



Mr. Tomás Ojea Quintana

Special Rapporteur on North Korean Human Rights
United Nations

September 9, 2020

Dear Mr. Tomás Ojea Quintana,

We bring warm greetings from the National Council of Churches in Korea and express a deep gratitude to you for your commitment to human rights in North Korea.

The NCKK is a Council of 9 mainline Christian denominations in Korea, including Presbyterians, Methodists, Anglicans, Lutherans, Salvation Army, Pentecostals, and Orthodox community, Korea Evangelical Church, etc. Since its inception in 1924, the NCKK has prayed and worked together for the Church's unity, nation's independence, realization of human rights and democracy, especially in South Korea. Since 1981 the NCKK has committed itself to reconciliation and reunification of the Korean people and nation.

We are writing this letter to help your understanding on the delicate situation triggered by the balloon-leafleting activities of some North Korean defector organizations which are represented by Mr. Park Sang-hak.

In fact, these groups sent anti-North Korea propaganda leaflets to North Korea several times in this year from the border town of Kimpo despite the strong warnings from both governments. Eventually on June 16, in response to the actions of provocation of Mr. Park's groups, North Korea blew up the inter-Korean Liaison office at Kaesung that had been established as a part of the 4.27 Panmunjom Declaration in 2018. With the destruction of Kaesung office, all the inter-Korean relations have completely died.

The South Korean government, in early June prior to the blowing up of Kaesung office, accused Mr. Park of violating inter-Korean exchange laws and of attacking a female journalist, and they began the legal process of cancelling the legal status of Mr. Park's organization as a non-profit organization.

However, Mr. Park has appealed to the international society that his human rights as a human rights activist are being severely violated by such reactions of the South Korean government. In addition, we are told that you are considering conveying your opinion to the South Korean Unification Ministry that the counter measure of the South Korean government is a political decision which might violate human rights.



In a careful consideration of each individual's human rights and freedom of expression as well as the right of people to peace, we would like to spell out the following two points:

1. The provocative acts that jeopardize peace between the two Koreas should be eradicated.

With the historical 4.27 Panmunjom Declaration and 9.19 Pyongyang Joint Declaration in 2018, the two governments have agreed to stop all provoking actions against each other including actions by civilians. We consider Mr. Park's actions as a kind of psychological warfare against North Korea, and they gravely jeopardize the peace of our entire nation. We have a very clear memory of such a dangerous situation in 2017 which had almost brought us to the brink of war. Any actions destroying peace on the Korean Peninsula must be stopped as they will bring a greater violence such as the destruction of the Kaesung office. Therefore, we consider that the South Korean government's counter measures to his actions can be justified. Furthermore in June we demanded our government to establish a strong legal and institutional measure to eradicate the anti-North Korea Leaflet sending actions.

2. The right of peoples to peace should be guaranteed in any circumstances.

The Charter of the United Nations (UN) and resolutions reaffirm "the Right of Peoples to Peace" which all UN member states shall abide. Mr. Park's actions have threatened the right of the people to peace particularly who live at the border towns in South Korea. The people living at the border towns have constantly demanded both to the defectors' organizations and their municipal governments to stop these actions which violate their right to live peacefully. Park Sang-hak, however, did not hesitate to call them, "red cubs", and push them off the road including using violence against a reporter filming him. Fortunately, we were told that several days ago the municipal governments sent a petition letter to you demanding the UN level's actions to secure the right of people to peace. We think that the action of the municipal governments is timely and right, and we believe that you will respond to them in an appropriate way.

If Mr. Park and his group really respect human rights and dignity of Korean people, they should have acted differently as there are many ways to raise human rights issues in a responsible, sensible and nonviolent way of communication without destroying peace between two Koreas and without violating other people's right to live in peace. The human rights movement is based on respect, caring and love.

We hope that you will listen carefully to both sides of the stories in order to make a balanced and



fair judgment, and we believe that your careful consideration and actions on the various claims on the North Korean human rights will promote peace and enhance human rights in the divided Korean Peninsula.

Sincerely,

Rev. Lee Hong-jung
General Secretary

Rev. Huh Won-bae
Chair-person - Reconciliation and Reunification Committee
National Council of Churches in Korea

cc: Ms. Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger, President, the UN Human Rights Council

Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, World Council of Churches (WCC)
World Communion of Reformed Churches
Asia-Pacific Alliance of YMCAs
The National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP)
Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT)
The National Christian Council in Japan (NCCJ)
The United Church of Christ in Japan (UCCJ)
Korean Christian Church in Japan (KCCJ)
The Uniting Church in Australia
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