

**Joint statement calling for the incorporation of the key contents of  
the 79<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly’s resolution 79/181 on North Korean human rights adopted on December 17, 2024  
in the 58<sup>th</sup> Human Rights Council’s draft North Korean human rights resolution**

March 14, 2025

We call upon South Korea and other like-minded governments to make efforts to incorporate the key contents of the 79<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly’s resolution 79/181 on North Korean human rights adopted on December 17, 2024 in the 58<sup>th</sup> Human Rights Council’s North Korean human rights resolution which must be submitted by March 21, 2025 at 1 pm (Geneva time).<sup>1</sup>

The proposed additions below have been taken verbatim from General Assembly resolution 79/181 which was adopted without a vote by consensus by 193 UN member states, including the 47 member states of the Human Rights Council, three months ago (The proposed addition to the HRC58 draft resolution is marked in yellow while the language copied from GA resolution 79/181 is marked in green).

The proposed additions to preambular paragraphs 19, 20 and 22 and operative paragraphs 1(e), 1(f), 1(i) and 2(h), 2(m), 3, 6 and 31 below cover the issues of abductees, detainees and prisoners of war (POWs), separated families, political prison camps, labor rights and forced abortions and infanticide against repatriated mothers and their children.

1. North Korea’s forced separation of abductees and their families (PP19)

- PP19 *Stressing again with grave concern* the urgency and importance of the issue of international abductions, which involves a serious violation of human rights, and of the immediate return of all abductees, as they and their family members are aging and there is no time to lose, expressing grave concern at the long years of severe suffering experienced by abductees and their families **as a result of their forced separation**, the lack of any concrete or positive action by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, notably since the investigations on all the Japanese nationals commenced on the basis of the government-level consultations held between the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and Japan in May 2014, and the identical and non-substantive replies by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to the numerous communications transmitted by the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, and strongly demanding again that the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea sincerely listen to the victims and their families to address all allegations of enforced disappearances, clarify the fate and whereabouts of disappeared persons and faithfully provide accurate, detailed and full information promptly to the families of victims, and resolve immediately all issues relating to all abductees, in particular the realization of the immediate return of all abductees of Japan and the Republic of Korea,
- [see PP23 of GA resolution 79/181: “*Stressing again with grave concern* the urgency and importance of the issue of international abductions, which involves a serious violation of human rights, and of the immediate return of all abductees, as they and their family members are ageing and there is no time to lose, expressing grave concern at the long years of severe suffering experienced by abductees and their families **as a result of their forced separation**, and the lack of any concrete or positive action by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, notably since the investigations on all the Japanese nationals commenced on the basis of the government-level consultations held between the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and Japan in May 2014 and the identical and non-substantive replies by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to the numerous communications transmitted by the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, and strongly demanding again that the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea sincerely listen to the voices of the victims and their families to address all allegations of enforced disappearances, clarify the fate and whereabouts of disappeared persons and faithfully provide accurate, detailed and full information promptly to the families of the victims, and resolve immediately all issues relating to all abductees, in particular the realization of the immediate return of all abductees of Japan and the Republic of Korea,”]

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<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Council Extranet, 58th session of the Human Rights Council (24 February to 4 April 2025), Draft resolutions, decisions and President’s statements, <https://hrcmeetings.ohchr.org/HRCSessions/RegularSessions/58/Pages/resolutions.aspx>

2. North Korea's continued failure in its obligation to repatriate the South Korean POWs under the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (PP20)

- PP20 *Noting with concern* the allegations of continued violations of the human rights of unrepatriated prisoners of war and their descendants, and **the continued failure of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in its obligations to repatriate under the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, of 12 August 1949, and noting with concern also** the issue of nationals of other States Members of the United Nations detained in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, with no information available regarding their health or the conditions of their detention,
- [see PP24 of GA resolution 79/181: "*Noting with concern* the allegations of continued violations of the human rights of unrepatriated prisoners of war and their descendants, and **the continued failure of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in its obligations to repatriate under the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, of 12 August 1949, and noting with concern also** the issue of nationals of other Member States arbitrarily detained in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with no information available regarding their health or the conditions of their detention,"]

3. A call to end the forced separation of separated families (PP22)

- PP22 *Stressing* the urgency and importance of the issue of separated families, including affected Koreans worldwide, in this regard encouraging the resumption of reunions of separated families and in accordance with the commitments made on this issue at the inter-Korean summit held on 19 September 2018 to strengthen humanitarian cooperation to fundamentally resolve the issue of separated families, **to end their forced separation**, and highlighting the importance of allowing permanent regular reunions and contact between separated families, including through meetings at an easily accessible location and regular facility, regular written correspondence, video reunions and the exchange of video messages, in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions,
- [see PP25 of GA resolution 79/181: "*Stressing* the urgency and importance of the issue of separated families, including affected Koreans worldwide, and in this regard urging the resumption of the reunions of separated families, considering the advanced age of the family members concerned, including the implementation of the commitments made on this issue at the inter-Korean summit held on 19 September 2018 to strengthen humanitarian cooperation to fundamentally resolve the issue of separated families, **to end their forced separation**, and allow permanent regular reunions and contact between separated families, including through meetings at an easily accessible location and regular facility, regular written correspondence, video reunions and the exchange of video messages, in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions,"]

