

**DENIED**

# FROM THE START

Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea



**Robert Collins**

**DENIED**

# **FROM THE START**

Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea



**Robert Collins**

Copyright © 2018  
Committee for Human Rights in North Korea

Printed in the United States of America

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior permission of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.

Committee for Human Rights in North Korea  
1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 435  
Washington, DC 20036  
P: (202) 499-7970  
[www.hrnk.org](http://www.hrnk.org)

ISBN: 978-0-9995358-2-0  
Library of Congress Control Number: 2018965076

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Gordon Flake, *Co-Chair*

Katrina Lantos Swett, *Co-Chair*

John Despres, *Co-Vice-Chair*

Suzanne Scholte, *Co-Vice-Chair*

Helen-Louise Hunter, *Secretary*

Kevin McCann, *Treasurer*

Roberta Cohen, *Co-Chair Emeritus*

Andrew Natsios, *Co-Chair Emeritus*

Morton Abramowitz

Jerome Cohen

Rabbi Abraham Cooper

Jack David

Nicholas Eberstadt

Carl Gershman

Robert Joseph

Stephen Kahng

David Kim

Robert King

Jung-Hoon Lee

Debra Liang-Fenton

Winston Lord

David Maxwell

Marcus Noland

Jacqueline Pak

**Greg Scarlatou, Executive Director**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) .....	II
About the Author .....	III
Acknowledgements.....	IV
Acronyms.....	V
Foreword .....	VI
Executive Summary.....	IX
Section 1: Introduction.....	1
Section 2 : Human Rights Denial at the Local Level .....	7
Section 3 : North Korean Society and Human Rights .....	17
Section 4 : The <i>Suryong</i> , the North Korean, and Human Rights .....	22
Section 5 : Korean Workers' Party Control at the Local Level.....	27
Section 6: Shaping Regime Propaganda at the Local Level.....	32
Section 7 : The Profile of a North Korean Village .....	36
Section 8 : <i>Inminban</i> (Neighborhood Watch Unit), the Foundation of Human Rights Denial.....	41
Section 9 : Controlling the Population at the Local Level in the North Korean Workplace .....	49
Section 10: Laying the Groundwork for Human Rights Denial in North Korean Schools.....	52
Section 11 : The Local Economy and Human Rights Denial .....	56
Section12 : Military Issues at the Local Level.....	64
Section 13 : Healthcare Challenges at the Local Level.....	71
Section 14 : <i>Saenghwal Chonghwa</i> , the Kim Regime's Ultimate Social Control Tool at the Local Level .....	78
Section 15 : The Future of Human Rights in North Korea .....	86
Section 16: Recommendations .....	91
Annex .....	93
Bibliography .....	107

**DENIED**

## FROM THE START

Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

### ABOUT THE COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA (HRNK)

---

HRNK is the leading U.S.-based bipartisan, non-governmental organization in the field of North Korean human rights research and advocacy, tasked to focus 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 more than 35 major reports (available at <https://www.hrnk.org/publications/hrnk-publications.php>). Recent reports have addressed issues including political prison camps, the dominant role that Pyongyang plays in North Korea's political system, North Korea's state sponsorship of terrorism, the role of illicit activities in the North Korean economy, the structure of the internal security apparatus, the *songbun* social classification system, and the abduction of foreign citizens.

HRNK is now the first non-governmental organization 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 on North Korean human rights. Its reports have been cited numerous times in the report of the Commission of Inquiry, 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, a report 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 regularly been invited to provide expert testimony before the U.S. Congress.



THE COMMITTEE FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA  
북한인권위원회

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR: ROBERT M. COLLINS**

---

Robert M. Collins completed 37 years of service as a soldier and U.S. Department of the Army civilian employee. He served 31 years in various assignments with the U.S. military in Korea, including several liaison positions with the Republic of Korea Armed Forces. Mr. Collins' final assignment was as Chief of Strategy, ROK-US Combined Forces Command, serving the four-star American commander as a political analyst for planning on Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asian security issues. He received the Sam-il Medal (Republic of Korea Order of National Security Medal, Fourth Class) from President Lee Myung-bak and U.S. Army Decoration for Exceptional Civilian Service by the Secretary of the Army. Mr. Collins earned a B.A. in Asian History from the University of Maryland in 1977, and a M.A. in International Politics, focusing on North Korean Politics, from Dankook University in 1988. Mr. Collins is a Senior Adviser at HRNK, where he conducts interviews with North Korean defectors in South Korea to gather specific information for North Korean population and human rights data. He is the author of *Marked For Life: Songbun, North Korea's Social Classification System*, *Pyongyang Republic: North Korea's Capital of Human Rights Denial*, and *From Cradle to Grave: The Path of North Korean Innocents*, which were published by HRNK.

**DENIED**

## **FROM THE START**

Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

---

The author wishes to dedicate this work to the North Korean families who suffer the plight of human rights denial every day, from birth to the grave.

The author wishes to thank HRNK Board Members, in particular Roberta Cohen, Nicholas Eberstadt, Robert King, David S. Maxwell, and Kevin C. McCann for their edits and suggestions.

Much appreciation to Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of HRNK, for his patience overseeing this report, and ensuring its publication.

The author is forever grateful to Amanda Mortwedt Oh, Human Rights Attorney for HRNK, for her contribution to the international treaty aspects of this report.

The author is much appreciative of the good and hard work of Raymond Ha, HRNK Editorial Consultant.

The author would also like to thank Rosa Park, HRNK Director of Programs and Editor, for the design, editing, and layout of this report.

Many thanks to Grace Warwick for her assistance in research and early editing. Also, thank you to Megan Finkbeiner for her assistance with the cover design and editing as well as Cassandra Wood and Susannah Pearl-Katz for their assistance with editing. Thank you to Huiwon Yun and Woohyeon Kim for their transcription and translation work. Special thanks to Hye-soo Kim for her contributions to this report, especially for her recollection of self-criticism sessions.

The debt owed to Kim Chongsuk cannot be repaid in any denomination of any kind. Her patience and assistance enabled this project.

*Robert Collins*

## ACRONYMS

---

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CGFTU	Chosun General Federation of Trade Unions
CMC	KWP Central Military Committee
COI	UN Commission of Inquiry on the Human Rights Situation in the DPRK
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
DWL	Democratic Women's League
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
HRNK	Committee for Human Rights in North Korea
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
KCNA	Korean Central News Agency
KINU	Korea Institute for National Unification
KPA	Korean People's Army
KWP	Korean Workers' Party
MGS	Monolithic Guidance System
MIS	Monolithic Ideology System
MPAF	Ministry of People's Armed Forces
MPS	Ministry of People's Security
MSS	Ministry of State Security (also known as the State Security Department)
NKDB	Database Center for North Korean Human Rights
OGD	KWP Organization and Guidance Department
PAD	KWP Propaganda and Agitation Department
PDS	Public Distribution System
ROK	Republic of Korea
LLGC	Socialist Law-Abiding Life Guidance Committee
SLYL	Kim Il-sung Kim Jong-il Socialist Labor Youth League
SPA	Supreme People's Assembly
SPC	State Planning Committee
TPMI	Ten Principles of Monolithic Ideology
UAWK	Union of Agricultural Workers of Korea
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	UN International Children's Emergency Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

## FOREWORD

---

Examination of the atrocious human rights conditions in North Korea has been the subject of study for numerous academic, government, and international organizations in the United States, the Republic of Korea (ROK), and the international community. One of the most thorough among these examinations is the United Nations' 2014 *Report of the Detailed Findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea* (COI).<sup>1</sup> Another is the Korea Institute for National Unification's (KINU's) annual *White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea*.<sup>2</sup> The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) has produced numerous reports that examine specific issues related to the human rights of the Korean people in the North. These and other studies provide an excellent analysis of the Kim regime's human rights record with respect to specific issues and in a "top-down" fashion. However, what has generally not been addressed regarding the human rights of North Koreans is the view from the bottom up. In other words, there is a need to examine the daily lives of North Koreans and how the North Korean Party-state's policies and practices of human rights denial impact each and every aspect of their lives. A close look at how the Kim regime employs local officials and local institutions—both standing and ad-hoc inspection organizations—to suppress any exercise of human rights and any opportunity to learn about these rights is worthy of our collective attention.

In 2012, Robert Collins exposed the Kim family regime's use of *songbun*, a socio-political classification tool that discriminates against North Koreans based on their perceived political loyalty to the regime, in his seminal report entitled *Marked for Life: Songbun, North Korea's Social Classification System*. From the regime's perspective, *songbun* provides legitimacy for the regime's total control and practice of political discrimination that severely restricts and denies fundamental human rights to the North Korean population.

In 2016, Collins authored *Pyongyang Republic: North Korea's Capital of Human Rights Denial*, which examined the Kim family regime's concept of a system based on the *Suryong* (Supreme Leader), critical to which is the recruitment, control, and development of a core class of elite North Koreans loyal to the regime. To adhere to the *Suryong* doctrine, one must sacrifice oneself completely to the service of the *Suryong* and accept a common destiny that is led in totality by the Supreme Leader. The report discusses the reality of North Korea's purposefully constructed disparity between Pyongyang's elites and ordinary citizens in the provinces, which promotes the common conviction that there are two republics within North Korea's borders—the "Pyongyang Republic" and the implied "Republic of Provinces."<sup>3</sup> Ultimately,

---

1 UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the detailed findings of the commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*, UN Doc. A/HRC/25/CRP.1 (February 7, 2014). <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/CoIDPRK/Pages/ReportoftheCommissionofInquiryDPRK.aspx>.

2 See [http://www.kinu.or.kr/www/jsp/prg/api/publ\\_main.jsp](http://www.kinu.or.kr/www/jsp/prg/api/publ_main.jsp).

3 Robert Collins also authored a 2017 report detailing the impact on innocent North Koreans who are of low *songbun* or otherwise labelled by the Kim regime as being disloyal or anti-state, which is namely internment in North Korean detention facilities. This report is entitled *From Cradle to Grave: the Path of North Korean Innocents*, and it is available at [https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/Collins\\_Cradle\\_to\\_Grave\\_WEB\\_FINALFINAL.pdf](https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/Collins_Cradle_to_Grave_WEB_FINALFINAL.pdf).

Collins argues that the Kim regime not only violates human rights, but also actively promotes a policy of human rights denial.

Taking a closer look at this “Republic of Provinces” is Collins’ 2018 report for HRNK: *Denied from the Start: Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea*. Collins examines the life of ordinary North Koreans away from the relatively bright lights of Pyongyang, delving into the core areas of society for the rest of the North Korean population. Collins uses the backdrop of the Ten Principles of Monolithic Ideology (TPMI) and international human rights law—specifically, the five international human rights treaties that North Korea has acceded to—to examine the reality of human rights denial for ordinary North Koreans at the local level outside Pyongyang. Collins makes it clear that North Korea’s participation in international human rights mechanisms and accession to relevant legal instruments are not reflected in policies at the local level, severely impacting the lives of ordinary North Koreans who are denied their fundamental human rights from the start.

Notably, 2018 marks the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which set out to proclaim “a common standard of achievement [of human rights] for all peoples and *all nations* [emphasis added].”<sup>4</sup> The UDHR’s preamble makes clear that “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.” This statement is also reiterated in the preambles of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)—treaties to which North Korea has acceded. Yet, 2018 also marks seventy years since the founding of North Korea. In 2014, the COI found evidence to conclude that North Korea’s human rights abuses, “in many instances,” constitute *crimes against humanity*.<sup>5</sup> Seventy years later, North Korea continues to violate the core principles and intent of the UDHR.

It is the objective of this report to explain how every North Korean core family unit faces denial of their human rights at every stage of life and in every circumstance, regardless of the family members’ station in life. In examining how such rights are denied for a typical family consisting of the father, mother, a daughter, and a son, it is important to recognize that the children are denied in the same manner that their parents were when they were of similar ages.

The 5-year-old son is born into a family where lullabies focused on the Supreme Leader or the protection of the Party, a process that the Party-state continues as he enters his first daycare center at the age of three months. This is the beginning of a lifetime of propaganda designed to promote loyalty to the regime over the individual. As he begins preschool, he learns that the Supreme Leader and Korea have two great enemies—the United States and

---

4 The full text of the UDHR (1948) is available at <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.

5 UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the detailed findings of the commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea*, UN Doc. A/HRC/25/CRP.1 Para. 80 (February 7, 2014). <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/CoIDPRK/Pages/ReportoftheCommissionofInquiryDPRK.aspx>.

**DENIED**

## FROM THE START

### Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

Japan—as displayed in his classrooms and playrooms. When he enters kindergarten, he must display his hatred of the U.S. by shooting arrows and darts at grotesque effigies of U.S. soldiers.

The 12-year-old daughter learns to confess all wrongdoings relative to the TPMI every Saturday to her teacher in front of the class, irrespective of personal humiliation. She must complete labor projects for the school without compensation. She cannot expect any education in her own country's schools about human rights or her own country's constitution, which stipulates those rights. She learns that loyalty to the Supreme Leader is the only true obligation to live by in a North Korean's life.

The father and mother, who experienced the same indoctrination and denial of opportunities to understand human rights, face forced inclusion into a working class that is dedicated to the goals of the Supreme Leader and the Korean Workers' Party (KWP). They are denied the public services and benefits one typically expects from a state's social contract. The father, after serving at least ten years in the Korean People's Army (KPA), is then assigned to "blocks" with dozens or hundreds of other soldiers to work at sites where the Party-state has identified labor shortages. He is then assigned and trained according to the needs of the worksite, and not his personal preferences. He has no choice in profession, location, or type of work. Once assigned to a worksite, he will eventually meet a woman in that area or line of work, marry, and move into housing together to begin a family. The mother is generally assigned the same way, either directly out of school or out of the military.

The location and quality of housing is not their choice, but assigned by the state based on their *songbun* classification. They have no choice where their children go to school, and they know that the way the teachers treat their children will also depend on their *songbun*. The family is subject to inspection and control by a variety of local officials who carry out the human rights denial policies of the Supreme Leader and the KWP. Those local officials include the local KWP committee chair, the local people's committee chair, the local police, the local prosecutor, the workplace supervisor, the neighborhood unit chief, and even the secret police. The police and secret police also recruit local citizens to spy on and identify any "anti-state" behavior. At no time are any of their human rights, as identified in their own state constitution, ever applied to their daily lives by the Party or the state. Every family is completely subservient to the whims of the Supreme Leader and the KWP. This is the everyday life of the vast majority of North Korean families that this report seeks to detail.

Collins' fourth report for HRNK continues to highlight the urgent need for reform inside North Korea to improve the lives of ordinary North Koreans at the local level. It is the hope of HRNK that this report provides an understanding of how the North Korean family and the individual roles experienced by each family member are severely impacted by the Kim regime's practices, policies, and institutions of human rights denial.

*David Maxwell*  
*Board of Directors, HRNK*  
*Senior Fellow, Foundation for Defense of Democracies*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

*Denied from the Start: Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea* is a comprehensive study of how North Korea's Kim regime denies human rights for each and every citizen of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). In doing so, this report examines human rights denial policies and practices. Local institutions are responsible for this denial at the schools, housing units, workplaces, and beyond. To justify this political approach towards shaping North Korean society, the North's Party-state specifically focuses on loyalty to North Korea's Supreme Leader and the KWP by incorporating regime-centered ideology into every fabric of socio-political life through these local institutions.

The Kim regime initially sought to shape North Korean society to fit the communist mold. During the seven decades since the founding of the DPRK, the Kim regime has instead been shaping society to promote a totalitarian dictatorship where only the Supreme Leader, the Kim family, and the KWP are to be respected and praised. The concept of human rights was based on the Soviet model of comprehensive and total equality, which proved to be a false premise based on the organization of the North Korean elite and the regime's socio-political classification of every North Korean as loyal, wavering, or hostile through the *songbun* system. All North Korean propaganda policies and institutions began to focus on the Supreme Leader with the exclusion of educating the population about the state's responsibility to the people. As this report explains in detail, the Party-state, through thought suppression and a highly selective education, has historically denied North Koreans the opportunity to learn what human rights are and, by extension, the North Korean people's right to understand and exercise those human rights.

In examining the life of ordinary North Koreans outside of Pyongyang, the report uses the backdrop of the TPMI and international human rights law—specifically, the five international human rights treaties that North Korea has acceded to—to survey the reality of human rights denial for ordinary North Koreans at the local level or outside Pyongyang. *Denied from the Start* makes it clear that North Korea's participation in international human rights mechanisms and accession to relevant legal instruments is not reflected in policies at the local level, severely impacting ordinary North Koreans who are, in reality, denied their fundamental human rights from the start.

Much has been written about the Kim regime's historical emphasis on denial and deception when targeting its foreign enemies. However, the Kim regime also began to apply denial and deception against its own people since the beginning of its revolution in 1945, when the Japanese ended their occupation of the Korean peninsula. This report provides a unique understanding of how this takes place at the local level and how that approach is institutionalized today.

Understanding the dynamics of human rights denial at the local level is crucial, not only to understand how the North Korean individual and family survive in a maelstrom of suppression of any concept of human rights, but also to understand how to approach the education of North Koreans about freedom and human rights when the possibility presents itself.

**DENIED**

## **FROM THE START**

### Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

This report focuses on the denial of human rights, primarily with respect to North Korea's obligations under the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the CRC. Section One outlines how this process takes place at the local level under the Kim regime's direction to the leadership organizations at those levels. Section Two focuses on how human rights are denied and the mechanisms of such denial. Section Three addresses the social aspects of human rights denial. Section Four discusses the Supreme Leader's role in human rights denial, and Section Five discusses the KWP's role in such denial. Section Six discusses the role of Party propaganda in shaping the thought processes of each and every North Korean. Section Seven profiles the structure of the North Korean village. Section Eight examines the *inminban* (neighborhood watch unit), which acts as the organizational base of human rights denial at the lowest level through the monitoring of 15 to 40 households and each household's observance of loyalty to the Supreme Leader and the Party. Section Nine addresses the workplace. Section Ten examines North Korean schools and how they shape all North Korean citizens to be loyal subjects of the Supreme Leader and the Party. Section Eleven examines how local economic conditions at the county and village level impact human rights. Section Twelve discusses military issues at the local level. Section Thirteen assesses food insecurity challenges at the local level, while Section Fourteen examines medical challenges faced by North Korean citizens at the local level. Section Fifteen addresses the future of human rights in North Korea and how a successor regime could improve its human rights observance. Finally, Section Sixteen outlines the fundamental necessities of reform aimed at bringing North Korea into the 21st century as a responsible state observing international norms and laws.

Ultimately, *Denied from the Start* provides an understanding of how the local student, family housing group, and worker must adapt to the demands of the Supreme Leader and the Party-state to survive in a society that suppresses the expression of individual aspirations and capabilities to maximize the socio-political benefits for the Supreme Leader.

*Greg Scarlatoiu*  
*Executive Director, HRNK*

## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION



The observance of human rights in any country requires its political leadership and institutions to not only respect, protect, and promote those rights at the national level, but also motivate leaders at the local level to do the same. The fundamental purpose of the North Korean regime's policies of population control is to "rationally control the existing conditions and changing process of the population to fit into people's autonomous and creative real characters and thus make the population suitable for the development of society and economy to press for the construction of socialism and communism."<sup>7</sup> This paper will explore how the human rights set forth in the ICCPR and ICESCR, to which North Korea has acceded, fail to be implemented at the local level and the reasons why.

Since 1945, the UN has formulated an extensive array of international treaties to articulate the substance of individual human rights. Most UN member states have signed or acceded to these legal instruments. North Korea, formally known as the DPRK, is no exception. For example, the DPRK acceded to the ICCPR and the ICESCR on September 14, 1981.<sup>8</sup> By becoming a party to these international treaties, the DPRK has assumed:

*Obligations and duties under international law to respect, to protect and to fulfil human rights. The obligation to respect means that States must*

---

6 Romain75020 [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], from Wikimedia Commons, [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/68/Statues\\_of\\_Kim\\_Il-Sung\\_and\\_Kim\\_Jong-Il\\_on\\_Mansudae\\_Hill.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/68/Statues_of_Kim_Il-Sung_and_Kim_Jong-Il_on_Mansudae_Hill.jpg).

