

## ACRC Korea Transparency Newsletter (April 2026)

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## Protecting Citizens' Rights and Interests from the Closest Place, by Local Ombudsmen Gathering Together

- *The National Council of Ombudsmen, which is a consultative group of the ACRC and Local Ombudsmen, launches on April 30*
- *Discussion on measures to develop Local Ombudsmen and sharing cases of local grievance complaint resolution*

(April 30, 2026, ACRC)

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jung Il Yeon) holds the 2026 National Council of Ombudsmen with the ACRC\* on April 30 at the Korea Federation of Banks building, with the representatives of Local Ombudsmen from across the country.

\* ACRC: a term referring to both the ACRC and Local Ombudsmen

Local Ombudsmen are local grievance complaints handling institutions (ombudsmen) established within local governments pursuant to Article 32 of the Act on the Prevention of Corruption and the Establishment and Management of the ACRC, in order to process grievance petitions from residents within their jurisdiction and improve unreasonable administrative systems. Since its implementation in 1995, 107 local governments across Korea have established and operate the institution.

### 〈Major Activities of Local Ombudsmen〉

- **(Jeju Island)** Resolution of loan cost issue following the use rescission of national property (collaboration with the ACRC)
- **(Ulsan-si)** Mediation on the removal of dangerous street furniture along roadsides (collaboration with the ACRC)
- **(Hwaseong-si, Gyeonggi-do)** Removal of dangerous factors at neglected bicycle racks
- **(Dalseo-gu, Daegu-si)** Establishment of accident prevention measures on side roads within school zones

The ACRC has carried out a variety of activities to support the growth and substantial operation of Local Ombudsmen, including: regional councils and joint briefing sessions, public forums to share innovative, outstanding cases of handling grievance petitions, on-site outreach program, and collaboration for handling grievance petitions and institutional improvements.

The Commission presents the 2026 Plan for Vitalizing Local Ombudsmen at the Council and will continue supporting Local Ombudsmen by incorporating feedback.

〈Key Tasks for Vitalizing Local Ombudsmen〉

- Expansion of customized consultations and one-on-one guidance for institutions that have not yet established or have insufficiently established Local Ombudsmen
- Progression of specialized education and joint training sessions to strengthen grievance handling and conflict mediation capabilities
- Promotion of joint investigations and institutional improvements to identify and resolve recurring civil complaints within the region
- Establishment of an online civil complaint reception platform (short-term) and joint utilization of the ePeople system (long-term)

At the same time, there will be a session to enhance the problem-solving capability of Local Ombudsmen through a presentation of joint institutional improvement between the Seoul Metropolitan Citizens' Ombudsman Commission and the ACRC to improve the rights and interests of the users of Culture Nuri Card, and special session on the topic of Understanding and the Role of Local Ombudsmen.

Chairperson Jung of the ACRC said, "Local Ombudsmen are the core institutions of this popular sovereignty government that can swiftly listen to and resolve the difficulties of the public." He added, "the ACRC and Local Ombudsmen will closely cooperate to continue providing water-tight protection for people's rights and interests."



## Resolving Conundrums Through Field-Centered Communication, Collective Conflict Mediation Bureau Off to a Smooth Start in Addressing Collective Civil Complaints

- *The ACRC releases major cases of collective civil complaint resolutions since the launch of the Collective Conflict Mediation Bureau last January*
- *The Bureau swiftly resolves collective civil complaints arising across diverse sectors including transportation, welfare, and the environment*

(April 1, 2026, ACRC)

Since the official launch of the Collective Conflict Mediation Bureau on Jan. 27 of this year, the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jung Il Yeon) has been swiftly resolving collective civil complaints that had been left unaddressed for years—going beyond simple legal review to “proactive mediation” that reflects the specific conditions of each case—thereby alleviating the difficulties faced by citizens.

The resolved cases that were released this time involve collective civil complaints closely related to everyday life that were deemed problem-free based on paper reviews conducted by the relevant administrative agencies. They were resolved by drawing a consensus among the relevant agencies, focusing on the actual inconveniences and hardships experienced by citizens on the ground.

