

Peruvian to Speak in Tokyo on Redress Suit Against U.S.

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Carmen Mochizuki is one of three plaintiffs in a federal suit challenging their denial of reparations.

Carmen Mochizuki, one of three Latin American Nikkei plaintiffs in a federal lawsuit challenging their exclusion from the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, will be in Japan this weekend to speak to the media about her case and her experiences.

Mochizuki, along with fellow plaintiffs Alice Nishimoto and Toshio Henry Shima, represent more than 2,200 other Latin American Japanese in the lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in August.

She will speak to the media all day on Saturday, Nov. 2, and in the afternoon and evening on Sunday, Nov. 3. She will be staying at the Hotel Pacific in Tokyo's Shinagawa district.

The 1988 redress bill authorized monetary reparations and an official government apology to Nikkei living in the U.S. who were put into wartime camps. The Latin American Nikkei were denied redress because the government did not consider them legal residents of the U.S.

A little known fact about the wartime machinations of the U.S. government is how it orchestrated the forcible deportation of more than 2,200 people of Japanese descent from 12 Latin American countries.

These Japanese Latin Ameri-

cans—80 percent of them Peruvians—posed no threat to their homeland or the United States. They were stripped of their citizenship, and confined by the United States as illegal immigrants in Department of Justice internment camps to be used as exchange hostages with Japan.

After the war, the U.S. government declared these Japanese Latin Americans to be "illegal aliens" and deported about 900 to war-devastated Japan. About 360 challenged deportation and were eventually allowed to become permanent residents or naturalized American citizens.

These Latin Americans of Japanese ancestry are seeking an official apology and formal redress from the United States government for the wartime mistreatment and violation of their human rights.

"Even with the media attention following the filing of the lawsuit, it appears the U.S. Justice Department and the Clinton Administration hope this issue stays hidden," ACLU's Ann Bradley said.

"We believe that our clients deserve their day in court and they deserve to have their story known—a story which dies with them if they are not allowed to tell what happened and their hopes for an official apology.



Carmen Mochizuki