



Peace Boat & Global Article 9 Campaign Statement on the Occasion of the International Day of Peace

September 21, 2015

As the world celebrates the International Day of Peace and marks the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, Peace Boat and the Global Article 9 Campaign strongly condemn the forceful passage in the Diet of security legislation that breaches Japan's peace constitution and allows its Self-Defense Forces to use force overseas.

Article 9 is the famous peace clause by which the Japanese people aspires to an international peace based on justice and order, renounces war and prohibits the use of force as means of settling international disputes. Adopted following WWII, Article 9 is a pledge to Japan itself and to the world, particularly to neighboring countries that suffered under Japanese invasions and colonial rule, to never repeat its mistakes. Since then, Article 9 has been widely recognized as a regional and international peace mechanism that has contributed to maintaining peace and stability in Northeast Asia and served as a legal framework to promote peace, disarmament and sustainability.

The adoption of new security legislation is the latest of a long series of initiatives that challenge Japan's longstanding peace policies. Such measures include re-interpreting Article 9, increasing the country's military budget and relaxing the long-held arms export ban. Indeed, the bills codifies the Cabinet's contentious decision to allow Japan to exercise the right to collective self-defense and expand Japan's security role around the world, under Prime Minister Abe Shinzo's pet-doctrine of "pro-active pacifism". It also puts the newly revised guidelines on Japan-U.S. defense cooperation into effect, granting the U.S. increased Japanese support in its military strategy not only in Asia but also in other parts of the world.

In Japan, the bills face broad opposition in the Diet and amongst the public, as shown by successive opinion polls and massive public protests, many of which organized by students and youth throughout Japan. Most of Japan's constitutional scholars (including former Prime Ministers, high-rank Cabinet officials and Supreme Court judges) deem the bills unconstitutional and the way they have been pushed through a worrisome deviation from the rule of law. At the regional level, the legislation has been met with anxiety from Japan's neighbors that consider the move a threat to regional peace and security in Asia.

On this International Day of Peace, Peace Boat and the Global Article 9 Campaign

- *Condemn in strongest terms the adoption of the security bills that fundamentally violate the principles and letter of war-renouncing Article 9;*
- *Decry the way by which the legislation was passed, in disregard for Japan's legal procedure and democratic process;*
- *Express utmost concerns at the possible repercussions the legislation will have on the region, and ask Japan and other countries in the region to refrain from any actions that would accelerate arms race and destabilize peace and stability in Northeast Asia;*
- *Support Japan's civil society efforts to prevent the legislation from being implemented and Article 9 to be further eroded;*
- *And call on people around the world to support Japan's vibrant mobilization towards the revocation of the bills, the preservation of Japan's democracy and pacific values, and the safeguard of Article 9 as a regional and global peace mechanism.*