

GANGJEONG VILLAGE STORY

News on the struggle against the Jeju Naval Base

Published at Gangjeong Village in Jeju, South Korea



On Feb. 3, as the Korean navy established a new Mobile Fleet Command at Jeju Naval Base, citizens gathered to assert their alternative vision for peace. Photo by Joo Yongseong

Protesting the Mobile Fleet Command in Jeju, the "Island of World Peace"

by Park Han Sol, edited by e-sang

On Feb. 1, the notorious Jeju Naval Base established a Mobile Fleet Command, spurring opposition from civil society. The navy explained that the Mobile Fleet Command would counter North Korea's nuclear threats and guard the Korean peninsula's maritime zones. However, people say it is not appropriate because it would heighten the risks of war in Jeju, which was declared "Island of World Peace" 20 years ago.

Seven civic groups including Gangjeong Friends and the Association of Gangjeong Villagers Against the Jeju Navy Base gathered on Feb. 3 in front of Jeju Naval Base to protest the establishment of the Mobile Fleet Command, calling for "the immediate shutdown of Jeju Naval Base and the Mobile Fleet Command that makes Jeju a powder keg of Northeast Asia." They urged the government to clarify whether it believes that the flagship ROKS Jeongjo the Great and SM3 missiles are really the best choice for peace in Northeast Asia and defense of the Korean peninsula, or whether they are willing to cancel their acquisition.

They stated that "Under the 'Blue-water Navy' policy, the Mobile Fleet Command is escalating military tensions in Northeast Asia and threatening world peace," warning that "More nuclear war drills among allied nations will deepen the new Cold War between the ROK-US-Japan and DPRK-China-Russia and end up dragging Jeju into the conflict between the US and China."

They highlighted the issues of the Jeju second airport likely to become an Air Force base, the National Satellite Integrated Operation Center and the radar stations. Jeju faces constant threats of military expansion until the Jeju Naval Base closes. Demilitarization, nuclear disarmament, and neutrality are key conditions to making Jeju a true peace island. The protest was joined by the Jeju Branch of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, Jeju Women's Association, and the Jeju Queer Pride Organizing Committee, as well as other progressive civil society organizations and political parties.



The rally against the Mobile Fleet Command included speeches, musical performances, and dancing. Photo by Park Han Sol

South Koreans Stop Authoritarian Power-Grab

by Jungmin Choi

On Dec. 3, at 10:23 p.m., South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol unexpectedly declared nationwide martial law, citing the need to eliminate pro-North Korean elements and anti-state forces. He then established martial law command, mobilized troops and stripped citizens of their fundamental political and social rights. This included prohibiting all political activities by the National Assembly and political parties, control over all press and publication freedoms, a ban on strikes, slowdowns and assemblies, and the ability to arrest and detain anyone without judicial procedures or warrants.

After martial law was declared, civil society activists shared information about the police blockade of the National Assembly and the possibility of MPs being arrested. Over 16,000 people assembled outside the National Assembly that night. They arrived before the martial law forces' armored vehicles and helicopters, helping MPs scale the walls of the blockaded assembly building.

The National Assembly passed a resolution demanding the withdrawal of martial law on Dec. 4 at 1:01 a.m. People maintained their position in front of the National Assembly, preparing for the possibility that the president might reject the Assembly's demand. According to a government investigation that followed, President Yoon allegedly issued directives to "enter the National Assembly main chamber by force, including the use of firearms if necessary, to remove the members." [However, citizens] stood against armored vehicles and buses carrying martial law troops with nothing but their bodies, [and some security forces acted in] open or subtle resistance to the coup attempt. The Presidential Office announced the lifting of martial law at 4:26 a.m.

As soon as dawn broke on Dec. 4, civil society organizations across the country began issuing statements and holding press conferences, demanding the president's arrest, resignation and parliamentary impeachment. On Dec. 14, as the National Assembly passed the impeachment motion, over a million people turned out for the mass demonstration. [Ongoing demonstrations] demanded the president's arrest and [continue to] urge the Constitutional Court to expedite its impeachment deliberations.

(For the full article, "What the US can learn from South Koreans who stopped an authoritarian power-grab" published Feb. 18, 2025, see <https://wagingnonviolence.org/2025/02/lessons-from-south-koreans-who-stopped-martial-law-coup/>)

Gangjeong Responds to Martial Law

by Curry

In the pre-dawn of Dec. 4, 2024, Gangjeong organizations released a statement condemning Yoon Seok-yeol's declaration of emergency martial law. They noted, "His proclamation to eliminate those who disagree with him by naming them as anti-state forces shows his ignorance of democracy. Just as war divides people into allies and enemies, and sets up people who are different as targets that must be killed, Yoon Seok-yeol is attempting to provoke a war that frames citizens as enemies." Indeed, investigations into Yoon's self-coup attempt have revealed that he not only threatened a "war" of oppression against domestic critics, but he also attempted to provoke North Korea to retaliate, which could have escalated dangerously.

On Dec. 7, Gangjeong Friends, the Association of Gangjeong Villagers Against the Jeju Navy Base, and Gangjeong Peace Network released a new statement, noting that "Gangjeong peace activists, calling for peace in front of the military base, were now being labeled as anti-state forces who could be arrested without a warrant." Beyond calling for Yoon's arrest and the dissolution of his People's Power Party, they emphasized the underlying need for "peace on the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia through systemic change." On Dec. 14, when the National Assembly voted to impeach Yoon, they released a new statement, "It's just the beginning! We are in the public square to build a world where no competition is dehumanizing, where no difference leads to hatred and discrimination, where there is no more killing, no more dividing."

