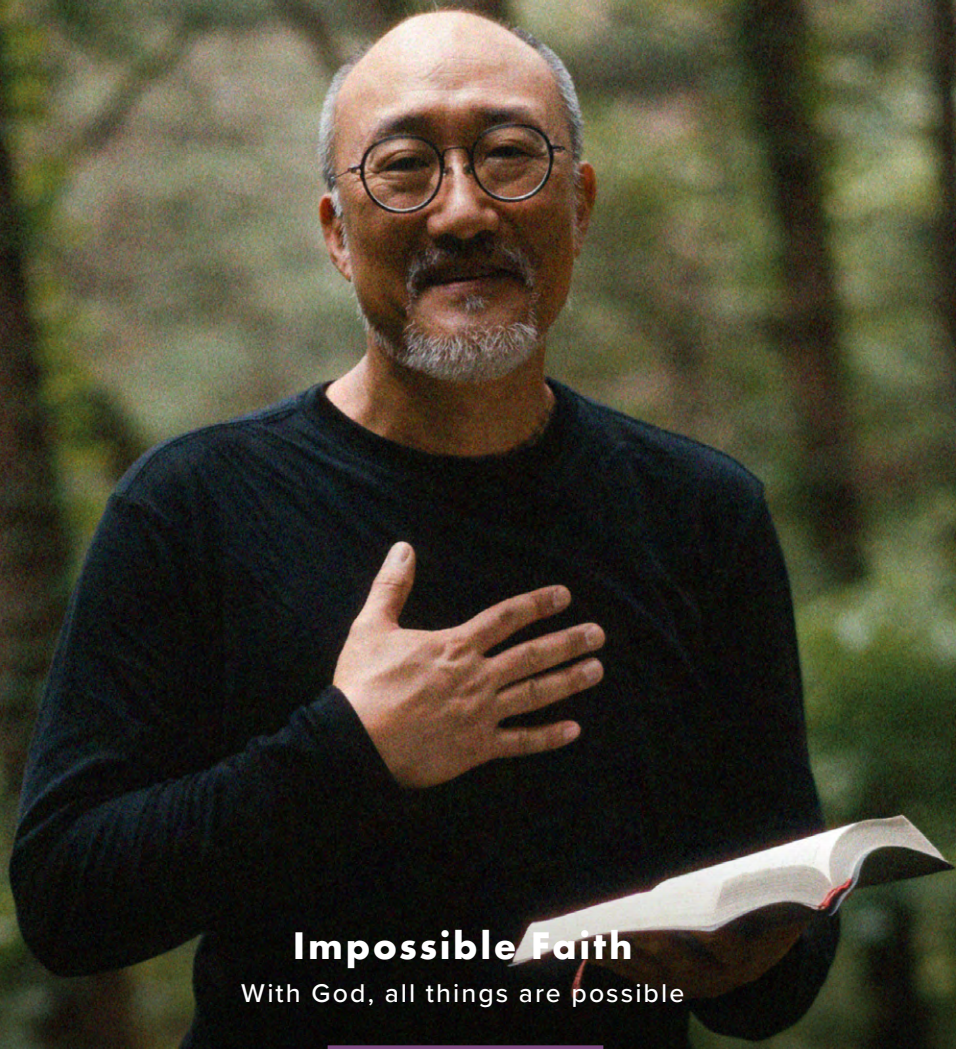


# OPEN DOORS

MAGAZINE



## Impossible Faith

With God, all things are possible

### Impossible Faith

*A thriving faith in North Korea*

4

### World Watch List 2026

*See it now*

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### Open Doors

*70 years of ministry*

14

*“With man this is  
impossible, but with God  
all things are possible.”*

*Matthew 19:26*



# Alex's Corner



**"BY THE GRACE GOD HAS GIVEN ME, I LAID A FOUNDATION AS A WISE BUILDER, AND SOMEONE ELSE IS BUILDING ON IT."**

1 Corinthians 3:10

**Alex Kan**  
Church Relations Officer  
Open Doors  
Hong Kong

Every day, I hear about impossibilities in the persecuted church. In human terms, the church shouldn't be growing in places where persecution is most extreme. In the natural, Christians who've suffered assault wouldn't choose to forgive their persecutors. In the natural, the gospel would never reach the most closed-off places on earth. But, every day, God does impossible things.

