

GANGJEONG VILLAGE STORY

News on the struggle against
the Jeju Naval Base

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Gureombi Remembrance Day press conference in front of the navy base in Gangjeong. Photo by Grace

Gangjeong Says, Stop the War!

By Bomal and Curry

On March 7, the annual Gureombi remembrance day, people gathered in front of the main gate of the Jeju Naval Base. As they had for the past week, people held picket signs during the 7 o'clock 100 Bows for Life and Peace, which read "Gangjeong says, Stop the War!" and "End the ROK-US joint military exercises!" The signs and preparations were useful for protesting the US warship Rafael Peralta while it docked in Gangjeong from Feb. 27-Mar. 3. On March 7, the 11th anniversary of the blasting of Gangjeong's precious Gureombi Rock coastline, the base entrance was occupied all morning with people mending banners, creating solidarity signs, and sharing music. Deulso shared a collection of "Voice of Peace" audio recordings which people sent to add their voices to call together for an end to war.

While some people joined the daily street mass at 11, others walked to Metburi and shared their memories of Gureombi. At 12, the daily human chain started at Gureombi Plaza as usual, but when the crowd reached the main gate, they held a press conference. They shared a statement remembering the struggle to protect Gureombi, denouncing the recent increase of military exercises and tensions, mourning the lives and homes lost to war, particularly in Ukraine, and condemning the renewed plans to build a Jeju 2nd Airport. Everyone shouted, "We want to live. Stop the military drills" and "Shut down the naval base."

After dancing the addictive Gangjeong dances, there was a festive mood as people shared the lunch prepared by friends from the organic coop Hansalim. In the afternoon, a book release celebration introduced the selection of "Gangjeong Jikimi"(Gangjeong peace activist) interviews called "Dance of the Stones." The profits of the book will be used to fund peace activism in Gangjeong. The final program was a contest, "The story of stones," asking participants to draw, paint, write or create something about the things they want to protect. The submitted works were exhibited at Gonggan Cafe.



Go Gwon-il shares memories of Gureombi Rock at Metburi, beside Gangjeong River. Photo by Grace

Get Out US warship DDG-115!

By Choi Sung-hee

On Feb. 27, the US warship Rafael Peralta (DDG-115) came to the Jeju Naval Base for the unloading of military supplies. After its departure from the base on Mar. 3, the warship had a joint maritime training with the South Korean navy off Jeju. Until the arrival of the USS Rafael Peralta, there had been no international warships for nearly two years since the visit by Australian warship Ballarat in May 2021 during the height of the epidemic worldwide. The DDG-115 was the first foreign warship to visit Jeju since the launch of the Yoon Suk Yeol government. For days people demanded that the warship leave Jeju. People also demanded the closure of the Jeju Naval Base, which degenerates the Island of Peace into a port of call for the US military for the US domination strategy. Meanwhile around 300 crew members of the DDG-115 toured around the island in ROK navy and tour company buses during their stay in Jeju.

DDG-115 is the most advanced Aegis destroyer among all the US destroyers that have come to the Jeju navy base since 2017. It is equipped with standard missile 3, which can intercept ICBMs, and Tomahawk cruise missiles, which can load nuclear warheads and make pre-emptive strikes. In other words, it is one of the core warships for the US missile defense system. The entry of DDG-115 directly proves that Jeju now stands on the blade of a knife. We are concerned that its visit may predict more serious military tensions. Against all this unnecessary and dangerous military build-up, as well as intensifying military tensions, we will definitely make a demilitarized peace island.



People protested against the visit of US warship DDG-115. Photo by Pang Eun-mi

Cruise matters: Jeju aches from over-tourism

By Choi Sung-hee

Since the opening of the Jeju Naval Base (Gangjeong Civilian-Military Complex Port for Tourism) where the civilians and military use the same water area, there had been only two cruises which came in 2019. However, beginning this March, 28 cruises of more than 100,000 tons are scheduled in Gangjeong this year. Including the Jeju port, there would be a total of 50 cruises and 120,000 cruise tourists all over Jeju this year. The island government is misleading islanders that this is for local balanced development.

In fact, the cruise industry relies on the low wages of third world nations and uses energy in the port which amounts to that used by a small village. It seriously contributes to deepening inequality and climate disaster. Along with warships, the cruises coming to the Gangjeong port will accelerate the destruction of the Gangjeong sea, a UNESCO biosphere reserve zone, and will threaten the local fishing industry. The waste from cruises is problematic, also. The Jeju government stopped the carrying-in of cruise waste to the island in 2016, but unloading of some waste is still going on. Jeju, with a population of less than 700,000, is aching from over-tourism and militarism. People are demanding that the Jeju island government make clear and open investigations and response to the matters of environmental destruction, climate crisis and deepening inequality.

Jeju 2nd Airport and the Endangerment of Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphins

Summarized and translated from a March 7 commentary by Hot Pink Dolphins

The conditional consent of the Ministry of Environment to the Jeju 2nd Airport Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment is problematic in that it accelerates the regional endangerment of Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins. The Ministry of Environment approved the airport construction project, saying that even under the worst noise conditions, there would be no noise impact on dolphins.

Dohwa Engineering reviewed and researched the possibility of supplementing the Jeju 2nd Airport Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment. On Feb. 22 and 23, 2022, the company conducted underwater noise research in the coastal waters of Sinsan-ri, Seongsan-eup and concluded that underwater noise would not have a significant impact on Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins. However, Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins do not solely live off the coast of Sinsan-ri, and it is very hasty and not scientific at all to conclude that there is no effect on the entire Jeju Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin population because of the low underwater noise here. This is because the population of coastal Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins, which do not have the ability to migrate or escape to distant seas like the oceanic bottlenose dolphins, would decline if coastal conditions deteriorate. Therefore, it is clear that no effect at one point does not mean there is no effect on the population as a whole.

