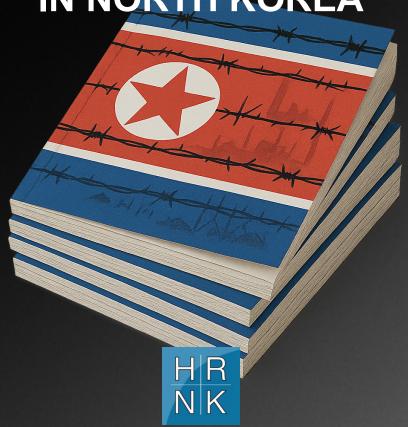
이제 우리는 알고 있다 NOW THE WORLD DOES KNOW

2025 REFERENCE GUIDE TO REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA



The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea

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2025 REFERENCE GUIDE
TO REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS
IN NORTH KOREA



Albert Buixadé Farré
The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea

NOW THE WORLD DOES KNOW: 2025 REFERENCE GUIDE TO REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA

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Unlike earlier totalitarian states and oppressive conduct, the world cannot now lament, "if only we had known..." Now, the world does know. And the question is whether the world will respond effectively and take the necessary action.

Judge Michael Kirby, Chair of the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 2014.

^{*}Kirby, Michael (November 18, 2014). "Kirby: Moment of truth for North Korea over human rights". CNN. https://web.archive.org/web/20150112144805/http://www.cnn.com/2014/11/18/opinion/north-korea-un-resolution-kirby/

NOW THE WORLD DOES KNOW: 2025 REFERENCE GUIDE TO REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THE COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA	5
PREFACE	7
A. Why this Reference Guide Exists	7
B. Contents and Inclusion Criteria	7
BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	8
A. Historical Context: The Two Koreas	8
B. Chronology and Major Themes in Human Rights Reporting on North Korea	9
CHAPTER I. UNITED NATIONS REPORTS	11
A. 2014 Commission of Inquiry	12
B. Universal Periodic Review	12
C. Secretary General	14
D. Special Rapporteur - UN Human Rights Council	15
E. Special Rapporteur - UN General Assembly	17
F. Other Reports	18
CHAPTER II. GOVERNMENT REPORTS	21
A. North Korea	21
B. South Korea	24
C. United States	28
CHAPTER III. SPECIALIZED HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS (N.KOREA)	38
A. Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights	38
B. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea	40
C. Database Center for North Korean Human Rights	44
D. Transitional Justice Working Group	47
E. Other South Korea-based Organizations	48
F. Other U.SBased Organizations	49
CHAPTER IV. GENERAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS	50
A. Amnesty International	50
B. Human Rights Watch	56
C. Other Organizations	59
CHAPTER V. OTHER ORGANIZATIONS	60
A. Bar Associations	60
CHAPTER VI. BOOKS	61
CHAPTER VII. ESSENTIAL WORKS: EXPERT RECOMMENDATIONS	62

CHAPTER VIII: OTHER RESOURCES	66
REFERENCES	67
EDITORIAL AND REFERENCE NOTES	81
APPENDIX: WORKS BY THE COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA	84
A. Prison Camps	84
B. North Korea State and Society	88
C. International Community	90
D. Submissions to the United Nations	91
E. U.S. Congressional Testimony	91
F. Other	93

ABOUT THE COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA

The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) is the leading U.S.-based nonpartisan, non-governmental organization (NGO) in the field of North Korean human rights research and advocacy, tasked with focusing international attention on human rights abuses in that country. It is HRNK's mission to persistently remind policymakers, opinion leaders, and the general public that more than 20 million North Koreans need our attention. Since its establishment in October 2001, HRNK has played an important intellectual leadership role in North Korean human rights issues by publishing over 50 major reports (available at https://www.hrnk.org/publications/hrnk-publications.php). Recent HRNK reports have addressed issues including North Korea's overseas workers, the influx of outside information into North Korea and the regime's response, the health and human rights of North Korean children, and North Korea's political prison camps.

HRNK is the first and only NGO that solely focuses on North Korean human rights issues to receive consultative status at the United Nations (UN). It was also the first organization to propose that the human rights situation in North Korea be addressed by the UN Security Council. HRNK was directly and actively involved in all stages of the process supporting the work of the UN Commission of Inquiry (COI) on North Korean human rights. Its reports have been cited numerous times in the report of the COI, the reports of the UN Special Rapporteur on North Korean human rights, a report by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, two reports of the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, and several U.S. Department of State Democratic People's Republic of Korea Human Rights Reports. HRNK has also regularly been invited to provide expert testimony before the U.S. Congress.

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PREFACE

A. Why this Reference Guide Exists

At its core, this reference guide challenges the notion that there is doubt or insufficient data to compel the strongest action by the international community to stop the North Korean regime from committing crimes against humanity.

Despite the opacity of the regime and the lack of direct access, sufficient evidence of broad, grave, and pervasive human rights violations in North Korea does exist. In fact, since the establishment of the DPRK more than sixty years ago, crimes against humanity have been committed by its totalitarian regime and continue to this day. And HRNK works to continue to provide up-to-date data and insights.

This reference guide aims to show with the greatest clarity how a body of knowledge exists; a body of knowledge that is accessible to the general public, that should heavily weigh on policymakers to take strong action, and that is available to researchers and analysts to draw insights from. It spans decades and is increasingly robust.

