

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

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Japan: Amnesty International welcomes US congressional committee passing 'comfort women' resolution

Amnesty International welcomes the overwhelming majority pass of House Resolution 121 by the US House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee on Tuesday 26 June, allowing the resolution to proceed to a vote by the full US House of Representatives. H. Res. 121 calls on the Government of Japan to 'formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner for its Imperial Armed Force's coercion of young women into sexual slavery.' Amnesty International urges the US House of Representatives to adopt the bill unanimously and expediently.

The resolution called the 'comfort women' system of forced military prostitution by Japan 'unprecedented in its cruelty and magnitude, included gang rape, forced abortions, humiliation, and sexual violence resulting in mutilation, death, or eventual suicide in one of the largest cases of human trafficking in the 20th century.'

To this day, the Japanese government has refused to acknowledge its responsibility for the crimes committed against former "comfort women".

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 before and during World War II. Women and girls were repeatedly raped and condemned to sexual slavery. Amnesty International believes that the crimes perpetrated against these women amount to crimes against humanity.

Amnesty International has been campaigning for justice for these women, who have over time courageously spoken of their suffering. Their voices have mobilised and inspired a global movement that has demanded that crimes of sexual violence be redressed.

Amnesty International urges nations across the world to follow the US congress's lead and put pressure on the Japanese government to ensure that survivors receive full reparation including: restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition.