

FY2024

The Protection of Human Rights

**Summary of the White Paper
on Human Rights Education and Awareness Raising**



Scan the Two-dimensional
code for more detailed
information.

(MOJ website:
[https://www.moj.go.jp/
ENGLISH/HB/hb.html](https://www.moj.go.jp/ENGLISH/HB/hb.html))



**Human Rights Bureau
Ministry of Justice, Japan**

Introduction

Under the Constitution of Japan, which guarantees fundamental human rights for all people, the government of Japan has taken various initiatives concerning human rights, which include the development of related systems and accession to international human rights conventions.

However, there are still cases of unjust discrimination and human rights violations based on social status, family origin, race, ethnic group, creed, gender, disabilities, or other grounds.

In order to achieve a peaceful and affluent society in which all people can coexist while respecting each other's human rights, it is vital to develop a spirit of respect for human rights in each and every individual in the country, and it is human rights education and awareness-raising activities that play significant roles in that process.

The Ministry of Justice has been carrying out diverse human rights awareness-raising activities with human rights volunteers in the private sector and in cooperation with other ministries and agencies, local governments and private companies, etc. so that all people can gain a sensible awareness of the significance of respecting human rights and can act properly with due consideration to other people's human rights based on that awareness.

This booklet outlines the mechanism and activities of the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice, and explains the human rights issues that are currently attracting people's attention in particular, as part of the human rights awareness-raising activities of the Ministry of Justice broadly targeting the general public.

January, 2025
Human Rights Bureau
Ministry of Justice

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* In this booklet, Two-dimensional codes linking to booklets prepared by the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice or to related websites are included. Link destinations are all in Japanese but the Two-dimensional codes are for broadly introducing the bodies' initiatives.

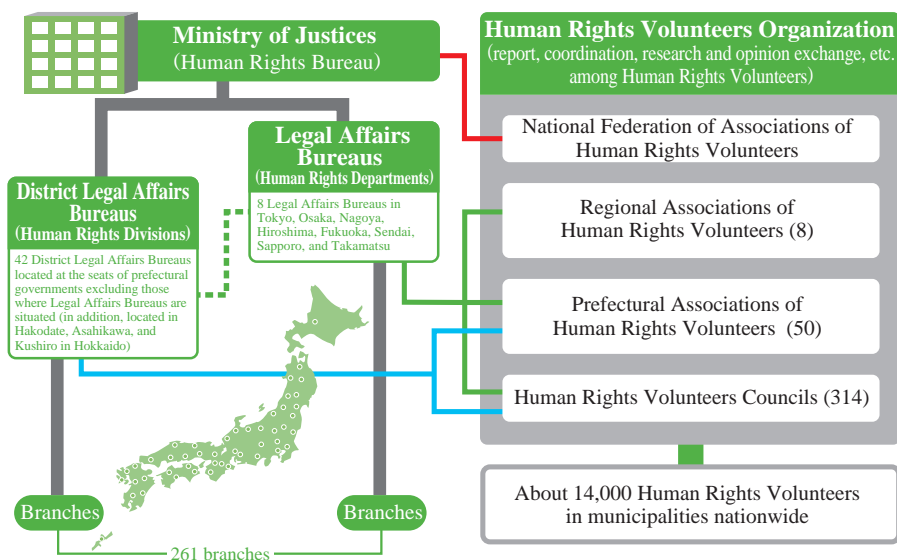
1. The Human Rights Bodies of the Ministry of Justice

A variety of problems concerning human rights occur around us. This particular Chapter introduces the structure of the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice established to address such problems.



Structure:

The Human Rights Bodies of the Ministry of Justice (as of June 1, 2024)



1- The Human Rights Bureau of the Ministry of Justice and Local Offices

The Human Rights Bureau of the Ministry of Justice is a national administrative organ centrally taking charge of human rights promotion and protection. It has local subordinate offices: the Human Rights Departments of the Legal Affairs Bureaus and the Human Rights Divisions of the District Legal Affairs Bureaus. They, in collaboration with their further branches, carry out the function of promotion and protection of human right.

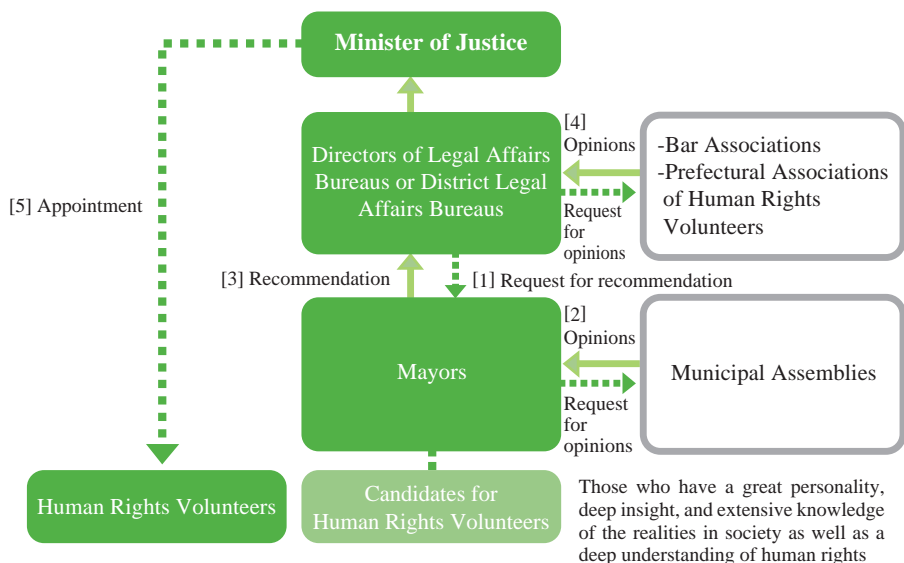
2- Human Rights Volunteers

Human Rights Volunteers are counseling partners available in your town. They provide counseling free of charge and will keep your case confidential. Feel free to consult them if you have any problems.

Human Rights Volunteers are private citizens appointed by the Minister of Justice. The Human Rights Volunteers System was established based on the concept that it would be effective for people in various fields to encourage respect for human rights in the local community, to make efforts to avoid violation of the human rights of the residents, and to promote and protect human rights. Such initiative in public-private collaboration is unparalleled in any other country.

At present, there are approximately 14,000 Volunteers in all of the municipalities of cities, towns, and villages across the country (including special wards in Tokyo), and they are proceeding with proactive activities taking advantage of their own careers and their individual specialized fields.

Appointment Process of Human Rights Volunteers



Symbol Mark for
Human Rights
Promotion and
Protection Activities

This symbol mark has been used since December 1992 with the aim of ensuring the uniformity and originality of awareness-raising activities by the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice and building a sense of affinity concerning human rights promotion and protection activities among people to increase the effect of the activities.

■ Activities of Human Rights Volunteers



Activities in disaster areas
(visiting temporary evacuation homes)



Human Rights Flower Campaign



Lecture at a local company



Human rights awareness-raising activities using
local FM broadcasting

Human Rights Volunteers provide human rights counseling services not only at Legal Affairs Bureaus and District Legal Affairs Bureaus but also at ad-hoc centers set up at public offices, social welfare facilities and commercial facilities.

Once a complaint is raised by a potential victim at a human rights counseling session or through other route to the effect that his/her human right has been violated, Human Rights Volunteers conduct an investigation and strive to amicably settle the case by mediating between the parties in cooperation with officials from the Legal Affairs Bureaus or the District Legal Affairs Bureaus.

Moreover, Human Rights Volunteers carry out human rights awareness-raising activities aimed at gaining local residents' awareness on human rights (such as holding "Human Rights Lectures" (refer to p.16) and the "Human Rights Flower Campaigns" (refer to p.17) for elementary school and junior high school students and kindergarten children, with the aim of teaching them the importance of caring for other people, and giving lectures on human rights at local companies) and introduce their activities through local FM broadcasts. In this manner, they are carrying out activities deeply rooted in individual local communities.

June 1 is "Human Rights Volunteers' Day"

The National Federation of Associations of Human Rights Volunteers has set June 1 as Human Rights Volunteers' Day to commemorate the day on which the "Human Rights Volunteers Act" entered into effect (June 1, 1949). Around every anniversary day, ad-hoc counseling centers are set up and various human rights awareness-raising activities are undertaken across the country aiming for deeper understanding of human rights.

1. The Human Rights Bodies of the Ministry of Justice

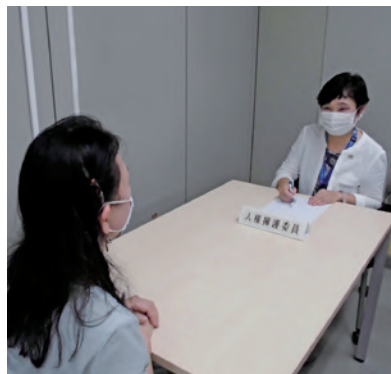
2. Activities of the Human Rights Bodies of the Ministry of Justice

3. Major Human Rights Issues

4. Topic/Efforts Regarding Human Rights of Children and Young People



Website to introduce the Human Rights Volunteers System and activities of Human Rights Volunteers



Face-to-face human rights counseling

Emblem of Human Rights Volunteers



The design of wood sorrel on the exterior frame and a chrysanthemum inside, shaping the kanji character "人" ('hito' meaning "human") within. Wood sorrel is a strong plant which spreads by sticking close to the ground and it symbolizes the hope that the concept of respect for human rights will spread.

2. Activities of the Human Rights Bodies of the Ministry of Justice

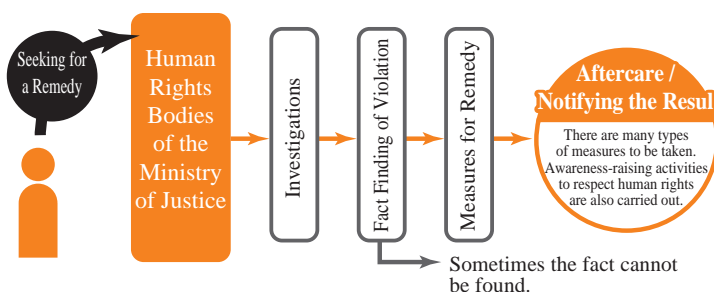
How the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice protect your human rights? Their activities can be divided into the following areas: investigation and remedy procedures for human rights violation cases, human rights counseling, and awareness-raising for human rights. This Chapter describes such activities of the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice.

1- Investigation and Remedy Procedures for Human Rights Violation Cases

A suspected case where human rights may be violated is called a "human rights violation case." If a victim of human rights violation seeks a remedy, the bodies promptly initiate remedy procedures. The bodies may also initiate the procedures when they become aware of a suspected case of human rights violation from other sources including newspapers or magazines.

During the remedy procedures, the bodies undertake investigation to confirm whether or not human rights violation has occurred. However, the bodies do not have the power for compulsory investigation like the police or public prosecutors, so their investigation is based on the voluntary cooperation of the people concerned.

■ Investigation and Remedy Procedures

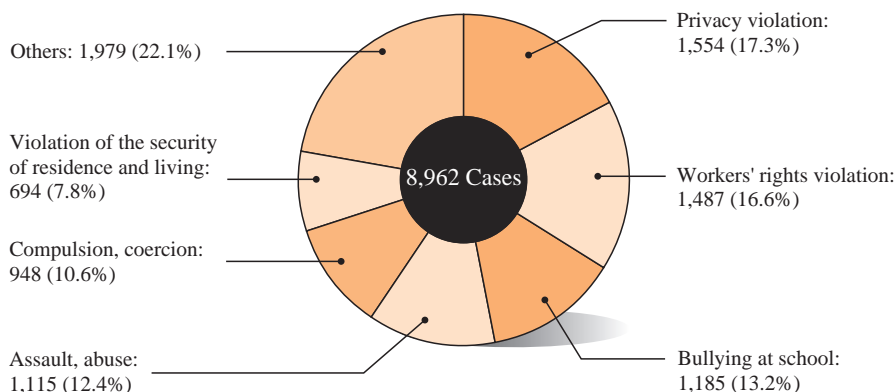




As a result of the investigation, the bodies will take appropriate measures depending on the case. There are seven kinds of measures including "assistance" to provide legal advice or non-legal advice, "conciliation" to mediate talks between the parties concerned, "instructions" or "recommendation" to make a human rights violator improve the situation, and "request" to ask a person who can make effective responses to take measures as required. Of these measures, the measures of "assistance" and "conciliation" may be taken at effective times even during the investigation.

The bodies will also take action to raise awareness of the people concerned about human rights, as the case may be. After closing the case, the results are notified to the victim and, where necessary, aftercare is provided for the victim through cooperation with the relevant administrative organs or by contacting the people concerned.

■ Breakdown of the Number of Human Rights Violation Cases in 2023



Examples of Remedied Human Rights Violation Cases

The following cases are examples of the cases the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice dealt with in 2023.

1 Bullying

Bullying at a junior high school

This is a case in which a junior high school student sent a Children's Rights SOS Mini-Letter, in which he/she complained about being bullied by classmates with words, such as "Fuck off and die," and suggested an intention to kill themselves.

