

**Written submission for the seminar of  
Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples  
“The Impact of militarization on the rights of Indigenous Peoples”**

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**I. Militarization and the right to self-determination and free, prior, and informed consent**

Militarization impacts the right to self-determination of Indigenous Peoples and the FPIC principles negatively in various ways. This paper provides issues that are especially concerning, showing the cases from Ryukyu/Okinawa, Japan.

**1. Lack of recognition as indigenous peoples leading to the State’s avoidance of responsibility to protect and promote indigenous peoples' rights**

Recognition as an indigenous people by the State is not essentially necessary to claim rights as an indigenous people. However, recognition by the State is essential in order to clearly identify the State's responsibility for the protection and promotion of indigenous peoples' rights as required under international human rights laws. When a State lacks this recognition, it is used as an excuse to avoid State responsibilities to implement the policies for the protection and promotion of indigenous peoples' rights, resulting in the non-establishment of mechanisms to ensure FPIC principles.

**Case 1**

Okinawa, one of the 47 prefectures (administrative units) in Japan, used to be an independent state called Ryukyu Kingdom. It was annexed by Japan in 1879 (Ryukyu Disposition). Its languages and culture were banned by the Meiji Government's assimilation policy, and the militarization of the island resulted in the loss of land and environmental degradation for its peoples. At the end of the Pacific War, it became the site of fierce ground battles between Japan and the U.S.. The islands had been placed under the U.S. control until 1972, when it was returned to Japan. During occupation by the U.S., land was forcibly seized to build the U.S. military bases.

Even after the reversion to Japan in 1972, the number of U.S. military bases has not decreased, and about 70% of the U.S. military facilities in Japan remain concentrated in Ryukyu/Okinawa, small islands that account for only about 0.6% of Japan's land area. In recent years, the deployment of Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF) has expanded rapidly.

In light of the historic background, it is obvious that the Ryukyuan/Okinawan peoples are indigenous peoples who have the right to self-determination. Civil society organizations of Ryukyu/Okinawa have appealed to the Government of Japan to recognize the peoples of Ryukyu/Okinawa as indigenous peoples and to respect and protect their rights, through the UN human rights mechanisms. The UN Human Rights bodies have repeatedly recommended to the Government of Japan to recognize the people of Ryukyu/Okinawa as indigenous peoples<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> CERD/C/JPN/CO/3-6, para 21, CERD/C/JPN/CO/7-9, para 21, CERD/C/JPN/CO/10-11 para 17, CCPR/C/JPN/CO/5, para 32, CCPR/C/JPN/CO/6, para 26.

Yet the Government of Japan has refused to do so.

Currently, the Government of Japan is now reclaiming Oura Bay in Henoko to construct a new U.S. base as an alternative to the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, which has been heavily criticized as posing a danger to local communities.

After the relocation plan was revealed, the Ryukyuan/Okinawan peoples have expressed their clear opposition to this construction plan through a series of elections at the local, prefectural, and national levels, demonstrations, and sit-ins. However, the voices of peoples of Ryukyu/Okinawa have been totally ignored by the U.S. and Japanese governments. The lack of recognition as indigenous peoples results in a lack of recognition of their rights stipulated in articles 3, 4, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 32 of the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and thus no mechanism is established to guarantee their rights as indigenous peoples, resulting in military facilities being built in disregard of the FPIC principles.



Oura Bay, Henoko in 2017, before landfill



Oura Bay, Henoko in 2022

## **2. Accelerated militarization of land and sea in disregard of FPIC principles due to security environment.**

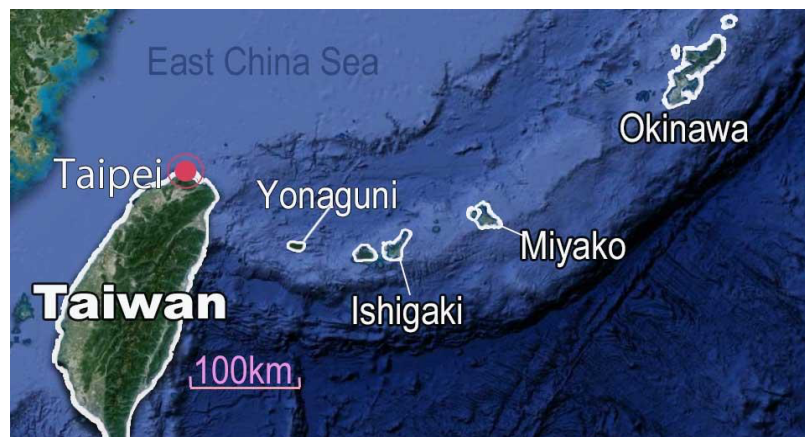
The security environment is deteriorating across the world in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. In Asia, especially the deepening US-China conflict over Taiwan has shaken the political and military stability of East Asia. As a result, countries in the area are focusing on

strengthening their military capabilities<sup>2</sup>, which is impacting indigenous peoples' lands and oceans in the form of accelerated militarization.

