Still No Freedom: From North Korea to China

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North Korean Diaspora

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>680 recognised NK refugees; estimated over 1,000 NK defectors (Park 2015)</td>
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<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>At least 50,000-200,000 (Huffington Post 2017)</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>20,000 by the end of 2015 (Home Office 2016)</td>
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Human Rights Abuse Faced by Women within NK

Rigid patriarchal structure - deeply embedded in every institution of society:

**Family**
- Domestic violence common; verbal abuse but no redress for such situations:
  - In North Korea the idea that men are superior to women is so prevalent that women are always beaten by their husbands. Even if we don’t have anything to eat, we have to serve alcohol to our husbands. I was also beaten by my husband for 25 years. We have to put up with it. (Ms A)

- When the famine began in the 1990s, it was the women who took the responsibility for family survival, going out and selling products and exchanging goods.

**Military**
- Sexual violence, harassment and rape common. Senior men use the threat of blocking young women from joining the party, which is a vital pathway to a secure and successful future.

**Neglect of women's hygiene issues**
- No sanitary towels for women and hygiene for women remain serious issues – women in the army are given wound dressings but ordinary women just use cuttings of male vests or socks etc.

Human Rights Abuse Faced by NK Women in China

- Settling in the UK began in 2004.
- The UK Govt has accepted largest no. of NK refugees, excluding South Korea.
- Since 2008, NK refugee numbers have declined due to toughening of the screening of asylum applications.

Human Rights Abuse Faced by Repatriated NK Women in NK Prisons

- Inhumane conditions: very crowded (no space to stretch their legs), substandard food, regular beatings and torture, hard labour.
- Pregnant women who are caught are forced to miscarry – made to stand against the wall and be kicked. Those past the 3-4 months period deliver in the cell helped by older women but forced to leave babies face down or some cover the baby’s face with a carrier bag to die. Then, the guards display the corpse on the toilet floor against the walls so people can see it to teach them not to go back to China by betraying their own country and not to bring foreign blood to NK.

Concluding remarks

- North Korean women are subject to systematic human rights abuse within and outside North Korea.
- This demands much more concerted global efforts to tackle these grave issues.