The UN Symposium on Human Rights and Jeju 4·3

Jeju 4·3, Truth, Responsibility, and Reconciliation

3:00-6:00pm, June 20, 2019, UNHQ (CR11)

Background

70 years ago, the peaceful Jeju Island off the southern tip of Korea turned into a site of tragedy. Amidst the turbulence of the Cold War and national division, numerous people suffered from illegitimate arrest and imprisonment, torture, execution, arson and forced evacuation due to the ideological confrontation and the resulting violent madness. This time period is now referred to as Jeju 4·3 (in Korean sa-sam), “an incident in which the lives of inhabitants were sacrificed in the riot that arose on April 3, 1948, starting from March 1, 1947 and in the process of armed conflicts and suppression thereof that took place in Jeju-do until September 21, 1954(From Article 2 of the Special Act on Discovering the Truth of the Jeju 4·3 Incident and the Restoration of Honor of Victims in Republic of Korea).”

The tragedy of Jeju 4·3 was once considered a communist riot, confined to the ideological distortion and suppression. The victims that have been officially recognized are tallied at 14,363, and with the estimated ones added, the total casualties would reach nearly 30,000. This figure equals a tenth of the entire Jeju Island population back then.

However, the democratization of South Korea finally returned the due recognition to the tragedy. In 2000, the Kim Dae-jung administration enacted the Special Act on Discovering the Truth of the Jeju 4·3 Incident and the Restoration of Honor of Victims, based on which the truth investigation revealed the wrongdoings by government authorities. In 2003, President Roh Moo-hyun expressed an official apology to the Jeju 4·3 victims. And in 2014, April 3rd was designated a national memorial day under the Park Geun-hye administration. This whole process was the driving force that established Jeju as an “Island of World Peace.”

Marking the 70th anniversary last year, Jeju 4·3 gained more attention from inside and outside Korea. Pope Francis delivered a message of “healing and reconciliation” to the Jeju 4·3 victims and their families. President Moon Jae-in officially attended the Jeju 4·3
Memorial Service and expressed a second presidential apology. He declared, “the residents of Jeju have overcome the tragedy created by ideology through reconciliation and forgiveness ... This will lead us to peace and coexistence on the Korean Peninsula and turn into a message of peace for the whole of humanity...” Through the long tunnel of distortion and suppression, Jeju 4·3 is laid under the bright light. It is now recognized as a proud historic event of the Republic of Korea. In the near future when peace and reconciliation is settled between the two Koreas, Jeju 4·3 will be finally recognized as the history of the entire Korean peninsula.

The residents of Jeju have put into practice reconciliation and forgiveness in a true sense. The victims and the perpetrators together declared reconciliation and mutually beneficial prosperity. Peace, forgiveness, reconciliation and mutually beneficial prosperity have become the essence of “Jeju Spirit”. There is no doubt that the said elements of Jeju Spirit are based on truth and justice. Above all, seeking the truth and reconciliation will help promote the fundamentals of human rights and ethics, as well as the universal value of humanity.

It is now time for Jeju 4·3 to take a new step toward the world by discussing justice, responsibility and reconciliation. To this end, we are hosting an international symposium on Jeju 4·3 at the U.N. headquarters. Around the world, we witness massacres and human rights violations similar to Jeju 4·3 are repeatedly committed. It is our wish that Jeju and its spirit will help the world prevent such a tragedy from happening again. Hopefully, Jeju 4·3 will serve as a stepping stone for world peace and reconciliation.

**Event Details**

- **Objectives**
  - To create a global model for resolving human rights violation cases by publicly discussing the issues of human rights, responsibilities and reconciliation regarding Jeju 4·3
  - To create international consensus, future support and solidarity on further truth-seeking process of Jeju 4·3 by sharing victim’s testimony and researchers’ discussion

- **When:** Thursday, June 20, 2019, 3:00-6:00 pm.
- **Where:** UN Headquarters, Conference Room 11
- **Host:** The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations
- **Co-organizers**
  - Jeju Special Self-governing Province
  - The National Assembly of Republic of Korea Office of Kang Changil
  - Jeju 4·3 Peace Foundation
- **RSVP:** by June 13 at korea.un_3c@mofa.go.kr

**Reception** to follow at 6:30 pm at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea
Program

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<td>2:30-3:00 pm</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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<td>3:00-3:30 pm</td>
<td>Opening Remarks &amp; Video Screening</td>
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<td>3:30-4:00 pm</td>
<td><strong>Keynote Speech</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Peter Kang U-il (Bishop of Cheju, former Chair of the Catholic Bishop’s Conference of Korea)</td>
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<td>4:00-6:00 pm</td>
<td><strong>Panel Discussion</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Speakers</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Bruce Cumings (Gustavus F. and Ann M. Swift Distinguished Service Professor of History and the College, University of Chicago)&lt;br&gt;• John Merrill (Former chief of the Northeast Asia Division in the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research)&lt;br&gt;• Charles Hanley (Former Deputy managing editor of the AP, Pulitzer Prize winner)&lt;br&gt;• Tae-Ung Baik (Professor at William S. Richardson School of Law, University of Hawaii)&lt;br&gt;• Ko Wansoon (Bereaved Family of Jeju 4·3, Bukchon-ri(village))&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Moderator</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Park Myung Lim (Professor, Yonsei University)</td>
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<td>6:30 pm -</td>
<td><strong>Reception</strong> (at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea)</td>
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**Endorsed Organizations**

**In U.S.** : Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations(CONGO). General Board of Church & Society, The United Methodist Church(GBCS/UMC), Korea Art Forum, Korean Council for Reconciliation and Cooperation of Great NY, Korean National Unification Advisory Council New York Chapter, MinKwon Center for Community Action, National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA(NCCC/USA), Presbyterian Church U.S.A., Presbyterian Peace Network for Korea(PPNK), The May 18 Memorial Foundation of USA, The International Center for Transitional Justice(ICTJ), The Jejudo Asso. of America(NY), The Korea Society, U.S. Minjoo Forum


**In Jeju** : Association for the Bereaved Families of the 4.3 Victims, Memorial Committee for the Jeju 4·3 Uprising and Massacre, Jeju 4·3 Research Institute, Jeju Dark Tours, Jeju Islanders' Solidarity for Investigation and Restoration of Jeju 4·3, Jeju Special Self-governing Province Council, Jeju Special Self-governing Province Office of Education, World Environment and Island Institute at Jeju National University