



North Korea Freedom Week 2019

Acknowledgements

16th Annual North Korea Freedom Week
April 28-May 4, 2019 Washington, D.C.

NKFW 2019:

“Listen to the North Korean Defectors: Then You Will Know the Truth”

Dear Friends:

It is my great honor and pleasure to provide you this report on the 16th annual North Korea Freedom Week to recognize and thank all the people and organizations who made the week such a great success and a powerful way to advance the cause of North Korea's freedom. This report was prepared for you by Kang Seo, North Korea Human Rights Fellow for the Defense Forum Foundation, who also served as the coordinator and translator for our wonderful delegation. A few things of particular note for this North Korea Freedom Week were the patriots of South Korea, private citizens and political leaders, who stepped up magnificently to ensure that the defectors had the means to come when it was learned that there would be no support from the Republic of Korea as in past years. It is also important to note that Professor Nishioka Tsutomu of the National Association for the Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea was the first to send support to Seoul for the delegation. We also were pleased by the media coverage from CNN to Fox News in the USA to daily coverage by South Korean media outlets. This year's theme was: ***Listen to the North Korean Defectors: Then You Will Know the Truth*** and events throughout the week featured the testimonies of North Korean defectors to focus attention on these topics listed below:

Exposing Kim Jong Un's Strategy: Latest Information from Inside North Korea: North Korean defectors had the opportunity at several venues to expose Kim Jong un's strategy to maintain power and report on the latest information coming out of North Korea. This included a panel session at the Heritage Foundation hosted by Bruce Klingner as well as an hour and a half session with Senior staff at the National Security Council.

Human Rights Abuses Against the DPRK Military: Three eyewitnesses exposed the human rights abuses the Kim regime commits against its own military including the abuse of female soldiers by elites in the regime and the use of the military to carry out illegal activities ranging from stealing from citizens to drug smuggling to raise cash for the Kim family fund. We are grateful to the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission for helping us secure a room on Capitol Hill for that event.

China's complicity in the enslavement of North Korean women and children: Focusing attention on China's complicity in North Korea's crimes against humanity received a lot of attention during the week and the closing day events included a demonstration at CCTV and at the Embassy of China. The Isabella Foundation organized an event at the Family Research Center which featured a brave young woman who survived the orphanage system in North Korea. Not many live through that experience.

How Women Created the North Korean Market System: One of my favorite topics because it shows the indomitable spirit of the Korean people is how North Korean women created the free market system. We were so thankful to Dr. Victor Cha and the Center for Strategic and International Studies for hosting two panel sessions on this topic including one featuring three North Korean female entrepreneurs/survivors.

Troubling Changes in the South Korean Government in Their Treatment of North Korean

Defectors: Because we believe that the most effective activists to change the hearts and minds of the people of North Korea are the very ones who escaped, we had to address the topic of what they are now facing in their work under the current South Korean government. We are grateful to Nicholas Eberstadt and the American Enterprise Institute for hosting a discussion on that topic.

Can Regime Change Happen Peacefully from Within? Is there any hope that the Kim family's 70 year plus reign of terror can be peacefully brought to an end by the very people who have escaped? The NKFWD delegation sure thinks so and defectors working to make that happen explained why at a Capitol Hill Forum sponsored by the Defense Forum Foundation. We were so grateful to David Maxwell, Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, for providing powerful opening remarks on why that is the best solution.

Please enjoy these photos and acknowledgements for North Korea Freedom Week 2019. We have also included links to the presentations and news articles for you.

Until they are FREE,

Suzanne Scholte and Kim Seong Min

Co Chairs, North Korea Freedom Week 2019

NORTH KOREA FREEDOM WEEK 2019 DEFECTOR DELEGATION

Special witnesses on North Korea's strategy to maintain power/Defector NGO leaders

Kim Seong-min (Free North Korea Radio)

Kim Heung-kwang (North Korean Intellectuals' Solidarity)

Kim Yong-hwa (North Korean Refugees Human Rights Association)

Huh Kwang-il (Committee for the Democratization of North Korea)

Choi Jeong-hun (North Korea People's Liberation Front)

Park Sang-hak (Fighters for Free North Korea)

Park Jung-oh (Keun Saem Education Center)

Special witnesses on North Korean women's role in creating market system

Lee Hyo-joo (Free North Korea Radio)

