



August 15 Unification Doctrine

**A Unified Korea based on
Freedom, Peace, and
Prosperity**



“My fellow South Korean citizens and fellow North Koreans!

In a unified Korea, we will enjoy more freedom and a greater range of opportunities. Furthermore, achieving this will bestow a blessing upon the whole of humanity.

The government and I will make 2024 the first year of advancing toward a unified Korea based on freedom, peace, and prosperity”

(President Yoon Suk Yeol's commemorative address for the 79th National Liberation Day on August 15, 2024)

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I

Background

I

Background

▶ **The international environment is increasingly unstable due to the U.S.-China strategic competition, prolonged Russia-Ukraine War, and proliferating global conflicts.**

- Amid the growing confrontation between democracy and authoritarianism, it is critical to strengthen solidarity based on freedom.
- It is time to defend universal values and international norms such as freedom, human rights, and rule of law.

▶ **North Korea focuses on developing nuclear and missile capabilities at the expense of the livelihoods of its people. While escalating military threats against South Korea, the North is rejecting the idea of One Unified Korea.**

- The North suspended all inter-Korean relations after the Hanoi Summit in February 2019. Since late 2023, the North has redefined inter-Korean relations as “two hostile states” and undermined all previous efforts toward unification.
- We must stay vigilant against the North’s security threats and achieve “peace through strength” based on ROK-U.S. extended deterrence for the historic mission of unification.

▶ **Despite increasing control and oppression, North Korean people are actively engaging in market activities and seeking information from the outside world.**

- North Korean people’s awareness about the world is changing with greater exposure to market activities and external information. We must aid their aspirations for freedom.

▶ **Three decades after the release of the National Community Unification Formula (1994), there is an increasing need for a new initiative to reflect the fast-changing environment.**

- We must create new vision and policy that bring together our people’s aspiration for unification, reflect fast changing international environment and honor the National Community Unification Formula.

“However, complete liberation remains an unfinished task for us. Lying ahead is a crucial historic task that must be addressed: unification.

...

The freedom we enjoy must be extended to the frozen kingdom of the North,

Where people are deprived of freedom and suffer from poverty and starvation.

We will finally achieve complete liberation only when a unified, free, and democratic nation rightfully owned by the people is established on the entire Korean Peninsula.”

(President Yoon Suk Yeol’s commemorative address for the 79th National Liberation Day on August 15, 2024)

II

Significance

II

Significance

- ✓ **The Constitution of the Republic of Korea advocates “peaceful unification based on the basic free and democratic order.”**
- ✓ **The Yoon Suk Yeol administration emphasizes the key values of “freedom, peace, and prosperity.” The following national goal and strategies have been proposed;**
 - The rise as a Global Pivotal State that contributes to freedom, peace, and prosperity as a national goal (May 2022)
 - The Strategy for a Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region (December 2022)
 - The National Security Strategy (June 2023)
- ✓ **Commemorating the 79th National Liberation Day, President Yoon proposed August 15 Unification Doctrine for “A Unified Korea based on Freedom, Peace, and Prosperity.”**



- ① **Goal | The Doctrine defines our goal of ‘unification based on freedom’ in accordance with the constitutional values of the Republic of Korea.**
 - National liberation will be completed when unified Korea is established based on freedom and democracy.
 - Our modern history represents our journey toward freedom. Freedom and democracy have been integral to our national identity since the beginning of the division.
 - Our mission is to work toward a unified Korea based on freedom aligned with the values that established the Republic of Korea.
- ② **Actor | The Doctrine proposes action plans for unification led by the Republic of Korea.**
 - The Doctrine is a feasible unification initiative that enables us to proactively respond to changes in the security environment.
 - Today, the international order based on the norms of liberal democracy is being challenged by totalitarianism and authoritarianism.
 - We must present visions and strategies that inspire Korean people to build favorable conditions for unification without depending on the goodwill of the North Korean regime.

③ Process | The Doctrine aims to build a democratic unification process to promote freedom and human rights of all the people on the Korean Peninsula.

