



February 15th, 2016

Re: DPRK resolution – need for enhanced focus on accountability

Members and Observers of the Human Rights Council,

In advance of the 31st session of the UN Human Rights Council, we write to urge your government to support the creation of a panel of experts on accountability in the resolution on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

As you know, in 2014, the UN commission of inquiry on human rights in the DPRK [found](#) that crimes against humanity, including extermination, murder, rape, deliberate starvation, and enforced disappearances, have been committed “pursuant to policies at the highest level of the state.”

The commission of inquiry stressed the importance of accountability for those responsible for grave abuses. The UN Security Council has recognized the gravity of the situation by discussing North Korea's bleak human rights record as a formal item on its agenda two years in a row, a critical step towards an eventual referral to the International Criminal Court.

In its own resolutions, the UN Human Rights Council has highlighted the need for accountability, a call that was echoed by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and many States during the plenary panel discussion at the 30th session of the Council.

In his most recent [report](#) to the UN General Assembly, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the DPRK has called for the creation of a panel of experts to make concrete recommendations to advance the objective of accountability.

Pressing for an ICC referral should remain a priority for the international community, particularly given the complex political dynamics within the Security Council. But even with an ICC referral, a more comprehensive accountability strategy will be critical to address the decades of impunity in North Korea.

Please find attached a briefing note, addressing key questions about the proposed panel of experts. As you will see, we are convinced that the panel of experts would be complementary to, but not duplicative of, the work of the High Commissioner's Seoul office, could draw upon the significant in-house expertise of the OHCHR to minimize resource implications, would constitute a credible next step to operationalize an existing HRC commitment to accountability on North Korea, and would not jeopardize the success of the resolution.

We trust we can count on your support to ensure a meaningful and substantive resolution that engages with and carries forward the recommendation of the commission of inquiry. The scale of the abuses, the needs of North Korea's countless victims, and the council's own credibility, require nothing less.

Sincerely,

African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHR)

Amnesty International

Asian Legal Resource Centre

Christian Solidarity Worldwide

CIVICUS

CONNECTAS

Citizen's Alliance for North Korean Human Rights (NKHR)

The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)

Human Rights Watch

International Bar Association

International Coalition to stop Crimes against Humanity in North Korea (ICNK)

International Commission of Jurists

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights