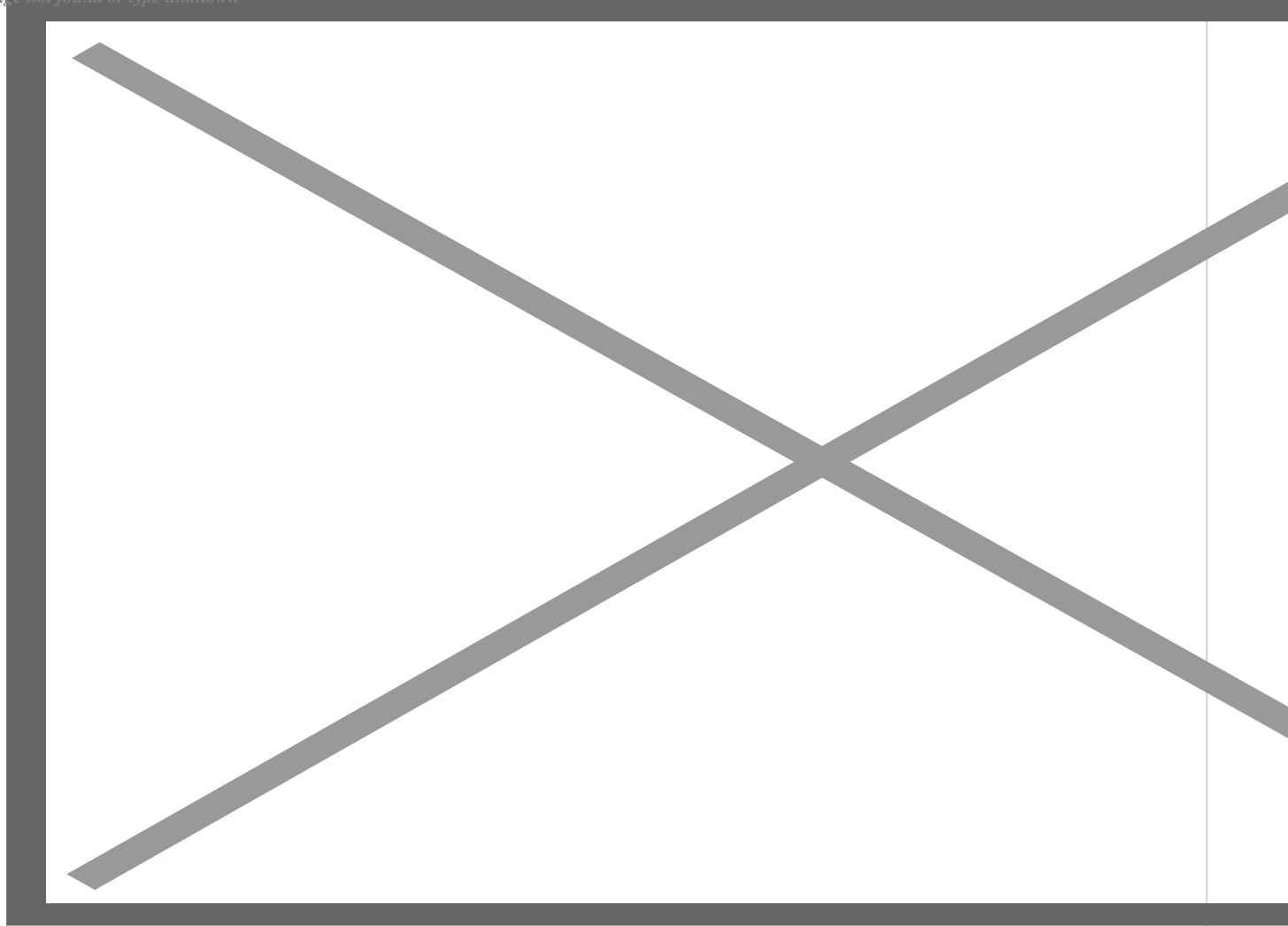


Survivors of forced labor under Japanese occupation condemn South Korean compensation plan

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South Korea has agreed to set up a fund to compensate victims of forced labor during Japan's colonization of Korea in the first half of the 20th century. South Korea's Foreign Ministry plans to raise the funds through voluntary contributions by businesses.

Tokyo, March 9 (RHC)-- South Korea has agreed to set up a fund to compensate victims of forced labor during Japan's colonization of Korea in the first half of the 20th century. South Korea's Foreign Ministry plans to raise the funds through voluntary contributions by businesses.

South Korean survivors condemned the agreement as a betrayal by their own government. They've been pushing for the funds to come directly from Japanese companies responsible for enslaving Koreans — including Nippon Steel Corporation and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries.

Supporters of the victims rallied against the agreement at a protest in Seoul on Tuesday. Protest organizer Kim Young-hwan told reporters: "We condemn the South Korean government for exempting Japan from its responsibility. It should have stood up to the Japanese government and engaged in diplomatic negotiations. Japan should apologize and compensate. But it doesn't make sense that the government proposed compensation in this shameful way without Japan's apology."

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