

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Open Letter

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Japan: Waiting for justice for over 60 years: AI expresses solidarity to “comfort women” and their supporters on occasion of 10 August 2005 “Wednesday Demonstration”

On the occasion of the 10 August “Wednesday Demonstration”, timed just before the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II, Amnesty International would like to express support for the women who were sexually enslaved by the Japanese military and their supporters who have tirelessly campaigned for justice.

Amnesty International is aware that the “Wednesday Demonstrations” have taken place every Wednesday outside the Japanese embassy since 1992. Despite this and other efforts, the survivors of the “comfort women” system are still awaiting justice.

Amnesty International is working to highlight the fact that all over the world victims of sexual violence are denied redress: there is widespread impunity for these crimes where perpetrators go unpunished and survivors are denied any form of reparation.

Tens of thousands of women were forcibly abducted and deceived into becoming “comfort women” in military controlled “comfort stations” organized in the different occupied countries during World War II. Women and girls were repeatedly raped and made into sex slaves. Amnesty International believes that the crimes perpetrated against these women amount to crimes against humanity.

The courage of the surviving “comfort women”, who over time have spoken of their suffering is remarkable. Their voices, along with the activism of women’s human rights defenders, has mobilised and inspired a global movement that has demanded that crimes of sexual violence be redressed.

To this day, the Japanese government has refused to acknowledge its responsibility for crimes against humanity committed against former “comfort women”. Survivors are still seeking official compensation from the Japanese government as well an apology that is acceptable to them and restores their human dignity.

Amnesty International calls on the government of Japan to ensure that survivors receive full reparation including: restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition. The organisation calls on the government of Japan to:

1) Accept full responsibility for the “comfort women” system, including publicly acknowledging the harm that these women suffered, restore the dignity of the survivors and publicly denounce sexual violence against women, whenever and wherever it occurs.

2) Issue an apology from the Japanese Diet that is acceptable to the majority of “comfort women” and their immediate relatives.

3) Offer adequate and effective compensation directly from the Japanese government to the “comfort women” or their immediate relatives. This compensation should take into account the violations committed against them including the long term denial of the remedy itself and issues such as lost opportunities and livelihoods.

4) Guarantee non-repetition by:

- Ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;
- Supporting efforts to agree on an international arms trade treaty to stop the proliferation of weapons used to commit human rights violations such as violence against women;

5) Provide an accurate account of the sexual slavery system in Japanese educational text books on World War II.

Public Document

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