4. Adding "political" before "prison camps" (OP1(e))

- OP1(e) Violations of the right to life and acts of extermination, murder, enslavement, torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, imprisonment, rape and other grave forms of sexual and gender-based violence and persecution on any grounds, including on the grounds of political opinion, religion or belief and sexual orientation and gender identity, throughout the entire penal system and in all places of detention, including in **political** prison camps, re-education camps, labour training camps, labour training centres, detention centres, holding centres and waiting rooms, and the widespread practice of collective punishment, with harsh sentences imposed on innocent individuals;
- [see OP2(a)(ii) of GA resolution 79/181: "The existence of an extensive penal system including **political** prison camps, re-education camps, labour training camps, labour training centres, detention centres, holding centres and waiting rooms, where a vast number of persons are deprived of their liberty and subjected to deplorable conditions, including forced labour, and where alarming violations of human rights are perpetrated;"]

5. Forced abortions and invasive body cavity searches endured by North Korean women and girls (OP1(f))

- OP1(f) Persistent violations and abuses of all rights of all women and girls, who remain the most vulnerable to trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation or domestic servitude and to child, early and forced marriage

and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, **including through forced abortions, invasive body cavity searches;**

- [see OP2(a)(viii) of GA resolution 79/181: “Violations of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women and girls, including unequal access to employment and discriminatory regulations; as well as, in particular, the creation of internal conditions that force women and girls to leave the country, making them extremely vulnerable to trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation, forced labour, domestic servitude or forced marriage, and their subjection to sexual and gender-based discrimination, including in the political and social spheres, as well as throughout the entire penal system, **including through forced abortions, invasive body cavity searches** and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence;”]

6. North Korea’s denial of repatriation of South Korean POWs and the immediate return of all abductees, detainees and unrepatriated prisoners of war (OP1(i) and OP2(h))

- OP1(i) Systematic abduction, denial of repatriation and subsequent enforced disappearance of persons, including those from other States Members of the United Nations, on a large scale and as a matter of State policy, **as well as denial of repatriation of prisoners of war;**
- OP2(h) Urgently resolving the issue of all persons who have been abducted or otherwise forcibly disappeared and their descendants by clarifying their fate and whereabouts in good faith and with transparency, including by ensuring the realization of their immediate return **of all abductees, detainees and unrepatriated prisoners of war,** and engaging in constructive dialogue with the parties concerned;
- [see OP3 of GA resolution 79/181: “Condemns the systematic abduction, denial of repatriation and subsequent enforced disappearance of persons, including those from other Member States, on a large scale and as a matter of State policy, **as well as denial of repatriation of prisoners of war,** and in this regard strongly urges the Government of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to engage in constructive dialogues with the parties concerned and to urgently resolve these issues of international grave concern, by clarifying their whereabouts in good faith and in a transparent manner, including by ensuring the realization of the immediate return **of all abductees, detainees and unrepatriated prisoners of war;**”]

7. North Korea’s forced abortions and infanticide against repatriated mothers and their children and trials that do not conform with international fair trial guarantees for repatriated North Korean refugees (OP2(m))

- OP2(m) Ensuring that citizens of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea who have been expelled or repatriated to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea are able to return in safety and dignity, are treated humanely and are not subjected to any kind of human rights violation, including enforced disappearance, arbitrary execution, torture and ill-treatment, as well as sexual and gender-based violence, **including forced abortions and infanticide against repatriated mothers and their children, and trials that do not conform with international fair trial guarantees,** and providing information on their status and treatment, in particular of women, children and persons with disabilities in detention;
- [see OP19(g) of GA resolution 79/181: “To ensure that citizens of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea who are expelled or returned to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea are able to return in safety and dignity, are treated humanely and are not subjected to any kind of human rights violations and abuses, including enforced disappearances, arbitrary executions, torture and ill-treatment, sexual and gender-based violence, **including forced abortions and infanticide against repatriated mothers and their children, and trials that do not conform with international fair trial guarantees,** and to provide information on their status and treatment, in particular of women, children and persons with disabilities in detention;”]

8. Membership in the International Labour Organization (ILO), compliance with international labour standards and ratification of the ILO core conventions (OP3)

