

## Nomination form

### International Memory of the World Register

### Voices of the 'Comfort Women'

ID Code [2016-101]

#### 1.0 Summary (max 200 words)

'Comfort women' is a euphemistic term for the women and girls forced into sexual slavery for the Japanese military between 1931 and 1945. They were drafted from many Asian countries and enslaved in 'comfort stations' established inside or around Japanese military camps.

The tragic violations of their human rights remained unknown to the international community until 1991, when a Korean victim first spoke out publicly. Her testimony was quickly echoed by other victims, leading to support activities by civil organizations and later, investigations by governments and international bodies.

The nominated documents encompass a vast variety of public and private collections relating to this issue, held all over the world. They comprise three categories: (1) official and private documents regarding the system of Japanese military 'comfort women'; (2) documents relating to the victims; and (3) documents regarding the activities of civil organizations to resolve the 'comfort women' issue. Altogether, 14 civil organizations collaborated on this joint nomination, with one additional public institution joining at a later stage. The nominated documents originate mainly from Asia, but also include the collections of the national archives and war museums or war memorials in Australia, the Netherlands, the UK and the USA.

The voices of the 'comfort women' and their supporters in seeking truth and justice have raised global awareness of rape and sexual slavery during wartime and changed international standards in recognizing these grave human rights violations. Considering the ongoing rampant sexual violence against women during today's conflicts, the nominated documents have both historic and global value, not least for history, human rights and peace education.

#### 2.1 Name of nominator (person or organization)

##### **International Committee for Joint Nomination of the Documents on the Japanese Military 'Comfort Women' to the UNESCO International Memory of the World Register**

(This Committee is composed of 14 of the 15 organizations listed below. The Imperial War Museum London is a joint nominator but was not part of the Committee.)

##### **Republic of Korea:** The Korean Committee for Joint Nomination to the UNESCO MoW Register

- (1) War and Women's Human Rights Museum, Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan;
- (2) The Museum of Sexual Slavery by Japanese Military, The House of Sharing;
- (3) Women and War Museum, Busan Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan;
- (4) HEEUM The Museum of Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, Daegu Citizen Forum for Halmuni;
- (5) Masan, Changwon, and Jinhae Civil Assembly for Japanese Military Sexual Slaves;
- (6) Tongyeong and Geoje Civil Assembly for Japanese Military Sexual Slaves;

##### **China:**

- (7) Research Center for Chinese 'Comfort Women' at Shanghai Normal University;
- (8) Beijing Fangyuan Law Firm;

##### **Chinese Taipei <sup>1</sup>:**

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<sup>1</sup> In this nomination, how to address Taiwan is still not agreed between certain concerned parties. One party suggested that the term 'Chinese Taipei' would be applied whenever Taiwan is referred to, while the other party is of the opinion that

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(9) Taipei Women's Rescue Foundation;

**Japan:**

(10) The Japanese Committee for Joint Nomination to the UNESCO MoW Register;

**The Netherlands:**

(11) The Foundation of Japanese Honorary Debts;

**The Philippines:**

(12) Lila Pilipina Lolos Center Inc.;

**Indonesia:**

(13) Solidarity Network for Indonesian 'Comfort Women';

**Timor-Leste:**

(14) HAK Association;

**United Kingdom:**

(15) Imperial War Museum London;

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**Institutions and Individuals, who approved nomination of documents in their custody**

(total 19 institutions and 2 individuals)

**Republic of Korea:**

- . Institutions: National Archives of Korea; The Independence Hall of Korea; Seoul Foundation of Women and Family; Constitutional Court of Korea
- . Individual: Chae Hyun Oh (Time Capsule Private Museum)

**China:**

- . Institutions: Central Archives of China; Liaoning Provincial Archives; Jilin Provincial Archives; Heilongjiang Provincial Archives; Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region Archives; Shanghai Municipal Archives; Nanjing Municipal Archives; Qinhuangdao Municipal Archives of Hebei Province;

