

## **SPARK's activities to achieve denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and a world without nuclear weapons**

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I'm In-ah Kim, the leader of the SPARK youth planning team.

Marking the 75th anniversary of the US bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki this year, I'm honored to speak at the 2020 World Conference against A and H Bombs which desire for a nuclear-free world.

Koreans comprise the second largest number of nuclear bomb victims. Around 70,000~100,000 Koreans were exposed to radiation and more than 50,000 of them passed away.

Most of Korean atomic bomb victims were forcefully mobilized by Japanese imperialism. A majority of Korean survivors returned to Korea after Korean liberation from Japan only to live in pain and poverty and suffer from social discrimination and a lack of national attention.

While 75 years have passed since the US bombing, the government of ROK(Republic of Korea) has not carried out even a clear factual survey on the Korean atomic bomb victims. The average age of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation of atomic bomb victims is 84. Every year more than 100 victims pass away having never been relieved of their suffering. We could no longer just wait for the government to conduct a survey.

So we thought about what we could do. The youth members of SPARK realized the importance and necessity of the atomic bomb victims' testimony, and we started an oral collection project.

While collecting oral statements of the victims, I felt that their very existence is testimony to the horror of the Japanese empire's colonial rule and nuclear weapons.

They say neither the US which dropped the atomic bomb nor Japan which forced mobilization, have admitted their responsibility, apologized or compensated.

I met a lot of victims who cry out in tears, saying, "The damage caused by nuclear weapons should end with us."

As I listened to these testimonies, I felt deeply that nuclear weapons should never be used again under any circumstances, and that all nuclear weapons on Earth should be abolished.

But the Korean Peninsula, where I live, is a place where the threat of nuclear war exists and has the highest likelihood of nuclear war in the world.

In fact, in 2017, the US and DPRK(Democratic People's Republic of Korea) heightened the threat of nuclear war, saying that the nuclear button on its desk is larger than the other's.

Fortunately, the leaders of the ROK and DPRK/ the US and DPRK met the following year and vowed

to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula and establish a permanent peace regime. Therefore, the whole people expected a peaceful Korean Peninsula without nuclear weapons.

However, the historic 2018 Panmunjom/ Pyongyang Declaration, Singapore Statement has not been implemented. Inter-Korean/ US-DPRK talks on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the conclusion of a peace treaty have been suspended. I'm concerned that US-DPRK relations may go back to nuclear confrontation.

I believe that no matter what happens, the nuclear war crisis should not raise as it did in 2017. I believe that if the US scraps its hostile policy toward DPRK and signs a peace treaty, DPRK can also dismantle its nuclear weapons and the Korean Peninsula can be free from the threat of nuclear war.

Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula does not mean DPRK's nuclear dismantlement alone. ROK can achieve real denuclearization only by scrapping the US nuclear umbrella policy.

The denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the conclusion of a peace treaty are important keys that can advance peace in East Asia.

Japanese Prime Minister Abe relies on the US-Japan alliance, cites collective self-defense, and also seeks military intervention in the event of an emergency on the Korean Peninsula.

If the nuclear issue of DPRK is peacefully resolved, the US-Japan alliance, which is being strengthened in the name of responding to nuclear threat posed by DPRK, will be unnecessary.

The denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the conclusion of a peace treaty make unnecessary the alliance, a potential war community, prevent the threat of war and establish peace permanently.

The denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the conclusion of a peace treaty are the primary tasks of SPARK. We ask for your continued interest and support to SPARK's activities.

We've already learned from the atomic bomb victims that nuclear weapons which instantly destroy all societies, nature, and even the lives of individuals, and cause inherited genetic pain, should never be used again.

On July 7, 2017, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapon (TPNW) was adopted and is about to enter into force. I believe it is essential for the Korean government to join the TPNW to prevent the threat and use of nuclear weapons in the event of another confrontation and war crisis on the Korean Peninsula. Therefore, SPARK is conducting an international signature campaign to urge the governments to join the TPNW.

We will continue to strive to achieve denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. If that happens, it will be a great step toward a world without nuclear weapons.

Only the day that nuclear weapons are abolished, real peace will begin.

Join us in our move toward a world without nuclear weapons. Thank you.