

FACTS ON JAPANESE MILITARY SEXUAL SLAVERY

Between 1932 and 1945, over 200,000 women and children of Korean, Chinese, Filipino, Indonesian, Burmese and Dutch origin were kidnapped or forced into the sex slavery system enforced by the Japanese Imperial Army. These victims, some as young as twelve, were systematically raped and tortured in so-called 'comfort stations', and coerced to have sex with up to 40 soldiers a day...every day for years. Many of them died after suffering unimaginable abuses. Now after all these years, the Japanese Government still refuses to accept responsibility for their crimes...or acknowledge their guilt...or apologize to the hundreds of thousands of women who suffered from these shameful and inhuman deeds. Why? Why can a country that aspires to be a member of the UN Security Council be allowed to perpetuate this legacy of shame, abetted by the silence of countries such as Canada and the United States?

World recognition of the sexual slavery system

1987, Professor Jeong-Ok Yoon of Ehwa University in South Korea reported on the tragedy of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery, and brought an international awareness to the subject.

1991, a former Japanese Military sexual slave, Hak-Soon Kim, testified publicly that she was a "comfort woman" during WWII, and in the same year a lawsuit was brought against the Japanese government.

1992, Professor Yoshimi Yoshiaki of Chuo University in Japan found wartime documents in the Library of the National Institute for Defense Studies that confirmed the existence of "comfort stations."

1993, 'Kono Statement' was brought up by Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono admitting that the military played a central role in coercing women to become sex slaves. The Kono Statement was never approved by the Japanese parliament.

1996, The **U.N. Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women**, and the Special Rapporteur on **Contemporary Forms of Slavery, Systematic Rape, Sexual Slavery and Slavery-Like Practices during Armed Conflict**, reported on Japanese Military Sexual Slavery. They strongly recommended the Japanese government to take legal responsibilities for the violations of international law.

1998, *UN Human Rights Commission* criticized and called for Japan to compensate officially victims of the military sexual slavery system, and to prosecute the perpetrators who were responsible for the human rights violating system.

2000, *Women's International War Crimes Tribunal* on Japanese Military Sexual Slavery

2006, *Amnesty International* criticized the Asian Women's Fund and called on Japan to pay official compensation to former 'comfort women'.

2007, UN Committee Against Torture reported that the victims are experiencing "continuing abuse and re-traumatization as a result of the state party's official denial of the facts, concealment or failure to disclose other facts, failure to prosecute those criminally responsible for acts of torture, and failure to provide adequate rehabilitation to the victims and survivors."

2007, The Japan Federation of Bar Associations dispatched members to the related countries to look into damage reports, and it publicized the results. Based on its findings, the federation has four times urged the prime minister to make a formal apology and extend compensation to individuals.

What are Japan's responses towards these world condemnations?

- To this date, the Japanese government has offered neither public apology for implementing the "comfort system," nor reparations to the victims of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery. All "comfort women" lawsuits have been rejected.
- The Japanese government hid relevant documents from public examination.
- A private foundation, "the Asian Women's Fund" was set up in Japan to evade its legal responsibilities.
- Under the pressure from the then Deputy Cabinet Secretary Abe Shinzo and the Economics and Industry Minister Nakagawa Shoichi, NHK altered the TV program about the Year 2000 Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japanese Military Sexual Slavery. (<http://japanfocus.org/products/details/2352>)
- **In 2001**, a Japanese right wing nationalist organization, the History Textbook Reform Society, published high school textbooks which justified the role of militarism and colonialism in Asia before and during World War II.
- **By 2005**, the then Education Minister Nariaki Nakayama denied the existence of 'comfort women'. Of the group of 8 textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education, 7 omitted references to 'comfort women'. Mr. Nariaki Nakayama supported the omissions, stating that references to 'comfort women' in textbooks was an 'incorrect description'
- **In 2007**, former Education Minister Nariaki Nakayama led a group of some 120 ruling LDP legislators to urge carrying out a study with the objective to water down parts of the Kono apology and deny direct military involvement.
- **March 2007**, the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe openly denied that the military had forced women into sexual slavery during World War II and stated that "there is no evidence to prove there was coercion".