

## Establishing a Protection System for Male Victims of Human Trafficking

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In Japan, human trafficking has mainly been tackled from the perspective of violence against women, with consideration of the protection of foreign women. However, in fiscal year 2010, it was found that at least three men, including Japanese nationals, were also its victims.

In Japan's 2009 National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons, the Ministerial Meeting Concerning Measures Against Crimes was supposed to consider making a policy and putting in place a system to protect male victims of trafficking. However, the male victims found in fiscal year 2010 received only police protection and were not eligible for protective services under the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare only because of their sex. Some of these men were protected by churches and non-governmental organizations and repatriated to their home countries.

Apart from a general lack of understanding that men can also be victims, there are other problems that beset the current system. For example, the protection services offered as part of social welfare measures were set up to shield women (*fujin-hogo jigyo*), and by its very nature, are not designed to provide men shelter. Furthermore, the system does not allow people access to necessary services unless they are staying in shelters.

This study explores the barriers to and prospects of establishing a system of protection for male victims of human trafficking from three perspectives—the protection of women, laborers, and victims of crime.

It is necessary to establish a system of protection that is not based on *fujin-hogo jigyo*, which is regulated by the Law on the Prevention of Prostitution. It is also necessary to make a commitment to protect laborers regardless of their nationality and sex and build a financial compensation system for victims of sex trafficking taking into account their claims based on a “subjective view of labor.” It is also the need of the hour to enforce a policy to protect victims of crime, regardless of their sex.