

STATEMENT

UPR Pre-session on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Geneva, 2024/08/28

Delivered by: People for Successful COrean REunification (PSCORE)

1. NGOs Collaboration

This statement is being jointly issued by three North Korean human rights organizations: People for Successful COrean REunification(PSCORE), North Korean Human Rights Corporation (NKHRC) and Lawyers for Human Rights and Unification of Korea (Hanbyun).

Among them, PSCORE has held special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council since 2012 and has been actively engaged in its work.

2. Plan of the Statement

This statement addresses 3 issues as follows:

(1) Forced repatriation (2) Digital rights (3) Disability Rights.

3. Statement

(I) Forced repatriation

A) Follow-up to the last review

In the last UPR, the DPRK rejected the recommendation to ensure freedom of exit and entry into the DPRK. Those repatriated faced inhumane treatment such as torture, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, and execution.

B) New developments since the last review

Further, following the COVID-19 pandemic, border control and forced repatriations from China to the DPRK have increased. In October 2023 and May and June 2024, over 700 escapees were repatriated from China.

C) Recommendations

Our recommendations are as follows:

1. Clarify those 700 individuals' fate and whereabouts by acknowledging their immediate return and engaging in constructive dialogue with the parties concerned.
2. Ensure the freedom of movement across the Yalu and Tumen Rivers' borders.
3. Ensure escapees are not subject to inhumane treatments upon repatriation such as: torture, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, and execution.

II) Digital Rights

A) Follow-up to the last review

In the last UPR, the DPRK accepted the recommendation to ensure freedom of expression, opinion, and the right to privacy. Nonetheless, the DPRK has not observed this recommendation.

B) New developments since the last review

The vast majority of North Korean citizens cannot access the Internet. DPRK conducts constant and widespread digital surveillance on its residents.

Further, the DPRK recently implemented 3 laws;

The Reactionary Ideology and Culture Rejection Act(2020), the Youth Education Guarantee Act(2021), and the Pyongyang Cultural Language Protection Act(2023). They are accompanied with severe punishments, which have further aggravated the digital rights.

C) Recommendations

Our recommendations are:

1. Allow unrestricted Internet access for all citizens to enjoy freedom of opinion and expression.
2. Cease surveillance of citizens' internet activities and monitoring of their digital devices to protect the right to privacy as defined in Article 17-1 of the ICCPR.
3. Repeal the 3 laws, the Reactionary Ideology and Culture Rejection Act, the Youth Education Guarantee Act, and the Pyongyang Cultural Language Protection Act.

III) Disability Rights

A) Follow-up to the last review

In the last UPR, the DPRK promised to improve the rights of the vulnerable class, including persons with disabilities.

B) New developments since the last review

But, until a few months ago, we were in contact with family members and people with disabilities that escaped from the DPRK. They testified that no special measures exist to improve the welfare of people with disabilities in the country.

C) Recommendations

Our recommendations are as follows:

1. Enforce the DPRK's existing laws on protecting the rights of people with disabilities.
2. Provide necessary equipment and facilities to ensure the well-being of people with disabilities.
3. Guarantee equality in universities and workplaces for people with disabilities