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The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and has the honour to submit, as enclosed, the response of the Government of the Republic of Korea to the joint communication from Special Procedures, dated 17 July 2025 (AL KOR 3/2025)

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 12 September 2025

Enclosed : as stated

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)



Response by the Government of the Republic of Korea to the Joint Communication from Special Procedures

(September 12, 2025)

1. Information and comments on the allegations mentioned in the Joint Communication

The Government of the Republic of Korea (hereinafter “the ROK Government”) hereby provides some general views on the “comfort women” issue.

First, the ROK Government has endeavored, and will continue to endeavor, to restore the honor and dignity of “comfort women” victims and heal their psychological wounds.

The ROK Government recently stated that it intends to pursue forward-looking cooperation with Japan that benefits both countries, while hoping that Japan will squarely face up to our painful history and strive to maintain trust between our two countries.¹

Furthermore, the “comfort women” issue is a global issue related to universal human rights, namely the matter of wartime sexual violence. It also offers important lessons to be drawn from history that must not be forgotten in order to ensure that no such acts are repeated in the future. The ROK Government will actively participate in the efforts of the international community to ensure that future generations learn the historical truth related to the “comfort women” issue and to prevent any recurrence of conflict-related sexual violence.

2. Information on the measures taken to collect, consolidate, analyze and preserve the statements of the victims and witnesses and documentary evidence, including the documents from the Allied war crimes trials, especially with respect to the work of the Truth Commission on Forced Mobilization under Japanese Imperialism and any follow-up work after the termination of the Commission’s mandate in 2015

The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (hereinafter “MOGEF”) established the Research Institute on Japanese Military Sexual Slavery (hereinafter “RIMSS”) in 2018

¹ (Excerpts from the Speech by the President of the Republic of Korea, H.E. Mr. Lee Jae-Myung, on the occasion of Korea’s 80th Liberation Day (August 15, 2025) “Guided by the principle of pragmatic, national interest-focused diplomacy, we will seek forward-looking cooperation with Japan that benefits both countries, while holding frequent meetings and frank dialogues through shuttle diplomacy. The stronger the trust, the higher the quality of cooperation. I hope that the Japanese government will squarely face up to our painful history and strive to maintain trust between our two countries.”

within the Women's Human Rights Institute of Korea under the Ministry. The RIMSS has been tasked with collecting, consolidating, analyzing and preserving testimonies, oral statements, findings of investigations, documentary evidence and other documents related to the issue.

The RIMSS publishes domestic and international research reports and papers and indeed collects and translates documents, such as official Japanese government documents and parliamentary records.

It also operates the "Archive 814" digital archive (www.archive814.co.kr), which digitalizes the Institute's research materials, such as chronological tables, publications and oral statements of victims, providing and preserving such documents online.

Under the Special Act on Verification and Support for the Victims of Forced Mobilization under Japanese Colonialism in Korea, the Truth Commission on Forced Mobilization under Japanese Imperialism was mandated to investigate and verify damage suffered by those forcibly mobilized by Japan, including "comfort women", conscripted soldiers, civilian workers in the military, and laborers.

In accordance with the Special Act, the Commission undertook two kinds of investigations: investigations of victims' claim and fact-finding investigations. Under victims' claims, a total of 226,583 cases of forced mobilization were received and examined, of which 336 cases concerned "comfort women."

Table 1. Decision on Claims (Unit: cases)

Category	Total	Soldiers	Civilian Workers in the Military	Laborers	"Comfort Women"	Others
Total cases	226,583	33,398	37,033	155,479	336	337
Victims	218,639	32,857	36,702	148,961	23	96
Dismissed	449	21	23	339	7	59
Rejected	1,318	195	104	966	1	52
Impossible to Verify	6,177	325	204	5,213	305	130

Under fact-finding investigations, with regard to policies, cases, and incidents related to the forced mobilization that were brought before the Commission either upon application or ex officio, a total of 32 investigations were completed. Among them, three (3) concerned the mobilization of "comfort women," and corresponding fact-finding reports were published.

Table 2. Investigations on the “Comfort Women” Issue (3 cases)

Applicant	Summary	Start Date	Completion Date
██████████	Investigation of the Registers of comfort women in Indonesia	September 2, 2005	November 19, 2009
██████████	Investigation of Korean sex slaves sent to Hainan Island	September 2, 2005	January 27, 2011
██████████	Investigation of “comfort stations” for laborers and Korean “comfort women for laborers in wartime Japan”	December 6, 2005	November 14, 2008

Furthermore, in order to accurately reflect the reality of victims who had been forcibly mobilized as “comfort women,” the Commission published in 2013 a Korean-language oral testimony collection under the title of “Can You Hear Us? – The Untold Narratives of Twelve Girls.” In 2014, it released an English translation of this volume under the adapted title “Can You Hear Us? – The Untold Narratives of Comfort Women,” with 20,000 copies distributed overseas through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The records produced and collected by the Commission, including electronic documents, victims’ claim files, registers, documentary materials, audiovisual records, and publications, were largely designated for permanent or semi-permanent preservation and transferred to the National Archives of Korea and related institutions. Some materials are also exhibited and utilized at the National Memorial Museum of Forced Mobilization under Japanese Occupation.

