



To Mr. Toru Hashimoto,
Mayor of Osaka City, Co-President of Japan Restoration Party

15th May, 2013

Letter of Request for Retraction and Apology for the Remark that “Comfort Women were Necessary”, and for Responsible Actions to Regain International Trust

On 13th May 2013, Mayor Toru Hashimoto, co-president of Japan Restoration Party, stated that the “Comfort Women” system was necessary. He denied the historical fact that the Japanese military forced women into sexual slavery by saying that there is no proof that the women were taken by force. He further expressed his views that the criticism toward Japan regarding this issue from concerned countries including the U.S. and a number of Asian countries was unjust. He went on to reveal that he asked the U.S. military in Japan to actively use the local sex-related business in order to reduce crimes by soldiers. His statements are a distortion of history and an unforgivable insult of women, and a clear human rights violation.

The historical reality of “Comfort Women”, sexual slavery by the former Japanese military, has been made clear over the years by the tireless efforts of Asian countries and NGOs within and outside Japan, through testimonies of victims and perpetrators, legal support and compensation systems. Thus, this is an undeniable fact. Mr. Hashimoto’s statements are an act of trampling upon the dignity of women who were forced into the Japanese military sexual slavery system. Moreover, the idea that sexual slavery is required in the military means making women a sexual sacrifice for men, and it is an act that eternalizes women’s human rights violation.

The YWCA of Japan works for women’s rights within the World YWCA network. We have continued our work in the belief that we should be able to build a peaceful future in collaboration with Asian YWCAs, by standing upon the regret that we could not stop the Japanese military’s invasion of Asian countries, sincerely facing the historical reality and expressing apology. Regrettably though, Mayor Toru Hashimoto of Osaka City, in his statement as a public figure, has refused to face the historical reality, resulting in a substantial loss of trust from the international community.

The YWCA of Japan strongly urges Mayor Hashimoto to retract and make a formal apology

for his statement that “Comfort Women were necessary”, and to fulfill his responsibility to regain the lost trust from the international community.

Sincerely yours,

侯野尚子

Naoko Matano
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