



**Abductions of Japanese Citizens  
by North Korea  
For Their Immediate Return!**


**Headquarters for the Abduction Issue, Government of Japan**

# For the Return of All of the Abductees!


The following is an outline of the cases related to the 17 abductees identified by the Government of Japan (GoJ) (information in brackets shows the age of each abductee when abduction took place and the location where the abductee went missing).

With the recognition that there are other cases in which the possibility of abduction by North Korea cannot be ruled out, the GoJ remains fully committed to demanding North Korea take action to ensure the safety of all abductees and their immediate return to Japan regardless of whether they are officially identified as abductees.


**1** **September 19, 1977**  
**Ushitsu Case**  
**Mr. KUME Yutaka**  
 (52, Ishikawa Prefecture)  
 Disappeared off the coast of Ushitsu, Ishikawa Prefecture. His whereabouts are unconfirmed. (North Korea denies he entered its territory.)




**2** **October 21, 1977**  
**Suspected Abduction Case Involving a Woman**  
**Ms. MATSUMOTO Kyoko**  
 (29, Tottori Prefecture)  
 Disappeared on her way to a knitting school close to her home. Her whereabouts are unconfirmed. (North Korea denies she entered its territory.)




**3** **November 15, 1977**  
**Suspected Abduction Case Involving a Girl**  
**Ms. YOKOTA Megumi**  
 (13, Niigata Prefecture)  
 Disappeared on her way home from school in Niigata city. Her whereabouts are unconfirmed. (North Korea claims she committed suicide.)





**4** **In or around June 1978**  
**Suspected Abduction Case Involving a Former Restaurant Worker**  
**Mr. TANAKA Minoru**  
 (28, Hyogo Prefecture)  
 Disappeared after departing Japan for Europe. His whereabouts are unconfirmed. (North Korea denies he entered its territory.)



**5** **In or around June 1978**  
**Suspected Abduction Case of Lee Un-Hae**  
**Ms. TAGUCHI Yaeko**  
 (22, unknown)  
 Her whereabouts are unconfirmed. (North Korea claims she died in a traffic accident.)



**6** **July 7, 1978**  
**Suspected Abduction Case Involving a Couple**  
**Mr. CHIMURA Yasushi**  
 (23, Fukui Prefecture)  
**Ms. CHIMURA Fukie**  
 (Maiden name HAMAMOTO)  
 (23, Fukui Prefecture)  
 Disappeared after going out stating that they were going on a date. The couple returned to Japan in October 2002.

**7** **July 31, 1978**  
**Suspected Abduction Case Involving a Couple**  
**Mr. HASUIKE Kaoru**  
 (20, Niigata Prefecture)  
**Ms. HASUIKE Yukiko**  
 (Maiden name OKUDO)  
 (22, Niigata Prefecture)  
 Mr. HASUIKE Kaoru disappeared after he went out stating that he was going out and would soon be back. Similarly, Ms. OKUDO Yukiko disappeared after going out. The couple returned to Japan in October 2002.






**8** **August 12, 1978**  
**Suspected Abduction Case Involving a Couple**  
**Mr. ICHIKAWA Shuichi**  
 (23, Kagoshima Prefecture)  
**Ms. MASUMOTO Rumiko**  
 (24, Kagoshima Prefecture)  
 Disappeared after going out, stating that they were going to see the sunset on the beach. Their whereabouts are unconfirmed. (North Korea claims that each of the couple died of a heart attack while swimming in the ocean.)




**9 August 12, 1978**  
**Suspected Abduction Case Involving a Mother and a Daughter**  
**Ms. SOGA Hitomi**  
 (19, Niigata Prefecture)


**Ms. SOGA Miyoshi**  
 (46, Niigata Prefecture)

Disappeared after going out, stating that they were going shopping. Ms. SOGA Hitomi returned to Japan in October 2002. Ms. MIYOSHI's whereabouts are unconfirmed. (North Korea denies she entered its territory.)

**11 Mid-June 1980**  
**Sin Kwang-Su Case**  
**Mr. HARA Tadaaki**  
 (43, Miyazaki Prefecture)



Disappeared in Miyazaki Prefecture. His whereabouts are unconfirmed. (North Korea claims he died of cirrhosis of the liver.)



**10 In or around May 1980**  
**Suspected Abduction Case Involving Japanese Males in Europe**  
**Mr. ISHIOKA Toru**  
 (22, Europe)

**Mr. MATSUKI Kaoru**  
 (26, Europe)

Both disappeared during their stay in Europe. Their whereabouts are unconfirmed. (North Korea claims that Mr. ISHIOKA has died in a gas accident and that Mr. MATSUKI died in a traffic accident.)

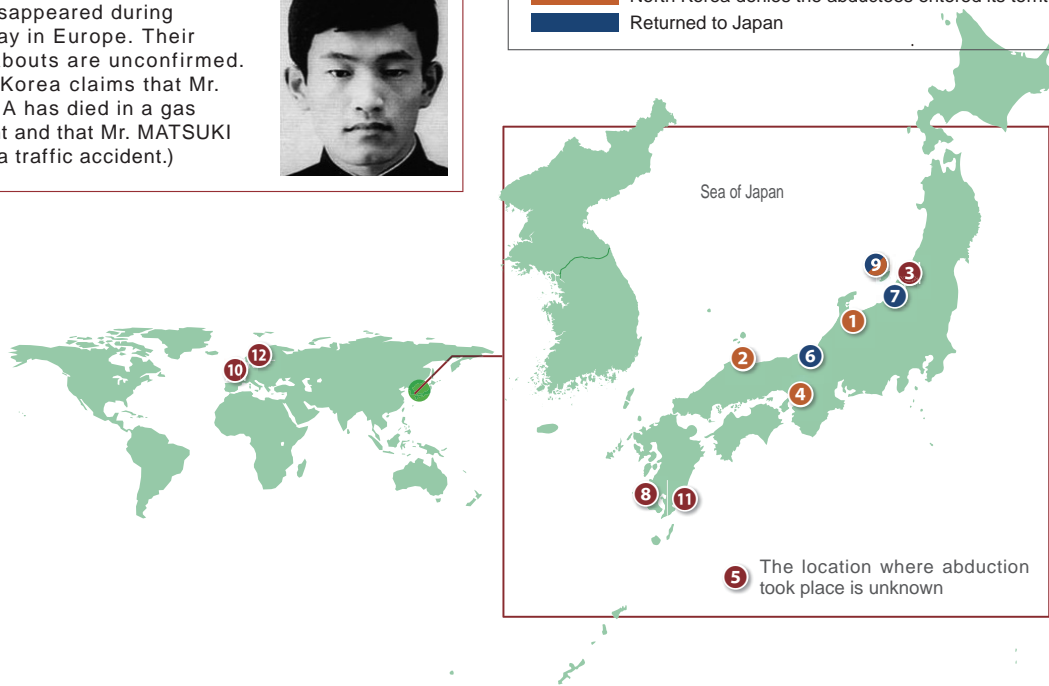
**12 In or around July 1983**  
**Suspected Abduction Case Involving a Japanese Woman in Europe**  
**Ms. ARIMOTO Keiko**  
 (23, Europe)

Disappeared in Europe. Her whereabouts are unconfirmed. (North Korea claims that she died in a gas accident.)



**Locations where abductees disappeared**

- North Korea claims the death of the abductees.
- North Korea denies the abductees entered its territory.
- Returned to Japan



**Cases of Missing Persons in Which the Possibility of Abduction by North Korea Cannot be Ruled Out**

With the recognition that, in addition to the 17 Japanese citizens already identified as having been abducted by North Korea, there are other cases in which the possibility of abduction by North Korea cannot be ruled out, the GoJ has been conducting information gathering and investigation activities both in Japan and overseas while maintaining close cooperation among the relevant ministries and agencies in every possible effort to solve the matter.

**Korean Domicile Victims Abducted in Japan (Suspected Abduction Case Involving an Elder Sister and Younger Brother)**

The police have concluded that the case of disappearances in mid-June 1974 of young siblings, Ko Kyon-Mi and Ko Kang, Korean domiciles, is a suspected abduction case committed by North Korea.

The GoJ views all abductions as serious human rights violations regardless of nationality as well as violations of the sovereignty of Japan. Accordingly, the GoJ urges North Korea to return the abductees to Japan as a return to their original state and also urges that North Korea obtain a full account of what happened to all abductees.

The GoJ has been making concerted efforts to demand North Korea to return all the abductees, regardless of whether they are officially identified as such, back to Japan immediately.

