



## Statement of Pax Christi International on Article 9

*Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution: "Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. To accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized."*

Pax Christi International is deeply concerned about efforts to revise or remove Article 9 from the Japanese Constitution. Article 9 has been a sign of hope for a world that yearns for deep, inclusive and lasting peace. It has encouraged dialogue and diplomacy, helping Japan to become a stabilizing factor in East Asia rather than a threat to neighbouring countries. We strongly encourage the Japanese government to address "territorial disputes" in accordance with the spirit of Article 9 rather than to remove such an important and visionary article from the Japanese Constitution.

Further, we urge all nations to demilitarize the region of East Asia. The United States should remove its military bases from Japan and, with the government of Japan, take action to mitigate the crushing burden of U.S. military bases upon the people of Okinawa. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea should reaffirm the "Joint Declaration on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" ratified by North and South Korea in 1992 and the "Joint Statement for the realization of the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" agreed at the six-party talks in September of 2005. Nations possessing nuclear weapons should move swiftly to nuclear disarmament, fulfilling the obligations of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, which provides the diplomatic basis for a resolution to regional tensions.

We salute and encourage all efforts made by multiple organizations and individuals to cultivate a just peace in the region and we affirm our conviction that amending or removing Article 9 from the Japanese Constitution would be a significant step in the wrong direction. Rather, the commitment represented by Article 9 to build peaceful international relations based on reconciliation, equality and mutual respect should serve as a model for the world.

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