



Public Lecture

The Report of the UN Inquiry on Human Rights in North Korea: International Law Meets a Moment of Truth

Michael Kirby

Retired Justice of the High Court of Australia

Friday, 17 October 2014, 1600-1730
Large Moot Court, 2/F Cheng Yu Tung Tower
The University of Hong Kong

In this lecture, Michael Kirby will review the important work of the COI on DPRK. He will describe its progress and examine its prospects for making a real change in the human rights situation in DPRK. In particular, he will examine the reasons that are sometimes given for pessimism and resignation about improvement in human rights in North Korea. He will explain why, overall, he is optimistic that change will come about because of the COI's findings of crimes against humanity and because of the commitment of the entire United Nations to the principle of the responsibility to protect (R2P) where a nation fails to do this in respect of its own citizens.



Michael Kirby was Australia's longest serving judge when he retired in February 2009. He served as President of the New South Wales court of appeal and then as a Justice of the High Court of Australia. On two occasions, he was acting Chief Justice of Australia.

In addition to these judicial posts, Michael Kirby has fulfilled a number of international positions: as chairman and president of the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva (1992-8); as Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations Human Rights in Cambodia (1993-6); as a member of the UNESCO International Bioethics Committee (1995-2005); and as chair of the UN Human Rights Council's Commission of Enquiry on human rights in DPRK (2013-14).

He has received many national honours and international honours including The UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Education (1998) and the Gruber Justice Prize (2010). He is an Honorary Professor of the University of Hong Kong and has delivered invited lectures in that capacity on law reform and other topics.

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