

# URGENT ACTION

## FEARS FOR FORCIBLY RETURNED NORTH KOREANS

**At least nine North Koreans have reportedly been forcibly returned from China to North Korea where they are at serious risk of arbitrary detention, torture and other ill-treatment, enforced disappearance, forced labour, and death. Other North Koreans currently detained in China are also in danger of being forcibly returned to North Korea.**

According to reports from the media and organizations with contacts in China and North Korea, the Chinese authorities forcibly returned at least nine North Koreans in mid-February.

North Koreans are not allowed to travel abroad without state permission, and leaving the country is almost impossible, in violation of the right to leave one's own country. However, thousands of North Koreans illegally cross the border into China every year despite significant risks. China considers all undocumented North Koreans to be economic migrants and forcibly returns them to North Korea if they are caught. Illegal border-crossers typically face harsh punishment, including arbitrary detention, torture and execution.

In January the North Korean authorities condemned border-crossers and threatened them with severe punishments on return to North Korea. These comments came at a time when the country's leadership is changing: the leader of North Korea, Kim Jong-il died in December 2011, and he has been succeeded by his son Kim Jong-un. Amnesty International is concerned that the denouncement of border-crossers could signal that those returned may be subjected to even harsher punishment than usual.

### **Please write immediately in English, Korean or your own language:**

- Call on the North Korean authorities to ensure that no one is detained or prosecuted for going to China, nor tortured or otherwise ill-treated, subjected to forced labour, enforced disappearance or to the death penalty on return to North Korea.
- Urge the North Korean authorities to abolish the requirement for permission to travel internally and abroad, in compliance with their international legal obligations.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 10 APRIL 2012 TO KIM JONG-UN, SUPREME COMMANDER OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE'S ARMY, CARE OF:**

Ambassador of the Permanent Mission  
of the Democratic People's Republic of  
Korea to the Office of the United Nations  
in New York

Mr Sin Son-ho  
Permanent Mission of the Democratic  
People's Republic of Korea in New York  
820 Second Ave, 13th Floor  
New York, NY 10017  
USA  
Fax: +1 212 972 3154  
Email: dpr.korea@verizon.net

Ambassador of the Permanent Mission  
of the Democratic People's Republic of  
Korea to the Office of the United Nations  
in Geneva

Mr. So Se-pyong  
Chemin de Plonjon 1  
1207 Geneva  
Switzerland  
Fax: +41 22 786 0662

### **Copies to :**

Minister of People's Security  
Ri Myong-su  
Ministry of People's Security  
Pyongyang  
Democratic People's Republic of Korea

### **Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:**

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



# URGENT ACTION

## FEARS FOR FORCIBLY RETURNED NORTH KOREANS

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Although China is a state party to the UN Refugee Convention, it has prevented the UN refugee agency, the UNHCR, from gaining access to North Koreans in China. International law prohibits the forcible return, either directly or indirectly, of any individuals to a country where they are at risk of persecution, torture or other ill-treatment, or death. Amnesty International believes that all North Koreans in China are entitled to seek refugee status because of the threat of these human rights violations if they are returned.

The North Korean authorities refuse to recognize or grant access to international human rights monitors, including Amnesty International and the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in North Korea. Ongoing restrictions on access to independent monitors and to intergovernmental and humanitarian organizations impede efforts to assess the human rights situation in the country. Information that does emerge, mainly through North Koreans living outside North Korea including refugees, points to widespread and systematic violations of human rights, including severe restrictions on freedom of association, expression and movement, arbitrary detention, torture and other ill-treatment resulting in death, and executions.

Name: At least nine North Koreans

Gender m/f: Unknown

UA: 68/12 Index: ASA 24/002/2012 Issue Date: 28 February 2012