**Chinese Taipei:**

- . Institution: Academia Historica; Taiwan National University Library

**Japan:**

- . Individual: Yoshiaki Yoshimi;

**The Netherlands:**

- . Institutions: National Archives of the Netherlands; NIOD, Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies;

**Australia:**

- . Institutions: National Archives of Australia; Australian War Memorial;

**United States of America:**

- . Institution: National Archives and Records Administration;

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**2.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage**

All nominators are the owners of the nominated documents in their custody, except the Japanese Committee for Joint Nomination to the UNESCO MoW Register and Timor Leste. The documents nominated by the Japanese Committee are owned by the Women's Active Museum or individuals who joined the Japanese Committee. The documents nominated by the HAK Association are jointly owned by the HAK Association and Akihisa Matsuno.

The institutions and individuals who gave approval for their documents to be nominated are the owners of the documents in their custody.

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**2.3 Contact person(s) (to provide information on nomination)**

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proper names or quoting from items such as research papers, reports, books and other works, the terms 'Taiwan' or 'Taiwanese' should be used as they appear in such names or works.

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Heisoo Shin, Director

Secretariat to the International Committee for Joint Nomination of the Documents on the Japanese Military 'Comfort Women' to the UNESCO International Memory of the World Register

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## 2.4 Contact details

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>
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## 3.0 Identity and description of the documentary heritage

### 3.1. 1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

The nominated documents relate to the issue of the 'comfort women', who were forced to sexually serve the Japanese Army across vast areas of Asia and the Pacific. These women were mobilized mostly from the Korean peninsula and Taiwan, both of which were under Japanese colonial rule at the time, but also from Japan and other areas under the military control of Japan in the Asia-Pacific, including China, the Philippines and others. Dutch women living in the then Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) were also victimized. As a result, documents on the 'comfort women' exist in general in all of these countries.

The documents nominated here are from the Republic of Korea, China, Chinese Taipei, Japan, The Netherlands, The Philippines, Indonesia and Timor-Leste. Also included are official documents produced by members of the Allied Forces such as the USA, the United Kingdom and The Netherlands, and a few items from Australia that belonged to a Dutch immigrant who had suffered as a 'comfort woman'.

The nominated documents, which are of differing nature and characteristics, are classified into three categories: (1) official and private documents relating to the system of Japanese military 'comfort women'; (2) documents relating to the 'comfort women' victims; and (3) documents regarding the activities of organizations for resolving the 'comfort women' issue.

#### **Category I: Official and private documents relating to the system of Japanese military 'comfort women' (Total 563 items)**

The nominated documents on the 'comfort women' system were produced between 1931 and 1955, covering the period from the outbreak of war in Manchuria to the conclusion of war tribunals. At the end of the war, according to historians, there is a suspicion that the Japanese government might have destroyed and burnt most of the official documents that would otherwise reveal the 'comfort women' system. However, some of these documents survived or were newly produced after the war. They are preserved in Japan and at the national archives in several countries.

The official documents nominated are the following: 11 items from the National Archives of Korea and the Independence Hall of Korea; 49 items from 8 archives and a research centre in China; 62 items from Academia Historica and the National Taiwan University in Chinese Taipei; 325 items from two institutions in The Netherlands – the National Archives of The Netherlands and NIOD, Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies; 30 items from the Imperial War Museum London; and 83 items from the National Archives and Records Administration in the USA.

The private documents nominated comprise three items: a diary in two volumes of a Korean manager of 'comfort stations' in Burma and Singapore in the 1940s; a diary of a Japanese military doctor in Shanghai in the late 1930s; and a travel document of a 'comfort woman' permitting her to leave Soerabata (Indonesia) for Amoy (China) in September 1946.

