

Women Urge U.N. Chief to Push for a Permanent Korean Peace Treaty

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More than 100 women from 38 countries have called on outgoing U.N. chief Ban Ki-moon to pursue a peace treaty that would officially end the Korean War.

In an [open letter](#) sent to the Secretary-General on Tuesday, the women — among them academics, entrepreneurs, activists and military personnel — called on Ban to initiate a peace process with a concrete time frame and ensure that women are fully represented in the discussions.

The Korean War ended with an armistice in 1953, and Ban promised in a [2007 speech](#) that as the world's top diplomat he would "aim to establish a peace mechanism" that would transition the pact into a permanent, binding accord.

Ban, who previously served as South Korea's Foreign Minister, will step down as the head of the U.N. in January.

The letter urged Ban to initiate a process that would be completed by 2018, the 70th anniversary of the peninsula's separation into two states. Signatories said reaching a permanent pact would be crucial to reducing

threats, as “the absence of a binding peace accord fuels fear, violations of human rights and economic deprivation caused by diverting resources in preparation for war.”

But South Korea is sitting next to an increasingly aggressive neighbor. On Sept. 9, North Korea drew fierce international condemnation after carrying out its [fifth and largest nuclear test](#). In response, President Obama [warned](#) that provocative actions from North Korea would be “met with serious consequences.”

Meanwhile on Tuesday, the U.S. [pledged to speed up](#) the deployment of an antimissile system in South Korea, called the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD). “Given the accelerating pace of North Korea’s missile tests, we intend to deploy on an accelerated basis. I would say as soon as possible,” Daniel Russel, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia, [told Reuters](#).

The letter sent to Ban on Tuesday, however, decried the deployment as “a highly provocative and potentially destabilizing move.” The letter was co-sponsored by the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom and Women Cross DMZ, a civil-society group that led a peaceful march last year across the demilitarized zone that lies between the two states.