



Permanent Representation of  
the Kingdom of the Netherlands  
to the United Nations Office and  
other International Organizations  
in Geneva

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The Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to Ms. Federica DONATI, Officer-in-charge, Special Procedures Branch, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva and, with reference to the latter's Note Verbale AL NLD 3/2025 dated 17<sup>th</sup> of July 2025, has the honour to transmit herewith the response of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Joint Communication from Special Procedures.

The Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to Ms. Federica DONATI, Officer-in-charge, Special Procedures Branch, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 15 October 2025



Ms. Federica DONATI, Officer-in-charge  
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**1. Please provide any information and/or comments you may have on the above mentioned allegations;**

The Dutch state acknowledges the suffering endured by the victims of the events that took place during the Second World War and recognises that many still bear the burden of this suffering today. At the same time, the Dutch state formally settled the matter of responsibility for suffering inflicted during the Second World War, within the scope of which the comfort women system falls, by signing the Treaty of Peace with Japan (1951) and the Yoshida-Stikker Agreement (1956).

In the Treaty of Peace with Japan (also referred to as the Treaty of San Francisco), the Netherlands, as one of the Allied Powers, waived, except as otherwise provided in the Treaty, all reparations claims and other claims of the Netherlands itself and its nationals, i.e. Dutch nationals who were interned during the war, arising out of any actions taken by Japan during the Second World War.

After concluding the Treaty of San Francisco, the Netherlands entered into negotiations on the provision of compensation for Dutch civilian detainees held in Japanese internment camps for the excessive suffering they endured. These negotiations led to the signature and entry into effect of the Yoshida-Stikker Agreement in 1956. On the basis of this treaty, Japan paid a voluntary and full and final settlement of USD 10 million to the State of the Netherlands. In that regard, the state affirmed that neither it nor any Dutch national would institute a claim of any nature against Japan in connection with the suffering that Japan inflicted on Dutch nationals during the Second World War.

Legally, the Dutch state is under no obligation to compensate the damage suffered by victims of the Japanese occupation, including victims of the comfort women system, because it did not cause this damage. Nevertheless, over the years the state has introduced a range of measures aimed at providing assistance to, and a certain level of compensation for, war victims. In this way, the state has demonstrated responsibility for the victims.

**2. Please provide detailed information on what actions and resources your Government has dedicated to support, justice, accountability, and reparations for 'comfort women; survivors from the Netherlands;**

Over the years, the Dutch government has introduced various measures and made resources available to support, acknowledge and, to a certain degree, compensate war victims from the Netherlands, including victims of the Japanese occupation of the former Dutch East Indies during the Second World War. This includes survivors of the comfort women system, but none of the provisions was directed specifically at these particular survivors. Even though full compensation was never the guiding principle, various schemes have been developed, in many cases in consultation with lobbying groups from the Indonesian community. The aim of these schemes was to ease and acknowledge the suffering, and to provide justice.

Although these measures did not provide for full compensation, they did constitute acknowledgement of the injustices inflicted on those concerned and their sacrifices.

The support provided to war victims, including victims of the Japanese occupation of the former Dutch East Indies and the survivors of the comfort women system, consists of three pillars:

- 1) Legislation concerning members of the resistance and people affected by the war;
- 2) Psychosocial support and social work;
- 3) One-off schemes for specific target groups, such as those for war victims from Southeast Asia.

Victims of the Second World War and members of the resistance are eligible for financial support and compensation for care costs under specific legislation that is still

in effect. In addition, war victims are still eligible for specific psychosocial support and social work. The one-off schemes were aimed at various groups of war victims, including civilians interned in Japanese camps.

In November 2007, the House of Representatives unanimously adopted a motion submitted by MP Hans van Baalen et al. during the debate on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' budget. The motion urged the Dutch government to press Japan to acknowledge and apologise for forcing women to serve as comfort women during the Second World War. The House of Representatives asserted that these women were victims of systematic sexual slavery and that their suffering had not been sufficiently acknowledged or compensated. On the basis of this motion, the Netherlands raised the issue in talks with the Japanese authorities.

Although the motion and the actions that followed could not result in any legal or financial compensation since such redress had been formally waived in the Treaty of San Francisco (1951) and the Yoshida-Stikker Agreement (1956), they were intended to provide political and moral support.

**3. Please provide detailed information on measures taken by your Government to ensure the meaningful participation of the survivors from the Netherlands and relevant associations representing them in participating in truth, justice and accountability processes;**

Apart from the measures cited above aimed at war victims in general, the state of the Netherlands has taken no specific measures to ensure the meaningful participation of Dutch survivors of the comfort women system or of relevant associations representing them in truth, justice and accountability processes.