The struggle against Jeju's 2nd airport faces a new phase

By Park Chan-sik, Jeju People's Assembly Against the 2nd Airport

On Mar. 6, the Ministry of Environment passed the resubmitted strategic environmental impact assessment with conditional consent. The SEIA, which must be completed to advance plans for the Jeju 2nd airport, was rejected in 2021 even after two supplements. Even this time, most environmental experts gave negative opinions. Nevertheless, the MOE still passed along the proposal with the condition that unresolved problems be resolved later.

Local residents and civic society are regrouping for the struggle, condemning the political cover-up of the truth by supporters of President Yoon Seok-yeol's pledge to promote the 2nd airport. On the other hand, Jeju People's Assembly Against the 2nd Airport (hereafter, 'People's Assembly') is briefing the media to verify and expose the problems of the SEIA and the basic plan for the airport. Recently, the fact that the risk of bird collision was reduced and manipulated was found and exposed. The People's Assembly also launched a signature campaign calling for a referendum. Jeju residents, not the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, should decide whether or not to build a second airport, which determines the future of Jeju Island.

Beyond the pros and cons of the 2nd airport, the majority of Jeju residents agree that Jeju residents should make their own decisions. If the governor of Jeju-do accepts the wishes of the people and requests MOLIT to hold a referendum, it will become a big issue and the airport promotion may be delayed. In addition, even if MOLIT ignores it and unilaterally enforces airport preparations, the referendum will be able to pressure the provincial governor and the provincial council, who have the authority to agree or disagree with future environmental impact assessments. The Yoon government and MOLIT will announce the basic plan to speed up the construction of the 2nd airport. However, as long as the resistance of the residents continues, the second airport will gradually lose momentum.

Abolish new airport projects across the country!

By Bombom

The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport and the Ministry of Environment are located together in the same place in Sejong City, main land of Korea. What does it mean? It means that the MOE is ready to quickly contribute to the MOLIT's national projects. Maybe the two ministries are doing one thing, that is, to give land to construction conglomerates and the U.S. military. Civil servants who work by people's taxes do not consider the land to be the people's.

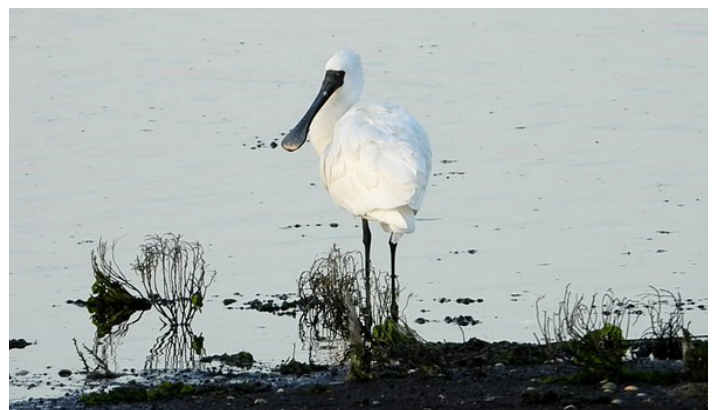
Environmental impact assessment is a key. The MOE should stop using EIA as a formality to agree to the MOLIT's new airport projects. The environment and ecology of the Sura mudflats, Jeju's Seongsan, and Busan's Gadeok-do Island should all be fully preserved without "conditional" consent.

The tent sit-in by Collective Action Against the Abolition of the Saemangeum New Airport Project in front of the MOLIT and the MOE has continued for over a year. Protesters from across the country are in tents together denouncing new airport projects which include Saemangeum New Airport, Jeju Second Airport, and Gadeok-do New Airport.

The adverse effects of new airport projects do not only reach the legally protected species or residents of the planned site. They do not only harm the people who are connected by the land and water of this country. The ecosystem destroyed by the MOLIT and the MOE of the Republic of Korea is facing a global climate crisis. The tent sit-in fought together again today. There is not much time left.



People protesting in front of the building where MOE and MOLIT are located together. Photo by Bombom in Sejong City on Mar. 3.



The planned site for the Jeju 2nd airport is surrounded by the habitats of winter and summer migratory birds. The black-faced spoonbill is one of around 40 species here which are either ROK government-designated protected species or IUCN-designated threatened species. Photo by Environmental Defenders for Seongsan

Remembrance and connections at Alddreu

By Curry

On Dec. 13, People Remembering the 85th Anniversary of the Nanjing Massacre and 14 supporting organizations hosted the 8th annual memorial for the Nanjing Massacre at Alddreu Airfield in Daejeong, on the southwest coast of Jeju. About 50 people gathered for speeches, music and quiet reflection in front of an aircraft hangar at the airfield which was built by forced labor to support the bombing of Nanjing by the Japanese imperial navy in 1937.

Kim Jung-im opened the memorial, noting how recent plans to make Alddreu into a peace park make this an important time to prevent over-development, and how recent military tensions make it an important time to remember of Alddreu's history. Emily Wang reminded participants of the invisible wars that must be addressed in order to truly end war: the violence caused by othering and erasing of non-citizens and non-humans. Satoko Norimatsu's solidarity message declared that Japanese "war preparation and history denial go hand in hand," and that we "need to do more to mobilize and activate the not many but not few Japanese who squarely face history and build friendship, not war, with Korean and Chinese neighbors." Evyn Lê Espiritu Gandhi drew parallels between Japanese imperialism's spread through Jeju to Nanjing and her own family's history of displacement by US imperialism in the Philippines and Vietnam. "Histories of militarism are connected... so therefore our peace activism must be connected, building solidarities with demilitarization struggles across the region."



Laying flowers in remembrance of the Nanjing Massacre. Photo by Park Seongin

How do we make peace with Alddreu?

On Jan. 27, there was a people's talk meeting on how to make the Great Jeju Peace Park which is to be created at the old Alddreu airfield. It was the first public meeting to talk about the Park. According to Dr. Cho Sung-yoon, Alddreu is the only place in South Korea where the various war-remains from the Pacific War (WWII) and Korean War all exist together. It also includes a tragic site from the Jeju 4.3 massacre. Jan. 27 was also the 10th anniversary of People Making Jeju a Demilitarized Peace Island.

