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South Korea: Dolkun Isa release welcome but authorities should not have denied him entry

Amnesty International today welcomed the release of Dolkun Isa, the Secretary General of the World Uyghur Congress, following his detention at Incheon International airport in Seoul, South Korea but said the authorities should not have denied him entry to the country.

Dolkun Isa, had been held at the airport for two days after being denied entry to South Korea.

“We welcome the news that Dolkun Isa was released and that he has safely returned home to Germany,” said Roseann Rife, Amnesty International Asia Pacific deputy director.

"We are, however, disappointed that the South Korean authorities did not permit Mr. Isa to enter South Korea to attend the 'World Forum for Democratization in Asia' in Seoul as he had planned."

Mr. Isa has travelled widely around the globe to participate in activities promoting human rights for Uighurs in China.

The Chinese authorities have accused the World Uyghur Congress and its President Rebiya Kadeer in particular, of having masterminded recent riots in Urumqi. The authorities have not substantiated such claims with any credible evidence.

Dolkun Isa fled China in 1997 obtaining asylum in Germany and became a German citizen in 2006.

In 2006, Husein Dzhelil, a Canadian citizen originally from Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, was detained in Uzbekistan and handed over to China.

In China he was held incommunicado, tortured, denied access to Canadian consular officials and finally sentenced to life imprisonment for “plotting to split the country” and “joining a terrorist organization”. He remains in prison in China.