#### **Category II: Documents regarding the 'comfort women' (Total 1,449 items)**

The documents in this category consist of records produced by the 'comfort women' themselves or about

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the 'comfort women'. Important historical facts were revealed by the testimonies of the 'comfort women' victims on the process by which they were recruited into the system, the sufferings and ordeals they experienced and the way they were treated in the 'comfort stations'. Documents about the 'comfort women' include official documents created by governments in the course of investigations or by a national committee commissioned to do such work. Also included in this category are materials created by the 'comfort women' themselves, such as paintings and artistic works, produced in the course of therapy to heal their psychological trauma, together with their medical treatment records.

The testimonies of the 'comfort women' include testimonies recorded on audio and video tapes, as well as interview documents of the victims from the victimized countries and also from Japan. Diaries and letters are also included in the documents produced by the victims themselves.

The investigation records nominated include the records relating to the 238 Korean victims of the system of Japanese military 'comfort women' who were registered with the government of the Republic of Korea. They are the government's investigation records produced in the process of registration, including the detailed information of the atrocities these women suffered. In the Philippines, the government worked through the Asian Women's Fund to officially identify the victims of sexual slavery, the records of which are included in the nominated documents. In the Netherlands, a national committee to implement the Asian Women's Fund recorded a brief description of the sufferings of the Dutch 'comfort women', and documents relating to this are also included.

The treatment documents include the medical records of the 'comfort women' and their paintings and other artistic works. The medical records show their physical and psychological scars and trauma, while the paintings and other artistic expressions were produced in art therapy classes to heal their wounds and trauma. Some of these paintings are very vivid depictions of their experiences as 'comfort women.'

### **Category III: Documents regarding activities to resolve the 'comfort women' issue (Total 732 items)**

The documents in this category vary in nature but share a common characteristic. They were generated by NGOs and activists who have worked to bring the issue of the 'comfort women' to the attention of the Japanese society and the international community and engaged in various other activities to support the victims and seek redress for the 'comfort women'. The nominated documents include legal documents from various lawsuits and records of various activities including the Wednesday Demonstrations, the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery held in 2000, petition post cards written by students, etc. Also included are the official documents related to the 'comfort women' system unearthed by scholars and submitted to the Japanese government by civil society but rejected by the Japanese government and returned to the submitters.

