

Regarding the Japanese Government's Attitude towards the Korean Judiciary's Ruling on Victims of Forced Labor

I express my deep concern over the continued aggressive remarks by Japanese government leaders about the Korean Supreme Court ruling regarding victims of forced labor during the Japanese occupation of Korea.

Their remarks are neither reasonable nor wise.

Rulings by the judiciary are not a matter for diplomacy between governments. A judicial institution is only responsible for making legal judgments, and democracies rest upon the principle that government should not intervene in judicial affairs. Japanese government leaders are certainly not unaware of this.

The Korean Supreme Court ruling does not negate the 1965 Treaty on Basic Relations between Korea and Japan. Rather, it pertains to the scope of application of the treaty based on an acknowledgement of it. The ruling makes this clear.

I have refrained from making comments on the issue and am working with the relevant government ministries and civilian experts to gather their wisdom on how to address this matter.

Japanese government leaders may speak their minds about the ruling of the Korean judiciary. Regretfully, I cannot but express my views because Japanese government leaders are driving the issue toward a diplomatic dispute.

I urge Japanese government leaders to deal with the issue wisely. The Korean government will do its utmost to heal the sufferings of the victims of forced labor. Again, it is the Korean government's wish that bilateral relations with Japan move forward in a future-oriented way.

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