The Climate Peace March in Moseulpo

By Kim Jung-im, Committee opposing the development of Songak Mountain

From 2019 to the present, we have actively raised our voices to deliver to future generations the current entire appearance of Songak Mountain (in Moseulpo, Daejeong-eup, Jeju). Beginning with a press conference which conveyed 1,000 local people's voices, we gathered around 12,000 signatures for our urgent petition to end reckless development.

Also, the Jeju Climate Peace March, held at the old Alddreu airfield on Jan. 29 was a chance for us to recharge ourselves by remembering and renewing our struggles. Songak Mt. and Alddreu are located next to each other, and both are sites where imperial Japanese military remains as well as Korean war remains still exist. The Peace March helped us to clarify the direction we want for the Jeju Peace Park, following up after our talk meeting on Jan. 27. Now, it became important to connect the concepts of peace and climate. Participants agreed together that the Peace Park should fill the true meaning of peace.

Moseulpo, located at the tip of Korea, has been recognized as a geographic and military strategic point, and it became the dominating nations' invasive outpost since earlier times. Alddreu, which is called a museum without a roof! We need a site where we can talk about the truth of war bombings, as well as peace, including our response to the climate crisis.

We are Songaksan! We are Alddreu!

By Park Seong-in, People Who Love Songak Mt.

On Mar. 1, in Daejeong-eup, Seogwipo-si, about 30 local residents gathered for a workshop to preserve Songak Mountain and create an Alddreu Peace Park together. On Feb. 3rd, residents of Daejeong (18 organizations) held an inauguration ceremony for the 'Alddreu-Songak Mountain Peace Park Promotion Committee.'

Recently, the Jeju Provincial Government and the Jeju Provincial Assembly decided to purchase a piece of land around Songak Mountain owned by a Chinese company in order to preserve the mountain. Also, the Ministry of National Defense and Jeju Island have agreed on a 'free use' agreement for additional land (renewed every 10 years), and if the proposal is passed by the National Assembly plenary session soon, it is expected to be implemented in earnest.

These changes are the culmination of a long struggle to preserve Songak Mountain against development and to make Alddreu a proper Peace Park. However, the "real" work is just beginning. For at least the next 2 to 3 years, there will be fierce debate over "who" and "how" to preserve Songak Mountain and create the Alddreu Peace Park. In the name of making Songak Mountain the center of west Jeju tourism, it is possible to turn it into a recklessly developed tourist destination. Alddreu Peace Park may end up being limited to peace washing or distorted as a security zone instead of a zone of peace. This is why the voices of Jeju residents are needed, rather than leaving it to experts and bureaucrats' administrative procedures.

Jeju Climate Peace March and Bijarim Road

By Hwang Yong-woon

Jeju citizens began a regular "Jeju Climate Peace March" last November. Once a month, they talk, walk, and explore what they can do at a climate disaster site, confirming each other's belief that "the world moves as much as we walk."

At Bijarim Road, which the march visited in February, more trees were recently cut for the road expansion construction to link Jeju City to the second airport (air base) project site. A lawsuit to stop the construction has been dismissed by the court. Citizens are currently filing a 'construction void ab initio' lawsuit against Jeju Island government.

On Dec. 6, Nial Moores, who has a PhD on birds, emphasized the ecological importance of Bijarim Road in the court, saying the island government's impact reduction measures were ineffective. Lee Kang-woon, with a doctorate on beetles, refuted Jeju Island's claim that alternative habitats should be prepared and beetles relocated, and said, "There has never been a successful case of alternative habitats."

On Feb. 28, the Jeju Provincial Government's day for argument, it claimed that construction was underway according to procedure. Jeju National University's Industry-Academia Collaboration had written service reports and concluded that the construction of Bijarim Road is okay as long as the reduction measures are good. Two members of "People Doing All Things to Save the Bijarim-ro" made their final statements as plaintiffs, and submitted a written rebuttal to the document submitted by Jeju Island. As of Mar. 31, the final trial date has not been made yet.



The Jeju Climate Peace March at the Bijarim Road. Photo by Lala.

Jeju Youth Change the World

By Jeong Geun-hyo, Jeju Youth Climate Peace Action

With the goal of creating peace through realizing climate justice, Jeju Youth Climate Peace Action (Jechyeonggihaeng) has been studying and speaking out with local youth through book clubs, researching environmental issues in Jeju.

We are speaking out against the dumping of nuclear contaminated water from Fukushima, Japan. It is said that the so-called "treated water" filtered by Japan's multi-nuclide removal facility is not completely free of radioactive substances and is likely to have adverse effects on marine ecosystems and human health. So it will go around and radiate us humans, increasing our chances of getting cancer. We don't want such a world, so we're against it.

We tried to tell the Japanese consul our opinion about the Fukushima nuclear contaminated water, but the police blocked us. We continued to picket in front of the Japanese consulate until the consul came out and listened to us. While we were holding signs, shivering with cold in the rain, the Japanese consul stayed inside the warm building, fiddling with their computer. The Japanese consul never came out. This is the result of them giving up because they thought the world would not change.

So Jeju Youth Climate Peace Action will not give up, we will continue to speak out, and we will change the world. And if we do, the world will change.



On Feb. 13, Jeju Youth Climate Peace Action demanded that the Jeju Island government actively oppose the Japanese government's plan to discharge nuclear contaminated water into the sea. Photo by Jeju Youth Climate Peace Action

Yoon Suk Yeol's "Solution" for Forced Mobilization Tramples on History and Korean Dignity

By Satoko Norimatsu

On March 6, the Yoon Suk-yeol government of the Republic of Korea announced a "solution" for the victims of forced mobilization under the Japanese colonial rule who had won their cases in the 2018 Korean Supreme Court rulings. In this "solution," a foundation established by the Korean government plans to accept donations from corporations and shoulder the responsibility instead of the Japanese perpetrating companies, Nippon Steel and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, paying compensation as per the ruling. This is an inconceivable way of exempting the perpetrating companies from responsibility, while the victimized country bears the responsibility of the perpetrators.