**Case 2. Rapid militarization to strengthen the capabilities of national military forces.**



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The construction and deployment of Japan's SDF bases is proceeding at a rapid pace on the remote islands of Miyako Island, Ishigaki Island, and Yonaguni Island in Ryukyu/Okinawa.

<sup>2</sup> NHK World Japan (15 Aug, 2022), *Japan's annual defense report focuses on Russia, China, Taiwan*, available at: <https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/backstories/2071/>

Miyako Island has a total area of about 160 square kilometers and a population of about 50,000 people. The SDF base was built without an environmental assessment required by laws and regulations, and 700 personnel, including surface-to-air missile troops, have been deployed there since April 2020.

Ishigaki Island has an area of about 222 square kilometers and a population of about 48,000. In March 2019, construction work began on a garrison for the deployment of Ground SDF missile units on the island. The area around the proposed deployment site is a tributary of the Miyara River, which is a water source for the islanders, but no environmental assessment has been conducted for this construction.

Yonaguni Island, a small island with a population of 1700 people, is located only 150 kilometers from the Senkaku Islands where Japan and China are in conflict over territorial rights and 111 kilometers from Taiwan, is also being militarized by Japan's SDF. Although the Government of Japan claims to have obtained the consent of the local population, as the majority of the people voted in favor of the deployment of the SDF in the referendum held in 2015, considering that the construction of the garrison had already started in 2015 when the referendum was held, it cannot be regarded there was 'prior consent'.

From 10 to 19 November, Keen Sword, a joint integrated exercise by the SDF and the U.S. military was held with the participation of some 26,000 SDF and 10,500 U.S. troops, and the remote islands of Okinawa and Kagoshima were chosen as training sites for the exercise, bearing in mind China's increasing maritime expansion. On Yonaguni Island, a Ground SDF Type 16 Mobile Combat Vehicle (MCV) traveled approximately 4 km on a prefectural road for about 20 minutes to move to the Yonaguni Garrison. Around the airport and other areas, local residents held placards in protest<sup>3</sup>. In response to the training exercise, Okinawa Governor Denny Tamaki announced on the same day that he had asked the Ministry of Defense not to drive on public roads, commenting that it was "truly regrettable". Furthermore, Missile evacuation drill was held on 30 November, 2022<sup>4</sup>.

### **3. Changes in demographic distribution due to militarization and their impact on the decision-making capacity as indigenous peoples.**

The influx of military personnel into areas where indigenous peoples live as a result of militarization changes the demographic distribution of the area. As elections and voting are used as decision-making instruments in democratic states, the 'decision-making process' is affected by the increase in the incoming population from outside and changes in the distribution of the population. This even affects the right to self-determination of that community. Where a community is not recognized as indigenous and does not have its own decision-making mechanism, this issue has a particularly negative impact.

#### **Case 3. Yonaguni Island**

The Yonaguni Garrison was deployed to strengthen the defense of the Nansei Islands in anticipation of China's maritime expansion. The number of military personnel is estimated to be about 160, and about 220 including their family members. The population of Yonaguni Island has increased sharply from about 1,500 before the deployment to about 1,700.

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<sup>3</sup> Nippon.com (copyright by The Jiji press) (17 Nov 2022) *GSDF Combat Vehicle Runs in Okinawa amid Protests*, available at: <https://www.nippon.com/en/news/yj2022111700948/>

<sup>4</sup> Nippon TV News 24 Japan, *Missile drill held on Japanese island near Taiwan*, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0DAH702X2Ig>

According to the town, SDF personnel now account for about 16% of the population.<sup>5</sup> Due to the lack of decision-making mechanism for indigenous people of Yonaguni, decision-making must rely on general elections, thus it is being impacted by increasing percentage of SDF personnel and their families.

#### **4. The invisibility of the situation as a result of the secrecy of information characteristic to military installations and the marginalization of indigenous peoples.**

Military installations are part of national defense policy and are given a special status among various national policies. Access to information related to military installations is often restricted and transparency is difficult to ensure. In the case of foreign military installations, it is even more difficult to access information. Meanwhile, the problems faced by indigenous peoples are by nature marginalized and there are few opportunities for people in other communities to learn about indigenous peoples' problems in the first place.

