

[calendar](#)>>[April 8. 2010 Juch 99](#)

South Side Assets in Mt. Kumgang to Be Frozen

Pyongyang, April 8 (KCNA) -- A spokesman for the General Guidance Bureau for the Development of Scenic Spots of the DPRK issued the following statement Thursday:

The Cabinet and relevant institutions of the DPRK recently conducted an overall survey of real estates of the south side in the Mt. Kumgang Tourist Zone.

The survey was carried out, pursuant to the solemn declaration made internally and externally in a statement of a spokesman for the Korea Asia-Pacific Peace Committee on March 4 that it would allow the tour of the Kaesong area from March and the tour of Mt. Kumgang from April and take resolute measures in case the south Korean authorities continue obstructing the resumption of the tour.

The south Korean authorities, however, have not taken any sincere approach toward the resumption of the tour while talking about "adherence to their stand" despite our persevering efforts and the unanimous demand of the south Koreans from all walks of life.

It is against this backdrop that we started the survey to freeze the real estates of the south side in the tourist zone as already declared.

By nature, no law stipulates that survey should precede any measure for the freeze of the south side's real estates and no one was entitled to blame us for directly taking the measure for the freeze of those estates in retaliation against the south Korean authorities' undisguised act of blocking the tour.

We, however, showed such magnanimity as allowing those concerned to witness the survey before taking the action to freeze the estates and sufficiently adjusting the period of survey, taking into consideration the feelings of the south Korean businesses which suffered a lot due to the traitorous group's insolent behavior.

The puppet group worked hard to scuttle the above-said survey in defiance of the above-mentioned magnanimity.

The puppet conservative group did not respond to the survey of real estates belonging to the authorities in the zone, blatantly challenging it, and even prevented the relevant businesses of the south side from undergoing the survey. 52 persons concerned belonging to 33 enterprises responded to the survey but only 16 persons belonging to nine enterprises out of them came to Mt. Kumgang within the designated date to undergo the survey.

The group has also got frantic in escalating the confrontation with the DPRK and smear campaign, groundlessly finding fault with the survey conducted by us under such pretexts as "violation of property right" and "breach of south-north agreement and international norms".

As for the "violation of property right" touted by the puppet group, it is nothing but sheer sophism which reminds one of a guilty party filing the suit first, not aware to whom Mt. Kumgang belongs.

Enormous are economic losses suffered by us due to the long suspension of the tour and the confiscation of all real estates and facilities of the south side in the tourist zone would not be enough to compensate for them.

Moreover, how can one assess in cash the military and security value of area of Mt. Kumgang, the south Koreans' wishes to see world famous scenic spots and the joy shown by the Koreans at the tour symbolic of national reconciliation and reunification?

If there be anyone who suffered losses, it is none other than the Korean people, the Korean nation and the south side's businesses, not the puppet group.

A great number of the south side's businesses staking their fates on the tour of Mt. Kumgang demonstrated outside the puppet Ministry of Unification in demand of the resumption of the tour but the puppet group did not even show up. It is disgusting, indeed, for the group to talk about "violation of property right."

It is also preposterous for the group to talk about "breach of south-north agreement and international norms".

Who did unilaterally suspend the tour after totally violating the June 15 joint declaration and the October 4 declaration which are the most important of the north-south agreements and overturning the agreements between us and

Hyundai?

It is the universally accepted practice and common sense that if any economic agreement or contract remains unimplemented for a certain period, it is bound to be scrapped and compensation should be made for the resultant loss, even according to international practice.

The step taken by us this time is, in the final analysis, an exercise of a legitimate right fully in line with international practice and norms.

No matter how vociferous the puppet group may be, it has no right to say anything about our step.

While closely following the attitude of the south Korean authorities towards the survey, we came to finally confirm the fact that the puppet group has neither guilty conscience nor iota of will to improve the inter-Korean relations but is only hell-bent on confrontation, much less intending to resume the tour.

It was brought to daylight that the group's talk about what it called "three conditions" was nothing but a jargon intended to scotch the tour.

We have no idea of having argument any longer, dealing with the puppet clique now that the south Korean authorities are set to stand in confrontation with us to the last, blatantly challenging us.

Under the present situation where the puppet conservative group is free to let loose reckless remarks defiling our dignity and the confrontation of systems has gone beyond the danger line, the issue of tour admits of no argument.

Now that there is no way to save the tour of Mt. Kungang from a crisis, the General Guidance Bureau for the Development of Scenic Spots of the DPRK is authorized to solemnly declare that it enters the phase of implementing the following steps in the wake of the survey of real estates of the south side in the Mt. Kungang Tourist Zone as already clarified:

1. We will freeze as the first phase the Mt. Kungang Reunion Center and the fire brigade belonging to the south Korean authorities and a cultural center, a hot spring resort and tax exemption office belonging to the Tourist Company of south Korea and expel all their management personnel.

2. We will deprive the Hyundai Securities, the Idun Company and the Phyongan

Fibre Industrial Co. Ltd of the south side that dodged the survey of their business rights and disallow the entry of those concerned into Mt. Kumgang.

3. Tour of Mt. Kumgang by people at home and abroad will soon start through new business enterprise now that the agreement and contract on the tour made with Hyundai are no longer valid due to the south Korean authorities.

4. In case the south Korean conservative group continues mocking at the sincere efforts of the DPRK and defiling them and escalate confrontation with the DPRK quite contrary to the spirit of the joint declarations and the desire of the nation, we will reexamine the work in the Kaesong Industrial Zone in an all-round way.

With neither sophism nor sleight of hand can the south Korean authorities flee from the responsibility for having blocked the tour of Mt. Kumgang and driven the north-south relations to a catastrophe. They will have to pay dearly for the consequences.

We will never remain a passive onlooker to the puppet conservative group's confrontation with the DPRK and its smear campaign but take resolute countermeasures one after another.

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