# 1

## Abductions of Japanese Citizens by North Korea

The authorities' investigations into missing Japanese citizens cases and the testimonies of defecting North Korean agents have revealed several strongly suspected cases of abductions by North Korea. Therefore, since 1991, the GoJ has raised the abductions issue at every possible opportunity. North Korea had stubbornly kept denying any involvement. However, at the First Japan-North Korea Summit Meeting held in September 2002, North Korea at last admitted for the first time that it had abducted Japanese citizens and apologized while promising to prevent any further recurrence. In October of the same year, five of the abductees returned from North Korea to Japan after 24 years.

However, as for those others whose whereabouts are currently unknown, despite North Korea's explicit commitment at the Second Japan-North Korea Summit Meeting in May 2004 to immediately resume thorough investigations to obtain a full account of what had happened to all abductees, North Korea has yet to provide any convincing explanations. Furthermore, the GoJ has repeatedly requested the provision of relevant information on cases in which the possibility of abduction by North Korea cannot be ruled out (Note 1), including so-called "unidentified missing Japanese probably related to North Korea" (Note 2). The remaining abductees are still denied all freedoms, having been long detained in North Korea, and to this day await rescue from North Korea.

In Japan, there have been active campaigns to rescue abductees, including the Association of the Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea formed in 1997, and the submission of petitions signed by more than 17.22 million people (as of January 2024) to the Prime Minister of Japan.



The Formation of the Association of Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea

The abductions by North Korea are a critical issue concerning the sovereignty of Japan and the lives and safety of Japanese citizens. It is a highly pressing issue that must be resolved under the responsibility of the GoJ. The GoJ has so far identified 17 Japanese citizens, including the five that have already returned to Japan, as victims of abduction by North Korea.

In addition, there are other cases in which the possibility of abduction by North Korea cannot be ruled out, such as the suspected abductions of non-Japanese nationals referred to as "Korean domiciles" (an alternative nationality for ethnic Koreans in Japan who do not hold Republic of Korea (ROK) citizenship) in Japan and cases of so-called "unidentified missing Japanese probably related to North Korea". While North Korea has not provided any satisfactory account or any convincing evidence, the GoJ remains fully committed to demanding North Korea take action to ensure the safety of all abductees and their immediate return to Japan regardless of whether they are officially identified as abductees, based on the premise that all abductees whose fate is unknown are still alive. The GoJ also remains committed to pursuing the disclosure of the truth regarding all abductions and demanding the surrender of the perpetrators of the abductions to Japan. The GoJ will, in accordance with the Japan-DPRK (the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) Pyongyang Declaration, continue to make its utmost efforts to realize the normalization of its relations with North Korea, through realizing the return of all abductees as soon as possible and settling the unfortunate past.

(Note 1) For missing persons cases in which the possibility of abduction by North Korea cannot be ruled out, the time of occurrence is even more extensive.

(Note 2) The term "unidentified missing Japanese probably related to North Korea" is used by the private citizens' group, the Investigation Commission on Missing Japanese Probably Related to North Korea, to refer to all missing Japanese it investigates.

# 2 Talks between Japan and North Korea on the Abductions Issue

## 1. First Japan-North Korea Summit Meeting (September 2002)

At the first Japan-North Korea Summit Meeting held on September 17, 2002, Kim Jong-Il, then Chairman of the National Defense Commission of North Korea, admitted, after years of denial, that the abductions of Japanese citizens took place and apologized. He also stated that among 13 persons who were suspected by the GoJ at the time to have been abducted by North Korea, four were alive, eight were dead and for one, entry into North Korea was not confirmed (Note). In addition, he acknowledged the abduction of SOGA Hitomi, who wasn't on the list for the investigation requested by the GoJ, and confirmed that she was alive. On the other hand, he claimed that as a result of a subsequent investigation, SOGA Miyoshi, SOGA Hitomi's mother who had disappeared at the same time, had not entered North Korea. Moreover, while promising to punish those responsible and prevent any recurrence, Kim assured that he would facilitate meetings between the abductees and their families as well as their return to Japan.



The First Japan-North Korea Summit Meeting

In response, then Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro strongly protested to Kim Jong-Il, then Chairman of the National Defense Commission, and demanded the continuation of an investigation, the return of those alive, and the prevention of any recurrence.

(Note) North Korea confirmed that four abductees, CHIMURA Yasushi and Fukie and HASUIKE Kaoru and Yukiko, were still alive, where it reported that eight abductees, YOKOTA Megumi, TAGUCHI Yaeko, ICHIKAWA Shuichi, MASUMOTO Rumiko, ISHIOKA Toru, MATSUKI Kaoru, HARA Tadaaki, and ARIMOTO Keiko, were dead, and that KUME Yutaka had never entered its borders. Note that the GoJ officially identified SOGA Miyoshi in January 2003, TANAKA Minoru in April 2005, and MATSUMOTO Kyoko in November 2006 as abductees.

## 2. Dispatch of the Investigation Team of the GoJ (September and October 2002)

From September 28 to October 1, 2002, the GoJ dispatched an investigation team that met with victims and strived to collect information on abductees who have not yet been accounted for. Unfortunately, the information provided by North Korea was limited right from the start and inconsistent and dubious on many points. For example, North Korea handed over materials it claimed were the remains of MATSUKI Kaoru, but forensic analyses showed that these remains were those of someone else. At the 12th round of the negotiations to normalize diplomatic relations between Japan and North Korea held from October 29 to 30, 2002 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the GoJ posed 150 questions concerning inconsistencies in the information provided by North Korea and requested more information, but did not receive an adequate response from North Korea.



The abductees returned to Japan after 24 years.

### 3. The Return of Five Abductees (October 2002)

On October 15, 2002, five abductees (CHIMURA Yasushi and Fukie, HASUIKE Kaoru and Yukiko, and SOGA Hitomi) returned to Japan and were finally reunited with their families.

With the consideration that the five abductees returned to Japan should be provided with an environment in which they were free to determine their own future and the future of their families who were still in North Korea, on October 24, 2002, the GoJ announced that the five abductees will remain in Japan. The Government also strongly urged North Korea to ensure the safety of their family members still in North Korea and to promptly set a date for their return to Japan.

### 4. Second Japan-North Korea Summit Meeting (May 2004)

On May 22, 2004, then Prime Minister Koizumi visited North Korea for the second time and was engaged in discussions with Kim Jong-II, then Chairman of the National Defense Commission, concerning the abductions and other bilateral issues, as well as security issues such as North Korea's nuclear and missile programs. Regarding the abductions issue, the two leaders agreed to the following points during their meeting:

- North Korea agrees to allow all five family members of CHIMURA Yasushi and Fukie, and of HASUIKE Kaoru and Yukiko to return to Japan on the day of the Summit Meeting.
- North Korea would promptly resume investigations from scratch in order to provide a full account of the truth.

Based on this agreement, all five members of the families of CHIMURA Yasushi and Fukie and of HASUIKE Kaoru and Yukiko returned to Japan with then Prime Minister Koizumi. Three family members of SOGA Hitomi subsequently arrived in Japan on July 18, 2004.



The Second Japan-North Korea Summit Meeting

### 5. Japan-North Korea Working-Level Consultations (August and September in Beijing; November in Pyongyang in 2004)

- (a) The Japan-North Korea Working-Level Consultations were held in Beijing in August (1st round) and September (2nd round) 2004. North Korea presented the preliminary results of its ongoing investigations into the abductees whose whereabouts remain unknown, but no concrete evidence or documentation to support the presented information was provided.
- (b) The third Japan-North Korea Working-Level Consultations took place in November of the same year. They lasted for more than 50 hours and included a question-and-answer session with the Investigation Committee of North Korea, along with direct interviews with a total of 16 alleged witnesses and the onsite inspection of facilities and other locations related to the abductions. Evidentiary materials such as the remains that North Korea claimed to be those of YOKOTA Megumi were also collected.

Moreover, at these Consultations, Japan requested that North Korea provide relevant information on five of the missing people whom the GoJ has not identified as abductees, but who might have been abducted by North Korea ("unidentified missing Japanese probably related to North Korea"). The North Korean side, however, responded that their entry into North Korea was not confirmed. (The GoJ repeatedly requests at consultations and during any other opportunity that North Korea provides relevant information about cases in which the possibility of abduction by North Korea cannot be ruled out.)

- (c) The GoJ immediately conducted a close examination of the information and physical evidence presented by North Korea at the third Consultations, and concluded that there was no evidence to support the explanation given by the North Korean side that “eight had died and two were not confirmed to have entered North Korea” (Note). Moreover, the information and physical evidence provided to date so far has brought up numerous questions, and DNA testing on the remains claimed to be those of YOKOTA Megumi resulted in detecting DNA belonging to someone else. The GoJ addressed these inconsistencies and firmly protested to North Korea.

Note: The “two not confirmed to have entered North Korea” refers to KUME Yutaka and SOGA Miyoshi.

