

We demand halt to Osprey flights and withdrawal of their deployment

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A CV-22 Osprey, a special operations aircraft stationed in the U.S. Yokota Air Base, crashed off Kagoshima's Yakushima Island on November 29, killing one of the eight crew members on board while a search continues for the remaining seven. As Ospreys are "structurally defective" and have caused numerous accidents, they could crash anywhere at any time. The Japan Federation of Democratic Medical Institutions (Min-iren) demands a halt to Osprey flights and the withdrawal of their deployment.

Following the 2016 crash in Okinawa's Nago City, this is the second Osprey crash and the first fatal one in Japan. Ospreys have caused other accidents in the country, such as fallings of aircraft parts and emergency landings. Serious accidents continue to occur outside Japan, including the crash of a U.S. Marine Corps Osprey in northern Norway in March 2022, killing four crew members, and another Marine Corps Osprey crash in the United States in June 2022, killing five crew members.

There are currently 44 Ospreys deployed in Japan by the U.S. military and the Japanese Self-Defense Forces, the largest number deployed in a country outside the U.S. In the wake of the latest crash, residents living in the vicinity of bases have voiced strong concerns and anger. The Japanese government at 8:00 a.m. on November 30 requested the U.S. forces to suspend Osprey flights, but Ospreys were spotted flying over densely populated areas such as Ayase City and Ebina City in the afternoon of the same day. Such disregard for the safety of all people living in Japan is absolutely unacceptable.

Given that the risks of Ospreys have long been pointed out, the latest crash was an accident waiting to happen. If they continue to be deployed and conduct flight exercises, they could cause irreparable accidents. For the protection of the lives and safety of people living in Japan, Min-iren demands a halt to flights of U.S. military and SDF Ospreys and withdrawal of their deployment.