



PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Grace Yoo, Executive Director
213.365.5999 / 213.864.5675
grace@kacla.org

KAC and Southern California Korean American Community React to Pardon and Release of Euna Lee and Laura Ling

The Korean American Coalition – Los Angeles (KAC) would like to express its delight on the occasion of the pardon and release of Euna Lee and Laura Ling, two American journalists who had been held in North Korea until today. We hope for a safe and speedy return to their families and a resumption of their normal lives after this nearly five-month ordeal.

KAC would also like to congratulate former President Bill Clinton and his entire negotiation team on the successful release of Euna Lee and Laura Ling, as well as praise the Obama Administration's continuous work since their capture to gain their pardon and release.

"KAC hopes that this is the first step towards normalizing relations between the U.S. and the DPRK," says Grace Yoo, Executive Director of KAC. "We are cautiously hopeful that the release of the two journalists will lead to a cooling of recent rising tensions between the United States and North Korea, and will provide the foundation for more reasonable relations between the two countries."

The first American official to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il since 2000, President Clinton was able to negotiate the release of the CurrentTV journalists within 24 hours of landing in Pyongyang. Captured on March 17 near the China-North Korea border, the two were sentenced on June 8 to twelve years in a North Korean prison camp for "committing hostilities against the Korean nation and illegal entry."

KAC has been closely monitoring the situation since the two journalists were captured nearly five months ago. Including close contact with Representative Jane Harman, who was also monitoring the situation, KAC deep interest in the capture and eventual release of Euna Lee and Laura Ling aligns with our THINK (Topples Hunger in North Korea) program, designed to raise awareness of continuing food shortages in the country as well as distribute general knowledge.

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KAC's current THINK program collaboration is with the producer of the documentary feature *Kimjongilia*, written and directed by NC Heikin. *Kimjongilia* follows several North Korean defectors as they tell their astonishing stories of starvation, persecution and escape from the world's worst human rights violator, the so-called Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The film is being screened in Los Angeles (Aug 7-13) and New York City (Aug 14-20), and will be played this August 7th at 2 and 7.45 pm at the ArcLight Hollywood Cinema. A "Q&A" session with writer/director NC Heikin will be held at the evening screening. Additional information on the movie as well as the screening schedule is available at Kimjongiliathemovie.com.

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The Korean American Coalition – Los Angeles (KAC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established in 1983 to promote the civic and civil rights interests of the Korean American community. KAC endeavors to achieve these goals through education, community organizing, leadership development, and coalition-building with diverse communities.