

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
Ligue Internationale de Femmes pour la Paix et la Liberté
Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad

Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC, UNCTAD and UNESCO; Special Consultative Relations with FAO, ILO, and UNICEF.



WILPF Statement on Jeju Island and the US Naval Base

8 June 2011

In the village of Ganjeong on Jeju Island, off the coast of South Korea, local people are struggling to prevent the construction of a new US naval base. The base is intended to service US Navy Aegis destroyers that hold Raytheon's missile "defence" systems. South Korean peace activists argue that the base will build-up offensive military systems in North East Asia, undermining security and prompting military responses from China and North Korea. Villagers also [oppose the base](#) because of the loss of farm land, where they have grown rice, garlic, tangerines, and more on the fertile land. The base will [destroy the local environment](#), including coral reefs named by UNESCO as key environmental treasures. The Navy intends to pour concrete over the rocks and marine life to make wharfs for the Aegis destroyers.

At a village meeting in 2007, the vast majority of villagers voted to oppose the base. They have launched lawsuits against the construction; they have held protests and engaged in civil disobedience against the construction efforts; their encampments have been raided and protestors have been injured and arrested; and some have even engaged in hunger strikes. Yang Yoon-Mo was [arrested](#) on 6 April 2011 for locking himself under earth moving equipment intended to begin construction. He began a hunger strike that lasted for 60 days, until Bishop Kang U-il of Jeju Catholic Diocese convinced him to stop and go on struggling in solidarity with the other activists. Sung-Hee Choi, who was [arrested](#) on 19 May for holding a sign that read "Do not touch any stone or flower," went on hunger strike until [Yang was released from jail on 1 June](#). She will go on trial on 10 June.

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) expresses solidarity with the people of Ganjeong in their struggle to stop the construction of the naval base. [Military bases](#) are a visible structure of militarism and imperialism; they waste economic resources of the "home" country and destroy environmental, social, political, and financial resources of the "host" country; and they undermine the lives and livelihoods of local people. They also undermine more constructive forms international cooperation and engagement and perpetuate militarism and military spending.

WILPF International calls upon members in all of its National Sections to contact the Korean Defence Attaché assigned to Washington, DC at [defenattache\[at\]yahoo.com](mailto:defenattache[at]yahoo.com), the South Korean Embassy in Washington at +1.202.939.5600, and/or the South Korean and US embassy in one's own country to call for the immediate cessation of construction of this base.

WILPF International also encourages its members to follow developments on the island through the [Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space blog](#) and the [Save Prof Yang and Sung Hee-Choi of Jeju Island Facebook page](#) and to support the trip of Global Network board member MacGregor Eddy to Jeju Island to bring international messages of solidarity to the people of Gangjeong village. MacGregor Eddy (who is also a WILPF member) from Salinas, California has been a leader in the international effort to build support for the people on Jeju Island. Please consider making a [tax deductible donation](#) to the Global Network to help fund her trip.