



B.C. Association for Learning & Preserving the History of WW II in Asia (ALPHA)

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A reminder to Harper and Abe: History Denied = Justice Denied



Out of the four victim grandmas from China, Korea, the Phillipines and the Netherlands giving testimonials in a special Parliamentary Committee in Ottawa, in Nov. 2007, only one of them is still with us today.

As Japan's Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, is currently visiting Canada and being received by Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, we at BC ALPHA (Association for Learning and Preserving the History of WWII in Asia) have some important reminders.

We would like to remind Prime Minister Harper of Motion 291. Motion 291 calls for the Government of Japan to abandon any statement which devalues the expression of regret from the Kono Statement of 1993; to clearly and publicly refute any claims that the sexual enslavement and trafficking of the 'comfort women' for the Japanese Imperial Forces never occurred; to take full responsibility for the involvement of the Japanese Imperial Forces in the system of forced prostitution, including through a formal and sincere apology expressed in the Diet to all of those who were victims; and to continue to address those affected in a spirit of reconciliation.

We would like to thank Prime Minister Harper and all of the Members of Parliament for taking the time to understand this issue, as on November 28 2007, Motion 291 passed unanimously in the House of Commons in Ottawa. (For full text of the Motion, please refer to the Appendix below)



We would like to remind Prime Minister Harper of his obligation to raise this issue on behalf of the parliament and the Canadian public with Mr. Abe. We would like to remind Prime Minister Harper of the critical importance of this in light of recent remarks by Hashimoto, the Mayor of Osaka, in May 2013: “When soldiers are risking their lives by running through storms of bullets, and you want to give these emotionally charged soldiers a rest somewhere, it’s clear that you need a comfort-women system, anyone can understand that.”

Beyond offering a sincere and official apology, we would like to remind Prime Minister Harper to urge Prime Minister Abe to ensure every single Japanese student knows about this history, and uses this knowledge to build a peaceful and just future, both within and beyond Japan.

Appendix (Excerpt from Hansard of November 28, 2007)

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=3151109&Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=39&Ses=2#T1410>

Human Rights

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[Ms. Olivia Chow \(Trinity—Spadina, NDP\):](#)  

Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations with all parties and I believe that if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move, seconded by the hon. members for [Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock](#), [Scarborough—Rouge River](#) and [Vaudreuil-Soulanges](#):

That, in the opinion of this House:

- i. During its wartime occupation of Asia and the Pacific Islands, from the 1930s through the duration of World War II, the Imperial Armed Forces of Japan officially commissioned the acquisition of young women for the sole purpose of sexual servitude, who became known as 'comfort women'; and
- ii. That some Japanese public officials have recently expressed a regrettable desire to dilute or rescind the 1993 statement by Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono on the 'comfort women', which expressed the Government's sincere apologies and remorse for their ordeal; and
- iii. That Japan has made progress since 1945 in recognizing and atoning for its past actions, and for many decades has been a major contributor to international peace, security, and development, including through the United Nations; and
- iv. That the Canada-Japan alliance continues to be based on shared vital interests and values in the Asia-Pacific region, including the preservation and promotion of political and economic freedoms, support for human rights and democratic institutions, and the securing of prosperity for the people of both countries and the international community; and
- v. That the Government of Canada should therefore encourage the Government of Japan to abandon any statement which devalues the expression of regret from the Kono Statement of 1993; to clearly and publicly refute any claims that the sexual enslavement and trafficking of the 'comfort women' for the Japanese Imperial Forces never occurred; to take full responsibility for the involvement of the Japanese Imperial Forces in the system of forced prostitution, including through a formal and sincere apology expressed in the Diet to all of those who were victims; and to continue to address those affected in a spirit of reconciliation.

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The Speaker:  

Does the hon. member for [Trinity—Spadina](#) have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.