"People's Square" Against the Coup

by Choi Hyea-yeong

People are gathering in the streets to oppose Yoon Suk-yeol's Dec. 3 coup. It's a "people's square" where young women in their 20s and 30s are actively joining, taking care of one another in the spirit of equality and solidarity. We declare and practice a new democracy, different from the current one, a different world without discrimination and hatred. There is no doubt that Yoon, the head of the coup, will be removed from power. However, the ultra-right wings' violence and fake news are carrying on the coup. In Jeju, we had 22 rallies so far. Every weekend, our rallies include performances, citizens' speeches, and a march. Expulsion of Yoon is not the end. People are not simply coming out on the cold street for a change of administration. The people's square is overflowing with diverse lights of people stepping forward toward a more equal and democratic society with no discrimination against women, the disabled, sexual minorities, and immigrants. Here in the square, we will continue to share our visions for better labor conditions, gender equality, peace, environment, and life.



In Jeju City and across Korea, citizens gather each weekend to call for systemic change and Yoon's removal from office. Photo by [yoonout_jeju](#)

Police Intimidation of the Human Chain

by Lee Kwang-hee

Freedom of assembly, protest, and association are fundamental rights under the South Korean Constitution, but public authorities try to control citizens who resist their power, claiming to promote a uniform, orderly democratic citizenship with the ulterior motive of creating an obedient flock of sheep.

On Oct. 12, Fr. Kim blocked a bus carrying US soldiers, using non-violent resistance to criticize US imperialism and the failure of the US to apologize for the Jeju April 3rd Massacre. US military authorities then complained to the South Korean government and the navy filed a complaint. In response, the authorities cracked down on the Human Chain, which we have held daily as a "cultural festival" since 2013. Because it included picket signs, flags, and slogans with political language, the South Korean authorities said the Human Chain was an unauthorized protest, and large numbers of police descended on the Human Chain, issued



On Jan. 6, over 20 police were intimidating the Gangjeong Human Chain, but activists responded to their threatening posture by sitting down in front of the navy base to play a game. Photos by Lee Sung-joon

dispersal orders, filmed the Human Chain, and issued summonses to call people in for questioning.

The South Korean government, caught up in U.S. hegemony and militarism, has once again abandoned the safety and rights of its own citizens and instead put them in the frontlines of the US war machine.

Jeju Youth Statement

by Lee Minju

Hello, We are the members of the Jeju Youth Climate Peace Action. Today, we have gathered here to oppose the establishment of the naval base in Gangjeong. It is absolutely unacceptable for a symbol of war, the Fleet Command, to be built on the peaceful island of Jeju.

Jeju is a place where beautiful nature and a peaceful community thrive. However, the residents of Gangjeong are fighting to protect their home and their lives. We must listen to their voices and take action together. And especially [Jeju Governor] Oh Young Hoon! Listen to us and act!!

We want Jeju to be a peaceful island. The Fleet Command must be withdrawn immediately, and we must make Jeju an unarmed peace island. Let us choose peace, not war!

The oil spill at the Jeju Naval Base... It took a month to make a 'late report'

By e-sang

On Feb. 18, it was reported that an oil wastewater spill had occurred at the Jeju Naval Base on Jan. 8, 2025. Severe contamination was confirmed in the soil and the concentration of total petroleum hydrocarbon (TPH) exceeded the standard by more than four times. It particularly fueled controversy because the navy only reported the oil wastewater spill after 40 days. The current law stipulates that if a soil pollutant leaks, it must be immediately reported to the administrative authorities.

The cause of the oil wastewater spill is believed to be damage to a 10-centimeter-diameter old pipe connecting ships to a land tank, and the navy currently is not disclosing the exact spill amount on the grounds that it is a military facility protection zone.

In a joint statement, Gangjeong peace groups strongly criticized, "this case shows the navy's irresponsible attitude toward environmental issues," arguing that "environmental protection and public interest are priorities incomparable to military security."

They urged Seogwipo City Hall to clarify the navy's legal responsibility for its delay in reporting and to file a complaint against the Navy. At the same time, they asked the National Assembly to improve the current law, under the Soil Environment Conservation Act, which requires the related parties to immediately report leaks of soil pollutants to the administrative authorities, but which does not stipulate rules for punishment when the law is violated. They also demanded that the navy apologize and disclose the extent of the spill and of the contamination, which has not been disclosed due to the navy's excuse that the facility is a military protection zone. Finally, they demanded that "the most reliable measure to prevent recurrence is to shut down the Jeju Naval Base, which caused environmental pollution by failing to check the safety of the facilities they manage."

US military sexually harassed women peace workers in Jeju

by Jungjoo Gang Park, Gangjeong Resident



A soldier from the USS Frank Cable harassed women activists with sexual hand gestures. Photo by Gangjeong Peace Network

The USS Frank Cable (AS 40), a nuclear submarine support ship, docked in the Jeju Naval Base from Oct. 9 to 13. Gangjeong peace activists protested at the main gate of the base. On Oct. 12, we held picket signs which said 'Get out' and 'No Warship.' One of the tour buses carrying US soldiers to a tour site was stopped by Father Kim Sung-hwan. His persistent action stopped the bus for more than 2 hours and we supported him by holding pickets and shouting at the soldiers in the bus. In the middle of the intense protest, I saw one of the US soldiers using his middle finger to insult me and the other women activists next to me. He did not stop and continued sexually harassing us with his hand gestures for 30 minutes. We demanded that the Korean police get on the bus and arrest him but they protected the US soldiers instead of their own citizens. This seems to show that Korean citizens are ranked below US soldiers even in their home country. This is not just a one time occurrence. Sexual abuse and assault on local women by US soldiers continually happens wherever US military bases are located in the world.

