On the pretext of the total ban on exports to Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), approved by Japan’s cabinet council on June 16, its Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) is enforcing inhumane regulation including rejection of mail articles and parcels.

The Japanese authority’s "sanctions" against DPRK since 2006 has not only escalated and worsened DPRK-Japan relations but also infringed human rights of Korean residents in Japan and threatened their livings.

The regulations of sending mail articles, parcels, and livingwares by the Japanese authorities are now facing accusing voices like "That’s aberrant!" "The worst case of bullying Korean residents in Japan!"

The General Association of Korean Residents in Japan
Actual Examples of Unjustified Regulation in International Mail under the Name of Total Ban on Exports to DPRK  
(period between June 18 and July 20)

Rejection of sending mail particles at Post Office counters

Case of an old Korean woman in her 70s living in Toda-city of Saitama-prefecture

When she went to Post Office counter to send basic goods for her daughter living in DPRK by international mail, the officer there rejected it, saying “Because of the sanction against North Korea, no mail article can be sent.”

Case of an old Korean woman in her 70s living in Shizuoka-city

She had applied for sending two pairs of soccer shoes, towels, and some nonprescription medicines for her grandkid living in DPRK at the nearest Post Office counter, but a few days after, the general Post Office told her that “You cannot send them. Please, contact METI for details.”

Case of an old Korean woman in her 70s living in Ukyo-ku of Kyoto-city

When she tried to send parcels for her relatives living in DPRK at Post Office counter, the officer told her that “You cannot send any parcel to DPRK for sanctions against the country by the Japanese government.”

Custom office’s instruction to reject and return parcels

Case of an old Korean woman in her 80s living in Toda-city of Saitama-prefecture

Despite that she had sent basic goods for her relatives living in DPRK, 4 days later, Tokyo Custom Office told her “Because mailing to North Korea is banned now, we return your parcels.” by a notification. When she called the office and asked the reason, the officer answered that “The quantity is problem.” She protested against the Custom officer saying there was not illegal good in the parcel and required the list of illegal goods, but she was rejected.

Case of an old Korean woman in her 70s living in Kawasaki-city

After she had sent medical books and food to her relatives living in DPRK by international mail, Tokyo Custom Office notified her of that there were goods not to be sent. When she asked “Concretely, what is illegal, and what is allowed?,” the officer answered that “Too many books to send at one time.”

Case of an old Korean woman living in Saitama-city

She had sent his relatives in DPRK 5 parcels including clothes and food by international mail, but some days later, a notification that “We return these parcels because they cannot be sent” was reached from Tokyo Custom Office.

Case of an old Korean woman in her 80s living in Kita-city of Kyoto-prefecture

She had sent a cardboard box containing some clothes and daily goods for relatives in DPRK, but the box was returned from Tokyo Custom Office later.

Case of the Members of Koryo Calligraphy Society

They had tried to send 20 of their works to be submitted to Exhibition of Calligraphy Works by Koreans in Japan by international mail, but their works and even three members’ private items were returned from Custom Office.
A newspaper publishing company "Choson Sinbo" tried to send its newspaper "The Choson Sinbo" to DPRK as normal, but after June 17, it was returned from Custom Office.

20 copies of the publicity matters, which had been periodically sent to DPRK, of International Institute of the Juche Idea (IIJI) were returned from Custom Office.

Buraku Liveration League’s organ paper "The Kaihou Shimbun" sent to DPRK was returned from Custom Office.

"Women’s paper," the organ paper of Women Conference I, women activist group, sent to DPRK was returned from Custom Office.

"Syakaihyoron" magazine edited by Ogawacho Kikaku sent to DPRK was returned from Custom Office.

"Shisou Undou (thought movement)," the organ paper of Shisou Undou, a group of social activists, sent to DPRK was returned from Custom Office.

"Weekly Sinsyakai," the organ paper of New Socialist Party of Japan sent to DPRK was returned from Custom Office.

※Assessment of the situation is still continuing

Contents of the ban on exports to DPRK announced by Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan

1. The export of all goods destined for North Korea is banned by imposing the obligation to obtain export approval from the METI Minister.

