

# Japan protests against 'girl statue' in Germany

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Japanese diplomats in Germany are reportedly trying to obstruct a civic group's plan to erect a "girl statue" representing wartime sex slavery victims inside a museum in Bonn.

The diplomats recently visited Marianne Pitzen, founder and chief of the Bonn Women's Museum, following media reports that a girl statue would be installed inside, said Yi Eun-hi, an activist who is leading the project.

Over 200,000 South Korean women were abused as sex slaves by the Japanese army before and during World War II.

At the meeting with Pitzen, the Japanese diplomats insisted that the number of the so-called comfort women is difficult to calculate and that they "volunteered" to serve for Japanese soldiers.

However, Pitzen rejected their claims, saying, "We cannot dial history back and what happened is what happened," according to Yi.

The museum accepted the activist group's plan to erect the girl statue Aug. 14, one day before the anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japanese colonial rule in 1945, while continuing to raise funds for it.

The statue in the Bonn Women's Museum will be the second girl statue in Europe. The first was installed in Nepal Himalaya Park in Wiesent, Germany, by Korean residents and citizens of Suwon in Gyeonggi Province in South Korea in March last year. However, they failed to establish a memorial stone detailing historical facts about comfort women after Japan formally protested.