The international community calls for the implementation of criminal justice measures to ensure accountability for human rights violators in North Korea. In 2014, the UN Commission of Inquiry (COI) found a wide range of human rights violations in North Korea and recommended two criminal justice options, a Security Council referral to the ICC or the establishment of an ad-hoc tribunal. However, criticisms of feasibility and efficiency of both options demand broader study of the use of criminal justice options beyond the UN’s recommendations. Thus, I evaluate different organizational and institutional choices of criminal justice starting with the ICC and ad-hoc tribunals and expanding the examination to mixed tribunals, domestic courts, and local justice. Each option has different merits and weaknesses, and preferences may be changing at times. Based on examination of each option, I recommend mixed tribunals or complementary court options to deal with the North Korea’s transitional justice.

Yun Ju Kang is an S.J.D. (The Doctor of Juridical Science) candidate in the Maurer School of Law. Anchored in international human rights law, her dissertation is about human rights-focused transitional justice design for the future reunified Korea. Her research interests also include developing human rights policies for refugees and marginalized population across contexts. Before joining the Maurer School of Law, she was a law lecturer at the College of Law, Hong-Ik University in South Korea, and a human rights lawyer for refugees (website).