

The “Comfort Women:” Japanese Military Sexual Slavery during the Asia-Pacific War

Prezi Full Script



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Accompanying Handouts and Materials

- Asia-Pacific War Student Backgrounder
- *Survivor Testimonies*: KIM Bok-Dong, CHUNG, Seo-Won, LEI Guiying, Maria Rosa Henson, Jan Ruff O’Herne
- *Paintings by Survivors*: “At That Time, at That Place,” “Kidnapped on a Boat,” “Lapaul (Rubaul) Comfort Station,” “Japanese Soldier Picking Pear,” “Untitled,” “Apologize Before Us”, “Purity Lost Forever”
- 1993 Kono Statement
- 1995 Murayama Statement on the establishment of Asian Women's Fund

(All the above materials can be downloaded [here](#))

Notes About Script Format

Each frame of the Prezi is titled in this script to represent the content covered therein, and includes a snapshot of the corresponding frame as seen on Prezi. Key information to be included in the presentation of each frame is provided in either paragraph or bullet-point form. Further information can always be found at www.alpha-canada.org. Teachers will also note that colored boxes appear with some frame descriptions. The pink boxes highlight important resources that BC ALPHA highly recommends that teachers peruse. The green boxes provide instructions for classroom activities. The blue boxes contain questions to be asked to students for either large- or small-group discussion. The orange boxes contain special advisories for teachers about sensitive content or topics.

Introduction

NOTE: It is recommended that the introduction take 1-2 minutes.

[Frame 1] Home Screen



The main background page is meant to frame the entire presentation as an issue of social justice and human rights. However you choose to introduce the topic, you may want to explain the background photograph, which is of some of the survivors in Korea protesting at the weekly Wednesday Demonstration in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul since January 1992. The one at the very front is PARK Ok-Seon, and the one to her right is KANG Il-Chul.

It is important to clarify that we are talking about a specific system of military sexual slavery that was coordinated and implemented by the Imperial Japanese forces during the Asia-Pacific War. It’s good to differentiate this from the global slave trade that students are likely to have heard about, and to emphasize that this military sexual slavery system was a product of war.

Section A: The Asia-Pacific War Background

NOTE: It is recommended that Section A take 6-8 minutes.

[Frame 2] Map of Asia Pacific During War



Students require a background on the Asia-Pacific War (1931-1945) to understand the historical context for Japanese military sexual slavery. If the students read through the Asia-Pacific War Student Backgrounder, then this frame is an opportunity to review the information in that handout. If students haven't read the Backgrounder, then you will need to briefly explain the concepts and events highlighted in that document.

[Frame 3] Reasons for Imperial Expansion and Expansion Strategy



NOTE: This frame requires clicking once to make the items appear on the screen.

Use this frame to review the following information with the students:

- Reasons for Japanese imperial expansion
 - Trying to establish itself on world stage following over two centuries of isolation
 - Small country with limited natural resources
 - Threatened by Western colonialism in the region
 - Japan's native religion of Shintoism fostered the belief of Japan's divine origin, its Emperor as a direct descendent of the sun goddess, and the destiny of the Emperor to rule the world
- Imperial Japan's strategy for expansion
 - Develop capitalist economy and rapidly industrialize
 - Bolster its military
 - Acquire foreign markets and territories through imperial expansion

RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS A more comprehensive background of the historical and socio-political reasons for Japan's Imperial expansion is provided in the [Teacher Backgrounder](#) of the BC Ministry of Education's Teacher's Guide, *Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific 1931-1945: Social Responsibility and Global Citizenship*.

[Frame 4] Establishment of "Comfort Stations"



NOTE: This frame requires clicking one-by-one to make the facts appear on the screen.

The Imperial Japanese forces established the first of what were referred to as “Comfort Stations” in Shanghai in 1932. **[Click 1]** According to official Japanese military documents, the supposed rationale for setting up these stations was to prevent soldiers from raping local women and to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) amongst soldiers. However, **[Click 2]** the reality was that as a result of the “Comfort Stations,” rape and STIs actually increased. Nonetheless, these were the justifications used to enslave women that they referred to as “Comfort Women” **[Click 3]** and to establish a system of rape centers that they referred to as “Comfort Stations.”

[Frame 5] The “Comfort Women” and “Comfort Stations” Euphemisms



NOTE: This frame requires clicking once to make the question appear on the screen.

The terms “Comfort Stations” and “Comfort Women” are euphemisms for the rape centers and the victims of Japanese military sexual slavery.

QUESTION FOR STUDENTS

What do we use euphemisms for?

- A euphemism is a word or expression that is used when people want to find a polite or less offensive way of talking about a difficult or negative topic. They are often used to downplay something that they know is wrong. Such was the reason why the Imperial Japanese forces used the word “Comfort Stations” for the rape centers and “Comfort Women” for the sex slaves that they forced to work in them.

NOTE: It is recommended that you use around 2-3 minutes for this discussion.

Section B: The “Comfort Station” System

NOTE: It is recommended that Section B take 25-35 minutes (Depending on whether the activity is done).

[Frame 6] Who Were the “Comfort Women?”



NOTE: This frame requires clicking once to make the ages appear on the screen.

Here we start looking at the demographics of the women and girls enslaved in this system. **[Click 1]** According to survivor testimonies and eyewitness reports, they ranged in age from about 11-33 years old, and the majority of them were in their teenage years or early twenties.

[Frame 7] Countries of Origin



NOTE: This frame requires clicking once to make the item appear on the screen.

[Click 1] The women and girls were from countries either occupied or invaded by the Imperial Japanese forces. There were also a small number from Japan. Everywhere on the map where there are dots indicate the main countries of origin. Origins of victims were Korea, China, Japan, Taiwan, Philippines, Burma, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, Borneo, Thailand, East Timor, Papua New Guinea, Saipan, Guam, the Netherlands (as Indonesia was a Dutch colony at the time – the Dutch East Indies), and Australia. However, there were women enslaved in any country where the Imperial Japanese forces were, so we can assume that this is not an exhaustive list. The majority of women came from Korea and China.