This "solution" involving no apology or compensation from the perpetrators is an outrage that tramples on victims' rights and history, even worse than the Japan-Korea "Comfort Women" Agreement reached at the end of 2015 by then Abe Shinzo and Park Geun-hye administrations without consulting victims. There was pressure by the U.S. government, in both of these instances, to strengthen the US-Korea-Japan military alliance [..]

(Excerpt from the writing of above title, Ryukyu Shimpo(English), Mar. 29, 2023)

Stop the oppression of Jeju activists!

By Kang Jeong-yeon, Progressive Party, Jeju regional branch

Park Hyun-woo, current Jeju province chairman of the Progressive Party and Ko Chang-geon, secretary general of Korean Peasants League, a Jeju native, were raided and searched by the National Intelligence Service on Dec. 19. Then they were suddenly arrested on Feb. 18 and detained on charges of violating the National Security Law. In addition, on Mar. 27, Shin Dong-hoon, head of the Peace Shelter was also subject to search and seizure on Jan. 18, and was also arrested on the same charge. Peace Shelter is a place that cares for the socially vulnerable.

Prior to these raids and detentions, the NIS used conservative right-wing media to illegally publicize their suspected crimes and spread false propaganda that they are part of a so-called 'Jeju spy network under North Korean orders.' What the state security agencies hope to accomplish with these public security-driven witch hunts is to isolate progressives from the public. On Jan. 17, the Jeju Committee to Stop Public Security Repression and Defend Democracy (hereafter, the 'Committee') filed charges against the NIS and several conservative media reporters to the Corruption Investigations Office for High-ranking Officials.

Ko, secretary general of the KPL, carried out a hunger strike for 42 days (as of the end of March), demanding the right to refuse to testify and that the unconstitutional National Security Law be repealed. The NIS and prosecutors have repeatedly used humiliating and violent methods to force suspects who refuse to make any statements into the NIS investigation room. The Committee is doing its best to exonerate the victims and end the 'public security' repression.

Please consider to send encouraging letters to

Ko Chang-geon: 161-303 Jeju P.O. Box, Jeju, South Korea / Park Hyun-woo: 161-235 Jeju P.O. Box, Jeju, South Korea /

Shin Dong-hoon: No. 384, Suwon Detention Center, 176 Paldalmun-ro (182 Wooman-dong), Paldal-gu, Suwon-si, Gyeonggi province, South Korea / (Zip: 16492) (Expected be transferred to Seoul Correction Service in April or May)

Condemning Korean government detention of anti-war Russian refugees at the border

By Bomal

On Dec. 30, 2022, civil society members advocating for the human rights and peace of refugees who refused to be drafted in Russia held a press conference simultaneously in Seoul and in Jeju. They revealed that the Ministry of Justice is locking up these refugees at Incheon International Airport and is effectively pressuring them to 'voluntarily' leave the country. A complaint was filed to the National Human Rights Commission of Korea requesting an opportunity for review, for the prevention of a recurrence of refugee rejection at similar borders, and for confirmation of human rights violations that have occurred at the airport so far.

On Feb. 14, four and a half months after the refugees fled to South Korea, the disposition was cancelled which the head of the Incheon International Airport Immigration Office had issued refusing to give them an opportunity to be screened, saying that they had no reason for their exile. The 1st Administrative Court of the Incheon District Court ruled in favor of two plaintiffs out of three Russian refugees who fled to South Korea to avoid forced conscription.

After the mobilization order for ordinary citizens on Sept. 21 during the Ukraine war, it is known that more than 300,000 Russian men have fled abroad as refugees.



People protesting in front of the Jeju human rights committee with signs saying "Acknowledge conscientious objectors as refugees."



56 civil society organizations held a "Stop the War! Ukraine Peace Now!" press conference in Seoul on Feb. 23, the one year anniversary of the war. They called for an immediate ceasefire and peace talks, denounced the Korean government's direct and indirect provision of weapons for the war, and called on the Korean government to recognize and protect Russian refugees. Photo by World Without War

Women Cross DMZ visit and Crossings screenings

By Curry

Several members of Women Cross DMZ travelled to Korea to join the 18th World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates in Pyeongchang, Korea, where Women Cross DMZ's Executive Director Christine Ahn was awarded the Peace Summit Medal for Social Activism. They also held screenings of Crossings, directed by Deann Borshay Liem, in Pyeongchang and in Seoul. The film invites viewers to experience the original Women Cross DMZ journey to walk from North Korea to South Korea in 2015. As they journeyed together, the group of diverse women including Nobel Peace Laureates, peace activists and members of the Korean diaspora from around the world overcame complex logistical and political challenges. They continue to work for peace on the Korean peninsula by calling international attention to the Korean people's yearnings for peace and reconciliation.

In May 2015, Ann Wright and several other Women Cross DMZ members visited the Gangjeong struggle against the Jeju Naval Base, just after their crossing at the DMZ, recognizing the connections between Korea's unended war and division with recent militarization. Once again, it was a precious opportunity to welcome Women Cross DMZ members Ann Wright, Deann Borshay Liem, and Liz Bernstein when they visited the village on Dec. 16-17. The three women met for discussions with members of the Association of Gangjeong Villagers Against the Jeju Naval Base, Gangjeong Peace Network, and other community members.



The Jeju screening of Crossings gathered a crowd on Dec. 17 despite snowy weather. Photo by Song Dong-hyo.

On Dec. 17, they shared both Crossings and Deann Borshay Liem's earlier film Memory of Forgotten War, about families divided by the Korean War, at Donggwang Catholic Church in Jeju City. Despite a rare blizzard in Jeju that night, over 50 people joined, and even though the Q&A time was shortened due to the weather, many people reflected that it was a valuable experience, and proposed that another screening be held in 2023.

Ethics for Enemies, What We Need

By Bomal

Kim Jeong-soo, Standing Committee Representative of Women Making Peace, gave a lecture on Jan. 3 at a Catholic church in Jeju city. The lecture was part of the Peace School held by St. Francis Peace Center.

