

An Investigation into the Human Rights Situation in North Korea's Political Prison Camps: Testimonies of Detainee Families

- Researcher: NO CHAIN

- Respondents: 10 family members of individuals who were detained in political prison camps

- Research Period: March 2018

- Research Site: South Korea

NO CHAIN conducted this research to investigate the situation in political prison camps operated by the North Korean state based on the testimony of family members of individuals who were detained in these facilities.

1. List of Individuals Imprisoned at Political Prison Camps

The purpose of this investigation is to assess human rights violations committed by the State Security Department (SSD / *Bo-wi-bu*) of the North Korean government in North Hamgyong province between 1999 and 2017. It focuses on cases of arbitrary arrest and detention without due process, torture and physical abuse during interrogations, and summary judicial proceedings without access to legal counsel or any other involvement on the part of the detainee. To this day, the ten witnesses listed below do not know the whereabouts of their family members since their arrest and detention. However, the witnesses are convinced that their loved ones were sent to political prison camps operated by the SSD.

The SSD deals with crimes against the state or political cases that threaten regime security. Prior to the 1990s, SSD-related cases mostly involved power struggles within the regime and other threats to regime security. However, since then, economic difficulties led to a rise in the number of defectors, which in turn led to an increase in the number of cases related to escaping to South Korea or religious activity. The testimony provided by the witnesses reflect a wide range of cases. Their loved ones were arrested and detained by the SSD for various reasons: meeting South Korean citizens in China after escaping, involvement in religious activity, seeking to escape to South Korea, and criticizing the North Korean state or its leader.

#	Witness Name	Detainee Name	Charges	Location of Detention (Presumed)	Duration of Detention	etc
1	Jeong Gwang-soon	Park In-sook	Religion			
2	Kim Dong-nam	Kim Kyung-jae	Religion			
3	Hwang Gyeong-hui	Eom Jang-su	Seeking to escape to South Korea			
4	Kim Yong-sik	Kim Hyeon-soon	Seeking to escape to South Korea			
5	Kim Myeong-hui	Nam Choon-bong	Criticizing the regime			
6	Kwon Yeong-hui	Kwon Yeong-geun	Criticizing the regime			
7	Jeong Chae-soon	Park Seong-ok	Seeking to escape to South Korea			

8	Kim In-sook	Kim Cheol-joon	Seeking to escape to South Korea			
9	Jeong Young-sil	Choi Seong-il	ROK Prisoner of War; Seeking to escape to South Korea			
10	Lee Jeong-moo	Lee Gyeong-moo	ROK Prisoner of War; Seeking to escape to South Korea			

2. Arrest

The Ministry of People’s Security (MPS / *In-min-bo-an-bu*), the State Security Department (SSD / *Bowibu*), and the Military Security Command (MSC / *Bo-wi Sa-ryeong-bu*) are the primary security agencies of North Korea. The MPS deals with economic or social crimes committed by North Korean citizens. The SSD deals with political crimes such as crimes against the state or anti-regime activity. The MSC deals with crimes associated with the military. These agencies work in close cooperation, and suspects may be transferred between these agencies depending on the details of each case.

The economic crisis of the 1990s triggered a mass defection of North Koreans. To prevent such defections, North Korea’s security agencies imposed strict and widespread controls with the use of violent and brutal punishments. The MPS is responsible for investigating most cases involving defection, and detainees are released after serving a sentence in labor training camps (*ro-dong-dan-ryeon-dae*) or ordinary prison camps (*kyo-hwa-so*). However, certain cases are considered as political crimes and therefore dealt with by the SSD. For example, coming into contact with South Korean citizens in China, being exposed to religion while in China, or attempting to defect to South Korea are considered to be political crimes. In most cases investigated by the SSD, detainees are sent to political prison camps following interrogation and trial. North Korea’s official statutes stipulate procedures, rights, and responsibilities with respect to the security agencies regarding arrest, investigation, trial, and detention. In reality, North Korea’s security agencies arbitrarily execute such procedures without due process. According to Article 183 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, security agencies must notify the suspect of the reasons for the arrest and the location of detention within 48 hours of an arrest. This provision is not followed. The rights of those who are detained and the protection of these rights, as stipulated in North Korean law, are rarely observed. Some provisions are only followed as a formality. SSD officials do not give any legal notice in the arrest, investigation, and detention of suspects and do not follow the necessary procedures.

According to witnesses interviewed for this report, the SSD arrests suspects at their house, workplace, or on the street. Most witnesses said that no arrest warrants or search warrants were presented upon arrest, and they were never informed—verbally or otherwise—of the reasons for their family member’s arrest. They also testified that they were afraid to even make an inquiry about the reasons for the arrest. This is because they understand that in political cases dealt with by the SSD, creating any inconveniences for the officials means that they could also be indefinitely detained in political prison camps.

In comparison to the economic and political crimes dealt with by the MPS, the neglect of legal procedures is even more blatant in arrests made by the SSD or the MSC. While SSD agents carry out the arrest for individuals in North Korea, the arrest and abduction of defectors and foreign citizens in China and other countries is conducted in an extrajudicial manner. According to the testimonies provided in this report, the North Korean authorities formed and operated unofficial “arrest squads” to arrest and abduct prisoners of war from South Korea who escaped to China and South Korean missionaries proselytizing in China. These arrest squads are covert, unofficial entities organized by the North Hamgyong Province SSD. They consist of civilians who have committed violent crimes and carry out arrests and abductions as ordered by the SSD. These activities are carried out in secret with the help of Chinese partners, without any formal consultation or cooperation with the Chinese police or other elements of the North Korean state. When the arrest squads are caught by Chinese police during an attempted arrest, the North Korean authorities deny any knowledge of such activities.

The North Korean civilians who belonged to the arrest squads include Park Geun-choon, Kim Song-san, Yun Ha-ryong, and Ji Gwang-cheol. The Chinese partners are Ryu Young-hwa, Kim Yeong-sam, and Choi Min-seob. The SSD selects and targets key figures among defectors for abduction and forcible repatriation. It incentivized the individuals in the arrest squads by commuting their criminal sentences in return for a successful abduction. To finance the arrest squads, the SSD provided illegal contraband, such as antiques and drugs, which were sold on the Chinese black market. An arrest squad was responsible for the illegal arrest and abduction of Reverend Kim Dong-Sik, who was actively involved in rescuing defectors in China. It is believed that these covert SSD arrest squads have abducted and repatriated dozens of defectors from China.

It is likely that the North Hamgyong Province SSD operated arrest squads on an *ad hoc* basis to show tangible “results” within the state apparatus. The SSD agents who planned the abduction of Reverend Kim Dong-Sik received medals from the North Korean authorities and were promoted to higher positions. These examples constitute cases of illegal abduction and detention carried out with the approval of and under the protection of the North Korean authorities.

3. Detention & Interrogation

Political suspects arrested by the SSD are detained in the SSD’s *ku-ryu-jang* (interrogation and detention facilities), which are located in each city, county, and province. Each SSD unit has several detention facilities that are operated in strict secrecy. According to witnesses interviewed for this report, suspects were interrogated for several months by the SSD unit for Hoeryong City, their place of residence. If the case was deemed to be critical or if the interrogation process was extended, suspects were transferred to the North Hamgyong Province and subject to a long-term investigation. Most victims undergo between six months to one year of interrogation. The detainees are interrogated by the SSD for political crimes, and they are transferred to the MPS if the crime is deemed to be economic or social in nature.

The witnesses stated that the detainees were held incommunicado, and no notification is made as to which *ku-ryu-jang* they are being interrogated at. Family visitation is not permitted. Visits by family members are sometimes allowed in cases of economic or social

crimes that are dealt with by the MPS, but they are strictly forbidden for SSD investigations of political crimes. During the interrogation period, family members have no way of knowing the alleged crime, what kind of interrogation process is taking place, or the outcome of the trial.

Detainees are subject to severe physical violence and torture during interrogation. Some witnesses recalled seeing detainees whose faces were beaten and bloodied beyond recognition. In some cases, the detainee's family members were also arrested and investigated following the initial arrest. The SSD interrogated the family members to obtain further information about the case or to determine whether they were also involved. Arrested family members were also subject to brutal torture and coercion during interrogation. Witnesses stated that they were forced by SSD agents to sign a pledge with their thumbprints promising not to divulge any information about the SSD's interrogation methods.