## **6. Japan-North Korea Comprehensive Talks (February 2006: Beijing)**

The consultation on the abductions issue at the Japan-North Korea Comprehensive Talks held in February 2006 extended for a total of approximately 11 hours, and Japan once again resolutely demanded the return to Japan of the surviving abductees, the launch of a new investigation aimed at revealing the truth about what had happened, and extraditing those responsible for the abductions. In response, North Korea repeated the same explanation it had previously given that “all of the abductees who are still alive have already returned to Japan.” Regarding the search for the truth, Pyongyang did not vow to continue investigations into the abductees whose whereabouts are unknown and refused to extradite those responsible.

## **7. Working Group on the Normalization of Japan-North Korea Relations (March 2007 in Hanoi: September 2007 in Ulaanbaatar)**

The first meeting of the Working Group on the Normalization of Japan-North Korea Relations, which was established at the Six-Party Talks in February 2007, was held in March of the same year. The GoJ reiterated its demands for the securing of the safety of all abductees and their families and their swift return, a full account of the truth in all abduction cases, and the extradition of those responsible. North Korea, however, failed to show good faith towards the resolution of the abductions issue by again repeating its position that “the abductions issue has already been resolved.” Neither was there substantial progress achieved on the abductions issue at the second meeting of the Working Group held in September.

## **8. Japan-North Korea Working-Level Consultations (June 2008 in Beijing, August 2008 in Shenyang)**

- (a) At the Japan-North Korea Working-Level Consultations in June 2008, Japan urged North Korea to take specific actions towards the resolution of outstanding issues of concern, including the abductions, by explaining that Japan would be ready to partially lift sanctions against North Korea if North Korea takes such actions. Japan also once again insisted that all abductees should be returned, a full account should be provided, and suspects should be handed over. Consequently, North Korea changed its existing position that “the abductions issue has already been resolved” and promised to reinvestigate the abductions issues in order to take concrete actions towards the resolution of the issue.
- (b) At the Working-Level Consultations in August of that year, the two parties held candid discussions about the actions agreed upon at the Consultations in June, focused on how the reinvestigation of the abductions issue should be conducted by North Korea. As a result, both parties agreed that North Korea should create an authorized investigation committee and start full-scale investigations on all abductees in order to find and return them. Japan for its part announced that the government was prepared to remove sanctions on travel and chartered flights to and from North Korea as soon as North Korea launched their investigations.
- (c) Nevertheless, on September 4, 2008, North Korea notified Japan that, although they would still maintain the position of implementing the measures agreed upon during the Working-Level Consultations, they would postpone the launch of their investigations until they examine how the new GoJ would act in regards to the agreement after its sudden change of the administration (i.e., the resignation of then Prime Minister Fukuda).

### **9. Japan-North Korea Intergovernmental Consultations (November 2012 in Ulaanbaatar)**

In November 2012, the Japan-North Korea Intergovernmental Consultations, which were the first consultations with North Korea in four years, were held. At the meeting, the two parties held in-depth discussions on the abductions issue and came to an agreement to continue deliberations in the future for further review in consideration of past progress and for discussion on individual points of view. In addition, the Japanese side brought up for discussion to North Korea the cases in which the possibility of abduction by North Korea cannot be dismissed.

The second Consultations were scheduled for December 5 and 6, but Japan had no choice but to postpone the meeting due to North Korea announced a missile launch on December 1.

### **10. Japan-North Korea Intergovernmental Consultations (March 2014 in Beijing)**

On March 3, 19 and 20, 2014, Japanese and North Korean officials held informal talks (director level) on the sidelines of meetings between the Japanese and North Korean Red Cross Societies in Shenyang, China for the first time in a year and four months. It was decided that they would coordinate to resume official talks.

Subsequently, official talks between Japan and North Korea were held in Beijing, China, on March 30 and 31. Wide-ranging exchanges of views concerning issues of interest of either side took place in a sincere and candid manner, and it was concurred to continue the consultations. In regard to the abductions issue, Japan raised its basic view based on the discussions in the consultations until then.

### **11. Japan-North Korea Intergovernmental Consultations (May 2014 in Stockholm)**

In May 2014, Japan-North Korea Intergovernmental Consultations were held in Stockholm, Sweden. North Korea promised to conduct comprehensive and full-scale investigation on all Japanese nationals, including abductees (the Stockholm Agreement). Japan, in response, decided that it would lift part of its autonomous measures against North Korea at the point of time when North Korea establishes the Special Investigation Committee for the investigations and starts the investigations.

### **12. Japan-North Korea Intergovernmental Consultations (July 2014 in Beijing)**

On July 1, 2014, Japan-North Korea Intergovernmental Consultations were held in Beijing, China. North Korea explained the organization, structure, and key members of the Special Investigation Committee. Japan asked questions focused on whether the committee is authorized to investigate all relevant organizations.

On July 4, North Korea, through its “state” media, announced the beginning of the investigations on all Japanese nationals including the abductees. It publicly announced in North Korea and abroad, the authority, structure, and investigation methods of the Special Investigation Committee that were consistent with the understanding of the Japanese side. At the same time, Japan lifted restrictions on visits of persons, special measures of restriction on North Korea regarding the amount of money requiring notification of the export of means of payments and report on the money transfer, and the embargo on the entry of North Korea flagged ships with humanitarian purpose into Japanese ports.



Japan-North Korea Intergovernmental Consultations  
(July 2014)



### **13. Japan-North Korea Diplomatic Authorities Meeting (September 2014 in Shenyang)**

On September 29, 2014, a meeting between Japan-North Korea diplomatic authorities was held in Shenyang, China, for North Korea's explanation on the current status of the investigations. North Korea said that it was not able to provide specific results on individual cases at this stage, but explained that, if a Japanese delegation visits Pyongyang and meet with the members of the Special Investigation Committee, they could hear a clearer explanation of the current status of the investigations.

### **14. Consultations with the Special Investigation Committee (October 2014 in Pyongyang)**

In October 2014, Consultations with the Special Investigation Committee were held in Pyongyang, North Korea. Japan reiterated that the resolution of the abductions issue is the most important for Japan, ensuring security of all abductees and their immediate return to Japan, providing full account of the truth in all abduction cases and the extradition of perpetrators who conducted the abductions are indispensable, and Japan seeks to find out the whereabouts of abductees, whether or not officially identified as such by the Government, and to have them back safely to Japan as soon as possible. Japan also strongly urged North Korea to expeditiously conduct its investigations and report the results sincerely and swiftly to Japan.

North Korea provided an explanation of the organization such as the structure of the committee and its branches. It also explained its policy to conduct objective and scientific investigations with a focus on witnesses and physical evidence and to thoroughly deepen the investigations from new angles, regardless of the past investigation results. It also explained that the Committee is invested with special authority by the National Defense Commission, the highest guiding body of North Korea, to conduct a thorough investigation of all organizations, including special agencies. Regarding the abductions issue, North Korea said that it was investigating the specific cases, including whether or not abductees entered North Korea, their living circumstances and the details of how each case took place, and that a new investigation into related places including guest houses where the abductees had stayed was being carried out while looking for new physical evidence and witnesses.

### **15. Unilateral Announcement by North Korea of Dissolution of the Special Investigation Committee (February 2016)**

In response to North Korea's January 2016 nuclear test and the launching of a ballistic missile purported to be a "man-made satellite" in February, that same month Japan announced it would implement autonomous measures against North Korea. In turn, North Korea unilaterally announced that it would completely cease comprehensive investigations concerning any and all Japanese persons, including abductees, and dissolve the Special Investigation Committee. Japan firmly protested these actions by North Korea and conveyed its position that it would not abandon the Stockholm Agreement. Japan also demanded that North Korea return abductees as soon as possible based on the Agreement.

### **16. Subsequent Developments**

Japan has repeatedly conveyed its basic position to North Korea since then. For example, at the reception of the opening ceremony of the Pyeongchang Olympic Winter Games hosted by then President Moon Jae-In of the ROK in February 2018, then Prime Minister Abe brought up the abductions, nuclear and missile issues, and conveyed Japan's basic position to Kim Yong-Nam, then President of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly of North Korea. In particular, then Prime Minister Abe strongly urged North Korea to resolve the abductions issue, including the return of all abductees to Japan. In addition, based on the request from then Prime Minister Abe, then President Trump of the United States raised the abductions issue directly with Kim Jong-Un, Chairman of the State Affairs Commission, at the U.S.-North Korea Summit Meetings held in June 2018 and February 2019 (details to follow).

# 3 Efforts in the International Community

In order to resolve the abductions issue, it is essential for Japan not only to proactively urge North Korea, but also to gain support and cooperation from other countries regarding the importance of resolving the abductions issue. Therefore, the GoJ has raised the issue at every diplomatic opportunity.