As a result of an investigation by the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice, it was found that the student had not consulted about the bullying with anyone so far and the class teacher had not noticed the student's worries. Accordingly, the bodies provided the information to the school so that it could make responses appropriately.

The bodies continued communication with the student using Children's Rights SOS Mini-Letters to build a relationship of trust, and recommended him/her to consult a school counsellor.

As a result, a system to closely watch the student was created between his/her family and the school (a case of "assistance").

2 Abuse

Abuse against a junior high school student (i)

This is a case in which a junior high school student made a consultation using a Children's Rights SOS Mini-Letter, alleging that he/she had been abused by his/her parent, by such means as abusive language.

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice promptly provided the information to his/her school and to the local government as requested thereby.

As a result, the Regional Council of Countermeasures for Children Requiring Aid held a meeting regarding an individual case for the student, and discussed the measures to be taken.

A support system for the student was thus created by relevant organizations (a case of "assistance").

3 Abuse

Abuse against a junior high school student (ii)

This is a case in which a junior high school student made a consultation with the "Human Rights Counseling Service on social media", alleging that he/she had been punched, kicked or otherwise assaulted by his/her parent and that he/she would like to ask for protection.

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice promptly provided the information to the police office closest to the relevant student's residence and the student was promptly placed under the protection of the police.

Furthermore, thanks to the cooperation of the police, the student was placed under the protection of a child guidance center on the day following the day on which the student made the consultation.

The student's physical safety was ensured without delay (a case of "assistance").



4 Corporal punishment

Corporal punishment at a junior high school

This is a case in which parents of junior high school students consulted with the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice, alleging that their children were punched in the stomach or otherwise assaulted by a school teacher.

An investigation by the bodies revealed the existence of differences in the awareness concerning corporal punishment between the students and the school, but, as a result of repeated talks between the school and the parents mediated by the bodies, the school principal expressed an intention to apologize to the students.

The parents accepted this and an opportunity to have talks was prepared.

The students accepted an apology directly from the school principal, and the relationship among related parties was improved (a case of "conciliation").

5 Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment targeting an employee by an employer

This is a case in which an employee consulted with the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice, alleging that the employer made sexual remarks to him/her during working hours.

As a result of an investigation by the bodies, it was found that the employer made sexual remarks to the employee during working hours.

The bodies told the employer that the relevant remarks are sexual ones against the will of the employee and fall under sexual harassment, which is a socially unacceptable act that violates the employee's human rights and cannot be overlooked from the perspective of protecting human rights.

The bodies instructed the employer to properly understand the unfairness of the relevant act and refrain from behaving in a similar manner in the future (a case of "instruction").

6 Elderly people

Violence against an aged parent by a child

This is a case in which an aged parent consulted with the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice, alleging that he/she is subject to violence by his/her child on a daily basis.

The bodies immediately provided the information to the local government having jurisdiction over the area of the victim's residence to ask it to take required measures, and had an interview with the victim.

As a result, support for short stays, etc. was offered to the victim and his/her safety was ensured by separating the victim from his/her child.

At the same time, the information on the victim's circumstances, such as violence by his/her child and the living hardship experienced, came to be shared among relevant organizations and a system of comprehensive support for the victim was created (a case of "assistance").

7 Discriminatory treatment

Discriminatory treatment against a foreign national

This is a case in which a foreign national consulted with the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice, alleging that a real estate company refused his/her request for preview on the ground that he/she is a non-Japanese.

As a result of an investigation by the bodies, it was found that the owner of the relevant room for rent had requested the real estate company to uniformly refuse foreign nationals.

The bodies told the owner that his/her act of refusing preview of the foreign national who wished to rent the room on the ground that he/she is a non-Japanese cannot be overlooked from the perspective of protecting human rights, and instructed the owner to properly understand the unfairness of the relevant act and refrain from behaving in a similar manner in the future (a case of "instruction").

8 Discriminatory treatment

Discriminatory remarks against a person with disability

This is a case in which a person with disability consulted with the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice, alleging that he/she received discriminatory remarks from an acquaintance at a meeting.

As a result of an investigation by the bodies, it was found that the acquaintance made discriminatory remarks regarding that person with disability to other participants.

The bodies told the acquaintance that the relevant remarks defame the person with disability and harm his/her sense of honor and cannot be overlooked from the perspective of protecting human rights, and instructed the acquaintance to properly understand the unfairness of the relevant act and refrain from behaving in a similar manner in the future (a case of "instruction").

9 Discriminatory treatment

Discriminatory comments concerning the *Dowa* issue

This is a case in which a person consulted with the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice, alleging that his/her neighbor had continuously made discriminatory comments in relation to the *Dowa* issue, such as pointing out that he/she is from a *Dowa* district.

As a result of an investigation by the bodies, it was found that the neighbor made the relevant comments.

The bodies explained that such comments made without understanding and awareness of the *Dowa* issue harm other people's human rights and dignity and cannot be overlooked from the perspective of protecting human rights, and instructed the neighbor to deepen correct understanding and awareness regarding respect for fundamental human rights and the *Dowa* issue, and to refrain from committing similar acts in the future (a case of "instruction").

**10 Human rights violation information on the internet****Defamation on the internet**

This is a case in which a victim consulted with the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice, alleging that messages stating that he/she has been committing fraud and has a criminal record were posted on the internet with his/her name and face photos.

As a result of an investigation by the bodies, it was found that posted details are all false and the posting of those messages falls under defamation.

The bodies requested the site administrator to delete those posts and they were all deleted (a case of "request").

11 Human rights violation information on the internet**Infringement of a sense of honor on the internet**

This is a case in which the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice commenced an investigation into posts on an electronic bulletin board that intend to facilitate the exclusion of foreign nationals residing in a specific area from that area.

As a result of the investigation by the bodies, it was found that messages stating that foreign nationals residing in the area should go out of Japan had been posted multiple times and that those posts infringe a sense of honor of those foreign residents.

The bodies requested the site administrator to delete those posts and they were all deleted (a case of "request").

12 Human rights violation information on the internet**Indication of a *Dowa* district on the internet**

This is a case in which the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice obtained the information on the posting of a video in which a person walks around a specific area and explains the history and other topic of the area, and points out that the area is a *Dowa* district.

As a result of the investigation by the bodies, it was found that the video cannot be considered to be disclosed for a justifiable purpose, such as for an academic or research purpose, and is problematic from the perspective of protecting human rights.

The bodies requested the site administrator to delete the video and it was deleted (a case of "request").

2- Human Rights Counseling

When you wonder if it is a human rights issue, or worry about prejudice, discrimination, bullying or other issues in your daily lives, please feel free to seek a consultation.

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice provide human rights counseling services by officials of Legal Affairs Bureaus and Human Rights Volunteers. The counseling service is free of charge, with no difficult procedures, and is strictly confidential.

The bodies have established the "Human Rights Hotline" (**0570-003-110** [from anywhere in Japan]), the "Women's Rights Hotline" (**0570-070-810**) and the "Children's Rights Hotline" (**0120-007-110**). Furthermore, Human Rights Counseling Services on the internet and LINE are also available.

Additionally, efforts have been made to develop a system for facilitating children's use of counseling services, such as through the use of letters by distributing the "Children's SOS Mini-Letters" (letter paper with a pre-stamped envelope for human rights counseling) to elementary and junior high school students throughout the country (refer to p.30).

For foreigners who are unable to speak Japanese fluently, the bodies have established the "Foreign-language Human Rights Hotline" and "Human Rights Counseling Centers for Foreigners" (refer to p.45).



Leaflets for disseminating systems for counseling and remedy procedures for human rights violations

3- Human Rights Awareness-Raising

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice have been carrying out various activities to improve each citizen's awareness and understanding of human rights.

Some examples of the activities are the holding of symposiums and lectures; conducting various forms of training such as Human Rights Lectures; publishing awareness-raising materials on websites and video distribution sites; displaying banner ads on the internet; utilizing publicity using broadcasts such as TV and radio, etc.; and running articles in newspapers and public relations magazines. These activities are collectively called "human rights awareness-raising activities."

Human rights awareness-raising activities are indispensable in preventing human rights violations in advance.

The Priority Goal of Awareness-Raising Activities

Ever since FY1966, the bodies have set a priority goal for the year and have conducted awareness-raising activities based on the goal.

The slogan representing the priority goal for FY2024 was decided as "It's not someone else's problem." This slogan incorporates the wish that everyone will consider various human rights issues not as matters for someone else but as matter for themselves and think about the importance of respect for human rights.

The bodies set the 17 human rights issues as priority targets with the aim of achieving an inclusive society where diversity is respected and all people mutually cherish individuals' human rights and dignity and can live a vibrant life.



Poster "The Priority Goal
for Awareness-Raising Activities for 2024"

Priority Targets of Awareness-Raising Activities

- ① Protect Women's Human Rights
- ② Protect Children's Human Rights
- ③ Protect Elderly People's Human Rights
- ④ Eliminate Prejudice and Discrimination on the Grounds of Disabilities
- ⑤ Resolve the *Buraku* Discrimination(*Dowa* Issue)
- ⑥ Eliminate Prejudice and Discrimination against Ainu People
- ⑦ Respect the Human Rights of Foreigners
- ⑧ Eliminate Prejudice and Discrimination Related to Infectious Diseases
- ⑨ Eliminate Prejudice and Discrimination against Present and Former Hansen's Disease Patients and Their Families
- ⑩ Eliminate Prejudice and Discrimination against People Released from Prison after Serving Their Sentences
- ⑪ Consider the Human Rights of Crime Victims and their Families
- ⑫ Eliminate Human Rights Violations on the Internet
- ⑬ Deepen Understanding of the Issue of Human Rights Violations by North Korean Authorities
- ⑭ Eliminate Prejudice and Discrimination against Homeless People
- ⑮ Eliminate Prejudice and Discrimination regarding "Sexual Minorities"
- ⑯ Stop Trafficking in Persons
- ⑰ Eliminate Prejudice and Discrimination Arising from Disasters such as Earthquakes

Human Rights Week



Poster "Human Rights Week"

The United Nations designated December 10 as Human Rights Day at its 5th General Assembly on December 4, 1950 in commemoration of December 10, 1948, the day that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted at its 3rd General Assembly, and recommended that member states further promote the development of human rights.

In Japan, the week ending on December 10 each year (December 4 to December 10) was designated as Human Rights Week in 1949, the year following the adoption of the Declaration, and human rights awareness-raising activities have been carried out intensively since then to broadly disseminate the meaning of the Declaration and further develop the concept of respect for human rights.

The Networks of Human Rights Awareness-Raising Activities

The Prefectural Network Associations of Human Rights Awareness-Raising Activities was established at a prefectural level and the Regional Network Associations of Human Rights Awareness-Raising Activities was established at a municipal level as an interlinking network among the bodies implementing human rights awareness-raising activities, such as the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice, the prefectural governments, municipal governments, and public interest corporations.

Members have been cooperating through this network in conducting human rights awareness-raising activities and providing relevant information, etc.

National Essay Contest on Human Rights for Junior High School Students

The National Essay Contest on Human Rights for Junior High School Students has been held since FY1981 for the purpose of enabling junior high school students, who will lead the next generation, to deepen their understanding of the importance and necessity of human rights and to foster awareness of human rights through writing essays on human rights issues.

In FY2023 (the 42nd contest), 761,947 essays were applied from 6,494 schools. Collections of award-winning essays, awareness-raising videos based on essays that were awarded in the past, and English translations of award-winning essays are available on the website of the Ministry of Justice (for the essays that received the Prime Minister's Award and the Justice Minister's Award in the 42nd contest, refer to pp.18-21).



Collection of award-winning essays for the 42nd National Essay Contest on Human Rights for Junior High School Students



Human Rights Lectures

Human Rights Lectures are one of the human rights awareness-raising activities carried out under the initiative of Human Rights Volunteers nationwide, with the aim of nurturing compassion and having participants learn about the preciousness of life by providing them with an opportunity to think about bullying and other topics.

Lectures are held, targeting elementary and junior high school students, on such occasions as school visits for the Human Rights Flower Campaigns (refer to p.17) or moral education classes.

In recent years, backed by growing domestic and international interest in business and human rights (refer to p.22), Human Rights Lectures for Adults targeting company managers and employees have also come to be held increasingly.

Additionally, Human Rights Lectures with Sports have been held by inviting athletes as lecturers to have children learn the spirit of fair play based on mutual support through enjoying games and hearing those lecturers' experiences. Furthermore, Experience-based Human Rights Lectures, such as using wheelchairs or enjoying sports for persons with disabilities are held to have participants learn "barrier-free mind" so as to understand the diversity and become aware of the importance of realizing an inclusive society where people live together regardless of differences.

As measures against human rights violations on the internet, which are becoming more and more serious mainly among young people, Human Rights Lectures for having participants learn about safe use of smartphones, etc. are also being provided actively in collaboration and cooperation with mobile phone companies.

In FY2023, these Human Rights Lectures were provided for a total of 986,672 people.



Various contents targeting companies are being introduced on the website of the Ministry of Justice.



