

December National News



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Human Rights Awareness Month

“If we know, then we must fight for your life as though it were our own—which it is—and render impassable with our bodies the corridor to the gas chamber. For, if they take you in the morning, they will be coming for us that night.”

— James Baldwin, Writer/Activist 1970

❖ Human Rights in Japan?

Human Rights Watch regularly observes the standard of human rights of sovereign states around the world, and Japan is no exception. In the ‘Events of 2016’ report on Japan, [HRW displayed 9 areas in which Japan was failing to uphold basic human rights](#). As a group, we might be more aware of discrimination facing us and our peers, but we want to also highlight the wide scope of human rights which are not being satisfactorily addressed. For the full article please head to the Human Rights Watch:

<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/japan>

HUMAN
RIGHTS
WATCH

Racial and Ethnic Discrimination

Japan is behind with no anti-discrimination laws to protect racial or ethnic minorities. “However, in May [2016], a so-called anti-hate speech law was passed, reflecting the increase in recent years of hate speech against Korean residents (*Zainichi*) in Japan. The new law requires the government to take measures to address hate speech, although it excludes undocumented migrants and indigenous people.”

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

“While the number of asylum applications has increased dramatically in recent years (7,586 in 2015 and 5,011 in the first half of 2016), only 27 asylum seekers were recognized as refugees in 2015 and 4 in the first half of 2016.”¹

Migrant Workers and Human Trafficking

With around 200,000 migrant workers in Japan, there have been complaints about “[...] illegal overtime, unpaid wages, dangerous working conditions, confiscation of passports, prohibitions on having cell phones and staying elsewhere overnight, forced return, and forced payments to sending agencies in home countries in case the training period does not finish successfully.”



Women’s Rights

The UN Committee have repeatedly condemned it, and requested amendment but in “December 2015, the Supreme Court ruled that article 750 of the Civil Code, which requires a husband and wife to adopt the same surname, is constitutional. Ninety-six percent of women change their surnames at the time of marriage.” Also in December, Japan and South Korea announced an agreement whereby Japan agreed to take responsibility and apologise and they “provided 1 billion yen[...] to the Foundation for Reconciliation and Healing established by the South Korean government.” This has been criticized for the insufficient amount of consultation with victims.



Lastly, Japan has a upsettingly low proportion of female managers, and since the government started a five year plan for gender equality “to ensure that at least 30 percent of leadership positions are held by women in all areas by 2020. Under the new target, the female leadership ratio goal was reduced to 7 percent for middle managerial positions in the central government and 15 percent for the same in the private sector.”

¹ <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/japan>

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law in Japan requires persons who want to change their gender marker on official documents to obtain a medical diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder, in addition “[...]requires forced sterilization, compulsory single status, not having any underage children, and being 20 years or older.” [Multiple cities and municipalities in Japan are recognising same-sex partnerships](#), although “same-sex marriage is not legally recognized in Japan”. Homophobic, and transphobic bullying is a problem with students facing discrimination by “[...]disregard for gender identity, including mandatory gender-based uniforms. In April [2016], the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) for the first time released a guidebook for teachers regarding sexual orientation and gender identity.”

Disability Rights

In April 2016, an act to eradicate “[...]unfair discriminatory treatment by governments and private entities based on disability” and the requirement that “[...]government-related agencies provide reasonable accommodation to enable the elimination of social barriers, unless the expense is ‘excessive’” was approved. Later that year, a mass stabbing occurred at a care home for persons with disabilities near Tokyo. The perpetrator “[...]was quoted as saying, ‘It is better that disabled people disappear’ moments after the attack. Following the incident, the Japanese government began examining the practice of involuntary hospitalization in psychiatric hospitals.”

Children’s Rights

Only in May 2016 was an amendment passed to explicitly assign children as “rights holders. As noted in a 2014 Human Rights Watch report on the over-institutionalization (nearly 90 percent) of children in Japan’s alternative care system, the revised law envisions a major shift from institutions to families. Article 3.2 lays out a new principle for family-based care although there are questions about the government’s commitment to enforce the new act.”

Death Penalty

[Japan still has the death penalty](#), with 17 people being executed “[...]since Abe returned to power in December 2012. Anti-death penalty advocates have long raised concerns about death row inmates having inadequate access to legal counsel and only being notified of their execution on the day it takes place.”

Foreign Policy

Japan is shy to speak aloud about human rights; the government is notorious for their “[quiet diplomacy](#)” in order for harmonious international relations. North Korea seems to be the only exception.

