

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Tuesday, December 10, 2013 -- Human Rights Day

## **THOUSANDS CALL FOR XI JINPING TO END CHINA'S VIOLENT TREATMENT OF NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES, HUMANITARIANS**

**(Washington, DC.)**....The North Korea Freedom Coalition sent petitions to the Embassy of China today signed by over eight thousand citizens from all over the world calling upon President Xi Jinping to end China's violent repatriation policy that has led to the torture, imprisonment and death of thousands of North Korean citizens and humanitarian workers. The NKFC also posted the latest update to THE LIST at [www.nkfreedom.org](http://www.nkfreedom.org) of those incidences when North Korean refugees were repatriated and humanitarian workers were killed for trying to help these refugees. To understand who these people are the NKFC selected six sample stories from THE LIST illustrating the horrible personal tragedies that are occurring because of China's illegal, inhumane and brutal policy of repatriation.

"It is fitting that these petitions are submitted on Human Rights Day, the day we recognize the passage of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," said NKFC Chairman Suzanne Scholte. "North Korea is the only country in the world denied every single one of these universally recognized human rights, which is why so many try to escape. This problem will only continue under the brutal dictatorship of Kim Jong Eun."

The signatures of more than 8,000 petitioners who represent twenty-eight nations were collected by Teresa Ost of the North Korea Freedom Coalition and through an online petition set up by Sue Logan at the NKFC's website. They request President Xi to honor China's international treaty commitments by providing the refugees access to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, so they will not be subjected to torture, imprisonment, and in many cases execution when forced back into North Korea. Petitioners included citizens of Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Columbia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Guatemala, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Indonesia, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Panama, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Republic of Korea, United Kingdom including England, Ireland and Scotland, United States of America including Puerto Rico, and Venezuela.

THE LIST compiled by NKFC members and edited by Youna Oh cites hundreds of incidences of repatriations and deaths.

"So that people fully understand **whose lives China has put in grave danger**, we are sharing today these six sample stories from entries of names from THE LIST," Scholte explained. "These tragic stories are from yesterday and today and will continue tomorrow until China ends its violent, inhuman, and illegal policy of repatriation."



North Korean escapee **Jo Sung Hye** was 26 years old and wanted a better life than the suffering and starvation she had endured in North Korea. Out of respect for China's law, she and six others known as the MOFA Seven filled out all the paper work to legally apply for asylum in China with the hope to go to South Korea. As she and the six others went to the Chinese Foreign ministry on August 26, 2002, to legally apply, the Chinese police arrested them and forced them back to North Korea. The fate of the MOFA 7 is not known.



North Korean escapee **Kang, Sung-II** had become a South Korean citizen but wanted the world to know about the suffering in North Korea's political prison camps which North Korea even today denies even exist. So, he traveled to China to get footage from another escapee of North Korea's infamous Yoduk prison camp that aired on Japanese television. He was reported as missing in Longjing City and believed to have been seized by North Korean agents in China and taken to Pyongyang and sent to a political prison camp in March 2005. China will not allow the UNHCR to work in this region, but has no problem letting North Korean agents arrest and kill refugees and humanitarian workers even on its own soil.



**Chung Soon-Ae** is the mother of Gil Su, the famous young man whose drawings depicting starvation, torture, and everyday life in North Korea shocked the people of South Korea when they were published in the *Chosun Ilbo*. His drawings made his entire family a target of the regime's wrath. Fortunately, most of Gil Su's family escaped from North Korea and made it to South Korea, but his mother tragically was seized by Chinese police and repatriated to North Korea on March 13 2001 and sent to a political prison camp in April 2001. She was 46 years old at the time. Gil Su asked that her name be added to THE LIST because "raising her name may keep her alive."



**Noh, Yea Ji** was 15 years old and part of a group of 9 North Korean orphans who had successfully escaped to Laos having been sheltered and protected in China by a South Korean missionary named MJ and his wife. They had successfully made it to Laos to seek resettlement in South Korea. Waiting and expecting every day to be allowed to go to South Korea, on May 28, 2013, they were told to gather their things as they were going to board a plane for South Korea. Excitedly they departed the detention center in Laos, to be forced to board a Chinese commercial flight not realizing that the Chinese government and the Lao government had conspired with the North Korean government to force all nine orphans back to North Korea. They were last seen in Pyongyang and being utilized in a propaganda film for the regime.



South Korean POW **Han Man Taek** was 73 years old when he escaped from North Korea on December 27, 2004, having been held there against his will since 1953. Within a month of being arrested by the Chinese authorities he was forced back to North Korea by China in January 2005. Like so many South Korean POWs – hundreds still in North Korea today -- he just wanted to go home.



**Reverend Kim Dong Shik** was an American humanitarian who had devoted his life to serving others especially disabled folks as he himself had been permanently injured from a car accident. Having a strong love for the people of North Korea, he and his wife hosted and sponsored the North Korean Olympic team during the Atlanta Games. Aware of the suffering of those trying to escape, Kim shifted his focus, moved to China and began sheltering refugees and helping them get to South Korea. He was abducted from China in January 2000 and it is believed he was tortured and killed. Repeated appeals by his wife to the DPRK for information about him, including his remains, have gone unanswered.

**These are the people of THE LIST** – In addition to THE LIST and the petition, the NKFC has posted a video featuring three North Koreans who escaped through China explaining the dangers they faced to make it to freedom. China's failure to honor its international treaty obligations has led to a lawless environment in China where over 80% of female refugees are subjected to trafficking and North Korean agents are allowed free reign to assassinate humanitarian workers but the UNHCR is denied access to the refugees.

For more information visit [www.nkfreedom.org](http://www.nkfreedom.org).