

## **Largest-Ever U.S. Gathering of North Korean Defectors and Rights Activists**

Escapees, Activists and Politicians to Call for Greater U.S. Action to Save Prisoners and Refugees

(Washington, April 21) From April 26<sup>th</sup> to May 2<sup>nd</sup>, thirty defectors from North Korea -- joined by U.S., South Korean and Japanese activists, politicians, policy experts, veterans and relatives of prisoners – will hold events across the Washington, DC-area spotlighting the massive human rights abuses in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and exposing China’s complicity in the mistreatment of North Korean refugees.

Former North Korean officials and other speakers at “North Korea Freedom Week” events will also explore links between North Korean human rights abuses and that nation’s missile and nuclear weapons programs, along with issues surrounding the succession of aging leader Kim Jong Il and the imprisonment of U.S. journalists Laura Ling and Euna Lee. The horrors of North Korea will be detailed by eyewitnesses including: escapees from the Korean Gulag now believed to hold 200,000 prisoners; military and diplomatic defectors; one of many North Korean trafficking victims sold into sexual slavery in China (a Chinese man paid the equivalent of \$585 for her); underground Christians captured and tortured for their faith; and defectors now active in sending radio broadcasts, pamphlets and money (a U.S. one dollar bill can feed a North Korean family for a week) into North Korea.

**Media interviews with North Korean defectors (including interpretation where needed) and other participants may be arranged by contacting the media contact below.**

“This year is a turning point for North Korean human rights. With a new U.S. President and Congress, and a South Korean government more focused on human rights in the North, the opportunity exists to make human rights a central part of our policies toward North Korea,” said Suzanne Scholte, chairman of the North Korea Freedom Coalition, which represents more than sixty groups and is organizing the events. “The fate of untold numbers of innocent men, women and children rests with our leaders and their decisions over coming months,” Ms. Scholte added.

Events will be held daily and include:

- **North Korea Genocide Exhibit:** Monday, April 27, all day, at Columbus Circle across from Union Station
- **Capitol Hill Rally for North Korea Freedom and Human Rights** with speakers including South Korean Human Rights Ambassador Jhe Seong Ho, Sen. Sam Brownback, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Rep. Ed Royce, members of the Japanese Diet, North Korean defectors and representatives from leading human rights groups: Tuesday, April 28 at noon, West Front of the Capitol
- **Special Screening** of *KIMJONGILIA*, an expose of North Korean human rights abuses premiered at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival, with Q&A with the film's director and producer N.C. Heikin. RSVP required (limited seating), see below: 6p.m. on Wed, April 29, Capitol Visitors Center - North Theatre
- **Panel Sessions and Briefings throughout the week sponsored** by Tom Lantos Congressional Human Rights Commission, the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, Peterson Institute, Heritage Foundation, Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, Defense Forum Foundation, and others
- **Demonstration** at the new Chinese Embassy: Saturday, May 2 at noon to protest their cruel treatment of North Korea refugees

All are welcome at North Korean Freedom Week events; some events require early registration due to space limits. For a full schedule and registration information, visit: <http://www.nkfreedom.org/>

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