3. Information on how the government will fulfill its obligation to support “comfort women” survivors’ right to truth, justice, remedy, and reparation, including through diplomatic channels and inter-state procedures

Since the “comfort women” issue was first raised in the international community in the early 1990s, the ROK Government has engaged in dialogue and consultation with the Government of Japan on the issue and shared views with United Nations human rights mechanisms.

On December 28, 2015, the ROK Government reached an agreement related to the “comfort women” issue with the Government of Japan at the ROK-Japan Foreign Ministers’ Meeting. It has continued to provide assistance to survivors and to make efforts to restore honor and dignity of the victims and to heal their psychological wounds.

In 1993, the ROK Government legislated the Act on Protection, Support and Commemorative Projects for Sexual Slavery Victims for the Japanese Imperial Army to ensure they have a stable livelihood and to implement commemorative projects for “comfort women” victims.

The MOGEF provides assistance for ensuring stable livelihoods for “comfort women” survivors, such as support for a stable livelihood and support for care costs. The Ministry also provides emotional support and other forms of assistance reflecting their needs through health-care and tailored service projects.

As of 2025, a monthly amount of KRW 1,882,000 per person is rendered for the living stability subsidy, and a monthly amount of KRW 3,446,000 per person is provided for care costs. In addition to the medical care cost assistance, tailored services aimed at improving their everyday lives and living conditions, such as regular monitoring and the provision of household items, are in place to ensure “comfort women” survivors receive real help and treatment.

4. Information on how the government will implement international human rights mechanisms’ recommendations, including those made by the Human Rights Committee and the CEDAW Committee, in relation to the issue of the so-called “comfort women”

The ROK Government respects the recommendations of United Nations human rights bodies and mechanisms on issues of human rights, including those on the “comfort women” issue.

The ROK Government will continue to strive to restore the honor and dignity of the “comfort women” victims and heal their psychological wounds, which is indeed the spirit of the 2015 Agreement. At the same time, it will give its utmost consideration to the views of victims and their bereaved families and of the Korean people, as well as policy coherence and bilateral trust.

The MOGEF has continued to increase support for the health and welfare of “comfort women” survivors, such as support for a stable livelihood, medical care and other forms of tailored support.

To provide support for a healthy later life for “comfort women” survivors, the Government increased the living stability subsidy and care cost support. The living stability subsidy rose from KRW 1,792,000 in 2024 to KRW 1,882,000 in 2025, while care cost support increased from KRW 3,282,000 in 2024 to KRW 3,446,000 in 2025. To identify tailored support to meet their needs, a fact-finding study on the livelihoods of victims and a policy

satisfaction survey are carried out on an annual basis from September to December.

5. Information on what measures the government has taken to protect “comfort women” survivors and supporting civil society organizations, human rights defenders, scholars, and journalists from harassment, threats, and intimidation, both online and off-line

The amendment bill to the Act on Protection, Support and Commemorative Projects for Sexual Slavery Victims for the Japanese Imperial Army is currently pending at the Korean National Assembly. The bill is intended to ban and punish the dissemination of false information, as well as defamation of “comfort women” victims. The ROK Government is working together with the National Assembly to pass the bill.

6. Information on actions taken by the government to pursue the enforcement of the court judgments of 8 January 2021 by the Seoul Central District Court (case No. 2016 Ga-Hap 505092), the judgment of 23 November 2023 by the Seoul High Court (case No. 2021 Na 2017165), and the judgment of 25 April 2025 by the Cheongju District Court (case No. 2024 Ga-Dan 52192)

Information on the cases related to the aforementioned judgments is as follows:

Judgment	Parties	Final Result (Method of Service)	Case for Property Specification	Progress of Proceedings
Seoul Central District Court Case No. 2016GaHap505092 Claim for Damages	Plaintiff: [REDACTED] and 11 others Defendant: The State of Japan	January 8, 2021 - Judgment for the Plaintiff (Service by Public Notice)	Seoul Central District Court Case No. 2021KaMyeong391 Property Specification Case	September 15, 2022 - Dismissed
Seoul High Court Case No. 2021Na2017165 Claim for Damages	Plaintiff: [REDACTED] and 14 others, legal successors to the late [REDACTED] Defendant: The State of Japan	November 23, 2023 Judgment for the Plaintiff in part (Service by Public Notice)	Seoul Central District Court Case No. 2024 KaMyeong 104327 Property Specification Case	June 27, 2025 - Dismissed

Cheongju District Court 2024GaDan52192 Claim for Damages	Plaintiff: [REDACTED]	April 25, 2025 Judgment for the Plaintiff in part (Service by Public Notice)	Seoul Central District Court Case No. 2025 KaMyeong 13617 Property Specification Case	July 14, 2025 - Case filed (Under Review)
	Defendant: The State of Japan			

