

Statement

We Urge Osaka Mayor Hashimoto Toru, Co-President of Japan Restoration Party to Apologize to All Victims of “Comfort Women” Issue and Immediately Resign from Public Life

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Hashimoto Toru, Co-President of the Japan Restoration Party and Mayor of Osaka said in the press conference on May 13 with reference to the military “comfort women”, “The comfort women system was necessary in order to maintain order within the military at that time”, and “Anyone can understand the necessity of the comfort women system if those young soldiers working fiercely in the line of fire at the front risking their lives with their blood surging are to be given time to rest somewhere.”

Hashimoto has so far distorted the fact that victim women were forcibly recruited into the military sex slavery. This time he went so far as affirming the necessity of this criminal system. His statement amounts to infringe human rights of women and accept the act of sexual violence for carrying out war, the worst form of violence. His words are utterly unbelievable as those of a representative of an open political party or a mayor, or even a human being. He rubbed salt into the wounds of, and once again violated the dignity of the victim women, whose lives have been ruined and full of indescribable pains and sufferings. We absolutely refuse to accept his behavior.

When he visited U.S. Futenma Air Station in Okinawa, he told a U.S. Commander to “make use of sex-related business.” This is another unforgivable remark made by Hashimoto, who totally ignored the suffering and fear endured by women and the people of Okinawa, who have been sacrificed by the continued existence of U.S. bases.

The Statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono Yohei on the result of the study on the issue of "comfort women" (August 4, 1993) confirmed, “Comfort stations were operated in response to the request of the military authorities of the day. The then Japanese military was, directly or indirectly, involved in the establishment and management of the comfort stations and the transfer of comfort women...in many cases they were recruited against their own will...They lived in misery at comfort stations under a coercive atmosphere.” And it stated, “Undeniably, this was an act,

with the involvement of the military authorities of the day that severely injured the honor and dignity of many women. The Government of Japan would like to take this opportunity once again to extend its sincere apologies and remorse to all those, irrespective of place of origin, who suffered immeasurable pain and incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort women.” In conclusion it declared, “We shall face squarely the historical facts as described above instead of evading them, and take them to heart as lessons of history. We hereby reiterated our firm determination never to repeat the same mistake by forever engraving such issues in our memories through the study and teaching of history.”

Hashimoto’s recent remarks run contrary to such position of the government and naturally draw immediate and sharp criticism from countries of Asia and the world.

The issue of the “comfort women” teaches us how the act of war would dehumanize humans and negate human rights, and that it should never be repeated for whatever reasons.

From our standpoint of protecting people’s lives and human rights among others, we urge Hashimoto Toru to extend his sincere apology to the victims of the “comfort women” issue, and to resign from public office.