

Reply of the Government of Japan to the Request for Information from the Expert  
Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

In response to the Request for Information sent on January 27, 2020 from the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) to the Permanent Mission of Japan to the International Organizations in Geneva, the Government of Japan (GoJ) provides the following information on efforts for the Ainu people, whom the GoJ recognizes as indigenous people in Japan.

1. The GoJ recognizes the importance of repatriation of human remains and grave goods of the Ainu people out of respect for the Ainu people's dignity and spiritual culture. In 2014 and 2018, the GoJ therefore formulated guidelines regarding repatriation of human remains and grave goods of the Ainu people held by universities. With the understanding and cooperation of people concerned, the GoJ has encouraged universities in Japan holding human remains and grave goods of the Ainu people to repatriate them to the Ainu people based on the guidelines. When the Ainu people need time to prepare for receiving such human remains and grave goods, the GoJ also temporarily keeps them in its memorial facility until the Ainu people have made the necessary preparations.
2. Furthermore, the GoJ has been conducting negotiations towards repatriation of human remains of the Ainu people held by overseas museums. In 2017, one human remain that was removed from a grave in the late 19th century was repatriated by a research institute in Germany.
3. The GoJ is committed to continuing to promote the repatriation of human remains and grave goods of the Ainu people in order to enable the Ainu people to realize more dignified commemoration.

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