

WORLDWIDE AWARENESS DAY FOR NORTH KOREA REFUGEES

MAY 2, 2013

Organized by the North Korea Freedom Coalition

Report prepared by Sue Logan

In solidarity with the 10th Annual North Korea Freedom Week (April 28 - May 5, 2013), the North Korea Freedom Coalition organized the Worldwide Awareness Day for North Korea Refugees on May 2, 2013. Events and petitions were delivered to the Chinese consulates and embassies around the world calling upon China's new President Xi Jinping, to reverse China's illegal, barbaric and inhumane repatriation of North Korean refugees. Events were held in twenty cities and ten countries. International efforts resulting from the Worldwide Awareness Day are highlighted below.



Following a special screening of *48M*, U.S. Congressman Rob Wittman (VA- 1) shows his support for the Worldwide Awareness Day for North Korean Refugees by displaying the petition to Chinese President Xi Jinping with North Korean escapees Songhwa Han and Jinhye Jo of NKUS (North Koreans in the USA)!

SAMPLE OF PETITIONS SENT

To The HONORABLE XI JINPING, President, People's Republic of China (c/o the embassy or consulate in your area) Dear President XI: Congratulations on your election this year to lead the world's most populous nation. We are writing with the fervent hope that your dreams and vision to lead China towards national rejuvenation will also lead to your reconsideration of China's policy towards your North Korean neighbors. Specifically, we are sending this petition to ask that you work with the international community to safely resettle North Koreans who have fled to your country to third countries rather than forcing them back to North Korea to face certain torture, imprisonment and even execution. We believe that this action would be consistent with China's desire to provide leadership internationally but also would signal to the increasingly hostile and threatening Kim Jong Eun regime that it is time to start adopting reforms that will improve conditions in North Korea so that its citizens will not want to flee. Many nations around the world have shown their willingness to accept North Koreans for resettlement so there is no reason to force them back to North Korea. We thank you for your consideration.

Many activists organized special screenings of "Crossing."

*"When we produced **Crossing** several years ago we hoped that the film would help awaken people in South Korea and around the world to the dire situation in North Korea that leads to North Koreans risking their lives to flee to China in an attempt to save themselves and their families. Tragically, today the situation has not improved, but in fact has gotten worse and North Koreans are in even greater danger. We hope that through the Worldwide Awareness Day for North Korean Refugees, that more people will view this film to understand the reality of North Koreans and join the peaceful call to China to end their repatriation policy."*

--Patrick Cheh, Producer, Crossing

CANADA

TORONTO

Two meaningful forums were held in Toronto, Canada in parallel with and in support of North Korea Freedom Week and the Worldwide Awareness Day for North Korea Refugees. A Luncheon Forum on North Korea Human Rights was held on Thursday, April 25, and a special event "Cry for us, please! 2013" was co-hosted by the Korean Church Coalition (KCC) in Toronto on Saturday, May 4. The events were organized The Council for Human Rights in North Korea (www.hrnkcanada.org). Mr. Kyung B. Lee of The Council, Alex Neve of Amnesty International Canada, Paul Johnson of Open Doors Canada, and Michael Craig of Amnesty International Toronto participated in the forums. Mr. Lee provided presentations concerning North Korea's public distribution system of food, food rationing, isolation policy, brutal punishment system and prison camps, as well as information about the U.N. Commission of Inquiry. The Council also held screenings of the films "Crossing" and "Yoduk Story". More information available at: http://www.hrnkcanada.org/bbs/board.php?bo_table=scheduled&wr_id=41

CZECH REPUBLIC

PRAGUE

Pavla Kantnerova of OPONA joined in solidarity delivering a letter to the Chinese embassy in Prague calling on the Chinese government to stop repatriating North Korean refugees.