Father Kim Arrested

by Curry



Fr. Kim Sung-hwan blocked a bus of US soldiers as an act of non-violent civil disobedience against the injustice of U.S. warships coming and going from Jeju Naval Base without apologizing for the April 3rd Massacre, and to raise the alarm about the increasing threat of war in Northeast Asia and the reality that Jeju is becoming a U.S. outpost. Photo by Gangjeong Peace Network

On Feb. 26, 2025, the ninth anniversary of the opening of the Jeju Naval Base, Father Kim Sung-hwan, director of the St. Francis Peace Center, was charged with obstruction of official business and arrested for blocking a bus of US soldiers that was coming out of Jeju Naval Base on Oct. 12, 2024. Thankfully, he was released after 5 hours, but the arrest was an unnecessary and disproportionate use of force. Furthermore, the police violated human rights by unlawfully following Fr. Kim for two hours before they arrested him.

A statement by the Association of Gangjeong Villagers Against the Jeju Navy Base, Gangjeong Friends, Gangjeong Peace Network, and St. Francis Peace Center noted the long history of human rights violations by the

Korean police. Particularly, on Oct. 12, while the police protected the US soldier who sexually harassed activists, police roughly grabbed several activists, causing one arm injury that has not healed as of February. Vowing to continue "nonviolent, peaceful actions of civil disobedience," the organizations asserted, "Jeju is not a U.S. colony! Close the Jeju Naval Base that is turning Jeju into an outpost of the US against China!"



On Nov. 9, Jeju Naval Base held an open house. People gathered to protest against the navy teaching militarism to visiting children. Photo by Choi Sung-hee



This past fall, Young along with others repaired the flags at the Human Chain. These flags are used daily and being well loved means that repairs are appreciated. Photo by Curry

National Forum on Peace in Space

by Choi Sung-hee



“National Forum on the Space Industry and the Militarization of Space” in Daejeon, Oct. 18-24, 2024. Photo by Sun Ny

South Korean peace and environmental activists held a “National Forum on the Space Industry and the Militarization of Space” in Daejeon from Oct. 18 to 24, 2024. Co-hosted by around 15 organizations, including People Opposing Space Militarization and Rocket Launches, the forum explored questions about the space industry and space militarization, and considered future tasks to take together after Bruce Gagnon's national tour last February. We talked about how the space industry, currently promoted by the South Korean government, local governments, and corporations, is linked to militarization

and about how the Korean economy and society are moving toward a war economy. We reflected on what the peace, environment, and human rights movement will do. The meeting was also organized as a part of activities for the Keep Space for Peace Week against the militarization of space, Oct. 5-12.

Daejeon, where we held the forum, was announced by the Yoon Suk-yeol government in March last year as part of the space industry cluster triangle: Daejeon (human resources), Jeollanam-do (projectile specialization) and Gyeongsangnam-do (satellite specialization). The three-day forum included a field trip to the cluster munitions plant in Nonsan.

The nationwide forum was followed by a Jeju space peace tour for two days in December. Around 10 people looked around the Hanwha space center which is under construction and the National Satellite Integrated Operation Center which opened in 2022, witnessing the rapid militarization at these and other space industry sites in Jeju.

Also in December, South Korea's third military reconnaissance satellite was launched at Vandenberg Space Force Base aboard a SpaceX rocket. The government is pushing to build a space launch site exclusively for the military in conjunction with a space industry cluster in Jeollanam-do. (For more on the national forum, see Space Alert No.45, space4peace.org).

Opposing cluster bombs in Nonsan

by Beth

In December, I visited the Mennonite Church in Nonsan, South Chungcheong Province, which is joining protests against the new cluster bomb factory. On Sunday after church, we were given a presentation on cluster bombs and went to the factory locations. What angers me the most about cluster bombs is that they are specifically made to hurt and kill people. Because there is little control over where the bomblets inside them go, they kill indiscriminately. Currently, the factory in Nonsan manufactures 14,000 bomblets creating 24 cluster bombs daily, while conducting about 30 tests a day. The cluster bomb factory came to Nonsan because the mayor secretly signed an MOU in his first 100 days in office. The people were only told that a factory was coming. While technically the manufacturer isn't Hanwha, Hanwha sells all the materials to the factory. The people in Nonsan started to engage with the issue in Sept. 2022, raising four main issues: peace, secretiveness, factory expansion and safety of people and the environment. Just like the navy base in Jeju, the struggle isn't done just because it's built. As a relatively new movement, the community needs support and solidarity to keep the movement going.

Talks on our tasks in 2025 (feat. Trump and Musk)

by Choi Sung-hee

Trump, who took office on Jan. 20, was the creator of the US Space Force in 2019. Trump, along with Elon Musk of SpaceX, who helped create Trump's regime, is further promoting the space industry combined with AI. Space is the defining stage of the hegemony competition between the US and China, which will further intensify the militarization and weaponization of space. The US with its huge debt of \$35 trillion is asking allies such as Korea to ease the burden.

War weapons companies like Hanwha, in conjunction with local governments, universities, research institutes, and the media, are turning South Korea into what they call "outposts of the space industry," continuing to disseminate romantic fantasies about space development and exploration to secure public support. In their promotion of space development and exploration, the implications of economic exploitation, military domination, and environment pollution are completely concealed.

In this context, People Opposing Space Militarization and Rocket Launches held an online debate on Feb. 5. Kim Hae-seo gave a presentation introducing “Space Humanities,” followed by Choi Sung-hee's short presentation on the space industry and Hee-eum's sharing on the results of last October's nationwide forum.

