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Canadian pastor admits to trying to 'overthrow' North Korea, dictatorship's news agency says

National Post (31.07.2015) -
<http://news.nationalpost.com/news/world/canadian-pastor-detained-in-north-korea-allegedly-admits-to-subversive-plots-and-indescribable-treason> - A South Korean news agency is reporting that an Ontario pastor detained in North Korea has confessed to "subversive plots" against the Communist state during a televised news conference.

Yonhap says Rev. Hyeon Soo Lim of the Light Korean Presbyterian Church in Mississauga, Ont., is quoted by the Korean Central News Agency as saying he was "a servant of the U.S. imperialists and South Korean puppet group."

A church spokeswoman says Lim was on a humanitarian mission to North Korea when he was detained in early February.

Lisa Pak says the 60-year-old Christian missionary left Canada on Jan. 27 with stops in South Korea and China before crossing into North Korea on Jan. 31.

She says Lim's family remains hopeful he will be released at some point, but didn't want to comment on the reports of his alleged confessions.

A Foreign Affairs spokeswoman says the government is "deeply concerned" and continues to try to arrange consular access and find a resolution to his case.

Assistance is difficult, however, because Canada has no diplomatic office in the Communist nation.

At Thursday's news conference, Lim reportedly said that he travelled to several parts of the country pretending to deliver aid, but his real purpose was "to build a base to overthrow the system of the country and create a religious state."

He then went on to apologize for his "indescribable treason."

Pak says the pastor has a deep love for the North Korean people, which is the reason he has visited the country more than 100 times.

Lim's family has previously said that much of his work has focused on the impoverished country's northeastern region of Rason. Pak said he has also helped out schools, an orphanage and a nursing home.

Lim started the church nearly three decades ago, shortly after he immigrated from South Korea. He grew the congregation from about a dozen people in 1986 to more than 3,000 members today, Pak said. He also runs a smaller church in downtown Toronto that caters to young people, she said.

North Korea detains S. Korean pastor for 'espionage'
Presbyterian Church clarifies he was missionary helping N. Korean homeless children in China

The Christian Post (01.04.2015) - One of two South Korean men that were detained late last year by the North Korean government on charges of espionage has been identified as a Presbyterian pastor who has dedicated much of the last 13 years to missionary work benefiting North Korean defectors in China.

After a North Korean state news agency announced last week that the country was holding two South Korean men accused of espionage, the General Assembly of Presbyterian Churches in Korea, a Seoul-based Protestant association, identified Kim Kuk Gi last Friday as one of their own registered pastors and demanded that he be released.

"He was carrying out missionary works for North Korean defectors in [the Chinese port city of] Dandong," a representative from the Presbyterian assembly told Voice of America News. "He bought noodle makers and tofu machines to send to the North, as well as sewing machines."

The other South Korean detainee has been identified as Choe Chun Gil. South Korean authorities tried to deliver a written request for the two men to be released, however, North Korean officials refused to accept the request.

The North Korean official media agency, Korean Central News Agency, reported that both detainees were taken into custody because they have been accused of working for Seoul's National Intelligence Service in Dandong on "smear campaign" against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

"They zealously took part in the anti-DPRK smear campaign of the U.S. imperialists and the puppet group of traitors to isolate and blockade the DPRK in [the] international arena by labeling it 'a country printing counterfeit notes' and 'sponsor of terrorism' while pulling it over its human rights issue," KCNA reported.

In an interview with the Seoul-based news agency, The Chosunilbo, A GAPCK spokesman detested North Korea's claim that Kim was involved in espionage and stated that he was originally sent to Dandong in 2003

strictly for missionary purposes.

"Kim operated a shelter for North Korean defectors and preached but had nothing to do with espionage," the spokesman asserted.

In a statement that was reported by Christianity Daily, GAPCK provided further detail on who Kim's ministry in Dandong was helping and contended that North Korea has clearly violated international human rights laws by detaining the pastor against his will.

"Kim Kuk Gi was sent as a missionary... to Dandong in China in 2003, and since then, he has been operating a 'shelter for refugees,' and has been taking care of refugees, Kotjebi (North Korean homeless children) and Korean immigrants living in China," the GAPCK stated. "In treating Kim in this way, North Korea is directly violating international customs as well as the basic worth of human rights of people."

"Please join us in prayer for Pastor Kim's safe return," the GAPCK statement added.

Christianity Daily further reported that a Chinese source revealed that Kim was contacted by North Korean authorities around December 2014 and was invited to come into the North Korean Capital of Pyongyang.