Article 167 of North Korea's Code of Criminal Procedure ("Prohibition of Coercion During Interrogation") stipulates that "a pretrial investigator should not force a suspect to admit a crime nor induce a suspect to make a statement,"¹ but this is almost never observed. According to witnesses, investigations are rarely conducted without physical violence, torture, or coercive language. Detainees are not notified of their rights as suspects or the need to observe human rights. There is no access to legal counsel. Most victims are unaware that they have the right to request legal counsel.

4. Trial Process

The severity of the criminal sentence depends on the gravity of the crimes committed, as determined by the SSD's investigation. Following the interrogation and investigation, the authorities determine the duration of the sentence and where the suspect will be imprisoned. However, his or her family members have no way of learning this information. The SSD never informs the family members, and they would not dare to ask.

The relevant SSD unit reports the results of the investigation to its superiors and determines whether the suspect should be punished by means of legal procedures or sent to a political prison camp without trial. However, the relevant legal provisions in North Korean law are rarely followed in making this decision. Judicial institutions and relevant individuals such as courts, prosecutor's offices, and attorneys take part in trials only as a formality. In most cases, the trial procedures are omitted or not observed. According to witnesses, there is no way to learn of the ruling issued in the trial or the sentence that is issued. There is no awareness of the basic elements of a trial, including the right to counsel and meeting with a prosecutor. When superior institutions determine the sentence based on the investigation results, the subordinate SSD unit immediately carries out the sentence. There are no opportunities to challenge the ruling or for legal counsel to be involved. Since the suspect and defense attorneys are not involved at all, this process cannot be understood as a typical criminal trial that meets basic legal norms and procedures.

Family members are not directly informed of the ruling that follows the SSD investigation, but sometimes they are able to learn from acquaintances about the length of the sentence and where the sentence will be served. Even this information, however, is only a guess and not

¹ North Korea's Code of Criminal Procedure, Article 167

necessarily accurate. Some witnesses also testified that victims were sent to political prison camps immediately after the investigation and without any trial process. These differences could be due to the severity of the alleged crimes or discretionary decisions made by SSD units. The testimonies could also indicate that there was no trial because the detainee was entirely unaware of the summary legal procedures that took place.

5. Political Prison Camps

Suspects are sent to political prison camps after the SSD's investigation and trial process. The North Korean authorities officially deny the existence of political prison camps.² These facilities have become known to the outside world from the testimony of victims who have escaped North Korea.³ The political prison camps are divided into two types: a life imprisonment zone and a "revolutionizing zone" where prisoners are released after a certain amount of time. Most political prison camps are operated in strict secrecy; even ordinary North Koreans are largely unaware of these facilities.

According to reports about the status of political prison camps, four such facilities currently exist in North Korea: no. 14 (Kaechon), no. 15 (Yodok), no. 16 (Myonggan), and no. 25 (Suseong). Of these facilities, only Camp 15 has a "revolutionizing zone." Prisoners at the other three facilities have no possibility of release.⁴

The individuals interviewed for this report do not know which facility their family members are imprisoned in, since the SSD makes no notification of the trial results. Some witnesses learned from acquaintances that their family members were sent to Camp 18 or 25, but this information may not be accurate. Family visitation is strictly forbidden, and the victim's whereabouts are completely unknown. There is no way to anticipate the length of the sentence or whether there is a possibility of release. Since the victims have not been released for 10 or 15 years, the only remaining unknown for the family members is whether their loved ones have already died in prison or are still serving a life sentence.

Because of first-hand testimonies by witnesses, the realities of life inside the political prison camp are now widely known. According to Jung Gwang-il, who was imprisoned at Camp 15 for three years, torture and physical violence are a daily occurrence inside the camps. Prisoners suffer and die from harsh living conditions, poor sanitation, starvation, and cold weather. It is currently estimated that there are between 80,000 and 12,000 prisoners in the political prison camps. However, this estimate is based on recent satellite images and witness testimony. The precise number of prisoners cannot be verified at this time.

² A North Korean official claimed at the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) that "political prison camps do not exist."

³ Lee Keum-Soon, "North Korea's Political Prison Camps," Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU), Jan. 2013.

⁴ Korean translation of the 2014 Report of the UN Commission of Inquiry on the Human Rights Situation in North Korea, KINU, p. 377.

6. Present Condition

The witnesses interviewed in this report are still unaware of the whereabouts of their family members following the SSD's arrest, investigation, and detention. They are trying to confirm whether their loved ones are still alive by asking relatives, acquaintances, and other family members in North Korea, but no one has exact information about the victims' whereabouts.

7. Interviews

1) Interview with the family of Political Prison Camp Victims: Jeong Gwang-soon

(1) Witness Information

- a. Name: Jeong Gwang-soon
- b. Gender: Male
- c. Age: 60
- d. Nationality: Republic of Korea
- e. Place of Residence in North Korea: Hoeryong City, North Hamgyong Province
- f. Occupation in North Korea: Trading company employee
- h. Relationship with Detainee: Spouse, Father
- i. Current Place of Residence: Seoul
- j. Present Occupation: Private business

(2) Detainee Information

- a. Name: Park In-sook
- b. Gender: Male
- c. Current Age: 59
- d. Age at time of arrest: 51 (2009)
- e. Nationality: Democratic People's Republic of Korea
- f. Place of Residence: Hoeryong City, North Hamgyong Province

(3) Circumstances of Arrest

- a. Date: January 2009
- b. Location: At home in Hoeryong City
- c. Reason for Arrest: Religion
- d. Did the agency or government officials show an arrest warrant or the text of the judicial ruling issued by the authorities?
- e. Warrant Issued by:
- f. Legal Basis:
- g. Current Status:

(4) Detention

- a. Date of Detention:
- b. Duration:
- c. Location:

- d. Type of facility (*Ku-ryu-jang*, *Jip-kyul-so*, *Kyo-yang-so*, *Ro-dong-dan-ryeon-dae*, *Kyo-hwa-so*, *Kwan-li-so*, etc.):
- e. Detention Ordered by:
- f. Reason for Detention (If unknown, please provide any available details, including rumors and hearsay):
- g. Legal Basis (If not informed by the authorities, please indicate any information you believe to be relevant):

(5) Testimony

In January 2009, Park In-sook was arrested with her daughter at her house in Hoeryong by the SSD. She was arrested for meeting a South Korean reverend in China and studying the Bible. When she went to China with her husband in September 2007 to find food, she met the reverend, who provided food for them. She studied the Bible over two nights and three days at a missionary center in Yanji, China. When an acquaintance who went to China with Park was arrested by the SSD in October 2008 and interrogated under physical violence, he/she [not specified in text] testified that Park had visited China with him/her.

In October 2008, Jeong Gwang-soon, Park's husband, defected to South Korea with his son. Park and her daughter remained in North Korea. In January 2009, Jeong sent a broker to bring his wife and daughter to South Korea, but he heard the news that they were arrested by the SSD. At the time of arrest, Jeong was not aware of the situation or the investigation that followed because he was not in North Korea.

The SSD not inform Park's family members of her arrest. Although news of the arrest rapidly spread across the city, her family did not even dare to ask the SSD. They were afraid that she may have been arrested for political crimes and knew that the SSD would refuse to give answers. Park's family members are afraid when an SSD agent visits them, even if they have done nothing wrong. Ordinary North Koreans know that family visits are possible and inquiries can be made about the sentence in cases where the MPS makes an arrest for economic or social crimes. They are also well aware that severe punishments are imposed for political criminals arrested by the SSD.

In October 2009, Jeong learned that the SSD had seized and removed all household items from their home by car. This information was passed on to him by an acquaintance who had helped his son escape to China; the acquaintance saw this first-hand. This implies that Park and her daughter were sent to a political prison camp after the SSD's investigation and trial. The SSD did not inform Park's family about the length of the sentence she received. According to Jeong's acquaintance, the head of the Hoeryong City SSD determined the length of the sentence on his own without a trial.

In September 2009, Jeong's acquaintance told Jeong that he/she saw Jeong's daughter at the *ku-ryu-jang* of Hoeryong City SSD while he/she was being interrogated there after being arrested for making a phone call to China. Jeong's daughter was 16 at the time, and she was with her mother in the *ku-ryu-jang*. Park and her daughter told the acquaintance that they would be sent to a political prison camp. He/she also stated that Park had been bloodied all over her body from severe beatings and torture. This information was conveyed to Jeong after the acquaintance escaped North Korea and arrived in South Korea in 2014.