Repression of the Soseong-ri Struggle

by Kim Young-Jae, Soseong-ri activist

On Jan. 9, strange cars suddenly arrived in Soseong-ri. They turned out to be investigators from the Seoul Central District Prosecutors' Office (SCDPO). They descended upon the Jinbat Bridge Peace Chapel and the houses of co-chairs of the Seongju Committee for THAAD Withdrawal, the 2017 manager of the No THAAD Situation Office, and a Won Buddhist minister and confiscated cell phones and all kinds of documents.

In July 2023, a public audit was requested by an anti-independence, anti-peace, anti-democratic conservative group named Korean Retired Generals and Admirals Defending the Nation (KORGAD). They alleged that high-ranking security officials in the Moon Jae-in administration had illegally delivered ROK-US alliance military secrets to China and to some civil groups to delay THAAD missile deployment. Last October, the Board of Audit and Inspection ordered investigations, leading to the SCDPO's raids on Jan. 9. It can be understood that, without any fact checking, the Yoon Suk-Yeol administration tried to use widespread anti-China sentiment to eradicate their political opponents and guarantee the extension of their own power.

Seongju-Gimcheon citizens and activists opposing THAAD have suffered repeated state violence for the last 10 years. We cannot hold back our anger against those who are willing to sacrifice citizens and peace activists for their power-games. Rather than suppressing the people who are struggling for peace, it is the illegalities since the beginning of the THAAD deployment process that must be investigated and clearly illuminated. We will continue to fight relentlessly against the ruthless military and political challenges to peace, shouting for peace until the end.

War drills to bring coup and war

by Choi Sung-hee

In the process of Pres. Yoon Suk Yeol's coup last December and the investigations into military leaders since then, we have learned that the coup planners were willing to incite war for their own power. It was also discovered that martial law training has become commonplace during the ROK-US joint drills. War drills do not deter war, but open the door to war, and they are inextricably linked to destroying democracy.

From Nov. 13 to 15, 2024, the ROK, US, and Japan conducted the 2nd 'Freedom Edge' multi-domain drill in the international waters south of Jeju Island. On Jan. 15, 2025, when Yoon Suk Yeol was arrested on charges of leading an insurrection, the three countries conducted an aerial drill in international waters near the Korean Peninsula, including the deployment of US B-1B strategic bombers. On Feb. 20, a month after Trump's inauguration, the US and South Korea conducted a joint aerial drill OVER the Korean Peninsula once again deploying US B-1B strategic bombers.

Meanwhile, the US Space Force in Korea conducted its first large-scale joint command and control drill called Polaris Hammer-KOREA at Osan Air Force Base in Pyeongtaek, Jan. 21-24. In addition to the US Space Force in Korea, personnel from the USFK, the ROK Air Force, and Vandenberg Space Force Base participated in the drill.

In Oct. 2024, the ROK Marine Corps joined the US-Philippine led Kamandag drill related to territorial disputes, provoking China to conduct a drill in the Taiwan strait.

For the Demilitarized Peace Island

by Choi Sung-hee

Jan. 27, 2025, marked the 20th anniversary of Jeju's designation as an Island of World Peace to sublimate the pain of the Jeju April 3rd uprising and massacre. In 1991, domestic and international scholars stated that the first condition for Jeju to become a true island of peace was 'demilitarization.' They also emphasized local efforts and active involvement of Jeju residents. However, affected by neoliberalism and the ROK-US alliance, this principle was distorted as the Jeju navy base was planned in early 2000s. Jeju Naval Base was completed in Gangjeong Village in 2016, and facilities related to the space industry are being built throughout Jeju. Also, despite various risks such as bird strikes, the Jeju 2nd airport, which is being pushed forward, is likely to be an airbase. Far from a Peace Island, Jeju is at risk of becoming a colony of the military and corporations.

People Making Jeju a Demilitarized Peace Island was created on Jan. 27, 2013, remembering the principle of 'demilitarization' and strengthening people's will for demilitarization. In 2025, we marked the 13th year since its creation with a ten day social media campaign to remember our will for demilitarization.



On Mar. 1, more than 40 organizations rallied in NYC, LA, and the Bay Area in honor of the 106th anniversary of the March 1st Movement for Korean liberation from Japanese colonial rule and against the upcoming Freedom Shield military drills scheduled for March 10-19. South Korean atomic bomb survivors, in NY to prepare for their 2026 International People's Tribunal, also joined. You can join them to promote a "nuclear-free Korea and world" through this photo campaign: <https://campaigns.do/campaigns/1507>. Photo by Wyatt Souers/NYC Party for Socialism and Liberation

Becoming each other's scenery

by Hee-jeong



The Jeju memorial ceremony for the Nanjing Massacre is held in front of an Aldreu Airfield bunker. Photo by Oum Mun-hee

If you walk along Sagye beach in Jeju, you will face a little mountain. It is Songak Mountain, which was formed by volcanic activity 4,000 years ago. There is a wide field on the west side of Songak Mountain. It is the site of Aldreu Airfield, a former Japanese military base. The fields once used as runways are now green, but you can see aircraft bunkers, ammunition storage, and anti-aircraft artillery positions. The aircraft bunkers are arched spaces that accommodated small fighter planes. They look like low hills from a distance. On Dec. 13, people gather in front of the bunker.

87 years ago, the Japanese army bombed and invaded Nanjing, massacring about 300,000 people. The invasion began on Dec. 13, 1937. Every year on this day, for 11 years now, Jeju people hold a memorial. But why is it held in Jeju, not Nanjing or Omura Air Base in Japan?

