

Jubilee Campaign Submits Statements to the UN: The Situation of North Korean Women, The Situation of Chinese Anti-Corruption Lawyers, and The Situation of Nigerian Women in Politics

This week, Jubilee Campaign submitted three written statements to various United Nations mechanisms, including the Commission on the Status of Women, the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, and the Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls. Fittingly, the three countries we submitted the statements in regards to are the countries Jubilee Campaign has been most actively engaged on this past year: North Korea, China, and Nigeria. In this email, we provide brief summaries of each of the written submissions.



Commission on the Status of Women: North Korean Defector Women in North Korea, China, and South Korea

****Click image below to view document**** -----

Commission on the Status of Women
 Sixth-Sixty session
 14-25 March 2022
 Statement submitted by Jubilee Campaign, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

Jubilee Campaign promotes the human rights and religious liberty of ethnic and religious minorities; advocates for the release of prisoners of conscience and promotes the dignity and safety of women and children from sexual exploitation. Jubilee Campaign has held special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council at the United Nations since 2003.

This report seeks to inform the United Nations Economic and Social Council Commission on the Status of Women on the conditions faced by North Korean women in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the People's Republic of China, and the Republic of Korea.

THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

2020 and 2021 saw relatively the same pattern of human rights violations taking place against North Korean women as had been recorded in previous years, including violence against women, trafficking and exploitation, and discrimination, all of which have been exacerbated by the pandemic. There have also been a few newer trends and violations during the coronavirus pandemic. For example, in August 2020, it was revealed that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had established "buffer zones" along its shared border with China where military and other state authorities can fire at individuals crossing the border irregularly, which is tantamount to extrajudicial killings; such measures were taken purportedly to prevent the spread of the coronavirus pandemic via transnational movement. These actions disproportionately impact women, who are, willing or not, significantly more involved in unauthorized travel and cross-border exchanges than men. The North Korean government has used the pretext of coronavirus to expand its ideal of "self-reliance", by rejecting offers of aid, vaccines, and food, thus leaving hundreds of thousands of civilians struggling for survival; this in turn resulted in the North Korean government placing additional pressure on women and has increased their exploitation for labor.

As in previous years, domestic and sexual violence has continued to ravage North Korean women despite domestic provisions (i.e., the 2012 Criminal Law, which prohibits sexual violence, and the 2010 Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Women, which prohibits domestic violence). In March 2021, it was reported that a North Korean married man under the influence of alcohol visited the home of his extramarital lover and stabbed her to death before setting her body on fire.

Human trafficking and sexual exploitation of North Korean women also persisted in 2020 and 2021. In January 2021, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights published a report on Promoting accountability in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; the OHCHR primarily interviewed North Korean defector women who had escaped after being repatriated at least once by China. These respondents reported that "women are also more at risk than men of being trafficked into neighboring States for the purposes of forced marriage and sexual or labour exploitation." North Korean women who are repatriated to the Democratic People's Republic of

One of the most vulnerable populations in the world are North Korean women. Already, citizens in North Korea face a plethora of hardships including poverty, starvation, and a complete lack of personal and human rights; regrettably, women in North Korea are made even more marginalized due to their gender. In August 2020, the North Korean government announced that to combat the transnational spread of COVID-19 it had established "buffer zones" along the border with China where individuals engaged in irregular movement could be fired at and killed; this disproportionately impacts women who are significantly more involved in travel due to smuggling jobs and even forced trafficking. The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced even more

problems for North Korean women. Throughout 2020 and 2021, the Kim regime pressured women to be fully present mothers while simultaneously participating in strenuous agricultural work to combat the famine that the North Korean government had exacerbated on its own by rejecting international aid.

With regards to the situation of North Korean defector women and girls in South Korea and China, they continue to be tricked by 'brokers' into following them out of the country with the false promise of careers; in reality, they are sold into forced prostitution, marriages, and the exploitative cybersex industry. North Korean defector women face a strong negative stigma in both China and South Korea, and this can have a drastic effect on their livelihood. In February 2020, Chinese doctors turned away a defector woman exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 because she was unable to present an identification card; in December 2020, it was reported that North Korean factory workers in China's Jilin Province - many of whom are women - were facing high rates of tuberculosis because they were relegated to cramped living and working conditions. Meanwhile in South Korea, North Korean defector women who often worked in restaurants and cafes faced unemployment as businesses closed down to mitigate the pandemic.

UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders: China's Anti-Corruption Lawyers

----- Image by [Tomas Raggero](#) on Flickr ([CC BY 2.0](#))

Since the initial rise to power of China's President Xi Jinping, much of the government's focus has been directed towards ridding the high ranks of corrupt leaders and state actors. President Xi has within the past decade disposed of numerous officials such as Bo Xilai, who oversaw the abduction and prolonged detention of a dissenting journalist and whose wife was under investigation for murder, and Zhou



Yongkang, who was convicted of bribery and leaking state secrets. While on the surface it appeared to be the CCP's genuine action to tackle internal corruption, in reality it also served another, perhaps more valued, purpose of eliminating President Xi's political opponents and other officials he deemed a threat to his power; the aforementioned Bo and Zhou were both extremely influential authorities during their prime and had massive potential for leadership. In essence, Xi's campaign to end corruption has simultaneously served as a form of corruption in itself as the president eliminated his rivals one by one and paved the path to supreme, uncontested leadership.

Ironically, while the CCP prides itself on weeding out corrupt officials, it simultaneously arbitrarily detains lawyers and human rights defenders known for their anti-corruption work. Last year in June 2020, authorities formally arrested civil rights legal scholar Xu Zhiyong for his work exposing CCP corruption and for publicly criticizing the government's inability to handle the COVID-19 pandemic⁸, and he was indicted in August 2021 for "subversion". Prior to his 2020 arrest, Xu had already served time in prison for his leadership of the anti-corruption campaign New Citizens' Movement. Another prominent targets of China's repression of anti-corruption defenders is Wang Quanzhang, who worked alongside Xu Zhiyong for the New Citizens' Movement to promote government transparency and expose corrupt officials; he also defended villagers against "corrupt local officials", took on cases of torture in police custody and violations of rule of law. In 2019, Wang was found guilty of "subversion of state power", sentenced to four years' imprisonment and five years of deprivation of political rights, and has had his law license revoked; fortunately, Wang was released in April 2020 as authorities included his sustained period of pre-trial detention towards his official sentencing.



Jubilee Campaign Submission to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders

Crackdown on Anti-Corruption Lawyers and Human Rights Defenders in China

Jubilee Campaign promotes the human rights and religious liberty of ethnic and religious minorities, advocates for the release of prisoners of conscience imprisoned on account of their faith, seeks religious freedom, religious-based persecution, and protects and promotes the dignity and safety of women and children from bodily harm and sexual exploitation. Jubilee Campaign holds special consultative status with ECOSOC at the United Nations.

I. China's 'Crackdown on Corruption'

At China's 13th National People's Congress in March 2018, two important actions were taken: firstly, President Xi Jinping was elected for a second term; secondly, the National Supervisory Commission was established.¹ Since the Commission's inception, and even prior to it, President Xi has sought to purge the government and other state institutions of corrupt officials, and has deposed of numerous problematic authorities. For example, Bo Xilai who oversaw the abduction and prolonged detention of a dissenting journalist and whose wife was under investigation for murder; and Zhou Yongkang, who was convicted of bribery and leaking state secrets.² While on the surface it appeared to be the CCP's genuine action to tackle internal corruption, in reality it also served another, perhaps more valued, purpose of eliminating President Xi's political opponents and other officials he deemed a threat to his power: the aforementioned Bo and Zhou were both extremely influential authorities during their prime and had massive potential for leadership. It is also worth mentioning that Xi went beyond targeting just his opponents, but their families as well. Zhou Yongkang's son Zhou Bin and wife Ju Xiaoye have also been detained and charged for graft; Reuters reported in 2014 that at least a dozen of Zhou's relatives have since been arrested.³ In essence, Xi's campaign to end corruption has simultaneously served as a form of corruption in itself as the president eliminated his rivals one by one and paved the path to supreme, uncontested leadership.

¹ Alexander Rankin, 'Xi Jinping's Anti-Corruption Campaign: The Hidden Motives of a Modern Day Mao', Foreign Policy Research Institute, 12 August 2018. ² Michael White, 'Xi, Rise and Fall of China's Bo Xilai, an Arc of Badness', The New York Times, 4 May 2013. ³ Reuters, 'Profile: China's hidden security chief Zhou Yongkang', BBC News, 10 October 2014. ⁴ Reuters, 'Son, wife of China's former domestic security boss jailed for graft', 15 June 2014.

****Click image above to view document****

UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls: Obstacles to Nigerian Women's Participation in Politics and Public Activism

****Click image below to view document**** -----



Jubilee Campaign Submission to the United Nations Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls

Women's Activism in Nigeria: Obstacles and Objectives

Jubilee Campaign promotes the human rights and religious liberty of ethnic and religious minorities, advocates for the release of prisoners of conscience imprisoned on account of their faith, seeks religious freedom, religious-based persecution, and protects and promotes the dignity and safety of women and children from bodily harm and sexual exploitation. Jubilee Campaign holds special consultative status with ECOSOC at the United Nations.