[Frame 8] Scope of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery System



NOTE: This frame requires clicking one-by-one to make the facts appear on the screen.

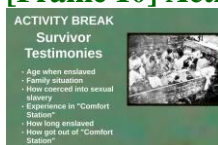
It's impossible to know the exact numbers, as documents have been destroyed and so few of the victims survived and even fewer came out publicly as survivors. But recent research puts the estimate of the total number of women taken into this system at somewhere around **[Click 1]** 400,000 across Asia over a **[Click 2]** 13-year period between 1932 and 1945.

[Frame 9] Map of Known "Comfort Stations"



The women and girls were placed in stations anywhere where there were Japanese troops. Those from invaded countries were usually placed in local stations, whereas those from occupied territories (like Korea and Taiwan) were trafficked to other countries, mainly China prior to 1942. The only way that up to 180,000 Korean women and girls were trafficked transnationally across such a large geographic region was by the Imperial Japanese forces, as no other individual or institution had the means implement such a system. The map shows some known locations of "Comfort Station" clusters.

[Frame 10] Activity Break: Survivor Testimonies



One way for the students to get to know of the survivors' stories is through this activity, in which they read some testimony excerpts in small groups.

ACTIVITY PROCESS

Divide students up into small groups and assign each group to one of the following survivor testimonies:

- KIM Bok-Dong
- CHUNG Seo-Won
- LEI Guiying
- Maria Rosa Henson
- Jan Ruff O'Herne

The groups should be given **4-5 minutes** to read through their survivor's story. The students in the groups should then discuss what stood out to them as particularly shocking or impressionable. By the end of the activity, the students should be able to answer the following about their survivors:

- At what ages was the victim taken into slavery?
- What were the economic or social conditions of the victim's family prior to their enslavement?
- How was the victim coerced into sexual slavery?
- What was the victim's experience like at the "Comfort Station?"
- For how long was the victim enslaved?
- How did the victim manage to break free from the "Comfort Station?"

If you opt not to do the testimony activity, then the next four slides provide you with opportunities to share a few of the survivors' stories. Otherwise, skip directly to Frame 15.

[Frame 11] Survivor 1: YI Ok-Seon



Yi Ok-Seon

YI Ok-Seon was born in Korea during the Japanese occupation. Her family was poor, and because she was a girl, she wasn't given any education. She always speaks of how much she longed to study, but her family didn't have enough money to send her to school, and it was not customary to educate girls at the time. She worked hard in the home to take care of her siblings, and at a young age, was sent to work as a maid in another home, and eventually she worked in a tavern-style restaurant in a nearby city. She endured physical abuse at each of these jobs, and was passed from place to place, from contract to contract, without her consent. One day, when she was about 14 years old, she was sent out by her boss to do an errand. Two men, one Japanese and one Korean, grabbed her and threw her into a truck. She was put on a train, and ended up in a "Comfort Station" in China, where she was forced into sexual slavery in violent and abject conditions.

[Frame 12] Survivor 2: PARK Ok-Seon



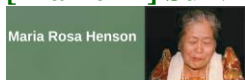
PARK Ok-seon was born in Miryang, Gyeongsang Province, in southeastern Korea in 1924. She was born into a poor family with seven siblings. In 1941, when she was eighteen, a friend told her that there was money to be made in China and jobs to be had in factories, and so proposed that they go together to work in a textiles manufacturing plant. As her family would most likely have forbidden her to go, she snuck out in the middle of the night and caught a train with her friend. Much to her surprise, she was abducted, with twenty other girls of her age, to a “comfort station” in the Muling area of Heilongjiang, Manchuria. She was kept there as a “comfort woman” for four years. Her base was bombed, and as she was wandering in the mountains when the war ended. She married an ethnic Korean and settled in Muling. She finally returned to Korea in 2001 and is currently living at the House of Sharing.

[Frame 13] Survivor 3: YUAN Zhulin



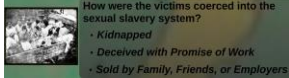
She was born in Wuhan City in central China to a very poor family with three daughters. Without money to send their daughters to school, her parents sent all three girls to other families as child brides. She never saw her sisters again after that. She married a driver at the age of fifteen, and lived a simple but decent life. In 1938, three years after their marriage, the Japanese Army attacked Wuhan City and her husband lost contact with the family. Her mother-in-law became hostile with the disappearance of her son. She considered YUAN as an extra burden to the family and thus forced her to leave the family and remarry. So she did, and gave birth to a young girl, her only child. In the spring of 1940, a local woman came to recruit women as cleaners in hotels. She signed up at the age of 18, and was deceived. She was taken by ship down river to a temple that had been turned into “Comfort Station,” and became a sex slave. During her time in the “Comfort Station,” her only daughter died of neglect.

[Frame 14] Survivor 4: Maria Rosa Henson



Maria Rosa L. Henson was born in Pasay City on 5 December 1927. She was the extramarital daughter of a big landowner and his housemaid. When she was 14 years old, the Pacific War broke out and the Philippines were occupied by the Japanese. In February 1942, she was first raped by Japanese soldiers. While she went to fetch firewood with her uncles and neighbors for her family, she was caught and raped by three Japanese, one of whom seemed to be an officer. After two weeks she was again raped by the same Japanese officer while fetching firewood. She felt a strong anger toward the Japanese military, and joined the HUKBALAHAP, an anti-Japanese guerilla group. A year passed. In April 1943 she was arrested by Japanese at a checkpoint in the suburbs of Angeles and taken to the garrison. There she was forced to be a “comfort woman.” She spent the next nine months of her life in this way. In January 1944 she was saved by guerillas.

