

**Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
(CERD)**

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NGO Report

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About JNCRD

Japan NGO Coalition against Racial Discrimination (JNCRD) is a coalition of civil groups involved in the racial discrimination issues in Japan and human rights violation issues against Japanese in foreign countries.

JNCRD Members

- ♦ Academics' Alliance for Correcting Groundless Criticisms of Japan
- ♦ Citizen's Committee for Reexamining Municipal Position on Comfort Women Issue
- ♦ Citizen's Group against Local Autonomy Basic Ordinance
- ♦ Grass Roots Action about Fabricated Comfort Women Issue
- ♦ HANADOKEL, the Patriotic Women's Association
- ♦ Indigenous and Minority Rights of Japan
- ♦ Japan Association for Fostering the Seeds of Historical Truth
- ♦ Japanese Citizen's Group against the Suffrage of Foreigners
- ♦ Japanese Volunteer Association to Rectify the Fabricated Comfort Women Issue
- ♦ Japanese Women for Justice and Peace
- ♦ Meeting in Hokkaido Aiming at a Solution of a Forgery Problem of the Japanese Military "Comfort Women"
- ♦ Okinawa Policy Research Forum of Japan
- ♦ Research Group on Political Rights
- ♦ Study Group on Freedom of Expression
- ♦ Society for the Dissemination of Historical Fact
- ♦ Soyokaze
- ♦ The Alliance for Truth about Comfort Women
- ♦ The Study Group for School Education
- ♦ Toronto Seiron
- ♦ True Japanese Society
- ♦ Veteran's Voice Memorial Project

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Preface

It is a very fortuitous coincidence for Japan that the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) for Japan will be holding its session in this timing because the 100th anniversary of Japan's initiative to abolish racial discrimination within the international arena will be nearing soon. On February 13, 1919, the Japanese government first made a proposal for racial equality within the committee responsible for drafting the Covenant of the League of Nations at the Paris Peace Conference in Versailles, to the effect that elimination of racial discrimination should be clearly stated in the Covenant. Japan's proposal was supported by an overwhelmingly majority (11 to 5) of committee members on April 11, 1919. However, US President Woodrow Wilson, chairman of the committee, unfairly intervened and overruled the majority decision. He blithely argued that such an issue of importance should be decided unanimously.

Moreover, the US Congress passed the Jonson-Reed Act in 1924 which virtually singled out Japanese immigrants. Even very pro-American Japanese intellectuals, such as NITOBÉ Inazo, UCHIMURA Kanzo and ASHIDA Hitoshi, greatly resented the passage of this Act. They stated that they would never visit the United States again since this Act was an inexcusable form of racial discrimination clearly targeted against a specific nation.

Japan endured racial discrimination from Western countries for a very long period of time since she was the only country among non-white countries that succeeded in state modernization and industrialization in the 19th century. Soon after Japan's victory in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), fears of the so-called "Yellow Peril" emerged in Europe at the end of the 19th century. In fact, Japan spent many years, without success, in trying to revise unequal treaties with Western countries.

These sentiments of discrimination against the Japanese people eventually led to the US-Japan War (1941-1945). Racial discrimination was obviously one of the major reasons behind the Second World War. During the war, Japan convened the Greater East Asia Conference with seven East Asian countries in Tokyo in November 1943, and announced the Joint Declaration of the Greater East Asia Conference on November 6, 1943, stating the abolition of racial discrimination. This was entirely

different from the US's and UK's so-called Atlantic Charter of August 14, 1941, which did not contain anything concerning racial equality at all.

It is very natural for Japan to be a pioneer of the racial equality movement in the international community because Japan had been the biggest victim in this sense for a very long time. After the Second World War, Japan has been the leader of the movement for racial equality.

Just 50 years after Japan's proposal for racial equality at the Paris Peace Conference, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) finally came into being in 1969. With the passage of time, we are very pleased to have the 96th Session of the CERD at the United Nations in Geneva in August 2018. We believe that Japan will continue to enthusiastically contribute as a leader and as a pioneer of the movement for racial equality.

Academics' Alliance for Correcting Groundless Criticisms of Japan (AACGCJ)