

Resolution of Protest Calling for the Thorough Enforcement of Discipline Among U.S. Servicemembers, Civilian Personnel and other Related Members

On December 6, a U.S. Air Force servicemember stationed at Kadena Air Base temporarily escaped from the base carrying a handgun was later arrested in Yomitan Village by the U.S. Forces. The area of the village where the escaped servicemember was arrested hosts tourist facilities and hotels, and this is a serious incident that may have resulted in unexpected circumstances. In addition, the Okinawa Defense Bureau and neighboring municipalities were notified of the incident after the arrest. It is extremely regrettable that the Japan-U.S. agreement, which stipulates the notification procedures in case that an incident that may affect the safety of the general public occurs, is not observed.

In 2014, a male U.S. Marine Corps servicemember holed himself up with a rifle in his house on Camp Kuwae, Chatan Town, which required employees working on the base to temporarily evacuate, revealed the U.S. Forces' poor management of their weapons.

Since the Okinawa Prefectural Police considers this incident happened off duties and plans to request the U.S. Forces for the cooperation in investigation, the U.S. Forces should respond appropriately.

On September 7 this year, in Yomitan Village as well, an Army servicemember stationed at Kadena Air Base intruded into a private house under the influence of alcohol, and a high school girl and a 5-month old baby girl who were in the house ran into an acquaintance's house in the neighborhood, seeking for a refuge.

Every time an incident or accident involving the U.S. Forces servicemembers, civilian employees and other related persons happens the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly has made strong demands to the U.S. Forces and other parties for the enforcement of discipline, preventive measures and education of related persons. However, it is deeply regrettable that this incident has happened, making us strongly question the U.S. Forces' efforts to prevent recurrence and the significance of the military personnel education and training, and this is utterly unacceptable.

To that end, we, the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly, in our duty to protect the lives, safety and the living environment of the people of Okinawa, strongly protest the recent incident and call for the prompt execution of the following items.

1. Enforce the thorough management of the firearms possessed by the U.S. Forces servicemembers, civilian employees and other related persons, and review the significance of the notification procedures.
2. Enforce the discipline among the U.S. Forces servicemembers, civilian employees and other related persons, and implement effective measures to prevent recurrence.
3. Conduct fundamental reviews of the Status of Forces Agreement.

The above is resolved as stated on this 20th day of December, 2018.

Okinawa Prefectural Assembly