

Human Rights Council – 40th Session

Interactive Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the
Democratic People's Republic of Korea

11 March 2019

Australian Statement

Australia continues to be deeply concerned by the grave human rights situation in the DPRK. We call on the DPRK Government to take urgent action to halt all human rights violations. Respect for human rights is essential to achieve lasting peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.

Five years ago, the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the DPRK reminded the world of the appalling human rights situation in the country. The COI, led by Australian former High Court Justice Michael Kirby, found that abuses perpetrated by the DPRK Government constituted no less than crimes against humanity.

We are deeply saddened that on the fifth anniversary of the COI's report, little has changed. Widespread human rights violations continue in the DPRK today. Freedoms of expression, assembly, religion or belief remain non-existent. Arbitrary detention and forced labour, among other abuses, remain wide spread. We call on the DPRK Government to implement the COI's recommendations as a matter of urgency.

The international community must maintain pressure on the DPRK Government to improve the human rights situation for its citizens and implement accountability measures. We continue to urge the DPRK to engage with UN processes and representatives, particularly by permitting the Special Rapporteur to visit the DPRK and participating constructively in its third Universal Periodic Review due this year.

Special Rapporteur, if you could exhort the DPRK to make one change as a positive start, what would that small step be?

240 Words