

Joint Submission by the Center for Human Rights and Peace at Kyungpook National University and Korean War Abductees Research Institute to the United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review (UPR) pertaining to the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)<sup>1</sup>

Prepared by: HEO Man-ho

The Center for Human Rights and Peace		Korean War Abductees Research Institute	
Room 314, The Institute for Social Science Research, Kyungpook National University 1370, Sankyuk-dong, Buk-gu, Daegu, Republic of Korea		2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Sungil Bld., 317, Chongryangri-dong, Dongdaemun-gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea	
Contact Person & e-mail	HEO Man-ho <a href="mailto:mhheo@knu.ac.kr">mhheo@knu.ac.kr</a>	Contact Person & e-mail	LEE Mi-il <a href="mailto:milee625@hanmail.net">milee625@hanmail.net</a>

## Sixth Session (30 November – 11 December)

[Summary]

Independent human rights experts of UN have reviewed the DPRK's second periodic report on "Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights" of November 2003. And, they have expressed particular concerns over and called for effective measures to prevent the use of violence on housewives in the DPRK. The level of family violence is quite serious when we look into the families of North Korean defectors in the Republic of Korea (ROK) based on their personal testimonies.

---

<sup>1</sup> Except for several personal names, the system of romanizing the Korean alphabet is consistent with the July 7, 2000 Notice of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Korea. Korean names in this submission are all written with the family name first, followed by the given name.

With the recent improvement in the food supply, the DPRK government strengthened its border regions to reduce the number of defectors. However, North Koreans are still defecting to China in search of a better life and/or seeking refuge in the Republic of Korea. Sixty to 70 % of the defectors are women, 70 to 80% of whom are victims of human trafficking. However, the attitude of the Chinese authorities is to arrest and repatriate all North Korean defectors/refugees.

During the Korean War (1950-1953), the DPRK authorities abducted more than eighty thousand South Korean civilians, including many intellectuals, scientists, and technicians. Most are assumed to have since died, while the remaining survivors live under miserable conditions. Their remained family members desire earnestly their repatriation, or at least their news since the closure of the War. Yet the DPRK authorities still deny their existence.

Key Words: Violence against Women, Human Trafficking, Human Smuggling, Political Prison Camps, Infanticide, Sexual Abuse, South Korean Abductees

## **I. Violence Against Women**

There have been no systematic survey results on domestic violence in the DPRK until now. Only several cases have been revealed by interviews with DPR Korean defectors conducted by the Korean Bar Association (KBA) twice. Testimony of the defectors and their lives in the Republic of Korea (ROK), however, indicate the severity of the violence.

The 2006 interview with DPR Korean defectors by the KBA shows that 90.7% respondents have experienced domestic abuse. As 54 out of 100 interviewees can't represent the whole DPR Korean society, we can't say that is generally true. Yet the rate is quite high. Even if we assume that domestic violence occurring in ordinary families of the DPRK is less brutal than in those of 54 respondents or those that they mentioned, the rate is much higher than in other countries.

In the 2008 interview, the rate is very low. It is a huge change, but it should be reserved because of the matter of representation and credibility. It is difficult to understand the real trend as the questions were given improperly, 60.4% of interviewees say, "Violence against wives by husbands occurs in most families." and 37.7% of them say, "Violence against wives by husbands occurs in some families." The total number of 98.1% is higher than in the 2006 interview.

Due to a lack of available data on domestic violence and relief efforts in the DPRK, a comparative study is impossible and it is not easy to judge the general situation for the present. However, it has been revealed that cooperative intervention of the community can effectively reduce domestic abuse in some western countries. And there are studies that a comprehensive approach with the combination of arrest, fine, exclusive probation and counseling throughout the community can produce good results. These results show that responses and intervention of people in the neighborhood have been better than in 2006 (I try to stop them first: 26.4%; I don't care: 54.6%; It's the wife's fault: 9.4%; I think the husband is strange: 3.8%; I report it to regulators: 3.8%). They, however, fall short of being useful in resolving the problem. And 94.4% of interviewee in 2006 and 88.7% in 2008 answered that there is no organization to provide counseling on domestic violence. It tells that this issue is not drawing public attention.

[Table 1] In North Korea, how do people in the neighborhood respond when they see husbands badly abuse wives physically or verbally?