Nevertheless, the Human Rights Watch are yet to produce their 2017 report, so some issues have become more prevalent now. [Tokyo-based international human rights NGO, Human Rights Now](#) is dedicated to illuminating the inequalities in human rights that occur in Japan. In their *Information for LOIPR Report on Japan* in July 2017 for the United Nations they express 6 areas in which Japan is underperforming in regards to human rights:

1. **Death Penalty and the Criminal Justice System (Articles 6, 9, 14)**
2. **Freedom of Expression and Threats against the Media (Article 19)**
3. **Hate Speech (Articles 20(2), 27)**
4. **Women's, Children's, and LGBT Rights (Articles 3, 7, 24, 26)**
5. **Human Rights Situation of People Affected by the Fukushima Disaster**
6. **The Situation in Okinawa (Articles 1, 9, 19, 21)**

This is a recommended read if you want an extensive insight into the current state of human rights in Japan currently!

[http://hrn.or.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/HRN_Information_for_LOIPR_Report_on_Japan.pdf]

❖ Human Rights Day - Dec 10th

“**Human Rights Day is observed every year on 10 December** – the day the United Nations General Assembly adopted, in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This year, Human Rights Day kicks off a year-long campaign to mark the upcoming 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a milestone document that proclaimed the inalienable rights which everyone is inherently entitled to as a human being -- regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. It is the most translated document in the world, available in more than 500 languages.

Drafted by representatives of diverse legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, the Declaration sets out universal values and a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations. It establishes the equal dignity and worth of every person.”²



“Although the Declaration with its broad range of political, civil, social, cultural and economic rights **is not a binding document**, it inspired more than 60 human rights instruments which together constitute an international standard of human rights. Today the general consent of all United Nations Member States on the basic Human Rights laid down in the Declaration makes it even stronger and emphasizes the relevance of Human Rights in our daily lives.”³

For more information, visit the UN website: <http://www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday/>

² <http://www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday/>

³ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Pages/HumanRightsDay.aspx>

❖ What can I do?

Join the United Nations Human Rights on Dec 10th and write the hashtag #standup4humanrights. "We want to encourage, support and amplify what you do in your everyday life to defend human rights. Together, let's take action for greater freedoms, stronger respect and more compassion. #StandUp4HumanRights"

W: <http://www.standup4humanrights.org/en/>

❖ Best/Worst for LGBT Human Rights

BEST PLACES IN JAPAN

Shibuya and Setagawa, Tokyo; Iga, Mie; Takarazuka, Hyogo; Naha, Okinawa; and Sapporo, Hokkaido are places with recognition for same-sex couples. With recognition, couples can obtain the rights such as hospital visits and shared renting of apartments. Couples receive a "*proof of partnership*" paper, although it is not based in Japanese law.⁴

BEST COMPANIES IN JAPAN

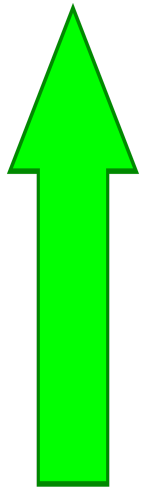
Work With Pride, a Japanese organization created to evaluate the efforts of companies LGBT-friendliness, evaluated 82 companies in Japan in 2016⁵, and 110 in 2017. Here are some of the more well known companies which were given a 'gold' status: Japan Airlines, Goldman Sachs / Morgan Stanley / Ernst & Young Tax Co. / Pencil / IBM Japan / NTT / Microsoft Japan / Rakuten / Sony Group / Panasonic / Fujitsu / AXA Life Insurance / Sumitomo Life / Lifenet Insurance Company. For the full list, please take a look at their 2017 Report... <http://www.workwithpride.jp/pride/report2017.pdf>

BEST COUNTRIES

There are many countries which are making much progress tackling LGBT discrimination and various other human rights issues within their countries, but according to The Social & Moral LGBT Equality Index, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Brazil, Canada and Spain are at the top!⁶

WORST COUNTRIES

According to a 2017 article in The Guardian, these are the worst countries in the world to be gay or transgender: Iraq, Iran, Honduras, Uganda, Russia, Egypt and Nigeria. There are arguably many more countries which deserve to be on this list as homosexuality to some degree is still illegal in over 70 countries.⁷



⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_rights_in_Japan

⁵ <http://www.nijironews.com/2016/10/27/japanese-companies-lgbt-friendly-2/>

⁶ http://www.humantruth.info/lgbt_rights_across_the_world.html

⁷ www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2017/mar/01/where-are-the-most-difficult-places-in-the-world-to-be-gay-or-transgender-lgbt

❖ 5 Organisations to Know in Japan



1. EQUAL MARRIAGE ALLIANCE

W: <http://emajapan.org/aboutemajapan>

EMA Japan is an NPO that advocates for the social and legal recognition of same-sex marriages in Japan. EMA Japan believes that Japanese society should recognize that sexual minorities also have equal rights and deserve the freedom and protection to live varied and fulfilling lives. Sign their online petition⁸!