[Frame 15] Summary of Methods of Enslavement



NOTE: This frame requires clicking one-by-one to make the items appear on the screen.

The stories of how each victim was enslaved are as unique as the individuals themselves, but we can generally delineate three major categories of enslavement methods.

- **[Click 1] Kidnapping:** This includes the Imperial Japanese forces taking women and girls from their homes or communities.
- **[Click 2] Deceived with Promises of Work:** This mostly consisted of the Imperial Japanese forces putting up false job postings or having local recruiters deceive people with promises of jobs.
- **[Click 3] Sold by Family, Friends or Employers:** Unfortunately it was not uncommon for victims to be sold by people they knew. It's important to emphasize to the students that these were desperate times and that people acted far out of the norm in order to save themselves and their families.

NOTE: Students may ask if there were women who were already sex workers and knew that they would be providing sexual services to soldiers. The answer to this question is that yes, there are accounts of that. But they did not expect to be held against their will, lose agency over their bodies, be abused and tortured, and be under constant threat of their lives. So they were sex slaves in the same way as others.

[Frame 16] Question: Conditions of Vulnerability



Anyone of any demographic could be forced into Imperial Japan's military sexual slavery system. In countries that the Army was invading, they were particularly indiscriminate in their selection of victims. However, in countries that were already occupied by Japan (e.g. Korea at the beginning of the war, they could be more strategic in which women and girls they coerced into sexual slavery.

QUESTION FOR STUDENTS

What conditions left hundreds of thousands of women and girls vulnerable to military sexual slavery?

- The answers to this question are discussed in length in the next frame. However, give the students a few moments to discuss their thoughts.

NOTE: It is recommended that you use around 2-3 minutes for this discussion.

[Frame 17] Conditions of Vulnerability to Military Sexual Slavery

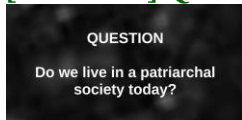


NOTE: This frame requires clicking one-by-one to make the items appear on the screen.

The following conditions are now recognized as having made women and girls in Asia during this time in history vulnerable to sexual slavery:

- **[Click 1] Poor** – Women and girls from poor families were targeted because the family would have less power and resources to resist. Those in poverty were also particularly vulnerable because they and their families were desperate for income and would therefore accept precarious employment situations with few questions.
- **[Click 2] Uneducated** – Almost all women at this time in history in Asia were uneducated, and this certainly affected what options they had in life and their ability to react to situations they found themselves in.
- **[Click 3] Illiterate** – Along a similar line, most women were illiterate. This reduced their ability to use print resources around them to escape if enslaved.
- **[Click 4] Patriarchy** – That cultures across Asia were (and still are in some areas) deeply patriarchal was the underlying cause of vulnerability of women and girls to sexual slavery. The fact that women were considered men’s possessions, and that community would turn a blind eye when irresponsible men sold their daughters off as servants, laborers, etc. Such norms certainly created the context in which soldiers and recruiters could so easily enslave hundreds of thousands of women and girls.
- **[Click 5] Powerless** – All of these factors leave women and girls disempowered, without agency over themselves, and therefore vulnerable.

[Frame 18] Question: Patriarchy Today



While we generally like to think of such gross forms of patriarchy as relegated to the past, the fact is that patriarchy is still very prevalent in our world.

QUESTION FOR STUDENTS

Do we live in a patriarchal society today?

- The answers to this question are discussed in length in the next frame. However, give the students a few moments to discuss their thoughts before proceeding.

NOTE: It is recommended that you use around 2-3 minutes for this discussion.

[Frame 19] Responses: Patriarchy Today



NOTE: This frame requires clicking once to make the answers appear on the screen.

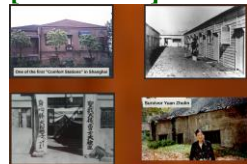
Although there are a wide variety of indicators of continued patriarchy in our world today, some of them that are particularly relevant to Canada include the *[Click 1]* wage gap, the unequal responsibilities over childcare, the disproportionate ratio of male to female politicians, and the continued gender-based violence, particularly against indigenous women and girls.

[Frame 20] Map of “Comfort Stations”



Regardless of how they were coerced into sexual slavery, victims were placed in “Comfort Stations” all across the Asia-Pacific region, in any location where there were Japanese troops. The “Comfort Stations” were set up in a variety of settings, including the back of military trucks, caves, temporary shelters, residential buildings, commercial buildings, temples etc.

[Frame 21] Photos of “Comfort Stations”



NOTE: This frame requires clicking one-by-one to make the photos appear on the screen.

The following four photographs show buildings that were used as “Comfort Stations.” In the upper left-hand corner is a building in Shanghai that was used by the Imperial Japanese forces as one of the first “Comfort Stations” in 1932. *[Click 1&2]* To its right and below it are photos of “Comfort Stations” in China. *[Click 3]* In the lower right-hand corner is Chinese survivor YUAN Zhulin standing in front of the temple where she was kept as a sex slave by the Japanese Army.

[Frame 22] “Comfort Station”/Cubicle Model



This is a photo of a model “Comfort Station” in a museum in South Korea. It depicts what a relatively clean and organized “Comfort Station” would look like, and is modeled off of one that was found in China. However, most “Comfort Stations” were much more rudimentary, with only a sheet on the ground or on a cement floor as a bed for the sex slaves to service soldiers on.

[Frame 23] Photo of Soldiers Waiting in Line at “Comfort Station”



This photo from the war is a piece of evidence of the systemization of the “Comfort Stations.” The writing behind the soldiers waiting in line at a “Comfort Station” is a list of rules written in Japanese.

