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Protest: Incident of a fallen window from a CH-53E helicopter into the sea off the east coast of Okinawa Island

On August 27<sup>th</sup>, an accident occurred in which a window of a CH-53 Helicopter that belongs to MCAS Futenma fell into the sea off the east coast of Okinawa.

This incident also occurred from another helicopter where a window fell onto Futenma Daini Elementary school in December 2017, and a piece of rubber tape fell onto a junior high school in Urasoe, Okinawa in June 2019. Each time an incident arises, we have taken the opportunity to demand effective measures to prevent recurrences, but these incidents still occurred. I feel a strong indignation in response to this incident.

Moreover, the city received notice on August 29<sup>th</sup>, two days after the incident occurred. I have strong doubts about the crisis awareness and management system of the U.S. military including report delays.

The MCAS Futenma is in the center of the city and is said to be the "world's most dangerous base", which can lead to catastrophes involving citizens in any incident. Ginowan City has been strongly requesting the closure of the base and return of land at the earliest possible date and that appeal continues today, but within the 23 years since the return agreement, incidents continue to happen, and since the return has not happened at this time, the dangers have continued. With the current situation that threatens the lives of the residents of Ginowan and Okinawa by this accident are highlighted again.

The current situation in which the danger of life of the citizens is located right next to their everyday life is extremely unique, and the fact that it will be irreparable if a mistake like this reoccurs. A step like this we must not accept ourselves, we must implement measures that have a sense of crisis.

I, the Ginowan City Mayor whose duty is to protect the lives and assets of over 99,000 citizens, cannot condone the current conditions associated with this aircraft. Thus, the city strongly protests and demands the following terms be met:

#### Note

- Thorough investigation of the cause and prevention plan of recurrence, as well as to publish this plan and contents as soon as possible.
- For all aircraft belonging to the MCAS Futenma including the CH-53 helicopter, carry out a total inspection of the safety management system including the maintenance system, strictly conduct safety checks again, and stop all flights until safety is confirmed.
- Establish a prompt contact system with accurate information provided when an accident occurs.
- To fully redeem the MCAS Futenma, which is the citizen's desire, take all measures and realize it as soon as possible.
- Suspend operation within 5 years and make efforts with a sense of crisis and realize steadily to eliminate the risk of MCAS Futenma and reduce the base burden until returning.