

North Korea Freedom Coalition Appeals for Humanitarian Consideration for American Robert Park

Washington, DC (December 30, 2009) The North Korea Freedom Coalition has sent urgent appeals today for humanitarian consideration for American Robert Park, a devout Christian, who crossed into North Korea on Christmas Day in his words "to proclaim Christ's love and forgiveness" and to call upon North Korea to open its borders so food and medicine can be delivered and to close down its political prison camps. NKFC sent appeals to Dr. Jakob Kellenberger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross; Sweden's Ambassador to North Korea Mats Foyer (the protecting power for United States in the DPRK); and Ambassador Sin Son Ho, North Korea's Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

Citing Robert Park's motivation for entering North Korea as an expression of his great love and compassion for the North Korean people, NKFC specifically requested Dr. Kellenberger and Ambassador Foyer's help to ensure that Park is treated humanely. In their letters to Kellenberger and Foyer, they noted that international attention to the detainment of American activists Euna Lee and Laura Ling was critical and led to their eventual return home, while permanent American resident Reverend Kim Dong Shik starved to death while detained in North Korea.

In their letter to North Korean Ambassador Sin appealing for Park to be given humanitarian consideration, the non-denominational NKFC, which has Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, and Muslim members, wrote, "We know that Robert Park entered North Korea illegally, but we know him to be a man of great love and compassion for humanity and especially for the people of North Korea...We appeal to the authorities in North Korea to consider that this man's actions were totally motivated by his love for them and that his behavior is modeled on the teachings of Jesus Christ, who Christians believe laid down his life for mankind. Certainly, this was what motivated Robert to cross the border on the day that Jesus' birth is celebrated around the world."

Park has been spearheading efforts in South Korea including prayer vigils and mass demonstrations to call attention to the suffering of the North Korean people and has led the worldwide campaign Freedom and Life for all North Koreans. He has not been heard from since he crossed the border on Christmas Day, but North Korean authorities have confirmed that he is in their custody.

"He knew fully the risks of going to North Korea," said NKFC Chairman Suzanne Scholte, "but was willing to lay down his life for the North Korean people who are the most persecuted people in the world today. We need to honor his commitment by redoubling our efforts to promote freedom and human rights for North Koreans. "

The NKFC released a report this month entitled "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and North Korea" that examines the thirty articles of this document to conclude that North Koreans are denied every single one of these universally accepted human rights standards. The document is available at nkfreedom.org.

For further information, visit nkfreedom.org or call 703-534-4313.

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