



GOODFRIENDS



Weekly Newsletter

No. 318 Hot Topics December 2009

["Good Friends" aims to help the North Korean people from a humanistic point of view and publishes "North Korea Today" describing the way the North Korean people live as accurately as possible. We at Good Friends also hope to be a bridge between the North Korean people and the world.]

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**[Hot Topics No. 318]**

Swine Flu Upgraded to "Urgent Matter No. 11"

One Child and Two Middle School Students Died in *Pyungsung*

Swine Flu Breaks Out at a Naval Base in *Ongjin* County

Doctors and Nurses also Infected with Swine Flu in *Sinuiju*

Visitation Banned at All Reeducation Centers due to Swine Flu

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**[Hot Topics No. 318]**

**Swine Flu Upgraded to 'Urgent Matter No. 11'**

The North Korean Security Authorities have upgraded the swine flu to 'urgent matter number 11' and are concentrating on preventive and treatment measures. In North Korea, patients who need treatment the most urgently are classified as urgent matter no. 11. For instance, casualties during the Korean War and those wounded in the 2002 West Coast Sea Battle have been treated as 'urgent matter no. 11' cases. A medical official in *Pyungsung*, South *Pyungan* Province says, "During the Korean War 'urgent matter number 11' patients were treated as the first priority. At that time, any vehicle could be stopped any time when there was a patient. Regardless of the status of passenger in the vehicle, whether it is the leading secretary of the party or anybody in high status, the person in charge of the vehicle was obligated to provide transportation for the patient. Those who violate this rule could receive administrative penalties as well as criminal charges. Classifying the swine flu as 'urgent matter no. 11' attests to the significance of the disease that needs to be taken very seriously." He added that doctors are keeping themselves busy everyday because of the increase in the number of patients, death, and the cases of relapse.

In *Pyongyang*, the majority of confirmed cases are in *Pyungchun* district, and death among middle school students are on the rise. At *Sinuiju* Medical School in North *Pyongan* Province, medical officials and medical professors have convened a series of meetings regarding the new swine flu. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss measures for treatment as the death toll from the flu increases throughout the nation. A professor who attended the meeting said the doctors are very concerned about the report that, "Currently, the death toll from the flu is increasing very rapidly and even the treated patients are having relapses. As such, it is classified as 'urgent matter no. 11' and we're conducting epidemiological investigations everyday." Doctors in the city of *Sinuiju* are also making rounds to every household to conduct medical checkups.

### **One Child and Two Middle School Students Died in *Pyung*sung**

A medical official in *Pyung*sung, South *Pyongan* Province reported that one child and two middle school students died of the flu as of December since November 20. He added that those who died were among the confirmed cases of 3 elementary school students and 7 middle school students, but they died during the treatment. Parents of the deceased students claimed that their children did not receive proper treatment and said, "Although we tried everything we could do, the doctors said they had no medicine to prescribe to treat the patients." Kim Chul-ryong (alias) said, "The only thing the doctors did was conducting epidemiological investigations of the virus and trying to quarantine the patients. They could not approach the places where the patients were perhaps because they were afraid of being infected by the virus."

### **Swine Flu Breaks Out at a Naval Base in *Ongjin* County**

A nineteen-year-old navy soldier was diagnosed as having the swine flu at a naval base in *Ongjin* County, South *Hwanghae* Province. The infection was confirmed after two health officials from the *Ongjin* town epidemic control agency in *Ongjin* County examined him. The naval base ceased all training and isolated the patient. All the soldiers who came in contact with the patient were also quarantined in order to closely monitor any further outbreaks of the epidemic.

### **Doctors and Nurses also Infected with Swine Flu in *Sinuiju***

At *Sinuiju* City Hospital in North *Pyongan* Province, doctors and nurses who came in contact with swine flu patients were reported to be infected by the same flu. Currently, the confirmed cases among the medical staff are two doctors and four nurses. The medical authorities are becoming increasingly concerned since medical personnel are not safe from infection in the midst of rising death toll. On December 18<sup>th</sup>, an elder died from the swine flu. On the 20<sup>th</sup>, a 27-year-old woman became unconscious and remained in critical condition. A doctor from the Province Hospital said that currently in *Sinuiju*, children between the ages of three and eight have the highest death rate from the swine flu, and the next vulnerable group is the elderly. Above all, the doctor expressed concern that many of the patients who received treatment relapsed into the swine flu, which would increase the death toll.

## Visitation Banned at All Reeducation Centers due to Swine Flu

On December 5<sup>th</sup>, the Re-education Bureau in the People's Safety Agency banned visitation at all labor reeducation centers due to the swine flu. Families and relatives had to leave the food and items prepared for the inmate to the officer on duty and leave the place without seeing the person they came to visit. ☀



Good Friends: Center for Peace, Human Rights, and Refugees



## Please become a good friend of the Good Friends

### Good Friends– An International NGO for Peace, Human Rights and Refugees

Good Friends provides relief works for international refugees to become all lives' friends, peace movement to fundamentally resolve disputes and conflicts that human beings face, and human rights movement to protect human rights.

Good Friends has been providing information on food shortages in North Korea, raising funds for humanitarian assistance, dispatching activists to national border areas between China and DPRK and having them investigate local situations, and publishing reports on food shortages in North Korea.

Currently, Good Friends is making efforts to improve humanitarian and human rights situation of North Korean people and to inform this situation to the international community by:

- 1) Collecting information on food shortages, public health conditions, education, the basic necessities situations and inform humanitarian organizations so that they can support North Korean people effectively.
- 2) Reporting the current human rights situation in North Korea where rights duly protected by law are being violated; assessing incidents of human rights violations in the process of arrest, punishment, and imprisonment and informing international communities; and requesting that the North Korean Government act to improve human rights.
- 3) Investigating the current situations of North Korean refugees in China, and providing protections and aid for them and their children in particular.

For these purposes, Good Friends USA publishes the weekly newsletter North Korea Today (English edition) to inform the international public.

You can make a difference by donating to **Good Friends USA**, Inc. Contributions to the Good Friends USA, Inc. (a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code) are tax deductible.

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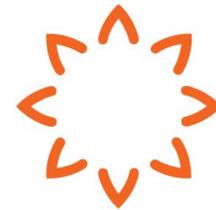
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