



For Immediate Release

Contact: Medea Benjamin

Women Who Crossed Korean DMZ for Peace Brief Members of Congress

July 20, 2015 (Washington, D.C.)—In May, 30 prominent women peacemakers from 15 countries, including two Nobel Peace Laureates, made a historic walk across the De-Militarized Zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea calling for an end to the Korean War, family reunification, and women’s peacebuilding. They participated in peace symposia and walks with North and South Korean women where they learned about the impact of the unresolved Korean War on their lives. At a Congressional briefing co-sponsored by Representatives John Conyers (D-MI) and Loretta Sanchez (D-CA), U.S. delegates will share insights from their journey across the Korean peninsula.

2015 marks the 70th anniversary of Korea’s arbitrary division into two separate states by the U.S. and former Soviet Union, which precipitated the 1950-53 Korean War. After claiming 4 million lives, including 36,000 U.S. troops, North Korea, China, and the United States signed the Armistice Agreement. Although the ceasefire halted the war, without a peace settlement, the Korean War still lives on and the DMZ stands in the way of the reunification of the Korean people and millions of families. 2015 also marks the 15th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 which affirms the need for women’s involvement in all levels of peacebuilding.

When: Tuesday, July 21, 2015, 4 pm
Where: U.S. Congress Rayburn House Building 226
Who: Congressman John Conyers, Korean War Veteran
Congressman Charles B. Rangel, Korean War Veteran
Gloria Steinem, author, Presidential Medal of Freedom awardee
Ann Wright, retired U.S. Army Colonel and diplomat
Abigail Disney, award-winning filmmaker and philanthropist
Brinton Lykes, Professor, Boston College
Christine Ahn, International Coordinator, Women Cross DMZ
Deann Borshay Liem will screen video footage from the trip

“Our walk was the first step in a long-term process to work with women in Korea and around the world to end the Korean War and to invite all concerned to imagine a new future for Korea,” says the lead organizer, Christine Ahn.

“As the Iran and Cuba deals show, diplomacy works,” says Ann Wright, retired U.S. Army Colonel and U.S. diplomat. “We must engage with North Korea, which will not only lead to greater security for Americans, but for Asia and our world.”

“We were able to be citizen diplomats and get both governments to agree,” says Gloria Steinem. “By being in the same space, we were able to empathize with Korean women, which neurologists say happens when we are physically together with all five senses.”

“One North Korean woman testified about the U.S. bombing of her village during the war when she was a child,” says Professor Brinton Lykes. “Even though I’ve heard many stories of war horrors and am familiar with research on torture and trauma, it was very challenging to hear her talk about vengeance. Her words underscored the importance of ending this war – so that she and many others, including American veterans, can begin to find closure and healing.”

“Our history of saber-rattling, sanctions and isolation has not brought the peninsula any closer to peace,” says filmmaker Abigail Disney. “Change in North Korea will come when the people are sufficiently dissatisfied with their own regime and profoundly less frightened that the rest of the world is looking to destroy them.”

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