Kim Jeong-soo started by introducing the 2 week journey she took right before arriving in Jeju with GPPAC NEA (Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, Northeast Asia). In addition to participating in GPPAC since 2004, Women Making Peace has held the Northeast Asia Women's Peace Conference for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the establishment of a peace regime, and has been an advisory group urging for the establishment of a national action plan on the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security, among many other peace and demilitarization actions.

Quoting the book "An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics" by Donald Shriver, Kim put into perspective the concept of peace in this era. The concept of peace should expand to common security to protest against the devastation of nuclear war. Otherwise, we're in danger of not being able to survive.

Finally, Kim stressed that the current government should implement the Resolution 1325 National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and promote gender mainstreaming in diplomacy and security, strengthen women's peace capacity, and expand women's participation in the peace process.

Women Conscientious Objectors' Camp

By Bomal

From Dec. 10 to 13, a Women Conscientious Objectors' Camp was held in Gangjeong. The camp was prepared by those who have already made or are interested in making declarations of conscientious objection. The workshop was held in the St. Francis Peace Center, and they visited around Gangjeong Village, including Naetgili-so. On the last evening of the camp, villagers were invited for a discussion and roundtable. After the camp, participants visited the Nanjing memorial ceremony and the Woljeong-ri sewage plant protest in solidarity.

Prevent Nuclear War in Korea

By Curry

Since the beginning of the Korean War, the US has threatened to use nuclear weapons against North Korea (DPRK). Since Sept. 2022, the DPRK's nuclear policy allows for a preemptive nuclear strike in response to non-nuclear attacks or imminent threats to its leadership. In response to the asymmetrical military power of the US and South Korea (ROK), the DPRK has focused on making credible nuclear threats, developing fast-launch solid fuel missiles, easily hidden underwater launch capabilities, and missiles that can maneuver to avoid missile defense systems. Meanwhile, ROK military spending is more than double the DPRK's GDP, and the ROK is developing missile defense and 'decapitation' strategies threatening DPRK leadership. Japan has made its peace constitution meaningless by developing offensive 'counterstrike' capabilities. All this dangerous build-up of military power and threats means that a tiny mistake could trigger a massive nuclear war. ROK-US-Japan war games create a threatening environment and conditions that could lead to devastating accidents. However, if the pretext of the unended Korean War is removed, this escalation towards nuclear war could be reversed. In the past, North Korea has responded with reciprocity in diplomatic negotiations. It is a crucial time to end the Korean War and negotiate a peace treaty.

In a Jan. 31 webinar hosted by PEACEMOMO and Civilian Military Watch and a Mar. 31 meeting of Korea Peace Appeal international partners (see "The Rise of First Strike Threats : Current Situation of the Korean Peninsula" on youtube), Professor Suh Jae-Jung described in detail the growing danger of war in Korea. Park Seok-jin of Civilian Military Watch emphasized the importance of solidarity exchanges between peace movements. PEACEMOMO's Moon A-Young emphasized the role of citizens to speak out about the current danger with hope and empathy. Hwang Soo-young invited everyone to join the Korea Peace Appeal campaign to end the Korean War.

War drills make democracy retrogressive

By Choi Sung-hee

Since the launch of the pro-US & Japan Yoon Suk Yeol government, ROK-US-Japan military cooperation and South Korea's incorporation into NATO is increasing. The ROK-US-Japan military alliance and NATO are two keys for the United States' global domination. Almost daily, war drills are being held. From Mar. 13 to early April, there were ROK-US combined aggressive war drills called Freedom Shield, a preparation for all-out war which includes an operation for the removal of North Korean leadership, and Warrior Shield, a large-scale field training exercise. During that period, a special unit from the UK, one of the UN Command member countries, joined for the 1st time in a ROK-US marine joint landing operation drill. European nations' war drill participation is for South Korea's incorporation into NATO and the revitalization of the UN Command. However, the UN Command is merely a military unit under the command of the US, with nothing to do with the UN. Arms corporations get profits by war drills while democracy gets retrogressive. The Yoon government openly blames workers for their protest to war drills. However, all the costs spent on military action should be used for the people's welfare, recovery of ecology systems, and response to the climate crisis. This year, some civic groups including Solidarity for Peace And Reunification of Korea submitted an appeal that Freedom Shield is in violation of the South Korean Constitution, given that it violates people's rights to peaceful life.

Jeju and war drills in preparation for the redeployment of nuclear weapons

By Choi Sung-hee

On Dec. 27, the media reported a document written in the name of a special committee of the ruling right-wing party responding to the North Korea nuclear crisis. The document mentioned 'promotion of the forward deployment of US nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula when North Korea's nuclear attack is imminent' and "necessity to examine the issue of making Jeju a strategic island in case of worsening situations." The document also mentioned "examination of construction of a runway enabled for use by US strategic bombers and of establishment of temporary storage for nuclear weapons" as well as "promotion of those in the building of a new airport in Jeju." The new airport means the Jeju 2nd airport. The special committee document also reads that "when deployment on the Korean peninsula is dangerous, it can be deployed in Japan, thus shared by the ROK, US, and Japan." On Dec. 20, B52H, F22, F35 etc. flew from eight bases of the ROK, US, and Japan and made a joint war drill in the KADIZ area, southwest of Jeju.

This January, the CSIS, a conservative US think tank, advised the US government to consider simulation training which prepares for the redeployment of tactical nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula, while in February, a report from the Heritage Foundation, another conservative US think tank, suggested that there should be a NATO-type nuclear planning group with South Korea. These are dangerous steps ignoring the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

THAAD integrates the U.S. MD system

By Kang Hyun-wook, No THAAD Situation Office

On Mar. 24, amid large-scale war games by the US and South Korea, the Ministry of National Defense announced that the U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) conducted a 'THAAD Remote Launch System Deployment Drill' at the illegal THAAD base.

The drill is part of THAAD performance improvement work under the U.S. Department of Defense's Joint Emergent Operational Need (JEON). JEON is not just about improving the performance of THAAD for US forces in South Korea. As a subsystem of US Indo-Pacific Command's Emergent Operational Need, the ultimate goal of JEON is the integration of US MD systems deployed around the world, using the South Korean territory as a base for the defense of the United States.

