



Kathryn Harrison  
Councilmember District 4

CONSENT CALENDAR  
May 30, 2017

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Councilmember Harrison  
Subject: Support the Immediate Halting of New U.S. Military Base Construction at Henoko, Okinawa

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution in support of the immediate halting of new U.S. military base construction at Henoko, Okinawa. Send copies of the attached letter, written by members of the Okinawan community living in the U.S., to Congresswoman Barbara Lee, Senators Kamala Harris and Dianne Feinstein, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, and Secretary of Defense James Mattis.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

BACKGROUND

This Resolution was brought to our office's attention by the Berkeley Peace and Justice Commission. This a follow-up to the commission's Resolution In Support of the People of Okinawa, which passed through the Berkeley City Council on September 9, 2015. This follow-up is necessary because the development of the U.S. military base in Okinawa, against the wishes of the Okinawan people, has not abated.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

No adverse affects to the environment.

CONTACT PERSON

Kathryn Harrison, Councilmember, District 4, 510 981 7140

Attachments:

1. Resolution
2. Letter

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

SUPPORT THE IMMEDIATE HALTING OF NEW U.S. MILITARY BASE  
CONSTRUCTION AT HENOKO, OKINAWA

WHEREAS, over 70% of the people in Okinawa are opposed to new military base construction at Henoko. The Japanese government is ignoring the will of the people of Okinawa; and

WHEREAS, the construction of the new U.S. military base and subsequent military operations at Henoko will damage Okinawa's sea, land, and sky, creating irreparable harm to their environment; and

WHEREAS, the voices and lives of the Okinawan people are not being heard or valued; and

WHEREAS, the irreparable harm to the values of democracy and human rights that the U.S. purports to uphold, will make it difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile our identities as Okinawans in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, Japan forcibly annexed Okinawa in 1879, sacrificed Okinawa as a breakwater to American forces in 1945, handed over Okinawa to U.S. military occupation from 1945 to 1972, and continued to allow the U.S. military to keep 75% of its Japanese military facilities in Okinawa.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Berkeley call upon the US and Japan governments to support the immediate halting of new U.S. military base construction at Henoko, Okinawa and endorse the attached letter written by members of the Okinawan diaspora.

We, people with ancestral ties to Okinawa living in the United States of America, demand the immediate halting of new U.S. military base construction at Henoko, Okinawa. This demand is presented to both governments of Japan and the U.S. The reasons for our demands include, but are not limited to the following:

**Irreversible harm to the environment:** The construction of the new U.S. military base and subsequent military operations at Henoko will damage Okinawa's sea, land, and sky. The fragile natural environment of Okinawa has been a source of physical and spiritual nourishment for our ancestors and to harm it threatens the bodies and spirits of the people of Okinawa with whom we have maintained familial, cultural, and spiritual ties. Harming Okinawa's environment inevitably harms us.

**Irreparable harm to democracy and human rights:** To know that over 70% of the people in Okinawa are opposed to new military base construction at Henoko is deeply troubling to us citizens and long-term residents of the U.S who recognize the benefits of a democratic society in which the voices and lives of individuals are equally valued. However, with the backing and support of the U.S. government, the Japanese government is ignoring the will of the people of Okinawa. It is not only the polls that have shown widespread disapproval of Henoko construction, but also the election of politicians who oppose Henoko construction, including the present Governor, the Mayor of Nago (where Henoko is located), and majority of Okinawa's Diet representatives, which clearly indicate the overwhelming disapproval of the project itself and of the Japanese government's use of state power to force Okinawans to accept it.

**Irreconcilable identities:** The construction of the new U.S. military base in spite of the irreversible damage it will have to Okinawa's environment and the irreparable harm to the values of democracy and human rights that the U.S. purports to uphold, will make it difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile our identities as Okinawans in the U.S. Toward our Okinawan homeland, we will feel shame in being "American." Toward our American government, we will feel distrust and fear for its destruction of our homeland and resentment for its hypocrisy. Further, the forcing of this project through by the Japanese government makes it difficult to find respect for Japan as it reminds us of a long history of Japanese oppression and exploitation of Okinawa. Japan's recent actions, including last year's forced construction of U.S. military helipads at nearby Takae, come in a historical context in which Japan forcibly annexed Okinawa in 1879, sacrificed Okinawa as a breakwater to American forces in 1945, handed over Okinawa to U.S. military occupation from 1945 to 1972, and continued to allow the U.S. military to keep 75% of its Japanese military facilities in Okinawa. In this context, the construction of the new U.S. military base in Okinawa again reveals the Japanese government's true attitude to Okinawa as a pawn to sacrifice for the sake of the rest of Japan.

For the reasons this statement underwrites, we, the Okinawans Diaspora communities across national borders, demand that the US and Japan end the dehumanization of land, people, and nature by stopping the construction of the US military base at Henoko as a step towards democracy, peace and freedom for Okinawans, Japanese, and Americans.

Sincerely,  
Okinawan Diaspora in the US

