**The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea Launches Updated Report Based on Satellite Imagery of North Korea’s Political Prison Camp No. 14**

***CAMP FULLY OPERATIONAL, GUARD FORCES AND PRISONER POPULATION APPEAR TO HAVE EXPANDED***

The report, *North Korea’s Political Prison Camp, Kwan-li-so No. 14, Update 1*,is available on HRNK’s website: <https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/Camp%2014%20v.8.pdf>

WASHINGTON, December 22, 2021. The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), a non-governmental organization based in Washington, D.C., has launched a report entitled *North Korea’s Political Prison Camp, Kwan-li-so No. 14, Update 1.* This is the first update building on the baseline report HRNK released over six years ago, on November 30, 2015. Political Prison Camp No. 14 (a.k.a. *Kwan-li-so* No. 14) is located approximately 61 kilometers northeast of North Korea’s capital city of Pyongyang and about 19 kilometers southeast of Kaechon, South Pyongan Province.

Located on the forested slopes of the Changan mountain range, Camp No. 14 remains one of North Korea’s oldest continuously operating political prison camps, having been established in the mid-1960s. The camp occupies an irregularly shaped area of approximately 153 square kilometers (58.9 square miles) that measures 21.9 by 13.8 kilometers (13.9 by 8.5 miles). While open-source information on the camp continues to be scarce, estimates of the Camp No. 14 political prisoner population have ranged from 15,000 in HRNK’s 2015 baseline report to 43,000 in recent media reports. What is certain is that the composition and physical size of the camp suggest that it could accommodate large numbers of prisoners. The entire camp is believed to be a “total control zone,” where prisoners are never eligible for release.

For this report, HRNK author and senior adviser **Joseph S. Bermudez, Jr.** analyzed ten high-resolution commercial pan-sharpened multispectral and pan-chromatic satellite images of Camp No. 14 and its immediate environs.

The report is the latest step in an effort by HRNK to create a clear picture of the evolution and current state of North Korea’s political prison camps and other detention facilities. HRNK is the NGO that put North Korea’s penal labor colonies on the map by publishing *Hidden Gulag* by world-renowned investigator David Hawk in 2003. *Hidden Gulag* wasthe first report ever to use satellite imagery to scrutinize North Korea’s vast system of unlawful imprisonment.

The new HRNK report establishes that Camp No. 14 remains an operational political prison camp. Based on the physical security measures observed, the majority of those inside the camp perimeter are prisoners. Satellite imagery analysis indicates that the prisoners maintain the agricultural fields, orchards, and livestock. Prisoners are forced to work in logging and the manufacturing of wood products. They are also dispatched as forced laborers at light industrial facilities and mines.

Agricultural activity, razing and construction of various structures, the addition of guard positions, and changes in light industrial facilities noticeable throughout the camp over the past few years confirm an expansion or reorganization of guard forces, a modest increase in the prisoner population, or both.

Report author **Joseph S. Bermudez Jr.** emphasized that, “while satellite imagery confirms that Camp 14 is fully operational, further monitoring is needed in order to identify all of the camp’s components, provide a detailed accounting of its previous operations, record physical changes at the facility, and assist with the identification of human rights abuses.” **Bermudez** further added: “HRNK’s satellite imagery program will be instrumental in the documentation of crimes against humanity and other egregious human rights violations, addressing possible complex humanitarian emergencies as well as the transitional justice process in North Korea, when the time is ripe.”

HRNK Director of International Advocacy and Development **Amanda Mortwedt Oh** stated: “The sobering reality is that people who were imprisoned in 2015, when we released our first imagery report on this camp, may not be alive today due to the camp's harsh conditions, abuse, and forced labor perpetrated by the Ministry of State Security.” According to **Mortwedt Oh**: “If the North Korean state wants to participate on the world stage and be taken seriously, it is long past time for it to close its gulags and release political prisoners. It is not too late to take this positive and meaningful step. This would surely signal to the world that Kim Jong-un is ready for true reform.”

HRNK Executive Director **Greg Scarlatoiu** noted: “This report confirms that, throughout its first decade, the Kim Jong-un regime has perpetuated relentless patterns of oppression and brutality established and continued under the current leader’s predecessors. This is a regime that preserves itself through crimes against humanity. Any overture aimed at dialogue with the Kim Jong-un regime, reconciliation, or peace declarations must factor in North Korea’s abysmal human rights situation.”

**RELEASE DETAILS**

The report rollout and presentation by **Joseph S. Bermudez Jr.** will be held via Zoom virtual conference, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST), on Wednesday, December 22, 2021. HRNK Executive Director **Greg Scarlatoiu** will moderate.

If you are unable to participate, a video recording will be made available on HRNK’s YouTube channel after the event at <https://www.youtube.com/user/committeehrnk>.

The report release is ON-THE-RECORD. For media inquiries, please contact Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director, at [executive.director@hrnk.org](mailto:executive.director@hrnk.org) (+1-202-499-7973).

*HRNK was founded in 2001 as a nonprofit research organization dedicated to documenting human rights conditions in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), as North Korea is formally known. Visit* [*www.hrnk.org*](http://www.hrnk.org) *to find out more.*