



## Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing

### Witness Biographies

## South Korea's Refugee Policy in the Yoon Administration: A New Openness to International Standards?

### Panel I



**Jong-Chul Kim, Esq.** is a senior researcher in the public interest lawyers' organization, Advocates for Public Interest Law (APIL) in Seoul he founded in 2011. His work focuses on the rights of vulnerable migrants in Korea, including refugees, victims of human trafficking, and migrant detainees. He also specializes in business and human rights and monitors human rights abuses committed by Korean companies overseas. In 2010-2011, Kim was the head of the Refugee Rights Network of Korea. In 2011-2012, he served as chair of the human rights department for the Korean Bar Association. In 2016, the Korean Bar Association awarded Kim with the prize for "Best Public Interest Lawyer." In 2018, Kim received the Trafficking in Persons Report Hero

Award from the U.S. State Department. He holds an LL.M. in public international law from Korea Graduate University and an LL.B. from Korea University and obtained his Certificate in Law at the Judicial Research and Training Institute. In 2019, Kim researched on the rights of non-citizens at the Human Rights Program of Harvard Law School as a visiting fellow.



**Ethan Hee-Seok Shin, Ph.D.** is a researcher at Seoul-based human rights documentation NGO Transitional Justice Working Group (TJWG) and a lecturer of international law at the Catholic University of Korea. He has been interviewing North Korean escapees in South Korea to record enforced disappearances and other grave human rights violations, made submissions to the UN human rights experts on their behalf and set up FOOTPRINTS, an online database of the people taken by North Korea. He is an advocate for the reform of South Korea's "joint interrogation" procedure for the newly arrived escapees from North Korea, the creation of a governmental fact-finding commission for the Korean War-era prisoners of war (POWs) and South Korea's ratification and domestic implementation of the International Convention for the

Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance as well as redress for the victims of World War II-era atrocities including the "comfort women" of Japan's military sexual slavery. He holds a Ph.D. in international law from Yonsei University in South Korea and an LL.M. from Harvard Law School.



**Moon Jun Sohn, Ph.D., M.D.** is a professor of Neurosurgery at Inje University, College of Medicine, Ilsan Paik Hospital, Korea. He is also the director of Neuroscience & Radiosurgery Hybrid Research Center, at Inje University, Goyang, Korea. Since 2010, he has been involved in Korea's ODA project in Bagram, Afghanistan as a project managing company (PMC) member of KOICA-University partnership. He has participated in the Korea's medical ODA project for developing and crisis countries. In 2021, when Afghanistan was occupied by Taliban, he participated in the mentorship program for Afghan migrants in Korea. He founded the NGO "We All Friends" with his colleagues from the ODA program and Korean civilian groups to help refugees

and migrants settle in Korea. He graduated from Inje University, College of Medicine in 1992 and holds a M.S. from Ulsan University, Graduate School of Medicine, and a Ph.D. in Medicine from Korea University.



**Suzanne K. Scholte, Ph.D.** is considered one of the world's leading activists in the North Korean human rights movement. She has spent over two decades promoting the freedom and dignity of the North Korean people and is currently President of the Defense Forum Foundation, a non-profit foundation promoting a strong national defense and freedom, democracy, and human rights abroad. In 1996, Scholte began a program to host the first North Korean defectors in the United States, giving them a voice to speak out about the atrocities being committed against the people of North Korea, including the political prison camps and the horrific treatment of refugees. She has led international efforts to pressure China to end their horrific repatriation policy and has been involved in the rescue of hundreds of North Koreans escaping their country.

Currently, Scholte also serves as Chairman of the North Korea Freedom Coalition, Vice-Co Chair of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, and Chairman of Free North Korea Radio. In recognition of her efforts, she was awarded the 2008 Seoul Peace Prize Laureate, the 2010 Walter Judd Freedom Award, the 2013 Order of Diplomatic Service Merit Sungnye Medal from the Republic of Korea, the 2014 Sanders Peace and Social Justice Award, and a Volunteer Service (Gold) Award from the President of the United States in 2014. She was made an Honorary Citizen of Seoul in 2008.

Scholte has testified before the United States Congress and at the United Nations. As a frequent speaker at international conferences, she has also been a guest lecturer at Yonsei University (Seoul) and Koshin University (Busan) and has presented at the National Defense University, Harvard, Wellesley and Princeton, University of Virginia, University of Illinois, and numerous other colleges. Scholte is also the Chairman and Founder of the U.S.-Western Sahara Foundation.

Scholte has appeared on numerous news segments including CNN, ABC, Fox, KBS, SBS and Arirang TV and has published OPEDs in the Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Washington Time, Chosun Ilbo, and DongA Ilbo. She is a graduate of the College of William and Mary and received an Honorary Doctorate in Education from Koshin University. She attends The Falls Church Anglican church where she considers she did her most important work: teaching Kindergarten Sunday School for 20 years. She currently serves there on the Welcoming Committee.



**Kennji Kizuka** is the Associate Director of Research & Analysis for Refugee Protection. Kizuka supports Human Rights First's efforts to promote the protection of refugees, reform U.S. asylum law, policies and practices, and bring other U.S. immigration policies and practices into line with international refugee protection and human rights law standards. At Human Rights First, he previously served as a Senior Researcher and Policy Analyst for Refugee Protection and an Immigrant Justice Corps Justice Fellow on the Refugee Representation team.

Kizuka clerked for the Honorable Rosemary S. Pooler on the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. He received a juris doctor degree, Order of the Coif, from the UC Berkeley School of Law, and holds a master's degree in public affairs from the School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. He graduated magna cum laude from the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University.