



Concept Note for 2018 UN Side Event on North Korean Human Rights

Wednesday, October 24, 2018, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

United Nations Delegates Dining Room

North Korea Human Rights on the 70th Anniversary of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and also the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the North Korean government. While human rights around the world have vastly improved over the past seven decades, the human rights situation in North Korea continues to be dire. The international community should be aware of the current reality that North Koreans face. Their human rights situation has worsened, and international civil society organizations must find ways to address their plight, through action at the United Nations and beyond.

Objective: This side event will shed light on the DPRK's gross human rights violations committed against North Koreans within their borders and abroad. The side event will address North Korean human rights-related priorities pertaining to the upcoming UNGA North Korean Human Rights Resolution, particularly focusing on the need to sustain the call for strong accountability measures. The value of linking North Korean human rights to denuclearization and peace talks with the DPRK will also be discussed. The invitees, including diplomats of UN member states, relevant UN officials, media correspondents to the UN Headquarters, civil society actors as well as the wider audience via webcast, will be given the opportunity to learn more about the seriousness of abuses to which North Koreans within North Korea's borders and those officially dispatched overseas as laborers are subjected to and the role that the international community can play in addressing these abuses.

Scenario: The meeting will open with Ambassador Jonathan R. Cohen, Deputy Representative of the United States to the United Nations, delivering opening remarks to set the context. Each organization representative from PSCORE, NKFC, JBI and HRNK will give brief introductory remarks marking the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its applicability to the North Korean human rights context. North Korean escapee Gwang-II Jung, a former political prisoner, will address the human rights violations and crimes against humanity being committed at North Korea's political detention facilities. North Korean escapee Hoi-Chang Roh, a former North Korean worker officially dispatched overseas, will discuss the realities that North Korean overseas laborers face. Ambassador Jonathan R. Cohen, Deputy Representative of the United States to the United Nations, will then deliver short remarks before the floor is opened for questions and answers. Ambassador Jonathan R. Cohen, Deputy Representative of the United States to the United Nations, will deliver closing remarks.

Logistics: The meeting will be webcast live on UNTV for global viewing and members of the press will be invited to ensure full media coverage. Civil society actors will be invited to attend and participate. Consecutive translation for Korean to English will be provided.

Draft Agenda (120 minutes)

- **Opening Remarks by Ambassador Jonathan R. Cohen, Deputy Representative of the United States to the United Nations (2 minutes)**
- **Introductory Remarks by PSCORE (5 minutes)**
- **Introductory Remarks by NKFC (5 minutes)**
- **Introductory Remarks by JBI (5 minutes)**
- **Introductory Remarks by HRNK (5 minutes)**
- **Panel Discussion Moderated by Dr. Stephen Noerper, Senior Director, Policy and Corporate Programs, The Korea Society**
 - **Testimony from North Korean Escapee (15 minutes): Mr. Gwang-II Jung** is a North Korean escapee and former political prisoner who founded No Chain for North Korea, a human rights defender based in South Korea. After serving in the military and trade sectors for most of his young life in North Korea, Jung was arrested under fabricated espionage charges by the North Korean State Security Department in 1998 and imprisoned at Yodok Political Prison Camp No. 15 in 2000. He was incarcerated for three years. Soon after his release, Jung escaped to South Korea and worked at Free the NK Gulag before establishing No Chain for North Korea in 2013. Jung has testified about the abuses in North Korea in front of the European Union and U.S. Congress, and was a key resource for the UN Commission of Inquiry's investigation into North Korea's human rights violations.
 - **Testimony from North Korean Escapee (15 minutes): Mr. Hoi-Chang Roh** was born in 1970 and served as the Central Party Secretary of the External Construction Supervision Bureau in North Korea. He lived in Russia and the Middle East for seven years until 2014 as an overseas worker dispatched by the Korean Workers' Party. He defected from Russia in December 2013 and entered South Korea in May 2014. Roh has testified regarding North Korea's exploitation of its people sent to foreign countries, generating the coveted hard currency to sustain the Kim regime. Roh has shared that forced laborers dispatched overseas face harsh labor conditions, substandard overcrowded housing, lack of medical care, and wage extortion by the regime. Once Roh reached South Korea, he worked as a Halla Company Safety Deputy. He now works as a representative of a health food company.
- **Remarks by Ambassador Jonathan R. Cohen, Deputy Representative of the United States to the United Nations (5 minutes)**
- **Questions and Answers with All Participants (26 minutes)**
- **Closing Remarks by Ambassador Jonathan R. Cohen, Deputy Representative of the United States to the United Nations (2 minutes)**
- **Reception (35 minutes)**