FRANCE

PARIS

Pierre Rigoulot and the French Committee to Help the North Korea Population joined in support by issuing a strong statement to the Chinese government as part of the Worldwide Awareness Day for North Korea Refugees. A portion of their statement follows: “Political solutions have been tried for years, especially by the US and South Korea. To no avail. Today, only China can put an end to these problems by stopping its food and energy aid to North Korea. But although it would like to have some stability in this region, China goes on refusing the idea of a unified Korea under the leadership of democratic South Korea. Without the protection and food and oil aid from China the North Korean regime would have collapsed a long time ago. Even though it isn't much of a docile protégé, North Korea, which is a creation of a Stalin era USSR and very isolated, is totally dependent on its powerful neighbor. It is high time China no longer allowed world peace to be jeopardized by such constant provocations. It is high it faced up to its responsibilities and let go once and for all of this pitiful but heavily armed buffer state should it go on implementing such crazy policies. Such a decision would enhance China's image and show it no longer has anything to do with totalitarianism.”

GERMANY

BERLIN

Award winning and internationally recognized human rights activist, Dr. Aaron Rhodes, who founded Freedom Rights Info, led efforts in Germany delivering a petition to the Chinese embassy in Berlin. He has also written very passionately about the North Korea refugee crisis.

JAPAN

TOKYO

Kan Ando, once again led efforts in Tokyo, and joined by other activists held a peaceful demonstration in front of the Chinese Embassy in Tokyo and delivered a petition signed by Nishioka Tutomu, the chairperson of the Rescue for Those Abducted by North Korea, Kato Hiroshi of Life Funds for North Korean Refugees, Song Yoon Bok of No Fence, and other activists working for democracy in China. They also held a demonstration in Shibuya and handed out flyers at Hactiko Square at Shibuya Station to raise greater public awareness about the plight of North Koreans.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

SEOUL

A rally was held across the street from the Chinese Embassy in Seoul, Korea on May 2. The event was hosted by JFNK, Pastor Peter Jung, SaveMyNK, Pastor Seo Kyung-seok, Association of North Korean Human Right Organization, North Korea Freedom Week Planning Committee, and U.S. delegation members. Speakers at the rally included Dr. Suzanne Scholte, Pastor Seo Kyung-seok, Seo Jae-pyong (CDNK) Pastor Kim Yong-gi (CFNKR), Pastor Moon Young-yong (Sandol Church), Pastor Lee Soo-young (Saemoonan Church), Pastor Kwon Oh-kyoon (Freedom and Life Church), Pastor Lee Hee-moon (NKFC), Pastor Kang Cheol-ho (Saetu Church), and Kim Min-seob (Good Shepherd Church).



Activists in Seoul held a demonstration in front of the Chinese Embassy.

BUSAN

Pastor Changho Lim and Jangdaehyun Church once again organized events for both North Korea Freedom Week and the Worldwide Awareness Day for North Korean refugees including a rally at Busan Station, prayer vigils, and several speaking engagements.

MEXICO

Mexico City, Cuidad Juarez, Irapuato, Chipas

Led by Teresa Ost, the North Korea Freedom Coalition – Mexico (COALICIÓN para la *Libertad* en Corea del Norte – México (www.rescatemosrefugiados.com)) partnered with other organizations to hold a peaceful protest in front of the Chinese Embassy in Mexico City on May 2, as well as deliver petitions with over 6,000 signatures to the Chinese Embassy, as well as coordinate events in four cities. The TV channel Enlace recorded the event and interviewed participants. “Crossing” producer, Patrick Cheh also made special arrangements for the movie to be broadcast on television for the Worldwide Awareness Day for North Korea Refugees. Gaby Mendoza coordinated the event on May 2 which included participants from 24/7 Leadership Academy and PuntoNET Youth Group.



The North Korea Freedom Coalition-Mexico gathered over 6,000 signatories for the petition to Chinese President Xi Jinping which was then delivered to the Chinese Embassy in Mexico City.



Renata Tarragona also organized an event on May 6, 2013 at the National Autonomous University of Mexico entitled "North Korea, a Piece of Reality". The event included the exhibits: "Where Love Does Not Exist" and "The Butterfly That Cannot Fly". Participants also had the opportunity to watch "Crossing" at the event.



Mexican Activists displayed exhibits of North Korea: "Where Love Does Not Exist."

Efforts in Mexico also included television broadcasts about North Korea on May 3, May 6, and May 17, 2013 in Puebla on 210 Ultravisión and in Veracruz on 208, and online at: <http://expandetv.com/#transmission> by Expande.TV.

SPAIN

MADRID

Alex Stanley submitted a petition to Chinese president Xi Jinping to the Chinese embassy in Madrid, Spain in solidarity with the May 2 Worldwide Awareness Day.

