

U.N. Human Rights Body to Probe "Comfort Women" Issue

The United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva will investigate the abuse of human rights of Korean women as "comfort women" in Japanese front-line brothels during World War II.

"The issue was raised on Korean girls or women compulsorily re-displaced by Japan for use as sex-slaves," said Theo van Boven, Special Rapporteur to the sub-commission in his final remark on SEX-SLAVES of the Japanese Imperial Forces during World War II, which followed an introduction to his second progress report to the sub-commission on Aug. 21.

"I can assure the sub-commission that I will duly examine the information on this issue received by the sub-commission and its working groups, and transmitted to me by the secretary general."

"I hope this information will also include the contents of the country (Japan) and countries that are immediately concerned or implicated," he stressed.

The commission will send him as a special U.N. inspector to Japan and the north and the south of Korea in December to draw up a report on Korean "comfort women."

The report which is expected to be submitted to the U.N. secretary general, will put heavy political pressure on the Japanese government to take a clear position regarding compensation to the victims.

NGO Meeting on Slavery by Japan

Groups of Korean residents in Japan and of south Korea rapped Japan on Aug. 18 for failing to admit that it used force in the recruitment of forced Korean labourers and "comfort woman" during World War II.

At an NGO (non-government organiza-

tions) meeting on slavery by Japan held at the U.N. organized by the World Council of Churches, the International Fellowship of Reconciliation and the International Educational Development Inc, registered with the United Nations, the Fact-Finding Team on the Truth about the Forced Korean Labourers in Japan and the (south) Korean Council for Women Drafted for Sexual Services for Japan urged Tokyo to carry out thorough investigations on the matter, make clear where the responsibility lies, and pay compensation to the women.

During the meeting, Hong Sang Jin, the secretary general of the Chongryun investigation group disclosed evidence (Material A) (see the full text on page 6) which proves that the Japanese imperial government forcibly drafted Chinese women as "comfort women." According to the material which was preserved in the U.S. Congress Library in Washington D.C., the Policy Planning Board of the Japanese imperial government worked out a draft plan for recruiting comfort women which was ratified by the Cabinet councilors. Japan claimed in its 7-month survey on forced Korean labourers and "comfort women" made public on July 6 that "comfort women" were not forcibly drafted.

He also disclosed lists of 147 Korean "comfort women" in Japan (Material B).

Hwang Kum Ju, 70, from south Korea, who served as a "comfort woman" attended the meeting to recount her experiences.

Hwang said that at the age of 19, she was taken to a frontline brothel in Jilin, northeastern China, then called Manchukuo, a Japanese puppet state, and suffered sexual abuse from Japanese soldiers for four years.

The meeting drew about 100 participants

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