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NORTH KOREA A new chapter for human rights to unfold

The International Coalition to Stop Crimes Against Humanity in North Korea

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A NEW CHAPTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA NEEDS TO UNFOLD

The death of Kim Jong Il on December 17, 2011 represents a unprecedented opportunity for North Korea's new leaders, including Kim Jong-un, to turn a new page on the human rights situation in the country and put an end to widespread and systematic violations which have characterized the regime and brutalized the North Korean people for too long, said the International Coalition to Stop Crimes against Humanity in North Korea (ICNK) today. The North Korean government must cease these violations, end impunity and ensure justice for countless victims. The leaders of DPRK should immediately put an end to practices such as forced labor, forced abortion of returnees, torture or executions, close all *kwan-li-so* (political prisoners' camps) and release all political prisoners and abductees, urged ICNK.

"North Korea remains a closed country and access is therefore urgently needed for independent and neutral human rights monitors, in particular the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in North Korea and international humanitarian organizations", said Souhayr Belhassen, president of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH). The Coalition will continue its campaign for the establishment of a UN Commission of Inquiry to investigate crimes against humanity that have characterized North Korea today and in the past.

"The death of Kim Jong-il opens up an opportunity which the international community should seize, to help free the North Korean people from decades of brutal oppression. While there may be a period of uncertainty and instability in the days ahead, the international community should ensure that the severe human rights and humanitarian crisis in North Korea is placed firmly on the agenda alongside security and political concerns," said Benedict Rogers, East Asia Team Leader at Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW). "Action must be taken to bring an end to the regime's crimes against humanity and the culture of impunity."

The International Coalition to Stop Crimes Against Humanity in North Korea (ICNK) includes human rights campaigners from around the world, including Asia, Latin America, North America, and Europe. Survivors of North Korean prison camps, and their groups such as Free NK Gulag, have added their support to the Coalition.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. The full statement summarizing the objectives of the ICNK is as follows:

The International Coalition to Stop Crimes Against Humanity in North Korea unites the world's major international human rights organizations, campaigners for freedom for North Korea and survivors of the North Korean gulags in a global campaign seeking a full investigation of the regime's crimes against humanity through a United Nations Commission of Inquiry.

The Coalition aims to bring together all the key organizations and individuals working on North Korean human rights, because we believe that a common, united effort will influence international political and public opinion and send a powerful message to the regime.

The Coalition fully recognizes the need to deploy a wide range of skills and initiatives to bring change to North Korea, and completely respects the individuality of each Coalition member. Coalition members will be free to pursue a variety of approaches, but will unite in a common campaign to seek the establishment of a UN Commission of Inquiry.

Coalition members will include organizations and individuals from across the world, including throughout Asia, North America, Latin America and Europe.

2. Members and supporters of the Coalition are as follows:

- § 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 Katacombs (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)
- § 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