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**Testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa,
Global Health and Human Rights**

Hello, my name is Kim Seong Min and I am a defector who escaped from North Korea in 1997, and currently I run “Free North Korea Radio” (FNKR) in Seoul, South Korea, which is a radio station that broadcasts into North Korea. It is a great honor for me to be able to share with the honorable Members of Congress through this written testimony the activities of Free North Korea Radio and other North Korean defector groups in Seoul.

Free North Korea Radio is a radio station that was formed in April of 2004 to broadcast messages of freedom, the truth of the democratic outside world, and information regarding human rights to the people of North Korea as well as to South Korea and the United States.

At that time, during the South Korean leftist administration of Roh Moo Hyun, he acquiesced to the Kim Jong-il regime and declared the ceasing of the government-run broadcasts into North Korea that had been airing on the basis of the North Korean people’s right to know of the outside world. However, because we defectors knew the importance of broadcasts into North Korea, we formed a radio station through our wish to continue the broadcasts in the private sector that which was stopped by the government, and ultimately broadcast 5 hours daily, from the initial 1 hour daily broadcasts.

We have great pride in the work we do in having established our own internal network inside North Korea and establishing a cellphone-based connection with North Korea citizens, thereby reporting the ever-changing internal news of North Korea that was carried by the well-known and major media outlets of South Korea and the world. Also, the 1,000 or so North Korean defectors who decided to escape North Korea and resettled in South Korea after hearing our broadcasts are precious people who reminded us of the significance of our broadcasting.

In April of 2006, a North Korean spy couple who received orders from the North Korea Worker’s Party and had been active in Europe, entered South Korea and visited our station. According to them, they listened to our FNKR broadcast everyday on the internet without missing an airing and it was our broadcasts that played a decisive role in changing their minds. Another time, a high-ranking North Korean elite called via cellphone and expressed his wish to defect; an officer in the North Korean army once sent in materials on public executions, imploring us to tell the outside world of the human rights situation in North Korea.

It has been over 6 years since we started broadcasting into North Korea on internet and over five years on short wave, and during this time FNKR has introduced videos from inside North Korea shot via hidden video cameras 130 times, and FNKR has been quoted more than 90 times by media outlets such as CNN, BBC, and NHK and others regarding our reporting from inside North Korea.

Our 'Voice of the People' program, one of our main programs in which North Korean citizens are interviewed via cellphones, and "News of North Korea from Seoul", are quoted on an almost daily basis by South Korean media outlets such as The Chosun Ilbo and KBS, and even now we still receive a deluge of letters from North Korean citizens who are encouraged by our message of hope.

As a recognition of our achievements FNKR was awarded the 'Media Prize' in December 2008 by Reporters Without Borders, and in December of 2009, we were awarded the 'Asia Democracy and Human Rights Award' by the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy.

However, the achievements of FNKR would have been impossible without the help of the United States Government and the American people. After only three months of starting broadcasts, Free North Korea Radio received funding from the National Endowment for Democracy, and starting from 2006 we have received significant funding from the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

With these developments in FNKR, there followed many incidents of opposition to the station. First, through their own media outlets, the North Korean regime over twenty times demanded the ceasing of our radio broadcasts, and threatened us by saying "the station that has been instigated by America, the broadcast of turncoats... must be blasted away".

In 2006 and 2007, threatening letters with blood-stained axe and butcher's knife were sent to the station, and in 2009 the person who sent the letter and the packages was found to be receiving orders from the North Korean regime to break up the station, and was arrested by the National Intelligence Service of South Korea, and is now currently in jail.

There are hundreds letters and emails threatening us with death if we do not shut down our station. There are countless happenings of 'press conferences' and 'rallies' demanding our shutdown that have plagued us. The electronic jamming of our broadcasts by the North Korea regime happens on a daily basis, as well as computer hackings of our FNKR website by North Korean agents.

However, we have not ceased broadcasting, not even for a day, since we started FNKR, and the disturbing machinations of the 'enemy' have actually empowered us to continue with our work.

I have received death threats from the North Korea regime from the moment I began this station, to now – the terror threats have continued. That is why I receive 24-hour protection from armed and active-duty police officers. Just this month, on September 6th, my colleague and fellow North Korean defector and activist, Mr. Park Sang Hak of Fighters for Free North Korea, which sends balloons into North Korea, was targeted for assassination; the North Korean spy was discovered and arrested by the South Korean National Intelligence Service.

The efforts of the Kim Jong-il regime to destroy Free North Korea Radio and Fighter for Free North Korea and other North Korean defector groups continue without ceasing. However, we see our work as more valuable than our lives, and that is why we continue our broadcasts and

send balloons into North Korea. There is justice in the work we do, and it is the overthrow of the dictatorship regime of Kim Jong-il that is we escaped North Korea in the first place.

Dear Honorable Members of Congress, I truly thank you, the American government, and the American people, for your interest and care for the democratization of North Korea and for its democratic development. Furthermore, I hope for continued international solidarity and cooperation, and I pledge to you that I will continue to devote myself and work for the freedom and liberation of North Korea.

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