

Japan Now

1. Swift Action Required Against Democratic People's Republic of Korea

On Saturday 8 April, 2017 an article I wrote outlining Japan's call for the international community to swiftly address security threat and human rights violation posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) was published in the Trinidad and Tobago Guardian Newspaper. Japan has paid particular attention to this issue given our proximity to North Korea and the fact that Japan has experienced devastating effects caused by the detonation of nuclear devices and has pursued, for many years, the recovery of Japanese nationals abducted by the DPRK. You can read the full text of my article below:

SWIFT ACTION REQUIRED AGAINST NORTH KOREAN THREATS

Japan is currently a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), contributing to deliberations on critical security matters that impact the international community. Since its war-renunciation in its constitution in 1947, Japan has been a leading advocate for global peace and security, and the elimination and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Over the years, Japan and its East Asian neighbours have witnessed the looming threat of nuclear proliferation on their doorstep as North Korea, also known as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), has become one of the biggest threats to the stability and security of the region.

Since the DPRK's first nuclear test in October 2006, we have witnessed an ever-growing threat to international peace and security. In recent months, a series of nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches demand that the international community join forces in having the DPRK respond to security concerns, as well as humanitarian and human rights concerns expressed in numerous UN resolutions.

Japan has been the only country to suffer the devastating effects caused by the detonation of a nuclear device in the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As such, Japanese citizens understand the severity and immediacy of the threat posed by North Korea. Our Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, has clearly registered his grave concern, describing the DPRK's successive nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches as totally unacceptable actions which seriously undermine the world's peace and security.

After the missile launch on March 21, 2017, the UNSC condemned the launch as a grave violation of the DPRK's international obligations. The UNSC also called upon all Member States to redouble efforts to fully implement sanctions, which state that all Member States shall prevent direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer of any items that could contribute to the DPRK's nuclear or ballistic missile programmes. The resolutions also request that Member

States' freeze all financial and/or other assets, which are owned or controlled by persons or entities involved in the DPRK's programmes, and prevent the entry or transit of those considered to be involved in the DPRK's programmes. Despite these restrictive measures, the DPRK has continued to defy UNSC resolutions and recently conducted another launch on April 5. The DPRK's actions further emphasise the urgent need for the full implementation of the sanctions against the DPRK.

Japan considers it extremely important that each Member State, in the Caribbean region and around the world, swiftly and fully implement the relevant resolutions to ensure their effectiveness.

Another issue that is of grave concern is the existing human rights situation in the DPRK as there has been no evidence of major improvements to stymie the DPRK's systematic and gross violation of human rights, which range from acts of torture, arbitrary detentions, violations of the freedom of expression and movement, to enforced disappearances and the abduction of foreign nationals.

During the 1970s and 1980s, at least 17 Japanese citizens disappeared under unusual circumstances and the DPRK confessed to abducting 13 of them, of which 5 have returned to Japan. Japan is not alone. There are also missing persons from the Republic of Korea (South Korea), Thailand, Romania, Lebanon, Malaysia, Singapore, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United States of America.

Japan remains dedicated to seeing a world without nuclear weapons and looks forward to working even more closely with Trinidad and Tobago, as responsible members of the international community, to address the increasingly alarming threats posed by the DPRK's nuclear weapon and ballistic missiles programmes, as well as its appalling humanitarian and human rights situation that has impacted the lives of missing foreign citizens and that of their families.

2. Japanese Anime Aired in T&T

Japanese pop culture has been gaining popularity around the world. Anime, or animation films produced in Japan, has accomplished the rare feat of finding popularity among a wide cross-section of youths and adults, who are drawn to the high quality storytelling and grand artistry.

Local T&T viewers have seen several Japanese anime which have been televised since Saturday 18 March 2017 from 8am – 9am on Trinidad and Tobago's local television station, CCN TV6, with English subtitles. This broadcast has been made possible by a Japan Foundation project which offers a variety of Japanese television programs such as dramas, animations and documentaries, to TV stations around the world with a view of introducing diverse aspects of Japanese culture and society.

“Space Brothers”, which was the first animation to be broadcast, has been on air at 8:30 a.m. every Saturday. It is the story of two brothers who, as children, make a promise to each other to

become astronauts. The first anime is immediately followed by the broadcast of Shinkai Makoto's animated movies: "5 Centimeters per Second", "The Voices of a Distant Star", "The Garden of Words" and "The Place Promised in Our Early Days", respectively. These animated offerings began airing on Saturday 25 March, 2017 and will each be aired successively at 8am until the final anime is broadcast on Saturday 29 April 2017.

Thank you and I hope you have an opportunity to enjoy one of the many anime offerings from Japan.

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