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Division Japan, Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Pacific
The Head of Division

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Ethan Hee-Seok Shin
Legal Advocate, Transitional Justice Working Group
Ph.D. Law, Yonsei University
LL.M. Harvard Law School
Mobile +82 10 7169 1965

dilutex@gmail.com

Subject: Joint open letter concerning the UN Human Rights Council's 2020 resolution on North Korea Human rights

Dear Human Rights Defenders,

Thank you for your letter of 26 February on the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), sent on behalf of 35 non-governmental organisations to Mr Josep Borrell, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission. I have been requested to reply.

The EU remains deeply concerned about the grave human rights situation in the DPRK. Accountability for gross and systematic human rights violations in the DPRK is essential. The EU fully supports the efforts of the dedicated investigation team established at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The EU presented the draft of a new Resolution on the situation of human rights in the DPRK during the 43rd session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC). As you are aware, due to the global COVID-19 emergency, the HRC can adopt the resolution only at a later date. If endorsed, like every year, the Resolution will extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for another year and repeat the call on the DPRK to grant the Special Rapporteur access to the country.

I am also pleased to inform you that the draft text covers key aspects of the five recommendations that you present, namely (i) political prisoners and the death penalty, (ii) sexual violence, (iii) Right to food, (iv) Liberty of movement, (v) International abductions. It also contains a strong expression of support to the work of the Special Rapporteur and the field-based structure of the Office of the High Commissioner.

We trust that this Resolution will send the necessary clear message that the systematic, widespread and gross violations, as identified by the UN Commission of Inquiry on the situation of human rights in North Korea, cannot continue.

As part of the EU's policy of critical engagement towards the DPRK, which combines pressure through sanctions and other messages, while keeping communication and dialogue channels open, the EU will continue to work – along with its international partners – to improve the human rights situation in the country.

Sincerely,

e-signed

Reinhold BRENDER