

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 7, 2025

The Honorable David Perdue
United States Ambassador to the People's Republic of China
55 Anjialou Rd,
Chaoyang District
Beijing, China, 100600

Dear Ambassador Perdue,

The United States and the People's Republic of China (PRC) maintain a competitive and dynamic bilateral relationship. The U.S. has long prioritized urging the PRC to respect human rights and freedoms of religion and expression; however, the PRC continues to repress religious minorities and target vulnerable populations. This is why we write to respectfully request you to condemn the PRC's forcible repatriation of North Korean refugees and urge senior PRC officials to recommit to upholding the principles of the United Nations 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.

In September 1982, the PRC ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. The 1951 Convention defines the term "refugee" and describes their rights and the international standards and treatment for their protection, which includes non-refoulement and respecting their basic human rights as core principles. The PRC has served as a member of the United Nations Refugee Convention and Protocol for over four decades yet consistently violates the principles to protect refugees.

In June 1964, the PRC and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) signed the "*Mutual Cooperation in Safeguarding National Security and Social Order in Border Areas*" agreement which categorizes North Korean refugees as illegal economic migrants and allows the PRC to forcibly repatriate them to the DPRK. According to the bipartisan Congressional Executive Commission on China, the PRC forcibly repatriated 600 North Korean refugees on October 9, 2023, which was the largest forcible repatriation of North Korean defectors, and approximately 200 North Korean refugees in April 2024. Although the PRC is party to the United Nations Refugee Convention, the PRC works in close collaboration with the DPRK to systematically and forcibly repatriate North Korean refugees and consistently violates its obligations under the Convention.

North Korean refugees are seeking safety from a brutal authoritarian regime led by Kim Jong Un, who has absolutely no respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. According to Amnesty International, the government exercises complete control over all aspects of life and anyone caught attempting to flee the country may be detained in prison camps, face torture and ill-treatment, or public execution. North Korean refugees demonstrate bravery, resilience, and are committed to shedding light on the oppressive Kim Jong Un regime, therefore their safety and protection must be prioritized.

North Korean women and children are most vulnerable to oppressive tactics when seeking refuge in the PRC. According to the U.S. State Department's 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report, female North Korean refugees are vulnerable to traffickers who lure, drug, detain, or kidnap them upon arrival in the PRC. These traffickers promise them employment opportunities but instead sell them to Chinese men for forced marriage, where they face physical and sexual abuse. These victims often lack identification documents and have children with men in the PRC, which further curtails their ability to escape. Approximately 30,000 children were born in the PRC to North Korean women who were not registered upon birth, furthering the cycle of statelessness. The malign North Korean regime has remained apathetic to honoring basic human rights, while the PRC remains complicit in horrendous human rights violations and continues to take advantage of North Korean refugees who are desperate for safety.

In April 2025, during your remarks at a nominations hearing in front of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, you committed to holding the PRC accountable on human rights. We request that you urge the PRC to halt its systematic and forcible repatriation of North Korean refugees and recommit to the United Nations Refugee Convention to which it is a party of.

Thank you for your time and attention to this critical request.

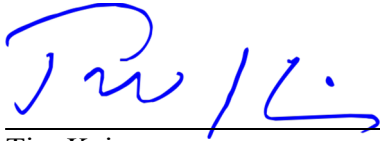
Sincerely,



James R. Walkinshaw
Member of Congress



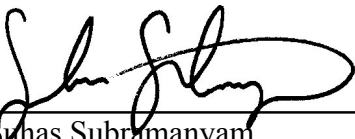
Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Suhas Subramanyam
Member of Congress



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator