

We express our solidarity with the water defenders at Standing Rock and Bold Iowa, and their nonviolent struggle to protect their lands and rivers from the Dakota Access pipeline.



Image by Licky Rooney/ Participants of Hotpinkdolphins' Jeju dolphin habitat monitoring on Oct. 15 found a pod of Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins.

Peace Festival and Keep Space for Peace Week

The annual Jeju Peace Festival was held September 30- October 2 in Gyorae on the northern side of Jeju Island. The festival gathered many people from around Jeju, Korea, and other countries including many from Japan. This year the theme was 'Family' and many workshops and performances focused on sustainable ways of living together. Curry and Baram Mal shared about Inter-Island Solidarity in the festival's 'Learning Zone.' Amidst booths with hand drip coffee and hand-made clothes participants from Gangjeong distributed the Korean and English Gangjeong newspapers and information about Keep Space for Peace Week. Keep Space for Peace Week, promoted by the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, was held around the world from October 1-8. This week-long annual event encourages people to speak out against the US/NATO military encirclement of Russia and China, and particularly against missile systems such as THAAD.



Image by a festival participant/ Promoting Keep Space for Peace Week at the Jeju Peace Festival

How You Can Help

1. Write a letter to the South Korean government to close the Jeju base project and to the US government to stop the support for it.
2. Write letters to the South Korean government to drop the lawsuit of USD 3 million against the people of Gangjeong.
3. Stay updated by joining our Facebook groups and following us on twitter.
4. Organize a solidarity event (concert, movie screening, protest, etc...)
5. Then share about it on social media.
6. Visit Gangjeong!
7. For other ways to help and more visit us on the web.

For More Information

<http://www.SaveJejuNow.org>
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/NoNavalBase>
<http://www.facebook.com/SaveJeju>
<http://www.twitter.com/SaveJejuNow>

For Gangjeong related videos, visit savejejunow.org or check these Vimeo/YouTube users :

Vimeo : cho sung bong / DH Song / Regis Tremblay
Youtube : Gang-Jeong Il-Gi / Shalomsea / 1234yz100 / Sungbong2012

- Created and designed by the Gangjeong International Team, special thanks to Everyday Practice.
- Published by the Gangjeong Village Association, 4417 Gangjeong-dong, the Life and Peace village,
- Seogwipo-si, Jeju, the Peace Island. Email: gjengnews@gmail.com

Calls for Park Geun-hye to resign in wake of "Choi-Gate"

By Curry

South Korea has been in uproar, with masses of citizens rallying and calling for President Park Geun-hye to resign in light of the evidence that was broadcast on October 24, revealing that Choi Soon-sil has been reviewing classified documents and directing the president on policy matters. Choi Soon-sil has apparently carried on the role of her father, Choi Tae-min, founder of the cult 'Church of Eternal Life' who mentored Park after her mother died in 1974. A leaked American diplomatic cable stated that Choi Tae-min "had complete control over Ms. Park's body and soul." Additionally, Park Geun-hye was reportedly with Choi Soon-sil's ex-husband when she was missing for seven hours at the time of the sinking of the Sewol Ferry. This scandal also implicates all South Korea's largest business conglomerates including Samsung, which could face bribery charges for giving hundred-billions of won (hundred-millions of dollars) in donations to the foundations Mir and K-Sports which were being directly managed by Park Geun-hye and Choi Soon-sil. Even though we have only seen the tip of the iceberg so far, this scandal makes it clear that the President of South Korea is incompetent, anti-democratic and must step down.

Security meeting amid protest

On Oct. 20 the Seongju candle light vigil in opposition to the deployment of THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) in Korea reached its 100th day, and the vigil in the neighboring city of Kimcheon reached its 61st day. It was also the day of the 48th annual Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) between South Korea and United States. Korean news reported that the ROK and US military authorities successfully agreed to strengthen naval cooperation in the face of North Korea's submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) threat. Previously on Oct. 13, Lee Soon-jin, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff of the Korean military stated that "it is necessary to strengthen missile ability before the deployment of THAAD next year." Vincent Brooks, commander of the ROK-US Combined Command emphasized in August that maritime interception capabilities would also contribute to the overlapped missile defense system. Additionally, South Korean defense minister Han Min-goo visited the US Naval Surface Warfare Center on Oct. 19. The NSWC is notable for developing the rail gun, a future advanced weapon.



