

# Djibouti National Day Special

## Ties based on principles and mutual respect

**IBRAHIM BILEH DOUALEH**  
AMBASSADOR OF DJIBOUTI



Today marks the 46th year since the Republic of Djibouti was established as an independent nation. On this august occasion, I am honored to present the deepest respects of our

nation and H.E. President Ismail Omar Guelleh to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, and to convey our sincere thanks to the government and people of Japan for the steadfast support and friendship that Japan continues to extend to our republic at the crossroads of Africa and Asia.

On our National Day, I am pleased to report that bilateral visits have resumed after their three-year suspension during the COVID-19 pandemic. This has spurred cooperation in several different areas.

As part of this exemplary cooperation, 2023 will see the inauguration of several large-scale social and economic infrastructure projects that will build human resource capacity and support regional stabilization.

As a result of these areas of cooperation, we will reinforce maritime transport capacity and will implement the construction of primary and secondary schools in an area with a rapidly growing school-age population. We will also enhance maritime safety and security capabilities.

Although not a wealthy country, Djibouti aspires to create an equitable and just society for all. Education is free and compulsory to age 16, and the government provides subsidies to encourage families to keep children in school.

The country has signed and ratified most U.N. conventions, including the Convention Against All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. In a major step toward gender equality, the law requires that women must comprise at least 25% of the workforce in government and parliament positions. The government has also raised the age of marriage to prevent girls being influenced or forced to marry against their will. The government is vigorously reaching out to traditional communities to educate and encourage learning and promote health and hygiene.

Despite its small size, Djibouti is an active player in the international arena. Like other African countries, Djibouti is a vigorous supporter of U.N. Security Council reform, and firmly backs Japan's claim for permanent membership. Djibouti resolutely supports Japan in all other international channels as well, such as voting for Japan-nominated candidates for key roles in all U.N. agencies and other international bodies.

Djibouti's crucial role at the crossroads of Africa and Asia has again become tragically evident in the recent conflict in the Sudan. While we are dismayed and distressed by the outbreak of fighting, our logistical support, political stability and readiness to assist, proved invaluable in making it possible for several countries to evacuate their personnel. Our country has hosted a base for Japan's Self-Defense Forces for more than 10 years, and the base played a vital role by supporting Japan in its fast and efficient reaction to the crisis. It is an excellent example of bilateral relations in action.

In a region sadly troubled by conflict, Djibouti is a stabilizing presence and a tireless advocate for cooperation. By offering its port facilities to the international anti-piracy coalition, the country makes a significant contribution to stability. I am pleased to report that, thanks largely to Japan's valuable contribution, and although the situation is not resolved, it has been under control for some time, and the disruption and attacks on international commercial shipping have been substantially reduced.

I believe that the close and cooperative relationship between Japan and Djibouti is not due solely to strategic self-interest, but also to an underlying friendship and respect between our countries. It is my fervent hope and desire that we build on this strong foundation and discover new activities and areas of cooperation. I am confident that we can expect our already excellent bilateral relations with Japan to continue to flourish.

*This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.*



**President Ismail Omar Guelleh**  
EMBASSY OF DJIBOUTI



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to the People of the Republic of Djibouti  
on the Anniversary of Their Independence



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