

# The President of the UN Centre for the Study of Human Rights offers a conference at Mondragon Unibertsitatea on peace and human rights

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The university has invited the internationally renowned defender of human rights, Park Kyung-seo, to present his views on the challenges that lie ahead of the inhabitants of 21st century: to become messengers of peace and to be reconciled with human rights, protection of the environment and an economic development model based on people's integrity

The President of the UN Centre for the Study of Human Rights, Professor Park Kyung-seo, gave a conference on Tuesday at the Mondragon Unibertsitatea Oñati Campus focusing on peace and human rights. Kyung-seo, an internationally renowned defender of human rights, was invited by Mondragon Unibertsitatea to present his views on the challenges that lie ahead of the inhabitants of 21st century: to become messengers of peace, to be reconciled with human rights and the protection of the environment. In short, to apply an **economic development model based on people's integrity** and their rights and the rights of the environment.

## Park Kyung-seo

Born in Suncheon, Jeollanam-do (South Korea), Professor Park Kyung-seo studied sociology at Seoul National University. He earned a doctorate in sociology at the University of Göttingen, Germany, and later obtained an Honorary Doctorate in Philosophy at the Academy of Ecumenical Indian Theology, Serampore University India and an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom.

Professor Kyung-seo worked for 18 years at the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland, as Executive Secretary for Asia and President of the Asia Working Group. During this time, in which he travelled many times to 31 Asian countries and many other developing countries in Africa and Latin America, he has been very active and he has taken to all these countries his message of peace and the struggle for human rights, showing his great interest in discovering the concerns of the countries and the people who live there.

This great advocate of human rights was appointed first Ambassador at Large for Human Rights of the Republic of Korea, in February 2001, where he remained in office for 7 years. He also held several important positions in the government of the Republic of Korea: he was the Chief Commissioner of the National Commission of Human Rights, President of the Policy Commission in the Ministry of Unification and President of the Commission on Human Rights of the Korea National Policy Agency.

At present, he is President of the UN Centre for the Study of Human Rights, President of the UN Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City and President of the Centre for Cooperative Management of Korea. He is also the mentor of the Centre for Cooperative Training of Korea, for which Mondragon Unibertsitatea has just been awarded the task of advising on its implementation and setting up.

As a defender and messenger of peace, the international UN human rights expert has written various books on the promotion of peace and human rights, reconciliation and reunification in Korea and on the Korean Peninsula and has offered many conferences on this subject.

## Ambassador for Peace

As a defender of human rights and people's integrity, Doctor Park Kyung-seo has staunchly defended the need to impose peace in all corners of the world and for people's rights to prevail over all things.



In the opinion of the UN expert on human rights, the growth model of the twentieth century was an incorrect model based on the dictatorship of economic data over key issues such as human rights, people's integrity and the protection of the environment. In his view, in the twentieth century model, national security was a high priority for the economic development of nations, as a result of which certain fundamental rights of people were pushed aside. In his conviction that there is a fairly widespread global consensus on the failure of that model, Kyung-seo states that "we have closed the twentieth century and we are living the new century with the conviction that we will not repeat past mistakes". In his opinion, the number of casualties and material damage from natural disasters has increased around the world, highlighting the failure of the twentieth century development model, where the dizzying race for economic growth left no place for environmental protection.

Now, well into the twenty-first century, the time has come for human dignity and security to take their rightful place in the nations' order of priorities and the knowledge and experience gained should be used to prevent natural disasters, wars and lack of human dignity. "Human dignity must not be sacrificed and we must all work to protect it and in favour of human security, human rights and environmental rights".

The UN Human Rights expert believes that we all have a very active role to play in favour of peace and in spreading the message of peace around the world.

"We must be messengers and evokers of peace and become reconciled with it in the twenty-first century". To illustrate this, the ambassador of peace often mentions the terrible death toll as a result of the various wars that have devastated mankind. The 4.5 million people killed in the Korean War, those who died in the Iraq War, the conflicts in Asia and the struggles of so many peoples in defence of their human rights that have been repeated throughout history. A long list that would be endless and that leaves behind a long, sad list of people who have lost their lives defending their rights.