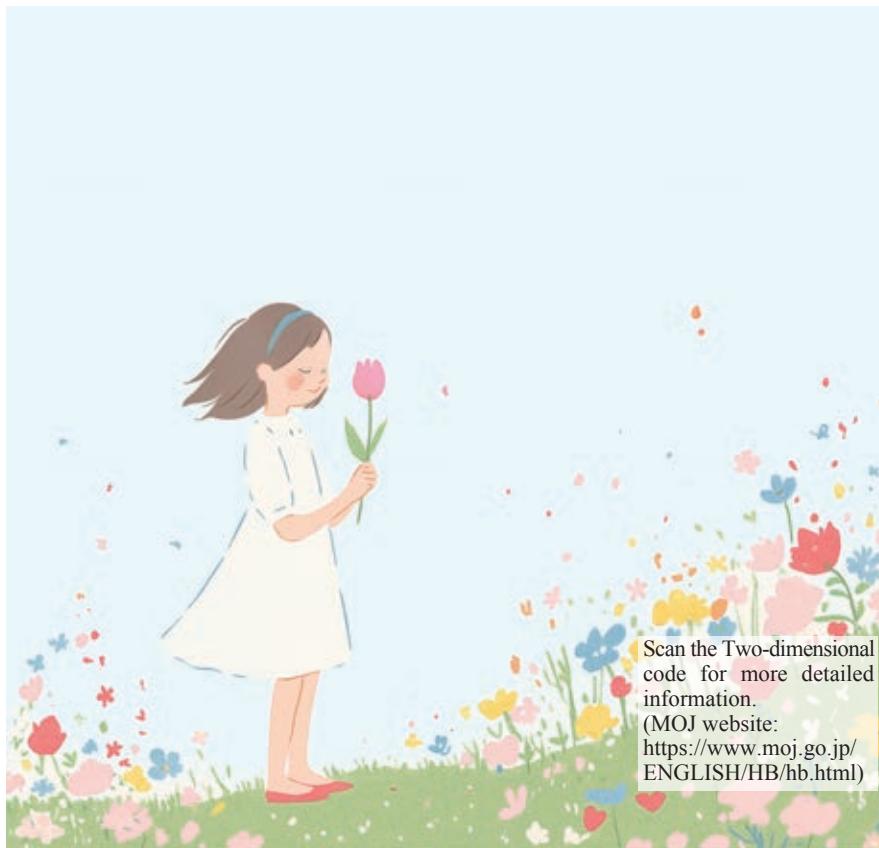


FY2025

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, 2026
Human Rights Bureau
Ministry of Justice

Table of Contents

	<h3>1. The Human Rights Bodies of the Ministry of Justice</h3>	<p>1. The Human Rights Bodies of the Ministry of Justice</p>
	<h3>2. Activities of the Human Rights Bodies of the Ministry of Justice</h3>	<p>2. Activities of the Human Rights Bodies of the Ministry of Justice</p>
	<h3>3. Major Human Rights Issues</h3>	<p>3. Major Human Rights Issues</p>
	<h3>4. Topic: Efforts to Realize an Inclusive Society Free from Prejudice and Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities(p.56)</h3>	<p>4. Topic: Efforts to Realize an Inclusive Society Free from Prejudice and Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities</p>

* 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.

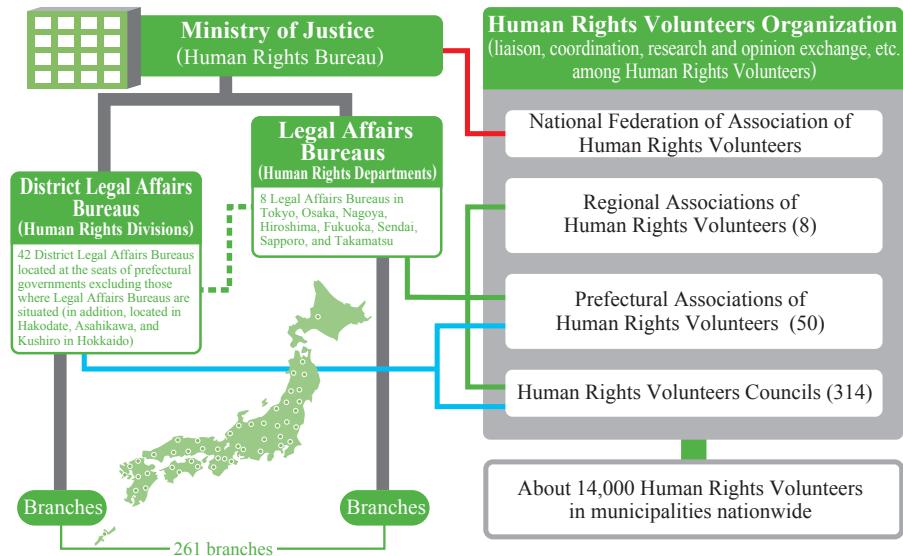
1. The Human Rights Bodies of the Ministry of Justice

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, 2025)



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 rights.



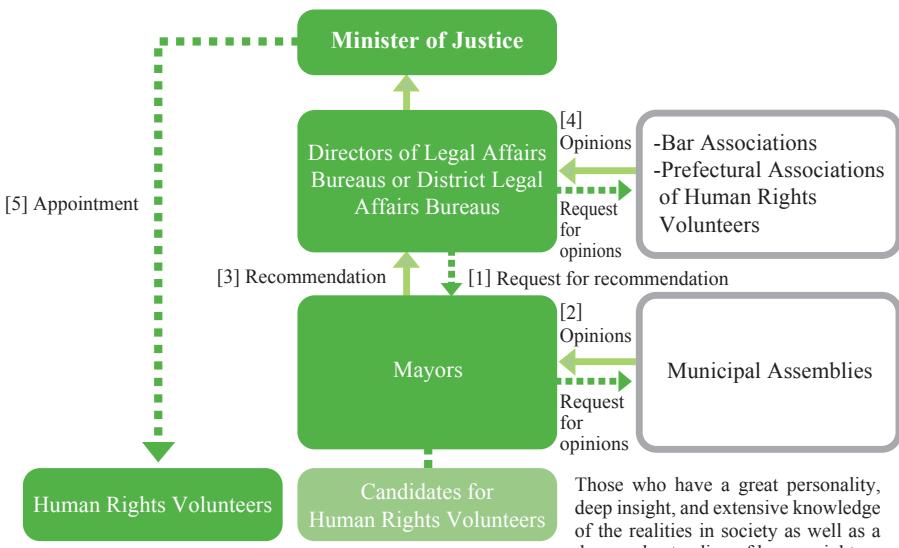
2- Human Rights Volunteers

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



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



Face-to-face human rights counseling



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.

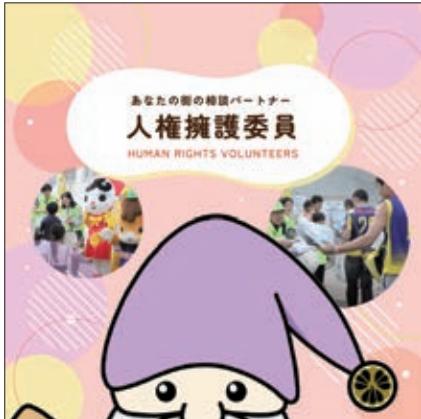
Moreover, Human Rights Volunteers carry out human rights awareness-raising activities aimed at gaining local residents' awareness on human rights (such as holding "Human Rights Lectures" (refer to p.16) and the "Human Rights Flower Campaigns" (refer to p.17) for elementary school and junior high school 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.



