

# South Korean government to sue church council for food aid in North Korea

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Tokyo, May 24 (ENInews)--The National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK) has requested its partners worldwide to pray for them and petition the Seoul government to resume its economic support to starving North Koreans.

"The NCCCK sent 172 tons of flour, worth \$87,000, to the North Korean Christian Federation on May 18, through the Amity Foundation in Nanjing, China," said Rev. Heawon Chae, executive coordinator of the Ecumenical Forum for Peace, Reunification, and Development Cooperation on the Korean Peninsula. The group is affiliated with the NCCCK.

"The South Korean government is now angry with the NCCCK and plans to sue, claiming the move violated the Law of Civilian Cooperation and Exchange between the North and the South. The law forbids any contact with North Korea without government permission," said Chae.

North Korea faces chronic economic problems, according to the CIA World Factbook, which states "the population continues to suffer from prolonged malnutrition and poor living conditions." Officials said the South Korean Christians went ahead with an unauthorized shipment of food aid to North Korea despite a warning from Seoul they could be punished, reported Agence France-Presse on May 18.

"Because of South Korean President Lee Myung Bak's stance for the past three years, we could not send any food or medicine to the starving people in North Korea," says Chae, who is currently attending the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in Jamaica. "But we will follow the order of Jesus Christ, to love our suffering neighbors."