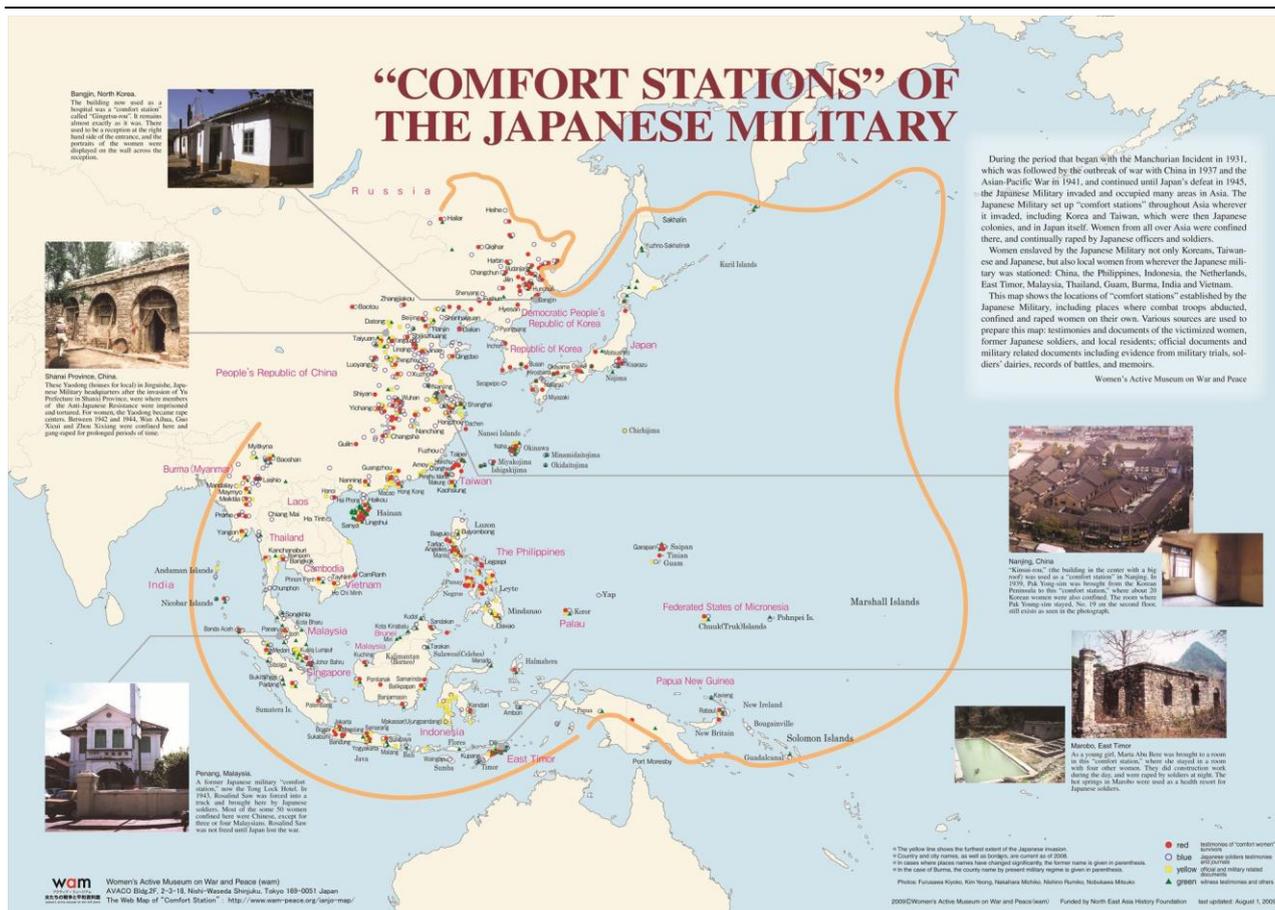
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### **3.4 History/provenance**

Until 1991, the issue of the 'comfort women', and the systematic, coercive nature of the sexual slavery that they suffered, was not generally known to the world. Under the strong patriarchal ideology prevailing in many parts of Asia, women's sexuality was a taboo subject, and women who lost their chastity often had no place even within their family, thereby subjecting the victims to a strong social stigma and pressure not to speak about what had happened to them. While there were a few researchers and journalists who were researching and reporting on the matter, they did so on a small scale and in a sporadic manner.

The 'comfort women' system operated during the period of Japan's various wars of the 1930s and 1940s. During this period, the Japanese military established, operated and managed this system of sexual slavery with the rationale that such a system would prevent rapes and sexually transmitted diseases, boost soldiers' morale and control information leakage. The 'comfort women' were recruited, brought to places that were often far from their homes and kept in sexual slavery, in many cases for up to several years, at the 'comfort stations', established across vast areas of the Asia-Pacific region as shown in the map of 'comfort stations' below. In the case of 'comfort stations' that were managed by civilians, the Japanese Army still controlled their operation.

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@ Women's Active Museum

In the mobilization of 'comfort women', the Japanese military secured cooperation from the Japanese government and the ruling powers of the territories colonized or occupied by the Japanese. For the management of the 'comfort stations', the Japanese military produced documents on regulations and rules, such as regulations on the sexual services at the 'comfort stations', control of the 'comfort women' and prevention of venereal diseases. Some of these documents survived the war. According to some documents, in addition to the women drafted into the 'comfort women' system, women captured at the battle fronts were also kept in captivity and became similar to the 'comfort women'.

The overall scale of the system of military sexual slavery is difficult to estimate: one Japanese historian estimates that between 80,000 to 200,000 women were forcibly enslaved, excluding the women raped on the battlefields. After the war, most of the 'comfort women' were abandoned wherever they happened to be. For half a century, the issue remained largely unknown, since societal attitudes regarded the women who had been victims as bearing the disgrace and dishonour rather than blaming the perpetrators.

