

### Timeline on 'Comfort Women' redress movement

Aug. 14, 1991	Kim Hak-Sun becomes first sex slave victim to testify publicly
Jan. 1, 1992	Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa, in a press conference, said: "Concerning the 'comfort women', I apologize from the bottom of my heart and feel remorse for those people who suffered indescribable hardships".
Jan.8 1992	Weekly rallies demanding an apology for comfort women in front of the Japanese embassy in Seoul commence
July 6, 1992	Japan announces results of its first investigation into the issue, acknowledging the government's involvement
Aug. 4, 1993	Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono issues landmark statement apologizing to comfort women victims
Aug. 31, 1994	Prime Minister Tomichi Murayama issues statement apologizing for Japan's wartime aggressions
July 19, 1995	Asian Women's Fund is launched
April 1996	UN commission on Human Rights adopts the report of the Special Rapporteur Radhika Coomaraswamy on the issue of the military sexual slavery in wartime
2006	Japanese middle school textbooks delete passage about its military's sex slaves
March 2007	Asian Women's Fund is terminated
August 2011	Constitutional Court of Korea rules the government's failure to deal with the issue of Japanese sex slaves was a violation of the Korean constitution
Dec. 27, 2012	Government spokesman Yoshihide Suga calls for a "review" of the Kono Statement
Feb 7, 2013	Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said there is "no evidence" to prove Kono Statement
February 2014	An investigative panel to reexamine Kono Statement is launched by Japanese government
June 20, 2014	Panel announces results of investigation
Dec. 28, 2015	Agreement between Japan and South Korea

## Statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono on the result of the study on the issue of "comfort women"

August 4, 1993

The Government of Japan has been conducting a study on the issue of wartime "comfort women" since December 1991. I wish to announce the findings as a result of that study.

As a result of the study which indicates that comfort stations were operated in extensive areas for long periods, it is apparent that there existed a great number of comfort women. Comfort stations were operated in response to the request of the military authorities of the day. The then Japanese military was, directly or indirectly, involved in the establishment and management of the comfort stations and the transfer of comfort women. The recruitment of the comfort women was conducted mainly by private recruiters who acted in response to the request of the military. The Government study has revealed that in many cases they were recruited against their own will, through coaxing, coercion, etc., and that, at times, administrative/military personnel directly took part in the recruitments. They lived in misery at comfort stations under a coercive atmosphere.

As to the origin of those comfort women who were transferred to the war areas, excluding those from Japan, those from the Korean Peninsula accounted for a large part. The Korean Peninsula was under Japanese rule in those days, and their recruitment, transfer, control, etc., were conducted generally against their will, through coaxing, coercion, etc.

Undeniably, this was an act, with the involvement of the military authorities of the day, that severely injured the honor and dignity of many women. The Government of Japan would like to take this opportunity once again to extend its sincere apologies and remorse to all those, irrespective of place of origin, who suffered immeasurable pain and incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort women.

It is incumbent upon us, the Government of Japan, to continue to consider seriously, while listening to the views of learned circles, how best we can express this sentiment.

We shall face squarely the historical facts as described above instead of evading them, and take them to heart as lessons of history. We hereby reiterate our firm determination never to repeat the same mistake by forever engraving such issues in our memories through the study and teaching of history.

As actions have been brought to court in Japan and interests have been shown in this issue outside Japan, the Government of Japan shall continue to pay full attention to this matter, including private researched related thereto.

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/women/fund/state9308.html>

## Statement by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama on the occasion of the establishment of the "Asian Women's Fund"

July 1995

I would like to share with you my sentiments on the occasion of the establishment of the "Asian Women's Fund."

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the end of the War, an event that caused many people, both in Japan and abroad, great suffering and sorrow. During these past 50 years we have worked hard to cultivate, step by step, friendly relations with our neighbouring Asian countries and others. However, the scars of war still run deep in these countries to this day.

The problem of the so-called wartime comfort women is one such scar, which, with the involvement of the Japanese military forces of the time, seriously stained the honor and dignity of many women. This is entirely inexcusable. I offer my profound apology to all those who, as wartime comfort women, suffered emotional and physical wounds that can never be closed.

Established on this occasion and involving the cooperation of the Government and citizens of Japan, the "Asian Women's Fund" is an expression of atonement on the part of the Japanese people toward these women and supports medical, welfare, and other projects. As articulated in the proponents' Appeal, the Government will do its utmost to ensure that the goals of the Fund are achieved.

Furthermore, to ensure that this situation is never again repeated, the Government of Japan will collate historical documents concerning the former wartime comfort women, to serve as a lesson of history.