Image by Oum Mun-hee/ On Oct. 7, Kim Young-Tae, a singer/activist in Seogwipo City had a peace concert in the Peace Center. It was 2 weeks after the death of Baek Nam-ki, a farmer shot by a police water cannon, as well as the 15th year of remembrance of the US/NATO attack on Afghanistan.



GANGJEONG VILLAGE STORY

October 2016

Monthly news on the struggle against the Jeju Naval base project

Published by Gangjeong Village in Jeju, South Korea

Gangjeong Case at The International Tribunal on Evictions

Article by Emily Wang
Image by ITE participant

The 5th International Tribunal on Evictions (ITE) was held in Quito, Ecuador on Oct 17th. Along with other diverse housing rights programs, it was part of the People's Social Forum in Resistance to Habitat III. Local Ecuador and international NGO groups co-organized the forum out of dissatisfaction with the new city agenda of the UN Habitat III conference, which was held simultaneously in Quito. "Forced eviction by Jeju's militarization" is one of 7 out of 89 submitted cases chosen to be reviewed and presented to the jury and the public during the ITE. While it's our first time to frame the militarization problem as part of the global struggle for habitat and housing rights, it's also the first time for ITE to include a case of forced eviction by militarization. The selection of the Jeju case recognizes the trend of large scale destruction of habitats caused by the new cold war. Taiwanese activist HungYing Chen, steering committee member of ITE and member of the Taiwan Alliance of Anti-Forced Eviction, explained "First, no military could defend the peace of earth's habitats. Gangjeong's struggle over the past decade has proven that the existence of the military base seriously violates the lives of non-human and human beings in Jeju Island. I believe the issue of militarization should be one of the most critical issues in the spectrum of the anti-forced eviction movement. Second, Gangjeong people's struggles are emblematic to inspire and empower others who are confronting similar threats of forced eviction. This fight is not only defending their homes but also standing at the forefront to secure peace in Asia. Third but not least, Gangjeong village's struggle is not only a struggle for defending homes but also it shows a responsible way of co-living in the world. It is far more valuable than the undemocratic networks of militarization which only leave the world with irresponsible harm." This is precisely why we brought our case to the International Tribunal. The domestic judicial system is incapable to handle "national security" problems because human security, community security, habitat security... is never priority compared to national security. We can only bring it into international consideration. Besides bringing our case to the ITE, we showed a Gangjeong documentary; we joined peaceful marching to the site of UN Habitat III but were totally blocked by the local police force; also, we had the chance to share our case with the UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing. Finally, we wrote wishes for our habitats, made a circle around them, and did 100 bows at the closing ceremony of the Resistance Forum. We used the 100 bows that Gangjeong people do everyday in front of the naval base to show our solidarity with others suffering from forced eviction and to show our peaceful resistance to UN Habitat III.



The 5th Anniversary of the Gangjeong Life and Peace Mass

By Oh Doo-hee

The street mass for Gangjeong Life and Peace met its 5th year. The anniversary mass was on Oct. 11th. Fr. Mun Jeong-Hyeon, who led the street mass, stated that "despite the completion of the Jeju naval base, the street mass will be continued until it is closed." On August 24, 2011, Kang Dong-Kyun, ex-mayor of Gangjeong and symbolic figure of the struggle was violently arrested and imprisoned by the government in front of the main gate of the base construction site. Fr. Mun in protest to this incident, called the site the 'Golgotha of Gangjeong,' and started to hold mass daily on the very site, since then. From that point, villagers and peace activists have struggled to stop construction during the mass, such as sit-ins, protests, blocking construction vehicles, and building barricades in front of the main gate of the construction site every 11 am. And priests, religious sisters and brothers, and followers made solidarity together through the resistance of sacrament. As such, mass has become a pillar of support for nonviolent peace action in Gangjeong. For five years, there have been more than 600 arrests and around 60 people who have been jailed. Now, as the navy base construction is completed, there is no more direct action to stop construction vehicles during the mass. However, the forward steps by peace pilgrims who wish for peace in Gangjeong are never pausing. They are struck with reverence, saying that, through mass, they can feel an urgency for peace which can be felt only in the protest site. As such, the Gangjeong Life and Peace street mass is an important space by which we reflect on peace, even beyond our religions.



Image by Kim Jung Mi/ This new banner displays the natural landscape of Gureombi Rock, which was destroyed by the navy base. After the 5 years' anniversary mass, the human chain posed for this photo illustrating the before and after appearance of the Gangjeong coast.