Human Rights Lecture

Human Rights Flower Campaigns

The Human Rights Flower Campaigns have been held since 1982 as a human rights awareness-raising activity carried out mainly for elementary school students. During the Campaigns, children are given flower seeds or bulbs and grow flowers by cooperating with one another. Through this experience, children are anticipated to understand the preciousness of life, nurture a warm-hearted spirit and learn about tenderness and compassion.

Flowers grown by children are delivered to their guardians and social welfare facilities, etc. and sketching and viewing events for looking back on the experience of growing flowers are held to deepen communication with local people. In this manner, the Campaigns are also providing opportunities for those local people to deepen their understanding of human rights.

In FY2023, the Campaigns were conducted for 416,564 students at 3,903 schools, etc.



Human Rights Flower Campaigns

**Material : 42nd National Essay Contest on Human Rights
for Junior High School Students**

Protect Both Oneself and Others

OZASA Shiori, Ninth Grade (third year of three grades)
Kasai City Izumi Junior High School, Hyogo Prefecture

"You mean that your mother is not your real mother?" This is generally the first reaction when I tell my friends about myself, and each time, such reaction makes me grow cold.

Many people may have heard the term, "adoption." Adoption means to create a legal parent-child relationship between persons without a blood relationship. You must have heard the term, "adopted son-in-law." I was adopted by the current parents immediately after birth under the special adoption system, not under the regular adoption system. Under the special adoption system, a child's legal relationship with their biological parents is terminated and a legal parent-child relationship between the child and new parents is created and is registered in a family register.

My biological mother was physically fragile and had me as a single mother. She was unable to raise me under such circumstances even if she wished. I heard this from my foster mother when I was still very young. In those days, I innocently thought that I had two mothers.

It was when I was in the third grade of elementary school, I think. For the first time, I told that fact to my friends. Then, one of them said, "Do you mean that your current mother is not your real mother?" I remember that I could not respond appropriately with my mind totally in panic. Another friend said that I was abandoned by my biological mother. I was shocked by this remark. Now, I understand that she meant no offense but just spoke without thought, but at that time, I seriously worried about myself, wondering why I was given up for adoption and thinking that I might have been an unwanted child. I felt sad and distressed.

Several days later, I asked my mother about the special adoption system, and I understood for the first time that giving me up for adoption was the utmost act of love by my biological mother. She strongly wished that I would grow up in a happy environment. Knowing that fact, I felt relieved and I came to think differently.

I have my current mother and another mother who gave birth to me. Both are my real mothers who care about me and are very important.

Now, I have told the truth to my friends from my elementary school days. They all understand me and are my good companions with whom I learn and spend enjoyable time. On the other hand,



I have kept it secret to my new friends at the junior high school. Once I tried to tell the truth, that new friend said, "Your mother is not your real mother." I could not make a response immediately.

In such occasions, the phrase that supports me is "do not need to force myself." I do not need to tell everything now. I have a choice not to tell as a means to protect myself so that I will not get hurt. I can choose the right timing to tell the truth, instead of forcing myself, and may try to make myself understood gradually even if I cannot convey my feelings as I wish.

Since my childhood, I have thought about the special adoption system. I have two mothers. My current mother and another mother who gave birth to me are both my real mothers who love me. I used to be seriously worried about the fact that I was adopted under the special adoption system. However, at present, I am proud of this fact because I have two mothers who care about me.

To protect human rights not only means to protect the human rights of others, but also means to protect the human rights of oneself. To know others, see them from various aspects and think about how to understand them. I think that such attitude leads to protecting the human rights of all surrounding people. At the same time, to tell about oneself and endeavor to make oneself understood while waiting for the right timing, instead of forcing oneself to tell everything, will lead to protecting one's own human rights.

I would like to be a person who can protect both others and myself. People are not flat but are three-dimensional. Whether they become a sphere, cube, pyramid, cylinder, octahedron or others depends on individuals. Arbitrarily deciding a form of a person or seeing a person one-dimensionally merely from a single aspect may lead to hurting that person. Therefore, in order to protect others, we need to see people from various aspects to ascertain their individual forms and to try to understand them accurately. On the other hand, understanding the form of oneself and devising means to make oneself understood by others will lead to protecting oneself.

I took a step in order to protect others and myself. I believe that my first step will lead to someone else taking the first step.

**Material : 42nd National Essay Contest on Human Rights
for Junior High School Students**

Precious Life

MIYAMOTO Ryudai, Ninth Grade (third year of three grades)
Ainan Town Misho Junior High School, Ehime Prefecture

A precious life that is equally given to each individual will eventually end someday. This fact makes me feel the irreplaceable value of life.

However, such precious life is treated poorly in reality. Over 500 days passed since Russia launched a military invasion against Ukraine. Casualties are ever-increasing in both countries. On TV, I have seen many people crying as they lost their family members, friends, or someone they care about. Each time I saw such scenes, I felt a tightening in my chest. Their peaceful daily life suddenly ended and they were forced to spend uneasy days with death near at hand. They could not have imagined that such days would continue until today.

One day, I talked about this war with my family. "Why did they start a war after all?" "Isn't there anything we can do?" "I hope that this war will end soon." We each expressed various opinions. However, we cannot understand the actual terror of a war. What we said were merely the comments of outsiders living in a peaceful world without war. I oppose war. The reason is that war takes the lives of people. There is little to gain and much to lose from war. Soldiers going off to war have places to come back and precious family members, who are worrying about their safety on the battlefields. They have people who will mourn over their deaths. Therefore, I want the war to end as soon as possible.

I also have precious family members, but a disease robbed me of one of my precious family members. It was the winter of my 7th grade year. My little sister, who was a 6th grader, was looking forward to entering junior high school but suddenly had a fever. Her fever lasted one or two weeks. The period that passed without the cause of the fever being identified was very long for us. After such period of uncertainty, my sister's illness was finally identified through an X-ray examination, but she faced the harsh reality of a fight against the disease. I was totally upset and could not think of what to say to her and could do nothing but cheer her up.

My sister was admitted into a hospital in Matsuyama. During the first one to two months, she stayed the hospital alone. Considering the anxiety caused by the disease and the loneliness of staying alone, I wonder whether I could have held out. I am proud of my Justice Minister's Award sister who had completed what I could not have done. After that, my mother decided to attend my sister at the hospital. I felt discomfort regarding life without my sister and my mother and I missed them, but I put up with the situation considering that my sister was suffering more than



me. I was looking forward to going to see my sister a few times a month. She was delighted to see me but looked sleepy, probably due to the loneliness of staying away from home and the fatigue from fighting the disease.

I became an 8th grader and enjoyed a school excursion with my classmates. On the night of the day when I returned home from the school excursion, there was a call on my grandmother's cellphone. It was a call notifying my sister's death. We hurried to the hospital in Matsuyama. I was overwhelmed with regret and sorrow and only kept crying. My sister died without experiencing any days at a junior high school, which she had looked forward to strongly. I learned the seriousness and agony of losing someone very important, like a family member or a friend, and suffered the sense of loss of not being able to see that person any longer.

A life equally given to each individual is not light by any means and cannot be replaced by any other person. So is my life, your life, and the lives of the many people lost in war. Not only soldiers but civilians, such as young people, elderly people, and small children, all had life equally. My sister, who looked forward to joining a basketball team at a junior high school, also had life. I want you to know the existence of people who could not live despite their wishes. I want my thoughts to reach people who are considering killing themselves. The number of people who committed suicide last year exceeds 20,000. I am surprised at this number. Even if you have a serious worry that makes you forget the happiness of just living, I want you to live through your life that was given to you. Look around you. There must be someone who cares about you. There is surely someone who would mourn over your death.

I am committed to cherish every single day in life more than anyone else. Not only human beings but all creatures have a precious life. We should not kill any of them carelessly. I am keeping five goldfish and many killifish and I have come to feel them to be members of my family while taking care of them sincerely. We should cherish all living creatures. A life ends eventually, but I treat any life with the attitude that I would like to grow together. No one can tell the future. There is a possibility that we may die in a war or due to a disease or a traffic accident. Therefore, I would like to cherish each day. As I learned the significance of life given equally to all, I feel happiness of just being alive. I would like to become a nurse, who works to save life, in the future.

Material : Japan's Efforts Concerning Business and Human Rights

Amid the further globalization of corporate activities, investors, civil society and consumers have come to have the awareness to expect companies to respect human rights in corporate activities. At the 17th session of the UN Human Rights Council in 2011, the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights for Implementing the UN "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework (the UNGPs) were endorsed by consensus. The UNGPs present principles on national governments' obligations to protect human rights, companies' responsibilities to respect human rights, and access to remedies for human rights infringement in connection with business. In achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), companies are required to act based on respect for human rights.

With an interest in business and human rights growing domestically and internationally, the government of Japan formulated the Japan's National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights in October 2020 after grasping the current legal systems and measures relating to corporate activities in Japan, having discussions with economic and labor circles, and undergoing public comment.

The Action Plan describes future measures to be taken by the national government in order to promote respect for human rights in corporate activities, and presents expectations for companies to introduce human rights due diligence (to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how they address their impacts on human rights). Efforts for disseminating the Action Plan and raising awareness on human rights due diligence are to be made cooperatively by the Cabinet Office and all ministries and agencies.

Additionally, based on the international standards, including the aforementioned Guiding Principles, the government of Japan formulated and published the Guidelines for Respecting Human Rights in Responsible Supply Chains in September 2022. The Guidelines explain efforts for respecting human rights required for companies in a specific and easy-to-understand manner, in line with the actual conditions of companies doing business in Japan.

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice are also endeavoring to make companies understand that corporate activities based on the Action Plan will contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights in society as a whole, including international society, and will result in the enhancement of corporate value, and are taking various measures to encourage corporate activities from the viewpoint of human rights. In FY2023, the bodies revised the awareness-raising material for companies to conduct training by themselves, titled "Measures Currently Required for Companies Regarding 'Business and Human Rights'," and delivered a video for training on the Ministry of Justice's YouTube channel. Regarding a dedicated website, "My Declaration of Human Rights," wherein companies, organizations and individuals declare their will to take actions based on respect for human rights, the bodies posted video advertisements on the internet for dissemination, calling for companies' participation. The website posts

declarations of people of over 800 companies regarding their commitments to respecting human rights. Additionally, in response to requests from companies, Legal Affairs Bureaus and District Legal Affairs Bureaus nationwide dispatch their staff and Human Rights Volunteers to provide human rights training, and deliver awareness-raising leaflets and videos titled "Companies and Human Rights – Society Respecting Human Rights Starting from Initiatives at Workplaces." In this manner, the bodies are endeavoring to support companies that are making efforts regarding business and human rights. For details, make inquiries with nearby Legal Affairs Bureaus, District Legal Affairs Bureaus or their branches.



Dedicated website,
"My Declaration of Human Rights"



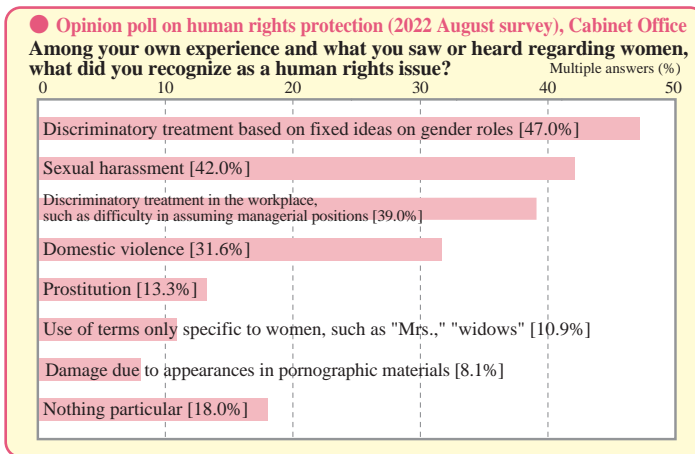
"Measures Currently Required for Companies Regarding
"Business and Human Rights" (leaflet and video)

3. Major Human Rights Issues

This Chapter focuses on the major human rights issues and efforts for addressing them.

1- Women – Sex Crimes and Sexual Violence, Domestic Violence, Harassment –

The ideal of gender equality is stipulated in the Constitution of Japan and the principle of gender equality has been established through the Act on Equal Opportunity and Treatment between Men and Women in Employment and others. In reality, however, fixed ideas on gender roles, such as that men should work outside and women should remain at home, are deeply-rooted in society even today and cause various kinds of gender discrimination at home and in the workplace.



In addition, violence against women such as sexual crimes and violence, abuse by a spouse or partner (domestic violence), and sexual harassment in the workplace, as well as disadvantageous treatment due to pregnancy and childbirth have still been frequently occurring.

With regard to women's human rights issues such as those mentioned above, the Act on the Promotion of Women's Active Engagement in Professional Life, which was enacted in April 2016, requires the national government and local governments, and employers that regularly employ a certain number of workers to ascertain the status of female employees' participation in the workplaces, analyze problems, establish a plan of action with numerical goals, and publicize the established plan and the information on the status of female employees' participation. In this manner, efforts have been made to develop an environment to enable women to fully exercise



their abilities in their vocational lives. All employers have come to be obliged to take measures for employment management to prevent power harassment, sexual harassment, etc. at workplaces. Companies are thus required to strengthen their measures to prevent all kinds of harassment at workplaces.

