



A Network of People
Building Peace

70 Years is Enough: Northeast Asian Civil Society Calls for an End to the Korean War

July 27, 2023 marks the 70th anniversary of the signing of the Korean War Armistice Agreement.

It has been 70 years since the roar of armed conflict ceased on the Korean Peninsula, yet there is no lasting peace and an unstable armistice regime continues. The humanitarian consequences of the unfinished war are significant, as this unresolved state is a root cause of tensions and has kept Korean families separated for decades. The past seven decades have vividly shown that lasting peace cannot be based on such a situation, but instead, that the normalisation of relations of states in the region and solid, legally binding commitments to peace are urgently needed.

The situation has further worsened as negotiations remain stalled in recent years. The rise of political and military tensions increases the risk of accidental conflict, and the continued state of war on the Korean Peninsula creates dangerous conditions that could lead to miscalculations with grave consequences.

There must never be another war on the Korean Peninsula. All people on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia have the right to peace.

This anniversary should mark the beginning of a process of dialogue between the two Koreas as reflected in the Panmunjom Declaration of April 2018, making concrete steps to strengthen the basis of peace and common prosperity. We call for the implementation of the agreements of Panmunjom and Singapore to pursue peace and denuclearization through improved relations and confidence building. Ending the unstable ceasefire and establishing a peace regime are inseparable from achieving complete denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula.

Peace can be achieved by only peaceful means, through dialogue and cooperation – not sanctions and pressure. To this end, hostile policies and military threats must stop. In particular, military provocations and aggressive demonstrations of force, such as joint military exercises, should be ceased. Civilian exchanges and cooperation play an important role in promoting peace on the Korean Peninsula, and should continue under any circumstance. Healing the wounds of war starts and ends at the interpersonal level, and we call for the lifting of barriers which prevent such people-to-people exchange.

On this 70th anniversary, we fervently hope that the governments of countries involved in the Korean War will listen to the voices of civil society from the Korean Peninsula, Northeast Asia and globally, as we call for sincere and sustained efforts to build a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula and a nuclear-free Northeast Asia.

We want peace. 70 years is enough. Let's end the Korean War.

This statement is issued on behalf of participants in the Ulaanbaatar Process, a civil society dialogue for peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula coordinated by the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) Northeast Asia and Mongolian NGO Blue Banner.

GPPAC Northeast Asia includes the participation of civil society experts from Beijing, Hong Kong, Kyoto, Pyongyang, Seoul, Taipei, Tokyo, Ulaanbaatar, Vladivostok, the United States and beyond.