

REDRESS

Peruvians Plan to File Suit in Federal Court This Week

Victims of World War II from Latin America want similar reparations as other internees.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

People of Japanese ancestry who were taken from Latin American nations against their will and detained in U.S. camps during World War II plan to file suit this week seeking an apology and reparations.

In addition to the estimated 120,000 Japanese Americans held in camps, the Roosevelt administration ordered the detention of more than 2,200 people of Japanese ancestry from 13 Latin American countries. Most were from Peru.

A group of the former detainees plans to file a suit in federal court this week in Washington, the *Los Angeles Times* reported Monday.

"These actions were a violation of international law," said Grace Shimizu, daughter of a Peruvian Japanese man held in the camps.

"This was kidnaping civilians

from a third country not at war, taking them across international waters and jailing them. It's important to hold the government accountable."

The government never gave an official explanation for its actions. But historians think the Japanese-Latin Americans were forced into Texas concentration camps for reasons similar to the larger detention of Japanese Americans on the West Coast: They were seen as a security threat to the United States.

The U.S. government apologized and gave \$20,000 to each of the surviving 60,000 Japanese Americans held in camps. The Japanese Latin Americans want a similar deal. Many of them became U.S. citizens after the war, when most were not allowed to return to their home countries, the newspaper said.

The government does recognize that the abductions happened, but officials with the Justice Department's Office of Redress Administration say the Latin American detainees are not covered by the 1988 reparations law.