The problem is therefore aggravated when military installations, characterized by the secrecy of information, are deployed on indigenous lands or in the sea. Access to information is restricted and indigenous peoples' issues are not treated with importance by the national media, creating a lack of monitoring, inability to address infringements of their human rights, and the State's disregard for these issues.

##### **Case 4. The revised Drone Regulation Law**

The revised Drone Regulation Law came into force in June 2019. Although the legislative intent of the law was originally explained as counter-terrorism measures for the Tokyo Olympics and Rugby World Cup, the regulation includes the skies over SDF bases and U.S. military bases designated by the Ministry of Defense. In Henoko, where the construction of a new U.S. base continues by reclaiming Oura Bay, news organizations and civil society groups have frequently flown drones as an effective way of checking on its progress, but the law places significant restrictions on media surveillance, as it outlaws drone filming without the consent by the U.S. military. A local newspaper reporter commented: 'Okinawa, where 70% of the US military bases in Japan are concentrated, is in danger of becoming full of restricted zones. There is an accelerating move to cover up facts that are inconvenient for Japan and the U.S..<sup>6</sup>

##### **Case 5. Act on the Review and Regulation of the Use of Real Estate Surrounding Important Facilities and on Remote Territorial Islands**

Act on the Review and Regulation of the Use of Real Estate Surrounding Important Facilities and on Remote Territorial Islands (Act on the regulation on land)<sup>7</sup>, which regulates the use of land around important facilities such as SDF bases, U.S. military bases, coast guard stations and nuclear power stations, as well as remote territorial islands, was enacted in September 2022.

The act designates 1 km around important facilities and remote border islands as 'Monitored Areas' and allows the government to investigate the names and addresses of land and building

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<sup>5</sup> Kyodo News (12 Jun 2022), *FEATURE: Opponents of SDF base on Japan islet fret as it puts down roots*, available at: <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2022/06/371f30437ae4-feature-opponents-of-sdf-base-on-japan-islet-fret-as-it-puts-down-roots.html?phrase=patrick%20cronin&words=>

<sup>6</sup> Ronza (14 Aug, 2019), *Fears that the revised Drone Regulation Act will make Okinawa full of regulations* (改正ドローン規制法で沖縄は規制だらけになる恐れ), available at: <https://webronza.asahi.com/politics/articles/2019073100012.html?page=2>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/ja/laws/view/3966>

owners and their actual use of land and buildings. For particularly important facilities, the surrounding area is designated as a 'Special Monitored Areas', and before buying or selling buildings or land of certain size, the name, address, and purpose of use must be reported to the authority in advance.

Government recommendations and orders are issued for 'acts that impede the functioning' of important facilities and remote islands, and failure to comply with them is subject to criminal penalties, including imprisonment.

The Government has argued that the Act is necessary because of the 'security risks', showing examples of land around bases and remote islands near borders being bought up by foreigners. However, the scope of investigations and the acts subject to penalties are unclear and are left to government ordinances and Cabinet decisions. Peoples of Okinawa/Ryukyu raised concerns about the restrictions of private rights since there is a high concentration of U.S. military bases.

Many Okinawans live within a one-kilometer radius around U.S. military bases. For example, 80-90% of Ginowan citizens live within a 1km radius around the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma. In addition, Ryukyu/Okinawa is located close to the border, and according to data from the Cabinet Secretariat, all 50 inhabited remote border island areas of Ryukyu/Okinawa, including Okinawa Island, are listed as designated targets for regulation. Furthermore, the Ministry of Defense has identified Miyako and Yonaguni islands, where the Ground SDF is being stationed, as candidates for 'Special Monitored Areas' with a high degree of restrictions, such as requiring prior notification for land transactions.

Although the Act outwardly reads as applying nationwide, it is feared to be discriminatory in its application, resulting in the disproportionate infringement of privacy right and land right of peoples of Ryukyu/Okinawa. It is no exaggeration to say that the Act on the regulation on land effectively targets Ryukyu/Okinawa.