For Human Rights Volunteers of your community, make inquiries with nearby Legal Affairs Bureaus, District Legal Affairs Bureaus or their branches.

June 1 is "Human Rights Volunteers' Day"

The National Federation of Association 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.



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

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

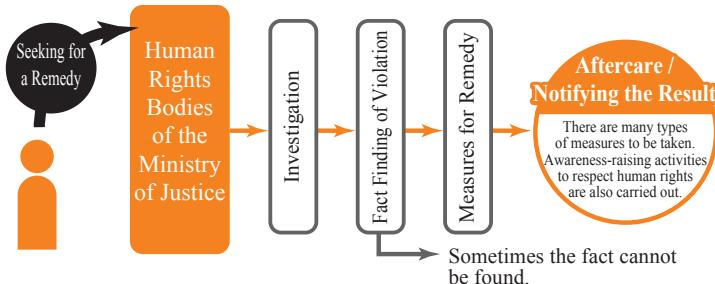
How the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice protect your human rights? Their activities can be divided into the following areas: investigation and remedy procedures for human rights violation cases, human rights counseling, and awareness-raising for human rights. This Chapter describes such 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." When the bodies identify a case of suspected human rights violation upon receiving an allegation by a victim, they promptly initiate remedy procedures.

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

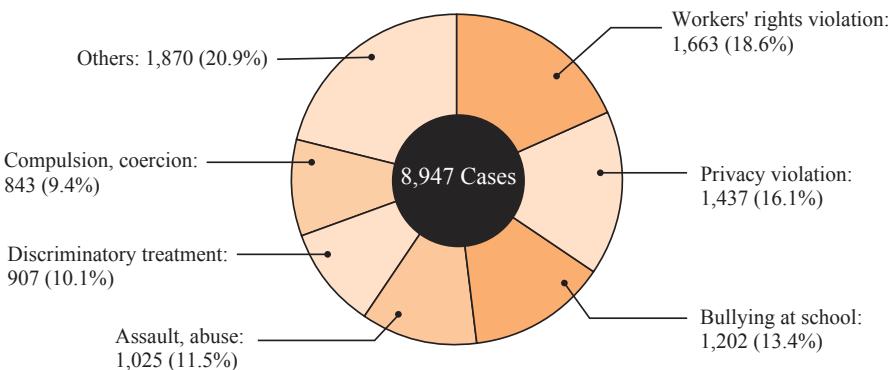




As a result of the investigation, the bodies will take appropriate measures depending on the case. There are seven kinds of measures including "assistance" to provide legal advice or non-legal advice, "conciliation" to mediate talks between the parties concerned, "instructions" or "recommendation" to 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 2024



Examples of Remedied Human Rights Violation Cases

The following cases are examples of the cases that the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice dealt with in 2024.

① Bullying

Bullying at an elementary school

This is a case in which a guardian of an elementary school student consulted with the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice, alleging that the student was bullied by classmates, such as being pushed from behind, and became unable to go to school but the school had not taken sufficient measures.

As a result of an investigation by the bodies, it was found that the school conducted an investigation on the bullying and gave due consideration so as to enable the student to come to school again, but such efforts made by the school were not sufficiently understood by the guardian.

Therefore, the bodies mediated a meeting between the school and the guardian, and compiled and told the guardian's requests to the school. The school expressed its intention to make school-wide efforts against bullying cases and continue taking measures to solve the problem regarding the student. The guardian showed some understanding of the school's responses and the relationship between them was improved (a case of "conciliation").

② Abuse

Abuse against a junior high school student

This is a case in which a junior high school student made a consultation using Children's Rights SOS Mini-Letter, alleging that the student had been abused by one of their parents, such as being forced to have sexual intercourse, but had no one to consult with.

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice promptly reported the case to the school in which the student is enrolled and to a child guidance center, and made adjustments for future measures.

As a result, the student was placed under the protection of the child guidance center and the student's physical and mental safety was ensured (a case of "assistance").

③ Abuse

Abuse against a high school student

This is a case in which a high school student made a consultation using the "LINE Human Rights Counseling," alleging that the student consulted with the parent regarding non-attendance at school but was kicked out of home.

As the student indicated that they were considering suicide, the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice confirmed the student's whereabouts, and an official of the nearest Legal Affairs Bureau went to save the student and reported the case to a child guidance center.

As a result, a system to closely watch the student was created in collaboration between the school and the child guidance center. Thereafter, the parent stopped behaving violently, and the student went back to school (a case of "assistance").



④ Inappropriate guidance Inappropriate guidance at an elementary school

This is a case in which a guardian of an early elementary school child consulted with the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice, alleging that the child became unable to go to school after being loudly reprimanded by the class teacher and being excluded from the classroom—for example by having the child and their desk moved to the corridor.

The bodies conducted an investigation and found that the teacher acted as above when giving guidance to the child, without giving sufficient consideration.

The bodies explained that such words and deeds are inappropriate as guidance and are not found educationally necessary, and instructed the teacher to deepen their correct understanding of the principle of respect for fundamental human rights and not to do similar acts. Additionally, the bodies requested the school principal to take appropriate measures for preventing the recurrence of similar cases by having teachers deepen their understanding of children's human rights and conducting thorough supervision and guidance of teachers (a case of "instruction" and "request").

⑤ Compulsion, coercion Transport to a hospital against one's will

This is a case in which a woman consulted with the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice, alleging that the woman was taken to hospital, without her consent, through violence, such as being grabbed by the arm or being held down, by staff members of a private company, which had received a request from her husband to take her to the hospital.

As a result of an investigation by the bodies, it was found that the staff members took her to the hospital without obtaining an effective consent from her.

The bodies told the staff members that such act robs the victim of her bodily autonomy and freedom of action and thus constitutes a serious infringement of rights that causes mental pain to the victim and cannot be overlooked from the perspective of the protection of human rights.

The bodies instructed the staff members to understand the illegality of the act and not to repeat similar acts and also instructed the company to raise its awareness to prevent the recurrence of similar cases (a case of "instruction" and "awareness-raising").

⑥ Discriminatory treatment Discriminatory treatment against a person with mental disorder

This is a case in which a person with a mental disorder consulted with the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice, alleging that the person's request for rental intermediation was refused by a real estate agency on the grounds of the person's mental disorder.

As a result of an investigation by the bodies, it was found that the staff member of the agency refused to provide intermediation services only on the grounds of the person's mental disorder, without checking the will of the owner of the rental housing.

The bodies told the staff member that the act of refusing intermediation services only on the grounds of a person's mental disorder falls under unfair discriminatory treatment against people with mental disorders and cannot be overlooked from the perspective of the protection of human rights, and instructed the staff member not to repeat similar acts (a case of "instruction").

7 Discriminatory treatment Discriminatory treatment against a person with disability

This is a case in which a person with a disability who is working for a local government, consulted with the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice, alleging that the person was forced to submit a copy of their physical disability certificate upon undertaking procedures for year-end adjustment.

As a result of an investigation by the bodies, it was found that receiving copies of physical disability certificates on a voluntary basis is recommended from the perspective of ensuring accuracy in year-end adjustments, but that the local government incorrectly understood that the submission is mandatory, not on a voluntary basis. The local government made an improvement in treatment to carry out year-end adjustment procedures even without the submission of copies of physical disability certificates (a case of "conciliation").

8 Discriminatory treatment Discriminatory comments concerning the *Buraku* discrimination (*Dowa* issue)

This is a case in which a person consulted with the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice, alleging that the parents of the person's fiancé pointed out that the person is from a *Dowa* district, and opposed the marriage, and also made discriminatory comments.

