

URGENT ACTION

ELDERLY PRISONER'S LIFE AT RISK IN NORTH KOREA

An 84-year-old man, Jeong Sang-un, is believed to be detained in a political prison camp in North Korea after he was forcibly returned by the Chinese authorities. On his return, he was known to be in poor health. Given his advanced age and the harsh conditions in the prison camp, Jeong Sang-un's life is at risk.

Jeong Sang-un, a former coal miner who fought for South Korea and was captured by North Koreans during the 1950-53 Korean War, crossed North Korea's border with China in September 2009. It is not known exactly why he made the crossing. Since the food crisis escalated in North Korea in the early 1990s, thousands of North Koreans have crossed into China every year in search of food and asylum. Shortly after he arrived in China, he was arrested by authorities in Jilin Province, and detained until he was forcibly returned to North Korea in February. At the time of his return, he was known to be very frail, and had to be helped to walk. Jeong Sang-un did not face any trial in North Korea, and was sent directly to Yodok political prison camp (or *kwanliso*) in South Hamkyung province.

According to testimony from former detainees and their relatives, supplies of food and medication are insufficient in Yodok *kwanliso* where Jeong is an inmate. Prisoners can be executed for even minor infractions. All prisoners are forced to watch public executions. Torture is widespread. Many inmates die after being forced into hard and dangerous labour with very little rest.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English, Korean or your own language:

- Calling on the North Korean authorities to release Jeong Sang-un immediately;
- Express concern that, given his age and poor health, continued detention in harsh prison camp conditions puts his life at risk;
- Urging them, while he is in custody, to ensure that he is not tortured or otherwise ill-treated, and has access to all the food, medical treatment and medication he needs.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 30 SEPTEMBER 2010 TO:

North Korean Representative at UN
in Geneva

So Se-pyong
Permanent Representative of DPRK
Mission in Geneva
Chemin de Plonjon 1
1207 Geneva
Switzerland

Fax: +41 22 786 06 62

Email: mission.korea-dpr@ties.itu.int

Salutation: Dear Ambassador

North Korean Representative at UN
in New York

Sin Son-ho
Office of the Permanent Mission of
the DPRK to UN
820 Second Ave., 13th Floor
New York, NY 10017
USA

Fax: +1 212 972 3154

Email: dpr.korea@verizon.net

Salutation: Dear Ambassador

And copies to:

Head of North Korean National
Assembly
Kim Yong-nam
President of the Presidium of the
Supreme People's Assembly
Supreme People's Assembly
Pyongyang
Democratic People's Republic of
Korea

Fax: +850 2 381 4410

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives of North Korea accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Thousands of North Koreans cross the border without official permission into China every year despite significant risks. If caught by the Chinese authorities and forcibly returned to North Korea, they are detained, interrogated and often face torture, forced labour and other ill-treatment in prison camps; some are executed. Conditions in detention vary from one facility to another but in general conditions are harsher in political prison camps (*kwanliso*) than in prison camps for non-political "crimes" (*kyohwaso* or *nodong danryundae*). Prisoners are subjected to forced hard labour in all camps. Typical types of labour include logging mountainside forests and quarrying stone, often for 10 hours or more per day with no rest days.

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