UNITED KINGDOM

LONDON

Ben Rogers of Christian Solidarity Worldwide-UK, submitted a petition to the Chinese embassy in London and also made arrangements for the release of a new song aimed at drawing attention to North Korea's dire human rights crisis. Inspired by the work of CSW and the story of Shin Dong Hyuk, the UK-based Band [Ooberfuse](#) released the song to mark North Korea Freedom Week: [Vanish the Night](#). The song begins with a message from Shin Dong-hyuk, who was born in a North Korean prison camp: "Don't forget us". You can view and hear the song on youtube at:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=be7WTX_z_E8&feature=share

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Andrew Hong and the North Korea Freedom Riders organized a peaceful demonstration in front of the Chinese Consulate in Chicago on May 2nd and delivered petitions which included signatories of over 200 people from around the world. In addition to Chicagoans, participants traveled from Georgia, Tennessee, and Ohio to stand up for North Korea refugees. The event included speeches of congratulations to the new leadership in China and asking the leadership to reverse its policy of forced repatriation of North Korean refugees. Then, the crowd chanted, "Let Them Go!" and "Free/Save My Brothers/Sisters/Friends!" Comments were then read from people who signed the petition that Lisa Orme had prepared describing why this cause was important to them. Samples of comments written by signatories explaining their motivation for signing the petition, follow:

"When North Korean citizens decide to leave their country in search of food, medication, jobs, religious freedom or a better life, the only way they can do this is cross the border into China. Unfortunately, China does not accept them and their policy is that, if caught, a North Korean refugee will be repatriated (sent back) where they will either go to a concentration camp OR be publicly executed. We are asking China to end this policy and STOP SENDING THE NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES BACK. We are asking China to grant them 'refugee status' and allow them to travel to another safe country. If China follows this request, it will end the suffering of thousands of NK refugees who are hiding in China who have been forced to endure sexual trafficking, forced marriages, and slave labor because they are desperate to not be sent back to North Korea."

From UTRECHT, NETHERLANDS: *Because human rights, such as the right to life, should be respected by every nation.*

From MCDONALD, TENNESSEE: *If the tables were reversed, China would want someone who was willing to take in their people. Be their voice! Be their refuge!*

From GEOJE-SI, REPUBLIC OF KOREA: *Because it's the right thing to do. Everybody deserves a chance at a decent life!*

From LANCASTER, TENNESSEE: *These brave but defenseless people are only doing what we would do. They need our help, our voice!*

ARLINGTON, TEXAS

Cathleen McLean organized a screening of “Crossing” and collected petitions to deliver to the Chinese consulate in Houston.

HOUSTON, TEXAS

Gail Bielitz organized a film screening of “Seoul Train” on May 1, 2013 at the Christ Church United Methodist in Texas, where viewers had the opportunity to sign petitions. She reports: “We attempted to deliver petitions signed after the viewing of the documentary, Seoul Train, to the Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in Houston asking their new President, The Honorable Xi Jinping, to work with the international community to safely resettle North Koreans that have fled to China to a third country rather than forcing them back to North Korea to face possible torture, imprisonment and execution. We were told that we would need an appointment and were kindly provided contact information. We were unable to make an appointment, so the petitions were mailed to the attention of Houston's Consul General, Ms. Xu Erwen.”

WORLDWIDE AWARENESS DAY FOR NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES

FILM SCREENING

Seoul Train 서울기차

CANADA • MEXICO • JAPAN • SOUTH KOREA • CHICAGO • HOUSTON • NEW YORK • WASHINGTON, D.C.

Invite a friend and join us!