7 *Introduction to Demography* (Pyongyang: Science and Encyclopedia Publishing House, 1996), as quoted in Yonhap News Agency, *North Korea Handbook* (Seoul: M.E. Sharpe Publishing, 2002), 86.

8 See [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=47&Lang=EN](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=47&Lang=EN).

**DENIED**

## FROM THE START

### Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

*refrain from interfering with or curtailing the enjoyment of human rights. The obligation to protect requires States to protect individuals and groups against human rights abuses. The obligation to fulfil means that States must take positive action to facilitate the enjoyment of basic human rights.<sup>9</sup>*

However, North Korea has regularly ignored such obligations by forming and maintaining a highly structured society designed by the KWP. The North Korean people are strictly subordinate to the Supreme Leader's interests and to the organizational control of the KWP.

With complete authority over the state, the KWP compels all North Koreans over the age of 14 to belong to a Party organization, without regard to profession, gender, level of education, or locality. This organizational approach enables the ideological indoctrination of specific themes on a national scale in a manner unparalleled in any other society. Concomitant with Party organization is the centralization of all power and authority in the *Suryong* (Supreme Leader). The *Suryong* implements his authority through the KWP and thereby guides and directs the state in the conduct of all societal actions.

Furthermore, North Korea implements socio-political and psychological profiling of the entire population. This system of social classification, facilitated by and based on Party directives, is known as *songbun*.<sup>10</sup> The regime applies this profiling to its personnel stationing, housing, education, occupational assignment, healthcare, and food distribution policies as a means of social control. By employing such profiling, the KWP has sought to predict or identify sub-groups and their vulnerabilities to exploitation. Those who are assessed to be loyal to the regime, particularly the descendants of partisans who fought against Imperial Japan, dominate the leadership of the Party, military, and state institutions. These individuals, who belong to the "core" class, formulate the policy recommendations that are forwarded to the Supreme Leader.<sup>11</sup> By contrast, those deemed to be members of the "hostile" class suffer the greatest impacts of human rights denial by regime design. They are assigned the most strenuous jobs, the worst housing, the worst healthcare, and are subject to the greatest food insecurity. Worst of all, they are denied the concept of opportunity due to being born into the "wrong" family.

Human rights in North Korea are specifically addressed in Articles 62 through 86 of the DPRK constitution. North Korea's stated view of human rights observance is through the prism of the collective. According to Article 10 of the DPRK constitution:

---

9 UN, "Human Rights Law," accessed November 10, 2018. <https://www.un.org/en/sections/universal-declaration/human-rights-law/>.

10 For a detailed examination of the *songbun* system, see Robert Collins, *Marked for Life*.

11 Because political terror affects the elite as much as the rest of the population, if not more so, these recommendations are shaped by the fear of political missteps as much as the necessity of finding acceptable solutions to policy issues.

*The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is underpinned by the politico-ideological unity of all the people based on the worker-peasant alliance led by the working class. The State shall revolutionize all the members of society, and assimilate them to the working class by intensifying the ideological revolution, and shall turn the whole of society into a collective, united in a comradely way.*<sup>12</sup>

Article 63 states, “In the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea the rights and duties of citizens are based on the collectivist principle: ‘One for all and all for one.’”<sup>13</sup> However, the Kim regime’s approach to human rights is based not on the observance of the constitution or international human rights treaties, but on the KWP’s policies and practices. These policies and practices, especially when compared to international human rights treaties, amount to the denial of human rights. Human rights denial in North Korea is a set of policies, practices, and institutions that ensure human rights—as defined by international human rights treaties—are not practiced, respected, or protected in North Korean society.

The Supreme Leader’s decisions are enforced through the Party and state apparatus in every city and village throughout North Korea, where the local leadership comprehensively implements the aforementioned policies and directives. Officials who strictly enforce Party directives in denying human rights to the masses are rewarded with material benefits and career advancement.<sup>14</sup> Failure to implement Party policies and practices amounts to gross dereliction of duty. In minor cases, this results in re-education, which entails hard labor at a mine or farm for the violating officials. Major infractions or recurring violations can result in purges, internment, or even execution—of which there are countless examples. No consideration is given to individual concerns in homes, workplaces, or schools for those who are under any given local official’s jurisdiction. Those who seek leniency or exceptions due to personal considerations must pay a price, and local leaders and security officials prey on the local population for personal gain.

The Kim regime’s violations of international human rights treaties are serious and widespread. North Korea has been found to violate the following articles of the ICCPR:<sup>15</sup>

- Article 1 (self-determination)
- Article 2 (discrimination based on religion, political or other opinion, birth status)

---

12 See Wikisource, “Constitution of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (2016),” December 23, 2017 (accessed November 10, 2018). [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Constitution\\_of\\_the\\_Democratic\\_People%27s\\_Republic\\_of\\_Korea\\_\(2016\)](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Constitution_of_the_Democratic_People%27s_Republic_of_Korea_(2016)). The Korean text is available at the Republic of Korea’s Unification Law Database: [http://www.unilaw.go.kr/bbs/selectBoardArticleSearch.do?nttId=235&bbsId=BBSMSTR\\_000000000021](http://www.unilaw.go.kr/bbs/selectBoardArticleSearch.do?nttId=235&bbsId=BBSMSTR_000000000021).

13 Ibid.

14 For a detailed overview of how the North Korean elite are rewarded for complying with the regime, see Robert Collins, *Pyongyang Republic: North Korea’s Capital of Human Rights Denial* (Washington, D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2016). [https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/Collins\\_PyongyangRepublic\\_FINAL\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/Collins_PyongyangRepublic_FINAL_WEB.pdf).

15 See Annex A for the full text of each article of the ICCPR referenced. Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CCPR.aspx>.

**DENIED**

## FROM THE START

### Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

- Article 6 (right to life)
- Article 7 (torture or cruel or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment)
- Article 8 (slavery or compulsive labor)
- Article 9 (arbitrary detention)
- Article 10 (treatment while deprived of liberty)
- Article 12 (liberty of movement)
- Article 17 (arbitrary interference with privacy and family)
- Article 18 (freedom of thought, conscience, and religion)
- Article 19 (freedom of expression)
- Article 20 (advocacy of national, racial, or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence prohibited)
- Article 21 (peaceful assembly)
- Article 22 (freedom of association)
- Article 23 (protection of the family)
- Article 26 (equal treatment)
- Article 25 (citizen participation in public affairs)

Furthermore, North Korea violates the following articles of the ICESCR:<sup>16</sup>

- Article 1 (self-determination—politically, economically, socially, culturally)
- Article 2 (political discrimination based on birth status)
- Article 4 (promoting general welfare)
- Article 5 (State, group, or person restricting rights of others)
- Article 6 (right to choose occupation)
- Article 7 (just and favorable work conditions)
- Article 8 (right to join trade union of choice and to strike)
- Article 10 (protection of the family)
- Article 11 (adequate standard of living)
- Article 12 (enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health)
- Article 13 (right to education)

In particular, it is the family unit that is under attack by the Party-state, as noted in the foreword. As such, the following obligations under the UDHR, ICCPR, ICESCR, and the CRC should be observed:

---

<sup>16</sup> See Annex B for the full text of each article of the ICESCR referenced. Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cesr.aspx>.

## UDHR

### Article 12

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

### Article 16

The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

### Article 23

Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

### Article 25

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

## ICCPR

### Article 17

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his honour and reputation.

### Article 23

The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

## ICESCR

### Article 10

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize that:

**DENIED**

## **FROM THE START**

### Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

The widest possible protection and assistance should be accorded to the family, which is the natural and fundamental group unit of society, particularly for its establishment and while it is responsible for the care and education of dependent children. Marriage must be entered into with the free consent of the intending spouses.

#### Article 11

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right, recognizing to this effect the essential importance of international co-operation based on free consent.

#### **CRC**

#### Preamble

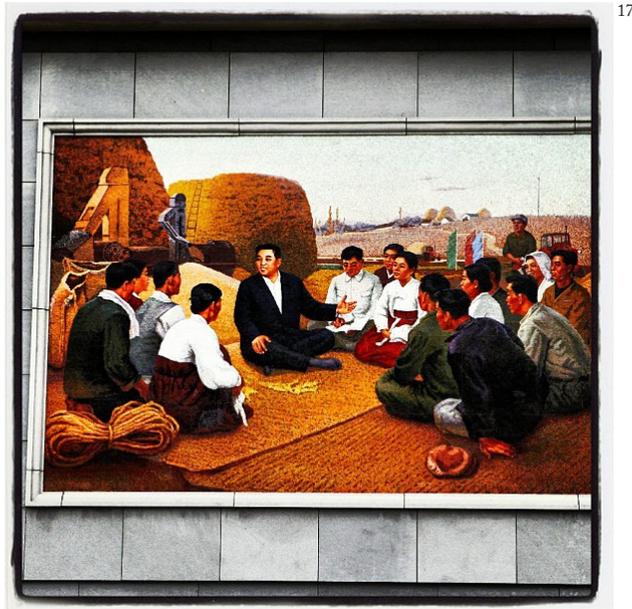
Convinced that the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community,

Recognizing that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding,

#### Article 16

No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation.

## SECTION 2: HUMAN RIGHTS DENIAL AT THE LOCAL LEVEL



17

There is a stark contrast between the Kim regime's *de jure* policy on human rights and its *de facto* policy. *De jure* policy is based on state documents starting with the DPRK constitution and formal laws, such as the Criminal Act and the Criminal Procedures Act—all drafted and ratified by the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA).<sup>18</sup> Another element of formal policy is accession to international human rights treaties, such as the ICESCR, ICCPR, CRC,<sup>19</sup> the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),<sup>20</sup> the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD),<sup>21</sup> and other agreements overseen by the UN and other international organizations.<sup>22</sup> Since the DPRK became a UN member state in 1991, it has implicitly accepted the observance of the UDHR and the UN Charter.<sup>23</sup>

17 Photograph of poster showing Kim Il-sung counseling workers on site. Photograph by William Proby, No. 29746289212\_1406e1fd5f\_z, at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/145294362@N05/albums/72157674200672805/page43>.

18 Collins, *Pyongyang Republic*, 14.

19 The DPRK ratified the CRC on September 21, 1990. [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=47&Lang=EN](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=47&Lang=EN). See CRC at <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/crc.pdf>.

20 The DPRK acceded to the CEDAW on February 27, 2001.

21 North Korea ratified the CRPD on December 6, 2016. [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=47&Lang=EN](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=47&Lang=EN).

22 Of the ten “core international human rights treaties,” North Korea has signed, acceded to, or ratified five: the ICCPR, ICESCR, CEDAW, CRC, and most recently the CRPD.

23 The UDHR can be reviewed at link [http://undocs.org/A/RES/217\(III\)](http://undocs.org/A/RES/217(III)).

**FROM THE START**

## Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

*De facto* policy is shaped, vetted, and approved by the KWP, which compels government, military, and socio-economic agencies at all levels to enforce loyalty to the Supreme Leader and protect the Kim regime from enemies from within, all at the cost of human rights. There is no evidence that *de jure* policy is enforced by any agency that implements the rights codified by the state. However, the *de facto* policy is implemented in some aspect—large or small—by every Party, state, military, economic, and social organization in North Korea at every level from the capital in Pyongyang to the smallest village in the provinces.<sup>24</sup> North Korea is a country of ideologically-driven behavioral norms that serve a dictator's objectives over the rule of law. Although the DPRK creates laws that address human rights, these laws are ignored in practice at all levels of North Korea. *De facto* human rights policy is determined by the central Party and primarily supervised by the KWP Organization and Guidance Department (OGD).

*Historical Background*

It is important to review the historical context of human rights denial policies and practices in North Korea. Such policies commenced immediately upon the advancement of the Soviet Union's 25th Army Corps into the northern half of the Korean peninsula. Under Colonel General Ivan Chistyakov, who was essentially the first ruler of northern Korea after the end of World War II, Kim Il-sung became a leader within the communist revolution that took place under the 25th Army's occupation from 1945 to 1948. When Kim Il-sung and others began the North Korean revolution in 1945, they established four lines of revolutionary action: 1) establish a democratic people's unification front; 2) cleanse society of reactionary elements; 3) organize a government and democratic revolution as well as reconstruct the economy; and 4) strengthen the communist party.<sup>25</sup>

These four lines served as North Korea's first national security strategy. The second of these four lines was the first policy directive denying human rights in the Kim regime's history. The intent was to politically neutralize all individuals who were formerly aligned with the Japanese during the colonial period: landowners, businessmen, and those affiliated with religious institutions. These individuals had all of their property confiscated and were executed, imprisoned, or banished to the mountainous regions of Hamgyong Province.<sup>26</sup> Many of these purged classes escaped to southern Korea, which later became the ROK. As the harbinger of attacks on the rights and freedom of the individual under the Kim regime, this initial strategy for reshaping Korean society in the North established the foundation for human rights denial policies today.

---

24 Collins, *Pyongyang Republic*, 14.

25 Outlined in a speech by Kim Il-sung delivered at the North Korean Labor Party Central Organization Committee Establishment Conference on October 10, 1945, entitled "On Construction of a Marxist-Leninist Party and Party Tasks in Our Country" as cited in Hyun Seong-II, *Bukan-ui gukga jeollyak-gwa parwo ellipseu: Ganbu jeongchaeg-ul jungsimeuro* [North Korea's National Strategy and Power Elite: Focus on Cadre Policy] (Seoul: Seonin Publishing, 2007), 63–64.

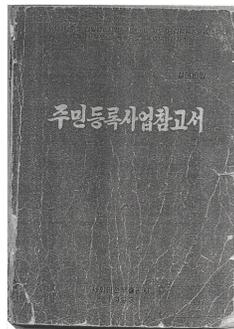
26 The latter became the forerunner of today's political prison camps.

While North Korean revolutionaries eliminated capitalism and land ownership, they also implemented collective policies that suppressed the rights of the individual. In 1957, the KWP initiated the “May 30 Decree,” which established programs for executing North Korea’s first large-scale purges based on family background.<sup>27</sup> To strengthen the newly implemented Party line of the Monolithic Ideology System (MIS), the Kim regime ordered extensive investigations into every person’s family background from 1966 to 1967.<sup>28</sup> This resulted in the *songbun* system of socio-political classification, whereby North Koreans were divided into the “core” class, the “wavering” class, or the “hostile” class. In 1973, Kim Jong-il became the Director of the KWP OGD and promulgated the TPMI, which compelled strict obedience to the Supreme Leader and the Party, thus suppressing all practices necessary for the observance of human rights.<sup>29</sup>

*Ten Lines of Human Rights Denial at the Local Level*

Given these historical developments, ten lines of human rights denial at the local level in North Korea can be identified. The first is the legacy of an individual’s parents, who have experienced a lifetime of regime-centered propaganda that has focused on and compelled individual loyalty to the Supreme Leader. Even the lullabies that parents sing to their children are about the Supreme Leader.<sup>30</sup>

The second is the Kim regime’s socio-political classification of every individual citizen, determined after an extensive background investigation of each person at the age of 17. This is the driving force behind the implementation of human rights denial. Until the age of 17, children assume the classification of their parents.<sup>31</sup> This *songbun* system classifies each citizen according to their assessed loyalty towards the Supreme Leader and the Party, and assigns each citizen to the “core”, “wavering”, or “hostile” class.<sup>32</sup> This is in direct violation of the ICCPR.<sup>33</sup> The 216-page manual pictured below contains instructions issued to local Ministry of People's Security agents on step-by-step examination of a person’s background.<sup>34</sup>



27 Collins, *Marked for Life*, 14.

28 Ibid., 24.

29 See chart in Collins, *Pyongyang Republic*, 15; see also Collins, *Marked for Life*, 14.

30 See Article 18(1) of the ICCPR.

31 See Article 2(2) of the CRC.

32 For a detailed examination of the *songbun* system, see Collins, *Marked for Life*.

33 See Article 1(1), Article 2(1), and Article 26 of the ICCPR. Article 1(1) and Article 2(2) of the ICESCR also discuss rights and obligations regarding political discrimination.

34 Kim and Ri, *Resident Registration Project Reference Manual*, 143–49.



35

Local schools are the third line of denial.<sup>36</sup> Schools at every level of education include curriculum on loyalty to the Supreme Leader and the Party. This sets the foundation in every North Korean's life to put the Supreme Leader and Party ahead of oneself. Study of the DPRK constitution, which addresses some human rights, is not included in school curricula at any level.<sup>37</sup>

The fourth line of denial is assignment to occupations, which expands to assignment of housing. There is no freedom of employment as everyone is assigned a job based on national labor requirements.<sup>38</sup> All of this is controlled by the KWP. Through its implementation by local leaders, Party policy dominates every aspect of an individual North Korean's life, and individual freedom in North Korea is counter to Party policy.

The *inminban* (neighborhood watch unit) system, is the fifth line of denial. The *inminbanjang* (neighborhood watch unit leader) is assigned by the Party-state to monitor and organize a group of 15 to 40 homes, depending on whether the location is urban or rural.<sup>39</sup> The *inminban* leader reports to the *dong samuso* (village office). However, the *inminban* leader is also tasked by the local Party, police, and secret police to oversee political meetings and to collect information on household residents under the *inminban* leader's jurisdiction. They are then required to report that information to the police and the Party.<sup>40</sup>

---

35 Photograph by (stephan), "Painting at Chongsan Coop. Farm School," Kangso District, Nampho City, North Korea, taken June 10, 2008, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/fjckr/3438624457/>.

36 This school poster states: "Our General is Number One." See Flickr link at <http://www.educationcareerjournal.com/10-north-korean-school-propaganda-posters/>.

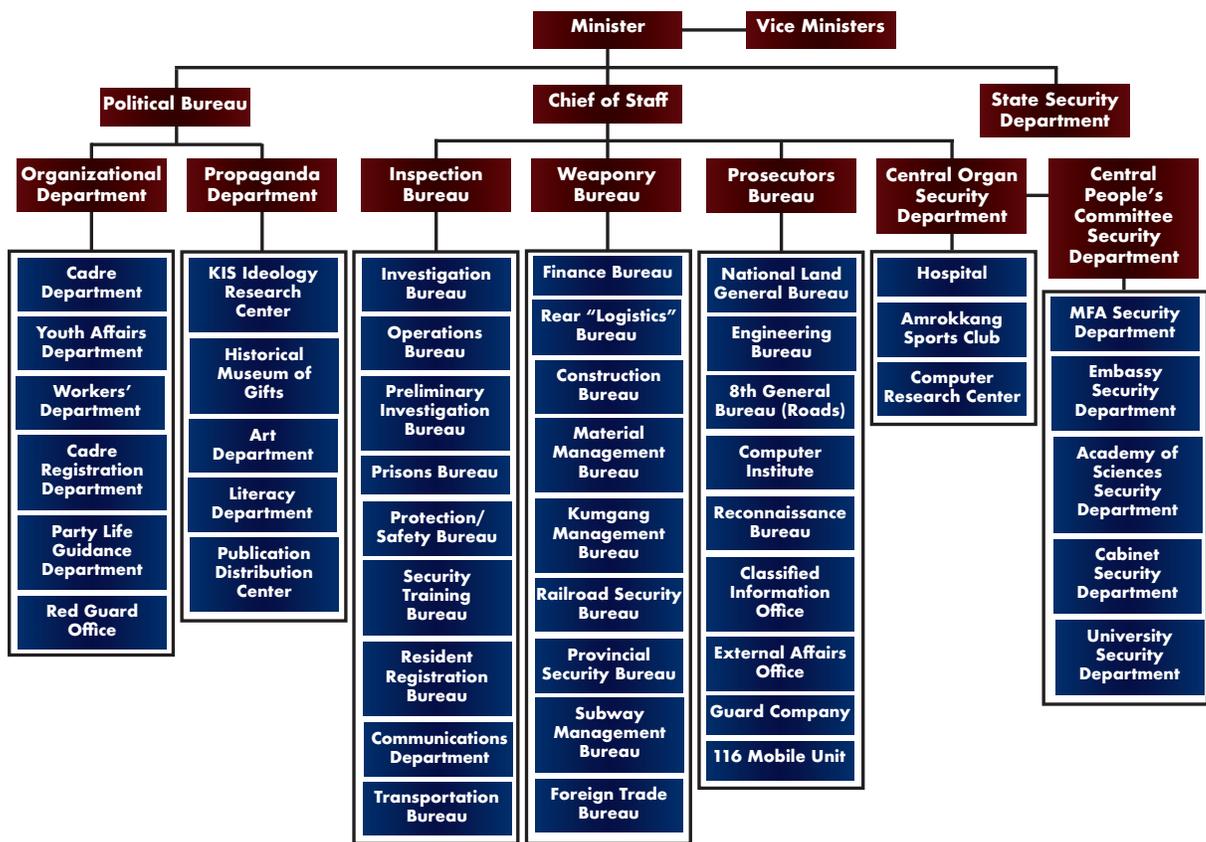
37 Multiple interviews with North Korean defectors by author.

