



Press release      Berlin, 5 June 2023

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## **DMZ – The Last Frontier of the Cold War**

28.07.2023 – 31.03.2024

The date 27 July 2023 marks the 70th anniversary of the signing of the Panmunjom ceasefire. This agreement ended the Korean War, which lasted from 1950 to 1953. Until then, fierce fighting took place between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and China – which intervened during the conflict – on one side, and the Republic of Korea and United Nations troops led by the United States on the other. About four million people were killed as a result of the Korean War. The 70th anniversary of the end of fighting and the establishment of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) have prompted the Allied Museum to present a selection of Park Jongwoo's photographs.

### **The Demilitarized Zone - DMZ**

North and South Korea are still officially in a state of war with one another today. A peace treaty was never concluded between the two states. The ceasefire agreement saw the establishment of a demilitarized zone. Both sides erected fortifications and observation posts on the 4-kilometre-wide strip, and the demarcation line that runs through the middle of it is the actual border. It is one of the most strictly guarded border lines in the world and stretches for 248 kilometres along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel from the Yellow Sea to the East Sea.

The DMZ remains testimony to the Cold War today – a conflict that left its mark on the entire world. In Europe, the Iron Curtain disappeared more than 30 years ago with Germany's reunification, but it is still a bitter reality on the Korean peninsula.

### **The photographs of Park Jongwoo**

The South Korean photo documentarist Park Jongwoo (born in 1958) was invited in the years 2009 and 2010 by the South Korean Ministry of Defence to accompany soldiers stationed in the DMZ. This makes him the first civilian ever to be given the opportunity to document everyday military life, but also the landscape and nature there in photographs and film. The result was a series of fascinating, detailed and diverse images.

As a documentarist and former photojournalist, Jongwoo captures with his lens the lives of minorities all over the world. From 1983 to 1995, Park worked as a photojournalist for the Korea Times, the New York Times and the Los Angeles Times.

His series of photographs of the DMZ shows us the unique tension in this region, which results from the sharp contrast between the military presence and the area's natural beauty. We see barbed wire, guard towers and armed troops, but also a diverse vegetation that has managed to reconquer the landscape, now offering a habitat for numerous species threatened by extinction.

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### **Historical photographs of the former inner-German border**

Germany, and especially Berlin with its own history of division, are the location for a photographic exploration of the last frontier of the Cold War. The Allied Museum collection contains a large number of photographs documenting the situation along the former inner-German border. These were taken by order of the U.S. Armed Forces, who were stationed on the border between the GDR and the Federal Republic from 1945 to 1990. Individual historical motifs from this photo archive can be seen alongside the photos of Park Jongwoo. While Germany reunited in 1990, the iron curtain of mines and barbed wire continues to separate the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea. The division of North and South Korea is far more extensive than the one between the Federal Republic and the GDR ever was. While only a few highly emotional family reunions organised by the Red Cross take place in Korea, the German-German border was more permeable, and contact with relatives as well as visits were possible.

### **The Allied Museum**

The Allied Museum, which has dedicated itself for the past 25 years to the history of the Cold War and what the Allies accomplished for Berlin and Germany, takes a look in this exhibition at an international political conflict and, by showing the photographs of Park Jongwoo alongside historical photos of the former inner-German border, sheds light on a tragic contemporaneity. With this exhibition, the Allied Museum underscores its unique role in Germany's museum landscape as an institution with multinational roots and an international perspective of the history of the Cold War.

### **Events**

Guided tours, films and individual events on the history of and the situation between North and South Korea today, the impacts of this on the region and beyond, as well as insights into Korean culture and society are an integral part of the exhibition.

DMZ – The Last Frontier of the Cold War

28.07.2023 – 31.03.2024

The Allied Museum, Clayallee 135, 14195 Berlin

Opening times: Tuesday–Sunday, 10am–6pm. Admission free of charge.

Guided tour for the press: 27 July 2023 at 11am together with Park Jongwoo

Opening: 27 July 2023 at 7pm

Press release and photos available at <https://www.alliiertenmuseum.de/presse/der-pressebereich-des-alliiertenmuseums/>

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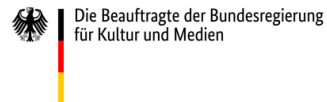
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The Allied Museum is funded by:



This exhibition is financially supported by:



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