



The International Coalition to Stop Crimes against Humanity in North Korea Urges Human Rights Council to Create Inquiry into Mass Atrocity Crimes

January 22, 2013
Seoul, South Korea

Last week, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay, called for “a full-fledged international inquiry into serious crimes” that have been taking place in North Korea for decades. Referencing the gulag system, Pillay said it “represents the very antithesis of international human rights norms . . . The highly developed system of international human rights protection that has had at least some positive impact in almost every country in the world, seems to have completely bypassed [North Korea].”

The High Commissioner also stated that “there is an urgent need to clarify the fate of the many South Koreans and Japanese, abducted by DPRK over the years, as well as the countless civilians in the South rounded up and taken to the North during the Korean War, and to seek truth, justice and redress for their long-suffering families.”

The International Coalition to Stop Crimes against Humanity in North Korea (ICNK), consisting of over 40 prominent human rights organizations and activists, strongly supports Ms. Pillay’s call for action. ICNK calls on the UN Human Rights Council to establish an international Commission of Inquiry at its upcoming regular session in March 2013 when the North Korean situation will be discussed. Such a Commission should investigate systematic and grave violations committed by the North Korean government. The call for the establishment of an investigative mechanism has also been supported by the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the North Korea, Marzuki Darusman, in a report presented to the UN General Assembly in 2012.

ICNK also welcomes the opinion made public today of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention regarding the cases of the family members of prominent North Korean defectors Kang Chol-hwan and Shin Dong-hyuk, urging their immediate release. This opinion and the prior one regarding the family members of South Korean Oh Kil-nam also imprisoned in North Korea, only reinforce the need for urgent action by the international community.

ICNK urges UN member states to include a provision in the forthcoming annual resolution on the DPRK in the Human Rights Council creating an independent Commission of Inquiry on the DPRK as recommended by Ms. Pillay.

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Members and supporters of the Coalition include:

- Advocates International Global Council
- Amnesty International
- Asia Justice and Rights
- Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances
- Asian Human Rights & Humanity Association of Japan
- Burma Partnership (Thailand)
- Christian Lawyers Association for Paraguay
- Christian Solidarity Worldwide
- Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (USA)
- Conectas (Brazil)
- Council for Human Rights in North Korea (Canada)
- Freedom House (USA)
- Free NK Gulag (ROK)
- Free North Korea Radio (ROK)
- Han Voice (Canada)
- HH Katakomb (ROK)
- Human Rights Watch
- Human Rights Without Frontiers (Belgium)
- Inter-American Federation of Christian Lawyers
- International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
- COMJAN (Investigation Commission on Missing Japanese Probably Related to North Korea)(Japan)
- Japanese Lawyers Association for Abduction and Other Human Rights Issues in North Korea

- Jubilee Campaign (USA)
- Justice for North Korea (ROK)
- Kontras (Indonesia)
- Liberty in North Korea - LiNK (USA)
- Life Funds for North Korean Refugees (Japan)
- Network for North Korean Democracy and Human Rights (ROK)
- NK Intellectual Solidarity (ROK)
- No Fence (Japan)
- North Korea Freedom Coalition
- Odhikar (Bangladesh)
- Open North Korea (ROK)
- People In Need (Czech Republic)
- PSALT NK (Prayer Service Action Love Truth for North Korea)
- The Simon Wiesenthal Center (USA)
- The Society to Help Returnees to North Korea (Japan)
- Students Alliance for Human Rights in North Korea (ROK)
- World Without Genocide (USA)
- Young Defectors' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights (ROK)
- Yuki Akimoto, Burmainfo (Japan)
- Tomoharu Ebihara
- David Hawk, Visiting Scholar, Columbia University, Institute for the Study of Human Rights, and author of Hidden Gulag
- Ken Kato, Director, Human Rights in Asia (Japan)
- Tomoyuki Kawazoe, Representative, Kanagawa Association for The Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea / Member,
- Reporters Without Borders
- Suzanne Scholte, Seoul Peace Prize Recipient & Defense Forum Foundation (USA)
- Dr. Norbert Vollertsen