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NORTH KOREA European Parliament highlights prison camps

The appalling human rights violations taking place in North Korea's prison camps will be highlighted in the European Parliament at two key events in April.

On 7 April, former North Korean prisoner Shin Dong-hyuk, Liberty in North Korea (LiNK) and Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) will give evidence at a hearing to be held by the Subcommittee on Human Rights.

One week later, a major documentary film, *Kimjongilia*, will be screened at the European Parliament in Brussels as part of the One World human rights festival. The film provides an extraordinary insight into the shocking realities of conditions in North Korea's prison camps through the personal testimonies of former prisoners. The film's Director, Nancy C. Heikin, and author, Pierre Rigoulot, will attend the event in the European Parliament hosted by CSW and Human Rights Without Frontiers (HRWF) at 6.30pm in the Yehudi Menuhin Room.

These initiatives are the latest steps in a growing international campaign to raise awareness of the dire situation in North Korea's prison camps. In November 2009, CSW hosted the visit of two former North Korean prisoners to London and Brussels, who gave evidence to a hearing in the House of Commons, including personal accounts of torture, starvation and slave labor.

CSW's Advocacy Director Tina Lambert, who will give evidence at the hearing on 7 April, said: "We are delighted that the European Parliament is turning its attention to the desperate human rights situation in North Korea. Such a focus is long overdue and much needed, and we believe the combination of the evidence provided at the hearing, and the screening of *Kimjongilia* a week later, will help push the humanitarian crisis in North Korea's gulags higher up the European Union's agenda. It is time for the EU to seriously consider ways in which the crimes against humanity perpetrated by the North Korean regime can be investigated, and the culture of impunity addressed."

Notes:

1. *Kimjongilia* will be shown at the Yehudi Menuhin Room at the PHS building of the European Parliament in Brussels at 18.30 on April 14 2010. To register please contact www.czechrep.be/oneworld.