## **II. The role of indigenous women in combating militarization and the impact of militarization on the rights of indigenous women.**

### **1. Women's voices against the sexual violence by the military shed light on the negative impact of militarization on human rights**

Where military facilities are located adjacent to areas the indigenous population lives, crimes committed by military personnel threaten the livelihoods of the surrounding population. Among those crimes, sexual violence is characteristically difficult to be addressed in the first place, and vulnerable gender groups, especially women or even female children, are more likely to be targeted. In the absence of mechanisms between military forces and indigenous peoples living close to military facilities to ensure the investigation of crimes and the prosecution of perpetrators, victims suffer not only from the sexual violence crimes themselves, but also from impunity and lack of reparation for damages, and their human rights violations are not remedied.

In such cases, it is crucial that indigenous women themselves investigate the sexual violence experienced by women and girls in indigenous communities. This research can reveal the reality of sexual violence and, in turn, demonstrate to the public the nature of the disproportionately negative impact of military facilities on women's human rights.

#### **Case 1. Okinawa Women Act Against Military Violence<sup>8</sup>**

About a half of all U.S. military personnel in Japan reside in Okinawa (55,026 U.S. military

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<sup>8</sup> <http://iwnam.org/2015/04/05/okinawa/>



personnel in Japan and 25,843 U.S. military personnel in Okinawa, accounting for 47%)<sup>9</sup>.

There have been many incidents and accidents involving U.S. military personnel in Okinawa. In particular, sexual violence against women has been rampant since 1945,<sup>10</sup> the year U.S. forces landed on Ryukyu/Okinawa.

During the postwar period of the U.S. military occupation of Okinawa until 1972, rape by U.S. soldiers was rampant. Even after the reversion of Okinawa to Japan in 1972, according to the statistics of the Okinawa Prefectural Police, the total number of criminal offenses committed by U.S. servicemen, servicewomen and their families until September 2020 counted 6,052, of which 581 were heinous crimes such as murder, robbery, rape and arson, and 129 were rape cases.<sup>11</sup> This is only the number of arrests made, and the actual number of incidents is believed to be much higher. Even today, half a century after the reversion of Okinawa to Japan, there is no end to the incidents of sexual violence committed by U.S. personnel in Ryukyu/Okinawa which hosts the largest military base in the Far East.<sup>12</sup>

Due to the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement, Japan does not have primary jurisdiction over cases involving U.S. military personnel on official duties, and even in cases where an incident occurred outside of official duties, the Okinawa Prefectural Police cannot take the suspect into custody before prosecution and therefore cannot conduct the full investigation. In addition, if the suspect flees to the base, the extradition of the suspect requires the consent of the US military. Since the U.S. military is not obligated to extradite, it is possible for the U.S. military to repatriate suspects so that they will not be tried for their alleged crimes. In fact, according to data from the period of 2001-18, the prosecution rate for criminal offenses committed by U.S. military personnel was 13.17%, which is about one-third of the national over-all prosecution rate of 43.85%.<sup>13</sup> The crimes committed by U.S. military personnel have gone largely unaddressed. In addition, there is a Japan-U.S. Joint Commission agreement that, in principle, Japan will not exercise primary jurisdiction except in important cases, making it difficult for Japan to prosecute even if a case is filed.

In other words, Ryukyuan/Okinawan women suffer not only from sexual violences, but also from the impunity.

Okinawa Women Act Against Military Violence, was founded in September 1995, following the rape of a 12-year-old girl by 3 U.S. servicemen. Suzuyo Takasato, co-chair of Okinawa Women Act Against Military Violence, knew from her experiences as a women's counselor that the actual number of sexual violence crimes is much higher than the number reported and thus started researching the cases of sexual violence by themselves and published the

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<sup>9</sup> Please note these are reference figures. The number of U.S. troops stationed in Japan is as of March 31, 2018, and that in Okinawa is as of June 30, 2011, which is a different time point. These are the latest officially released figures.

<sup>10</sup> Interviews with women have revealed that incidents of rape and sexual violence against women by U.S. servicemen have been occurring since the U.S. military landed on Ryukyu/Okinawa in 1945 during World War II (Battle of Okinawa). See also NGO report. 2016. *Okinawa Beihei ni yoru josei heno seihanzai* 沖縄・米兵による女性への性犯罪. Okinawa

<sup>11</sup> Okinawa Times (21 Oct 2020), *In Okinawa heinous crimes by US military personnel counts 581, case detected counts 6052 - since reversion to Japan*, available at: <https://www.okinawatimes.co.jp/articles/-/650949>

<sup>12</sup> For example, in 1955, an Okinawan girl of elementary school age was assaulted and killed by a US soldier and her body was dumped; in 1995, three US soldiers sexually assaulted an Okinawan girl; and in 2016, a 20-year-old Okinawan woman was assaulted, killed, and dumped by a former US military man.