The bodies conducted an investigation and found that the parents made the relevant comments based on their sense of *Buraku* discrimination (*Dowa* issue).

The bodies told the parents that those comments hurt others' human rights and dignity and cannot be overlooked from the perspective of the protection of human rights, and instructed them to strongly recognize the unreasonableness of such act and to deepen their correct understanding of the *Buraku* discrimination (*Dowa* issue) (a case of "instruction").

9 Discriminatory treatment Discriminatory treatment against a sexual minority

This is a case in which a high school student consulted with the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice, alleging that the student had told the school about a special circumstance that the student would not be able to participate in activities in a gym class and would only observe the class because of gender identity but the school did not take any alternative measures in consideration of such circumstance, and the student is now in trouble due to a shortage of credits for graduation.

The bodies conducted an investigation and found that the information on the student's gender identity was not sufficiently shared among teachers and alternative measures for the student were not taken.

Through the mediation of the bodies, the school decided to make efforts for better information sharing among teachers and conduct a makeup exam for the gym class for the student with no other students present in consideration of the student's gender identity. As a result, the student passed the makeup exam and was able to graduate from the school, and the problem was thus solved (a case of "conciliation").



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 to Realize an Inclusive Society Free from Prejudice and Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities

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 citing facts such as the victim having received disciplinary punishment from the workplace were posted on the internet with the name and affiliation of the victim.	
As a result of an investigation by the bodies, it was found that the posted details are all false and that the posting of those messages falls under defamation.	
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 online 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 leave Japan had been posted and that those posts infringe those foreign residents' sense of honor.	
⑫ Human rights violation information on the internet	Privacy infringement on the internet
This is a case in which a victim consulted with the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice, alleging that the victim's name, address, telephone number, etc. are posted on the internet.	
As a result of the investigation by the bodies, it was found that those posts infringe the victim's right to privacy.	
The bodies requested the site administrator to delete those posts, and they were all 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]) 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 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 (refer to p.32).

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.43).



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."

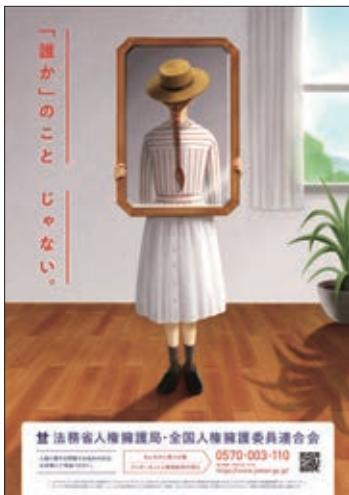
Human rights awareness-raising activities are indispensable in preventing human rights violations in advance.

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 FY2025 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 18 human rights issues as priority targets with the aim of achieving a society of coexistence 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"

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
- ⑱ Eliminate Prejudice and Discrimination regarding Genome Information (Genetic Information)

Human Rights Week



Poster
"The 76th 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.



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 to Realize an Inclusive Society Free from Prejudice and Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities

The Networks of Human Rights Awareness-Raising Activities

The Prefectural Network Associations of Human Rights Awareness-Raising Activities were established at a prefectural level and the Regional Network Associations of Human Rights Awareness-Raising Activities were 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 FY2024 (the 43rd contest), 736,513 essays were applied from 6,450 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 43rd contest, refer to p.18 and thereafter).



Collection of award-winning essays for the 43rd 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.23) , 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 FY2024, these Human Rights Lectures were provided for a total of 985,983 people.



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



Human Rights Lectures



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 FY2024, the Campaigns were conducted for 393,526 students at 3,786 schools, etc.



Human Rights Flower Campaigns

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 to Realize an Inclusive Society Free from Prejudice and Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities

Material : 43rd National Essay Contest on Human Rights for Junior High School Students: Essay that Won the Prime Minister's Award

Badmouthing

TERATAKE Rune, Eighth Grade (second year of three grades)
Kameoka Municipal Elementary and Junior High School, Kyoto Prefecture

One day I said something hurtful about my friend and hurt their feelings. I get flashbacks of that memory sometimes and feel uneasy.

That day, I met with a few of my friends as planned, and we chatted about some everyday things, like how our summer homework was going and our latest favorite manga/anime characters and celebrities. The conversation gradually moved on to club and school activities, and we started talking about a particular friend. I happened to have some frustrations with that person myself, so I joined in without thinking much. At first, it felt like a simple venting session, but as we shared more about the things that annoyed us or made us upset, the atmosphere heated up. Before we knew it, the conversation escalated into outright badmouthing. Even when it came to things that hadn't really bothered me before, I found myself nodding along, saying, "Yeah, I know what you mean." After a while, one friend who had been listening said "Hey, that's enough" and stopped us from saying any more nasty things. In that instant, an awkward silence filled the air, and I was at a loss for words. Looking back, I realize that instead of feeling guilty, I was more annoyed that they had disrupted our lively conversation. Later, the friend we had been talking about found out what we had said and was deeply hurt.

We had spoken irresponsibly, thinking "As long as they don't find out, it's fine." There was a strange sense of unity in sharing those words with the group—a kind of twisted camaraderie. But in reality, this was *bullying*, even though I hadn't realized at the time.

Many things happen every day when you act in groups. Naturally, there are people who we don't get along with or disagree with. I think that we all have an experience of saying something unkind about such people at some point in our lives. However, what we did wrong was turn our friend into a scapegoat and treat badmouthing as entertainment. We also lacked the ability to put ourselves in their shoes. Speaking badly of someone behind their back is bullying.

I have a weakness—I tend to get swept up in the moment without thinking deeply about my actions. Even though I've been hurt by harsh words, I couldn't stop myself from saying harsh words about someone else. I wasn't able to think about how the friend I was talking about would feel, and if no one had stepped in to stop us, our words could have escalated even further. When I think about that, I regret my thoughtless behavior even more. You can't take back words once



you've said them. I reflected deeply on my actions and apologized to my friend. They were kind enough to accept my apology, but our relationship has not yet fully returned to how it was before. A lingering tension remains.

There is a Japanese phrase that means “reading the room.” It refers to an attitude of keenly sensing the mood of a situation and behaving accordingly. There is even a slang term, “KY,” which is used to mock people who can’t sense the mood. This phrase is used to make fun of people who don’t go along with the crowd, sometimes even when they’re standing up for what’s right. I don’t mean to blame our behavior on this phrase, but I feel like we are overly sensitive to the idea of “reading the room” and bound by it. The fear of being seen as someone who “can’t read the room” creates a negative mindset that influences our actions, and I feel that such negative feeling is also reflected in our behavior. We saw the friend who stopped us badmouthing at that time as “KY.” I remember feeling like, “Why are they acting like they’re so good, spoiling our conversation?” However, now I understand how much courage it took for them speak up and stop us, and I genuinely admire them for it.

During the summer vacation this year, the Olympic Games were held in Paris, and there were news reports of the excellent performances of many Japanese athletes every day. But at the same time, some negative aspects were also focused on, such as social media being flooded with hateful comments about those who didn’t win. Seeing this, I felt angry—how could people say such cruel things about athletes who had worked so hard? Hiding behind anonymity to throw insults is cowardly. However, I realized that what I did towards my friend was essentially the same thing. Talking behind someone’s back, thinking “It’s fine as long as they don’t find out,” wasn’t I just as cowardly as those anonymous haters?