When I read Cho's\* story of impossible faith (p4), I am reminded of 1 Corinthians 3:10-15. Cho has completed his ministry and gone to glory, but what he has built – faithfully taking the gospel to North Korean refugees – others will build upon. And Cho built on the truth of the gospel: "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 3:11)

So we can pray big prayers. Let's keep praying the light into dark places. Let's pray for more of God's presence in the midst of extreme persecution – and for His church to keep growing, even where it looks impossible.

And as a new year begins, please also pray for fresh inspiration from the Holy Spirit for Open Doors. Please ask that we continue being guided to share the stories and requests of the persecuted church in a way that encourages people to reflect and respond. You can play your part by sharing the 2026 World Watch List with your family, church, and other Christian communities you're a part of, so that many more will hear the amazing testimonies of faith and need for support for our persecuted brothers and sisters. Thank you so much.

I pray that, together, we can be part of God's impossible plan.

*\*name changed for security reasons*

# IMPOSS FA



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Evangelist Cho shares the gospel with North Korean refugees – but this ministry depends on your support.

# IBLE ITH



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**Following Jesus in North Korea is so dangerous, it should be impossible. But with your support, faith will not only survive – it can thrive.**

Eun-Yeong\* was terrified. Crouching in the undergrowth, she watched the man approach. “Get away from us,” Eun-Yeong cried in fear. “Leave us alone!”

Eun-Yeong and her partner Cheol-Ho\* were in danger. They’d only just made the perilous journey to escape North Korea, and this stranger could send them back. As defectors, they would face severe punishment – including torture and even death.

But instead, the man placed a bag of food and water on the forest floor. He also left blankets and shelter, and promised to return.

The next night, as Eun-Yeong ate delicious white rice delivered by the kind stranger, she couldn't help but ask: why do you do this?

"It's because of a man named Jesus," came the reply, from Open Doors partner Evangelist Cho\*. "He is the Son of God, and he loves you very much. In fact, I brought you a book about him..."

## INDOCTRINATED

For years, Evangelist Cho had been helping North Korean refugees like this young couple. Every day, he hiked through the mountain forests. His mission? "To save souls," Cho said.

## "God is calling us."

But like most North Koreans he met, Eun-Yeong and Cheol-Ho had been taught to hate religion. Christianity is dangerous and evil, the regime insisted, and foreign missionaries poison children and steal their organs.

And yet, Evangelist Cho's steadfast care challenged this couple's assumptions. In their makeshift tent on the North Korean

border, Eun-Yeong and Cheol-Ho started reading the Bible...

One day, Cho visited with his usual delivery of food and Eun-Yeong ran to meet him. "I had a dream," she said breathlessly. "A person called me by name – and I think it was 'Jesus' this book talks about. I want to know more... What can you tell me?"

Evangelist Cho smiled. This couple's lives were about to change forever.

## SAFE HOUSES

Cho took Eun-Yeong and Cheol-Ho to an Open Doors safe house. Here, North Korean refugees receive food and care, and have an opportunity to learn about Jesus. Eun-Yeong and Cheol-Ho threw themselves into Bible study. They gave their lives to Christ – and then made an astonishing announcement: "God is calling us to return to North Korea, to share our newfound faith with people desperately in need of the gospel," said Eun-Yeong.

It meant risking extreme danger. North Korea has been top, or near the top, of the World Watch List for more than 20 years. Christianity is completely forbidden, and owning a Bible can mean a death sentence. If a secret believer is discovered, he or she may face torture, interrogation or life in a labour camp.

But despite the danger, we estimate there are more than 400,000 Christians in North Korea. They operate in secret, and meet in small, trusted groups.

Now, Eun-Yeong and Cheol-Ho are among them – and they've been faithful to God's call.

One year after Cho first met Eun-Yeong and Cheol-Ho,



Owning a Bible in North Korea can mean a death sentence, but your support can give God's word to persecuted believers.

he received a coded message from inside North Korea. It said simply: "Our family has grown to five."

## ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE

In human terms, faith shouldn't be possible in North Korea. Yet, even here, the Lord is at work.

Right now, people like Cho are waiting along the border to share the good news with fleeing refugees. Our secret network of safe houses can support thousands of people with relief aid and pastoral care. Christians who plan to return to North Korea can receive vital biblical training from Open Doors partners. And while some believers might re-visit a safe house in future, for many, this may be last chance to hear the gospel in their life.

