



Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber  
Head of the Department for Ecumenical Relations and Ministries Abroad  
Kirchenamt der Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland EKD

October 12, 2020

**Dear Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber,**

We greet you in the name of Christ.

We are always grateful to the history of solidarity between EKD and NCKK as we have addressed together our common challenges for more than a half century. Especially, we would like to express a deep gratitude for your continuing support and prayers for peace and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula.

Today we write to you regarding the unfortunate circumstances as the Mitte District of Berlin had earlier approved an application for a group called, Korea Verband, to build a "Peace Statue", but after the statue was unveiled they have since rescinded the approval and ordered the statue to be removed by October 14th, or else they will remove it forcefully. We believe this district administration has changed their mind because of the intervention of the Japanese government. We would like you to help us in joining your voice to stop the removal of this statue.

The Berlin "Peace Statue" is a replica of the one that resides in Seoul, Korea, and it represents the ongoing struggle of the "Comfort Women", the women forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese government during their time of colonization of Korea and throughout World War II. The "Comfort Women" are still waiting and demanding for an official recognition of the crime of forced sexual slavery on the part of the Japanese government. Cities around the world have begun supporting Korean residents by erecting their own versions of the "Peace Statue" to give hope to all those who have survived the violence of war and are struggling to preserve peace for our future.

It is apparent that the current Japanese diplomatic community is continuing to refuse this recognition, claiming they do not believe the evidence presented, fighting to hide the history of their past crimes, and seeking to block "Peace Statues" in cities around the world to stifle solidarity. It appears that they have convinced Mayor Stephan von Dassel of the Mitte District of Berlin that appeasing the Japanese government is a higher priority than supporting the struggle for peace in specific instances of violence. The mayor has claimed that the statue should have been a vague reference to peace instead of a specific struggle for peace on the behalf of certain survivors of conflict.

We have admired the courageous way that German society has sought to acknowledge and apologize for its sinful past, and to teach about the specific wrong doings so that they are not repeated again. That is why we are so surprised at the decision of this district of Berlin that any art addressing peace must be vague and that specific threats to peace must not be mentioned. But we all believe that, "to establish justice and preserve peace, we must not forget the painful past and we must remember the wrong-doings in details as this remembrance is a starting point of the whole process of reconciliation including truth-finding, apology, reparation and healing." The ultimate aim of the Peace Statue is to remember the past and open up a way towards reconciliation.

Therefore, it is in this context that we seek your solidarity in protecting the Peace Statue and ask you to write an emergency letter before Oct. 14. We hope that we, German and Korean Churches, can further strengthen our solidarity through preserving the "Peace Statue" in Berlin.

In ecumenical solidarity,



Rev. Lee Hong-jung, General Secretary



Rev. Min Suk-hee, Chairperson of Women's Committee  
National Council of Churches in Korea

Cc: Rev. Ostarek Claudia  
Executive Secretary  
Head of the East Asia,  
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