

- Statement -

Global Action for Righteous Resolution of the Japanese Military “Comfort Women” Issue and the 1212th Wednesday Demonstration

January 6, 2016

After Hak-soon Kim courageously testified on August 14, 1991 against Japan’s crime, the Japanese military “comfort women,” the first Wednesday Demonstration was held on January 8, 1992. Since then, it has been carrying on the hopeful spirit for 24 years and reached 1212th demonstration today. This weekly demonstration has become the brave voice of the victims, fight of the people hoping to accomplish human rights and peace, and a place of solidarity of people worldwide who oppose the war and demand elimination of violence against women. On December 14, 2011, the Peace Monument was erected here through solidarity participations of citizens to celebrate the 1000th Wednesday demonstration, and it vividly affirms our righteous fight.

The foreign ministers of Korea and Japan’s talk on December 28, 2015 clearly ignored “comfort women” victims’ demands that they have been calling at 24 years of Wednesday demonstrations, and it was concluded as a hasty Agreement, a mere political collusion. In order to resolve the issue, the Japanese government must first clearly admit its crime, systematic military sexual slavery. Therefore, the victims calling on Japan to accept and fulfill its state and legal responsibilities are righteous demands. However, the Agreement did not mention the crime specifically and acknowledgement of the crime was vague, and yet, the two governments concluded that the Agreement will be a “final and irreversible” settlement of the issue.

The Korean government has shamelessly stated that the Agreement, which does not reflect any of the victims’ voice, is for the victims’ honor and recovery of their human rights. Even at this very moment, they ignore the survivors’ demand and threaten that they would no longer be involved unless the Agreement is accepted by the survivors.

As soon as the Agreement was announced, the Japanese government clearly stated that what they had said during the talk was neither reparation nor legal responsibilities, thus, there would not be another apology. It is an expected action of Japanese government as the Agreement does not reflect any of their sincerity. Despite the situation, the Korean government is misleading the public that the issue is resolved and has promised to refrain from criticism and condemnation of Japan to the international community. All this only deepens the victims’ despair.

All of us, gathered here today, stipulate the Agreement which concludes the “comfort women” issue through political collusion between the two governments which is another violence that deeply hurts the victims. The survivors claim that the Agreement is unacceptable and call on Japanese government for a sincere apology and acknowledgement of its legal responsibilities. Thus, we and the survivors declare the launch of the global solidarity action for a righteous resolution of the Japanese military “comfort women” issue.

Students and citizens all over the country are denouncing the Agreement of December 28 and are protecting the Peace Monument and conscience people everywhere and civil societies are spreading their voices. People from all around the world and Korea have joined us through solidarity actions. We will become butterflies that spread the voice of the victims and fight beyond the borders to let the injustice of the Agreement known and achieve the righteous resolution. With our firm determination, we demand the followings.

- We demand the Korean and Japanese governments to rectify the Agreement of December 28 and conduct an immediate renegotiation for the righteous resolution.
- We call on Japanese government to follow the Recommendation of the 12th Asian Solidarity Conference, which reflects the survivors' demands and admit state and legal responsibilities of its crime, military sexual slavery. Thus, implement measures including legal reparations, truth disclosure, recurrence prevention, and history education.
- We demand the Korean government to review the Agreement which violates the survivors' human rights and actively pursue a resolution that is acceptable by the survivors.
- We demand the international community to act together for a proper resolution of the issue to recover the survivors' human rights and honor.
- We pledge to pave the way towards righteous resolution of the Japanese military "comfort women" issue and actively participate in recovering human rights and justice for the survivors.

All participants of the Global Action for Righteous Resolution of the Japanese Military "Comfort Women" Issue and the 1212th Wednesday Demonstration