

For Immediate Release

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To All Media Houses

2020 Human Rights Day: Safeguard Human Rights after a peaceful election-HRRG

2020 has been a rather challenging year for all persons globally, and in every trajectory of life – health, culture, economics, and most importantly, human rights.

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, and its alarming rate of spread and severity, as well as the increased death tolls to the disease, it is particularly fitting that we observe the 2020 Human Rights Day this 10 December, on the theme: Recover Better – Stand Up for Human Rights.

At the heart of Human Right is equality of all persons without any form of discrimination, and at the heart of International Human Rights is amongst others, the right to the highest attainable standard of health for all persons; thus obligating governments to take steps to prevent threats to public health.

However, with rising inequalities, poverty, discrimination and other wide gaps in human rights protection and promotion, the impact of the COVID-19 response in many nations and for particular groups of people, has been dawdling.

The UN Secretary General, in a policy brief on COVID-19 and Human Rights, emphasized the instability and fear that the pandemic engenders is exacerbating existing human rights concerns such as discrimination against certain groups.

A typical case in hand, is the stigmatization, discrimination, scapegoating and persecution of the Shincheonji Church and its leadership, by the South Korean government, which amounted to wanton violation of international human rights law. Thanks to the mounting pressure by the Human Rights Reporters Ghana, other Human Rights Organizations including Civil Society Groups across the world, the situation has improved.

We hereby commend the South Korean government and authorities for the release of Chairman Lee Man-Hee, the leader of the Shincheonji Church from detention. We however, urge the South Korean authorities to ensure that the case be struck out completely from court, and Mr. Lee, discharged entirely. We further call for the legal entity of Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light (HWPL) a not-for-profit organization founded by Mr. Lee which was withdrawn, to be restored.

In the wake of COVID-19 pandemic, if we are to recover fully and build back a world that is better, more resilient, just and sustainable, it behooves on States, governments and all persons, to ensure that only measures that close inequality and discriminatory gaps and advance human rights are enforced.

Today, as we mark the Human Rights Day 2020 in commemoration with the world, and celebrate the universal rights outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we stand up wholly for human rights and recommit ourselves to protecting and promoting the fundamental, universal and essential rights and freedoms, which all people are entitled to, for a better and safer COVID-19 world.

Finally, we use this occasion, to condemn the electoral and post-electoral violence happening in some parts of the West Africa, and congratulate Ghanaians and the Electoral Commission of Ghana for a peaceful general polls, as well as President Nana Akufo-Addo on his re-election into office.

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