

Testimony

To

The Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific,
House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations

Hearing: The North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004

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Mr. Chairman, I am honored to testify in this joint hearing before the House Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific and the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations about the plight of North Korean refugees who I so passionately wish to see helped.

In recent years, the plight of North Korean refugees has finally received international attention. Significantly, the Chinese government has come under increasing pressure to stop impermissibly forcing North Korean asylum seekers to return to the government from which they fled, facing certain detention, punishment in labor camps, and even execution. In this testimony, I will address China's violation of international law and provide recommendations, but I wish to first address the affect on refugees of the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004.

Affect on Refugees of the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004:

Our organization applauded the efforts of members of Congress and so many colleagues in the non-government community who joined together and passed the historic North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004 (hereinafter "the Act"). Unfortunately, North Korean refugees have far to go before they are truly protected in any land to which they escape seeking safe harbor or asylum. Despite passage of the Act in December 2004, the likelihood of processing North Korean refugees to be resettled in the United States or granted asylum within the United States remains remote for the time being.

In order to gain consensus of opinion and passage of the Act, numerous provisions intended to assist real refugee protection and processing—such as Temporary Protective Status and Humanitarian Parole—were omitted from the final passed version. For an overview of those provisions and the remaining refugee provisions that are useful, see Appendix 1 attached to this statement.

Since the passage of the Act, a number of news reports described how some North Koreans who had availed themselves of resettlement benefits and citizenship in South Korea have entered the United States—lawfully or unlawfully—and sought asylum. Not surprisingly there has been no reported grant of such an asylum case. The concept of "firm resettlement" is well established in asylum and refugee jurisprudence and remained prominent in the Act. (Appendix 1 sets forth established bars to grants of asylum in U.S. immigration jurisprudence on account of firm resettlement.)

Section 302 of the Act outlines eligibility for refugee and asylum consideration. The last clause of Section 302(a) of the Act affirms the fact that North Koreans who have been processed for resettlement and citizenship to South Korea may not qualify for asylum to the United States. Based upon the number of reports that North Koreans resettled in the South have ignorantly sought asylum in the US and even committed crimes of unlawful entry to the U.S. in pursuit thereof, more needs to be done to educate North Koreans resettled in the South that the Act did not change American asylum law on the issue of firm resettlement.

One of the most promising provisions to help North Korean refugees is Section 304(a)(5) which states, “the UNHCR should pursue a multilateral agreement to adopt an effective ‘first asylum’ policy that guarantees safe haven and assistance to North Korean refugees...” Such action is its mandate after all. Mongolia, Russia, and other countries through which North Korean refugees currently migrate should be part of the First Asylum policy talks. A first asylum strategy must be employed by all countries neighboring the DPRK.

Guarantees of safe haven, specifically the provision of temporary protective status in China, Russia and Mongolia are not negotiable—it is international law. Both China and Russia are party to the International Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol. Both have violated their obligations to North Korean refugees under this treaty and must be held to account. Although Mongolia is not a signatory to the refugee treaty, it has complied with international human rights standards and afforded protection. Yet, Mongolia should be encouraged to become party to the treaty.

Section 304(b) of the Act sets forth the sense of Congress that the UNHCR should initiate binding arbitration proceedings pursuant to Article XVI of the 1995 UNHCR Mission Agreement with China and appoint an arbitrator. The sense of the NGO community remains that the UNHCR has abdicated its responsibility and failed to initiate the one available and accessible, mandatory and actionable legal remedy to China’s utter failure to comply with international law.

Shortcomings of the Department of State Report, “The Status of North Korean Asylum Seekers and the USG Policy Towards Them”:

Section 301 of The Act mandated that the Department of State issue a report 120 days from enactment that “...describes the situation of North Korean refugees and explains United States Government policy toward North Korean national outside of North Korea. The report, dated March 11, 2005, falls short of providing new and innovative ideas of how the United States will assist North Korean refugees. Most disappointing is any elaboration on already existing access to admissions of refugees to the US independent of the UNHCR other than to say host countries such as China would strongly oppose US refugee admissions programs.

For example, no reference is made to the fact that in its FY 2005 program, the Department of State, Populations, Refugees and Migrations (PRM) bureau notes NGO involvement. In its revised definitions of processing priorities, “Priority 1 (P-1) will include all individually referred cases identified and referred to the program by UNHCR, a U.S. Embassy or a non-governmental organization (NGO).” Despite this clear language, the DOS Report seems to imply there is no opportunity for individual North Korean case referrals for access to the US refugee admissions program.

