



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on December 12, 2021

## China Helping North Korea Persecute Christians

North Korea seeks to suppress Christianity within its borders — and China is giving the regime a hand.

“If you tell them that you went to a church and believed in Jesus, they would not stop at just beating you,” says North Korean defector Lee Kang In, as quoted in a [report](#) released last week by U.K.-based human rights group Korea Future. The report highlights North Korea’s sordid record on human rights.

Based on interviews with North Korean defectors who escaped during the last two decades, the report studied 167 incidents of persecution against ninety-one Christians taking place between 1997 and 2018. The [list of offenses](#) encompasses deprivation of liberty; refoulement; and torture or cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment.

The report also looked at 227 cases of persecution against 151 individuals who practiced Shamanism. Shamans were punished with criminal sentences for practicing their faith, though most were released in a few years’ time. In the case of Christians, however, most are held indefinitely in political prison camps and unlikely to ever be released.

North Korea’s Ministry of State Security is charged with searching out perceived threats to the regime’s power. Christianity is considered a domestic threat. Thus, holding Christian beliefs is a crime and government agents regularly seek to arrest Christians. Those who are captured are detained in a web of holding centers, detention centers, internment camps, and political prison camps.

The report detailed the way in which China assists North Korea with this religious persecution. In 25 cases, North Korean defectors were caught and repatriated from China. In these cases, Chinese authorities interrogated the defectors about possible Christian affiliation and documented their answers before handing them over to North Korean agents.

If a defector had engaged in Christian activities while in China, the Chinese authorities inserted a stamp on their files to inform the North Korean agents of these activities. The report explains that the inclusion of these stamps increased the likelihood that these individuals would face brutal punishments.

This is especially significant given that most Christians in North Korea today converted to the faith after discovering it in China. The Chinese government is fully aware of the treatment these Christians will receive at the hands of North Korean authorities, yet still repatriates them and provides notice about their Christian affiliation.

One former detainee told the researchers who compiled the report that after another detainee was caught praying, the person was beaten every morning for 20 consecutive days. There are also accounts



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of beatings with fists, steel rods, or even logs, as well as being forced to endure positional torture by holding a painful physical position for hours a day.

The National Interest notes:

In several cases, victims were detained over their possession of a Bible, sometimes with their entire family. In one documented instance, the detained family included a two-year-old. Korea Future's report highlighted one particularly disturbing incident: Ko Sun Hee, who was detained at Onsong County Ministry of State Security Detention Centre, observed how correctional officers would make detainees suspected of studying the Bible stick their heads between the steel bars of a cell door. The officers would then strike the detainees' heads until "blood spurted upwards."

Joe Biden has yet to announce a formal policy regarding North Korea. Yet dictator Kim Jong-un shows no sign of ending his aggression, as shown by a recent underwater missile test launched from a submarine.

China has been flexing its strength, indicating the intention to forcefully annex Taiwan in the near future. Beijing [warned](#) that the Chinese military "will heavily attack U.S. troops who come to Taiwan's rescue" if China invades Taiwan.

The latest threat against the United States in the event of a China-Taiwan conflict came Thursday in the *Global Times*, an official mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

"If Washington supports the Taiwan authority's path of seeking secession and encourages the Taiwan authority to rely on it, then reunification by force will definitely happen. The more the U.S. and the island of Taiwan collude, the sooner reunification by force will come," the Chinese propaganda outlet declared.

Arielle Del Turco at The National Interest reserved harsh words for China:

"China must also face global condemnation for its part in repatriating defectors and directly enabling abuses perpetrated against repatriated defectors. Subjected to life in a totalitarian regime, the North Korean people are not in a position to speak for themselves. The free world can and must speak up for them."



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