

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

29 March 2013
AI Index: ASA 22/005/2013

Growing support inside Japan for justice for the survivors of Japan's military sexual slavery system

Amnesty International welcomes the Kyoto Prefecture Assembly's statement calling for justice for the survivors of Japan's military sexual slavery system.

On 26 March, Kyoto Prefecture Assembly became the first prefecture in Japan to pass a statement calling on the central government to provide redress to the survivors of Japan's military sexual slavery system including compensation aimed at restoring the honour and dignity of the survivors.

Already in Japan, 39 local city and town councils have passed similar statements since 2008 calling on the central government to address the situation urgently as support continues to grow inside the country to provide justice for the survivors of Japan's military sexual slavery system.

The statement passed by the Kyoto Prefecture Assembly was passed in the same month that the Japanese government rejected recommendations made by state parties during Japan's second Universal Periodic Review to accept responsibility, including legal responsibility for Japan's military sexual slavery system, and to take appropriate measures to restore the dignity of the survivors, including by providing adequate compensation.

Amnesty International is particularly concerned by recent comments by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe that he wants to "revise" previous apologies extended to the survivors. This is a worrying sign that Japan will continue to deny justice to the survivors, as is the statement by the Japanese government in their response to the Universal Periodic Review recommendations that the issue "should not be politicized or turned into a diplomatic issue".

The Japanese Imperial Army sexually enslaved women and girls from across the Asia Pacific region who, because of age, poverty, class, family status, education, nationality or ethnicity, were susceptible to being deceived and trapped into the sexual slavery system. The Japanese Imperial Army used violence and deception to enslave the women and girls, and survivors have suffered from physical and mental ill-health, isolation, shame and often extreme poverty as a result of their enslavement

Amnesty International has previously raised concerns that the denial of justice by the Japanese government only compounds the human rights violations committed against the women.

Amnesty International calls on the government of Japan to:

- accept full responsibility, including legal responsibility, in a way that publicly acknowledges the harm these women have suffered and is acceptable to the majority of the survivors;
- apologize fully and unequivocally for the crimes committed against the women;

- provide adequate and effective reparations to survivors directly from the government in line with international standards and including the participation of survivors to establish what constitutes adequate and effective reparations;
- include an accurate account of the sexual slavery system in Japanese educational textbooks on the Second World War.

-ENDS-