

THE NORTH KOREA FREEDOM COALITION

WORKING GROUP ON NORTH KOREAN WOMEN SPRING 2019 REPORT

MARCH 28, 2019

NKFREEDOM.ORG

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- In a world where North Korean women are discriminated against, persecuted, punished, tortured, and even killed by their own government, the UN Commission on the Status of Women has yet to take up this issue. We were in New York for the annual meetings again this year and highlighted the suffering of North Korean women through expert and eyewitness testimony.


Our working group was founded in 2016 in collaboration with organizations around the world. We brought four, high-profile defector women to speak at a Side Event at the the U.S. Mission to the United Nations during the annual meeting of the UN CSW. Past speakers have included Lim Hye Jin and Lee So Yeon of the New Korea Women's Union, Grace Jo of NKinUSA, Lee So Yeon of Teach North Korean Refugees, and May Joo of NKIA Collaboration.

This year's CSW theme was "Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls." These very concepts are absent from North Korean society. Highlighting this important issue, our CSW event was entitled **Total Lack of Protection for North Korean Women and Girls**.

THE NORTH KOREA FREEDOM COALITION & JUBILEE CAMPAIGN PRESENT

TOTAL LACK OF PROTECTION FOR *North Korean* WOMEN AND GIRLS

March 15, 2019 at 2:30 p.m., 4 W 43rd St. New York, NY. (Aqua Room)



Our event took place on March 15 in midtown New York. We drew an audience of over 50 people, mostly NGO representatives working on women's issues around the world. We were joined by two eyewitnesses that gave their testimony on the horrible situation faced by North Korean women.



Kim Hye-Sook is a North Korean prison camp survivor. After 28 years of starvation, overwork, and brutality, Kim escaped North Korea. Her age is not known, but she is around 50 years old. In 1975, she and her family were sent to Camp 18 because they were "guilty by association" since her father had escaped to South Korea. Kim was only 13 years old. She speaks of the horrors she saw, how "human lives were worth less than those of flies" and how she witnessed "the streets filling with corpses and public executions being held everywhere". In 2001, Kim was released under an amnesty and fled to China. She was caught in 2007 and sent back to the same camp. Eventually, she managed to escape to South Korea in 2009.

We were also joined by **Ms. Park** (alias), who testified about the realities of prosecutors' violence towards women, including a woman's death case, security agents' drug abuse and rapes perpetrated by them, and the realities of forced abortions of pregnant women who were repatriated to North Korea.

Following these testimonies, Greg Scarlatoiu of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) gave expert testimony and recommendations on resolving the human rights crisis in North Korea. Co-Chair Jason West also gave his recommendations and the recommendations of Ann Buwalda on how China, the international community, and NGOs around the world should address North Korea's human rights violations. NKFC Chairman Suzanne Scholte moderated the event and gave opening and closing remarks. Kang Seo served as translator.



In addition to our UN CSW Event, our witnesses also attended meetings at the State Department, met with Congressional Staff on Capitol Hill, and attended meetings at both the U.S. Mission to the United Nations and South Korean Mission to the United Nations where they met with Ambassador Cho. At each of these meetings, these women provided information and answered questions for key decision makers in US and Foreign Policy.

Our guests were also interviewed by various outlets, including the popular Free North Korea Radio program *Coming to America*, which highlights the visits of North Korean defectors to the United States and is broadcast into North Korea.

And lastly, we did find some time to let our speakers rest, relax, sample the wide variety of restaurants in DC and New York, and meet with NKFC members!

There are so many people to thank for making this yet another successful year for our Working Group. First, we couldn't have done it without Mariam Bell, who opened her home to our two guests. This not only saved us from having to rent hotel rooms, but was a much more comfortable experience for our speakers! We also want to thank the Isabella Foundation for sponsoring a large portion of our budget this year as well as all of the individual NKFC, DFF, and Jubilee Campaign donors that helped us make this event happen.

A special thank you to Kang Seo for translating at our event and many of our meetings, Thanks to Suzanne Scholte and Jenitza Castro for arranging

meetings and accompanying our speakers to those meetings. Thank you to four additional translators that would like to remain anonymous. Thank you to Chloe Kim of the Bao Sei Foundation and her friend for their assistance during our event in New York. And thank you to Kim Seong Min and Free North Korea Radio for their assistance in identifying speakers for this year's event.

And of course, thank you to our two speakers, Kim Hye Sook and Ms. Park. We greatly appreciate your time and effort, especially considering how difficult it is to recount the horrors that happen in North Korea. It is your voice, experience, and bravery in speaking out that enables us to inform the world on these important issues.

Sincerely,

Jason West, Esq.
Co-Chair, Working Group on North Korean Women
Vice Chairman, North Korea Freedom Coalition

Ann Buwalda, Esq.
Co-Chair, Working Group on North Korean Women
Treasurer, North Korea Freedom Coalition
Executive Director, Jubilee Campaign

PRESS COVERAGE AND VIDEO

UN CSW Event Video

<https://youtu.be/vPpjDzhFdlU>

유엔 여성지위 위원회, '북 여성 인권' 다뤄야

https://www.rfa.org/korean/in_focus/human_rights_defector/nc-yh-03182019152316.html

솔티 "탈북여성, 유엔서 북 여성 인권 탄압 실상 증언"

https://www.rfa.org/korean/in_focus/human_rights_defector/nc-sk-02212019154701.html

탈북 여성들, 유엔서 북한 여성인권 문제 증언한다

<http://www.christiantoday.co.kr/news/320240>