The North Korean government similarly invited Canadian Presbyterian megachurch pastor, Rev. Hyeon Soo Lim, to come to Pyongyang on January 31. After receiving the invitation, the pastor went missing and it was confirmed in early March that he was and still is being detained by North Korean authorities.

In October 2013, North Korea jailed another South Korean missionary, Kim Jeong Wook, who was also charged with espionage.

For the 13th consecutive year, North Korea tops Open Doors USA's annual World Watch List of countries with the worst treatment of Christians, topping countries like Iraq, Syria and Nigeria where militant groups barbarically behead and torture Christians because of their faith.

"The god-like worship of the leader, Kim Jong-Un, and his predecessors leaves little room for any other religions and Christians face unimaginable pressure in every sphere of life," Open Doors noted in its 2015 World Watch List. "Anyone discovered engaging in unauthorized religious activity is subject to arrest, arbitrary detention, disappearance, torture and/or execution. Those Christians who attempt to return to North Korea from China are sentenced to life in prison or executed."

The World Watch List estimates that nearly 50,000 to 70,000 Christians are imprisoned in labor camps in North Korea, while many other North Korean Christians are forced to flee to China due to lack of food.

Fears for Canadian pastor missing in North Korea
Reverend Hyeon Soo Lim has not been heard from since January
31

AFP (03.03.2015) - A Canadian pastor who has reportedly gone missing in North Korea was invited to the capital Pyongyang just before his disappearance, a prominent Seoul activist said Tuesday.

Reverend Hyeon Soo Lim, of the Light Korean Presbyterian Church in Toronto, has not been heard from since January 31, just after he arrived in North Korea via China, according to media reports in Canada and South Korea.

Reverend Chun Ki-Won, the director of Durihana, a South Korean Christian missionary organization helping North Korean refugees, said Lim was one of the most influential Christian missionaries operating in the North.

The 60-year-old Lim had led many aid missions there involving work with orphanage houses, nursing homes and food plants, the reverend said.

"As far as I know, he was asked by officials to come to Pyongyang on January 31 before he went incommunicado," said Chun, a personal acquaintance of Lim's.

Chun said the information had come from other members of the close-knit circle of ethnic Korean missionaries in the US and Canada who are involved in aid projects in the North.

Lim's lack of communication was initially attributed to the 21-day quarantine imposed on all foreign visitors to North Korea to prevent any outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus.

But that period would have ended on February 21, after which there was still no news, Chun said.

Chun noted that some of the food-related projects Lim was involved in — ranging from noodle plants to flour mills — were linked to associates of Jang Song-Thaek, the purged uncle of leader Kim Jong-Un.

Jang is known to have led many joint economic projects before he was dramatically arrested and executed for treason in December 2012.

"We're worried the invitation to Pyongyang was somehow related to his ties to Jang," Chun said, adding that Lim had rarely travelled to the capital on previous trips.

Lisa Pak of the Light Korean Presbyterian Church told the *Toronto Star* newspaper that Lim had traveled to North Korea hundreds of times.

"Every now and then (there has been) a delay here or there but never to

this extent," Pak said.

The Canadian government was not immediately available to confirm the disappearance.

Ottawa advises its citizens against travel to North Korea.

Although religious freedom is enshrined in the North Korean constitution, it does not exist in practice and religious activity is severely restricted to officially-recognized groups linked to the government.

Pyongyang views foreign missionaries with deep suspicion, although it allows access to some who undertake humanitarian work.

However, anyone caught engaging in any unauthorized activities would be subject to immediate arrest.

A number of missionaries — mostly US citizens — have been arrested in North Korea in the past with some of them allowed to return home after interventions by high-profile US figures.

HRWF Footnote: See as well

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/canadian-pastor-hyeon-soo-lim-missing-after-aid-trip-to-north-korea-1.2979419>

<http://time.com/3729742/north-korea-reverend-hyeon-soo-lim-church-proselytizing-canada-pyongyang/>

[http://www.bing.com/videos/search?](http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=hyeon+soo+lim+north+korea&qpv=Hyeon+Soo+Lim+north+korea&FORM=VDRE)

[q=hyeon+soo+lim+north+korea&qpv=Hyeon+Soo+Lim+north+korea&FORM=VDRE](http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=hyeon+soo+lim+north+korea&qpv=Hyeon+Soo+Lim+north+korea&FORM=VDRE) (Videos)
