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ARIZONA

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE,  
SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION  
COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

## United States Senate

February 28, 2007

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The Honorable Condoleezza Rice  
Secretary of State  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rice:

I am writing to express concern about disturbing reports that thousands of North Korean women have been forced into virtual slavery after fleeing to China.

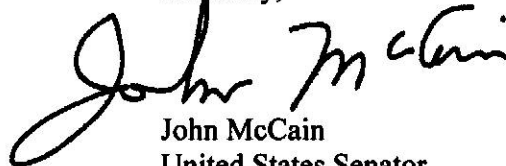
According to numerous sources, including Refugees International, Human Rights Watch, and Radio Free Asia, thousands of North Korean women who have fled famine in their homeland have been "sold" as brides to Chinese men. They are then frequently confined and subjected to serious labor, physical, and sexual abuses. These women, who live and work in often nightmarish conditions, face the prospect of arrest by Chinese law enforcement authorities for illegally crossing the border and of deportation to North Korea, where returning defectors are routinely sent to labor camps. Some of the women who have remained in China have been "sold" more than once.

Such practices are morally abhorrent and constitute a form of modern day slavery. By returning these refugees to North Korea, where they face a well-founded fear of persecution, the Government of China is in violation of its obligations under the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. Last year, in light of continuing concerns about human trafficking, the State Department added China to the Trafficking in Persons "Tier 2 Watch List."

Last month the State Department issued an interim assessment stating that China has increased its efforts to combat trafficking in persons since the 2006 Trafficking Report. I urge you to ensure that trafficking of North Korean women is a key element of any discussion with Chinese officials that bear on these issues. Additionally, this issue and the broader issue of Pyongyang's appalling human rights record must be on the table in talks conducted pursuant to the new agreement with North Korea.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



John McCain  
United States Senator

JM/rf