

제국의

재

*Sanctions of
Empire:*

A Nodutdol Zine



October 20, 2020

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Nodutdol 노뚝돌

NODUTDOL IS COMPRISED OF DIASPORA KOREANS AND COMRADES BASED IN LE NAFÉ HOKING / NEW YORK. MADE UP OF FIRST THROUGH FOURTH GENERATION KOREANS, WE HAVE WORKED SINCE 1999 TO BRIDGE DIVISIONS CREATED BY WAR, NATION, GENDER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, CLASS AND GENERATION AMONG KOREANS AND TO EMPOWER OUR COMMUNITY TO ADDRESS INJUSTICES WE AND OTHER PEOPLE OF COLOR FACE HERE AND ABROAD. WE MOBILIZE OUR MEMBERSHIP TO ADVANCE PEACE, DECOLONIZATION AND SELF-DETERMINATION IN KOREA AND TURTLE ISLAND / NORTH AMERICA. WE USE POLITICAL EDUCATION, BUILD COLLECTIVE ACTION AND PRACTICE PRINCIPLED SOLIDARITY TO ACHIEVE OUR MISSION.

Glossary

노퍽돌 / no-dut-dol /:

1. stepping stone
2. home, opening, entryway
3. bridging
4. love and longing in separation
5. reunification

제재 / jeh-jeh / sanctions

An economic ban, block, embargo, or trade restriction placed on governments, entities, or specific individuals when they do not comply with US or UN foreign policies.

스마트 제재 / se-ma-te jeh-jeh / ‘smart sanctions’

Also known as ‘targeted sanctions’, the UN alleges that the smart sanctions are directed at individuals, companies and organizations, or restrict trade with key commodities and accordingly more efficiently accomplish the intended purposes. However, in reality we see that all sanctions end up harming the entire country and its civilians.

수출입 규제 / su-chul-eeb-gyu-jae / embargo

An embargo is the partial or complete prohibition of commerce and trade with a particular country or a group of countries.

초과규정준수 / 과다 규정준수 / cho-gwa-gyu-jung-jun-soo / gwa-da-gyu-jung-juhn-su / overcompliance

Excessive caution or the tendency of firms to avoid sanctioned countries for fear of repercussions even when it may be within the firm’s rights to interact with the country.

테러 지원국 / te-ruh-ji-won-guk / State Sponsors of Terrorism List

A list of countries that the US State Department alleges have “repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism”. The list currently includes four countries: the DPRK, Iran, Sudan, and Syria.

국제 연합 안전 보장 이사회 / guk-je yun-hap ahn-juhn bo-jang ee-sa-hwe / United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

The UN’s most powerful body, responsible for enacting sanctions. The 5 permanent members of the UNSC are the United States, United Kingdom, Russia, France, and China.

제국주의 / jeh-guk-ju-ee / imperialism

The monopoly stage of capitalism whereby the concentration of production and capital are developed to such a stage that it creates international monopolies that seize territorial divisions of the world.

식민주의 / sik-min-joo-wee / colonialism

A practice of domination; the subjugation of one people to another. Full or partial political control over another country, occupying it and exploiting it economically.

헤게모니 / hegemony

The domination of a ruling state over subordinate states by intervention and indirect threats of rule including military invasion, occupation, and annexation.

제국 / jeh-guk / empire

A state that administers and protects international monopolies and global territories; a state that maintains political control over the decisions of other states.

군사 점령 / gun-sa jum-ryung / military occupation

The forceful and provisional control over a territory by the military, without a claim of formal sovereignty.

군국화 / guhn-guk-hwa / militarization

A process of organizing an area, country, or organization with armed forces and weaponry.

미국 간섭주의 / mi-guk gan-sub-ju-wee / US interventionism

A US policy of interfering in another nation’s affairs through a combination of political, military, economic, cultural, and humanitarian forces.

미국 예외주의 / mi-guk yeh-weh-juu-ee / US exceptionalism
The belief that the US's values, political system, and history are unique and worthy of universal admiration.

탈식민지화 / tal-sik-min-ji-hwa / decolonization
A process of undoing colonialism by dismantling its political institutions, economic relations, and cultural and ideological legacy.

자주 / ja-ju / self-determination
The process by which a country or people determine their own statehood, political allegiances, and government.

주체 / juche
Self-reliance or self-determination in the Korean language. Juche is also a political ideology formulated by Kim Il-sung. It is the founding ideology of North Korea. Juche emphasizes working within the actual conditions of one's country to creatively solve problems that emerge in revolution without compromising national independence.

폐지 / pye-ji / abolition
The act of wholly eliminating a system, practice, or institution. In the context of the US, usually referring to the abolition of the current-day US police system and prison industrial complex.

디아스포라 / diaspora
A group of people who have been forced or have chosen to leave their homeland to settle in other lands, and preserve and celebrate the culture and traditions of their homeland.

조선 / Joseon
Old name for Korea. North Korea still refers to itself as Joseon, and calls South Korea 남조선 (nam-jo-seon), while South Korea calls North Korea 북한 (buk-han).

한국전쟁 / han-guk-juhn-jehng / Korean War:
Refers to the war in Korea during June 25, 1950 to July 27, 1953. In the US, it is also known as the Forgotten War. In South Korea, it is called the Korean War; in North Korea, it is called the Fatherland Liberation War. To this day, we are experiencing the aftermaths of this Korean War.

통일 / tong-il / reunification
In our context, it also means the reconciliation of past conflicts and hostile relations; creating a new culture that is expansive enough to encompass diverse experiences and identities within what it means to be Korean.

휴전 / hyoo-juhn / armistice
An agreement made in a war to stop fighting for a certain time. For the Korean War, on July 27, 1953, US, China and North Korea signed onto the Armistice Agreement.

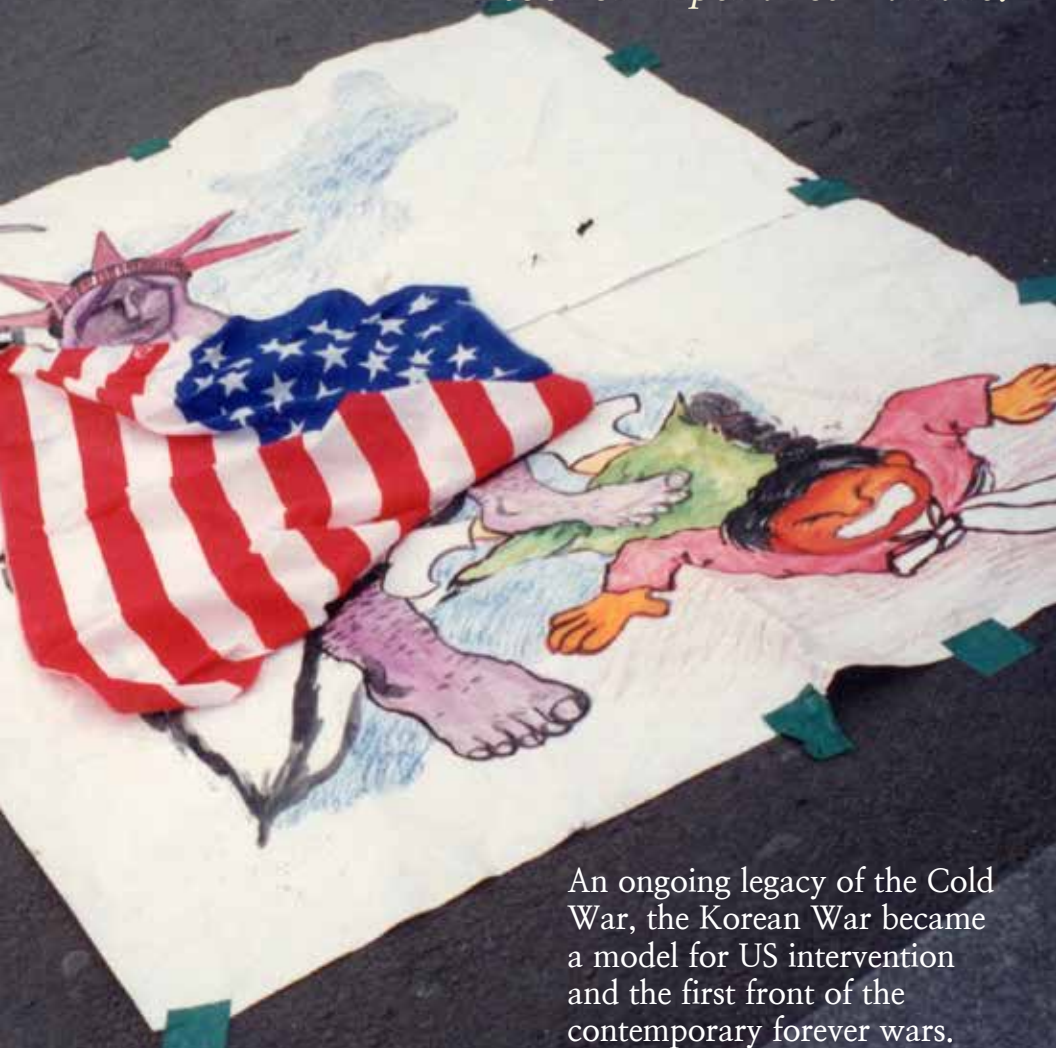
비핵화 / bee-hek-hwa / denuclearization
The act of reducing or eliminating nuclear weapons.