The DOS Report found that in the past five years no North Koreans have been resettled by the U.S. refugee admission program. Nine North Koreans were granted asylum from 2002-2004 by immigration courts during removal proceedings. A turn around for refugee

admissions can take place with implementation of Priority 1 processing as well as the establishment of a process by PRM to accept North Korean refugees for resettlement.

Treatment of North Korean Refugees by the United Nations:

Jubilee Campaign applauds the detailed report and conclusions reached by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on North Korea, Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn, who had been appointed in July 2004 by the U.N. Office of the High Commission for Human Rights to carry-out a mandate to investigate and report on human rights violations in North Korea and to begin dialogue with its government. Professor Muntarbhorn presented his report in March, 2005 to the 61st session of the U. N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva, Switzerland. For the first time an official United Nations document has clearly defined North Korean defectors as “refugees.”

For the past three years, Jubilee Campaign has been pressing the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to decisively find that North Koreans fleeing their homeland are refugees and should be afforded refugee protection. After all, the mandate of the UNHCR is to protect refugees and promote durable solutions to their plight. The first positive step occurred on September 29, 2003, when United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Rudd Lubbers, at the 54th Session of the Executive Committee (ExCom), declared North Korean defectors in China as a “group of concern” to the UNHCR, which was to trigger certain protection obligations. He noted, “In view of their protection needs, the group is of concern to UNHCR. For those in need of assistance, UNHCR is ready to work with partners in meeting their needs. Above all, the principle of non-refoulement must be respected.” Yet, nothing changed despite this proclamation.

In his report, Special Rapporteur Muntarbhorn referenced the legal definition of a “refugee” from the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees and properly applied it to North Koreans who flee their homeland. In paragraph 44 of his Report, Muntarbhorn emphatically stated that, “In general, those leaving the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea for political reasons fit into the traditional international law definition of “refugee”, namely persons fleeing their country of origin for a well-founded fear of persecution.”

China, a signatory to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol, has persistently sought to characterize all North Koreans fleeing into its territory as “economic migrants” thereby justifying its abrogation of its treaty requirement of non-refoulement of North Koreans fleeing across its border. International refugee law experts have repeatedly asserted that the second part of the definition of a refugee provides protection to anyone found to be a “refugee *sur place*” or someone unwilling to return to her country for fear of persecution on account of events occurring after her flight. Muntarbhorn in paragraph 45 also affords protection to such persons as justified by the North Korea’s harsh imprisonment, torture, internment in labor camps, forced-abortions, infanticide of the babies, and even execution of repatriated defectors.

During a parallel meeting held at the 61st Session of the U.N. Commission for Human Rights in late March, Professor Muntarbhorn elaborated on his Report and stated, “It is important to make it known as I have done that those who came out of the DPRK are refugees and entitled to international protection. They are entitled to the basic right of non-refoulement. I have taken it upon myself to make this very clear. We should not be deluded by terms such as ‘illegal immigrants.’ They are persecuted, they are protected by international law, and they must receive protection.” He went on to say, “The UNHCR is to give this protection. The UNHCR does not have access in many situations, including with the North Korean refugees.”

From the audience a Senior Liaison Officer for Human Rights of the UN High Commission for Refugees in Geneva commented, “We are grateful for the support and close cooperation of the Special Rapporteur with our office. We see no difference between the Special Rapporteur’s report, definitions of refugee he used to refer to North Koreans, and our own position. We previously referred to them as ‘persons of concern.’ We also ascribe to his position regarding root causes.”

Despite these assurances, in fact the UNHCR has done little more than refer to “private negotiations” with China, which has produced no cooperation by China to abide by its treaty obligation of non-refoulement and has provided the UNHCR no access to these refugees. Instead, China has increased border patrols, has offered bounties for refugees rounded up, and has refouled North Koreans without regard to the fact that some have been executed upon their return to North Korea and the rest consigned to labor camps. This Senior Liaison Officer then took a position useful to justifying China when he commented, “Increasingly refugees use support of professional smuggling networks. This intermingling of sometimes criminal issues is not helpful. We stress the need to clearly maintain a humanitarian approach. We must follow a purely humanitarian approach and not abuse refugees.” It seems that in its efforts not to upset China’s humane approach, the UNHCR views no approach as best.

