

Ginowan City Joint Statement: Request for Early Closure and Return of MCAS Futenma Land, Relocation of MV-22 Ospreys, as well as Abatement of Noise

We, the people of Ginowan, have lived amidst the various burdens imposed on us by the existence of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma for 70 long years since the end of World War II.

19 years ago, in 1996, the Japanese and United States governments agreed to return the land in its entirety under the mutual understanding that the “abatement of risks brought upon Ginowan by the air station which is located in the center of the city is top priority.” The residents of Ginowan saw this agreement as a new light of hope and the first step to freedom from the past burdens.

However, the plans mentioned in the return agreement and the risk factors have been abandoned since then. The residents’ hypothetical concerns became a reality on August 13, 2004 when a CH-53 crashed into a building at Okinawa International University. Moreover, in October 2012, MV-22 Ospreys were deployed to MCAS Futenma despite calls of protest by the local citizens. This caused feelings of anger.

The residents’ anger and feelings of concern and distrust towards current situation are reaching its threshold. There has been no progress towards the land return even now, 19 years since the return agreement, and 11 years since the helicopter crash at the university. The residents of Ginowan are not asking for any special privileges- we are merely asking for a normal living environment and the safety and comfort which come with it.

However, our requests have been ignored and U.S. military aircrafts continue their aviation activities right above us. “We have had enough.” We all must recognize and understand the issue that Ginowan City faces to solve this problem.

We must immediately start to refocus on the main agenda of the return agreement- “abatement of risks brought upon Ginowan by the air station which is located in the center of the city.” We must recognize that this issue is one which must be dealt with expediently.

We, the people of Ginowan City, demand the following items to realize the goals to close and return MCAS Futenma and abatement of base-related burdens such as noise pollution and risk factors:

Note

- Prevent MCAS Futenma from being permanently located in its current site, and to close and return the said installation as soon as possible
- Noticeable progress in the abatement of burdens and risks imposed by MCAS Futenma
- Relocation of MV-22 Ospreys currently operating out of MCAS Futenma
- Abide by the conditions expressed in the Aircraft Noise Abatement Countermeasures at Futenma Air Station and cease all aviation activity at night and over residential areas.

November 30, 2015

Atsushi Sakima
Mayor,
Ginowan City

Masatoshi Oshiro
Chairman
Ginowan City Council

Katsuhide Tamaki
Superintendent,
Ginowan City Board of Education

Hiroyuki Uezato
President
Ginowan City Residents' Assn.

Shinryu Tawata
President,
Ginowan City Senior Citizens' Assn.

Michiko Shinjo
President,
Ginowan City Women's Assn.

Takuya Nakama
President,
Ginowan City Youth Assn.

Kiyotaka Fukusato
President,
Ginowan city Commercial and Industrial Assn.

Hisashi Tamura
President,
Ginowan City PTA Representatives' Assn.