

Peace in Jeju's Kangjeong Village! Stop the construction of Navy base in Jeju

Transcending our religious differences and offering our commonalities, we, the participants of the 3rd Asia Inter-Religious Conference on Article 9, together with all peace-loving religious communities, have prayed together for peace and security in East Asia. The conflict has deepened due to the construction of a naval base at Kangjeong village in Jeju Island. Praying for peace at Kangjeong village, we declare our position as follows.

Jeju Island has been recognized by UNESCO as an ecological reserve and world heritage site, and at the same time considered as a World Geological Park because of its pristine natural environment and beautiful sceneries. Most especially, Kangjeong village where the government plans to construct a naval base was already recognized as an ecological reserve for absolute protection because of its soft coral beds and rare basalt rocks rarely found in the world.

We, representatives of varied religious communities are greatly concerned that the beautiful and peaceful Jeju Island will be turned into a large naval-military facility as US's advance base in East Asia, thus creating tensions among Asian neighbors. Furthermore, the construction of a naval base in Jeju Island will not promote peace and stability in Northeast Asia and the world. We believe that genuine peace can only be brought by mutual cooperation and dialogue but not by military superiority.

We also highlight the Korean government-initiated undemocratic decision-making processes. The desperate appeal of Kangjeong villagers to protect their peaceful living and land has been completely ignored and many violent and illegal methods have been used to suppress the villagers' human rights and quash their appeal. The power entrusted by people to governments must respect the democratic legal process. Moreover, the government dependence on violent methods is unjustified.

We will pray and act for an immediate stop of the naval base construction as well as for the restoration of peace at Kangjeong village.

We demand the South Korean Government –

- To stop construction of the naval base immediately;**
- To release immediately from detention the imprisoned Kangjeong villagers and peace activists;**
- To resume democratic dialogue with Kangjeong villagers**

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Participants, the 3rd Article 9 Conference in Okinawa