### **[Field-Oriented] Focus on Citizens' Lives Rather Than the Regulations**

Extension of the Senior Community Center in Okryong-dong, Gongju-si: the conflict over the extension of the senior community center in a permanent rental apartment estate—which had been at a standstill for years—was dramatically resolved after the ACRC conducted three on-site visits to directly assess the poor welfare conditions of elderly residents and persuaded Korea Land & Housing Corporation (LH). LH had initially been reluctant to approve the extension, citing the area standards under the relevant regulations. It, however, ultimately agreed to permit the use of the site based on a shared understanding that “senior welfare is directly related to the survival of the



elderly” and committed to actively supporting the creation of a resting space for the elderly residents.

### **[Creative Alternatives] Opening a Third Way of “Mutual Prosperity” Beyond a Simple Permit or Deny Decision**

Conflict over the construction of a new cattle shed in Daepyung-ri, Goryeong-gun: residents had been opposed to the construction of a large-scale cattle shed on a site adjacent to a small stream at the entrance of the village, citing concerns over odor, overflow of the small river, and water pollution. Since there was no legal basis, however, to restrict the construction, the conflict between the local government and residents had persisted. In response, the ACRC stepped outside the administrative framework of merely determining whether to grant a permit, and proposed a third way centered on guaranteeing the right to a healthy living environment, paving the way for mutual prosperity. Considering residents’ concerns over odor, overflow, and water pollution, the Commission explicitly incorporated into its mediation proposal “priority consideration for inclusion of the small river improvement project” and “on-site inspection conducted in the presence of resident observers,” thereby securing both the legal right to construct the cattle shed and the trust of the residents at the same time.

### **[Tangible Outcomes] For Children Forced onto the Roadway, Finding the Answer to Safety in the Field**

The safety of the school commute route at Jeonbuk Jeil High School and Iri Middle School in Iksan-si: although the commute route is used daily by approximately 1,000 students, a dangerous situation had persisted in which children were forced onto the roadway due to a one-meter height difference between the sidewalk and the crosswalk. Through an on-site investigation, the ACRC confirmed that children pushed onto the roadway faced a high risk of accidents as they mingled with vehicles entering the school’s main gate, and implemented a combination of measures—including facility improvements to eliminate the height difference in the sidewalk and a redesign of the traffic signal system—to create a school commute environment where children can feel genuinely safe.

## **[Reduction of Social Costs] The Miracle of Two Hours Where Data Met Sincerity**

Transportation convenience improvements in the new town multi-family housing area of Icheon-si: ahead of large-scale move-ins to the new town, the inconvenience caused by insufficient public transportation and other factors had grown so severe that more than 1,800 civil complaints were filed over six months. The local government had been reluctant to devise alternatives due to the finalized project plan and the lack of budget, but the ACRC facilitated a session in which it persuaded the relevant agencies based on objective demographic data, leading to a dramatic agreement reached in just two hours. Throughout this process, the Commission went beyond simple arbitration and took the lead in fostering communication so that all parties could deeply understand each other's positions, ultimately reaching swift decisions including the establishment of new bus routes and averting enormous social costs.

Since the launch of the Collective Conflict Mediation Bureau, the ACRC plans to continuously share and disseminate these collective civil complaint resolution cases—achieved by listening to the voices of citizens—across the entire government. Chairperson Jung of the ACRC stated, “The Collective Conflict Mediation Bureau is an organization that finds answers not through paperwork-bound administration, but by sincerely listening on the ground where citizens’ lives breathe,” and added, “We will continue to actively identify and share best practices to heal social conflicts and provide stronger protection for citizens’ rights and interests.”

## Hiring of Public Sector Employees in Central Administrative Agencies to Be Fairer and More Transparent!

- *ACRC has enacted and is set to implement the Prime Minister's Instruction, "Basic regulations for the Fair Hiring of Employees Belonging to Central Administrative Agencies"*

(April 6, 2026, ACRC)

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jung Il Yeon) announced that it enacted and will implement "the Basic Regulations for the Fair Hiring of Employees Belonging to Central Administrative Agencies" as a Prime Minister's Instruction in order to enhance the fairness and transparency of hiring non-civil service personnel, such as public sector employees and fixed-term workers, who serve in central administrative agencies.

