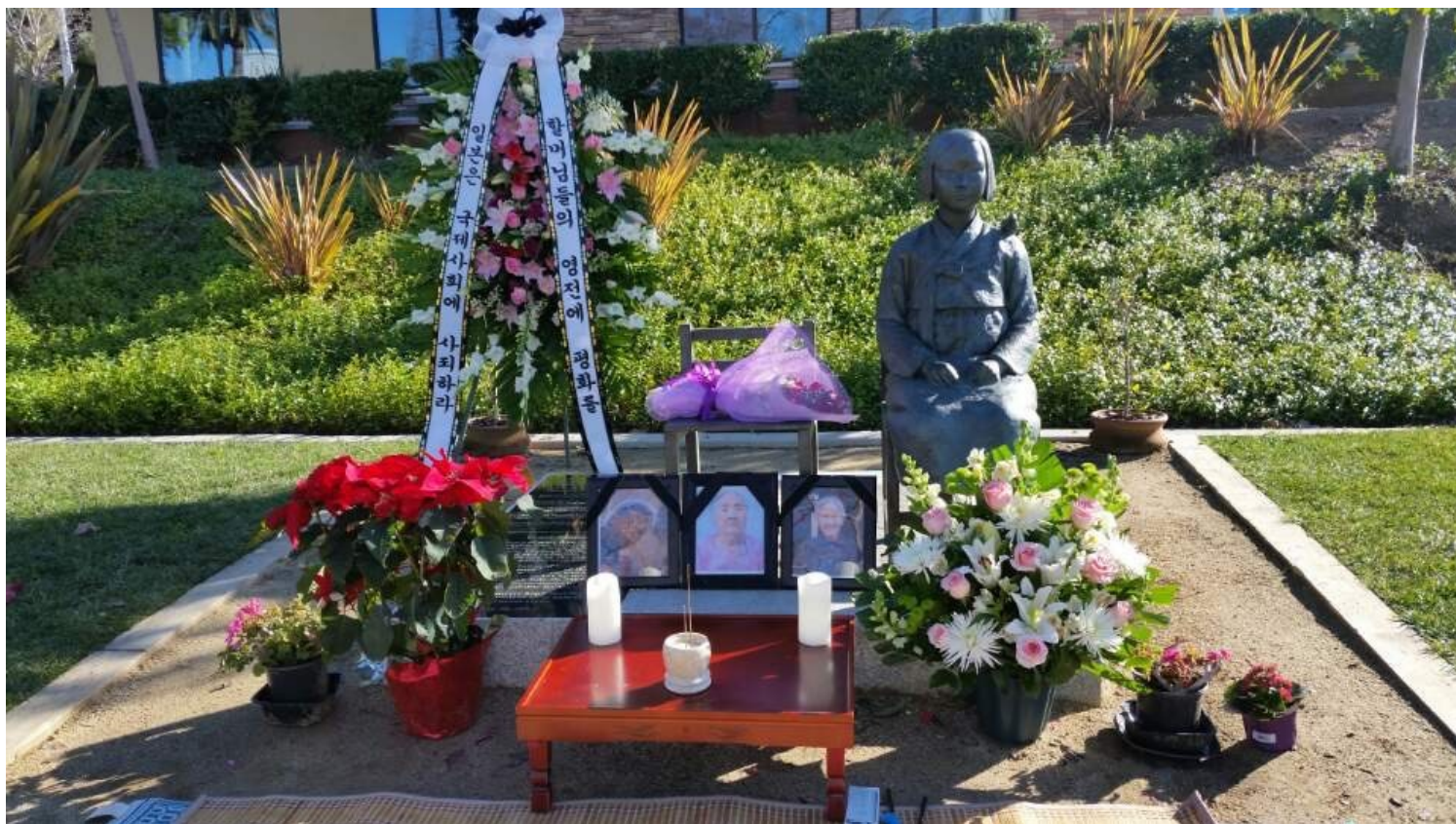


Asian America

Supreme Court Declines Case Over Lawsuit to Remove 'Comfort Women' Memorial

by Agnes Constante / Mar.31.2017 / 6:57 AM ET



The memorial in Glendale, California, was installed in 2013. Courtesy of Phyllis Kim

The Supreme Court on Monday [denied the review](#) of a case seeking the removal of a “comfort women” memorial in a Southern California city.