If I could go back to that day, would I have the courage to say, “Why don’t you say that to their face?” It’s been a year since that day. The time it takes to be able to talk with my friend without any lingering awkwardness is also the time for me to confront my weaknesses. I never want to make the same mistake again. Looking forward, I want to take responsibility for my words and always try to see things from other people’s perspective.

Material : 43rd National Essay Contest on Human Rights for Junior High School Students: Essay that Won the Justice Minister's Award

The baton of life handed to me

YAMAMOTO Kana, Third Grade,
Eishin Gakuen Junior High School, Hiroshima Prefecture.

”Please share our story and pass on our history.”

That is what Mr. NAKAO Shinji, who turned 90 this July, said to me.

Mr. Nakao's face and hands are visibly affected by the aftereffects of his disease, yet to me, everything about him is wonderful.

Mr. Nakao is the chairman of the residents' association at Nagashima Aiseien, a national Hansen's disease sanatorium in Okayama Prefecture. He has entrusted me with the responsibility of passing on the untold history of unjust discrimination against people with Hansen's disease, as well as the resilience of those who have survived it. That responsibility now weighs heavily on my heart.

Hansen's disease was once called “leprosy” and was widely despised. Because it is a chronic infectious disease that can cause visible disabilities in the hands, feet, and face, people with the disease were feared and shunned. It has long been overcome in Japan, so those who once had the disease are now referred to as “former patients” or “recovered individuals.”

In 1907, the Japanese government enacted the Leprosy Prevention Act, treating those with the disease as a national disgrace (the Act was abolished in 1996). Patients were forcibly removed from their communities and isolated in remote facilities like Aiseien. In doing so, the government not only incited discrimination but also fueled public fear, leading ordinary citizens to participate in the exclusion of patients. A nationwide movement called the Leprosy-Free Prefecture Campaign encouraged local authorities to compete in rounding up patients, accelerating the forced isolation. It wasn't until 2001 that this lifelong segregation policy was declared unconstitutional. The government admitted its wrongdoing, issued a formal apology, and established a compensation law.

At Aiseien, remnants of that painful history remain—the dock where patients were forcibly separated from their families, the disinfecting stations where their belongings and bodies were sterilized, and the confinement rooms where those who tried to escape or resisted staff were locked away. Patients were forbidden from having children; men were forcibly sterilized, and women were forced to have abortions. As I walked through Aiseien, this tragic history was



etched into my heart.

There is also a columbarium, a place for the remains of those who passed away at the sanatorium. The sanatorium itself is supposed to be equivalent to a hospital, a place where people receive treatment. But the very existence of the columbarium represents the absolute lifelong isolation, showing that these patients were never allowed to return home—not even in death. There is a haiku written by a resident:

Is it time yet?

Even as bones, the answer remains: Not yet.

I believe this poem expresses the deep sorrow and anger of those who were victims of this government policy.

Today, Aiseien is home to about 80 residents. Its columbarium holds the remains of approximately 3,800 people, and the remains of the 80 current residents will eventually also rest there. The thought of this brings tears to my eyes. And yet, for that very reason, I feel a stronger determination to treasure the time I have with the residents—to listen to their stories while I still can.

One of Mr. Nakao's stories will never leave me.

At the age of 14, he was sent to Aiseien. When he recovered, he was allowed to return home temporarily during the busy farming season to help his older brother, who was overjoyed to see him. But one day, his brother said, “Please leave, and never come back.”

His brother was about to get married. With a family to protect, he could no longer afford to let others know about Nakao's existence.

I can only imagine how devastating it must have been to hear those words. My heart aches just thinking about it.

But Mr. Nakao continued, “It must have been painful for my brother to say that. He must have suffered throughout his family life, hiding my existence.”

At that moment, I was struck by the harsh reality of discrimination—how it tears families apart. But at the same time, I saw the incredible strength of a man who had endured severe discrimination yet still chose to think of others before himself. In him, I learned the true meaning of kindness. And in my heart, I made a promise to become someone who, like Mr. Nakao, embodies unconditional kindness and empathy.

Even now, Mr. Nakao remains active as the head of the residents' association, working with his peers to have Aiseien recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site. His passion lies in ensuring that Aiseien remains a place where people can learn the importance of human rights.

Just the other day, I visited Aiseien with a group of friends to celebrate Mr. Nakao's 90th birthday. Seeing him smile as he enjoyed his cake, saying, "I'm so glad to be alive," was truly heartwarming.

That day, he shared something important with us.

"Just recently, the old Eugenic Protection Act was ruled unconstitutional. It was a lawsuit brought by people with disabilities who were forcibly sterilized or made to have abortions. The Act applied to people with Hansen's disease too, so I was also sterilized. That's why none of us have children. That's why there's no one to pass down our stories and our history. And that's what makes me saddest of all. So, I'm asking you—please share our story and pass on our history."

That was the moment I described at the beginning. His face grew serious for a moment, but then he quickly broke into a smile and said,

"You know, they call turning 90 sotsuju—like 'graduation.' So, I've decided that I'm going to graduate from my past life and start afresh, as if I'm beginning a whole new life. That way, life will be fun again!"

I held his hand, feeling its warmth grounding me. And in that moment, I made a vow.

"I will share your story, Mr. Nakao.

I will pass on the lessons of Hansen's disease.

I will help create a world without bullying or discrimination—a society where all people, even people with illnesses and disabilities, can live together as equals."



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 FY2024, the bodies prepared the material titled "'Business and Human Rights' First Step - Examples of Initiatives for SMEs" with the aim of encouraging SMEs, which account for a large proportion among Japanese companies, to proceed with their efforts regarding business and human rights, published the awareness-raising material for companies to conduct training by themselves, titled "Measures Currently Required for Companies Regarding 'Business and Human Rights,'" on the Ministry of Justice's website, 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

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 to Realize an Inclusive Society Free from Prejudice and Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities

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 by people at many 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, thereby 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)



"Business and Human Rights'
First Step - Examples of Initiatives for SMEs"





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 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 violence, domestic violence, and sexual harassment in the workplace, as well as disadvantageous treatment due to pregnancy and childbirth have still been frequently occurring.

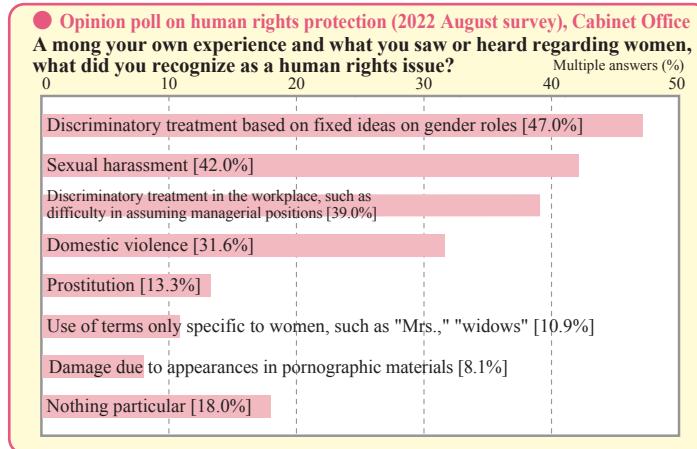
With regard to women's human rights issues such as those mentioned above, based on the Act on the Promotion of Women's Active Engagement in Professional Life, which was enacted in April 2016, efforts have been made to develop an environment to enable women to fully exercise their abilities in their vocational lives.

As one of the initiatives regarding violence against women, during the period for the Campaign to Eliminate Violence against Women from November 12 to November 25 every year, efforts to raise awareness of the general public on this issue are intensively carried out.

