

**United Nations Human Rights Council**

**Universal Periodic Review**

**China**

**Protection of civil and political rights**

**Submission by**

**Citizens' Coalition for Human Rights of Abductees and North Korean Refugees  
(CHNK)**



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Citizens' Coalition for Human Rights of Abductees and North Korean Refugees

**C·H·N·K**

CHNK is a NGO headquartered in 47, Sejong-daero 23-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea, which was founded in March 2000. **CHNK** received the Korean Human Rights Award by the government Republic of Korea in 2013. Its aim is to protect the life and human rights of North Korean defectors and South Korean prisoners of war who are forcibly kidnapped by North Korean authorities; issue public statement to authorities in the South Korean, North Korean, Chinese governments, the United Nations to improve the humanity of North Korea; Coordinate with domestic and overseas human rights groups to support and protect refugees' freedom of belief, association, speech, etc. in South Korea.

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This submission addresses the following areas:

- I. Protection of civil and political rights
- II. Protection of Freedom of Religion and Beliefs

## **I. Protection of Civil and Political Rights**

### **1.1 The Chinese Authorities' Attitude Toward North Korean Defectors Who Flee to China (2014-2018)**

1.1.1 The Chinese authorities have prevented North Korean defectors from arriving at safe places with the care, help and protection of international human rights organizations, and even arrested and detained them. The Chinese authorities have clearly known that North Korean defectors will suffer from severe human rights abuses and even be sentenced to death once sent back to their country, yet each month they still forcefully deport dozens to hundreds of defectors including children, back to North Korea.

According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), from June 2016 to September 2017, 92 North Korean defectors were arrested by the Chinese authorities and at least 37 of them were forcefully deported. (<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/09/03/china-redoubling-crackdowns-fleeing-north-koreans>)

According to *The New York Times*, from the beginning of October 2017, and before the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, over 100 North Korean defectors were detained or repatriated by the Chinese authorities<sup>1</sup>.

### **1.2 China's Violation of Conventions and Protocols**

1.2.1 From 2014 to 2018, the Chinese authorities have forcefully repatriated North Korean defectors, which violates the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) and its Protocol (1967), the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention Against Torture (CAT).

1.2.2 According to Article 1 (A) of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, North Korean defectors who have fled to China meet the condition of having a "well-founded fear of being persecuted." Repatriation of North Korean defectors breaches Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

### **1.3 Cases**

The Human Right Organization, Amnesty International said: "In December last year (2017), ten North

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/07/world/asia/north-korea-defectors-china.html?\\_ga=2.119931912.1482779590.1521286128-787284930.1521286128](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/07/world/asia/north-korea-defectors-china.html?_ga=2.119931912.1482779590.1521286128-787284930.1521286128)

Korean defectors arrested in Shenyang, China, include a mother and her four-year-old son and they were forcefully returned to North Korea by the Chinese police. ... The mother Go, JeongHua is subjected to an investigation in the State Security Department of North Korea, though suffering from severe malnutrition.”<sup>2</sup> (Reported by RFA in January 2018)

A cadre of the Workers’ Party of Korea, his wife, his son and two daughters escaped North Korea in early July 2017. They planned to go to South Korea via a third country, but were arrested by the Chinese police in Kunming, Yunnan Province. According to the human rights activists who helped them, this family carried potassium cyanide with them when they left North Korea and would take it if they were caught by the North Korean police. However, after succeeding in their escape, they were arrested and deported by the Chinese police, and they took the poison and died on their way back to North Korea.<sup>3</sup>(Reported by RFA in July 2017)

## 1.4 Recommendations

—International human rights organizations and the member states of United Nations should persist in denouncing and opposing the Chinese authorities’ forceful repatriation of North Korean defectors. They should urge the Chinese authorities to not again carry out such acts against humanity which severely violate the International Law.

—The Chinese authorities must immediately cease arresting, detaining, and forcefully repatriating the North Korean defectors who seek freedom and human rights.

## II. Protection of Freedom of Religion and Beliefs

### 2.1 Introduction of The Church of Almighty God and Situation of The Church of Almighty God Christians Who Fled to South Korea

2.1.1 The Church of Almighty God (CAG) is a new religious movement established in China in 1991, whose teaching is that Jesus Christ has returned to Earth and incarnated as Almighty God who expresses words partially collected in the book of *The Word Appears in the Flesh*. Some western scholars proclaim CAG an authentic Christian group<sup>4</sup>. Estimated by the Chinese authorities in 2014, CAG has 4,000,000 members<sup>5</sup>.

2.1.2 As the Chinese authorities escalated their arrests and persecution against CAG Christians, the violation of the right to religious freedom has been worsening increasingly. Some CAG Christians had to flee overseas to seek political asylum from 2013. According to the findings, hundreds of CAG Christians have submitted their asylum applications to the Immigration Office of South Korea as of 2017.