Cultural relics found, buried, destroyed again at Jeju naval base site

By Joyakgol

As excavations for buried cultural relics near Jeju naval base sites go on, the vicious circle repeats itself; important cultural heritage is unearthed, but soon buried under the military base facilities and destroyed. The first series of full-scale excavations began in September 2011 after the navy blocked the road to Gureombi Rock. At that time, a number of so-called relics experts came down to the proposed navy base site and carried out several months of field investigation, only to decide that the unearthed cultural objects and assets were not important enough to stop the military's desires. The area was too vast to dig at once, so they split the land into several investigation blocks, which diminished the importance of the treasures; house sites, bones, tools and pottery from the Bronze Age, and pottery which dates back to 1,000 to 2,000 BC.

Gangjeong villagers believe that the abundance of clean fresh water in the area may have provided perfect conditions for people in prehistoric times to settle down on this volcanic island where fresh water is scarce. However, if you split the village into several blocks, it's not easy to see the whole picture. Now the digging is going on at Jungdeok Samgeori until the end of this year. Another digging is being carried out at the new main gate area for some months, as if the village was cut off into pieces. I talked to a field researcher who oversees the team, and he said he personally opposes the naval base project because it destroys cultural assets, but he has no real power to say no since the important decisions are made way above his pay grade. He was busy making a thorough inventory.



Image by Joyakgol/ The white lines mark the areas where relics were found.

Three COs declared Not Guilty

The Gwangju District Court of Appeals acquitted three conscientious objectors and held them not guilty of evading military service. The court cited that "Freedom of religion and conscience are constitutionally guaranteed rights and cannot be restricted by criminal punishment." The court also called for alternative service, saying that the state should pay attention to the rights of minorities.

This is the first time in history that the Appeals Court ruled in favor of conscientious objectors. Beginning from the Seoul Southern District Court in 2004, a total of thirteen conscientious objectors have been exonerated in the first trial by six different courts. As of October 2016, 399 objectors are known to be in prison. The three objectors who were acquitted this time will go to jail eventually under the current law which does not recognize the right of conscientious objection to military service.

The true significance of the Appeals Court's verdict will become known in due course when the Constitutional Court makes its ruling on whether the law which criminalizes conscientious objection violates the country's constitution. The government of Korea must stop punishing conscientious objectors and make provisions for providing a practical alternative.

(* Excerpts from the statement by World Without War, Oct. 18, 2016)

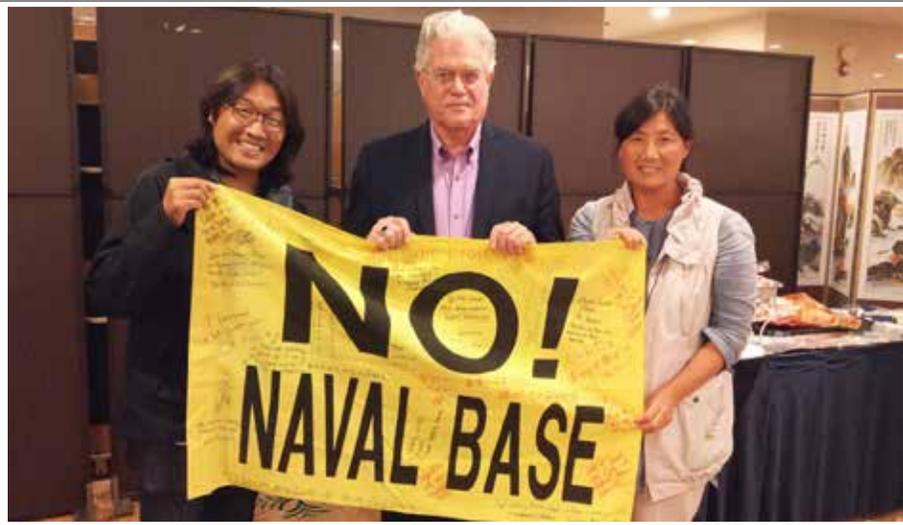


Image by the village intl. team/ With Bruce Cumings at the 6th Jeju 4+3 Peace Forum , Oct. 20.



Image by Baek Gayoon. Around 60 historians, history teachers and activists from Japan, China and South Korea visited Gangjeong Peace Center on 23rd October. Gangjeong villagers explained about the current situation of Gangjeong village and negative impact of Jeju naval base on peace in East Asia.

