

Joint Statement on Strengthening Cooperation to Improve Human Rights in North Korea

On October 18, 2024, the United States, the Republic of Korea (ROK), and Japan convened in the Spirit of Camp David to promote respect for human rights in North Korea. They reaffirmed that improving the human rights situation in North Korea is integral to achieving lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the landmark United Nations Commission of Inquiry Report on Human Rights in North Korea, which concluded that North Korea's human rights violations amount to crimes against humanity.

The North Korean regime remains one of the worst human rights violators in the world, committing violations and abuses within its own territory and abroad. There are regular, credible reports of acts involving summary executions, assassinations, abductions – including of Japan, ROK, and other foreign nationals –, torture, and unlawful and unjust detentions.

Today, as the human rights situation in North Korea continues to deteriorate, the Governments of the United States, the ROK, and Japan urge the international community to shift its approach on North Korean human rights issues toward action – from monitoring violations and abuses to promoting accountability.

The United States, the ROK, and Japan reaffirm our commitment to promoting human rights and the welfare of people in North Korea. In doing so, we intend to increase our joint efforts to increase access to independent information in North Korea; promote accountability for those responsible for human rights abuses in North Korea; support and amplify the voices of North Korean escapees and refugees to increase global awareness of violations in North Korea; and urge the immediate resolution of the issues of abductees, detainees, and others unjustly detained, and unrepatriated prisoners of war as well as the issue of separated families.

Japan supports the establishment of a new contact group by the United States and the ROK on North Korean human rights issues, consistent with the recommendations of the 2014 UN COI report. The three sides also concurred to promote the efforts to counter the widespread and pervasive risks posed by the DPRK's use of forced labor which operate domestically and internationally, as

pointed out in the COI report. The governments support efforts to demonstrate an immersive art exhibit, showcasing the immense talent and strength of the North Korean escapee community and the surviving family members of those still in North Korea.

The United States and Japan acknowledged their support for President Yoon's vision of a free, peaceful and prosperous Korean Peninsula and reiterated their support for a unified Korean Peninsula that is at free and at peace. In the Spirit of Camp David, the three governments are aligned in our vision; undaunted in the face of our era's greatest challenges; and, united in our commitment to tackle human rights challenges in North Korea together, now, and in the future.