[Frame 24] “Comfort Station” Rules



The rules included items such as “Soldiers must wear condoms,” “Don’t beat the women,” “Only use your allotted time,” etc. These rules were rarely ever followed, but the fact that the list was identical at many of the stations is evidence of how systematized the “Comfort Stations” were and that the Imperial Japanese Forces decided on how these “Comfort Stations” were run. The rules also listed how much the soldiers would have to pay, a sum which most often was paid for in military scrip to the manager of the station and not to the women themselves. Even though some women might receive military scrip as “tips” by individual soldiers, they were useless at the end of the war as military scrip was then declared void by the Japanese government. They had no way of redeeming these scrip into Japanese Yen. All of this evidence is crucial for refuting claims by Japanese officials that the women were prostitutes and that the military did not establish or run the “Comfort Stations.”

[Frame 25] Name Placards



NOTE: This frame requires clicking once to make the arrow appear on the screen.

[Click 1] This wartime photo includes the rules underneath a Japanese flag and next to a series of name placards that are explained in the following frame.

[Frame 26] Name Placards (Continued)



In most stations there were wooden name placards for each woman, using the Japanese names assigned to them when they came into the system (photo shows the name placards of a “comfort station” model at the House of Sharing Museum in Seoul). Not only were they given Japanese names, but in some places they were not allowed to speak in their native languages for fear of being beaten. The name placards were used to show which women were available. If the name side was face-up, they were available for service. If the name side was facedown, they were either already being raped or were too ill to service soldiers.

Section C: Life as a Military Sex Slave

NOTE: It is recommended that Section C take 7-8 minutes.

[Frame 27] Experiences in the “Comfort Stations”



NOTE: This frame requires clicking one-by-one to make the items appear on the screen.

It is impossible to encapsulate the diversity of experiences faced by those enslaved in the “Comfort Stations.” However, the following list summarizes the main categories of experiences as described by survivors [*Clicks 1-2*]:

- “Comfort Women” were fed barely enough to survive and lived in extremely meager conditions.
- They were confined to their “Comfort Stations” and rarely had contact with people outside.
- In addition to social isolation, the victims were exposed to regular psychological abuse by the officers and civilians maintaining the “Comfort Stations,” and by the soldiers and officers who raped them.
- The women were subjected to regular physical and psychological abuse. Beatings were extremely common, as was torture. Some of the survivors have L-shaped scars on their bodies where the soldiers would insert and then twist knives before pulling them out, thus inflicting the maximum amount of pain. There are survivors with dislocated joints or disfigured body parts as a result of the beatings and torture they endured. Some are deaf in one ear from being beaten on the side of the head. These are some of the examples of the injuries resulting from the physical abuse they endured while enslaved.
- Victims were raped anywhere from a few to 40 times a day. Women considered of greater “value” (such as Japanese women or Dutch women) were usually reserved for just one or a few officers and therefore endured fewer rapes and often less abuse. But the majority of women were raped between 10 and 30 times per day. And they never had days off, even during menstruation.
- The women were also subjected to regular medical exams by Japanese military doctors, during which the doctors would often rape them. If they had a disease, they were given shots of Mercury 606, a highly toxic chemical that in some cases resulted in infertility. Historians and researchers have uncovered many of the medical documents that prove Japanese military doctors were the ones who performed regular examinations.
- Pregnancy was dealt with by forced abortions using all sorts of methods including, beating the stomach until the child was aborted. Babies who were born at the “Comfort Stations” were often killed immediately.
- Women who tried to escape faced either severe beatings or were killed.
- Many tried to commit suicide, with varying levels of success.
- As a result of these conditions, only about a third of those taken into sexual slavery survived.

[Frame 28] Video Testimony Excerpts of Korean Survivors (2 min.)



[Source: “*The Butterflies: flying high with hope – 20 years of history and Halmonies’ peace*”]
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AI2WYht2KPs>

This is a video with testimonies from several Korean survivors giving brief descriptions of their experiences in the “Comfort Stations.”

[Frame 29] Video Testimony of LEI Gui-Ying (3 min.)



[Source: BC ALPHA, Interview during 2006 Peace and Reconciliation Study Tour]
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdttsCWhdNo>

This is a video testimony of LEI Guiying, who was enslaved as a “Comfort Woman” in Nanking, China.

Section D: Interpreting Survivors’ Art

NOTE: It is recommended that Section D take 20 minutes.

[Frame 30] Activity Break: Painting Analysis



The purpose of this activity is to help students emotionally process what they’ve learned, and also to give them an opportunity to emotionally connect better with the survivors. The paintings used in the activity were done by some of the Korean survivors with the help of an art therapist.

ACTIVITY PROCESS

Divide students up into small groups and assign each group to one of the following paintings:

- “At That Time, At That Place”
- “Kidnapped on a Boat”
- “Lapaul (Rabaul) Comfort Station”
- “Japanese Soldier Picking Pear”
- “Untitled”
- “Punish Those Responsible”

The groups should be given **6-8 minutes** to interpret the paintings. They should be looking at not only what is literally being depicted, but what symbolism is being used as well. Students should pay attention to color, dimensions, abstract symbolism, contrasting images, etc. The end goal is for the students to offer their interpretation of what the artist-survivor was trying to convey.

After the analysis period, each group is then given **1-2 minutes** to present their painting interpretations to the rest of the class. Click to show the following paintings on screen when the students are presenting their interpretations.

This activity should take approximately 20 minutes in total.

[Frame 31] Painting 1: “At that time, at that place”



[Frame 32] Painting 2: “Kidnapped on a Boat”



[Frame 33] Painting 3: “Lapaul (Rabual) Comfort Station”



[Frame 34] Painting 4: “Japanese Soldier Picking Pear”



[Frame 35] Painting 5: Untitled



[Frame 36] Painting 6: “Punish Those Responsible”



[Frame 37] Painting 7: “Purity Lost Forever”



Section E: The Experiences of Survivors in the Post-War Period

NOTE: It is recommended that Section E take 10 minutes.

