

Algerian church closed for 'illegally printing Bibles and material intended for evangelism'

World Watch Monitor (20.11.2017) – <http://bit.ly/2z7ure4> – A church in Algeria's north-western town of Aïn Turk (15km from Oran city) has been closed down by local authorities.

The church, affiliated to the Protestant Church of Algeria (known as EPA, its French acronym), was sealed off by police on 9 November.

Authorities in Oran claimed the church had been used to "illegally print Gospels and publications intended for evangelism".

The police notification also stated that the church didn't have state approval. But the president of the EPA, Rev Mahmoud Haddad, denied any wrongdoing, saying the justifications for closing the church were "unfounded".

"Firstly, this community is indeed affiliated to the Protestant Church of Algeria, which has been officially recognised by the government since 1974 and is accredited with both the Ministry of the Interior and the local government," he said.

"Also there is no printing activity of Gospels or Christian publications inside these premises."

He pointed to several "anomalies and falsehoods" in the notification, which stated that the church of Aïn Turk belonged to a man named "Rachid", who serves there as a

pastor.

“This is not the case,” said Rev. Haddad, who added that the accusations were “unjust and false”.

Youssef, a board member at Aïn Turk church, added: “I am very saddened by this injustice and persecution we are facing in Algeria. The notification of the Prefect is based on false motives.”

World Watch Monitor has reported extensively about intimidations and harassment faced by churches in Algeria.

In May, the human rights situation in Algeria was debated by the Human Rights Council in Geneva. The session was attended by the president of the EPA, and raised hope among the Christian community, which expected positive changes.

A new Constitution, passed in February 2016, established freedom of religious worship. Article 36 states that freedom of religious worship is guaranteed in compliance with the law. But in practice, a number of churches were ordered to cease all religious activities on the grounds that they were in breach of a 2006 law which regulates non-Muslim worship.

Moreover, EPA international partners planning to visit churches in Algeria have seen their visa application denied.

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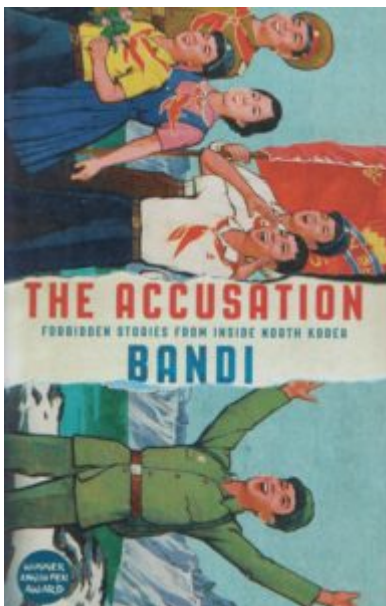
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NORTH KOREA: Bandi's book "The Accusation" smuggled from North Korea now published in 18 languages



This book can be purchased on Amazon here:

<https://www.amazon.com/Accusation-Forbidden-Stories-Inside-North/dp/0802126200>

HRWF (03.04.2107) – On 29 March, a conference was held in Seoul to announce that the literary work *"The Accusation"* had just been published in English, the 18th language in which many English-speaking countries are now having access to this

book written by a North Korean author under the pen name of Bandi (*). The organizer of the event entitled "*International Literature and Human Rights Conference*" was **Mr Do, Hee Youn** who had been instrumental in the smuggling of the book from North Korea. A dozen publishers from the UK, USA, Italy, Spain, Denmark, Poland... had been invited to the event.

The conference was well attended by human rights NGOs, academics and young students from the different universities in Seoul. Defector writers currently writing and publishing in Seoul were also present indicating increasing interest in new and creative ways of addressing the North Korean challenge. Such a new way is indeed to bring human rights and literature together.

