

Megachurch Pastor Released From North Korea Healthy, 'Not in Critical Condition'

A Canadian pastor freed from a North Korean prison on humanitarian grounds is healthy and not in critical condition, his family said on Thursday.

Hyeon Soo Lim, who served in one of the largest churches in Canada, had been sentenced to hard labor for life in December 2015 after North Korea accused him of attempting to overthrow the regime.

On Wednesday, North Korea's KCNA news agency said he was released on "sick bail."

Lim is expected to return to Canada later on Thursday, a source familiar with the matter said on Wednesday.

A spokeswoman for the family, Lisa Pak, said the latest update on Lim's well-being is that he is healthy and "not in critical condition." The family is "relieved, grateful, excited, anxious to see him home," Pak said.

Footage from Japan's ANN television showed Lim walking on a tarmac next to Canada's national security adviser, Daniel Jean, at the Yokota Air Base on the outskirts of Tokyo. Lim also was seen shaking hands with various unidentified people.

Lim's release came amid heightened rhetoric between Washington and Pyongyang but there was no clear connection between the two.

Lim's case was taken up by a delegation led by Jean that had gone to North Korea earlier in the week. Sweden's embassy in Pyongyang, which represents several Western nations in the insular nation, also helped, according to a statement from

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. {eoa}

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