

Proposal  
“Concerning the Acceptance of Syrian Refugees in Japan”

28 September 2015

Your Excellency Prime Minister Shinzo Abe:

We are private organizations dedicated to refugee assistance in Japan.

The armed conflict in Syria has led to what is said to be the worst refugee crises since the Second World War. Refugees are forcibly displaced into neighboring countries and, unable to obtain sufficient protection, are being further displaced into the European Union and beyond. We are deeply concerned about the precious lives that are being lost in the process. In responding to what can only be called a state of emergency, and facing the reality of this large-scale refugee crisis, the time is now for collective action and support from the international community, with Japan playing a key role in that effort. With this sense of perspective, beginning with assistance to the surrounding host countries and the refugee receiving countries in Europe, now is the time for Japan, who is a member of the G7, to take an active role in contributing to international resolution of this crisis alongside other countries by accepting Syrian refugees into Japan.

In this regard, we propose the following:

1. We request an expression of acceptance of responsibility for Syrian refugees in Japan at the upcoming UN General Assembly Meeting on September 29.
2. We request that it be expressed that the acceptance of Syrian refugees will be carried out by the bringing together of stakeholders with a wide range of experience and expertise among the Government (relevant Ministries), local authorities, international organizations, and civil society.

Along with the above two points being addressed to the United Nations General Assembly, and in addition to other Syrian refugee assistance, we request an explicit expression of commitment, as Japan, to contribute positively to the resolution of the refugee crisis as a member of the international community. We wish to emphasize, that with regard to implementation, we will cooperate and are committed in our private organizations to assist on the basis of our extensive experience providing refugee assistance in Japan.

In 2011, both the House of Representatives and the House of Councilors unanimously passed a resolution committing to the development of initiatives that would ensure national refugee protection (See in attached document). As the resolution states, “Japan will play a leading role regionally in Asia and globally, in improving the quality of refugee protection and finding durable solutions to the global refugee crisis.” It is in accordance with that spirit, that we request Japan to

express its intention to the international community of expanding refugee assistance including through acceptance of refugees in Japan.

Your favorable consideration would be greatly appreciated.

End.

On behalf of the following supporting agencies:

(Alphabetical Order in Japanese)

公益社団法人アムネスティ・インターナショナル日本 | Amnesty International Japan

イエズス会社会司牧センター | Jesuit Social Center Tokyo

移住者と連帯する全国ネットワーク | Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan

カトリック東京国際センター | Catholic Tokyo International Center

シリア支援団体サダーカ | Sadaqa (Syrian Refugee Support Organization)

全国難民弁護団連絡会議 | Japan Lawyers Network for Refugees

NPO 法人名古屋難民支援室 | Door to Asylum Nagoya

NPO 法人難民自立支援ネットワーク | Refugee Empowerment Network

一般社団法人日本福音ルーテル社団 | Japan Evangelical Lutheran Association

RAFIQ (在日難民との共生ネットワーク) | RAFIQ (Network for coexistence with refugees in Japan)

認定 NPO 法人難民支援協会 (申入れ事務局) | Japan Association for Refugees (Proposal Secretariat)

**【Point of Contact; Secretariat】**

Japan Association for Refugees [Authorized NPO]

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[Attachment: Draft Resolution on the ongoing effort to ensure refugee protection and solutions to the global refugee crisis (179<sup>th</sup> Diet Session, Resolution Number 2, Session of the House of Representatives, passed respectively by the House of Councilors)]

2011 is the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, and the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Japan's accession to the Refugee Convention. Since accession to the Convention, over the course of these 30 years, as a member of the international community, Japan has remained committed to providing support to the world's refugees and other displaced persons, with an emphasis on human security and a focus on humanitarian assistance and peace building, and directed to each refugee. In 2010, Japan launched a resettlement program of refugees in Thailand from Myanmar as a pilot program, becoming the first country in Asia to accept refugees through 3<sup>rd</sup> country resettlement.

With regard to domestic refugee protection, Japan has acted with the goal of improvement and development of the asylum procedures, transparency in refugee status determination, and improved efficiency.

Whilst respecting basic principles of international law and the law of international refugee protection, and whilst strengthening partnerships with international organizations and civil society groups supporting refugees, Japan shall establish comprehensive domestic systems of refugee protection, and work toward further improvement and enrichment of the resettlement program. At the same time, consistent with Japan's foreign policy strategy, Japan will play a leading role regionally in Asia and globally, by improving the quality of refugee protection and finding durable solutions to the global refugee crisis.