I. Status of Women's Participation in Politics and Public Advocacy

Numerous scholars have noted that Nigerian women's participation in governmental positions and public office has remained low since the nation transitioned into a constitutional democracy in 1999, and that there has been no visible uptick in women's political participation within the last twenty or so years.¹ In fact, while the global average of women's political participation in elective and appointed government positions is 22.5%, and the subregional average for West Africa is 15%, Nigeria's average is just 6.2%, highlighting that "the more women demand political inclusion in the Nigerian nation, the less democratic the spaces for inclusion open to women seem to become."² For instance, the number of women elected into Nigeria's Senate declined from seven in 2015 to six in 2019, and the House of Representatives experienced an even more significant decline from 20 women elected in 2015 to just 12 in 2019; such a deteriorating trend in Nigerian women's political participation negatively correlates to the rising demand for gender equality in governments across the world.

While the representation of women in national politics has unfortunately remained steadily low, there has been in recent years an increase in women's participation in advocacy and activism at smaller, more local levels, usually via non-governmental organizations (NGOs). One of the primary reasons women have become more engaged in grassroots advocacy is that social media has facilitated outreach to stakeholders, collaborations among NGOs, receiving donations, and gaining

¹ Luke Kelly, 'Barriers and obstacles for women's participation in government in Nigeria', University of Manchester, Knowledge, Evidence and Insights for Development Institute, 24 May 2019. ² Adeline Neema Mills, Brent Chadwell Odeh, Corvella O. Okoro, Francisca N. Ojha, & Christine A. Ugochukwu, 'Gender, Democracy, and National Development in Nigeria', Sage Journals, May 2020.

Numerous scholars have noted that Nigerian women's participation in governmental positions and public office has remained low since the nation transitioned into a constitutional democracy in 1999, and that there has been no visible uptick in women's political participation within the last twenty or so years. Many of the hardships women in politics face stem from Nigeria's emphasis on traditional gender roles. Women who have in the past run for elections or have attempted to break into Nigeria's political sphere have reported being subjected to disparaging comments such as that they are unintelligent, sexually immoral, inexperienced, and that they should focus their time on domestic work as they gender norms dictate. For the small

proportion of women who make it far enough to run for elections, they are constantly facing the threat of electoral violence. A 2015 study focusing specifically on electoral violence in Kogi State, Nigeria found that women in state elections have reported being stalked during campaign tours and raped by groups of men in cars or bushes; regrettably, many of the perpetrators view nonconsensual sexual violence of female politicians as a form of political patronage which they are entitled to in exchange for support. Moreover, Nigeria's patronage system by which "political leaders distribute resources and favors to constituents (also known as 'clients') in exchange for their loyalty", poses obstacles to women who want to participate in politics but whose male family members control the family's financial assets and expect them to remain at home raising children and performing household work. The situation of financial dependency for Nigerian women has only been exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic which forces many to conduct unpaid domestic labor at home, such as taking care of and homeschooling their children while schools are temporarily shut down.

Outside of the political sphere but in the realm of public activism, women face nearly identical hardships. Jubilee Campaign has the privilege of having numerous female colleagues who work with Nigerian civil society. Their most commonly reported problems include sexism in the form of donors asking for sexual favors in return for financial assistance, as well as "consistent backlash, threats, and trash talk." Dr. Oby Ezekwesili, who founded the #BringBackOurGirls movement following the 2014 Boko Haram abduction of 276 primarily Christian schoolgirls from the Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok, faced serious blows to her credibility. Despite her numerous exceptional titles as former Vice President of the World Bank, co-founder and Founding Director of Transparency International, and former Nigerian Minister of Education, and her therefore undeniable dedication to improvement of Nigerian society, her advocacy on the #BringBackOurGirls movement was "viewed through the prism of partisan politics" because the kidnapping and subsequent advocacy efforts occurred on the brink of the 2015 presidential elections. Numerous actors baselessly accused Dr. Ezekwesili of using the abduction and #BringBackOurGirls movement as "a front to gain political capital".

To learn more about Jubilee Campaign's projects, advocacy, and initiatives, please visit our website by clicking the button below:

jubileecampaign.org

If you would like to donate to Jubilee Campaign, you may do so by clicking the button below. We thank you in advance for your generous contribution.

Donate



Jubilee Campaign USA | 9689-C Main Street, Fairfax, VA 22030

[Unsubscribe jubilee@jubileecampaign.org](mailto:jubilee@jubileecampaign.org)

[Update Profile](#) | [About Constant Contact](#)

Sent by jubilee@jubileecampaign.org in collaboration with



Try email marketing for free today!