[Frame 38] The End of the Asia-Pacific War

The End of the War	
Sept. 18, 1931	Japan invades Manchuria in China
July 7, 1937	Full-scale invasion of China
Dec. 7, 1941	Attack on Pearl Harbor
Dec. 8, 1941	US declares war on Japan
Aug. 6, 1945	US drops atomic bomb on Hiroshima
Aug. 9, 1945	US drops atomic bomb on Nagasaki
Aug. 15, 1945	Emperor Hirohito announces Japan's surrender

NOTE: Dates are given according to the time zones in which they occurred.

The following are key dates related to the end of the Asia-Pacific War that students should become familiar with:

- Sept. 18, 1931 Japan invades Manchuria of China
- July 7, 1937 Full-scale invasion of China
- Dec. 7, 1941 Attack on Pearl Harbor
- Dec. 8, 1941 US declares war on Japan
- Aug. 6, 1945 US drops atomic bomb on Hiroshima
- Aug. 9, 1945 US drops atomic bomb on Nagasaki
- Aug. 15, 1945 Emperor Hirohito announces Japan's surrender

[Frame 39] Liberation for “Comfort Women”



While 1945 signaled the end of the war and liberation for many, for surviving “Comfort Women” the war never ended. Those who survived—estimated to be only about one-third of those forced into sexual slavery—faced many difficulties in the aftermath of the war and up to the present day.

[Frame 40] Photo of “Comfort Women” Taken as POWs



Many of those who survived were captured by Allied Forces and considered Prisoners of War until it could be determined that they were enslaved by the Imperial Japanese forces.

[Frame 41] Photo of Young “Comfort Woman” with Allied Soldier



The process of determining who the women and girls were was not unproblematic, and could be traumatizing in and of itself. There were linguistic barriers that made the investigations difficult for all parties. There have also been several witness reports of allied forces using the existing “Comfort Stations” once they took control.

But regardless of the process, once it was discovered that the women and girls were sex slaves, they were released and left to fend for themselves wherever they were found. Few of those who had been trafficked to foreign countries were repatriated by the Allied Forces.

[Frame 42 Post-War Life for Survivors



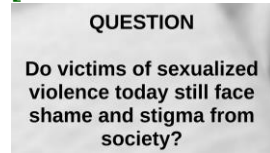
NOTE: This frame requires clicking one-by-one to make the items appear on the screen.

Every survivor’s situation was different, but many faced severe difficulties in their post-war lives. Their lives were largely marked by:

- **[Click 1] Poverty:** Survivors left the “Comfort Stations” at the end of the war with no money or resources and were left to survive by whatever means they could. This was especially difficult for those who had been trafficked to foreign lands where they didn’t speak the language, didn’t have social connections, and were discriminated against by the local population.
- **[Click 2] Isolation:** Some of the survivors were isolated geographically from their families and communities. All were emotionally isolated by not being able to talk about their experiences as sex slaves due to social shame and stigma.
- **[Click 3] Shame:** As is still true today in most societies, women were shamed and stigmatized for the sexualized violence that occurred to them. If women had come out, they would have been blamed and ostracized. Many, if not most, women internalized that shame, never speaking of what happened to them.
- **[Click 4] Trauma:** All of the survivors live with severe physical and psychological trauma. Some of them who have come out in later years have had access to psychological and medical support, but most never got that.
- **[Click 5] Re-victimization:** Thus, the post-war period was re-victimizing rather than liberating for survivors of Japanese military sexual slavery.

It’s important to emphasize that all of the post-war stories are unique, and that some women got married and had families and lived relatively normal lives.

[Frame 43 Discussion Break: Stigma for Survivors of Sexualized Violence]



As the students may already be aware of, shame and stigma for victims of sexualized violence is not unique to the surviving “Comfort Women.” It is a universal experience for women around the world.

QUESTION FOR STUDENTS

Do victims of sexualized violence today still face shame and stigma from society?

- The clear answer to this question is yes. Teachers should guide students in this discussion, allow them to offer personal observations and experiences. It can also be helpful to draw on examples of this in contemporary society that have played out in the media and thus would be public knowledge. One example in recent Canadian history would be the way some of Canadian society reacted to the first few victims who came out with allegations about former CBC broadcaster Jian Gimeshi in 2014.

Section F: Breaking the Silence: The Social Justice Movement

NOTE: It is recommended that Section F take 16-18 minutes.

[Frame 44] Breaking the Silence: KIM Hak-Soon



NOTE: This frame requires clicking one-by-one to make the items appear on the screen.

The tide turned for the survivors when KIM Hak-Soon publicly came out in August of 1991 as a former “Comfort Woman.” She had heard denials of the military sexual slavery system by a Japanese official on the radio and decided she could no longer remain silent. With the support of Korean feminist organizations, she was the first survivor in more than 50 years to speak about her experience as a military sex slave and started what is now known an internationally recognized social justice movement. The quote shown in this frame is attributed to her and captures the essence of the redress movement: “We must record these things that were forced upon us.”

[Frame 45] KIM Hak-Soon and Victim Support Organizations



NOTE: This frame requires clicking once to make the items appear on the screen.

She sued the Japanese government in December of 1991, and this ignited a redress and social justice movement that lasts to this day. The two main organizations that formed in Korea to support her and other survivors were **[Click 1]** the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan and the House of Sharing. After KIM Hak-Soon came out, other survivors in Korea came forward.

[Frame 46] Seven Demands



NOTE: This frame requires clicking one-by-one to make the demands appear on the screen.

Shortly after the movement took shape, the survivors and their supporters drafted a list of seven demands for redress. They demanded that the Japanese government:

- **[Click 1]** Admit the drafting of Japanese military “Comfort Women”
- **[Click 2]** Make an official apology
- **[Click 3]** Reveal the truth about the crimes and open-up all official documents
- **[Click 4]** Erect memorials for the victims
- **[Click 5]** Pay compensation to the victims or their families
- **[Click 6]** Teach the truth in schools so that the history is not repeated
- **[Click 7]** Punish the war criminals

[Frame 47] Mission of the Korean Organizations



NOTE: This frame requires clicking one by one to make the items appear on the screen.

