

We strongly protest against unjust ruling of administrative subrogation lawsuit over Henoko base construction

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The Naha branch of the Fukuoka High Court on December 20 ordered the Okinawa governor to approve a changed plan for a new U.S. base construction in Henoko, Okinawa, as requested by the national government in an “administrative subrogation” lawsuit. The Japan Federation of Democratic Medical Institutions (Min-iren) condemns this unjust ruling that tramples on the will of Okinawan people calling for the removal of bases and the right to local autonomy.

The ruling ordered Okinawa Prefecture to approve the application for design changes on the grounds that if the application is not approved, removing the dangers posed by the U.S. Futenma Air Station will not be achieved, and “public interest” will be harmed.

Residents of Okinawa Prefecture have consistently expressed their opposition to the new base construction through a prefectural referendum and gubernatorial elections. They have also called for the removal of the Futenma base. The will of Okinawan people must be recognized as public interest.

Although Okinawa Prefecture continued to ask the national government for discussions, the national government filed the administrative subrogation lawsuit without responding to the prefecture’s request. The ruling undermines the “equal and cooperative” relationship between the national and local governments and denies the right to local autonomy. This is not just an issue of Okinawa but could lead to violations of local autonomy in many other parts of Japan.

The national government’s outrageous attempt to trample on the will of Okinawans and forcibly conduct the Henoko base construction is unacceptable. Min-iren firmly opposes the new U.S. base construction. To realize a peaceful and prosperous Okinawa without turning it into a battlefield again, we are determined to continue to fight in solidarity with Okinawan people and a wide range of citizens throughout Japan with the slogan, “The way to win is to never give up.”