However, when Hak-soon Kim of Korea came forward on 14 August 1991 and publicly testified about her sufferings during her years' of enslavement, civil society responded actively, by installing hotlines for the victims to call in and starting to collect testimonies. Soon the surviving victims in other countries also came forward, and civil organizations began activities to support the survivors while demanding full disclosure of the system of military sexual slavery. The testimonies of the survivors, and the research conducted by NGOs, historians and activists were published in books and reports, video documentaries and in other forms, most of which remain the property of the relevant supporting organizations and scholars. At the same time, the survivors themselves tried actively to overcome their own trauma and produced records of testimonies and speeches, paintings and other documents about themselves.

The efforts of scholars and researchers on the issue of Japanese military sexual slavery contributed to the discovery of historical documents relating to the issue preserved in several countries. In those countries that had been under Japanese colonial rule or occupation during the relevant time, the archives, war memorials, university libraries and museums preserved and maintained documents related to the 'comfort women' system, such as official documents on the recruitment, transport and management of the 'comfort women', as well as private documents such as diaries of individuals involved in this system of military sexual slavery. Researchers also found documents in the national archives and war museums/memorials of the Allied

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Forces that had been confiscated from the Japanese military or created for the tribunals after the war, and most of which were produced in the period from the late 1930s until the early 1950s.

When the issue was raised in the early 1990s, there was no acknowledgement about the historical truth by the Japanese government, which prompted civil society in Korea to bring the issue to the attention of the international human rights community, including the United Nations human rights bodies, and to request research on the issue of military sexual slavery. The International Commission of Jurists conducted a study into the issue, with its experts visiting the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Japan, and published a report in 1994.

At the UN level, two studies were conducted by experts during the 1990s. Radhika Coomaraswamy, the special rapporteur on violence against women appointed by the UN Commission on Human Rights, conducted a study on the issue of military sexual slavery, with visits to the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Japan, and submitted her report to the Commission on Human Rights in 1996. A special rapporteur on systematic rape, sexual slavery and slavery-like practices during wartime, appointed by the UN Sub Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, also conducted a study and visited the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Japan, with the final report being submitted by the succeeding special rapporteur, Gay McDougall, in 1998. These UN reports provide an understanding of the issue from the perspective of international human rights law and are still available from the UN websites.

After the issue became a topic of discussion in the Republic of Korea and was also discussed at the UN, the government of Japan also started to investigate the issue, from December 1991, and found about 200 documents showing the involvement of the government and military, which it made available to the public. On 4 August 1993, the then chief cabinet minister Yohei Kono issued a statement, known as the 'Kono Statement', acknowledging the fact that the 'comfort stations' were established and operated over a vast area and over a long period of time, and that there had been a large number of 'comfort women'. The documents being nominated, however, do not include the official government documents kept in the national archives of Japan, the Japanese Ministry of Defence or the Japanese Ministry of the Interior. The nominators of this heritage are hoping that after this nomination proposal has been accepted and the archives are inscribed in the Memory of the World, the owners of the important historical documents in Japan will understand the value of the nomination and participate in it.

In the 2000s, several UN treaty monitoring bodies, after examining the Japanese government's reports on the implementation of various international human rights treaties and other available documents, adopted various recommendations to the government of Japan to resolve the 'comfort women' issue. The parliaments of several countries that had been part of the Allied Forces also discussed the 'comfort women' issue, resulting in parliamentary resolutions passed in several countries.

