

Statement (Japan): We oppose proposed revisions to immigration law that exacerbate direct and structural violence against refugee and immigrant women

Saturday 13 May 2023, by [Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center](#) (Date first published: 12 May 2023).

We oppose the proposed revisions to the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act, which were passed by the House of Representatives on May 9 with the support of the Liberal Democratic Party, New Kōmeitō, Isshin, National Democratic Party of Japan, and others, on the grounds that the proposed revisions would cause serious human rights violations.



Although Japan already has a low rate of approving refugee status, this revised law will promote the deportation of at-risk migrants to countries where they are at risk of persecution. This undermines what stability they have found and the human relations they have built in Japan, and could also constitute a violation of their fundamental rights. We want to emphasize that the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act is unacceptable from the perspective of protecting women's rights and eliminating gender-based violence and oppression.

Wishima Sandamali's death demonstrated not only the inhumane treatment of detainees in immigration facilities. Wishma lost her status of residence because, as a victim of domestic violence, she was prevented from attending school and could not access the proper support for her situation. As a result, she then was abused in a Japanese immigration detention facility. Because there is no system in place to ensure that victims of gender-based violence receive protection regardless of nationality or residency status, victims are instead at risk of criminalization under immigration law.

Furthermore, as evidenced by the case of a technical intern trainee who was prosecuted for abandoning the corpse of an infant, it is clear that immigrant women in Japan are facing structural violence in Japanese society. Government efforts to support resettlement and eliminate discrimination are lacking, while their legal status is made precarious by immigration laws, leaving immigrants in a highly vulnerable economic and social position. In particular, parolees are excluded from employment and basic social services, leaving them with little to turn to outside of their families and communities. In this context, women who are vulnerable to the combined effects of nationality- and race-based discrimination as well as gender-based discrimination, and who often

bear heavy burden for care responsibilities in their families, are often put in a situation in which they do not get the help they may need. Their situation is compounded by the fact that their children, especially girls, find their life chances limited as well.

If the Japanese government is going to talk about “eliminating violence against women” and “supporting women in need,” strengthening an immigration system that threatens refugee and immigration women is a huge misstep. These women should be able to build a stable life as an equal member of Japanese society and fully exercise their potential according to their own will.

In accordance with the recommendations of the UN human rights organizations, we must remove all legal, socioeconomic, and cultural barriers to women’s rights in Japan.

For these reasons, we oppose the proposed amendment to the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act, and call for laws and measures to guarantee the rights of refugee immigrants in Japan.

May 12, 2023

Asia-Japan Women’s Resource Center

P.S.

- Article in Japanese:
<https://www.tokyo-np.co.jp/article/249622>