The local population is directly affected by the powerful nations' hegemonic rivalry. In Nogok-ri, Gimcheon (100 residents), the closest village to the THAAD radar site, there have been 11 cancer cases and seven deaths in the last 1~2 years. In Soseong-ri, three villagers were injured when a launcher was taken out for a deployment exercise, and there was a scary incident when a brake blew out on the village access road.

That's not all. Despite the direct harm caused by the illegal deployment of THAAD, the government is not tolerating even the smallest act of opposition from residents. To date, the government has prosecuted and tried more than 50 residents and activists for blocking construction vehicles and U.S. military vehicles from entering the base for 30 minutes to an hour.

Fines and legal fees have exceeded 50 million won (around \$38,000 USD). The THAAD base is gradually being completed, but our hope is that the residents and peaceful citizens have not been deterred from their struggle, and that operation of the base will be stopped by the residents' struggle. We will not stop fighting until THAAD is withdrawn.



Soseong-ri residents protest the entrance of military supplies to the THAAD base. They would soon be blocked by the police. Photo by No THAAD Situation Office in Dec. 2022.

US Space Forces Korea is a US outpost

By Choi Sung-hee

On Dec. 14, US Space Forces Korea was created at Osan Air base, Pyeongtaek, mainland of South Korea. SPACEFOR-KOR, 'a subcomponent of U.S. Space Forces INDOPACOM' is 'to maximize synergy between the 7th Air Force headquarters and the 607th Air Operations Center.' The size of the unit was not made public. But it will provide the USFK Command functions of space planning and monitoring. On Feb. 2, the ROK foreign minister and US counterpart made clear that the next scope of ROK-US partnership is 'space.' On Mar. 9, James H. Dickinson, commander of the United States Space Command testified that SPACEFOR-KOR is being integrated with the land forces of South Korea and Japan. The Space Force joined a meeting on ROK-US space satellite navigation on Mar. 20-21, followed by the first ROK-US space policy consultative group between the ROK air force and US space force on Mar. 23. SPACEFOR-KOR will be an outpost for US intervention in northeast Asia and world conflicts.

Otherwise, South Korea's ambitions for space are being accelerated this year with the vision of civilian-government cooperation led by private corporations. By last December, the Yoon government designated three regions in the city of Daejeon and Gyung-sandnam-do and Jeollanam-do provinces as space industry clusters. On Jan. 1, the government made public its plan to launch a collecting satellite for the removal of space debris but which could be also used as a weapon against enemy satellites, and successfully launched a 2nd solid-fuel propelled projectile on Jan. 30. Jeju, also ambitious for space industry, is driving to secure a launch site, while the central government is installing radars on its oreums (parasitic cones) for so-called civilian purposes. Dangerous moves for the militarization and climate crisis!

Vietnam Survivor Wins Case

By Curry

For the first time, a South Korean court has acknowledged government responsibility for massacres by South Korean troops in the Vietnam War. In 1968, Nguyen Thi Thanh was 8 years old when Korean soldiers entered her village of Phong



Nguyen Thi Thanh holds a bouquet given by Korea-Vietnam Peace Foundation members to celebrate the victory of her court case. Photo by Shin Da-eun/The Hankyoreh

Nhi and massacred more than 70 villagers, killing 5 of her family members and seriously wounding her and her brother. In 2018, Nguyen Thi Thanh visited Korea to testify at a people's tribunal and she visited the Vietnam Pieta Statue at St. Francis Peace Center and met with survivors of the Jeju April 3rd massacres. In 2020, she brought her case to the Seoul Central District Court. After receiving news on Feb. 7, 2023 that the Seoul court had ordered the Korean government to pay her \$23,900 in compensation, Nguyen Thi Thanh said, "All I want is an acknowledgment and apology from the South Korean government. [...] There are still so many civilian massacres [...] that have not yet been investigated." She told Hankyoreh news, "I hope the South Korean government will waste no time and investigate these incidents and apologize to the victims. I'd like to see the victims be comforted in that way."

Peace visit to Okinawa: We have each other

By Oi, Peace Wind

From Feb. 1-7 I visited Okinawa with Nallibeobseok. It had been long since my last visit and I could feel danger rising in Okinawa. While the Korean government and US Forces Korea were making a Pyeongtaek-Gunsan-Soseong-ri-Jeju war belt, the Japanese government and US Forces Japan have been building the US base at Henoko and making a war belt throughout the Nansei Archipelago.

Also, through the US-Japan alliance, Japan has increased military cooperation with the Philippines and Australia, and 5 new bases will station US troops in the Philippines. Leveraging fear of tensions between China and Taiwan and North Korean weapons tests, Okinawa is being frighteningly militarized. During my visit, I could feel the reality of the US military's Korea-Japan-Philippines war belt. All across Okinawa, US and Japanese bases are being built and the community is collapsing as mountains and the sea are being excavated. My hair stands on end at the violence of those who see all the beautiful people and living beings of Okinawa only as bases.

From the experience of war, Okinawans have deeply engraved in their hearts the expression, "All life is precious," and they are resisting to stop the bases. I cry to see Okinawans face this time of endless tension and violence just like the people of Gunsan, Gangjeong, and Soseong-ri. In the face of the power, troops, and money that easily bring down large mountains, can the simple resistance of taking slow "cows steps" stop these crazy weapons and protect peace?

First, let us meet together again with cheerful liveliness, we who call for peace and fight the same fight.

A newly constructed base on Ishigaki

By Umi

Ishigaki island is 410 km from Okinawa and 260 km from Taiwan. As fierce competition for military expansion spreads in Asia, Ishigaki has suffered. In Nov. 2015, base construction was announced, and in July 2018 the mayor of Ishigaki formally accepted the base. In Feb. 2019, the signatures of 30% of the citizens called for a referendum but they were rejected. That March, base construction commenced. On Mar. 16, 2023, even though construction continued, the Ground Self Defense Force base opened, and 570 troops are expected to be stationed there.

