

Okinawans reject relocation of U.S. base in referendum



Tokyo, February 26 (RHC)-- In Japan, residents of Okinawa opposed plans to relocate a U.S. air base elsewhere on the island in a referendum on Sunday. Over 70 percent of voters voted against the plan.

One local resident who voted against the move told reporters: "Accidents have taken place here. However, the U.S. forces, even if they break laws or regulations, go unpunished in accordance with agreements between Japan and the United States. So I don't think it's fair. Plus, the military base is something related with war. I don't think military bases should exist in the world."

The Japanese government said on Monday it would nonetheless move ahead with the relocation, ignoring the referendum. For decades, Okinawans have called for the expulsion of U.S. troops from the island, which houses about two-thirds of the 50,000 U.S. troops currently stationed in Japan. Last year, residents elected a new governor, Denny Tamaki, who vowed to fight against the U.S. military presence.

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