It is presumed that Park and her daughter were sent to Camp 16. Park's younger brother told Jeong this information in a phone call. Her brother had not been directly informed by the SSD and was only able to find out through an SSD agent that he personally knew. Park and her daughter were severely punished because Park believed in Christianity with her husband, and because they tried to defect to South Korea. The North Korean authorities consider belief in Christianity and Christian missionary work to be among the most serious crimes.

Jeong first encountered Christianity during a visit to China in 2005, where an acquaintance introduced him to a South Korean reverend. There is no freedom of thought or religion in North Korea. Everyone must believe in *Juche* ideology. He began to study the Bible and developed his Christian faith through conversations with the reverend.

He started to preach Christianity to his close friends, telling them that believing in and praying to God would help them through life's difficulties. He proselytized in North Korea for five years. When his acquaintances made a visit to China, he introduced them to the reverend he had met. He did so for over 40 acquaintances from various parts of North Korea, including Hamheung, Chongjin, Hoeryong, and Wonsan. Upon meeting the reverend in China, they began to study the Bible while also receiving economic assistance.

As more and more people returned from China after meeting the reverend, Jeong learned that the SSD was planning to arrest him for spreading Christianity in North Korea. He escaped in 2008. After his escape, the authorities arrested his family to obtain information on his whereabouts. In this process, his wife's cousin, upon being arrested and interrogated, told the SSD of Jeong's meeting with the reverend in China. The SSD also became aware that Jeong's wife had visited China in 2007. The SSD imprisoned Jeong's wife and daughter in a political prison camp for attempting to escape to South Korea and for spreading Christianity. Jeong's daughter had never been to China and had no exposure to Christianity. She was sent to the political prison camp for her parent's crimes.

To this day, Jeong lives in agony, knowing that his escape from North Korea led to his wife and daughter being imprisoned in a political prison camp.

(6) Photo of the Detainee

(7) Name and Address of Witness

Name:

Phone Number:

E-mail:

Date:

Name:

Signature:

2) Interview with the family of Political Prison Camp Victims: Kim Dong-nam

(1) Witness Information

- a. Name: Kim Dong-nam
- b. Gender: Male
- c. Age: 58
- d. Nationality: Republic of Korea
- e. Place of Residence in North Korea: Osan-duk, Hoeryong City, North Hamgyong Province
- f. Occupation in North Korea: Hoeryong City Medicinal Herb Management Office, employee
- h. Relationship with Detainee: Father
- i. Current Place of Residence: Yongin City, Republic of Korea
- j. Current Occupation: Business

(2) Detainee Information

- a. Name: Kim Kyung-jae
- b. Gender: Male
- c. Current Age: 29
- d. Age at time of arrest: 19 (2008)
- e. Nationality: Democratic People's Republic of Korea
- f. Place of Residence: Hoeryong City, North Hamgyong Province

(3) Circumstances of Arrest

- a. Date: September 25, 2008
- b. Location: At home in Hoeryong City
- c. Reason for Arrest: Religion
- d. Did the agency or government officials show an arrest warrant or the text of the judicial ruling issued by the authorities?
- e. Warrant Issued by:
- f. Legal Basis:
- g. Current Status:

(4) Detention

- a. Date of Detention:
- b. Duration:
- c. Location:
- d. Type of facility:
- e. Detention Ordered by:
- f. Reason for Detention (If unknown, please provide any available details, including rumors and hearsay):
- g. Legal Basis (If not informed by the authorities, please indicate any information you believe to be relevant):

(5) Testimony

Kim Dong-nam's son, Kim Kyung-jae, was arrested by the SSD for meeting a missionary and studying the Bible for three days in China in 2007. To this day, it is unknown whether he is still alive.

In 2007, Kim Kyung-jae visited Yanji, China with a friend, where he met a Korean-American pastor, Reverend Im Myeong-cheol, and studied the Bible. They stayed at Cha Dong-seong's house in Bangwon-ri, Hoeryong City before going to China, and illegally entered China with Cha's help. One year later, Cha was arrested by the SSD. During the interrogation, Cha admitted to helping individuals illegally enter China and gave the names of individuals who were involved.

To capture and arrest Reverend Im in China, the SSD arrested Kim Seung-ho of Gangwon Province, who was associated with Pastor Im. Pastor Im was operating a church outreach program in China. The SSD attempted to abduct Reverend Im after arresting Kim Seung-ho. Over the course of the SSD's investigation, 19 acquaintances who had met Reverend Im in China were arrested. Kim Dong-nam's son, Kim Kyung-jae, was also arrested on September 25, 2008 as part of this investigation.

When Kim Kyung-jae was arrested, his mother was also present in the house. The SSD officer who came to the house did not present any identification and only told them that he was from the SSD and had come to investigate a few things. There was no arrest warrant. The officer asked if Kim Kyung-jae was in the house, and he took Kim to the SSD. The officer did not provide any information about the reasons for the arrest.

Kim's mother went to the SSD to find her son, but the SSD refused to provide any information. The SSD only told her that she should stop trying to find out where her son had gone. She asked other acquaintances to determine her son's whereabouts, but to no avail. The SSD did not allow her to see her son.

It is presumed that Kim Kyung-jae was investigated by Hoeryong City SSD for six months. It is also believed that he was then transferred to another *ku-ryu-jang* for another six months, but there is no precise information about what happened.

After 40 days, Kim's mother heard from Sohn Chul-hoon that her son was being investigated by the SSD. Sohn had been investigated at the same *ku-ryu-jang* as her son. Sohn had been arrested and investigated by the SSD for facilitating a phone call between Kim and his father, Kim Dong-nam. The SSD had sought to determine how Kim had contacted his father, who had escaped North Korea, and they arrested Sohn and confiscated his phone. Sohn was interrogated for 40 days, forced to pay a fine, and was sent to a *kyo-hwa-so*.

It is presumed that Kim was investigated by Hoeryong City SSD and North Hamgyong Province SSD. After a year, Hoeryong City SSD sent a letter to Kim's mother. In the message, Kim asked his mother to give their refrigerator as a bribe to the SSD officer who delivered the message. Kim also asked his mother to send clothes, shoes, and corn powder. Those who are sent to the political prison camps typically receive necessary items and supplies from their family before entering the camps.

Kim's mother went to Hoeryong City SSD, where she handed over the specified items, but she was not allowed to see her son. Kim Dong-nam sought to determine his son's whereabouts for another year by asking acquaintances, but to no avail. He eventually obtained information from a distant relative, and it is believed that suspects associated with that investigation were sent to the Hwasong political prison camp (Camp 16). No one was involved in the trial proceedings, and no one knows of the ruling from the trial.

Since there is no information on whether he is still alive, it is believed that he was sentenced to at least ten years or possibly a life sentence. It is also possible that he has already died inside the prison.

Following such events, Kim Dong-nam's wife was placed under constant SSD surveillance, and neighbors reported all of her actions and activities. According to Kim Dong-nam's acquaintance, an SSD officer in Hoeryong City said that all individuals related to Pastor Im's case were sent to Hwasong political prison camp. Kim Dong-nam believes that his son will never be released, and that his son was sent to the camp after one year of investigations. There is the possibility of a trial and the provision of a public defender in cases of economic crimes, but trial proceedings and legal counsel are entirely omitted for political crimes.

Cha Dong-seong, who helped Kim's son enter China, was sent to a *kyo-hwa-so*, since Cha had not visited China and had not met the Pastor.

Kim Dong-nam's wife escaped North Korea in 2010. Since then, Kim has asked organizations involved in North Korean human rights and international institutions, including the UN, to help confirm whether his son is still alive.

Ordinary North Koreans do not make strong demands to the SSD to provide information about a family member's arrest and investigation, or even about whether the family member is alive. This is because of the SSD's brutal violence. They are afraid that other family members will suffer or be sent to political prison camps if they raise a complaint with the authorities. There is no freedom of expression in North Korea, but it is especially difficult to express one's opinion when a family member is involved in political crimes. This is because anyone who expresses such an opinion could suffer an even greater cost, along with other remaining family members.