The bombers that attacked Nanjing came to Aldreu Airfield to refuel. Sometimes they flew from here to Nanjing with shells. Local residents were robbed of their farmland and subjected to forced labor to build the airfield. Is Jeju a perpetrator or victim?

But Jeju people have not been trapped by simplistic questions. They have chosen reflection. They say that peace "includes the right not to be a perpetrator." They did not take the impact of Jeju's militarization 80 years ago as a lesson only from the victim's point of view. This year, we received messages of solidarity from Nanjing, Okinawa, Canada and Palestine. Remembrance is an action by those who choose to reflect.

Of course, the Nanjing memorial is a small event. There are few participants, and the government is not involved. Nevertheless, on this day, people who want to protect and remember come to join from Jeju, Korea and abroad. Although it is humans who cover the earth with bombs and break its natural circulation, it is also humans who become each other's scenery. We remember, connect, and circulate.

Stop the Construction of a Death Runway!

by Oh Doo-hee

On Dec. 29 last year, the world was shocked by the tragedy at Muan Airport that killed 179 people and many birds. While multiple factors contributed to the disaster, it all started with a bird strike. Korean law requires that there be no bird habitats or special protection areas within an 8-kilometer radius. However, Muan Airport was built within 8 km of nine natural reserves including UNESCO Ramsar Wetlands and tidal flats. A government report had estimated that a fatal bird strike would occur about once every 12,221 years, but this catastrophic bird strike happened after just 17 years since the airport opened.

These issues aren't just about Muan Airport. The Korean government is proceeding with 10 more airports, including Saemangeum New Airport, Gadeokdo New Airport, and the Jeju Second Airport, even though there are 15 airports in the country already. The Saemangeum New Airport, a globally known sanctuary for migratory birds and other birds that live there all year, has a several hundred times greater risk of bird strikes than Muan Airport. Then why is the Korean government trying to build an airport on land that holds a high conservation value and which is not safe? The answer is more about a larger geopolitical strategy in East Asia than a reckless local development by politicians. The United States, pursuing a containment strategy against China, is strengthening its military alliances with South Korea and Japan. This has led to an increase in military spending across the region and building airports near China to convert to military use at any moment. As a result, I worry about the inevitable irreversible destruction of ecosystems, cultures, and human life in Korea, and elsewhere in Asia. We should not be silent or turn a blind eye toward the construction of these new airports.

Sewol Ferry Documentary Asks for Truth

by Hwang Yong-woon

After the Sewol Ferry tragedy under the Park Geun-hye administration, during the Moon Jae-in administration the truth should have been revealed and those responsible for the disaster should have been punished. However, President Moon Jae-in created a private investigation committee, hid behind it, and left office. Why didn't President Moon investigate the Sewol ferry?

The documentary "10 years after the sinking, Zero-Sum" begins with this question. The film discusses the domestic and international context of the Sewol tragedy, including the overlap of the Sewol ferry's route with a zone that was restricted due to US-ROK joint military drills on April 16, 2014, communications between a US military commander and the Jindo Vessel Traffic Service, and the meeting of the US CIA director and then prosecutor general Yoon Suk-yeol.

The film has already been screened online with English subtitles by 416 Global Networks and other overseas organizations, and it is looking to enter overseas film festivals.

From Tamil Eelam to Gaza: Whose Security?

by Curry

Prof. Jude Lal Fernando asked participants who joined his Oct. 22 lecture at St. Francis Peace Center to question the “security” that prioritizes military control rather than human life. Some had heard Jude speak before, but for most people it was their first time to learn about the massacre of over 70,000 Tamil people in 2007-9. Though the Sri Lankan government attempted to expel journalists and NGOs, people on the ground documented bombings targeting camps of displaced people and other war crimes. We saw some of this footage in the documentary “No Fire Zone.” Jude has coordinated Peoples' Tribunals to demand accountability from the Sri Lankan government and the US government which supported Sri Lanka. He pointed out Sri Lanka’s strategic location for controlling international shipping lanes, and the US navy’s interest in using Trincomalee harbor. Jude emphasized the importance of creating spaces to discuss massacres and military bases, human rights and peace. He said that where there is resistance to repression, there is hope.

Visiting Rohingya Refugee Camps in October 2024

by Inhye Park (Gangjeong Mermaid)

I’ve been a friend of refugees, assisting campaigns to introduce their stories to our society since 2016 when I interned with an organization to support refugees from Myanmar (Burma) in Maesot, Thailand. Since then, the number of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh has rapidly increased from around 300,000 to over 1 million due to the large-scale massacre committed by the Burmese military with the aim of ethnic cleansing in 2017. When I visited Bangladesh with The Frontiers, I could see the reality of the world’s largest refugee camp in the world’s most densely populated country. Dhaka was covered in grey smoke from the moment I saw it from the sky. The unique ‘desolation’ of a megacity could similarly be found at the southernmost border area with Myanmar, 12 hours away by bus. By interacting with local Bangladeshi villagers and the family who hosted us, I learned the language, cultural and socio-political situations, and their negative perception of Rohingya refugees. The burden of extreme poverty and the government’s damning reporting about criminal gangs in refugee camps made Bangladeshis scared or hateful of the influx of Rohingya refugees. What made me feel heavier was the similar situation of both Bangladeshis and Rohingya refugees—Rohingya refugees were deprived of their freedom, dignity, and hope for the future due to the Burmese junta’s scheme of genocide, and Bangladeshis lost the opportunity to have all of these things due to poverty and a culture of severe violence regardless their possession of citizenship. However, I could also celebrate a moment of gratitude and joy on this trip by installing a well, a shower room, and a toilet at our host family’s home. Watching the water tank in the shower room fill up instantly with a hose connected from a well, I was relieved that the village girls and women would finally be free from all the labor and inconvenience caused by carrying water. I fervently pray that their tomorrow will be better than today, with peace and more chances to achieve their dreams.