In 2015, a nomination proposal on the 'comfort women' documents was submitted by China to the UNESCO Memory of the World program. The decision was deferred since the issue of the 'comfort women' involved many more countries than China alone. The preparation of this joint nomination was begun in the Republic of Korea in November 2014 by six civil organizations, soon joined by civil organizations in other countries, including China. The preparations gained a new momentum in May 2015, when these organizations formed an International Committee for Joint Nomination. In the process of preparation of this joint nomination proposal, the nominators have worked together to compile and examine together documents that have existed in fragments and scattered all over the world. As a result of this work, a much fuller picture has emerged of the system of the Japanese military 'comfort women' and its astonishing facts, though not a complete picture, as many related documents have perished.

The revelation over the last 25 years of the factual truths of the matter has created diplomatic conflicts, including in relation to the demands from the victims, and organizations supporting them, for a formal apology from the Japanese government in the manner of the German government's apology for the Holocaust. Recently in December 2015, the governments of the Republic of Korea and Japan announced an agreement on the 'comfort women' issue, including the decision to establish a foundation for the victims in the Republic of Korea. However, this agreement still faces objections from some 'comfort women' victims and supporting organizations, and thus represents a far from complete resolution of the issue in Korea.

While the archive of documents being nominated was formed primarily by the activities of victims and NGOs, it must be noted that this nomination is dedicated to the wider cause of remembering this wartime tragedy and inscribing it on the memory of the international community in the hope that such a tragedy should not occur again. Furthermore, the nominators hope that this archive will become a milestone for future efforts to solve the similar problems, still ongoing in today's world, of sexual abuse and associated violations of human rights.

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## 4.0 Legal information

*Information for this section is included in Appendix 3.*

### 4.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

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Name	Facsimile
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Telephone
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### 4.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details if different from the owner)

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Name	Facsimile
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Telephone
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### 4.3 Legal status

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### 4.4 Accessibility

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### 4.5 Copyright status

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## 5.0 Assessment against the selection criteria

### 5.1 Authenticity

The official historical documents relating to the 'comfort women' system that are being nominated as documentary heritage are all authentic. They were produced between 1931 and 1955 and preserved in the national archives and war memorials/museums in various countries. Those in Korea, Chinese Taipei and China are authentic documents produced by Japan and the Allied Forces. The historical documents in the custody of the two Dutch institutions and the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) are all original documents produced by the Allied Forces between 1945 and 1949. The documents nominated by the Imperial War Museum London were taken from the Japanese Army and kept by the Allied Forces.

Regarding the testimonies of the 'comfort women' victims, the nominated testimonies were chosen as they were acknowledged as true in the course of legal proceedings before the Japanese courts or through a government investigation process. The documents from countries without lawsuits or government investigations were collected by organizations or researchers in relationships of trust with the victims and are believed without reservation to be authentic. The documents on social movements and activities of supporting organizations, produced since the early 1990s, were chosen based on their historical value and authenticity.

### 5.2 World significance

The 'comfort woman' system, which has become recognized through the gradual accumulation of fragments of evidence, is a wartime tragedy comparable to the Holocaust and the Cambodian genocide, not in terms of the numbers of victims, but in terms of the depth of the victims' suffering and their enduring humiliation. Their

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tragedy continued even after the war, as the victims continued to suffer, both mentally and physically, from their experiences, while being offered no redress and often being shunned if it was known what had happened to them. It was almost half a century later that some victims began seeking mental relief by 'confessing' what had happened during the war. The nominated archive shows a form of brutality against human dignity particularly harsh in the sense that the brutality was amplified as a consequence of the prejudice surrounding women's social position. The voices of the comfort women, therefore, constitute universal heritage of memory deserving of being inscribed in the minds of people all over the world.

The victims' own courage, together with the efforts both of the organizations supporting them, and of the international women's and human rights communities, led to the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery, held in December 2000 in Tokyo, at which 64 survivors from 10 countries gathered and shared their pain, together with the 1,100 participants and over 100 reporters from around the world. The tribunal acknowledged that the 'comfort women' system was a war crime and a crime against humanity.