Letter to UN Special Rapporteur

Dear Leilani Farha,

The Jeju naval base occupied the habitats of humans and diverse species. We have been forcibly evicted from our housing, farming lands, sea shore and coastal waters. Our community has been divided and discriminated against during the struggle against the naval base. Some villagers must leave since they are not able to afford the rising rent due to land speculation. Furthermore, the navy filed a civil lawsuit (claiming about 3.1 million USD) against the anti-base villagers. This is not simply a violation of property rights but a tool to threaten the people who stand against violence and war. None of the domestic legal system can support us as the project is declared a matter of "national security." It is untouchable. So, we decided to bring our case to the International Tribunal on Evictions (Quito/Oct. 17th, 2016). We need international solidarity to put political pressure on the Korean government. The solution for the militarization problem can only be reached on an international level. Countless local communities are impacted by the new cold war between the US and China. In South Korea, it includes at least Gangjeong and Seongju, and in Japan, it includes at least Amami, Miyako, Ishigaki, Yonaguni, Henoko and Takae. 'China has broken its anti-imperialist policy by constructing new bases. It is a "base race" between China and the U.S. Bases are spreading like cancer. As we know, bases bring suffering to local communities and destroy the environment. They also require constant military practice, which is a constant war on the local people.' (Quote from K. Paik). We demand your visit to our communities to officially address the problem caused by militarization from the perspective of housing rights as UN Special Rapporteur for adequate housing. Living with a military base is never an adequate environment for housing.

Gangjeong villagers Joan, Emily, DongWon

(Editor's note: this article has been edited from the original letter)

International Solidarity



Image by Pang Eunmi/ On Oct. 5, 13 women peace activists from 12 countries on the Women's Boat to Gaza were kidnapped by the Israeli navy in international seas. They were heading to Gaza for solidarity with women in Gaza. Hearing the news, people in Gangjeong expressed their solidarity to the 13 women and the people in Gaza, "Free the 13 women! Free Palestine!" It was around Oct. 7 that the 13 women were deported back to their countries.

No life can live near Jeju naval base

Gangjeong Village Association revealed on Oct. 31 the results of a 6-month investigation of the marine ecosystem near the Jeju naval base. According to the report, the water quality has been deteriorating since the completion of the base, due to the decomposition of accumulative deposits. The newly built breakwaters alter the flow of currents and stop the floating materials from the Gangjeong River from spreading towards the deep sea, which accelerates the decay process in the shore area.

The results show that Gangjeong sea shore's

average depth level was 5 to 6 meters before the construction, but now it is a mere 2.5 to 3 meters due to accumulation of debris. The chemical oxygen demand (COD) test results were also shocking: at level 4, it is very dangerous for living organisms. Gangjeong villagers believe this year's disappearance of sweetfish in the river is related to the change of the marine environment.

Cancer-causing arsenic was also found in the water near Jeju base, four times higher than the permitted level. The toxic chemical travels westbound

following the currents and slowly contaminates Jungmun and Hwasun beaches, too. The problem is beyond the naval base; the damaging effects of overdevelopment extend everywhere on Jeju Island. Currently, the amount of sewage exceeds the treatment capacity, causing hundreds of tons of untreated filthy water to be emitted directly into the sea every day. However, the Jeju provincial government is authorizing more large-scale development plans, such as Ora Tourist Complex, the second airport and the new Jeju harbor, ignoring environmental concerns.

Military Secrets?

By Park Inchun

At Metburi, the beginning of the Jeju navy base faces K resort with the Gangjeong stream in-between. In recent years, on the top floor of the K resort, I used to take photos of the site of the base construction and the base after its completion. I have shared almost daily with the people what I saw through photos and writings on facebook. I have shared how the government, despite the opposition of most villagers, enforces base construction in violation of numerous regulations and laws, and how people's hard-earned taxes are helplessly wasted. This is the place where not only me but resort guests also smoke sometimes, enjoy views, and take photos. You cannot see any warning notice that says that one should not observe the base or take photos here. However, on August 18, three navy sailors came up and threatened me that I should not take photos here. They said that even though the area is not a military restriction area, photos are not allowed since it is a military base. I told them that the navy has no right to say no to me taking photos. I also told them, if any of my photos in social media have brought worries for them, I would hold back. Then, on Oct. 4 the navy brought me a copy of a document which read that my activities taking photos and posting on social media are in violation of the laws on the protections of military secrets and military base/facilities. But the Jeju navy base is also called the Jeju Civilian-Military Complex Port for Tour Beauty, which means it is a facility for tourists, also. How can things that anybody could see be military secrets?

