

An Urgent Appeal to the United Nations

June 3, 2009

Mr. Ban Ki-Moon
Secretary-General
United Nations
First Avenue at 46th Street
New York, NY 10017
USA

Dear Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon:

May the grace of God giving life to all creation be always with you as you work with deep commitment for justice and peace for all people in the global community.

The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), which has always prayed and worked for peace and reunification of the Korean Peninsula, is deeply concerned about the current situation on the Korean peninsula as the tension and confrontation is drastically escalating. We strongly urge the international community to multilaterally cooperate to overcome this critical situation; otherwise the conflict on the Korean Peninsula can trigger an arms race throughout Asia and eventually threaten the peace and security of the global community.

At the present time North Korea continues to initiate such provocative actions as rocket-launching, nuclear testing, and missile-launching. In addition, the stiff backlash of the international community against these actions is extensively escalating the political and military tension over the whole North-East Asia region. We, as people committed to building a world opposed to war and committed to peace, are seriously concerned about this situation of conflict on the Korean Peninsula and urgently request that the United Nations take an active role for peace in the world as well as in the Korean peninsula.

1. We look forward to the active mediation of the UN for peace on the Korean peninsula.

We cannot conceal our anxiety about more strict and comprehensive sanction-centered policies as the international community reacts to the second nuclear test with an uncompromising attitude. Last April the UN Security Council issued a presidential statement against the rocket-launch of North Korea, and the UN, in response to the second nuclear test, is currently discussing the possibility of freezing the financial accounts of North Korea, strengthening the search of vessels for illegal weapons and expanding the list of items of contraband weapons. Until now, the sanctions against

North Korea have not yielded any positive result, but, rather, have only escalated the conflict and thus endangered peace and security in the international community. On the other hand, the diplomatic efforts of the international community respecting North Korea as a partner in dialogue and initiating conversation with North Korea have had more effective results.

2. North Korea wants negotiation with the USA.

North Korea has conducted nuclear tests in spite of the strong opposition of the international community. The nuclear power of North Korea will exacerbate the worldwide military confrontation, stimulating Iran and India to conduct nuclear tests and paving the way to the re-armament of Japan. Nevertheless the international community should pay close attention to the message behind North Korea's pursuit of nuclear strategy. North Korea, which experienced terrible ruination in the Korean War, is afraid of another war against the USA. The nuclear strategy of North Korea aims to maintain its internal unity to sustain the existence of North Korean society. We interpret this strategy of North Korea not as military confrontation but as a political gesture to normalize diplomatic relations with USA. Therefore we urge the UN to encourage the US Obama administration to respond to the gesture of North Korea in peaceful ways and to reflect this response in the US policy toward North Korea.

3. We urge the international community to positively initiative and participate in humanitarian aid to North Korea.

The sanctions against North Korea are driving the people of North Korea into suffering and death. According to the World Food Program and Food and Agriculture Organization, in 2009 North Korean grain production will decrease by 500,000 to 1,000,000 tons less than in 2008 due to insufficient fertilizer and natural disasters. The food aid to North Korea from South Korea and international society is cut off or reduced, while North Korea needs 1,780,000 tons of food aid from outside. Under these circumstances, children and elderly people in North Korea are the most vulnerable, suffering from the severe shortage of food. Therefore, we urge that the international community consolidate its efforts to recover the relationship between North Korea and South Korea, and between North Korea and the USA, and to take a positive initiative in providing humanitarian aid of food, medical supplies, and energy to the people of North Korea.

The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) sincerely prays that the spirit and words of the June 15, 2000 North-South Korea Declaration and October 4, 2007 North-South Korea Declaration will be actualized in accordance with the scripture of Isaiah 2:4, "They will beat their swords into plowshares." We also pray that the UN, as a stronghold of world peace, can fulfill its mission to peacefully resolve international disputes, strongly believing that you, as UN Secretary-General, will take a critical role of mediator on the pilgrimage to peace.

Rev. Seo Jae-II
Moderator

Rev. Bae Tae-Jin
General Secretary

Rev. Kwon Young-Jong
Chairperson, Peace and Reunification Committee

The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK)

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