

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

AI index: ASA 22/002/2012  
8 March 2012

### **Japan must provide justice for the survivors of Japan's military sexual slavery system**

On the occasion of International Women's Day, Amnesty International reiterates its call on the Japanese government to provide justice to the women who survived Japan's military sexual slavery system.

The voice of the survivors of Japan's military sexual slavery system and their call for justice has resonated with women around the world and raised global awareness about the horrific human rights violations against women during military conflict. In May 2010, the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women praised the "comfort women" movement as one of the best organized and well-documented movements for reparations for women.

At the end of 2011, activists and survivors in Seoul, South Korea held the 1000<sup>th</sup> demonstration in front of the Japanese embassy, in a weekly protest that began in 1992. The protests are continuing to take place every Wednesday.

In August 2011 South Korea's Constitutional Court ruled that it is unconstitutional for the South Korean government not to make efforts to settle the dispute with Japan over reparations for these women. The Japanese government has rebuffed all efforts to raise this issue through diplomatic channels.

The Japanese Government continues to deny justice to the survivors of Japan's military sexual slavery system insisting that any obligation to provide reparations has been settled through peace treaties and arrangements which sought to preclude further reparations.

However, compensations offered by the government have failed to meet international standards on reparations and are perceived by survivors as a way of buying their silence. These women are now elderly, and many have passed away without seeing justice.

Throughout the areas of the Asia Pacific region under Japanese military control, women were sexually enslaved by the Japanese Imperial Army from around 1932 to the end of World War II. The Japanese Imperial Army targeted women and girls who, because of age, poverty, class, family status, education, nationality or ethnicity were most susceptible to being deceived and trapped into the sexual slavery system. The vast majority of women enslaved were under the age of 20; some girls were as young as 12 when they were abducted.

The Japanese Imperial Army used violence and deception to obtain women and girls. Survivors have suffered from physical and mental ill-health, isolation, shame and often extreme poverty as a result of their enslavement.

Amnesty International calls on:

- The Japanese Diet to make a full unequivocal apology to survivors, including accepting legal responsibility for the crimes, acknowledging that the crimes amount to crimes under international law, and acknowledging the harm suffered by survivors in a way that is acceptable to the majority of the survivors
- The Japanese Government and Diet to review national laws with a view to removing existing obstacles to obtaining full reparations before Japanese courts and to ensure that Japanese educational texts include an accurate account of the sexual slavery system

- The Japanese Government to immediately implement effective administrative mechanisms to provide full reparations to all survivors of sexual slavery

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