

URGENT ACTION

NO DETAILS ABOUT DETAINED NORTH KOREANS IN CHINA

No official information has been made available regarding eight North Koreans that have been detained in China since mid-March 2017. If forcibly returned to North Korea, they are at risk of arbitrary detention, torture or other ill-treatment, enforced disappearance and execution. Without news about their health, families remain concerned for their well-being.

In mid-March 2017, a group of eight North Koreans were stopped by traffic police while travelling in Shenyang city in Liaoning province, in north-eastern China and bordering on North Korea. According to Human Rights Watch, they were taken to the local police station after officials realized they did not hold any valid identification documents. The location and condition of the eight have not been confirmed since mid-June when a pastor reported that the group was being detained at the same police station and were at risk of imminent forcible return to North Korea.

Among the group are two women who said they had previously been sold to Chinese men and were beaten by them. While two other women had suffered injuries they were unable to be treated at a hospital due to their undocumented status in China.

The Chinese government considers North Koreans crossing the border into China without prior permission not as refugees, but as irregular, economic migrants, and forcibly returns them regularly to North Korea if caught. Although China is a state party to the UN Refugee Convention, it does not currently allow the UN refugee agency, UNHCR, access to North Koreans fleeing their country.

Forcibly repatriated North Koreans are often subjected to arbitrary imprisonment, forced labour, torture or other ill-treatment, and possibly execution. According to a report issued by the United Nations in 2014, some repatriated women were subject to treatment violating the prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment, including forced abortions at detention facilities after being returned.

1) TAKE ACTION

Write a letter, send an email, call, fax or tweet:

- Immediately disclose the whereabouts and condition of the eight North Koreans and ensure they are protected from torture and other ill-treatment while in detention and have prompt access to legal counsel of their choosing and any necessary medical treatment;
- Stop the forcible return of any person to North Korea, including this group of eight detained North Koreans;
- Grant refugee status to those North Koreans who are entitled to it and to give them immediate access to the UNHCR

Contact these two officials by 16 November, 2017:

President
Xi Jinping
The State Council General Office
2 Fuyoujie
Xichengqu, Beijingshi 100017,
People's Republic of China
Fax: +86 10 6238 1025
Email: gov@govonline.cn
Salutation: Dear President

Ambassador Tiankai Cui, Embassy of the People's Republic of China
3505 International Place NW, Washington DC 20008
Phone: 1 202 495 2266 | Fax: 1 202 495 2138
Email: chinaembpress_us@mfa.gov.cn OR
chineseembassyspokesperson@gmail.com
(If you receive an error message, please try calling instead!)
Salutation: Dear Ambassador

2) LET US KNOW YOU TOOK ACTION

[Click here](#) to let us know if you took action on this case! *This is Urgent Action 163.17*

Here's why it is so important to report your actions: we record the actions taken on each case—letters, emails, calls and tweets—and use that information in our advocacy.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In February 2014 the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) released its *Report of the detailed findings of the Commission of Inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea* (DPRK). The report documents the systematic, widespread and grave violations of human rights in the country. Individuals or families in the DPRK fled the country to escape persecution for political or religious reasons. They also often have no choice but to cross the China-North Korea border illegally for the desperate need of food and work.

Border controls in North Korea have reportedly been tightened in recent years since Kim Jong-un came to power in December 2011. The North Korean government condemned people crossing the border without prior permission and threatened them with severe punishments. The fortified security measures have caused a decrease in these crossings since 2012, but they have not stopped.

The principle of non-refoulement, codified in the UN Refugee Convention which China is a state party to, and in other international human rights treaties binding on China prohibits the transfer of anyone to a place where they would be at real risk of serious human rights violations or abuses. This principle has also achieved the status of customary international law, binding on all states regardless of whether they have ratified the relevant treaties. Amnesty International believes that anyone fleeing North Korea is entitled to international protection because they are at risk of serious human rights violations if returned to North Korea just for having left the country.

Name: Group
Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 163/17 Index: ASA 17/7181/2017 Issue Date: 6 October 2017