(6) Photo of the Detainee



* This is a photo of Kim Dong-nam's wife and son, taken on September 9, 2008. In North Korea, September 9 is the Day of the Foundation of the Republic. This commemorative photo taken in front of the People's Library in Hoeryong, North Korea. Kim Kyung-jae was arrested on September 25, only two weeks after this photo was taken.

(7) Name and Address of Witness

Name:

Phone Number:

E-mail:

Date:

Name:

Signature:

3) Interview with the family of Political Prison Camp Victims: Hwang Gyeong-hui

(1) Witness Information

- a. Name: Hwang Gyeong-hui
- b. Gender: Female
- c. Age: 53 (1966)
- d. Nationality: Republic of Korea
- e. Place of Residence in North Korea: Hoeryong City, North Hamgyong Province
- f. Occupation in North Korea: Athlete (Basketball player)
- h. Relationship with Detainee: Spouse
- i. Current Place of Residence: Gayang-dong, Gangseo District, Seoul
- j. Current Occupation: Restaurant worker

(2) Detainee Information

- a. Name: Eom Jang-su
- b. Gender: Male (Soccer Player)
- c. Current Age: 56 (born 1962)
- d. Age at time of arrest: 36 (in 1998)
- e. Nationality: Democratic People's Republic of Korea
- f. Place of Residence: Hoeryong City, North Hamgyong Province

(3) Circumstances of Arrest

- a. Date: Early September 1998
- b. Location: He was abducted at 6am in the morning after he went out to exercise at the schoolyard of a male-only middle school in Hoeryong City.
- c. Reason for Arrest:
- d. Did the agency or government officials show an arrest warrant or the text of the judicial ruling issued by the authorities?
- e. Warrant Issued by:
- f. Legal Basis
- g. Current Status:

(4) Detention

- a. Date of Detention:
- b. Duration:
- c. Location:
- d. Type of facility:
- e. Detention Ordered by:
- f. Reason for Detention (If unknown, please provide any available details, including rumors and hearsay):
- g. Legal Basis (If not informed by the authorities, please indicate any information you believe to be relevant):

(5) Testimony

In September 1998, Eom Jang-su went out for a jog in the morning but never returned. Later in the morning, Hwang Gyeong-hui went out to search for her husband. An acquaintance who owns a cigarette business told Hwang that Eom was seen in an SSD car at around 8am. Hwang went to Hoeryong City SSD to inquire about her husband, but the SSD refused to provide information. Hwang also found the driver who had taken Eom to the SSD and asked the driver about her husband's whereabouts. The driver said that Eom was taken to a storage building for cigarettes at Goksan Factory in Hoeryong. Hwang learned from the driver that Eom was on his way home when SSD officers arrested him on the street.

Hwang informed Eom's father about what happened. Eom's father met SSD officials through his acquaintances. He went to the SSD unit at Goksan Factory and met with the officer in charge. Hwang asked why her husband had been arrested. The SSD official said that Eom was arrested for attempting to escape to South Korea. The official said that Eom had committed a crime and should be punished for his wrongdoings. The official told Hwang that she should stop trying to find her husband and would do well to take care of her children instead. Hwang later attempted to bribe an SSD officer to release her husband, but the officer refused to meet Hwang.

Eom was involved in an antique business with his Chinese acquaintances in 1998. At the time, he met South Korean citizens during his business trips to China. According to Hwang's testimony, it may have been these meetings that led to Eom's arrest. It is presumed that one of Eom's friends who made these business trips to China with Eom was arrested by the SSD and informed the SSD of Eom's business dealings with South Korean citizens.

A few days later, the SSD summoned and investigated Hwang. She was intensively interrogated about what kind of business her husband was engaged in, how he had gone to China, and who he had met. They also asked questions about whether Eom's family had also decided to escape to South Korea. The SSD also summoned and investigated Eom's younger brother, who suffered severe beatings and physical violence during the interrogation. Eom's brother had been bloodied all over his body following the interrogation, and he was unable to walk properly. He had to receive medical treatment for a long time. He seems to have been released after signing, at the end of the interrogation, a pledge not to divulge information. He never told his family about the investigation process or about his brother's alleged crime, even after several years. It seems that Eom's brother suffered for a long time from the terror that he experienced during the SSD investigation.

In January 1999, four months after the SSD had arrested and detained Eom, the SSD contacted Hwang and requested that she send food to Eom. Hwang made "rice cakes" with corn and sent it three times or so. There was no further message to Hwang. It is presumed that Eom was sent to North Hamgyong Province SSD in Chongjin. In August 1999, Hwang learned that a security official who knew Eom's father had seen Eom in the North Hamgyong SSD prison. According to this official, Eom's face was bloodied beyond recognition, likely due to brutal physical violence. It is presumed that Eom was at this provincial SSD for a few months.

In 2003, Hwang escaped from North Korea through China and arrived in South Korea. Before her escape, Hwang did not receive any notification from the North Korean authorities about Eom's trial, sentence, or whereabouts. Following Eom's arrest and detention, Hwang's neighbors—upon the SSD's instructions—carried out strict surveillance on Hwang.

Eom was likely imprisoned in Camp 22, where prisoners are held for life. Hwang believes this because her husband would have been released by now if he had been taken to Yodok (Camp 15). Hwang has family members in North Korea, but none have information about Eom's whereabouts. She frequently contacts her family members through secret means, and the SSD still refuses to provide information about what happened to Eom.

Hwang's family cannot make a firm request to the authorities about Hwang's whereabouts because of the fear of repression. They fear that the family members could also be sent to political prison camps if they raise a complaint with the authorities. They do not even think of making such a complaint for fear of violence, detention, and interrogation. Hwang says that in a free country like South Korea, family members of suspects have a right to know about trial proceedings, the ruling from the trial, the investigation process, and the whereabouts of the suspects even when they have actually committed a crime. In North Korea, however, family members are afraid to even ask about such information, and this is clearly a severe violation of human rights. Hwang is deeply saddened and frustrated because she has no way to know whether her husband is still alive.

(6) Photo of the Detainee

(7) Name and Address of Witness

Name:

Phone Number:

E-mail:

Date:

Name:

Signature:

4) Interview with the family of Political Prison Camp Victims : Kim Yong-sik

(1) Witness Information

- a. Name: Kim Yong-sik
- b. Gender: Male
- c. Age: 52
- d. Nationality: Republic of Korea
- e. Place of Residence in North Korea: Hoeryong City, North Hamgyong Province
- f. Occupation in North Korea: Businessman
- g. Relationship with Detainee: Spouse, Father
- h. Current Place of Residence: Seoul
- i. Current Occupation: Businessman

(2) Detainee Information

- a. Name: Kim Hyeon-soon (Spouse), Kim Gyeong-il (Son)
- b. Gender: Female, Male
- c. Current Age: 47 (born 1971), 25 (born 1994)
- d. Age at time of arrest: 39 (2010), 17 (2010)
- e. Nationality: Democratic People's Republic of Korea
- f. Place of Residence: Hoeryong City, North Hamgyong Province

(3) Circumstances of Arrest

- a. Date: October 2010
- b. Location: Hoeryong City, North Hamgyong Province
- c. Reason for Arrest:
- d. Did the agency or government officials show an arrest warrant or the text of the judicial ruling issued by the authorities?
- e. Warrant Issued by:
- f. Legal Basis:
- g. Current Status:

(4) Detention

- a. Date of Detention:
- b. Duration:
- c. Location:
- d. Type of facility:
- e. Detention Ordered by:
- f. Reason for Detention (If unknown, please provide any available details, including rumors and hearsay):
- e. Legal Basis: (If not informed by the authorities, please indicate any information you believe to be relevant):

(5) Testimony

Ms. Kim Hyeon-soon and Mr. Kim Gyeong-il, respectively the wife and son of Mr. Kim Yong-sik, were arrested and sent to a political prison camp for attempting to escape North Korea to join Mr. Kim Yong-sik in South Korea.

Kim Yong-sik escaped from North Korea in November 2009 and spent some time in China before arriving in South Korea in August 2010. In September 2010, he called his wife and persuaded her to join him in South Korea. In October 2010, his wife and son attempted to escape North Korea by crossing the Tumen River. They first attempted to cross the river near Hoeryong City, North Hamgyong Province, but returned home after they failed to meet their guide. The SSD had already arrested the guide who was supposed to help them escape to China. Subject to physical violence during the interrogation, the guide informed the SSD of plans to help Kim Hyeon-soon and her son escape from North Korea. The SSD then wiretapped Kim Hyeon-soon and her son's telephone.

