



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA
GENEVA

KGV/ 43 /2016

Reference: The Communication from Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief (AL KOR 4/2015)

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and, in response to the latter's note verbale dated 11 December 2015, has the honor to submit, as attached, the Republic of Korea's observations.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurance of its highest consideration.

Encl.: as stated

Geneva, 24 February 2016

Special Procedures Branch (c/o Karim Ghezraoui)
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights(OHCHR)
Palais des Nations
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Introduction of Alternative Service for Conscientious Objectors

- Our position that the question of allowing alternative service for conscientious objectors depends on the existence of a positive change in the security environment and national consensus remains unchanged.
- Alternative service is an issue that requires the consideration of country-specific circumstances. Taking into account the fact that the majority of countries that permit alternative service do not face direct security threats, it is necessary to consider the unstable security environment of Korea, the only divided nation in the world, where military provocations and threats from North Korea clearly exist.
- Furthermore, a drastic decrease in military manpower is expected due to the recent drop in birth rate. It is, thus, imperative to take into account the issue of increasing military manpower once alternative service is allowed.
- Since 2006, the Government has been continuously reviewing the adoption of alternative service by conducting public hearings, national surveys and various studies, and has made a number of suggestions within the context of domestic courts and international conferences. Currently, the Government is reviewing examples of alternative service for conscientious objectors in other countries including Taiwan, Germany, Singapore and France. /End/