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NORTH KOREA | Religious Liberty Partnership Calls For Action

The [Religious Liberty Partnership](#) (RLP), a coalition of Christian organizations from over 20 countries that focus on religious liberty, has released a statement on May 7 calling for the release of all detainees in North Korea, an independent tribunal and sanctions against officials responsible for human rights violations.

It comes in the wake of the [official report](#) of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in North Korea, which found “the gravity, scale and nature” of the violations of human rights in North Korea “reveal a State that does not have any parallel in the contemporary world”. It details crimes against humanity including “extermination, murder, enslavement, torture, imprisonment, rape, forced abortions and other sexual violence, persecution on political, religious, racial and gender grounds, the forcible transfer of populations, the enforced disappearance of persons and the inhumane act of knowingly causing prolonged starvation”.

The RLP Ottawa Statement on the Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of North Korea (DPRK) expresses concern about the individuals imprisoned in the concentration camp system, victims of religious persecution, female victims of abuse, and North Korean refugees in China. It calls for “a response of strong international organization and governmental action in light of this comprehensive report.”

The RLP commits to “heightening in-depth research on human rights and religious freedom violations in North Korea through documenting accounts of refugee survivors” and to “disseminate widely information on the reality of life within North Korea.”

The Commission of Inquiry also found “there is an almost complete denial of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as well as the rights to freedom of opinion, expression, information and association”. It concludes that the regime “considers the spread of Christianity a particularly severe threat” and as a result, “Christians are prohibited from practising their religion and are persecuted”.

CSW’s Chief Executive and RLP Chairman Mervyn Thomas said, “It is extremely important that the well-documented report and recommendations from the UN Commission of Inquiry does not now lie on a shelf somewhere in the United Nations gathering dust. The unspeakable human rights atrocities highlighted in this report have been going on for far too long, and the international community must now act in order to make a real difference in the lives of ordinary North Korean citizens. The time for action is now!”