The voices of the 'comfort women' have made significant contributions to the understanding of human rights violations around the world and the establishment of new international standards. The two reports by UN special rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights and its Sub-Commission enhanced peoples' understanding in relation to the nature of violence against women during wartime. The policy documents adopted at the UN global conferences, such as the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, included clear recognition of sexual slavery during wartime as an important issue of violence against women and as a punishable war crime and a crime against humanity.

UN treaty monitoring bodies have also raised concerns on the issue of the 'comfort women' when examining Japan's reports on the implementation of its treaty obligations, while international human rights NGOs have also conducted studies on the issue as part of their campaigns against violence against women. These international concerns have been echoed by the legislatures of several countries, including those of victimized countries but also in the USA, The Netherlands, Canada and the European Parliament, all of which have passed resolutions on the issue. Several world leaders have shown special concern and sympathy with the 'comfort women', such as Pope Francis and the former and the current High Commissioners for Human Rights, Navanethem Pillay and Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein including at the time of their visits to Korea.

During the past 25 years, the issue of the 'comfort women' has been raised in many different forms, media and venues around the world. In many countries in the Asia Pacific region, Europe and the Americas, many conferences and forums have addressed the 'comfort women' issue, while documentary films, plays, dramas, cartoons, photo exhibitions and other artistic events have been organized, presented and performed. The survivors have been invited to conferences and speaking tours to universities, as well as award ceremonies around the world. Many 'girl's statues for peace' and plaques have been erected mostly by civil society organizations in various parts of Korea, Japan and United States, totalling more than 50 at present, and the numbers will continue to grow.

The still pervasive and systematic sexual violence and sexual slavery perpetrated during armed conflicts of today, both internal and inter-state, are similar in nature to the atrocities suffered by the 'comfort women'. Encouraged by the courage of the 'comfort women', victims of rape in places such as the former Yugoslavia, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Cambodia, have spoken about their sufferings in various formats, including their testimonies at the tribunals and hearings relating to the crimes committed against these women. Increased awareness of the 'comfort women' issue has also led to new studies being carried out in related areas, for example on the issue of sexual violence and forced prostitution during the Nazi Holocaust.

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## 5.3 Comparative criteria:

### 1 Time

The nominated documents were produced over a long period of time, covering from the time of Japan's wars in the Asia-Pacific region in the 1930s and 1940s, through the post-war tribunal period, up to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The most recent documents were produced in 2006, when the testimonies of victims in Timor-Leste were collected. The period covers the sequence of wartime, followed by a long period of silence and prolonged suffering of the victims, and finally the period of exposition. The whole period spans about eight decades.

### 2 Place

The nominated documents concern not only the former colonies of Japan, such as Korea and Taiwan, but also other areas in which the Japanese Army engaged in wars and wherever the 'comfort women' system operated throughout the vast areas of the Asia-Pacific region. Comprising documents produced from around the world, this archive is a complex collection of an international nature.



*A wall of photographs of former 'comfort women' from many different countries. @Women's Active Museum.*

### 3. People

The nominated documents reflect important aspects of human behaviour and social development. They provide evidence of the occurrence during wartime of grave human rights violations, as shown in the 'comfort women' system, victimizing countless numbers of women living in the Asia Pacific region. Their impact and influence, however, extend beyond the Asia-Pacific region. People all over the world have been affected by the documents and appalled by the level of brutality of the human rights violations evidenced by the documents. Equally, people from around the world have participated in sharing the nominated documents and have engaged in activism to raise awareness of the issue.

### 4 Subject and theme

Before the issue of the 'comfort women' became widely known and discussed, rapes and sexual slavery during wartime were often neglected. Through the testimonies of the 'comfort women', the systematic, continuous and repeated nature of the rape of women by the military in the Japanese sexual slavery system became known, and the degree of these human rights violations was recognized. The issue was an important subject at the 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights and the 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women. Ultimately, the issue of violence against women during wartime, including the issue of the 'comfort women', was reflected at the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, defining rape, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy and forced sterilization as punishable war crimes and crimes against humanity.

