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Contact: Suzanne Scholte or Jack Rendler;

Phone: 202-257-0095 (Scholte) or 612-202-8512 (Rendler)

Candlelight Vigil at Chinese Embassy to Mark *Save North Korea Refugees Day*: September 24; Over 20 Cities Plan Action

(Washington, D.C.)...On Thursday September 24, the North Korea Freedom Coalition joined by the International Coalition to Stop Crimes Against Humanity in North Korea is sponsoring the annual "Save North Korean Refugees Day" to recognize the horrifying plight and inhumane treatment of North Korean refugees by the Chinese government. Petition deliveries will occur in cities throughout the world including Washington, D.C., Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco; Seoul, Busan; Toyko; Berlin; London; The Hague; Toronto, Ottawa; Mexico City; Rio de Janeiro; Santiago; and Buenos Aires calling for the government of China to abide by its international treaty obligations and stop forcing North Koreans back to North Korea to face torture, imprisonment and even execution for fleeing their homeland. Solidarity cities including San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Waterloo, Ontario are planning events to call for action to help North Korean refugees.

Several cities will also have events to mark the tragic circumstances facing North Korean refugees. For example, in Chicago, the North Korea Freedom Network will sponsor a protest at 11 am in front of the Chinese consulate, while in Washington, D.C., there will be a candlelight vigil at 8 pm at the Chinese embassy at which North Korean defectors and activists will read aloud the names of the hundreds of refugees who were forced back to North Korea by China. There will also be a special demonstration at the Van Ness/UDC metro stop by North Korean defectors.

"We are taking this action to ensure that Chinese officials realize that this issue will not go away, that many people in many places continue to care about the people of North Korea, and to insist that China protect the rights of North Korean refugees," according to a statement released by Suzanne Scholte of NKFC and Jack Rendler of ICNK, co-chairs of the event.

The NKFC has continuously pointed out that North Korean refugees are unlike any refugees in the world today because they have a place to be immediately resettled as they are citizens of the Republic of Korea. There is no reason for China to continue their inhumane and barbaric treatment of these refugees which has led to over 80% of North Korean females to be trafficked and tens of thousands of starving orphans to be in constant danger.

The Coalitions, human rights activists, and organizations around the world will deliver letters on Thursday to Chinese embassies and consulates appealing for safe passage for North Korean refugees, who every day face arrest and forced repatriation to North Korea by Chinese authorities.

The petition to China will also include the letter that Justice Michael Kirby sent to China's United Nations Mission in Geneva in December 2013. Justice Kirby acted as chair of the UN Commission of Inquiry that found the government of North Korea responsible for crimes against humanity. His letter outlines the ways in which Chinese authorities have participated in those crimes by their brutal treatment of North Korean refugees.

For Save North Korean Refugee Day Events in Washington, D.C., Thursday, September 24, 2015

4 pm Delivery of the Petition to the Chinese Embassy by NKFC and ICNK Location: Embassy of the People's Republic of China, 3505 International Drive, N.W., Washington D.C.

4:30-6:30 PM NKinUSA (North Koreans in the USA) will host special demonstration and music
Location: Van Van Ness/UDC metro

8-9 pm Candlelight Vigil for the North Korean Refugees
Location: 3505 International Drive, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Copies of the petition and Kirby's letter are available at www.nkfreedom.org

The North Korea Freedom Coalition is a nonpartisan coalition founded in 2003 to work for the freedom, human rights, and dignity of the North Korea people. The Coalition has over 70 public member organizations representing millions of American, South and North Korean, and Japanese citizens as well as other nations, along with many individual members. The Coalition also has private members that provide humanitarian relief inside North Korea and members in China and other nations that feed, shelter, and rescue North Korean refugees. To learn more about NKFC, please visit www.nkfreedom.org.

The International Coalition to Stop Crimes against Humanity in North Korea is a joint effort of over 40 human rights groups worldwide that seeks to protect the human rights of North Koreans and to hold the Pyongyang government accountable for its abuses and violations of the human rights of the North Korean people. It has over 40 member organizations including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the International Federation for Human Rights. It was formed with the goal of establishing a UN commission of inquiry to investigate crimes against humanity in North Korea. To learn more about ICNK, visit http://stopnkcrimes.org/about_01.php

Suzanne Scholte
President, Defense Forum Foundation
www.defenseforumfoundation.org
Chairman, North Korea Freedom Coalition
www.nkfreedom.org