Japanese Embassy
Ambassador Kunikata
Haakon VIIs gate 9
0244 Oslo

ハザラの人々への短歌

「犀の如くまっすぐ歩めハザラ人
その麗しきバーミアンの野を」

「神々は愛したまえりバーミアン、その里人の澄んだ瞳を」

Poem by Naotaka Uematsu, from the anthology Poems for the Hazara

Dear Ambassador Kunikata,

First, I would like to thank the Japanese people and government for its support of Afghanistan. This includes many commercial development and humanitarian projects in programs such as the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction.

As a Hazara, I especially recognize the importance of the Japan's role in today's international community. Millions of Hazara share a common culture with a large part of the Japanese people through the ancient Buddha sculptures of Bamyan, which are masterpieces of humanity's heritage.

With tremendous international expertise and financial assistance, Afghanistan is embarking on a $10 billion upgrade to its electrical power grid. This will enable the people to jump from its medieval industrial capacity into the 21st century. All involved hope that this will help bring stabilization, education, industrial productivity, and peace to Afghanistan, Asia, and the entire international community.

As the details of this grand electrification plan are refined, I strongly encourage you to ensure that the decisions regarding the infrastructure of the grid will benefit the most people, without social discrimination, and in the most cost-effective manner, despite political pressures to do otherwise.

I am concerned about this, because the Hazara, as a large ethnic community, have suffered serious discrimination throughout Afghanistan's history. Systematic crimes against the Hazara

have included slavery, genocide, and forced displacement. The Hazara people experience current and past discrimination in education, labor, healthcare, the judiciary, and infrastructure. We still suffer from regular violent Taliban attacks. Sadly, many of these situations have occurred with little government action or prevention. As in many places around the world, official discrimination is deeply embedded, and needs to be monitored and avoided.

I ask the Japanese government to closely monitor the planning and construction of the power grid, so that its funds are used fairly. For example, the planned TUTAP project will use Japanese funds to build a 500 kV transmission line. The planners, after thorough study, strongly recommend the Bamyan route (which will electrify much of the traditional Hazara region/Hazaristan), as the most cost-effective route. However, the Afghan government is demanding an alternative route—which would avoid the Hazara region.

We can only think that the Afghan government is continuing past discrimination, and favoring one ethnic group against another for political purposes. This is unproductive for the people and the region, and we hope that with honest oversight, it will not happen.

Sincerely,

For more information about the Hazara, please visit www.HazaraPeople.com.