



6.22.15

## **NORTH KOREA | CSW Welcomes New UN Human Rights Office**

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) welcomes the establishment of a new UN Human Rights Office in Seoul, South Korea, which will focus on the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

The office fulfils one of the recommendations of the ground-breaking February 2014 report of the UN Commission of Inquiry on human rights in the DPRK, endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council, to establish "a field-based structure to strengthen monitoring and documentation of the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea."

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, will open the UN Human Rights Office as part of his three-day official visit to Seoul which concludes June 25.

The Commission of Inquiry concluded that "unspeakable atrocities" continue to be perpetrated against the North Korean people, and that "the gravity, scale and nature of these violations reveal a State that does not have any parallel in the contemporary world." The February 2014 report concluded that "a number of long-standing and ongoing patterns of systematic and widespread violations in [North Korea] met the high threshold required for crimes against humanity in international law" and that these crimes "clearly merit a criminal investigation."

In November 2014, the UN General Assembly voted in favor of a recommendation that the Security Council refer North Korea to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

CSW's Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, "We warmly welcome the opening of the new UN office in Seoul, which was specifically recommended by the UN Commission of Inquiry. This is a very significant step forward and will serve to keep the appalling human rights situation in North Korea on the agenda of the international community, and continue the process of documenting crimes against humanity in North Korea with a view to holding the perpetrators of such crimes accountable. We look forward to working with the UN Human Rights Office to ensure that the truth about North Korea continues to be documented and reported and that justice is done."