

OPEN LETTER TO THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED STATES & JAPAN

- Kim, Hak Soon

Survivor of a comfort station in China

Kim Hak Soon, who was the first to courageously speak up about her horrible experience as a sex slave for Imperial Japanese soldiers, left a will, requesting that Japan's government should apologize for the World War II crimes committed by the government against more than 200,000 victims like her. Many of the known victims have died since then, leaving only 53 victims in South Korea. They are dying by the day. But to this date, Kim Hak Soon's final request has not been realized.

The government of Germany has taken responsibility for WWII crimes by extending a *direct, sincere, and unequivocal* apology to the victims of the Holocaust, offering government reparation to them, making it unconstitutional to deny the Holocaust, and teaching its children the history to prevent recurrence in the future. But, in a stark contrast, Government of Japan has done exactly the opposite by attempting to deny, cover up, and rewrite history to evade or reject its responsibility for the atrocities against humanity.

Japanese PM Abe, and his senior ministers, have repeatedly denounced the survivors of Japanese military rape camps as prostitutes and liars. In Abe's version, neither the Imperial government nor the Imperial army has any responsibility whatsoever for these systematic crimes. In reality, Japan's Imperial military and security police kidnapped women and girls from Korea, China, Philippines, and other countries for the military sex camps. Victims were subject to rapes and tortures if they resisted. Unknown thousands were executed if they were no longer useful as an instrument for sex.

Abe's government has not just ignored but has rejected H.Res. 121 which was passed unanimously by the House of Representatives in 2007. H.Res. 121 calls on the Japanese government to formally acknowledge its historical responsibility and apologize in a clear, unequivocal manner. Abe's foreign ministry has dispatched Japanese diplomats to California, New Jersey, Virginia, and to other states in an attempt to intimidate local officials into destroying or refusing to erect memorials to victims of military sexual slavery. It repeatedly attempted to block United Nations reports and legal analyses of Imperial Japan's culpability for systematic crimes against "Comfort Women."

Abe's officials at the Japanese Education ministry required re-writes of Japanese school textbooks to undermine or altogether remove historical facts about the Imperial government's criminal acts. They even demanded American textbook manufacturer McGraw Hill to delete any references to these violations along with the attack on Pearl Harbor, reports of comfort women and the Nanking Massacre.

Japan's ongoing denigration of "Comfort Women" today is in the form of providing aid, comfort, and ready-made legal alibis for modern warlords and others who use rape as a weapon of war.

Japan's own national interest, as well as that of its neighbors and the United States, are best served by Japan's government clearly acknowledging, accepting and apologizing wartime crimes against humanity during the WWII. As long as Japan continues to whitewash its past crimes, a true reconciliation with countries of victims will be impossible.

Abe is scheduled to speak to the joint session of the Congress in the House Chamber on April 29, 2015. The House Chamber is sacred ground in American history, where President Roosevelt delivered his "Infamy Speech." There is no place better than the US Capitol for Abe to accept the Japanese Imperial government's role in crimes against humanity during the WWII, and to offer a *clear and unequivocal* apology to all victims.

We, the people of all colors, sincerely hope that Japan will overcome its shameful past by facing the historical facts, not by hiding or covering them up, and become a true champion in the global community.

- Lee, Yong Soo

Survivor of a comfort station in Taiwan

Korean American Association of Washington Metropolitan Area
Korean Society of Maryland
The Koreatimes Washington, DC
Amnesty International
Asia Pacific WW II Atrocities Memorial Inc.

Global Alliance for Preserving the Truth of WWII
ROC Veteran Association of Greater Washington
The Union of Chinese American Professional Organizations
Chinese Alumni Associations of Greater Washington
Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association