

We strongly protest against land minister's lawsuit for US base construction in Okinawa

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Land Minister Tetsuo Saito filed a lawsuit against Okinawa Prefecture on October 5, requesting an administrative subrogation order that would allow the national government to approve, on behalf of Okinawa Governor Denny Tamaki, design changes related to ground improvement work for the construction of a new U.S. base in Henoko, Okinawa. In disregard of the will of Okinawan people who oppose the base construction, the national government outrageously tries to forcibly continue the construction work even if it means destroying local autonomy. The Japan Federation of Democratic Medical Institutions (Min-iren) strongly condemns the government's filing of the lawsuit.

After soft seabed was found off the coast of Henoko, Nago City, the Okinawa Defense Bureau applied for design changes for land reclamation work in 2020. Governor Tamaki denied the application, saying that it contained problems. The national government annulled the governor's decision based on the Administrative Complaint Review Act and ordered the prefecture to retract the disapproval based on the Local Autonomy Law.

Okinawa Prefecture filed a lawsuit against the national government, arguing that the order was illegal, but the Supreme Court dismissed the prefecture's appeal in an unjust ruling. Based on this Supreme Court decision, the national government demanded that the Okinawa government approve the design changes, but Governor Tamaki announced that he was unable to approve the application by the deadline. Therefore, the national government filed the latest lawsuit.

With a prefectural referendum and gubernatorial elections, Okinawan people have consistently expressed their opposition to the new U.S. base construction. The Okinawa government has requested meetings with the national government, but it has refused such requests. The national government's outrageous attempt to trample on the will of Okinawans and force the base construction at any cost is unacceptable.

To realize a peaceful and prosperous Okinawa without turning it into a battlefield again, Min-iren firmly opposes the Henoko base construction and is determined to continue our fight in solidarity with Okinawan people and a wide range of citizens throughout Japan with the words "The way to win is to never give up."