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ASIA/SOUTH KOREA - Christians in prayer for reconciliation between North and South, in the demilitarized zone

Busan (Agenzia Fides) - More than 800 faithful Christians of different denominations, participants in the tenth World Assembly of the "Ecumenical Council of Churches" underway in Busan (October 30 to November 8), yesterday experienced a pilgrimage for peace and reconciliation in the Korean peninsula. As Fides learns, they went to Imjingak, a town on the border between South and north Korea, pausing in prayer and leaving appeals for peace in the demilitarized Zone that divides the peninsula.
The initiative - reports a statement of the Ecumenical Council, sent to Fides - marked the tenth meeting of the Council on the theme "God of life, lead us to justice and peace", and was thought of on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the division between the two Koreas. The "demilitarized Zone" which separates the territory of North and South after the armistice was signed on 27 July 1953 at the conclusion of the war.
The participants of the pilgrimage came together at the "Bell of Peace" erected in 1972 in Imjingak as a sign and hope for the future reunification of Korea. The bell was rung by seven people, representing all regions of the world, to launch a heartfelt appeal for peace in Korea. The participants then crossed the "Freedom Bridge" in Imjingak to closely see the reality of the division. The participants gathered pausing in prayer and singing hymns under the bridge, which is the front line of division. Some young people placed ribbons with messages and prayers for peace on the iron fence along the military demarcation line.
The Secretary-General of the Ecumenical Council, Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, asked to "lower the tension on the Korean Peninsula", expressing the hope of Christians "for the pursuit of peace and reconciliation". (PA) (Agenzia Fides 05/11/2013)

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