B. Contents and Inclusion Criteria

This reference guide distinguishes between fact-focused publications and analysis- and policy-focused publications, where the latter draw on the information provided in the former to develop conclusions and recommendations.

Chapters I–V provide an expansive list of fact-focused reports. Chapter VI includes books recounting the experiences of defectors. Chapter VII presents a curated selection of policy-focused publications, chosen by HRNK staff in consultation with external experts. Chapter VIII lists other relevant sources of information that do not fit into the preceding chapters.

This guide limits itself to publications in English. Submissions made by NGOs or state parties to the United Nations, whether as part of treaty-body reviews or Human Rights Council mechanisms, are not included here; instead, the resulting UN reports are listed.

For the purposes of this guide, publications are considered to be "on human rights in North Korea" if they principally:

- Directly cover human rights abuses in North Korea; or
- Examine the regime and leadership in relation to those abuses; or
- Discuss how the situation can be improved and/or how justice may be attained.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

A. Historical Context: The Two Koreas

For centuries, Korea had been a high-ranking tributary state within the Imperial Chinese tributary system. In the late 19th century Japan began to assert greater control over the Korean peninsula, culminating in its annexation in 1910. Korea remained a colony of Japan until Japan's defeat in World War II in 1945.

At the end of World War II, with Japan stripped of its colonial territories, the Korean peninsula was placed under a United Nations trusteeship: the northern half administered by the Soviet Union and the southern half by the United States. The stated plan was to restore Korea as a united and independent country. Disagreements over how and when to implement self-rule led the two territories to establish their own separate and rival governments. The Korean War (1950–1953) was the last attempt to reunify the peninsula by force, but it ended in stalemate and entrenched two very different regimes.

Within the Soviet and American spheres respectively, the North became a Stalinist totalitarian regime continuously led by the Kim family, and the South developed into a capitalist society that, until 1987, experienced short periods of unstable democracy and longer periods of authoritarian rule, including over 25 years under right-wing military governments.

Supported by their allies, both North and South experienced rapid economic growth after the Korean War, but in the 1970s the North's growth faltered while the South's accelerated.

South Korea's period of military autocracy ended in 1987 through mass citizen mobilizations, giving rise to a more stable democracy with a prosperous free-market economy. North Korea, by contrast, remained under a rigid totalitarian regime that never allowed its people to mobilize for reform. Its command economy stagnated in the 1970s and, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, spiraled into crisis in the 1990s, culminating in a massive famine. To this day, North Korea remains one of the world's most isolated countries, with a struggling economy under an isolationist, militaristic, and totalitarian regime.

^{*} A general history of the two Koreas can be found in these two works: Oberdorfer, Don; Carlin, Robert (December 10, 2013). Two Koreas: A Contemporary History. Basic Books. ISBN 978-0465031238.; Cha, Victor; Pacheco Pardo, Ramon (June 27, 2023). Korea: A New History of North and South. Yale University Press. ISBN 978-0300259810.

B. Chronology and Major Themes in Human Rights Reporting on North Korea

The reporting of human rights in the DPRK follows the progression of the modern movement of human rights, which from the 1970s civil society and governmental efforts made violations more visible to the general public and in international politics. [1-3]

Given the opacity of the DPRK's regime, especially before the 1990s, little was known about the situation of human rights. [4-11] The few reports that were issued at that time made note of the lack of concrete information, mostly only being able to describe the general characteristics of the country's political system. [7, 4, 11] Amnesty International, founded in 1961,[12] began to issue some basic reports on the DPRK in 1977. [13,5] In 1979 the US's Department of State also began to cover the DPRK in its Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. [14]

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the subsequent North Korean famine of the 1990s, a higher number of individuals began to flee the country and more first-person accounts began to be collected by human rights organizations. [15] That was also followed in the early 2000s by greater availability of satellite imagery. [6] South Korea, having itself transitioned from a military dictatorship to a democracy in the late 1980s, began to publish reports in 1996 through its governmental think tank Korea Institute for National Unification. [16, 17] In the late 1990s and 2000s several NGOs specialized on North Korea emerged and began to publish their own research: Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights (1996), [18, 19] Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (2001), [20-22, 15] Database Center for North Korean Human Rights (2003), [23-25] People for Successful Corean Reunification (2006). [26-29] Around the same time some other world-wide human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Christian Solidarity Worldwide also began to publish reports on the DPRK.

As reports from NGOs and governments began to reveal more details on the human rights situation in the DPRK during the 1990s and 2000s, these concerns were elevated to the United Nations, where various UN bodies and parties also began to express a growing concern on the situation and opacity of the regime. [30-33, 15] The mounting evidence being collected and published by governments and civil society led in 2004 to the establishment of the mandate for the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the DPRK, issuing reports annually. [34]

The growing amount of information, and the grave situation it increasingly revealed, led the United Nations General Assembly [35] and the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) [36-38] to repeatedly pass resolutions officially expressing their concerns and urging the DPRK's government to change its ways. [31-33, 39]

Ten years later, further joint efforts by the UN Special Rapporteur, governments, and NGOs [18] led to the establishment of a special one-time investigation unprecedented in depth and breadth [40] commissioned by the Human Rights Council, with a landmark report published in 2014. [41, 42, 31, 43, 15] It was deemed the most authoritative report up to that point. [44, 42, 45] The report unequivocally concluded that the DPRK regime committed gross and systematic violations of human rights including freedom of thought, expression and religion; freedom from discrimination; freedom of movement and residence; and the right to food, [43] as well as crimes against humanity entailing "extermination, murder, enslavement, torture, imprisonment, rape, forced abortions and other sexual violence, persecution on political, religious, racial and gender grounds, the forcible transfer of populations, the enforced disappearance of persons and the inhumane act of knowingly causing prolonged starvation". [31, 46, 47]

