

(Provisional Translation)

Statement by Keiji Furuya, Minister in charge of the Abduction Issue on the Occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the Second Japan-DPRK Summit Meeting

May 22, 2014

- Today marks the 10th anniversary of the Second Japan-DPRK Summit Meeting held in Pyongyang and, as the Minister in charge of the Abduction Issue, I would like to reaffirm my determination to resolve the issue of abduction.
- As the Minister in charge, I am overcome with shame that over this long decade we have still not been able to ensure the return of the abductees. In particular, I wish to express how deeply sorry I am to the abductees who have been placed in the harshest of conditions in North Korea and whose return we have not yet been able to achieve, and to the families of the victims who continue to wait so desperately for their return.
- It is absolutely deplorable that during this period North Korea has not taken any concrete measures towards resolving the abduction issue. On the other hand, following my statement after the ninth anniversary of the Second Japan-DPRK Summit Meeting, Japan and North Korea have held a series of talks, which includes the Red Cross talks, and Mr. and Mrs. Yokota met with their granddaughter, Kim Eun Gyong. At the same time, owing to the report and activities of the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, international concern over the human rights violations of the DPRK, including the abductions, has become more heightened than ever.
- Under these circumstances I would once again like to reiterate the following points.
 1. The “results of the reinvestigation” presented at the Japan-DPRK working level consultations following the Second Japan-DPRK Summit Meeting not only did not offer any concrete physical evidence to support the results, but contained many dubious points and inconsistencies. We do not and will not regard this as the final answer.

2. Without any concrete action by North Korea to resolve the abduction issue, there will be no humanitarian aid nor lifting of sanctions. However, as long as North Korea takes positive measures as steps in the process of resolving the issue, based on “the principle of action for action”, other than those measures taken based on United Nations Security Council resolutions, we will not preclude the possibility of lifting, in incremental steps, the measures which are being taken independently by Japan.
 3. Japan has consistently been strengthening its activities to collect information on the abductees whose safety and whereabouts are unknown. Buying time with a temporary pause leads neither to an improvement in the situation nor to the acquisition of any advantage. Trying to stamp out the abduction issue by concealing the existence of the abductees only forces relations between Japan and North Korea into an irreparable situation. Attempting to have the issue forgotten by trying to convince the families of the “death” of the abductees or to separate the parties concerned will not work in any way. It is not possible through scheming to suppress the voices of the Japanese people who seek the safe return of the abductees.
- Japan will continue to maintain close coordination with the other relevant countries, and to seek the normalization of Japan-DPRK relations through the comprehensive resolution of the various issues, including the abductions and the nuclear and missile programs, and the settling of Japan and North Korea’s unfortunate past. Alongside Prime Minister Abe who stated, “The Abe administration shall resolve the abduction issue. My mission shall not be complete until the day the abductees are able to once again embrace their family members”, I too am committed to fulfilling my responsibilities towards fully resolving the issue of abduction based on my determination to become the last Minister in charge of the Abduction Issue.
 - I strongly urge North Korea’s leadership to comply with serious and specific talks aimed at resolving the issue by taking a historical and broad perspective and once more going back to the spirit of the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration, and by making the right decision, which is to ensure the return of all of the abductees. Doing so will enable North Korea to take a first step towards achieving, with dignity, harmony with other countries, including Japan.

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