

Resolution of Protest over the Routinization of Parachute Drop Training by the U.S. Forces

The Okinawa Prefectural Assembly, the Okinawa Prefectural Government, and local governments around Kadena Air Base of the U.S. Air Force have repeatedly requested the termination of parachute drop training at the base. However, the U.S. Forces conducted training in rapid succession on May 27 and June 4, 2026. Since last December when Ie Shima Auxiliary Airfield resumed operations, five jump training events have been carried out at Kadena Air Base, which is permitted to be used only in exceptional cases. It must be said that the training is becoming routine.

On June 11, 1965, the U.S. Forces conducted airdrop training for military supplies at the former Yontan (Yomitan) Airfield. A trailer fell to the ground, resulting in a tragic accident which killed a fifth-grade girl. Even today, more than 50 years since Okinawa was returned to Japan, parachute drop training has been conducted at various locations in the prefecture. Accidents resulting from jumps outside the facilities and areas which are provided to the U.S. Forces have also occurred.

The parachute drop training at the airfield, which is surrounded by residential areas with several schools and other facilities, is hazardous because even a single mistake could cause serious accidents involving residents. The training has triggered a considerable sense of unease and fear among prefectural residents, including local residents.

At the Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO) in 1996, it was agreed to relocate the parachute drop training to Ie Shima Auxiliary Airfield. Subsequently, at the U.S.-Japan Joint Committee in 2007, it was reportedly confirmed that Kadena Air Base can be used only in exceptional cases. However, such training, which is permitted only under exceptional circumstances, has been conducted repeatedly. This recurring training is contrary to the purpose of the SACO agreement. Despite the resumption of operation of large fixed-wing aircraft at Ie Shima Auxiliary Airfield last December, training has been conducted repeatedly at Kadena Air Base. This is inconsistent with the objective of “reducing the burden of Kadena Air Base,” as confirmed by the Japanese and U.S. governments. It is an affront to the prefectural residents who have consistently sought to live in peace and therefore is utterly unacceptable.

This situation is the consequence of prioritizing the operations of the U.S. Forces. We are compelled to conclude that the safety and peace of mind of the prefectural residents are compromised, and their fears have not been alleviated.

Accordingly, we, the prefectural assembly, strongly protest against recurring parachute drop training at Kadena Air Base and demand the termination of training in order to protect the lives, property, and living environment of the prefectural residents.

The above is resolved as stated.

July 13, 2026

Okinawa Prefectural Assembly