Introduction

*Withholding, barring, restricting
And then, near-total embargo*

*This is the reality of US and UN sanctions.
A tool of imperialist warfare.*



An ongoing legacy of the Cold War, the Korean War became a model for US intervention and the first front of the contemporary forever wars.

Restrictions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is a legacy of an ongoing war. 2020 marks the seventieth year since the official beginning of the Korean War.

In its claim to protect the Asia Pacific from North Korea's nuclear capacities, the US has installed weapons on the peninsula's southern mountains, aimed at deterring the enemy. Casting North Korea as the evil and hostile threat justifies US intervention in peninsular politics. In the state of unended war, military escalation has been normalized.

As part of military escalation, trade restrictions and sanctions have also been normalized. Under the auspices of the 1917 Trading with the Enemy Act, the US executive has the power to restrict any and all trade between the US and its enemies in times of war. In this context of ongoing war, trade with North Korea has been restricted since 1950, the official beginning of the Korean War. North Koreans have lived in a regime of restrictions, embargoes, and scarcities, imposed and enforced by a variety of sanctions from the United States and the United Nations. These sanctions had targeted the military and elite, but then in 2016, sanctions became sectoral, targeting entire industries. But any and all sanctions always affect civilians. From North Korea to Cuba to Iran to Venezuela, sanctions kill. This zine explores the geopolitical and human impact of sanctions. We argue that ...

... sanctions are tools of political violence.



The pandemic has pulled the curtain on US empire. As the US became an early skeptic of the pandemic's reach, denying PPE and devaluing the lives of essential workers, the US confirmed its hypocrisy – again. This denial was mapped onto the world, as sanctions denied medical equipment and protective gear to people around the globe, endangering their lives in the shadow of empire. Sanctions are particularly violent during a pandemic, depriving the most vulnerable of life-saving equipment and PPE. Dismissing the realities of the pandemic, imperial powers continue its crusade for dominance. As the US is unraveling in the face of the pandemic, it is using its imperial might to grip the world. Sanctions are one of its tools to control, devalue, and endanger life.

But the uprisings for Black liberation continue to reveal the lies of US exceptionalism. We are in revolution. In the face of the mass black death, the pandemic has redirected our energies, to reveal the US to itself. As calls for police and prison abolition are entering mainstream debates, we aim to provide an internationalist framework to also call for the abolition of sanctions. Sanctions, alongside policing, militarization and warfare, are the US imperial tools of control, targeting those who have posed a threat to hegemonic power. We see our mission alongside struggles for decolonization and self-determination, contributing to a global force against US imperialism.

What are sanctions?

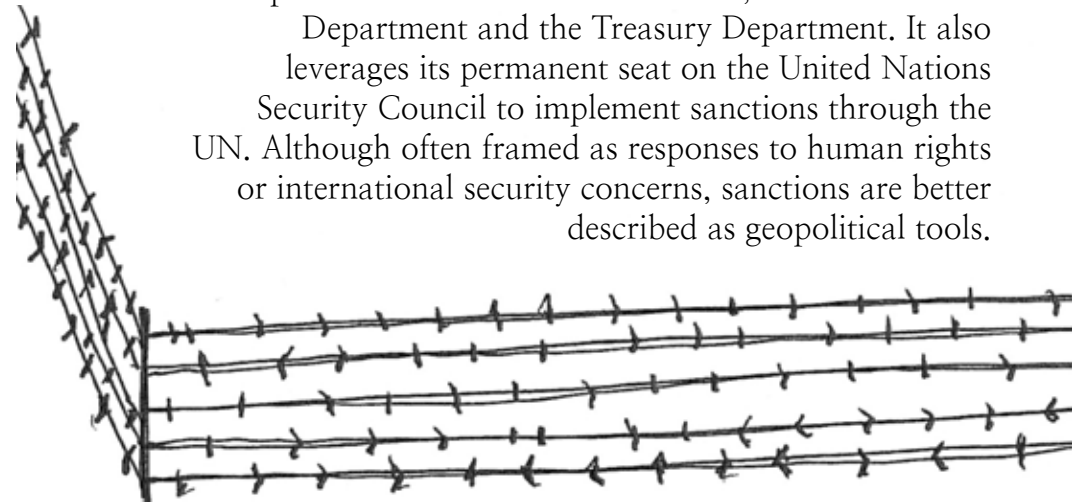
Economic sanctions are measures taken by countries against governments, entities, or individuals by commercial and financial means.

This can include anything from asset freezes and property seizures to travel bans and total trade embargoes. According to [Sanctions Kill](#), an international campaign to stop US sanctions, the US has [8,000](#) active sanctions measures that impact people in 39 countries.



The U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), the agency responsible for enforcing US sanctions, currently [lists](#) sanctions against *Belarus, Burundi, Central African Republic, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Nicaragua, Russia, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, the Crimea region of Ukraine, Venezuela, Yemen, former Yugoslavia, and Zimbabwe*. Some countries targeted by sanctions through other US government agencies, like the State Department, are not on this list.

The US implements sanctions through congressional legislation, presidential executive orders, and various departments in the executive branch, such as the State Department and the Treasury Department. It also leverages its permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council to implement sanctions through the UN. Although often framed as responses to human rights or international security concerns, sanctions are better described as geopolitical tools.



The first of many generations of US sanctions against the DPRK began shortly after the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, which threatened the US-backed Rhee Syngman government in the south. Since the beginning of the DPRK nuclear tests in 2003, the Bush and Obama administrations respectively lifted some sanctions to facilitate negotiations around DPRK denuclearization, and then reinstated them when the negotiations failed to produce the results desired by the US. The sanctions regime reimplemented by the Obama administration targeted three fourths of all DPRK exports, and instituted a labyrinthine network of financial limitations that have functionally cut the DPRK off from accessing international trade or foreign investment.

The administrative hurdles placed on international aid organizations and outright bans on items containing metal instituted by Obama's US and UN sanctions have had devastating effects on the DPRK agricultural, medical, and sanitation systems. In 2018, 3,968 people in the DPRK, who were mostly children under the age of 5, died as a result

of shortages and delays to UN aid programs caused by sanctions. The Trump administration has elaborated on DPRK sanctions by returning the DPRK to the State Sponsors of Terrorism list, targeting the DPRK's access to international shipping, instituting a travel ban, and adding new measures targeting a number of DPRK industries.



US economic sanctions' capacity for destruction is best understood through imperialism. Lenin defines imperialism as the monopoly stage of capitalism, characterized by the concentration of production and centralization of finance capital, and the economic, political, and territorial partition of the world among the great capitalist powers. Contemporary imperialism differs somewhat from the imperialism Lenin described in the early 20th century, most significantly by the emergence of a unipolar imperialist system under US hegemony. [Economist Ramaa Vasudevan](#) notes that in the present context, the United States singlehandedly dominates the imperialist system through the power of the US dollar, which serves as the world's reserve and international trade currency. The dollar accounts for [60%](#) of global foreign exchange reserves and [88%](#) of all foreign exchange trading.

This pervasive dependence on the US dollar affects the value of virtually all global currencies and makes most financial institutions subject to US law.

As the only country with jurisdiction over the world's currency, the US has immense powers to dictate the behavior of nations and global financial institutions. This is one way US sanctions become globally enforced. A good example is the case of HSBC, a British bank that paid [\\$875 million in penalties](#) in 2012 for violating US sanctions against Cuba, Libya, Myanmar, and Sudan. The reason a non-US bank is subject to US law is that the entity does business in the US and, more importantly, conducts international transactions in dollars. Even if a country targeted by sanctions doesn't have direct trade with the US, the banks they rely on usually do. Sanctioned countries can be further impacted by [overcompliance](#), or the tendency of firms to avoid sanctioned countries for fear of repercussions even when it may be within the firm's rights to interact with the country.