None of this ministry can happen without your support.

**"With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."**

**MATTHEW 19:26**

Your gifts and prayers can help the most persecuted Christians in the world. You can strengthen the church where it shouldn't exist. And you can join with Eun-Yeong, Cheol-Ho and evangelists like Cho, to be part of God's impossible plan.

*\*Because of the extreme risk to North Korean believers, we've disguised identities. This is a true story based on Evangelist Cho's testimony.*

*\*\*Evangelist Cho, an Open Doors partner, died recently – but his ministry continues and his legacy lives on.*

## PLEASE GIVE

**Every HK\$200** could provide a Bible and discipleship materials to believers, so they can meet God in His Word.

**Every HK\$415** could help provide safe housing and relief aid to a refugee fleeing extreme persecution.

**Every HK\$630** could help train a leader to care for other believers who have fled persecution.

Give now at  
**[donation.opendoors.org.hk](https://donation.opendoors.org.hk)**



## PLEASE PRAY

- Lift up our brothers and sisters in North Korea, and give thanks for their extraordinary resilience. Ask the Lord to strengthen them with unshakeable peace and growing faith.
- Pray for evangelists like Cho, helping believers and refugees along the border and in safe houses. Pray they would be filled with wisdom and courage.
- Ask that, in the midst of fear, hunger and isolation, North Korean believers would find joy. May they know they are not alone – and that Christ himself walks with them.

**The Open Doors World Watch List launches on 14 January 2026. Get your free World Watch List Top 50 and pray for believers in the places where faith should be impossible.**



# WORLD WATCH LIST 2026



## ABOUT THE LIST

The World Watch List is compiled by Open Doors' analysts using real-world data from experts on the ground in 150 countries. Persecution in each country is recorded using a points system which tracks violence and pressure. This measures the number and severity of violent incidents against Christians and the degree of pressure exerted against the practice of their faith in 5 spheres of life.

## PERSECUTION

**HIGH**  
41-60 points

Every country on the list is a country of persecution, sh...

