

Minister Hatoyama Kunio
Ministry of Justice
1-1-1 Kasumigaseki
Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 100-8977
Japan

Dear Minister,

I am gravely concerned to hear of the case of **Okunishi Masaru**, who is on death row since 36 years now. **Okunishi Masaru** has been found guilty to have murdered five women, among them **Okunishi Masaru's** wife and lover, in the town of Nabari in southern Japan on March 28th 1961. He has been accused to have had offered the victims wine poisoned with agricultural chemicals but there was no evidence found that **Okunishi Masaru** in fact had given the poison to them. **Okunishi Masaru** had confessed the crime after long questioning by the police, during which he was reportedly tortured. During the first trial he had withdrawn his confession and was found not guilty for lack of evidence. However the judgement was quashed by the higher court and **Okunishi Masaru** was sentenced to death. Despite his lodged appeal the sentence was confirmed by the Supreme Court on June 15th 1972. When he lodged an appeal against the sentence for the seventh time the criminal court of Nagoya approved a resumption of the trial. The new proceedings begun in April 2005 but were dropped again soon after. **Okunishi Masaru** has now exhausted all possibilities of appeal and is at imminent risk of execution.

In my opinion death penalty is a cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment that violates the most fundamental human right, the right to life. Therefore I urge you to commute the death sentence against **Okunishi Masaru** into a prison term and to exert yourself for a new resumption of the trial against him.

I am looking forward to hear from you in this serious matter.

Yours faithfully

Date: _____

Sender: _____
