

**RESOLUTION OF PROTEST
OVER THE
INCIDENT OF A SHIPPING CONTAINER FALLING FROM A
US FORCES HELICOPTER OFF THE COAST OF TONAKI ISLAND**

At approximately 12:30 PM on July 13, 2021, an accident took place off the coast of Tonaki Island. A steel shipping container, which was suspended from a US Forces CH-53E large transport helicopter belonging to the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing of the US Marine Corps in Okinawa, fell as it was being transported.

While there has been no confirmation of injuries nor damages, this recent incident has caused great shock and anxiety to the residents of the nearby islands, and people of Okinawa Prefecture in general, as it was also reported by various media that this steel container measured at approximately two (2) meters in length, 2.4 meters in width and height, and about 1.2 tons in weight when empty. Moreover, inadequacies in the reporting system have been pointed out since the first report to the Okinawa Defense Bureau regarding this incident was not from the US Forces but rather from Tonaki Village, and notification to the Okinawa Prefecture took a considerable amount of time.

There have been numerous and repeated incidents of objects falling from US Forces helicopters while transporting suspended objects and/or training of such activities, including the incident in December of 2006 when a scrap car was dropped in the offing of Torii Communication Station, and when a steel object was dropped in February of 2020. Transportation of suspended objects by aircraft is extremely dangerous, potentially leading to a very serious accident involving the lives and properties of the residents of our prefecture.

Furthermore, this recent incident took place while the shipping container was being transported from Irisuna Island, an island where the US Forces use for live-fire drills. Under such circumstances, the citizens of Okinawa Prefecture are forced to live alongside dangers on both land and at sea, as training in the prefecture are not only being conducted on land but also in vast airspace and water areas.

Every time an incident involving the US Forces occurs, we have made pressing calls to the US Forces and relevant agencies for thorough investigations into the causes, implementation of preventive measures, and to take thorough steps in notifying and reporting accidents/incidents promptly and accurately. Despite this, it is truly regrettable that this incident has taken place, and it is absolutely unacceptable.

To that end, in our duty to protect the lives and properties of the people of Okinawa Prefecture, we strongly protest against this recent dropping incident and call for the prompt execution of the following five items.

1. Conduct a thorough investigation into the cause of the incident, and promptly disclose the findings to the people of Okinawa Prefecture.
2. Strictly adhere to the notification system in place for when incidents/accidents occur, and provide information promptly and accurately.
3. Cease the transportation and drills of objects suspended from helicopters.
4. Thoroughly review maintenance and inspection system of US Forces aircraft, disclose the findings, and make efforts toward effective safety management and prevention of recurrences.
5. Fundamentally revise the Japan-US Status of Forces Agreement, including a review on training airspace and water areas.

The above is resolved as stated on this 26th day of July 2021.

Okinawa Prefectural Assembly