



## Human Rights Watch

### Oral Statement

March 17, 2014

#### Interactive Dialogue with the UN Commission of Inquiry on DPRK

Thank you Mr. President,

Human Rights Watch would like to pay tribute to the Commission of Inquiry, its team and Michael Kirby who lead the Commission with inspirational vision.

Rarely is the Human Rights Council confronted with a report like the one we have heard today. It describes a government that has relentlessly abused the rights of its citizens and foreign nationals in the most extreme and cruel way for over fifty years, affecting generations of North Koreans.

The atrocities described in this report are a profound challenge to the founding ideals of the United Nations. How can the world remain indifferent to testimonies such as that of the starving boy who was born in Camp 14 and had to witness the public execution of his mother and his brother.

The Commission found that these crimes against humanity were committed "pursuant to policies established at the highest level of the State".

Now we know.

The UN Security Council can no longer continue to act as if the nuclear threat were the only issue the UN needs to deal with in North Korea. The UN has a responsibility to respond, to protect the population in North Korea from further abuse.

Now we know.

The UN must bring to justice the perpetrators of these unspeakable crimes.

Mr. President, Elie Wiesel received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986. In his acceptance speech he said "No one may speak for the dead, no one may interpret their mutilated dreams and visions". We cannot speak for the dead or the loss experienced by North Korea's victims. But we can and must act for the living and those that have borne witness to such atrocities. Each of us has a duty towards them. We cannot betray the hope they have deposited in us and in the United Nations.