

## **No. of suicides in Japan drops below 25,000 for first time in 18 years**

TOKYO —

The total number of suicides that occurred nationwide in 2015 has slipped below 25,000 for the first time since 1997, according to a preliminary report issued by the National Police Agency (NPA).

The NPA said that a total of 23,971 people killed themselves in Japan between Jan 1 and Dec 31 last year, a reduction of 1,456 from 2014, and the sixth straight annual decline, Fuji TV reported.

By region, the highest number of suicides—2,471— occurred in Tokyo, followed by 1,382 and 1,301 in Kanagawa and Saitama prefectures, respectively. In terms of ratio per population, however, the highest suicide death toll was recorded in Akita Prefecture, while the lowest was observed in Osaka Prefecture.

Of those who killed themselves in 2015, 16,641 were men and 7,330 women.

The report further reveals that by month, the highest number of suicides was recorded in March, with a total of 2,300 cases, while the lowest was February, with 1,766 suicides nationwide.

The toll shows a significant improvement from Japan's so-called "dark period" that began in 1998, a year that launched the beginning of 14 consecutive years of total suicides surpassing 30,000.

A steady decline began in 2012, slipping under 30,000 for the first time since 1997.

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