



A Network of People
Building Peace

GPPAC Northeast Asia Statement

Urging cooperation to overcome divisions and decisive action to end prevent armed conflict

November 2024

As 2024 approaches its close Northeast Asia is at a crucial juncture, with heightening tensions and greater polarisation. “New Cold War” structures are forging greater divisions in the region, as expanding military alliances and blocs deepen distrust and exacerbate already severe challenges. Participants of the Ulaanbaatar Process, a forum for dialogue amongst Northeast Asian civil society, expressed their deep concern over these issues, and highlight the below interconnected issues as areas needing urgent action by all relevant stakeholders in order to resolve this current crisis and ensure the dignity and safety of all living in the Northeast Asian region.

We express deep concern about the escalating military tensions on the Korean Peninsula, especially in the border areas. We urge the governments of both Koreas to halt all military and other hostile acts, and restore the minimum communication channel and the Inter-Korean Military Agreement in order to prevent any accidental clashes on the Peninsula which could lead to the risk of full-scale armed conflict.

We also express great concern over current reliance on military solutions to end ongoing wars and suffering. We urge the world to focus on instead seeking, lasting peaceful solutions, beginning with a cease-fire and followed by a just and peaceful resolution. Failing to do so will lead only to broader destabilization and conflict, on a regional or even larger scale. Urgent efforts must be made to end the conflict in Ukraine, and to stop the appalling devastation in Gaza.

We recognize that militarized national security impacts all facets of society, and that the sex industry is a built-in part of this system. It is crucial to remember the history of violation of the dignity of women and girls at this critical juncture in the region that is facing increasing military tension. We stand in solidarity with the US Military Kijichon Comfort Women, survivors of militarized sexual servitude in the Republic of Korea, and local organizations calling for preservation of the historic Venereal Disease Management Center building in Dongducheon, ROK - a testimony of the sufferings of women and girls who were forced or coerced into sexual servitude to U.S. soldiers stationed in Korea in the period of rebuilding of the country after the devastating war on the Korean Peninsula to cement the U.S.-ROK military alliance.

We also stand with the people of Okinawa in opposing the construction of a new offshore facility at Camp Schwab, a US Marine Corps base near Henoko in northern Okinawa. We condemn the continued violation of Okinawan people's self-determination, as they have protested base expansion at Henoko for over 20 years, currently through nonviolent direct action to block trucks carrying construction materials into the base. After years of preparatory work and delays, reinforcement of the seabed started on August 20, 2024. Environmental experts have criticised this construction process, which is expected to take at least twelve years at a projected cost to the Japanese government of 930 billion yen (\$6.4 billion), 2.7 times the original estimate, yet the Japanese government has gone ahead anyway. In the meantime, the US military keeps Futenma Marine Corps Air Station located in a crowded urban area. The United States promised to return this base to Okinawa's control on condition that it was replaced by a new facility at Henoko. Okinawan people opposed this plan and demanded the return of Futenma without replacement; we condemn the anti-democratic process that has forced this new facility onto the Okinawan people.

2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, of liberation from Japanese colonial rule for much of the region including Korea and Taiwan, and of the end of World War II. As civil society we pledge to work together to recall the lessons of the past, and coordinate together to prevent future armed conflict. We will therefore actively participate in the 2025 DMZ march hosted by ROK civil society in order to resolve the growing crisis and risk of war in the border region of the Korean Peninsula. Heeding the leadership of Nihon Hidankyo, the 2024 Nobel Peace Laureates, we will also support all efforts to abolish nuclear weapons. This coming year must be a time for cooperation to overcome divisions and take decisive action to end ongoing crises and prevent future armed conflicts.