

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Sixth session

Item 9 of the agenda

10-28 September 2007

Racism, follow-up and implementation of the DDPA
Oral statement delivered by Japan Fellowship of Reconciliation,
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status
By Ms. Sumie Ogasawara

Racism and religion

"Comfort Women": military sexual slavery by Japan

Thank you Mr. President.

Japan Fellowship Of Reconciliation (JFOR) welcomes the Report (A/HRC/6/6) submitted by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, Mr. Doudou Diène. In it, he focuses on the phenomenon of Islamophobia. However, JFOR takes note of his warning, "(T)his focus does not imply the establishment of any hierarchy in discrimination against different religions."

It was the religious hierarchy over Korea under the colonial rule militarily established by the Japanese Emperor, namely the head of the "Shinto" religion that made possible for the Japanese military to enslave many Korean "comfort women", namely military sexual slavery victims.

Mr. Diène earlier pointed out in his report on the mission to Japan (E/CN.4/2006/16/Add.2), "However, issues such as official apology, compensation and proper education about this tragic historical episode known as "comfort women" have still not been settled."

JFOR wishes to draw the attention of the HRC to the recommendations by the Committee against torture in May as well as the House Resolution 121 EH of the US Congress in July, which urged the Japanese government to make a formal and unequivocal apology to the victims.

In this regard, it should be noted that the Japanese opposition Diet Members of the House of Councilors have been submitting the Bill for formal apology by the State of Japan to the victims of war time sexual coercion and that the general public supported the oppositions in the last election of that House in July, which resulted in the recent resignation of PM Abe.

JFOR wishes to request the HRC further support the victims of this gross violation of human rights of women.