RESCUE RELIEF

Frequently Asked Questions & How To Respond
The 3,000 mile journey that North Korean refugees embark on after they leave North Korea for China is made possible by the consistent fundraising efforts of Rescue Teams around the world. However, fundraising is only one aspect of this work.

We believe that changing the narrative around North Korea and its people can begin with a simple conversation.

Whether this conversation is with a friend, classmate, family member, or total stranger—bringing awareness to the extreme challenges North Koreans face is critical to Liberty in North Korea’s mission in helping the North Korean people achieve their liberty.
Where do we start the conversation? When people hear “North Korea,” their minds are probably filled with images and thoughts of Kim Jong-un, nukes, soldiers marching, and the intergovernmental summits. But we’re working to humanize an issue that has been politicized and oversimplified for too long. The North Korean people are not the regime, not brainwashed, and not hopeless.

They are resilient, resourceful, and actively finding freedom and creating change.

This guide will help prepare you and your team for some frequently asked questions you might receive and how to best respond with answers that are both accurate and people-focused.
Quick Tips

- **Keep your answers short and precise!**
  If someone wants to know more or would like a more detailed answer, they will ask.

- **Start with some questions** (What comes to mind when you hear North Korea? etc.) to find out how much they know or where a person’s interest in the issue stems from.

- **Be mindful!**
  You never know how much someone may or may not know about the issue, so keep it natural until you have a better understanding of who you are speaking with. Some people may already know about LiNK and North Korea while others may not. Everyone will have a different reason for talking to you and your team—keep this in mind and treat everyone with respect.

- **Be friendly and approachable.**
  Standing in front of the table rather than sitting behind it invites people to come and talk with you.

- **Use language that treats the North Korean people with respect.** Your answers should reflect the people’s challenges and their potential.

- **Speak slowly and clearly.**
  You don’t want to overwhelm people with too much information. Ask if they have any other questions.

- **Share LiNK and Rescue Team accomplishments!**
  We have rescued over 1,000 North Korean refugees!
Q: What do you even do?

We fundraise to help North Korean refugees reach freedom through Liberty in North Korea’s rescue routes and we change the narrative on North Korea to focus on the people.

Q: Why North Korea? Why North Korean refugees?

The United Nations has stated that North Korea’s human rights abuses are unparalleled in the contemporary world and that it’s the only country in the world that has a form of enforced poverty.

North Korean refugees in China are not safe. They can be arrested and sent back to North Korea to face horrific punishments including torture and forced labor. Many North Korean refugees do not have the resources to reach freedom on their own. This is why LiNK’s work is so important. LiNK rescues North Korean refugees without cost or condition and also empowers North Koreans to thrive in their new lives in freedom.
Q: How do North Koreans escape from Korea? What makes them refugees?

North Koreans secretly cross the border between North Korea and China on foot. Many North Koreans make the crossing through the Tumen River in areas that are not as heavily guarded, evading authorities and finding ideal times to escape. Even after they make it to China, they are still not safe because the Chinese government does not recognize them as refugees. Instead, North Korean refugees are deemed “economic migrants” because of the economic relationship that China and North Korea share. If North Koreans are caught in China, they can be sent back to North Korea where they face imprisonment, torture, or even death, despite the fact that China ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention and a subsequent treaty known as the 1967 Protocol.
We connect with North Korean refugees once they cross into China. LiNK has a secure and trusted network in China and works with trusted partners on the ground. Each person we work with is vetted and held to the highest standard to ensure the North Korean refugees are treated with dignity and respect.

No, we do not smuggle people. Everyone involved is participating in the rescue mission at their own will.

Q: So you go into North Korea to get people out? Isn’t that considered smuggling?

LiNK is aware of China’s growing surveillance and security. We are constantly changing our rescue routes in the country in order to ensure the safety of the North Korean refugees and to keep the missions secure and confidential.

Q: What is LiNK doing about China’s growing surveillance and security? Are rescue missions becoming more difficult?
Q: How much does it cost to rescue a North Korean refugee?

It costs $3,000 to rescue one North Korean refugee in China. The $3,000 funds basic needs, such as food and clothing, transportation, and accommodations. It also funds costs for fines, fees, and the network of partners and staff in the underground as well as any emergencies and unforeseen expenses during the journey. 100% of all donations fund rescues.

Q: How can I volunteer? Can I go on a rescue mission?

There are 4 ways you can get involved!
1) You can join our team, attend our events, or donate to our fundraising goal.
2) You can fundraise on your own, either on the LiNK fundraising site or facebook, or you can donate on the website.
3) You can become a Liberty Donor! Liberty Donors are monthly recurring donors who are the backbone of the organization. Donating $15 or more will get you a free LiNK t-shirt!
4) If you are interested in working for one of the three LiNK offices, you can check out their website for jobs and internships in the U.S., South Korea, or Southeast Asia!

