

We denounce the Japanese government for ignoring the will of Okinawans and forcibly reclaiming Oura Bay to build a military base in Henoko

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Tsuyoshi Masuda

President, Japan Federation of Democratic Medical Institutions (Min-iren)

The Japanese government and the Okinawa Defense Bureau on August 20 forcibly began the full-scale construction of “Seawall A” on Oura Bay after finishing pile driving tests that had been conducted in the bay since July.

The government says the construction period is expected to be nine years and three months, but driving more than 70,000 sand piles into the seabed at a depth of more than 70 meters below the surface is unprecedented. It must be said that the planned construction on the site with a depth of more than 90 meters below the sea surface is unlikely to be completed.

Okinawa Governor Denny Tamaki condemned the start of the construction in disregard of prior consultations and demanded that the construction be halted until the consultations were completed, but the national government has completely ignored this.

We Min-iren reiterate our strong demand that the government listen to Okinawans’ voices and respond to the governor’s request.

The cost of constructing seawalls in Oura Bay, which was estimated at 26.147 million yen after the design change, has increased by 17 billion yen with the contract change to 37.876 billion yen, 1.5 times the initial cost.

Moreover, according to news reports, the Japanese government, while calling for the relocation of the U.S. Futenma air station to Henoko, had paid 21.7 billion yen for repairs in the Futenma base since 2013. It had been used to pay for the renovation of hangars, barracks, and other facilities in the base ordered by the Okinawa Defense Bureau. This highlights the inconsistency of the government spending a large amount of money on repairs of the base that it says it will remove.

It is outrageous that massive amounts of tax money are used to build a new military base in Henoko and to repair the Futenma base while many citizens are forced to endure hardship due to higher prices.

We are determined to continue fighting to achieve a peaceful and prosperous Okinawa in solidarity with Okinawans and a wide range of people throughout Japan, keeping the words in our hearts, “The way to win is to never give up.”