



We protest against the Secrecy Bill

At the end of World War II, YWCA of Japan determined to do its best for building peace. This results from serious repentance that we had not made enough efforts to resist the war.

Kobe YWCA is also regretful and has focused our work on grassroots peacemaking. Now we are highly concerned about the current government who urgently and eagerly pursues national security and military related legislations. A bill to create a Japanese version of the U.S. National Security Council has passed the Upper House and now the government is impatiently trying to have the Secrecy Bill passed.

We strongly protest against the Secrecy Bill that will undermine the people's right to know. This law will give the government ministries the right to classify information related to defense, diplomacy, counterintelligence and counterterrorism as a state secret. But there is no guideline as to what constitutes a secret; the government can designate any inconvenient information secret.

What if we can't get the information that would be crucial to our life?

Let us recall that in March 2011, the government bureaucrats withheld data collected from "SPEEDI (System for Prediction of Environmental Emergency Dose Information)", and many refugees evacuated into more contaminated areas. The tragedy was caused because the essential information was concealed and the refugees were left behind.

Under the Bill, anyone who is convicted of leaking or searching for "special secrets" can be sentenced to up to ten years in prison without being notified of the reason. This could wither citizens' will to pursue the truth.

We cannot forget about the past disastrous wars, which we were involved in without knowing the truth.

The government is aiming for a state that can go to war with the allies, to pursue national security and military related legislations, applying the right of collective self-defense. However, this obviously is a violation of the Constitution. We will never choose the path to war again.

The Secrecy Bill encroaches on popular sovereignty, fundamental human rights, and pacifism. We, Kobe YWCA strongly object to the Bill.

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YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association)

is a global network of women leading social and economic change in 125 countries worldwide. It advocates for peace, justice, health, human dignity, freedom and care of the environment, and has been at the forefront of raising the status of women since it was founded in 1855.