



THE COMMITTEE FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA
북한인권위원회



Human Rights Groups HRNK and JBI Call For Deeds, not Words from North Korea; Seek a Strong General Assembly Resolution based on the COI Recommendations

New York, October 29, 2014 — The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) and the Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights (JBI) call upon states in the United Nations General Assembly to support the recommendations made by the UN Commission of Inquiry (COI)'s report on human rights in the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea). The COI held extensive hearings of hundreds of witnesses, and produced a 400-page in-depth study which found systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations in the DPRK amounting to crimes against humanity. It called for referral of North Korea's human rights situation to the UN Security Council with a view to accountability, including through a criminal justice court, and targeted sanctions.

To head off support for these findings in a General Assembly resolution, North Korea is now waging a diplomatic counter-offensive. Although for the past ten years, the DPRK has ignored human rights resolutions and reports of the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly, it is now offering to cooperate. While cooperation should be pursued, "it cannot be used to barter away and gut the text of a UN resolution based on the COI findings and recommendations for accountability," said HRNK Co-Chair Roberta Cohen.

"Words must be accompanied by deeds," remarked Felice Gaer, JBI Director. "Any change on the part of the UN should be based on deeds-- genuine and verifiable improvements on the ground." According to Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of HRNK, "North Korea continues to deny well documented severe violations, in particular at the political prison camps. There is no discernable progress on the ground to match its diplomatic counteroffensive."

On October 21, Justice Michael Kirby, Chair of the COI, addressing a special 'side event' at the United Nations, asked "will the United Nations back away because of the steps belatedly taken by North Korea?...my hope is that the answer to that question will be 'no.' We don't back away.. we expect accountability for great crimes." And that, he also said, "is the right of the people of North Korea," who should be provided with copies of the COI report in Korean. This UN side event was co-sponsored by JBI, HRNK and other non-governmental groups together with Australia, Botswana and Panama.

HRNK is the leading U.S.-based bipartisan, non-governmental organization in the field of North Korean human rights research and advocacy, tasked to focus international attention on human rights abuses, and to seek solutions to improve human rights in that country. For the past decade, HRNK has published twenty major reports, which have significantly contributed to bringing world attention to human rights abuses in North Korea. "Hidden Gulag" by David Hawk (2003 and 2012) constituted a turning point in international efforts to expose the egregious human rights violations perpetrated inside North Korea's prison camps. See: www.hrnk.org.

The Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights (JBI) works to advance human rights worldwide. Since its origin in 1971, JBI has conducted and supported original research and policy analyses of central issues on international human rights. Its work aims to improve the protection of international human rights through the machinery of the United Nations and other international organizations, and through the policies of individual governments.

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