Heo Cho-hee

Kim Ji-young (Free North Korea Radio)

Special witness on the human rights abuse against orphans

Park Ji-hye

Special witnesses on the human rights abuses against North Korean military

Choi Yu-jin

Kang Ri-hyuk (Free North Korea Radio)

Jo Young-hwa (Free North Korea Radio)

Additional Special Witnesses on North Korea Human Rights

Noh Hye-ji (Free North Korea Radio)

Kim Tae-hee (North Korean Defectors' Alliance for Freedom and Human Rights)

Han Young-Soon (North Korean Refugees Human Rights Association)

Lee Yoon-man (North Korean Refugees Human Rights Association)

Translators and Assistants to the Delegation

Seo Kang (Defense Forum Foundation)

Han Jin-sik (Free North Korea Radio)

Baik Su-jung (North Korean Refugees Human Rights Association)

Ahn Seong-ho (North Korean Refugees Human Rights Association)

Major Grant Donors Supporting NKFw 2019

Special thanks go to those South Korean patriots who supported the NKFw 2019 Defector delegation to cover their expenses including airfare. Due to the current South Korean government's efforts to halt the work of North Korean defectors, the Ministry of Unification, which has supported NKFw every year, said they would only support the delegation if they would not raise their concerns about the current policy towards North Korea during the NKFw events. Refusing to accept such a condition, the North Korean defector delegation raised their own funding to cover their expense through donations from South Korean citizens and other human rights activists including the following:

Professor Nishioka Tsutomu (National Association for the Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea)

Professor Lee Yong-hee (Esther Prayer Group)

Assemblyman Kim Yong-tae (Liberty Korea Party)

Mr. Shin Hye-sik (Youtube *Shin ui han su* ('A Move of Shin'))

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqOLQwRv1r2m9mhE1tfsn3Q>

Mr. Kim Jin (Youtube *Kim Jin TV*) https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBuR4YNGjfi_4ti8EUw8p1w

And many other South Korean patriotic citizens including politicians.

(News coverage on South Korean government's interruption to stop NKFw delegation coming to the US and civil movement to raise funding for the delegation:

http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2019/03/18/2019031801453.html?utm_source=naver&utm_medium=original&utm_campaign=news

<http://www.newdaily.co.kr/site/data/html/2019/03/27/2019032700154.html>

North Korean defector delegation held a press conference at the National Assembly on April 25 to announce the 16th North Korea Freedom Week. The press conference was organized with the support of the Korea Patriot Party North Korean Human Rights Committee and Assemblyman Cho Won-jin.



<http://www.christiantoday.co.kr/news/321966>

<https://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=123&oid=587&aid=0000000876>

Additional Supporters Donating for the NKFW Delegation's Events

Richard and Patricia Allen
JEB Carney
Dr. Thomas Chung
Cathy and Ed Gillespie
Alana Johnson
Ms. Huh
Annie Kim
Young Chul Kim
So Hee Lee
Tai Lee

Kook Hee Park
Dr. In Young Park
Nancy Purcell
Mary Lynn Qurnell
Dr. Jai Ryu
Dr. Ok Cha Soh
Diana Tull
Rev. John Yoon
Genuine Zu

Sunday, April 28

International Day of Prayer and Fasting for North Korea's FREEDOM North Korea Freedom Week began with an international day of prayer and fasting. Folks were invited to sign up to pray and fast on April 28th at <https://www.april28.org/> We are grateful to **Roxann Moss** for setting up a website especially for this day and for **Alana Johnson** preparing special prayers and to those who prayed and fasted around the world for North Korea's freedom.

9:30 AM Opening Day began with a **Special Church Service at New Hope Bible Church**, Front Royal, VA, hosted by **Pastor Bobby Stepp** and **Wendy Wright**, President of **Christian Freedom International**. Representative of the North Korean Refugees' Human Rights Association, Kim Yong-hwa spoke on behalf of NKFW 2019 delegation about recounted his long journey of escape to South Korea and his efforts to get information to North Korea through rice bottle launches.





