

Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Ref.: UA CHN 4/2026
(Please use this reference in your reply)

25 March 2026

Excellency,

I have the honour to address you in my capacity as Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 55/21.

In this connection, I would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information I have received concerning the risk of forcible repatriation to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, of [REDACTED], which may put her at the risk of serious human rights violations upon repatriation.

According to the information received:

On 2 January 2025, a national of Democratic People's Republic of Korea, [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]) was arrested near the Myanmar-China border in [REDACTED] by police authorities. [REDACTED] was detained in the pre-trial detention facility in [REDACTED] from January to mid-August 2025. Since mid-August 2025, [REDACTED] has been detained in the pre-trial detention facility in [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] is married to a Chinese national and wants to live with [REDACTED] in China. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is also ready to receive [REDACTED]

Two other nationals of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were arrested together with [REDACTED]. One of them has been reportedly released to her Chinese husband.

I wish to express concern over the possible human rights implications of any decision by your Excellency's Government to repatriate the abovementioned individual to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, taking into consideration that the individual would be at threat of human rights violations, including torture, ill treatment, sexual violence upon detention, committed against repatriated individuals of that country for the legitimate exercise of their rights to leave the country and to seek asylum, which thus would render arrest arbitrary. This would also result in the violation of her right to family life.

The full texts of the human rights instruments and standards recalled above are available on www.ohchr.org or can be provided upon request.

In view of the urgency of the matter, I would appreciate a response on the initial steps taken by your Excellency's Government to safeguard the rights of the above-mentioned person in compliance with international instruments.

[REDACTED]

As it is my responsibility, under the mandate provided to me by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to my attention, I would be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Please provide any additional information and any comment you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.
2. Please provide the legal grounds for the arrest and detention of abovementioned individual and the charges brought against [REDACTED]
3. Please provide updated information on the current legal status of the abovementioned detainee.
4. Please explain what measures are in place to ensure the human rights of the detainees are upheld and that an individual assessment is conducted to ensure the principle of non-refoulement.

This communication, and any response received from your Excellency's Government, will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#) at the 60 days mark. Should Your Excellency's Government respond within 60 days, both the communication and the response, may be published before the 60 days mark. The communications and responses will also be made available in the subsequent periodic report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

While awaiting a reply, I urge that all necessary interim measures be taken to halt repatriations and that consultations are made with the United Nations, including human rights mechanisms, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees to prevent their re-occurrence. I also request that access be granted to these detainees for our mandates and these United Nations bodies, including in coordination with third parties such as the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Elizabeth Salmón
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's
Republic of Korea