Treasury Secretary [Steven Mnuchin's](#) recent admission that sanctions are an "alternative to world military conflicts" illustrates how sanctions are a method of economic coercion used to uphold the US-dominated imperialist system. The DPRK is subject to especially severe sanctions reserved only for governments whose existence fundamentally threatens US geopolitical interests: Cuba, Iran, Venezuela, and Syria, among others. The US professes concerns for human rights in its implementation of sanctions, yet the tremendous death toll of sanctions themselves reveal these claims to be little more than an alibi for the US' true aims: unfettered access to global markets and resources, underpinned by planetary militarization and occupation.

This piece is an adapted excerpt from the article, "The Real Damage of U.S. Sanctions," which originally appeared in an issue of Out of Print Magazine.

Timeline of US & UN Sanctions on North Korea

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T

1950: Korean War officially begins. US imposes an export ban on the DPRK and forbids financial transactions by, or on behalf of, the DPRK, including transactions for travel.

1955: Through the International Traffic in Arms Regulations, the US denies the DPRK "licenses, other approvals, exports and imports of defense articles and defense services."

1975: US prohibits transactions related to agricultural products that contain raw goods originating in the DPRK.

1988: DPRK is added to US State Dept.'s State Sponsors of Terrorism list.

1989: US eases regulations to allow export of "commercially-supplied goods intended to meet basic human needs", travel transactions for special activities, and ease in flow of information materials (such as CDs).

1992: US eases regulations to allow tele-communication between US and DPRK. However, the US imposes "missile sanctions" for proliferation activities

1995: US eases regulations to allow unlimited travel-related transactions, establishment of news organization offices, transactions related to light-water reactor technology, and importation of magnesite and magnesia.

1996: US eases regulations to allow humanitarian donations in response to the Arduous March, referring to the floods and famine in the DPRK. However, the US prohibits the DPRK and Iran of any imports or exports to missile-related sectors. Pre-existing bans make this move largely symbolic.

1999: Pres. Clinton announces the most significant easing of trade and travel restrictions since their imposition in 1950.

2000-2003: US eases trade and travel sanctions. However, the US imposes sanctions on the DPRK government and firm, Changgwang Sinyong Corporation, for its unspecified missile-related transfers to Iran, as well as missile technology to Yemen and Pakistan.

2005: US issues Executive Order 13382 denying "Weapons of Mass Destruction" proliferators and members of their support networks access to the US financial and commercial systems.

2006: UN Security Council issues Resolution 1695 and Resolution 1718 demanding that DPRK suspend missile activities and prohibiting export of some military supplies and luxury goods.

2008: US State Dept. removes the DPRK from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list. However, the US issues Executive Order 13466 Continuing sanction restrictions.

2009: UN Security Council issues Resolution 1874 intensifying ship inspection, destroying cargo suspected of being related to nuclear weapons activity, and creating financial restrictions.

2010: US issues Executive Order 13551 blocking the assets of entities determined to have supported DPRK's WMD programs, arms sales, illicit activities, or luxury goods imports.

2011: US issues Executive Order 13570 reaffirming a ban on the import of goods, services, and technologies from North Korea.

2013: UN Security Council issues Resolution 2087 and Resolution 2094 clarifying right to seize and destroy cargo suspected of heading to or from North Korea for purposes of military research and development and restricting money transfers to shut North Korea out of the international financial system.

2015: US issues Executive Order 13687 expanding the scope that the US may impose sanctions designations against North Korean entities and individuals. It was issued concurrently with designations of 10 North Korean officials and 3 North Korean entities, shortly after the U.S. accused North Korea of responsibility for the Sony Pictures hack.

2016:

US issues Executive Order 13722 blocking property of the DPRK and the Workers Party and prohibiting certain financial transactions with DPRK.

UN Security Council issues Resolution 2270 banning the export of gold, vanadium, titanium, rare earth metals, as well as coal and iron with an exemption for transactions that were purely for "livelihood purposes."

UN Security Council issues Resolution 2321 capping DPRK coal exports and banned exports of copper, nickel, zinc, silver.

TIMELINE
TIMELINE
TIMELINE

The preceding timeline

details a chronology of sanctions imposed on the DPRK by both the United States and the United Nations.

The events can be understood by examining the US State Department's on-again-off-again approach to including the DPRK on the State Sponsors of Terrorism list. Described by former State Department official Joseph DeThomas as "more of an art than a science", designation to the list is a key strategy for the US to continue to justify and fully institutionalize brutal sanctions. Meanwhile, the DPRK's temporary removal from the list is part of the same calculated effort towards cornering the DPRK into negotiations around denuclearization in exchange for the US easing their imposed sanctions.

As you follow our timeline, you'll notice the many generations of coercive tactics used to discipline and batter the DPRK under US imperialism.

A Korean War Story

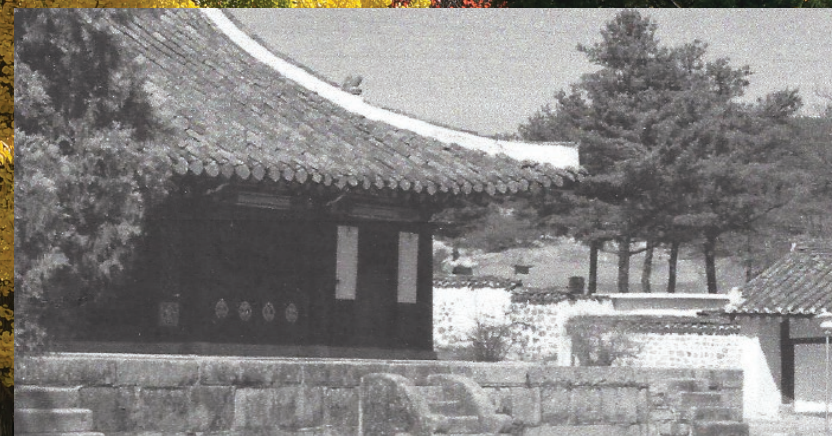
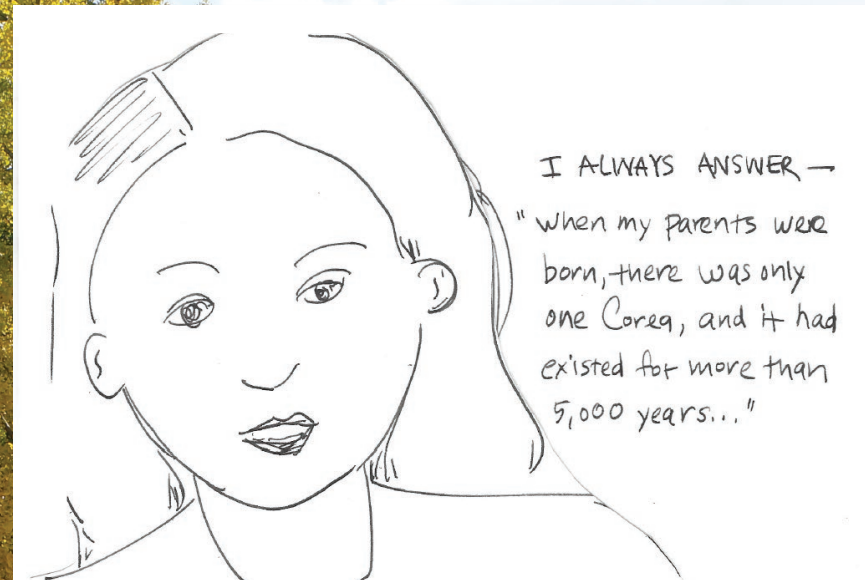


MY FATHER RECEIVED A STUDENT VISA TO STUDY AT BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY IN PROVO, UTAH.