### 2.2 China’s Violation Against the Legal Framework

During the span between 2014 and 2018, the Chinese authorities’ violation against the right to the religious freedom of CAG Christians has exported to foreign countries. On June 16 of 2014, the Chinese

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.rfa.org/korean/in\\_focus/human\\_rights\\_defector/amnestynkhr-12052017133056.html?searchterm:utf8:ustring](https://www.rfa.org/korean/in_focus/human_rights_defector/amnestynkhr-12052017133056.html?searchterm:utf8:ustring)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.rfa.org/korean/commentary/ae40d604c544/khacu-07242017102332.html>

<sup>4</sup> Holly Folk, 2017. *“Protestant Continuities in The Church of Almighty God”*  
[http://cesnur.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/tjoc\\_2\\_1\\_4\\_folk.pdf](http://cesnur.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/tjoc_2_1_4_folk.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Ma. 2014. “马兴瑞同志在省委防范和处理邪教问题领导小组全体成员会议上的讲话”. <https://www.adhrrf.org/china-ma-xingrui-20140709.html>.

Central 610 Office convened a nationwide teleconference concerning a special crackdown on CAG, instructing to inquire into the circumstances of CAG in South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan<sup>6</sup>. In July 2015, the Chinese authorities conducted online investigation, overseas investigation, and the special crackdown projects against CAG, i.e. “Two Investigations, On Project” implementation plan<sup>7</sup>, in which overseas investigation was listed as the key point in their action. On February 24 of 2016, Meng Jianzhu, secretary of the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission, specified the relevant deployment to repress religious groups overseas, demanding that “squeeze the space for religious groups overseas to the utmost.” Early in 2017, the Chinese authorities began the special household investigation (Door-Knocking Operation)<sup>8</sup>, arresting members in exile and out of control, including those CAG members who fled to foreign countries. The implementation of these documents seriously violates Articles 14 and 18 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights signed by the Chinese authorities, as well as the provision of “citizens of the People’s Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief” in the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China.

## **2.3 Violation Against the Human Rights of CAG Christians Displaced in South Korea**

In the process of implementation of a series of documents issued by the Chinese authorities during the span between 2014 and 2018, as for CAG Christians in Mainland China, the documents demand surveillance and arrests; as for CAG Christians who have fled overseas, the documents demand individual analysis, research and determination, in order to develop individualized plans for accurate crackdown on them<sup>9</sup>.

2.3.1 Once identified as CAG members fleeing overseas, they are under immediate arrest when they go back to China. One example is: Mr. Li Zhenyuan, age 48, Korean Chinese, is a native of Hunchun City, Jilin Province, China. On May 18 of 2015, he was arrested by the Chinese police when he returned to Yanji, China from South Korea. The police showed him some photos of performers and audience in the movies and choir videos produced by CAG, and asked him to identify them. But Mr. Li refused, and the Chinese police began to torture him, giving him heavy punches and kicks, stripping him naked, handcuffing him to the window rails and depriving him of sleep, for six days and nights. Later, the police threatened him with his family and forced him to infiltrate into CAG in South Korea to act as their undercover agent to provide them with intelligence. Eventually, Mr. Li Zhenyuan pretended to follow their request and seized the opportunity to return to South Korea. (See Affidavit A by Li Zhenyuan)

2.3.2 The Chinese authorities have ensnared family members of CAG Christians to protest against the South Korea government for hosting CAG refugees. Ms. Liu jingxiu, age 29, a former resident of Xi’an, China, fled to South Korea in March 2015 due to her faith in Almighty God. In November 2017, the Chinese authorities ensnared her husband into coming to South Korea for Liu. Unexpectedly, he was asked to cooperate with the Chinese authorities to organize a press conference defaming CAG and

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<sup>6</sup> “中共 610 办全国电视电话会议文件” 2014. 6. 16 <https://www.adhrrf.org/20140616.html>

<sup>7</sup> “中共香口乡委员会办公室关于印发香口乡反邪教‘两排一专’工作实施方案的通知” 2015. 7. 3 <https://www.adhrrf.org/xiangkou-20150703.html>

<sup>8</sup> “中共河南省委《省委防范和处理邪教问题领导小组 2017 年工作要点的》通知” 2017. 3. 31 <https://www.adhrrf.org/henan-20171222.html>

<sup>9</sup> “中共香口乡委员会办公室关于印发香口乡反邪教‘两排一专’工作实施方案的通知” 2015. 7. 3 <https://www.adhrrf.org/xiangkou-20150703.html>

protesting against the South Korean authorities for hosting CAG refugees<sup>10</sup>. Having a sense of being deceived, Liu's husband turned to the Korean police for help, with whose help he was able to meet Liu. He told his wife, "At the time, I just wanted to come find you, so I followed along with their demonstrations and made a statement at the press conference. I never imagined that would turn you into a public figure. I didn't imagine that things would turn out this way." (See Affidavit B by Liu Jingxiu)

## **2.4 Recommendations**

—The Chinese authorities must cease all their suppression and persecution against CAG.

—The Chinese authorities must respect the freedom of religious belief, and allow CAG Christians to freely disseminate the information of CAG at home and abroad. The Chinese authorities must cease their monitoring, investigation and arrests of overseas CAG Christians and their family members in Mainland China. The CAG Christians who have been back to China but arrested and imprisoned because of their belief in Almighty God, must be released.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.rphrr.org/ccp-launches-a-new-round-of-persecution-against-the-church-of-almighty-god.html>