As one of the initiatives regarding violence against women, a two-week period from November 12 to November 25 every year is designated as a period for the Campaign to Eliminate Violence against Women, during which efforts to raise awareness of the general public on this issue are promoted. Additionally, as initiatives for supporting victims, counseling services and support are offered at Spousal Violence Counseling and Support Centers established nationwide and at One-Stop Support Centers for Victims of Sexual Crimes and Violence, etc. Furthermore, every April is designated as a Period for Preventing Sexual Violence Victimization among Young People, and awareness-raising activities are carried out using SNS. As measures against damage due to appearances in pornographic materials, efforts for the prevention of damage and the relief of victims are being promoted based on the Act on the Prevention and the Remedy of Harm Associated with Performing in Sexually Explicit Videos.

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice established the "Women's Rights Hotline" (0570-070-810 [from anywhere in Japan]), a special telephone service for human rights counseling for women. Officials of the Legal Affairs Bureaus and Human Rights Volunteers provide counseling for various human rights problems affecting women, such as abuse by a spouse or partner (domestic violence), sexual harassment in the workplace, victimization by stalking behavior, and damage due to appearances in pornographic materials. The bodies also undertake investigation and human rights remedy activities as human rights violation cases when they have found any suspected human rights violation, and carry out human rights awareness-raising activities such as distributing awareness-raising videos.



Poster
"Women's Rights Hotline"



Awareness-raising video "It's not someone else's problem."

■ The number of human rights violation cases (violence and abuse against women)^(Note) for which remedy procedures were commenced

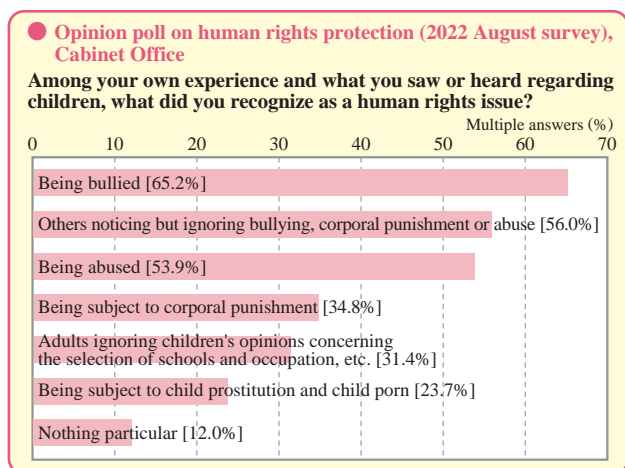
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Violence and abuse against women	947	629	435	430	383

(Note) Refer to pp.6-11 for human rights violations cases.

2- Children – Bullying, Child Abuse, Corporal Punishment, Sexual Exploitation –

According to the FY2022 Survey on Undesirable Behavior and School Non-attendance of Students, which the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology conducted, the number of incidents of violence at elementary schools, junior high schools, and high schools was 95,426 cases and the number of recognized bullying cases was 681,948 cases. The situation is still alarming. The number of people arrested or taken into custody by the police for incidents caused by bullying in 2023 was 404.

Among human rights violations for which the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice conduct investigations and resolution, cases involving children have remained at a high level, with 1,185 cases of bullying at school, 74 cases of corporal punishment by school teachers, and 268 cases of violence and abuse against children in 2023.



Bullying

In response to the enactment of the Act for the Promotion of Measures to Prevent Bullying in June 2013, the Basic Policies to Prevent Bullying was formulated (and revised in March 2017) and measures to prevent bullying and to early detect and early deal with bullying have been promoted based thereon.

Recent bullying among children is characterized by the fact that any child can be a target and that bullying is often committed via a social network service or is otherwise becoming less and less visible, and it is often the case that a trivial incident triggers escalation to serious bullying behavior.

The causes and backgrounds of children who commit bullying or who turn a blind eye to bullying are diversified, but it can be considered that the root of the problem is a lack of



consciousness of respect for human rights, or in other words, a lack of compassion and kindness towards others. In order to prevent children from bullying others or not to overlook bullying, it is important for children themselves to cultivate a sense of human rights, such as respecting the differences between them as expressions of their individual characters, and for adults around them to make efforts to notice subtle change in children.

■ The number of human rights violation cases (bullying) for which remedy procedures were commenced

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Bullying at school	2,944	1,126	1,169	1,047	1,185

Child abuse

In recent years, the number of consultations concerning child abuse received at child guidance centers nationwide has increased constantly and reached 219,170 cases (preliminary figure) in FY2022. Serious child abuse cases resulting in children's deaths occur frequently, and the prevention of child abuse is a problem to be tackled by society as a whole.

In December 2022, the Civil Code was amended, and the provisions concerning the disciplinary right of persons with parental authority were deleted, and the obligations that persons with parental authority should fulfill in taking custody of and educating children are clarified. The obligations include respect for children's moral rights, consideration to the age and development level of each child, and prohibition of corporal punishment or other words and deeds that exert harmful effects on children's healthy mental and physical development. In line with the provisions of the amended Civil Code, the Child Abuse Prevention Act and others were also amended, and child rearing without corporal punishment or other violence is being further promoted.

In April 2024, the Act Partially Amending the Child Welfare Act, etc. was put into effect (excluding some provisions) and relevant measures have been strengthened, such as the establishment of the Children and Families Centers, which offer comprehensive counseling support, etc. to children and their families, and the creation of businesses for supporting children and their families, such as housekeeping support services conducted by visiting personnel.

■ The number of human rights violation cases (child abuse) for which remedy procedures were commenced

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Violence and abuse against children	413	341	253	216	268

Corporal punishment

Corporal punishment is clearly prohibited in the proviso to Article 11 of the School Education Act and should never be permitted in any situation, because corporal punishment exerts serious harmful effect on children's minds and bodies, and may foment the idea of seeking settlement by force and create an environment for bullying and violence.

■ The number of human rights violation cases (corporal punishment by school teachers) for which remedy procedures were commenced

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Corporal punishment by school teachers	141	83	51	75	74

Child sexual exploitation

Commercialized sexual exploitation, such as child prostitution and child pornography flooding the internet, and child sexual abuse have become a serious concern all around the world.

The Act on Regulation and Punishment of Acts Relating to Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and the Protection of Children, which was enacted in July 2014, newly provides for punishment for acts of possessing or retaining child pornography for the purpose of satisfying one's sexual curiosity and the act of producing child pornography by secretly depicting poses of a child. In April 2022, the Act on Prevention of Sexual Violence against School Children and Students by Education Personnel, which provides for measures for protecting children from sexual violence by teachers, was enforced. The Act provides for the development of a database concerning persons whose special licenses were revoked, etc. by the national government (persons whose teaching licenses were revoked or stripped on the grounds of their sexual violence against school children or students). From April 2023, schools are obliged to use the database when appointing or employing teachers or school staff members, regardless of whether they are national, public or private and whether the person is to be newly appointed or employed on a full-time basis or a part-time basis.

In addition, government-wide efforts are being made against sexual exploitation of children based on the Plan for the Prevention of Sex Crimes Against Children (Basic Plan on Measures against Child Sexual Exploitation) 2022, which was formulated in May 2022 (refer to the material on page 31 for efforts for preventing sexual exploitation of children and young people).

Furthermore, various measures are also being taken to prevent children's victimization by sexual crimes, including those for preventing damage due to appearances in pornographic materials (refer to p.25).



Efforts of the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice have been carrying out various human rights awareness-raising activities for developing children's awareness of human rights, such as holding the National Essay Contest on Human Rights for Junior High School Students, Human Rights Lectures, and Human Rights Flower Campaigns (refer to pp.15-17) in collaboration with schools, etc., and distributing awareness-raising leaflets and videos, with the aim of cultivating awareness regarding children's human rights issues among the society.



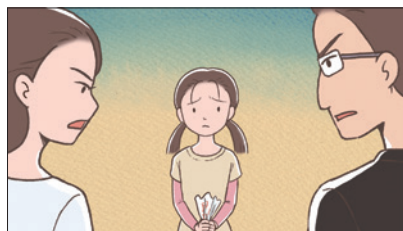
Awareness-raising booklet
"Bullying - Never Permit or Overlook"



Awareness-raising booklet
"All are Friends; Learn and Consider Human Rights through a Comic"



Awareness-raising video
"Are you OK? Let's consider bullying!"



Awareness-raising video
"Are you OK? Let's consider child abuse!"



For adults



For children



Awareness-raising video "It's not someone else's problem."



The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice have been distributing "Children's Rights SOS Mini-Letters" (letter paper with a pre-stamped envelope for human rights counseling) to elementary and junior high school students throughout the country since 2006. Through them, the bodies aim to understand the concerns and problems of children who are not able or willing to consult teachers or guardians, and to resolve various human rights problems concerning children in cooperation with the schools and relevant organs.

Through counseling by the use of the "Children's Rights Hotline" (0120-007-110 [from anywhere in Japan]), the "Human Rights Counseling Service on the Internet (SOS-e mail)" (<https://www.jinken.go.jp/kodomo>), and the "LINE Human Rights Counseling" which is accessible to young people, officials of the Legal Affairs Bureaus and Human Rights Volunteers are endeavoring to detect children's human rights violations at an early stage.

When any suspected case of human rights violation is found through human rights counseling, etc., the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice investigate the case as a human rights violation case and take appropriate measures depending on the circumstances.



Poster
"Children's Rights Hotline"

Results of the Children's Rights SOS Mini-Letters Project

Collection period : April 1, 2023–March 31, 2024
Collected data:
 Children's Rights SOS Mini-Letters from students in elementary and junior high schools throughout the country

- Number of counseling cases via the Mini-Letter: approximately 7,511
- Number of counseling cases by students' grade

Grade	Number of cases
First (Elementary school)	846
Second (Elementary school)	1,174
Third (Elementary school)	1,276
Fourth (Elementary school)	1,267
Fifth (Elementary school)	926
Sixth (Elementary school)	867
First (Junior high school)	335
Second (Junior high school)	320
Third (Junior high school)	279
Others (Junior high school)	221

- Contents

[Breakdown]

Bullying: 2,126 (28.3%)	Corporal punishment: 26 (0.3%)
Abuse: 312 (4.2%)	Others: 5,047 (67.2%)

Children's Rights SOS Mini-Letter



1. The Human Rights Bodies of the Ministry of Justice

2. Activities of the Human Rights Bodies of the Ministry of Justice

3. Major Human Rights Issues

4. Topics/Issues Regarding Human Rights of Children and Young People

Material : Efforts for Preventing Sexual Exploitation of Children and Young People

In light of the problematic circumstances where children and young people in vulnerable positions are often victimized by sex crimes or sexual violence and they are generally unable to understand that they were victimized or find it difficult to ask for help or receive proper support, the national government compiled the Emergency Policy Package for Preventing Sexual Exploitation of Children and Young People (July 26, 2023; Joint Session of the Inter-ministerial Meeting to Strengthen Action against Sexual Crimes and Violence and the Inter-ministerial Liaison Meeting on Measures against Child Sexual Exploitation).



Ministry of Justice's website
"Amendments of sex crime-related Acts"

Based on this policy package, the government has been steadily carrying out various measures to strengthen countermeasures. Those measures include the dissemination of the purport and details of the amended Penal Code, etc., which further clarify the requirements for the establishment of sex crimes, and the strengthening of strict measures concerning sex crimes, the nationwide implementation of the "Safety Education for Life" to prevent children from becoming perpetrators, victims, or bystanders of sex crimes, and the enhancement of various counseling service offices to offer better support by making it easier for victims to file complaints.

In July 2023, the Penal Code was amended and the Act on the Punishment for Filming Sexual Poses and the Erasure of Electronic or Magnetic Records of Sexual Images Recorded in Seized Articles was put into effect, and the age of the persons under the so-called age of consent was raised from "younger than 13" to "younger than 16," and the act of asking for a meeting with a person up to the age of 16 years with the intent of molestation and the act of filming sexual poses of a person up to the age of 16 years without justifiable reasons were made subject to punishment. The materials outlining the purport and details of these Acts are available on the website of the Ministry of Justice. Please refer to them.

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice have created awareness-raising videos titled "Are you OK? Let's consider dating violence!" and titled "Are you OK? Let's consider child abuse!" concerning dating violence and child abuse, including case examples falling under sexual violence (refer to p.29). The bodies utilize them in Human Rights Classes and are delivering them on the ministry's YouTube channel for carrying out various human rights awareness activities, and are also endeavoring to disseminate the information on human rights counseling services (refer to p.12 and p.30).



Awareness-raising video
"Are you OK? Let's consider dating violence!"