38 See Article 6(1) of the ICESCR.

39 See Section 8 for a detailed description of the *inminban* system.

40 Article 17(1) of the ICCPR.

The sixth line of denial is the local police of the Ministry of People's Security (MPS), whose violations of human rights are extremely well documented through escapee testimony.<sup>41</sup> The MPS has a nationwide force of over 300,000 personnel and is well represented at all local levels. The MPS maintains offices in 200 localities and each office maintains a force of 200 to 500 personnel. Subordinate to that are over 4,000 MPS office locations at the village or city sub-district level with each office maintaining a force of 20 to 30 personnel. These local MPS offices send out one- and two-man beat patrols to handle local criminal activity, check exit and entry of non-local residents, and maintain records on individual households.<sup>42, 43</sup> They coordinate with the *inminban* leader to monitor anti-state behavior and conduct unannounced checks at night to determine such behavior. Of particular interest are checks on household radios and recording devices. The organizational chart of the MPS is shown below.<sup>44</sup>



41 See *Daily NK* at <http://www.dailynk.com/english/index.php>; Database Center for North Korean Human Rights at <http://www.nkdb.org/2016/main.php>; or the KINU's many annual White Papers on Human Rights in North Korea from 1996 to 2018 at <http://www.kinu.or.kr/>.

42 Chon Hyun-Joon, *A Study of the Social Control System in North Korea: Focusing on the Ministry of People's Security* (Seoul: KINU, 2004), 31–33.

43 See Article 19(2) of the ICCPR.

44 See Ken Gause, *Coercion, Control, Surveillance, and Punishment: An Examination of the North Korean Police State* (Washington, D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2012), 33. [https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/HRNK\\_Ken-Gause\\_Web.pdf](https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/HRNK_Ken-Gause_Web.pdf).

**DENIED**

## FROM THE START

### Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

The Ministry of State Security (MSS), the regime's secret police, constitutes the seventh line of human rights denial. The MSS conducts operations across the country in counterintelligence and counterespionage for the purpose of protecting the Kim regime from internal and external threats. The MSS fields 50,000 agents nationwide and maintains offices down to the local level, where the focus is on institutions and the personnel associated with local institutions.

MSS agents focus on violations of the TPMI more than state law as the justification for investigating, arresting, and incarcerating local citizens.<sup>45</sup> North Korea's official political dictionary defines the TPMI as: "the ideological system by which the whole party and people is firmly armed with the revolutionary ideology of the *Suryong* and united solidly around him, carrying out the revolutionary battle and construction battle under the sole leadership of the *Suryong*."<sup>46</sup> Violation of the TPMI—not violation of the Criminal Code—is the reason that most people are sent to political prison camps.<sup>47</sup>

Local MSS agents recruit *inminban* leaders and brief them of their intent to root out anti-state and anti-Party elements within their jurisdiction. MSS agents recruit "safety agents" (spies) at every institution to report on coworkers. The recruitment rate is approximately one in every twenty to thirty individuals in the population. The organizational chart of the MSS is shown on the next page.<sup>48</sup>

---

45 This paragraph reproduces material from Robert Collins and Amanda Mortwedt Oh, *From Cradle to Grave: Path of the North Korean Innocents* (Washington, D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2017), 3–5. [https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/Collins\\_Cradle\\_to\\_Grave\\_WEB\\_FINALFINAL.pdf](https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/Collins_Cradle_to_Grave_WEB_FINALFINAL.pdf).

46 Kang Mi-Jin, "NK Adds Kim Jong Il to 'Ten Principles'," *Daily NK*, August 9, 2013. <http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk01500&num=10828>.

47 Hyun Seong-II, "Bukan sahoe-e daehan nodongdang-ui tongjecheje" [KWP's Control System Over North Korean Society], *Bukan josa yeongu* (Aug. 1998), North Korean Issues Research Center.

48 Gause, *Coercion, Control, Surveillance, and Punishment*, 33. See *Ibid.*, 17–25 for a detailed discussion of the MSS, also known as the State Security Department (SSD).



The eight line is the court system, which makes judgments based on Party policy.<sup>49</sup> North Korean courts do not serve legal arbitration or interpretation. Lawyers defend the legal system and prosecutors defend the state. Judges defend the Party and defendants are presumed guilty upon arrest. The courts are responsible for protecting the state, not the rights of the accused.<sup>50</sup> “Important political cases are handled by the MSS,” not the courts.<sup>51</sup>

The Penal Code of the DPRK is defined in the state’s official political dictionary as “a body of laws designed to strictly identify and enforce various methods of punishment according to class distinctions, and to prevent crimes, inculcate animosity toward class enemies, and foster law-abiding spirits.”<sup>52,53</sup> The theoretical hierarchy of North Korean law is the constitution

49 This subsection draws on Collins, *Pyongyang Republic*, 124–25 and Collins and Mortwedt Oh, *From Cradle to Grave*, 21–22.

50 Article 14 of the ICCPR provides a list of fair trial rights.

51 Collins and Mortwedt Oh, *From Cradle to Grave*, 23.

52 *Political Dictionary* (Pyongyang: Social Science Publishing House, 1973), 1249.

53 This is in direct contravention to Articles 2(1) and 26 of the ICCPR.

followed by (in order of authority): individual laws; SPA legislation and decisions; State Affairs Commission decisions and orders; SPA Presidium intent, decisions, and directives; cabinet regulations, decisions, and directives; cabinet committee directives and regional people's committee decisions. However, the KWP exercises supreme authority in practice.<sup>54</sup>

The courts solely serve the Kim regime in the exercise of power. All court representatives, including judges and police take orders from the Party, not the state. Legal decisions are made based on political considerations.<sup>55</sup> The SPA Presidium is responsible for interpreting the law, not the courts.<sup>56</sup> For the defendants, the court interprets what is appropriate thought and behavior.<sup>57</sup> According to Article 167 of the 2016 constitution, the DPRK's Central Court, which is subordinate to the SPA, is the court of highest jurisdiction in North Korea. There are three levels of courts: Central Court, provincial courts, and people's courts.<sup>58</sup>

The ninth line is the prison system that also conducts operations based on Party policy for political crimes and law, or Party policy for ordinary crimes. According to a 2011 report by the Database Center for North Korean Human Rights (NKDB), there at least 182 detention facilities of six different types across the country, all with specific purposes.<sup>59</sup>

Evidence of serious human rights violations has been documented for several different types of facilities. In particular, the 2014 report of the UN COI concluded that crimes against humanity have occurred and are taking place in political prison camps (*kwan-li-so*) and labor re-education camps (*kyo-hwa-so*).<sup>60</sup> The MSS and MPS manage four lower-level prison systems. The holding centers (*jip-kyul-so*) “[investigate] and [detain] travelers who go beyond authorized regions and stay beyond...their authorized duration, homeless children, those whose cases are pending and repatriated defectors.”<sup>61</sup> Detention centers (*ku-ryu-jang*) are used for conducting investigations of apprehended suspects. MPS detention centers process general crimes, while MSS detention centers examine “cases related to crimes against the State or the people.”<sup>62</sup> There are also labor training camps

54 Unification Education Institute, *Bukan beob-eul boneun bangbeob* [How to Understand North Korean Law] (Seoul: Ministry of Unification, 2006), 30. The State Affairs Commission has replaced the National Defense Commission.

55 Lee Kyu-Chang and Gwang-Jin Chung, “The North Korean Criminal Trial System: Characteristics and Actual Practice,” *KINU Research Abstract 11-05* (January 26, 2012).

56 The SPA Presidium is a three-member body responsible for all legal and legislative issue interpretation and leadership of the SPA. Its current members are Kim Yong-nam (Chairman), Yang Hyong-sop, and Kim Yong-dae. See <http://nkinfo.unikorea.go.kr/nkp/theme/getPowerStructureJung.do>.

57 Darren C. Zook, “Reforming North Korea: Law, Politics, and The Market Economy,” *Stanford Journal of International Law* 48.1 (2012): 147.

58 “The Judiciary,” in *North Korea: A Country Study*, ed. Andrea Matles Savada (Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress, 1993). <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-9648.html>.

59 “Database Center for North Korean Human Rights – ‘At least 182 detention facilities in North Korea, forced prison labor used to produce exports,’” *VOA Korea*, July 21, 2011. <https://www.voakorea.com/a/nk-gulag-125949338/1342241.html>.

60 UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the detailed findings of the commission of inquiry*, 323–33.

61 Han Dong-Ho et al., *White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea 2018* (Seoul: KINU, 2018), 98.

62 *Ibid.*, 99.

(*ro-dong dan-ryeon-dae*). The MPS operates these in every city and county, and they serve as a standard local confinement facility for more “common” crimes. The sentences typically range from six months to two years for “common” crimes, some of which are classified as “anti-Socialist behaviors.”<sup>63</sup> Then, there are the MPS-operated re-education centers (*kyo-yang-so*).<sup>64</sup>

At the upper end of the spectrum of human rights denial in the prison system are the MPS-operated labor re-education camps (*kyo-hwa-so*) and the political prison camps (*kwan-li-so*).<sup>65</sup> The *kyo-hwa-so* are known to serve as shorter-term prison camps for both political prisoners and “common” criminal offenders.<sup>66</sup> The *kwan-li-so* are also referred to as *jeong-chi-beom su-yong-so*, directly translated as “concentration camps for political prisoners.” The Kim regime denies the existence of these facilities. There are at least five *kwan-li-so* that hold between 80,000 and 120,000 individuals.<sup>67</sup> Four of the known facilities are administered by the MSS, and the fifth is administered by the MPS.<sup>68,69</sup> The *kwan-li-so* represent the peak of human rights denial in North Korea’s prison system. Prisoners are invariably detained for political reasons through real or perceived disloyalty to or disrespect of the Supreme Leader or the KWP. They are usually arrested at night and sent to the prisons without due process.<sup>70</sup> Under a system of guilt-by-association (*yeon-jwa-je*), up to three generations of family members of the accused are also arrested.<sup>71</sup> For those who are sent to the *kwan-li-so*, “death...invariably leads to burial in unmarked graves.”<sup>72,73</sup> A map of the locations of the *kyo-hwa-so* and *kwan-li-so* is shown on the next page.<sup>74</sup>

---

63 Lee Keum-Soon et al., *White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea 2009* (Seoul, Korea: KINU, 2009), 89–90.

64 For a detailed description of North Korea’s *jip-kyul-so*, *ku-ryu-jang*, *ro-dong dan-ryeon-dae*, and *kyo-yang-so* prison systems, see David Hawk with Amanda Mortwedt Oh, *The Parallel Gulag: North Korea’s “An-jeon-bu” Prison Camps* (Washington, D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2017).

65 For more information on North Korea’s political prison camps, see David Hawk, *The Hidden Gulag: Exposing North Korea’s Prison Camps* (Washington, D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2003). [https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/The\\_Hidden\\_Gulag.pdf](https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/The_Hidden_Gulag.pdf).

66 For a detailed description of North Korea’s *kyo-hwa-so*, see David Hawk and Amanda Mortwedt Oh, “The Parallel Gulag: North Korea’s “An-jeon-bu” Prison Camps,” (Washington, D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2017). <https://www.hrnk.org/publications>.

67 UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the detailed findings of the commission of inquiry*, 270.

68 Han et al., *White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea 2018*, 446.

69 Ch’oma-bong, a sixth facility, has been identified as an operational prison camp based on satellite imagery. No witness testimony is available as of 2018. See Joseph S. Bermudez Jr., Andy Dinville, and Mike Eley, *North Korea: Ch’oma-bong Restricted Area* (Washington, D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2016).

70 See Articles 9 and 14 of the ICCPR.

71 For an overview of how an arrest is made, see Collins and Mortwedt Oh, *From Cradle to Grave*, 20–23.

72 Ibid., 38.

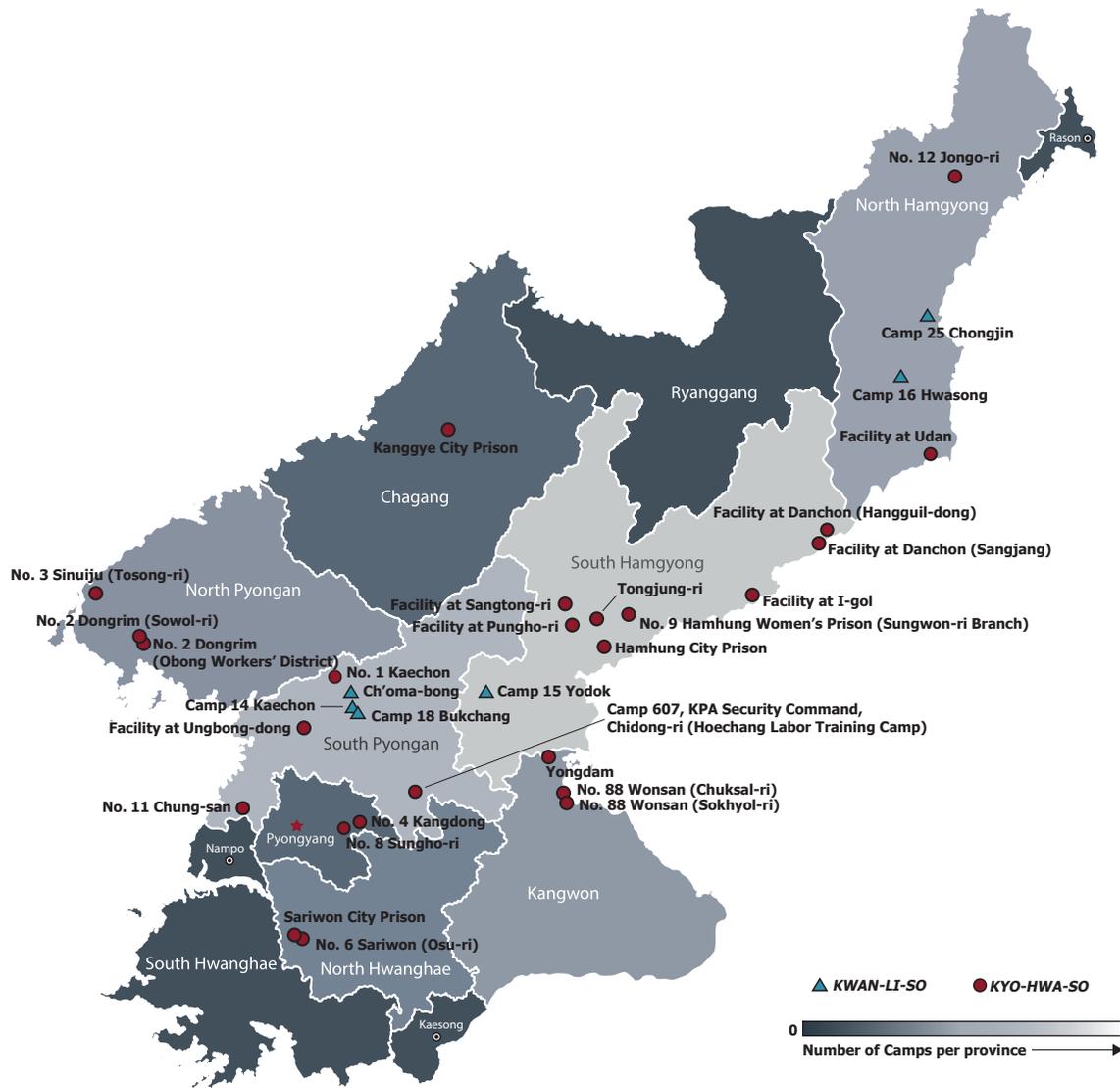
73 Article 10(1) of the ICCPR states, “All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person.”

74 Reproduced from Hawk with Mortwedt Oh, *The Parallel Gulag*, V.

**DENIED**

## FROM THE START

### Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea



The final and tenth line is the *saenghwal chonghwa* system of self-criticism. Under this system, every North Korean must state his or her shortcomings with respect to ideological loyalty or workplace objectives. A mandatory self-criticism session is typically held once every week.<sup>75</sup>

These lines of human rights denial protect the Kim regime from internal dissent. They suppress resistance to the Supreme Leader and the Party, deter local accumulation of dissent by organized groups, and, most importantly, effectively prevent communication between groups in disparate local communities that seek to foment rebellion against the regime.

75 See Section 14 for a detailed discussion on *saenghwal chonghwa*.

## SECTION 3: NORTH KOREAN SOCIETY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

---



From the earliest days of the North Korean revolutionaries' takeover of the northern half of the Korean peninsula, the focus has been on the collective rather than the individual. After Kim Il-sung consolidated his power in the late 1950s, the Kim regime shaped North Korean society through the tools of totalitarianism, the priorities of the dictatorship, and the denial of human rights for the individual. Through the tools of cradle-to-grave propaganda and political terror, the regime compelled loyalty to the Supreme Leader and the KWP over any other set of values or societal norms.

North Koreans share a common Confucianism-based culture with South Koreans that maintains a robust self-identity, which is separate and distinct from nearly all other cultures. However, Confucianism in North Korea has been severely diluted as social doctrine and practices have been significantly transformed by the "values" of the totalitarian dictatorship into ethnic nationalism. Confucian traditions have shaped the values of all Koreans with respect to age, seniority, and the people's relationship to the "king." However, the values of the North Korean populace have been reshaped with a particular emphasis on filial piety, patriarchal approaches, devotion to family, and allegiance to the Party and the Kim family. The Kim family regime has attempted to modify Confucianism to align with socialist principles, ensuring that the masses serve the needs of the Party-state. The regime's intent is well described

---

76 Photograph by Michael Day [CC BY 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The\\_Kims\\_\(6647257359\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Kims_(6647257359).jpg).

**FROM THE START**

## Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

by one North Korean propagandist: “Loyalty to the Supreme Leader is the fundamental basis of the philosophy of life, in which lies the true values of life and happiness.”<sup>77</sup>

The cultural landscape of the North is primarily influenced by *Juche* thought, the Kim family cult of personality,<sup>78</sup> and the TPMI.<sup>79</sup> “Folk culture is a driving force to encourage nationalistic feelings centered on Korea’s uniqueness. Even popular culture, an extremely powerful force of cultural change worldwide, is strictly controlled. The sum of this manipulation is that North Korea’s cultural landscape is unlike any other on the planet.”<sup>80,81</sup> Since before the inception of the state, Party propaganda has continually emphasized that the collective over the individual serves as the basis for societal values, and that a “social-political life is essential to a valuable life which has been bestowed upon the people by the Supreme Leader.”<sup>82</sup> The importance of prioritizing the masses over the individual is taught throughout the life of each North Korean as the appropriate focus in life, whether it is applied to the workplace and the economy, national security and the military, or within social and administrative organizations.

The historical background of North Korean society is unique. Koreans are an ethnically homogenous people with a shared history of 5,000 years, which contributes to a sense of ethnic purity and extreme national pride. Beginning from a feudal society under successive competing dynasties, the Korean experience has been shaped by millennia of geographic isolation and struggles to maintain independence from China and Japan. Falling under Japanese colonial rule between 1910 and 1945 only served to strengthen national pride in both North and South Korea.

