

## **"Daughter of Tongyeong " campaign to rescue SHIN Suk-ja and her daughters from DPRK prison camps**

### **Persons concerned:**

SHIN Suk-ja, b. 1942 in Tongyeong, RoK

OH Hye-won, b. 1976 in Kiel, Germany

OH Gyu-won, b. 1979 in Kiel, Germany

### **Case background:**

Having come to Germany in the 1960s to work as a nurse, Shin Suk-ja there met economist Dr. OH Kil-nam, whom she married in 1975. In 1985, after Shin had had a car accident, the family were lured to the DPRK by promises of first-rate medical treatment and professional advancement for the husband.

After lengthy indoctrination, Oh worked on propaganda broadcasts to South Korea during 1986, then was sent back to Germany to recruit other student couples, but defected, requesting political asylum in Copenhagen. In reprisal, his wife and daughters were sent to Yodok prison camp in 1987.

Although Oh received letters, photographs and audio tapes from his family on several occasions, from contacts striving to entice him back to the DPRK, his attempts to secure their release failed.

### **Campaign:**

After remaining lost among thousands of other North Korean HR cases for twenty years, the plight of Shin Suk-ja and her daughters came to the attention of a pastor in her home town, who launched the "Daughter of Tongyeong" campaign of awareness-raising.

Shin's reported loyalty, first to her husband in following him to the DPRK against her instincts, then to her people in enjoining him, at greatest risk to herself, to defect rather than to lure others to the DPRK, seems to have made her quite a celebrity in South Korea.

### **Latest developments:**

- In early October, the National Human Rights Commission of South Korea debated Shin's case, thereby making it an official cause and increasing public awareness.

- The campaign has now reached its target of 100.000 signatures, and plans to address a formal letter to UNSG Ban Ki-moon on 10 December (Human Rights Day), asking him to take up her case and secure her release.

- The story is to be made into a main-screen movie in South Korea.

- There are reports that Shin Suk-ja was moved to another prison camp in September, possibly in reaction to the campaign; whether alone or with her daughters is unclear.