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NORTH KOREA World's major human rights groups deliver open letter to Kim Jong-un urging a new era

The world's three largest international human rights organizations, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), along with 40 other organizations from around the world, today released an **open letter to Kim Jong-un**, the heir-apparent to the leadership of North Korea.

The letter, by members of the International Coalition to Stop Crimes Against Humanity in North Korea (ICNK), urges General Kim to reverse the decades-long pattern of human rights violations and abuses committed by the government in Pyongyang against the North Korean people.

Ha Tae Keung, President of Open North Korea and a member of the ICNK Coordinating Committee, said, "Kim Jong-un should look to his legacy. He has the opportunity to be remembered as the leader who restored freedom to the people of North Korea. He can bring his country out of isolation and assure peace and security on the Korean peninsula. But he can do this only by respecting the basic human rights of the North Korean people. He should open the country to international human rights monitors, close the prison camps and set the captives free."

Human rights violations cited in the open letter include:

- Over 200,000 men, women and children held for political reasons in a system of prison and labour camps;
- Relatives of political prisoners incarcerated through 'guilt by association;'
- A population of 24.5 million people living in fear that their loyalty to the regime will be questioned, leading to their arbitrary detention, disappearance, torture or death;
- Widespread hunger, malnutrition and lack of health care while a political elite lives like royalty.

The open letter calls on Kim Jong-un to live up to the rights enshrined in international treaties which North Korea has signed, and grant access to human rights monitors, especially the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in North Korea and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)..

The ICNK includes human rights campaigners from around the world, including Asia, Latin America, North America, and Europe (see list below). Reflecting the global commitment to hold the North Korea government accountable for widespread and systematic violations, human rights organizations such as Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), Jubilee Campaign, People In Need, Freedom House and the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea have joined forces with organizations such as Kontras (Indonesia), Odhikar (Bangladesh), Conectas (Brazil) and the Inter-American Federation of Christian Lawyers to put the spotlight on one of the world's most abusive human rights situations. Survivors of North Korean prison camps, and their groups such as Free NK Gulag, added their support to the Coalition.

For further information please contact:

Seoul, Ha Tae Keung, Open North Korea & Secretariat to the Coalition (Korean, English): +82-50-5470-7470; or opennk@naver.com

Tokyo, Kanae Doi, Human Rights Watch (Japanese, English): 03-5282-5162; 090-2301-4372 (mobile); or doik@hrw.org

London, Kiri Kankhwende, Christian Solidarity Worldwide (English): +44 208 329 0045; or kiri@csw.org.uk

Bangkok, Phil Robertson, Human Rights Watch (English, Thai): +66-85-060-8406 (mobile); or robertp@hrw.org

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 Katakomb (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)