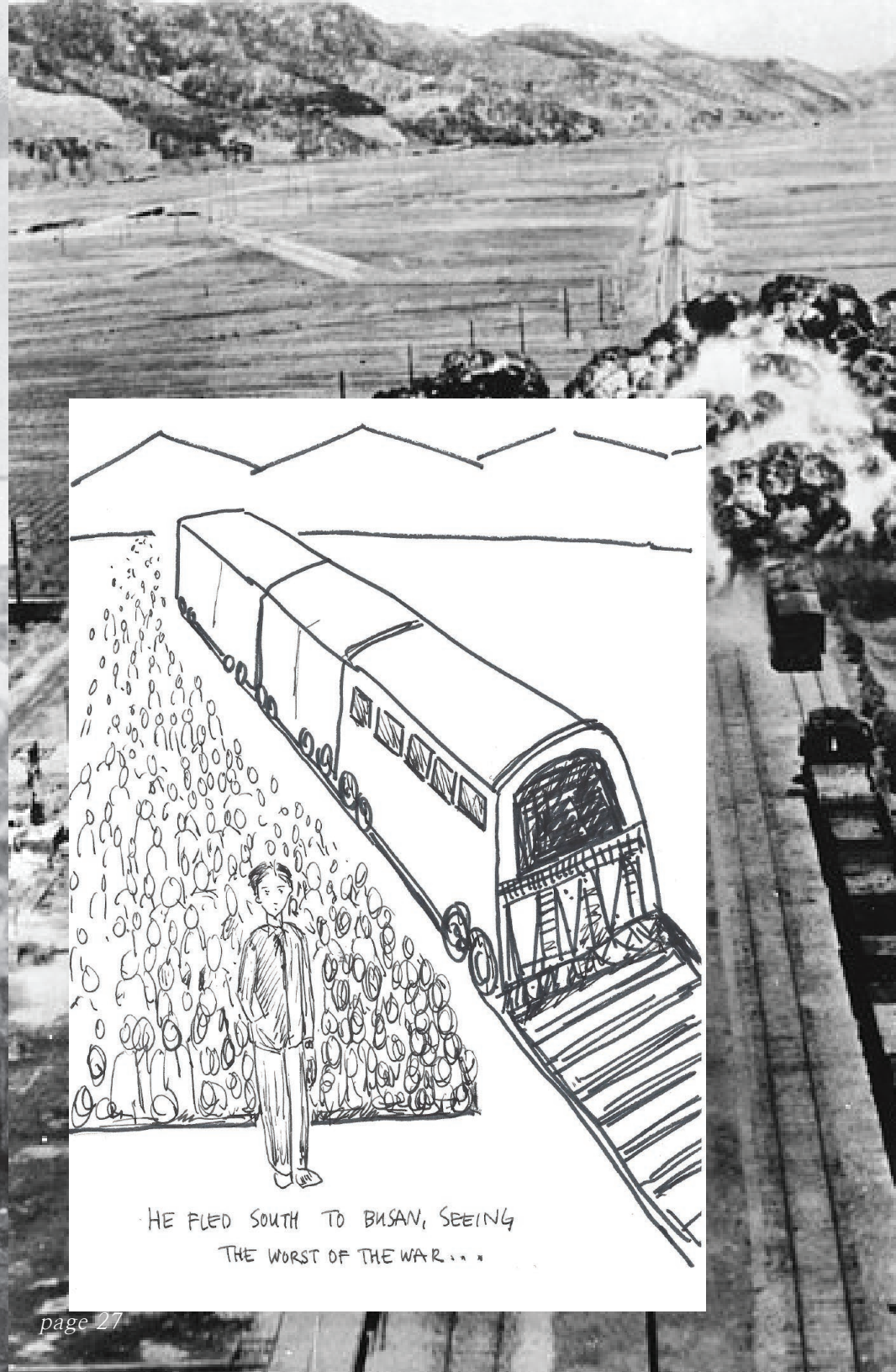




WHEN PEOPLE LEARN MY PARENTS ARE FROM KOREA, THEY ALWAYS ASK, "SOUTH KOREA? OR NORTH KOREA?"

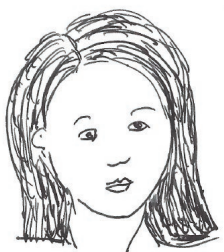


MY FATHER WAS BORN IN KAESONG, THE CAPITAL OF KOREA DURING THE TAEBONG KINGDOM (b.901) AND THE SUBSEQUENT GORYEO DYNASTY (918-1392).

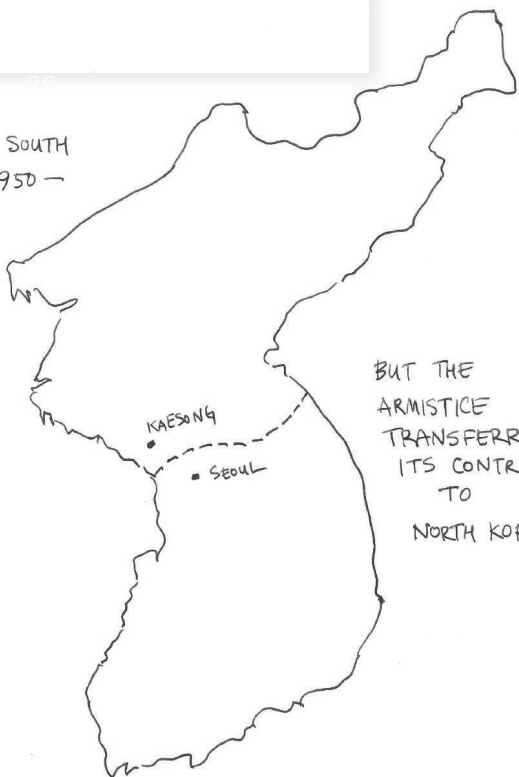




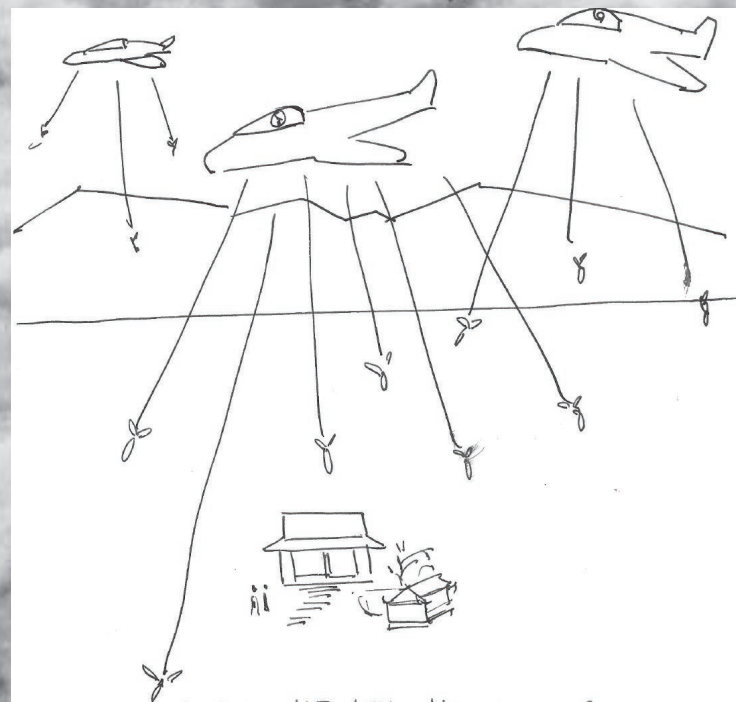
WHEN THE ARMISTICE WAS
SIGNED IN 1953, MY
FATHER WAS NEVER ABLE
TO RETURN HOME...



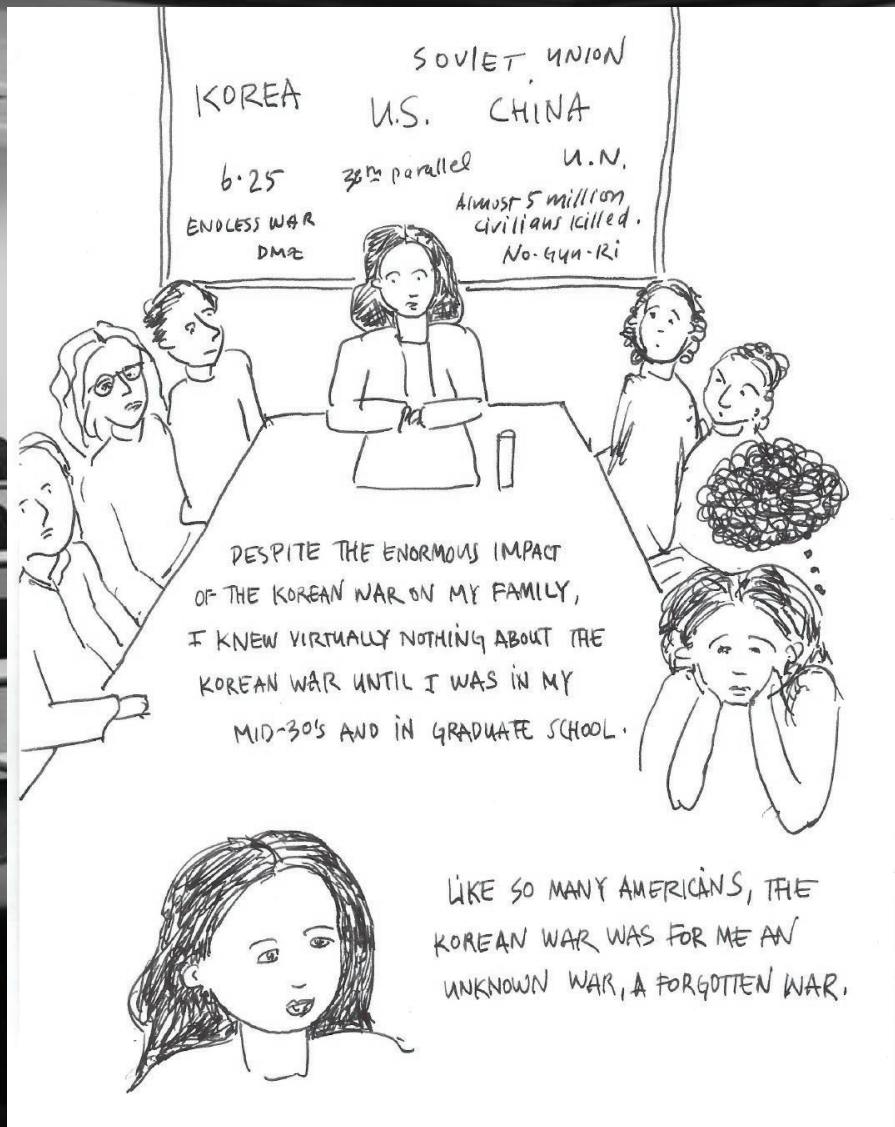
KAESONG WAS PART OF SOUTH
KOREA FROM 1945 TO 1950 -