VIOLENCE



PRIVATE LIFE



FAMILY LIFE



COMMUNITY LIFE



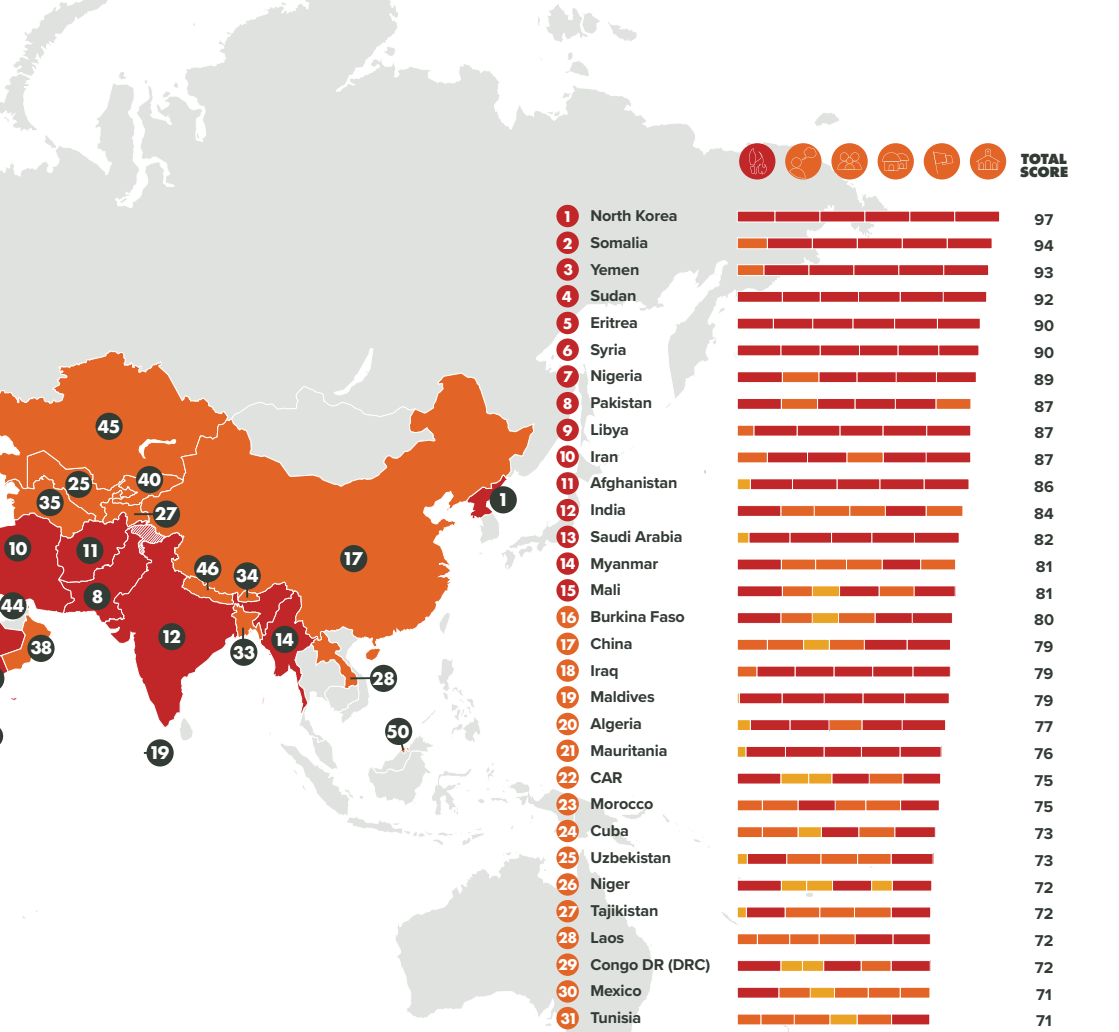
NATIONAL LIFE



CHURCH LIFE



Maximum score for each is 16.7, maximum total of 100 when combined. Each country's ranking is determined by its total score out of 100, giving an indication of severity of persecution.



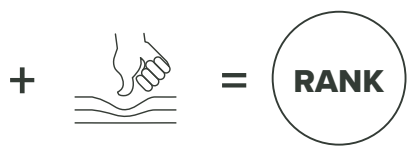
**TOTAL SCORE**

1	North Korea	97
2	Somalia	94
3	Yemen	93
4	Sudan	92
5	Eritrea	90
6	Syria	90
7	Nigeria	89
8	Pakistan	87
9	Libya	87
10	Iran	87
11	Afghanistan	86
12	India	84
13	Saudi Arabia	82
14	Myanmar	81
15	Mali	81
16	Burkina Faso	80
17	China	79
18	Iraq	79
19	Maldives	79
20	Algeria	77
21	Mauritania	76
22	CAR	75
23	Morocco	75
24	Cuba	73
25	Uzbekistan	73
26	Niger	72
27	Tajikistan	72
28	Laos	72
29	Congo DR (DRC)	72
30	Mexico	71
31	Tunisia	71
32	Nicaragua	71
33	Bangladesh	71
34	Bhutan	71
35	Turkmenistan	71
36	Ethiopia	70
37	Cameroon	70
38	Oman	70
39	Mozambique	69
40	Kyrgyzstan	68
41	Türkiye	68
42	Egypt	68
43	Comoros	68
44	Qatar	67
45	Kazakhstan	67
46	Nepal	67
47	Colombia	66
48	Chad	66
49	Jordan	65
50	Brunei	65

**PERSECUTION LEVELS**

- **VERY HIGH**  
61-80 points
- **EXTREME**  
81-100 points

The list is ranked as having very high or extreme levels showing the intensity of persecution against Christians.



# PRAY FOR FAITH TO BE POSSIBLE

A thriving Somali church?  
Impossible, people said.  
And yet, something  
extraordinary is happening  
– and Christians need your  
prayers.



When Aweis' underground church in Somalia grew to 14 people, it was one of the happiest times of his life. He'd spent years following Jesus alone, listening to radio broadcasts in secret, and fervently prayed he might meet another Christian.

"What was once seen as impossible became possible because God was in it," says Aweis. "I had somebody I could sit with to learn the Bible. It felt like the whole world was open to me."

But within two years, it was all over – in the most shocking way imaginable...

"12 of the 14 people in our church were killed for their faith," says Aweis, his face dark with sorrow. "We had no doubt we were being targeted. You could be sitting in a café, enjoying your meal, and somebody could come and attempt to decapitate you... cut your head off."

