

GUA

Global Uchinanchu Alliance

Web: www.uchinanchu.com Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2180108192239523/>

The Global Uchinanchu Alliance (GUA) is a network led autonomously by and for overseas Uchinānchu (Okinawans) defined as those with ancestral roots indigenous to the Ryukyu Archipelago.

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The Global Uchinanchu Alliance (GUA) Commemorates *Irei no Hi*:

Announces National Screenings of "Our Island's Treasure" Urging an End to the New U.S. Military Base Construction in Henoko, Okinawa

June 23, 2019 marked *Irei no Hi*, a day of prayer and reflection on the tragic bloodbath 74 years ago known as the Battle of Okinawa. Over a quarter of the local population of Okinawa perished during this battle, having been caught in a war between Japan and the U.S. with heavy casualties on all sides. *Irei no Hi* is only officially recognized within Okinawa, which was an unofficial colony of Imperial Japan formerly known as the Ryūkyū Kingdom. In Okinawa, this day for remembering consists of visiting graves, and engaging in peace education about the realities of war and the urgent necessity of avoiding future ones.

What makes this Okinawan "Memorial Day" unique is the practice of honoring all those who perished from the battle regardless of nationality or military status. While most war memorials typically recognize only the soldiers from their own nation, the Okinawan commemoration extends respect to all fallen soldiers and conscripts regardless of nationality, and to the civilians who made up the bulk of the casualties, including British POWs and Korean conscripts that have been unrecognized by the government of Japan. In this regard, *Irei no Hi* acknowledges the indiscriminate loss of life that results from wars, and the importance of peace.

The 75th Anniversary of the *Tsushima Maru*, a symbol of the senseless lethality of war, will also be commemorated this year. The *Tsushima Maru* was a passenger-cargo ship evacuating 1,484 civilians from Okinawa to Kyūshū, Japan that was torpedoed into a watery grave, causing the deaths of most on-board, including 767 children. For this 1944 wartime sinking, the USS Bowfin received Navy Commendation awards, and it continues to sit as a popular tourist attraction in Pearl Harbor (*Pu'uloa*), Hawai'i, where this history remains as silent as it had been for decades after the war, when Imperial Japan ordered *Tsushima Maru* survivors not to speak of this military catastrophe.

The lessons of the Battle of Okinawa and the *Tsushima Maru* underscore the futility of war as a means of defending life - a value expressed in the Uchinānchu proverb "*nuchi dū takara*" - that life is a precious treasure to be cherished. Safeguarding life is also at the heart of Okinawan opposition to US military bases that were forced onto the Okinawan people in 1945 through armed forces and bayonets, through generations of wars.

Today, with no end in sight to these ongoing base burdens, the current construction of yet another Marine facility at Oura Bay in Henoko, Okinawa, not only tramples on the democratic will of the indigenous Okinawan people, but is already destroying the

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environment of delicate coral reef that sustains numerous species including endangered aquatic life.

As part of our ongoing contribution to peace education, GUA is announcing a series of screenings in the U.S. & Hawai'i of "Our Island's Treasure," a film produced by 17 year-old high school senior Kaiya Yonamine, a GUA youth member from Portland, Oregon. Through contemporary interviews with Okinawan local residents, this film is designed to introduce American youth audiences to the situation in Okinawa, and to urge Americans of all ages to help to stop the new base construction. A listing of all national screenings to date follows:

Los Angeles, California

Okinawa Documentaries - "Our Island's Treasure" and "Himeyuri"

Saturday, June 29, 2019, 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Fruit of the Spirit Lutheran Church (2706 W 182nd St, Torrance, California 90504)

<https://www.facebook.com/events/2483283618362299/>

Honolulu, Hawai'i

Hawai'i Film Premier & Community Talk: "Our Island's Treasure"

Sunday, June 30, 2019, 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Jikoen Hongwanji (1731 N School St, Honolulu, Hawaii 96819)

<https://www.facebook.com/events/363777547612060/>

Chicago, Illinois

Our Island's Treasure: What's Going On in Okinawa and What is #RiseForHenoko?

Sunday, June 30, 2019, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Japanese American Service Committee (4427 N. Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60640)

<https://www.facebook.com/events/340633480162611/>

SF Bay Area, California

Tentatively Scheduled for Friday, July 26, 2019; Details to be announced

The Global Uchinanchu Alliance (GUA) joins the people of Okinawa in the commemoration of *Irei no Hi*, and in remembrance of all the precious lives lost in the hellish war in Okinawa. On behalf of all of our families and the people of Okinawa, we firmly pledge to do whatever possible to prevent such tragedies from happening again.

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