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, during a Period for Preventing Sexual Violence Victimization among Young People in April every year, awareness-raising activities are carried out using SNS, etc. 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.

In addition, based on the Act on Support for Women Facing Difficult Problems (the "New Act on Support for Women") enacted in April 2024, efforts are being made for enhancing and strengthening effective support for women facing diverse situations (refer to p.27).

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice provide counseling for various human rights problems affecting women, such as domestic violence, sexual harassment in the workplace, victimization by stalking behavior, damage due to appearances in pornographic materials, and harassment against female entrepreneurs. The bodies also undertake investigations and 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.



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

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Violence and abuse against women	629	435	430	383	331

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



Material : Support for Women Facing Difficult Problems

Difficult problems faced by women, such as sexual violence, abuse, exploitation or other sexual damage, breakup of family relations, and poverty, have become diverse and complex and have become more and more complicated. Such circumstances rose to the surface due to the COVID-19 crisis, and it is urgently necessary to strengthen new measures for supporting women, while incorporating the perspective of addressing loneliness and isolation. Under such circumstances, for breaking away from the Anti-Prostitution Act (Act No 118 of 1956), which used to be the legal basis for measures for supporting women, the New Act on Support for Women was put into effect in April 2024 to create a new support framework based on the ideas of respecting support recipients' will, promoting their well-being, and protecting their human rights.

The New Act on Support for Women incorporates the strengthening of support systems in local communities by clearly providing for the obligation to make efforts to assign women's counseling and support officers to municipalities, the obligation to make efforts to establish a support coordination committee by local governments, and cooperative support with private bodies. Based on those provisions of the New Act, efforts are being made for enhancing and strengthening effective support for women facing diverse situations.

Furthermore, the women's support portal "*Anata no Mikata* (We are on Your Side)" was opened, which contains a list of support offices and consultation services in each region, relevant columns and interview articles. Thus, an environment is being developed to make it easy to access required information for women facing difficult problems and local governments and other support organizations.

Article 14 of the New Act on Support for Women provides that Human Rights Volunteers "are to cooperate with women's counseling and support centers and women's counseling and support officers in relation to the enforcement of this Act." Accordingly, the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice, when finding any women in need of support by a women's counseling and support center, a women's counseling and support officer, a women's self-support facility, or the like through human rights counseling, convey the details of available support to those women and introduce appropriate support organizations in accordance with their intention.



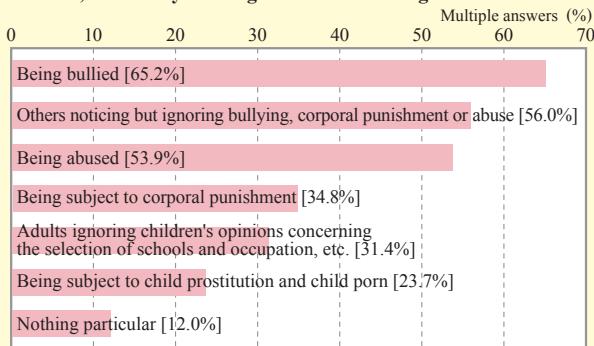
Women's support portal "*Anata no Mikata*"

According to the FY2023 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 was 108,987 cases and the number of recognized bullying cases was 732,568 cases. The situation is still alarming. The number of people arrested or taken into custody by the police for incidents caused by bullying in 2024 was 457.

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 1,202 cases of bullying at school, 79 cases of corporal punishment by school teachers, and 219 cases of violence and abuse against children in 2024.

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

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



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 adults to have children cultivate a sense of human rights, such as respecting the differences between them as expressions of their individual characters, and to be always careful enough to notice even a subtle change in children.

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

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Bullying at school	1,126	1,169	1,047	1,185	1,202

Child abuse

The number of consultations concerning child abuse received at child guidance centers nationwide has remained at a high level and reached 225,509 cases in FY2023. Serious child abuse cases resulting in children's deaths occur frequently, and the prevention of child abuse is an urgent 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.

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

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Violence and abuse against children	341	253	216	268	219

Corporal punishment, etc.

Corporal punishment is prohibited in Article 11 of the School Education Act. Corporal punishment exerts a 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. Guidance using corporal punishment or inappropriate words and deeds should never be permitted.

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

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Corporal punishment by school teachers	83	51	75	74	79

Child sexual exploitation

With regard to measures against sexual exploitation of children, government-wide efforts are being made based on the Plan for the Prevention of Sex Crimes Against Children (Basic Plan on Measures against Child Sexual Exploitation) 2022, the Policy for Further Strengthening Measures against Sexual Crimes and Sexual Violence, the Comprehensive Measures for Preventing Sex Crime Victimization of Children and Young People, and the Basic Guidelines for Prevention of Sexual Violence against School Children and Students by Education Personnel.

The Act on Regulation and Punishment of Acts Relating to Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and the Protection of Children regulates and punishes acts relating to child prostitution and child pornography, and provides for measures, etc. for the protection of children who have been physically or mentally harmed due to these acts.

Furthermore, various measures are also being taken to prevent children's victimization by sexual crimes, such as preventing damage due to forced appearances in pornography under the Act on the Prevention of and Protection from Damage due to Appearances in Pornography.

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 p.15 and thereafter) 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.



1. The Human Rights Bodies of the Ministry of Justice

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 FY2006. 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.

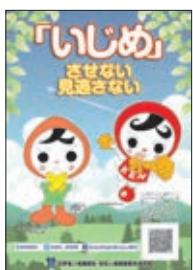
Through counseling by the use of the "Children's Rights Hotline" (0120-007-110 [from anywhere in Japan]), the "Human Rights Counseling Service on the Internet (SOS-e mail)" (<https://www.jinken.go.jp/kodomo>), and counseling in a chat format such as the "LINE Human Rights Counseling" which is accessible 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.

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

3. Major Human Rights Issues

4. Topic: Efforts to Realize an Inclusive Society Free from Prejudice and Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities



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."



Poster
"Children's Rights Hotline"

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

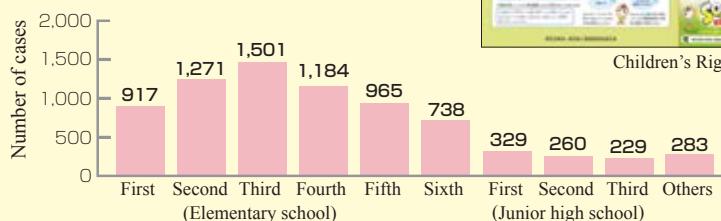
Collection period : April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025

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:**
7,677

● **Number of counseling cases by students' grade**



Children's Rights SOS Mini-Letter

● **Contents**

[Breakdown]

Bullying: 2,305 (30.0%)

Abuse: 403 (5.2%)

Corporal punishment: 27 (0.4%)

Others: 4,942 (64.4%)

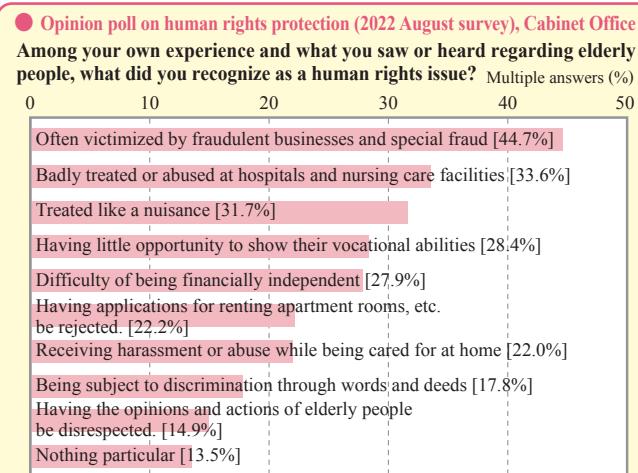


3- Elderly People

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, disposition of property by family members, etc. without prior consent of the elderly or other financial abuse, 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.



