



KOREAN AMERICAN COALITION

WASHINGTON DC CHAPTER

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KAC-DC Support of House Resolution 121

KAC-DC is urging its community members locally and nationally to take action on behalf of comfort women. In a recent article by the Associated Press, Japan's Nationalist Prime Minister Shinzo Abe stated, "there is no evidence to prove there was coercion" regarding these women. Many have come to Japan's defense arguing that the country's government has sufficiently apologized for its actions. However, the stance of Japan's government is obvious from Prime Minister Abe's recent remarks. "There's no conclusive evidence, in a narrow definition, that comfort women were forcibly recruited. It wasn't like the government and the army took these women away like kidnapping," Abe said.

Historians estimate that during World War II, as many as 200,000 women and girls, the majority of them Korean, were conscripted as comfort women. Women from China, Japan, the Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, Dutch East Indies, and other Japanese-occupied countries were also taken. Historians found Japanese documents in 1992 that showed military authorities worked directly with contractors to find these women and put them into the brothels.

"Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's denial of Japan's forced sexual slavery should be taken as insanity. If we don't, we are the ones who are insane," said Dai Sil Kim-Gibson, director, producer, and writer of *Silence Broken: Korean Comfort Women*. "As to those women whom I call grandmas, they are resilient. They will be able to endure with courage and move forward until death."

Japanese soldiers as well as surviving comfort women have put forth their testimonies confirming the government's role in setting up brothels. Nariaki Nakayama, however, compares the comfort women to a school cafeteria. "Some say it is useful to compare the brothels to college cafeterias run by private companies, who recruit their own staff, procure foodstuffs and set prices," he said.

"Prime Minister Abe's denial of the history of comfort women completely neglects and denies the evidence brought to light not only by historians, but by soldiers, and most importantly, survivors," said KAC-DC President Gie Kim. "We hope that community members will be motivated by the remarks by Prime Minister Abe to help bring House Resolution 121 to a vote and pass. This is a human rights issue that sends a message to all countries who participate in the practice of sexual slavery. We are standing firm to say that it will never be tolerated."

KAC Leaders in Orange County, CA met with Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (CA-46) to personally deliver a letter regarding support for the resolution. Rep. Rohrabacher believed that Japan had already apologized to these women, citing the 1993 statement by then-Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono. Many of the supporters of comfort women, as well as the survivors themselves, however, did not see this apology as sufficient as it was not approved by the Japanese Diet. After discussing the recent denial by Prime Minister Abe, however, Rep. Rohrabacher has agreed to support the resolution.

Support for HR 121 is more important now than ever before. Those who want to support the resolution can visit www.kacdc.org to download a letter to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, asking them to bring the resolution to a vote. After failing the first time, our community has the golden opportunity of a second chance to put this resolution to a vote. We as a community must make sure that our voices are heard this time.

“This resolution goes a long way in repairing the damage done to the dignity of these women, and will send an important message to both those who seek to rewrite history, and to current perpetrators of institutionalized and organized rape around the world. It is unacceptable, and such crimes will not go uncondemned,” said Adrian Hong, Vice President of External Relations for KAC-DC.

The Korean American Coalition is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, nonpartisan, community-based organization established in 1983 in Los Angeles to facilitate the full participation of the Korean American community in civic, legislative and community affairs. KAC has grown into a national organization with nearly 20 chapters and affiliates in major cities, including Washington, D.C., Hawaii and Alaska. As the Korean American community's leading advocacy organization, KAC works to educate, organize, empower and bridge language, cultural and information gaps.

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