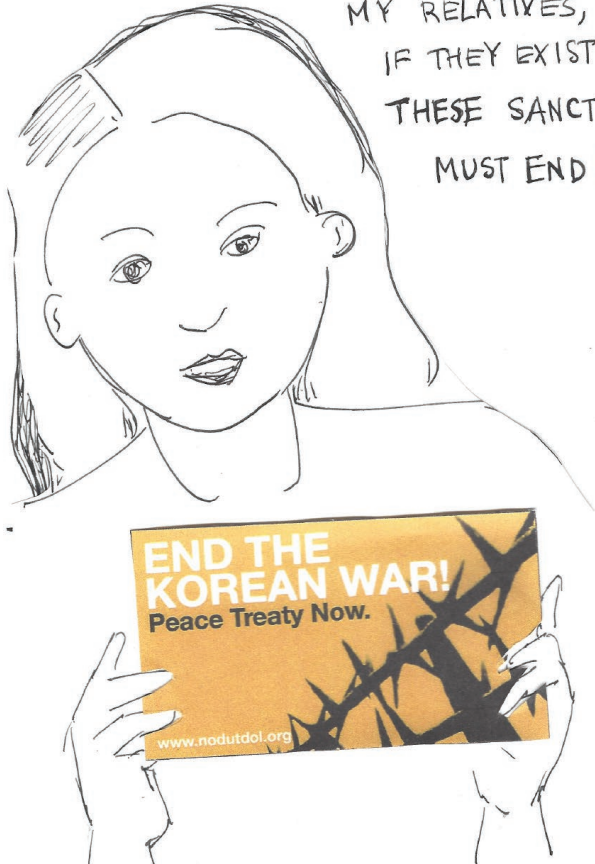
BUT THE
ARMISTICE
TRANSFERRED
ITS CONTROL
TO
NORTH KOREA.



LATER, HE LEARNED THE U.S.
HAD BOMBED HIS HOME, KILLING HIS MOTHER
AND BROTHER, MY GRANDMOTHER AND
MY UNCLE...



I WANT TO SEE WHERE MY FATHER
WAS BORN & RAISED, TO MEET
MY RELATIVES,
IF THEY EXIST -
THESE SANCTIONS
MUST END!



조선은 하나다!

Joseon is one!



The Human Costs and Gendered Impacts of Sanctions on DPRK

Excerpts from Korea Peace Now's 2019 report



1. The Humanitarian Impact of Sanctions

There are urgent and long-standing unmet humanitarian needs in the DPRK.

According to the 2019 Needs and Priorities Report by the UN Resident Coordinator for the DPRK:

“An estimated 11 million men, women, and children lack sufficient nutritious food, clean drinking water or access to basic services like health and sanitation” – affecting over 40% of the population.

Although sanctions state that they are not intended to have adverse humanitarian consequences or interfere with the work of humanitarian agencies, evidence shows that they have such consequences in practice. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP) reported, for instance, that sanctions directly and indirectly affected agricultural production, most obviously through “restrictions on the importation of certain items that are necessary for agricultural production, in particular fuel, machinery and spare parts for equipment.” Meanwhile, the UN Resident Coordinator found that “humanitarian agencies continue to face serious unintended consequences on their programmes, such as lack of funding, the absence of a banking channel for humanitarian transfers and challenges to the delivery of humanitarian supplies.”

2. *The Development Impact of Sanctions*

Beyond their adverse humanitarian consequences, sanctions have also negatively impacted the country's economic development.

In a sense, this impact is self-evident from the increasingly punitive nature of the sanctions. UN sanctions against the DPRK were at first essentially obstructive, designed simply to deny the country any support in the pursuit of its nuclear, missile, and WMD programmes. In 2006, UN resolutions 1695 and 1718 required UN Member States to prevent the transfer to the DPRK of any related items, materials, goods, and technology. Since then, however, the UNSC has increased pressure on the DPRK by widening the scope of the sanctions.

The first generation of sanctions largely took the form of “smart” sanctions. The term refers to targeted measures designed to avoid the sort of adverse consequences for the population that had arisen in the context of the comprehensive trade embargo on Iraq in the 1990s. In the North Korean case, these measures included travel bans and asset freezes of key individuals or companies, a ban on luxury goods, and a ban on military goods.

From 2016 onwards, however, the implications of the sanctions for North Korea's economic development have become much more pronounced. The relevant UNSC resolutions adopted measures aimed at an almost total ban on any trade, investment, and financial transactions involving the DPRK. While there is contradictory evidence as to how hard this second generation of sanctions is hitting the domestic economy, there has been a sizable decline in the DPRK's external trade...

3. The Gendered Impact of Sanctions

Sanctions significantly degrade women's economic status and threaten their social rights, particularly in developing countries. While men also suffer economically under sanctions, women are typically already at an economic disadvantage apart from sanctions due to pre-existing patterns of discrimination, and thus tend to experience disproportional effects as a result of foreign economic restrictions imposed on their countries.



Seemingly “nonviolent” sanctions also have differential consequences for women's security as well as their social and political rights. While a state may increase its repression under sanctions and target men more directly with coercion, sanctions frequently produce greater social disorder and violence in society, and this increases gendered violence and discrimination. States under sanctions become less likely to enforce women's rights and, as women's socioeconomic status deteriorates, women are less able to protect their physical security and participate in public life.

Many of these dynamics appear to be unfolding in the DPRK, particularly as sanctions have become more expansive in recent years. Women's livelihoods are undermined by sanctions targeting the industries in which they work and reducing the activity of the markets in which they trade. Their dignity is under threat in this climate of instability and economic insecurity. Their very lives are at risk as they struggle to ensure food security for themselves and their families, and the transfer of critical medicines and medical equipment face delays.



