

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000762/25
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
César Luena (S&D)
(19 February 2025)

Subject: The situation of detainees in the DPRK in the draft annual resolution on human rights in the DPRK at the UN Human Rights Council

According to the answer to Written Question E-002674/2024 ⁽¹⁾, ‘the EU in principle does not enumerate individual consular cases in the annual Human Rights Council resolution on human rights in the DPRK’, and ‘the cases relating to Myanmar concerned the highest representatives of the democratically elected government’.

However, the resolutions referred to in the initial question concern the cases of two journalists ⁽²⁾. See:

1. 37/32 ⁽³⁾, point 25, calls on the Government of Myanmar to ‘immediately release journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo’;
2. 39/2 ⁽⁴⁾, point 18, ‘Expresses grave concern at the imprisonment, prosecution and sentencing of journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo’;
3. 40/29 ⁽⁵⁾, point 10, calls on the Government of Myanmar to ‘immediately and unconditionally release journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo’;
4. 43/26 ⁽⁶⁾, point 8, ‘Welcomes the release of journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo’.

Therefore, will the EU consider specifying the cases of North Korean escapee Kim Cheol-ok and the South Korean missionaries detained for over 10 years, Kim Jung-wook, Kim Kook-kie and Choi Chun-gil, in the upcoming draft annual resolution on human rights in the DPRK at the UN Human Rights Council?

Submitted: 19.2.2025

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(5 May 2025)

The general objective for United Nations (UN) resolutions remains to address the overall human rights situation, and in the case of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) to address the systemic, gross and widespread human rights violations.

While the outcome and final text of such resolutions always depends on negotiations in Geneva and New York with the wider UN membership, it remains the EU’s policy to maintain the emphasis on the overall human rights situation, including recent developments and systemic violations. It does not preclude that on rare occasions, such as the ones referred to by the Honourable Member, there can be exceptions.

The EU calls attention to individual cases in its statements, notably during general debates or interactive dialogues at the UN. In addition, there is also a constraint in the sense that referring to an individual case requires having reliable sources of information.

Due consideration is given to applying the ‘do no harm’ principle, sought through contacts with civil society and representatives of victims and their families.

Following the Honourable Member’s written question (E-002674/2024) and input received from other stakeholders, the EU in 2025 has made a particular effort to strengthen the UN Human Rights Council resolution on the situation of human rights in the DPRK with additional language on the topic of arbitrary detention of foreigners in the DPRK.

¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2024-002674-ASW_EN.html.

² <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-48182712>.

³ <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1485543?v=pdf>.

⁴ <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g18/317/39/pdf/g1831739.pdf>.

⁵ <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/RES/40/29>.

⁶ <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/RES/43/26>.