The UN's fact-finding process continues to yield periodical reports, which greatly rely on and are underpinned by the also on-going research and publishing conducted by NGOs and governmental agencies. [33, 48, 49, 18, 40, 50, 3]

Increased awareness of human rights abuses has led to efforts in shaping policy and pressuring the North Korean regime. [51] However the pursuit for the improvement of human rights in the DPRK has had to contend with the efforts of preventing a nuclear weapons escalation.[51, 40] Further, the isolationist and totalitarian nature of the regime has also meant that information and freedom of movement of its population as well as that of foreigners is still tightly controlled, making extremely challenging to document abuses on the ground, [50] including having access to imagery (other than satellite imagery) that could inspire greater action. [40]

CHAPTER I. UNITED NATIONS REPORTS

The United Nations has issued four main kinds of reports on the human rights in North Korea.

The first are a series of documents containing recommendations from treaty-based bodies, which are issued by those bodies to each country that is party to them (in contrast to charter-based bodies, of which all UN members are part). The treaty-based bodies that North Korea has joined include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The first document of this kind was issued in 1998 (Convention on the Rights of the Child); the second in 2001 (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights), after a 17-year delay in North Korea submitting the required information to the committee [52, 53]

Prompted by growing evidence provided by human rights NGOs, during the 1990s and 2000s various UN bodies and parties expressed greater concern on the situation of human rights in North Korea and the opacity of the country's government. [30-33, 3] That led to another series of reports started by the UN Commission on Human Rights (the predecessor of the UN Human Rights Council), which established the mandate for the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the DPRK in 2004, issuing reports annually [54, 55] These reports are issued in detail to the Human Rights Council, and in a more condensed form to the General Assembly.

The United Nations also conducts a Universal Periodic Review (every 3 or 4 years, in which all UN members are subject to a review of their human rights practices), with the first report on North Korea issued in 2010. [56-59]

Finally, the most notable was the 2014 Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the DPRK, considered a landmark document resulting from a special in-depth, one-time investigation commissioned by the Human Rights Council, [41, 42, 31, 43, 18] It was deemed the most authoritative report up to that point. [44, 42, 45]

UN documents can be searched using their "symbol" (i.e: A/HRC/42/10) in two official UN repositories:

UN Digital Library:

https://digitallibrary.un.org/

UN ODS (Official Document System):

https://documents.un.org/

Additionally, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights also holds a large collection of relevant documentation:

https://www.ohchr.org/

A. 2014 Commission of Inquiry

 United Nations Human Rights Council Session 25 Summary record Report of the commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea A/HRC/25/63

https://web.archive.org/web/20140311073546/http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoIDPRK/Report/A.HRC.25.63.doc

• United Nations Human Rights Council Session 25 Report of the detailed findings of the commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea A/HRC/25/CRP.1 February 7, 2014.

https://web.archive.org/web/20140227104633/http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoIDPRK/Report/A.HRC.25.CRP.1_ENG.doc

Additional documentation can be found at: https://web.archive.org/web/20230104174749/https://www.o hchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/co-idprk/reportofthe-commissi onof-inquiry-dprk

B. Universal Periodic Review

- Human Rights Council (13th Session) (January 4, 2010), Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review Democratic People's Republic of Korea
 A/HRC/13/13. https://www.https://www.archive.org/web/20211003202022/https://undocs.org/A/HRC/13/13
 - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (6th session) (September 18, 2009), Compilation prepared by the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in accordance with with paragraph

- 15 (b) of the annex to Human Rights Council Resolution 5/1 -- Democratic People's Republic of Korea (A/HRC/WG.6/6/PRK/2). https://web.archive.org/web/20230211151009/https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/lib-docs/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session6/KP/A HRC WG6 6 PRK 2 E.pdf
- Human Rights Council (27th Session) (July 2, 2014), Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review - Democratic People's Republic of Korea A/HRC/27/10.
 - https://web.archive.org/web/20210125233704/https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Regular Sessions/Session27/Documents/A HRC 27 10 ENG.doc
 - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (HRC 19th session) (July 2, 2014), Compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21 -- Democratic People's Republic of Korea (A/HRC/WG.6/19/PRK/2). https://web.archive.org/web/20230211152008/https://upr-info.org/sites/default/files/documents/2014-04/a hrc wg.6 19 prk 2 e.pdf
- Human Rights Council (42nd Session) (June 25, 2019), Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review Democratic People's Republic of Korea (A/HRC/42/10)
 https://web.archive.org/web/20230211152452/https://daccess-ods.un.org/tmp/7039813.39931488.ht
 - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (HRC 3rd session) (February 26, 2019), Compilation on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/WG.6/33/PRK/2).

 https://web.archive.org/web/20230211152706/https://upr-info.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019-04/a hrc wg.6 33 prk 2 e.pdf
- Human Rights Council () NOVEMBER 2024
 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (HRC 47th session) (August 6, 2024), Compilation of information prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/WG.6/47/PRK/2).
 https://documents.un.org/doc/und-oc/gen/g24/122/67/pdf/g2412267.pdf

