

UN Human Rights Council Investigating North Korea

The United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) adopted a resolution establishing a commission of Inquiry “to investigate the systematic, widespread and grave violations of human rights” in North Korea.

The long-awaited resolution was welcomed warmly by Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) after years of advocacy and campaigning, along with a range of civil society organizations, to focus international attention on the crimes perpetrated on the North Korean people by one of the world’s most brutal regimes.

CSW first recommended an international inquiry in 2007 in its report North Korea: A Case to Answer, A Call to Act. In 2011 CSW helped establish the International Coalition to Stop Crimes against Humanity in North Korea (ICNK), drawing together over 40 human rights organizations around the world to campaign for an investigation into North Korea’s human rights record.

This call was echoed earlier this year by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navanethem Pillay, while the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in North Korea, Marzuki Darusman, described the North Korean government’s human rights abuses as “egregious” and recommended the establishment of “a more detailed mechanism of inquiry” in his most recent report.

The Commission of Inquiry will investigate human rights violations including “the violation of the right to food, the violations associated with prison camps, torture and inhuman treatment, arbitrary detention, discrimination, violations of freedom of expression, violations of the right to life,

violations of freedom of movement, and enforced disappearances, including in the form of abductions of nationals of other states, with a view to ensuring full accountability, in particular where these violations may amount to crimes against humanity.” The resolution also extends the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for another year.

“CSW warmly welcomes this resolution, which is the result of years of advocacy and campaigning by CSW, along with other human rights organizations and North Korean defectors,” says CSW’s Advocacy Director Andrew Johnston.

“We hope that the Commission of Inquiry will expose the extent of the North Korean government’s human rights violations and provide the first steps towards justice for the North Korean people, who have suffered terribly under one of the world’s most brutal, and most closed, regimes.”