The Great Catastrophe, Genocide in Palestine, and our Solidarity

by Inhye Park (Gangjeong Mermaid)

From the Edges and St. Francis Peace Center co-hosted an online and offline workshop on Jan. 15 and 16 to discuss the past 15 months of genocide against Palestine. Dr. Lina Koleilat, a Lebanese-Palestinian scholar-activist living on Ngunnawal Ngambri land in so called Australia, presented about the historical background, current situation, and people’s solidarity activities. In the first session, she introduced the beautiful culture and history of Palestine, which have been hidden by the media and replaced with the enormous reporting of destructive scenes of genocide. Images of the olive trees, Palestine watermelons, the farming and the life-giving land in the past, helped the participants imagine the prosperous life the Palestinians had inherited for a long history



Dr. Lina Koleilat shared images of Palestinian olive and watermelon farmers, helping the audience to imagine the long history of Palestinians farming and living on their land before the Nakba happened in 1948. Photos by Alessandra Sanguinetti and Anadolu agency

before the Nakba happened in 1948. She also explained the situation of Palestinians over 75 years, how life in Gaza became the largest scale open-air prison on the earth, and how the West Bank has been divided into smaller areas by Israeli settlements and ruled by the Israeli military with violence and coercion, and how those in Israel face death threats and discrimination. During the second session with activists in Gangjeong, we discussed the recent solidarity actions with Palestine in many cities and campuses in so-called Australia, and how the movement combined with anti-militarism. We heard that Hanwha, the Korean weapons manufacturer, expanded its operations to manufacture weapons in Australia in cooperation with the Israeli weapons manufacturer Elbit Systems. Local people and activists are resisting, blaming Hanwha for its support of the genocide in Palestine. The workshop was an opportunity to share solidarity for peace in Palestine, Lebanon, Australia, and Korea.

From Henoko to Peace

by Jihye

Okinawa has the largest number of US military bases in East Asia. They cover almost 20 percent of the island. Okinawa was formerly the Ryukyu Kingdom, but since 1609 it has been colonized by the Japanese. It became a battleground between the US and Japan during World War II. Over 100,000 civilians were killed, and Japanese imperial brainwashing also led to mass suicide. Even to this day, when the war is believed to be over, it is still experiencing double colonization from Japan and the US.

Despite having so many war bases already, the US and Japan are expanding their military bases. Expansion of the US Marine Corps base Camp Schwab is underway at Henoko. The construction process of the new Henoko base looks a lot like Gangjeong. More than 80 percent of Okinawa residents opposed it, but Japan ignored them and pushed ahead with the construction. Even the current governor of Okinawa opposes the base's construction.

Construction trucks enter Camp Schwab every day at 9:00 AM, 12:00 PM, and 3:00 PM. People sit at the entrance of the site every day and protest against the construction. The struggle is not just here in Henoko. People are also protesting at the landfill soil source sites at Awa, Shiokawa, and Miyajima. People here walk slowly in front of trucks, slowing down their progress. Last year, there were even attempts to use soil from the southern part of the island where there were the highest number of casualties in the Battle of Okinawa and many bodies in the soil have yet to be recovered.

I came to Henoko last April, because I thought Okinawa's "baseization" was a problem not only for Okinawa, but a problem for all of us. The US military occupation stretches from Japan to Okinawa to Korea to Jeju to the Philippines, so peace movements should also be connected and united.

It is tragic to see construction work progress no matter how many times people call for peace. I see military vehicles running on the national road and hear unknown explosive sounds here almost everyday. I feel that actually this is a war itself. However, I would try to believe what a friend of mine said: We have not lost yet as long as there are people who call for peace. I would like to believe that a world without war is still approaching, little by little.



Endless landfill is destroying the environment of Oura Bay in order to build a new runway for the US Marines at Camp Schwab. Photo by Jihye



Sitting together in front of the base construction site at Henoko. Photo by Jihye



Feb. 23 was the Global Day of Action to #CloseBases. One day early, at the Feb. 22 Gangjeong Human Chain, a total of 27 participants, including visitors from Japan and Taiwan, shouted in four languages for the closure of bases. Photo by Young

Guilty but righteous act to free beluga whale

by Joyakgol (Hot Pink Dolphins)

On Jan. 16, Hot Pink Dolphins co-representative Hwang Hyun-jin was sentenced to a fine of 2 million won on charges of obstruction of business and property damage against Lotte World aquarium (Korea's lone beluga whale-holding facility).

Although Hwang was found guilty on all charges, the Seoul Eastern District Court judge said that HPD's act of putting up a banner on the captivity tank was understandable and righteous, citing the Korean government's recent ban on holding cetaceans in captivity. In a long sentencing order, the judge wrote that animals shouldn't just be objects for human use or exploitation, but rather animals should have rights, and thus human beings have legal and ethical responsibility to respect the rights of animals.

Hot Pink Dolphins appealed the case to a higher court to challenge the guilty sentence with legal help from People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy. The appeal court date is yet to be decided.

