



Embassy of the Republic of South Africa - Japan

南アフリカ共和国大使館

Office of the Ambassador

Tokyo, 13 February 2015

Mr Hirohiko Iizuka
Managing Director,
SANKEI SHIMBUN CO., LTD
Otemachi 1-chome 7-2,
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
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Dear Mr Iizuka,

A column written by Ayako Sono in the February 11, 2015 edition of the daily Sankei Shimbun, in relation to how Japan should facilitate an immigration policy to address the shortage of nursing care for the elderly was brought to my attention by friends of South Africa and South African citizens who found the article shocking.

I wish to offer a strong caution about emulating apartheid laws. Furthermore, it is important to place apartheid in its correct context in order to avoid any country from glorifying it as a policy consideration.

The columnist recalls that South Africa 20 to 30 years ago implemented a policy of separate housing based on race and advocates in her article for a similar policy to be implemented in Japan for labour related immigration for nursing care workers from other Asian countries. She states in her column that she supports the idea where Whites, Blacks and Asians live separately. In essence this condones and glorifies Apartheid. This is a scandalous proposal in the extreme. As a South African I dare not leave this proposal unchallenged as a country that lived under these laws.

I wish to place on record that Apartheid was institutionalised from 1948 to 1991 in South Africa. Race laws touched every aspect of life. All South Africans were racially classified into one of three categories: white, black (African), or colored (of mixed descent) and Asian. Classification into these categories was based on color of a person's skin, appearance, social acceptance, and descent. Non-compliance by blacks with the race laws was dealt with harshly. All blacks were required to carry "pass books" containing fingerprints, photo and information on access to non-black areas. These laws gave the apartheid regime the leeway to torture and detain blacks arbitrarily, it

forced blacks to work under the most humiliating conditions earning meagre wages compared with whites.. On many farms some workers were only paid with alcohol bottles. Apartheid reserved the best separate public facilities, jobs, housing, healthcare, and education for whites only. Blacks were subjected to stop and search in public spaces and in their homes by the police and severely tortured and detained without trial. Blacks had to live in often barren tribal homelands or townships near cities, often in polluted industrial areas while whites got the choicest city addresses. Blacks had to use different beaches and public restrooms. Signs distinguished facilities reserved for whites -- often referred to as Europeans.

Surely the respected columnist and writer is not suggesting such treacherous and archaic laws for nursing care immigration to Japan? Why would Japan a respected member of the United Nations, and a bidder for the United Nations Security Council non-permanent seat for 2016 even consider such laws?

Is the columnist suggesting that Japan discriminate against other human beings on the basis of race, using Apartheid, which in 1966, in the United Nations General Assembly was declared and labeled a crime against humanity? (Resolution 2202 A (XXI) of 16 December 1966) and in 1984 the United Nations Security Council endorsed this determination resolution 556 1994 of 23 October 1984. The Apartheid Convention is intended to apply to situations other than South Africa, and this is confirmed by its endorsement in a wider context in instruments adopted before and after the fall of apartheid.

Apartheid is a crime against humanity. It can never be justified in the 21st century to deliberately discriminate against other human beings anywhere in the world on the basis of skin color or any other classification.

President Nelson Mandela has said 'No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.'

Sincerely,



Mohau Pheko
Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary to Japan
Embassy of the Republic of South Africa