

Hirokazu Nakaima, Governor of Okinawa Prefecture
Yoshihiko Noda, Prime Minister
Koichiro Genba, Foreign Minister
Satoshi Morimoto, Defense Minister
Barack Obama, President of the United States
John V. Roos, U.S. Ambassador to Japan
Kenneth Glueck, Okinawa Area Coordinator and Commanding General of III Marine Expeditionary Force
Alfred Magleby, U.S. Consul General of Naha, Okinawa

Monday, August 20, 2012

**Statement of protest against the sexual assault on an Okinawan woman by a US Marine Corps serviceman,
and demand for withdrawal of US Military Forces**

We, residents of Okinawa, and women of Okinawa, who have long suffered from imposition of US military bases and troops on this island, are deeply shocked and outraged over the sexual assault on the woman, resulting in injury, which happened at 4:30 AM on August 18.

The offender, a US marine, knocked the woman down on the street as she was on her way home, and assaulted her. Local residents heard her scream, and the offender has been arrested, but the pain and fear of the victim is immeasurable, causing serious anxiety in local communities. We must also remember that many such crimes are left unreported.

Why are US combat personnel allowed to freely roam around outside of the bases and enter local neighborhoods? Why is the provision of a safe living environment for women and children not treated seriously?

According to a newspaper report on July 6 (*Ryukyu Shimpo*), the number of sexual assaults against female service members within the US Marine Corps as a whole last year was three hundred and forty-six, sixty-seven of which were committed by Marine Corps members based in Okinawa, the second highest in all US Marine Corps bases. We were appalled that the rate of such crimes in Okinawa was twice of those of the other bases, and this does not even include sexual crimes against Okinawan women.

The US military in June 2010 placed an indefinite midnight curfew on military personnel, in response to the frequent occurrences of fatal hit-and-run accidents and taxi robberies. This present case shows that such disciplinary measure by the US military has been gradually dropped.

Together with the risk posed by the MV-22 Osprey deployment in Okinawa we must raise awareness about the continuing threat posed by the US military and call for their removal. Based on the stance that “the military is an institution of structural violence, not providing true security either at local or inter-state level,” we demand the following:

- Respect for the privacy of the woman victim, and physical and psychological care for her.
- Apology to be issued to the woman victim and the offender to be strictly punished.
- Banning of all off-base activities of all US military personnel, in order to secure safe living environments for women and children.
- Withdrawal of all US military bases and troops from Okinawa.

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