

The Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center (AJWRC) strives to eradicate all forms of violence and discrimination against women, toward a democratic Japanese society based on respect for human rights and gender equality, and toward a fair and sustainable global society. In order to end all forms of gender-based violence, including sexual violence under armed conflicts and around military bases, trafficking and sexual exploitation, domestic violence, and sexual harassment, we address gender biases and the multiple forms of discrimination which women face, challenging the conventional concepts of peace and security.

AJWRC engages in numerous activities relating to the promotion of women's rights. These include: information sharing and networking of women's movements in Japan and throughout the world; providing educational opportunities for the general public to understand various issues from a gender perspective; holding seminars and workshops on issues such as violence against women and women's movements in other parts of the world and organising women's study tours to exchange information and experiences with women's and civil groups in other countries. AJWRC also monitors cases and policies that may violate women's rights, runs ad-hoc and long-term campaigns, conducts research and surveys for advocacy purposes and actively participates in international feminist debates and campaigns.

AJWRC currently has a number of ongoing campaigns aimed at eradicating sexual violence against women. These include a campaign to end violence against women perpetrated by US soldiers around their military bases, and also a campaign calling for judicial and legislative reform in relation to cases of sexual violence against women.

Sexual assaults by US soldiers remain an ongoing threat to women and girls living in communities hosting military bases, despite the numerous promises of prevention made by Japanese and US governments. Facilitated by a weak Japanese criminal justice system and the bilateral military agreement that limit jurisdiction of Japanese authorities over US soldiers, many perpetrators evade punishment. Most of the victims do not receive any legal support or sufficient compensation. AJWRC is lobbying the Japanese government to take effective measures to prevent, prosecute and punish sexual abuses against women and children by foreign military members. It must ensure that such crimes are fully investigated, and the perpetrators prosecuted and punished according to Japanese law, and that victims are fully compensated.

AJWRC highlights cases of sexual violence against women wherein perpetrators receive impunity and lobbies the Japanese government to reform its archaic and gender-biased legislation and judicial practices with regard to sexual violence. Fundamental flaws in the law include a lack of any comprehensive legal definition of sexual violence and lenient punishments for rape and other sexual abuses. Furthermore, due to the male-centered interpretation of rape law, victims are often required to provide evidence that they desperately resisted the assault. This prevents many victims from reporting the crime to the police. AJWRC is fighting for the implementation of a just and gender-balanced law which qualifies sexual violence as sexual acts that occur without consent and violate the victim's sexual freedom. The burden of proof on victims to give evidence that they resisted the attack must be removed together with the elimination of other barriers for bringing perpetrators to justice.