

Statement by H.E. Ambassador LEE Jung-hoon

Ambassador for Human Rights of the Republic of Korea

Agenda item 69(c) (ID with the Commission of Inquiry and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the DPRK)

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Mr. Chairman,

My delegation would like to express its sincere appreciation to the Special Rapporteur and the Commission of Inquiry (COI) for their tireless efforts to implement their mandates.

The establishment of the Commission at the 22nd Session of the Human Rights Council clearly demonstrates the determination of the international community to strengthen its efforts to address this issue. During the visit of the Commission to the Republic of Korea last August, my government rendered all necessary assistance for its work while fully respecting its independence and impartiality. We believe that the activities of the Commission, especially the public hearings, have indeed been contributing to the enhancing of awareness of the suffering experienced by the people of the DPRK.

My delegation hopes that their continued dedication will lead to improvements in the human rights situation in the DPRK. To that end, the DPRK's cooperation is essential, which, regrettably, the DPRK has refused so far. My delegation once again urges the DPRK to cooperate with the Commission of Inquiry and the Special Rapporteur.

Sharing the concerns expressed by the Special Rapporteur in his report, my delegation also urges the DPRK to heed to his recommendations, including the release of all people detained in prison camps on the basis of guilt by association and the allocation of adequate resources to address its food situation. I would also like to join his call for the protection of refugees and asylum seekers from the DPRK and reiterate the importance of respecting the principle of non-refoulement in this regard. The DPRK is strongly urged to ensure the lives and safety of those repatriated and to refrain from imposing unjust punishment or ill treatment on them.

The issue of separated families remains as a deep concern of ours. It is regretful that the DPRK unilaterally cancelled the reunion of separated families across the inter-Korean border scheduled to be held in September despite of its earlier agreement to it. My delegation urges the DPRK to reschedule the family reunion as soon as possible with a view to alleviating the pain and suffering of the Korean people as a whole. In addition, we also call on the DPRK to take immediate measures to resolve the issues of abductees and prisoners of the Korean War detained in the DPRK.

Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Korea reaffirms its commitment to fully support the work of the Commission and the Special Rapporteur. We are confident that the Commission will indeed faithfully fulfill its mandate with great devotion and we look forward to the Commission 's report at the Human Rights Council next March.

Thank you.

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