Deokcheon-ri, a World Natural Heritage Village

by Kim Hong Mo



At a press conference for Deokcheon-ri in front of the Jeju provincial government building on Dec. 11, 2024, students and musicians shook the entire provincial government by playing percussion instruments together. Photo by Kim Hong Mo

The Geomun Oreum and Lava Cave System, which spans Deokcheon-ri and Seonheul-ri on Jeju Island, was the first place in South Korea to be listed as a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site, and Deokcheon-ri was designated as a World Natural Heritage Village. However, the Jeju Provincial Government and the village association attempted to relocate industrial complexes from the Hwabuk area to Deokcheon-ri. Although we, the people opposing that relocation, established a countermeasures committee, its activities were suppressed in various ways. Our banner was forcibly removed, we were blocked from the village hall, and outsiders were accused of forming the committee. However, we did not give up and

tried to minimize conflict in the village by continuously meeting the head of the village association. To protect the World Natural Heritage site, we tried to form solidarity with citizens all across the country. Deokcheon-ri is a very small village with some 200 residents and not even any teenagers, but more than 300 citizens joined the committee's fundraising event on Dec. 25, the largest number of people to visit Deokcheon-ri since the village was established. After two months of struggle, on Jan. 22, this year, we finally got the Jeju provincial government to announce the nullification of the relocation plan. The local elections were only a year and five months away. We took advantage of that situation for our struggle and eventually protected our World Heritage Site and Gotjawal (Jeju's unique forest biome). Every small effort came together to create a miraculous victory.

Gangjeong Peace Movement Vision for 2025

by Nang

On Jan. 3, an internal workshop was held to prepare for the Gangjeong peace movement in 2025. About 15 Gangjeong jikimi ('protectors') joined the time of presentation, Q&A, and discussion.

Sung-Hee presented "2025 Prospects for Peace and War." She began by asking what might have happened if martial law had not been prevented. She looked at geopolitical tensions between the US and China along with the superpowers' strategies, and South Korea's increasing military power. Sung-Hee reminded us that the Earth is facing not just climate crisis but climate collapse.

Curry presented the "Status of Anti-Base Movements on Various Islands." Curry shared how in the face of histories of colonialism, militarization, and environmental destruction, islands are fighting to protect their environment, culture, and independence. She also delivered a message of solidarity: 'From Guahan to Korea Demilitarize Now!'

Lee Kwang-hee shared key points in the 2022-2026 mid-term defense plan of the Ministry of National Defense which includes giving the Navy more power. He also shared concerns about the expansion of the access road to Jeju Naval Base and about how the new Mobile Fleet Command will affect Jeju Island.

During the discussion, we agreed that our vision for a peace regime should be delivered to the "people's square." We decided to take a banner reading "Prevent coups through peace and disarmament" to the weekly rally held at Jeju City Hall.



On Dec. 27, members of Korea University Student Progressive Union, University Students for Environmental Solidarity, and University Student Movement Headquarters for Yoon Suk-Yeol's Resignation joined the human chain in solidarity with Gangjeong. They danced, sang and had speeches. Photo by Ddochi

..... Photos



On New Year's Day of 2025, we once again did 100 Bows at Metburi, and then we shared vegan rice cake soup, Knafeh (a Palestinian dessert), and tea together. Photo by Lee Jaekak



On Jan. 28, the Gangjeong 'extended family' gathered together at Samgeori Community Kitchen, cooked and ate warm Lunar New Year food such as dumplings and fried foods, and played games. Photo by Curry



A Christmas party was held at Gonggan Cafe on Dec. 25. Photo by Hati



On Jan. 31, Gonggan cafe was filled with people who came to see the first solo concert of the duo "Moredo-toyoil." Photo by Kim Jong-hwan



Uncle Jonghwan, who made lunch for the Gangjeong peace community nearly every day for 16 years, became the general manager of Samgeori Community Kitchen and Lee Kwang-hee took over as head chef. Photo by Choi Hyea-yeong



At Gangjeong Sports Day on Nov. 9, pink team and yellow team competed in various games, such as running and dodgeball, and everyone exchanged gifts. Photo by Tantan

My experience in Gangjeong so far

by Beth

I arrived in Gangjeong at the end of August as a volunteer sent by Mennonite Central Committee to work with the St. Francis Peace Center, and was thrown into peace activism. I attended Peace for the Sea Camp, did a learning tour of Jeju, then attended the Jeju Peace Theology Forum. After that was Chuseok, and I learned about the holiday traditions. The next few months I helped teach English for Peace University and attended some classes. I also helped with the last issue of the Gangjeong Village Story. In the beginning of December I went to Nonsan, which you can hear about in this issue. I had a wonderful Christmas and New Years though I missed home greatly. Seol (Lunar New Year) was a great time with friends and I learnt more Korean traditions. In February, me and Curry went to Gwangju and Gunsan, followed by a Creating Cultures of Peace workshop.

I have learnt so much in these past 6 months and they have been good but also hard. Hearing about all the atrocities of the past, present and those foreseen to come is extremely difficult. Why do we let our power hungry, fearful self control us? Life is so much better in community. I have been so blessed by the peace activists here in Gangjeong and will miss them dearly when I leave. I have learnt so much from those around me and how to be a part of a healthy community, where everyone contributes and problems don't get dismissed. I am learning so much about myself and how I can contribute to a community. I don't know where I am going from here, I only know that peace activism will continue to be a part of my life. I can't wait to see what the next 5 months here in Gangjeong will hold.

To be a Christian Peacemaker

by Gaemi

Last summer, I was attracted to join World Peace University (WPU), hosted by The Frontiers in Jeju's terrific landscape. I anticipated studying theoretical peace everyday in nature. I naively regarded Jeju as already peaceful and fine, so that anyone could just enjoy being here. I didn't know the ongoing struggle against the naval base in Gangjeong at all. And I had no idea about the considerable possibility of war between the US and China that threatens the peace of the world.