The keynote speaker, **Willy Fautré**, from *Human Rights Without Frontiers* (Brussels), addressed the issue with a paper entitled "*Human Rights in North Korea: Pyongyang in the Dock*":

"Since 1948, North Korea has been ruled by a single family, the Kim dynasty, which has imposed a single ideology, the Juche, to a population that is now estimated at around 25 million people. North Korea is a one-party system which has in its grip all the powers: legislative and executive as well as the judiciary. North Korea has never tolerated the emergence of a civil society outside the one organized by the Workers' Party. North Korea is the last country in the world which still has a Stalinist-type Gulag. North Korea is ranked by all the human rights organizations as the most repressive state in the world, and rightly so. In North Korea, there is no freedom of conscience, no freedom of thought, no religious freedom, no freedom of expression, no freedom of association and assembly, no political freedom." (Full speech available on request)



International Literature & Human Rights Conference in Seoul (29 March 2017)

Some quotes from the speakers

Mr. Do, Hee Youn director of the Seoul-based NGO “Toward a Happy Unification”, was quoted as saying:

“Bandi’s book is the scream of the people. Everybody should read the book to let the world know about what is happening in North Korea. This is my wish but for the message to be delivered worldwide, we have to unite our efforts and to act together.”

Mr. Thae Yong-ho, former Deputy Ambassador of North Korea to the UK, who defected last year from London made a moving statement:

“The majority of North Koreans continue living as slaves today. The day we defected with my family I said to my children ‘this is when your shackles are broken, but we have to continue to fight for our family left behind in North Korea and for all those enslaved’. We have to uphold Bandi’s critical thinking, and free the slaves of North Korea. Where should we begin? We have to tell more people around the world of the realities, to make them aware of the truth of the regime. Bandi is a writer in a country where there are no readers of such literature.”

Former Prime Minister Kim Jong-pil (1998-2000):

“We talk about the unification of the two Koreas, but it is a very abstract thought. Totalitarianism exists in North Korea, and the concept appears in Bandi’s novels. He describes North Korea as a totalitarian state full of deception and fiction but we don’t have full knowledge of what this represents. We have to deal with this kind of fantasy before we are able to emancipate slaves. The reality of North Korea is not known in the outside world. This is why we gathered today’.

Chang Hae sung, a writer in NK before his defection to South Korea:

“Literature does not exist in its pure form in North Korea, it is all state regulated. Broadcasts follow state directives. Content is allowed for three aims: to praise the greatness of the leaders, to promote their virtue and to uphold the greatness of the system. So it is truly shocking that Bandi could write such a book.”

Pierre Rigoulot, from the Paris-based NGO *Comité d’aide à la population nord-coréenne* and author of the famous book “*The Aquariums of Pyongyang*” with Kang Cheol Hwan, titled his presentation “*The Accusation: A Target for Friends of North Korea, but an Opportunity for Human Rights*” (Full text in English and in French available on request). He said among other things:

“The publication in March 2016 of *La Dénonciation* by the Publishing House Piquier in France has not remained unnoticed in French-speaking countries, far from it. In France, the novel has been quoted over 40 times. However, it has not made the headlines. No debate on television. Neither the translator nor the author of the afterword in the French version of the book was invited to literary programs on television. It was not different in South Korea.”

Zsuzsa Anna Ferenczy: a political adviser at the European

Parliament in Brussels, spoke about *The European Union's Engagement Policy Towards North Korea* and was quoted as saying:

In spite of European and international efforts to engage with North Korea, the dictatorship has continued its provocations and **increased isolation away from the international community. Dialogue has seized.** However, academics have suggested that it is vital to facilitate as many people-to-people contacts as possible beyond government officials, through for example education and research programs. As our event on North Korea, last week at the European Parliament revealed, facilitating information into the country is essential. People are increasingly interested in consuming foreign media content, through which they discover a new reality and slowly realize that they have been living in a lie, imposed by the regime through indoctrination and propaganda.



Ms Zsuzsa Anna Ferenczy,
European Parliament
political adviser

Other speakers were:

Jang Haeseong: He spoke about *The Actual Condition of North Korean Literature and North Korean Defectors' Humanities from North Korean Authors' Point of View.*

Nam Jung Wook: His paper was entitled "*Bandi is not the Solzhenitsyn of North Korea*".

and some defectors.

CNN

On 30 March, CNN reported on the publishing of the book with a report filming the publishers and the speakers of the conference at the DMZ near the Freedom Bridge while they were reading aloud the best pages of the book.

