

2018 Citizens' Peace Declaration

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– Let's finish the Korean War, condemn Abe's lies and revitalize Article 9 –

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Between the end of 1944 and August 14 1945, the U.S. conducted aerial bombings of Japan's main islands almost every day, and used 168,000 tons in total of both conventional and incendiary bombs. As a result the people of 393 cities, towns and villages throughout Japan became the target of indiscriminate bombings. In addition the atomic bombings of Hiroshima on August 6 and Nagasaki on August 9 annihilated approximately 210,000 people including 40,000 Koreans. The estimated total number of casualties from these American crimes against humanity is 1.02 million including 560,000 deaths. 70% of them were women and children. Furthermore, in the battle of Okinawa 150,000 civilians were killed. On the other hand, the reckless 15 year-long war that Japan conducted between 1931 and 1945 victimized 21 million Chinese as well as several million people in various other parts of the Asia-Pacific. Japan also kept the Korean Peninsular under its colonial rule for 36 years.

After World War II the U.S. concealed its own war crimes. It decided to politically exploit Emperor Hirohito, the person most responsible for wartime Japanese atrocities, in order to suppress the rising communist movements in Japan and thus manage smoothly the U.S. military occupation of that nation. With this intention, in Chapter 1 of Japan's new constitution promulgated on November 3, 1946, the emperor was portrayed as the symbol of the state of Japan and the unity of the Japanese people, writing off his war crimes and responsibility. In other words, Hirohito was actually the symbol of irresponsibility for Japan's war of aggression and war crimes. Fortunately, however, our universal right to live in peace was officially recognized in the preamble of the constitution, and Japan's commitment not to fight a war with military forces was proclaimed in Article 9.

As soon as the Korean War broke out on June 25 1950, Article 9 was weakened by the establishment of military forces under the fake name of the National Police Reserve. The San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1952 made Japan perfunctorily "independent." Yet with the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, which was concluded almost simultaneously with the Peace Treaty, the U.S. was able to permanently utilize its military bases on Japanese soil. Okinawa was virtually colonized; and the renamed Self Defense Forces were firmly built into the U.S. military's cold war strategy. Japan thus became the takeoff and supply base for the U.S. bombers utilized in the Korean War, and the Japanese economy ruined by the Asia-Pacific war was rapidly revitalized through U.S. special procurements. Since then, these U.S. military bases have been continuously utilized for U.S. wars of aggression in Vietnam, the Gulf, Afghanistan and Iraq.

In 2015 the Abe administration reinterpreted Article 9 of the Japanese constitution in order to approve the exercise of the right of collective self-defense. It also passed unconstitutional security-related legislation. In this way, during the last 68 years since the beginning of the Korean War, many things have undermined Japan's Article 9. They are: Korea, divided into north and south; the cold war in Asia; the military colonization of Okinawa; the incessantly expanding U.S.-Japan Security Treaty; and the perpetual U.S. nuclear deterrence. In order to eliminate these destructive factors and revitalize Article 9 of our constitution, we need to trace back to the beginning of the Korean War and completely end that war.

The Korean summit talks on April 27 this year and the U.S.-North Korea summit talks on June 12 opened the door on a new age. The motivating power for this change is undoubtedly the Korean peoples' movements for peace. To end the Korean War, a summit conference of North and South Korea, together with the U.S. and China, is essential. If the war ends legitimately and successfully, justification for maintaining the U.S. bases in Korea and Japan also becomes invalid, and accordingly the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty must also change. We need to explore opportunities to strengthen solidarity with people on the Korean Peninsular and other parts of East Asia, reinforcing our actions and abolishing the U.S. military bases in Japan such as Okinawa and Iwakuni.

The corrupt Abe administration, with its strong nationalist sentiments and deep hatred of Koreans, initially tried to obstruct the Korean effort for peace. Having realized that would not be possible, however, Prime Minister Abe proposed negotiation over the issue of Japanese people abducted by North Korea. But it is clear that the abduction issues could not be solved without Japan's apologies for wartime forced Korean labor; proper compensation for that; and economic cooperation with Korea. We demand that the Japanese government sincerely and promptly deal with these matters and normalize our relationship with North Korea.

The present government's policies are full of falsehoods on many fronts. It is clearly not telling the truth about the corruption cases of Moritomo and Kake. It has suspended financial aid to the victims of the Fukushima Nuclear Power accident, claiming that radiation is no longer a serious problem and now forcing them to return home. It continues to ignore rampant sexual harassment problems despite its official policy of "Empowering Women." It endorses low pay and long hours of hard work for non-regular workers despite the fake policy of "Work Style Reform." It is enforcing the construction of the new U.S. military base at Henoko despite the promise to "reduce the burden on Okinawa." It is inflating the military budget despite the recent alleviation of tensions on the Korean Peninsular.

The German philosopher Karl Jaspers once said that insincerity is essentially evil and destroys all forms of peace. According to this Abe's ability to boldly tell lies could potentially destroy peace. Moreover, it has the capacity to distort or erase peoples' memories, including those of Japanese wartime atrocities such as the Nanjing Massacre and the military sex slaves. Abe tells lies about the past and present, because he wants to control our future with lies. To stop this, we must overthrow the Abe regime as quickly as possible!