

Japan Osaka faces Korean subsidy suits

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OSAKA - An operator of Korean schools will sue the Osaka prefectural and municipal governments this month, claiming their decision to terminate subsidies to its schools is illegal, sources said Saturday.

The Higashiosaka-based educational corporation plans to file the lawsuit with the Osaka District Court to have the local governments' decision not to pay the subsidies nullified, and to demand that they resume payments that were cut off at the start of the school year in April, the sources said.

In March 2010, then-Osaka Gov. Toru Hashimoto announced the prefecture would stop paying subsidies to Korean schools that refuse to meet four criteria, including the removal of portraits of the late North Korean leader Kim Jong Il.

The operator is expected to claim that the provisions violate international human rights laws by encouraging racial discrimination and damaging ethnic minorities' right to education. It is also likely to argue that the provisions infringe on Article 14 of the Constitution, which says all people are equal under the law, according to the sources.

The Osaka Prefectural Government stopped paying subsidies to one of the corporation's high schools in the 2010 academic year after determining it did not meet the provisions. It ended payments to most of the operator's elementary and junior high schools in the following school year because Kim's portrait adorned faculty rooms. For the current fiscal year, the prefecture didn't even allocate a budget for the subsidies. Meanwhile, the Osaka Municipal Government cut off subsidies to the schools when Hashimoto became mayor in 2011.

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<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20120902a7.html>
