

June 28, 2018

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland
Minister of Foreign Affairs
125 Sussex Drive, Ottawa ON K1A 0G2

Dear Minister Freeland,

We are writing to you as members of the Women, Peace and Security Network-Canada and others working on the implementation of 'Women, Peace and Security' agenda, in relation to your recent statement on the United States and North Korea summit.

Despite the historic diplomatic breakthrough presented by the June 12 summit, we are concerned by Canada's focus on maintaining sanctions, in lieu of support for an inclusive dialogue and women's active participation in resolving and ending the Korean War.

Canada's National Action Plan lists "the meaningful participation of women, women' organizations and networks in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict state-building" as a top objective, and the US-Korea summit is a unique opportunity to implement this transformative approach.

Sustainable and lasting peace will not take root without the work and participation of all Korean citizens, in particular women. Women's peace movements in Korea have played a vital role in laying the ground for peace and the inclusion of their voices is central to stability of the region.

As Canada's National Action Plan recognizes, women play a vital role in building consensus during and following peace processes and have been proven to broaden security conversations to reflect the needs of the community.

Now is the time to put UN Security Council Resolution 1325, Canada's Feminist Foreign Policy and Canada's 'Women, Peace and Security' agenda into practice. Canada can lead in ensuring that Korean women —who have been frontrunners in the call for peace for decades— not only have a place at the table, but a real voice when decisions are made on the future of their communities.

As individuals and organizations committed to a Peace Treaty to formally end the Korean War, we urge Canada to ease restrictions for engagement, and seize this critical window to support people-to-people diplomacy, including the full and meaningful participation of women, at all stages.

Canada is known as the 'honest broker' in international relations, a leader in peace negotiations and often the only feminist voice in diplomatic exchanges. This rational, honest voice is urgently needed for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

In this fragile but potent context, it is maximum engagement, not 'maximum pressure' which will ensure this peace process prevails.

Canada has an important role to play in securing a denuclearized, peaceful Korean Peninsula and can lead the way by supporting women's participation and positive diplomatic engagement. We urge you to support Korean women's participation and to ensure Canada's representatives speak at every opportunity and do whatever is possible to facilitate their participation throughout the peace process. We would like to request a meeting with you to further discuss how we might implement our Women Peace and Security National Action Plan in the context of the Korean peace process.

Sincerely,

Liz Bernstein, Executive Director, Nobel Women's Initiative
Sarah Tuckey, PhD Candidate, University of Ottawa and Steering Committee Member, WPSN-C
Patti Talbot, Team Leader, Global Partnerships, The United Church of Canada
Debra V. Wilson, Research Fellow at University of Manitoba, member - WPSN-C
Susan Bazilli, Director, International Women's Rights Project (IWRP)
Mary Scott, Institute for International Women's Rights – Manitoba
Rehana Hashmi, Program Coordinator, Sisters Trust Canada, member - WSPN-C
Jay Scott (Ms.), member - WPSN-C
Dr. Kate Frieson, Associate Faculty, MA Program Human Security and Peacebuilding | Justice Studies Program, Royal Roads University, member – WSPN-C
Jo Rodrigues, Gender Consultant, Trainer & Coach, Steering Committee member, WPSN-C
Carole Doucet, Senior Gender Equality Advisor, member - WSPN-C
Thora Broughton, member - WPSN-C
Sophia Papastavrou, Gender Consultant and PhD candidate University of Toronto, member, WPSN-C
Janis Alton, Co-Chair, Canadian Voice of Women for Peace, member-WSPN-C
Georgina Bencsik, Certified Presenter and Climate Leader (Champion) for Al Gore's Climate Reality, member WPSN-C
The MATCH International Women's Fund
Ricardo Magan, Acting Executive Director, Oxfam Canada
Rasha Jarhum, Director/ Co-Founder of Peace Track Initiative, member, WSPN-C
Kristine St-Pierre, Steering Committee Member, WPSN-C and Director, The WPS Group
Nahid Azad, MD, FRCPC, CCPE, Professor of Medicine, member - WPSN-C