Additional documentation involved in the preparation of the UN's UPR reports can be found here:

https://web.archive.org/web/20230210132138/https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/kp-index

Individual reports submitted in the preparation of the UN's UPR reports by stakeholders including human rights and civil society organization, can be found here:

First Cycle:

https://web.archive.org/web/20230210132844/https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/uprkp-stakeholders-info-s6

Second Cycle:

https://web.archive.org/web/20220308154513/https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRKPStakeholdersInfoS19.aspx

Third Cycle:

https://web.archive.org/web/20210729012107/https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRKPStakeholdersInfoS33.aspx

C. Secretary General

79/pdf/n2140379.pdf

- Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/279), (August 3, 2017). https://web.archive.org/web/20241213020625/https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n17/243/09/pdf/n1724309.pdf
- Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Note by the Secretary-General (A/74/275/Rev.1), (September 20, 2019). https://web.archive.org/web/20241106103937/https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3827959#record-files-collapse-header
- Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Report of the Secretary-General (A/76/242), (July 28, 2021).
 https://web.archive.org/web/20241106103636/https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n21/208/98/pdf/n2120898.pdf
- Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 16 December 2021 76/177. Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (A/RES/76/177), (January 10, 2022).
 https://web.archive.org/web/20241106103320/https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n21/403/
- Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Report of the Secretary-General (A/77/247), (July 29, 2022).

 https://web.archive.org/web/20241106103320/https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n21/403/79/pdf/n2140379.pdf
- Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Report of the Secretary General (A/78/212), (July 21, 2023) https://web.archive.org/web/20241106102929/https://seoul.ohchr.org/en/node/535

• Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea - Report of the Secretary General (A/79/277), (August 5, 2024)

https://web.archive.org/web/20241106103125/https://seoul.ohchr.org/en/node/580

D. Special Rapporteur - UN Human Rights Council

- UN Human Rights Council (4th session) Vitit Muntarbhorn (February 7, 2007),
 Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Vitit Muntarbhorn (A/HRC/4/15).
 https://web.archive.org/web/20230203190249/https://daccess-ods.un.org/tmp/3524353.20615768.html
- UN Human Rights Council (7th session) Vitit Muntarbhorn (February 15, 2008),
 Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Vitit Muntarbhorn (A/HRC/7/20).
 https://web.archive.org/web/20230203190356/https://daccess-ods.un.org/tmp/9893237.35237122.html
- UN Human Rights Council (10th session) Marzuki Darusman (February 24, 2009),
 Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the
 Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Marzuki Darusman (A/HRC/10/18)
 https://web.archive.org/web/20230203190520/https://daccess-ods.un.org/tmp/1421091.70556068.html
- UN Human Rights Council (16th session) (February 21, 2011), Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (A/HRC/16/58).
 https://web.archive.org/web/20230203190616/https://daccess-ods.un.org/tmp/3233124.31573868.html
- UN Human Rights Council (19th session) (February 13, 2012), Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (A/HRC/19/65).
 https://web.archive.org/web/20230203190728/https://daccess-ods.un.org/tmp/3260387.18223572.html
- UN Human Rights Council (22nd session) Marzuki Darusman (February 1, 2013),
 Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the
 Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Marzuki Darusman (A/HRC/22/57).
 https://web.archive.org/web/20230203190832/https://daccess-ods.un.org/tmp/6485376.95407867.html
- UN Human Rights Council (26th session) Marzuki Darusman (June 13, 2014), Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Marzuki Darusman (A/HRC/26/43).
 https://web.archive.org/web/20230203190941/https://daccess-ods.un.org/tmp/4271399.37877655.html
- UN Human Rights Council (28th session) Marzuki Darusman (March 18, 2015),
 Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the
 Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Marzuki Darusman (A/HRC/28/71)

- $\underline{https://web.archive.org/web/20230203191043/https://daccess-ods.un.org/tmp/2340227.36549377.html$
- UN Human Rights Council (31st session) (January 19, 2016), Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (A/HRC/31/70).
 https://web.archive.org/web/20230203191134/https://daccess-ods.un.org/tmp/746422.931551933.ht
- UN Human Rights Council (34th session) (February 22, 2017), Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (A/HRC/34/66).
 https://web.archive.org/web/20230203191241/https://daccess-ods.un.org/tmp/3770414.29281235.html
- UN Human Rights Council (40th session) (May 30, 2019), Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (A/HRC/40/66).
 - https://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?OpenAgent&DS=A/HRC/40/66&Lang=E
- UN Human Rights Council (43rd session) (May 1, 2020), Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (A/HRC/43/58). https://web.archive.org/web/20230203191438/https://daccess-ods.un.org/tmp/7321061.49196625.ht
- UN Human Rights Council (46th session) Tomás Ojea Quintana (July 2, 2021),
 Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Tomás Ojea Quintana (A/HRC/46/51).
 https://web.archive.org/web/20230203191550/https://daccess-ods.un.org/tmp/2110193.07374954.html
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 Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Elizabeth Salmón (A/HRC/52/65).
 https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g23/046/66/pdf/g2304666.pdf
- UN Human Rights Council (55th session) Elizabeth Salmón (March 26, 2024), Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Elizabeth Salmón (A/HRC/55/63).
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E. Special Rapporteur - UN General Assembly

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CHAPTER II. GOVERNMENT REPORTS

A. North Korea

North Korea published a report on its own human rights situation, as a rebuttal to the 2014 United Nations Commission of Inquiry report. [42, 45, 60-67] It has also submitted reports to the United Nations.