The UNHCR’s reported, official statistics of North Korean refugees are a far cry from the number known by NGOs to exist. Annually, the UNHCR publishes a comprehensive Statistical Yearbook, including a 10-year spectrum of information about the situation of refugees in China. In a 10-year span, the 2002 Statistical Yearbook of the UNHCR counted only 61 individual applicants for asylum outside of indo-Chinese refugees. The UNHCR’s “2003 Global Refugee Trends” publication in Table 3 mentions 304 North Korean refugees, of which the UNHCR assisted one. Table 7 of this publication computed 272 North Korean asylum applicants, and reports that the UNHCR helped none. The UNHCR fails to identify any North Korean refugees in its Refugee Trends Publications for the first three quarters of 2004.¹

Now that the UN Special Rapporteur has defined all of the North Koreans who fled China as refugees or “refugees sur place”, the UNHCR must start publishing actual number of North Koreans hiding in China. The UNHCR must make North Korean asylum seekers in

¹ “Present Situation of North Korean Refugees,” Tarik Radwan, The 6th International Conference on North Korean Human Rights and Refugees, Citizen’s Alliance for North Korean Human Rights, Feb. 2005., p. 89.

China more than an “abiding preoccupation”². It must make them refugees and afford them protection. As Special Rapporteur Muntarbhorn remarked, “We must work with neighboring countries. We need to work with them, rationalize with them, and give them incentives to assist. If neighboring countries are not willing to give permanent resettlement, at least provide temporary protection. We need to constructively assist those refugees and provide the protection required.”

The Plight of North Korean Defectors in China:

China has persistently, and with impunity, claimed that North Koreans who cross its border illegally are economic migrants and thus not entitled to refugee protection. This claim is without basis and contrary to the findings of the United Nations Special Rapporteur to North Korea, Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn.

China has unashamedly abandoned its legal obligation toward North Korea refugees. As a Party to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, and the 1967 Protocol by the same name, China is obligated to extend a list of protections to North Korean refugees, including the protection from expulsion from the country (Article 32) and the protection from “refoulement,” which is the forcible return of a refugee to a territory where one’s life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion (Article 33).

In addition to the Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, China has also ratified the Convention Against Torture, or Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Punishment. This convention also prohibits repatriation of a person to a territory where it is likely that one will be tortured, regardless of the motivation for the torture.

Yet, as stated, China continues unabashedly to violate its treaty obligations. The 2004 World Refugee Survey states that “Non-governmental organizations estimate that China forcibly deports between 150-200 North Koreans per week amounting to an estimated 7,800 forced deportations during 2003.” China maintains that it has an obligation to repatriate North Koreans under a “secret” agreement with Pyongyang. (This agreement is not found in an international treaty registry required for international recognition.)

Further, China has consistently denied the UNHCR access to North Korean asylum seekers on the ground that it does not consider them refugees. The 2004 World Refugee Survey indicates that China has denied UNHCR access to more than 100,000 North Koreans.³ China, however, has the gall to assert in its bilateral agreement with the United Nations that “UNHCR personnel may at all times have unimpeded access to refugees.”

What is worse, not only has China aggressively apprehended and repatriated North Koreans but it has also tacitly given permission to North Korean agents to execute

² Excerpt from the High Commissioner for Human Rights Opening Statement to the Executive Committee, October 2004.

³ 2004 World Refugee Survey, Table 10., U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants.

kidnapping operations on its soil.⁴ The arrest of a North Korean agent, who was involved in the abduction of Reverend Kim Dong Shik (more below on his case), a humanitarian worker for North Korean refugees in China, has revealed that North Korea operates an extensive kidnapping scheme in China.⁵ North Korean agents kidnap the defectors in China and humanitarian workers who help them.

The harshest treatment upon refugees refouled to North Korea has been reportedly applied to North Koreans who embraced Christianity while in China. Many Christians in the border provinces of China have provided food, shelter, and protection to North Korean refugees. Many of these refugees embraced Christianity as a result. Repatriated defectors who have managed to escape again after interrogation and internment in North Korea, consistently report intense questioning about Christianity and contacts with Christians in China. Those carrying a Bible or Christian literature are more severely punished.

Moreover, China conducts intense campaigns to disassemble volunteer aid and support systems that provide for refugees along the border provinces; it has made assisting this population a criminal act. In addition to imprisoning and imposing severe fines on humanitarian aid workers, China provides substantial bounty money on the heads of displaced North Koreans and on those who help them. Many Christian aid workers from South Korea have suffered imprisonment in China, drawn out court cases, torture in Chinese custody, and have even been handed over to North Korean authorities.

