

GPPAC Northeast Asia Statement for Peace on the Korean Peninsula

Dear Friends,

The Northeast Asian network of Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) issued the statement below regarding the situation of the Korean Peninsula. It is now open for endorsement. (Please read and write to the contact below.) Key civil society organizations from Seoul, Tokyo, Beijing, Shanghai, Taipei and Vladivostok got united in calling for a peace through dialogue against the growing tension after the recent artillery exchange between North and South Korea. It calls on the governments concerned to refrain from any military activities and work to create and expand Demilitarized Zones.

Best

Akira Kawasaki

Peace Boat

GPPAC Northeast Asia Regional Secretariat

=====

GPPAC Northeast Asia Statement for Peace on the Korean Peninsula

We, the undersigned members of civil society organizations, are shocked at the artillery exchange between North and South Korea on November 23, 2010, that caused the tragic killing of and injuries to the people of Yeonpyeng Island. We extend our deepest condolences to the families of all those who lost their lives and to the communities affected. We categorically condemn the attack that caused the tragedy, no matter what background there might be for the respective governments.

We are also gravely concerned about the developments after the incident. The tension caused through military activities and provocative behavior among policy makers and even the public is growing. While we understand the emotions behind these reactions, an escalation of tension would only lead to further violence and confrontations. We must ease tensions, and work together to find creative, peaceful solutions. Dialogue is the only way to proceed. The people of Northeast Asia should be united in calling for peace.

We hereby call on all the governments and people concerned to commit to the following:

1. Stop military activities now.

A ceasefire must be declared by North and South Korea immediately. Military exercises in and around the area are counterproductive and should be stopped. All the parties must refrain from any acts that increase tension in the region.

2. Work to start dialogue.

The governments of North and South Korea must arrange diplomatic talks as soon as possible, and other governments should work to make such talks a success. Regional dialogue should also be pursued, including an early resumption of the Six-Party Talks.

3. Investigate the incident.

Attention should be paid to the fact that the area of this incident has long been disputed between North and South Korea. All the parties should therefore have fully refrained from provocation and military actions. International investigation needs to be carried out to clarify exactly what happened.

4. Do not start an arms race.

No government should use this event as an excuse for military build-up or an increase of military expenditure. Build-up of military capability would not prevent conflicts, but rather trigger an arms race. An arms race would not only deprive the people in need of their limited resources, but also risk additional confrontations. Regional cooperative disarmament measures and security arrangements should instead be developed.

5. Create and expand Demilitarized Zones.

We call on the governments of North and South Korea to work to establish a Peace and Cooperation Zone in the West Sea/Yellow Sea as agreed in the Joint Statement of the North-South Summit of October 4, 2007, with a view to preventing conflicts in the area. We further call for the creation and expansion of Demilitarized Zones (DMZs) in other disputed areas in the region. In such zones, military activities, including exercises, should be prohibited, and confidence-building measures such as dialogue and transparency programs should be implemented.

6. Civil society has a critical role to play.

Civil society actors such as NGOs, academic institutions and the media can play a critical role to facilitate the processes outlined above. Governments should allow and encourage them to play their legitimate roles. The media has a special responsibility to refrain from any provocation. Rather, the media should promote a balanced analysis and facilitate dialogue.

This tragic incident reminded us of the fact that our region is still divided and suffering from the remnants of the Cold War. More than half a century since the armistice was declared in the Korean War, a peace regime needs to be realized on the Korean Peninsula, along with a peace mechanism in Northeast Asia as a whole. Recalling the North-South Declarations of June 15, 2000, and October 4, 2007, and the Joint Statement of Six-Party Talks of September 19, 2005, we call on the governments concerned to make further efforts, and reaffirm our commitment to strive to achieve these goals.

December 2, 2010

Initial Signatories:

ANDO Hiroshi, Nonviolent Peaceforce, Tokyo
HUANG Haoming, China Association for NGO Cooperation, Beijing
HSU Szu-chien, Institute of Political Science, Academia Sinica, Taipei
Meri JOYCE, GPPAC Northeast Asia Regional Liaison Officer, Tokyo
JUNG Gyung-Lan, Women Making Peace, Seoul
KAWASAKI Akira, Peace Boat, Tokyo
Anton KOSTYUK, Maritime State University, Vladivostok
LEE Jae Young, Korea Anabaptist Center / Northeast Asia Regional Peacebuilding Institute, Seoul
LEE Taeho, People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD), Seoul
Kathy R. MATSUI, Hague Appeal for Peace Global Campaign for Peace Education, Tokyo
SASAMOTO Jun, Japan International Lawyers Solidarity Association (JALISA), Tokyo
SHEN Dingli, Fudan University, Shanghai
YI Kiho, Hanshin University, Seoul
YOSHIOKA Tatsuya, GPPAC Northeast Asia Regional Initiator / Peace Boat, Tokyo

*This statement was drafted and initially signed by the members and affiliates of Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) Northeast Asia Regional Steering Group, and made open for endorsements.

*Affiliations are for identification purposes only.

Endorsers:

International Peace Bureau

Abolition 2000 Council
(To be added)

Contact:

GPPAC Northeast Asia Regional Secretariat
c/o Peace Boat
3-13-1 B1 Takadanobaba, Shinjuku, Tokyo 169-0075
Phone +81-3-3363-8047
Fax +81-3-3363-7562
KAWASAKI Akira kawasaki@peaceboat.gr.jp
Meri JOYCE meri@peaceboat.gr.jp