Imperialist rhetoric on sanctions

BINGO

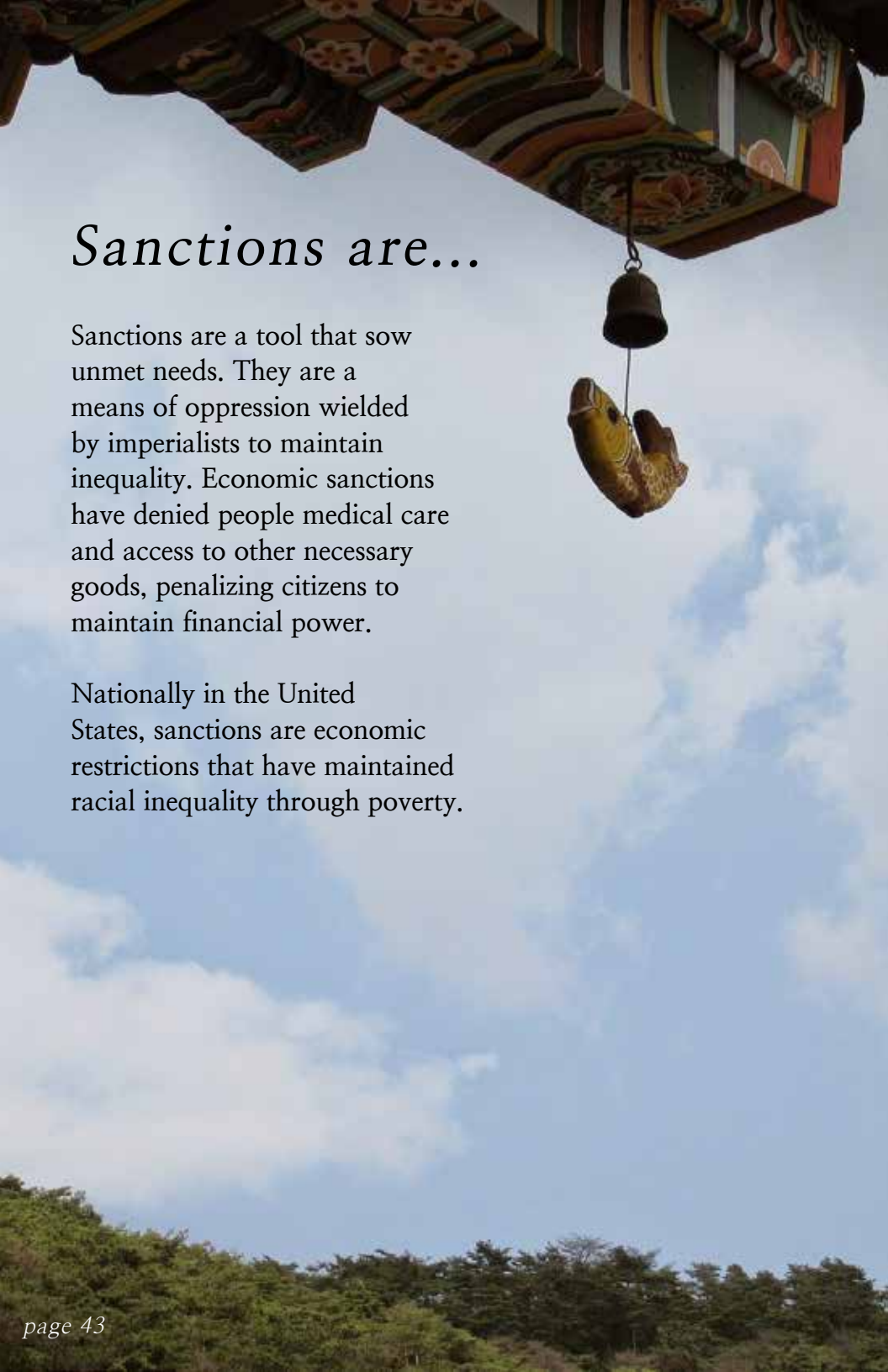
1 TO 15	16 TO 30	31 TO 45	46 TO 60	61 TO 75
"Sanctions promote peace"	"The ruling elite hoards luxuries"	"Sanctions aren't violent"	"State sponsored terrorism"	"Illegal smuggling"
"They're not like us"	"They shouldn't have nuclear capabilities"	"Human rights violations"	"Dictators"	"They're starving their own people"
"They're undermining democracy"	"We can target the regime without harming the people"	FREE X SPACE	"Sanctions are the only way to pressure them"	"Illegal drug trade"
"Money laundering"	"Brain-washed citizens"	"They don't respond to negotiation"	"The oppressed people are grateful for us"	"They overspend on the military"
"They're incapable of governing themselves"	"They're a threat to the world!"	"The regime is about to collapse"	"We're being lawful"	"They're unpredictable"



Sanctions are...

Sanctions are a tool that sow unmet needs. They are a means of oppression wielded by imperialists to maintain inequality. Economic sanctions have denied people medical care and access to other necessary goods, penalizing citizens to maintain financial power.

Nationally in the United States, sanctions are economic restrictions that have maintained racial inequality through poverty.



Sanctions turn brothers into enemies

Between Seoul and Pyongyang, a distance of only a few hours' drive
Lies a separation marked by the blood of millions and the grief of a people

Our closest relatives: fishermen on the banks of the Taedong River,
couples in love in Wonsan, poets in Sinujiu, Buddhist monks in the
Kumgang Mountains, industrial workers in Kaesong, tour guides
on Mt Paektu, teenagers killing time in Pyongyang, mothers, best
friends, class clowns, dreamers

Rendered into caricatures by propaganda, distorted into beings who
are less than human

Their radiant vitality is dimmed by sanctions, the endless drone of
war buzzing endlessly on

Let it be heard:

Tear down the barbed wire biting its ugly fangs across Korea

Tear down the sanctions that suffocate so many in their barbaric grip

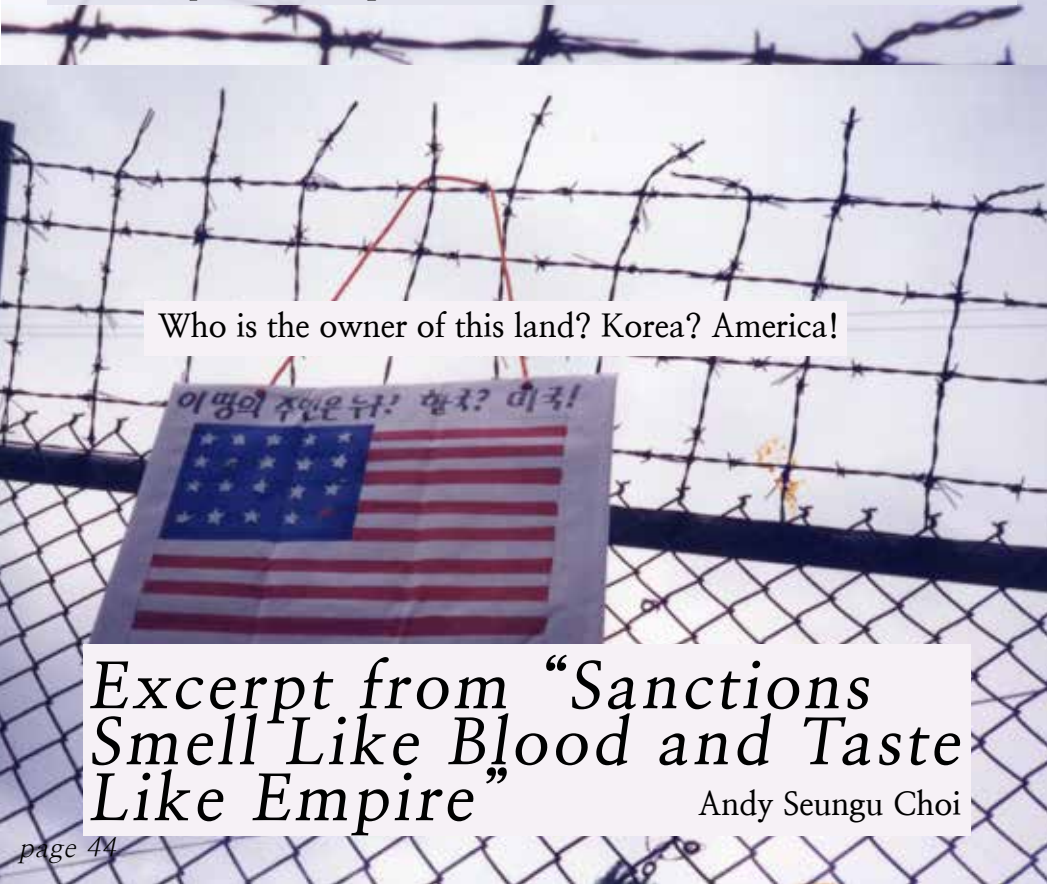
Let the requiem for empire be heard far and wide

