

## **The Hon. Mr. Michael Kirby AC CMG - The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star**

In recognition of his contribution to promoting understanding of the situation of Human Rights in North Korea in the international society including the issue of the abductions of Japanese nationals

The Hon. Mr. Michael Kirby AC CMG is former Chair of the UN Commission of Inquiry (COI) on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, former Justice of the High Court of Australia and former Chancellor of Macquarie University, among many other positions held.

In his capacity as Chair of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the DPRK from 2013-2014, he led the inquiry into the situation of human rights in North Korea including the issue of the abductions of Japanese nationals by North Korea. In the course of conducting investigations, the COI established public hearings and heard testimony from Japanese abductees. Mr. Kirby and the COI visited Japan in August 2013 in order to conduct hearings into the abductions issue, taking testimony from the families of abductees, responsible government officials and support groups. The final report into human rights in North Korea including the abductions issue was published in February 2014, and as a result of this report, the seriousness and urgency of the situation of human rights in North Korea and in particular the seriousness and urgency of the issue of the abductions of Japanese nationals became more widely known by the international community.

Even after his role as COI Chair, Mr. Kirby continued to be involved in the issue; he participated in symposia organised by the Japanese Government (Geneva, Sept. 2014, and Tokyo, Dec. 2015) regarding the situation of human rights in North Korea, including the issue of the abductions of Japanese nationals, as well as a UN Human Rights Council panel discussion on the same matter (Geneva, Sept. 2014).

The final report produced by COI under the leadership of Mr. Kirby helped to shed light on the situation of human rights violations in North Korea and it advised that violations such as abductions may amount to 'crimes against humanity' and gave concrete recommendations regarding North Korea. Furthermore, the COI's report has led to greater momentum within the international community to consider targeted sanctions against those who appear to be most responsible for crimes against humanity and to work towards improving the situation of human rights in North Korea.

The Hon. Mr. Michael Kirby AC CMG is being recognised for his distinguished service as outlined above.