National division at the end of World War II created two distinct and separate societies—one based on communism in the North and another based on anti-communism in the South. After the Soviet Union occupied the northern half of the Korean peninsula, North Korea quickly became a communist state with communist approaches to human rights that prioritized collective rights over individual rights. However, the Kim family regime has arguably long abandoned communism as an ideology of social control. Instead, it has adopted ethnic nationalism to promote nationalist themes that further the regime’s domestic control and vilify foreign influences. Traditional culture in North Korea has been somewhat dulled in comparison to its South Korean counterpart due to the ideological influence of revolutionary principles and a focus on self-reliance defined in North Korea as *Juche* ideology. Although Confucian principles continue to shape the basic cultural fabric of North Korean society, collectivism is the dominant organizational approach under the Party-state. The Kim

---

77 Kim Chang-ha, *The Path to the True Life* (Pyongyang: Pyongyang Social Sciences Publishing, 1989), 269-90.

78 Jon C. Malinowski, “Cultural Geography” in Eugene J. Palka & Francis A. Galgano, eds., *North Korea: A Geographic Analysis* (West Point: United States Military Academy, 2002), 74.

79 For a review of the TPMI and the Kim regime’s view of violations of these principles, see Collins and Mortwedt Oh, *Cradle to Grave*, 3-4.

80 Malinowski, “Cultural Geography,” 74.

81 Article 15(1)(a) of the ICESCR states: “The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone: (a) To take part in cultural life.”

82 Kim Soo-Am et al., *The Quality of Life of North Korean: Current Status and Understanding* (Seoul: KINU, 2012), 14.

regime attempts to maintain collective, ethnic, and ideological purity through deliberate isolation.

Ethnic Koreans make up almost the entire population of approximately 25 million. There are minor representations of ethnic Chinese and Japanese residents (less than 0.5%).<sup>83</sup> There are no significant ethnic minorities in the country. North Koreans speak a single language, shared with South Koreans. However, the Kim regime prohibits the use of Chinese characters and bans the use of foreign loan words. Both are commonly used in South Korea.

The North Korean people have never been part of a burgeoning economy. The average Korean had always been exploited by the gentry class prior to 1945. Since then, they have been exploited by the totalitarian dictatorship of the Kim regime. Today, the majority of citizens live under a moribund economy that has resulted in poverty, poor food security, and poor-to-non-existent healthcare.<sup>84</sup> North Korean society is Pyongyang-centric, where those most supportive of the ruling regime are centrally located in the capital city. The residents of Pyongyang live far better than the rest of the country because civilian resources are prioritized for Pyongyang's population.<sup>85</sup> Citizens who are less important to the regime are deliberately located outside of the capital, while those who are deemed to be unreliable are placed in isolated areas of the country—particularly in the east and the northeast—through a deliberate and reinforced residence policy.<sup>86</sup> Those with vested interests in the Kim regime, which includes the political, military, and science elite, continue their loyalty and support, if for no other reason than to maintain their privileged status in a highly stratified society. This privileged minority maintains strict control over the daily lives of the entire populace through the world's most centralized and hierarchical system of governance, which maintains a sophisticated and pervasive police and security network.

Generally, most of the population maintains a considerable degree of uniformity in daily life and leisure. The North Korean authorities use this uniformity in daily life as a means of social control. However, the class-based aspects of North Korean society lead to a stark division between the politically powerful and politically powerless with an unequal distribution of monetary and non-monetary privileges. The highest-ranking people in North Korea are Kim Il-sung's family and relatives, followed by his old comrades and their families, who used to be referred to as revolutionary fighters, denoting their participation in the anti-Japanese armed resistance of the 1930s and 1940s. The next stratum is made up of the families of Korean War veterans and anti-South Korean sabotage officers. The children of this class are typically educated in schools for the bereaved children of the revolutionaries and have access to better career opportunities. Upon graduation, women generally lag behind men in regards to high-

---

83 Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook: Ethnic Groups." Accessed November 20, 2018. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kn.html>.

84 To some degree and because of the aforementioned conditions, the ordinary people of North Korea are less loyal to the regime under Kim Jong-un than under Kim Jong-il, and far less than under Kim Il-sung.

85 See Collins, *Pyongyang Republic*.

86 Article 12(1) of the ICCPR states: "Everyone lawfully within the territory of a State shall, within that territory, have the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his residence."

status positions in society—although the daughter of an established revolutionary can hold a very high rank in both the Party and the government.

The North Korean citizenry has no knowledge of legal rights, civil liberties, or human rights. The North Korean education system does not explain or teach these ideas as opposed to what students in liberal, democratic societies learn in civic education classes during secondary school. Citizens also have no access to materials from other countries or the international community that convey such ideas.<sup>87</sup> According to the National Human Rights Commission of South Korea, approximately 75% of North Koreans who make their way to South Korea demonstrate little understanding of human rights.<sup>88</sup> Even if ordinary North Koreans have strong feelings about what is humanly right and wrong, they are unable to articulate their opinions in terms of legal obligations and the human rights framework.

The basic starting point for concepts relative to rights and fairness inevitably begins with the nuclear family:

*Generally, the grandfather and father's generations have a strong sense of loyalty to the regime and understand the importance of the collective way of living. However, the younger generation has a much keener sense of an individualistic quality of living, though nothing close to those in the West. Moreover, the younger generation believes that family and money are the most crucial factors that will benefit one's life.<sup>89</sup>*

The core value of almost every Korean, North or South, is family first. Traditionally, every Korean is socially and culturally trained to support the family with a focus on the father as the leader of the family. Personal sacrifices are the norm as North Koreans attempt to survive a moribund economy, poor food security in most of the country, and abysmal healthcare. The Kim regime leverages loyalty to and sacrifice for the family by inculcating from the earliest ages in pre-school that the Supreme Leader is the parent of the “family” who will protect and nurture every Korean. This focus on loyalty—as defined, directed, and monitored by the KWP—is intended to benefit the regime by securing individual loyalty of all North Koreans to all decisions, directives, and motives of the Supreme Leader.

Religion in all forms is strictly prohibited and ruthlessly suppressed.<sup>90</sup> The Kim regime does permit “Potemkin Village”-type churches for use by foreign personnel and populated by designated worshippers. There are churches in Pyongyang—one Catholic, one protestant, and one Russian Orthodox—that serve the diplomatic corps and other international

---

87 Article 19(2) of the ICCPR states: “Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.”

88 Claire Lee, “Opinions on human rights ‘significantly different’ among South Koreans and NK defectors: study,” *Korea Herald*, September 25, 2018. <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20180925000119>.

89 Kim et al., *The Quality of Life of North Korean*, 53.

90 See Article 18 of the ICCPR.

representatives in Pyongyang. However, these churches serve as fronts for the Party-state in dealing with international religious organizations for obtaining external aid, which is then allocated according to the regime's priorities rather than the peoples needs. The churches are staffed with Party-appointed personnel and congregation members. There are also a few Buddhist temples in isolated mountain locations, but these too are for show. Escapee testimonies reveal that there are some true believers in North Korea, but they exist in very small groups that must conceal their activities lest they be imprisoned or even executed.<sup>91</sup>

Very few North Koreans have access to the internet or other forms of modern communication. However, cell phones have become increasingly common in recent years. There are presently over two million subscribers to a system installed by the Egyptian company Orascom Investment Holding (formerly Orascom Telecom Media and Technology Holding).<sup>92</sup> Affordability is an issue, but a major inhibitor of information access is state control. Some North Koreans living near the border with China are able to receive Chinese signals and obtain more information about the outside world. However, most North Koreans have very little information about the world other than what they hear by word of mouth and smuggled South Korean television shows and movies. The all-pervasive Party-state propaganda shapes their understanding of the world. This propaganda puts Americans and South Koreans in the worst possible light as enemies of the North Korean people.

---

91 For a discussion of these issues, see Tim Peters, "Reaching Underground Believers & Guiding Others in Flight: Silent Partners Assist North Koreans under Caesar's Sword," *HRNK Insider*, September 24, 2018. <https://www.hrnkinsider.org/2018/09/reaching-underground-believers-guiding.html>.

92 "Egypt's Orascom changes name, retains North Korea business," *UPI*, August 8, 2018. [https://www.upi.com/Top\\_News/World-News/2018/08/08/Egypt's-Orascom-changes-name-retains-North-Korea-business/3701533774370](https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2018/08/08/Egypt's-Orascom-changes-name-retains-North-Korea-business/3701533774370).

**SECTION 4: THE *SURYONG*, THE NORTH KOREAN, AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

93

In North Korea, the *Suryong* is the ultimate authority.<sup>94</sup> The Kim regime has created a society based on loyalty to the Supreme Leader. Every North Korean is judged in relation to his or her family history and individual loyalty to the *Suryong*. Society is constructed in this manner so that stability is the norm when everyone is loyal. Within this society, North Koreans live in a state where political and social stability depend on the dominance of the Kim regime's authority. No other form of leadership is allowed or tolerated in this monolithic Party-state where the population has no autonomy, no freedom of thought, and little room for individuality. All values, ideology, philosophy, economic and physical efforts, societal functions, and security practices are designed to serve the needs of the Supreme Leader. This enables a cult of personality that directs Party-state propaganda to reinforce the supremacy of the leader among the populace. For instance, every home is required to display pictures of both Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il as a daily reminder for every North Korean of their

93 Kim Il-sung photograph by Nicor - File:Grand People's Study House 08.JPG, CC BY-SA 3.0. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=44257275>; Kim Jong-il photograph by Pyongyang 100th Year Kim Il Sung Birthday Celebrations 03.jpg: Photographed by Joseph Ferris III. Derivative work: Great Brightstar (talk) - File:Pyongyang 100th Year Kim Il Sung Birthday Celebrations 03.jpg, CC BY 2.0. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=25844499>; Kim Jong-un photograph at Blue House (Republic of Korea) [KOGL Type 1 ([http://www.kogl.or.kr/open/info/license\\_info/by.do](http://www.kogl.or.kr/open/info/license_info/by.do))]. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kim\\_Jong-un\\_at\\_the\\_Workers%27\\_Party\\_of\\_Korea\\_main\\_building.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kim_Jong-un_at_the_Workers%27_Party_of_Korea_main_building.png).

94 This section draws on and extends content previously published in Collins, *Pyongyang Republic*, 18-27.

collective responsibility to serve the Supreme Leader. Most importantly, every North Korean, with no exception, is required to memorize the TPMI and comply with the demands of those principles, which focus on loyalty to the Supreme Leader.<sup>95</sup> The Ten Principles are:<sup>96</sup>

1. ***Struggle with all your life to paint the entire society with the one color of the Great Leader Kim Il-sung's revolutionary thought.*** (The intent of the first TPMI is to construct a society where everybody follows the same ideology without question or criticism.)
2. ***Respect and revere highly and with loyalty the Great Leader Kim Il-sung.*** (The intent of the second TPMI is to secure absolute loyalty to Kim Il-sung and, by extension, Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un.)
3. ***Make absolute the authority of the Great Leader Kim Il-sung.*** (The intent of the third TPMI is to ensure complete loyalty to the Supreme Leader's position with the implication that anything less is tantamount to treason.)
4. ***Accept the Great Leader Kim Il-sung's revolutionary thought as your belief and take the Great Leader's instructions as your creed.*** (The intent of the fourth TPMI is to shape the thoughts of each North Korean individual so that he or she acts exactly as told by the Supreme Leader and the Party.)<sup>97</sup>
5. ***Observe absolutely the principle of unconditional execution in carrying out the instructions of the Great Leader Kim Il-sung.*** (The intent of the fifth TPMI is to ensure personal, political, and professional performance consistent with principles three and four.)
6. ***Rally the unity of ideological intellect and revolutionary solidarity around the Great Leader Kim Il-sung.*** (The intent of the sixth TPMI is to eliminate political and ideological conflict with that of the Supreme Leader.)
7. ***Learn from the Great Leader Kim Il-sung and master communist dignity, the methods of revolutionary projects, and the people's work styles.*** (The intent of the seventh TPMI is to mold societal work values that support the regime's objectives.)
8. ***Preserve dearly the political life the Great Leader Kim Il-sung has bestowed upon you, and repay loyally for the Great Leader's boundless political trust and considerations with high political awareness and skill.*** (The intent of the eighth TPMI is to ensure that every North Korean's political life does not vary from that of the Supreme Leader and to guarantee compliance with the Supreme Leader's directives.)

---

95 Hyun, *Bukan-ui gukga jeollyak-gwa pawo ellipseu*, 400–403; see also Lee Kyo-Duk et al., *Study on the Power Elite of the Kim Jong Un Regime* (Seoul: KINU, 2013).

96 The English translation of the translations is from “Ten Great Principles of the Establishment of the Unitary Ideology System,” *Citizens Alliance for North Korean Human Rights*, June 29, 2012. [https://eng.nkhumanrights.or.kr:444/board/bbs\\_view.php?no=3&board\\_table=bbs\\_literature&page=1](https://eng.nkhumanrights.or.kr:444/board/bbs_view.php?no=3&board_table=bbs_literature&page=1).

97 See Article 18 of the ICCPR.

**FROM THE START**

## Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

9. *Establish a strong organizational discipline so that the entire Party, the entire people, and the entire military will operate uniformly under the sole leadership of the Great Leader Kim Il-sung.* (The intent of the ninth TPMI is to ensure loyalty to the Party under one leadership.)
10. *The great revolutionary accomplishments pioneered by the Great Leader Kim Il-sung must be succeeded and perfected by hereditary successions until the end.* (The intent of the tenth TPMI is to guarantee the support of the entire population for Kim family succession.)<sup>98</sup>



The *Suryong's* relationship with each North Korean is dominated by his ability to restrict the human rights of each North Korean, as shown in the chart above.<sup>99</sup> He does so through the policies and practices in every political, military, economic, social, and cultural organization. The *Paektu* bloodline, the bloodline of the Kim family, is taught in all Party propaganda as the supreme bloodline of authority for all Koreans worldwide. This authority justifies the *Suryong's* leadership in all major institutions in North Korea, including the Party, the military, and the government. Every North Korean, regardless of location or position, must submit to this authority at least weekly and publicly affirm this authority at self-criticism sessions (*saenghwal chonghwa*). Local leaders evaluate each North Korean citizen under their jurisdiction in terms of his or her performance of loyalty to the Supreme Leader.

98 See Article 25 of the ICCPR.

99 Author's rendition of power, priorities, and relationships within the Kim regime.

A North Korean's relationship with the Supreme Leader is one of complete submission. Although rights are guaranteed in the constitution, the three *Suryong* have demonstrated no commitment to supporting those rights in practice. On the contrary, the *Suryong* has created extra-judicial organizations designed to track down any form of dissent.<sup>100</sup> Individual North Koreans have very little contact with the Supreme Leader, but are heavily impacted in every aspect of their lives by his directives. Furthermore, the KWP plays an expansive role in every North Korean's life at the local level. The Supreme Leader's directives and the Party's policies and practices, as implemented at the local level, form the basis for human rights denial.

The major ideological components of human rights denial are: 1) socio-political classification of each individual (*songbun*); 2) the MIS, which was established to defeat any internal opposition to Kim-family rule; 3) the TPMI, which every North Korean citizen must memorize and comply with to establish the monolithic leadership of the Supreme Leader; and 4) the monolithic guidance system (MGS), which compels regime institutions to only follow the directives of the Supreme Leader. The major institutions that carry out these directives are: 1) the KWP OGD, which is the virtual "control tower" of the regime to which all institutions report; 2) the KWP Propaganda and Agitation Department (PAD), which is responsible for all regime propaganda, agitation, and indoctrination at every level of society down to the villages, workplaces, and schools; 3) the MPS, which serves as the national police; and 4) the MSS, which serves as the regime's secret police, both of which enforce the TPMI over the law.



101

100 See Article 21 and Article 22(1) of the ICCPR.

101 Photograph by Roman Harak [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:North\\_Korea\\_\(5015267945\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:North_Korea_(5015267945).jpg).

**DENIED**

## FROM THE START

### Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

Kim Il-sung, the regime's founder, is often depicted in a paternalistic manner and personified as a benevolent parent who looks after the entire population as his children and disciples. During his rule, Kim Il-sung and his propaganda machine created the notion of a family state with himself as the head of the "family." Indeed, a popular North Korean children's song includes this refrain:

*Our Father is Marshal Kim Il-sung*

*Our home is the bosom of the party*

*We are one big family*

*We have nothing to envy in the whole wide world.*

Decades of regime propaganda has portrayed Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il, and now Kim Jong-un, as parental figures nurturing the North Korean population as their children.<sup>102</sup> Such propaganda has transformed respect for authority into a cult of personality, worshiping the regime's founder and his successors. However, based on testimony by numerous defectors, it appears that the regime has yet to create similar levels of respect for the grandson and current Supreme Leader, Kim Jong-un.<sup>103</sup>

---

102 For a detailed analysis of this parental psychology aspect of regime propaganda, see B.R. Myers, *The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves and Why It Matters* (New York: Melville House, 2011), 95–112.

103 See, for example, Wooyoung Lee, "Defector: 'Young North Koreans indifferent to politics,'" *UPI*, November 18, 2018. [https://www.upi.com/Top\\_News/World-News/2018/11/18/Defector-Young-North-Koreans-indifferent-to-politics/7191542594173/](https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2018/11/18/Defector-Young-North-Koreans-indifferent-to-politics/7191542594173/).

## SECTION 5: KOREAN WORKERS' PARTY CONTROL AT THE LOCAL LEVEL



North Koreans live in an atmosphere of pervasive state control, almost daily political indoctrination, and fear. This fear, as applied to an individual's daily life, is comprised of: 1) fear for survival (particularly in terms of food security); 2) fear of political accusation (in terms of political disloyalty to the regime or the Supreme Leader); and 3) fear of arrest and incarceration (particularly at political prison camps).<sup>105</sup> The Kim regime's anti-socialist inspection teams, which have recently increased their activities under Kim Jong-un, are a major contributor to this fear.<sup>106</sup> However, at the heart of this fear are the policies and practices of the KWP.

The KWP oversees the government, the military, and the security services to form a highly repressive ruling structure to which each North Korean citizen is accountable. The KWP is the only political party with political power in North Korea, and the KWP dominates all forms of political activity within the North.<sup>107</sup> There is no freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, or freedom of movement.<sup>108</sup> Supreme Leader directives, the KWP charter, and KWP guidance supersede the DPRK constitution. Therefore, Party guidance to internal security agencies and the court system focus on denying these rights. Anyone expressing opinions contrary to the position of the Supreme Leader or the Party

104 Caption in poster states: "The highest glory to our mother party!" Photograph by KCNA, available from Curtis Melvin, "Korean Workers' Party (KWP) 4th Delegates' Conference," North Korea Economy Watch (blog), March 9, 2012, <https://www.nkeconwatch.com/2012/04/11/4th-delegates-conference-announced/>.

105 See Article 9(1) of the ICCPR.

106 See, for example, Kang Mi-Jin, "New MPS Guidelines Portend Hard Times," *Daily NK*, January 7, 2014. <http://english.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk01500&num=11351>; Jang Seul-Gi, "North Korean residents subject to new inspections in nationwide crackdown," *Daily NK*, March 30, 2018. <http://english.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk01500&num=15095>; and Kang Mi-Jin, "Authorities encourage residents to report on one another," *Daily NK*, May 8, 2017. <http://english.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk01500&num=14506>.

107 The Kim regime permits minor parties to exist with nominal leaders, but no members. This is to give the impression to the outside world that there is political diversity within the North's political system.

108 See Article 12, Article 19(2), Article 21, and Article 27 of the ICCPR.

**FROM THE START**

## Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

is subject to severe punishment.<sup>109</sup> There are no domestic non-governmental organizations through which the North Korean population can express dissenting points of view, as this could potentially counter the directives and guidance of the Supreme Leader. The media is controlled by the KWP and delivers only messages crafted by the Party.

The organization of North Korean society at the local level (counties and villages) is dominated by the KWP. The KWP embeds a Party committee into every institution—government, military,<sup>110</sup> economic, and social—to provide Supreme Leader and Party guidance to institutions from the highest levels in Pyongyang to the lowest level of the villages, economic enterprises, and social organizations.<sup>111</sup> There are approximately 3.2 million Party members comprised of approximately 210,000 Party cells across the country.<sup>112</sup> While Party representatives include women, workers, and farmers, it is the full-time core Party members who dominate positions in the KWP's central institutions. These positions include Party section chiefs in the central Party, vice-directors at the provincial level, corresponding core Party members in city and county parties, and cell secretaries at economic enterprises and social organizations.<sup>113</sup> Excluding the organizational secretary at the county Party committee, local-level Party members are not paid.