For the last 10 years, there was not enough public information or response to the citizens. In the last four years, over 30 thousand trees were cut, the sound of breaking stones filled the air, and trucks filled the streets. Now what will happen? Soldiers will roam the streets and the noise of the base will fill the air. Explosives are stored too close to residences and elementary students have to walk to school on streets near the base. To house the soldiers the natural environment will be further infringed and destroyed. My heart is heavy as I envision these preparations for war.

I recently visited Ishigaki for the first time. For one week we visited spiritual, natural, and historical sites. In the Pacific War, 78 years ago, there was no land invasion, but Ishigaki was bombed from land and sea, and malaria killed many people. Now on Mar. 18, surface-to-ship missiles were deployed on this island. Missiles are certainly the most destructive materials for a living, breathing island. I feel as if I have been struck with this heavy weapon, but life will go on for Ishigaki citizens and for the flora and fauna. I want to keep running towards islands- towards an Asia- where bases are dismantled and missiles are rejected.



Gangjeong activists posed with solidarity signs that they sent to Ishigaki with a group called 'Nallibeobseok.' Photo by Lee Myoung-jae

Strategic is not special

By Theresa "Isa" Arriola, Mariana Islands

While we are strategic to the military, let us not confuse this with being special. [...] Two-thirds of Tinian is under Department of Defense lease, the entire island of Farallon de Medinilla has been bombed since 1971, not to mention the intense buildup on Guam. [...] We are seeing our community flung into the crosshairs of another conflict that is not of our own making. This time our islands are being promised a lot of money to act as island shields against outside aggression. Wargames are on the rise. This means military planners are literally playing games to figure out scenarios where the Pacific would be attacked, specifically Guam. The problem is, this isn't a game. (See "No to NMI as military 'pleasure ground'" at mvariety.com)

Opposition to fire festival in the era of climate crisis

By Bomal

Jeju City announced that it would hold the Jeju Fire Festival Mar. 9-12, and on the third day of the festival, various events were scheduled, such as burning daljip ('full moon houses') and setting fire to Saebyeol Oreum (volcanic cone) in Aewol-eup, Jeju-si. The area to be burnt was about 300,000 square meters. It is a modern reproduction of Jeju's traditional pastoral culture, 'Bangae', where fire is set before spring to get rid of pests in grazing lands, but this event is currently being criticized for ignorant historical distortion that does not consider the ecosystem of the oreum.

Oum Mun-hee of the Jeju Climate Peace March said, "It may have been part of the pastoral culture in the past, but now it has nothing to do with it. It is only for tourism and events to burn mountains with animals and plants nesting within.

In the end, just before the event was to take place, Jeju City belatedly canceled the setting of fires. The direct reason for the cancellation was that a forest fire warning had been raised nationwide.

An official from Jeju City Tourism Promotion Division said, "Directly, as forest fire warnings were raised, all fire-related events were canceled, but citizens' complaints were also taken into account in the process."



People are holding flags for the Climate Peace March and protesting against the fire festival. Photo by Kim Soo-oh

2023 Korea Peace Appeal

The Korea Peace Appeal campaign held on- and offline meetings with Korean partner organizations in February, including in Gangjeong on Feb. 21, and with international partners on Mar. 30-31 to introduce campaign plans for 2023, the 70th anniversary of the armistice that paused but never fully ended the Korean War. In addition to signature collection, the campaign hopes that partners will plan peace actions in June and July across Korea and in 100 places around the world. See more at endthekoreanwar.net



On Mar. 10, college students entered just to the front of the ROK-US Combined Forces Command, located in Yongsan, Seoul. The students demanded an end to ROK-US war drills, and opposed the ROK-US-Japan trilateral alliance. Making a sit-in, they also demanded a meeting with Paul LaCamera, commander of the ROK-US Combined Forces Command. 18 students were eventually arrested but all were released by Mar. 13. In three days, about 13,600 citizens joined the petition for their release. Photo by Kim Young-ran, Jaju Siboo.



On Mar. 29, progressive organizations from across Korea travelled to Pohang to make visible their opposition at the site of the Ssangyong Exercise, an aggressive amphibious landing exercise in which the US and ROK marines and navies practiced invading North Korea. Photo by the Korea Peace Appeal Campaign



16 organizations including Amnesty International, BDS Korea and World Without War held a press conference on Mar. 28 to denounce Hyundai Construction Equipment for being complicit in Israeli war crimes, such as the forced displacement of Palestinians and the demolition of their houses and villages with Hyundai equipment.



On Mar. 30, sea-diving women in Woljeong-ri, Gujwa-eup, northeast of Jeju, slept overnight outside the Jeju Island government hall amid heavy rain. Most of them are 70-80 years old. The women oppose the enlargement of a wastewater treatment facility in their village, which threatens their health and livelihood and destroys the sea environment. Close to the facility, there is a UNESCO World Natural Heritage cave. However, the island government has never communicated responsibly with the locals. Meanwhile the construction companies have been threatening them with the possibility of fines and arrests. The other photo shows the sea-diving women's resistance when construction trucks arrived on Dec. 19, 2022. Photos by Oum Mun-hee and Hwang Yong-woon.



As every New Year's Day, the 100 Bows for Life and Peace took place at Metburi, where the first sun of the year rises right next to Beomseom (Tiger Island). Photo by Choi Hyea-yeong

Activists recovered their qualification as residents

On Oct. 27 last year, seven Gangjeong activists won a suit against the Gangjeong Village Association which has been compromising with the navy in recent years. In 2019, the village association revised the definition and qualification of village residents in its village code. By the revised clause, only people who had moved to the village before Jan. 2007 were qualified as residents. Since most activists moved to the village after 2010, the revision deprived them of their resident qualification. However, the court concluded that anyone is acknowledged as a resident by their move into a naturally formed village.