3- Elderly People

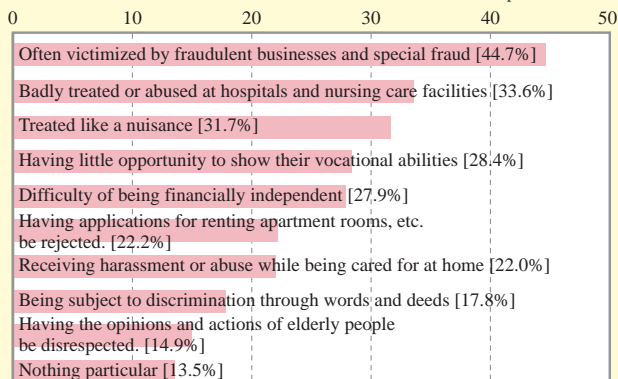
Due to the increased extension of the average life expectancy and the declining birth rate, one-quarter of the population in Japan is composed of elderly people aged 65 or over. In such a situation, the human rights problems of elderly people, such as physical or psychological abuse by caretakers, etc., are now becoming social problems.

In December 1995, the Basic Act on Measures for the Aging Society entered into force, aiming to achieve a society in which each citizen can live worthwhile lives with a sense of security throughout their lives. In July 1996, the General Principles Concerning Measures for the Aging Society were compiled based on this Basic Act (the current General Principles were decided at a Cabinet meeting in September 2024).

Furthermore, based on the Act on the Prevention of Elder Abuse and Support for Caregivers of Elderly Persons and Other Related Matters, which was enforced in April 2006, measures are being implemented for prevention and early detection and dealing with abuse of elderly people in order to protect their dignity.

● Opinion poll on human rights protection (2022 August survey), Cabinet Office

Among your own experience and what you saw or heard regarding elderly people, what did you recognize as a human rights issue? Multiple answers (%)



In December 2018, the Act on Comprehensive and Integrated Promotion of Measures for Achieving a Universal Society was enforced with the aim of realizing a society in which each citizen is recognized as a member of society standing on an equal footing, irrespective of having disabilities or not or being young or old, with their dignity being fully respected, and can freely exercise their abilities with a guaranteed opportunity to participate in activities in any field of society, and all citizens thereby coexist while mutually respecting others' personality and characteristics and offering support. Based on this Act, efforts for achieving a universal society are being promoted cooperatively by relevant administrative organs.

Additionally, based on the General Principles Concerning Measures for Dementia Patients, which were compiled in June 2019, measures focused both on coexistence and disease prevention are being taken while prioritizing viewpoints of dementia patients and their families, aiming to achieve a society where people can enjoy daily lives with hope even after developing dementia.

Based on the Basic Act on Dementia to Promote an Inclusive Society, which was put into effect in January 2024, measures for dementia are being taken comprehensively in order to promote the realization of a vibrant society in which each person, including those with dementia, can fully realize their individuality and abilities, and live in an inclusive and mutually-supportive social environment with others while respecting each person's character and individuality.

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice distribute leaflets, deliver videos or are otherwise carrying out human rights awareness-raising activities with the aim of achieving a society where the human rights of all people, including the elderly, are respected.

The bodies set up ad-hoc human rights counseling centers at social welfare facilities such as welfare facilities for the elderly so that facility users and their family members, who usually have difficulty in visiting a Legal Affairs Bureau or District Legal Affairs Bureau, can receive counseling services easily in these facilities.

The bodies also strive to make human rights counseling activities widely known to social welfare workers, who work closely with elderly people, and call on them to help with strengthening cooperation in such forms as providing information when they recognize a human rights violation case.



Awareness raising booklet

"Toward the Age of Coexistence ; Aged Society and Human Rights"



Awareness-raising video
"It's not someone else's problem.
– For achieving an inclusive
society where people mutually
support with each other"

■ The number of human rights violation cases against elderly people for which remedy procedures were commenced

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Violence and abuse against elderly people	251	185	131	81	107
Human rights violations at welfare facilities for the elderly	31	23	16	23	19

4- Persons with Disabilities

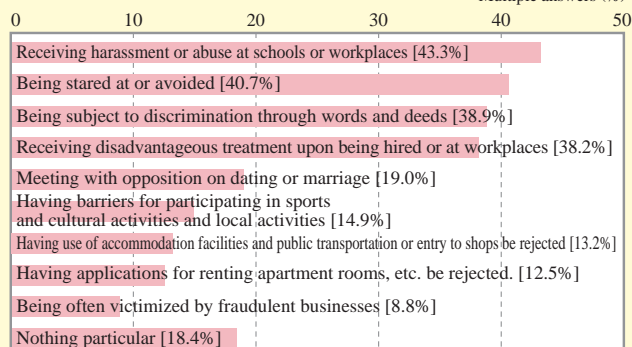
Elimination of prejudice and discrimination on the grounds of disabilities

In order to create a comfortable society equal for everyone, including persons with disabilities, it is necessary for all people in society to strive to fully understand and give due consideration to persons with disabilities, while various measures are being taken by the national government and local governments.

The Basic Act for Persons with Disabilities designates the week from December 3 to December 9 every year as the Week of Persons with Disabilities. During this week, various events are held intensively in collaboration among the national government, local governments and private entities, etc. in order to disseminate the principle of an "inclusive society."

● Opinion poll on human rights protection (2022 August survey), Cabinet Office

Among your own experience and what you saw or heard regarding persons with disabilities, what did you recognize as a human rights issue? Multiple answers (%)



Additionally, based on the Act on Prevention of Abuse of Persons with Disabilities and Support for Caregivers, which was enforced in October 2012, measures are being implemented for prevention and early detection and resolution of abuse cases of persons with disabilities in order to protect their dignity.

Furthermore, under the Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities, which was enforced in April 2016, administrative organs and private companies have been making efforts to prohibit unfair discriminatory treatment and give due consideration to persons with disabilities for eliminating discrimination on the basis of disability. In April 2024, an amendment of the Act was enforced and a duty of companies to make an effort to provide reasonable accommodation to persons with disabilities was made mandatory.

In February 2017, ahead of the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics Games, the Universal Design 2020 Action Plan, which provides for the promotion of "barrier-free mind" and creation



of communities with universal design, was determined. Based on this plan, efforts have been made to implement and improve measures based on evaluations by the persons with disabilities and support organizations. Additionally, under the Act on Comprehensive and Integrated Promotion of Measures for Achieving a Universal Society, which was enforced in December 2018, initiatives for achieving a universal society have been promoted.

In May 2022, the Act on Promotion of Measures Concerning Acquisition and Use of Information and Communication by Persons with Disabilities was enforced to enable all persons with disabilities to participate in activities in all fields.

The government of Japan is promoting measures to assist persons with disabilities to support their independence and social participation in line with the Basic Plan for Persons with Disabilities (the fifth plan), which was established under the Basic Act for Persons with Disabilities, with the aim of achieving an "inclusive society" where persons with and without disabilities are able to respect each other's personality and individuality without distinction.

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice conduct various human rights awareness-raising activities, such as providing opportunities to experience wheelchairs or sports for persons with disabilities and holding Human Rights Lectures combining talks and lectures by Paralympians and a symposium under the theme of an inclusive society, in collaboration with Social Welfare Councils, with the aim of eliminating prejudice and discrimination on the grounds of disabilities.

The bodies have set up ad-hoc human rights counseling centers at support facilities for persons with disabilities so that facility users and their family members, who usually have difficulty in visiting a Legal Affairs Bureau or District Legal Affairs Bureau, can receive counseling services easily in these facilities. The bodies also commit to having human rights counseling activities widely known to social welfare workers, who work closely with persons with disabilities, and request them to cooperate in such forms as providing information when they recognize a human rights violation case.



Awareness-raising booklet "Persons with Disabilities and Human Rights"



Awareness-raising video
"It's not someone else's problem."



■ The number of human rights violation cases against persons with disabilities for which remedy procedures were commenced

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Discriminatory treatment against persons with disabilities	163	125	112	107	149
Human rights violations at welfare facilities for persons with disabilities	38	28	22	27	31

Amendment of the Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities

In order to realize a society of coexistence with mutual respect for one another's personality and individuality without being discriminated against according to whether or not they have a disability, it is important to eliminate social barriers that limit activities of persons with disabilities and restrict their social participation in their daily or social life. Therefore, the Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities prohibits administrative organs and companies from treating persons with disabilities in a discriminatory manner on the grounds of their disabilities and requires them to provide reasonable accommodation to the needs of persons with disabilities. Through these measures, the Act aims to realize an inclusive society where persons with disabilities can access various services and opportunities provided in the society and can participate in social activities.

• Major points of the amendment

In order to further promote the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of disabilities, companies came to be obliged to provide reasonable accommodation to implement the elimination of social barriers on April 1, 2024 onward. At the same time, it was decided to strengthen collaboration among administrative organs and take measures to enhance support measures for eliminating discrimination on the grounds of disabilities.

- (1) To oblige companies to provide reasonable accommodation to implement the elimination of social barriers.

Regarding companies' provision of reasonable accommodation to implement the elimination of social barriers (items, institutions, practices, ideas, and other things in society that stand as obstacles against persons with disabilities engaging in daily or social life), the current obligation to make efforts is to be made mandatory.

- (2) To add the responsibilities of the national and local governments to make collaboration and cooperation.

The national and local governments are to be required to divide roles appropriately and cooperate and collaborate with one another so that measures for promoting the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of disabilities are implemented efficiently and effectively.

- (3) To enhance support measures for eliminating discrimination on the grounds of disabilities.

- (i) Basic matters concerning the implementation of support measures for eliminating discrimination on the grounds of disabilities are to be added as matters to be specified in the basic policy.

- (ii) The national and local governments' responsibilities are to be clarified in fostering and securing human resources who respond to consultations on discrimination on the grounds of disabilities.

- (iii) Local governments are to make efforts to collect, compile and provide information on discrimination on the grounds of disabilities and initiatives for the elimination thereof (case examples, etc.).



Initiatives regarding the former Eugenic Protection Act

In response to the judgement of the Supreme Court rendered on July 3, 2024 in relation to the former Eugenic Protection Act, Prime Minister Kishida met the plaintiffs and others in lawsuits for state redress over the former Eugenic Protection Act on July 17, 2024. The Prime Minister expressed remorse and apology, representing the national government, for the fact that many people have suffered physical and mental agonies under the former Eugenic Protection Act or due to the existence of the Act. The Prime Minister stated that the government will check its past initiatives and build a new cross-governmental system to strengthen education and awareness-raising activities and other efforts toward the complete elimination of the concept of eugenics and prejudice and discrimination against persons with disabilities.

On July 26, the Headquarters for the Promotion of Measures toward the Realization of an Inclusive Society Free from Prejudice and Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities, consisting of all ministers, was established in the Cabinet. The Headquarters will follow up and strengthen initiatives for promoting a "barrier-free mind" as provided for in the Universal Design 2020 Action Plan and will deliberate on measures required for realizing an inclusive society free from prejudice and discrimination against persons with disabilities and formulate a new action plan.

5- *Buraku* Discrimination (*Dowa* Issue)

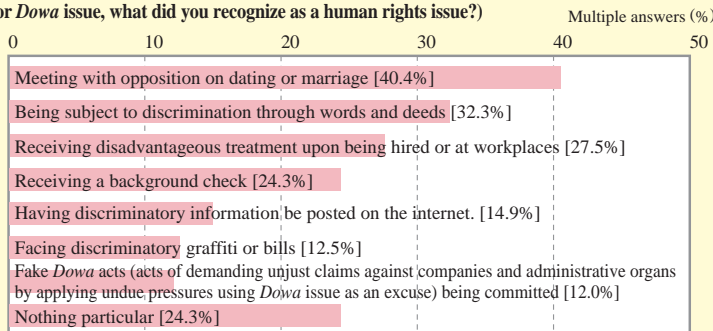
Buraku discrimination (*Dowa* issue)

Due to discrimination based on the structure of social statuses which was formed in the course of the historical development of Japanese society, some Japanese people had been forced to endure a deprived status economically, socially and culturally over years, and they are still subject to various kinds of discrimination in their daily lives even today, such as meeting opposition to marriage or being subject to disadvantageous treatment upon employment on the grounds of being from a district called a *Dowa* district. This is the *Dowa* issue, which is a human rights issue unique to Japan.

In order to solve this issue, the national government, together with local governments, had worked for 33 years since 1969 on measures for regional improvements based on Acts on Special Measures. As a result, developments in infrastructure in order to improve the impoverished environment of the *Dowa* districts have achieved steady results, and the regional disparity with other districts has become considerably smaller.

● Opinion poll on human rights protection (2022 August survey), Cabinet Office

Among your own experience and what you saw or heard regarding the *Buraku* discrimination or *Dowa* issue, what did you recognize as a human rights issue?



However, the survey on the status of *Buraku* discrimination, which was conducted based on the Act on the Promotion of Elimination of *Buraku* Discrimination that was enforced in December 2016, and the results, which were published in June 2020, (https://www.moj.go.jp/JINKEN/jinken04_00127.html) revealed that although a correct understanding on the *Buraku* discrimination (*Dowa* issue) has been increasing: discriminatory false accusations targeting specific individuals or unspecified people are posted on the internet; cases of discriminatory treatment occur upon individuals' marriage or dating; some people still have prejudice and discriminatory points of view; some of the viewers of information related to the *Buraku*



discrimination on the internet have a certain discriminatory motivation. It is necessary to properly deal with the *Buraku* discrimination (*Dowa* issue) based on the purport of the same Act, the incidental resolutions, and the results of the aforementioned survey.

