



Oral Statement by the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute

58th Session of the Human Rights Council

ITEM 6 - UPR Outcome of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

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The Dire Situation in North Korea Requires Decisive Steps Towards Justice and Accountability

The IBA's Human Rights Institute (the IBAHRI) is highly concerned that over ten years after the report of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (CoI), chaired by Justice Kirby, many of the recommendations have not been implemented.

The human rights situation in North Korea is one of the worst in the world, although it rarely receives adequate attention from the international community. The 2014 CoI report classified the atrocities as crimes against humanity. The report further considered the issue of genocide; however, it did not make a clear determination and called for further evidence and consideration. The 2014 CoI report made several recommendations, including for States to refer the situation in North Korea to the International Criminal Court (ICC). Over ten years later, this has not been attempted yet.

Furthermore, recent years have seen several concerning reports on abuses of North Koreans abroad. Among others, thousands of North Koreans have been sent to certain death to Russia to be used on the frontlines and in areas of hostilities, often referred to as 'meatgringer.' Reports also suggest the use of North Koreans in conditions of modern-day slavery globally, including on Chinese tuna vessels.

North Koreans must be ensured their human rights, in North Korea and beyond.

The IBAHRI calls upon members of the Council to:

- Intensify efforts necessary to effectively ensure the cessation of ongoing crimes against humanity and possible genocide,

- Take all possible actions to support the implementation of all recommendations contained in the 2014 CoI report,
- Support any accountability effort to bring perpetrators to justice, including seriously considering a referral of the situation to the ICC.

The IBAHRI urges the government of North Korea to:

- Immediately halt ongoing gross human rights violations and other crimes under international law, ensure justice and remedy to victims/survivors,
- Ensure compliance with the obligations contained in human rights treaties to which the DPRK is a party.

Thank you.

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