

## **Oral Statement**

### **MINBYUN – Lawyers for a Democratic Society**

South Korean civil society welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur on his official visit to the Republic of Korea and hopes that victims of this turbulent history will be guaranteed their right to the truth, justice, reparation, and guarantees of non-recurrence and memorialization in accordance with international human rights norms. The Special Rapporteur's report is significant because it is the first comprehensive document to examine the Republic of Korea's fulfillment of its transitional justice obligations under international human rights norms.

The first Truth and Reconciliation Commission, TRC, was established in 2005, but its work was too short-lived. The second TRC, finally established in 2020 after years of outcry and dozens of days of hunger strikes, is in danger of running aground: the newly-appointed chairperson denies the victims of history, and is fomenting division and hatred. Human rights violations and victims' rights are being ignored, as the TRC is discriminating and questioning the "victim-ness" of victims, such as classifying and grading the Korean War victims based on their "ideological purity." The truth is not being uncovered, the perpetrators are not held accountable, and the memorialization of human rights violations are not properly carried out.

As the Special Rapporteur said, "[n]ot one tragedy nor one victim should continue to be unrecognized and unaddressed." We urge the Government to accept all recommendations by the Special Rapporteur and incorporate them into national policies, including the the National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights of the Republic of Korea, based on a victim-centered approach to achieving transitional justice, so that victims' rights can be redressed as soon as possible.