- The ultimate goal of unification is to ensure freedom and human rights of all the people on the Korean Peninsula.
 - Unification will require the active participation of people of both Koreas to take the lead and drive change, not primarily by negotiations between authorities.
 - The Doctrine proposes visions and strategies creating an environment free from nuclear threats, allowing North Korean people to openly communicate with the outside world, eliminating oppression and reducing poverty.

④ International Solidarity | The Doctrine aims to realize our vision through cooperation with the international community, while contributing to world peace and prosperity.

- The Doctrine represents our will to build solidarity with the international community for unification and contribute to world peace and prosperity.
 - Unification based on the universal value of freedom requires cooperation with the international community, as its implications extend beyond the Korean Peninsula.
 - As a Global Pivotal State, we will work to secure international support for unification, and contribute to global peace and prosperity.

August 15 Unification Doctrine Diagram




III

Three Visions and Three Strategies

III


Three Visions



For
Koreans

A Nation based on freedom, safety, and the pursuit of happiness

- ▶ Unification will ensure a better future for all the people of the Korean Peninsula by eliminating the threats to freedom and security that the division has caused.
- ▶ North Korean people will be free from oppression and poverty, and fully gain their human dignity through unification based on freedom.



For the
nation

A strong and prosperous Nation through creativity and innovation

- ▶ Unification is essential for national development, as it brings freedom and peace for greater achievements.
- ▶ Through unification, we will gain new growth engine for enlarged economic opportunities and a better future for coming generations.



For the
world

A Nation contributing to global peace and prosperity

- ▶ Unification based on freedom will catalyze peace and prosperity across Northeast Asia, the Indo-Pacific region, and the international community, opening a new chapter in history.
- ▶ Unification of Korea will contribute to the diffusion of universal values, justice, and the rule of law.

Three Strategies

For South
Korea

Reinforcing the capacity for unification based on freedom

- ▶ A sense of responsibility, tolerance, and adherence to norms are the prerequisites for ensuring freedom for all.
- ▶ Unification based on freedom should be achieved by securing public support and protecting freedom.

For North
Korea

Promoting North Korean people's aspirations for unification based on freedom

- ▶ We must encourage North Korean people to desire for unification based on freedom.
- ▶ If more North Korean people realize they will be accepted as citizens of unified Korea and their lives will become better, they will become partners for unification based on freedom.

For
International
Community

Fostering international support for unification based on freedom

- ▶ We will contribute to global peace and prosperity, while working with the international community to set foundation for unification.
- ▶ We encourage the international community to promote freedom and human rights through unification.

IV

Seven Action Plans

IV

Seven Action Plans

1 Advancing Unification Education

- Creating a sense of responsibility among our citizens to lead unification based on freedom
- Inspiring younger generation to imagine free unified Korea utilizing cutting-edge technologies
- Presenting a vision of unification through virtual and augmented realities

Significance

- It is essential for the younger generation who will become the future leaders to have hope and vision for unified Korea.
- Unification will remove barriers of national division and provide freedom and opportunities for the youth of both Koreas.
- Our approach to unification will be inter-disciplinary utilizing diverse fields, such as politics, economy, administration, education, healthcare, biology, environment and IT.

Details

- **Unification Education** | We will provide tailored education programs offering a forward-looking vision that raises prospects of unification.

- We will produce contents through advanced technologies to inspire imagination on unification.

* For example, the Center for a Unified Korea Future will utilize AR and VR.

- **Unification discourse for the future** | We will expand research platforms to bring together experts in related fields and create a blueprint for a unified Korea.

2 Improving North Korean Human Rights

- Improving the quality of the Report on North Korean Human Rights and sharing findings internationally
- Expanding the discourse on North Korean human rights situation through the International Conference on North Korean Human Rights
- Establishing the Fund for Freedom and Human Rights in North Korea to support civil society activities

Significance

- It is important to improve North Korean human rights situation for peace and unification on the Korean peninsula.
- It is our mission and constitutional responsibility to extend freedom to North Korean people to safeguard their human rights.
- We will strive to improve the human rights of North Korean people by cooperating with the international community and civil society by supporting their activities.

