

Joint Statement for Peace in Asia

We are citizens' organisations engaged in the consumer movement and consumer cooperative activities in South Korea and Japan. As we promote efforts to protect the rights of consumers and citizens, we are heartbroken that many people are embroiled in wars and conflicts around the world, such as the war in Russia and Ukraine and the fighting between Israel and Palestine.

War takes and maims all life, including children, and destroys everything that sustains life. We saw this first-hand in the two World Wars. In World War II, Japan inflicted indescribable damage on Korea and other Asian countries. Upon reflection, the citizens of Japan resolved in the Constitution of Japan to ensure that the horrors of war would never again be caused by the actions of the government, and pledged to Asia and the world that the mistakes would never be repeated.

However, in 2022, the Japanese Government revised three documents on security and announced a plan to double defence spending to a total of 43 trillion yen (about 374.5 trillion won) over the next five years in the name of deterrence. This is a 180-degree turnaround in Japan's approach to security, from the previous policy of exclusive defence to pre-emptive attack, and an attempt to once again push the country into war. In response to this situation, a joint statement by consumers in Japan calling for the withdrawal of the three security documents has been issued, with the support of over 90 organisations.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Japan and South Korea both rank around the top ten in the world's military expenditure rankings. Conflicts and tensions continue in many parts of the world, but we know from past war experience that the expansion of armaments is never a deterrent, but paves the way for war. Wars do not start suddenly one day, but creep into our lives little by little. At a time when the global arms build-up is underway, Asian consumer and civil society organisations need to unite in solidarity and appeal for anti-war and peace.

All people on earth have the right to live in peace and security. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that 'Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.' Peace is not merely the absence of war and conflict, but a state of peace and prosperity, free from violence, poverty, oppression of human rights, discrimination and environmental destruction. Above all, we believe that human dignity must be taken seriously. We see each situation that threatens this as our own and urge that all international confrontational challenges be resolved not by force but by dialogue.

We hereby resolve to continue dialogue and exchange in order to further broaden and deepen the links between people in search of peace and never to provoke war.

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Dure Consumer's Cooperative Union (South Korea)

SHUFUREN (Japan)

Consumers Union of Japan (Japan)