President of the Nippon-Hyoron-sha Ltd.),

Akio Kawamura (Visiting scholar of the Asian Institution at the Chulalongkorn University),

Osamu Shiraishi (Director of the Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center),

Kanae Doi (Attorney at Law),

Yasushi Higashizawa (Attorney, Professor of Law, Meiji-Gakuin Universitys School of Law)

2. Accounting / Finance

The Fiscal report and balance sheet of 2007 was distributed at the General Assembly.

As described in Part 1, the activities of HRN have expanded all over Asia and the scope of these activities has also broadened. Therefore, our income is not sufficient for the expected activities.

Financial resources are required for staff members to go abroad to conduct research, and in most projects, staff members used their own money for their expenses. Furthermore, it is important to go to international conferences actively, such as meetings held by the United Nations. It is difficult for members to participate in those meetings without using their own money or other special invitations. HRN must improve its financial situation for the purposes of working in the field of human rights upon the request from civil society, conducting projects and taking action as a watchdog of the human rights situation in Asia. To continue to build and develop our organization, we look forward to many kinds of help from our supporters.

Many thanks.