

Ending the Korean War: A Petition to the United Nations

by

Alliance of Korean War Veterans and Global Citizens to End the Korean War

organized by

The Korean War Legacy Foundation & The Center for Global Nonkilling

Preamble:

The Korean War began June 25, 1950 and, although combat ended July 27, 1953, an outdated armistice has perpetuated a state of war on the Peninsula to this day. This war that killed millions of soldiers and civilians over a period of three years and left the Korean Peninsula utterly devastated, continues politically as a result of an armistice signed sixty-seven years ago. In the history of modern civilization, no war has lasted more than a half-century after a ceasefire. This represents an unnecessary failure on the part of humanity—we believe—to develop, practice and promote peaceful coexistence.

Due to the unprecedented military confrontation that has centered around the Demilitarized Zone on the 38th parallel, more than two million Korean youths, with enormous government backing, are compelled by the insecurity in the region to serve in their military. To make matters worse, North Korea's all-in stance for nuclear weapons and ICBMs has been threatening to drag the Peninsula back into a vortex of competition amongst superpowers. Amidst such ever-increasing armament regimes, brothers and sisters, divided by politics and diplomatic missteps of past generations, continually aim bullets at each other, preventing hundreds of thousands of relatives from ever sharing the same space and homes again.

The hostility that has sadly crystalized around North Korea and South Korea has outlasted even the Cold War itself, which dissolved in 1991. Periodically, the parties reiterate negotiations that perpetuate the stalemate between North and South Korea and between North Korea and the United States; however, the Korean division remains the most overdue peace agenda in the world.

What we owe to this unresolved tragedy of the last century is to officially end the war and mutually recognize a treaty of peace among all parties involved. Sharing the belief that North Korea's nuclear program poses the most dangerous threat to peace on the Peninsula, we argue that continued failure to end this war after so many years is unjustified. Specifically, the Armistice Agreement envisioned "an appropriate agreement for a peaceful settlement at a political level between both sides" (Art. V Sec. 62), a commitment that has not been upheld. More importantly, President Moon Jae-in of the Republic of Korea recently reinforced the political and symbolic significance of ending the Korean War, saying "The end-of-war declaration will, indeed, open the door to complete denuclearization and a permanent peace regime on the Korean Peninsula" during his video address to the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly on September 23, 2020.

Petition:

As a Korean proverb says, “The one who has tied a knot must untie it.” It is time to begin a transition from 70 years of war hostility to final closure and peace on the 67th anniversary of the Armistice Agreement. We, the Korean War Veterans of all participant countries, joined by peace-seeking global citizens led by the Center for Global Nonkilling, urge the United Nations with the support of major powers around the Korean Peninsula (US, China, Japan, and Russia), to convene a “**UN Korean Peace Settlement Conference to End the War.**” As survivors who fought for peace in the Korean War, representing ourselves and those who sacrificed their precious lives, we feel we have a legitimate claim to urge UN leaders to conclude peace before we die. Our average age is 89.

The rationale for UN action includes the following:

1. President Truman engaged the United States in the Korean War for world peace under the auspices of the UN (UNSC Res. 82, 83, 84), saying “We can’t let the UN down!” (Glenn D. Paige, *The Korean Decision: June 24-30, 1950*, p. 125; also pp. 188, 211, 243).
2. Subsequently, 21 UN members (16 combatants and 5 humanitarian participants) joined to support the UN Command.
3. The July 27, 1953 Armistice Agreement was signed by the UN Command Delegation, the Delegation of the Korean People’s Army, and the Chinese People’s Volunteer Army.
4. Now all Korean War combatants and humanitarian participants, including the two Koreas and their allies, are UN members.
5. In the historic Inter-Korean Summit meeting held on 27 April, 2018 at the “Peace House” at Panmunjom, Kim Jong Un, Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, and Moon Jae-in, President of the Republic of Korea, agreed to end the current armistice and establish a firm peace regime on the Korean Peninsula. This historic mission must not be delayed any further. The two sides agreed to declare an end to the war this year, which marks the 65th anniversary of the armistice, and pursue trilateral meetings involving the DPRK, the ROK, and the US, or quadrilateral meetings involving these parties and China, with a view to replacing the armistice with a peace agreement and establishing a solid and lasting peace.
6. Based on the ceasefire agreement in 1953 and the two Korean leaders’ declaration on April 27, 2018, the current UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, with deep understanding of Korea, can bring the absence of a Korean Peace Settlement to the attention of the Security Council as a “matter which may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security” under Article 99 of the UN Charter.
6. Security Council members China and Russia both support seeking a Peace Settlement to end the Korean War Armistice.

We hereby petition the United Nations to:

1. Seek a UN-initiated Korean Peace Settlement as a comprehensive approach for achieving peaceful inter-Korean relations, denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, relaxation of regional tensions, and strengthening of peace and security in Asia and worldwide.
2. Establish within the Security Council a Standing Committee for Ending the Korean War.
3. Commission the International Academic Community to assess political, military, economic, social, and cultural costs/benefits of Korean peace for all parties involved, including the two Koreas, the United States, China, Japan, Russia, and all countries of the Asia-Pacific region.
4. Convene a Korean War Peace Settlement Conference chaired by the Secretary-General as directed by the Security Council Standing Committee to End and Replace the Korean War with a peace treaty.
5. In the spirit of “commitment for commitment, action for action,” the Petition calls attention to the steps agreed in the 9/19 Joint Communique of the Six-Party Talks:
 - 1) The DPRK committed to abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs and returning at an early date to the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.
 - 2) The DPRK, the US, and Japan take steps to normalize relations subject to their respective bilateral policies.
 - 3) The six parties undertook to promote economic cooperation in the fields of energy, trade and investment, bilaterally and/or multilaterally.
 - 4) Committed to joint efforts for lasting peace and stability in northeast Asia.