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 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC,
 SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS Second periodic reports submitted by States parties under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant Addendum -DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA E/1990/6/Add.35.
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B. South Korea

The Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU; formerly the Research Institute for National Unification) opened the Center for North Korean Human Rights in 1994 to systematically collect and manage all source materials and objective data concerning North Korean human rights. Since 1996, KINU has published the White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea each year, in Korean and in English. [16, 68-70] Other reports, including those by the U.S. government, use KINU's reports as part of their sources. Another South Korean governmental institution publishing research on human rights in the DPRK is the National Human Rights Commission of Korea (NHRCK). [71]

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C. United States

The United States government, through the Department of State's (DOS) Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, has published annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, which began including North Korea in 1979 [14]. Two different bodies within the U.S. government have also published reports on religious freedom: the Department of State (since 2001) [72], and the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF; since 2003). Finally, the DOS Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons publishes *Trafficking in Persons Reports* (TIP) that include some coverage of North Korea. The TIP series began in 2001, following the passage of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, with North Korea briefly covered starting in the 2003 report [73-74] and more fully covered beginning in 2005 [75].

The Country Reports on Human Rights Practices issued by the DOS noted each year the difficulty of obtaining detailed, up-to-date information, relying instead on sparse data collected over several years. This was especially the case during the 1970s and 1980s, and began to change in the 1990s with more witness accounts, though the reports continued to note the lack of detailed and timely information [8]. As more reports became available, the DOS and USCIRF reports frequently cited publications from the United Nations, South Korea's Korea Institute for National Unification (starting in 1996), nonprofits (especially the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea and the Database Center for North Korean Human Rights, since their establishment in the 2000s), and the press [48].

U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, reports list: https://www.state.gov/reports-bureau-of-democracy-human-rights-and-labor/

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CHAPTER III. SPECIALIZED HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS (N.KOREA)

A. Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights

The Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights (NKHR; South Korea-based nonprofit founded in 1996) works in researching and disseminating information about the human rights violations in North Korea. It also runs assistance programs for North Korean defectors. [18, 76, 19]

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- "What Happened to Ethnic Koreans Displaced from Japan to North Korea?".

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B. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea

The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK; U.S.-based nonprofit established in 2001) is known for its original research based on its adept [20-22, 51] use of satellite imagery, defector accounts [15], and even information coming directly from inside the country [33, 20]. Its published research has been relied upon as sources in reports issued by the United Nations and governments [33, 48, 49, 15]. HRNK has issued four main types of reports: reports analyzing the situation in prison camps [51], reports on other human rights issues in the country, reports on North Korea's leadership and institutions, as well as policy briefings addressed to the international community. The first three types of reports are listed here.

The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, publications list: https://www.hrnk.org/documentation/

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C. Database Center for North Korean Human Rights

The Database Center for North Korean Human Rights (NKDB; South Korea-based nonprofit founded in 2003) [25-27] specializes in collecting and analyzing human rights abuses and maintaining a database, which as of 2022 included the accounts of over 52,000 individuals and 82,000 cases of human rights violations [78].

Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights, publications list: https://en.nkdb.org/researchreport

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D. Transitional Justice Working Group

Transitional Justice Working Group (TJWG) describes itself as a human rights documentation and advocacy NGO established in Seoul in 2014 that aims to develop the best practice to address mass human rights violations and to realize reparation and judicial accountability through a victim-centered approach in societies that are making a transition from or have yet to make a transition from armed conflict or dictatorship. TJWG also cooperates and shares experience with organizations and individuals who take the lead in human rights documentation and accountability for mass atrocities.

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CHAPTER IV. GENERAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

A. Amnesty International

Amnesty International (AI; based in the United Kingdom, established in 1961) publishes an annual report, *The State of the World's Human Rights* [13, 40], which initially included only brief mentions of most countries, later expanding to devote 1–2 pages to the analysis of the human rights situation in each country, including North Korea in 1977 [15, 5, 51]. Through the 1970s and 1980s, the organization noted that its ability to report on human rights in North Korea was severely hampered by the opacity of the regime, with only scant reports available [5, 4]. This began to change in the 1990s as more information became available. Since that time, AI has also issued other stand-alone reports specific to human rights issues in North Korea.

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Human Rights Watch (HRW; based in the United States, established in 1978) publishes an annual World Report. Listed below are the sections of those reports that focus on the situation in North Korea. HRW has produced World Reports since 1989 covering a limited number of countries, and it began to devote a section to the DPRK in 2004 [78, 79, 51, 40].

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^{*}Shin Dong-hyuk later recanted parts of his story.

CHAPTER VII. ESSENTIAL WORKS: EXPERT RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter stands apart from the others in this reference guide. We invited experts on North Korea to provide their recommendations for essential readings especially suited to time-constrained policymakers seeking to engage with human rights issues in North Korea.

Each contributor was asked to recommend both their own most relevant work and other leading works in the field. Some suggestions overlap with titles already listed elsewhere in this report. Some works were endorsed by multiple experts, while others reflect individual perspectives; this guide does not distinguish between the two, but presents all selections together. The list is not intended to be read in full but rather to provide a selection of key works from which readers can identify the most useful for their needs. It encompasses publications of many kinds, including both fact-focused and policy-focused works.

