

## **Joint Statement on the Human Rights Situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea**

*The following is a joint statement, delivered by Ambassador Joonkook Hwang, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the UN, in his national capacity, on behalf of the Republic of Korea, Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Micronesia, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, New Zealand, Palau, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, Ukraine, Uruguay, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union.*

I would like to deliver a statement, in my national capacity as the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, on behalf of 57 Member States and the Delegation of the European Union.

This morning, the Security Council will discuss the human rights situation in the DPRK as the Council remains seized of this matter of international peace and security.

This year marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landmark UN Commission of Inquiry Report on Human Rights in the DPRK. It was a watershed moment for the international community to shift its approach on DPRK human rights issues toward action - from monitoring to accountability.

Ten years ago, the COI reported that the international community's response had been inadequate. Today, we continue to face a human rights crisis that is worsening, while the DPRK engages in increasingly provocative behavior. The DPRK continues to commit systematic, widespread, and gross human rights violations and abuses. These include restrictions on freedom of expression and freedom of movement, collective punishment, arbitrary detention, torture and other cruel, inhuman, and degrading punishments, including public executions without fair trial, and issues related to abductees, detainees, and unrepatriated prisoners of war.

The DPRK's control over its own people has been further tightened. This includes the possibility of the death penalty under its newly enacted domestic laws for merely sharing ROK movies or publications. The social and economic rights, including the right to food, have also deteriorated due to the DPRK's intensified control over food distribution and exacerbated discrimination based on social class.

Over the past years, we have also seen how the abysmal human rights and humanitarian situation in the DPRK is closely intertwined with the advancement of its weapons programs, like two sides of the same coin.

The DPRK is diverting its scarce resources toward its development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles in violations of UN Security Council resolutions at the expense of the well-being of the people in the DPRK alongside political impunity for its human rights violations and abuses at home. The DPRK's oppressive political and social system has allowed it to remain in power and vigorously develop nuclear and missile capabilities. The DPRK's exploitation of its citizens, domestically and overseas, including through forced labor, generates revenues that finance its weapons programs.

As such, we now call on all UN Member States to join us in taking action to bring concrete change that improves the welfare of people in the DPRK and contributes to a more peaceful and secure world. ###