Even if a judgment ordering the payment of money is rendered under the civil execution procedures of the Republic of Korea, compulsory execution may only be carried out upon the creditor’s application, and compulsory execution by the state ex officio is not permitted. Currently, no application for compulsory execution has been filed by the creditor based on the above judgments as enforcement titles. Although an application for property specification was submitted in preparation for compulsory execution, it was dismissed due to reasons outlined below including the refusal of service by the debtor (the State of Japan).²

7. Information on what measures the government has or will undertake to support survivors’ efforts to memorialize and archive their testimonies, as well as to educate the public on past atrocities

Since the establishment of the RIMSS on the issue of Japanese military “comfort women” in 2018 within the Women's Human Rights Institute of Korea under the MOGEF, the Institute has been preserving testimonies by “comfort women” victims and digitalizing related documentary evidence.

² Partial excerpt from the reasoning of the property specification order issued by the Seoul Central District Court on June 27, 2025 (Case No. 2024KaMyeong104327). (The property specification order issued on September 15, 2022 (Case No. 2021KaMyeong391) by the Seoul Central District Court was based on the same reasoning.) :

Pursuant to the creditors’ application for property specification in this case, the Court issued an order for property specification against the debtor on November 6, 2024. For service the document abroad on the debtor, the Court issued a correction order to the creditors on November 18, 2024. [...] Subsequently, the above-mentioned request documents were forwarded to the Minister of Justice of Japan with respect to the debtor. However, the Minister of Justice of Japan refused to receive the request documents on the grounds that the service of the request documents would violate the sovereignty or security of the debtor, citing Article 13(1) of the Hague Convention on the Service Abroad of Judicial and Extrajudicial Documents in Civil or Commercial Matters. As a result, the request documents were returned. After all, this Court attempted to properly serve the debtor with the documents related to the property specification order in this case; however, the documents were returned. In light of the procedural history of this case, it is evident that there is no other viable means of serving the above-mentioned documents on the debtor except by way of service by public notice. Accordingly, the Court has decided to dismiss the creditors’ application for property specification by applying Article 62(7) of the Civil Execution Act by analogy, and therefore decides as stated in the holding of the judgment.

In addition, oral documents, chronological tables and research and educational materials are offered online to increase public access to the information and raise public awareness, via the Webzine Kyeol (kyeol.kr) and the "Archive 814" digital archive (www.archive814.co.kr).

The MOGEF conducts a systematic research and records documents related to the issue of “comfort women.” The efforts include collecting and building a database of domestic and overseas documents, translating and annotating overseas documents, and translating and publishing Korean documents and oral records.

The Ministry is planning to organize academic symposiums, youth artwork contests, exhibition projects, and international cooperation projects to build domestic and global consensus on the issue of wartime sexual violence.

The Ministry of Education is developing the national curriculum³ and textbooks, which form the foundation of history education, to include content on the Japanese military’s “comfort women,” so that related teaching of this can be systematically implemented in schools. Accordingly, all middle and high school students in Korea receive education on the historical facts regarding “comfort women” with the use of testimonies of victims and historical records.

In addition, the Ministry plans to continue providing teachers and students with educational materials in collaboration with historical research institutions to find related source materials and develop education resources.

8. Information on what actions the government will take to protect memorials established to honor “comfort women” survivors, including the “comfort women” statues installed in various locations in the Republic of Korea and beyond

The ROK Government wishes to reiterate that the “comfort women” issue is a key instance of wartime sexual violence, which is not an issue confined to any particular group of countries, but rather is a matter of women’s universal human rights.

The ROK Government well recognizes the “comfort women” statues to be part of an effort to promote awareness of the true nature of this ‘universal human rights issue,’ and a voluntary civic initiative to prevent future any similar tragedies by encapsulating the

³ The national curriculum for primary and secondary schools serves as a common and general standard presented at the national level, and functions as a guideline for achieving the educational goals of elementary and secondary education.

historical lessons of the “comfort women” issue in the statues.

In addition, local governments are encouraged to strengthen the management of domestic monuments and symbols that honor “comfort women” victims through the enactment or implementation of relevant ordinances.

9. Information on measures taken by the government to ensure the meaningful participation of the “comfort women” victims, their families and relevant civil society organizations in truth, justice, reparation and accountability processes

The ROK Government has been engaging in dialogue with “comfort women” victims, their bereaved families, and relevant civil society organizations, including through public-private consultations, as it seeks measures to restore the honor and dignity of “comfort women” victims and heal their psychological wounds.

The ROK Government will continue to listen attentively to the views of “comfort women” victims, their bereaved families, and relevant civil society organizations, and engage in best efforts to restore the honor and dignity of victims and heal their psychological wounds.

The MOGEF annually allocates an earmarked budget for legal counseling, representation in lawsuits and other legal assistance to support legal procedures at the request of victims.

The Ministry also supports projects involving private organizations’ activities to ensure the meaningful participation of civil society in the process of truth, justice, reparation and accountability in relation to “comfort women” issues.

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