Looking towards reunification Tongil 통일

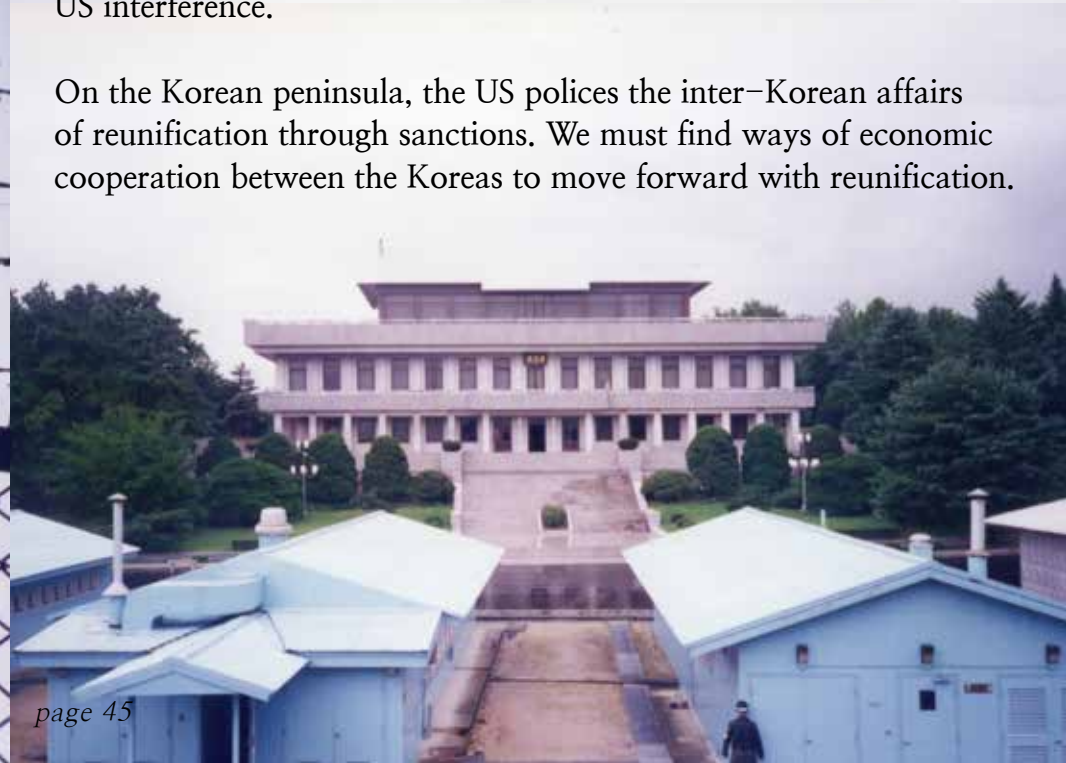
In April 2018, South and North Korean leaders signed the historic Panmunjeom Declaration, committing to officially ending the war. Efforts to end the war and pursue reunification include economic cooperation between the two Koreas.

Yet, the US consistently interferes in inter-Korean affairs by citing sanctions. Only a few months after the Korean leaders signed the Panmunjeom Declaration, the US-led UN Command which oversees the DMZ, [blocked development of the inter-Korean railway](#). In January 2020, South Korean President Moon Jae-In expressed interest in developing tourism to North Korea, but the US ambassador Harry Harris blocked this effort. Harris claimed that “independent” [tourism plans would have to undergo US consultation](#). He emphasized that the items inside South Korean tourists' luggage could violate sanctions, demonstrating the extent of US interference.

On the Korean peninsula, the US polices the inter-Korean affairs of reunification through sanctions. We must find ways of economic cooperation between the Koreas to move forward with reunification.



Excerpt from “Sanctions
Smell Like Blood and Taste
Like Empire”
Andy Seungu Choi





Let's give our descendants a unified homeland!

Due to U.S. economic sanctions on the DPRK, such as their textile production, a smuggling network of goods and off sourcing of North Korean labor by other countries (i.e. China, the U.K., U.S.) is widely used. Ultimately, this illegal movement of goods exploits the country's economic vulnerabilities.

One way the country has fought these sanctions is by producing its own line of school backpacks to provide for students and children. The school backpack is an example of DPRK's efforts to secure a self-reliant economic system.

Although DPRK still heavily relies on outside aid from South Korea, China, and Russia, producing its own goods for the North Korean people is a way to tackle the restrictions of U.S. sanctions.

DPRK "Juche" school backpack,

Julie Yunhee Moon
문윤희



Resilience & Self-determination under sanctions

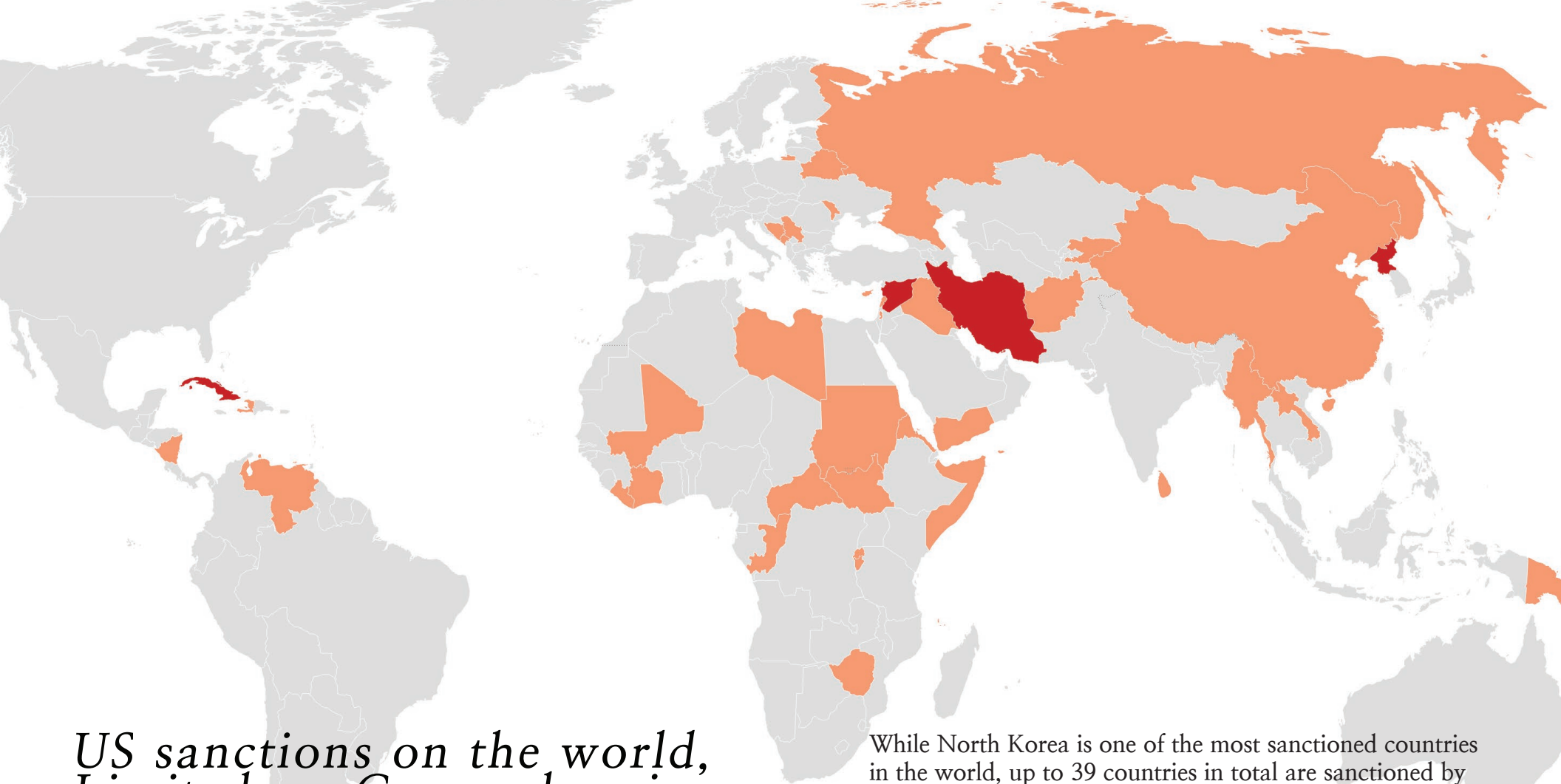
행복한 개일을 위한 길에

“We are fully capable of living under any sanctions, so there is no reason for us to be driven by the U.S.”

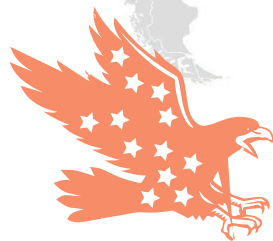
“the sufferings imposed upon us by the U.S. have now turned into the hatred for the U.S., and this hatred would drive us to break through the blockade of persistent sanctions led by the U.S. and to live our own way by our own efforts.”

