

**Final Statement of the 4th Global Inter-religious Conference on Article 9
From Seoul and Okinawa to Tokyo**

December 5, 2014

YMCA Asia Youth Center

Article 9 of Japan's Peace Constitution

Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes.

In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained.

The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.

All religions are universal, transcending races and nations. Today, however, there are cases where religions are used to instigate and justify violence. Religions should be purified to their original inspiration, and their followers should faithfully translate these truths and realities about life in word and deed in their respective contexts. Each religion should be an expression of the universal truths like peace, and lead to collectively proclaim and live these rather than insist on differences that may lead to disunity or even hostility.¹

The 4th Global Inter-religious Conference on Article 9 of the Japanese Peace Constitution gathered 120 participants from Japan, South Korea, China, Hong Kong/PRC, Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Myanmar, Australia, Congo, Norway, Switzerland, Germany, Canada and the USA. The conference was held at the YMCA Asia Youth Center and its participants hereby issue this Statement. This Conference follows upon the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Asia Inter-religious Conference on Article 9, which were held in 2007 (Tokyo), 2009 (Seoul) and 2011 (Okinawa), but the name was changed to the Global Inter-religious Conference on Article 9, to reflect the broadened base of participation from abroad.

¹ Excerpt from *Our Mission: Inter-Religious Conference on Article 9 and Peace in Asia*. Seoul, 2009.

- 1) We reaffirm our commitment and call the followers of all religions to be accountable to the values of justice, peace and care for all life, nationally, regionally and globally.
- 2) In the statements issued on the occasions of the 2nd and the 3rd Asia Inter-religious Conference on Article 9 of the Japanese Peace Constitution, we affirmed that Article 9 is more than ever relevant, not only for Japan, but for regional and international relations, and that it is forward-looking. It can be seen as an essential step toward preventing and ending all war and as a unique expression of the core value of a just, peaceful, and sustainable future for all communities around the world.
- 3) Together with our Japanese hosts and partners, we are deeply concerned that the Abe/Liberal Democratic Party administration has reinterpreted and further intends to revise and amend Article 9, which is Japan's pledge for peace and to desist from war. Revising the peace constitution of Japan will bring about serious instability in the region of Asia and beyond. Japan should never be a threat to neighboring countries, nor become a destabilizing factor. This constitutional reinterpretation and proposed revision by the Abe administration is contrary to the wishes and desires of the people in this region, and a threat to constitutional democracy.
- 4) The Abe administration should squarely reflect upon Japan's modern history of invasion and colonialism, and express this reflection clearly before the world. Not only should the government of Japan protect the Constitution, which is also the Japanese people's promise of non-belligerence, but it should uphold previously-made official Government statements that reflect upon Japan's past invasions and colonialism, such as the (Chief Cabinet Secretary) Kōno Statement², the (Prime Minister) Murayama Statement³ and the (Prime Minister) Kan Statement⁴. Members of the administration should also not pay official homage visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, which can be perceived as a

² Statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary Yōhei Kōno on the result of the study on the issue of "comfort women" 1993.08.04

³ Statement by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama "On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the war's end" 1995.08.15

⁴ Statement by Prime Minister Naoto Kan (on the occasion of 100 years since the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty) 2010.08.10

provocative act of endorsing war crimes. Genuine acknowledgement and apology for Japan's invasions, atrocities and colonial rule by the Japanese government forms a foundation for peace in the Asia region.

- 5) We demand that the government of Japan strive to resolve regional territorial disputes in accordance with the letter and spirit of Article 9, through dialogue and diplomatic negotiations. We call upon each country to refrain from the use, or threatened use, of armed force as a means of settling such disputes.
- 6) The government of Japan should take action, without delay, to mitigate the crushing burden of U.S. military bases placed upon the people of Okinawa and other Japanese communities. We are witnessing the pain of the people and ecological destruction around military bases. We demand that the Japanese and US governments the immediate closing of Camp Futenma and the immediate halt of construction of the new base in Henoko. We demand that the United States government recall its military forces to the U.S. not only from Japan but from other countries in the region.
- 7) Remilitarization brings not more security but more vulnerability to a nation and a region. The cynical manipulation of the idea of collective self-defense through Abe regime's reinterpretation of Art 9 definitely will lead to a dangerous arms race that will destabilize the entire region. It is obvious that this remilitarization of Japan is linked to and supported by a US desire to strengthen its hegemony in Asia. We call upon all nations, to abstain from and reject military solutions to political conflicts and diplomatic challenges. We encourage the Japanese government to show leadership that is true to the letter and spirit of Article-9, and resist pressure from other states to accept a remilitarization of their country. We are grateful to the efforts of people in peace movements in the US and other countries, and encourage them to continue their work for true peace.
- 8) We are hopeful that all people around the world will overcome narrow nationalism and, following the spirit of the Article 9, will construct relationships based on the principles of no-war, reconciliation, equality, mutual respect, and mutual benefit. As consequence of the commitment to non-violence as expressed in Article 9, and as persons of faith committed to life, we plead to

respect the human right of conscientious objection to military service.

- 9) In addition to the points raised in the text above, we petition the government of Japan in the spirit of Article 9 to address the growing problem of hate speech, which is being directed against Korean and other minority groups, as well as peace advocates, in communities across Japan. We urge the government of Japan to institute laws that would protect residents from fear-inducing taunts and threats, and to end the practice of lending police protection to those who deliver hate speeches under the cynical guise of “protecting freedom of expression.”
- 10) We believe that ultimate security can be guaranteed only by no weapons and no military forces. Acting on this belief, Conference participants pledge to communicate to their communities the importance of Article 9, and to support the reaffirmation of Article 9 by correspondingly addressing their governments. Our prayer is that Article 9 will inspire people of all nations.

Recommendations for Action

Religious Communities

- We call upon faith communities in Japan, Korea and other Asian nations to form country working groups in East Asia, to implement Article 9 activities.
- We call upon faith communities to engage youth in the promotion of the cause of Article 9, by use of creative media and by the creation of education materials.
- We call upon faith communities to include a prayer for the spread of the spirit of Article 9 on September 21st, the International Day for Peace.
- We call upon faith communities and advocates of peace in other lands to remember Japan and Article 9 on May 3, Constitution Day, when the people of Japan commemorate the promulgation of the Constitution.
- We call upon the WCC to consider the possibility of hosting an international interfaith Article 9 conference, as part of its Pilgrimage on Justice and Peace.
- We call upon our Muslim friends in peace across Asia to consider the possibility of hosting an interfaith Article 9 conference in a majority Muslim country in Asia.
- We call upon the CCA to help organize a solidarity visit by article 9 leaders to North and South Korea, to promote peace, reunification and Article 9.
- We call upon the Asia Pacific Forum of North America to organize an Article 9

solidarity visit to the United States.

Civil Society

- In order to actualize the spirit of peace in article 9, we will make efforts to strengthen our solidarity with those who advocate for peace in civil society.
- We will work with those who advocate for peace in civil society to make Article 9 and the commitments arising from it a subject of instruction in school.
- We will support the ongoing efforts of Article 9 advocates to seek nomination and award of the Nobel Peace Prize for Article 9.

Participants of the 4th Global Inter-religious Conference on Article 9