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Global Women Leaders Call On UN Secretary-General Guterres to Appoint Special Envoy to De-fuse Threat of War on Korean Peninsula

[Women Cross DMZ](#)

In response to President Trump's threat "to totally destroy North Korea," at the United Nations General Assembly, nearly 300 women leaders and several major women's organizations from 45 countries, including South Korea, Japan, Guam and the United States, call on the UN Secretary-General to immediately appoint a Special Envoy to de-escalate the threat of war now facing the Korean Peninsula. They include former elected officials, Nobel Peace Laureates, leading academics, prominent activists, such as Angela Davis and Ai-jen Poo, bestselling authors, such as Gloria Steinem, Alice Walker and Naomi Klein, award-winning filmmakers such as Abigail Disney, and prominent philanthropists.

"When Mr. Trump threatens to annihilate 25 million people in North Korea, he is endangering 51 million South Koreans," said Jeong-ae Ahn-Kim, representative of Women Making Peace in South Korea. "Millions of South Koreans have family in the North. When he threatens them, he threatens us."

"The United Nations is a community where peace-keeping is rewarded," writes Gloria Steinem, American feminist author and activist and one of the 30 women peacemakers who crossed the Korean DMZ in 2015. "Trump must be censored for turning the U.N. into a stage for his own insecurities. His threats in no way represent the interests of his own country, much less of the U.N."

The women leaders also urge the UN Secretary-General to take seriously North Korea's security concerns by supporting a widely backed proposal for North Korea to freeze its nuclear and missile tests in exchange for the United States and South Korea halting its annual war drills, the world's largest ever, which rehearse surgical strikes against North Korea, "decapitation," and regime change.

"About a quarter million people in Nagasaki and Hiroshima were instantly killed by U.S. atomic bombs," writes Kozue Akibayashi, Professor at Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan, and International President of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). "The Japanese people do not support warmongering by Trump or Shinzo Abe, both of whom are using the North Korean nuclear threat to justify more militarization, such as revoking Article 9, which threatens the security of the entire region."

"Diplomacy does not mean placing embargoes on seafood and textiles that will inflict more misery on the North Korean people," says Ewa Eriksson Fortier, a Swedish humanitarian worker with extensive experience in North Korea. "Diplomacy means engagement that leads to peace and improved relations. President Trump should look to

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South Korean President Moon's recent decision to allocate \$8 million to ongoing humanitarian needs in North Korea."

"I doubt the three Generals in the White House approved President Trump's call "to totally destroy North Korea,"" said Ann Wright, retired US Army Colonel and former US diplomat. "They know that there is no military solution to this crisis just as there hasn't been one in Iraq, Afghanistan or Syria. U.S. military intervention will not and cannot solve a political problem."

"History must not repeat itself," says Suzy Kim, Professor of Korean History at Rutgers University. "Trump has been compared to President Truman for his Cold War rhetoric and willingness to use nuclear weapons. Trump should not follow in Truman's footsteps and commit the United States to waging war again in Korea. As U.S. Defense Secretary Mattis warns, a war in Korea would be "tragic on an unbelievable scale."

After claiming four million lives, the Korean War was halted on July 27, 1953 when military leaders from the United States, North Korea and China signed the Armistice Agreement. They promised to return within three months to forge a peace agreement (Armistice Agreement, Article 4, Paragraph 60), which has yet to be fulfilled.

Women leaders call on UN Secretary-General Guterres to initiate a peace process and to take immediate steps to formally end the Korean War with a Peace Treaty. This would lead to greater security in Korea and counter the escalating militarization in the region and the global proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Women Cross DMZ is an organization led by women working globally for peace in Korea. In May 2015, on the 70th anniversary of the division of Korea, Women Cross DMZ led a historic women's peace walk across the De-Militarized Zone from North to South Korea to draw global attention to the urgent need to end the Korean War with a peace treaty, reunite divided families, and ensure women's leadership in peace-building. www.womencrossdmz.org

Letter:

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

We are peace-loving women from over 45 countries, including the United States, Republic of Korea (ROK), Japan, and Guam, and many from nations that fought in the Korean War. We are united by our belief that diplomacy is the only way to resolve the nuclear crisis and threat of war now facing the Korean Peninsula, China, Russia, Japan, and other U.S. allies and territories in the region.