In inviting contributions, we sought a diversity of perspectives to more broadly represent the field, irrespective of whether the recommended works align with one another or with HRNK.

Expert contributors include Andrei Lankov (Kookmin University), Andrew Yeo (Brookings Institution), Dong-ho Han (Korean Institute for National Unification; KINU), Gi-Wook Shin (Stanford University-Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center), Hyunwoo Noh (Human Rights Research division, KINU), Joshua Stanton (Institute of Corea-American Studies Fellow; founder of OneFreeKorea), Kwang-jin Kim (Institute for National Security Strategy), Michael Kirby (Former chair of the UN COI). Some contributors chose not to be identified by name.

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CHAPTER VIII: OTHER RESOURCES

- The **Database Center for North Korean Human Rights** (**NKDB**; South Korea) maintains a "Unified Human Rights Database"; a digital repository aggregating testimonies, data, and case records of human rights violations in North Korea. As of their latest public figures, the database contains information on over 88,000 cases of human rights violations documented from the accounts of more than 57,000 individuals. The collection draws from memoirs, questionnaires, and in-depth interviews.
 - https://en.nkdb.org/DB
 - o https://en.nkdb.org/record
 - Visual Atlas, Database Center for North Korean: https://en.nkdb.org/visualatlas
- The North Korea International Documentation Project (NKIDP; United States) is part of the Wilson Center's History and Public Policy Program and functions as a clearinghouse of declassified archival materials related to the DPRK. It gathers and publishes primary documents from the archives of North Korea's former communist allies, including the Soviet Union, China, East Germany, Romania, Hungary, Poland, and Albania, providing insight into North Korea's foreign relations, military policies, inter-Korean affairs, and Cold War dynamics. Through working papers, e-dossiers, briefing books, and a publicly accessible digital archive, NKIDP aims to make formerly opaque documentary evidence available to scholars, policymakers, and the broader public.
 - https://www.wilsoncenter.org/program/north-korea-international-docume ntation-project
- The **North Korean Archives Project**, a joint effort by the Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights (NKHR) and Poland's Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), began with Polish sources particularly files in the IPN archives but stated their plans to expand by collaborating with other national authorities in the European Network of Official Authorities in Charge of Secret Police Files. Its stated goal is to shed light on North Korean state security operations, provide contextual evidence for institutional abuses, and support accountability initiatives, human rights research, and truth-seeking efforts.
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"Amnesty International has carefully monitored all available information from North Korea and can only report that it contains no detailed evidence whatsoever regarding arrests, trials and imprisonment in that country. Furthermore, there appears to be a complete censorship of news relating to human rights violations. Despite its efforts Amnesty

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"This certainly contrasts with the past when the world was largely in the dark about human rights conditions in North Korea. It was not until 40 years after Kim Il-sung assumed power — in the late 1970s and 80s — that international NGOs first began to report on the human rights situation. More recently with the escape of some 25,000 North Koreans to the South, information has become more plentiful about all aspects of human rights in North Korea. Hundreds of former prisoners and former prison guards are among the defectors and have been providing testimony about their prison experiences. And since 2003, satellite photos of the camps have helped verify the information provided by the former prisoners and guards. North Koreans hiding in China have also been providing information."

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"The Committee welcomes the submission of the second periodic report, which contains detailed information on domestic legislation in the area of civil and political rights, and the opportunity to resume the dialogue with the State party after an interval of more than 17 years. The Committee welcomes the State party's decision to send a strong delegation from its capital, composed of representatives of various government authorities, for the examination of the second periodic report, and the readiness expressed by the delegation to continue the dialogue with the Committee after the examination of the report. The Committee is also pleased to note that the delegation of the State party recognized the importance of the Committee's task and intimated that the Committee could expect more prompt reporting in the future. The Committee regrets, however, the considerable delay in the submission of the report, which was due in 1987. It regrets the lack of information on the human rights situation in practice, as well as the absence of facts and data on the implementation of the Covenant. As a result, a number of credible and substantiated allegations of violations of Covenant provisions which have been brought to the attention of the Committee could not be addressed effectively and the Committee found it difficult to determine whether individuals in the State party's territory and subject to its jurisdiction fully and effectively enjoy their fundamental rights under the Covenant."

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EDITORIAL AND REFERENCE NOTES

ENDORSEMENT DISCLAIMER

HRNK has sought to broadly include reports and publications from multiple institutions and authors in order to provide a diverse and reasonably comprehensive list of works. The aim of this guide is to reflect the breadth of the field as a whole, including disparate or even opposing perspectives. Accordingly, this reference guide also includes materials issued by North Korea.

HRNK's inclusion of any work does not constitute an endorsement of the quality, rigor, or viewpoint of the publication, author, or institution. This remains a judgement for each reader to make.

The exclusion of any report from this guide likewise does not imply a judgment of irrelevance or lack of quality. Exclusions may have resulted from determinations about whether a report met the inclusion criteria of this guide—primarily topical relevance and a focus on factual reporting—or from unintentional oversight, as discussed further in the On Completeness section below.

ON COMPLETENESS

HRNK has endeavored to make this reference guide as comprehensive as possible, within the bounds of its inclusion criteria. These criteria are set out in the Contents and Inclusion Criteria section of the introduction, and principally cover English-language works focused on human rights in North Korea, with an emphasis on fact-focused publications.