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice carry out various human rights awareness-raising activities, such as distribution of awareness-raising videos, and endeavor to disseminate the details of the Act on the Promotion of Elimination of *Buraku* Discrimination in order to eliminate the public prejudice relating to the *Buraku* discrimination (*Dowa* issue). Additionally, the bodies endeavor to provide a remedy for damage and prevent occurrence of human rights violations concerning the *Buraku* discrimination (*Dowa* issue) through human rights counseling and investigation and resolution of human rights violation cases. When the bodies find: through reports by relevant administrative organs, etc., any information on the internet citing a certain area as a *Dowa* district or the like, they make judgements on the illegality thereof and demand the relevant provider, etc. to delete the information or otherwise take appropriate measures.



Awareness-raising video
"It's not someone else's problem."

■ The number of human rights violation cases regarding the *Buraku* discrimination (*Dowa* issue) for which remedy procedures were commenced

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Human rights violations regarding the <i>Buraku</i> discrimination (<i>Dowa</i> issue)	221	244	308	433	448

Elimination of pseudo-actions purportedly on behalf of *Dowa* problems

One of the major factors hampering the resolution of *Buraku* discrimination (*Dowa* issue) is the widespread occurrence of pseudo-actions purportedly on behalf of *Dowa* problems. These pseudo-actions refer to acts of demanding unjust profits or claims against companies and administrative organs (such as forcing them to purchase expensive books) by applying undue pressures using *Dowa* issue as an excuse.

In order to tackle pseudo-actions, it is necessary for administrative organs and companies to take a firm attitude towards unfair claims in close cooperation.

In 1987, the national government established the Central Liaison Conference for Measures against Pseudo-Actions with the participation of all of the ministries and agencies. Efforts to eliminate pseudo-actions have also been made at the regional level through the establishment of the Liaison Conference among Relevant Organizations for Measures against Pseudo-Actions, with Legal Affairs Bureaus and District Legal Affairs Bureaus across the country acting as secretariats.

The Ministry of Justice prepared a guide compiling concrete responses to be made against pseudo-actions and has made it available on its website (<https://www.moj.go.jp/content/001361670.pdf>). The Ministry has conducted questionnaire surveys eleven times since 1987 with the aim of ascertaining the actual status of pseudo-actions (the results of the latest survey conducted for FY2018 are available at: <https://www.moj.go.jp/content/001290375.pdf>).



6- The Ainu People

The Ainu people have an original and rich culture such as a unique language, traditional ceremonies and rituals, Yukar and other oral literature, but due to integration policies which were implemented in modern times, efforts for the preservation and the handing down of traditions have not been sufficiently made in the present day. In particular, people who understand the Ainu language as a mother tongue and can uphold the traditions are aging and important foundations needed to pass on the culture show signs of diminishing.

On the basis of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2007, and the report by the Advisory Council for Future Ainu Policy published in July 2009, the national government has been promoting comprehensive and effective Ainu policies.

The Act on Promoting of Measures to Achieve a Society in which the Pride of Ainu People is Respected, which was enforced in May 2019, provides for the basic idea concerning the prohibition of discrimination, etc. on the grounds of being an Ainu person and for support measures to carry out Ainu policies comprehensively on an ongoing basis, with the aim of achieving a society in which the Ainu people can live with their ethnic pride and in which their pride is sufficiently respected. Under this Act, measures including promotion of regional developments, industry and tourism, in addition to conventional measures for promoting culture and welfare, are being implemented comprehensively and effectively.

In July 2020, Upopoy (National Ainu Museum and Park) was opened in Shiraoi Town in Hokkaido as a base for reconstruction and creation of Ainu culture. Upopoy offers visitors opportunities to experience the lives and traditional performing arts of the Ainu people from diverse perspectives.

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice carry out various human rights awareness-raising activities, such as distribution of awareness-raising videos and utilizing the videos as learning materials for school children and students before their school excursions or school trips to Hokkaido, in order to improve understanding and recognition about the Ainu people and eliminate prejudice and discrimination against them. Furthermore, the bodies commenced collaboration with the Counseling Services for Ainu People in May 2022, thereby positively carrying out human rights counseling, investigation and resolution of human rights violation cases.

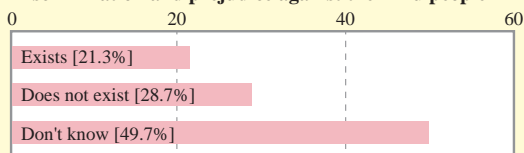


Awareness-raising video,
"A=kor Youth"
(a=kor is an Ainu word meaning "our.")



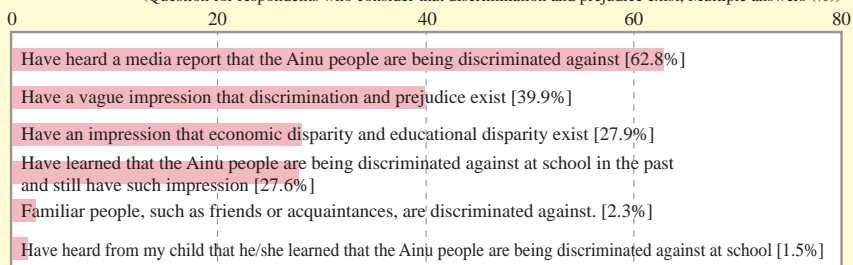
● **Survey on the public understanding about the Ainu people (2022 November survey),
Cabinet Secretariat and Cabinet Office**

Discrimination and prejudice against the Ainu people



Reasons for discrimination and prejudice against the Ainu people

(Question for respondents who consider that discrimination and prejudice exist; Multiple answers (%))



■ **Act Promoting Measures to Achieve a Society in which the Pride of Ainu People is Respected
(Act No. 16 of 2019)**

Article 4 It is prohibited for any person to discriminate against Ainu people or commit, on the grounds that a person is Ainu, any other act that infringes upon the rights or interests of that person.

■ **The number of human rights violation cases (discriminatory treatment against the Ainu people) for which remedy procedures were commenced**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Discriminatory treatment against the Ainu people	0	0	0	1	6



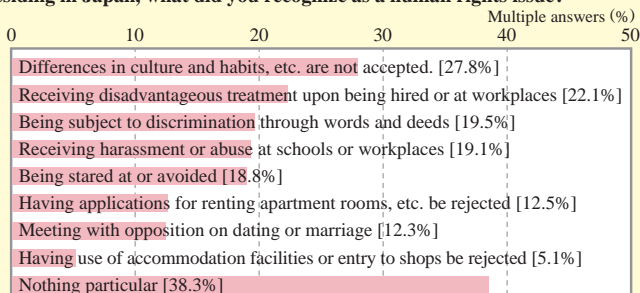
7- Foreigners

The number of foreigners residing in Japan was approx. 3.41 million people as of the end of 2023, hitting a record high. Under such circumstances, various human rights problems regarding foreigners have taken place due to differences in language, religion, customs and other factors.

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice established the "Foreign-language Human Rights Hotline" and the "Foreign-language Human Rights Counseling Service on the Internet," as well as "Human Rights Counseling Centers for Foreigners" to provide human rights counseling services in multiple languages to foreign nationals who cannot speak Japanese fluently. Furthermore, the bodies carry out human rights awareness-raising activities, and conduct remedy activities in order to eliminate prejudice and discrimination against foreign nationals.

● Opinion poll on human rights protection (2022 August survey), Cabinet Office

Among your own experience and what you saw or heard regarding foreigners residing in Japan, what did you recognize as a human rights issue?



Recently, discriminatory speech and behavior intended to exclude people of certain ethnic groups or nationalities has become a public concern as so-called "hate speech." In June 2016, the Act on the Promotion of Efforts to Eliminate Unfair Discriminatory Speech and Behavior against Persons with Countries of Origin Other than Japan was enforced. However, hate speech has yet to be eliminated. Such discriminatory speech and behavior not only cause a feeling of anxiety or repugnance but could also violate human dignity or generate a discriminatory environment and cannot be tolerated. As indicated in the incidental resolutions of the Diet in the process of deliberating the relevant Act, hostile speech and behavior on the grounds of nationality, race or ethnic group, etc. with the intention to encourage or induce discrimination are not forgivable, irrespective of whether they target people from overseas or not.

While sharing information with relevant ministries and agencies, as well as with local governments, the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice are carrying out various human rights awareness-raising activities under the catch phrase "STOP! HATE SPEECH" and are conducting human rights counseling, investigation and remedy activities for human rights violations, including damage due to hate speech.



Awareness-raising video
"It's not someone else's problem."



Awareness-raising video
"Stop online hate speech."



Awareness-raising
booklet (comic)
"Hate Speech around Us"



■ The number of human rights violation cases (discriminatory treatment against foreigners) for which remedy procedures were commenced

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Discriminatory treatment against foreigners	72	60	59	47	83


You can get the Human Rights Counseling Leaflet for Foreigners from the Ministry of Justice website at: <https://www.moj.go.jp/JINKEN/jinken21.html>



Material Human Rights Counseling in Foreign Languages

English, Chinese, Korean, Filipino, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Nepali, Spanish, Indonesian, and Thai

Foreign-language Human Rights Hotline (from anywhere in Japan)

 **0570-090911**

Service hours: 9:00 - 17:00 on weekdays (excluding the year-end and New Year holidays)

*A call to this number is connected to the competent Legal Affairs Bureau or District Legal Affairs Bureau via a private multilingual call center.

Foreign-language Human Rights Counseling Service on the Internet

https://www.jinken.go.jp/soudan/PC_AD/O101_en.html



Human Rights Counseling Centers for Foreigners

Legal Affairs Bureaus and District Legal Affairs Bureaus nationwide provide human rights counseling services to foreign nationals who cannot speak Japanese fluently with an interview through a translator.

Service hours: 9:00 - 17:00 on weekdays (excluding the year-end and New Year holidays)

Human rights counseling offices are periodically opened at the following locations other than Legal Affairs Bureaus and District Legal Affairs Bureaus.

City	Location	Service hours	Language	Contact information
Takamatsu	Kagawa International Exchange Center (I-pal Kagawa) 1-11-63, Ban-cho, Takamatsu-shi	13:00 - 15:00 on 3rd Friday every month (Reservation required)	English, Chinese	Human Rights Department, Takamatsu Legal Affairs Bureau 087 (821) 7850
Matsuyama	Ehime Prefectural International Center (EPIC) 1-1, Dougoichiman, Matsuyama-shi	13:30 - 15:30 on 4th Thursday every month	English, Chinese	Human Rights Division, Matsuyama District Legal Affairs Bureau 089 (932) 0888

8- Patients of Infections

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is less contagious, and there is almost no possibility of being infected in daily life, outside of sexual contact. Additionally, thanks to the progress made in treatment, even if a person is infected with HIV, early detection and treatment can prevent the onset of AIDS and can significantly reduce the risk of infecting others.

Hepatitis is mostly caused by the hepatitis B virus or hepatitis C virus, and these viruses are transmitted mainly via blood and body fluids. Therefore, in order to prevent transmission of the hepatitis virus, it is important not to share tools with blood or body fluids with others and to avoid a wound or mucous membrane from directly touching any blood or body fluid. If such precautions are taken, there is no possibility to be infected with the hepatitis B virus or hepatitis C virus in ordinary everyday life.

However, such accurate information is not broadly understood, and not a few patients and their families suffer from prejudice and discrimination.

In relation to COVID-19, whose category under the Infectious Disease Act was changed to Class V Infectious Disease in May 2023, various human rights issues, including prejudice and discrimination against patients and medical care professionals, etc., occurred. In light of such circumstances, the provisions to provide for the responsibilities of the national and local governments in preventing discriminatory treatment against patients, etc. were newly added in the Act on Special Measures against Novel Influenza, etc. in February 2021.

The national government is endeavoring to disseminate accurate knowledge on these infectious diseases and raise awareness of the general public in order to eliminate prejudice and discrimination against infectious diseases.



Awareness-raising video
"It's not someone else's problem."



The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice have also been conducting various human rights awareness-raising activities, and conduct human rights counseling, investigation and resolution of human rights violation cases in order to eliminate prejudice and discrimination relating to infectious diseases.