(See <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/04/02/asia/north-korea-the-accusation>)



Willy Fautré (Human Rights Without Frontiers) reading a recent poem of Bandi at Freedom Bridge on the border between South Korea and North Korea under the eye of CNN's camera (29 March 2017)

(*) 'The Accusation' is a collection of short stories secretly written by Bandi from 1989 to 1995 and smuggled from North Korea a few years ago. Bandi still lives in North Korea today. The collection overwhelms with powerful emotions depicting the inner life, dominated by fear and anxiety, but also by love and affection of everyday North Koreans trying to make a sense of their world. Smuggled out in 2013 by South Korean human

rights activist Do Hee-youn, the manuscript was published in Seoul in 2014 but remained unnoticed. Today the book can be read in French, English, Finnish, Norwegian, Spanish, Italian, soon Hungarian, Japanese and others to follow. 'Bandi is love, Bandi is an act of great love', Mr. Do said at the conference in Seoul gathering publishers of *'The Accusation'* and human rights activists, bringing together literature and human rights, two of the most essential things the world needs to encourage and embrace, protect and guarantee.

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NORTH KOREA: Stranger than fiction: How forbidden book was smuggled out of N. Korea

By Paula Hancocks

CNN (02.04.2017) – <http://cnn.it/2nNpaoI> – They say fact is stranger than fiction. One book smuggled out of North Korea encapsulates both.

Written by a dissident writer still living inside the country, “The Accusation; Forbidden Stories from Inside North Korea” is a collection of short stories about the lives of regular people, who live without freedom and under constant scrutiny.

Officially fiction, the book is considered to be a reflection of life under North Korean rule. The author is known simply as “Bandi”, Korean for firefly, a pen name he apparently chose himself.

The South Korean activist who helped smuggle it out, Do Hee-youn, tells CNN: “It doesn’t deal with political prison camps, or public executions, human rights issues. It shows normal life of North Korea citizens and it is very frightening. This book shows that they live like slaves.”

The book was first published in Korean in May 2014, and translated into French in 2015. It was published last month in the United States and United Kingdom and is now available in 19 languages.

Book discovered by chance

Do said he first heard about the manuscript completely by chance.

“We heard about a North Korean defector,” Do told CNN, “A woman who had been arrested by Chinese border troops... We have been helping such cases in the past so we were helping her and we learned about Bandi and the manuscript.”

The woman told them Bandi was a relative and had asked her to smuggle the manuscript out of North Korea when she confided she was planning to defect.



Copies of “The Accusation” translated into different languages are placed next to each other Thursday on the Bridge of Freedom at Imjingak in Paju.

But she was too scared she would get caught with it, Do said. A wise decision as it happens – she was caught on the Chinese side of the border. If she was carrying the manuscript she would likely have been sent back to imprisonment, or even execution in North Korea.

“It is very difficult to bring a document out of North Korea,” Do said. “We have tried in the past and failed but there were a few cases we succeeded.”

Smuggled out in propaganda

Do sent a trusted contact into North Korea to make discreet contact with the author.

The hand-written manuscript was then smuggled out in between propaganda books on former leaders Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il.

“We found a way of getting the script out through Chinese tourists. We thought that disguising the book among these propaganda materials would make it easier to bring it outside so we decided to hide the copy.”

The luggage was x-rayed but not hand-searched at the border,

Do says, a fact that surely saved the freedom, if not life, of the courier. Once the manuscript arrived in South Korea in 2013, Do worked to find a publisher.



Publishers and literary agents read a passage from “The Accusation,” a collection of short stories by a North Korean writer who is still living in North Korea.

The text was written on 750 pages of coarse squared manuscript paper, the type only writers in North Korea could possess, Do says. Bandi was part of Korean Writers’ Alliance, a state-run organization that wrote literature for the regime.

Do says he is now retired and is safe but gives little else away, fearful the regime will discover his identity. Pyongyang does not look kindly on defectors who criticize the state, calling them “human scum.” This is the first known writer of a book, critical of North Korea, who is still inside the country. Do says his safety is paramount.

“Bandi considered this more valuable than his own life, the love for the citizens of North Korea. He sees himself, his family and all North Koreans living like slaves, with no future under the current regime,” he said.

Do says poems were also smuggled out at the same time that deal with the Kim Jong Il era and will be published later.

He has little doubt Bandi is still writing and at some point in the future will attempt to share with the world his views of life under the current leader Kim Jong Un.

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CHINA: Chinese Christians Imprisoned for Selling Religious Devotional Books

By Julie Brown Patton

The Gospel Herald Ministries (10.03.2017) – <http://bit.ly/2mONrHi> – Five Christian leaders in China's

northeastern Liaoning province, who were arrested for allegedly purchasing and selling Christian books, now received prison sentences for doing so.