[Click 1] The two organizations that formed (the House of Sharing and the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan) immediately ensured that they could offer residential care for survivors who came forward. It was particularly important to offer these survivors a place to live because many of them would be shut out of their families and communities for coming forward. Also, being connected with other survivors can be therapeutic and can provide psychological support. Today, many survivors still live in these residences, and receive accommodation, meals, medical care, and other forms of daily support.

[Click2] The organizations also started political lobbying for redress and justice at the local and international levels, reporting to the UN Human Rights Commission every year since 1992. The Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan included their report in the resolution of the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna 1993 and the World Conference on Women in Beijing 1995. The issue of the “Comfort Women” has been addressed unequivocally in United Nations reports by Special Rapporteurs Radhika Coomaraswamy in 1995 and Special Rapporteur Gay McDougall in 1998. Lobbying at the international level, both with the United Nations and national governments, continues to this day.

[Frame 48] Weekly Wednesday Demonstrations



Since January 8, 1992, survivors have also held weekly Wednesday demonstrations in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul. In all types of weather, the survivors and their supporters, both local and international, rally to demand justice each week. At first, only a few people joined them. Today, anywhere from 20 to 200 people gather at the Japanese Embassy to call on the Japanese Government to face up to its past. The Wednesday protest is one of the longest-held demonstrations in recorded history.

[Frame 49] Jan Ruff O’Herne – International Solidarity



As the movement in Korea grew, the organizations pushed for international solidarity, reaching out to other civil society groups and contacts to get in touch with survivors in other countries. One of the survivors to come forward from the international community was Jan Ruff O’Herne, a Dutch woman who lived in the Dutch East Indies at the time of Japanese invasion. She came out for the first time in 1992 with the expressed intent of supporting the Asian survivors. She knew her white privilege would catapult the movement onto the international scene, as it did.

[Frame 50] Video of Jan Ruff O’Herne Interview (2 min. 30 sec.)



[Source: Australian Broadcasting Corporation, “Talking Heads” Interview with Jan Ruff O’Herne, 2009]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBchgNkcCA0>

In this video, Jan Ruff O’Herne is interviewed about her experience coming out to her family, friends and the general public about her experience as a Japanese military sex slave.

[Frame 51] International Survivors



NOTE: This frame requires clicking one-by-one to make the photos appear on the screen.

News of the redress movement spread and over 300 women from countries across Asia came out as survivors of Japanese military sexual slavery and joined in the fight for justice. This frame contains multiple shots of survivors from different countries to emphasize the global nature of the “Comfort Women” redress movement. Here are the origin countries of the women in order of appearance:

[Click 1] Taiwan

[Click 2] Mainland China

[Click 3] East Timor

[Click 4] Philippines

[Click 5] Indonesia

[Click 6] Indonesia

[Click 7] North Korea

[Frame 52] Survivor Organizations



NOTE: This frame requires clicking one-by-one to make the organizations appear on the screen.

The survivors have been supported by local organizations and civil society groups such as the Taipei Women’s Rescue Foundation in Taiwan, and the Lila Pilipina and the Malaya Lolos in the Philippines.

[Frame 53] YOSHIMI Yoshiaki



At the same time that the survivors were coming forward to testify about their experiences as “Comfort Women,” Japanese historians, researchers and activists were also working hard to uncover the truth. One such individual was [YOSHIMI Yoshiaki](#), a professor of Japanese modern history at Chuo University in Tokyo, Japan. In the early 1990s he sifted through military archives and government records to uncover evidence about the “Comfort Station” system. He published the relevant documents and his analysis of the findings in the book “[Comfort Women](#),” which made waves domestically in Japan and internationally. He continues his research and activism on the issue still today.

[Frame 54] Japanese Activism



NOTE: This frame requires clicking one-by-one to make the items appear on the screen.

In addition to YOSHIMI Yoshiaki, the role of other Japanese citizens and groups in the redress movement cannot be underestimated. *[Clicks 1-2]* The *Center of Research and Documentation of Japan's War Responsibility* and *Violence Against Women in War Network-Japan* are organizations that were formed to uncover the truth and to advocate for the victims. They have played a large role in pressuring the Japanese government to face up to its wartime past. *[Clicks 3-4]* It's also important to emphasize the efforts of hundreds of Japanese researchers, educators, lawyers and activists, as well as Japanese witnesses and former soldiers who have come forward despite enormous pressure not to from their own society. The redress movement would not have made such gains without their courage and conviction.

[Frame 55] The Impact of Transnational Grassroots Solidarity

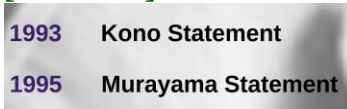


Without transnational grassroots solidarity, the “Comfort Women” issue would not have become internationally recognized and supported. This is a good example of the importance of transnational solidarity in any social justice movement in our globalized world.

Section G: Japanese Government Responses

NOTE: It is recommended that Section G take 13-15 minutes.

[Frame 56] The Kono and Murayama Statements



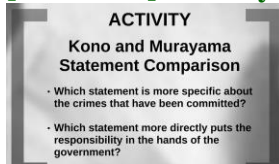
NOTE: This frame requires clicking one by one to make the items appear on the screen.

[Click 1] The growing redress movement and the evidence published by YOSHIMI Yoshiaki forced the Japanese government to respond. In 1993, Chief Cabinet Secretary KONO Yohei released a statement that said a government study had found that the Japanese Imperial forces had forced women, known as “Comfort Women” to work in military-run brothels during the war, and that the Imperial Japanese forces had been involved directly and indirectly with the establishment of “Comfort Stations.” The Kono Statement also acknowledged that coercion had been used in the recruitment and retention of the women. This was the first and last time that the Japanese government officially acknowledged its role in the military sexual slavery system.

