

DID YOU KNOW?

According to Japanese criminal law, if you are arrested, you can be detained and held under police control for up to 23 days before formal charges are laid, without guaranteed access to a lawyer.

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The “confessions” that are generated are not written by the detainee. They are written by the police during interrogation sessions that, by law, are not videotaped nor recorded.

DID YOU KNOW

Japanese criminal law does not require that the prosecution disclose all evidence to the defense, which is a violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Because of this system, Kazuo Ishikawa, a man of Buraku origin, was found guilty of murder and spent 32 years in prison at hard labor, all for a crime he did not commit. Ishikawa has spent the past 44 years professing his innocence and fighting this system.

These issues are not limited to the Sayama Case. The present criminal justice system in Japan makes it extremely easy for people to be tried and convicted for crimes that they did not commit. Combined with the rising xenophobia and racism in Japan post-September 11, and the intensified vilification of foreigners and minority groups in Japan due to the “war on terror,” it is increasingly imperative that this system be re-examined and overhauled.

THE SAYAMA CASE

On May 1, 1963, in Sayama City, north of Tokyo, a female high school student disappeared on the way home from school. Three days later she was found murdered. The police conducted an investigation of a nearby Buraku neighborhood and, on May 23, arrested Ishikawa Kazuo on charges unrelated to the murder. However, while interrogating him, they accused him of the murder of the girl. Ishikawa was held for 47 days in the police detention center, without adequate contact with lawyers, and intimidated into signing a false confession. On March 11, 1964, he was sentenced to death; this sentence was later commuted to life with hard labor. Both decisions were disproportionately based on the ‘confessions’ extracted from Ishikawa. Ishikawa’s legal defense team has submitted evidence proving his innocence and called for a retrial; however, these appeal requests have been dismissed without any examination of the new evidence or dialogue with the defense team.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Support Ishikawa. This case is an opportunity to address the problems of the Japanese Criminal Justice system and reduce the chances of this kind of profiling happening again. Sign our online petition, write a letter of solidarity, and purchase a solidarity ribbon.

Visit www.imadr.org/sayama for more.