In October 2010, the SSD arrested Kim Hyeon-soon and her son Kim Gyeong-il at their home. They were detained and investigated without an arrest warrant or any legal procedures. They were interrogated about their plans to escape North Korea and join Kim Yong-sik in South Korea. The SSD was already aware of relevant details from listening in on telephone conversations between Kim Yong-sik and his wife.

The Hoeryong City SSD investigated them for six months. They were then transferred to North Hamgyong Province SSD and investigated for another three months. It is known that they underwent trial proceedings thereafter, but there is no information on when the sentence was determined or when the ruling was issued. Kim Yong-sik asked his acquaintances in North Korea to in an effort to determine the whereabouts of his wife and son, but he failed to obtain any information. Even his close friends are afraid of being involved in the SSD's investigation of a political crime, because they could become associated with the crime or be punished as a result. The authorities did not notify other family members of the arrest. The arrest was confirmed through informal means only after repeated attempts through acquaintances and relatives. It was confirmed that they were undergoing trial proceedings. However, no information was given as to the trial process or the final sentence. It is thus impossible to determine how the trial was conducted or whether it was properly conducted. No visitations are allowed during the trial, and no notification is given regarding the final sentence.

It is believed that Kim Hyeon-soon was sentenced to seven years, and her son Kim Gyeong-il to four years, but this cannot be confirmed. Kim Yong-sik obtained this information through his acquaintances, but it may not be credible. The only things that appear to be certain are that the SSD listened in on his telephone conversations with his wife, and that his wife and son were arrested and detained because of attempting to escape to South Korea. The fact that Kim had already arrived in South Korea is likely to have increased the severity of their crimes.

Kim Hyeon-soon's family are Koreans who went to North Korea from Japan. Individuals with this family background are subject to increased surveillance from the state. When family members of Koreans from Japan are investigated for political crimes, the punishment may be more severe. Escaping North Korea with the intent of going to South Korea is also a more serious crime than only going to China.

Nevertheless, there is no still news of his wife and son, seven years after the arrest. Kim Yong-sik believes that his wife and son may have received a more severe sentence, and that they may have already died inside a political prison camp. Even when prisoners die in political prison camps, their bodies are not returned to surviving family members. It is certain that Kim's wife and son were sent to political prison camps, but it is not known whether they were sent to Camp 25 (Suseong *kyo-hwa-so*) or Camp 16 (Hwasong *kwon-li-so*).

Kim Yong-sik has requested help from South Korea's National Human Rights Commission to determine his wife and son's whereabouts, but he has still not received any information.

(6) Photo of the Detainee



*Photo of Kim Hyeon-soon, taken in Pyongyang, 1989.

(7) Name and Address of Witness

Name:

Phone Number:

E-mail:

Date:

Name:

Signature:

5) Interview with the family of Political Prison Camp Victims: Kim Myeong-hui

(1) Witness Information

- a. Name: Kim Myeong-hui
- b. Gender: Female
- c. Age: 58
- d. Nationality: Republic of Korea
- e. Place of Residence in North Korea: Kang-an-dong, Hoeryong City, North Hamgyong Province
- f. Occupation in North Korea: Farmer
- g. Relationship with Detainee: Spouse
- h. Current Place of Residence: Busan
- i. Current Occupation: Office Worker

(2) Detainee Information

- a. Name: Nam Choon-bong
- b. Gender: Male
- c. Current Age: 62
- d. Age at time of arrest: 42 (1997)
- e. Nationality: Democratic People's Republic of Korea
- f. Place of Residence: Hoeryong City, North Hamgyong Province

(3) Circumstances of Arrest

- a. Date: Early February 1997
- b. Location:
- c. Reason for Arrest:
- d. Did the agency or government officials show an arrest warrant or the text of the judicial ruling issued by the authorities?
- e. Warrant Issued by:
- f. Legal Basis:
- g. Current Status:

(4) Detention

- a. Date of Detention:
- b. Duration:
- c. Location:
- d. Type of facility:
- e. Detention Ordered by:
- f. Reason for Detention (If unknown, please provide any available details, including rumors and hearsay):
- e. Legal Basis (If not informed by the authorities, please indicate any information you believe to be relevant):

(5) Testimony

In early February of 1997, Nam Choon-bong crossed the river with Kim Seong-yeong, an acquaintance, to get food from China. While staying in China, Nam learned from watching television how developed China and South Korea was and how free life was in these two countries compared to North Korea. He criticized the North Korean dictator, Kim Jong-il, because of this. The next day, the SSD arrested Nam as he crossed the river back to North Korea near Sanhezhen, China. Nam and Kim were sent to Hoeryong City SSD and transferred to North Hamgyong SSD in Chongjin for interrogation. It is believed that they were then sent to Susong *kyo-hwa-so* in Chongjin, but this cannot be confirmed.

A week after Nam was arrested, the SSD came to Kim Myeong-hui and requested that she bring food and other necessities for a visitation. The SSD officer who visited Kim is the officer in charge of the Goksan Factory SSD. The officer informed Kim that her husband was arrested for escaping to China and currently undergoing investigation at Hoeryong City SSD. The officer demanded that Kim bring food and other necessities for her husband. Kim went to the Hoeryong City SSD the next day, but the SSD did not allow her to see her husband and sent her back after receiving the items. Henceforth, the SSD kept asking her to bring food but never allowed her to see her husband.

In April 1997, Nam was transferred to North Hamgyong Province SSD in Chongjin City. One day, an investigator from the North Hamgyong Province SSD visited Kim Myeong-hui. The investigator interrogated her about how and why her husband went to China. Kim Myeong-hui told the investigator that Nam went to China to find food. The investigator asked for more food, saying that since Nam was not in good health. Kim sent food as requested. On a later occasion, the investigator asked for money instead, so Kim gave him cigarettes and 9,000 won in cash.

In May 1997, an officer from the North Hamgyong Province SSD visited Kim Myeong-hui while in Hoeryong for other work. The officer said that the investigation of Nam was almost complete, and that he would be sentenced to 12 years. Nam had also asked the officer to tell his wife that he was sorry, promising her that he would return home and pleading her to wait until his return. Kim Myeong-hui also heard from another acquaintance that her husband was sentenced to 12 years. It is assumed that Nam was sent to a political prison camp. The exact date is not known.

In July 1997, Kim Myeong-hui found out from Ji Yeong-su, the chief SSD officer at Goksan Factory SSD, about the reasons for her husband's arrest. Her husband had criticized North Korea's leader Kim Jong-il while watching television in China, and this was considered a political crime. Later, Kim learned that one of her relatives may have seen her husband at Tanchon prison camp. This relative, who worked at a munitions factory in Chongjin, was arrested in Tanchon prison camp but was later released after it was determined that he was innocent. However, it cannot be confirmed whether the person this relative saw was really Kim's husband. It could have been someone who looks similar.

Kim Myeong-hui escaped from North Korea in 2005 and arrived in South Korea in 2010. Prior to her escape, from 1997 to 2005, she was never informed by authorities of the trial process, the outcome of the trial, the sentence her husband received, or where her husband was detained. Kim has a 33-year old son who still lives in Hoeryong. Her son is working to

find out information about his father, but there is still no information. Over 12 years has passed since Nam received his sentence, but he has still not been released.

The SSD is the most feared agency in North Korean society. Kim could not summon the courage to ask about her husband because she did not know what he was accused of. Ji Yeong-su, the chief SSD officer at Goksan Factory SSD, said that Kim and other family members were fortunate not to have been arrested as well. Kim was in great fear, especially because she could not know how severe her husband's anti-regime crime was.

In 1997, people began to die of starvation and many escaped across the border to China. Those who were forcibly repatriated were investigated by the *An-jeon-bu* [MPS]. They were released after serving a sentence in the *kyo-hwa-so* or *ro-dong-dan-ryeon-dae*. Family visitations were sometimes allowed, and it was possible to find out the length of the sentence. The SSD arrested Kim's husband and investigated him as a political criminal only because he had insulted Kim Jong-il while watching television in China. Kim cannot understand why her husband was given such a long sentence and why he is still not being released.