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. Furthermore, based on the Basic Act on Dementia to Promote an Inclusive Society, which was put into effect in January 2024, and the Basic Plan for the Promotion of Policies on Dementia, which was decided at a Cabinet meeting in December 2024 based on the Basic Act, 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 strengthen cooperation in such forms as providing information to the bodies 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

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Violence and abuse against elderly people	185	131	81	107	95
Human rights violations at welfare facilities for the elderly	23	16	23	19	14



4- Persons with 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 national government is promoting measures to support self-reliance and social participation of persons with disabilities in line with the Fifth Basic Programme for Persons with Disabilities, which was formulated based on the Basic Act for Persons with Disabilities, in order to realize a society of coexistence in which no people are set apart on the basis of disability and people mutually respect the personality and individuality of others. Furthermore, by designating the week from December 3 to December 9 every year as the Week of Persons with Disabilities under the Basic Act, various events are held intensively in collaboration among the national government, local governments, private entities, etc. in order to disseminate the principle of an "Inclusive Society."

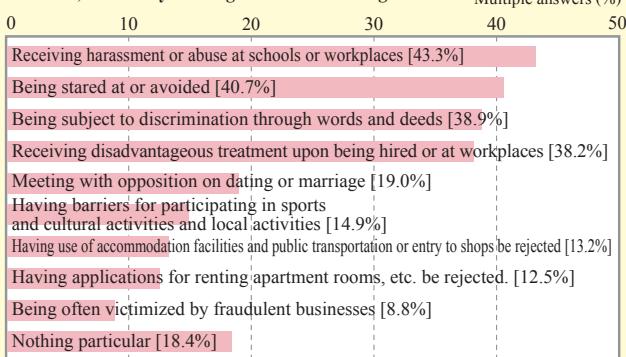
Based on the Act on the Prevention of Abuse of Persons with Disabilities and Support for Caregivers, measures are being implemented for prevention and early detection and resolution of abuse cases of persons with disabilities.

With regard to the promotion of employment, etc., various measures are also taken based on the Act to Facilitate the Employment of Persons with Disabilities so as to promote the social participation of persons with disabilities through vocational activities.

Furthermore, under the Act for Eliminating Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities, 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.

● 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 (%)



On July 3, 2024, the Supreme Court rendered a judgment in relation to the former Eugenic Protection Act. In response, the Action Plan to Realize an Inclusive Society Free from Prejudice and Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities was formulated in December 2024, and various measures are being promoted.

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

The bodies set up ad-hoc human rights counseling centers at support facilities for persons with disabilities so that facility users and their family members can receive counseling services easily. 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 suspected human rights violation case.



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



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



Awareness-raising Video "Do you know about the Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities?"



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

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Discriminatory treatment against persons with disabilities	125	112	107	149	171
Human rights violations at welfare facilities for persons with disabilities	28	22	27	31	40



5- Buraku Discrimination (Dowa Issue)

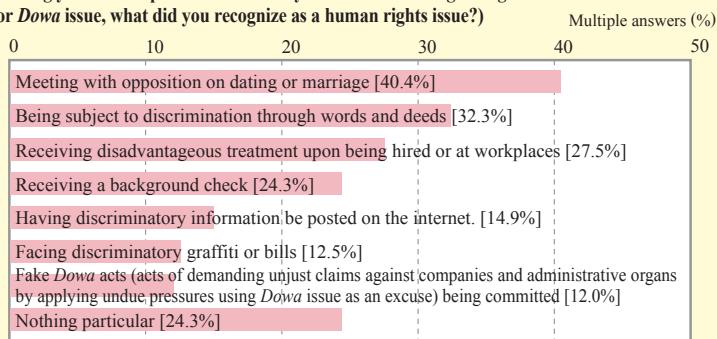
Buraku discrimination (Dowa issue)

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 (*Dowa* issue) 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

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Human rights violations regarding the <i>Buraku</i> discrimination (<i>Dowa</i> issue)	244 (211)	308 (296)	433 (414)	448 (430)	499 (475)

* Figures in the parentheses are the numbers of cases where information identifying individuals' attributes or *Dowa* districts is pointed out on the internet.

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 *Buraku* discrimination (*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 twelve times since 1987 with the aim of ascertaining the actual status of pseudo-actions (the results of the latest survey conducted for FY2024 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 history, etc. of 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.

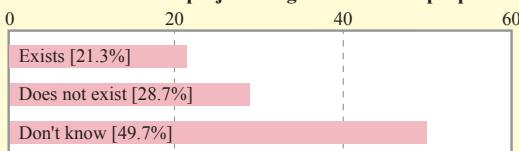


Awareness-raising video,
"A=kor Youth"
(a=kor is an Ainu word meaning "our.")



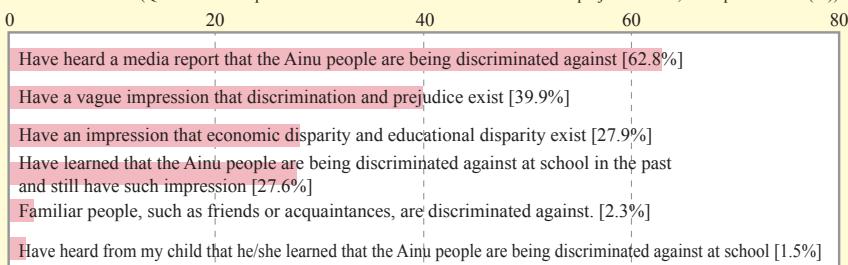
● Survey on the public understanding about the Ainu people (2022 November survey),
Cabinet Secretariat and Cabinet Office

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

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Discriminatory treatment against the Ainu people	0	0	1	6	1



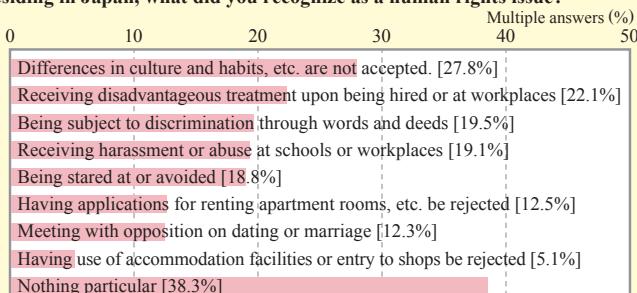
7- Foreigners

As of the end of 2024, approximately 3.77 million foreign residents were residing in Japan, hitting a record high. Under such circumstances, various human rights issues regarding foreign residents have taken place due to differences in culture, language, religion, customs and other factors.

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice have 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 (Hate Speech Elimination Act) 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 during deliberation of the Act, any discriminatory speech or behavior intended to promote or encourage discrimination on the basis of nationality, race, or ethnicity should never be tolerated, regardless of whether it targets foreign nationals 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 harm 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

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Discriminatory treatment against foreigners	60	59	47	83	98

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>



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/goriyouannai_en/



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 Prefecural 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 no possibility of being infected in daily life. Infection routes are mainly limited to the following three: infection through sexual contact, infection via blood, and mother-to-child infection.

