



토론토지구 한인회

www.koreancentre.on.ca

**Korean-Canadian Cultural Association of the Greater Toronto Area**

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April 9, 2007

Dear Honourable Member of Parliament: L'hon. Stéphane Dion

Subject: Canada's Response to Crimes against Asian and Caucasian "Comfort Women"

On behalf of all Korean Canadians, we express our gratitude for the passage of The Honourable MP Wayne Marston's motion in the subcommittee on International Human Rights, requesting our government to urge the Government of Japan to formally apologize and compensate the "Comfort Women" enslaved in World War II. We are also grateful for the motion tabled by The Honourable MPs Olivia Chow and Dawn Black that would urge Japanese Prime Minister to apologize officially and to offer financial compensation to the victims.

We respectfully ask for your help in passing this or similar resolution in the House of Commons. Such a measure would demonstrate Canada's ongoing support in this issue, and would complement a similar bill in the U.S. Congress. HR 121, a bipartisan resolution introduced by Rep. Mike Honda, has gathered significant support since being introduced January 31st of this year.

During WWII the Japanese Imperial Armed Forces organized and operated a vast system of sexual slave stations commonly referred to as the "Comfort Stations," solely for the purpose of providing sexual gratification for their soldiers. Up to 200,000 teenage girls and women living under their occupational control were tricked, kidnapped or coerced into serving as sexual slaves. Most were Korean and Chinese, but many other Asians and even European women of Caucasian descent were also victimized. These "Comfort Women" were raped by up to 20 soldiers per day, every day, for up to seven years. At the end of the war, those who managed to survive were either murdered or simply abandoned thousands of miles from home in the middle of nowhere.

Did Japan ever offer an unequivocal apology for their actions? Not really. Unlike Germany, which has made a point of owning up to its war crimes, Japan has been consistently evasive on this and other issues, much to the concern of its neighbours in the region.

The Prime Minister of Japan recently remarked that there was no evidence that the "Comfort Women" were actually coerced into sexual slavery - implying that it was their choice to be raped thousands of times a year for several years. He also implied that countless "comfort women" who testified against Japanese Imperial Army were liars conspiring to defame Japanese honour. These remarks came despite the fact that in 1993, it was discovered that the Japanese Army's involvement was documented in the government's own defense files, and as a result Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary at the time Yohei Kono issued a partial apology. **However, for the apology to be meaningful and official, it must come from the Japanese Diet and the Japanese Prime Minister.**

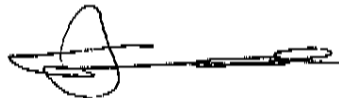
Has Japan compensated the victims? Again, not really. In 1995, the "Asian Women's Fund" was established in Japan. The objective of this private fund was to extend "atonement" from the people of Japan to the "Comfort Women." This Fund expired March 31st, 2007. Only 285 out of thousands of "Comfort Women" applied for compensation. Most of the women refused to recognize this Fund since it was not an official agent of Government of Japan. **Their demands were simple enough: official apology and official compensation.** To their credit, they were not willing to be so easily bought off.

What does any of this have to do with Canada? Canada has come to be respected by the international community as a voice of decency and reason. The cause of the "Comfort Women" would be greatly assisted by Canada lending its moral support. If that is not reason enough, it should be remembered that Canadian POWs themselves suffered disproportionately at the hands of their Japanese captors in WW II. Almost 20 percent of Canadian POWs died in hellishly brutal Japanese captivity, compared to less than 5 percent under German captivity. The prisoners, numbering about 1700, were beaten, degraded, tortured, murdered and were forced to do slave labour work in mines and factories. Japanese Government has never acknowledged, apologized, or compensated for these acts.

For those teenage girls - now very elderly women - who suffered unimaginably and who have harboured their pain for so long, we owe it to them at least to let them know they have not been forgotten, and that their cause is not forgotten by the world at large, and that those who commit such acts and then try to pretend nothing happened will be held accountable, even if it takes a lifetime. Canada can help these teenage girls, and in so doing, will be making the world a safer place for girls and boys growing up today in such dangerous times.

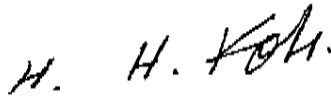
Yours respectfully,

Sang Hoon Lee



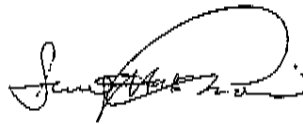
President, Korean Canadian Cultural Association of Metropolitan Toronto

H. H. Ko



President, Korean Senior Citizen's Association of Toronto

Choi Sung Hwak



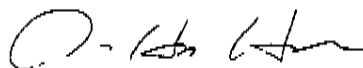
KCWA Family And social Service

Jin Soo Lee



President, Korean Veterans Association in Canada

The Reverend Sukhyon Peter Han



The Chairman of the Council of the Korean Churches in Ontario