

▶ **Ministry of Foreign Affairs
South Korea**

Dear Ms. Kang Kyung-wha:

I hope you are doing well. Firstly, I would like to commend you and the Korean Government for the actions you have taken in fighting COVID-19. Here in the United States we have heard about how quickly South Korea has taken steps to fight the spread. Unfortunately, this great news has been offset by so disturbing information that was recently brought to my attention. Concerned members of my community brought to my attention the persecutions of Mr. Man Hee Lee, the Chairman and Founder of HWPL and Shincheonji Church of Jesus in South Korea. I saw that there has been unfortunate scapegoating of the Shincheonji Church in regard to COVID-19. As an advocate for love and peace. I find this situation very troubling.

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom has investigated this situation and reported in their March 2020 Factsheet on Covid-19 that the “ Shincheonji Church has faced considerable criticism and even harassment from the South Korean government and Society. USCIRF has received reports of individuals encountering discrimination at work and spousal abuse because of their affiliation with the church.” With all of the positive work I have seen taking place in Korea regarding fighting COVID-19, I hope that you will take the time to pay attention to this injustice as well.

We are all facing a difficult public health crisis due to COVID-19 and that the Korea government has a legitimate concern in investigating the outbreak that occurred in the Shincheonji Church. However, blaming and scapegoating one organization for the spread of this disease is not right. Using this as an opportunity to persecute a group of people because of their beliefs is against any respect for Human Rights and should not be tolerated. The actions taken so far seem excessive and appear to have a sad and negative effect on the freedom of members of this church to practice their religion and has put their safety at risk. Our duty should be to love not hate one another. Especially in this time when we are suffering together. The Vice Minister of Health Kim Kang-lip has publicly stated that Shincheonji Church has cooperated with the authorities. It is commendable that 4000 fully recovered members of this church are donating plasma to be used to research a cure for this deadly virus. I ask you to please take a strong stance against the persecution happening in Korea and become a champion for peace and unity in your nation.

I urge the government of Korea to reconsider the actions it is taking against the Shincheonji Church.

Sincerely,
Proud Member

Gwinnett Interfaith Alliance
08/26/2020

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