(Photo Credit: Christianity Daily)

<http://www.christianitydaily.com/articles/9167/20190429/the-opening-of-the-16th-north-korea-freedom-week.htm>

3 PM Wreath Laying Ceremony Honoring Americans who Died and Served in the Korean War at the **Korean War Memorial** Hosted by the **Korean War Memorial Foundation** and the **North Korean People's Liberation Front**. Former North Korean soldiers, now members of the North Korean People's Liberation Front, presented a wreath to honor the Americans who served and died for South Korea's freedom by pledging to devote their lives for North Korea's freedom. A special thanks to Korean War Veteran **Dr. James Butcher (Korean War Combat Infantry Sargent)** who gave inspiring remarks and **Dr. James Fisher** of the Korean War Memorial Foundation for hosting this meaningful event. Thank you to **Ms. Paula Park** of the Korean American Association of the Washington Metropolitan Area and **Dr. Sekwon Chong** of the Korea Freedom Alliance for joining.





<http://kr.christianitydaily.com/articles/99954/20190428/%EB%A8%BC-%EC%9D%B4%EB%B0%A9%EC%9D%98-%EB%95%85%EC%9D%98-%EC%9E%90%EC%9C%A0-%EC%9C%84%ED%95%9C-%EB%AF%B8%EA%B5%B0%EC%9D%98-%ED%9D%AC%EC%83%9D-%EC%9E%8A%EC%A7%80-%EC%95%8A%EC%9D%84-%EA%B2%83.htm>
<http://www.koreatimes.com/article/1244966>

Visit to David's Tent North Korea Freedom Coalition member **Nancy Purcell** organized a visit to David's Tent, which is a 24/7 place of nonstop prayer. The North Korean defector delegation, American and South Korean citizens and representatives of David's Tent prayed for North Korea's freedom.



After a day of prayer and remembrance it was time to begin the events

Monday, April 29

10 AM US Department of State organized a meeting with the defector delegation. A special thank you to **Julie Turner** who put together a meaningful meeting that included many representatives within the State Department but also other branches of the US government interested in North Korea.

2 PM Center for Strategic and International Studies and Dr. Victor Cha and NKFC Co-hosted Panel Sessions focusing on the topic: ***Women and Market Mechanisms in North Korea.***

An expert panel session featuring **Ms. Amy Lehr** (CSIS), **Dr. Victor Cha** (CSIS, Georgetown University), **Dr. Andrew Yeo** (The Catholic University of America) and **Ms. Olivia Enos** (The Heritage Foundation) discussed the market system in North Korea. Their panel was followed by three North Korean defectors, **Ms. Lee Hyo-joo**, **Ms. Heo Cho-hee**, and **Ms. Kim Ji-young**, who described their experience in the market as examples of women who created the free market system in North Korea. The second session was moderated by **Suzanne Scholte**, President of Defense Forum Foundation and Chair of NKFC. A full video can be found at <https://www.csis.org/events/women-and-market-mechanisms-north-korea>



https://www.rfa.org/korean/in_focus/human_rights_defector/freedomweek-04302019144250.html
<https://www.voakorea.com/a/4896978.html>
https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2019/04/29/Trading-in-North-Korea-markets-risky-business-defectors-say/1441556582989/
<http://news.kbs.co.kr/news/view.do?ncd=4190762&ref=A>

5 PM The Institute on Religion and Democracy hosted the **Welcome Reception to Honor NKFW Delegation**. As a founding member organization of the North Korea Freedom Coalition, the Institute of Religion and Democracy, led by **Dr. Mark Tooley** and **Faith McDonnell** arranged a special reception to welcome and greet the delegation of heroic men and women who came to bear witness and promote freedom for their homeland.



<http://www.christiandaily.co.kr/news/%EC%88%98%EC%9E%94-%EC%86%94%ED%8B%B0-%EC%97%AC%EC%82%AC-%ED%98%84-%EB%B6%81%ED%95%9C%EC%A0%95%EA%B6%8C%EC%9D%80-%EC%95%85%EB%A7%88%EC%A0%81-%EC%A0%95%EA%B6%8C-%EB%B6%81%ED%95%9C-%EC%9E%90%EC%9C%A0-%EC%9A%B4%EB%8F%99%EC%9D%80-83382.html>