It is known that there are also many ROK people who were abducted by North Korea. Testimony from returned Japanese abductees and others has further revealed that there are people from Thailand, Romania, and Lebanon who may have been abducted by North Korea. It has also been said, according to the testimony from abductees of the ROK who have returned from North Korea and from others, that Chinese and other nationals have also been abducted.

As detailed above, abduction by North Korea constitutes a universal issue among the international community as a violation of fundamental human rights.

## 1. United Nations

- (a) In the United Nations, the Resolutions on the Situation of Human Rights in the DPRK, which include reference to the abductions issue, have been adopted at the Human Rights Council 16 times for 16 consecutive years and at the General Assembly 19 times for 19 consecutive years (as of January 2024). The resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2023 stresses again with grave concern the urgency and importance of the issue of international abductions which involves a serious violation of human rights, and of the immediate return of all abductees, as they and their family members age, expresses grave concern at the long years of severe suffering experienced by abductees and their families, and the lack of any concrete or positive action by North Korea, notably since the investigations on all the Japanese nationals commenced on the basis of the government-level consultations held between Japan and North Korea in May 2014 and the identical and non-substantive replies by North Korea to the numerous communications transmitted by the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, and strongly demands again that North Korea sincerely listen to the voices of the victims and their families to address all allegations of enforced disappearances, clarify the fate and whereabouts of disappeared persons and faithfully provide accurate, detailed and full information promptly to the families of the victims and resolve immediately all issues relating to all abductees, in particular the realization of the immediate return of all abductees of Japan and the ROK.
- (b) At the Human Rights Council in March 2013, the Resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in the DPRK that includes the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry (COI) was adopted by consensus (without voting). The COI has investigated the human rights situation in North Korea including the abductions issue through their visits to Japan, the ROK, the U.S., the United Kingdom and Thailand, and has released their final report (COI report) in February 2014.



Prime Minister Kishida during his speech at the General Debate Session in the UN General Assembly (September 2023)

(c) In December 2014, the UN Security Council (UNSC) discussed the situation in North Korea comprehensively, including the human rights situation. Since then, the UNSC has held several meetings on “the situation in the DPRK.” Japan has urged the resolution of the North Korean abductions issue as soon as possible at these meetings. In December 2022, an informal consultation on the human rights situation in North Korea was held in the UNSC, and afterwards, like-minded countries including Japan issued a joint statement, which includes a sentence strongly urging the resolution of the abductions issue, and the immediate return of the abductees. In August 2023, a public meeting was held in the UNSC to discuss human rights situation in North Korea, including the abductions issue, for the first time in about six years since 2017. After the meeting, 52 Member States and others including several UNSC Members participated in the joint media stakeout by like-minded countries. They called on all UN Member States to hold North Korea accountable for its human rights violations, while addressing the abductions issue.



The online symposium in the UN on the abductions issue (June 2023)

(d) In addition, the GoJ has sought to disseminate information and strengthen coordination with the international community, including hosting international symposiums at the UN Headquarters and other locations. In June 2023, an online symposium in the UN on the abductions issue was held as a side event of the UN, co-hosted by the governments of Japan, the U.S., Australia, the Republic of Korea, and the delegation of the European Union. In the symposium, the voices of parties concerned, including the Association of the Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea, and the Family Association of the Missing Persons Probably Related to the DPRK, were conveyed to the international community, and a panel discussion was held by a former Ambassador to North Korea of the UK and former Ambassador of international cooperation on North Korean human rights of the Republic of Korea. In this way, the symposium called for the understanding and cooperation of the international community towards the immediate resolution of the abductions issue.

Speakers of the Association of the Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea and the Family Association of the Missing Persons Probably Related to the DPRK at the symposium. (middle row, right)

## 2. Six-Party Talks

Japan has raised the abductions issue at the Six-Party Talks. In fact, taking steps to normalize relations between Japan and North Korea, on the basis of the settlement of the abductions issues and other outstanding issues of concern, was set as one of the goals in the September 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks. Based on this goal, during the Six-Party Talks held in February 2007, the decision for the establishment of a Working Group for the “Normalization of DPRK-Japan Relations” was incorporated in an outcome document. At the Six-Party Talks held in October 2007, it was reaffirmed in another outcome document that “the DPRK and Japan will make a sincere effort to normalize relations expeditiously in accordance with the Pyongyang Declaration, on the basis of the settlement of ‘the unfortunate past’ and the outstanding issues of concern,” and that “the DPRK and Japan have committed themselves to taking specific actions towards this end through intensive consultations between them.” The abductions issue is no doubt included in the “outstanding issues of concern.”



Six-Party Talks (September 2007)

### 3. Multilateral Frameworks

The GoJ has raised the abductions issue in multilateral frameworks, including the G7 summit, the Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Summit Meetings and the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings, and the importance of resolving the abductions issue and efforts the GoJ has been making towards this end have gained the clear understanding and support of other nations.

At the G7 Hiroshima Summit in May 2023, the G7 leaders reaffirmed that they would continue to closely work together in responding to issues related to North Korea, including the abductions issue, and also stated in the Leaders' Communiqué that the G7 would call for an immediate resolution of the abductions issue.



G7 Hiroshima Summit (May 2023)

At the Japan-Australia-India-U.S.(Quad) Leaders' Meeting, held on the occasion of the G7 Hiroshima Summit, Prime Minister Kishida also asked for the understanding and cooperation of each country toward the immediate resolution of the abductions issue, and gained their support. In Quad leaders' Joint Statement, it is stated that the four leaders urged North Korea to resolve the abductions issue immediately.

At the Japan-U.S.-ROK Summit held in August 2023 at Camp David in the United States, the leaders reaffirmed their shared commitment to the immediate resolution of the abductions issue. At the ASEAN Japan Summit held in September 2023, Prime Minister Kishida asked for continued understanding and cooperation of each country toward the immediate resolution of the abductions issue through a series of meetings and other means, and a reference to an immediate resolution of the abductions issue was included in the Chairman's Statement. At the Commemorative Summit for the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation in December 2023, Prime Minister Kishida also asked for understanding and cooperation from all countries toward an immediate resolution of the abductions issue through a series of meetings.



Japan-U.S.-Korea Summit (August 2023)



The Commemorative Summit for the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation (December 2023)

#### 4. Bilateral Consultations

The GoJ has addressed the abductions issue at bilateral summit talks and foreign ministerial meetings with countries such as the United States, the ROK and China, who offer their understanding and support for the position of Japan.

For example, with regard to the United States, based on a request from then Prime Minister Abe, then President Trump took up the abductions issue with Kim Jong-Un, Chairman of the State Affairs Commission, at the first U.S.-North Korea Summit Meeting in June 2018. In addition, at the second U.S.-North Korea Summit Meeting in February 2019, then President Trump raised the abductions issue with Chairman Kim Jong-Un

during the first tête-à-tête meeting held on the first day, and clearly conveyed then Prime Minister Abe's views regarding the abductions issue to the Chairman. At the small group dinner that followed, then President Trump once again raised the abductions issue, and a serious discussion took place between the leaders.

After assuming office in September 2021, Prime Minister Kishida asked for continued understanding and cooperation towards the immediate resolution of the abductions issue, to which President Biden offered his support at the Japan-U.S. Summit Telephone Talk in October. Subsequently, at the Japan-US Summit Meeting in January, May, October, November 2022, January and May 2023, Prime Minister Kishida asked for the continued understanding and cooperation of the United States for the immediate resolution of the abductions issue, and again gained full support from President Biden. Furthermore, in the Japan-U.S. Joint Statement issued on the occasion of the January 2023 Summit Meeting, President Biden reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to the immediate resolution of the abductions issue. Furthermore, during his visit to Japan in May 2022, President Biden met with the family members of the abductees in the presence of Prime Minister Kishida, and listened carefully and earnestly to the families' sentiment and their requests for U.S. support in resolving the abductions issue as soon as possible. At the joint press conference following the Japan-U.S.-ROK Summit in August 2023, President Biden mentioned his meeting with the family members of the abductees and expressed his determination to work together to see the return of all the abductees.

As for the ROK, Prime Minister Kishida asked for continued understanding and cooperation in resolving the abductions issue at the Japan-ROK Summit in March, September, October and November 2022, March and May 2023, and again gained support from President Yun Suk-yeol. The two countries also concurred that they would work with each other in dealing with North Korea, including the abductions issue, at the Japan-ROK Summit in July and November 2023.

Regarding China, at the Japan-China Summit Meeting in June 2019, President Xi Jinping stated that, during China-North Korea Summit held in June, he conveyed to Chairman Kim Jong-Un Japan's position on Japan-North Korea relations and Prime Minister Abe's views also gained the strong support of President Xi for improvement of Japan-North Korea relations, including the abductions issue. At the Japan-China Summit Meeting on November 16, 2023 the two leaders also discussed the international affairs, such as North Korea, including the abductions issue, and confirmed that they would maintain close communication on those issues.



