



NEWS RELEASE

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Media Liaisons:

Christine Hong: 510-421-6472

Monica Kim: 734-478-0105

endingkoreanwar@gmail.com

Activists Take Over National Mall, Call for End to Korean War

WASHINGTON, DC – On Friday, April 5, 2024, in an effort to shine light on eight decades of the unending Korean War and the genocidal brutality of the 1948 Jeju 4.3 uprising and massacre, the Ending the Korean War Teaching Collective (EKW), in collaboration with ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism), Nodutdol, and the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM), calls attention to what the war memorials on the National Mall in Washington, DC, overlook: the profound human toll of U.S. imperialist wars and foreign policy around the globe.

“Few Americans are aware the Korean War is not over, yet its irresolution negatively impacts the lives of millions of people on the Korean peninsula, in the diaspora, and throughout Asia and the Pacific,” collective member Christine Hong, director of the Center for Racial Justice at UC Santa Cruz, stated. “We are converging on April 5 to transform the National Mall, which serves as a site for imperialist memory, into a space of grieving for the four million Koreans killed in the Korean War and for all the world’s people whose lives have been affected by the Korean War. We understand the war to be an active structure of violence that reaches across the globe.”

The political action, titled “Disrupting Permanent War: An Anti-Imperialist Detour of the National Mall,” invites the public to participate in a walking tour of World War II, Vietnam, Martin Luther King Jr., and Korean War memorials. “Political education is necessary because the Korean War is absent from American textbooks and classrooms, and current stories about the war are deeply distorted,” stated Monica Kim, an EKW collective member and historian at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. “People do not realize how central the Korean War has been to facilitating U.S. warfare in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The scale and depth of the destruction, both past and present, remain unknown to the general public.”

Against the perception that the Korean War ended in 1953, the action highlights the war’s status as one of the U.S.’s longest-running permanent wars. In place of a U.S.-centric memorialization of the war, the “detour” will provide participants with critical perspectives on the state memory enshrined at the Korean War Memorial. Although the July 27, 1953 armistice recommended that the United States, North Korea, and China swiftly negotiate a permanent peace agreement, the Korean War persists today in Korea’s ongoing division, the protracted separation of Korean

families, the continued U.S. military occupation of South Korea, the U.S.-led sanctions regime against North Korea, and the unabating militarization of the larger region.

Even fewer people are aware that the United States authored a genocide in Korea well before 1950. This political action takes place on the anniversary of the Jeju 4.3 uprising and massacre. On April 3, 1948, in the same historical window that fascist gangs were laying waste to historical Palestine, purging Palestinians from their own land, the Jeju islanders rose up against the U.S. occupation and imperialist division of the Korean peninsula. Having experienced Japanese imperialism for nearly four decades, they demanded Korea's sovereignty from colonial rule. The U.S. military and South Korean government, including fascist paramilitaries, retaliated in full force killing an estimated 30,000 civilians in Jeju and perpetrating a scorched-earth campaign. "This memory is still alive in the present. This is why we Koreans who are fighting for our own self-determination and permanent peace have no choice but to fully support the Palestinian struggle for their own sovereignty," said Juyeon Rhee, Nodutdol board member.

As the first hot war of the Cold War, the Korean War inaugurated an imperialist infrastructure of violence that the U.S. imposed across the world following World War II: the military-industrial complex, the national security state, the U.S. empire of bases, and the imperial university. This imperialist infrastructure reverberated in other places spanning regions such as South Korea, Vietnam, Guåhan, Hawai'i, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Palestine. "Ending the Korean War will have far-reaching consequences that include but extend beyond the Korean people. We who live in the belly of the beast have an obligation to fight alongside the world's peoples to bring this unjust war to an end," said Brian Becker, National Coordinator of ANSWER.

The itinerary will start at the World War II Memorial, on Friday, April 5, 2024 at 12pm EST and will end around 3pm EST at the Korean War Memorial.