Acquaintances who worked in the SSD in other regions of the country refuse to give information on cases involving political crimes. They are extremely afraid of receiving any requests about such cases. The family of political prisoners constantly live in the fear that they, too, could be sent to the political prison camps. They cannot even dare to raise a complaint with the authorities. There is no way to find out why their loved one has been arrested and for what reason, what trial has been conducted, and where the sentence is being served.

6) Interview with the family of Political Prison Camp Victims: Kwon Yeong-hui

(1) Witness Information

- a. Name: Kwon Yeong-hui
- b. Gender: Female
- c. Age: 48
- d. Nationality: Republic of Korea
- e. Place of Residence in North Korea: Musan-eup, Musan County, North Hamgyong Province
- f. Occupation in North Korea: Factory No. 323 Employee (a factory that manufactures explosives)
- h. Relationship with Detainee: Younger Sister
- i. Current Place of Residence: Ilwon-dong, Gangnam-gu, Seoul
- j. Current Occupation: School Teacher

(2) Detainee Information

- a. Name: Kwon Yeong-geun
- b. Gender: Male
- c. Current Age: 54
- d. Age at time of arrest: 30
- e. Nationality: Democratic People's Republic of Korea
- f. Place of Residence: Musan-eup, Musan County, North Hamgyong Province

(3) Circumstances of Arrest

- a. Date: Precise date unknown
- b. Location: Yanji City, China
- c. Reason for Arrest: Criticized North Korea's leader while watching South Korean television
- d. Did the agency or government officials show an arrest warrant or the text of the judicial ruling issued by the authorities? NO
- e. Warrant Issued by: SSD
- f. Legal Basis: Defection from North Korea
- g. Current Status: Unknown

(4) Detention

- a. Date of Detention: Early July of 1994
- b. Duration: From early July of 1994 until present
- c. Location: Unknown
- d. Type of facility: Political prison camp
- e. Detention Ordered by: SSD
- f. Reason for Detention: Defection from North Korea, Criticizing the leader
- g. Legal Basis: Illegal border-crossing, betraying the Party and the State

(5) Testimony

In June 1994, Kwon Yeong-geun went to a relative's house in Yanji, China in search of food. On July 8, 1994, there was strict border security at the Sino-North Korean border following Kim Il-sung's death, and Kwon was unable to find a way home.

Kwon watched South Korean television programs at his aunt's house in Yanji, China. As he observed South Korea's free society and its level of economic development, Kwon criticized the North Korean regime and the Supreme Leader. One of the people watching television together in the house returned to North Korea and was later arrested by the SSD. Towards the end of the SSD investigation, this individual said that Kwon would soon escape to South Korea after having watched South Korean television in China. Upon the SSD's request, Chinese police arrested Kwon at his aunt's house in Yanji, China.

Kwon and those who were with him were interrogated in China. Around five to seven days later, on July 12, they were repatriated to North Korea through the Chilsung Customs Office. It was publicly announced in Musan that traitors were going to arrive at the Chilsung Customs Office at a specific time, and they were repatriated to North Korea on a military truck.

Kwon's family was not aware of the situation when Kwon was arrested in China. The family was not allowed to come out to the street, while friends and other residents in Musan watched Kwon and others as they were repatriated from China to North Korea.

Kwon and others who were with him were sent to Musan SSD. It is unclear how long they were detained there. Kwon's mother worked as a doctor at a military hospital and had recently treated an SSD officer. This officer permitted an unofficial visit between Kwon and his family. The visit took place in early September. No visits had been allowed for the previous two months. Visits are typically not allowed during SSD investigations. No information about the arrest or the reasons for the arrest are provided to family members.

During the unofficial visit, the family spoke to Kwon for about 15 to 20 minutes. Because the visit was granted as a favor by an SSD officer, there were no SSD agents in the room. At that time, his face was covered with scars from beatings and physical violence. His whole body had been bloodied, and there was blood everywhere on his prison uniform.

Kwon Yeong-hui, Kwon's younger sister, cursed and reproached Kwon, saying that her life had been ruined because of him. Likewise, Kwon's mother cried throughout the entire visit. Kwon did not make any comments about the procedures of the arrest or the interrogation and kept saying that he was wrongly accused. Specifically, he said, "Mother, I am sorry. Sister, I am sorry. My crime was watching television at our aunt's house and talking about it in front of her. I had no intention of escaping to South Korea." Kwon told his family that he had gone to China to find food for his child's birthday celebration on July 9.

Kwon's parents had been members of the Workers' Party, but they were notified of their status as "traitors." Subsequently, the parents were expelled from the Party for not properly raising their child. Kwon's family was never presented with an arrest warrant or any other document about the arrest. Instead, they were simply condemned for their wrongdoing.

It is not known for how long Kwon was interrogated at the SSD or when the trial took place. An SSD officer involved in Kwon's case informed the family during the unofficial visit in September that Kwon was likely to be sent to a political prison camp. The officer also told the family that this would be the last opportunity to see him. When Kwon's mother asked the officer to confirm whether her son would be sent to a political prison camp, the officer replied that they should know as such. It is believed that the trial was almost complete by that time. There was no defense lawyer for Kwon.

The fact that Kwon's parents were originally from South Korea also appears to have affected the trial. Moreover, considering that it was during a state of emergency after the death of Kim Il-sung, one suspects that the act of watching television was framed as a "crime." Starting in early October of 1994, Kwon became the subject of public criticism at work.

At that time, Kwon Yeong-hui did not feel pity for her brother as much as she feared that her life was ruined. She believed that it was important to be loyal to the North Korean regime and believed that her brother had made a mistake by illegally crossing the border.

There is no way of knowing whether Kwon received a trial at Musan SSD or at North Hamkyung Province SSD. Even now, his whereabouts are unknown. The family has given up on trying to find where he is. Normally, when someone is sent to a political prison camp in North Korea, people are afraid even to inquire about the person.

In 1997, three years after the incident, Kwon Yeong-hui escaped North Korea. As her parents were expelled from the Workers' Party on account of their son's arrest, the SSD imposed stricter surveillance. For the next six months, the incident and Kwon's crime became the subject of public ideological lectures. Kwon's father died later the same year of a stroke from the psychological shock he had suffered. The following year, Kwon's mother also died, and the rest of the family fell into misery. Kwon Yeong-hui lived in a factory dormitory after her parents' deaths. The manager of the factory told her to be cautious, since the SSD kept a close eye on her.

Kwon Yeong-hui escaped North Korea because of despair. She saw no hope in North Korea after her brother was sent to a political prison camp and after her parents died. Presently, her second older brother resides in North Korea.

The authorities did not provide any explanation or notification about the trial process, the possibility of legal counsel, or the outcome of the trial. No official visits were allowed. There were no legal procedures to notify the family upon Kwon's transfer to the political prison camp. Because the family became associated with a political crime, they could not make any efforts to inquire about his whereabouts or to find him in case other family members suffered consequences.

There has been no harm to Kwon Yeong-hui's brother who lives in North Korea. The SSD is presumably aware of her escape to South Korea.

(6) Photo of Detainee

(7) Name and Address of Witness

Name:
Phone Number:
E-mail:

Date:
Name: Signature:

7) Interview with the family of Political Prison Camp Victims: Jeong Chae-soon

(1) Witness Information

- a. Name: Jeong Chae-soon
- b. Gender: Female
- c. Age: 58
- d. Nationality: Republic of Korea
- e. Place of Residence in North Korea: Hoeryong City, North Hamgyong Province
- f. Occupation in North Korea: Farmer
- g. Relationship with Detainee: Mother
- h. Current Place of Residence: Seongnam City, Gyeonggi Province
- i. Current Occupation: Housewife

(2) Detainee Information

- a. Name: Park Seong-ok
- b. Gender: Female [*corrected; irrelevant information entered in original word document*]
- c. Age: 19 (2007)
- d. Age at time of arrest:
- e. Nationality: Democratic People's Republic of Korea
- f. Place of Residence:

(3) Circumstances of Arrest

- a. Date: July 13, 2007
- b. Location: Inner Mongolia, China
- c. Reason for Arrest: Attempting to go to South Korea
- d. Did the agency or government officials show an arrest warrant or the text of the judicial ruling issued by the authorities?
- e. Warrant Issued by:
- f. Legal Basis:
- g. Current Status:

(4) Detention

- a. Date of Detention:
- b. Duration:
- c. Location:
- d. Type of facility:
- e. Detention Ordered by:
- f. Reason for Detention (If unknown, please provide any available details, including rumors and hearsay):
- g. Legal Basis (If not informed by the authorities, please indicate any information you believe to be relevant):

(5) Testimony

Park Seong-ok lived in China after escaping from North Korea in January 2007. On July 13, 2007, Park was arrested by Chinese police as she was crossing the Chinese-Mongolian border in Inner Mongolia to go to South Korea. Yoo Sang-joon, the broker who was guiding Park, provided news of the arrest three days later. Seven others who were with Park as they crossed the border were also arrested.

