

STATEMENT OF LILA-PILIPINA

(Task Force on Filipino Comfort Women)

on the Japanese Government's plan to Collect "Charity Money"

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Women Survivors of rape and military sexual slavery who have filed a claim for individual compensation and apology from the Japanese government are not beggars! They are women who fight to recover their humanity and to reclaim their human rights. They are entitled to a sincere and dignified apology and compensation from the Japanese government as well as reparation of all the sufferings, and damages inflicted.

LILA-PILIPINA opposes the Japanese government plan to set up a 'fund' sponsored by private sectors. This idea allows the Japanese government to evade its responsibility to the women survivors for direct compensation.

It was the Japanese government which started the war. It was the Japanese Imperial Army, before and during World War II, which had set up a vast network of comfort stations for the exclusive use of its forces. The Japanese military provided brothels to its troops wherever they were located. Chinese, Korean, Filipino, Malaysian, Indonesian and Dutch women and girls were put in these military brothels and sexual services were extracted from them under duress. The Japanese which had strict control of its forces and all passages and transportation, bears the responsibility for trafficking in women. This responsibility should be accepted by the present government of Japan. The vast scale in which these atrocities were perpetrated is truly appalling. Equally appalling is the kind of life in the military borthels that the women had to endure a living hell! The women were beaten and tortured, in addition to being raped by 15, 20 ro 30 soldiers a day, and by the officers at night, day after day, for periods ranging from three weeds to eight years. Living conditions were cramped and shabby. Although medical check-ups by army doctors took place occasionally, many women were afflicted with sexual transmitted diseases. Women and girls, who were healthy in body and spirit before they were abducted, left the brothels diseased in body, crippled in spirit.

The Japanese government, in order to sincerely resolve the issue, has to restore the honor and dignity of the women it did violence to. The women's honor and dignity could not be restored if the Japanese government simply promotes "charity money" or "condolence money" from private citizens of Japan. Where is its own political and moral responsibility? The Japanese government should confront its own guilt, and not transfer this to ordinary citizens and make the letter responsible for a war crime against women which the government had

committed.

The issue of official individual compensation to the war victims by the Japanese government has been left unsettled for nearly half a century. All wartime documents and records in the possession of Japan and the former Allied countries are still not made public. A thorough investigation, including interviews with the victims, is still to be conducted by the Japanese government.

Japan has granted compensation only to Japanese nationals. Japan should offer reparation for damages inflicted through direct compensation. Japan must acknowledge these crimes to ensure that wars and militarism and the degradation and violation of women will never happen again. And in order that such a crime may never be repeated, atrocities committed by the Japanese Imperial forces must be remembered. Proper education must be conducted in homes and schools, both in Japan and in the Philippines.

The Filipino, Korea and all comfort women who have publicly spoken out, have dared to call rape and military slavery by Japan a war crime. They seek reparation and renewal from the Japanese government. They seek redressal for the crimes against women, for the human rights violations committed against their persons.

We, the supporters, advocates of women's rights and for peace with justice can do nothing less but to continue the campaign and the social movement for all the victims and survivors of violence on women in war and armed conflict situations.