

10 June, 1996

Mr. Director General
International Labour Office
CH-1211 Geneva 22
Switzerland

Dear Mr. Director General,

I am writing to withdraw the representation of the FKTU under Article 24 of the ILO Constitution on the issue of so called "comfort women" which was submitted to the ILO on 20 March 1995.

To our deep regret, the representation of this issue has not yet been reported to the Governing Body for its decision on the receivability of the representation for more than one year. It is to our great surprise that no action has been taken by the Governing Body, even after the Committee of Experts on the Applications of Conventions and Recommendations published its 1996 report containing an observation with regard to the comments of the OFSET, which refers to the same issue.

As you are certainly aware, the Committee notes that the Forced Labour Convention was in force for Japan during the years prior to the Second World War and during that war, and accordingly recognized that the "comfort women" issue should be characterized as sexual slavery in violation of the Convention.

While the Governing Body kept silent on our representation, the same issue has been seriously discussed in the UN human rights bodies, in particular the Commission on Human Rights. The Commission's Special Rapporteur on violence against women concluded in her report that the system of comfort stations set up by the then Japanese Imperial Army was a violation of its obligation under international law and that Japan still remains legally responsible for its violation.

Under these circumstances, the FKTU, on behalf of a number of surviving victims of such gross human rights abuses, has no choice but to simply express its strong dissatisfaction and disappointment with the lack of appropriate consideration by the Officers of the Governing Body. We also perceive little hope for any constructive response in the foreseeable future.

- Federation of Korean Trade Unions -

Faced with this situation, we can not but withdraw the representation. We are concerned that this might seriously undermine the credibility of the ILO Governing Body as a reliable supervising machinery.

We wish to make it clear that our decision to withdraw this representation in no way implies a failed attempt, instead we will make every continued effort to bring this heinous crime against international law to justice.

With our deepest sorrow.

Yours Sincerely,

Park, In-sang
President

朴仁相