Both South and North Korea Should Cease Hostile Acts and Provocations

If our minds are ruled by our desires, we will die. But if our minds are ruled by the Spirit, we will have life and peace. Our desires fight against God, because they do not and cannot obey God's laws. If we follow our desires, we cannot please God. (Romans 8:6-7)

Military tensions between South and North Korea show no sign of abating. These tensions began with anti-North leaflets sent by South Korean civilian organizations. North Korea responded with balloon launches containing waste. As of September, South Korea had sent 71 anti-North leaflets, while North Korea had dropped 28 waste-filled balloons. These provocations have escalated into loudspeaker broadcasts directed at each other. Such unending hostile acts and psychological warfare do nothing but increase military tension on the Korean Peninsula. Both North and South Korea must halt these provocations. It is irresponsible to lay the blame solely on the other side. Above all, the leaders of both countries must prioritize safeguarding the lives and security of their citizens.

On October 11, North Korea's Foreign Ministry issued a significant statement alleging that South Korean drones had entered Pyongyang's airspace three times to drop leaflets. In response, South Korea's Ministry of National Defense stated that it "could not confirm" the incident. It is concerning that the Yoon Suk-yeol administration and the Ministry of National Defense have shown a troubling neglectful attitude by avoiding measures to address the leaflet activity, which has been a long-standing source of military tension, and by allowing for the recent drone leaflet drops.

As with North Korea's drone reconnaissance incident in January 2023, sending drones beyond the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) constitutes a violation of the Armistice Agreement and contravenes aviation law. In the event of an accidental conflict, which could escalate to full-scale war in today's heightened tension, all resulting damages and costs of further conflict would ultimately fall on the citizens. War is mutual destruction. Acts of provocation that amplify the tension and fear of war must cease immediately.

First, the Ministry of National Defense must promptly disclose the details regarding the drones. Since this is a clear violation, action is needed to address such acts that provoke war and conflict. Continuing with an irresponsible stance endangers the lives and safety of the

Room 706 KOREA CHRISTIAN BUILDING, 19 Daehak-ro, Jongro-gu, Seoul 03129, Republic of Korea
T. 82-2-763-7990 F. 82-744-6189 E. kncc@kncc.or.kr

people. The Ministry of National Defense, alongside the government, must demonstrate a responsible attitude now more than ever.

There must be a halt to psychological warfare, including loudspeaker broadcasts, in addition to control and sanctions on leaflet drops aimed at the North. "Waste balloons" from the North have now become a routine response. While North Korea's provocations are certainly a factor, these tensions began long before and have reached their peak. History has shown that actions provoking the other side, including military exercises and displays of force, do not contribute to peace on the Korean Peninsula. All hostile actions must cease, and both sides must strive for peace.

October 15, 2024

Moderator, Rev. Dr. Han Gie Yang
Reconciliation and Reunification Committee
National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCK)

Room 706 KOREA CHRISTIAN BUILDING, 19 Daehak-ro, Jongro-gu, Seoul 03129, Republic of Korea
T. 82-2-763-7990 F. 82-744-6189 E. kncc@kncc.or.kr