In November 2007, Park contacted her mother, Jeong Chae-soon, through an acquaintance while inside the prison in Tumen, China. A Chinese woman who had been in the same cell as Park was released, and this woman told Jeong in a phone call that Park and others who were arrested with her would all be repatriated to North Korea.

In November 2007, a police officer at the prison in Tumen informed Jeong about her daughter. Jeong was living in China at the time. Jeong had escaped North Korea with her daughter and was living in China as refugees and had decided to send her daughter to South Korea. Because Jeong also had a son in North Korea, she had planned to earn money in China and return to North Korea.

In December 2007, Park and others who were arrested with her were repatriated to North Korea through the Namyang Customs Office in Onseong County, North Hamgyong Province. They were sent to Namyang SSD before being transferred to Onseong SSD. Jeong sought to visit her daughter through an acquaintance in North Korea. This acquaintance went to Onseong SSD and bribed an SSD officer. In January 2008, Park was sent to Hoeryong City SSD, since her original residence was in Hoeryong. Jeong was able to see her daughter due to her acquaintance's efforts. During the SSD investigation, Park's escape was not deemed to be of a political nature. Park was then transferred to the Kang-an police station in Hoeryong. Once the police investigation at Kang-an was complete, Park could be released after serving a sentence of forced labor at a *kyo-hwa-so* or *ro-dong-dan-ryeon-dae*.

However, in January 2008, only a week after being transferred to the Kang-an police station, Park was returned to Hoeryong City SSD. Jeong believes that her daughter was detained again as a political prisoner by the SSD because one of the people who was arrested with her divulged their intent to go to South Korea. Once again, Jeong made efforts to visit her daughter by bribing the SSD through her acquaintances, but further visits were not permitted.

In August 2008, Jeong received a call from her son in North Korea. Hoeryong City SSD had asked him to bring shoes, clothing, and food for Park, and Park's younger brother gave these items to the SSD. He asked to see his sister when he went to hand over these items, but the SSD did not permit a visitation. He told his mother that his sister would likely be sent to a political prison camp once the SSD investigation was over. He did not know, however, where she would be sent or how severe the sentence was. Park was investigated by Hoeryong City SSD for 7 to 8 months before receiving a trial, but none of this can be definitively confirmed.

Jeong arrived in South Korea in October 2008. Her son is still in North Korea. She attempted to bring him to South Korea, but he refused because he was fearful from having seen his sister sent to a political prison camp because of a failed attempt to go to South Korea. According to Yoo Sang-joon, the guide, two individuals who were forcibly repatriated and arrested with Park completed a three-year sentence at a *kyo-hwa-so* and have since successfully escaped to South Korea. Jeong believes that her daughter was sent to a political

prison camp not because of staying in China after escaping from North Korea, but because there was an intent to go to South Korea. It is also possible that the authorities learned of Jeong and Park's church attendance during their stay in China. However, no definitive information is available about the trial proceedings, the content of the trial, or the sentence that Park received. Jeong's relatives in North Korea also do not know which political prison camp her daughter was sent to. There are only rumors that she was sent to Susong *kyo-hwa-so* following the SSD investigation. Jeong's family members and relatives, as well as her acquaintances, are afraid to demand information from the authorities for fear of being associated with a political crime.

(6) Photo of the Detainee



*Photo of Park Seong-ok, the daughter of the witness Jeong Chae-soon. Last photo taken in China, shortly before departing for South Korea in July 2007.

(7) Name and Address of Witness

Name:

Phone Number:

E-mail:

Date:

Name:

Signature:

8) Interview with the family of Political Prison Camp Victims : Kim In-sook

(1) Witness Information

- a. Name: Kim In-sook
- b. Gender: Female
- c. Age: 53
- d. Nationality: Republic of Korea
- e. Place of Residence in North Korea: Sin-am District, Chongjin, North Hamgyong Province
- f. Occupation in North Korea: Housewife
- g. Relationship with Detainee: Older sister
- h. Current Place of Residence: Yongin City, Gyeonggi Province
- i. Current Occupation: Office Worker

(2) Detainee Information

- a. Name: Kim Cheol-joon
- b. Gender: Male
- c. Current Age: 47
- d. Age at time of arrest: 46 (November 2017)
- e. Nationality of Detainee: Democratic People's Republic of Korea
- f. Place of Residence of Detainee: Chongjin

(3) Circumstances of Arrest

- a. Date: November 26, 2017
- b. Location: Yanji, China
- c. Reason for Arrest: Captured during an attempt to escape North Korea
- d. Did the agency or government officials show an arrest warrant or the text of the judicial ruling issued by the authorities?
- e. Warrant Issued by:
- f. Legal Basis:
- g. Current Status:

(3) Detention

- a. Date of Detention:
- b. Duration:
- c. Location of Detention:
- d. Type of facility:
- e. Detention Ordered by:
- f. Reasons for Detention (If unknown, please provide any available details, including rumors and hearsay):
- g. Legal Basis (If not informed by the authorities, please indicate any information you believe to be relevant):

(5) Testimony

On November 8, 2017, Kim Cheol-joon escaped North Korea and arrived in Yanji, China with a friend. In order to flee to South Korea, he asked Jung Gwang-il for help, and Jung sought out a broker to help him escape. Due to lack of coordination among the brokers, their departure from Yanji was delayed. One of the brokers was arrested by the SSD. After interrogation under torture, the broker told the SSD of Kim and his friend's escape from North Korea and their plan to go to South Korea. The SSD was already aware that Kim was a relative of Jung, who had escaped North Korea and was leading a North Korean human rights organization (No Chain) after his arrival in South Korea. The SSD requested the cooperation of the Chinese police in arresting Kim and others who were with him.

On November 26, 2017, following the SSD's request, Chinese border guards arrested Kim and his friend at the broker's house where they were staying in Yanji. Following their arrest, they were transferred to the SSD in only three days. North Korean defectors who are arrested in China typically undergo at least three to four weeks of initial investigation before being repatriated to North Korea, but Kim and his friend was transferred in only three days because the request had come directly from the SSD.

To determine the whereabouts of her brother, Kim In-sook asked her acquaintances in North Korea find out about the SSD's investigation process. They informed her that her brother had been immediately transferred from China to North Korea because the arrest was requested by the SSD. While she knew that her brother and his friend were under interrogation at Hoeryeong City SSD, no one knew what charges or sentences they faced.

In March 2018, Kim was contacted by an acquaintance in North Korea and was informed that Kim and his friend were to be sent to a political prison camp following three months of interrogation. According to this acquaintance, the SSD already knew that Kim had escaped North Korea with the intention of going to South Korea. Moreover, because Kim had relatives who had already escaped to South Korea, he was likely to be given a harsher sentence. This acquaintance also did not know which political prison camp Kim and his friend were going to be sent to, or how long their sentence was.

(6) Photo of the Detainee



*Right: Kim Cheol-joon, Left: Kim's friend. Photo taken on November 20, 2017 while waiting in China to go to South Korea. They were arrested and repatriated only three days after this photo was taken.