2. Transactions of goods that involve the movement of goods from third countries to North Korea (intermediary trading) are banned by imposing the obligation to obtain permission from the METI Minister. (Revision of the public notice by which the METI Minister designates the service transactions, etc. subject to permission under Article 18, Paragraph 3 of the Foreign Exchange Order).

3. Goods exported for humanitarian purposes are exempted from the above bans.

4. These bans on exports to North Korea will be effective from June 18, 2009 to April 13, 2010.

(from the official website of METI)
Call for lifting of the sanctions and resuming of dialogue!

The sanctions that caused oppression of Koreans in Japan were thoroughly strengthened with "strict enforcement of the law" under Abe cabinet after it had started in the end of Koizumi cabinet. Because of the ban on arrival of "Man Gyong Bong 92," a humanitarian ferryboat for traffic of Korean residents in Japan between DPRK and Japan, old or frail Koreans in their applications for re-entry permit and cancellation of the reduced rates and exemption to the fixed property of Chongryon and its related facilities are the very "bullying Korean residents in Japan."

Ban on exports to DPRK imposed by Aso cabinet is, in fact, not the regulation of trades, but interception of bonds among families and blockade against friendship and exchange between DPRK and Japan. The dangerousness of these actions is so serious, recalling the wartime situation.

No problem can be solved by pressure or sanctions. Let's call for Japan to turn away from its pressure-only policy to improve DPRK-Japan relations through dialogue!

Process of Strengthening the Anti-DPRK Sanctions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>July</td>
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<td>Ban on arrival of “Man Gyong Bong 92” in Japanese ports.</td>
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<td>Ban on charter flights from DPRK into Japan.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>October</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ban on arrival of every ship of DPRK in Japanese ports.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total ban on imports from DPRK.</td>
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<td>Ban on DPRK-nationality holder’s entering Japan.</td>
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<td>Ban on Chongryon executives’ re-entering Japan.</td>
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<td>(All of the measures above were decided to be extended for 6 months in Aprils and Octobers of 2007 and 2008.)</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>April</td>
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<td>Lowering the amount of money transfer to DPRK that must be declared to the authority down to “over 10,000,000 YEN” from “over 30,000,000 Yen.”</td>
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<td>Lowering the amount of money carrying to DPRK that must be declared to the authority down to “over 300,000 YEN” from “over 1,000,000 Yen.”</td>
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<td>Extension of the expiration of the sanctions up to “1 year” from “6 months.”</td>
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<td>June</td>
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<td>Total ban on exports to DPRK.</td>
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Shigeru Tokoi,  
lawyer, chairman of the executive committee of seminar on human rights of Korean residents in Japan

"Ban on the export of all goods destined for DPRK violates the Japanese Constitution and International Human Rights Law, and is nothing but an inhumane act which infringes basic human rights of Korean residents in Japan.

The Japanese government says they except items for humanitarian use from the ban, but, in fact, it is banned to send all items. Judgment of whether it is humanitarian item is apparently not difficult. Post Offices’ rejection is violation of Article 79 of Postal Act, and is subject to penal servitude not more than one year or fine not more than 300,000 Yen. And it possibly infringes privacy of communications or violates ban on censorship. Pyongyang Declaration still has effect. Effective acts by The Japanese government based on the declaration are needed."

Article 79 of Japanese Mail Law (Offense of Non-Performance, etc. of Mail Handling)

"Whoever engaged in the Mail Service shall willfully and maliciously not handle mail or shall cause it to be delayed, shall be punished by imprisonment with work for not more than one year or a fine of not more than three hundred thousand Yen."

Katsunori Domatsu,  
Editor of a magazine “SYAKAIHYORON (social critic)"

"The ban on exports that the Japanese government and METI imposed in this time is what blocks normalization of Japan-DPRK relations and exchanges for friendship between the people of the both countries. This is just what brings only harmful results with no benefit. We can never be tolerable to such an outrageous measure. Stand up hand-in-hand to call for the Japanese government to lift the anti-DPRK 'sanctions'!"