

HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA (DPRK)

Statement by Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights (NKHR)

Situation in DPRK – Awareness of human rights legislation; participation of women in associations and decision-making processes

- **DPRK enacted the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Women (Women’s Law) in 2010**
- **It accepted recommendations on implementation of the new laws, enhancement of rights awareness programs, and promotion of human rights of women and children**

Situation in DPRK – Awareness of human rights legislation; participation of women in associations and decision-making processes

- **New developments:**
 - **DPRK appeared at the CEDAW review in 2017**
 - **It claimed wide dissemination of laws and education sessions related to human rights including national surveys conducted by Korea Democratic Women's Union**
 - **It was unable to respond to repeated questions of consultations with independent women's organizations**
 - **Continued lack of awareness of laws; NK women also deny to have been educated on their rights, or that they participated in the surveys.**

Situation in DPRK – Awareness of human rights legislation; participation of women in associations and decision-making processes

- **New needs:**
 - **The DPRK's Women's Union is the only state-organized mass org. for women. Ideological education, Life Review Sessions. Does not reflect real needs.**
 - **It is difficult to understand how the government is gathering independent feedback on issues women are facing for its state reports, and during policy-making/implementations stages when it consults with the only governmental organization - Women's Union.**

Recommendations – Awareness of human rights legislation; participation of women in associations and decision-making processes

- **Provide public lists of civil society organizations advocating on women’s issues (other than KDWU) and provide details of issues that were raised by these NGOs during national consultations before the next cycle of the Universal Periodic Review.**
- **Facilitate conditions to allow members of North Korean NGOs advocating on women’s issues (aside from KDWU) to appear and contribute information to the experts of UN CEDAW and CRC and before the next UPR.**

Situation in DPRK – Exploitation and discrimination against women

- **Several countries gave general recommendations regarding better representation of women at top posts, better access to health, education and food without addressing specific conditions that have developed in DPRK leading to exploitation and discrimination against women**

Situation in DPRK – Exploitation and discrimination against women

- **New developments:**
 - **Women continue to be pressured to take care of livelihood of their families (reinforced by Women's Union and state policies).**
 - **North Korean economy is largely supported with women's private market activities. Huge disproportions with men. Women are expected to quit state jobs at certain age. Growing perception that women do not need education and skills to make money in private trade.**

Situation in DPRK – Exploitation and discrimination against women

- **Korea Democratic Women's Union is exploiting economic power of their female members requiring to provide large quota of materials (beans, oils, metals, nuts, etc.), money and forced unpaid labor (construction sites, railroads, bricks making) for the government and military investments. Labor also enforced as punishment for not providing the quotas.**
- **Despite generation of that revenue women complain that there are no investments in the outdated health and education infrastructure in provinces outside Pyongyang.**

Recommendations – Exploitation and discrimination against women

- **Prohibit and effectively end exploitative practices that require women who support families through private economy to contribute quota of goods, money and unpaid forced labour for the government and military investments, especially through Women's Union.**
- **Establish policies to invest monetary contributions and goods in proportionate geographic distribution of medical and school investments so that women in areas outside Pyongyang also benefit.**
- **Enforce policies in consultations with women NGOs to end discriminatory practices pressuring only women into private economic activities to address growing disproportions between women and men continuing education or sustaining state jobs.**

Situation in DPRK – Violence against women

- **The issue of violence against women including in detentions have been addressed by several states and focused on enacting specific legislation, providing assistance to the victims but was not effectively addressed by the DPRK government.**
- **During CEDAW Review in 2017, DPRK claimed that violence against women, sexual harassment do not exist, but could not provide specific evidence.**
- **Very limited awareness among government, law enforcement officials, judiciary. The delegation did not understand the concepts such as ‘marital rape’.**
- **DPRK also denied that large numbers of women deported from PR China, including victims of trafficking are sent to detentions.**

Situation in DPRK – Violence against women

- **New developments:**
- **The reported incidents of violence remain high but lack of awareness among police. Lack of medical records to provide as evidence for the victims. No shelters.**
- **No female police personnel or counsels trained to assist victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse.**
- **Violence major reason for divorces but courts increasingly deny them claiming right of children to a family. Suspiciously low official statistics.**

Situation in DPRK – Violence against women

- **New developments:**
- **Violence against women in pre-trial detentions by the Ministry of State Security (*powibu*) is an unaddressed problem**
-secret detention, system of incommunicado, arbitrary decision determining guilt and type of sentence without involving courts, substandard conditions of food and hygiene, admission of guilt sometimes forced by beatings, genital searches, forced abortions continue.
- **The steps DPRK takes to increase the independence of judiciary are meaningless if MSS continues to have overwhelming power and prerogatives to administer detention, sentence. Secret police decisions are exempted from all court proceedings.**

Recommendations – Violence against women

- **Review the laws to include definitions of violence against women, including rape, trafficking. The definitions should include sexual intercourse with a woman in custody/care of state functionaries/abuse of authority.**
- **Introduce special training programs for law enforcement officers, judiciary, staff of Korea Democratic Women's Union on what constitutes violence against women and sexual harassment and effective responses. Introduce female law enforcement officers/counsels to respond and provide support to women and children who are victims of violence or sexual abuse.**

Recommendations – Violence against women

- **Introduce clear orders prohibiting MSS officers to perform enforced and humiliating genital searches on NK women deported from PR China which constitute elements of crimes of sexual assault or rape under Rome Statute of ICC.**
- **End prerogatives of MSS (secret police) to administer arbitrary pre-trial detention. End incommunicado system, allow contacts with family and lawyers.**
- **Establish behaviour reviews and press charges against MSS officers who perform investigations amounting to torture, sexual violence or impose inhumane conditions.**
- **Incorporate principle of presumption of innocence in laws and in practice.**

Thank you