109 See Article 19 of the ICCPR.

110 The KPA General Political Bureau performs this function in the military. This bureau reports directly to the KWP OGD.

111 Jang Jin-Sung, "Why Choe Ryong-hae is not North Korea's No. 2," *New Focus International*, November 12, 2014. <https://web.archive.org/web/20160608220805/http://newfocusintl.com/choi-ryong-hae-2/>.

112 *Bukan gaeyo* [Overview of North Korea] (Seoul: KINU, 2009), 48.

113 Pak In-Ho, "北 당대표, 비서국 임명 간부들로 채워지나?" [Are Cadre Appointed by the Secretariat Dominating North Korea's Party Representative Posts?], *Daily NK*, August 27, 2010. <http://www.dailynk.com/korean/read.php?cataId=nk05000&num=86355>.

114 Photograph by William Proby at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/145294362@N05/29566208770/in/album-72157674200672805/>

Authority structures at the local level begin with the embedded Party committees at the county, village, and workplace. In turn, these Party committees provide guidance to the people's committees at the county and village levels and to the local *dong samuso* (sub-district office) and *inminban* (neighborhood watch unit). The *dong samuso* coordinates local administrative matters, while the *inminban* acts as the lowest level of administrative control.

The most influential position in each embedded Party committee at the provincial, city, and county level is the organizational secretary. Only the Party committee's organizational secretary has daily contact with the KWP OGD, which is the Kim regime's "control tower."<sup>115</sup> The link between the local organizational secretary and the KWP OGD is a vital component of the Kim regime's ability to control all levels of North Korean society on a daily basis. The organizational secretary at the local county level, who always maintains a low profile, oversees the implementation of KWP central Party guidance within his or her sphere of geographic or organizational responsibility. The organizational secretary also oversees local personnel management, surveillance, and investigations conducted by local internal security elements and provides reports directly to the KWP OGD.<sup>116</sup> No individual has as much of an impact on human rights denial at the local level as the organizational secretary of the county Party committee due to his or her ability to affect and implement local social control practices.

The policies and practices of Party life play a major role in evaluating every North Korean citizen's dedication to the Supreme Leader and the Party. Party life for every North Korean, regardless of KWP membership, consists of Party-led ideology study sessions, weekly self-criticism sessions, ideology lectures, self-study, and specific labor efforts. Party lectures focus on the Party's MIS, Party policy, and Party propaganda. Everyone is judged weekly or bi-weekly by the organizational secretary or Party cell secretaries on how well they participate and perform in these sessions.<sup>117</sup> In the central Party, Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il were cell members within the Party headquarters section of the OGD, and conducted their Party life from there. Kim Jong-un likely does the same. In regional Party elements down to the county and village level, secretaries and organizational secretaries conduct their Party life and self-criticism from within their respective Party cells.<sup>118</sup> Evaluations of Party personnel are forwarded to the Party Life Guidance Section of the KWP OGD. Those who are too elderly to work conduct their Party life as part of their *inminban*.

Depending on the workplace and the local area, Party cell membership consists of 5 to 30 personnel. The Party cell, guided by the cell secretary, is the lowest organizational level within the KWP. If workplaces at the local level do not have five Party members, two or more workplaces can be combined to make a cell. These cells organize Party life activities for their

---

115 Ri Myeong-Hun, "Nodongdang naebu sa-eob silsang-gwa jojik-jido-bu 65-gwa" [Reality of KWP internal affairs and Section 65 of the OGD], *Bukhan* (August 2014): 85–91.

116 Jang Jin-Sung, "Why Choe Ryong-hae is not North Korea's No. 2," *New Focus International*, November 12, 2014. <https://web.archive.org/web/20160608220805/http://newfocusintl.com/choi-ryong-hae-2/>.

117 Lee Kwang-Bo et al., *Bukhan-hak* [North Korea Studies] (Seoul: Jinyoung Publishing, 2010), 138–39.

118 Ri, "Nodongdang naebu sa-eob silsang-gwa jojik-jido-bu 65-gwa," 86.

area of responsibility.<sup>119</sup> North Koreans experience organizational life led by the Party starting in elementary school until their death. Children go to their first daycare center at three months of age. Throughout their school years, North Koreans must belong to youth groups (ages 7 to 13) and then, as they enter their teens, they must belong to the Kim Il-sung Kim Jong-il Socialist Labor Youth League (SLYL) (ages 14 to 30). As an adult, one either belongs to the Party or to a Party-led organization, such as the local chapter of an employment league, a labor organization, the Women's League, or another KWP organization.<sup>120</sup>

One can enter the KWP as early as 18. Service in the Youth Pioneers in school followed by membership in the SLYL are qualifiers for joining the KWP. Since the Party is above the state at every level, all North Koreans want to join the Party, but only a select few are chosen. They do so because Party membership provides socio-political advantages and privileges for that person as well as his or her family. New Party members must serve one year as candidate members and there are a number of procedures that are required as a candidate member. For those intending to join the Party, two Party members from local party cells must sign off on a Party entrance guarantee form, which one submits to a local Party cell. Party cell plenary sessions then debate the application and decide eligibility. The county Party committee then ratifies the application.<sup>121</sup>

The local organ of state power is the people's committee at the city sub-district, county, and village levels. Articles 145 to 152 of the 2016 DPRK constitution detail the authorities of the people's committee. According to Article 147.4, the function of these committees is to "implement the laws, ordinances, decrees, decisions and directives...of the corresponding People's Committees at higher levels, the Cabinet and the Commissions and Ministries of the Cabinet." However, the local people's committees carry out the guidance and directives of the local Party committee just as, according to Article 11 of the constitution, the state carries out its duties under the direction of the Party.<sup>122</sup> In doing so, the local people's committees conduct local budgeting, adopt measures to maintain public order, protect the property and interests of the State, and "safeguard the rights of citizens in the given area" as stated in Article 147.8. The latter is implemented according to the interpretation of the KWP, not international treaties on human rights.

North Korea's internal security and criminal justice systems are designed to ensure that the social control policies and human rights denial practices of the Party are carried out effectively. The MPS and MSS have representation at the local level as discussed in Section 2. At the county level, people's courts represent the lowest echelon of North Korea's judicial system.

---

119 Lee et al., *Bukhan-bak*, 141.

120 Ibid., 138–39.

121 Ibid., 141.

122 See Wikisource, "Constitution of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (2016)," December 23, 2017 (accessed November 10, 2018). [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Constitution\\_of\\_the\\_Democratic\\_People%27s\\_Republic\\_of\\_Korea\\_\(2016\)](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Constitution_of_the_Democratic_People%27s_Republic_of_Korea_(2016)). The Korean text is available at the Republic of Korea's Unification Law Database: [http://www.unilaw.go.kr/bbs/selectBoardArticleSearch.do?nttId=235&bbbsId=BBSMSTR\\_000000000021](http://www.unilaw.go.kr/bbs/selectBoardArticleSearch.do?nttId=235&bbbsId=BBSMSTR_000000000021); see also Choi Jin-Wook, *Hyeondae Bukan Haengjeong-ron* [Modern North Korean Administration Theory] (Seoul: Myongin Munhwasa, 2008), 118–21.

The judicial panel consists of one judge and two people's assessors, who are temporarily appointed laymen.<sup>123</sup> There are approximately 100 of these courts nationwide, and their jurisdiction may exceed more than one county. The KWP screens and appoints all judges and people's assessors, just as it does with all SPA members and local people's committee members.<sup>124</sup> At the local level, the prosecutor's office leads court proceedings, not the judge. Defense lawyers are assigned by the state and defendants have no alternative.<sup>125,126</sup>

The aforementioned organizations, from central authorities headquartered in Pyongyang down to the county and village levels, work to enforce the KWP's policy of social control, employing the TPMI as the foundation for operations targeting those suspected of violating standards of social control.<sup>127</sup> In doing so, human rights denial becomes the norm for every citizen, beginning at the local level. This foundation serves to preserve the integrity of the Kim regime and the security of the Supreme Leader, Kim Jong-un.

---

123 "The Judiciary," in *North Korea: A Country Study*.

124 Yonhap News Agency, *North Korea Handbook*, 151.

125 "The Judiciary," in *North Korea: A Country Study*; see also Kim Jong-il, "Sabeop geomchal saeob-eul gaeseon ganghwa halde daehayeo" [On Improving Legal Prosecution Tasks], in *Collected Works of Kim Jong-il*, Vol. 7 (Pyongyang: KWP Publishing Company, 1996), 321.

126 See Article 14(3)(b) of the ICCPR.

127 See of the ICCPR Article 9(1) .

**SECTION 6: SHAPING REGIME PROPAGANDA AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**

---



All North Korean citizens face lifelong KWP indoctrination.<sup>129</sup> As a core function of the Kim regime's social control strategy, propaganda and political agitation serve to shape the entire populace into one that is obedient to the regime. The KWP employs political agitation and propaganda to set standards for collective political thought, guide individual socio-political behavior, provide internal security with operational guidelines, and provide the military with an ideological compass. This is accomplished at the local level at the workplace, at the schools, and with the *inminban* (neighborhood watch unit). The regime's intent is to ensure that every North Korean is loyal to the Supreme Leader and to organize the populace into a singularly directed workforce to accomplish national goals and objectives.

The KWP PAD leads all political agitation and propaganda activities in North Korea at all levels. The PAD assigns a political agitation officer at every level of every agency in the North Korean political, military, internal security, economic, and social sectors.<sup>130</sup> The PAD receives its guidance from the KWP OGD, which is the control tower of the KWP. The KWP OGD is the Party lead for policy approval, including propaganda themes.

---

128 Photograph by Roman Harak, "Eternal President and Great Leader together," taken September 5, 2010, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/roman-harak/5015253795/in/album-72157624888383265/>.

129 This section draws on material previously published in Collins, *Pyongyang Republic*, 117–20.

130 The KWP United Front Department and the KPA General Political Bureau also conduct psychological operations against the ROK and the international community. Those operations are not addressed in this report.

The PAD manages all information services in North Korea, including the state's three television stations, 200 radio stations, and all newspapers including the KWP's politically authoritative *Rodong Sinmun*. It supervises the Central Broadcasting Committee, which oversees broadcast media, including the *Korean Central News Agency (KCNA)*.<sup>131</sup> The PAD oversees North Korea's publishing companies, including the KWP Publishing House, the Foreign Language Publishing House, and the Workers' Publishing House. The PAD also supervises all art and music troupes, the film industry, and all literature groups.<sup>132</sup> It even oversees the Party History Institute and the Party History Research Center.<sup>133</sup> The PAD propagandizes every Party slogan and policy through broadcasts, newspapers, published items, art, and at every gathering or meeting and self-criticism session nationwide.<sup>134</sup>

Individual and organizational loyalty to the Supreme Leader are the fundamental themes of North Korean political agitation and propaganda as demonstrated in the poster below, which reads "Great comrade Kim Jong-un, we will be loyal to you to the end."<sup>135</sup> Other common themes include the wisdom and benevolence of the Supreme Leader, the superiority of North Korean culture and the socialist system, hatred for capitalism and religion, the struggle of socialism against imperialism, and the threat posed by the outside world.



131 See Article 19 of the ICCPR.

132 See Article 15 of the ICESCR.

133 Michael Madden, "KWP Propaganda and Agitation Department," *NK Leadership Watch*, November 2009. <http://nkleadershipwatch.files.wordpress.com/2009/11/kwppropagandaandagitationdepartment.pdf>.

134 Jeon, *Dasi gochyeo sseun Bukan-ui saboe-wa munhwa*, 34.

135 Photograph by William Proby, No. 29776715021\_e4e2873467, at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/145294362@N05/albums/72157674200672805/page29>.

**FROM THE START**

## Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

The county KWP committee's propaganda section assigns propagandists to workplaces and schools. They also provide propaganda materials to each *inminban* leader for dissemination in each *inminban*. This indoctrination is designed to shape the loyalty of the people to the regime leadership and extol the virtues of being a North Korean, living a life free from foreign domination. The predominant work of Party propaganda takes place at the local level. Most farms throughout North Korea have major signs constructed outdoors in view of farmers as they work, as shown in the picture below. These billboards usually stress loyalty to the Supreme Leader or the KWP, as does this one, which states, "Let's thoroughly achieve the last wishes of Great Supreme Leader Kim Il-sung."<sup>136</sup>



North Koreans experience their first political agitation session in a local daycare center, where there is a focus on portraying the United States and Japan as the enemy.<sup>137</sup> As children advance in age, they are required to attend political agitation courses at all levels of education, at the workplace, and in the community until the end of their lives. During periods of high tension in national security, political agitation sessions at the local and national levels increase their focus on resisting the enemy or the cause of the crisis. There is also a greater emphasis on motivating patriotic activities by individuals and organizations to support the regime and the Supreme Leader. For instance, a regular theme during perceived crisis is North Koreans "becoming guns and bombs to protect the Supreme Leader," whereby local agitators impel their audience to develop methods to protect the Supreme Leader with their lives. These types of posters are prevalent throughout North Korean society, beginning with daycare centers,

136 Photograph by William Proby, No. 29824830906\_3c6cf64925\_n, at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/145294362@N05/albums/72157674200672805/page39>.

137 See Article 20(2) of the ICCPR.

schools at all levels, and official government and Party buildings. Posters like these are used in propaganda sessions by the KWP's professional political agitators at all levels. Posters are included in propaganda materials that North Koreans must study and are ubiquitous in the workplace, regardless of the type of work that is being done. The local workplace maintains an embedded KWP committee whose propaganda secretary is responsible for ensuring that the posters are properly themed for that particular workplace.

Every North Korean is subjected to this type of propaganda throughout his or her lifetime.<sup>138</sup> The ideological tenets of *Juche* and the TPMI underpin the regime's justification for rule over and control of the North Korean populace. At no time are citizens permitted to study any other ideology with the exception of the evils of capitalism.<sup>139</sup>



140

138 See Article 19(2) of the ICCPR.

139 See Article 17 of the CRC.

140 Photograph by AgainErick [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>) or GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>)], from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:DPRK\\_Museum\\_painting\\_1.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:DPRK_Museum_painting_1.jpg).

**SECTION 7: THE PROFILE OF A NORTH KOREAN VILLAGE**

141

To understand human rights denial at the local level in North Korea, it is important to understand local North Korean community dynamics on a day-to-day basis. Archaic technological capabilities and endemic famine-like conditions in the North Korean countryside give little opportunity to individual families for improving their own situation, especially given the Kim regime's prioritization of the nuclear and ballistic missile programs. Food insecurity at the local level related to human rights denial is well documented in the 2014 UN COI report. The instability based on resource shortages causes concern for a potential humanitarian crisis in North Korea.

Cities in North Korea are generally focused on industrial production through a complex of factories and service organizations. However, each of the over 4,000 villages in North Korea is typically characterized by one predominant type of economic activity: agriculture, mining, fishing, or factory production.<sup>142</sup> Village populations vary from 100 to 5,000 residents, and the larger villages tend to support factory production. By contrast, there are over 40 communities with a population of 200,000 or more. The North Korean population is comprised of 63.1% factory and enterprise workers, 23.5% agricultural workers, and 13.4% office workers. The occupational hierarchy is based on the *songbun* classification to which every North Korean is assigned. This is a major factor in the Kim regime's assignment of occupations.

Life at the local level in North Korea involves innumerable challenges to survival. Those challenges are so great that time to even think about their human rights is sparse. Even though they have instincts about what some of those rights should be, the ability to act upon

---

141 Photograph of a farming village by William Proby, No. 29215559583\_22d4cecfce\_n, at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/145294362@N05/29806196206/in/album-72157674200672805/>.

142 Most villages engage in some level of agricultural activity. There are also some villages that focus on logging in the north-central areas of North Korea.

those instincts is nearly impossible. There are reports of scattered incidents of resistance against local authorities, such as the occasional sign posting complaints about the regime and the Supreme Leader, but unity of effort in resistance is not possible in North Korea. In that vein, survival is a way of life for the vast majority of North Koreans who live on the edge, especially outside of Pyongyang.

The fear of starvation is closely followed by the fear of the North Korean political system. Leadership dynamics within villages suppress any actualization of rights among the villagers. The most feared person at the county level is the Party committee organization secretary because he or she holds the power of life and death over every village resident in the county. This individual reports directly to the KWP OGD, the most powerful actor in the country below the Supreme Leader. Other feared individuals include officers of the MSS and MPS due to their authority to apprehend, arrest, try, convict, and sentence individuals without notification.<sup>143</sup> They are generally hated by the locals, who have to pay them bribes to avoid or lessen punishment. The *inminban* leader also provides information to the authorities. The local police also recruit informants, with two or three informants for a group of ten village residents. Each informant is aware that there are other informants, which means that they are forced to tell the truth.

When the authorities notify a village resident that he or she must be ready to leave in 24 hours, the neighbors know that the resident is being sent for life to a prison camp. The neighbors will drop off gardening tools because they know that the departing resident will need these to survive. Consequently, the threat to personal safety dominates each North Korean's thoughts in their daily activities and conversations.

To further isolate villages from the center, the Kim regime restricts national media content and isolates local populations to ensure information control.<sup>144</sup> Local media content is treated as a subset of nationally distributed content. Every morning and evening, the local KWP agitator broadcasts propaganda on every street through local public speaker broadcasts. This system is not dissimilar to advertisements in capitalist countries, but it is much more politically intense.<sup>145</sup>

Most villages in the countryside have contaminated water systems, scant electricity, poor healthcare, little economic activity, and significant food insecurity. Even the villages centered around collective farms suffer from food appropriation by the military, thus leaving the local population with only small personal plots—of a size prescribed by the Party-state—to supplement minimal food provisions from the collective farm stocks.<sup>146</sup> These conditions add to the village population's dependency on the local state enterprise for sustainment. The typical farming village consists of grouped houses surrounded by individual farming plots

---

143 See Article 9 of the ICCPR.

144 See Article 19 of the ICCPR.

145 Jeon, *Dasi gochyeo sseun Bukan-ui sahoe-wa munbwa*, 33–34.

146 See Article 11 of the ICESCR.

for growing personal food, while the food grown in cooperative farms goes to military or government agencies and urban residents.

Key observable socioeconomic and political patterns provide the basis for analyzing a North Korean village and its norms. This includes housing patterns, movement patterns involving work details, physical restrictions and controls within the village, vehicle transportation patterns,<sup>147</sup> well water retrieval, electricity and chimney use patterns (normally limited to early mornings and late evenings), and population lockdowns during civil defense drills. These factors all give rise to specific population patterns, which are useful in assessing and identifying the village workforce and leadership. Since many villages are focused on farming or supporting one or two factories, most housing areas operate on the same daily schedule of sleep, rise, eat, go to work, and return home.

Family housing patterns within villages are determined by *songbun*. These patterns are determined and monitored by the local leadership, which maintains a strict hierarchy of privilege provision and denial. All housing is assigned by the local people's committee leadership under the local Party committee's guidance. There are five levels of housing, whether in the smallest of villages or in Pyongyang, although the quality is significantly higher in the latter. Level one is the lowest level and it makes up approximately 60 percent of all housing countrywide. This level includes smaller apartments, farmers' houses, and older houses provided to general laborers, white-collar workers, agricultural workers, and farming community residents. Level two housing is provided to provincial guidance officers, city and county section directors, enterprise section directors, schoolteachers, and *Chollima* project team leaders.<sup>148</sup> This housing consists of one room and a kitchen, or two rooms and a kitchen for two families. Level three housing is regarded as mid-level housing that includes single-family units or newer apartments. This is provided to central government guidance officers, provincial agency deputy directors and above, enterprise directors, and school principals. Approximately 25 percent of all housing is second- and third-level housing. Level four housing is provided to Party section chiefs, government bureau directors, people's actors, honored artists, college professors, and enterprise directors. This level of housing consists of high-rise apartments that are approximately 121 square meters to 182 square meters in size. Fifteen percent of the population lives in level four housing or above. Level five (special class) housing is provided to Party vice-directors, cabinet officials and above as well as military generals and admirals.<sup>149</sup> Level four and special class housing is not found at the village level.