Four women and one man, all members of Chaoguang Church, also known as Chaoguang Village Christian Gathering Place, were sentenced for allegedly buying and selling “officially forbidden Christian devotional books,” according to ChinaAid sources. ChinaAid is an international nonprofit whose employees expose abuses of persecuted Christians and promotes religious freedom, human rights and rule of law in China.

Pastor Li Dongzhe, and his wife, Piao Shunnan, received seven years each with a fine of \$14,500, according to China Aid. The church’s accountant, Zhao Chunxia, and a secretary, Li Yuan, were given five years each and fined \$10,200. Another member, Shi Jinyan, was sentenced to three years with a fine of \$7,300.

Most of the defendants belong to a Korean ethnic minority group that resides within China, according to ChinaAid. They were arrested last June.

Johan Oeyangen, on social media, invited others to imagine this same development happening in a democratic nation.

Ingrid Jarrett Tater asked online: “If America is a Christian country, why are we doing business with China?”

Chaoguang Church is an officially registered church within China’s government-run Protestant church system, the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. The church also received a fine of \$29,000 associated with the allegedly offense of these devotional books. Despite the church’s registered status, the courts declared the Christians illegally conducted business because they intended to make a profit while selling Christian literature.

Following the conviction, Chaoguang Church has closed down,

reports ChinaAid.

Convicting registered church members is perceived as a change from prior actions, in that charges such as “illegal business operations” were typically levied against attendees of unregistered house churches to limit their freedom.

“Christian convicts of crimes like ‘illegal business operations’ and ‘participating in cults’ are [usually] brought against house church members,” said Ren Quanniu, a lawyer who often works on such cases. “[The government] simply comes up with random legal excuses to detain them. I’ve heard of a similar case, in which the believers were arrested because of illegally publishing religious materials.”

ChinaAid was founded in 2002 after the announcement of death sentences for five Chinese house church leaders. Some of the group’s first actions involved a letter-writing campaign, and sending trained human rights lawyers to defend those being persecuted. In the end, the five death sentences of these leaders were overturned.

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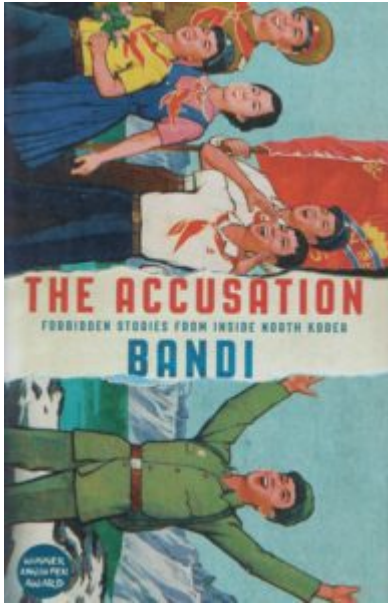
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NORTH KOREA: The Accusation

Forbidden stories from inside North Korea



Written by an anonymous dissident known to us only by the pseudonym “Bandi”, smuggled out of North Korea and set for publication in seventeen languages around the world, these profound vividly characterized stories tell of life under the totalitarian regimes of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il.

The Accusation is a deeply moving and eye-opening work of fiction that paints a powerful portrait of life under the North Korean regime. Set during the period of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il’s leadership, the seven stories that make up *The Accusation* give voice to people living under this most bizarre and horrifying of dictatorships. The characters of these compelling stories come from a wide variety of backgrounds, from a young mother living among the elite in Pyongyang whose son misbehaves during a political rally, to a former Communist

war hero who is deeply disillusioned with the intrusion of the Party into everything he holds dear, to a husband and father who is denied a travel permit and sneaks onto a train in order to visit his critically ill mother. Written with deep emotion and writing talent, *The Accusation* is a vivid depiction of life in a closed-off one-party state, and also a hopeful testament to the humanity and rich internal life that persists even in such inhumane conditions.

This book can be purchased on Amazon here:

<https://www.amazon.com/Accusation-Forbidden-Stories-Inside-North/dp/0802126200>

It will be presented on **22 March 15:00 – 17:00 | European Parliament, ASP Room A3F383**

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