



NARPI Response to Artillery Exchange between North and South Korea

November 23, 2010

In response to the artillery exchange which took place over the West maritime border of North and South Korea, in the afternoon of November 23, 2010, the Northeast Asia Regional Peacebuilding Institute members wish to express our concerns as follows:

1. NARPI members first wish to extend our deepest condolences to the communities, families and friends of those who lost their lives unnecessarily due to this event. The lives of these young people were precious and we acknowledge the emotional toll this loss brings to the involved communities. We also express deep regret and sadness towards those who have sustained injuries and those people whose property was damaged in the artillery exchange.

2. This incident reminds us that the present situation of military confrontation will continue to bring unnecessary deaths. We ask for a ceasefire and for no further military action from all sides in order to prevent further loss of life and injuries. In place of violent military action, we ask that the focus of leaders and military personnel would be directed to peaceful resolution through dialogue. We also express deep concern over continued military drills, including U.S.-joint drills, near the border or the Northern Limit Line (NLL), which only escalate the tensions in North and South Korea and the region.

3. We must also acknowledge the ongoing fragility of the situation between North and South Korea and the region as whole, and the fear and concern that is experienced by civilians throughout Northeast Asia. The impacts of this artillery exchange and other past conflicts between North and South Korea are not only felt by these two countries but indeed by Northeast Asia as a whole. Therefore we call upon other civil society groups in Northeast Asia and the international community to raise their voices in concern over this and to advocate for the use of non-violent, non-military approaches.

4. This event indicates more than ever the need for the people of Northeast Asia to find realistic and concrete solutions to the cold war structure, which was created by the world powers against the will of the Korean people, and the 55-year military conflict within the Korean peninsula. We are convinced that in our region, capacity building for nonviolence through peacebuilding institutes such as NARPI, instead of ongoing reliance on military strength and solutions, is absolutely vital in our present reality. Therefore, as a civil society peace organization in Northeast Asia, we call for the cooperation of all groups toward the transformation of the Korean peninsula and Northeast Asia into a peaceful region.

-Northeast Asia Regional Peacebuilding Institute