Meeting between President Biden and the family members of the abductees (May 2022)

#### **Draft Resolution Concerning a U. S. Citizen Possibly Abducted by North Korea**

In the U.S. Congress, a draft resolution, which urged the U.S. Government to coordinate investigations with the governments of Japan, China, and the ROK on a U.S. citizen possibly abducted by North Korea, was approved and passed in the regular session of the House of Representatives in September 2016. In addition, an identical draft resolution was approved and passed in the regular session of the Senate in November 2018.

# 4 Steps Taken in Japan

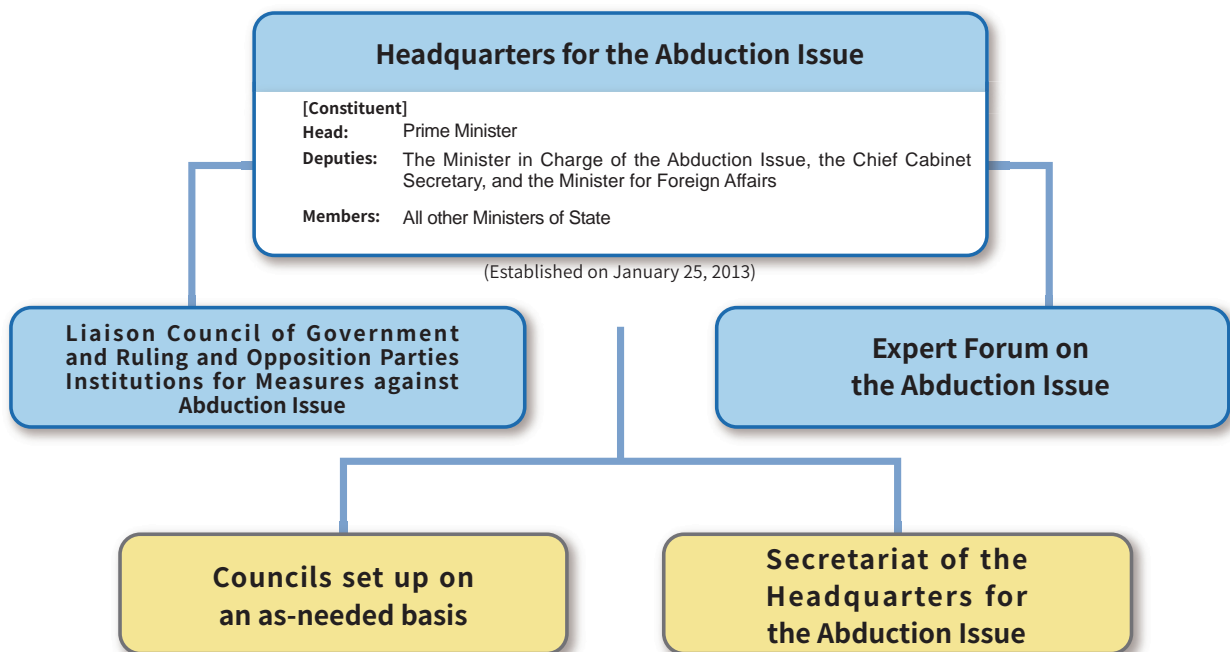
## 1. Establishment of the “Headquarters for the Abduction Issue”

In January 2013, the GoJ established a new “Headquarters for the Abduction Issue” consisting of all Ministers of State, in order to discuss measures to address the abductions issue and to promote strategic approaches and comprehensive measures for the resolution of this issue. The Headquarters is led by the Prime Minister serving as the head, and the Minister in Charge of the Abduction Issue, the Chief Cabinet Secretary, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs serve as the deputies. Individual Ministers closely collaborate with mainly the head and deputies and exert themselves to the utmost of their ability in their respective fields of responsibility towards the goal of resolving the abductions issue.



The First Meeting of the Headquarters for the Abduction Issue (January 2013)

Moreover, the “Liaison Council of Government and Ruling and Opposition Parties Institutions for Measures against Abduction Issue” has been formed to strengthen bipartisan efforts towards the resolution of the abductions issue.



## Policies and Concrete Measures for Resolving the Abduction Issue

### 1 . Policies

The abductions by North Korea are a critical issue concerning the sovereignty of Japan and the lives and safety of Japanese citizens. It is a highly pressing issue that must be resolved under the responsibility of the government. The government will firmly maintain its basic policy that the normalization of diplomatic relations with North Korea will not occur unless the abductions issue is resolved, and remains fully committed to demanding North Korea take action to ensure the safety of all abductees and their immediate return to Japan regardless of whether they are officially identified as abductees. The government also remains committed to pursuing the disclosure of the truth regarding all abduction cases and demanding the surrender of the perpetrators of the abductions to Japan.

### 2 . Concrete measures

With the initiative of the head and the deputies of the Headquarters, all Cabinet ministers should cooperate in implementing the above-mentioned policy, and should make their utmost efforts in the following eight points within their respective areas of responsibility.

1. to discuss further countermeasures and promote strict law enforcement under the current legal framework to urge North Korea to speedily resolve the abduction issue;
2. to take every opportunity, including the Japan-North Korea Intergovernmental Talks, to strongly demand that North Korea takes concrete action to resolve the abduction issue;
3. to strengthen the collection, analysis, and management of information on abductees and the situation in North Korea;
4. to strengthen the investigation and examination of cases in which the possibility of abduction cannot be ruled out, and to continue investigating the individuals responsible for abductions domestically and internationally;
5. to reaffirm our determination not to let the abduction issue be fade away, and to make further efforts to raise public awareness on this issue through various domestic and international means, including education in schools;
6. to further enhance international cooperation by strengthening ties with the United States, ROK, and other relevant countries and by having discussions at UN meetings and other multilateral talks;
7. to take conscientious measures with regard to the family members of abductees, offer ongoing support for returned abductees, and carefully prepare for the future return of abductees; and
8. to discuss all other measures which can contribute to the resolution of the abduction issue.

(Policies and Concrete Measures for Resolving the Abduction Issue] Set by the Headquarters for the Abduction Issue on January 25, 2013)



Meeting between Prime Minister Kishida and Family Members of the Abductees  
(October 2021)













## 2. Investigations by the GoJ

The GoJ, with the continuous cooperation from the returned abductees, has been thoroughly investigating the cases of abduction by North Korea as well as the cases of disappearances in which the possibility of abduction by North Korea cannot be ruled out. As a result of such investigations, the GoJ has so far identified 12 separate incidents involving a total of 17 Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea.

The National Police Agency of Japan determined that a case in which an elder sister and younger brother of Korean domicile were abducted from Japan (two abductees) is also a suspected abduction case committed by North Korea. It has issued domestic arrest warrants for 11 suspects including North Korean agents, who were involved in abduction cases, and then also issued for them international arrest warrants.

Furthermore, regarding the investigations into the disappearances in which the possibility of abduction by North Korea cannot be ruled out, Japanese authorities have been striving to reveal the truth behind these cases by reinforcing their efforts, including 1) the installation of a Special Supervision Team in the Foreign Affairs Division of the National Police Agency in March 2013 to conduct supervision and coordination between prefectural police departments, 2) the collection of physical evidence from family members for DNA testing, and 3) the posting of information on the websites of the National Police Agency and prefectural police departments, including a list of the people who are involved in the cases in which the possibility of abduction by North Korea cannot be ruled out in their disappearances. In addition, by enhancing their partnership, the Police and Japan Coast Guard have been collectively reinvestigating cases that were originally handled as marine accidents.

### ■ Interpol Notice Suspects Connected with Suspected Abduction Incidents

Case Name	Suspected Abduction Case Involving Two Siblings	Ushitsu Case	Suspected Abduction Case Involving a Couple (in Fukui)	Suspected Abduction Case Involving a Couple (in Niigata)		
	KINOSHITA Yoko a.k.a. Hong Su-Hye	Kim Se-Ho	Sin Kwang-Su	(Commonly Known as) Choi Sun-Chol	(Commonly Known as) Han Geum-Nyeong	(Commonly Known as) Kim Nam-Jin
Suspect						
Date Interpol Notice Issued	April 2007	January 2003	March 2006	March 2006	February 2007	February 2007
Case Name	Suspected Abduction Case Involving a Mother and Daughter	Suspected Abduction Case Involving Japanese Males in Europe		Sin Kwang-Su Case		Suspected Abduction Case Involving a Japanese Woman in Europe
	(Commonly Known as) Kim Myong-Suk	MORI Yoriko	WAKABAYASHI Sakiko (Maiden name: Kuroda)	Sin Kwang-Su	Kim Kil-Uk	UOMOTO Kimihiro (Former Family name: ABE)
Suspect						
Date Interpol Notice Issued	November 2006	July 2007	July 2007	April 2006	April 2006	October 2002

## 3. Efforts to deal with cases in which the possibility of abduction by North Korea cannot be ruled out

With the recognition that, in addition to Japanese citizens already identified as having been abducted by North Korea pursuant to Article 2 of the Act on Support for Victims Abducted by North Korea (hereinafter referred to as the "Support Act"), there are other cases in which the possibility of abduction by North Korea cannot be ruled out, the GoJ has been conducting information gathering and investigation activities both in Japan and overseas while maintaining close cooperation among the relevant ministries, and agencies in every possible effort to solve the matter. As a result of that, when the GoJ confirmed that further abductions were committed by North Korea, the abductees will be promptly identified as victims as stipulated in the Support Act.