<sup>13</sup> Okinawa Times (10 Feb 2020), *Low Prosecution Rate for Criminal Offenses Related to U.S. Military: Expert Says Japan's Secret Agreement to Give Up Jurisdiction is Alive*, available at: <https://www.okinawatimes.co.jp/articles/-/532799>

chronology booklet titled, “Postwar U.S. Military Crimes Against Women in Okinawa” in 1996. Since then, Okinawa Women Act Against Military Violence has published 12 editions, with the most recent edition reporting more than 350 cases.

Okinawa Women Act Against Military Violence poses the question 'Why are U.S. soldiers, who are combat personnel, allowed to freely roam outside the base and invade residential areas?' and openly state that 'the military is a structurally violent organisation and does not guarantee the true security in the region or between nations'.

Based on this position, Okinawa Women Act Against Military Violence has been calling for the closure and removal of bases, as demand for demilitarization process from a gender perspective. Because if the closure of the bases is not done as part of demilitarization, it will only lead to the transfer of the burden to women in other regions, often similarly oppressed areas.

Okinawan women's initiatives to examine the impact of military bases from a gender perspective have led to the interaction with women in other areas where the U.S. military is stationed, building network with women in mainland Japan, Korea, the Philippines, the U.S., Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and Guam, under the international women's network against militarism.

## **2. Health hazards to mothers and children from military training**

Noise damage caused by military facilities and military training is often overlooked but has a negative impact on the health of residents of the surrounding communities. Those impacts are of particular concern regarding pregnant women and the upbringing of small children.

### **Case 2. Occurrence of low-birthweight (LBW) infants**

In the vicinity of U.S. military bases in Ryukyu/Okinawa, health hazards, especially to mothers and infants, have arisen due to the effects of noise pollution over the years. Okinawa Prefecture conducted a four-year survey on the health effects of aircraft noise on residents living near the Futenma and Kadena Air bases from 1995 to 1998. It revealed the adverse effects of aircraft noise pollution on the residents, such as loss of hearing due to years of exposure to noise, an increase in the birth rate of low-birth-weight babies, and a large number of infants requiring physical and mental observation.<sup>14</sup>

According to another survey conducted by Okinawa Prefecture, the percentage of LBW babies in Okinawa Prefecture is the highest in Japan at 11%, compared to the national average of 9.4%, while the number of LBW babies is highest in the Okinawa's Chubu area where the U.S. military bases are concentrated.<sup>15</sup> It has been pointed out that LBW babies often require medical care after birth, and are at high risk for delayed growth and development, disability, and health problems, including in adult life.

Residents living near the Futenma and Kadena Air bases filed lawsuits against the Government of Japan, seeking an injunction order against night-time flights of U.S. military aircrafts and compensation for damages, but in each case, the lawsuit was dismissed on the basis of the "third party act theory", which stated that the Government of Japan does not have the authority to restrict the actions of U.S. forces.

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<sup>14</sup> Okinawa prefectural Government (2018), *U.S. Bases in Okinawa*, available at: <https://www.pref.okinawa.jp/site/chijjiko/kichitai/documents/3syoul.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Okinawa prefectural Government (2008), *Maternal and Child Health in Okinawa Prefecture (2008) 3. Maternal and Child Statistics in Okinawa Prefecture from a National Perspective (2008)*, available at: <https://www.pref.okinawa.jp/site/hoken/chiikihoken/boshi/documents/syunaru.pdf>



In addition, in the decision on the appeal of the second Futenma explosive sound lawsuit, the Naha Branch of the Fukuoka High Court acknowledged the health hazards caused by the noise, such as psychological burden, mental anguish, sleep disturbance, and increase in blood pressure due to stress, but it denied the increased risk of ischemic heart disease, increase in LBW babies, decrease in long-term memory of school children, and damage caused by infrasound, stating "no evidence sufficient to admit the facts".<sup>16</sup>

- 3. Environmental pollution originating from military bases and its impact on human health.** Military facilities store and use a wide variety of chemicals and fuels. Although great care is likely to be taken in their management, hazardous substances can leak out due to a variety of factors. In the case of military facilities in close proximity to indigenous peoples' lands or oceans, damage to the environment where indigenous peoples live, and human health may occur. As indigenous peoples are often marginalized, environmental and human health damage tends to be underestimated.