– [Kim Yo Jong](#), First Vice Department Director of Central Committee of Workers’ Party of Korea, in response to being called a [“rogue state”](#) by US Defense Secretary





US sanctions on the world, Limited vs. Comprehensive



*Limited US
sanctions*



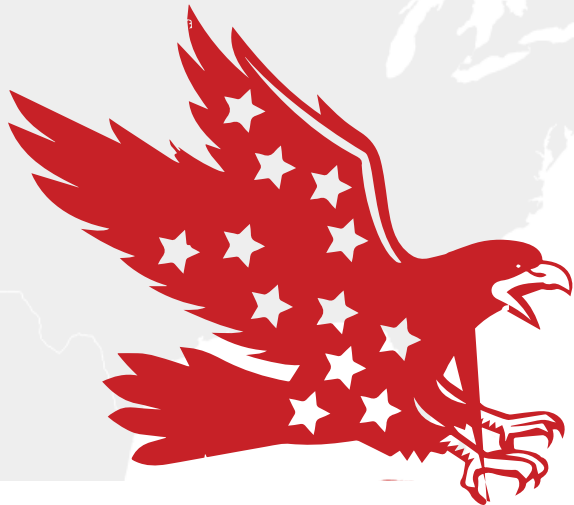
*Comprehensive
US sanctions*

While North Korea is one of the most sanctioned countries in the world, up to 39 countries in total are sanctioned by the United States in some form, according to the Sanctions Kill campaign. Sanctions can vary quite widely, from asset seizures to total trade embargoes affecting entire nations. The United States classifies its own sanctions as “limited” or “comprehensive” based on their range of intended impacts. However, these designations should be taken with a grain of salt. Countries like Zimbabwe have argued that there is nothing “limited” about the effects of U.S. sanctions on their economies and populations. Indeed, even “limited” sanctions can severely restrict nations’ access to international finance, trade, and debt relief—which can have disastrous effects on local quality of life.

Beyond North Korea: Iran, Venezuela, & Zimbabwe

Human rights and global security concerns are the two most frequently cited justifications for U.S. sanctions. However, U.S. allies and friendly nations are never subjected to U.S. sanctions, regardless of their records on human rights or global security. Instead, countries that openly defy Washington's interests or otherwise undermine U.S. hegemony are most frequently and severely targeted with sanctions.

Sanctions impose deprivation and manufactured scarcity on populations. Despite being packaged in the language of human rights and security, the efficacy and ethics of sanctions are rarely questioned when sanctions themselves are shown to produce and exacerbate human rights violations and political instability. On the contrary, sanctions are used as a tool to coerce international compliance with Washington's economic and military agendas.



Iran



Iran has virtually been under some form of US sanctions since the 1979 Iranian Revolution deposed the US-backed Shah and established the Islamic Republic of Iran. In 2015, Iran signed on to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), popularly known as the Iran nuclear deal, with the US and EU. In exchange for abiding by certain nuclear restrictions, Iran was promised relief from some sanctions imposed by the US, EU, and UN Security Council. The Trump administration pulled out of JCPOA in 2017, and dramatically escalated sanctions against Iran. This has had a devastating effect on Iran, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Prevented from conducting business with the US dollar, unable to access overseas assets, and blocked off from most international trade, the Iranian economy has been struck by massive unemployment, runaway inflation, and severe shortages of basic goods. This has been particularly devastating for public health, as shortages of vital medical supplies have exacerbated the rate of preventable deaths, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Venezuela

In 2017, the US and its allies in North America and Europe imposed sanctions on Venezuela targeting individuals in government, state institutions, and access to international credit. Since then, the US and its allies have expanded sanctions to target Venezuela's major industries, banking sector, and international food aid. These measures have acutely impacted the economic situation in Venezuela, and created shortages of medicine, food, and fuel that have led to widespread suffering. In 2019, the [Center for Economic Policy Research](#) published a study estimating that 40,000 deaths in Venezuela from 2017–2018 could be attributed to US sanctions.



Zimbabwe

In 2001, Congress passed the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act, which placed sanctions on the Zimbabwean government's access to international loans, credit, and debt relief. Although the US insists that its sanctions against Zimbabwe are “targeted” and only affect individuals and institutions responsible for undemocratic behavior, the government of Zimbabwe has argued that the sanctions are comprehensive in practice and have contributed to the country's decades-long economic crisis. According to a [2017 study](#) in the *African Research Review*, US sanctions and corresponding EU restrictive measures have tremendously affected Zimbabweans' access to healthcare and education. The study found that Zimbabwe's capacity to treat and prevent HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in particular was impacted by rising costs, difficulty accessing funds, and increased emigration of educated professionals, including healthcare workers. The prolonged economic crisis in Zimbabwe, inflamed by decades of sanctions, have resulted in massive unemployment and inflation as well as shortages of basic commodities—consequences that have been observed elsewhere in similarly sanctioned countries.

Acknowledgements

Images:

Nodutdol Archives
[Citt on Flickr](#)

Contributors:

Andy Seungu Choi
Catherine K.
Julie Yunhee Moon

Editorial team:

E.K.
Haruki Eda
Jia H.
J.L.
JT Takagi
Ju Hyun Park
Minju Bae
Rose M. Kim

Resources

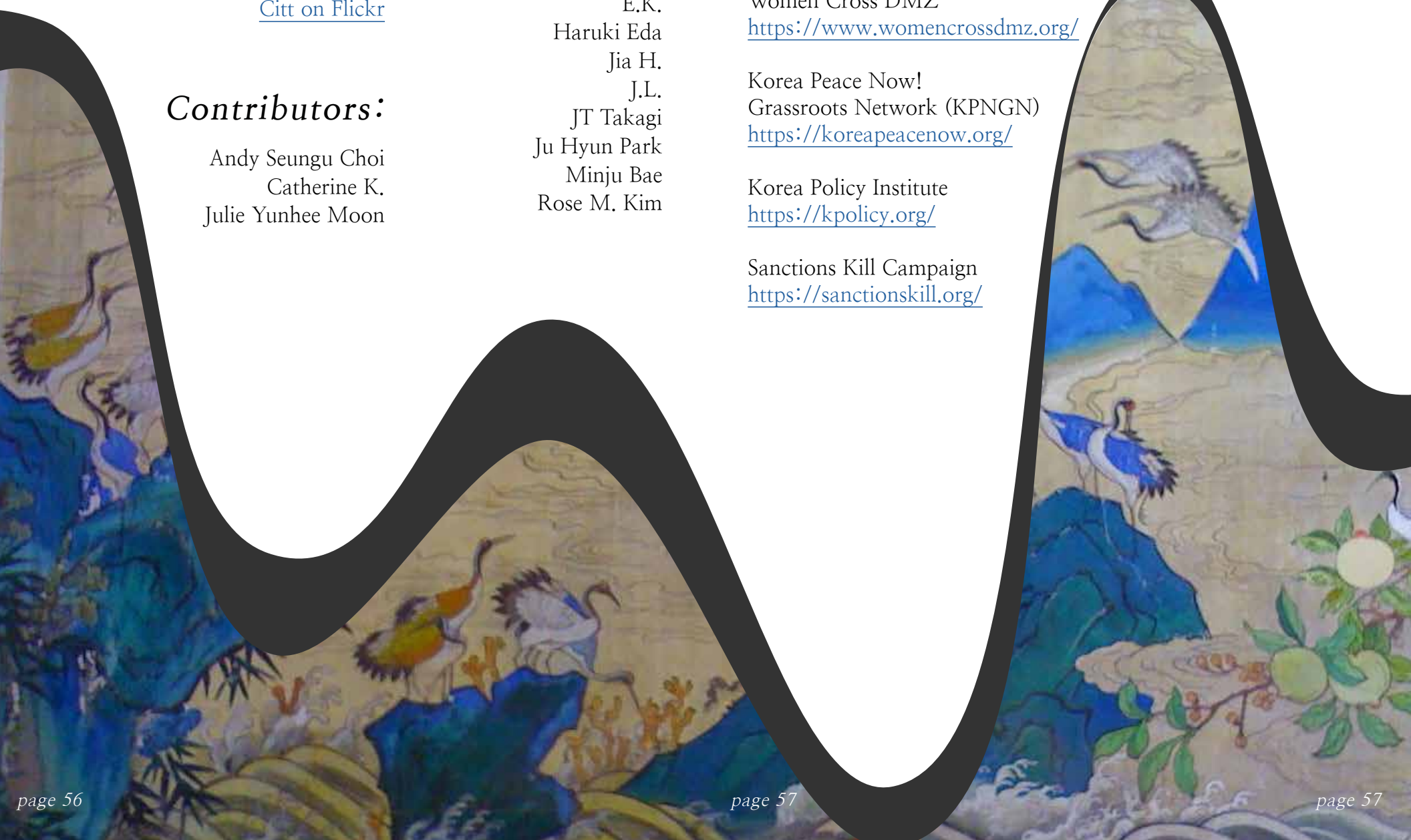
Nodutdol for Community Development
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Korea Peace Now!
Grassroots Network (KPNGN)
<https://koreapeacenow.org/>

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<https://kpolicy.org/>

Sanctions Kill Campaign
<https://sanctionskill.org/>



Struggle with us
against sanctions and
US imperialism &
neocolonialism.

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