

'Comfort women' ask Canada to press Japan for apology

Group wants MPs to pass resolution urging compensation for former sex slaves

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[CBC News](#)

Korean Jeomdol Jang was only 14 when Japanese soldiers abducted her from a train station and put her to work as a sex slave.

Jang, now 85, recalled at a news conference in Ottawa on Tuesday how she was on her way to her aunt's place when the soldiers approached her.

"A man came up to me and said 'I have work for you at a factory so stay here'," she said through a translator.

She was taken to Manchuria and placed in a house where soldiers raped her daily.

During Jang's time in captivity, she gave birth four times. One daughter survived, though she later died of heart disease at the age of 20. "The father is a Japanese soldier, but yet I still loved the child because it was my child," she said.

The elderly Korean woman is one of an estimated 200,000 women, mostly from China and Korea, forced to work as sex slaves by the military government as so-called comfort women during the Second World War.



Jeomdol Jang, 85, speaking at a news conference in Ottawa. (CBC)

Jang shared her tale of hardship as part of a coalition's request for the Canadian government to help the women win compensation and an apology from the Japanese government.

U.S. Congress passed motion

In March, then Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe declared that there was no evidence women had been coerced into sex with soldiers.

That comment backtracked from a landmark 1993 government statement acknowledging that tens of thousands of women were forced into prostitution for the military.

The U.S. Congress reacted in July by passing a motion demanding the Japanese government apologize to the comfort women. The coalition is hoping Canada does the same.

MPs need to "let [the women] know that they are standing together with them at this critical moment, no matter how hard the lobbying from the Japanese side is," said Dr. Joseph Wong, who is leading the coalition.

Toronto New Democrat MP Olivia Chow has tabled a motion calling for the government to urge the Japanese prime minister to pass a resolution in the Diet to formally apologize to the women and compensate them.

The women now want Parliament to act on it.