Turning from yesterday to today, we still see many women suffering violence and inhuman treatment in many parts of the world. The "Asian Women's Fund," as I understand it, will take steps to address these problems facing women today. The Government of Japan intends to play an active role in this regard.

I am convinced that a sincere effort on the part of Japan to implement these measures will further strengthen the true relationships of trust we share with our neighbours in Asia and other nations around the world.

The Government of Japan intends to cooperate, to the greatest extent possible, with the "Asian Women's Fund," in order that its aims are achieved. I call on each and every Japanese citizen, asking for your understanding and cooperation.

## The Points of Remarks by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe ( Upper House Budget Committee )

May 15, 2013

### Recognition of History

- Regarding the Murayama Statement, in the past, Japan caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries, particularly to those in Asian nations. This fully reflects the feelings of the Abe Cabinet, and the entire position outlined by previous administrations is continued by the Abe Cabinet.
- The Murayama Statement was issued 50 years after WWII, and a statement was issued by the Koizumi Cabinet ten years later. These statements were issued by the respective Cabinets of the time, and the position outlined by previous administrations is continued by the Abe Cabinet.
- Based on such deep remorse, we have established a free and democratic Japan, which respects the rule of law and contributes to a peaceful international society.
- I have never said that Japan has not committed aggression, and have never denied the fact of its colonial rule.

### Comfort Women Issue

- Regarding the Kono Statement, I am deeply pained to think of the comfort women who experienced immeasurable pain and suffering, a feeling I share equally with my predecessors.
- My position is that this issue should not be politicized or be turned into a diplomatic issue.
- Throughout history, women's dignity and basic human rights have often been infringed upon during the many wars of the past. The Government of Japan places paramount importance and is committed to doing its utmost to ensure that the 21st century is free from further violations of women's dignity and basic human rights.

[https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/page3e\\_000119.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/page3e_000119.html)

## Announcement by Foreign Ministers of Japan and the Republic of Korea at the Joint Press Occasion

### 1. Foreign Minister Kishida

The Government of Japan and the Government of the Republic of Korea (ROK) have intensively discussed the issue of comfort women between Japan and the ROK at bilateral meetings including the Director-General consultations. Based on the result of such discussions, I, on behalf of the Government of Japan, state the following:

- (1) The issue of comfort women, with an involvement of the Japanese military authorities at that time, was a grave affront to the honor and dignity of large numbers of women, and the Government of Japan is painfully aware of responsibilities from this perspective. As Prime Minister of Japan, Prime Minister Abe expresses anew his most sincere apologies and remorse to all the women who underwent immeasurable and painful experiences and suffered incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort women.
- (2) The Government of Japan has been sincerely dealing with this issue. Building on such experience, the Government of Japan will now take measures to heal psychological wounds of all former comfort women through its budget. To be more specific, it has been decided that the Government of the ROK establish a foundation for the purpose of providing support for the former comfort women, that its funds be contributed by the Government of Japan as a one-time contribution through its budget, and that projects for recovering the honor and dignity and healing the psychological wounds of all former comfort women be carried out under the cooperation between the Government of Japan and the Government of the ROK.
- (3) While stating the above, the Government of Japan confirms that this issue is resolved finally and irreversibly with this announcement, on the premise that the Government will steadily implement the measures specified in (2) above. In addition, together with the Government of the ROK, the Government of Japan will refrain from accusing or criticizing each other regarding this issue in the international community, including at the United Nations.

### 2. Foreign Minister Yun

The Government of the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the Government of Japan have intensively discussed the issue of comfort women between the ROK and Japan at bilateral meetings including the Director-General consultations. Based on the result of such discussions, I, on behalf of the Government of the ROK, state the following:

- (1) The Government of the ROK values the GOJ's announcement and efforts made by the Government of Japan in the lead-up to the issuance of the announcement and confirms, together with the GOJ, that the issue is resolved finally and irreversibly with this announcement, on the premise that the Government of Japan will steadily implement the measures specified in 1. (2) above. The Government of the ROK will cooperate in the implementation of the Government of Japan's measures.
- (2) The Government of the ROK acknowledges the fact that the Government of Japan is concerned about the statue built in front of the Embassy of Japan in Seoul from the viewpoint of preventing any disturbance of the peace of the mission or impairment of its dignity, and will strive to solve this issue in an appropriate manner through taking measures such as consulting with related organizations about possible ways of addressing this issue.
- (3) The Government of the ROK, together with the Government of Japan, will refrain from accusing or criticizing each other regarding this issue in the international community, including at the United Nations, on the premise that the Government of Japan will steadily implement the measures it announced.

[https://www.mofa.go.jp/a\\_o/na/kr/page4e\\_000364.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/na/kr/page4e_000364.html)