Once such Christian aid worker, wheel-chair bound Reverend Kim Dong-Shik had been abducted by North Korean agents in China and disappeared in North Korea without a trace. On December 14, 2004, the Seoul Central District Prosecutor's Office released its finding that, indeed, South Korean citizen and U.S. permanent resident Reverend Kim Dong-Shik had been abducted by DPRK agents in northeast China in January 2000 and taken forcibly into North Korea. Following the findings by the Seoul Central District Prosecutor's Office, 20 Illinois lawmakers led by the Chairman of this Committee on International Relations, Congressman Henry Hyde, have written letters of protest to North Korea in the matter of their constituent and also criticized the South Korean government noting that when a government neglects its first duty of protecting its citizens, it loses its reason to exist. Jubilee Campaign has filed a petition with the U.N. Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances on behalf of Reverend Kim Dong-Shik.

For no other country does the international community quietly stand by and tolerate such blatant and systematic violation of treaty obligations as that committed by China. The Act set forth the unanimous opinion of the House and the Senate that, in fact, China has been abrogating its refugee treaty obligations. China must be held to account for this.

⁴ Jonghap News reported in January 2005 that 60 refouled North Korean refugees had been executed upon their refoulement to the DPRK. Visual evidence was broadcast by Japan's n-TV on Wednesday, March 16, 2005, airing footage of a public execution in North Korea. The TV channel ran the footage obtained from a defector on its afternoon news program "News Plus 1."

⁵ Chosun Ilbo, "N.Korea Abducted 40 from 1999 to 2001," January 19, 2005.

Recommendations:

1. The United States should redouble our efforts to ensure that the UN High Commissioner for Refugees continues to make public and published affirmations of refugee status for North Koreans. Now that the UNHCR is coming around to accepting the correct legal definition of North Koreans as “refugees,” it must do so publicly. At its next Executive Committee meeting in September, it should emphatically declare them as such. In its next annual report, it should fully report the real number of them in China and elsewhere.
2. The UNHCR must regain unimpeded access to North Korean refugees found in China, in particular in the border areas. In this process, it would be contrary to international refugee law for the UNHCR to deny refugee status to any North Korean citizen who would face arrest, torture, labor camp detention, or execution upon their return. Such punishment violates international standards of human rights and constitutes the worst imaginable cruelty. No one should be deliberately expelled to such cruelty.
3. The UNHCR must commence binding arbitration proceedings against China in order to obtain unimpeded access to these refugees. The role of the UNHCR is to protect refugees, and it has the authority to enforce this existing treaty with China.
4. Crimes against humanity are committed systematically by the DPRK against its own citizens. We must uphold the innocent, hungry, and distressed North Korean brothers and sisters. We must prevent any more from perishing. Those responsible for the gross and systematic human rights abuses perpetrated by the DPRK should be brought to justice. It is time for member states of the United Nations to consider bringing genocide charges against Kim Jong-Il and officials within the DPRK.
5. The DOS must make further efforts at multi-lateral negotiations to secure a first asylum strategy and temporary protective status for North Koreans refugees.

Appendix 1

Excerpt from Article entitled, “Strategies for North Korean Refugees,” by Ann J. Buwalda and Michele Lombardo and published by Citizen’s Alliance for North Korean Human Rights in the 6th International Conference on North Korean Human Rights and Refugees, held in Seoul, Korea, February 24-16, 2005.

V. THE UNITED STATES

A substantial amount of misinformation has circulated regarding U.S. asylum prospects for North Korean refugees currently living in South Korea as well as those outside of the peninsula who desire to bring claims. Unfortunately, the chances of such refugees being granted asylum to the United States or in the United States are extremely unlikely, and the enactment of The North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004 has done little to change this. This subsection will explore what the Act does and does *not* accomplish.

A. THE NORTH KOREAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACT OF 2004:

The following summary of sections of the Act relevant to refugees are all that remain from the very ambitious original drafts of the North Korean Freedom Act.

Sec. 301. United States Policy Toward Refugees and Defectors—Requires the Secretary of State to consult with other appropriate federal departments within 120 days from enactment (due mid-February) to describe the situation of North Korean Refugees and explain the US government policy toward North Korean nationals outside of North Korea. Two of the provisions which legislate what content this report is to contain call for a description of the treatment North Korean refugees receive in China and to what degree they have access to the UNHCR there. (Of course, we already know that access to the UNHCR in China is nil and this is already noted in Findings Sec. 3(19) of this Act.)