Choices	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)	Effective Percentage (%)
I try to stop them first. I don't take any other measure.	24	43.6	45.3
I don't care about other family's business	25	45.5	47.2
I report it to regulators	3	5.5	5.7
Others	1	1.8	1.9
Subtotal	53	96.4	100.0
N/S	2	3.6	
Total	55	100.0	

[Table 2] What do people in the neighborhood think about husbands who beat their wives badly?

Choices	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)	Effective Percentage (%)
They have no idea or feeling	9	16.4	17.0
They think the husbands are fastidious and violent (It is the husband' fault)	27	49.1	50.9
They think it is not right but possible.	7	12.7	13.2
They think the wives might do something wrong	4	7.3	7.5
Others	6	10.9	11.3
Subtotal	53	96.4	100.0
N/S	2	3.6	
Total	55	100.0	

[Table 3] If husbands who physically or verbally abuse their wives are reported, what happens to them?

Choices	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)	Effective Percentage (%)
Punished by law	9	16.4	17.0
Not punished	30	54.5	56.6
The reporter is considered a strange person	6	10.9	11.3
Others	8	14.5	15.1
Subtotal	53	96.4	100.0
N/S	2	3.6	
Total	55	100.0	

[Table 4] Is there an organization where women get counseling on violence by their husbands and other family matters in North Korea?

Choices	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)	Effective Percentage (%)
Yes	3	5.5	5.7
No	47	85.5	88.7
I have no idea	3	5.5	5.7
Subtotal	53	96.4	100.0
N/S	2	3.6	
Total	55	100.0	

It means that the pathological problem has yet to be recognized properly and that is why necessary legal measures to protect women from domestic violence have not been taken. Still the more serious cases of violence against DPR Korean women is mental and physical abuse that female defectors experience when they fall victim to human trafficking. According to the investigation report of the Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights, 60 to 70% of North Korean defectors are women and 70 to 80% of them are kidnapped by human traffickers, and suffer from common violence.

In the case of human trafficking by coercion or kidnapping not human smuggling, the situation is worse. Both human smuggling and trafficking occurs in three phases. First phase: local recruiters, ethnic Koreans in China (in border areas), Second phase: middlemen (in small and medium cities), Third phase: Chinese human trafficking ring (in inland or big cities). Once kidnapped or recruited, women are forced to gather at an apartment in cities near the China-North Korea border and wait for dealers. There it is common for them to be stripped off their clothes or beaten. After being bought by dealers, women are transferred to big cities or inland by car or train. The price is set by grades based on age, appearance and marital status. It has been reported that in 2000 women were sold at ¥2,000 to 5,000 (the prices of livestock in Inner Mongolia in August 2000: ¥1,300 for sheep, ¥2,000 for horse, ¥4,000 for beef) in Inner Mongolia, the demand area at step one. In addition, in 2007 women were transacted at ¥3,000 to 7,000 in the border, a supply area at step three. As human trafficking is conducted by criminal rings, most of the women are usually caught while attempting to escape and are badly beaten.

In the 2006 interview with DPR Korean defectors by the KBA, a mere 13.4% of respondents answered "yes" when asked: "Have you ever been beaten by human dealers or human traffickers?" This may indicate that victims left the DPRK in the form of human smuggling rather than human trafficking. But it is necessary to pay attention to the testimony of people who have been smuggled. It is certain that they were forced to make a choice and experienced less physical abuse but more emotional violence.

In addition, there has been a report that they suffered from serious physical and mental violence even sexual torture by interrogators when questioned whether they had contacted South Koreans or religious people and whether they had sexual relationship with the Chinese. There are even some women whose babies were killed right before them after being induced to have an abortion. It is dreadful and physically shocking.

As there is little information about the recent situation, it is difficult to gauge the degree of improvement. But women who are put in political prison camps seem the most seriously abused. Especially beautiful women suffered the most. KIM Yong, a DPR Korean defector who had been put in Camp 14 and transferred to Camp 18 and escaped from there and now live in the U.S., introduced the testimony of KIM Yeong-il. His college inmate at Camp 14 told him that those atrocities were being carried out systematically.

"There is a 'Cadre Guest House' at No. 14 Political Prison Camp. It is a special building where ministers or deputy ministers from Pyongyang stay. When senior officials come from Pyongyang, pretty maidens aged 21 to 25 are selected among female inmates, bathed and then sent to them. After the officials make a sexual plaything of those females, they charge the women with fleeing and kill them to keep secrets."

