

Protecting minority rights during humanitarian crises

The International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR)

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Mr. Chairperson,

I am speaking on behalf of the International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism in Japan.

I would like to share the experience in Japan that is most relevant to the draft recommendations on minorities in situations of humanitarian crises, number 20(c) regarding implementation of measures to prevent advocacy of racial hatred.

The Kumamoto earthquakes are a series of earthquakes that occurred in Kumamoto Prefecture in 14th of April, 2016 in Japan.

On 14th April, the first day of the earthquake, hate speech that resembled the one from the Great Kanto earthquake in 1923 was spread via social media against one of the most discriminated groups, which is Zainichi Koreans. They were falsely accused of committing crimes. Due to the hate speech in 1923, many Zainichi Koreans were massacred in Yokohama and Tokyo. Today, with similar hate speech, we risk repeating the same tragedy.

In a separate incident, a member of the Yukuhashi city council, in Fukuoka Prefecture advocated hate speech against Zainichi Koreans. The councillor stated that 'people are often terrified of foreigners and foreigners are more likely to be suspected of being involved in any forms of crimes during a disaster'.

Given the situation, Mr. Chairperson, I would highly recommend that the Government of Japan, especially during the vulnerable time of humanitarian crisis, to implement the 2014 CERD Concluding Observations for Japan, in particular: paragraph 11(b), to take appropriate steps to combat hate speech in the media, including the Internet; and paragraph 11 (d), to pursue appropriate sanctions against public officials and politicians who disseminate hate speech and incitement to hatred.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.