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JAPAN

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Dear Colleagues,

## ***FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AT RISK IN JAPAN***

Education International is surprised and concerned to learn that the plenary opening of the Annual JTU National Educational Research Congress had to be cancelled this year. Many teachers from other countries have attended this annual forum in the past. They know that it is a forum for teachers from around Japan to discuss education issues.

It is amazing that a major hotel should cancel this conference – which is recognized nationally and internationally – in defiance of court orders. As Japan's leading newspapers have rightly pointed out, this cancellation places Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Assembly at risk.

The legal systems of democratic countries protect not only the rights of contracting parties, as in this case, but also these fundamental freedoms. Yet this private hotel chain chose to defy the courts. This defiance will raise questions in other countries about the strength of Japan's democratic institutions.

JTU can be assured of the continuing support of Education International and its member organizations around the world in upholding the rights of free expression and assembly.

Yours sincerely,

Fred van Leeuwen  
General Secretary