These various forms of violence against DPR Korean women are serious violation of international norms including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The high frequency in domestic violence in the North may be due to the economic difficulties and poor awareness on the issue. So it could be improved only after economic growth and efforts to raise public awareness in the DPRK. Still there is no information on what measures the North Korean government has taken to root out domestic abuse against women.

Infanticide in the DPRK itself is a crime against humanity and it can be regarded as genocide if it is committed systematically. Even without considering the systematical killing of babies, after pregnant female deportees or political prison inmates are forced to abortion or give birth to a baby it is a violation of the Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It states that all children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection. So not only the DPRK government, but the South Korean and Chinese governments are also breaking international norms of obligation in failing to take preventive measures.

## **II. South Korean Civilian Abductees during the Korean War (1950)**

During the Korean War, many South Korean civilians were abducted by the DPRK authorities. In 1952, the Republic of Korea (ROK) government published a list of 82,959 abductees. Yet remained family members assess the number of civilian abductees at least 120,000.

Relying on the identity of the 7,034 abductees, and the process of their abduction that the ROK National Red Cross has listed according to the remained family members' petition on June 15 - August 16, 1956, it is assumed that the abduction was a well planned war policy.

Mostly they were abducted in first weeks after the outbreak of the Korean War on June 25. Some of them were abducted on September, yet they were detected and lured in hiding. It means that the abduction had been planned when the DPRK authorities decided the War.

Mostly they were "arrested" (in fact kidnapped) by the DPRK policemen, officers of the Domestic Affairs. Some of them were lured with their superior's order to come to work or their friend's visit to their hidden place. So, the abduction was systematic and well organized.

The DPRK policy on the abduction of the ROK civilians is assumed to have relation with the KIM Il Sung's instruction "On bringing the intellectuals from South Korea" given in July 31, 1946. The DPRK authorities brought a mass of South Korean young people under the cloak of dispatching them to the USSR to continue their study. In fact, they were trained as guerilla at Kangdong Political Academy or Hoeryong Military Academy, and dispatched them to the ROK at the end of 1940s and spring of 1950. That policy and such experiences in pre-war era may form the base of abductions of the ROK civilians in early weeks of war-time.

Among the 81,731 abductees, there were 1,206 policemen, 2,004 public service personals, 455 soldiers, 677 professors and teachers, and 4,452 merchants.

The aim of abduction varied with abductees' occupation. More than half of them are farmers and workers; 44,885 and 3,635 among 81,731. They are assumed to be engaged in various construction and restoration as war-time laborers. 2,581 engineers, 139

lawyers, and 209 medical doctors may be helpful to fulfill the shortage of highly qualified persons in the DPRK.

The DPRK authorities searched firstly politicians such as Cho So Ang (respected progressive nationalist), to employ them in strengthening legitimacy of the Kim Il Sung regime, and in forming “united national front”.

The DPRK authorities abducted South Korean believers, right-wing elements, pro-Americans etc. to punish and isolate them. It is assumed based on the Chinese and Vietnamese cases. After subjugate enemy territory, the communist authorities classified such people as reactionary class, and detained them in Laogai in China, and confined them in concentration camp (Trai Cai Tao Lao Dong) or expel them to “New Economic Zone” in Vietnam.

It is highly possible that useless or non-collaborative abductees were detained in Special Detention Center of Laborers (*Tukbyol Nomuja Suyongso*) along with “reactionary abductees”.

The ROK civilian casualties of the Korean War are distinctive by their composition: 84,532 abductees and 303,212 missing persons among 990,937 casualties (second investigation of the ROK government in 1953). Any written order of abduction is not known in the Western world. Yet practical instructions are known such as “*Seoul simin chonch’ul saope kwanhan hyopjosa’e daeha’yo*(On the Cooperation to the Moving-Out Work of Seoul Citizens)” which warns to the DPRK Police, Office of Domestic Affairs, to “inspect recruited workers (moved-out Seoul citizens) and mobilize maximum of informants to interrupt any impure activities”; and to “prohibit strictly to move out to the DPRK any family who do not have laborers.”

