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## NORTH KOREA CSW calls for end to crimes against humanity in wake of Kim Jong-il's death

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In the wake of the death of the North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) is calling on the North Korean regime to bring an end to the brutal oppression of its citizens, amounting to crimes against humanity.

Kim Jong-il reportedly died of a heart attack on Saturday, December 17, though the news was only reported by state media today. His youngest son, Kim Jong Un, has been named the 'Great Successor', although it is unclear whether he will have real power or whether senior military figures will take charge.

Kim Jong-il presided over the world's most closed nation with one of the worst human rights records in the world. The country has a system of prison camps with an estimated 200,000 people jailed in desperate conditions and subjected to the worst forms of torture and cruel and degrading treatment. Summary executions are common. The practice of "guilt by association" often means that entire families are often imprisoned, and punished for the crimes of family members up to the third generation. North Korea has no religious freedom, and Christians are jailed and sometimes executed for their beliefs.

CSW has been campaigning for an end to the North Korean regime's crimes against humanity for over a decade. This year CSW hosted North Korean defectors Shin Dong-hyuk and Kim Hye Sook, who testified in hearings in the British Parliament. CSW has also testified on North Korea in the US Congress, and hosted North Korean defectors in previous years who have testified in the European Parliament. On 8 September CSW helped to establish the International Coalition to Stop Crimes Against Humanity in North Korea (ICNK), incorporating 40 global human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the International Federation for Human Rights. In 2007, CSW published a landmark report on North Korea's prison camp system and the case for a Commission of Inquiry into crimes against humanity, [North Korea: A Case to Answer, A Call to Act.](#)

CSW's Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, "There is now a real opportunity for North Korea to change direction, end its isolation, stop the brutal oppression of its own people and open up to the world. North Korea should invite the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in North Korea to visit the country and access their notorious prison camps. CSW urges the North Korean regime to take the initiative at this unique moment in time in order to introduce fundamental changes and close the prison camps, end torture, slave labor and summary executions, respect religious freedom and release all prisoners of conscience. The international community should seize the moment to press for these changes."

### Notes to Editors:

1. For more information on the International Coalition to Stop Crimes Against Humanity in North Korea, please visit the website: [www.stopnocrimes.org](http://www.stopnocrimes.org)