

UPF Canada: Anthropologist Shares Visit to North Korea in Global Webinar

Robert Duffy
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Montreal, Canada – Dr. Okkyung Pak, an anthropologist, former government of Canada official, and ambassador for peace, gave an informative presentation on her recent visit to North Korea in an online program hosted jointly by UPF-Canada and UPF-EUME on November 28, 2024. More than 100 interested parties from Europe, Russia, Japan, the United States, and Canada joined the event, which was the 9th in a series of webinars on "Viewing the DPRK from Within."

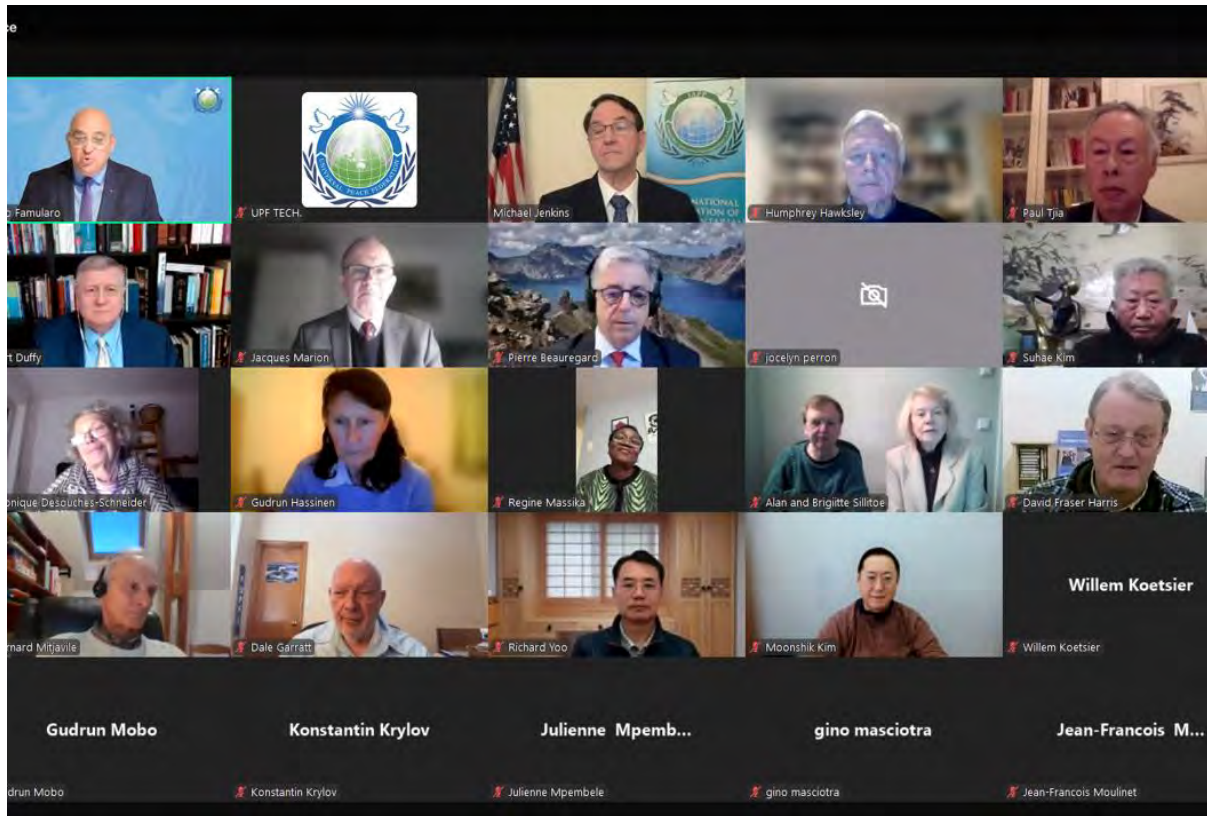
Traveling at the invitation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Dr. Pak met with academics and extended family members mainly in the Pyongyang area. She also visited her grandfather's gravesite situated in a special cemetery for heroes and patriots.

Mr. Robert Duffy, secretary general of UPF-Canada, introduced the program, inviting his UPF-EUME counterpart, **Mr. Jacques Marion**, to add context to the event. Mr. Marion noted that UPF's ongoing interest in the DPRK stems in part from the fact that UPF's founders, Rev. Sun Myung Moon and his wife, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, were both born in North Korea.

Dr. Franco Famularo, president of UPF-Canada, then took up the task of moderating the meeting, which spanned several time zones and included an interpreter into Korean who joined from South Korea from midnight until 1:30 a.m.

In her presentation, Dr. Pak showed her visits to museums and meetings with academics and extended family members, including some of the cousins who share her late grandfather, a hero of early North Korean society. Her anthropologist's eye for social cues guided her in interacting positively with museum

guides and academics, including a professor of political science whose lectures she attended. She shared with webinar participants the repeated emphasis on the DPRK's determination to be self-reliant in accord with its Juche philosophy.



Commenting on Dr. Pak's presentation was **Mr. Paul Tija**, a Dutch businessman who has been teaching and doing business in North Korea for many years. He suggested that the time has come to end punitive measures that tend to isolate rather than intimidate the regime, and to initiate more extensive engagement with the DPRK. He suggested that UPF could play a role in making personal contacts with North Koreans, possibly through academic exchanges with European or Canadian counterparts.

Mr. Humphrey Hawksley, author, documentarist, and former bureau chief for the BBC in Beijing, commented on the need to end the ineffective sanctions based on unrealistic expectations that the DPRK will join the Western system based on 4 or 5-year Western election cycles.

Dr. Michael Jenkins, international president of UPF, concluded the webinar by praising the effort to bring greater understanding of the DPRK.