POLICY & DIPLOMACY

JAPAN STANDS WITH UKRAINE: KEEPING EDUCATION GOING FOR STUDENTS

In response to Russia’s egregious aggression against Ukraine, Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio condemned the act in the strongest terms, declaring that causing harm to civilians is a clear violation of international law. In Japan, there is a growing network of support for Ukrainians who have been forced to flee their homes, and universities have risen to stand with Ukraine and have accepted students from the country. Here is one such example.

"Japan stands with the people of Ukraine in this time of crisis." The Government of Japan began working closely with global society soon after the February 24 Russian invasion of Ukraine, adopting cumulative measures that include financial sanctions targeting Russian banks, restrictions on imports and exports, revocation of Russia’s "most-favored-nation" status, and freezing the assets of persons related to the government of Russia including President Vladimir Putin and Russian business oligarchs. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Kishida has held summit telephone talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

In April, Kishida condemned the aggression in his virtual address to the Japanese Diet. "Here in Japan, we hope that these students will regain the right to live with human dignity. As for ourselves, we hope to be humane and empathetic in accepting them into our midst."

President Iwakiri is not alone in cherishing such hopes. Russia’s violation of international law is utterly unacceptable and all of us in the public and private sectors, along with academia stand firm with Ukraine and its people in our support.

There is a growing movement among institutions of higher education to foster environments that will provide as many students as possible with the opportunity to continue their education after being forced to flee their own countries. Universities actively exchange information, and ICU plays a central role in sharing its experience. "The key is to provide educational opportunities to those who have been deprived of them," asserts President Iwakiri.

In late May, five evacuee students from Ukraine began to study at ICU as auditors. In June, the university's first Syrian refugee students who had begun their studies in 2018, will graduate. Iwakiri stated, "Here in Japan, we hope that these students will regain the right to live with human dignity. As for ourselves, we hope to be humane and empathetic in accepting them into our midst."

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