

A letter of request to the United States of America!

We, the North Korean refugees from the Thailand Immigration Detention Center and the all U.S. destined North Korean refugees, present a letter which we have written from the bottom of our hearts to the United States of America, a nation that stands as the symbol of protection of world peace and safety and as the model of free democracy and human rights protection.

For an anachronistic rise of communism and a long-term authoritarian ambition, the regime of Kim Jong Il continues to suppress the lives and the human rights of its own people. We are North Korean refugees who have escaped from this regime, experiencing hardships and suffering in our long journey, having run until where we are now in Thailand, all in search of true freedom and happiness that is full of human rights.

Finally, we are now in a place where there is no threat to our lives. Through a lawful process and interviews, we have now been given the opportunity to freely choose a country of our choice.

We want to express our deepest gratitude to the United States of America and President George W. Bush for creating and enforcing national policies and many other lawful and practical tasks in order that we, who once lived without the protection of basic human rights nor the freedom to see, hear or say things and lived like slaves, would see this opportunity for an asylum for freedom and resettlement.

Since birth, we have familiarized ourselves with the term “American wild-dogs,” learning that the main cause for our lives full of unhappiness and pain was America. It is truly an unbelievable reality now that we, who were helpless and lost, have now found true freedom through the protection and help from the United States of America.

Through our daily personal experiences, we have come to learn more of the truth to the history that was once taught to us. We have clearly realized the evil deceit of Kim Jong Il’s regime, which has been covering the eyes and ears of the people from learning the real history. And we have come to know that the U.S.A, a place we only thought of as evil, is the North Korean refugees’ real safe haven and a place with the fullness of true freedom.

For all these reasons, we have declined the thankful invitation from the Republic of Korea where they welcome us each with a house to live in, resettlement money and warm brotherly love. We have instead boldly chosen a journey to the United States of America, where everything still seems so new and unfamiliar.

We realize the challenge of the language barrier, and we know that it is a place without any employment guarantee programs for refugees. Still, we have not faltered in our decision to go to the U.S.A, not because we are selfish beings who will be satisfied with the newly found freedom and happiness while forgetting our past lives, but because we desire to live our lives as fighters for human rights and true freedom and to rescue our North Korean brothers and sisters who are still living in the unhappiness and pain that Kim Jong Il’s dictator regime has caused.

A land barren of the freedom of thought and religion, the living hell that is North Korea where worship of the dictator is enforced – it is in this place that people do not know about the almighty God. It is in this place that people live empty lives and fall down the spiral of crimes. It is in this place that the people have been neglected from this world.

The people of North Korea are certainly God's people. They are supposed to be able to praise the almighty Father God and receive the love and grace that God has blessed unto them. But why, then, are our North Korean citizens the only ones who cannot receive this blessing?

For these reasons, we have escaped from the land of dictatorship, and we have longed to go to America, the land of God.

Of course, we are not oblivious of the challenges of going to America.

We have been waiting here living an isolated prison life, waiting without a time limit or a guarantee. There have been many North Korean refugees who became exhausted in their wait, changed their minds and gave up their journey to America. And now, it is only about one among a hundred people who will maybe choose this journey to America. Do you know how much patience and persistence is needed for this journey?

Through the life of Jesus Christ, we have learned that true happiness comes from the greatest suffering. And compared to the pain that Jesus Christ went through before dying, we realize that a few years of waiting in prison is not a huge amount of suffering.

However, the most discouraging part of it all is that even the hardest journey can be reached only if there is a destination, but for us refugees waiting to go to the U.S.A, we see no definite destination.

Two years have passed since we came to Thailand, and we are all exhausted from waiting. Some people who arrived after us have not gone through a proper interview yet, and they wait hopelessly in prison without even having properly registered in the list for U.S. destined refugees.

Among the U.S. destined North Korean refugees, there are people suffering from pneumonia, a patient with a broken leg, and even a family with a toddler. There is no real place to sit here; we are deeply suffering in this confined prison cell.

North Korean refugees who are waiting in the local detention centers have not seen sunlight for over a year and a half, and their malnourishment has caused them to have the disease rickets. They are withering away.

