Thirty women peace makers from 15 countries made a historic crossing of the two-mile wide De-Militarized Zone (DMZ) from North to South Korea on May 24th, International Women’s Day for Peace and Disarmament. We called global attention to the need for a peace treaty to finally end the Korean War; to reunite families long separated by Korea’s division; and to assure women’s leadership in the peace process. Because it is illegal and physically impossible for most citizens of North and South Korea to cross the DMZ, we did so on their behalf in solidarity with their desire for peace and reunification of Korea.

The delegation included prominent women leaders, including two Nobel Peace Laureates, Mairead Maguire of Northern Ireland and Leymah Gbowee of Liberia, feminist author and activist Gloria Steinem, human rights lawyers, professors, faith leaders, humanitarian aid workers, filmmakers, artists, and a retired US Army Colonel.

We held parallel events with North and South Korean women, including two peace symposiums in Pyongyang and Seoul where we heard Korean women’s experiences and women in the international delegation shared how they have mobilized women to end conflict in their communities. We participated in peace walks in Pyongyang and Kaesong (DPRK), and Paju (ROK) – together with thousands of Korean women.

**SHARING WHAT WE LEARNED**

Several members of the international delegation have made presentations in major cities, including in Berkeley, Boston, Eugene, Honolulu, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Tokyo and Washington, DC. We’ve had report backs in bookstores such as Busboys and Poets (Washington, DC), community spaces, feminist organizations like the Global Fund for Women (San Francisco), and on college campuses (including Boston College, Scripps, Wellesley, and the University of Colorado).

On July 21, 2015, two Korean War veterans—Congressmen John Conyers and Charles Rangel—co-sponsored a Congressional briefing with Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez. Congresswoman Barbara Lee and Congressmen Charles Rangel both applauded us for our courageous efforts despite powerful detractors advocating for continued isolation, militarism, and war. Approximately 100 people attended, including staffers from Congressional offices, Asia Pacific and Foreign Relations committees, and the State Department.

On July 23, 2015, the Ambassador of Lichtenstein co-sponsored a United Nations panel with the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom that was moderated by Covnairs, an advisor to Women Cross DMZ. Christine Ahn, Asyoung Choi, Hyun-Kyung Chung and Ann Wright spoke about our trip, which was very well received.

**SUCCESSES**

The Women’s DMZ Peace Walk generated global media attention and an outpouring of support from world leaders, including Nobel Peace Laureates, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, former US President Jimmy Carter, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Dalai Lama, authors Alice Walker, Maxine Hong Kingston, and Naomi Klein, actor Robert Redford, physician Deepak Chopra, and former UN Ambassador and US Governor Bill Richardson.

In North Korea we established working relationships with the Overseas Korean Compatriots, Korean Committee for Solidarity with World Peoples and the Democratic Women’s Union of Korea. In South Korea, we partnered with local women’s groups such as the Gyeonggi Women’s Network, Korea Women’s Political Solidarity, and Hoppia, as well as several leading national women’s organizations, including Women Making Peace, YWCA of Korea, Korean Women’s Association United, and Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan.

According to our South Korean partners, the solidarity of the international delegation helped renew debate and open political space in South Korea, including putting into public discourse the legal mandate of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 to ensure that women are involved at all levels of every peace process. They recently wrote: “This was the first time for women to lead the two NK/SK governments, UN Command and US embassy to engage in a civil society-led peacemaking event in the Korean peninsula... It has generated abundant discourse on the NK/SK division and women’s role in bridging this division within local/national/global domains... As time goes by, local women’s groups appreciate this event more and express their strong wish to continue the peace walk.”

**OUR NEXT STEPS**

1. **Deepening the Dialogue with Korean Women**

   In early 2016, we are planning a Women’s Peace Summit in Indonesia of Korean women from North and South with members of the international delegation to generate a women-centered vision of peace and reunification, and to assure women’s leadership in the peace process. This group will present the outcomes of our discussion at the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) meeting in New York City in March 2016.

2. **US and Transnational Campaigns**

   The US is a major signatory to the Armistice Agreement that halted the fighting but did not formally end the Korean War, so it is critical to continue public education in the United States. We will host a series of webinars with scholars, activists and policy experts on topics ranging from land mines to human rights to military games to be shared on YouTube.

   **Advocate for HR 384**

   WCDMZ will work with a national coalition to advocate for HR 384 introduced by the three remaining veterans of the Korean War: Charles Rangel (D-NY), John Conyers (D-MI), and Sam Johnson (R-TX). This bill calls “upon the international community to support the vision of a unified Korea and assist efforts to promote international peace and security, denuclearization, economic prosperity, human rights, and the rule of law both on the Korean peninsula and elsewhere.”

   **2020 Peace Treaty Campaign**

   The diplomatic victories with Iran and Cuba make the political conditions ripe to advocate for engagement and ultimately peace with North Korea. WCDMZ will help anchor a new US coalition to achieve a Peace Treaty by 2020. This will bring together multiple generations of Korean Americans, faith-based leaders, Korea policy experts and scholars, humanitarian aid organizations operating in DPRK, peace and anti-war organizations, and Asia Pacific solidarity groups.

   **De-Mine the DMZ**

   The dangerous crisis that broke out last August between North and South Korea stemmed from a landmine explosion in the DMZ that wounded two South Korean soldiers. WCDMZ is exploring how we can advocate for de-mining the DMZ as a crucial next step towards peace and the reunification of Korea.

   **3. Political Education**

   WCDMZ members will continue to undertake speaking engagements across the country. We will collaborate with film director Dawn Borshay Liem to coordinate screenings and educational events once the independent documentary Crossings is finished.

**Calling for Women’s Leadership in the Korean Peace Process**
SUPPORT US

Our women’s peace walk was a first step, and we need your support to continue working together for peace in Korea. You can support us by making a donation, joining our mailing list, inviting us to speak to your community and participating in campaigns for peace in Korea.

Make a tax-deductible contribution to:
Peace Development Fund
PO BOX 40250
San Francisco, CA, U.S.A.
www.peacedevelopmentfund.org

* Specify gift to WomenCrossDMZ

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Steering Committee
Christine Ahn, Executive Director, Honolulu
Aiyoungh Choi, Nonprofit Consultant, New York City
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Women Call for a Korean Peace Treaty

Women Cross DMZ

Ending War. Reunite families.

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info@womencrossdmz.org
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