Amid such violent persecution, it's surely impossible to follow Jesus. Somalia has been in the top 10 of the World Watch List since 1993. And yet, faith is not only surviving – it's thriving. And today Aweis, in exile in another country, is at the heart of it.

"People thought it would be impossible for the Somali church to grow because of all the killings," says Aweis. "But what was impossible is, in fact, now possible. The growth of the church in Somalia is *huge*."

**"There is no place  
where Christ cannot  
be followed."**

Aweis is currently working on the Somali Bible translation, and is developing

discipleship material and leadership training. He is open about his identity and ministry, despite receiving constant threats. Like persecuted Christians around the world, Aweis depends on your prayers.

*“Pray for us to be stronger spiritually,” says Aweis. “Pray we thrive in the midst of persecution, that we become more Christ-like, so when Muslim persecutors see us, they think, ‘Wow they are different, we want to be like them.’ Pray they see the light and become disciples of Christ.*

*“Because there is no place where Christ cannot be followed,” he adds with conviction. “It’s impossible.”*

## **WILL YOU PRAY WITH AWEIS FOR THE SOMALI CHURCH?**



Heavenly Father,

When you are with us, no one can be against us.

Because we have you, Father, everything we want to do in the Kingdom of God is possible.

I pray that no persecution, rejection or threat would prevent believers from following Jesus, even in the most dangerous places in the world to be a Christian. We know the gates of hell cannot prevail against the church.

I pray the Holy Spirit would be a guide, comfort and counsellor, and the church will thrive in places where – in human terms – it seems impossible.

Amen.



North Korean Christians need your prayers.

## **PRAY FOR CHRISTIANS WHERE FAITH SHOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE**

- In North Korea and most countries on the World Watch List top 10, Christians gather in small, secret groups. Pray God would protect these beautiful expressions of his church.
- Pray that believers in nations hostile to the faith will know they are not alone – even if they must follow Jesus without meeting another Christian.
- Ask God to give hope to our persecuted brothers and sisters living in countries on the World Watch List, that they have the strength and stamina to keep serving Him.

# DISCIPLESHIP MADE POSSIBLE

Faith should not be possible in Yemen. But your support is not only strengthening Christians here, you are raising up future leaders too.



---

Thanks to your gifts and prayers, Khaled survived persecution and is now courageously following Jesus.

Khaled\* sat in the university director's office, processing the news that he'd been expelled after telling another student about Jesus. Suddenly, Khaled's father opened the door, crossed the room and slapped Khaled hard across the face.

It was a moment of pure humiliation. But Khaled's nightmare was just beginning...

When they arrived at home, Khaled's father exploded in a fury. He grabbed a whip and beat Khaled until the family begged him to stop. "It was like he'd lost his mind," remembers Khaled. Hours later, this young man was homeless.

Khaled grew up in a family of strictly religious Sufi Muslims. It was only at university, with access to the internet, that he heard about Jesus. Khaled began following a Yemini Christian on YouTube, plucked up the courage to message him one day, and was introduced to Open Doors partners who began secretly discipling him. Khaled was even baptised in an online service.

Now, rejected by his family and with nowhere to go, Khaled turned to these Christian brothers – and they became a lifeline.

"These disciple-makers were like my backbone in those tough days," says Khaled. "We prayed together and they encouraged me. I had bruises on my back, arms, sides and face. Yet in those hardest days, I grew closer to my Father."

## **"I want to baptise Yemeni Christians here."**

Thanks to you, Khaled got the support he needed at a critical time. And today your gifts are continuing to help this young man, who our partners believe could become a leader in the Yemeni church. Khaled is being coached by a pastor in

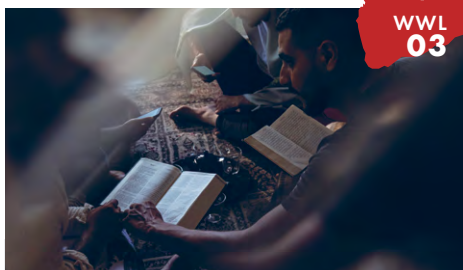
another country and receives financial aid. Our team are even helping Khaled start a business, to generate funds to support the church.

At one time, it might have been impossible for Khaled to remain in Yemen. The nation has ranked in the World Watch List top five for years. But because of your steadfast support, Khaled now cannot imagine leaving...