It is not possible to volunteer or go on a rescue mission. Our rescue missions are led and handled by our team and Field Coordinators in Southeast Asia. The Field Coordinator position requires an 18-month commitment, fluency in both English and Korean, as well as five years of driving experience.
Q: What do you do to help North Koreans facing discrimination in South Korea?

Unfortunately, many North Koreans who resettle in South Korea face difficulty adjusting because of cultural and language barriers (North Koreans have a distinct dialect with different terms while South Koreans often use English-mixed words.) The South Korean government provides services to help North Koreans resettle and assimilate into their new home, but many still have trouble as they most likely left family and friends behind. LiNK ensures that the North Koreans who choose to connect with us once they resettle have a community where they can be connected to the resources they might need.
Q: Is LiNK doing anything on Capitol Hill or making an impact in the political arena?

Although Liberty in North Korea does not lobby or have any kind of political association, an important part of the work is connecting politicians and policymakers with North Korean stories and voices to provide North Korean peoples’ perspectives. For example, LiNK’s North Korean Advocacy Fellows have spoken at the U.S. State Department and the Director of Research and Strategy frequently meets with various U.S. politicians that visit Seoul.

Q: Does North Korea know about LiNK?

The North Korean government most likely knows about LiNK. However, we are just one of the many issues they are dealing with and because our work is focused in China and Southeast Asia, the North Korean government does not make stopping our work a focus or a priority. Despite the lack of immediate danger, we do our best to uphold the utmost standards of security because there are definitely risks of North Korean infiltration both in China and through our technology.
We are called a Rescue Team because our efforts support the main aspect of LiNK’s work—rescue refugees. LiNK is actively rescuing North Korean refugees hiding in China and 100% of the money we raise goes directly to those rescues.

Rescue Teams are student and community groups located around the world. We are committed to standing with the North Korean people as they overcome one of the greatest challenges facing humanity. We raise funds to rescue North Korean refugees and encourage our peers to join the movement. From hosting creative events in our communities to fundraising online, Rescue Teams are at the forefront of this movement.

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Q: Have any North Koreans in LiNK’s network been caught in China and sent back to North Korea?

Human Rights Watch reported in September 2017 that, “China has intensified its crackdown on groups of North Koreans trying to move through China in search of protection in a third country, and on the networks of people that facilitate their escape.”

This has led to many complications and challenges in China and Southeast Asia. LiNK is constantly optimizing the rescue routes they use to help North Korean refugees in China reach freedom. They have one of the safest, if not the safest, networks for refugees who are trying to reach freedom.

LiNK has over a **95% success rate** when it comes to rescue missions.

Q: Why are most North Korean refugees women?

Most North Korean refugees are women because unlike men in North Korea, women are not required to report to work each day. It is much easier for a woman to “disappear” for a few days and cross the border than it is for men.

Men are required to serve in the military for most of their twenties, which is the prime time to defect. Women are exempt from military service.
Q: What is a rescue mission like?

Rescue missions are incredibly dangerous. The Chinese government doesn’t recognize North Koreans as refugees and actively seeks out those that are hiding.

Through our networks in China, we find and assist North Korean refugees along a 3,000-mile journey. We protect them every step of the way as we travel together by car, boat, and even on foot, all while remaining hidden. When a group reaches Southeast Asia, they face some of the most difficult terrain as they travel through dense jungles, mountains, and rivers. It is physically taxing after all they have been through, but once they cross the border into Southeast Asia, they are finally free.

Q: How do refugees get in contact with you? How do you connect with North Koreans when they escape?

Many North Koreans we come in contact with in China are referred to us by their family members that have already resettled in South Korea or the United States.

Our partners on the ground in China identify and connect with North Koreans who are looking for a way to make it to Southeast Asia.
Q: Are they still starving?

In the 1990s, a famine devastated North Korea and killed hundreds of thousands of people. However, while food shortages are still a huge issue, the introduction and use of black markets in North Korea is allowing people to purchase food and other necessities to help them survive.

Q: What is LiNK’s stance on reunification? Do you think it will happen?

LiNK does not have a stance on reunification between North and South Korea. We support the North Korean people who are in search of freedom—however that freedom looks to them. Our mission is to work with the North Korean people to accelerate change and opening in the world’s most closed country.
Share these answers and the following resources with everyone on your team. Equipping all Rescue Team members to be able to answer these questions is critical because each rescue team member represents Liberty in North Korea and has the opportunity to change people’s perspective and inspire action.

If you or anyone on your team runs into a question that you do not know the answer to, reach out to us at rescueteams@libertyinnorthkorea.org and we’ll get back to you ASAP!

The following resources are also full of inspiring and relevant content that you could either refer to or share with people seeking more information:

- Website
  libertyinnorthkorea.org

- Blog
  libertyinnorthkorea.org/blog

- Instagram
  instagram.com/libertyinnorthkorea

- Twitter
  twitter.com/libertyinnk