

Oral Statement at the 15th Session of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
Item 3 (4 July 2022)

Thank you very much, chairperson. My name is Takamatsu Gushiken. I am a representative of Gamafuya in Ryukyu, located in the southern part of Japan.

I appreciate the opportunity to raise an urgent issue that Ryukyuan Indigenous peoples face at the 15th session of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Currently, the tension between China and Taiwan is an international concern in the immediate area of Ryukyu. Concerning this, a more difficult issue for Ryukyu is the existence of the Japanese and American war potential based on the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan.

This Treaty does affect Ryukyuan Indigenous Peoples, but it was concluded without the respect for their rights, neglecting the rights to self-determination and participation in decision-making in matters that would affect their rights, as well as non-militarisation of Indigenous peoples' lands, as provided in Articles 3, 18 and 30 under the UN Declaration respectively. I expect the EMRIP's treaty study to deepen analyses on such treaties that ignore Indigenous peoples' existence and rights but affects them.

Notably, Japanese and American forces have repeated the military training by constructing 40 bases in the Ryukyu Islands, from Amami Oshima to Yonaguni-jima islands, and by planning to attack the Chinese forces if Taiwanese conflicts occur. Ryukyuan Indigenous peoples do not have any intention to attack China from Ryukyu. Attacking from Ryukyu means the area would be a battleground.

I urgently request states and UN bodies to realise the non-militarisation of Ryukyuan Indigenous peoples' lands and territories, as well as the right to peace.

Takamatsu Gushiken
Representative, Gamafuya
(Non-profit organisation for collecting human remains from Battle of Okinawa)