This instruction was enacted on April 6 and will take effect starting July 5, and all central administrative agencies will revamp their hiring regulations for non-civil service personnel in line with this new mandate.

The newly enacted instruction primarily focuses on mandatory establishment of recruitment deliberation bodies and recruitment plans; strengthening recruitment monitoring and fairness management; and providing relief for victims of hiring irregularities.

### < Key Contents of the Instruction >

- **Mandatory Establishment of Deliberation Bodies and Recruitment Plans**
  - Establish deliberation bodies to oversee major hiring processes, ranging from the formulation of hiring plans to the cancellation of appointments and the provision of relief for victims of hiring irregularities
  - Establish recruitment plans in advance, including details such as the number of hires, eligibility criteria, additional points/preferential treatment, and evaluation standards
- **Strengthening Recruitment Monitoring and Fairness Management**
  - Hiring authorities may verify whether recruitment procedures were conducted fairly before announcing final successful candidates, and in cases where illegal or unfair circumstances that could influence the final selection are found, the audit department must investigate and take necessary measures



- Agencies are required to check whether any newly hired employees are relatives of existing officials and may disclose the number of such individuals on the agency's website if necessary
- **Relief for Victims of Hiring Irregularities**
  - Hiring authorities must identify and actively provide relief to victims when recruitment irregularities occur.
  - If a victim can be identified as the next-in-line candidate during a case of recruitment fraud, they must be granted the opportunity to take the next stage of the selection process. If the fraud occurred during the final stage, the victim may be hired immediately

The ACRC plans to carry out follow-up measures without a hitch, such as distributing a detailed regulatory guidebook to ensure the instruction takes root in the field and monitoring whether each agency has updated its non-civil service recruitment regulations to align with this new instruction.

Chairperson Jung of the ACRC stated, "With the enactment of this instruction, we expect the recruitment procedures for non-civil service personnel in central administrative agencies to become as transparent as those for civil servants."

He added, "We will continue to spread a fair recruitment culture so that job seekers, including young people, can compete confidently based solely on their skills, and so that victims of recruitment fraud can receive swift relief."



## Korea Spreads K-Anti-Corruption to Ethiopia

- *The ACRC and KOICA jointly operate a five-day anti-corruption capacity-building training program for Ethiopia starting on April 28*
- *Korea's outstanding anti-corruption systems, including the Act on the Prevention of Conflicts of Interest of Public Officials and the anti-corruption education system, are to be shared*

(April 28, 2026, ACRC)

The Korea Integrity and Civil Rights Training Institute (KICTI) under the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jung Il Yeon) announced that it will operate an Anti-Corruption Capacity-Building Training Program for public officials of Ethiopia's Federal Ethics & Anti-Corruption Commission (FEACC) for five days starting on April 28.

This training is a follow-up measure pursuant to the MOU on anti-corruption cooperation signed between the ACRC and the FEACC in June 2024, and was arranged in response to a request from the Ethiopian side to learn from Korea's public official conflict-of-interest prevention system and its systematic anti-corruption training system.

Nine FEACC officials at the director-level are participating in this program, which is operated in cooperation with KOICA(Korea International Cooperation Agency). The curriculum is centered on core anti-corruption legislation, such as the Act on the Prevention of Conflicts of Interest of Public Officials and the Code of Conduct for Public Officials, as well as the current state of anti-corruption education programs for public officials and integrity education programs for the younger generation.

The Republic of Korea has garnered sustained international attention for its Korean-style anti-corruption policies and experience since it stands as an exemplary case of having simultaneously achieved economic growth and improvement in its CPI\*(Corruption Perceptions Index) in the shortest period of time in the world.

\* (2016) 53 points, 52nd place (out of 180 countries) → (2025) 63 points, 31st place (out of 182 countries)



Accordingly, the ACRC has been operating annual anti-corruption capacity-building training programs for public officials from countries around the world as part of ODA (Official Development Assistance) projects, and has shared Korea's anti-corruption systems and experience with 746 public officials from 74 countries to date.