Hepatitis is mostly caused by the hepatitis B virus or hepatitis C virus, and there is no possibility of being infected with the hepatitis B virus or hepatitis C virus in ordinary everyday life, except for transmission mainly via blood and bodily fluids.

However, such fact is not broadly understood, and not a few infected individuals and patients suffer from prejudice and discrimination.

In relation to COVID-19, 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. amended in February 2021, and the Basic Plan based on this Act was fundamentally reviewed in July 2024 and respect for fundamental human rights was included as one of the goals in aiming to realize a resilient society that can flexibly cope with an infectious disease crisis.

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

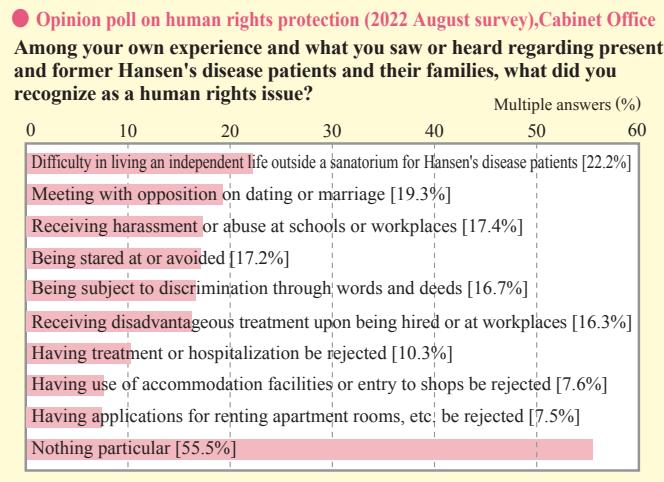
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Discriminatory treatment against infectious disease patients (excl. patients of Hansen's Disease)	44	68	49	24	11



9-

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

Although Hansen's disease is contagious due to *Mycobacterium leprae*, it is extremely rare to contract the disease even if in cases of exposure to the bacteria, due to low infectivity. Even in the rare event of coming down with the disease, there are effective therapeutic medicines, and it is curable without aftereffects if treated properly at an early stage. However, the policy adopted in the past to isolate Hansen's disease patients at care facilities created the 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.



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. are provided and panel discussions are held with the participation of students, and have delivered the content of those symposiums online, thereby disseminating the 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.



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



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



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





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

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Discriminatory treatment against Hansen's disease patients	0	1	0	1	0

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

Prejudice and discrimination against people released from prison after serving their sentence, etc. and against their family members are deeply rooted, and released persons face discrimination in finding jobs or difficulties in securing housing, and therefore the conditions are very severe for those people who are trying to reintegrate into society. In order to ensure that they are accepted and included in local communities and live their stable social life as a member the 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, etc., 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.

Centering around July, a month for raising awareness for the prevention of recidivism and a month for strengthening the "Brighter Society Campaign," the Ministry of Justice intensively carries out PR and awareness-raising activities for preventing crime and juvenile delinquency and for deepening interest and understanding broadly among citizens with regard to the improvement and rehabilitation and the prevention of recidivism of persons who have committed crimes and delinquent juveniles (see the website of the Ministry of Justice for the details of the "Brighter Society Campaign").

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.



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

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Discriminatory treatment against people released from prison after serving their sentence	5	4	4	2	7

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, etc. 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

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Human rights violations against crime victims, etc.	4	0	2	1	6



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 misrepresentation of character, defamation, privacy infringement against individuals, 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.

Furthermore in April 2025, the Act for amending the so-called Provider Liability Limitation Act was put into effect 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 the safe use of smartphones, etc., as countermeasures against human rights violations through abuse of the internet, which are becoming increasingly serious. The bodies are also preparing and distributing awareness-raising leaflets and videos 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 a social network service business association, and are making efforts to improve people's information morals.

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 consultants' intentions, and if that information is found to constitute defamation or privacy infringement, etc. 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 booklet "Are you OK?
Let's consider the internet and human rights."

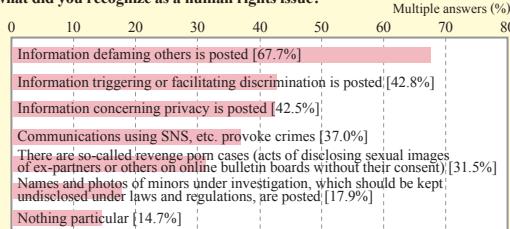


Awareness-raising video "Are you OK? Let's consider the internet and human rights."



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

● **Opinion poll on human rights protection (2022 August survey), Cabinet Office**
Among your own experience and what you saw or heard regarding the internet, what did you recognize as a human rights issue?



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



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

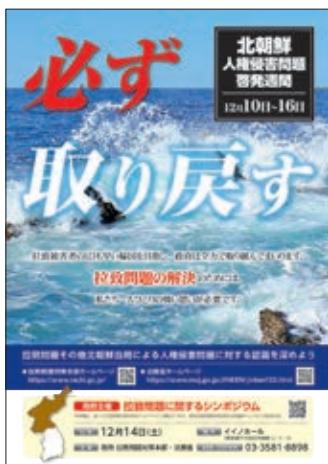
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Human rights violations on the internet	1,693	1,736	1,721	1,824	1,707



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 December 16 every year as the North Korean Human Rights Abuse Awareness Week, with the aim of deepening interest and awareness regarding abduction and other human rights violation issues related to North Korean authorities broadly among people.

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 concerning the Abduction Issue – For Achieving the Earliest Possible Return of All Abduction Victims –

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 to Realize an Inclusive Society Free from Prejudice and Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities

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

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Human rights violations against homeless people	1	1	0	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 the Cabinet Office and 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

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Human rights violations against sexual minorities	17	9	9	26	12

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 the Cabinet Office and 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" (for victims)



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 Noto Peninsula Earthquake in January 2024, the distribution and spread of false or incorrect information became an issue. In the event of an earthquake or other disaster, it is necessary to encourage each person to act properly with compassion for others based on correct information and calm judgment.

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.



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 to Realize an Inclusive Society Free from Prejudice and Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities

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	173
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	175
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	77
8	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Dec. 13, 2006 May. 3, 2008	193

(As of June 2025)

4. Topic: Efforts to Realize an Inclusive Society Free from Prejudice and Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities

Article 3 of the Basic Act for Persons with Disabilities provides that an Inclusive Society in which no people are set apart on the basis of disability and people mutually respect the personality and individuality of others should be realized based on the premise that all persons with disabilities are entitled to dignity as individuals enjoying fundamental human rights equally to persons without disabilities, and possess the right to be guaranteed a life befitting of that dignity. The national government has promoted various government-wide initiatives based on the Basic Act, the Basic Programme for Persons with Disabilities, which was formulated based thereon, and the Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities.

Meanwhile, on July 3, 2024, the Supreme Court rendered a judgment that provisions of the former Eugenic Protection Act are unconstitutional, and the national government has made responses and taken various measures. Here, the developments regarding the former Eugenic Protection Act and the national government's responses are outlined.

◎ Developments regarding the former Eugenic Protection Act

The former Eugenic Protection Act, which was enacted in 1948, provided for eugenic surgeries (sterilization operations) and artificial abortions for the purpose of preventing births of inferior offsprings from the aspect of eugenics and protecting mothers' lives and good health. Through the amendment in 1996, the relevant provisions were deleted and the title of the Act was altered to the Maternal Health Act. However, until that point in time, approximately 25,000 eugenic surgeries were conducted under the former Eugenic Protection Act. Many people were forced to receive a surgery for removing the ability to reproduce or to receive irradiation on the grounds of having specific diseases or disabilities and suffered tremendous physical and mental agony. On April 24, 2019, the Act on the Lump-sum Payment, etc. to Persons Who Have Undergone Eugenic Surgery, etc. under the Former Eugenic Protection Act (Act on the Lump-sum Payment) was enacted as legislation by Diet members, and was promulgated and put into effect.

