

UN Committee on Racial Discrimination (CERD) review of Japan (20-21 August 2014) in the 85th session of the Committee

IDSN August 2014 – buraku references in the CERD review of Japan

The Committee on Racial Discrimination (CERD) considered Japan's [seventh to ninth periodic report](#) in the 85th session of the Committee (20 and 21 August 2014). At the review, the Committee raised several concerns regarding discrimination against the Burakumin.

At the outset, Mr. Osamu Yamanaka from the Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Division of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs described the efforts that had been taken by the Japanese government to eliminate discrimination against the Burakumin. However, the Committee raised serious concern regarding continued discrimination against the Burakumin. The Committee specifically emphasized harmful and racist expressions and attacks via the internet against the Burakumin, the situation of Buraku women and access to information from the family registration system used for purposes of discrimination against the Burakumin.

Even though, the Japanese representative emphasised that Buraku discrimination does not fall under the scope of the ICERD, the Committee underlined that Buraku discrimination does fall under the scope of the ICERD and further, that the General Recommendation No.29 on descent-based discrimination applies to the Buraku people.

Committee member Mr. Kemal further noted that the Committee's last set of concluding observations to the State party in 2010 referred to discrimination against the Burakumin. However, that the State party omitted reference to the Buraku issue in its latest report. Civil society has reported that although the living conditions of the Buraku had improved over recent years, thanks to special measures, the gap in the standard of living between Buraku and the majority remained wide, and social discrimination continued to be a troubling problem.

Please find the [UN News release](#) for the review and the IMADR twitter feed on the review https://twitter.com/IMADR_Geneva

Further information

On August 18, ahead of the review, the Committee met with NGOs and civil society to hear information on racial discrimination. A representative of the Buraku Liberation League expressed concerns about widespread racist demonstrations against minority groups such as Koreans, Chinese and Burakumin, staged by racist groups such as the Zaitokukai, about the permission and protection given by the authorities to those racist demonstrators under the name of "freedom of expression", and about the oppression by the authorities of civil society protests against racist organizations. Please see the [UN Press release](#) (18 August 2014)

The [List of issues](#) includes discrimination against the Burakumin and specifically with regards to access to employment, housing, land and education, the enactment of a law on human rights protection, as agreed with the Burakumin organizations and the creation of a public authority to deal with Burakumin issues.

Four NGO reports from civil society address the situation of the Burakumin people. These include the [Committee on the Protection of Human Rights of the Central Head Office of the Korean Residents Union in Japan](#), [Japan Federation of Bar Associations](#) and two reports from the NGO Network for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Japan (ERD Net) on the [Implementation of ICERD](#) and [hate speech](#)