Sec.302. Eligibility for Refugee or Asylum Consideration – Seeks to clarify that North Koreans are eligible to apply for U.S. refugee and asylum consideration and are not preemptively disqualified by any prospective claim to citizenship they may have under the South Korean constitution. There would be no chance under current asylum and refugee law in the U.S. without this section. However, whether this section goes far enough to overcome legal constraints to asylum under the concept of “firm resettlement” (i.e., in South Korea) will potentially evolve with case law.

Sec.303. Refugee Status – Requires the Secretary of State, who generally under the U.S. processing system is responsible for refugee intake, to “facilitate the submission of applications” by citizens of North Korea. A specific mandate requiring the Secretary of State to treat them for “Priority 2” processing was deleted following strong opposition by both the Department of State and Department of Homeland Security, who argued that such a specific legislative directive would infringe upon the discretionary authority of the Secretary of State to make that designation.

Sec. 304. United Nations High Commission for Refugees – Notes China’s obligations to provide the UNHCR with unimpeded access to North Koreans in China, urges the UNHCR to use professionals and NGOs with proven expertise in aiding North Koreans in China, and urges the UNHCR to assert its right to arbitration with China in an effort to secure access to North Koreans in China.

B. THE ACT DOES NOT NEGATE EXISTING U.S. ASYLUM REQUIREMENTS

The granting of asylum in the United States is specifically limited by several exceptions. The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) § 208(b)(2)(A)(vi) states that asylum is not available where:

the alien was firmly resettled in another country prior to the arrival of the alien in the United States.

Effective October 1, 1990, regulations concerning firm resettlement were amended, providing for a mandatory denial of asylum upon a finding of firm resettlement. See 8 C.F.R. § 208.14(c)(2) (1991); see also 8 C.F.R. §202.13(c)(2)(i)(B) (2000); and the Immigration Service’s regulations at 8 CFR § 208.13(c)(1).5.

The INA does not furnish a definition of "firm resettlement," but federal regulations do. 8 C.F.R. § 208.15, captioned "Definition of `firm resettlement,' " states:

An alien is considered to be firmly resettled if, prior to arrival in the United States, he or she entered into another nation with, or while in that nation received, an offer of permanent resident status, citizenship, or some other type of permanent resettlement unless he or she establishes:

- a) That his or her entry into that nation was a necessary consequence of his or her flight from persecution, that he or she remained in that nation only as long as was necessary to arrange onward travel, and that he or she did not establish significant ties in that nation; or
- b) (b) That the conditions of his or her residence in that nation were so substantially and consciously restricted by the authority of the country of refuge that he or she was not in fact resettled.

In making his or her determination, the Asylum Officer or Immigration Judge shall consider the conditions under which other residents of the country live, the type of housing made available to the refugee, whether permanent or temporary, the types and extent of employment available to the refugee, and the extent to which the refugee received permission to hold property and to enjoy other rights and privileges, such as travel documentation including a right of entry or reentry, education, public relief, or naturalization, ordinarily available to others resident in the country.

In *Abdille v. Ashcroft*, 242 F.3d 477 (3d Cir. 2001), the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit interpreted for the first time, the meaning of the “firm resettlement bar” to asylum now codified in the INA and further defined in 8 CFR § 208.15. The Court concluded that:

...the plain language of § 208.15 makes clear that the prime factor in the firm resettlement inquiry is the existence of an offer of permanent resident status, citizenship, or some other type of permanent resettlement. While recognizing that factors other than the issuance of such an offer may prove relevant to the firm resettlement question, we reject an alternative “totality of the alien’s circumstances” approach that would have us consider the existence of an offer as simply one component of a broader firm resettlement inquiry according equal weight to such non-offer-based factors as the alien’s length of stay in a third country, the economic and social ties that the alien develops in that country, and the alien’s intent to make that country his permanent home.⁶

As South Korea has clearly extended not only “firm resettlement,” but also the benefits of refugee status and full citizenship upon those who have escaped from the North, such individuals would be barred from receiving asylum in the United States except under the most extraordinary and egregious of circumstances. An asylum seeker would have to demonstrate those egregious circumstances related to his treatment in South Korea, virtually demonstrating that he was persecuted in South Korea either by the government or by those whom the government is unwilling or unable to curtail thereby showing that his safety is not secure in South Korea.