On the same day, the national government expressed remorse and apology for the fact that many people were forced to receive surgery for removing the ability to reproduce and suffered tremendous physical and mental agony, in the form of a statement by the Prime Minister and a statement by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare.



After that, on July 3, 2024, in the lawsuit for state redress over the former Eugenic Protection Act, the Supreme Court rendered a judgment that the provisions on eugenic surgeries in the former Eugenic Protection Act are unconstitutional, and that the legislation by the Diet members concerning the relevant provisions was unlawful under Article 1, paragraph (1) of the State Redress Act. The Supreme Court admitted the national government's liability for damages. In response to this judgment, the then Prime Minister Kishida met the plaintiffs and others in the lawsuits on July 17, 2024, and expressed remorse and apology, representing the national government, and committed to taking actions for an early resolution of the lawsuits. On September 13, 2024, the then Minister of State for Special Missions Kato (for Policies Related to Children, Declining Measures for Birthrate, Youth Empowerment, and Gender Equality) signed the Settlement Agreement for Pending Lawsuits with the National Plaintiffs Group for Damages due to the Eugenic Protection Act and the National Defense Group Council for Damages due to the Eugenic Protection Act. Based on this Agreement, the national government proceeded with settlement procedures with the plaintiffs, and all relevant lawsuits were terminated on November 15, 2024.

Additionally, on September 30, 2024, the then Minister of State for Special Missions Kato (for Policies Related to Children, Declining Measures for Birthrate, Youth Empowerment, and Gender Equality) signed the Basic Agreement with the National Plaintiffs Group for Damages due to the Eugenic Protection Act, the National Defense Group for Damages due to the Eugenic Protection Act, and the National Liaison Conference for Complete Settlement of the Issues Relating to the Eugenic Protection Act. Based on this Basic Agreement, it was decided to establish a framework for deliberations between the National Plaintiffs Group for Damages due to the Eugenic Protection Act, etc. and the Cabinet Office and relevant ministries and agencies and to have deliberations continuously and periodically for considering and implementing measures for complete settlement of the issues. On March 27, 2025, the First Meeting for Complete Settlement of the Issues Relating to the Former Eugenic Protection Act was held.



Meeting between the then Prime Minister Kishida and the plaintiffs and others

Source: Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan

Regarding new compensation for a broader range of victims, including those who have not instituted lawsuits, the Act on the Lump-sum Payment was fully amended based on the Supreme Court judgment, and the Act on the Payment of Compensation to People Who Have Undergone Eugenic Surgery, etc. under the Former Eugenic Protection Act (Act on the Payment of Compensation) was unanimously approved and enacted on October 8, 2024, as legislation by Diet members. This Act was promulgated on October 17, 2024, and put into effect on January 17, 2025. The preamble of the Act on the Payment of Compensation provides that the Diet and the national government are to sincerely accept the Supreme Court judgment, admit their responsibility seriously for the fact that they had legislated and enforced those unconstitutional provisions and had promoted measures for false purposes from the aspect of eugenics, with remorse and regret, and profoundly apologize for it.

Upon the enforcement of the Act on the Payment of Compensation, the then Prime Minister Ishiba met the plaintiffs and others in the lawsuits, heard about their hard experience and thoughts, and expressed his commitment to making efforts so that the new compensation under the Act on the Payment of Compensation will surely be paid to victims.



Meeting between the then Prime Minister Ishiba and the plaintiffs and others
Source: Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan

● Action Plan to Realize an Inclusive Society Free from Prejudice and Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities

On the occasion of the meeting with the plaintiffs and others in the lawsuits for state redress over the former Eugenic Protection Act on July 17, 2024, the then Prime Minister Kishida expressed the national government's intention to build a new government-wide system to review its past initiatives and strengthen relevant measures, including educational and awareness-raising measures, with the aim of eliminating the concept of eugenics and prejudice and discrimination against persons with disabilities.

The national government established the Headquarters for Promoting Measures Towards an Inclusive Society Free from Prejudice and Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities consisting of all Cabinet members, with the Prime Minister serving as the chief. The Headquarters checked past initiatives by individual ministries and agencies, and had deliberations while hearing opinions of the victims of the former Eugenic Protection Act and persons with disabilities.



ties, with the participation of intellectuals in the fields of human rights and disabilities, in order to strengthen relevant measures, including educational and awareness-raising measures, for the elimination of prejudice and discrimination against persons with disabilities. On December 27, 2024, the Headquarters formulated the Action Plan to realize an Inclusive Society Free from Prejudice and Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (the "Action Plan"), which compiles the matters to be tackled by the national government as a whole for the realization of such society.

The Action Plan first states that "discrimination, isolation, violence, and biased views that persons with disabilities had received so far are impermissible" and that "Japan must break away from prejudice and discrimination against persons with specific diseases or disabilities from the aspect of eugenics, as well as attitudes and conduct that view persons with disabilities as being inferior to persons without disabilities," based on the idea of Social Model of Disability. Then, the Action Plan compiles the matters to be tackled, centered on the promotion of supportive measures for achieving a life of one's choice, including parenting, the strengthening of measures for changing the mindsets of public employees, and the strengthening of efforts for a "barrier-free mind," which is provided for in the Universal Design 2020 Action Plan. The national government will promptly commence measures compiled in the Action Plan, will reflect reports and opinions hearing by the Commission on Policy for Persons with Disabilities in the next Basic Programme for Persons with Disabilities, and will strengthen the system to monitor implementation statuses with the participation of external intellectuals and persons with disabilities.

Based on the Action Plan, the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice delivered training DVDs concerning the former Eugenic Protection Act to Legal Affairs Bureaus and District Legal Affairs Bureaus nationwide and provided training targeting staff members engaging in human rights counseling and investigation and remedy procedures and Human Rights Volunteers during FY2024. In FY2025, as for the strengthening of measures for changing the mindsets of public employees, the bodies will provide training targeting national and local public employees to raise their awareness on human rights by incorporating the history of the former Eugenic Protection Act and interviews of the victims in the content of the training. Regarding the strengthening of efforts for a "barrier-free mind," which is provided for in the Universal Design 2020 Action Plan, they will carry out human rights awareness-raising activities combining experience of sports for persons with disabilities and cultural and artistic activities, etc. and Human Rights Lectures by Human Rights Volunteers, with the participation of persons with disabilities, in collaboration with Social Welfare Councils. When any suspected case of human rights violation in relation to persons with disabilities is found through human rights counseling, etc. the bodies investigate the case as a human rights violation case and take appropriate measures depending on the circumstances. On such occasions, irrespective of whether human rights violation is found or not, the bodies will present preferable based on the purport of the Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities, etc. and proactively take action to raise awareness.

MEMO



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 infringement of human rights.

A hairdresser refused
to cut your hair.



You were not
allowed to rent
an apartment.



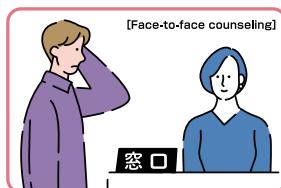
Your child is bullied at school.



Different customs that are hard to accept.



Don't worry alone. Consult with us first.



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



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



We accept human rights inquiries in 10
languages on the Internet Human Rights
Counseling Services.

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 advices.



See page 43 for details