[Click2] The 1993 Kono statement was followed up with a watered-down 1995 Murayama statement made upon the establishment of Asian Women's Fund. In the new statement, Japan

acknowledged only in brief and general terms the suffering of “Comfort Women” but evaded to admit unambiguously its role in the military sexual slavery system. The purpose was to whitewash its war crimes and to negate any responsibility by the government. This statement, along with the establishment of the Asian Women’s Fund, signaled a trajectory of historical denial that has continued to this day.

[Frame 57] Activity Break: Kono and Murayama Statements Comparison



This activity gives students an opportunity to review primary source legal documents. The point of the activity is for the students to compare the level of responsibility acknowledged in the 1993 Kono Statement with that of the 1995 Murayama Statement on the establishment of the “Asian Women’s Fund”.

ACTIVITY PROCESS

Divide students up into small groups and give everyone a copy of each the Kono and Murayama Statement Handouts. Have the students read the statements out loud in their groups, and then have them analyze the statements according to the following criteria:

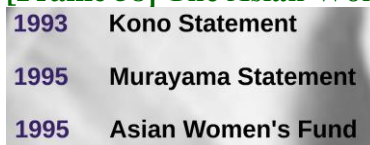
Which statement is more specific about the crimes that have been committed?

Which statement more directly puts the responsibility in the hands of the government?

Give the groups **5 minutes** to read and analyze the statements in their groups. Then follow up with a large-group discussion to summarize their findings.

This activity should take around **8-10 minutes** in total.

[Frame 58] The Asian Women’s Fund



NOTE: This frame requires clicking once to make the item appear on the screen.

While the Kono Statement should have led to redress and reconciliation, powerful right-wing factions in Japan pressured the government to shift its stance on the issue and to avoid taking direct responsibility for the “Comfort Women” system. **[Click 1]** Thus, to address the issue of compensation following the Kono Statement, the Japanese government set up the Asian Women’s Fund. Through the fund, survivors could petition for approximately two million Japanese Yen. However, most survivors and all of the major advocacy organizations working on this issue rejected the money. This is because the money for the survivors was donated by the

Japanese public and not provided by the Japanese government. While the Japanese government covered expenses in administration fees and medical support to survivors, government money was not to be used to compensate victims. This was a sneaky way for the Japanese government to avoid direct responsibility for its crimes. In addition, the Asian Women's Fund was not extended to survivors in North Korea or Mainland China.

Section H: International Legal Responses and Civil Society Solidarity

NOTE: It is recommended that Section H take 8-10 minutes.

[Frame 59] “Comfort Women” Lawsuits in Japan

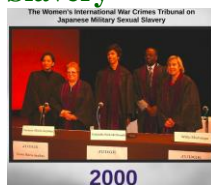


"Comfort Women" Lawsuits in Japanese Courts	
3	Korean Lawsuits filed in 1991, 1992, 1993
4	Mainland Chinese Lawsuits filed in 1995, 1996, 1998, 2001
1	Taiwanese Lawsuit filed in 1999
1	Filipino Lawsuit filed in 1993
1	Dutch Lawsuit filed in 1994
Victims' Testimonies: Uncontested and Accepted in Court	
Final Decision: No Compensation	

There have been total ten lawsuits filed in Japan by Korean, Chinese, Taiwanese, Filipino and Dutch victims against the Japanese government since KIM Hak-Soon of Korea first filed her lawsuit in the 1991. Despite the fact that none of the former “Comfort Women’s” testimonies were contested in the Japanese courts, the judicial system of Japan decided that no compensation was to be awarded to the victims. A summary of the ten court cases can be found [here](#).

Only in one court case filed in 1992, which involved three former Korean “Comfort Women,” did the judge at the Yamaguchi District Court rule in favor of the victims. He ordered the Japanese government to pay them compensation. However, this lower court decision was overturned by higher courts upon appeal. Although none of these lawsuits were successful in the end, they made an important statement to the world about the need for due justice.

[Frame 60] Women’s International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan’s Military Sexual Slavery



To show Japan and the world that international community stood by the survivors of Japanese military sexual slavery, and to make a clear statement on the responsibility of the Japanese government, Asian women’s and human rights organizations—with the support of international NGOs—set up The Women’s International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan’s Military Sexual Slavery. Also known as the “Tokyo Women’s Tribunal,” this people’s tribunal was held from December 8-12, 2000 in Tokyo. The tribunal brought together 78 survivors from all different countries to bear witness to the global community.

On December 4, 2001, the final judgment from the Tribunal was rendered at The Hague in the Netherlands. The Tribunal convicted the Japanese government of crimes against the “Comfort Women” and put forth recommendations to the Japanese government, the Allied nations, and all

UN member states on how to reconcile the issue. A summary of the findings from the Women's Tribunal can be found [here](#).

[Frame 61] International Government Responses



NOTE: This frame requires clicking one-by-one to make the items appear on the screen.

Many national governments have officially come forward in support of the survivors. **[Click 1]** The first to do so was the United States, which passed House Resolution 121 in 2007. This Resolution called upon Japan to acknowledge its crimes against the victims and to pay due compensation. This Resolution was primarily pushed forward by U.S. Congressman Mike Honda. Other government motions and resolutions include:

- **[Click 2]** The Canadian House of Commons Motion 291, 2007
- **[Click 3]** The Dutch Parliament Motion, 2007
- **[Click 4]** The European Parliament, 2007
- **[Click 5]** The South Korea National Assembly, 2008
- **[Click 6]** The Taiwan Legislative Yuan, 2008
- **[Click 7]** The Philippines' House Committee on Foreign Affairs, 2008

[Frame 62] Photo of Canadian Parliamentarians with Survivors



We like to highlight to students their own government's support for the survivors of Japanese military sexual slavery. The motion passed in the Canadian House of Commons, with unanimous support from all parties, can be found [here](#).