Though we are the same people, the North Korean refugees destined to go to the Republic of Korea are continuously and regularly being processed to South Korea with the active support and aid from its government. On the other hand, we, who are destined to go to America, are completely neglected and hopelessly waiting away without anyone's interest or help.

It is hard to understand for what fault, for what wrong we did, and for what reason we must continue to suffer.

That we must continue to waste our lives waiting in suffering is hard to understand. We escaped, risking our lives and facing death, and have ran until we arrived in Thailand in order to find freedom and a way to live. Why have we become prisoners here in a detention center where the United Nations is present? Why are we to go through a prisoner trial? Why are we charged to pay a fine, and thrown into prison for being unable to pay the fine? The South Korean government neglects us for the reason that the United States of America will take care of us since we are U.S. destined refugees. The Thai government puts the responsibility of the processing on the United States. The U.S. Embassy avoids any responsibility or fault by saying they have not received an approval from Thailand. How is it that even after the inspection process, it has now been two years and we still have not gone to America? For over a half a year, some of us have not had a proper interview nor have we passed through the initial registration process. Filled with conviction and hope, we had chosen the journey to America. But it is hard to understand why here in Thailand, where it's not North Korea nor China and where many Americans frequent, we still are watching our lives pass by, suffering in this refugee detention center.

To the government of the United States of America, which has set policies to resolve the North Korean human rights crisis and has been a leader of rallying international support and attention to this cause:

To President George W. Bush, who promised to resolve the North Korean human rights crisis, having even teared from reading the North Korean defector Kang Cheol-Hwan's memoir, to all of the significant leaders of economics, history, and the press, and to all of the Senators and Congressmen:

Please answer us.

When will we go to America?

When will the hand to rescue us North Korean refugees who are rotting away in prison come for us?

Should we have not believed in the United States of America? Should we have not decided to go to America?

Why must anyone suffer like this? Why must anyone experience pain that forces him or her to wither away like this? Where we wait without any time limitation, any resolution to this problem, any updates from this situation?

Does this mean that we will never get to America? Does this mean that we are unnecessary beings to America?

Please tell us.

Should the United States of America truthfully care for the human rights of the North Korean citizens, who cry for help from the atrocities created by the dictatorship regime of Kim Jong Il, and should the U.S. be genuine about its decision to accept North Korean refugees, who are the victims of this dictatorship, please help us! Please save us!

Please prove yourselves to the North Korean citizens who are to this day dreaming of one day getting to America from listening to “Voice of America” in their basements.

We have been forced to even sign an oath accepting any kind of disadvantage we may have to accept should we choose to decide on going to South Korea after having already decided on America. Please help us. We have nowhere else to go if America rejects us.

The U.S. destined North Korean refugees in Thailand currently are on a hunger strike in solidarity, and from this solidarity we desperately plead to the United States of America.

We ask that you answer us and take action with deeper interest and care for us who have been waiting without knowing how long.

After never having heard of the word “God” and having been brainwashed into a cultish religion of idolizing only what we physically saw, when we learned about God for the very first time, we felt a surge of desire to live our lives for true freedom.

Since then, we have dreamed the American dream of the land of opportunity, studying daily and praying for this goal. Just the idea of going to America, the land of freedom, has been our main source of energy and strength in our daily lives.

However, in this journey where the destination is hardly visible, we have all grown too tired. There truly are too many things that we cannot understand.

We have risked our health and lives and have chosen to go on a fast. We hope you understand that this is our only option, and we ask that you will reflect on our desperate call and need to go to America.

We have come to learn that freedom is as valuable as our lives. And so, we pledge that we will not give up from this battle of fasting.

Here in this third country, the U.S. destined refugees daily wait expectantly for the government of the United States of America to open its doors to true freedom.

We ask the government of the United States of America to not be silent to the North Korean human rights crisis. We ask that the U.S. government take definite measures and action and accept us.

To the nation that we will be citizens to, and to the nation of hope that will protect the freedom and human rights of the North Korean people, we collect all of the North Korean refugees’ hearts into one and desperately plead to the United States of America.

Should America be the symbol of freedom and peace, we deeply believe that the government of the United States of America, the land of our God, will urgently take appropriate measures to help us achieve our desperate dream of America as our final destination.

April 10, 2008

We collect in solidarity the hearts of the U.S. destined refugees in the Thailand Immigration Detention Center.

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