

Japan: An Urgent Appeal from Feminists Protesting Discrimination and Hatred against LGBTQ+

Tuesday 11 July 2023, by [Women's Action Network \(WAN\)](#) (Date first published: 14 June 2023).

For the LGBT Understanding Promotion Act, three drafts were submitted: the ruling party LDP/Komeito bill, the CDP/JCP/SD bill [former bipartisan proposal], and the JIP/DPP bill. The JIP/DPP version was eventually merged into the LDP/Komeito bill, and the four-party amendment was passed at the Lower Cabinet Committee on June 9th and at the Lower House plenary session on June 13th.

The four-party amendment includes the phrase “[LGBT] must consider that all citizens shall live safely,” thus, the law, which was supposed to protect minority rights, now champions majority rights. Furthermore, promotion of understanding sexual minorities in education and establishing counselling systems at schools could be at stake due to the addition of the condition “[they must be conducted] under cooperation from households, local residents, and other concerned parties.”

Rumors that fuel anxiety have been spreading around on social media for some time, but the situation is becoming more worrisome as the enactment of the law is approaching [translator's note: enacted on June 16th]. For example, a statement such as “We could not refuse a biological male entering a female bathing area if he said, ‘I identify myself as a female’ when the law was enacted because if we did, we would be regarded as sexists,” has been going around quite often. We are concerned that spreading such misperceptions and prejudices will trigger a moral panic, and, as a result, hatred against transgender people will worsen.

The belief that protecting transgender people's rights will threaten women's safety can be extremely dangerous to transgender people's lives and wellbeing. In fact, some transgender people have received death threats. There are also difficulties in providing safe places for children with gender dysphoria.

As feminists, we are deeply concerned about the situation where such falsehood that frightens women is spreading even among some feminists. Feminism, which has sought women's safety and rights, does not seek the safety of cis women alone. It goes without saying that public restrooms and bathhouses should be safe for everyone. The real issue here is the current situation in which women's safety is not sufficiently protected; thus, supports for victims of sexual violence and for legislation to prevent sexual violence are strongly needed.

We issue this statement in the hope that attacks on LGBTQ+ people will stop in the current tense situation. As feminists, we want to stand with solidarity with the movement to eliminate any kinds of discrimination, prejudice, and hatred against transgender people, and to create more opportunities for exchanging dialogues in order to realize a truly inclusive society free of gender-based discrimination.

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Women's Action Network (WAN)

P.S.

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