



MARYKNOLL OFFICE FOR GLOBAL CONCERNS

Peace, Social Justice and Integrity of Creation

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 3, 2025

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With the Election of the New South Korean President, US Advocates Organize for Korea Peace

WASHINGTON, DC – As Lee Jae-myung has been newly elected as South Korea's president, hundreds of peace advocates across the country will participate in the tenth annual Korea Peace Advocacy Week to urge their members of Congress to support a diplomatic solution to the conflict and a peace-first approach.

Running from June 9-13, 2025, Korea Peace Advocacy Week will consist of virtual and in-person lobby visits with Congressional Representatives, Senators, and staff to advocate for H.R.1841, the Peace on the Korean Peninsula Act, which calls for serious, urgent diplomacy in pursuit of a binding peace agreement to formally end the Korean War. The bill — which currently has 39 co-sponsors, including bipartisan support — also calls for a review of the U.S. travel ban on North Korea, which prevents Korean Americans from visiting their families in North Korea and can impede the work of humanitarian aid groups.

This is an especially timely moment to support peace efforts, as tensions on the Korean Peninsula continue to run dangerously high with the United States and South Korea continuing to hold larger and more frequent joint war drills, which have proven to raise tensions in the region, and North Korea conducting increased missile tests. In the aftermath of Yoon Suk Yeol's illegal declaration of martial law, which included an alleged failed plot to provoke North Korea with drones, and his subsequent impeachment, there have been renewed calls for an end to the Korean War amidst the massive pro-democracy movement in South Korea. Moreover, a new public opinion poll shows that a majority of the U.S. supports diplomatic engagement with North Korea and China to reduce rising tensions and pursue peacebuilding efforts.

Although it is known in the U.S. as “the Forgotten War,” the Korean War never ended but was merely halted by an armistice in 1953, which was supposed to be temporary. This unresolved state of war is the root cause of ongoing tensions between the U.S. and North Korea, has driven the extreme militarization of the Korean Peninsula, and has kept Korean families separated for decades. Furthermore, the U.S. approach of pressure and isolation has failed to improve the security crisis in Korea or the situation of human rights in North Korea. A peace-first approach would be a more realistic and effective method for improving the safety and well-being of Koreans and Americans.

“The election of South Korea's new president creates a historic opening for lasting peace on the Korean peninsula. But democracy cannot thrive under militarism and forever war. As U.S.-based peace activists, we must do our part to continue to build the political will for a peace agreement to finally end the 75-year-old Korean War.” — Cathi Choi, Executive Director, Women Cross DMZ

“Advocacy Week is an important moment for supporters of a peaceful and stable Korean Peninsula to come together and speak with one voice to Congress. As we have seen in recent public opinion polling, a significant majority of the U.S. public supports engagement between the U.S. and DPRK on many issues. Advocacy Week is an opportunity for these polling statistics to come off the page and come to life through the stories and voices of constituents from across the country. At a moment when tensions are high and trust is low, we need to let our members of Congress know that we want to see courageous legislative action towards peace and diplomatic engagement.” — Austin Headrick, American Friends Service Committee

“The United Methodist Church stands in firm commitment with the Christians of Korea, both North and South, and around the world in faithful actions to work towards peace, healing, and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula.

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Especially as tensions continue to escalate, Korea Peace Advocacy Week is an opportunity for faith in action to advocate to Congress to pursue peace.” — Colleen Moore, Director of Peace With Justice at the General Board of Church and Society, the social justice agency of the United Methodist Church.

“Walking with the Korean people for over a century, Maryknoll missionaries have felt first-hand the pain of war and separation on the Korean Peninsula. Demilitarization, reduction of nuclear risk, delivery of humanitarian aid, reuniting separated families – everything that constitutes just and enduring peace for all Koreans begins with negotiating a peace agreement to officially end the Korean War. The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns is so grateful to join our partners and Korea peace champions from around the United States in advocating for Congress to pursue peace now.” — Susan Gunn, Director, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

“As Korean Americans, we carry the enduring legacy of a war that has divided families and nations for over seven decades. The Korean American Peace Fund proudly joins this year’s Korea Peace Advocacy Week to call for an end to the Korean War through dialogue and diplomacy. Peace is not only a moral imperative — it is a necessary step toward justice, reconciliation, and a future in which all Koreans, on both sides of the DMZ, can live without fear of war.” — Yu Soung Mun, President, Korean American Peace Fund

This will be a record tenth year of coordinated advocacy days for the cause of peace in Korea, and the fifth year of advocacy days being held virtually to accommodate interested constituents from across the country. When the initiative first started in 2015, only 12 people participated; the effort has now grown to include more than 200 people.

This year’s Korea Peace Advocacy Week is being organized by the American Friends Service Committee, Korea Peace Now! Grassroots Network, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), Church & Society and Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, Korean American Peace Fund, and Women Cross DMZ.

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The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) promotes a world free of violence, inequality, and oppression. Guided by the Quaker belief in the divine light within each person, we nurture the seeds of change and the respect for human life to fundamentally transform our societies and institutions. We work with people and partners worldwide, of all faiths and backgrounds, to meet urgent community needs, challenge injustice, and build peace.

MCC U.S. is a non-profit organization that strives to share God’s love and compassion through relief, development and peacebuilding. In addition to supporting MCC’s international work, our national and regional staff lead programs across the U.S.

General Board of Church and Society is a social justice agency of The United Methodist Church, dedicated to the work of living faith, seeking justice, and pursuing peace. Addressing more than 30 social issues on which The United Methodist Church has claimed a position, Church and Society communicates with policymakers and leaders around the world with the mission of transforming the world.

As the mission and humanitarian assistance agency of The United Methodist Church, Global Ministries leads The United Methodist Church in equipping, strengthening and transforming people and communities for God’s mission around the world. In its work of making disciples of Jesus Christ, Global Ministries envisions and facilitates mission so that churches and faith communities grow and flourish; justice, freedom, peace, health and well-being prevail across racial, cultural, national and political boundaries; and people of all faiths live in dignity and security, even when they face humanitarian disasters and their aftermath.

The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (MOGC) represents Maryknoll missionaries, who are Catholic men and women serving in impoverished communities around the world. The MOGC provides analysis and advocacy on issues of justice, peace and the integrity of creation that affect the countries and communities where Maryknoll missionaries serve.

The Korean American Peace Fund (KAPF) is a community-driven initiative dedicated to advocating for peace and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula. Rooted in the Korean American community’s long history of activism, KAPF mobilizes resources, raises awareness, and supports legislative efforts to end the unresolved Korean War. Through grassroots organizing, public education, and strategic advocacy, the fund empowers Korean Americans and allies to take action for a lasting peace that prioritizes diplomacy and human rights. KAPF is committed to fostering a future where Korea is no longer divided by war but united in peace and justice.

Women Cross DMZ is the leading feminist voice in the movement to bring lasting peace to the Korean Peninsula.

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