

THE SITUATION IN NORTH KOREA IS ABSOLUTELY DIRE': PANEL HIGHLIGHTS NUMBER 1 PERSECUTOR OF CHRISTIANS, ONCE CHRISTIAN ITSELF



July 23, 2019 by Jordan Hilger, Worthy News Correspondent

([Worthy News](#)) - The situation for Christians in North Korea was highlighted recently by a panel that spoke before the debut of the documentary *Humanity Denied: Religious Freedom in North Korea* held just down the road from the State Department's summit on religious freedom Thursday.

Olivia Enos, an expert on Asia at the Heritage Foundation, and Kenneth Bae, a Korean-American missionary who frequented North Korea and was imprisoned by the regime for 2 years, told an audience at the Senate Dirksen building that North Korea lives up to its reputation as the number 1 persecutor of Christians and other people of faith by all estimates.

"The situation in North Korea is absolutely dire," Enos said, pointing to a 2014 UN report that documented cases of North Koreans who had escaped to China but were later apprehended by North Korean authorities, who promptly asked them two things: Whether they had had contact with South Koreans, and whether they had had contact with Christian missionaries.

"It's very telling how the Kim regime conceives of religion in general," she explained.

By the same token, Bae, who often went to North Korea on missionary trips disguised as a tourist, related how deeply threatened the regime was by his faith.

"They said 'we are not afraid of nuclear weapons...we are afraid of someone like you bringing religion into our country and us[ing] it against us and then everybody will turn to God and this will become God's country and we will fall,'" Bae told those present, saying the Korean officials who put him through hard labor between 2012 and 2014 informed him he was the most dangerous criminal the regime had seen since the Korean War.

The story of North Korean Christianity is a little-known tragedy, with Pyongyang having been referred to as the "Jerusalem of the East" by

American missionaries for about half a century before the communist regime took over following World War II.

Following the efforts of Presbyterian doctor, Horace Allen in 1884, the current capital of North Korea became the epicenter of a revival movement in 1910 and later accounted for over 60,000 of the Christians in the region—in the Presbyterian denomination alone.

“The North Korean regime has vilified the American Christian missionaries of Korea from its beginning, recognizing the potency of their memory... whose memory has contributed to the exceptionally severe persecution of Christians [there],” writes Robert S. Kim, a Korea scholar who served in the US government.

North Korea consistently ranks as number 1 on Open Doors USA’s World Watch List.

TURKEY WILL RETALIATE IF US IMPOSES SANCTIONS OVER S-400 DEAL, OFFICIAL WARNS

Turkey would retaliate against what it called an unacceptable threat of US sanctions over Ankara’s purchase of Russian S-400 missile defences, its foreign minister said on Monday, adding he thinks US President Donald Trump wants to avoid such measures.

PUERTO RICO BRACES FOR AN 11TH DAY OF PROTESTS, AMID CALLS FOR PUERTO RICO'S GOVERNOR TO RESIGN

over offensive chat messages that have drawn hundreds of thousands of people.

BRITAIN CALLS SHIP SEIZURE 'HOSTILE ACT' AS IRAN RELEASES VIDEO OF CAPTURE

Britain on Saturday denounced Iran’s seizure of a British-flagged oil tanker in the Gulf as a 'hostile act' and rejected Tehran’s explanation that it seized the vessel because it had been involved in an accident.

SENIOR US TEAM TO VISIT MIDDLE EAST FOR TALKS ON WASHINGTON'S PEACE PLAN

Senior US officials are set arrive in the region next week to further discuss the Trump administration’s forthcoming Israeli-Palestinian peace plan, a senior US official told The Times of Israel last Sunday.

EGYPT, JORDAN, SAUDI ARABIA PRESSURING US TO DELAY ROLLOUT OF PEACE PLAN

Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan are pressuring the US to hold off on announcing US President Donald Trump’s “deal of the century” peace plan for Israel and the Palestinians, according to a report in the London-based pan-Arabic *Asharq Al-Awsat* that quoted a spokesman for Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, Nabil Abu Rudeineh.