As time goes by, the '100 bows' meditation and 'human chain' right in front of the base everyday have impressed me to a great extent. Although people in this village have their own jobs, they gather to march, sing and dance with sincere hope of authentic peace among all living things. After the routine event, we have lunch together in our dining space, and chat joyfully. I have felt true humanity and tenacious solidarity in this community.

Also, all the course work has enlightened me that there are enormous obstacles which prevent the world from being happy: capitalism and militarism. Through investigating histories of violence and theology of peace, I could realize that peacemakers who have genuine Christian spirit must be reconciled with all creatures.

After the WPU course for about 100 days, I decided to remain to invest myself here. I will participate in the life of the Gangjeong community and 'permaculture', which means 'permanent agriculture,' pursuing the coexistence of all things on the earth. I will never forget the experiences of last autumn that have taught me to be a genuine peacemaker.

The life I learned in Gangjeong

by Kira

A place to try to change the world by our way of life. This is the introduction of the 'Something Peace' program. Before I joined, this didn't make sense to me, but after my experience in the 5th cohort of 'Some People,' I started to understand. I took several classes and started joining Gangjeong's daily actions. I started thinking about the peace I learned in class and what kind of daily life I should live.

I can't go back to the life I had before coming to Gangjeong. Without coming here, I wouldn't know much about state violence and I probably wouldn't know about many forms of violence that are still happening. Shamefully, I learned about numerous cases of exploitation by the state only since coming to Gangjeong. Now that I know, my perspective changed. I think the direction of my future studies will also change.

When I was living in Seoul, I constantly doubted my abilities, and I couldn't take on challenges because I was busy comparing myself to others, proving what kind of person I was. In Gangjeong, you don't have to prove yourself. In my three months in Gangjeong, no one has ever set my limits. Not even myself. Here, I could just act. I think this experience has made me stronger. The reason why I could spend each day safely and happily is because of the consideration and hard work of many people, so I spent every day in Gangjeong thankfully. I'm back in Seoul now, but I still think of Gangjeong memories and my friends.

Changing my way of life has made me want to change the world. I'm grateful to 'Something Peace' for creating an unforgettable experience for me!

Christine Ahn denied entry

Women Cross DMZ founder and long-time supporter of the Gangjeong peace movement Christine Ahn was on her way to deliver the keynote address at the International Youth Peace Forum (hosted by the Gyeonggi Province government!) when she was denied entry to South Korea on Oct. 30. Women Cross DMZ and Amnesty International collected over 1,200 signatures urging President Yoon to protect the human rights of freedom of speech, assembly, and movement by lifting the travel ban on Christine Ahn. After Yoon's declaration of martial law, it became even more clear that "we need more voices calling for peace and diplomacy."

Oh Cheol-geun Presente!



Between 2011 to 2017, Seoul Quaker Meeting member Oh Cheol-geun spent 1000 total days in Gangjeong. During the cooler seasons, from Monday to Saturday, he did "3 Steps and 1 Bow" in traditional funeral clothes as a symbol of mourning for the loss of sovereignty, human rights, democracy, and Gureombi Rock, the original coastline of Gangjeong Village. In 2012, he wrote, "Just as India's legal order sought to subjugate the Indian people to British interests during Gandhi's nonviolent resistance, South Korea's law now seeks to subjugate the South Korean people to protect American interests." He hoped to complete not only 1000 days in Gangjeong, but also 1000 days of "3 Steps and 1 Bow," but his health prevented him from returning. On Jan. 2, we learned that he had passed away from cancer at age 78. Photo by Choi Hyea-yeong

Ken Mayers, Presente!

Ken Mayers, a member of the US Veterans for Peace who visited Gangjeong in Dec. 2015, passed away on Jan. 27, 2025. He joined to block the construction vehicles in front of the Jeju navy base construction site with other members of VFP. Rest in peace, Ken Mayers.

Peace for the Sea Camp in Taiwan Sept. 26-29

<https://sites.google.com/site/peaceforthesea/>

Peace in
Palestine!
Sudan!
Ukraine!
DR Congo!

How You Can Join

1. Write letters to ask the South Korean government to close the Jeju Naval Base and to ask the US government to stop using it
2. Stay updated. Write to gjengnews@gmail.com to subscribe to the Gangjeong Village Story and follow our social media
3. Organize a solidarity event (concert, movie screening, protest, etc...), then share about it on social media
4. Visit Gangjeong!

For More Information

<http://www.SaveJejuNow.org>
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/NoNavalBase>
<http://www.facebook.com/SaveJeju>
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/478515615508751>

For Gangjeong related videos, check out:

Youtube: Shalomsea / zodopehead (See "Jeju's Aching Heart" 25 min.) / Sungbong2012 (See "Gureombi, The Wind is Blowing" 88 min.) / Gang-Jeong Il-Gi / gangjeongcurry83 / 1234yz100 / Vimeo: cho sung bong

Created and designed by the Gangjeong English Newsletter Team (Beth, Curry, Haecho, Sung-hee Choi, Tantan, and Yeoul), with extra translations by Gaemi and weze. Special thanks to Everyday Practice. Published by the Association of Gangjeong Villagers Against the Jeju Navy Base, 620 leodo-ro, Gangjeong-dong, the Life and Peace Village, Seogwipo-si, Jeju, the Peace Island, Korea 63563

Email: gjengnews@gmail.com



JOIN
GANGJEONG
FRIENDS!

<https://cafe.daum.net/gangjeong79s/POK7/1>