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Contact: Ann Wright (808) 741-1141 or Brinton Lykes (617) 552-0670

Women's Walk for Peace in Korea Continues

May 8, 2016. In three weeks, the women's walk for peace will continue along the southern border of the De-Militarized Zone (DMZ) separating North and South Korea. Organized by 30 major South Korean civil society organizations, it is a call for a peaceful resolution to the unresolved Korean War. "I am so heartened that the Korean people will carry on the walk for peace," says Nobel Peace Laureate Mairead Maguire, whose nonviolent movement ended decades of violent conflict in Northern Ireland.

Earlier this month at a press conference sponsored by right-wing conservative organizations, a lobbyist from the United States alleged that the 2015 women's peace walk was conceived by a diplomat at the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Mission to the United Nations. This is wholly inaccurate.

The idea for the May 2015 women's peace walk was inspired by five New Zealanders who in 2013 rode their motorbikes across the Korean DMZ, one of the world's most fortified borders. The 30 international women obtained approval to cross the DMZ from the United Nations Command and both Korean governments. The stakes here are too high to be distracted by misinformation. The goal of the peace walk is simple: to bring a peaceful and immediate end to the Korean War by urging political leaders to immediately begin a peace process.

"Our diverse group of 30 women from fifteen countries joined this journey across the DMZ because we were motivated to help bring healing to the division and war that have destroyed three generations of families," says Gloria Steinem, author and activist. "I was in high school during the Korean War, and I lost several classmates to that war."

"The goal of the peace walk, then and now, is to encourage political leaders to achieve a diplomatic solution to the 63-year old conflict," says Ann Wright, retired U.S. Army Colonel and U.S. diplomat. "Shifting attention away from the need for a peaceful resolution to the unresolved Korean War is a part of these conservative organizations' agenda," says Brinton Lykes, Professor of Psychology and Associate Director of the Center for Human Rights & International Justice at Boston College. "If anything, it is an indication of how much the Cold War still shapes politics in South Korea."

On May 24, 2015, thirty prominent women peacemakers including two Nobel Peace Laureates crossed the DMZ dividing Korea calling for an end to the Korean War, the resumption of family reunions, and the inclusion of women in the peace building process. On May 28, 2016, South Korean peace organizations are organizing another women's peace walk along the DMZ to continue the call for peace and reconciliation in Korea and to formally end the Korean War (1950-53) with a peace treaty. For those interested to learn more about the May 28 peace walk, please visit www.wpwalk.kr.

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