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PRESS RELEASE

Stop Henoko! Close Futenma!: 100 civil society organizations and 32 U.S. elected officials have joined the Letter of Request to U.S. Congress members

Critical momentum has been building up in the civil society's movement against the Japanese and U.S. government's plans to build a U.S. military base at Henoko-Oura Bay, Okinawa, Japan. As of October 19, 100 civil society groups and organizations and 32 U.S. elected officials at state and municipal levels have joined our Letter of Request to U.S. Congress members. We expect that more organizations and elected officials will join the Letter.

The Letter urges the U.S. federal legislators to take the initiative to stop the base construction at Henoko-Oura Bay and close the dangerous U.S. Futenma Air Station for which the Henoko base is being built as its replacement.

Eighty-seven civil society groups and organizations originally sent the Letter in early September. Then, the Letter Sending Campaign moved to the next stage. Led by the Democratic Socialists of America International Committee, U.S.-based organizations began reaching out to elected officials as well as civil society organizations.

The fact that the 100 organizations and 32 elected officials have signed on to the Letter signifies the civil society's unwavering support for Okinawa's struggle against the Henoko base construction over the last two decades. It also indicates that the civil movement can grow into a more significant grassroots-political movement.

The Letter of Request shows that the Henoko base construction plan violates the principles of democracy, environmental protection, and human security. It shows that the Japanese government has provided misleading information to the U.S. government regarding the issues of the soft seafloor at the construction site and the environmental impacts the base construction has caused. It explains the dangers, such as PFOA/PFOS contamination, the residents living around Futenma Air Station face.

We express our appreciation to all who have joined the Letter, and we will try to make the best of this momentum. Our next objective is to have the U.S. Congress hold a hearing on the Henoko base project. To this end, we will continue to invite other organizations and elected officials to sign on to the Letter. We will send copies of the Letter to the Congressional Research Service and the Government Accountability Office, asking them to incorporate the information into their reports. We will also send copies of the Letter to other Congress members.

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