■ The number of human rights violation cases (discriminatory treatment against infectious disease patients) for which remedy procedures were commenced

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Discriminatory treatment against infectious disease patients (excl. patients of Hansen's Disease)	15	44	68	49	24

1. The Human Rights Bodies of the Ministry of Justice

2. Activities of the Human Rights Bodies of the Ministry of Justice

3. Major Human Rights Issues

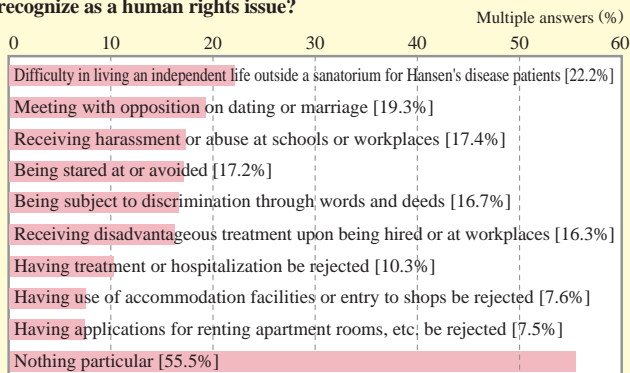
4. Topic/Efforts Regarding Human Rights of Children and Young People

9- Present and Former Hansen's Disease (also known internationally as leprosy) Patients and Their Families

Although the bacteria, *Mycobacterium leper*, found in Hansen's disease is contagious, it is extremely rare to contract the disease even if the bacteria have been acquired due to low infectivity. In the rare event of coming down with the disease, as effective treatment has been established and there are no aftereffects as long as the disease is detected early and treatment is administered appropriately. However, the policy adopted in the past to isolate Hansen's disease patients at care facilities created awareness that Hansen's disease is a dreadful disease, and this has caused unreasonable discrimination and prejudice against present and former Hansen's disease patients and their families.

● Opinion poll on human rights protection (2022 August survey), Cabinet Office

Among your own experience and what you saw or heard regarding present and former Hansen's disease patients and their families, what did you recognize as a human rights issue?



In the lawsuit to seek compensation for the violation of the Leprosy Prevention Act, questioning the national government's responsibility for the delay in a shift of its policies on Hansen's disease, the Kumamoto District Court rendered a judgment to hold the national government liable in May 2001. Thereafter, the national government has endeavored to disseminate correct knowledge on Hansen's disease, also in light of the purport of the Act on Promotion of Resolution of Issues Related to Hansen's Disease, which was enacted in June 2008.

However, prejudice and discrimination were not eradicated. In June 2019, in the lawsuit filed against the national government by the families of Hansen's disease patients to seek compensation for damage due to prejudice and discrimination, the Kumamoto District Court rendered a judgment to hold the national government liable. In response, the then Prime Minister issued a statement to accept the judgment in July 2019 and expressed deep remorse and an apology as the national government for the suffering and difficulties faced by present and former patients and their families over the years due to extreme prejudice and discrimination in society originated from the national government's wrong policies to isolate patients at care facilities. The statement also contains the national government's commitment to taking new compensatory measures for patients' families and strengthening human rights education and awareness-raising activities in consideration of their hardships, in close collaboration and cooperation among relevant ministries and agencies.

The Committee Discussing Measures for Eliminating Discrimination and Prejudice against Hansen's Disease consisting of experts and related parties, which was established under the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, compiled a report in March 2023. In this report as well, relevant ministries and agencies are required to collaborate with each other and take measures for raising awareness and providing counseling services.

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice are carrying out human rights awareness-raising activities in light of harsh experiences faced by present and former Hansen's disease patients and their families.

For example, the bodies have held symposiums on Hansen's disease issues, wherein lectures by patients or their families, etc., were provided and panel discussions were held with the participation of students, and have posted the content of those symposiums in national newspapers for junior and senior high school students, thereby disseminating feelings of former patients and their families. Additionally, the bodies have held panel exhibitions on Hansen's disease, placed internet banner advertisements, and prepared and delivered awareness-raising videos. In this manner, the bodies have been carrying out various human rights awareness-raising activities in collaboration with relevant ministries and agencies for the purpose of disseminating an accurate understanding of Hansen's disease and eliminating prejudice and discrimination against Hansen's disease patients. The bodies also conduct human rights counseling, investigation and resolution of human rights violation regarding cases of discrimination against Hansen's disease patients, etc.



1. The Human Rights Bodies of the Ministry of Justice

2. Activities of the Human Rights Bodies of the Ministry of Justice

3. Major Human Rights Issues

4. Topic: Efforts Regarding Human Rights of Children and Young People



Article on the symposium (Yomiuri Shimbun for junior and senior high school students)



Awareness-raising video "Learn about Hansen's Disease – Feelings of Former Patients and Their Families"



Awareness-raising video "Hansen's Disease Issues – Testimony from the Past, Advice for the Future"



Awareness-raising video "– A Story about Hansen's Disease and a Family – Hometown that I could Return to Only in My Dream"



■ The number of human rights violation cases (discriminatory treatment against Hansen's disease patients) for which remedy procedures were commenced

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Discriminatory treatment against Hansen's disease patients	1	0	1	0	1

10- People Released from Prison after Serving Their Sentence and Their Families

Prejudice and discrimination against people released from prison after serving their sentence and against their family members are deeply rooted and released persons frequently receive undue discriminatory treatment in finding jobs or housing, and therefore the conditions are very severe for those people who are trying to reintegrate into society. In order to ensure their stable social life as a member of local communities, understanding and cooperation not only from their family members but also from their workplaces and local communities are indispensable, in addition to a strong desire for rehabilitation on the part of people released from prison after serving their sentence.

Based on the secondary Plan on Promotion of Prevention of Repeat Offenses, which was formulated in March 2023 under the Act for the Prevention of Recidivism, and other policies, the national government is promoting various measures to prevent repeat offenses, including PR and awareness-raising activities, so that people released from prison after serving their sentence can be accepted as responsible members of the society.

In order to promote understanding and cooperation of citizens with regard to improvement and rehabilitation of persons who committed crimes and delinquent juveniles and to create local communities free from crimes and delinquency, the Ministry of Justice has been carrying out the "Brighter Society Campaign" with the understanding and participation of local residents, while adopting "Yellow Feather of Happiness" as a symbol mark of the activities (see the website of the Ministry of Justice for the details of the "Campaign to Give Society a Brighter Future").

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice carry out various human rights awareness-raising activities, and conduct human rights counseling and human rights remedy activities in order to eliminate prejudice and discrimination against people released from prison after serving their sentence and their families, and contribute to their rehabilitation into society.

Website of the Ministry of Justice
"Brighter Society Campaign"



■ The number of human rights violation cases (discriminatory treatment against people released from prison after serving their sentence) for which remedy procedures were commenced

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Discriminatory treatment against people released from prison after serving their sentence	11	5	4	4	2



11- Crime Victims and Their Families

It has been pointed out that the crime victims and their family members have not only been damaged psychologically and economically by the crime itself and its aftereffects, but they may also suffer other injuries such as defamation through rumors and mindless slander or disturbance of peace in their private lives.

In order to achieve a society where the rights and benefits of crime victims, etc. are protected, the Basic Act on Crime Victims was enacted in December 2004. Based on this Act, the Fourth Basic Plan for Crime Victims was formulated in March 2021, and measures set up in this Basic Plan are being taken.

Furthermore, the week from November 25 to December 1 is designated as Crime Victims' Week, during which activities are carried out every year to improve people's understanding of the situation of crime victims and the importance of giving consideration to the honor and peaceful lives of crime victims.

The Ministry of Justice posts a pamphlet to broadly introduce and disseminate a system for protecting and supporting crime victims on its website (see the website of the Ministry of Justice for the details of the pamphlet).

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice carry out human rights awareness-raising activities, and conduct human rights counseling, investigation and resolution of human rights violation cases in order to ensure consideration for the human rights of crime victims and their families and protection of their rights.



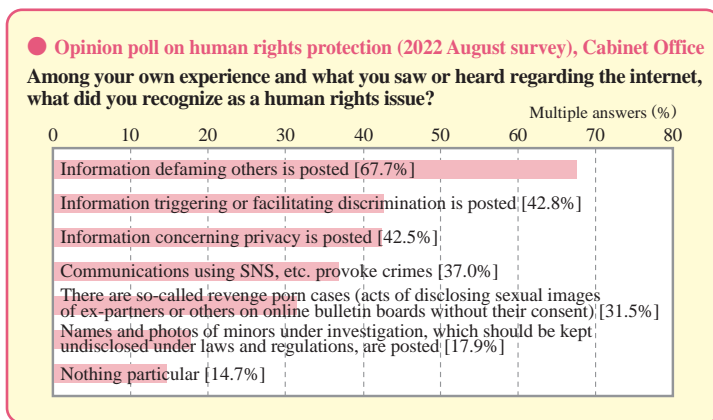
Website of the Ministry of Justice
"For Crime Victims"

■ The number of human rights violation cases against crime victims, etc. for which remedy procedures were commenced

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Human rights violations against crime victims, etc.	6	4	0	2	1

12- Human Rights Violations on the Internet

Following increased use of the internet and owing to its anonymity and capacity to send out information with ease, various human rights problems have arisen, such as violation of individual reputations and privacy and publication of expressions that promote discrimination. These acts hurt the targets and those who have made such posting may be accused of a crime. As defamation on the internet has become a social problem, in particular, defamation as a whole has come to be strictly criticized and public awareness of the need to deter defamatory postings is increasing. Accordingly, as measures against recent cases of defamation, the statutory penalty for insult was raised in July 2022. It is necessary to continuously carry out human rights awareness-raising activities for general internet users in order to promote their correct understanding concerning human rights. The number of young internet users such as elementary and junior high school students has been increasing every year and, there are cases such as slandering through social network service, illegal download, etc. in which both the assailants and the victims of the human rights violations are children. In light of such circumstances, from February to May every year, when many young people start to use a smartphone, etc., awareness-raising activities are carried out intensively as the "Spring Unified Campaign for Safe Internet Use" to call for safe use of smartphones and SNSs.



Furthermore, in order to prevent the occurrence and expansion of damage due to so-called revenge porn, the national government enforced the Act on Prevention of Damage due to the Provision of Personal Sexual Records in December 2014. Controls are being conducted under the Act, which prescribes penal provisions concerning acts of disclosing sexual images shot personally or providing such images for disclosure and also provides for the development of a support system for victims of such acts.



1. The Human Rights Bodies of the Ministry of Justice

2. Activities of the Human Rights Bodies of the Ministry of Justice

3. Major Human Rights Issues

4. Topics/Efforts Regarding Human Rights of Children and Young People

Furthermore in May 2024, the Act for amending the so-called Provider Liability Limitation Act was enacted and promulgated in relation to the issue of the distribution of illegal and harmful information, such as defamatory content, on the internet. The amendment includes the obligations of large-scale platform operators to make prompt responses and enhance transparency of operation status, and the common title of the Act was also amended to the Information Distribution Platform Act.

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice hold Human Rights Lectures nationwide, in collaboration and cooperation with mobile phone companies, mainly targeting junior high school students, to provide them with an opportunity to learn about safe use of smartphones, etc., as countermeasures against human rights violations by abuse of the internet, which are becoming increasingly serious among young people. The bodies are also distributing an awareness-raising leaflet and video and have held a symposium targeting junior high and senior high school students and their guardians in order to raise their awareness of human rights. Additionally, the bodies launched a website for raising awareness concerning the use of social network services, under the slogan "#No Heart No SNS," jointly with an social network service business association, and published a flow chart introducing online counseling services concerning human rights violations on the website of the Ministry of Justice, thereby endeavoring to improve young people's information morals, disseminate information on human rights counseling services, or otherwise strengthen countermeasures.

When receiving a consultation, the bodies give advice on how to demand the disclosure of identification information of the sender or deletion of the relevant information based on consulters' intentions, and if that information is found to constitute defamation or privacy infringement as a result of an investigation, the bodies undertake appropriate measures, such as requesting the relevant provider or other parties to delete that information.

Awareness-raising video
"The internet is not a tool to hurt others."



Awareness-raising booklet
"Are you OK?
Let's consider
the internet and
human rights."



Human Rights
Awareness-raising
Website "#No Heart No SNS"



■ The number of human rights violation cases on the internet for which remedy procedures were commenced

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Human rights violations on the internet	1,985	1,693	1,736	1,721	1,824



13- Victims Abducted by North Korean Authorities

In June 2006, the Law to Address the Abduction Issue and Other North Korean Human Rights Violations was enforced with the aim of improving public understanding of the issue of human rights violations by North Korean authorities and disclosing and preventing human rights violations by North Korean authorities in cooperation with the international community. The Law provided for the responsibilities of the national government and local governments and designated the week from December 10 to 16 every year as the North Korean Human Rights Abuse Awareness Week.

During the Week, various activities are conducted, including a symposium concerning the abduction issue held by the national government and PR activities using various media, such as advertisements in train cars and in newspapers as well as internet advertisements.



Poster "North Korean Human Rights Abuse Awareness Week"



Symposium held by the national government

14- Homeless People

The Act on Special Measures concerning Assistance in Self-Support of Homeless, which was enacted in 2002, provides that due consideration should be given to human rights of homeless people when offering self-sufficiency support to them.

Based on this Act and in light of the results of the nationwide survey on the status of homeless people that was conducted in July 2023, the Basic Policy to Support Self-Sufficiency of the Homeless was formulated. The Basic Policy states that it is necessary to promote protection of the human rights of homeless people through carrying out awareness-raising and PR activities and offering human rights counseling services, while giving due consideration to the human rights of both homeless people and neighboring residents.