In his first General Assembly address, President Trump threatened, "to totally destroy North Korea," if the United States or its allies were attacked. As the world's greatest military power, the United States is the only nation ever to use atomic bombs against a civilian population that annihilated a quarter million people in Nagasaki and Hiroshima. We call on you, as Secretary-General of the United Nations, to counsel in the strongest

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of terms, the President of the United States and its Ambassador to the UN, that threats to destroy another country are unacceptable and will not be tolerated by the community of nations.

We must work to abolish nuclear weapons worldwide, including in India, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan, and among all Permanent Members of the Security Council. We oppose North Korea's increased militarization, including testing missiles and nuclear weapons, and threats to retaliate against the United States, its allies, and its territories where significant U.S. military bases are located. However, we understand North Korea's fears of a U.S. pre-emptive strike. There is still no Peace Treaty ending the Korean War, during which the United States carpet-bombed 85 percent of North Korea. From 1950-53, four million people were killed, including a quarter of the North Korean population.

As the leader of the United Nations, which was established "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war," we appeal to you to act swiftly to prevent the Korean Peninsula from becoming ground zero for a global nuclear war. We urge you to:

1. Immediately appoint a Special Envoy to de-escalate the Korean conflict to "encourage dialogue, compromise and the peaceful resolution of tensions." Past Secretaries-General, Kofi Annan and Boutros Boutros-Ghali, initiated peace processes for the Korean Peninsula. Given the well documented fact of women peacemakers' significant impact towards reaching peace settlements, a high-level intervention of women mediators is needed now to avert war.
2. Hold the United States accountable for threatening to wage war against another sovereign country at the United Nations. U.S. and North Korean leaders regularly exchange such threats, but we do not believe such threats to annihilate an entire population of 25 million people should go unchecked, and certainly not in the international forum for peace, cooperation and diplomacy. In his September 19, 2017 UN General Assembly speech, Mr. Trump violated Article 2, Paragraph 4 of the UN Charter: "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state."
3. Support a freeze of North Korea's nuclear and missile programs in exchange for halting U.S.- R.O.K. war drills. In accordance with UN Charter rules, we urge you to respond to North Korea's security concerns regarding these war drills, the world's largest, which rehearse surgical strikes on North Korea, "decapitation," and regime change. According to Article 32 of the UN Charter, "Any Member of the United Nations which is not a member of the Security Council ... if it is a party to a dispute under consideration by the Security Council, shall be invited to participate, without vote, in the discussion relating to the dispute." Yet the DPRK has never been invited to participate in UNSC sessions on sanctions resolutions, and the Permanent Mission of the DPRK to the UN has not received a response to its August 25, 2017 letter where they "strongly request[ed] the Security Council of the United Nations to place the issue of the joint military exercise as its emergent agenda and discuss in the meeting with no further delay." U.S.

Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley recently warned, "If North Korea keeps on with this reckless behavior... North Korea will be destroyed." North Korea refers to its own history of surviving indiscriminate U.S. bombing during the Korean War and the enduring hostile

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U.S. policy in justifying its nuclear weapons. North Korea also points to Iraq and Libya as examples of countries that suffered heavily under U.S. military intervention because they did not have a nuclear deterrent or agreed to give it up. With the United States now threatening to abrogate the Iran deal, North Korea has fewer incentives to de-nuclearize.

The world community cannot simply wait for the Trump administration to engage in dialogue with North Korea. For the Trump administration, current acts of diplomacy are narrowly defined as instituting more sanctions against North Korea and cajoling other countries to cut off diplomatic ties with Pyongyang. Not only have sanctions failed to halt North Korea's nuclear and missile program, by now targeting sectors not directly linked to them, new sanctions under UNSCR 2375 and 2371, which ban exports such as textiles and seafood, will inflict more economic misery on the North Korean people and make the DPRK ever more isolated and desperate to strengthen its nuclear and missile deterrence.

In this dangerous hour, with no Korean peace process and when threats of annihilation are made in the halls of diplomacy, we urge you to act on these three recommendations to de-fuse the crisis and work towards the peaceful conclusion of the Korean War with a peace agreement as promised under the 1953 Armistice Agreement, Article 4, Paragraph 60. Averting war and a global nuclear disaster rests with your ability to act now.