"My parents view me as a loser, a man with no future, an infidel," says Khaled. "But I want to stay. I want to start a local church among trusted followers of Christ. I want to baptise Yemini Christians here. If we leave to other countries, who will tell people that Jesus saved them? It's not easy, but it is necessary."

He added, "I used to be terrified, but now I know God is with me and will protect me."

*\*name changed and representative images used for his safety*



### **PLEASE PRAY**

- Give thanks for Khaled's brave faith and commitment to remain in Yemen to serve God.
- Ask the Lord to bless Khaled's plans and use him powerfully in the Yemeni church.
- Pray for Yemen's secret believers, who are among the most persecuted in the world.

# OPEN DOORS - 70 YEARS OF SERVING PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

**1955**

A Dutchman Anne van der Bijl, nicknamed Brother Andrew, discovers the persecution of Christians in the Eastern Bloc during a trip behind the Iron Curtain, to Warsaw. Called to help this isolated Church, he began smuggling Bibles into Eastern Europe, soon joined by a team.



**1978**

Open Doors sponsors the “Love Africa” congress in Malawi, gathering mission agencies and churches to promote a vision for reaching Africa with the Gospel. Contact with churches in the Middle East begins.



**1984**

A seven-year campaign for the Soviet Union begins and in 1988 one million New Testaments are delivered to Russia.



**1993**

The World Watch List of Christian persecution is created for the first time.



**2014**

Emergency and long-term aid is given to Christians attacked by the so-called Islamic State. In 2017, Noeh, a young Iraqi man who lost his home, is received at the UN with a petition of 800,000 signatures.



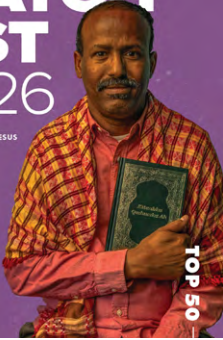
**2023**

Faced with the explosion of violence and urgent situation of Christians in Sub-Saharan Africa, Open Doors launches a new international awareness and support campaign.



# WORLD WATCH LIST 2026

WHERE FOLLOWING JESUS COSTS THE MOST



## WORLD WATCH LIST 2026 HANDBOOK OF PRAYER

Pray for Christians in the top 50 countries where following Jesus costs the most.

Get your free World Watch List 2026 Top 50 booklet and pray for our courageous brothers and sisters around the world. You'll find inspiring testimonies, expert information and the latest prayer requests.

Get yours: [opendoors.org.hk/resources](https://opendoors.org.hk/resources)



**Support  
Christians living  
where faith costs  
the most!**

In Yemen and around the world, Christians risk everything to follow Jesus. The 2026 World Watch List shows the reality of this. Persecution remains one of the biggest issues facing God's people.

The best way to help is by becoming a **Monthly Donor**. Monthly Donors ensure that Open Doors is able to stand with believers in both urgent needs and through long-term, sustainable support.

Visit [www.opendoors.org.hk](https://www.opendoors.org.hk), click "Donate" and select "Monthly Donation" to get started.

## Make your Will for free

You can give your persecuted family hope of a brighter future by including Open Doors as one of the beneficiaries in your Will. It won't cost you anything right away but it will mean a lifetime of support for those who will suffer for following Jesus.

You can make a FREE Will with ForeverGift, if you donate HK\$10,000 to Open Doors Hong Kong. Find out more at [opendoors.org.hk/getinvolved/leavelegacy](https://opendoors.org.hk/getinvolved/leavelegacy) or [forevergift.hk/opendoorshk](https://forevergift.hk/opendoorshk).



# FAITH SHOULDN'T BE POSSIBLE HERE.

## AND YET...

*"... with God, all things are possible."  
(Matthew 19:26)*

In North Korea, following Jesus is so dangerous it should be impossible.

But along the border, evangelists like Cho\* are waiting to minister to fleeing North Koreans.

*Will you support them?*

Strengthen the church where it shouldn't exist.

Every **HK\$415** could help provide safe housing and relief aid to a refugee fleeing extreme persecution.

Be part of God's impossible plan. Visit [donation.opendoors.org.hk](https://donation.opendoors.org.hk) to give now.

*Thank you*

*\*pseudonym and re-enactment image used for security reasons*

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Website