In the 1990s and early 2000s initiatives were launched by the Asian Women's Fund (AWF), a Japanese fund that set up medical and welfare projects in the Netherlands and elsewhere for women who were forced into prostitution during the Second World War. In the Netherlands, local organisations of war victims helped identify those eligible and provided support in the application process. In the Netherlands 79 victims of the comfort women system accepted this form of financial compensation.

In addition, in 2020 the Foundation of Japanese Honorary Debts, an independent civil society initiative, brought a case against the Dutch state asserting that it had acted wrongfully vis-à-vis the war victims by ratifying the Treaty of San Francisco and the Yoshida-Stikker Agreement. In 2021 the Dutch court ruled in this case that the state had not acted wrongfully vis-à-vis war victims and that there had been no violation of the European Convention on Human Rights.

In sum, the Dutch state has not taken any specific measures aimed at ensuring the meaningful participation of Dutch survivors of the comfort women system or their representatives in truth, justice and accountability processes. The forms of participation that have taken place were facilitated under foreign or civil society initiatives.

**4. Please provide detailed information on how your Government will fulfil its obligation to support 'comfort women' survivors' right to truth, justice, remedy and reparation, including through diplomatic channels and inter-state procedures;**

The Dutch state acknowledges the suffering endured by the victims of events that took place during the Second World War and recognises that many still bear the burden of this suffering today. At the same time, under the terms of the Treaty of San Francisco (1951) and the subsequent Yoshida-Stikker Agreement (1956) the Dutch state cannot submit any further claims or demands to Japan. The Treaty of San Francisco, of which the Netherlands is a signatory, required Japan to pay reparations to the Allied countries, but excluded any further individual claims against Japan. The Yoshida-Stikker Protocol, a bilateral agreement between the Netherlands and Japan, built on this and specifically emphasised that: *'[t]he Government of the Kingdom of The Netherlands confirms that neither itself nor any Netherlands nationals will raise against the Government of Japan any claim concerning the sufferings inflicted during*

*the Second World War by agencies of the Government of Japan upon Netherlands nationals.'*

In a law suit brought by the Foundation of Japanese Honorary Debts against the Dutch state in 2020, in which the Foundation asserted that the state had done too little to help war victims, including comfort women, the district court held in 2021 that the state had not acted wrongfully by concluding the Yoshida-Stikker Agreement. The state asserts that it has already taken moral and financial measures to acknowledge and support war victims, and has consequently fulfilled its responsibility and has no further obligation to provide additional compensation or acknowledgement.

**5. Please explain what measures your Government has undertaken to document, analyze, memorialize and archive statements of victims and witnesses and documentary evidence concerning the 'comfort women' system, as well as to educate the public on past atrocities;**

The Dutch government has not taken any specific measures to systematically document, analyse or archive the statements of victims of the comfort women system, or to educate the public on this matter.

However, there are third parties that have taken it upon themselves to carry out some of this work. For example, the Asian Women's Fund (AWF), a Japanese initiative, commissioned research into Dutch archives and published reports about Dutch nationals who were subjected to the comfort women system. In addition, there are academic publications and research reports that draw on Dutch archive material. These projects have made important witness statements and documentation available but were not initiated or structurally supported by the Dutch state.

Furthermore, interest groups and researchers play a role in bringing survivors' stories to light, for example, through publications and university research papers. It can be concluded that efforts to educate the public and document, analyse and archive information regarding the Dutch nationals who were victims of the comfort women system largely stem from outside the Dutch government and are not rooted in any official policy or government initiatives.

**6. Please provide what measures your 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 Dutch state has not undertaken any measures to protect survivors of the comfort women system against threats and intimidation. Nor are there any known cases of survivors having been the target of intimidation in connection with their transfer to the Netherlands. Measures related to these concerns are general in nature.

In the Netherlands freedom of expression is a fundamental right laid down in article 7 of the Constitution. The groups mentioned are therefore at liberty to tell and publish their stories, free of state censorship. In addition, by implementing EU legislation on combating the use of strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs) and through the PressSafe (*PersVeilig*) initiative, the Dutch state works to protect people who actively engage in public debate.

**7. provide detailed information measures taken by your Government to ensure the meaningful participation of the 'comfort women' victims, their families and relevant civil society organizations in participating in past, present, or future truth, justice, reparation and accountability processes.**

The Dutch state has not taken any specific measures or initiatives to ensure the meaningful participation of survivors of the comfort women system, their families or relevant civil society organisations in truth, justice, reparation or accountability processes. Any engagement of this kind has been facilitated by third parties and not by official Dutch government structures or policy. However, the Dutch government has provided redress in a broader sense for war victims from the former Dutch East

Indies, including victims of the comfort women system. Under legislation applying to people affected by the war and members of the resistance, war victims are still eligible for financial support and compensation for care costs. In addition, war victims are still eligible for specific psychosocial support and social work. Efforts to provide reparation and acknowledgement have been made through one-off compensation schemes such as *Het Gebaar* and *Uitkeringswet Indische Geïnterneerden*.