Conference on international advocacy to act to ensure accountability for North Korea’s human rights violations

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NK Watch, an NGO specializing in investigating and documenting the harm of North Korean human rights violations, will hold an international conference, the *Conference on international advocacy to act to ensure accountability for North Korea's human rights violations*, on Monday, September 27th, at the Seoul Global Center, occurring both online and in-person.

This conference aims to promote in-depth discussion and seek practical legal mechanisms for holding North Korea accountable for its crimes against humanity with renowned experts from the international community and witnesses who suffered from inhumane crimes in North Korea.

The leading speakers will include Her Excellency Joanne Doornewaard, the Dutch ambassador to South Korea; Sir Geoffrey Nice QC, co-founder of the Geoffrey Nice Foundation and lead-prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (online); and Dr. Nevenka Tromp, the Executive Director of the Geoffrey Nice Foundation. Other key presenters will be the Hon. Michael Kirby AC CMG, the former chair of the UN Commission of Inquiry on the DPRK (online); Imesh Pokharel, Representative ad interim of the OHCHR in Seoul; Eric Husketh, Human Rights Officer for the OHCHR in Seoul; and Nicolai Sprekels, the Executive Director of SARAM – Foundation for Human Rights in North Korea.

A variety of presentation topics will be featured at the conference. Dr. Nevenka Tromp will be the chairperson of the conference. The Program Director of NK Watch, Dr. Kwanhyung Lee (Ph.D. in North Korean Studies), will be presenting "NK Watch's Activities for Human Rights Advocacy and Cooperation with the International Community." The lawyers of the Geoffrey Nice Foundation, Ruby Peacock, Nathan Fuller, Holly Armstrong, and Adam Smith, will be presenting key content online from *A Report on the Legal Avenues to Deal with Human Rights Abuses in the DPRK* (Reference 2).

The Hon. Michael Kirby AC CMG; Eric Husketh, UN Human Rights Officer at OHCHR Seoul; and Nicolai Sprekels, the Executive Director of SARAM, will present the main discussion.

MyeongChul Ahn, the Executive Director of NK Watch, said, "This conference will reinvigorate the discussion on North Korean human rights, which has remained stagnant for the last few years."

\* This conference offers simultaneous interpretation and strictly follows COVID-19 guidelines.

\*Please understand that photography and video recordings of the conference will not be permitted.

\* Please understand offline seats are limited due to social distancing policies.

\* We will send an email explaining how to participate in the conference to the reporters who want to cover the event.

Reference 1: Conference program

Reference 2: Background data

NK Watch is a non-profit organization established by the victims of North Korean prison camps and their families in 2003. Since 2013, NK Watch has submitted 828 petitions to relevant UN bodies. These petitions document the harm caused by North Korean human rights violations.

In 2020, NK Watch made a request to the Geoffrey Nice Foundation, a group of international law experts, to review and analyze the petitions on a legal basis. After a continuous exchange of opinions, the Geoffrey Nice Foundation has produced remarkable research and published its findings in *A Report on the Legal Avenues to Deal with Human Rights Abuses in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea* in March 2021. The upcoming conference will provide a venue to discuss the key content of the report, primarily the possible legal mechanisms for holding North Korea accountable for its crimes against humanity.

Reference 3.

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1st line - Joanne Doornewaard (the Netherlands Ambassador to South Korea), MyeongChul Ahn (Executive Director of NK Watch), The Hon. Michael Kirby AC CMG (former chair of the UN Commission of Inquiry on the DPRK)

2nd line - Geoffrey Nice QC (co-founder of the Geoffrey Nice Foundation), Dr. Nevenka Tromp (Executive Director of the Geoffrey Nice Foundation), Imesh Pokharel (Representative ad interim of the OHCHR in Seoul)

3rd line – Ruby Peacock (lawyer for the Geoffrey Nice Foundation), Adam Smith (lawyer for the Geoffrey Nice Foundation), Nathan Fuller (lawyer for the Geoffrey Nice Foundation)

4th line- Holly Armstrong (lawyer for the Geoffrey Nice Foundation), Dr. KwanHyung Lee (Program Director of NK Watch), Nicolai Sprekels (Executive Director of SARAM)