The GoJ has repeatedly demanded that North Korea ensure the safety and immediate return of all abductees, not only those who have been identified so far.



(Note) Act on Support for Victims Abducted by North Korea (Extract)

(Definitions)

Article 2: In this Act, the meanings of the terms listed in the following items are as prescribed respectively in those items (i) "Victim" means a person identified by the Prime Minister as a Japanese citizen abducted by North Korea. (ii) to (vii) (...)

2. When the Prime Minister intends to make an identification set forth in item (i) of the preceding paragraph, he/she shall consult with the heads of the relevant administrative organs in advance.



Meeting between Mr. Matsuno, then Chief Cabinet Secretary and Minister in charge of the Abduction Issue, and the Family Association of the Missing Persons Probably Related to the DPRK and others (November 2021).

#### 4. Major Activities to Publicize and Promote the Understanding of the Abductions Issue

The Law to Address the Abductions Issue and Other North Korean Human Rights Violations was promulgated and came into effect in June 2006 with the purpose of increasing awareness among Japanese nationals of the abductions issue and other human rights violations committed by North Korean authorities. In cooperation with the international community, the law also aims to elicit a full account of the situation surrounding the abductions issue and to prevent abductions from happening again in the future. In addition to laying out the responsibilities of the GoJ in resolving the abductions issue, this law holds national and local governments responsible for raising awareness of the issue and to this end establishes North Korean Human Rights Abuses Awareness Week (December 10 – 16), which calls on national and local governments to hold educational events on the topic during this week.

The GoJ also distributes pamphlets and posters, screens movies and cartoons which raise awareness about the abductions issue, dispatches personnel for workshops and other educational events, hosts essay contests for junior high and high school students, holds training for teachers, university students aspiring to become teachers and others, broadcasts radio programs (in Japanese and Korean) to North Korea and holds arts performances aimed at raising awareness of the issue, etc. In August 2023, the "Junior High School Summit on Abductions by North Korea" was held, where junior high school students nominated by prefectural and government-designated city boards of education from across Japan gathered in Tokyo to learn about and discuss the abductions issue.

Furthermore, every year in December, during North Korean Human Rights Abuses Awareness Week, many conferences and symposiums etc. are held by governments and NGOs to advocate the resolution of the abductions issue both inside and outside of Japan. In particular, the GoJ has been working to raise awareness of the abductions issue through symposiums hosted by the GoJ and other opportunities to hear the "real voices" of those concerned, including members of the Association of the Families of Victims kidnapped by North Korea and the Family Association of the Missing Persons Probably Related to the DPRK.



Mr. Hayashi, Chief Cabinet Secretary and Minister in Charge of the Abduction Issue during the keynote speech at the symposium on the abductions issue (December 2023).



MEGUMI (Japanese animation)



Posters distributed nationwide

## 5. Actions against North Korea

On July 5, 2006, North Korea launched seven ballistic missiles. Since then, despite repeated warnings from the international community, Pyongyang again launched ballistic missiles in April 2009, April 2012 and December 2012. It also carried out nuclear tests in October 2006, May 2009 and February 2013. In addition, in March 2010, North Korea launched a torpedo attack on an ROK naval vessel. In response, the GoJ protested firmly, expressing strong condemnation of these North Korean actions, and imposed a series of measures against North Korea. In addition to the sanction measures set out in the UNSC resolutions, Japan requested its own citizens to refrain from traveling to North Korea, banned the entry of North Korean nationals into Japan as well as of North Korean flagged ships and ships that have made port calls in North Korea into Japanese ports and also, prohibited export and import with North Korea.

Based on what was agreed in May 2014, that July Japan lifted restrictions on visits of persons, special measures of restriction on North Korea regarding the amount of money requiring notification of the export of means of payments and report on the money transfer, and the embargo on the entry of North Korea flagged ships with humanitarian purpose into Japanese ports.

However, in response to North Korea's January 2016 nuclear test and February ballistic missile launch, in February that same year, Japan implemented restrictions on visits of persons; lowered the minimum amount of money requiring notification of the export of means of payment; prohibited in principle the payment of money to North Korea; prohibited the entry of North Korean flagged ships as well as ships carrying the flag of a third country which stopped at a port in North Korea, including those with humanitarian purposes, into Japanese ports; and also expanded the list of related organizations and individuals subject to asset freezing. In addition, Japan also implemented measures against North Korea based on UNSC resolution 2270 adopted in March of that year, including prohibiting the entry into Japanese ports of ships designated as subject to sanction and expanding the list of related organizations and individuals subject to asset freeze.

Furthermore, in September 2016, North Korea conducted the second nuclear test in the year. It also launched over 20 ballistic missiles that year. Taking into account that it failed to resolve the abductions issue in spite of strong calls to return all abductees as soon as possible, Japan upgraded restrictions on travel to North Korea, prohibited the entry into Japanese ports of Japanese flagged vessels which had stopped at a port in North Korea, and further expanded the list of related organizations and individuals subject to asset freeze in December of that year. Additionally, based on the UNSC resolution 2321 adopted in November that same year, Japan again further expanded the list of related organizations and individuals subject to asset freeze.

Moreover, in 2017, North Korea launched 17 ballistic missiles, including three with an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) range, and in September of the same year, North Korea carried out the sixth nuclear test, the scale of which is estimated to be the largest in its history. Meanwhile, UNSC adopted resolutions 2356, 2371, 2375 and 2397 in June, August, September and December of the same year respectively, and Japan expanded the list of related organizations and individuals subject to asset freeze based on those resolutions. In addition, Japan implemented autonomous measures in July, August, November and December of the same year, designating additional entities and individuals subject to asset freeze. Furthermore, in 2022, North Korea launched ballistic missiles 31 times with unprecedented frequency and manner, including those passing over Japan and multiple ICBM-class ballistic missiles, and in 2023, it repeatedly launched ballistic missiles and others. Under these circumstances, the GoJ designated additionally as Japan's own autonomous measures, related organizations and individuals as subject to such measures as asset freeze in April, October, and December 2022, and March, September, and December 2023.

# 5

## Abducted 13-year-old Girl, Miss YOKOTA Megumi

■ **On November 15, 1977, more than 45 years ago, a 13-year-old girl suddenly vanished from a town in Niigata Prefecture, which faces the Sea of Japan**

That morning, as usual, Miss YOKOTA Megumi had busily eaten breakfast with her father, mother, and her twin younger brothers and then went off to her junior high school. That was to become the last time Megumi's family saw her.

### **Megumi didn't come home!**

On that evening, Megumi didn't come home at her usual time, although she was supposed to come home after finishing badminton practice, which was the club she belonged to at school. Her family was worried and desperately searched for her. The police also conducted a search and an investigation assuming a variety of scenarios, such as a kidnapping, accident, runaway, or suicide. However, they found no eyewitnesses nor any items left behind.

### **On that night, Megumi was...**

According to testimony heard much later, during that time when Megumi's father and mother were desperately searching to find her, she had been kidnapped by North Korean agents and was confined in the pitch-dark and cold hold of a boat heading to North Korea. She cried out "Mom! Mom!" and scratched everywhere on the door and walls so desperately that when she arrived in North Korea it was said that her finger nails had almost come off and were covered with blood.

### **Bright and cheerful Megumi**

Megumi was a bright and cheerful girl. She was like the sun to the members of her family. She liked to sing and draw pictures, and she practiced Japanese calligraphy and classical ballet.

November 14, the day before she disappeared, was her father's birthday. She gave her father a comb as a gift, with the words "Please take good care of your appearance from now on."

### **Days of sorrow for the family**

From the day that Megumi disappeared, the life of her family changed completely. For their lively dinner table, it was as if the fire had gone out.

Her father left the house a little early every morning and searched along the shore. When her mother finished her housework, she would walk to many different places in town and along the shore for several kilometers while calling Megumi's name.

At night, her father cried in the bath. Her mother cried when alone so that the other members of the family would not know it. They both thought, "Why do we have to go through such a sad experience? I just want to die already."