Film Screening and Discussion
SEOUL TRAIN

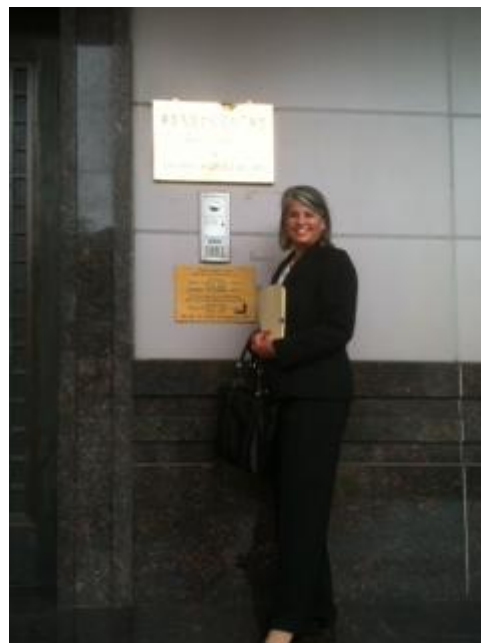
Wednesday, May 1, 2013

Christ Church United Methodist
Room: The Parlor
6363 Research Forest Drive
across from the parking lot of The Woodlands High School
The Woodlands, Texas 77381

Registration 6:45 PM
Film Start Time 7:00 PM

No Childcare Available
Light Refreshments

SEOUL TRAIN is a gripping documentary that exposes the life-and-death struggle faced by North Korean refugees that attempt to flee their homeland through China. We hope through the Worldwide Awareness Day for North Korean Refugees that more people will understand the reality facing North Koreans.



Gail Bielitz led efforts in Houston.

LOS ANGELES

Paul Jhin delivered petitions to the Chinese consulate in Los Angeles and the Korean Church Coalition for North Korea Freedom joined efforts there.

NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA

Congressman Rob Wittman (VA-1) held a special screening of *48M* in April where participants were invited to sign the petitions. These petitions were then delivered to Louise Van Horne to be sent to the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C. on May 2nd.

NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK

NKFC activist Erin Zaikis and Michelle Petrazzuolo, who founded United for North Korea Freedom, attempted to hand-deliver their petition to the Chinese consulate in New City on May 2. While the security guard allowed them entry, the security inside said they had to make an appointment to deliver a petition like that! Although the consulate refused to accept the petition they were able to deliver through other means.



The sun shines on new friends in the North Korea human rights movement, Erin Zaikis and Michelle Petrazzuolo who were the coordinators in New York City for May 2nd Worldwide Awareness Day for North Korean refugees.

PUERTO RICO

Sister Carmen Gutierrez for Jannet Luttrell, Station Manager of Calvary Evangelistic Mission Missionary Radio Stations of Puerto Rico, submitted a petition to the Chinese Embassy on May 2, 2013.

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Joana Chong led efforts in Seattle. Chong, President of Chong & Co., was joined by Yong Hwan Seo, President of the Seattle Washington State Korean Association, in preparing a special screening of the

movie “Crossing” at the Community Church of Seattle in Washington State. Signatures for the petition delivered to the Chinese consulate were also collected at the event. Funds raised on that day allowed the organizers to purchase “Crossing” DVDs to distribute to public libraries throughout the State of Washington. The organizers plan to host a movie night at each of the libraries that accept the DVD donation to raise awareness of the situation of North Korean refugees. The Korean Association will also lend the DVD to other organizations that seek to host screening of “Crossing” as part of the outreach program.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Louise Van Horne led efforts in Washington, D.C. by organizing a screening of "Crossing" at Annandale United Methodist Church and gathering petitions on line as well as gathering petition is from other activists. Georgetown University THiNK members and students as well as the Fairfax-based organization, Jubilee Campaign, circulated petitions which totaled over 228. Kelley McLean of Jubilee Campaign hand delivered the petition to the Chinese Embassy on May 3, however, as in New York, Houston and other cities, the embassy refused to accept the petition so it was sent through other methods.

The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (www.hrnk.org) joined the efforts of the North Korea Freedom Coalition and sent a letter to the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C. on May 2. Among the HRNK Board members signing the letter were a former U.S. Ambassador to China, a former Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, and a former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State.

Susan Wheeler and the SALT Opera Ensemble in conjunction with the Korean American Association of the Washington Metropolitan Area organized a special concert entitled “A Night of Hope” to kick off North Korea Freedom Week on April 28, 2013 at Truro Anglican Church, Fairfax, Virginia. The concert featured Korean songs and famous opera Arias. Funds were raised at the concert to benefit the broadcast of Free North Korea Radio.

An article about the Worldwide Awareness Day was published by Dan Wooding in the ASSIST News Service, available at: <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2013/s13040102.htm>