Nevertheless, some worthy works or institutions are bound to have been inadvertently omitted. Authors, institutions, or other interested parties are welcome to contact HRNK to recommend additions or corrections for consideration in possible future editions of this guide. HRNK can be reached by email at: committee@hrnk.org.

Readers are also encouraged to contribute to the Wikipedia version of this report, subject to the policies and guidelines of the Wikimedia Foundation and the Wikipedia project.

ONLINE ACCESS AND URL ARCHIVAL

Whenever possible, and to maximize ease of access, we have included a URL to the digital version of each publication listed.

In anticipation that original URLs may cease to function over time due to changes in how institutions host their publications online, we have sought to provide archival URLs, using the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine (https://web.archive.org/).

Each archived URL cited contains two parts: the second portion is the original URL (blue highlight in the example below), while the first portion is the Internet Archive's own URL (green highlight). This format ensures that the original URL information is preserved in the citations included in this guide.

Example:

https://web.archive.org/web/20140227104633/http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoIDPRK/Report/A.HRC.25.CRP.1_ENG.doc

In cases where a website could not be archived, this guide provides the latest available live URL

ABOUT THIS WORKING EDITION

This guide has been prepared as a working reference resource rather than a finished, polished report. While care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of sources, the citation styles are not fully standardized. The emphasis has been on making a broad range of bibliographic information available in a timely and accessible manner, rather than on achieving stylistic uniformity. Future iterations may refine formatting, but this edition is offered as a working tool for researchers and practitioners.

HRNK'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO WIKIPEDIA

HRNK's Wikipedia contributions began in 2016¹ with the creation of a Wikipedia article that summarized and contextualized the 2014 United Nations Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.² The article was first published in English; HRNK subsequently prepared Korean and Chinese versions.

That effort was followed by the creation of a list of publications on human rights in North Korea, which HRNK first published as a Wikipedia article on September 10, 2018:³

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List of fact-finding reports on human rights in Nort h Korea

This reference guide builds and expands on that work. New information published here may subsequently be freely published in Wikipedia by HRNK staff or any other editors.

http://web.archive.org/web/20230120100537/https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk:Report_of_the_Commission_n of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=List_of_fact-finding_reports_on_human_rights_in_North_Korea&oldid=858850719 (archival link:

https://web.archive.org/web/20180910021002/https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_fact-finding_reports_on_human_rights_in_North_Korea)

Publishing notes on Talk page of the article:

https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:List of fact-finding reports on human rights in North Korea&oldid=858850895 (archival link:

https://web.archive.org/web/20240409025058/https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk:List of fact-finding reports_on_human_rights_in_North_Korea)

[\]frac{1}{https://web.archive.org/web/20160316193826/https://www.hrnk.org/events/announcements-view.php?id=3 0

²https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People%27s_Republic of Korea (archival link:

http://web.archive.org/web/20161229182600/https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Report of the Commission of Inquiry_on_Human_Rights_in_the_Democratic_People's_Republic_of_Korea)

³Article version at first publication:

APPENDIX: WORKS BY THE COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA

As a prerogative of the publishing institution of this reference guide, we include in this appendix a detailed list of HRNK's published works.

HRNK has issued four main types of reports: reports analyzing the situation in prison camps, reports on other human rights issues in the country, reports on North Korea's leadership and institutions, and policy briefings addressed to the international community. All of these are presented here. In addition, some submissions to the United Nations, as well as U.S. congressional expert testimony, are also listed below.

A. Prison Camps

General Reports

- Hawk, David (2003), The Hidden Gulag, First Edition Exposing North Korea's Prison Camps, LCCN 2004398171, DOI https://doi.org/10.69981/4702.
 https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/The_Hidden_Gulag.pdf
- Hawk, David (2012), The Hidden Gulag, Second Edition The Lives and Voices of
 'Those Who are Sent to the Mountains', ISBN 9780615623672, LCCN 2012939299, DOI https://doi.org/10.69981/4717.

 https://web.archive.org/web/20140702133812/http://hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/HRNK_HiddenGulag2Web_5-18.pdf
- Hawk, David (2013), North Korea's Hidden Gulag: Interpreting Reports of Changes in the Prison Camps. DOI https://doi.org/10.69981/4718.
 https://web.archive.org/web/20180803055838/https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/NKHiddenGulag-DavidHawk(2).pdf
- Hawk, David (2015), The Hidden Gulag IV: Gender Repression and Prison
 Disappearances, ISBN 9780985648046, LCCN 2015947712, DOI
 https://doi.org/10.69981/4726.

 https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/Hawk_HiddenGulag4_FINAL.pdf
- Hawk, David; Mortwedt Oh, Amanda (2017), The Parallel Gulag: North Korea's
 'An-jeon-bu' Prison Camps, ISBN 978-0-9995358-0-6, LCCN 2017957916, DOI
 https://doi.org/10.69981/4738.
 https://web.archive.org/web/20180215030317/https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/Hawk_The_Parallel_Gulag_Web.pdf
- Collins, Robert; Mortwedt Oh, Amanda (2017), From Cradle to Grave: The Path of North Korean Innocents, ISBN 978-0-9995358-1-3, LCCN 2017959301, DOI

- https://doi.org/10.69981/4737.
 https://web.archive.org/web/20180218064813/https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/Collins Cradle to Grave WEB FINALFINAL.pdf
- International Bar Association (IBA) War Crimes Committee; Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (2022), **Report: Inquiry on Crimes Against Humanity in North Korean Detention Centers**, DOI https://doi.org/10.69981/4758.