The court's decision concludes a three-year legal battle that began in 2014 when the [Global Alliance for Historical Truth-US Corporation](#) (GAHT-US) filed a lawsuit against the City of Glendale in Los Angeles County. It alleged that the city's statue, which honors the mostly Korean women who were forced into Japanese military-run brothels during World War II, unconstitutionally interfered with the federal government's exclusive authority to conduct foreign affairs.



The memorial in Glendale, California, was installed in 2013. Courtesy of Phyllis Kim

The case was dismissed in a district and superior court. The dismissal was upheld by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in 2016.

Recommended



[Ex-Senate staffer James Wolfe wants to gag 'glib' President Trump](#)



[Frustrated American Medical Association adopts sweeping policies aimed at gun violence](#)

In February, the [Japanese government had filed an amicus brief](#) in support of the lawsuit.

RELATED: [Advocates Protest After Japan Files Court Brief Supporting Removal of 'Comfort Women' Statue](#)

Phyllis Kim, executive director of the Korean American Forum of California, the organization that led efforts to install the statue, told NBC News in an email that although this lawsuit was won, the fight against history revisionism is not over.

“We believe this was a frivolous lawsuit that shouldn't have started in the first place,” she said. “Its only purpose was to put [a] gag order to the victims and silence the American citizens and local governments from speaking out and educating about the largest case of sex trafficking in modern history.”



Demonstrators protest at a statue honoring World War II-era "comfort women" after the government of Japan filed an amicus brief with the Supreme Court supporting its removal. Courtesy of Phyllis Kim

Historians [estimate that between 50,000 and 200,000 women](#) from countries including Korea, China, Indonesia, and the Philippines, were forced into Japanese military-run brothels during World War II.

The topic of “comfort women” has been a controversial issue. Advocates say that the Japanese government has long denied justice to comfort women, while opponents say there is no evidence supporting the claim that women were forced into sex slavery and that [Japan has already apologized](#) for its actions.

RELATED: [Japan, South Korea Reach Historic Deal on Wartime 'Comfort Women'](#)

In an email to NBC News, Koichi Mera, a representative from GAHT-US, said the organization regrets the decision made by the Court.

“In addition, we feel that the judicial system in the U.S. is not neutral, but definitely biased in terms of political orientation,” Mera said. “We shall try to correct this bias in other ways in coming months and years.”

NBC News has reached out to the Japanese Embassy for comment.



South Korean supporters of former so-called comfort women, hold up pictures of deceased former comfort women during the weekly rally against the Japanese government, near the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, South Korea, 30 December 2015. YANG JI-WOONG / EPA

Comfort women memorial statues exist in cities across the United States, including Union City, New Jersey; and Southfield, Michigan. Later this year, the City of San Francisco is expected to become the first major city in the country to install such a memorial.

Julie Tang, a retired judge of the Superior Court of San Francisco and co-chair of the Comfort Women Justice Coalition, said the Supreme Court's decision on Monday has cleared the way for building more comfort women memorials.

"I believe the real motivation behind the lawsuit is to intimidate and chill the local grassroots efforts to build 'comfort women' peace memorials. This tactic backfired.... Essentially, the U.S. Supreme Court has given a green light for 'comfort women' peace memorials to be built anywhere in the U.S.," she said.

Follow NBC Asian America on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Tumblr](#).

SPONSORED STORIES

by Taboola

Here Are The Best Vehicle GPS Tracking Devices

Yahoo Search

Say Goodbye to iPhone: This Could Be 40X Better

The Motley Fool

Avoid Grammatical Errors with This Helpful Browser Extension