- OP3 *Recalls* General Assembly resolution 78/218, in which the Assembly expressed its very serious concern at the violations of workers’ rights, including the right to freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the right to strike, and the prohibition of the economic exploitation of children and

of any harmful or hazardous work of children, as well as at the exploitation of workers sent abroad from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to work under conditions that reportedly amount to forced labour, often for the purpose of generating income for the Government **and in which the Assembly strongly urged the Government to become a member of the International Labour Organization, to enact legislation and adopt practices to comply with international labour standards and to consider ratifying all the relevant conventions, in particular the core labour conventions of the International Labour Organization;**

- [see OP19(m) of GA resolution 79/181: “*Strongly urges* the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to respect, protect and fulfil all human rights and fundamental freedoms and, in this regard: ... **To become a member of the International Labour Organization, to enact legislation and adopt practices to comply with international labour standards and to consider ratifying all the relevant conventions, in particular the core labour conventions of the International Labour Organization;**”]

#### 9. North Korea's forced abortions and infanticide against repatriated mothers and their children (OP6)

- OP6 *Reiterates* its deep concern at the findings of the commission of inquiry and subsequent investigations of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights concerning the situation of refugees and asylum-seekers returned to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and other citizens of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea who have been repatriated from abroad and made subject to sanctions, including internment, torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, sexual and gender-based violence, **including forced abortions and infanticide against repatriated mothers and their children**, enforced disappearance or the death penalty, in this regard strongly urges all States to respect the fundamental principle of non-refoulement, especially in the light of the resumption of cross-border travel, including where the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea exerts pressure on returning States to effectuate such returns, to take action to counter acts of transnational repression by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to treat humanely those who seek refuge and to ensure unhindered access to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, with a view to protecting the human rights of those who seek refuge, and to ensure adequate international protection by refraining from sharing information about the contacts and conduct of refugees, asylum-seekers and other citizens of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and once again urges States to comply with their obligations under international human rights law, including the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment as well as the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Protocol thereto, in relation to persons from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea who are covered by those instruments;
- [see OP2(a)(v) of GA resolution 79/181: “The situation of refugees and asylum-seekers expelled or returned to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including where the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea exerts pressure on returning States to effectuate such returns, and retaliations against citizens of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea who have been repatriated from abroad, leading to punishments of internment, torture, other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, sexual and gender-based violence, **including forced abortions and infanticide against repatriated mothers and their children**, or the death penalty, and in this regard strongly urges all Member States to respect the fundamental principle of non-refoulement, especially in the light of a resumption of cross-border travel, including where the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea exerts pressure on returning States to effectuate such returns, to take action to counter acts of transnational repression by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to treat those who seek refuge humanely and to ensure unhindered access to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and his Office, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, with a view to protecting the human rights of those who seek refuge, and to refrain from sharing information about the contacts and conduct of refugees, asylum-seekers and other citizens of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and once again urges States parties to comply with their obligations under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereto in relation to refugees from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea who are covered by those instruments, as well as under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;”]

10. Dialogue on and engagement with regard to the humanitarian and human rights situation, including enforced disappearances, international abductions and the forced separation of families (OP31)

- OP31 Encourages all States, the United Nations system, including its relevant specialized agencies, regional intergovernmental organizations and forums, civil society organizations, foundations and engaged business enterprises and other stakeholders to support efforts aimed at improving dialogue on and engagement with regard to the humanitarian and human rights situation, including enforced disappearances, international abductions and the forced separation of families, in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, and inter-Korean dialogue;
- [see OP23 of GA resolution 79/181: “Encourages all Member States, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Secretariat, relevant specialized agencies, regional intergovernmental organizations and forums, civil society organizations, foundations and engaged business enterprises and other stakeholders towards which the commission of inquiry has directed recommendations to implement or take forward those recommendations, and to also support efforts aimed at resuming and improving dialogue, including inter-Korean dialogue, on the humanitarian and human rights situation, including enforced disappearances, international abductions and the forced separation of families in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea;”]

We lastly ask the like-minded states to specifically call for the immediate and unconditional release of South Korean missionaries Kim Jung-wook, Kim Kook-kie and Choi Chun-gil in speeches and the draft resolution (OP 2(1)). We note that North Korea has released detained Korean American and Korean Canadian missionaries on “humanitarian grounds” in the past and that detained Reuters journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, who were named in EU-sponsored Human Rights Council resolutions 37/32 of 23 March 2018, 39/2 of 27 September 2018 and 40/29 of 22 March 2019 on Myanmar, were released on 7 May 2019 by a presidential amnesty.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Signature organizations and individuals (as of March 14, 2025)

Kim Kyu Li and Kim Hyuk (elder sister and cousin of Kim Cheol-ok who was repatriated by China to North Korea on October 9, 2023)

Kim Jeong-sam (elder brother of missionary Kim Jeong-wook who has been held in detention in North Korea since 2013)

Citizens’ Alliance for North Korean Human Rights (NKHR)

Justice For North Korea

Korean War POW Family Association

Mulmangcho

No Chain

Stepping Stones

THINK

Transitional Justice Working Group (TJWG)