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## **NORTH KOREA | UN Human Rights Council Calls for Security Council Action**

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) welcomes the strong resolution on North Korea, passed March 28 by the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC), including a request for the UN Security to take action on North Korea's human rights situation.

The resolution includes an official response to the report of the UN Commission of Inquiry on North Korea (COI) and includes a wide range of recommendations, most notably encouraging UN Security Council consideration of the report, including possible referral of North Korea to an "appropriate international criminal justice mechanism".

The resolution "condemns in the strongest terms the ongoing and systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations" in North Korea including the "denial of the right of freedom of thought, conscience and religion". It goes on to acknowledge "the body of testimony and information received provides reasonable grounds to believe that crimes against humanity have been committed".

Other key recommendations of the resolution included the creation of a new mechanism to continue COI's work of information and evidence collection, as well as a renewal of the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in North Korea.

Earlier last week the COI concluded its one-year mandate by presenting its final report to the HRC. In his concluding remarks, the COI's Chair Justice Michael Kirby said, "The world is now better informed about Korea. It is watching. It will judge us by our response. This Commission's recommendations should not sit on the shelf... It is now your duty to address the scourge of human rights violations and crimes against humanity in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea."

CSW and the Jubilee Campaign, in a joint oral statement to the HRC, said, "The clear and unambiguous evidence of the wide range of crimes against humanity being committed in the DPRK, and the near certainty of command responsibility, demand an equally clear response... The blood and the tears and what is left of the dignity of the North Korean people cry out to us. We must act."

CSW's East Asia Team Leader Benedict Rogers said, "CSW warmly welcomes this resolution and echoes the call for the UN Security Council to take action on the unparalleled human rights violations in North Korea. Among the findings of the COI report is an almost complete denial of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion in the country. Christianity is considered a particularly severe threat, with the result that Christians are prohibited from practicing their

religion. We call on Christians and church leaders worldwide, including Pope Francis Archbishop Welby, to pray for and speak out on behalf of the suffering people of North Korea, and especially on behalf of Christians in the country, who are among the most persecuted in the world.”