



Plenary sitting

B9-0196/2022

5.4.2022

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on human rights situation in North Korea, including the persecution of religious minorities
(2022/2620(RSP))

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on behalf of the ECR Group

European Parliament resolution on human rights situation in North Korea, including the persecution of religious minorities (2022/2620(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on North Korea, in particular that of 21 January 2016 on North Korea,
 - having regard to the Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, of 21 March 2022,
 - having regard to the Resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on 16 December 2020 on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea,
 - having regard to the Resolution adopted by the UN Human Rights Council on 23 March 2021 on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief of 1981,
 - having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has an extremely worrying human rights situation through a coercive system of governance that deprives all fundamental freedoms of people in the country; whereas this includes arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and ill-treatment, restrictions on freedom of expression, religion and thought, access to information, freedom of movement and the practice of forced labour; whereas control over the population has even further tightened since the beginning of 2020 in the context of COVID-19 prevention measures;
- B. whereas religious freedom conditions in the DPRK remain among the worst in the world; whereas the North Korean authorities target and persecute Christians, adherents of shamanism, Buddhists, Chondoists, and other religious groups; whereas these violations are neither arbitrary nor random but are part of systematic and targeted attacks directed at religious minorities; whereas these patterns of violations underscore the total denial of the fundamental right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; whereas North Korea is the lowest ranking country in the World Bank's religious freedom index;

- C. whereas although the North Korean constitution nominally grants freedom of religion, internal party legal commentaries, which constitute authoritative guidance for interpreting North Korean constitutional and criminal law within the framework of the Ten Principles and Juche, contain explicit anti-religion language;
- D. whereas documentation from NGO's show that Christians are especially vulnerable to persecution, followed by adherents of shamanism; whereas most North Korean Christians are unable to meet for collective worship due to severe repression, and they suffer from harsh abuses such as long-term imprisonment in various prisons or prison-like facilities, severe beatings that result in broken bones and ruptured skin, strangulation, starvation, sexual violence, forced abortion, and execution;
- E. whereas recently a reliable source revealed the tragic news that several dozen North Korean Christians, that were gathered for a meeting, were executed after the meeting was raided by security guards; whereas it is believed that over 100 members of their families have been rounded up and sent to political camps;
- F. whereas practitioners of shamanism in North Korean society face severe persecution as the North Korean authorities define shamanism as a crime of superstition; whereas practitioners have been subjected to detention, arrest, physical assault, and execution; whereas information on the condition of adherents of other major religious traditions - such as Buddhism and Chondoism - remains very limited;
- G. whereas the DPRK government does not allow any political opposition, free and fair elections, free media, freedom of association, collective bargaining or freedom of movement;
- H. whereas the state-directed *songbun* system classifies citizens based on their perceived loyalty to the state and its discriminatory nature subsequently has a detrimental effect on all spheres of life of the North Korean people; whereas according to this system religious practitioners belong to the "hostile" class and are considered enemies of the state, deserving "discrimination, punishment, isolation, and even execution";
- I. whereas the DPRK state authorities systematically perpetrate extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention and disappearances, including in the form of abductions of foreign nationals, interning more than 100 000 people in prison and 're-education' camps; whereas there is a lack of fair trial guarantees and a judiciary that serves the interests of the government, creating a widespread fear of arbitrary arrest and mistreatment in detention, especially those forcibly repatriated, including detention in *kwanliso* political prison camps;

- J. whereas chronic food insecurity remains a serious problem, with the numbers of food insecure people consistently above 10 million, representing over 41 per cent of the country's population. whereas malnutrition remains a leading cause of maternal and child mortality; whereas the people of the DPRK have been exposed to decades of under-development;
- K. whereas the Chinese government views all North Korean refugees as illegal economic migrants and repatriates them if discovered, without regard to their risk of persecution on return; whereas North Koreans in Russia face repatriation to their country of origin, as Russian police have a history of arresting North Koreans at Pyongyang's request; whereas this practice stands in direct violation of China's and Russia's obligations under the 1951 United Nations (UN) Convention on Refugees and its 1967 Protocol; whereas many North Korean escapees go through tremendous hardships in China and its neighboring countries, with no official identity or legal status, and are extremely vulnerable, being subjected to human trafficking, kidnapping, and sexual exploitation;
- L. whereas due to the prolonged COVID-19 related restrictions, in 2021 only 63 escapees arrived in the Republic of Korea, a significant decrease from previous years; whereas humanitarian organizations remain unable to return to the DPRK; whereas limited international presence inside the country and the significant fall in escapees arriving in the Republic of Korea, makes documentation of human rights violations become more challenging than ever;
- M. whereas the DPRK regime has hardly cooperated with the UN and has rejected all UN Human Rights Council and General Assembly resolutions regarding human rights in North Korea; whereas it has failed to cooperate with the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the country, and has rejected all assistance from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights under the special procedures;
- N. whereas the European Union is a defender and promoter of human rights and democracy in the world; whereas the EU-DPRK human rights dialogue has been suspended by the DPRK since 2013;
- O. whereas the ongoing nuclear and ballistic missile-related activities of the DPRK represent a serious threat to international peace and security; whereas the EU imposed sanctions on 57 listed individuals and 9 listed entities for contributing to the DPRK's nuclear-related, ballistic-missile-related or other weapons of mass destruction-related programmes or for sanctions evasion; whereas on 22 March 2022 the EU imposed Magnitsky-style sanctions under the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime on two individuals and one entity in the DPRK.