Those of lower *songbun*, who belong to the "hostile" class, are assigned housing that is separate from that of other classes. Most are housed in isolated mountain villages, where they perform hard labor in mines and on farms. They are not permitted to live in fishing villages due to the

---

147 This is very limited, since private vehicles are virtually absent at the village level.

148 This refers to individuals who are responsible for adherence to Party-state ideology on these projects.

149 Kim Byeong-Ro and Kim Seong-Cheol, *Bukan saboe-ui bulpyeongdeung gujo-wa jeongchisaboejeok hamui* [The Structure of Inequality in North Korean Society and its Political-Social Implications] (Seoul: KINU, 1998), 51-52.

risk of escaping North Korea. For similar reasons, they are also not permitted to live near the demilitarized zone or the Sino-North Korean border.<sup>150</sup>

The local KWP committee dominates the local political scene without exception. Each Party committee coordinates and oversees all social, economic, and political organizations within its jurisdiction. If the village is large enough, the village Party committee may have up to 500 members or candidate members. The village leadership will be comprised of the village Party committee, the local KWP military committee that leads local civil defense during crisis and related training, the local people's committee that conducts administrative management of the local village, and the police. Court officials are also part of this group in villages that serve as the county's administrative center.

Leadership figures will be recognizable from afar because their efforts are separate and distinct from that of the average laborer. If there are automobiles in the village, the laborers will likely be there to serve the leadership or perform logistical functions. The local village Party committee chairperson is generally regarded as the most powerful and fearsome individual in that community since he or she has the power to control all aspects of an individual's life. He or she may also serve in other non-Party leadership positions, such as the head of a local enterprise. If the village is large enough, there will also be an MSS representative who will be feared and resented by the local villagers. Other senior Party leaders are ranking members of all other committees and management structures regardless of the knowledge those leaders bring to the committee.<sup>151</sup>

Leaders in the village communities invariably climbed the local political and professional ladder because they were evaluated as superior to others in their Party life. To remain in their positions, these leaders must ensure that the Party's directives and the TPMI are observed by all of their subordinates. These are the leaders at the local level who ensure that the actions of the village are in line with central Party policies and directives. Subordinate leaders at the village factory, farm, schools, and neighborhood housing units, and security personnel implement the daily practices that create this dynamic.

The lowest end of village leadership is the *inminban* leader, who observes the private life of 15 to 40 housing units and plays an essential role in local Party propaganda programs.<sup>152</sup> The *inminban* is a critical component in understanding the local community. Every village maintains several of these *inminban* and each is led by an *inminban* leader. Each *inminban* leader reports not only to administrative officials, but also to the local police and the secret police on her findings with respect to individual households.

All villagers are either Party members or members of a Party-controlled organization, such as the labor unions, the Union of Agricultural Workers of Korea, the SLYL, the Women's League, or the Red Youth League. All of these organizations maintain local chapters;

---

150 See Article 12(1) of the ICCPR.

151 In North Korea, Party loyalty is considered more important than competence.

152 The number of housing units in an *inminban* depends on the housing pattern in the village.

**DENIED**

## **FROM THE START**

### Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

membership in these organizations is mandatory for all village residents. This policy enables the local KWP committee to mobilize and control the entire village population, especially during a crisis. All of these organizations contribute to the centralization of authority and organization of daily life for all North Korean citizens.

The vast majority of North Korea's population leads their entire lives in only three or four locations. For men, these locations are: their childhood home until graduation from high school, followed by military service for which the vast majority of soldiers are in one unit at one location for up to ten years, and post-military civilian employment in one community. For women, these locations are: their childhood home until graduation from high school, a military unit for approximately three years if they serve, post-military civilian employment in one community until marriage, which is followed by movement to her husband's assigned housing unit. The rigidity of the political system eliminates personal autonomy and restricts freedom of movement. North Korea's centralized housing policy, the KWP's policy on population employment and mobilization, and the regime's *songbun* system create predictable patterns of socio-political dynamics at the village level. It is this rigidity and predictability that enables the analysis of villages in terms of political-economic profiles, socio-cultural factors, and physical organization.

## SECTION 8: *INMINBAN* (NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH UNIT), THE FOUNDATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DENIAL



North Korea is ruled, not by law, but by ideology and a single dictator. All administrative structures at every level are under Party control and implement Party decisions. Unauthorized behavior is suppressed. Individuals cannot freely choose where to live, and they cannot freely travel beyond their local area of residence. The *inminban* is the lowest level of administrative organization in this strategy of social control.<sup>154</sup> According to Article 1 of the DPRK Family Law, the family is the base level of implementation of social revolution theory. From the earliest days of the North Korean revolution, the family was shaped to be a key component of the socialist collective system. The *inminban* is the direct implementer of this system in every neighborhood at the local level, whether urban or rural. In March 1968, the Women's League introduced this concept and the Fifth KWP Congress in 1970 institutionalized it. The purpose was and is to revolutionize North Koreans from the family base up, thus making the *inminban* a foundation for societal revolution.<sup>155</sup>

Although they existed before the 1960s, today's *inminban* format was essentially established in that decade. Its purpose focused on social control from the outset and evolved to include

---

153 Photograph by Jacky Lee [CC BY 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>)], [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Small\\_village\\_in\\_North\\_Korea\\_%E6%9C%9D%E9%B2%9C%E4%B9%A1%E6%9D%91\\_-\\_panoramio.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Small_village_in_North_Korea_%E6%9C%9D%E9%B2%9C%E4%B9%A1%E6%9D%91_-_panoramio.jpg).

154 Report Shop, "북한사회의변화와인민반의상관관계에대한고찰 (Examining the Relationship Between Changes in North Korean Society and the Neighborhood Unit)," March 19, 2010, [http://www.reportshop.co.kr/data/data\\_view.html?rpID=427615](http://www.reportshop.co.kr/data/data_view.html?rpID=427615).

155 Doopedia, "북한의가정생활 (North Korea's Family Life)," undated, accessed January 1, 2018, <http://terms.naver.com/entry.nhn?docId=1180420&cid=40942&categoryId=31643>.

ideological instruction.<sup>156</sup> In an early policy that helped shape the *inminban*'s purpose, Kim Il-sung gave a speech in July 1958 in Changsong County, North Pyongan Province, where he stated "every salaried employee was responsible for five others in guiding their ideological instruction and economic tasks for across-the-board consistency. In that way, village tasks could be carried out by the village party committee properly. If this took place throughout all of North Korea, then family life could be consistent for everybody."<sup>157</sup> The Pyongyang city authorities then held a conference referred to as "Pyongyang's Exceptional *Inminban* Workers' Conference" from March 12 to 13, 1963. At this conference, *inminban* were directed to focus on political doctrine for the *inminban* residents, addressing issues such as Party policies, communism, class struggle, and revolutionary tradition for the purpose of building a socialist society as well as mobilizing the masses.<sup>158</sup>

With the advent of Kim Jong-il's influence in the early 1970s, life in the *inminban* became far more focused on obedience to the Party and the collective approach over the individual. Kim Jong-il instructed that *inminban* residents must arm themselves with the Supreme Leader's revolutionary thought and contribute to the MGS so that the whole *inminban* could act as one family. To enforce this ideological approach, a surveillance system was established.<sup>159</sup> Human rights considerations were essentially eliminated at this point.

In North Korea, human rights denial begins with the *inminban*.<sup>160</sup> The *inminban* serves to enforce the complete loyalty of every North Korean citizen to the Supreme Leader and the KWP. The *inminban* complements the Party, social organizations, and the internal security and the criminal justice systems in the Party's strategy of controlling the daily lives of every North Korean.<sup>161</sup>

Every North Korean except the Supreme Leader is required to belong to an *inminban*. Even the regime's elites cannot be exempt; their families must also belong to an *inminban*. The surveillance systems to which these elite families are subjected to are far more pervasive than that of *inminban* in the rural areas.<sup>162</sup> In North Korean cities, an *inminban* manages twenty to thirty households. These *inminban* are subordinate administratively to townships (*eup*), labor districts (*rodongja-gu*), and city sub-districts (*dong*). There are forty to sixty *inminban* in a city sub-district. They are administratively subordinate to the local sub-district administrative office (*dong samuso*), which is subordinate to the local people's committee. In rural areas, the *inminban* is subordinate to the same structure. The number of households under one

---

156 Report Shop, "북한사회의변화와인민반의상관관계에대한고찰 (Examining the Relationship Between Changes in North Korean Society and the Neighborhood Unit)," March 19, 2010, [http://www.reportshop.co.kr/data/data\\_view.html?rpID=427615](http://www.reportshop.co.kr/data/data_view.html?rpID=427615).

157 Ibid.

158 Ibid.

159 Ibid.

160 Ibid.

161 Ibid.

162 Ibid.

*inminban* varies with the economic and geographic features of a specific village, but generally ranges between fifteen and forty.<sup>163</sup>



The *inminban*'s mission is to conduct ideological education, organize mobilization and social support, maintain residential area cleanliness and order, manage residents, and perform surveillance on all residents.<sup>164</sup> Families belong to an *inminban*, but these families are also controlled by other Party organizations. Even children belong to Party organizations, such as the Young Pioneers, within their local schools. Working men conduct Party activities at the local workplace. Each *inminban* conducts study sessions, lectures, and self-criticism sessions, which are difficult to avoid.<sup>165</sup>

*Inminban* meetings are conducted twice a week.<sup>166</sup> As depicted in the organizational chart on the next page, the *inminban* leader is responsible for all activities within her specific *inminban*.<sup>167</sup> The *inminban* leader is normally a middle-aged woman. According to one recent report, selection of an *inminban* leader is becoming more democratic as these neighborhood unit leaders are being selected by *inminban* residents rather than being selected and appointed by the local government.<sup>168</sup> The *inminban* leader is assisted by a chief of sanitation, a deputy chief of households, and a propaganda agitator representing the KWP. The *inminban* leader's surveillance and political responsibilities include monitoring neighborhood activities and individual behavior, reporting regularly to the national police and occasionally to the secret police, conducting Party propaganda sessions, and overseeing neighborhood self-criticism sessions. Residents cannot ignore the orders of the *inminban* leader. Many national programs that focus on resource collection, such as scrap paper drives and compost

---

163 Ibid.

164 Ibid.

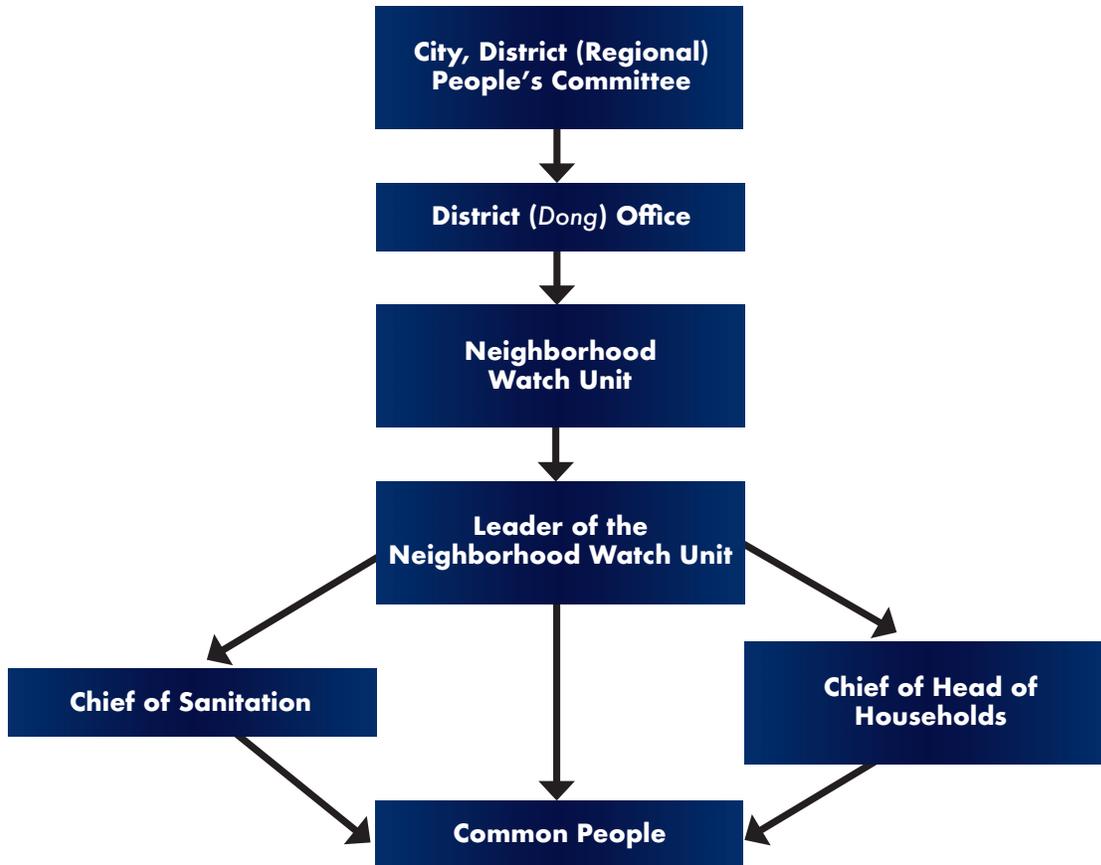
165 Lee et al., *Bukhan-bak*, 142.

166 The picture above is a screen capture from footage of an *inminban* meeting. See Kang Mi-Jin, "Some neighborhood watch leaders picked by more democratic process," *Daily NK*, March 26, 2018. <http://english.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk01500&num=15084>.

167 Gause, *Coercion, Control, Surveillance, and Punishment*, 45.

168 Kang Mi-Jin, "Some neighborhood watch leaders picked by more democratic process," *Daily NK*, March 26, 2018. <http://english.dailynk.com/english/read.php?num=15084&cataId=nk01500>.

collection drives, begin with the *inminban* leader. *Inminban* leaders receive very modest salaries, but their food rations are usually better than those of other *inminban* residents.<sup>169</sup>



The *inminban* leader is responsible for knowing every resident within her specific *inminban*. After interviewing several former *inminban* leaders, Andrei Lankov noted that every one of his interviewees made a statement to this effect: “An *inminban* head should know how many chopsticks and how many spoons are in every household.”<sup>170</sup> In an interview with the author,

169 Kim Byung-Wook, *Hyeondaejeon-gwa Bukan-ui jiyekbangwi* [Modern Warfare and North Korea's Regional Defense] (Seoul: Seonin Publishing, 2011), 290–91.

170 Andrei Lankov, *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 39.

Ms. Kim Young-soon, a former *inminban* leader, stated that in carrying out her duties as expected by her chain of command and the police, she would always ask questions such as:

*Why is your light on so late?*

*Why did you leave your house late in the evening?*

*Where did you go?*

*Why were you too sick to work today?"*

Other interviews of former *inminban* leaders who have escaped to South Korea reveal that the primary duty of an *inminban* leader is ensuring that all *inminban* residents praise Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il, and Kim Jong-un through constant ideological education.

The *inminban* is an integral component of North Korea's social control policies. *Inminban* leaders are ostensibly administrative employees of the North Korean state, but they take their security-related instructions primarily from the local MPS and, to a lesser degree, the county-level MSS officer in monitoring the activities of everyone in the specific *inminban*.<sup>171</sup> For the purpose of rooting out "class enemies," *inminban* personnel are trained to report "counter-revolutionary" comments by those living in their respective *inminban* to the security services in the name of "revolutionary vigilance."<sup>172</sup> The *inminban* leaders also assist the local police in updating records of new persons in the local housing units, including new births, releases from the military or prisons, relocations or marriages into a housing unit, and deaths.<sup>173</sup> Moving out of a community begins with asking permission from the *inminban* and workplace. The request is then forwarded to higher authorities. Moving up to a better workplace or promotion is possible based on good evaluation reports.<sup>174</sup> The *inminban* leaders also support local security agencies by actively looking out for *inminban* residents' possession of DVDs, USBs, and other information devices that may contain anti-regime content. Banned lists of songs, movies, and other items are sent down from the KWP PAD to shape confiscation efforts by the *inminban* leaders.<sup>175</sup>

The MPS and MSS employ informants within the *inminban*. Each MPS officer is assigned to monitor approximately 200 citizens, thirty of whom are recruited as informants. In other words, 15% of the North Korean population serves as an informant of some kind.<sup>176</sup> The

---

171 Lee et al., *Bukhan-hak*, 142–43.

172 Seong-Chang Cheong, "Stalinism And Kimilsungism: A Comparative Analysis Of Ideology And Power," *Asian Perspective* 24.1 (2000): 154.

173 Kim and Ri, *Resident Registration Project Reference Manual*, 11 & 25.

174 Lee et al., *Bukhan-hak*, 143.

175 Choi Song-Min, "Ban tightens on N.Korean songs of 'resistance'," *Daily NK*, July 24, 2015. <http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk01500&num=13365>.

176 Kim Young-Cheol, "North Korea's Control over its People and the People's Safety Agency: Testimony of a former officer of the People's Safety Agency," *Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human*

North Korean internal security agencies have now established emergency phone numbers (110 for the MSS and 118 for the MPS) for informants to call when they see something suspicious. However, most residents do not call these numbers because there is no reward for doing so and it is safer not to take any action.<sup>177</sup>

The *inminban* leaders must also comply with the guidance of the local Socialist Law-Abiding Life Guidance Committees (SLLGC). Founded in 1977 at Kim Il-sung's order, these committees were formed in all provincial, city, and county central people's committees. These extra-judicial committees meet monthly and they are generally comprised of local judges, prosecutors, police, and other community leaders. Generally, the SLLGC committee chair is the local people's committee chairman. The SLLGC's purpose is to oversee general compliance with the law and to prosecute violators.<sup>178</sup>

Labor mobilization is a common community task directed by the Party and carried out by local administrations. It involves local enterprises, *inminban*, and schools. Labor projects include cleaning streets and statues, agricultural support, and disaster relief.<sup>179</sup> This forced labor is uncompensated. Those that participate have no option when the *inminban* leader directs participation based on the local people's committee directive. This directly violates Article 8 of the ICCPR, which prohibits slavery or forced labor.<sup>180,181</sup>

Mobilization for political events is also very common in North Korean society, and the *inminban* leader is responsible for preparing her neighborhood for each event. *Inminban* residents are required to practice songs and slogans with fellow residents. Common political events include the New Year, holidays such as the founding of the KWP, and the birth and death dates of the ruling Kim family leaders.

*Inminban* leaders do not always cooperate with each other within the larger community. Even though veiled enmity exists between leaders and they may be jealous of others receiving more credit from their superiors, they allusively tell an MSS agent or the chief of the district rather than publicly oppose other *inminban* leaders.

---

*Rights*, June 29, 2012. [https://eng.nkhumanrights.or.kr:444/board/bbs\\_view.php?no=162&board\\_table=bbs\\_evidence&page=1&word=&searchItem=&cate\\_id=](https://eng.nkhumanrights.or.kr:444/board/bbs_view.php?no=162&board_table=bbs_evidence&page=1&word=&searchItem=&cate_id=)

177 Kang Mi-Jin, "Authorities encourage residents to report on one another," *Daily NK*, May 8, 2017. <http://english.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk01500&num=14506>.

178 Daum Encyclopedia, "법무생활지도위원회." Accessed January 1, 2018. <http://100.daum.net/encyclopedia/view/b09b1517n0>; see also "The Judiciary" in *North Korea: A Country Study*.

179 Park Sun-Hwa, "A Lifetime of Mass Mobilization in North Korea," *New Focus International*, August 16, 2015. <https://web.archive.org/web/20160616204537/http://newfocusintl.com/a-lifetime-of-mass-mobilization-in-north-korea/>.

180 See Article 8 of the ICCPR.

181 A recent assessment rated North Korea as the country where "modern slavery" is most prevalent. See "The Global Slavery Index 2018: Data – Korea, Democratic People's Republic of," *The Walk Free Foundation*. Accessed November 20, 2018. <https://www.globallslaveryindex.org/2018/data/country-data/north-korea/>.