### **Case 3. Water pollution**

Organofluorine compounds and other toxic substances used in foam fire extinguishing agents and other products at U.S. military bases have frequently been detected in high concentrations in rivers and wells in the vicinity of Kadena Air Base and Futenma Air Station on the main island of Okinawa. These substances have been pointed out to pose risks such as carcinogenicity, to the health of mothers and children, and to the development of children. Since the high contamination is detected around the U.S. military bases, these bases have been considered as the source of the contamination.

In an April 2019 a research team lead by Akio Koizumi, professor of Kyoto University, conducted a survey of blood levels of organofluorine compounds among residents of Ginowan City, Okinawa Prefecture, where the U.S. Marine Corps Futenma Air Station is located. The results showed that the levels of PFOS<sup>17</sup> were four times higher than the national average. The blood levels of PFHxS,<sup>18</sup> a toxic organofluorine compound for which international discussions are underway to regulate its manufacture and use, were 53 times higher than the national average.<sup>19</sup>

In April 2020, a massive leak of fire extinguishing foam containing PFOS occurred from the Futenma Air Station. Okinawa Prefecture has conducted regular water quality checks around U.S. bases since 2017. In 2021 water quality check, it found alarming levels of a suspected carcinogen and other substances at 38 locations, or more than 70 percent of 49 surveyed sites. The level of PFOS and other substances exceeded the Environment Ministry's target at all 14 surveyed sites near the U.S. Kadena Air Base.<sup>20</sup>

Although Okinawa Prefectural Government and local municipalities around the U.S. bases have requested the U.S. military and the Government of Japan to allow on site investigations of soil and water quality, to take measures against soil and groundwater contamination, and to provide the record of the use of fire extinguishing foam agents at Kadena Air Base and Futenma

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<sup>16</sup> Okinawa Times (17 Apr 2019) *Editorial: Ruling on Futenma explosive sound lawsuit: Relief for residents' a big step backward*, available at: <https://www.okinawatimes.co.jp/articles/-/409867>

<sup>17</sup> Perfluorooctane sulfonate

<sup>18</sup> Perfluorohexane sulfonate

<sup>19</sup> Ryukyu Shimpo (17 May 2019) *Kyoto University professors detect PFOS concentration of 4 times national average in Ginowan residents' blood*, available at: <http://english.ryukyushimpo.jp/2019/05/21/30452/>  
See also Mitchell, J et al., 2020 *Eien no kagaku busshitsu mizu no PFAS osen* Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten. p 61.

<sup>20</sup> The Asahi Shimbun (28 Dec 2021) *PFOS exceeds state-set levels at 38 sites near U.S. bases*, available at: <https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14512180>

Air Station, the investigations have not been conducted. The rivers and wells around the U.S. bases that have been found to be contaminated by toxic substances are the source of drinking and daily life water for local residents, but sufficient investigation, verification, and information disclosure on the causes of the contamination are left to the discretion of the U.S. military.

A citizens' group in Okinawa Prefecture, conducted the study in June and July 2022, with the cooperation of Koji Harada, associate professor of environmental hygienics at Kyoto University, collecting blood samples from a total of 387 people in the five municipalities of Okinawa, Ginowan, Kadena, Kin and Chatan, which host U.S. military bases, and Ogimi, a base-free village located in the northern part of the main island, to compare results.

The study found that Blood levels of the chemical compound recorded in the Okinawa municipalities were between 1.7 and 14.3 times the national average.<sup>21</sup>

Water contamination does not only originate from U.S. military bases. In April of 2021, a firefighting foam leaked from the Japan's Air Self-Defense Force's Naha base on the island of Okinawa. At first, the Air SDF explained that the leaked foam did not contain organofluorine compounds. However, it later apologized and said that it would correct its initial explanation after it detected the compounds at a maximum of about 128 times the government's provisional guideline value in the fire extinguishing foam recovered at the base.<sup>22</sup>

PFAS has been found to be associated with reduced birth weight, and studies have shown that children born between 1974 and 1993 in areas of Okinawa with PFAS contamination of drinking water tended to have lower birth weights than children born in other areas (Naha and Ginowan cities, where the contamination is found, has a PFAS level of 7.3 %, where 6.4% in other areas).<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> The Mainichi (5 Nov 2022) *Toxin blood levels up to 14 times national average among Okinawa residents near US bases*, available at <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20221105/p2a/00m/0na/005000c>

<sup>22</sup> Okinawa Times (8 Apr 2021), *PFOS detected in foam spilled from Air Self-Defense Force base in Naha, also detected in nursery school*, available at <https://www.okinawatimes.co.jp/articles/-/734543>

<sup>23</sup> Supra note 19, p 68.