Tuesday, April 30

2 PM Dr. Bruce Klingner and **The Heritage Foundation** hosted two panel sessions entitled: ***Bridging the Policy Gap Between North Korean Human Rights and Security Threats.*** The first panel session featured three North Korean defector organization leaders including **Kim Seong-min** (Free North Korea Radio), **Kim Heung-kwang** (North Korea Intellectuals' Solidarity), and **Huh Kwang-il** (Committee for Democratization of North Korea), moderated by Suzanne Scholte. Their panel session focused on the topic: ***Exploring Kim Jong Un's Strategy: Views from High Ranking Defectors.***, Immediate following was a panel discussion which include expert commentary by **Dr. Robert King**, Former U.S. Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Issues, **Frank Jannuzi** of the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation, and **Ms. Olivia Enos** of the Heritage Foundation who gave analysis on the current issues regarding North Korean policy and how human rights should be on the agenda. The panel was moderated by **Dr. Bruce Klingner** of The Heritage Foundation. Video of the program can be found <https://www.heritage.org/asia/event/bridging-the-policy-gap-between-north-korean-human-rights-and-security-threats>



http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2019/05/03/2019050300796.html?utm_source=naver&utm_medium=original&utm_campaign=news
<https://www.voakorea.com/a/4898166.html>
http://news.tvchosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2019/05/01/2019050190154.html

7 PM Dr. Sekwon Chong and Korea Freedom Alliance Hosted a Korean American Community Dinner to Honor the NKFWD Delegation and to discuss the ***Current Situation in North Korea and the North Korea Human Rights Movement under the Moon Government***. Defector organization leaders discussed how the current South Korean government has been intentionally interrupting the activities of the North Korean human rights organizations.



<https://www.manna24.com/20190501-the-korean-freedom-alliance/>
<http://www.koreatimes.com/article/1245381>

Wednesday, May 1

11 AM NKFW Delegation visited **Radio Free Asia** and had interviews about NKFW 2019 and discussed the current situation in North Korea.



https://www.rfa.org/korean/weekly_program/defector_view_hr/fe-jy-05012019134356.html?searchterm:utf8:ustring=%20%EB%B6%81%ED%95%9C%EC%9E%90%EC%9C%A0%EC%A3%BC%EA%B0%84
https://www.rfa.org/korean/weekly_program/ad81ae08c99d-d480c5b4c90db2c8b2e4/askquestion-05062019094124.html

2 PM The US Senate Foreign Affairs Committee Hosted a Staff Briefing on North Korea

Witnesses discussed Kim Jong-un's strategy to maintain power, the current situation in North Korea, and the continuous suffering of North Korean refugees in China. Special thanks to the US Senate Foreign Affairs Committee staff who participated and to **Lara Crouch** for arranging the gathering.



<http://www.christiantoday.co.kr/news/322176>

4:30 PM National Security Council hosted a roundtable meeting with all NKFW delegation The Senior Staff of the NSC met with the entire NKFW delegation for an hour and half discussion on Kim Jong-un's strategy to deceive the US and evade international sanctions, how sanctions were impacting the people of North Korea and why it was necessary to continue to put more pressure on the regime. Of note was that the delegation was unanimous in making it clear that even if sanctions

do create hardship on the North Korean people, they must keep up this pressure because average North Koreans will find a way to survive, but the elites will be the ones most impacted. ***A huge special thank you to the NSC senior staff for inviting the entire NKFW delegation for the meeting and giving them so much of their time.***

7 PM Christian Freedom International and Arlington Community Church hosted a special service for NKFW 2019. Defector delegation **Kim Yong-hwa** spoke about his escape from North Korea and the underground Christians in North Korea.

<http://kr.christianitydaily.com/articles/99996/20190501/%EA%B9%80%EC%9A%A9%ED%99%94-%ED%9A%8C%EC%9E%A5-%EB%AF%B8%EA%B5%AD%EA%B5%90%ED%9A%8C%EC%84%9C-%EA%B0%84%EC%A6%9D-%ED%95%98%EB%82%98%EB%8B%98%EC%9D%80-%EB%AF%BF%EB%8A%94-%EC%9E%90%EB%A5%BC-%EC%82%B4%EB%A6%AC%EC%8B%A0%EB%8B%A4.htm?r=ny>

Thursday, May 2

1 PM Nicholas Eberstadt and the **American Enterprise Institute** hosted a discussion on the ***Troubling Changes in the South Korean Government in Their Treatment of North Korean Defectors***. Defectors shared their experiences on how the current South Korean government has been trying to silence North Korean defectors and suppress their freedom of speech by cutting off all support for their work and undermining their ability to continue to speak out.