[Frame 63] Video of Survivors at Canadian Parliament Hill (2 min. 30 sec.)



[Source: CTV, "Comfort Women" Testimonies at Parliament Hill]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKy7JMRCwwk>

This video is of a news report of the motion passed in the Canadian House of Commons, and shows survivors testifying at Canadian Parliament Hill.

[Frame 64] Public Memorials



NOTE: This frame requires clicking one-by-one to make the photos appear on the screen.

Not only governments but also the general public have gotten behind the movement as well.

[Click 1] In 2010, supporters in New Jersey erected a memorial in Pallisides Park, a move that ignited outcries and petitions for removal by some people of Japanese descent. However, none of the petitions were successful and the memorial remains.

[Click 2] In 2011, the Korean Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan erected a permanent statue—the peace statue—in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, where the weekly demonstrations take place. It is a statue of a girl watching the embassy and waiting for justice, with an empty chair inviting us to join her. It speaks to the perseverance of the survivors, the importance of international solidarity, and the universality at the heart of this and other social justice movements.

[Click 3] In 2014, a replica of the “Comfort Women” peace statue was erected in Glendale, California, and drew strong reactions once again from some people of Japanese descent who even initiated legal action to have the statue removed. They were unsuccessful in their attempts. Other statues and memorials are being planned for in various countries as international public support grows.

[Click 4] On November, 18 2015, a replica of the “Comfort Women” peace statue was erected in Toronto, Canada.

Section I: Current Stance of Japanese Government

NOTE: It is recommended that Section I take 2-3 minutes.

[Frame 65] Japan’s Denials and Historical Whitewashing



Much like other atrocities committed by the Imperial Japanese forces during Asia-Pacific War, the current Japanese government refuses to accept its responsibility for crimes related to the military sexual slavery system. Not only does it continue to deny responsibility on a political level, but it also deliberately whitewashes historical accounts in school textbooks. This is part of a broader neo-nationalist framing of the Asia-Pacific War that the Japanese government has promoted since the 1950s. Thus, despite demands for redress from victims across the world, justice has not yet been served as a result of Japan’s policy of denials. Up-to-date news on the Japanese government’s stance on the “Comfort Women” issue can be found [here](#).

Section J: The Impact and Legacy of the Survivors' Social Justice Movement

NOTE: It is recommended that Section J take 3-5 minutes.

[Frame 66] Question: Without an Apology, Has the Movement Failed?



Despite this decades-long, arduous battle for justice, the survivors have yet to receive their apology from the Japanese government.

QUESTION FOR STUDENTS

Does not getting an apology from the Japanese government mean the social justice movement has failed?

- The answers to this question are discussed in length in the next frame. However, give the students a few moments to discuss their thoughts on this question.

NOTE: It is recommended that you use around 2-3 minutes for this discussion.

[Frame 67] Achievements of the Social Justice Movement



NOTE: This frame requires clicking one-by-one to make the items appear on the screen.

While the Japanese government has not acknowledged and apologized for its crimes, the “Comfort Women” movement has made many remarkable achievements that have significantly impacted our world. They include:

- **[Click 1]** Raising awareness of Japanese military sexual slavery
- **[Click 2]** Providing support for survivors
- **[Click 3]** Helping to decrease the shame and stigma for survivors of sexualized violence
- **[Click 4]** Educating youth and the general public at large about sexualized violence and war crimes
- **[Click 5]** Putting pressure on the Japanese government and other governments to take accountability for war crimes
- **[Click 6]** Increasing international feminist solidarity
- **[Click 7]** Increasing international awareness of violence against women in times of both conflict and supposed peace
- **[Click 8]** Providing an excellent example of what a grassroots social justice movement can achieve

[Frame 68] Resilient and Inspirational Survivors



Most importantly, the survivors have left behind a mark of inspiration for everyone about the power of courage, love and compassion. Despite everything they have been through, the surviving “Comfort Women” show humor, grace, and compassion on a daily basis.

Unfortunately the few survivors that remain are in the last years of their lives (all of them in their late 80s and early 90s) and are at the end of this long battle for justice. They need the international community’s support now more than ever.

Section K: Global Citizenship: Action Items

NOTE: It is recommended that Section K take 3-4 minutes.

[Frame 69] Action Items



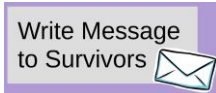
Students, as global citizens, always have the option of engaging with issues of human rights violations. There are steps that students can take to support the survivors and their movement, and to contribute to enhancing universal human rights.

[Frame 70] 100 Million Signature Campaign



Students can go online to sign the [100 million signature campaign](http://www.womenandwar.net) launched by the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan. This signature campaign is meant to show the Japanese government and international governance bodies the extent of the global support for the survivors’ redress movement.

[Frame 71] Write Message to Survivor



If students want to write a message of support to survivors, BC ALPHA will have the message relayed to the concerned survivors/advocacy organizations.

[Frame 72] Write to Government Officials

Write to your
MP or to the
Japanese
Government



Students can also always exercise their democratic freedoms by writing to their own government officials or to government officials of other countries such as Japan to voice their concerns about these and other such issues.

[Frame 73] Write a Reflection

Write a
Reflection



If students would like to write a reflection on what they've learned, BC ALPHA will consider showcasing their writing on its website.

[Frame 74] BC ALPHA Resources

www.alpha-canada.org

<https://www.facebook.com/Canada.alpha>

BC ALPHA's [website](http://www.alpha-canada.org) provides extensive resources on this issue and other human rights issues related to the Asia-Pacific War. Our [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/Canada.alpha) also provides up-to-date news about the redress movements.

[Frame 75] Home Screen