(7) Name and Address of Witness

Name:

Phone Number:

E-mail:

Date:

Name:

Signature:

9) Interview with the family of Political Prison Camp Victims: Jeong Yeong-sil

(1) Witness Information

- a. Name of the Witness: Jeong Yeong-sil
- b. Gender: Female
- c. Age: 52
- d. Nationality of the Witness: Democratic People's Republic of Korea
- e. Place of Residence in North Korea:
- f. Occupation in North Korea:
- g. Relationship with Detainee:
- h. Current Place of Residence:
- i. Current Occupation:

(2) Detainee Information

- a. Name: Choi Seong-il
- b. Gender: Male
- c. Current Age: 54
- d. Age at time of arrest: 36 (September 1999)
- e. Nationality of Detainee: Democratic People's Republic of Korea
- f. Place of Residence of Detainee: Hoeryong City, North Hamgyong Province

(3) Circumstances of Arrest

- a. Date:
- b. Location: Yanji
- c. Reason for Arrest:
- d. Did the agency or government officials show an arrest warrant or the text of the judicial ruling issued by the authorities?
- e. Warrant Issued by:
- f. Legal Basis:
- g. Current Status:

(4) Detention

- a. Date of Detention:
- b. Duration:
- c. Location:
- d. Type of facility:
- e. Detention Ordered by:
- f. Reason for Detention (If unknown, please provide any available details, including rumors and hearsay):
- g. Legal Basis (If not informed by the authorities, please indicate any information you believe to be relevant):

(5) Testimony

In September 1999, Choi Sang-su and his son, Choi Seong-il, escaped North Korea to go to South Korea. They arrived and stayed in China after their escape. Choi Sang-su had been detained as a prisoner of war during the Korean War in 1950, and the North Korean authorities did not release him after the war. After an arduous life in North Korea working in a coal mine, he decided to escape and return home to South Korea. They contacted family members in the South after arriving in China and was waiting for assistance from the South Korean embassy in China.

Jeong Seong-deok, a defector who guided Choi and his son during their escape, accompanied them to Hanam, Yanji City, China before returning to North Korea. At the time, Jeong had in his possession a letter that Choi Seong-il had written to his younger sister in North Korea. He had written in the letter that he would contact her upon arriving in South Korea and gave the letter to Jeong. Jeong was arrested by North Korean border guards on his way back to North Korea, near the Tumen River at the Sino-North Korean border. Choi Seong-il's letter was discovered during the SSD investigation, and the SSD learned that Jeong had served as a guide to Choi Sang-su and his son during their escape to South Korea. After interrogating Jeong using torture, the SSD learned of the location where Choi Sang-su and his son were staying in China. The Hoeryong City SSD formed an arrest squad to arrest Choi and his son.

In late September of 1999, the SSD arrest squad conducted a night raid on the house in Hanam, Yanji City, China where Choi and his son were staying. They abducted Choi and his son in a car and returned to North Korea using a smuggling route at the Sino-North Korean border. Choi Seong-il was investigated at the Hoeryong City SSD until late November of 1999. Choi Sang-su was investigated separately at the Goksan Factory SSD in Hoeryong. The SSD also detained and interrogated Choi Seong-il's mother and younger sister.

After the investigation was completed in December 1999, all four members of the family were sent to a political prison camp. It is likely that this decision was made to prevent any remaining family members from escaping North Korea again. Jeong Yeong-sil, a relative of Choi Seong-il, was not allowed to visit him at the SSD, and Jeong was completely unaware of the trial process, the outcome of the trial, or the sentence that was issued.

In December 1999, after the SSD's investigation was complete, a truck came to Choi Seong-il's house and took everything in the house. It is believed that this is when the family was sent to a political prison camp. As the SSD emptied the house, the SSD requested Jeong to prepare food. Because of this, Jeong believes that the family was sent to Camp 16. If they had been sent to Camp 22 (Susong), which is close by, there is no need to eat a meal on the way. In addition, prisoners who are sent to Yodok (Camp 15) are usually sent by train because it is very distant. Since Jeong was asked to prepare food, considerations about distance and travel time lead her to believe that the family was sent to Hwasong (Camp 16). However, this is only a guess. It is not possible to confirm where the family was sent. No one, including other family members and relatives, knows what sentence they received and which prison camp they were sent to.

(6) Photo of the Detainee

(7) Name and Address of Witness

Name:

Phone Number:

E-mail:

Date:

Name:

Signature:

10) Interview with the family of Political Prison Camp Victims: Lee Jeong-moo

(1) Witness Information

- a. Name: Lee Jeong-moo
- b. Gender: Male
- c. Age:
- d. Nationality:
- e. Place of Residence in North Korea:
- f. Occupation in North Korea:
- g. Relationship with Detainee: Older brother
- h. Current Place of Residence: Democratic People's Republic of Korea
- i. Current Occupation:

(2) Detainee Information

- a. Name: Lee Gyeong-moo
- b. Gender: Male
- c. Current Age: 54
- d. Age at time of arrest: 35
- e. Nationality of Detainee: Democratic People's Republic of Korea
- f. Place of Residence/Address: Hoeryong City, North Hamgyong Province / Kraft paper factory

(3) Circumstances of Arrest

- a. Date: Mid-June of 1999
- b. Location: Koreana Restaurant in Yanji, China
- c. Reason for Arrest:
- d. Did the agency or government officials show an arrest warrant or the text of the judicial ruling issued by the authorities?
- e. Warrant Issued by:
- f. Legal Basis:
- g. Current Status:

(4) Detention

- a. Date of Detention:
- b. Duration:
- c. Location:
- d. Type of facility:
- e. Detention Ordered by:
- f. Reason for Detention (If unknown, please provide any available details, including rumors and hearsay):
- g. Legal Basis (If not informed by the authorities, please indicate any information you believe to be relevant):

(5) Testimony

In June 1999, after escaping North Korea to go to South Korea, Lee Gyeong-moo, Kim Geum-seon (Lee's wife), and their son were staying at a friend's house in Yanji, China. Kim Geum-seon's father had been a prisoner of war from South Korea during the Korean War. After living in North Korea, he escaped in 1998 and had already arrived in South Korea. Kim's father sent cash and a broker to North Korea to bring his daughter and her family to South Korea. The family illegally escaped North Korea to China, and they were waiting for a guide to meet them in Yanji on their way to South Korea. A day before their planned departure, they were abducted and arrested by the SSD.

A few days after the family had escaped to China, the Hoeryeong City SSD became aware of their disappearance from North Korea. The SSD imposes heightened surveillance on former prisoners of war and their family members. Since it was known that Kim's father, a former prisoner of war, had already escaped to South Korea, the surveillance was especially severe. Upon receiving reports from neighbors of the family's disappearance, the SSD learned that the family had escaped North Korea and formed an arrest squad.

The SSD coerced Park Geon-choon, Lee Gyeong-moo's acquaintance, into making a telephone call to Lee. Park suggested that they have a meal together at the Koreana Restaurant in Yanji, China. Lee went to the restaurant with his family to share a meal with Park, a close acquaintance, and the family was arrested by a five-member SSD arrest squad.

The SSD's arrest squad is an *ad hoc*, illegal entity separate from the official institutions of the North Korean and Chinese authorities. The arrest squad abducted Lee and his family in broad daylight in downtown Yanji and forced them onto a van before driving back to the Sino-North Korean border. The SSD used a smuggling route from Sanhezhen on the Chinese side of the border to Ingye-ri, Hoeryong City, on the North Korean side to repatriate the family across the river after 10pm.

Lee Gyeong-moo and his family were subject to beatings and torture during the interrogation process, which took place in a facility separate from Hoeryong City SSD. This facility, located in a cigarette storage building in Goksan Factory, Hoeryong, was created and operated by a special team from North Hamgyong Province SSD with cooperation from Hoeryong City SSD. In this interrogation facility, any and all forms of violence and torture are used to "create" political criminals. Lee Gyeong-moo's older brother, Lee Jeong-moo, was also interrogated at this facility for information about his brother's escape plans and his intent to go South Korea. Lee Jeong-moo was later expelled from the Korean Workers' Party and fired from his position at a Party institution because of his younger brother's political crime. Another younger brother was forcibly discharged from military service. The SSD did not notify Lee Jeong-moo, other family members, or relatives about the outcome of the trial or which prison camp the family had been sent to.

During the SSD interrogation, Lee Gyeong-moo admitted his intent to go to South Korea. Lee, his wife, and his son were all sent to a political prison camp. According to Lee Jeong-moo, his brother's face was bloodied beyond recognition due to brutal violence and torture during interrogation. The SSD will beat a suspect to the point of death to extract a confession of guilt. Lee Jeong-moo and other family members believe that Lee Gyeong-moo's family was sent to Camp 16 (Hwasong).

(6) Photo of the Detainee

(7) Name and Address of Witness

Name:

Phone Number:

E-mail:

Date:

Name:

Signature: