

DO YOU DARE OVERLOOK THE HELL NAMED NORTH KOREA?

We Japanese ask President Barack Obama for joint actions to resolve the human rights violations of North Korea.



Megumi Yokota and Her Brothers

President Barack Obama, congratulations on your inauguration as the 44th president of the United States. We are writing this letter to inform you that serious crimes against humanity are being conducted in East Asia.

In 1977, Megumi Yokota, a Japanese girl who today would be 3 years your junior, was abducted from her neighborhood and transported to North Korea by a spy boat. At the time she was a 13-year old who loved playing badminton and reading books. She was and still is loved by everyone around her. Her family desperately looked for her without really knowing the truth about her sudden disappearance. The North Korean regime, which had been denying any involvement in Megumi's disappearance, admitted the abduction for the first time in 2002, when Junichiro Koizumi, Japanese Prime Minister of that time, visited Pyongyang. This was only the first step toward the solution of the abduction issue. Chairman Kim Jong-Il subsequently admitted the abduction of 13 Japanese citizens, of which 5 of them had been returned to Japan after 25 years. For the remaining abductees, Pyongyang's official position was that they had died and tried to support their position with inconclusive evidence, which proved to be completely false. A series of investigations led us strongly to believe that there were more than 13 Japanese abductees. The Japanese Government and its people have been urging North Korea to disclose the truth, but the regime continues to dismiss the abduction issue as "an already closed case." Meanwhile parents of abductees are becoming older and some passing away. The surviving family members desperately hope to see their sons and daughters returned to Japan. We must have these abductees released so they can be re-united with their families.

Pyongyang still detains a large number of Korean prisoners of war from the Korean War, and has subsequently abducted at least 500 South Koreans. However, this is not all; it has become clear that innocent people from many countries and regions such as Lebanon, Romania, Thailand, Macau, and Singapore have also been abducted by the North Korean regime.



Rev. Kim with a young refugee

Abduction by North Korea has a close connection to you, Mr. President. Kim Dong Shik, a minister and permanent resident to the United States, was kidnapped by a North Korean secret agent in 2000, when he was leading relief activities for North Korean refugees fleeing to China. His whereabouts is unknown, and his family, who are permanent residents of the United States, are agonizing and waiting for his return to his home state of Illinois.

Our petition is not limited to the release of abducted Japanese nationals. Sakie Yokota, the mother of Megumi Yokota and a devout Christian, visited the United States to meet President George W. Bush in 2006. In her testimony at a hearing in the House of Representatives, she urged "we should not just focus on solving the abduction issue, but must help the people of North Korea who are suffering from serious human rights violations."

The abduction of foreign citizens is deeply rooted to the serious violations of the basic human rights in North Korea, where people are forced to live in slave-like conditions. Satellite photographs of North Korea indicate an estimated 200,000 prisoners of conscience are imprisoned in 6 concentration camps, in grim living conditions far worse than that of the labor camps or the "Gulag" under Stalin. We fear for the lives of these prisoners. Although the UN repeatedly adopted the

Resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in North Korea at the General Council, the situation shows no sign of improvement. We believe that different measures should be taken that effectively bind North Korea with all applicable international laws. International Criminal Court (ICC) had issued an arrest warrant to the president of Sudan over the genocide in Darfur. Murder, torture, cruel treatment of prisoners at those internment camps, and the abduction of foreign nationals clearly constitutes "crimes against humanity" orchestrated by the North Korea. We hope that the ICC will take definite measures for those serious violations. We also ask for a human rights inspection team to study the status of abductees, political prisoners and the conditions of the internment camps in which they are being held.



A Concentration Camp in North Korea

It is estimated that 3 million men, women, and children have starved to death during the late 90's in North Korea, which has total population of 20 million: starvation not associated with natural disasters. During the same period, North Korean leaders spent an enormous amount of money for the development of nuclear weapons and missiles. Under this reign of terror, the regime produces counterfeit bills, narcotics and illegal drugs to acquire foreign currency, which is then used for their military buildup to maintain its regime. It is the total neglect of basic human rights that enables this failed state to develop nuclear arms. People in North Korea choose to put their lives at stake and cross the river to bordering China in search of food and freedom. Many refugees are arrested and deported back to North Korea by the Chinese Government, let alone receiving support and protection. Secretly leaving the country is considered treason under the North Korean regime, and severe punishment including the threat of death awaits the refugees once deported back to North Korea. The Chinese Government, which oppresses human rights in Tibet and Uyghur, treats refugees without any humanitarian concern: as a result, more than 100,000 North Korean refugees in China are constantly living under fear. It is our humanitarian duty to help refugees who fled oppression and persecution. Washington is extending aid to North Korean refugees and opened its doors for them to settle in the United States. We hope that such assistance will be given to the refugee on a larger scale.

We strongly believe that ensuring democracy and basic human rights in North Korea will not only lead to the release of abductees, but to bring happiness to the people of North Korea. This too is the best way to eliminate the threat to neighboring states and the world imposed by the terrorist state of North Korea. Protection of human rights is essential to completely eliminating the nuclear threat imposed by North Korea. President Barack Obama, we appeal to you as a champion of human rights, as well as the American people, who cherish democracy, to work together with us to change North Korea to become a truly Democratic state. The same message in this opinion ad is sent to the White House.

(<http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/>).

We look forward to hearing from you, President Obama.

* The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the official name of North Korea in English.

Donations by thousands of Japanese have made this ad possible.

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Please visit the website to learn details of the state terrorism of North Korea led by Kim Jong Il to people of Japan, South Korea and many other countries.
<http://jinken.asia/en/>