

27 April 2022

From: Association to end sexual harassment and sexual assault in the film and moving image industry

**Ending sexual harassment and sexual assault
in the film and moving image industry**

We, the undersigned, are victims of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the film and moving image industry, together with our supporters.

We are all still experiencing anxiety and conflict, but if we do not speak up, we fear that nothing will change. By showing our solidarity with others who have the same purpose, we may be able to take a step forward. With that in mind, we make the following statement.

A magazine report on the 10th of March 2022 exposed sexual assault and sexual violence committed by a film director. Since then, accusations against multiple actors, further film directors, film producers, and others have followed in quick succession. In addition, many voices have begun to complain through the press and social media about the damage caused by harassment, assault, and sexual abuse in the film and moving image industry.

Sexual assault and sexual violence in the film and moving image industry often happen in entrapment-style situations, making use of status and power relations. One example is a director or producer who coerces an actor into having sexual intercourse on condition of casting. The coerced are worried about the consequences if they refuse: they may lose the job, they may not be able to work in the future, or they may be seen as a disturbance to the project or by the film world at large. And so these victims are forced into silence. There is also the repeated use of term ‘pillow sales’ (*makura eigyo*), similar in meaning and implication to ‘casting couch’, whose use is convenient for the perpetrator. The use of such expressions by third parties, in spite of the obvious harm and damage involved, implies that the victims were complicit in or wanted such treatment. This is an insult that minimizes suffering and the seriousness of the problem. Sensational headlines in the press and on social media are an

additional factor that causes secondary trauma, as do attempts to identify victims that chose to speak out anonymously.

Cases of sexual assault and sexual violence against production crew members are also numerous. An on-set hierarchy that elevates the director and senior crewmembers above others, hierarchy between companies, along with the gender gap lead to a production system where the use of violence is permitted. This promotes power harassment, with sexual assault and sexual violence as extreme examples. As a result, there many people that have suffered damage but do not have the means to deal with it. They remain silent and endure the pain. At the root are the harsh working conditions of film and moving image production. A poor working environment can be a hotbed for sexual violence and abuse, with perpetrators taking advantage of colleagues who are weakened due to overwork and lack of sleep.

Many of the victims of sexual assault and sexual violence have been traumatized and are currently suffering from the stress-related symptoms. It is a continuous pain that cannot be easily erased, even if it is a past event for the perpetrator or others. Recalling the past you want to forget and telling others about it requires great amounts of energy, which further wears down the victim.

Some victims have spent a long time unaware that what happened to them was sexual assault. Other victims blame themselves even though they were not at fault. Those that tried to speak up or share their experiences were told to give up because there was no legal basis for an accusation. Many people have been living in deep frustration. Some kept silent while trying to minimize their suffering in comparison to others. There is a large number of people that wish to speak up but who are, for various reasons, incapable of doing so and therefore suffer in silence. Damage cannot be minimized through comparison with other damage.

We, the people working in the entertainment world, may have been desensitized to serious cases of damage from harassment, because we thought that abuse is simply common practice in this industry. Were we complicit by pretending not to see or passively tolerating this behavior? When the perpetrator continues to work freely, even after their actions are revealed, this is a defense of the perpetrator that hinders the victim's recovery. Were the defenders also unaware

of the responsibility that comes from sharing a common interest with the perpetrator?

We as victims emphatically state that there should be no more people damaged or suffering in silence. We state that sexual assault, sexual violence and secondary harm are not just a problem for the parties concerned. The difficulty of punishing perpetrators of sexual violence under the current Japanese legal system is well known: many types of damage are still officially considered insignificant. We emphasize the necessity of a fact-finding survey to visualize and eradicate sexual assault and sexual violence in the film and moving image industry. We also stress the need to establish an appropriate third-party organization to handle and investigate such cases.

We would like to create an environment where we can talk about the problems that are occurring now as well as the problems that have occurred in the past, and to have a genuine discussion. We sincerely hope that we can work together to create an environment where these problems do not occur and where everyone can work with peace of mind, based on a relationship of mutual respect. That day should come as soon as possible.

Association to end sexual abuse in the film and moving image industry:

Chihiro (actor)

Kaori Haga (production designer)

Shin Hayasaka (cinematographer)

Yumi Ishikawa (actor, activist)

Kaga Kenzo (film director)

Takuya Kawakami (sound designer)

Takehiko Minato (screenwriter)

Mipo O (film director)

Rina Sakuragi (actor)

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