



MEMBERS OF JAPANESE and Korean women's groups and German grassroots activists gather in front of the Japanese Embassy in Berlin on Wednesday to show support for a Women's International War Crime Tribunal scheduled to be held in Tokyo from Dec. 8 to 10.

KYODO PHOTO

'Comfort women' rally held in Berlin

FRANKFURT (Kyodo) A demonstration of support for the Women's International War Crime Tribunal, which will investigate sexually violent acts committed by Japan's military during the war, was held Wednesday in front of the Japanese Embassy in Berlin.

The Dec. 8-10 tribunal, to be held in Tokyo, will not carry any legal authority.

About 150 people, including church representatives, members of both Japanese and Korean women's groups in Germany, and German grassroots activists, marched in the demonstration.

The demonstrators carried photographs of "comfort women," who were enslaved to serve as prostitutes for the

Japanese military. They demanded that the Japanese government apologize and pay compensation to the victims.

"We want you to pay attention to what the victims are saying," one demonstrator said in front of the embassy.

The tribunal will bring together former sex slaves and their supporters from China, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, the Netherlands, Indonesia and Japan.

They are expected to testify at the tribunal, where the responsibility of the Japanese government, former soldiers and the late Emperor Showa will be examined. However, they do not expect any of the accused to attend, as most

have since died.

A ruling will be handed down by six judges from third-party countries, based on a charter compiled by the tribunal's organizing committee.

Organizers say they are aiming to raise awareness among the Japanese public and build international pressure on Tokyo to deal appropriately with the crime of sex slavery, which, in contrast to other war crimes, has yet to be prosecuted.

The tribunal expects 500 participants from abroad and 600 from Japan to attend. A public hearing on crimes against women in recent wars and conflicts around the world will also be held Dec. 11 as a related event, they said.