



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

### Forty-second session

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Agenda item 6

### Universal Periodic Review

## **Written statement\* submitted by People for Successful Corean Reunification, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[16 September 2019]

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\* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.

## **Without respecting the international human rights standards, DPRK will never be a responsible member of the International Community.**

### **Overview**

People for Successful COrean REunification (PSCORE) takes this opportunity at the 42nd session of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council (HRC) to raise serious concerns over North Korean human rights violations and the State's continued denial of those violations.

Despite the Kim Jong-Un administration's implementation of various national “plans” and “strategies” to promote the social rights of North Korean people, the Human Rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is still highly alarming.

PSCORE thinks that the responses provided by the DPRK during the third UPR on North Korea were disappointing considering the numerous recommendations that it refused to take into account. The DPRK is a signatory of some of the most important international human rights bills and seems to be trying to improve its relations with the international community. Considering this, the DPRK should be more receptive to the recommendations made by UN member states. PSCORE wishes that the DPRK rethink its refutation of the aforementioned recommendations and, instead, ensure for its people all basic human rights. Ensuring human rights for North Koreans should begin with changes in the following areas:

### **The international conventions**

The DPRK must respect the human rights protected by the conventions it has already ratified. Additionally, we urge the DPRK to endorse the remaining main human rights conventions it is not party to before the fourth UPR round in 2024.

The DPRK denies numerous human rights violations occurring under their regime, such as the existence of political prison camps and government-sanctioned abductions. However, the international community is aware of the situation in North Korea. We urge the DPRK to ratify the Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and its Optional Protocol. Indeed, if the DPRK does not torture its people and has no political prisoners and political prison camps as it keeps claiming, there is no reason for the government to not ratify those conventions. We are also looking forward to the DPRK joining the International Labour Organization and ratifying the eight fundamental ILO conventions. Encouraged by this demonstration of shared values, other governments may be more willing to engage the DPRK.

### **The freedom of movement both within and outside the country; and the urgent issue of abductions**

The freedom of movement proclaimed by Article 13 of the UDHR and Article 12 of the ICCPR has been violated in many instances by the successive Kim's governments for many decades now. For this reason, we would like to bring the attention of the international community to those matters. We urge countries to diplomatically push the North Korean government to finally take responsibility for their actions.

On December 11th, 1969, the Korean Airlines YS-11 plane from Gangneung Airbase bound for Gimpo International Airport was hijacked and its flight path changed to land in North Korea. This year, 2019, will mark the 50th year anniversary of this terrible event. 11 people have not yet returned to South Korea even though they expressed their desire to return home, according to reports by abductees who returned to South Korea. Unfortunately, the total number of abductees from South Korea does not end there. They can be counted by the thousands since the beginning of the Korean War. Indeed, before and after the KAL YS-11 incident, successive North Korean regimes kidnapped not only Korean nationals but also people coming from all around the world. Estimates of the total number of abductees have been made public by different official sources<sup>1</sup>. However, as it did in the second session of the UPR, the DPRK continues to reject all recommendations regarding abductions and involuntary disappearances. Thus, repatriation of the missing people is, again, impossible. The DPRK has voluntarily agreed to international rules which include the Hague Hijacking Convention and therefore should abide by these rules.

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1. People for Successful COrean Reunification (PSCORE), *Forgotten Abductees: 50 Years in North Korea, 1969 Korean Air Lines Hijacking*, Available at <http://bit.ly/2GbYrL9/>.

In addition to respecting the liberties of those inside the country, the DPRK has a duty to respect the liberties of its people moving outside of the country as well. To respect freedom of movement, the government must refrain from hunting and harassing North Korean citizens try to leave the country. It must not, under any circumstances, punish them for doing so by imprisonment or death. Finally, North Korea should not seek the help of bordering countries to forcibly repatriate people who have left the territory.

North Korea should stop increasing security and crackdowns. Instead the government should honor its responsibility to protect the lives and well-being of its people. People caught trying to escape the country should not be detained in political prisons nor should they be executed.

China's newest policies have led to more crackdowns and raids to capture North Korean defectors; it is imperative that the North Korean government does not share intelligence to help their capture outside of the territory.

By granting safe passage to China, the government can protect the lives and rights of its people, who are otherwise often forced to turn to criminal networks and thus fall into human trafficking such as prostitution, forced marriage or cybersex operations in China<sup>2</sup>.

### Child abuse

As PSCORE's upcoming report<sup>3</sup> demonstrates, the DPRK's government fails to protect children in three ways. First, the basic, underlying societal conditions in North Korea foster a climate of impunity regarding child abuse. These impunity-fostering conditions in North Korea include economic instability, weak or nonexistent law enforcement, and patriarchal, elitist morals.

Second, despite the implementation of the Children's Rights Act, the North Korean government fails to efficiently protect children from abuse. Interviews PSCORE conducted with North Korean defectors revealed that most had never heard the term "child abuse" since the two words were never used together. According to the interviewees, the word "child" is used alongside positive words only<sup>4</sup>. The fact that it is uncommon to discuss negative things happening to children reveals a weakness in children's rights and child protection in North Korea. DPRK must widen its understanding of "child abuse" to be able to prosecute and to condemn such mistreatments.

Consequently, and lastly, North Korea lacks any official post-abuse assistance for victims. Unlike in other countries, there are no psychological services or mechanisms to report crimes in North Korea. Sadly, though the DPRK ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1990, children in North Korea continue to suffer abuses with no legal recourse. As a signatory of the CRC, the DPRK needs to guarantee the rights of its children against abuse, as this is the norm after ratifying a treaty.

In a time of technologies that permit satellites to observe beyond borders and permit witnesses to share their stories with the rest of the world, Kim Jong-Un's government cannot hide behind lies anymore. We urge the DPRK to cease all human rights violations it is committing against its own people if it wants to one day have a legitimate and deserved place within the international community.

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2. Korea Future, *Sex Slaves, The Prostitution, Cybersex & Forced Marriage of North Korean Women & Girls in China*, Available at [https://www.koreafuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Korea\\_Future\\_Initiative-Sex\\_Slaves.pdf](https://www.koreafuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Korea_Future_Initiative-Sex_Slaves.pdf).

3. PSCORE, *Inescapable Violence, Child abuse within North Korea 2019*, (forthcoming).