**30th session of the Human Rights Council  
Agenda item 4**

**Panel discussion on the situation of human rights   
in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea,   
including the issue of international abductions, enforced disappearances and related matters**

*Concept note (as at 8 September 2015)*

**Date and time: Monday, 21 September 2015, 12 - 3 p.m.**

**Venue:** **Room XX, Palais des Nations, Geneva**

**Background:** The General Assembly and the Human Rights Council have adopted numerous resolutions on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, culminating in the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry that reported last year.[[1]](#footnote-1) The Commission report[[2]](#footnote-2) documented long-standing and on-going patterns of systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations. These relate to violations of the freedoms of thought, expression and religion; discrimination based on the *songbun* system; violations of the freedom of movement and residence; violations of the right to food and related aspects of the right to life; arbitrary detention, torture, executions and prison camps; and abductions and enforced disappearances from other countries. The Commission concluded that these violations met the high threshold for crimes against humanity in international law, and that the main perpetrators should be brought to justice. The Government of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea has categorically rejected this report.

In its resolution 25/25, the Human Rights Council welcomed the report[[3]](#footnote-3) of the Commission of Inquiry and called upon all parties concerned to consider implementation of its recommendations. In resolution 69/188, the General Assembly decided to submit the report of the Commission of Inquiry to the Security Council and encouraged it to consider its relevant conclusions and

recommendations and take appropriate action to ensure accountability, including through consideration of referral of the situation in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to the International Criminal Court. In December 2014, the Security Council added “the situation in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea” to its agenda.

In its resolution 28/22, the Human Rights Council decided “to convene a panel discussion on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, including the issue of international abductions, enforced disappearances and related matters” at its 30th session (paragraph 11).

**Focus and objectives:** To raise further awareness and understanding of the human rights situation in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and propose strategies for action, including on the issue of international abductions, enforced disappearances and related matters.

**Chair**: **H.E. Mr. Joachim Ruecker**, President, Human Rights Council

**Moderator:** **Mr. Michael Kirby**, former Chair of the Commission of Inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea

**Panellists**:

1. **Mr. Marzuki Darusman**, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea [Special procedure of the Human Rights Council]
2. **Mr. David Hawk**, author of *The Hidden Gulag: Putting Human Rights on the North Korea Policy Agenda* [A scholar / researcher specialized in this topic]
3. **Mr. Koichiro Iizuka**, Vice Secretary-General, Association of Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea, to present the overall issue of abductions, enforced disappearances and related matters affecting nationals of multiple countries [Civil society]
4. **Ms. Kwon Eun-kyoung** representing the International Coalition to Stop Crimes Against Humanity in North Korea (ICNK) to present on the overall situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea [Civil society]

**Format:** The moderator will make introductory remarks to introduce the panel discussion and ask panellists to make their presentations (five minutes each). An interactive discussion will ensue, divided into two segments of 60 minutes each (45 minutes for comments and questions from the floor, followed by 15 minutes for comments and replies by panellists and moderator). The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea will be given the floor as the concerned country at the beginning of the list of speakers. States, national human rights institutions, international organizations and non-governmental organizations are encouraged to participate and make their contributions to the debate, subject to the modalities and the practices of the Council. In particular, NGO coordination is strongly encouraged to maximize the use of time. The speaking time for interventions from the floor during the two discussion segments is two minutes for States and observers. The interactive discussion will be followed by concluding remarks by the moderator.

**Non-exhaustive list of relevant United Nations documents:**

* HRC resolutions [28/22](http://search.un.org/?query=A%2FHRC%2FRES%2F25%2F22&searchTrigger=Search+the+ODS&SS=GS&tpl=ods&lang=en), [25/25](http://search.un.org/?query=A%2FHRC%2FRES%2F25%2F25&searchTrigger=Search+the+ODS&SS=GS&tpl=ods&lang=en), [22/13](http://search.un.org/?query=A%2FHRC%2FRES%2F22%2F13&searchTrigger=Search+the+ODS&SS=GS&tpl=ods&lang=en), [19/13](http://search.un.org/?query=A%2FHRC%2FRES%2F19%2F13&searchTrigger=Search+the+ODS&SS=GS&tpl=ods&lang=en), and GA resolutions [69/188](http://search.un.org/?query=A%2FRES%2F69%2F188&searchTrigger=Search+the+ODS&SS=GS&tpl=ods&lang=en), [67/181](http://search.un.org/?query=A%2FRES%2F67%2F181&searchTrigger=Search+the+ODS&SS=GS&tpl=ods&lang=en), [66/174](http://search.un.org/?query=A%2FRES%2F66%2F174&searchTrigger=Search+the+ODS&SS=GS&tpl=ods&lang=en) on the Situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea
* A/HRC/[25/63](http://search.un.org/?query=A%2FHRC%2F25%2F63&searchTrigger=Search+the+ODS&SS=GS&tpl=ods&lang=en), Report of the Commission of Inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea; [A/HRC/25/CRP.1](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/CoIDPRK/Pages/Documents.aspx), Report of its detailed findings
* A/HRC/[28/71](http://search.un.org/?query=A%2FHRC%2F28%2F71&searchTrigger=Search+the+ODS&SS=GS&tpl=ods&lang=en), A/HRC/[26/43](http://search.un.org/?query=A%2FHRC%2F26%2F43&searchTrigger=Search+the+ODS&SS=GS&tpl=ods&lang=en), A/HRC/[22/57](http://search.un.org/?query=A%2FHRC%2F22%2F57+&searchTrigger=Search+the+ODS&SS=GS&tpl=ods&lang=en) and A/HRC/[19/65](http://search.un.org/?query=A%2FHRC%2F19%2F65+&searchTrigger=Search+the+ODS&SS=GS&tpl=ods&lang=en) “Reports of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea”
* A/[69/639](http://search.un.org/?query=A%2F69%2F639&searchTrigger=Search+the+ODS&SS=GS&tpl=ods&lang=en), A/[68/392](http://search.un.org/?query=A%2F68%2F392&searchTrigger=Search+the+ODS&SS=GS&tpl=ods&lang=en), A/[67/362](http://search.un.org/?query=A%2F67%2F362&searchTrigger=Search+the+ODS&SS=GS&tpl=ods&lang=en), Reports of the Secretary-General on “Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea”
* A/[69/548](http://search.un.org/?query=A%2F69%2F548&searchTrigger=Search+the+ODS&SS=GS&tpl=ods&lang=en), A/[68/319](http://search.un.org/?query=A%2F68%2F319&searchTrigger=Search+the+ODS&SS=GS&tpl=ods&lang=en), A/[67/370](http://search.un.org/?query=A%2F67%2F370+&searchTrigger=Search+the+ODS&SS=GS&tpl=ods&lang=en) “Reports of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea”
* [S/PV.7353](http://search.un.org/?query=S%2FPV.7353+&searchTrigger=Search+the+ODS&SS=GS&tpl=ods&lang=en), Record of the Security Council meeting on “The situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea” held on Monday, 22 December 2014
* HRC decision [27/108](http://search.un.org/?query=A%2FHRC%2FDEC%2F27%2F108&searchTrigger=Search+the+ODS&SS=GS&tpl=ods&lang=en), “Outcome of the universal periodic review: Democratic People’s Republic of Korea”
* A/HRC/[27/10](http://search.un.org/?query=A%2FHRC%2F27%2F10+&searchTrigger=Search+the+ODS&SS=GS&tpl=ods&lang=en), Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review - Democratic People’s Republic of Korea

1. See non-exhaustive list of relevant United Nations documents at the end of this note. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A/HRC/25/63. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. A/HRC/25/63. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)