



Global Article 9 Campaign to Abolish War

Proposal for activity at the WSF, Tunisia, March 26-30, 2013

Save Japan's Peace Constitution! – Article 9, its global scope and its relevance for the Arab Spring and the Middle East

Organizer: Peace Boat, in cooperation with the Japan Lawyers International Solidarity Association (JALISA)

Peace Boat, www.peaceboat.org/english: Peace Boat is a Japan-based international non-governmental and non-profit organization that works to promote peace, human rights, equal and sustainable development and respect for the environment. Peace Boat seeks to create awareness and action based on effecting positive social and political change in the world. Peace Boat carries out its main activities through a chartered passenger ship that travels the world on peace voyages.

Japan Lawyers International Solidarity Association (JALISA), <http://homepage3.nifty.com/jalisa/> : JALISA was founded in 1957. As a member of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL), JALISA engages in international solidarity activities in cooperation with other democratic lawyer organizations, taking a role as an interface to link various domestic activities for peace, democracy and human rights on an international level. Furthermore, as lawyers of Japan, the only A-bombed country in the world, JALISA also pursues efforts for the elimination of nuclear weapons."

International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL) <http://www.iadllaw.org> : IADL was founded 1946 in Paris, whose members have been engaged in actions to restore, defend and develop democratic rights and liberties in legislation and in practice. IADL organizes campaigns against racism, colonialism, and economic and political injustice wherever they interfere with legal and human rights.

Date: March 27, 2013

Format: dialog session

Duration: 90 min

Content: Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution renounces war as a mean of settling international disputes and prohibits the maintenance of armed forces and other war potential. Article 9 is not just a provision of the Japanese law. A pledge to the people of the Asia Pacific region, Article 9 has been one of the fundamental factors guaranteeing peace in Northeast Asia since WWII and remains the foundation for a peaceful future of this region. It also acts as an international peace mechanism towards reductions in military spending, promotion of nuclear-weapon-free zones, supporting conflict prevention, and mitigating the negative environmental impact of the military, and more.

Today, however, with the return in power of the conservative aisle of the Liberal Democratic Party, Japan's peace constitution is under threat. Abe Shinzo, elected as Prime Minister in December 2012, has already announced his intention to revise Article 9, thus opening the door for new militarization of Japan and threatening to destabilize regional peace.

Peace Boat and JALISA have been engaged in the Global Article 9 Campaign for many years. Launched in 2005, this campaign seeks not only to locally protect Article 9, but also to educate people about existing peace constitutions and call for the adoption of peace clauses, for disarmament, demilitarization and a culture of peace.

Particularly now, when Article 9 is under the threat of revision announced by new government, these two organizations want to mobilize international CSOs to help to save Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, to campaign for peace clauses to be included in the constitution of other countries and preserve peace in Northeast Asia and in the world.

In the wake of the Arab Spring that has produced revolutionary changes of the political systems in Northern Africa and the Middle East, a debate on the role that peace clauses have in promoting peace, democracy, disarmament and human security could have a positive impact on countries that are faced with the opportunity to remodel their constitution.

This session will give an insight on the challenges posed to Article 9 at the Japanese level and highlight the importance and relevance peace constitutions have as international peace mechanisms. It will also seek to create a fruitful dialog among participants on possible new legal and political avenues to achieve a global peace that does not rely on force.

More information about the Global Article 9 Campaign:

<http://www.article-9.org/en/about/index.html>

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