

Beat: Miscellaneous

Japan moves closer to ban child porn possession

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USPA News - The judicial affairs committee of Japan's lower house of parliament has voted in favor of a bill that would criminalize the simple possession of child pornography, and analysts expect lawmakers will pass the bill by the end of the month, local media reported on Wednesday. Japan is only one of two major countries in the world where the simple possession of child pornography is legal, though the production or distribution is illegal.

Previous attempts to ban child pornography possession in Japan have failed, but the revised bill that excludes animated children is expected to pass. On Wednesday, the judicial affairs committee of the House of Representatives, which is the lower house of Japan's parliament, decided by a unanimous vote that its chairman will submit the revised bill to the main chamber, moving the country closer to a ban, according to the Jiji Press news agency. The original bill that proposed an outright ban on child pornography possession was submitted to parliament last year by the ruling coalition and the opposition, but concerns about freedom of expression followed. As a result, the committee dropped the provision that sought to ban the possession of animated child pornography. The bill now requires approval from both houses of parliament, but analysts expect this will happen by the end of the current session, which ends on June 22. The only other major country in the world where the simple possession of child pornography remains legal is Russia, though efforts have increased in recent years to pass legislation that would criminalize the material. As in Japan, production and distribution of child pornography is also illegal in Russia.

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