



The Korean Council for the Women Drafted for
Military Sexual Slavery by Japan

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Prime Minister
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Cabinet Secretariat
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Japan

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Dear Prime Minister

OPEN LETTER: JAPAN'S COMMITMENT TO PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT MUST BEGIN WITH JUSTICE FOR THE SURVIVORS OF JAPAN'S MILITARY SEXUAL SLAVERY SYSTEM

Amnesty International and the Korean Council for Women Drafted into Military Sexual Slavery by Japan (Korean Council) are writing to urge you and the Government of Japan to act consistently with the commitments Japan made when adhering to the G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict¹ by accepting full responsibility for Japan's military sexual slavery system which operated from 1932 to 1945 and providing full reparation without further delay to the survivors. .

Amnesty International and the Korean Council welcome Japan's adherence to the UK government-led Declaration of Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict adopted by the G8 foreign ministers on 11 April 2013. Our organizations welcome this initiative to prevent and end impunity for crimes of sexual violence committed during armed conflict and the commitment made by Japan and the other G8 States to address this serious human rights issue.

Japan's commitment to the G8 initiative is, however, undermined by Japan's continuing failure to meet its obligations under international law to provide justice, truth and full reparation for the survivors of Japan's military sexual slavery system. Contrary to the commitments in the Declaration to raise awareness of crimes of sexual violence, remove barriers to justice, provide better support to victims and bring perpetrators to justice, Japan has refused to fully acknowledge and accept responsibility for the system of military sexual slavery and opposed survivors' calls and efforts to obtain justice, truth and reparation.

The Japanese government and high profile Japanese officials continue to deny or excuse the system of military sexual slavery by its Imperial Army. The Japanese government's position that any obligation to provide justice to the survivors of Japan's military sexual slavery system was settled in the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty and other bi-lateral treaties is untenable. Those treaties did not cover acts of sexual slavery and did not preclude individuals from seeking reparation. Further, the Japanese

¹ G8 Declaration on Prevent Sexual Violence in Conflict:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/185008/G8_PSVI_Declaration_-_FINAL.pdf

government continues to contradict earlier acknowledgements or expressions of remorse by denying or evading responsibility, including legal responsibility. In May this year the UN Committee against Torture noted that Japan's rejection of relevant recommendations made by UN treaty bodies and in the Universal Periodic Review process was of deep concern. The Committee against Torture deplored the omission of Japan's military sexual slavery system from educational textbooks and comments made by high-ranking national and local officials, such as those made by the Mayor of Osaka, Toru Hashimoto, that the system of sexual slavery during World War II was "necessary".

The remaining survivors of Japan's military sexual slavery system are now elderly. The majority have passed away without receiving justice, truth or reparation. The continued failure of the Japanese government to accept full responsibility and provide survivors with full reparation prolongs their suffering and denies them an effective remedy.

Our organizations urge the Government of Japan to give substance to Japan's adherence to the G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict by accepting full responsibility for Japan's military sexual slavery system and providing full reparation to the remaining survivors. Until Japan adequately addresses its system of military sexual slavery, its support for the G8 Declaration will ring hollow. By meeting the call for justice Japan would show leadership in substantiating the commitments advocated in the Declaration.

Amnesty International and the Korean Council will make this letter public one week from the date of this letter. We will urge the other G8 members and other States to call on your government to take concrete steps, without further delay, to fulfil Japan's obligations towards the survivors of Japan's military sexual slavery system and to prove its commitments to the G8 Declaration.

Yours sincerely

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