

Issued condemnation statement on a series of incidents that the U.S. military aircrafts have threatened the safety of the people of Okinawa to Prime Minister and U.S. President from Shinshū Ōtani-ha Okinawa District.

**Condemnation statement on the United States military aircrafts' flights threatening the safety of local residents near Futenma military base**

December 28, 2017

We, the Shinshū Ōtani-ha (Higashi Honganji) Buddhist denomination, were horrified by the news of the two recent incidents that involved metal objects falling out of the U.S. military aircrafts over Futenma No. 2 Elementary school and Midorigaoka preschool in Ginowan city, Okinawa.

A series of other incidents that involved the U.S. military aircrafts have threatened the safety of the people of Okinawa. In 2004, a military helicopter crashed onto a building of Okinawa International University. In December last year, an Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft crash-landed on the coast of Nago city, and in October this year a CH-53 chopper also crash-landed on a private land in Higashi village. In addition to those faulty aircrafts and crashes, a number of tragic incidents have been caused by U.S. troops. This is because of the presence of the military base. The lives of us local residents are always threatened by those incidents.

We, the Shinshū Ōtani-ha, have sought to establish a truly peaceful society based on the foundational spirit of our teaching, of "people living in harmony and prosper, with no need of armament," which is stated in the *Sutra of Measureless Life*, one of the discourses by Shakyamuni Buddha. Ginowan city is the place where one of our regional head temple and its members' community are located. As Buddhists, we can no longer tolerate such dangers keeping threatening the lives of the residents, especially of children whom our country's future rests upon.

Even after the recent accident, U.S. military aircrafts have continued flying over the preschools, schools at all three levels, and residential areas. Those acts trample on the human dignity of the local people. We strongly condemn the recent incidents of the falling aircraft parts and request that the U.S. military suspend flights over the residential areas and schools.

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