Ms. Kim Young-soon was a former *inminban* leader in North Korea prior to defecting to South Korea. Her testimony regarding how she conducted herself in that position is as follows:<sup>182</sup>

- Ms. Kim Young-soon was assigned as an *inminban* leader by the MSS in Pyongyang because they wanted to put her on their radar and watch her. *Inminban* leaders in Pyongyang received 600 grams of rice per day and 60 won a day.
- *Inminban* leaders in Hamheung, where Ms. Kim Young-soon lived and worked, did not receive any additional compensation other than 30 won. She served as the leader of the 18th *inminban* of Unhung 1-dong, Dongheungsan District in Hamheung City. Her direct supervisors were the head of her community's *dong samuso*, the Party secretary of her neighborhood, and the head of her neighborhood's Women's League. She had no direct engagements with the SLLGC.
- Each *inminban* leader is in charge of 25 to 30 households on average. There is no possibility of promotion for *inminban* leaders as they are usually housewives without jobs and it is obvious to *inminban* leaders that they will not be promoted.
- Housewives who are not social workers are usually assigned to be the *inminban* leader. There are no particular requirements for the selection of *inminban* leaders. There are *inminban* leaders with lower *songbun*, but they often prove themselves by working harder. *Inminban* leaders are not official social workers. They are assigned as *inminban* leaders for their obedience to the Party.
- The role of *inminban* leaders is important as they must know every issue in every household. They must report every aspect of their neighborhood situations to their supervisors. Even small and private matters of each household have to be reported if they do not seem to follow the KWP's guidelines.
- The *inminban* leaders are more closely involved with the MPS than the MSS. They mainly function as watchdogs of North Korean civilians for the police. Some of their main duties include: 1) identifying "lawbreakers" whose ideology does not match that of the Kim regime; 2) constantly checking if there are any strangers in their neighborhood units; 3) identifying those who do not participate in group tasks

---

182 Author interview via email with Ms. Kim Young-soon.

**FROM THE START**

## Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

- assigned by the neighborhood offices; and 4) identifying whether or not strangers stayed over in each household and reporting to both the police and the secret police.
- *Inminban* leaders meet with the police around four times a year. They meet with the police far more often than the secret police because they essentially work under the police. Meetings are set up randomly with no particular time slots for meetings. At night, *inminban* leaders randomly visit households with police officers to check if strangers are staying over without official registration. In each *inminban*, there is a spy from the government. Even the *inminban* leaders do not know who the spies are.
  - *Inminban* leaders frequently meet other *inminban* leaders at least every Monday. They must also go to the neighborhood *dong samuso* almost every day for their duties. *Inminban* leaders do not meet with higher organizations, such as local people's committees. *Inminban* leaders usually do not get to participate in such activities. High-performing *inminban* leaders sometimes participate in certain propaganda activities.
  - There is also a male version of the *inminban* leader called the *sedeju* leader. The difference between an *inminban* leader and a *sedeju* leader is that *sedeju* leaders have actual jobs. Both positions are at the same level, but *inminban* leaders have more duties because they are usually housewives without jobs.
  - All assignments are delegated by the provincial people's committee to lower people's committees and, in turn, to the neighborhood-level people's committees. During the North Korean famine of the 1990s, even assignments related to civic management were given to *inminban* leaders. Under the *inminban* leader's guidance, each household was in charge of one yard of its neighborhood for cleaning and garbage disposal, road repairs, and rural public mobilization.
  - There are various duties given to *inminban* leaders. One of them is contributing to foreign currency earnings. Their contributions include:
    - » Production and provision of silk cocoons
    - » Picking mushrooms (*matsutake*)
    - » Gathering sunflower seeds
    - » Supporting agricultural activities
    - » Gathering items, such as scrap iron, scrap paper, excrement (fertilizer), etc.
  - A typical weekly schedule of communal activities for Hamheung citizens was:
    - » On Wednesday, people are obligated to attend a lecture about the Party's ideologies.
    - » Thursday is basically like Sunday for Hamheung citizens.
    - » Friday is for collaborative labor.
    - » Saturday is for ideological education.
    - » Sunday is for social labor.

## SECTION 9: CONTROLLING THE POPULATION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL IN THE NORTH KOREAN WORKPLACE



183

Human rights denial also takes place at every local-level occupational site in North Korea. The workplace exists not only for economic production, but also for a form of population control. Through a combination of KWP policies, Party-led organizational structures, workplace assignments based on political status, and local labor requirements, the North Korean worker is subject to political and physical control by the Party to serve both the economic and domestic security interests of the Kim regime.<sup>184</sup>

Though Article 70 of the 2016 DPRK constitution states, “All citizens who are able to work shall choose occupations according to their wishes and talents,”<sup>185</sup> the reality of workplace assignment is quite the opposite as this right is denied by Party policies and practices.<sup>186</sup> Such assignments are conducted under the leadership of the Ministry of Labor and the State Planning Committee (SPC). At the county level, local people’s committee staffers with Party affiliation forward projected labor requirements up the chain to the SPC. More often than not, group assignments are made to target projected labor shortages at factories, mines,

183 Picture of a factory party cell chairman or propaganda officer conducting propaganda lecture at the worksite. Photograph by William Proby, No. 29859499705\_2661dcfd08, at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/145294362@N05/albums/72157674200672805/page33>.

184 Kim, *Hyeondaejeon-gwa Bukan-ui jiyekbangwi*, 284–85. See also defector testimony in Mina Yoon, “How do you get a job in North Korea?,” *NK News*, November 29, 2013. <http://www.nknews.org/2013/11/how-do-you-get-a-job-in-north-korea/>.

185 See Wikisource, “Constitution of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (2016),” December 23, 2017 (accessed November 10, 2018). [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Constitution\\_of\\_the\\_Democratic\\_People%27s\\_Republic\\_of\\_Korea\\_\(2016\)](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Constitution_of_the_Democratic_People%27s_Republic_of_Korea_(2016)). The Korean text is available at the Republic of Korea’s Unification Law Database: [http://www.unilaw.go.kr/bbs/selectBoardArticleSearch.do?ntId=235&bbId=BBSMSTR\\_000000000021](http://www.unilaw.go.kr/bbs/selectBoardArticleSearch.do?ntId=235&bbId=BBSMSTR_000000000021).

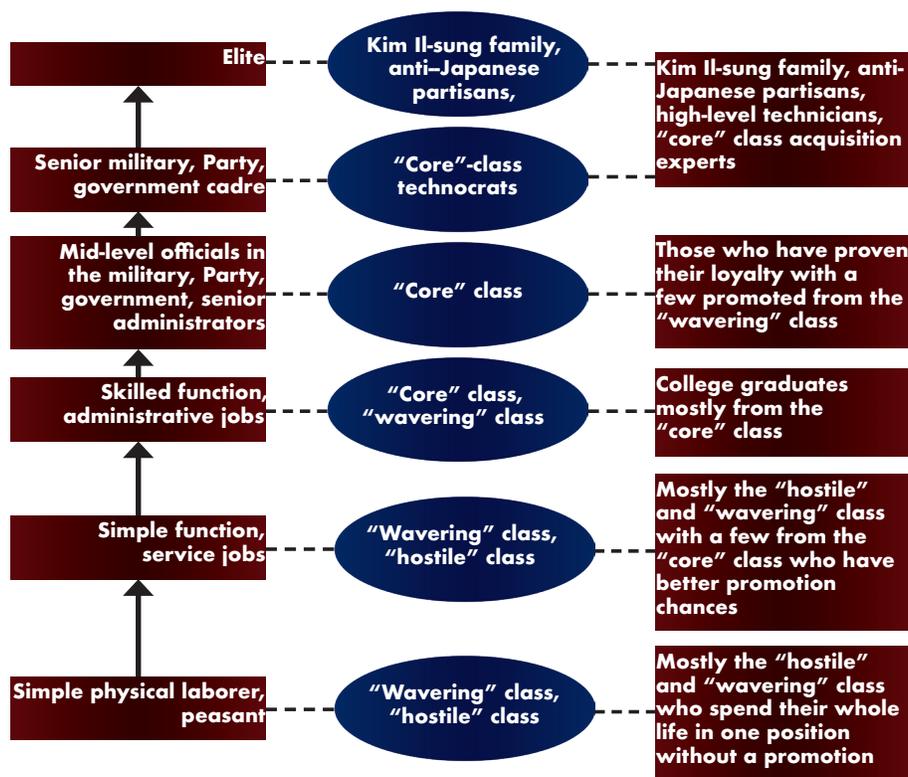
186 See Article 1(1) and Article 2(2) of the ICESCR.

**FROM THE START**

Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

farms, and elsewhere. This is particularly true of recently discharged soldiers.<sup>187</sup> There is no freedom of occupational choice or workplace location. Local workplace assignments in North Korea are based on *songbun* classification and influenced by the corrupt practices of bribing and influence peddling. Numerous North Korean escapee testimonies indicate that occupations are largely based on “background (*songbun*), personal connection, [and the] ability to bribe (assets).”<sup>188</sup> The chart below demonstrates Party-led restrictions on North Korean occupational assignments.<sup>189</sup> In addition to being in direct contravention of Article 6 of the ICESCR,<sup>190</sup> workplace assignment practices are also contrary to Article 23 of the UDHR.<sup>191</sup>

**North Korea’s Occupational Stratum of Constrained Mobility**



187 Jeon Byong-Yu et al., *Reforming North Korea’s Markets and Enterprises and the Work-incentive System* (Seoul: Korea Labor Research Institute, 2004), 42–45, as cited in Do Kyung-Ok et al., *White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea 2017* (Seoul: KINU, 2017), 311–12.

188 Han et al., *White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea 2018*, 294.

189 Lee, Song-Ro. *Bukhan-ui Saboe Bulpyeongdeung Gujo: Giwon-gwa Simhwa gwajeong, Jeongchi-gyeongjejeok Hamui-reul Jungsim-euro* [North Korea’s Societal Inequality Structure: Focus on Origins, Intensification Process and the Political-Economic Meaning] (Seoul: Haenam Publishing, 2008). This chart appeared originally in English in Collins, *Marked for Life*, 55.

190 This is inconsistent with Article 6(1) of the ICESCR, which states: “The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right to work, which includes the right of everyone to the opportunity to gain his living by work which he freely chooses or accepts, and will take appropriate steps to safeguard this right.”

191 See Article 23 of the UDHR.

Every employed North Korean outside of Party, government, or military positions works for a local enterprise overseen by a hierarchy of political control supervised by the KWP Workers' Organizations' Department, which implements central management and administration for all social organizations. Among these is the Party's Chosun General Federation of Trade Unions (CGFTU). The CGFTU controls every worksite at every location through the control of all workers' unions and parallel social organizations. Housewives, who are not part of a Party union, join the Democratic Women's League (DWL). Outside of the Party, the DWL, and the Union of Agricultural Workers of Korea, the CGFTU controls each worker's (ages 30 and above)<sup>192</sup> productivity and the rules under which the worker performs. Under the CGFTU, there are no provisions for workers' rights to collective action or collective bargaining.<sup>193</sup> Violations of these rights stand in direct contravention of Article 8 of the ICESCR.<sup>194</sup>

The CGFTU manages all North Korean workers in the industries of metal and chemical; power and coal; commerce and light; machine building; forestry; fisheries; transportation; logistics (post); and education, culture, and public health.<sup>195</sup> The current Chairman is Ju Yong-gil. One union that is not subordinate to the CGFTU is the United Agricultural Workers of Korea, which has 1.5 million members, who work as farmers, laborers, office workers, and other employees on the country's cooperative farms and other agricultural production sites. Kim Chang-yop is the current Chairman.<sup>196</sup>

As discussed earlier, the workplace has an embedded Party committee or Party cell depending on the size of the workplace. These Party committees and cells are responsible for the Party life of each employee with regards to Party lectures, self-criticism sessions, and self-study as well as propaganda activity designed to motivate the local workforce. These workplace political meetings focus on loyalty to the Supreme Leader and the Party while achieving Party-designated work goals.

---

192 All North Koreans between the ages of 14 and 30 must belong to the Party-led SLYL.

193 Michael Madden, "Workers' Organizations," *NK Leadership Watch*, January 16, 2018. [http:// www.nkleadershipwatch.org/workers-organizations/](http://www.nkleadershipwatch.org/workers-organizations/).

194 See Article 8 of the ICESCR.

195 Yonhap News Agency, *North Korea Handbook*, 389.

196 Michael Madden, "Workers' Organizations," *NK Leadership Watch*, January 16, 2018. [http:// www.nkleadershipwatch.org/workers-organizations/](http://www.nkleadershipwatch.org/workers-organizations/).

**SECTION 10: LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DENIAL IN NORTH KOREAN SCHOOLS**

197

For the Kim regime, the term “revolution” is rarely clear in its exact meaning. However, a detailed examination reveals that the meaning is whatever the Kim regime wants it to be in terms of support for its goals and objectives.<sup>198</sup> Thus, revolutionaries are those who support the regime. Those who are perceived as not being supportive of the regime are labeled “reactionaries” and punished accordingly. As demonstrated by the North Korean school curriculum, support of the regime is the foremost purpose of education within the school system.<sup>199</sup> Article 43 of the 2016 DPRK Constitution states, “The state shall implement the principle of socialist pedagogy, and thus raise the younger generations as resolute revolutionaries who struggle for the society and the people, and as new *Juche*-type people of knowledge, virtue, and physical health.”<sup>200</sup>

To that effect, the education policies of the KWP Science and Education Department dominate and shape every North Korean classroom and every student, from preschool through doctoral studies, for the purpose of supporting the doctrines of the KWP and the objectives of the regime. Third party or parental input to shape school curriculums or local educational agendas is not possible because it is not permitted by the Party.<sup>201</sup> The concept of education that promotes critical thinking is sacrificed for instilling loyalty and obedience towards the Party and the Supreme Leader in particular. The teaching of discrimination and

197 Photograph on the left by Roman Harak, “Young Pioneers at Work,” taken on September 10, 2010, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/roman-harak/5015249829/in/album-72157624888383265/>. Photograph on the right by Roman Harak [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:North\\_Korea\\_-\\_Pioneers\\_\(5015867380\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:North_Korea_-_Pioneers_(5015867380).jpg).

198 This section draws on material previously published in Collins, *Pyongyang Republic*, 68–70.

199 Hyung-Chan Kim and Dong-Kyu Kim, *Human Remodeling in North Korea: A Social History of Education* (New York: University Press of America, 2005), 201–16.

200 See Wikisource, “Constitution of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (2016),” December 23, 2017 (accessed November 10, 2018). [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Constitution\\_of\\_the\\_Democratic\\_People%27s\\_Republic\\_of\\_Korea\\_\(2016\)](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Constitution_of_the_Democratic_People%27s_Republic_of_Korea_(2016)). The Korean text is available at the Republic of Korea’s Unification Law Database: [http://www.unilaw.go.kr/bbs/selectBoardArticleSearch.do?nttId=235&bbid=BBSMSTR\\_000000000021](http://www.unilaw.go.kr/bbs/selectBoardArticleSearch.do?nttId=235&bbid=BBSMSTR_000000000021).

201 See Article 13(3) of the ICESCR.

hate for internal and external enemies, including the United States,<sup>202</sup> is central to the Kim regime's objectives.<sup>203</sup>

The school curriculum in North Korea is very limited outside subjects relating to science. Most North Koreans learn very little about the outside world.<sup>204</sup> Some only know the names of a handful of countries.<sup>205</sup> There are no lesson plans in the North Korean education system focused on individual rights as outlined in the DPRK constitution.<sup>206</sup> The primary focus in North Korea's school curriculum is Party ideology. There are four areas of ideological requirements from kindergarten through graduate school: 1) the history of Kim Il-sung; 2) the history of Kim Jong-il; 3) the history of the KWP and its policies; and 4) communist morals.<sup>207</sup> Devotion to the Supreme Leader is treated as the primary objective of education and curriculums focus on the MIS, class ideology, and revolutionary traditions.<sup>208</sup> More than 20% of all lesson plans in college are devoted to these themes, as they are in primary and secondary school. There is ample testimony of this by numerous escapees. For example, one defector stated that "Most parts of the North Korean education are a process that indoctrinates people with loyalty for Kim's regime except for the very basic subjects."<sup>209</sup> Another defector observed that "If we failed to give them what they wanted, we would be dragged out on the podium and get verbally abused; the other students and teachers would verbally attack and criticize us for not adhering to the words of the Great Leader."<sup>210</sup>

Courses taught in North Korean schools at the elementary school level include:

- "The Youth Years of Great Leader Generalissimo Kim Il-sung"
- "The Youth Years of Dear Leader Marshal Kim Jong-il"
- "The Youth Years of Anti-Japanese Female Hero Mother Kim Jong-suk"

Such courses taught in middle school include:

- "Revolutionary Activities of the Great Leader Generalissimo Kim Il-sung"
- "Revolutionary Activities of the Dear Leader Marshal Kim Jong-il"

---

202 See, for example, Jean H. Lee, "In North Korea, learning to hate US starts early," *Associated Press*, June 23, 2012. <https://www.yahoo.com/news/north-korea-learning-hate-us-starts-early-120658377.html>.

203 See Article 20(2) of the ICCPR.

204 See Article 17 of the CRC.

205 Casey Lartigue Jr., "Why North Korean defectors learn English (3)," *Korea Times*, May 19, 2018. [https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2018/05/113\\_249229.html](https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2018/05/113_249229.html).

206 See Article 29(1) of the CRC.

207 This latter term of "communist morals" has likely already been changed to "socialist morals" or an equivalent title as the Kim regime has progressively eliminated the term "communism" from all of its official documents.

208 Kim and Kim, *Human Remodeling in North Korea*, 191–217.

209 Nam Bada et al., *Forced to Hate: North Korea's Education System* (Seoul: People for Successful Korean Reunification, 2016), 224. <http://pscore.org/newest/our-report-on-the-north-korean-education-system-forced-to-hate-north-koreas-education-system/>.

210 Ibid.

**FROM THE START**

## Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

- “Revolutionary Activities of the Anti-Japanese Female Hero Mother Kim Jong-suk”
- “Revolutionary Activities of the Respected Marshal Kim Jong-un”

Such courses taught in high school include:

- “Revolutionary History of the Great Leader Generalissimo Kim Il-sung”
- “Revolutionary History of the Dear Leader Marshal Kim Jong-il”
- “Revolutionary History of the Anti-Japanese Female Hero Mother Kim Jong-suk”
- “Revolutionary History of the Respected Marshal Kim Jong-un”
- “Party Policy” (KWP)
- “Overthrow the American Invaders”<sup>211</sup>

Every local school is staffed with a Party guidance officer who organizes and guides political lectures as well as study sessions, self-criticism sessions for the students, and topic discussions. They sign off on student progress reports regarding their ability to demonstrate loyalty to the Party. The school’s Party guidance officer also organizes students to participate in collective chores, such as raising rabbits, helping in the agricultural fields, metal collection, and recycling. The students conduct marching drills on Saturdays. Once they join a Party-led organization, they are issued appropriate membership cards.<sup>212</sup>

In North Korea's linguistic practice, Kim Il-sung's words are frequently quoted as a quasi-religious reference point. The vocabulary of the North Korean Party-state is dominated by words relating to such concepts as revolution, socialism, communism, class struggle, collectivism, patriotism, anti-imperialism, anti-capitalism, national reunification, and dedication and loyalty to the Supreme Leader. People learn vocabulary by reading publications of the state and the Party, including schoolbooks. Since the printing industry and the entire publishing establishment are Party-owned and Party-controlled, no private importation of foreign-print materials or audiovisual resources are legally permitted outside of select, controlled libraries. Words that do not conform to the interests of the Party and the state are not officially introduced into society in the first place, resulting in efficient censorship.<sup>213</sup>

By contrast, the vocabulary that the state finds difficult, inappropriate, or at variance with a total commitment to the leader—in particular, those words and expressions that refer to sexual or romantic relations—does not appear in print. Even so-called romantic novels depict lovers who are more like comrades on a journey to fulfill duties for the leader and the state. Limiting the vocabulary in this way has made everyone, including the relatively uneducated, competent practitioners of the state-engineered language. On the societal level, this has had a homogenizing effect on the linguistic practices of the general public. In other words, rather

---

211 Author interview with North Korean defector Ms. Kim Hye-soo (alias).

212 Lee et al., *Bukban-hak*, 140.

213 See Article 19(2) of the ICCPR.

than broadening the vision of citizens' literacy and education, the Kim regime confines the citizenry into a cocoon of North Korean-style socialism and state ideology.<sup>214</sup>

Mobilization for labor is quite common, not only for *inminban* (neighborhood watch unit) residents, but also for their children at local schools. The Kim regime seeks to control students through ideological means and to exploit them for its own economic needs. According to the U.S. State Department's 2018 report on trafficking in persons:

*Officials occasionally sent schoolchildren to work in factories or fields for short periods to assist in completing special projects, such as snow removal on major roads or meeting production goals. The effects of such forced labor on students included physical and psychological injuries, malnutrition, exhaustion, and growth deficiencies. At the direction of the government, schools force students older than 14 years of age, including those in universities, to work without pay on farms for periods up to a month, twice a year; students who do not meet work quotas set out by schools face physical abuse. In addition, school principals and teachers exploit students for personal gain by forcing them to work on farms or construction sites.<sup>215</sup>*



216

214 Kim and Kim, *Human Remodeling in North Korea*, 216–18.

215 U.S. Department of State, *2018 Trafficking in Persons Report*, 256. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/282802.pdf>.