<http://www.aei.org/publication/why-is-south-korea-making-life-hard-on-defectors-from-the-north/>



<http://www.newdaily.co.kr/site/data/html/2019/05/03/2019050300109.html>
https://www.rfa.org/korean/in_focus/human_rights_defector/nkhr-05022019165213.html
<http://www.christiantoday.co.kr/news/322179>

3 PM Isabella Foundation and the **Family Research Council** co-hosted a **Panel Session** on ***From Orphanages to Escape, An Update on the Current Situation faced by North Korea Orphans***. North Korean defector witness **Park Ji-hye** told her riveting story as an orphan who lived in both state-run and a private orphanage from the age of 10, and human rights abuse she witnessed and experienced against orphans in North Korea. **Kim Yong-hwa** who is currently involved with rescuing orphans spoke about the dire situation that North Korean orphans in China are facing. Special thanks to **Wendy Wright** of CFI, **Dr. Pavel** and **Susan Klein** of the Isabella Foundation and **Jason West**,

NKFC Vice Chair, for organizing this session and **Dr. Travis Weber** and the **Family Research Council** for hosting and moderating this event.



https://www.rfa.org/korean/in_focus/human_rights_defector/orpanage-05032019160600.html

<https://www.voakorea.com/a/4901545.html>

<https://www.christianexaminer.com/article/north-korean-defector-details-decade-of-abuse-forced-labor-at-orphanage/52775.htm>

7 PM North Korea Freedom Coalition hosted a **Dinner** to honor the NKFW Delegation. So, we gave the delegation a night off, just to have some Korean food, and meet and spend time with the North Korea Freedom Coalition members.



Friday, May 3

10 AM North Korea Freedom Coalition with the assistance of **Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission** hosted a **Panel Session on the Human Rights Abuses Against the DPRK Military**. Three North Korean defector eyewitnesses, **Ms. Choi Yu-jin**, **Mr. Kang Ri-hyuk** and **Mr. Jo Young-hwa** exposed the human rights abuses the Kim regime commits against the North Korean military including the abuse of female soldiers, robbery of civilian villages, prevalent violence against lower rank soldiers, malnutrition and the use of the military to carry out illegal activities including drug smuggling for the Kim family. Special thanks to **Rosie Berman** and **Pierro Tozzo** of the **Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission**, and human rights champions of the US Congress: **Congressmen James McGovern** and **Chris Smith**.



CNN News Coverage:

<http://www.cnn.com/video/data/2.0/video/tv/2019/05/03/exp-todd-tsr-cindy-warmbier-former-north-korean-soldiers.cnn.html>

https://www.rfa.org/korean/weekly_program/baa9c694-b300b2f4/fe-mj-05142019140632.html

12 PM Defense Forum Foundation hosted **Congressional Defense and Foreign Policy Forum** on **"North Korea: What are The Prospects for Regime Change from Within?"** The **Defense Forum Foundation** hosted this session especially to answer that question from the best folks to do just that: North Korean defectors who lead the major NGOs working for North Korea's freedom. They discussed their work changing the hearts and minds of people inside North Korea through their efforts getting information into North Korea and reaching out to citizens from elites and average civilians. Despite having just returned from a Asia, **Dr. David Maxwell** of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies gave a spirited opening remark explaining that the only viable solution to the North Korean issue is regime change, which really inspired the North Korean defector delegation who all strongly agree. North Korean Defector leaders who spoke, all of whom are on Kim Jong Un's list for assassination, were **Kim Seong Min** of Free North Korea Radio, **Park Sang Hak** of Fighters for Free North Korea, **Kim Heung-Kwang** of North Korean Intellectuals Solidarity, and **Hu Kwang il** of Committee for the Democratization of North Korea.



https://www.rfa.org/korean/in_focus/nk_nuclear_talks/regimechange-05032019164457.html

FOX News Coverage: <http://bit.ly/2LPhEYt> and at

<https://video.foxnews.com/v/6032778388001/#sp=show-clips> (from 14:00 mark)

4 PM North Korea Freedom Coalition organized a **Protest against China's Repatriation of North Korean Refugees** at the **CCTV Washington DC Bureau**. Right before NKFW, seven North Koreans, who range in age from a nine year old girl to her 32 year old uncle, were arrested in China on their way to South Korea. As all of them have family members in South Korea and were clearly trying to reach South Korea, they face immediate execution or a slower death in a political prison camp if China forces them back to North Korea. In order to urge China not to repatriate these seven refugees, NKFW Delegation and members of the North Korea Freedom Coalition staged a peaceful demonstration calling on Xi Jinping to end his illegal, inhumane and brutal repatriation policy that is a death sentence for North Korea men, women, and children.



