

Recommendation for awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to Japanese citizens who have continued supporting Article 9 of the Constitution of Japan

Reason for the recommendation

In the past, Japan destroyed numerous lives and inflicted huge damage in the world, especially in the Asia-Pacific region, during wars. We owe a heavy responsibility to the victims. Since the end of World War II, Japan has maintained a pacifist Constitution which stipulates that the Japanese government will contribute to world peace by no longer waging war. The renunciation of war stated in Article 9 of this Constitution is the only way to compensate victims. Such reparation can be done by forever renouncing war, not engaging in armed conflict and contributing to peace. This Peace Constitution has been maintained for 68 years in spite of the Cold War and severe international circumstances. That is a fruit of the wish among people in Asia and the Japanese people's will to not relinquish Article 9.

At the same time, international society has also been seeking ways to reduce the damage caused by wars and to eliminate conflict. These efforts include the antiwar approaches to establishing collective security frameworks such as the League of Nations, the United Nations and the European Union and to make war illegal by means of international law. International society is progressing toward world peace by making use of this accumulated history. The Preface and Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution reflect the efforts and earnest desire of international society. An Australian scholar of constitutional law, Cheryl Saunders, has stated that if an international constitution is ever enacted, Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution will be a model. I believe that Article 9 is deeply inspiring to global initiatives toward peace.

The Northeast Asia Group of the UN-convened network, Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), discussed the following three points in its preparatory meeting.

- ① Northeast Asia is the only cold-war region remaining in the world;
- ② Japan is still a militaristic nation;
- ③ Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution is indispensable for peace in Asia.

As a result, they submitted an action agenda on Article 9. Later, Article 9 was discussed in the United Nation in 2005 as part of the Global Action Plan (*1).

However, Article 9 is currently under threat of being revised amid the deteriorating relationship among East Asian nations and increased military tension over territories and resources. Under such circumstances, if the Nobel Peace Prize were

awarded to Japanese citizens who have maintained Article 9, the Japanese people will reaffirm the significance of their mission to live in the spirit of Article 9 and they will draw courage and confidence to continue to follow the path toward peace. Peace can be brought about not by use of force but by a deepening of trust and dialogue alone. Article 9 exemplifies the determination to realize peace based on this conviction. I recommend Japanese citizen who have continued maintaining Article 9 for the Nobel Peace Prize because I believe that if they were awarded the Prize, the significance of Article 9 as a world treasure will be conveyed to the world and global peace will surely be greatly promoted.

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Michael Goro Matsuura, Auxiliary Bishop of Osaka
President of the Japan Catholic Council for Justice and Peace
President of the Catholic Commission of Japan for Migrants, Refugees and
People on the Move

Reference

(*1) “In the world there are regions where norms or laws play an important role in promoting regional security and deepening trust. For example, Article 9 of the Constitution of Japan renounces war as means of settling international disputes as well as abandoning the maintaining of war potential to that end. This article has been the foundation of the collective security of the entire Asia Pacific region.”