

【From MDS Flyer dated April 11, 2004】

Welcoming Statement to Release Hostages, We Demand Withdrawal of Japanese Troops from Iraq!

Japanese Military Should Immediately Leave Iraq

Al-Jazeera television aired the statement to release the three Japanese hostages at around 3 a.m. Japan local time on April 11. We welcome this decision and, at the same time, proclaim that we will continue to struggle for an immediate withdrawal of Japanese Self-Defense Forces (SDF) troops from Iraq.

The statement says, "Arrogant leaders of the Japanese government, following the criminal acts of Bush and Blair, will not change their ideas, nor will they withdraw their troops," but goes on to state that the group will release the hostages within 24 hours, saying, "We will not kill friendly citizens from abroad."

The Japanese government had declared, from the start, that it would not withdraw the troops, and adopted a policy to do nothing to prevent the three from being killed, virtually deserting its own nationals. This aroused from around Japan strong protests and voices calling for the pullout of the SDF units.

It has been made clear worldwide that many Japanese people do not give approval to the government joining the occupation forces and standing on the side of the oppressor. It is these voices to demand the SDF's withdrawal that have brought about the statement to release the three Japanese civilians. We welcome the statement.

Iraq Should be Left in Hands of Iraqis!

However, massacres of the Iraqi people by the occupation forces still continue. Fallujah is under siege by the US troops and a number of children and women are being killed and wounded. This indiscriminate killing by the US forces is met with antagonism even from US-appointed members of the puppet Iraqi Governing Council.

The SDF, Japanese military, is giving hands to the massacre as part of the occupation forces. It is a duty of the Japanese people to bring back the SDF troops, and now is the time to realize it. While more countries are breaking away from the occupation forces, Japan's withdrawal would lead to a decisive disbanding of the occupying coalition.

We must immediately bring the SDF soldiers back home, and leave Iraq in the hands of the Iraqis. We must never allow the Japanese government that deserted its own nationals. In solidarity with the Iraqi resistance against the occupation, let us win, together with global anti-war movements, the total withdrawal of all the occupation forces from the region. (April 11, 2004)