Recently a South Korean Daily, Joong Ang Ilbo revealed a Soviet Russian document on “Repatriation Order of 500,000 Seoul citizens to the DPRK”. The sum of listed 84,532 abductees and 303,212 missing persons approaches to the number on the document.

Repatriation of the abductees to the ROK is stipulated at the “Military Armistice Agreement in Korea” in the name of “displaced civilians”. However the DPRK authorities deny by now their existence. Even though Roh Mu Hyun government had agreed several times with KIM Jong Il government to discuss on this question in the



name of “war-time missing personals” at Inter-Korean Red Cross Talks, it had never been effectuated.

### **III. South Korean Civilian Abductees in the Post-Korean War Years**

Since May 28, 1955, when then South Korean fishermen were abducted from Daesung-ho by the DPRK government, a total of 3,696 South Korean fishermen have been abducted after the closure of the Korean War in 1953. 3,264 of them were repatriated. Six of them have recently returned to the Republic of Korea. Accordingly, 427 fishermen are still presumed detained in the DPRK. 12 crewmen and passengers of Korean Airlines (KAL) were detained after a hijacking on December 11, 1969, and 20 crewmen of a South Korean Navy I-2 boat were abducted on June 5, 1970.

The DPRK government has been detaining a South Korean schoolteacher, KO Sangmun, since his abduction in April 1979 from Norway; a South Korean student studying in the USA, LEE Jae-hwan, since his abduction during his visit to East Europe in July 1983; and Full Gospel Church Reverend AHN Seung-wun since his abduction in July, 1995 at Yanji, China. In addition to these individuals, the DPRK government had abducted an assumed total of 3,795 South Korean citizens since the Korean Armistice in 1953. A total of 3,315 of them (87%) have returned to the Republic of Korea. Six persons have recently fled the DPRK and returned to the ROK. Accordingly, 480 persons are still presumed detained in the DPRK.

It was also reported by the Japanese Union of Associations to Rescue Abductees from the DPRK that 16 Japanese, 4 Lebanese, 4 Malaysians, 3 French, 3 Italians, 2 Chinese, 2 Hollanders, 1 Thai, 1 Romanian, 1 Singaporean, and 1 Jordanian were detained in North Korea. They are presumed kidnapped by North Korean agents who wanted to eliminate witnesses of their illegal activities. Some of them may have been abducted to be employed as teachers of foreign language and civilization for North Korean agents or as propagandists of North Korean regime.

Moreover, DPRK authorities kidnapped South Korean high school boys to use them in the future as instructors of spies to dispatch to the Republic of Korea, such as CHOI Seung-min and YI Min-gyo, kidnapped in 1977 from the west coast of the ROK; KIM Young-nam, kidnapped on August 1978 from the beach of Seonyu-do; and HONG Geon-pyo and YI Myeong-woo, disappeared from a beach of Hong-do in 1978.

These kidnaps were committed to follow KIM Jong-il's instructions: "As the South Korean refugees to North Korea of the Korean War get old, take young South Koreans and use them in the operations against the South."

Given these orders, there may be many more abductees than officially recognized as victims. This assumption becomes more evident when we take into consideration the unknown number of South Korean civilians who had been abducted to the DPRK during the Vietnam War. Among these detainees, SEONG Kyung-hui and JEONG Kyeong-sook, stewardesses of the hijacked KAL flight in 1969, were forcibly employed as broadcasters to the ROK, and HONG Geon-pyo and YI Myeong-woo were used as instructors to teach South Korean intonation, socio-economic life, etc., to the commandos and spies to be dispatched to the ROK.

### **Concluding Recommendations**

The detainees at the North Korean political prison camps and the South Korean civilian abductees are the last slaves of the 20th century who continue to be deprived of even the minimum of human rights. They are the victims of the ideological struggle of the communists, and strident antagonistic inter-Korean relations. Yet, even though the Cold War has already been resolved in many ways, these victims of history still need to be saved.

As for the human trafficking of North Korean women, it is a problem that can be prevented if the South Korean and Chinese governments firmly demanded North Korea to resolve the problem. The negligence of the two governments is also in violation of their duties under international treaties to take preventive measures against human trafficking.

At this point, these are issues that need to be addressed on a long term and continuing basis. The human trafficking problem, in particular, is an issue that needs to be addressed by a multilateral consultative body led by the Chinese and North Korean Governments.