Details

- **Raising awareness** | We will share information about North Korean human rights situation with our citizens and the international community.
 - We will annually publish the Report on North Korean Human Rights and open the National Center for North Korean Human Rights by 2026.
- **International Conference on North Korean Human Rights** | We will host the International Conference on North Korean Human Rights in close collaboration with our allies, domestic and international NGOs, and international organizations.
- **Fund for Freedom and Human Rights in North Korea** | We will create a fund to support civil society activities related to freedom and human rights protection for North Korean people.
 - The North Korean Human Rights Foundation which was mandated by the North Korean Human Rights Act in 2016 has yet to be established.
 - We will create a sustainable fund to improve the North Korean human rights situation regardless of the domestic political situation and fulfill our obligations mandated by the North Korean Human Rights Act.
 - We will ensure that the North Korean human rights community can expand through sustained support.

3 Providing Humanitarian Support for North Korean People

- Expressing our willingness to provide disaster relief to North Korea to mitigate the damage caused by flood as shown in the proposal on August 1 2004
- Being prepared to provide humanitarian support for North Korean people at any time, regardless of political situation
- Providing humanitarian support, such as food and healthcare supplies, to vulnerable groups*
 - * Infants, women, seniors, persons with disabilities and others

Significance

- We remain consistent in our stance to provide humanitarian support regardless of political and military situation.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, we offered to provide vaccines, medical supplies, masks, diagnostic kits, and other supplies to the North.
- We will not ignore the suffering of North Korean people and continue to seek ways to provide them with humanitarian support.

Details

- **Relief support** | We will offer emergency relief support for floods, droughts, infectious diseases, as demonstrated by our proposal for the provision of COVID-19 vaccines (May 16, 2022) and flood damage restoration support (August 1, 2024).
 - If the North responds positively, we will instantly provide relief materials, such as food, medicine, blankets for victims.

- **Support for vulnerable groups** | We will prioritize food and healthcare supplies for North Korea's vulnerable groups such as infants, women, seniors, and persons with disabilities.
 - Provisions include food, vaccines, essential medications, and sanitary supplies.
- **Cooperation with international organizations** | We will work with WFP, UNICEF, WHO, and other international organizations to support vulnerable groups in North Korea.
 - We will provide humanitarian support for urgent needs such as disaster relief, healthcare, and water sanitation.

4 Increasing Access to Information for North Korean People

- Promoting 'unification of hearts and minds' by sharing the value of freedom
- Inspiring North Korea's younger generations to be hopeful about life after unification
- Developing diverse channels to help North Korean people to obtain information from the outside world

Significance

- We will safeguard the North Korean people's right to know by increasing access to outside information through multiple channels.
- North Korean people have the right to obtain information from the South and outside world.
- If more North Korean people realize they will be accepted as citizens of unified Korea, they will become partners for unification based on freedom.

Details

- **Sharing North Korea's reality** | We will continue to focus on sharing the realities of North Korea accurately and widely.
 - We will produce and distribute various contents about North Korea, such as the Report on North Korea's Economy and Society.
- **Right to access information** | We will help North Korean people stay informed about changes in the outside world through diverse channels and methods.
 - We will enhance the delivery and effectiveness of activities aimed at expanding North Korean people's right to access information.
 - We will support the civil society to produce radio contents for North Korean people, evaluate their impact, and train experts in the sector.
- **North Korea's younger generations** | We will make it easier for North Korean youth to access radio, TV, and other multimedia by developing contents tailored to their needs.
 - We will help North Korean youth to experience diverse cultural contents in global media.

5 Empowering North Korean Defectors in the Unification Process

- Recognizing North Korean defectors as symbols of unification and contributors to the unification process
- Expressing our will to protect and support defectors, we established the North Korean Defector's Day (July 14, 2024).
- Reflecting the experiences and knowledge of North Korean defectors in our unification policies

Significance

- North Korean defectors show what the future of unification would look like through their successful integration to our society.
- The knowledge of North Korean defectors who have experienced life in both Koreas will be invaluable to the unification process.

