

Comment by MORI Masako, Minister of Justice

January 5, 2020

On December 31 last year, the media reported that the defendant Carlos Ghosn Bichara, who had been released on bail, criticized the Japanese criminal justice system and made an announcement that he was in Lebanon.

As the Minister of Justice, as soon as I became aware of this case, I immediately instructed the relevant authorities to make every effort to properly address the case, including confirming the facts.

Although the confirmation process is still under way, it has been identified that there is no record of the defendant Ghosn departing Japan. It is believed that he had illegally departed from the country by use of certain unlawful means. It is extremely regrettable that we have come to this situation.

Japan's criminal justice system sets out appropriate procedures to clarify the truth of cases and is administered appropriately, while guaranteeing basic individual human rights. There

is no room to justify the flight by a defendant who has been released on bail.

Defendant Ghosn's bail has already been revoked, and upon Japan's request, the Interpol has issued its Red Notice against the defendant.

It is my recognition that the prosecutors will also appropriately address the situation by making every effort to reveal the facts, including how the defendant Ghosn fled from Japan, in coordination with respective organizations and through prompt investigations.

The Ministry of Justice will continue to coordinate with relevant authorities, respective countries and international organizations to take all available measures so that the Japanese criminal proceedings can be properly served.

I have also instructed the Immigration Services Agency to coordinate with relevant ministries and agencies to try to further tighten departure procedures. The Ministry will continue to take necessary measures to ensure that such incident will never happen again.

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