1. Condemns in the strongest terms the long-standing and ongoing systematic, widespread and gross violations of human rights in and by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including those that may amount to crimes against humanity;
2. Urges the DPRK authorities to cease ongoing crimes against humanity, including through the system of *kwanliso*, and to undertake a process of reform whereby all human rights are respected and protected; calls further on the Government of the DPRK to end immediately its use of the systematic suppression of human rights as a political tool to control and monitor its own population; urges the DPRK Government to stop its state-sponsored forced labour;
3. Is appalled by the recently reported violent attack on North Korean Christians whereby dozens of people were killed and many arrested;
4. Is deeply concerned about the systematic violations of freedom of religious and belief of Christians, adherents of shamanism and other religions in North Korea; denounces the arbitrary arrests, long-term detention, torture, ill-treatment, sexual violence and killings of religious people; urges the DPRK authorities to cease all violence against religious minorities and to grant them the right of religious freedom and belief, the right of association and freedom of expression; stresses the need to hold the perpetrators of the violent acts to account, including the Ministry of People's Security and the Ministry of State Security that are instrumental in the persecution of religious communities;
5. Condemns the severe restrictions on the freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association, as well as discrimination based on the *songbun* system which classifies people on the basis of state-assigned social class and birth, and also includes consideration of political opinions and religion;
6. calls on the Government of the DPRK to fulfil its obligations under the human rights instruments to which it is a party, and to ensure that humanitarian organisations, independent human rights monitors and the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the DPRK have access to the country and are provided with the necessary cooperation;
7. Stresses the importance of securing accountability for past and ongoing crimes against humanity; calls on the international community to prioritise the gathering and preservation of linkage evidence to a criminal law standard that can lay the legal groundwork for a range of future efforts to hold perpetrators to account; calls for efforts to be pursued to refer the situation in DPRK to the International Criminal Court or create

an ad hoc tribunal or comparable mechanism to determine the criminal responsibility of Government officials, including the highest authorities;

8. Stresses the need for additional targeted Magnitsky-style sanctions to be imposed on individual perpetrators and state organisations who are responsible for serious human rights violations in North Korea;
9. Recognizes the crucial role that civil society organizations have been and will continue to play to secure improvements to the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and to document and to collect evidence of past and present human rights violations in the country;
10. Expresses its particular concern about the severity of the food situation the country is facing and its impact on the economic, social and cultural rights of the population; calls on the DPRK authorities to ensure access for all citizens to food and humanitarian assistance on the basis of need, in accordance with humanitarian principles;
11. Continues to support a peaceful resolution to the conflict on the Korean Peninsula, which should involve denuclearization together with improvements to the human rights situation in the DPRK;
12. Welcomes the UN General Assembly resolution of 16 December 2020 on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which was supported by all the EU Member States; calls on the EU and its Member States to continue to address the grave human rights situation in the DPRK;
13. Encourages the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Russian Federation, in accordance with its obligations as a state party to the UN Refugee Convention, not to deny North Korean refugees who cross the border into China and Russia their right to seek asylum or to forcibly return them to North Korea, but to protect their fundamental human rights; calls on the EU to exert diplomatic pressure to that effect; reiterates its call on all countries, including EU Member States, who are recipients of refugees from the DPRK to respect the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 protocol by not sending any North Korean refugees back to the DPRK;
14. Calls on VP/HR to use the expert capacity of the Republic of Korea in formulating the EU's strategy towards the DPRK; calls on the VP/HR to monitor further developments in the DPRK and to report back to Parliament so that the issue of human rights in the DPRK stays high on the EU's political agenda; believes that the EU has a constructive role to play through its critical engagement with the DPRK Government as well as in the light of its Indo-Pacific Strategy;

15. Calls on the Commission, the Council and the Member States to cooperate with like-minded partners, in particular the UK and the US and others, to raise, prioritise and address human rights violations in North Korea with special attention to the situation of religious communities;
16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the EEAS, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, the Government and Parliament of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the DPRK;