Details

- **Implementation** | We will accomplish 10 tasks in 3 areas (settlement, capacity building, and unity) as announced in the commemorative address for the 1st North Korean Defector's Day (July 14).

1

Settlement

- ❶ Increasing the initial settlement support grant
- ❷ Laying the financial foundation with subsidies
- ❸ Providing necessary support for working mothers
- ❹ Expanding educational support to North Korean defectors' children born outside North Korea
- ❺ Establishing a strong safety net through cooperation between the central and local governments

2

Capacity

- ❻ Increasing employment quotas for North Korean defectors in public sectors
- ❼ Incentivizing companies to hire more North Korean defectors
- ❽ Including more North Korean defectors in unification policy-making

3

Unity

- ❾ Supporting the community building efforts of North Korean defectors
- ❿ Integrating North Korean defectors into local communities

- **Empowering defectors** | We will support North Korean defectors so that they can contribute to the unification process.
 - We will provide one-to-one mentorship that is tailored to their academic and career needs to improve their capabilities.
 - We will increase opportunities and empower North Korean defectors to become experts who can inform policies on unification with their experience.

6 Establishing Inter-Korean Working Group

- Opening the doors to inter-Korean dialogue
- Calling on North Korea to accept our proposal for Inter-Korean working Group
- Addressing a wide spectrum of issues, including easing tensions, facilitating economic cooperation, promoting people-to-people exchanges and cultural exchanges, and responding to disasters, climate change, and humanitarian issues

Significance

- We have remained open to dialogue with North Korea.

* (From the Joint Statement of the Camp David ROK-U.S.-Japan Summit on August 18, 2023) ROK-U.S.-Japan remain committed to reestablishing dialogue with North Korea without preconditions.

- Inter-Korean dialogue should not become a ‘political show,’ but rather a practical opportunity for building peace and improving the quality of life for Korean people.

Details

- **Format** | We will organize Inter-Korean Working Group at a working level to promote thorough discussions about current issues and solutions.
 - We will pursue bottom-up approaches for pragmatic and sustainable agreements.
- **Agenda** | We are willing to discuss any issues.
 - Potential agendas include de-escalation, economic cooperation, people-to-people exchanges, cultural exchanges, humanitarian issues

(separated families, abductees, detainees, and prisoners of war), disaster relief and climate change.

- Based on the Audacious Initiative proposed by President Yoon on National Liberation Day in 2022, we will initiate political and economic cooperation with the North as soon as the North takes the first step toward denuclearization.

※ Through the Audacious Initiative, President Yoon proposed to improve North Korea’s economy and its people’s livelihoods if the North resumes denuclearization dialogue (August 15, 2022).

7 Securing International Support through Global Korea Forum

- Emphasizing that unification will protect the universal values of freedom and human rights, and contribute to global peace and prosperity
- Establishing the Global Korea Forum to foster international support for unification based on freedom
- Building solidarity based on freedom with our allies and partners in unification process

Significance

- As our national division was the product of international politics, unification is difficult to be achieved on our own.
- We will highlight the benefits of a unified Korea based on freedom in contributing to global peace and prosperity.
- We will fulfill our obligations to the international community and work together for unification.

Details

- o **Global Korea Forum** | We establishes the Global Korea Forum to foster international support for unification based on freedom.
 - The Korea Global Forum, held annually by the Ministry of Unification since 2010, was reconstructed according to the Doctrine. The forum encompasses a wide spectrum of policy agendas and diversifies participating countries.
 - The first Global Korea Forum was held on September 3, 2024. The Forum will serve as the leading platform for fostering international support for unification.

- o **Reinforcement of unification diplomacy** | We will strengthen solidarity with our partners based on common values to build consensus on unification policy.
 - We will invest efforts to build consensus that the unified Korea will contribute to global peace and prosperity to create favorable environment for unification.

* Survey on Global Perception of Korean Unification (from September 2024) will be conducted by the Ministry of Unification to identify and analyze international opinion on the issue of unification.

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