### 5 Form and style

The documents nominated are in various forms and styles. They include historical papers, records of meetings, legal documents, photos, video tapes of interviews, films of testimonies, paintings and other artistic expressions such as embroidery and pressed flowers. Some paintings of the 'comfort women', despite depicting the atrocities that happened to them, have surprising aesthetic value.

### 6 Social/ spiritual/ community significance:

The social significance of the nominated documents cannot be overstated. The 'comfort women' issue and the nominated documents are powerful reminders of the tragedy of war and the cruelty of human rights violations. At the same time, some of the documents show the very positive effects upon people that have resulted from addressing the issue, especially in relation to the recovery of human dignity by the victims and an unyielding determination to seek redress. The 'girl's statue for peace', erected first in Seoul in 2011, has been replicated

in many different cities in Korea but also in other countries, and has become a symbol of the peace movement. More than 50 'girl's statues' have been erected already, as well as many plaques installed for peace, in different places around the world.



*Pyeonghwa-bi: Peace Monument- Japanese Embassy in Seoul*



*Korean and Chinese 'comfort women' statues, Seongsu-dong, Seoul*



*Veterans Memorial at Eisenhower Park Westbury, Nassau County, New York*



*Fairfax County Government Center, Fairfax, Virginia*



*Central Park, Glendale, California*

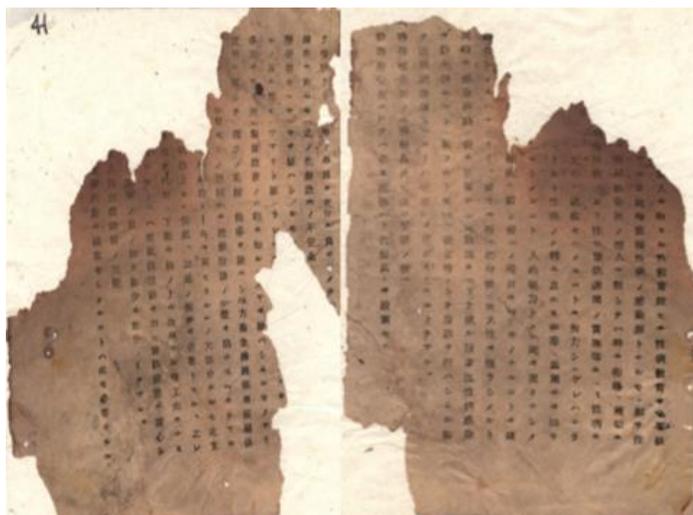


*Korean American Cultural Center, Southfield, Michigan*

## 6.0 Contextual information

### 6.1 Rarity

It is believed that many official documents perished during the final days of the war, some destroyed by those who generated them and others by wartime confusion. This archive was formed by putting together the rare pieces that escaped the destruction and other pieces generated in the decade immediately following the war. The testimonial documents of the 'comfort women' victims are also rare documents, especially since most of the survivors have now passed away and can no longer testify, or are very old and frail, making further



testimony difficult. This archive has taken its present form through the solidarity of many countries, which itself is rare in the history of archival activity.

### 6.2 Integrity

The nominated archive probably comprises only a small part of what could potentially have been included. It must be noted that the documents under the custody of Japanese institutions such as the National Archives of Japan and other public institutions have not been included. In addition, the archive includes half-burnt documents that indicate possible attempts at deliberate destruction. However, the documents included in this archive are

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sufficient to provide a vivid picture of what the system of 'comfort women' was, how it was run, how much the countless victims suffered during the period of their exploitation, how much rage has been provoked by the revelations of the existence of the system and its effects, and especially how the international community stood up to help the victims recover their damaged human dignity. Therefore, the archive has secured its integrity even though it does not include all the related documents that exist, or may once have existed.

*Report on Improving Facilities for comfort women by Japanese Military Police in North China*

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