



*North Korea human rights activist and policy expert Dr. Suzanne K. Scholte*

### **Dr. Suzanne K. Scholte**

*Current Titles:*

**Chair, North Korea Freedom Coalition**

**President, Defense Forum Foundation**

**Chair, Free North Korea Radio**

**Chair, US Western Sahara Foundation**

**Co-Vice Chair, Committee for Human Rights in North Korea**

*Recipient of:*

**Seoul Peace Prize**

**Sanders Peace and Social Justice Award**

**Walter Judd Freedom Award**

**Sungnye Medal Order of Diplomatic Service (highest award given by Korean government to non Korean)**

**Outstanding Washingtonian Award from the Potomac Korean Forum (2020)**

**Volunteer Service (Gold) Awards from Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump**

**Honorary Citizen of Seoul**

**Good Spoons Racial Harmony Award**

**Korean Unification Contribution Award**

Dr. Scholte is considered one of the world's leading activists in the North Korean human rights movement. She has spent over two decades promoting the freedom and dignity of the North Korean people and is currently President of the [Defense Forum Foundation](#), a non-profit foundation promoting a strong national defense and freedom, democracy, and human rights abroad. In 1996, Scholte began a program to host the first North Korean defectors in the United States, giving them a voice to speak out about the atrocities being committed against the people of North Korea, including the political prison camps and the horrific treatment of refugees. She has led international efforts to pressure China to end their horrific repatriation policy and has been involved in the rescue of hundreds of North Koreans escaping their country.

Currently, Scholte also serves as Chairman of the [North Korea Freedom Coalition](#), Vice-Co Chair of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, and Chairman of [Free North Korea Radio](#). In recognition of her efforts, she has received numerous awards including the 2008 Seoul Peace Prize, the 2010 Walter Judd Freedom Award, the 2013 Order of Diplomatic Service Merit



Sungnye Medal from the Republic of Korea, the 2014 Sanders Peace and Social Justice Award, and a Volunteer Service (Gold) Award from the President of the United States in 2014 and 2020. She was made an Honorary Citizen of Seoul in 2008. Most recently, in December 2021 she received the Korean Unification Contribution Award for contributing towards peaceful unification of Korea.

Scholte has testified before the United States Congress and at the United Nations. As a frequent speaker at international conferences, she has also been a guest lecturer at Yonsei University (Seoul) and Koshin University (Busan) and has presented at the National Defense University, Harvard, Wellesley and Princeton, University of Virginia, University of Illinois, and numerous other colleges. Scholte is also the Chairman and Founder of the U.S.-Western Sahara Foundation.

Scholte has appeared on numerous news segments including CNN, ABC, Fox, KBS, SBS and Arirang TV and has published OPEs in the Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Washington Time, Chosun Ilbo, and DongA Ilbo. She is a graduate of the College of William and Mary and received an Honorary Doctorate in Education from Koshin University. She attends The Falls Church Anglican church where she considers she did her most important work: teaching Kindergarten Sunday School for 20 years.

### ***Summary of Scholte's North Korea Human Rights Work:***

- Established and chaired ***North Korea Freedom Day*** which was held on April 28<sup>th</sup> and included the largest gathering for North Korea's freedom outside of the Korean peninsula. Members of Congress credited that Day with leading to the passage of the North Korea Human Rights Act that Fall.
- Established and Chairs ***North Korea Freedom Week*** in 2005 to promote the freedom, human rights and dignity of the North Korean people.
- Established and Chairs ***Save North Korean Refugees Day***, held annually since 2009 to promote awareness and action to save North Korean refugees.
- Chairman and Founding Member, **North Korea Freedom Coalition**, an organization of over 65 nongovernmental organizations and individuals from around the world promoting the freedom, human rights and dignity of the North Korean people.
- Serves as Honorary Chairman, **Free North Korea Radio**, the only defectors-run radio program broadcasting news and information into North Korea.
- Serves as Honorary Chairman, **North Korea People's Liberation Front**, elected unanimously by former North Korean soldiers who are working against the Kim Jong-un regime and pro-communist groups in South Korea.
- Serves as Vice Chairman and Founding Board Member, **Committee for Human Rights in North Korea**, an organization that publishes factual information about North Korea human rights issues.
- Established a **Rescue Fund** in 2002. Scholte continues to support the rescue of hundreds of North Korean refugees through the underground railroad.
- Organized annual **Protests at Embassies of China to Save the North Korean Refugees** since 2002.
- Hosted the first North Korean defectors to speak out publicly in the USA in 1997.
- Hosted the first survivors of the North Korean political prisoner camps in the USA, 1998.
- Organized the largest delegation of North Korean defectors to visit the USA, 2009.
- Helped author and present *The Seoul Statement* on North Korean Human Rights in 1999 at the First International Conference on



## North Korea Human Rights and Refugees.

### *U.S. Congressional Hearings Scholte Has Organized:*

- Scholte has hosted visits to the USA for hundreds of defectors from North Korea to testify in Congress and speak at conferences and events.
- She has organized:
  - The first Congressional hearing on the North Korea's political prison camps (1999) and the most recent hearing on the political prison camps (2011).
  - The first Congressional hearing on the trafficking of North Korean Women (2005) and most recent one on protecting North Korean Refugees (2017).
  - The first Congressional hearings on South Korean and Japanese Abductees, South Korean POWs, and North Korea's Illicit Activities (2006, 2006).
  - The first Congressional hearing witnesses on the persecution of Christians in North Korea (2008)
  - The first Congressional briefing on the lack of freedom of thought, conscience, religion belief and how it keeps North Koreans living in the dark (2018)
  - The first Capitol Hill briefing on the Human rights violations the Kim regime is committing against the military (2019).