



Center for Prisoners' Rights Japan
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On Friday March 25th, Japan's Justice Minister Mitsuhide Iwaki ordered the executions of Mr. Yasutoshi Kamata at the Osaka Detention Center, and Ms. Junko Yoshida at the Fukuoka Detention Center. These executions were authorized by the minister, who took office in October 2015. These were his second round of executions following those he authorized in December 2015..

Mr. Kamata was 75 years old. He responded to the questionnaire sent by a human rights group, by saying that he had become senile and did not understand anything complicated. His execution is problematic with reference to the UN Human Rights Committee's recommendation that consideration should be given by with regard to the execution of persons at an advanced age.

Ms. Yoshida had been seeking a retrial, but her request was rejected last year. We suspect that her execution was hurried so that she could not file further petition. Although various UN bodies including the UN Human Rights Committee have repeatedly recommended that Japan should ensure that inmates on death row and their families are given reasonable advance notice of the scheduled date and time of executions, the government has totally ignored such recommendations.

In 2020, Japan will host the UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The government's complete disregard for the voice of the international community and its persistence in retention and usage of the death penalty will remain a shame for the country. The government should face up to numerous problems with the death penalty, and immediately commence review of the entire system with a view to abolishing of the punishment.

The Center for Prisoners' Rights condemns today's executions and will continue its struggle to achieve moratorium on executions and ultimate abolition of the death penalty.

Yuichi KAIDO
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