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North Korea: UN Commission of Inquiry a positive step in addressing crimes against humanity

The North Korean government must co-operate fully with a new UN investigation - the Commission of Inquiry - into grave, systematic and widespread human rights violations in the country, Amnesty International said.

The UN Human Rights Council in Geneva passed without a vote a resolution to establish a Commission of Inquiry to investigate human rights violations in North Korea.

Rajiv Narayan, North Korea Researcher for Amnesty International, said:

“The Commission of Inquiry is a positive step towards addressing the dire human rights situation in North Korea. UN Member States have today sent a clear message to the North Korean authorities that those responsible for crimes against humanity will ultimately be held to account.

“Millions of people in North Korea suffer extreme forms of repression. Hundreds of thousands, including children, remain in political prison camps and other forms of detention where forced hard labour, torture and other ill treatment is systemic.

“The wide mandate provided to the Commission of Inquiry is very encouraging. It means the Commission can investigate the gross and systematic nature of these human rights violations, including crimes against humanity, and ensure those responsible are held to account.

“We urge the North Korean government to co-operate fully with the Commission and grant its members unrestricted access to the country. The UN Secretary General must also ensure the Commission has the necessary resources to enable it to effectively carry out its mandate.”