



70 Years After the Armistice: A Statement for Reconciliation and Peace on the Korean Peninsula

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. (Matthew 5:9)

(1) The 15th General Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) expresses deep concern that the entire Korean Peninsula is in a seemingly unending threat of war and escalation of conflict imperilling the strong desire for just, durable, and lasting peace. The strength-for-strength stance of the South and the North is continuing military tensions on the Korean Peninsula and military tensions throughout Northeast Asia. Recently, South Korea, the United States, and Japan have held large-scale military exercises, and the North has responded with missile tests. The lines of confrontation on the Korean Peninsula are becoming clearer. We pray that the cycle of conflict and tension may be broken and for a move toward a path of peace.

(2) 27 July 2023 marked the 70th anniversary of the armistice this year. We are reminded once again that the Korean War is not over; peace is imperfect and war can break out at any time. On this 70th anniversary of the armistice, we fervently pray for true peace on the Korean Peninsula.

(3) Relations between North and South Korea have deteriorated significantly since the failure of the 2019 summit in Hanoi, Vietnam. In June 2020, the Joint Inter-Korean Liaison Office was demolished and communication lines were cut. With the northern border closure since the pandemic, communication between the two Koreas has been cut off, and there has been no meeting with the Korea Christian Federation (KCF) since December 2019. In this desperate situation, we fervently pray that relations with our sisters and brothers in the KCF will be restored and that a time will come when Christians from the North and the South will worship together.

(4) To break the cycle of conflict, tension, and escalating confrontation on the Korean Peninsula, a strong decision to move from a declaration of war to a peace agreement is needed. The current confrontation on the Korean Peninsula is not the right choice for the future, as it will only increase armaments and the social costs of tension. Treating others with violence and antagonism is never God's way. The transition from an armistice to a peace agreement reflects a common desire of the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCK) and the Korea Christian Federation (KCF).

(5) Therefore, the 15th CCA General Assembly calls for an official end to the Korean War, prays for a peace agreement to replace the 1953 Armistice, and:

- Invites all CCA constituencies to worship together for peace on the Korean Peninsula on the second week of August each year using the worship liturgy and prayer of the “North-South Joint Prayer for Peace and Reunification on the Korean Peninsula”.
- Calls upon CCA constituencies and the wider ecumenical community to actively participate in the Korea Peace Appeal, a campaign to achieve total peace in the Peninsula by 2025, being led by the NCCK.
- Strongly encourages an easement of the sanctions on North Korea, currently a major obstacle to civilian exchange, cooperation, and political dialogue with the people of North Korea. We also urge, along with representatives of the global ecumenical community, that substantive civilian exchanges between Christians in North and South Korea be quickly resumed.
- Calls upon the governments involved to refrain from provocative statements and military actions that escalate confrontation and tensions and to create instead an environment of reconciliation and dialogue for peace on the Korean Peninsula.
- Prays that the permanent members of the UN Security Council continue to work together for reconciliation and peace on the Korean Peninsula.