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NORTH KOREA CSW hosts expert delegation at EU

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) is hosting an expert delegation on North Korea at the European Union as part of a campaign to press for EU support in establishing a UN Commission of Inquiry to investigate crimes against humanity in North Korea.

The delegation, consisting of a North Korean defector and a human rights defender from South Korea, is due to meet with representatives from the French Foreign Ministry today and has already met with Belgian Foreign Ministry and European Commission officials to discuss the upcoming United Nations General Assembly resolution on North Korea.

Guang-il Jung is a North Korean defector who is currently based in South Korea, working for Democracy Network Against North Korean Gulag. He was arrested by North Korean security agents in Hoeryeong in July 1999 on fabricated charges and suffered torture in an underground cell for nine months. Following a false confession extracted under duress he was moved to the infamous Yodeok penal colony, where he faced forced labor and malnutrition during his three-year detention. He managed to flee North Korea in 2003, arriving in South Korea in 2004.

Tae Keung Ha is the director of a coalition group called Crimes Against Humanity Investigation Committee, based in Seoul. He has assisted North Korean refugees along the border with China and was a Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellow at the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington DC.

The EU is tabling the annual UN General Assembly resolution on human rights in North Korea, to be introduced in October. CSW wrote to the Foreign Ministers of all EU member states on 20 August, urging them to call for the establishment of a UN Commission of Inquiry to investigate crimes against humanity in North Korea. The letter argues that there is a "prima facie case of crimes against humanity committed by the [North Korean] regime, including murder, extermination, enslavement/forced labor, forcible transfer of population, arbitrary imprisonment, torture, persecution, enforced disappearances of persons, and other inhumane acts. The use of public executions as a method of generating fear and obedience is also illegal under international law."

CSW's National Director Stuart Windsor said, "CSW urges the EU to support the recommendation of the European Parliament's resolution of 8 July 2010 on North Korea, which calls on the EU to support the establishment of a UN Commission of Inquiry into human rights violations in North Korea. CSW believes that establishing a commission of inquiry is an important step towards addressing the culture of impunity surrounding the abuses perpetrated by the North Korean regime against its people."