Given these circumstances, the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice carry out human rights awareness-raising activities, and conduct human rights counseling and human rights remedy activities to eliminate prejudice and discrimination against homeless people.

■ The number of human rights violation cases against homeless people for which remedy procedures were commenced

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Human rights violations against homeless people	3	1	1	0	0



15- Sexual Minorities

The government has been making efforts for dealing with various problems relating to sexual minorities that have been arising in various scenes, such as at public facilities and schools, etc., or upon employment, or in receiving medical treatment or social welfare services.

Under such circumstances, the Act on the Promotion of People's Understanding on the Diversity in Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity was enacted and enforced in June 2023. In compliance with the basic idea that "all people are to be respected as irreplaceable individuals equally enjoying fundamental human rights, irrespective of sexual orientation or gender identity," as prescribed in this Act, the government is continuing its efforts and promoting measures to increase people's understanding, in collaboration among relevant ministries and agencies, aiming to realize an inclusive society where people mutually respect one another's personality and individuality, with the awareness that undue discrimination and prejudice against sexual minorities are unacceptable.

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice carry out various human rights awareness-raising activities, such as holding lectures and distributing awareness-raising leaflets, and conduct counseling and human rights remedy activities, while emphasizing the elimination of prejudice and discrimination in relation to sexual minorities as priority issues. The bodies launched and have been operating a user-generated dedicated website "My Declaration of Human Rights: Sexual Minorities Edition" which introduces related initiatives by companies and organizations, with the aim of further promoting their efforts regarding sexual minorities and increasing understanding on sexual minorities broadly among society as a whole.



Dedicated website "My Declaration of Human Rights: Sexual Minorities Edition"

■ The number of human rights violation cases against sexual minorities for which remedy procedures were commenced

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Human rights violations against sexual minorities	17	17	9	9	26

16- Trafficking in Persons (Coercive Sexual Services and Labor)

Based on the 2022 Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which was formulated in December 2022, the national government has been responding with appropriate measures to the situation against trafficking in persons and carrying out integral and comprehensive countermeasures as a government-wide initiative. Additionally, under this Action Plan, the national government has held the Council for the Promotion of Measures to Combat Trafficking in Persons as necessary to ascertain the current situation of trafficking in persons in Japan, and to promote prevention and elimination of trafficking in persons and proper protection of victims. At the same time, it has been carrying out PR activities concerning these efforts and seeking cooperation of the general public to make a report when finding any suspected victimized person. In this manner, measures have been taken cooperatively by relevant ministries and agencies.

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice carry out various human rights awareness-raising activities, thereby endeavoring to deepen people's interest and understanding regarding the issue of trafficking in persons. The bodies also conduct human rights counseling, investigation and resolution of human rights violation cases.



Poster "Measures against Trafficking in Persons"



Leaflet "Measures against Trafficking in Persons"



17- Human Rights Problems Arising after an Earthquake or Other Disaster

In relation to the accident at Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011, prejudice and discrimination based on rumors occurred and this is still a matter of concern. Also, upon the occurrence of the Kumamoto Earthquake in April 2016 and the Noto Peninsula Earthquake in January 2024, the distribution of unconfirmed information that may generate prejudice and discrimination against disaster victims became an issue.

Even in the event of a disaster, it is necessary for each person to behave properly in consideration of others' human rights, including those of women, children and elderly people taking refuge.

In order to respond to various human rights issues arising from a disaster, such as discriminatory treatment based on rumors, and to prevent occurrence of new human rights violations, the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice respond to human rights consultations, including provision of psychological care to disaster victims. The bodies carry out various human rights awareness-raising activities, such as distributing human rights awareness-raising videos.

Material : The Core Human Rights Conventions Japan Signed

	Convention	Adopted on Enforced on	Signatory nations, regions and organizations
1	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	Dec. 16, 1966 Jan. 3, 1976	172
2	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	Dec. 16, 1966 Mar. 23, 1976	174
3	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	Dec.21, 1965 Jan. 4, 1969	182
4	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women	Dec. 18, 1979 Sep. 3, 1981	189
5	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	Dec. 10, 1984 Jun. 26, 1987	174
6	Convention on the Rights of the Child	Nov. 20, 1989 Sep. 2, 1990	196
7	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance	Dec. 20, 2006 Dec. 23, 2010	75
8	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Dec. 13, 2006 May. 3, 2008	191

(As of June 2024)

4. Topic: Efforts Regarding Human Rights of Children and Young People

As mentioned in "2- Children – Bullying, Child Abuse, Corporal Punishment, Sexual Exploitation –" (refer to p.26 and thereafter), the number of serious bullying cases and the number of received consultations concerning child abuse have been at higher levels, and the environment surrounding children remains harsh. The government as a whole is taking measures under the initiative of the Children and Families Agency. This Topic introduces the government's initiatives in FY2023, regarding the framework for measures concerning children and young people, and measures to prevent bullying and child abuse, etc.

● Basic Act on Children's Policy

The number of cases of dealing with consultations on child abuse, non-attendance at school, suicides of elementary, junior high school, and high school students, and the number of bullying incidents on the internet have reached the highest-ever level. Against a background of such harsh environment surrounding children, the Basic Principles on New Promotion System for Policies on Children, which was formulated in December 2021, clearly stated that the Children and Families Agency will be newly established as the control tower for achieving a society centered on children, wherein initiatives and policies concerning children are given the highest priority in consideration of the best interest of children, always based on the viewpoint of children. In response, the Agency was established in April 2023, with the mission to protect children's rights and interests.

Together with the Act Establishing the Children and Families Agency, the Basic Act on Children's Policy was enforced in April 2023 as a comprehensive basic Act for carrying out measures for children comprehensively and aggressively as a society-wide initiative. The Basic Act on Children's Policy aims to promote policies for children in a comprehensive manner for achieving a society in which all children, who will play the central role in the next generation, can build the foundation of their lifetime personality formation, grow in a healthy manner as independent individuals, and live a happy life toward the future, with their rights being surely protected, irrespective of their mental and physical status and their environment. Based on the purport of the Constitution and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the basic ideas common to all measures for children are specified therein.

● General Principles for Child-Related Measures

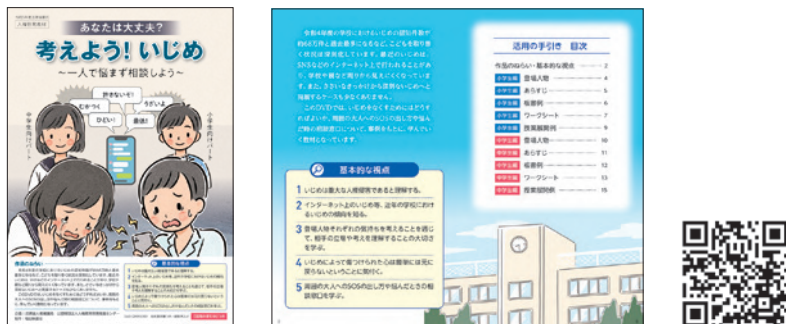
In December 2023, based on the Basic Act on Children's Policy, the General Principles for Child-Related Measures were formulated for the first time. The General Principles integrally provide for the basic policies for the coming five years or so and important matters for comprehensively promoting a broad range of child-related measures. Aiming to achieve a society centered on children, where all children and young people can live a happy life physically, psychologically, and socially, the General Principles specify six basic policies, such as recognizing children and young people as independent actors holding rights, respecting their diverse personalities and characteristics, guaranteeing their rights, and seeking their best interest at present and in the future. In promoting all measures for children and young people, their viewpoints and rights are to be considered as the basis. Furthermore, in order to share the awareness that children and young people are independent actors holding rights, information provision and awareness-raising activities are to be promoted to deepen people's understanding of the purport and details of the Basic Act on Children's Policy.

● Bullying prevention measures

As the number of serious bullying cases hit a record high at 923 in FY2022, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) formulated the Emergency Policy Package for Preventing Non-Attendance and Bullying in October 2023. MEXT is endeavoring to strengthen bullying prevention measures by using terminals that are provided to individual children and students for early detection of their worries and anxieties and by dispatching support teams to local governments to prevent the occurrence of serious cases.

The Children and Families Agency will collaborate with MEXT, which is working to prevent bullying mainly at schools, to broadly prevent bullying among children, including cases outside schools. More specifically, the Agency newly commenced a Project to Develop and Demonstrate Methods of Creating Mechanisms for Solving Bullying Cases through an Approach from Outside of Schools in FY2023, aiming to have departments under the direct control of the heads of local governments take bullying prevention measures from outside of schools, with the expectation that such external efforts, together with schools' efforts, will prevent bullying from becoming long-term and becoming serious. Additionally, the Agency started to assign experts, such as academic experts, as bullying survey advisors in September 2023 to have them provide advice regarding such matters as how to ensure the objectivity and neutrality to local governments that conduct surveys into serious bullying cases. Assigned advisors have provided advice in response to requests from local governments regarding appointment of survey members and neutral and fair survey methods. In this manner, the Agency is coping with the problem of bullying as society-wide efforts by promoting specific measures by local governments for preventing bullying and creating relevant systems.

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice created an awareness-raising video "Are you OK? Let's consider bullying." In light of the current circumstances where bullying is being conducted on the internet, such as by using SNS, and has become less visible to school teachers and parents, and where a trivial incident often triggers escalation to serious bullying behavior, the video is designed to let children learn from case examples what to do to stop bullying, how to ask adults around them for help, and where to have a consultation when they have worries.



Awareness-raising video
"Are you OK? Let's consider bullying"

● Child abuse prevention measures

Based on the amended Child Welfare Act, which was put into effect in April 2024, the Children and Families Agency is promoting measures for enhancing children's rights protection, in addition to strengthening comprehensive support systems for pregnant women and households raising children, through such means as developing Centers for Children and Families. More specifically, the amended Act provides that developing an environment for children's rights protection is one of the duties of prefectures, and obliges directors of child guidance centers, etc. to hear views of children when taking temporary custody of or admitting children. Furthermore, a project to support children's presentation of views was created under the amended Act. Accordingly, the Agency endeavored to disseminate the operation manual it prepared in FY2023 to ensure proper operation, and prescribed matters necessary for securing the quality of temporary protection centers, such as the standard for staffing for promoting children's rights protection and personal care, in the Standards on Facilities and Operation of Temporary Protection Centers, which was newly formulated based on the amended Act. Additionally, the Agency revised the "Temporary Protection Guidelines" for improving the environment of temporary protection centers. The Agency is thus offering support to prefectures that are making efforts for children's rights protection.

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice created an awareness-raising video "Are you OK? Let's consider child abuse." The video introduces various case examples, including psychological abuse, physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, abuse relating to religious activities, etc., to have children and their guardians obtain correct knowledge concerning prevention of child abuse.



For children



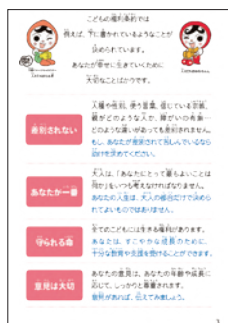
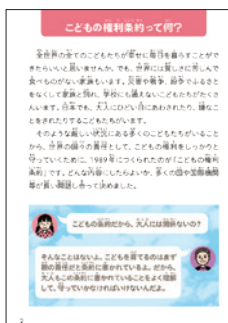
For adults



Awareness-raising video
"Are you OK? Let's consider child abuse"

● Efforts to promote awareness that children are independent actors holding various rights

In order for children facing difficulties to ask for help, they need to be fully aware of the fact that they are independent actors holding various rights. To help children notice that fact, the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice prepared an awareness-raising leaflet "Easy to Understand! Convention on the Rights of the Child" which explains the right to life, survival and development, consideration of children's best interests, respect for children's views, and prohibition of discrimination, etc., which are prescribed in the Convention, in an easy-to-understand manner to children, and are positively using it in Human Rights Lectures, etc.



Awareness-raising booklet
"Easy to Understand! Convention on the Rights of the Child"

MEMO

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**We can provide a consultation
about human rights issues
in your language.**



— Information on Human Rights Counseling in Foreign Languages —

The troubles you encounter may be an infringement of your human rights.

**A hairdresser refused
to cut your hair.**



**You were not
allowed to rent
an apartment.**



Your child is bullied at school.



Feeling excluded due to cultural differences.



Don't worry alone. Consult with us first.

[Face-to-face counseling]



For those who are not comfortable speaking Japanese, Legal Affairs Bureaus and District Legal Affairs Bureaus throughout Japan provide human rights counseling services.

[Telephone counseling]



We offer telephone counseling through the Foreign-language Human Rights Hotline (Navi Dial).

[Counseling on the Internet]



We accept human rights inquiries on the Internet Human Rights Counseling Service.

English, Chinese, Korean, Filipino, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Nepali, Spanish, Indonesian, and Thai.

We will find the best solution to your problem.

Conciliation

We mediate in discussions.



**Instructions and
recommendation to violators**

We will demand the violator to improve the situation.



Advice and referrals

We make referrals to specialized agencies that can provide legal advice.



See page 45 for details