



September 29th 2010

To:

Mayor Noboru Yamazaki
Sumida City
1-23-20 Azumabashi
Tokyo 130-8640, Japan
Telephone: 81 (0) 3 5608 1111
Fax: 81 (0) 3 5608 1289
E-mail: triphony@njp.or.jp

CC:

Sanya Welfare Center for Day-Laborer's Association
Nihon-Tsutsumi 1-25-11, Taito-ku, Tokyo
Tel: +81-3-3876-7073 □ 070-5022-2641
Email: san-ya@sanpal.co.jp

His Excellency
Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama
Cabinet Office, Government of Japan
1-6-1 Nagata-cho, Chiyoda-ku,
Tokyo 100-8914, Japan.
Tel: +81-3-5253-2111
kantei@mmz.kantei.go.jp

Embassy of Japan
2520 Massachusetts Ave NW
Washington, DC 20008
jicc@embjapan.org

Re: No the ordinance that will prohibit collecting recyclables by homeless people, Yes to provide the homeless with decent and affordable housing

Dear Mayor,

I am writing to you on behalf of the International Alliance of Inhabitants (IAI), an international network of social organizations (inhabitants' associations, tenants' unions, homeless and poorly sheltered people's committees, housing cooperatives and social centres, volunteers' and migrants' associations), which for many years has been committed to the defence of housing rights 'without frontiers'.

Since my organization received very disturbing information from Japanese mass media and civil society organizations such as Sanya Welfare Center for Day-Laborer's Association, about the Sumida City ordinance entitled "Ordinance regarding reduction and disposal of Sumida Ward waste materials (Sumida-ku Haiki-butsu no Genryo Oyobi Shori ni Kan Suru Jorei)" that will prohibit collecting recyclables by homeless people and penalize them with a fine of Yen 200,000 (USD2,330) if caught doing so. This runs counter to the dream of a "kinder and better" Sumida City as posted on your City's website.

As you know very well, Japan is a member of the United Nations. Your country is a signatory to legally binding international treaties such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other related international agreements. The covenants clearly state that your government must respect, protect and fulfill human rights, including the rights to work or engage in a livelihood, adequate housing, food. While other countries are struggling to comply with their human rights obligations to their citizens, your country being rich would have no reason not to be able to do so.

o/o

Moreover, the homeless people who do recycling are doing honest, decent and honorable work. In fact they should be lauded, instead of being threatened with the loss of their work and of incurring heavy fines clearly beyond their means. It is their sole means of survival.

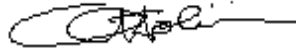
We, therefore, strongly urge you to immediately:

- repeal or withdraw the said ordinance
- provide the homeless with decent and affordable housing

Expressing our solidarity with the people affected by that ordinance and organisations supporting their struggle, will monitor developments regarding this matter. We hope for positive results.

I look forward to your response.

Respectfully yours,



Cesare Ottolini
coordinator of International Alliance of Inhabitants