However, while the family was experiencing such sorrow and pain, time went by without finding any clue.

### ■ **Then 20 years later, January 21, 1997**

### **Megumi is alive!**

The family then heard the information that Megumi was alive in Pyongyang. Her father Shigeru and mother Sakie had made the name "YOKOTA Megumi" known to the public. And so newspapers and magazines simultaneously reported the news, and her case was raised in the National Diet.

### **Japan-North Korea Summit Meeting**

On September 17, 2002, then Prime Minister Koizumi visited North Korea and had the first Summit Meeting with then National Defense Commission Chairman Kim Jong-II. Both Shigeru and Sakie had high expectations of finally seeing Megumi. On that very day, then National Defense Commission Chairman Kim Jong- II admitted the abduction and apologized.

However, the information given by North Korea had the shocking claim that YOKOTA Megumi was deceased (among those that North Korea has claimed as the 5 alive, 8 deceased, and 2 no entry).

### **Unconvincing explanation from North Korea**

However, the claim about Megumi was only what North Korea has claimed unilaterally. North Korea has not yet provided any convincing explanation or evidence of this claim. In November 2004, North Korea provided what they claimed were Megumi's "remains", but forensic analysis on them has detected that DNA different from Megumi's.

### **We will never give up! Until we take you back!**

The abductees, including Megumi, have been robbed of their lives, which are irreplaceable. The families are still awaiting the return of these most important persons in their lives in intense grief.

These abductions by North Korea are a serious human rights violation and an infringement of national sovereignty. We must rescue the abductees as soon as possible.

Sakie speaks in this way:

"I want to take Megumi into a very natural place when she returns because I believe that she is living now by doing her best not to make any mistakes, while being afraid of wiretaps and hidden cameras in North Korea. I want her to lie spread out on open ground, like on a ranch in Hokkaido, and let her say 'I'm Free!!'"

Over 45 years have passed since her disappearance, but Megumi still remains abducted by North Korea.



# 6

## Q&A on the Abductions Issue

### Q1 What is the abductions issue?

#### A1

Since 1991, the GoJ has raised the abductions issue by North Korea at every possible opportunity, as the authorities' investigation into missing Japanese citizens cases and testimonies of defecting North Korean agents have revealed several strongly suspected cases of abductions by North Korea.

North Korea had stubbornly kept denying for quite some time that it had abducted Japanese citizens. At the Japan-North Korea Summit Meeting held in September 2002, however, North Korea's leader Kim Jong- Il, then Chairman of the National Defense Commission, admitted the abduction of Japanese people for the first time and apologized to then Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro. But only five of the abductees have returned to Japan.

In addition to the five abductees, the GoJ has strongly demanded North Korea to promptly return the abductees to Japan, and also has repeatedly requested North Korea the provision of relevant information on cases in which the possibility of abduction by North Korea cannot be ruled out, including cases involving so-called "unidentified missing Japanese probably related to North Korea."

### Q2 Why did North Korea abduct Japanese people?

#### A2

The full truth behind the abductions remains purposefully unclear, so nothing can be said definitively at this point. However, it is deemed that North Korea committed these abductions, which are unprecedented crimes sponsored by the North Korean government, for the following reasons: 1) disguising North Korean agents as Japanese citizens; 2) forcing abductees to train North Korean agents to act as Japanese; 3) recruitment by the "Yodo-go" group\*, which is still being harbored in North Korea.

(Note) The GoJ is continuing information gathering, investigations and inquiries both in Japan and overseas about the missing 871 persons (as of January 2024) for whom the possibility of abduction cannot be ruled out.

### Q3 Is North Korea making a false statement in claiming that the abductions issue "has already been resolved"?

#### A3

North Korea has been claiming that it has already returned all the surviving abductees and that the remaining abductees have either died or never entered its territory, and hence that the abductions issue has already been resolved.

North Korea, however, has only provided extremely unnatural and thoroughly unconvincing evidence of the "death" of abductees.

During the Japan-North Korea Intergovernmental Consultations held in May 2014, "despite its previous position", North Korea made a commitment to conducting comprehensive and full-scale investigations on all Japanese nationals, including the abductees, then expressed its intention to resolve all related issues. The GoJ will continue to do everything in its power to realize the return of all the abductees.

### Q4 How many Japanese people were abducted by North Korea?

#### A4

17 are identified by the GoJ as victims of abduction by North Korea. Of those, five have returned to Japan, but 12 abductees still have not returned home.

In addition, it has also been revealed that two young Korean domicile children were abducted from Japan.

Moreover, there are many other missing Japanese people for whom the possibility of abduction cannot be ruled out\*. The GoJ has been urging North Korea to return all the abductees, regardless of whether they are officially identified as such, back to Japan immediately.

\*(Note) The GoJ is continuing information gathering, investigations and inquiries both in Japan and overseas about the missing 871 persons (as of January 2024) for whom the possibility of abduction cannot be ruled out.

### Q5 Why are there abductees who cannot come back to Japan although North Korea has admitted their abduction?

#### A5

It is suspected that North Korea considers it risky that inconvenient facts about the country such as committing espionage and terrorist activities will be revealed by returning the abductees to Japan.

For instance, former North Korean agent Kim Hyon-Hui passed herself as Japanese and blew up an airplane of the ROK in November 1987. Kim Hyon-Hui gave testimony that she learned Japanese from an abductee (Ms. TAGUCHI Yaeko). In the meantime, North Korea has not admitted to having been involved in this incident, and has not returned Ms. Taguchi back to Japan for fear that the truth will be revealed if she returns.

## Q6 When can we say that the abductions issue is resolved?

**A6** It is necessary to achieve the following three items for the resolution of the abductions issue:

- 1) The safety of all abductees must be secured and they must be returned to Japan immediately.
- 2) North Korea must give a full account of the truth regarding all abduction cases.
- 3) North Korea must hand over to Japan the persons who carried out the abductions.

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## Q7 What actions is the GoJ taking to resolve the abductions issue?

**A7** The GoJ has been strongly demanding North Korea to take actions to resolve the abductions issue, and implementing various measures on North Korea such as bans on imports from and exports to North Korea.

By taking the opportunities of bilateral talks and international conferences, the GoJ is seeking the understanding and cooperation of other countries on the abductions issue.

In addition, the GoJ is gathering information on the abductees, and conducting investigations and inquiries about the missing Japanese people for whom the possibility of abduction cannot be ruled out.

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## Q8 What kind of negotiation policy is the GoJ following against North Korea in order to resolve the abductions issue?

**A8** In accordance with the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration, the GoJ's policy towards North Korea is the comprehensive resolution of the outstanding issues of concern such as the abductions, nuclear and missile issues.

As regards the GoJ's future efforts to resolve the abductions issue, the GoJ intends to continue to demand North Korea to fulfill the Stockholm Agreement and will take every measure to achieve the immediate return of all abductees.

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## Q9 How does the international community see the abductions issue?

**A9** According to the final report published by the Commission of Inquiry (COI) on Human Rights in the DPRK in February 2014, victims of abduction by North Korea are not only from Japan but also from other countries including the ROK, Lebanon, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Romania, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and China.

The abductions issue is a human rights issue that should be raised by countries around the world, regardless of whether their people have been abducted. The international community demands that North Korea resolve the abductions issue immediately, as is evident from the adoption, by majority vote, of a resolution based on the report by the COI at the UN General Assembly in December 2014 and the annual adoptions of Resolutions on the Situation of Human Rights in the DPRK by the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.

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## Q10 What can we as Japanese citizens do for the resolution of the abductions issue?

**A10** Over 17.22 million Japanese people (as of January 2024) have signed a petition for the resolution of the abductions issue.

The fact that each individual citizen has expressed his or her strong determinations not to tolerate abduction in this manner will give a significant push for resolution of the abductions issue.