Along with the training program for the Ethiopian government this year, the Commission plans to operate a customized training program for public officials from Zimbabwe in June, and conduct training sessions in September for four Asian countries—India, Nepal, Mongolia, and Bhutan—as well as four West African countries—Senegal, Guinea, Togo, and Benin—thereby steadily expanding its international anti-corruption training programs.

Chairperson Jung of the ACRC said, “Ethiopia is the only African ally that sent troops to fight alongside Korea during the Korean War,” and emphasized, “As a nation leading democracy and sustainable development, we will continue to share the anti-corruption policies of Korea with Ethiopia and the international community to enhance the standing of the Republic of Korea.”

## Ground Sink Victims Struggle for Compensation; Public Insurance to Be Strengthened

- *The ACRC prepares “Improvement Plan for Compensation and Insurance Systems for Ground Subsidence (Sinkhole) Fatalities”*
- *Recommends adding ground sink-related coverage items to the Civil Safety Insurance program, and strengthening compensation levels for bereaved families of fatalities under the Public Liability Insurance program*

(April 23, 2026, ACRC)

Ground sink (e.g. ground subsidence, sinkhole) accidents have increased in recent years, and the scale of damage, including fatalities, has also grown. In response, when multiple fatalities occur due to ground sink accidents in the future, compensation from the public insurance programs of Civil Safety Insurance and Public Liability Insurance is expected to expand.

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jung Il Yeon) has prepared an “Improvement Plan for Compensation and Insurance Systems for Ground Subsidence Fatalities” following a fact-finding survey and opinion-gathering process involving all 243 local governments nationwide, and issued recommendations to the metropolitan local governments and LOFA (Local Finance Association).

This institutional improvement was carried out as a collaboration between central and local governments, following a proposal from the Seoul Metropolitan Citizens’ Ombudsman Commission (Chairperson Cho Duk Hyun) to the ACRC after identifying the need for improvement in the public insurance coverage framework in cases of large-scale sinkhole accidents.

According to the fact-finding survey, more than 40% of sewer pipes nationwide have been in place for more than 30 years and are experiencing serious deterioration. In addition, approximately 150 ground sink accidents occur each year, and the scale of the incidents has also been increasing—as seen in the



large-scale ground sink accident in Myeongil-dong, Gangdong-gu, Seoul in March 2025. Under the current public insurance\* framework, however, adequate compensation for victims is difficult even when multiple fatalities occur as a result of ground sink accidents.

\* Local governments subscribe to Civil Safety Insurance and Public Liability Insurance so that swift compensation can be provided when damage occurs due to defects in public facilities owned and managed by the local governments.

Structural limitations were also identified. When the current Civil Safety Insurance policy terms subscribed to by each local government do not include coverage items for “ground sink,” victims may be excluded from compensation. Under the Public Liability Insurance, compensation is divided within the rider limit set by the local government, without distinguishing between bodily injury and property damage—meaning that in the event of large-scale fatalities, the per-person compensation amount is significantly reduced.

To address these problems, the ACRC recommended that metropolitan local governments add a fatality coverage item for ground sink to their Civil Safety Insurance.

The ACRC also recommended that LOFA either establish a new rider to enable compensation for fatalities caused by ground sink under the Public Liability Insurance, or raise the compensation limit under the current road coverage rider and separate compensations for bodily injury from that for property damage, thereby strengthening the level of compensation for bereaved families of fatalities.

Seoul Metropolitan Citizens' Ombudsman Commission Chairperson Cho Duk Hyun stated, “We confirmed that the current compensation framework has limitations in cases where multiple fatalities occur in ground sink accidents and making it difficult to provide sufficient compensation to victims. We thus proposed the institutional improvement to the ACRC, and compensation for bereaved families has been significantly strengthened.” He added, “We plan to continue improving unreasonable institutions through this kind of collaboration.”

The Director General for Institutional Improvement Kim Ki Sun also stated,



“The increase in ground sink accidents is causing public anxiety. While fundamental prevention must come first, there is also a need to ensure that bereaved families, who are left in grief, can return to their daily lives as soon as possible through appropriate compensation and support.” He added, “The Commission will continue to expand its collaboration with the Local Ombudsmen to consistently identify and improve systems from the perspective of citizens.”