

Huge protest in Tokyo rails against PM Abe's security bills



Tens of thousands of protesters gathered near Japan's parliament building on Sunday to oppose legislation allowing the military to fight overseas, the latest sign of mistrust in Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's security policy.²⁾ In one of Japan's biggest protests in years - organizers put the crowd at 120,000 - people of all ages braved occasional rain to join the rally, chanting and holding up placards with slogans such as "No War" and "Abe, quit".

3) Demonstrators swarmed into the street before parliament's main gate after the crowd size made it impossible for police to keep them to the sidewalks. A second nearby park area also filled with protesters.

4) The rally was one of more than 300 this weekend in Japan protesting Abe's move to loosen the post-war, pacifist constitution's constraints on the military.

5) "Sitting in front of TV and just complaining wouldn't do," said Naoko Hiramatsu, a 44-year-old associate professor in French and one of the Tokyo protesters.

6) "If I don't take action and try to put a stop on this, I will not be able to explain myself to my child in the future," said Hiramatsu, holding a four-year-old son in her arms in the thick of the protest.

7) Abe in July pushed through parliament's lower house a group of bills that let Japan's armed forces defend an ally under attack, a drastic shift in Japan's post-war security policy.

8) The bills are now before the upper chamber, which is also controlled by Abe's ruling bloc and aims to pass the legislation before parliament's session ends on Sept. 27.

9) Abe's ratings have taken a hit from opposition to the security bills. Media surveys showing those who oppose his government outnumber backers, and more than half are against the security bills.

10) "We need to make the Abe government realize the public is having a sense of crisis and angry. Let's work together to have the bills scrapped," Katsuya Okada, head of Japan's largest opposition party, the Democratic Party of Japan, told the Tokyo rally.

11) The demonstration was the biggest in Tokyo since the mass protests against nuclear power in the summer of 2012, after the March 2011 Fukushima atomic disaster. 【Aug 30, 2015/Reuters/ BY KIYOSHI TAKENAKA】

rail against: 不平を言う、ののしる mistrust: 不信 brave: ものともしない rally: 集会 chant: 繰り返している swarm: 群集する pacifist constitution: 平和憲法 constraint: 制限するもの associate professor: 准教授 in the thick of ~の最中に take a hit: 批難を受ける outnumber: 数で上回る scrap: 廃止にする

★Ice breaker for active discussion★

1. What can you say about the photo? Why are the people protesting?
2. How important are security bills for countries? Is it necessary to change the security bills in Japan?
3. Why is PM Shinzo Abe pushing for the security bill despite the huge protests?
4. Have you ever joined any protests before? What was it all about? Please share your experience.
5. Do you think such protests are effective in making a change?
6. Make sentences using the following words: legislation, mistrust, take a hit, outnumber, constraint, swarm, scrap, pacifist, rail and chant.

「安全保障関連法案」は、新たな「国際平和支援法」と、10本の既存の法律を一括して改正する法案から成る。国会前の集会には、主催者側の発表で12万人、警察の発表で3万数千人が参加した。