

North Korean Christians Plead: 'Don't Forget Us'

North Korea is the world's most closed nation, ruled by one of the world's most repressive regimes. Over 200,000 people remain in desperate conditions in the country's prison camps, where they are subjected to extreme torture, slave labor, sexual abuse and starvation.

band Ooberfuse released "Vanish the Night," a new song aimed at drawing attention to North Korea's dire human rights crisis, to mark North Korea Freedom Week. The story of North Korean escapee Shin Dong-hyuk and the work of Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) inspired the song.

The song, "Vanish the Night," begins with a message from Shin Dong-hyuk, who was born in a North Korean prison camp: "Don't forget us."

Christians are among the most oppressed in a country where there is no **freedom of religion** or belief. The U.N. Human Rights Council recently established a Commission of Inquiry to investigate crimes against humanity in North Korea, following five years of campaigning by CSW and others. In 2011, CSW helped establish the International Coalition to Stop Crimes Against Humanity in North Korea (ICNK), drawing together more than 40 human rights organizations from around the world.

Ooberfuse has previously released songs in memory of Pakistan's assassinated Federal Minister for Minorities Affairs Shahbaz Bhatti and jailed Pakistani Christian Asia Bibi, as well as the official English language song for the Catholic Church's World Youth Day.

"We have joined forces with Shin Dong-hyuk, who was actually born inside one of these gulags but who managed, against all odds, to escape through a deadly high-voltage barbed wire

fence patrolled by soldiers with instructions to kill on sight,” says Cherrie Anderson from Ooberfuse. “His account of the routine violence and brutality inside Camp 14 ignited our desire to respond somehow. ‘Vanish the Night’ calls for the lights to be turned on in what has been described as one of the darkest places on earth. Our song is a message of hope for the ordinary people of North Korea whose suffering often goes unnoticed and whose cries are largely unheard.”

Benedict Rogers, CSW’s East Asia team leader, hopes that “Vanish the Night” will help to “raise public awareness of the horrific human rights crisis in North Korea and encourage people to continue pray and protest until we see freedom come to its citizens.”