Special thank you to NKFC members Peter Kang, Professor Ok Cha Soh, Alana Johnson, Nancy Purcell, and Sally Jo Messersmith for joining for events on Friday to focus on saving North Korean refugees.

5 PM North Korea Freedom Coalition and NKFW Delegation delivered a petition for **President Moon Jae In** to the **Republic of Korea Embassy** to urge the South Korean government to rescue the seven refugees held in a Chinese detention center. Under the South Korean Constitution, these refugees are entitled to South Korean nationality, hence South Korean government is obligated to rescue and bring them safely to South Korea.



5:30 PM North Korea Freedom Coalition organized a **Candlelight Vigil for North Korean Refugees** at the **PRC Embassy**. The NKFWD Delegation and members of the North Korea Freedom Coalition delivered the petition to Chinese Embassy and read aloud **The List**, a list of the names of all the men, women and children who have been forced back against their will to North Korea by the government of China. Special thanks to **Youna Oh** for updating and preparing The List. Also, a special thank you to **Rev. Kim JeUk** of Good Spoons Ministry for joining the vigil and providing refreshments for all the participants.



<http://kr.christianitydaily.com/articles/100030/20190504/%EB%B6%81%EC%86%A1%EB%90%9C-%ED%83%88%EB%B6%81%EC%9E%90-%EC%9D%B4%EB%A6%84-%ED%95%98%EB%82%98%ED%95%98%EB%82%98-%EB%B6%80%EB%A5%B4%EB%A9%B0%E2%80%A6%EB%B6%81%ED%95%9C%EC%9E%90%EC%9C%A0%EC%A3%BC%EA%B0%84-%EA%B3%B5%EC%8B%9D%EC%9D%BC%EC%A0%95-%EB%A7%88%EC%B3%90.htm>
<http://www.christiantoday.co.kr/news/322217>

Saturday, May 4

The NKFWD Delegation enjoy a Taste of Heaven! The one thing we were missing was the chance for the delegation to be hosted for a meal with an American family. We were so blessed that **Gina and Alan Price** volunteered to do this for the delegation.



Special thank you to **Gina and Alan Price** for giving what is best described as a “taste of Heaven”. Gina spent two days cooking to put together a bounteous feast for the NKFW delegation. She and her husband gave the delegation such a delicious meal and provided wonderful fellowship welcoming them all to their home in Virginia.



OUR NKFW 2019 Traditional farewell dinner at Peking Gourment

NKFW Chair Suzanne Scholte’s interview with Munhwa Daily

<http://www.munhwa.com/news/view.html?no=2019042601032903007001>

NKFW delegation interviewed with Voice of America

<https://www.voakorea.com/a/4905511.html>

NKFW Delegation Choi Jeong-hun had an interview with Christian Broadcasting Network:

<https://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/us/2019/may/nkorean-defector-details-persecution-and-false-religion-of-kims-regime-they-are-not-gods-there-is-a-real-god>

**U.S. Department of State Press Release on North Korea Freedom Week:
SUPPORTING FREEDOM IN NORTH KOREA**

<https://www.state.gov/supporting-freedom-in-north-korea/>

Thank you to U.S. State Department for not only welcoming the delegation for meetings on the first business day of North Korea Freedom Week but also issuing a strong statement of concern regarding the human rights situation in North Korea.



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesperson**

For Immediate Release

STATEMENT BY MORGAN ORTAGUS, SPOKESPERSON

May 6, 2019

Supporting Freedom in North Korea

As we reflect on North Korea Freedom Week, we recognize the efforts of the North Korean defector and human rights community to continue to shine a spotlight on the dire human right situation in North Korea. For decades, the regime in North Korea has subjected its people to egregious violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Approximately 100,000 individuals languish in political prison camps and their family members and children often suffer by their sides. Further, those trying to flee this oppressive environment, if caught, are often tortured or killed.

We remain gravely concerned and deeply troubled by these abuses. We continue to work with the international community to raise awareness, highlight abuses and violations, enhance access to independent information, and promote respect for human rights in North Korea.

xxx