



## Letter of Protest

July 6, 2018

Ms. Yoko Kamikawa  
Minister of Justice  
Tokyo, Japan

Center for Prisoner Rights  
[cpr.jca.apc.org](http://cpr.jca.apc.org)  
Japan Death Penalty Information Center  
[jjadep.org](http://jjadep.org)

Regarding the execution of seven inmates on July 6, 2018.

This morning, according to an order signed by Japanese Minister of Justice Yoko Kamikawa, seven death row prisoners: Chizuo Matsumoto (aka Shoko Asahara), Kiyohide Hayakawa, Yoshihiro Inoue, Tomomitsu Niimi, Masami Tsuchiya, Tomomasa Nakagawa, and Seiichi Endo, were hung on the gallows. The Center for Prisoner Rights and the Japan Innocence and Death Penalty Information Center condemn these executions which are fraught with illegalities.

First, the execution of Matsumoto is very likely in violation of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Article 479, clearly states, "Where the person who has been sentenced to death is in a state of insanity, the execution shall be suspended by order of the Minister of Justice."

On June 15 of this year, the Japan Federation of Bar Associations, on demand of private citizens, surveyed death row prisoners and found that 8 are either close to, or, in a recognized state of legal insanity. The association advised Minister Kamikawa to stay these sentences. While the Federation of Bar Associations did not release the names of the eight prisoners in question, it is quite certain that Chizuo Matsumoto, who is blind and suffers from incarceration syndrome, was included. We would have to harken back to the December 2007 execution of Seiha Fujima to find such a miscarriage of justice.

Secondly, according to news reports, 6 out of 7 of the executed prisoners were seeking retrial. Executing those seeking retrial is a violation of prisoner's rights, as well as a denial of justice by those holding the reign of power. The United Nation's Human Rights Committee has advised the Japanese government, a signee to present treaties, to not repeat executions of those seeking retrial. Needless to say, the three executions that occurred in 2017 was the first time since 1999 that prisoners seeking retrial were put to death. It is clear that the Ministry of Justice used this as a precedent for today's executions.

Minister Kamikawa has persistently stated a desire to realize "a society in which no one is left behind." Nevertheless, as of today, it is clearly evident that in light of today's executions of 7 former members of the Aum Supreme Truth Cult, the minister's declaration is just a façade to decorate the upcoming 2019 Imperial Enthronement, the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, as well as the United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to be held in Kyoto in April 2020. And at the same time, it is evident that the remaining six members of Aum Supreme Truth Cult will be executed under the same guise of "no one left behind."

The human dignity of all human beings must be respected. We deplore the executions carried out today, and will continue to use all means possible to seek the worldwide abolition of the death penalty, and the termination of executions in Japan.