Trial Updates



▶ On Oct. 9, the higher court of the Seoul Central District Court ruled against the plaintiff, seven activists who had filed a civilian lawsuit against the government in relation to the police's illegal detention of people, including these seven, for more than two hours in the Jeju navy base project committee building complex on June 28, 2012. The attorney of the seven stated that it is hard to understand how the court can make such a decision on a case in which illegal activity of the government is clear. The 1st court last December had ruled that the government should pay damage compensation to the plaintiff.

▶ On Oct. 12, the 1st court of the Jeju local court made a decision against a male activist M of 8 month imprisonment suspended with two years' probation along with 80 hours' social service. He had been accused with the charge of obstruction of justice for his protest to the police on Dec. 2, 2015 when a base construction vehicle hit a woman activist.

▶ On Oct. 13, the higher court of the Jeju local court made a court decision against Mr. Bang Jong-Woon, a regional chairman of the Cort/Cortek guitar workers' union with 1 year imprisonment suspended with 2 years' probation. The 1st court had ruled against him with 1 year imprisonment suspended with 3 years' probation. Mr. Bang had joined people's struggle on Jan. 31, 2015 when people resisted to the government crackdown on people's sit-in tent against the building of military residential housing. He was arrested then was almost to be imprisoned for that solidarity activity.

▶ On Oct. 14, the Supreme Court dismissed a civilian lawsuit filed by 22 people including ex-village mayor Kang Dong-kyun who claimed that Won Sei-hoon, an ex-chief of the National Intelligence Service had damaged the honor of the Gangjeong people who demanded no Jeju base during the WCC held in Jeju in 2012, calling them 'pro-North Korea left wing.' The 1st and 2nd court had both ruled against the plaintiff. An infuriated village representative stated that the Supreme Court decision document can be understood as the Supreme Court's refusal to review cases related to Gangjeong.

▶ On Oct. 31, the higher court of the Jeju local court made a decision of 8 month imprisonment suspended with 1 year probation against Gangjeong village mayor Cho Kyung-Chul for the charge of special obstruction of justice. Along with others, Mayor Cho had chained himself to the watch tower on Jan. 31, 2015, which people erected in protest to the government crackdown on the people's sit-in tent at the construction site of the illegal military housing. The 1st court had ruled against him 1 year imprisonment suspended with two years' probation.

The National Assembly inquiry on the navy lawsuit

The defense committee of the South Korean National Assembly carried out an inspection of the navy headquarters on Oct. 11. The focal point of the inspection was the navy's reimbursement lawsuit against Gangjeong villagers and activists.

Above all, Lee Chul-hee of the Minjoo Party inquired why the navy gave Samsung around 24 million USD through 'arbitration' without going through any 'lawsuit' when Samsung demanded compensation for damages. On Oct. 7, he had exposed an official document dated August 19, 2013 from the Jeju naval base project chief to the Jeju Public Prosecutors' Office chief.

In the document, the navy wrote that there should be 'arbitration' rather than 'lawsuit,' when dealing with Samsung, since the navy and Samsung had worked together through close cooperation against the anti-naval base protests and that some facts during the process should not be made public. After the arbitration with Samsung, the navy/government filed an unjust indemnity lawsuit of around 3 million USD against Gangjeong villagers, activists and civic groups to hand over the burden to them, which is without precedent. Village vice-mayor Ko Gwon-il was present as a witness in the investigation, and he stated that there is no fairness in the navy's indemnity lawsuit and it is as if the government wants to shut the mouth of the villagers.

Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Um Hyun-sung was also present in the inspection and, according to Mr. Ko, was consistent in his hostile attitude against the villagers and made a finishing remark falsely justifying the lawsuit, saying the government financial loss is due to citizens' obstruction of construction.

On Oct. 25, after the inspection, 165 National Assembly members, more than half of the members of the National Assembly, made public their "resolution urging the settlement of conflicts in relation to the Jeju naval base construction, such as the dropping of the navy indemnity lawsuit." Additionally, on Oct. 21, the Jeju Island government officers and residents' self-governing committee said they considered the navy's dropping the lawsuit as the prime task to settle the conflicts related to the Jeju navy base.



Image by Oum Mun-hee/ On Oct. 22, women activists protested when civilian security guards at the base took away their strings and scissors used for hanging anti-base banners. A soldier who removed the name tag from his military uniform led a group of men to surround those women, threatening them to remove their banners in front of the gate. There were even women soldiers who joined the men. The police did nothing but watched the scene. It was only after people's infuriated protest that the men withdrew themselves.