Place and Displace in Gangjeong Village

By Deulso

I came to learn from Gangjeong. Not just the brilliant individuals or the community, but also from the place itself; the village, the stones, the river, and the sea. But while I was here, something unexpected started to happen. Parts of Gangjeong began to disappear. In my six months in Gangjeong, six houses and the old Gangjeong Village Ceremonial Hall were demolished, leaving behind fields of rubble and hastily constructed parking lots.

Perhaps these seem like small erasures of a changing village, but they are in a history of displacement. During the Joseon period, exiles were sent from the peninsula and starving Jeju refugees were refused entry to “their” country. During the 4.3 uprising, anyone living on Halla Mountain was displaced “in order to mop up the anti-American extremists”; more than 130 villages were flattened. And in Gangjeong, villagers and jikimis [‘protectors’] were forced off Gureombi rock.

It wasn’t just that Gureombi was demolished. It was that its soft waves of stone and rough sea were replaced with square edged concrete. And what is a naval base but a parking lot for warships? In the development of militarism and tourism on Jeju, we see these same projects over and over again, as the places that made Jeju or Gangjeong special are replaced with widening roads and new tourist attractions that could have been built anywhere else. These pockets of anywhere and nowhere are “dis-places”. They are anti-locations, not meant for dwelling or growing, but as stopping points on the way to somewhere else.

In Gangjeong I learned the opposite. If we can preserve our environment and our communities as something other than eco-parks and tourist traps, it will be because we have preserved their place in the world. Places are where we rest, where we arrive, and most importantly, where we return. Gangjeong is full of these returns. The daily schedule of the 100 bows, the Peace and Life Mass, and the looping human chain sit beside the river, its water cycled through Hallasan and the sea, its tides flushing back and again, and an old friend has come back again, and a new face resolves to return again someday soon. If we are going to survive the relentless destructive power of militarism and capitalism, it will be, in part, because we have protected places like Gangjeong from the corrosive nowhere-ness of displacement by returning, by showing up every day, every month, every year. Of all the lessons I learned in Gangjeong, that is the one that I will keep in mind until, someday soon, I return.

Life in Gangjeong



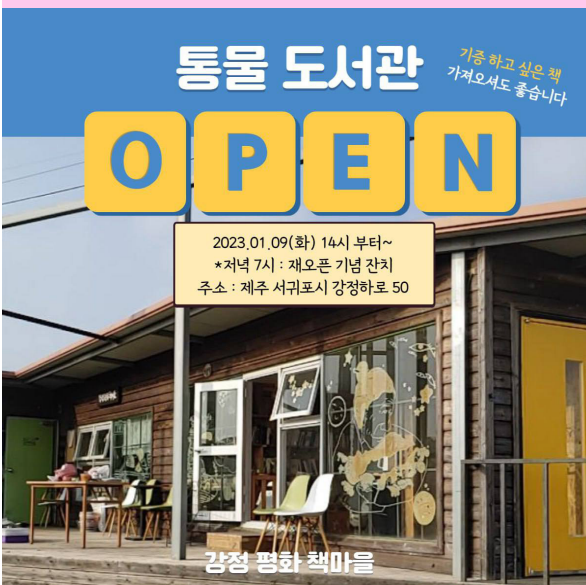
People gathered at Gonggan Cafe to celebrate the publication of an illustrated book "Along the Stream" on Feb. 7. The book by Jeong Jiwon tells the tale of Gangjeong Stream under the threat of over-development and militarization. Photo by Toran, drawing by Jeong Jiwon



Wearing traditional hanbok for the Lunar New Year holiday, Rang greeted Grandpa Jonghwan at Halmangmul community kitchen. Photo by Grace.



Jeong Seon-nyeo (Joan of Arc) and Father Mun Jeong-hyeon told Deulso that his yellow jacket made him look like the police. At Christmas Eve mass, Deulso presented a handmade flag that he made from that jacket. It reads "Swords into Plowshares." Photo by Yang Sang.



Gangjeong Tongmul Library was renovated by the Frontiers after the disbanding of "Friends of Gangjeong Book Village." A party was held on Jan. 9 to celebrate its renewal. Anyone can use it from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Photo by Choi Hyea-yeong



Pacchi productions produced 2 videos for Gureombi Remembrance Day, Mar. 7. This year's performance, "Seon-on(manifesto)" took place at the Metburi coast and the human chain, and included holding a fallen wood branch instead of a flag and shoveling the ground and planting oneself. (See youtube.com/@user-bc2tu1gm4l)

Lim Bora, Presente!

Lim Bora, pastor at Hyanglin Seomdol Church and long-time supporter of the Gangjeong peace movement, was an encouraging and faithful friend to the most vulnerable people in Korea, especially to sexual minorities and people in struggle sites like Gangjeong. She connected many people to Gangjeong through the Gangjeong Protestant Committee. Lim Bora passed away on Feb. 4 and her friends in Gangjeong gathered to share memories and encourage each other on Feb. 11. Hundreds of people gathered at a Seoul memorial service on Mar. 11.

We remember the victims and survivors of the Feb. 6 earthquake in Turkey and Syria

Stop the War in Ukraine. Peace in Ukraine!



Join us 5000km Peace Sailing Project Jun. 1 ~ Sept. 2023

The East China Sea, surrounded by Korea, China, Taiwan and Japan, is a sea of conflict and border disputes. Jeju Island, the Okinawa Islands, and Taiwan are connected by this sea and are historically, culturally, and politically similar. Residents who oppose the military bases on these islands have long been part of the anti-base movement. We are about to set sail in June with the hope of driving out war, military training, and bases from this sea and creating a sea of coexistence and peace where humanity and all sea creatures can live together.

<https://linktr.ee/peacean>

instagram. @peacean.forall

How You Can Join

1. Write a letter to the South Korean government to close the Jeju base and to the US government to stop the use of it.
2. Stay updated by joining our Facebook groups and following us on twitter.
3. Organize a solidarity event (concert, movie screening, protest, etc...)
4. Then share about it on social media.
5. Visit Gangjeong!
6. 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

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**The Jeju Grand March
for Life and Peace was
paused for three years
due to the coronavirus,
but will start again this
year, late July/early
August. Stay tuned for
more details.**



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