 https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/Report%20Findings%20Inquiry%20on%20Crimes%20Against%20Humanity.pdf

Kwan-li-so

- Bermudez Jr., Joseph S.; Dinville, Andy; Eley, Mike, North Korea Imagery Analysis of Camp 14. DOI https://doi.org/10.69981/4724.
 https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/ASA_HRNK_Camp14_v7_highrezFINAL_11_30_15.pdf
- Bermudez Jr., Joseph S.; Scarlatoiu, Greg; Mortwedt Oh, Amanda (2021), North
 Korea's Political Prison Camp, Kwan-li-so No. 14, Update 1. DOI
 https://doi.org/10.69981/4749.
 https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/Camp%2014%20v.8.pdf
- Bermudez Jr., Joseph S.; Dinville, Andy; Eley, Mike (2015), North Korea Imagery
 Analysis of Camp 15. DOI https://doi.org/10.69981/4730.
 https://web.archive.org/web/20150607143851/http://hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/ASA_AnalysisReport_HRNK_Camp15_Final.pdf
- Bermudez Jr., Joseph S.; Dinville, Andy; Eley, Mike (2015), Imagery Analysis of Camp
 15 "Yodok" Closure of the "Revolutionizing Zone." DOI https://doi.org/10.69981/4727.
 https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/ASA_HRNK_Camp15_RevZone_HO.pdf
- Bermudez Jr., Joseph S.; Dinville, Andy; Eley, Mike (2015), North Korea Imagery
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 Connection between Kwan-li-so No. 16 and the Punggye-ri Nuclear Test Facility? DOI
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 https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/Camp_18.pdf
- Bermudez Jr., Joseph S.; Opperman, Amy; Amen, Katelyn (2012), North Korea's Camp No. 22. DOI https://doi.org/10.69981/4714.
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- Bermudez Jr., Joseph S.; Dinville, Andy; Amen, Katelyn (2012), North Korea's Camp No. 22 Update. DOI https://doi.org/10.69981/4713.
 https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/HRNK%20CAMP%2022%20REPORT%20UPDATE%20DECEMBER%2011-2012.pdf
- Bermudez Jr., Joseph S.; Farfour, Micah; Amen, Katelyn (2013), North Korea's Camp No. 25. DOI https://doi.org/10.69981/4720.
 https://web.archive.org/web/20160402162728/http://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/HRNK_Camp25
 201302 Updated LO.pdf
- Bermudez Jr., Joseph S. (2014), North Korea's Camp No. 25, Update. DOI https://doi.org/10.69981/4721.
 https://web.archive.org/web/20150607135054/http://hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/Camp%2025%20Update%20Good.pdf
- Bermudez Jr., Joseph S.; Dinville, Andy; Eley, Mike (2016), North Korea Camp No. 25
 Update 2. DOI https://doi.org/10.69981/4731.

 https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/ASA_HRNK_Camp25_Update2.pdf
- Bermudez Jr., Joseph S.; Scarlatoiu, Greg; Mortwedt Oh, Amanda; Tokola, Rosa (2021), North Korea's Political Prison Camp, Kwan-li-so No. 25, Update 3. DOI https://doi.org/10.69981/4751.
 https://web.archive.org/web/20211006020529/https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/Bermudez_KLS25_FINAL.pdf
- Bermudez Jr., Joseph S.; Scarlatoiu, Greg; Ha, Raymond (2024), North Korea's Political Prison Camp Kwan-li-so No. 25, Update 4. DOI https://doi.org/10.69981/4764.
 https://web.archive.org/web/20240517211717/https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/camp25_update4.pdf

Kyo-hwa-so

- Bermudez Jr., Joseph S.; Scarlatoiu, Greg; Mortwedt Oh, Amanda; Park, Rosa (2000),
 North Korea's Long-term Prison-Labor Facility Kyo-hwa-so No. 1, Kaech'ŏn. DOI
 https://doi.org/10.69981/4748.
 https://web.archive.org/web/20220226225906/https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/Bermudez Kaechon_FINAL.pdf
- Bermudez Jr., Joseph S.; Scarlatoiu, Greg; Mortwedt Oh, Amanda; Tokola, Rosa (2021), North Korea's Long-term Prison-Labor Facility, Kyo-hwa-so No.3, T'osŏng-ni (토정리). DOI https://doi.org/10.69981/4750.

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- Bermudez Jr., Joseph S.; Scarlatoiu, Greg; Mortwedt Oh, Amanda; Park, Rosa (2019),
 North Korea's Long-term Re-education through Labor Camp (Kyo-hwa-so) No. 4 at
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- Bermudez Jr., Joseph S.; Scarlatoiu, Greg; Mortwedt Oh, Amanda; Park, Rosa (2020),
 North Korea's Long-term Prison-Labor Facility Kyo-hwa-so No. 12, Jŏngŏ-ri Update
 3. DOI https://doi.org/10.69981/4747.
 https://web.archive.org/web/20220122084306/https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/KHS12_FINALFINAL.pdf
- Bermudez Jr., Joseph S.; Scarlatoiu, Greg; Mortwedt Oh, Amanda; Park, Rosa (2019),
 North Korea's Long-term Re-education through Labor Camp (Kyo-hwa-so) at
 Pokchŏng-ni. DOI: https://doi.org/10.69981/4745.

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