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NORTH KOREA | CSW Urges China to Allow Family Passage

Seven North Koreans who escaped their country are currently facing forcible repatriation following their detention in China on April 28. The family includes a nine-year-old and a 17-year-old.

A relative of the family issued an appeal for help, and Justice for North Korea, a Seoul-based NGO, has said that “international organizations and the international community are the only way to save the lives of these seven at risk.”

Under North Korean laws, departing the country without permission is a criminal offense. North Koreans who have previously been forcibly repatriated have faced imprisonment in political prison camps or other detention facilities, or in some cases execution.

CSW’s East Asia Team Leader Benedict Rogers said, “Forcibly repatriating this family to North Korea would be to send them to a dire fate, with almost certain torture and imprisonment and possibly execution. Furthermore, it would be a breach of China’s obligations under international law and a violation of the international principle of non-refoulement. We urge the Chinese authorities to live up to their responsibilities and obligations under international law, and allow this family to transit to a third country. We also call on the international community to offer China every assistance to resolve this case justly, and ensure that this family is able to move to a place of safety. This case requires urgent action.”