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## **CHINA | CSW Urges End to Refoulement of North Korean Refugees**

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) wrote China's President Xi Jinping requesting that North Korean refugees are allowed safe passage to a third country.

The letter was sent to mark the Day of Action on behalf of North Korean Refugees and the 33<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of China becoming a signatory to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol.

"Unlike any refugee crisis in the world today, the North Korean refugees have a place to go for immediate resettlement as they are citizens of South Korea, under Articles 2 and 3 of the Republic of Korea Constitution. Furthermore, the United States as well as other countries have shown a willingness to accept these refugees for resettlement. There is no reason for them to remain a burden and concern for China and face the threat of repatriation to North Korea where they will most certainly be tortured and imprisoned, and in some cases, executed for fleeing their country," CSW's Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas wrote. "The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHRC) can help China quickly and safely resettle these refugees, and we are asking our government to do more to facilitate resettlement."

A supporting letter to President Xi by Justice Michael Kirby, on behalf of the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) cites the findings that:

- DPRK citizens who cross the border into China do so owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted;
- Those forcibly repatriated are subjected to torture and arbitrary detention and in some instances rape, enforced disappearances, summary execution and other gross human rights violations;
- There are reasonable ground for believing that Chinese officials have in some cases shared with DPRK authorities information which further aggravates the risk for these repatriated DPRK nationals and that China is allowing DPRK agents to operate on Chinese territory and even abduct DPRK citizens and at least one Republic of Korea (ROK) national;
- Many North Korean women are being trafficked into forced marriages and in some instances commercial sexual exploitation; and
- Estimates of "stateless" children in China (children of Chinese fathers and North Korean mothers) ranges from 10,000 to 25,000.

Mervyn Thomas concluded, "These findings could immediately be addressed if China simply

followed its international treaty obligations. We believe working together with the international community and the UNHCR that China can resolve this crisis quickly and safely.”