

Appeal to women of the world

Adopted at the International Symposium:

## How to hold the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal 2000

December 12, 1998 Tokyo

Let us work together for the success of the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery 2000

The 20th century is said to be a century of progress but it has certainly been a century of violence. No previous century has witnessed such a vast number of lives destroyed by war and genocide and such a huge number of women victimised by violence as in this century.

Among others, Japan's military sexual slavery which is believed to have victimised 200,000 Asian women as "comfort women" during the fifteen years of the Asia-Pacific War represented one of the most blatant war crimes committed against women in this century. Nevertheless, after WWII, sexual violence of the Japanese Imperial Army was hardly prosecuted at the Tokyo Trial.

But a new page of history was turned in the last decade of this century as "comfort women" broke their decades of silence and came forward. They encouraged women of the world who suffered from violence against them in war and armed conflict situations, including mass rape-survivors of former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and elsewhere. A growing number of women of the world have taken action to fight war crimes against women to form a new international tide.

At the Fourth United Nations World Women's Conference in Beijing, the Platform for Action adopted declared that systematic rape, sexual slavery and other violence against women in war and armed conflicts are war crimes and urged full investigation, full redress for the victims and prosecution of all criminals responsible for such crimes. In 1998, it was agreed to establish the International Criminal Court as a permanent war crimes court, whose statute recognises sexual violence in war and armed conflict situations as war crimes and crimes against humanity.

In 1998, the Sub-commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of the UN Commission on Human Rights adopted the McDougall Report on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, Systematic Rape, Sexual Slavery and Slavery-like Practices during Armed Conflict, which stressed the importance of criminal prosecution of perpetrators as well as reparation for victims in order to prevent such violence. It includes recommendations on the issue of "comfort women," to take both measures of compensation and prosecution.

Now we demand strongly for the Japanese government to take legal responsibility as soon as possible by disclosing the wartime documents needed for full investigation and providing state compensation with official apology to the victims. We call on an international campaign so that recommendations by the McDougall Report

addressed to the Japanese government and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights are implemented.

In order to face the end of this century in which women of the world have turned their pains into power and become subjects of moving history forward, we propose to hold a Women's International War Crimes Tribunal in December 2000 in Tokyo as part of "Justice and Honor to 'Comfort Women'! Global Campaign 2000." It is a non-governmental tribunal originally proposed by Japanese women and will be jointly organised by women of the offending country Japan, women of victim countries and women who are fighting wartime sexual violence. We urge all of you to participate in our process toward the Tribunal.

Since this is a non-governmental tribunal, it cannot actually punish anyone. It aims at making the fact established that Japan's military sexual slavery constituted a war crime against women, identify the perpetrators of the crime, define proper modes of their punishment, and record the complete proceedings of the Tribunal as historical documentation. For that purpose, women should take initiative in the preparation for the Tribunal with cooperation of experts and international solidarity. It is vitally important that as many grassroots women and men as possible to participate in the process, especially Japanese women should take responsibility as women of the offending country. Two years from now, it is imperative to make all efforts for investigation and documentation.

The success of the Tribunal will contribute, firstly, to pressurise the Japanese state to meet its responsibilities for its aggressive war and colonial rule of the Asian people and, thus, to cultivate the ground for a shared future in Asia based on reconciliation. Secondly it will promote to establish women's human rights and to develop further international law by ending the cycle of impunity of wartime sexual violence.

Let us work together, women of the whole world, at the close of this century of war and violence, to usher in a new century free from violence and discrimination against women, based on human dignity and peace.

Participants of the International Symposium:  
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