

**RESOLUTION OF PROTEST
OVER THE
INCIDENT OF AN OBJECT DROPPING FROM A
US FORCES CH-53E LARGE TRANSPORT HELICOPTER**

At approximately 1:10PM on February 25, 2020, an incident occurred in which a US Forces CH-53E large transport helicopter stationed at MCAS Futenma dropped a steel object that it was transporting to a shooting range from Torii Station. In this incident, the steel object that was suspended from the helicopter was dropped into the ocean, at an area that was 1.3 kilometers west of Torii Station.

Although the US Marine Corps has explained that safety on the water was ensured, confirming that there were no vessels nor civilians in the area, the incident has impacted the local residents and the people of Okinawa Prefecture with great anxiety, as the water area where the incident took place is a fixed shore net fishing site, and a shore route for vessels.

Furthermore, despite the announcement by the USMC that transporting of objects by suspension will not take place until the case is investigated, it has been confirmed that the same model of helicopter was already flying with heavy machinery slung beneath the aircraft on the 27th of the month.

In Yomitan Village, there was a tragic accident in the past where a trailer truck was dropped on to civilian property, killing a young girl in the fifth grade. Another accident involved the same model of helicopter which was suspending and transporting a scrap car which was dropped into the waters near Toya Fishing Port.

Drills and transportation of objects suspended by aircraft are extremely dangerous and can lead to serious accidents involving the local residents; and local authorities and other bodies have strongly called for the US Forces to cease such actions. Despite these calls from the local governing bodies, the US Forces continue to engage in these actions.

Such conduct by the US Forces displays a significant absence of consideration toward the local residents who are forced to live their lives so close to the military bases. Both governments of Japan and the US must take a closer and sincere look at the excessive burden of military bases shouldered by the Okinawan people, and engage in examinations and discussions in good faith, and implement effective measures to realize the alleviation of the burden.

To that end, we, the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly, in our duty to protect the lives, properties, and the living environment of the people of Okinawa, strongly protest the incident in which an object suspended from a US Forces CH-53E large transport helicopter was dropped, and call for the prompt execution of the following four items.

1. Conduct a thorough investigation into the cause(s) of the incident and promptly disclose the findings to the people of Okinawa Prefecture.
2. Cease drills and transportation of heavy objects suspended from helicopters.
3. Eliminate the “Act on Special Provisions of the Civil Aeronautics Act upon the enforcement of the Japan-US Status of Forces Agreement,” in order to apply aviation laws that establish the safety and other issues involving flights of aircraft, and fundamentally revise the Japan-US Status of Forces Agreement.
4. Immediately cease combat training within Torii Station.

The above is resolved as stated on this 6th day of March, 2020.

Okinawa Prefectural Assembly