Although the Act was passed without the broad sweep of refugee benefits originally conceived, it has not been practically applied, and the flight of North Korean refugees remains a two-edged sword. On the one hand, those who are successful in fleeing from North Korea into South Korea have indeed managed to escape persecution. Unfortunately, in so doing, they have been “firmly resettled” in the South, thereby foreclosing the possibility of being granted asylum in the United States. The language of the Act removing the bar to eligibility caused by South Korean citizenship clearly states that it is not intended to apply to North Koreans who have availed themselves of their right to South Korean citizenship.

Conversely, if a North Korean manages to somehow enter the United States without first “resettling” in South Korea, he or she faces heightened scrutiny as North Koreans. This second scenario, however, is by far more likely to result in a grant of U.S. asylum for the North Korean refugee.

Despite the hurdles of heightened scrutiny, there is reason to hope for North Korean refugees entering the United States. Never has information regarding not only the potential for nuclear disaster, but the flagrant human rights violations of the North Korean

⁶ *Abdille v. Ashcroft*, 242 F.3d 477, 478 (3d Cir. 2001).

regime been so widely disseminated and understood by U.S. authorities. The very existence of H.R. 4011 is evidence of this fact.

Provided, therefore, that persecuted Koreans from the North are able to reach U.S. soil without first spending time in South Korea, the prospects for being granted asylum in the United States are promising. For those who have escaped into the South, however, and have been firmly resettled therein, U.S. asylum is simply not a viable option.

In rare instances, where an applicant can establish not only persecution in North Korea, but can provide substantial proof of egregious persecution by the South Korean government or its agents, it is possible that such a claim may be put forth. As previously stated, however, the standard for establishing such claims is extraordinarily high, and not one that could be recommended without a substantial amount of evidence and representation by a highly experienced asylum attorney.

Also notable is the fact that the United States provides very little in refugee benefits. Unlike the benefits given to North Koreans who re-settle to South Korea, the United States does not provide housing, does not provide money, does not provide language training, does not provide employment training, and provides only a limited few months of medical assistance. North Koreans seeking asylum in America would be at the mercy of friends in their community to help with housing and finding a job. Sadly, North Korean asylum seekers could be easily exploited or find themselves penny-less and on the street. There is a saying in America: "No free lunch."

Efforts are being made to assure that Koreans from the North are not mistreated in the South, and for now at least, this seems the most viable option for North Korean refugees.

**CURRICULUM VITAE
ON
ANNIGJE J. BUWALDA**

Annigje J. Buwalda has devoted her energies and legal training to seeking justice for the oppressed, including performing extensive human rights activism. Ann became USA Director for Jubilee Campaign USA in 1991 when she opened the office and effectively launched the organization in the Washington, DC area. Jubilee Campaign promotes the human rights and religious liberty of ethnic and religious minorities in countries that imprison, terrorize, or otherwise oppress them. Since 1990, Ann has participated almost annually at the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva, Switzerland, and gave numerous speeches under the religious freedom categories. In March 1996, Senator Hank Brown of Colorado invited Ann to address the Senate Subcommittee on Near-East Asia concerning human rights violations in Pakistan.

Ann gains personal knowledge of country conditions following undertaking fact-finding missions. She has lead fact-finding trips to Pakistan, Indonesia, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Laos, Vietnam, and the Thai-Burma border areas. Refusing to neglect or turn a blind eye to specific believers suffering within their countries without recourse to justice, Ann has also lead daring rescue efforts to escort believers to a safe haven.

Ann founded the law firm, Just Law International, PC, in March 1996, which focuses on immigration law practice and particularly asylum and refugee cases. She has spent long hours in researching country situations on behalf of clients claiming asylum in the United States or seeking refuge in a safe country. This has given her a broad knowledge of country-specific human rights conditions. Currently, the law firm staffs six additional licensed attorneys.

She is a 1990 graduate of Regent University School of Law earning a Juris Doctor. In 1991 she completed two Master's Degrees at Regent University, one in Public Policy from the School of Government and the other in International/Cross-Cultural Communication. In 1986 she graduated *Summa Cum Laude* from Liberty University earning joint majors in Business Administration and Political Science with two minors in Language and Linguistics and in International Affairs.

Ann's commitment to obtaining justice for the oppressed poor is a motivating factor for the various avenues of professional experience she has pursued.

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