2. HUMAN RIGHTS NOW

W: <http://hrn.or.jp/eng/>

Human Rights Now (HRN) is an international human rights NGO based in Tokyo, Japan with UN special consultative status. HRN was established in 2006 by a group of human rights professionals, such as lawyers, scholars, and journalists, as the first international human rights NGO based in Japan.



3. WORK WITH PRIDE

W: <http://www.workwithpride.jp/about.html>

Work With Pride is business organization that supports and consults diversity management relating to sexual minorities (LGBT) to companies and other organizations. The conception of the organization began from a 2012 seminar by IBM Japan where international and domestic LGBT NGOs gathered to discuss support for LGBT workers.



4. NIJIRO DIVERSITY

W: <http://nijiroidiversity.jp/nijiroidiversity/>

Nijiroidiversity promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace. They are the first Japanese organization to take on these issues⁹. They provide educational training for companies, are making an LGBT app, and develop LGBT workplace guides and workbooks for employers.



5. GOOD AGING YELLS

W: <http://goodagingyells.net/>

Good Aging Yells is a pro bono organisation that collaborates with other organisations and produces events and projects so that LGBT people can feel at ease with oneself, get along with those who are not LGBT, and build a care home where both LGBT and non-LGBT persons can grow old together.

⁸ <http://emajapan.org/donate/advocate>

⁹ <http://www.nijiroidiversity.jp/nijiroidiversity/>

Information & Design Contests!

❖ Information Contest



Make A Difference!

Help others find the LGBTQIA+ support they need by submitting information lacking on our website!

Get Cool Prizes!

The more qualifying submissions you make the better the prizes are!

1-5 Submissions - entered into our Rainbow Raffle

6-10 Submissions - 2 Rainbow Raffle entries and LGBTQIA+ stickers

11+ Submissions - 4 Rainbow Raffle entries, LGBT+ stickers, and a customized LGBTQIA+ artwork by a Stonewall Japan member!

How to Enter?

Send the list of information you have found to both:

webteam@stonewalljapan.org and *info@stonewalljapan.org*

Email topic "Information Contest - [your name]"

What Kind of content are we looking for?

- Local Block information on LGBT+ Groups, Businesses, Events, Etc. for the following topics:
Activism / Community / Support / Health / Events / Nightlife / Miscellaneous
- Trans Guide information on local resources, personal experiences, updated regulations etc.

Look here for our current guide in progress:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EhXfZSnOLI3HVAi1pplAGwr7ADqulDvUYtevyYyGXGk/edit?usp=sharing>

- Youtube LGBTQIA+ in Japan resources:

We're creating a new resource guide to list videos and youtubers who cover LGBTQIA+ topics in Japan.

We're also accepting LGBT+ friendly intersectional videos that feature topics such as race, mental health, (dis)ability, etc.

➤ Other information you can add to any of our life resource lists.

Check our website's current content here: <http://stonewalljapan.org/>



Stonewall Japan will be producing pride goods for 2018 and we need your help!

How to participate?

1. Fill out this survey!

Help choose what goods would be most appealing:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfPKFXaERPjvW3fbKqSODzx74SwMul6c13ZDE0hUBITeVZxnA/viewform?usp=sf_link

2. Submit your design!

Want to see your design on Stonewall Japan Goods?

- Create a design featuring the words "Stonewall Japan"

(It can feature any original image design and does NOT have to feature the rainbow tree.)

- Send it to info@stonewalljapan.org, email topic: "Design Contest - [your name]"

Design winner will get a free Stonewall Japan good with their artwork on it!

Events +

Check out the events on our new Stonewall event calendar!

Thanks to the webteam, we now have a space for members to suggest and search for events!

Know about any upcoming events in December or beyond?

Send in the event info!

<http://stonewalljapan.org/events/>

Need help translating event details?

Send the event information to our secretary!

loana@stonewalljapan.org



Stonewall Japan: ONLINE MEETUPS

Are you interested in meeting up online with other members?

Fill out the survey here to let us know what you'd be interested in!

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdmPAJX6nIOxQ-QGPTJbMIIGwtUA3cqME58WJYIEVY1v-oRGg/viewform?usp=sf_link

*Currently we don't have enough respondents to make these happen!

You MUST fill out the form so that we can see there is sufficient demand to host these events!

That's all for our December edition!

Rainbow love and peace~

-Stonewall Japan