# Chronology of Abductions



Abduction cases occurred (Cases 1, 2 and 3 on page 2 and 3)  
 Abduction cases occurred (Cases 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 on page 2 and 3)  
 Abduction cases occurred (Cases 10 and 11 on page 3)  
 Abduction case occurred (Case 12 on page 3)  
 The GoJ brought up the abductions issue with North Korea at every possible opportunity. However, North Korea persistently denied any involvement.  
 The Association of the Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea (the Families' Association) was established  
 North Korea launched a ballistic missile  
 The First Japan-North Korea Summit Meeting (in Pyongyang) and the signing of the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration  
 Kim Jong-Il, Chairman of the National Defense Commission, himself admitted to the abductions of Japanese citizens and apologized  
 A fact-finding team was sent to North Korea  
 Five abductees returned to Japan  
 "Act on Support for Victims Abducted by North Korea" was enacted.  
**The First Six-Party Talks**  
 The Second Japan-North Korea Summit Meeting (in Pyongyang)  
 Five family members of the abductees who had already returned to Japan in October 2002, came back from North Korea to Japan  
 Kim Jong-Il, Chairman of the National Defense Commission, promised to immediately reopen a thorough investigation of the abductees whose whereabouts are unknown starting from scratch. SOGA Hitomi reunited with her family members in Jakarta, Indonesia, and the family returned to Japan (July).  
 Japan-North Korea Working-Level Consultations (in Pyongyang)  
 The forensic evidence showed that "the remains" that North Korea handed over to Japan and claimed to be those of YOKOTA Megumi contained DNA different from hers. The GoJ strongly protested to North Korea.  
 The Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks was released  
 The Resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in the DPRK adopted for the first time at a Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly  
 Japan-North Korea Comprehensive and Parallel Talks (in Beijing)  
 U.S. President Bush met with family members of the abductees (in Washington D.C.)  
 "Enforcement of the Law to Address the Abduction Issue and Other North Korean Human Rights Violations" was enacted  
 North Korea launched ballistic missiles (7 launches)  
 Japan announced autonomous measures against North Korea  
 Adoption of the UNSC resolution 1695  
 The Headquarters for the Abduction Issue was established  
 North Korea announced nuclear test  
 Adoption of the UNSC resolution 1718  
 The Headquarters for the Abduction Issue decided on the "Policy on the abduction issue" at its first meeting  
 First Working Group for normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and North Korea (in Hanoi)  
 Second Working Group for normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and North Korea (in Ulaanbaatar)  
 Japan-North Korea Working-Level Consultations (in Beijing)  
 Both sides agreed to resume investigations on the abductions issue  
 Japan-North Korea Working-Level Consultations (in Shenyang)  
 Both sides agreed on the specific details, etc. for complete reinvestigations of the abductions issue  
 North Korea notified Japan that they would postpone the launch of their reinvestigations  
 North Korea launched a ballistic missile (8 launches through July)  
 Japan announced autonomous measures against North Korea  
 Nuclear Test by North Korea (2nd Time)  
 Adoption of the UNSC resolution 1874  
 Japan announced autonomous measures against North Korea  
 The Headquarters for the Abduction Issue Established (Former Headquarters Established in 2006 Abolished)  
 Torpedo attack by North Korea on ROK navy patrol ship Cheonan  
 Japan announced autonomous measures against North Korea  
 Bombardment of Yeonpyeong in the ROK by North Korea  
 North Korea's National Defense Commission Chairman Kim Jong-Il dies  
 North Korea launched a ballistic missile (2 launches through December)  
 Kim Jong-Un assumed the position of First Chairman of North Korea's National Defense Commission  
 Japan-North Korea Intergovernmental Consultations (in Ulaanbaatar)  
 Adoption of the UNSC resolution 2087  
 The Headquarters for the Abduction Issue Established (Former Headquarters Established in 2009 Abolished)  
 "Policies and Concrete Measures for Resolving the Abduction Issue" was adopted at the first meeting of the Headquarters for the Abduction Issue  
 Nuclear Test by North Korea (3rd Time)  
 Japan announced autonomous measures against North Korea  
 Adoption of the UNSC resolution 2094  
 The UN Human Rights Council decided to set up the Commission of Inquiry (COI) on the situation of human rights in the DPRK  
 Commission of Inquiry (COI) on Human Rights in the DPRK paid a courtesy call to Prime Minister Abe  
 Mr. and Mrs. Yokota met Kim Eun-Gyong (daughter of YOKOTA Megumi) (in Ulaanbaatar)  
 The Commission of Inquiry (COI) on Human Rights in the DPRK submitted its Final Report to the UN Human Rights Council  
 North Korea launched ballistic missiles (11 launches through July)



Japan-North Korea Intergovernmental Consultations (in Beijing)  
 U.S. President Obama met with family members of the abductees (in Tokyo)  
 Japan announced Statement by FURUYA Keiji, Minister in charge of the Abduction Issue, on the Occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the Second Japan-North Korea Summit Meeting  
 Japan-North Korea Intergovernmental Consultations (in Stockholm)  
 North Korea promised to conduct comprehensive and full-scale investigation on all Japanese nationals, including abductees.

July  
 Japan-North Korea Intergovernmental Consultations (in Beijing)  
 North Korea established the Special Investigation Committee and launched investigations. Japan lifted part of its measures against North Korea.

September  
 October  
 March 2015  
 June  
 September  
 January 2016  
 February  
 Japan-North Korea government-level consultations (in Shenyang)  
 Consultations with the Special Investigation Committee (in Pyongyang)  
 North Korea launched ballistic missiles (2 launches)  
 The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) of a field-based structure was established in Seoul  
 The UN Human Rights Council held a panel discussion on the situation of human rights in the DPRK (in Geneva)  
 Nuclear Test by North Korea (4th Time)  
 North Korea launched a ballistic missile (23 launches through October)  
 Japan announced autonomous measures against North Korea  
 In response to North Korea's January nuclear test and February ballistic missile launch, Japan announced it would implement autonomous measures against North Korea. In turn, North Korea unilaterally announced it would cease comprehensive investigations concerning Japanese persons, including abductees, and dissolve the Special Investigation Committee.

March  
 June  
 Adoption of the UNSC resolution 2270  
 National Defense Commission First Chairman Kim Jong-Un assumed office as the Chairman of the State Affairs Commission

September  
 November  
 December  
 Nuclear Test by North Korea (5th Time)  
 Adoption of the UNSC resolution 2321  
 Panel Discussion: "The Situation of Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea" held in the UN Headquarters in New York

February 2017  
 June  
 July  
 August  
 Japan announced autonomous measures against North Korea  
 North Korea launched a ballistic missile (17 launches through November)  
 Adoption of the UNSC resolution 2356  
 Japan announced autonomous measures against North Korea  
 Adoption of the UNSC resolution 2371  
 Japan announced autonomous measures against North Korea  
 Nuclear Test by North Korea (6th Time)  
 Adoption of the UNSC resolution 2375

September  
 U.S. President Trump mentioned the abductions issue of Japanese citizens in his address at the UN General Assembly

November  
 U.S. President Trump met with family members of the abductees (in Tokyo)  
 Japan announced autonomous measures against North Korea  
 The U.S. re-designated North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism

December  
 Japan announced autonomous measures against North Korea  
 The UNSC held a meeting on the situation in the DPRK (fourth meeting in four consecutive years)  
 Adoption of the UNSC resolution 2397

April 2018  
 May  
 June  
 September  
 February 2019  
 May  
 June  
 Inter-Korean Summit (in Panmunjeom)  
 Inter-Korean Summit (in Panmunjeom)  
 U.S.-North Korea Summit (in Singapore)  
 Inter-Korean Summit (in Pyongyang)  
 U.S.-North Korea Summit (in Hanoi)  
 North Korea launched ballistic missiles, etc. (over 25 launches by November)  
 U.S. President Trump met with family members of the abductees (in Tokyo)  
 Meeting between U.S. President Trump and Kim Jong-Un, Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of North Korea (in Panmunjeom)

March 2020  
 January 2021  
 March  
 January 2022  
 April  
 May  
 October  
 December  
 North Korea launched ballistic missiles (8 launches)  
 President of the State Affairs Commission, Kim Jong-un has assumed the position of General Secretary of the Party  
 North Korea launched ballistic missiles, etc. (6 launches through October).  
 North Korea launched ballistic missiles (at least 59 launches by December 2022)  
 Japan announced further autonomous measures against North Korea.  
 Meeting between the family members of the abductees and the U.S. President Biden (in Tokyo)  
 Japan announced further autonomous measures against North Korea  
 Japan announced further autonomous measures against North Korea  
 The Resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in the DPRK adopted at a Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly (18th adoptions for the 18th consecutive year)

January 2023  
 March  
 April  
 North Korea launched ballistic missiles (at least 25 launches by December 2023)  
 Japan announced further autonomous measures against North Korea.  
 The Resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in the DPRK at the UN Human Rights Council (16th adoptions for the 16th consecutive year)

August  
 September  
 December  
 January 2024  
 The UNSC held a meeting on the situation in the DPRK (for the first time in nearly six years)  
 Japan announced further autonomous measures against North Korea  
 Japan announced further autonomous measures against North Korea  
 North Korea launched 1 ballistic missile

For further information on abductions of Japanese citizens, please refer to our website

Abduction issue

Q Search



◆Website Address >>> <https://www.rachi.go.jp/en/>

◆YouTube "The Official Channel of the Headquarters for the Abduction Issue, the Government of Japan" >>> <https://www.youtube.com/c/rachitaichannel>

Your cooperation in helping resolve the abductions issue is vital.

If you have any information concerning abductions,  
please contact the Secretariat of the Headquarters for the Abduction Issue by email or fax.

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