216 Photograph by (stephan) [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Propaganda\\_poster\\_in\\_a\\_primary\\_school\\_-\\_DPRK\\_\(2604154887\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Propaganda_poster_in_a_primary_school_-_DPRK_(2604154887).jpg).

**SECTION 11: THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND HUMAN RIGHTS DENIAL**

---



217

Economists estimate North Korea's GDP per capita to be between \$700 and \$2,000, making it one of the poorest countries in the world.<sup>218</sup> The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency ranks North Korea as the 215th country out of 230 in terms of per capita income.<sup>219</sup> Within North Korea, the economic situation in the provinces and local areas is worse than that in Pyongyang. This is because the regime has concentrated its resources on the nuclear and missile programs, the military, luxury items for the core elite, and Pyongyang-centric development. Recent developments have dimmed North Korea's economic prospects. According to the Bank of Korea (BOK), South Korea's central bank, the North Korean economy shrank by 3.5 percent in 2017. The BOK attributed this to the imposition of international sanctions, which damaged North Korea's mining sector as well as its heavy and chemical industries. By the BOK's estimates, 2017 was the worst year for North Korea's economy since 1997, when there

---

217 Photograph by William Proby, No. 29214459064\_c3bd70e051\_n, at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/145294362@N05/29548983970/in/album-72157674200672805/>.

218 William B. Brown, "Special Report: North Korea's Shackled Economy, 2018," *National Committee on North Korea*, March 2018. [https://www.ncnk.org/sites/default/files/issue-briefs/NCNK\\_William\\_Brown\\_NK\\_Shackled\\_Economy\\_Report.pdf](https://www.ncnk.org/sites/default/files/issue-briefs/NCNK_William_Brown_NK_Shackled_Economy_Report.pdf).

219 Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook: GDP – Per Capita (PPP)." Accessed November 20, 2018. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2004rank.html#kn>. South Korea's GDP per capita is \$39,400.

was a 6.5 percent decline in output.<sup>220</sup> Ri Gi-song of Pyongyang's Institute of Economics at the Academy of Social Sciences stated that North Korea's GDP per capita grew by 3.7 percent in 2017,<sup>221</sup> but this is highly unlikely under the prevailing circumstances. Furthermore, according to the Heritage Foundation's 2018 Index of Economic Freedom, North Korea is ranked last out of 180 countries in terms of economic freedom.<sup>222</sup>

As stated in a report by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network for the UN, "North Korea is the quintessential case of despotic rule leading to extreme poverty despite otherwise favorable economic potential."<sup>223</sup> The economic plight of the North Korean population is a tragedy brought on by the Kim regime's policies, which have failed at nearly every turn. The failure of the North Korean economy since the fall of communist countries between 1989 and 1991 has severely affected the economic status of the average North Korean, particularly in rural areas. In March 2013, Kim Jong-un promulgated his dual-track economic policy of *byungjin*, intending to simultaneously develop the nuclear program and the economy.<sup>224</sup> Prioritizing the development of weapons of mass destruction has had a clear impact on the economy as there is a lack of support infrastructure in the provinces, and a chronic lack of energy and raw materials. Moreover, the mobilization of the populace for state projects outside official production plans and targets places a heavy burden on enterprises.

Economic woes over the past twenty years have led most North Koreans to adopt a proactive approach towards personal survival. This has significantly impacted most North Koreans' respect for the Kim Jong-un regime. The economic life of North Koreans, which was previously based only on social class and employment, has changed significantly with the advent of the "*jangmadang*" market economy since the famine and economic crisis of the 1990s. As factories closed and employment opportunities disappeared, North Korean workers began to develop personal strategies of relying on "illegal" activities, pursuing day labor jobs, and using brokers.<sup>225</sup> The economic crisis had the worst impact on the provinces, away from the privileged city of Pyongyang.

When assessing how the Kim regime's economic policies contribute to human rights denial, there are three primary considerations: 1) the prioritization of resources to Pyongyang; 2) the prioritization of the military; and 3) the Party-state policy of assigning occupations based on the needs of the state. As noted in Section 8, the violation of human rights in this context

---

220 "N. Korea's economy shrinks 3.5 pct in 2017: BOK," *Yonhap News*, July 20, 2018. <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20180720004700320>.

221 Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, "North Korea's economic growth - from Pyongyang's perspective," *North Korea Economy Watch*, October 15, 2018. <https://www.nkeconwatch.com/2018/10/15/north-koreas-economic-growth-from-pyongyangs-perspective/>.

222 "2018 Index of Economic Freedom," *Heritage Foundation*, February 2, 2018. <https://www.heritage.org/international-economies/commentary/2018-index-economic-freedom>.

223 Sustainable Development Solutions Network, "Global Profile of Extreme Poverty," October 15, 2012. <http://unsdsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/121015-Profile-of-Extreme-Poverty.pdf>.

224 "Kim Jong-un's Concluding Speech at the March 2013 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea," *Rodong Sinmun*, April 2, 2013.

225 Cho Jeong-Ah et al., *The Everyday Lives of North Koreans* (Seoul: KINU, 2009), 15-16.

begins with occupational assignments by the Kim regime, which is in direct contravention of Article 6 of the ICESCR.<sup>226</sup>

The famine of the 1990s, which the Kim regime designated as the “Arduous March,” was a detrimental consequence of North Korea’s misguided economic policies.<sup>227</sup> Available estimates of the number of deaths from starvation range between 490,000 and 3 million, and the “hunger and malnutrition [the North Korean people] experienced has resulted in long-lasting physical and psychological harm.”<sup>228</sup> The World Food Programme (WFP) estimated in 2017 that approximately 40% of North Korea’s population suffers from undernourishment, with an especially severe impact on women and children.<sup>229</sup> The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has listed North Korea as one of 39 countries worldwide that are food deficient.<sup>230</sup> As an indicator of how serious food insecurity is in the provinces, the resident UN coordinator for North Korea requested \$111 million in humanitarian assistance in April 2018 to provide food, health, and sanitation necessities for 6 million vulnerable North Koreans.<sup>231</sup>

The hardships faced by ordinary North Koreans have worsened since the famine, with a nearly complete collapse of the state’s public distribution system (PDS), which provided each citizen with food, clothing, and daily necessities; the collapse of the universal healthcare system; and the deterioration of the education system. The latter two public services, formerly provided at no cost, now depend on individual family contributions.<sup>232</sup> This undermines the average North Korean’s confidence that the state is looking after his or her welfare, thus impacting his or her loyalty towards the regime. The failure of the state has forced North Koreans to adopt a more proactive and autonomous approach to seeking survival under a moribund economy. One consequence of this is a rise in unlawful activities, such as smuggling and illegal border trade, prostitution, illegal trade in natural resources, misappropriation of state assets, illegal drug trade, black markets, and theft.<sup>233</sup>

However, perhaps the most consequential result of the “Arduous March” is the emergence of the *jangmadang* markets. The failed policies that led to the famine enabled the development of a burgeoning market economy from the “bottom up.” According to Victor Cha and Lisa Collins, “[the] growth of markets is the single most significant socioeconomic development

---

226 See Article 6 of the ICESCR.

227 UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the detailed findings of the commission of inquiry*, 146-48 & 177-79.

228 Ibid., 204.

229 WFP, “Where we work: Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.” Accessed November 20, 2018. <http://www1.wfp.org/countries/democratic-peoples-republic-korea>.

230 Grace Oh, “N. Korea again designated as a food-deficit country,” *Yonhap News*, September 22, 2018. <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2018/09/22/0401000000AEN20180922000800320.html>.

231 “DPR Korea: UN says \$111 million needed to provide life-saving aid, tackle malnutrition,” *UN News*, April 12, 2018. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/04/1007141>.

232 See Article 13(2)(a) of the ICESCR.

233 Kim et al., *The Quality of Life of North Korean*, 41-43.

to occur in North Korea over the last 20 years.”<sup>234</sup> *Jangmadang* can be understood as a nascent form of quasi-private entrepreneurship that emerged as a survival mechanism during the famine. These markets are now permitted by the KWP as workarounds to the failure of the PDS.<sup>235</sup> As of February 2018, at least 482 official markets have been identified in commercial satellite imagery.<sup>236</sup> North Korean citizens have become accustomed to using these markets as centers of information distribution in the absence of reliable telecommunications at the lower end of the socioeconomic scale.<sup>237</sup> Not all *jangmadang* are equal; the sophistication of these marketplaces varies based on population density. The markets in Pyongyang deal in a wide variety of goods, including foreign merchandise. Those in larger towns within counties are focused on both food and a variety of goods while village-level *jangmadang* usually focus on basic necessities for survival.

Not all North Koreans have access to *jangmadang*. Those who work on collective farms have little to no opportunity to participate in market activity. If their harvest yields poor results, the survival of these local residents is put at great risk; there are no state policies that address these types of crises.<sup>238</sup> For example, drought presented a major problem for North Korean farmers in 2017.<sup>239</sup> There are limited coping mechanisms available for those who face these crises. Those in rural areas can cultivate a garden of 60 square meters, and they can also raise small animals.<sup>240</sup> In North Korea, there are approximately 3,900 cooperative farms that grow vegetables and 100 state farms that raise livestock. Despite the vast majority of these farms being located in rural areas, chronic malnutrition is higher in rural areas, particularly in northern provinces, than in urban locations. Chronic malnutrition is highest in Ryanggang Province and lowest, predictably, in Pyongyang.<sup>241</sup> In general, the northern provinces have little ability to produce their own crops, which means that these areas are under significant threat. Even soldiers in the northern areas of North Korea are permitted to leave their posts in order to find their own food.<sup>242</sup>

---

234 Victor Cha and Lisa Collins, “The Markets: Private Economy and Capitalism in North Korea?,” *Beyond Parallel*, August 26, 2018. <https://beyondparallel.csis.org/markets-private-economy-capitalism-north-korea/>.

235 However, the Party-state’s control of the *jangmadang* faces challenges from those at the lower ranks of economic success. “Tick merchants” is a term for those black marketers who operate from the alleys near the *jangmadang* because they cannot afford to conform to the rules. They are exploited by the police for bribes to continue operating.

236 Roh Jeong-Min, “북 공식 시장 꾸준히 증가, 480개 넘어” [Official markets in North Korea steadily increasing in number, now exceeding 480], *Radio Free Asia*, February 3, 2018. [https://www.rfa.org/korean/in\\_focus/ne-jn-02022018151709.html](https://www.rfa.org/korean/in_focus/ne-jn-02022018151709.html).

237 See Article 19(2) of the ICCPR.

238 Kim Chung-Yeol, “Food insecurity riles North Korea’s poorest provinces,” *Daily NK*, October 18, 2017. <http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk01500&num=14767>.

239 Andy Dinville, “Significant Food Shortages Likely in North Korea,” *38 North*, October 16, 2017. <http://www.38north.org/2017/10/adinville101617/>.

240 Praveen Agrawal, “Roundtable Discussion on Agriculture in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea,” *WFP*, briefing in Seoul, Republic of Korea, September 13, 2018.

241 Ibid.

242 Soldiers in frontline units are prioritized for food over those in the northern provinces just as Pyongyang residents are prioritized over other North Koreans. See Greg Norman, “Hungry North Korean soldiers are being

Although the Kim regime tolerates *jangmadang*, there is essentially no freedom in the areas of trade, investment, and finance. The *jangmadang* has created some space for economic freedom, but its impact has not been sufficient enough to raise North Korea from the bottom of the Heritage Foundation's Index of Economic Freedom.<sup>243</sup> Furthermore, the rise of the *jangmadang* has not impacted the Kim regime's prioritization of the military, its weapons of mass destruction programs, and the core elite over critical societal needs.<sup>244</sup> This prioritization denies any focus on upgrading the food security of the average North Korean, such as improving collective farming practices, improving soil quality, increasing arable land, or solving other systemic problems in the field of agriculture.<sup>245</sup>

The emergence of bottom-up marketization has also had negative consequences. One problem is the changing attitude towards the elderly. As North Koreans are forced to fend for themselves without state support, the elderly are no longer able to support themselves. Younger generations scraping together a life for themselves through the markets are now ignoring the elderly, thus changing cultural traditions in favor of personal survival. Furthermore, the traders at *jangmadang* are predominantly women. Because they usually "travel in North Korea without legal permits," these women are highly vulnerable to "sexual abuse and demands for bribes" by policemen and other state officials.<sup>246</sup>

Bribery and corruption have always been a part of North Korean life, but their intensity has grown significantly as individuals at all levels try to deal with the changes in their personal economies after the disasters of the 1990s. There are three general categories of bribery that take place at all levels, including at the village level. Supervisors compel subordinates to pay bribes or suffer in the workplace. Government administrators, including local people's committee leaders and *inminban* leaders, coerce citizens to "contribute" to new regime initiatives. This is especially true of KWP officials, who collect "loyalty payments." Local police demand bribes from local citizens who want to apply for permits in the economic, travel or administrative area, and to avoid criminal charges, whether those charges are justified or not. Although there has been significant discussion among national leaders about the need to eliminate corrupt practices, little is done as those in charge of implementing anti-corruption measures are as guilty as anyone else.<sup>247</sup>

---

given leave to find food, report says," *Fox News*, January 2, 2018. <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2018/01/02/hungry-north-korean-soldiers-are-being-given-leave-to-find-food-report-says.html>.

243 "2018 Index of Economic Freedom," *Heritage Foundation*, February 2, 2018. <https://www.heritage.org/international-economies/commentary/2018-index-economic-freedom>.

244 The Kim regime purchased \$640 million worth of luxury items from China in 2017, despite UN sanctions against such trade with North Korea. Kim Jong-un has purchased more than \$4 billion worth of luxury goods since he took power in December 2011. Much of this purchase presumably went toward rewarding the elite in Pyongyang. See "North Korea 'bought at least \$640 million in luxury goods from China in 2017', in defiance of UN Sanctions," *Reuters*, October 22, 2018. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/10/22/north-korea-bought-least-640-million-luxury-goods-china-2017/>.

245 See Article 2(a) of the ICESCR.

246 Human Rights Watch, "You Cry at Night but Don't Know Why" – *Sexual Violence against Women in North Korea* (November 2018), 58. [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report\\_pdf/northkorea1118\\_web2.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/northkorea1118_web2.pdf).

247 Kang Mi-Jin, "Bribery culture expands in North Korea throughout 2017," *Daily NK*, December 30, 2017. <http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk01500&num=14913>.

With the failure of food distribution through the PDS, each village in North Korea has adapted to survive. As noted in Section 7, each village has a specific economic role based on the predominant resources in that region and the proximity of factories, mining complexes, fishing areas, and logging areas. The economic circumstances of the specific village determine, to a great degree, how human rights denial impacts each villager, particularly when it comes to food security and healthcare. For example, those villages that serve military industries fare far better on those two issues than do the vast majority of other villages. Those villages that exist in isolated mountain regions have greater access to alternative food sources in forests than those in low-lying plains, where most of the land is tilled for agriculture. This enables them to withstand food security crises better than those in the cities, suburbs, or other areas barren of forests.

Although each province has some agricultural areas, the villages in North and South Hwanghae Provinces in southwestern North Korea are the breadbasket of North Korea. However, there is a preponderance of military units stationed in these provinces; the KPA Fourth Corps is located in the southwestern region of North Korea while the Second Corps is located in the south-central region. Because of this, farmers suffer from extensive state confiscation and outright theft of crops by soldiers.<sup>248</sup>

North and South Pyongan Provinces are located in the country's northwest. South Pyongan Province is industrialized in its southern counties, but agriculturally focused in its northern counties. North Pyongan Province serves as a major trade route to North Korea's primary trading partner, China, and some local citizens benefit greatly as a result.

Chagang Province, which borders China, is the center of North Korea's large military industrial complex. Those who live in villages related to these factories are better fed and healthier than those villagers who are not connected to the military. North and South Hamgyong Provinces, located in the northeastern part of North Korea, have a history of being neglected by the Party-state. Due to its isolation and mountainous terrain, the Party-state has located its main nuclear test site and two of its political prison camp facilities (Camps 15 and 16) in these provinces. Those of low *songbun*, classified as "hostile" to the regime, were relocated to these areas.

Gangwon Province, located in the southeast, is dominated by fisheries, manufacturing plants, and livestock farms. There is very little arable land. The capital city of Wonsan, however, is a major port city that maintains numerous factories and employs many of the city's residents in the transportation industry. The fishery and tourism industries also play a major economic role in this region.

---

248 There are several reports of this illegal confiscation. See Ryan Pickerell, "North Korean Soldiers Are Stealing Food To Prepare For 'Imminent War'," *Daily Caller*, August 31, 2017. <http://dailycaller.com/2017/08/31/north-korean-soldiers-are-stealing-food-to-prepare-for-imminent-war/>; see also Greg Norman, "North Korean officials ransacking farmers' homes to find food for Kim's hungry army, report says," *Fox News*, January 22, 2018. <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2018/01/22/north-korean-officials-ransacking-farmers-homes-to-find-food-for-kims-hungry-army-report-says.html>.

Fishermen in coastal villages also feel the strain caused by the Party-state's economic policies. Pyongyang's demand for more fish to satisfy state exports to China have compelled poorly-equipped boats and crews to venture further out to sea to increase their catches. In 2017 alone, this resulted in a total of 83 "ghost ships" from North Korea. In November and December, 52 landed on Japan's west coast. Five such crafts had survivors on board. These "ghost ships" likely became stranded at sea after exhausting their fuel supplies.<sup>249</sup> The dominant sea currents off North Korea's east coast flow towards Japan. Fuel has always been limited by local authorities to ensure that fishing boats cannot defect to the ROK.<sup>250</sup> Lacking proper resources and equipment, the demands on fisherman by the Party-state amount to forced labor.<sup>251</sup>

Recent sanctions by the UN Security Council (Resolutions 2356, 2371, 2375, and 2397) are having an impact on the North Korean economy. According to the ROK's Institute for National Security Strategy, North Korea is likely to encounter "severe economic difficulties" in 2018 due to the sanctions adopted under Resolution 2375.<sup>252</sup> However, the Kim regime's track record of prioritizing Pyongyang over the provinces means that those individuals in the local-level villages will bear the initial brunt of those sanctions. The miners in coal mining villages are particularly hurt by the sanctions against North Korean coal exports. Nevertheless, ordinary North Koreans are adapting by developing alternative methods of survival as explained above.<sup>253</sup>

---

249 See Article 12 of the ICESCR.

250 "Japan rattled by 83 North Korean 'ghost ship' arrivals," *Nikkei Asian Review*, December 14, 2017. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/Policy-Politics/Japan-rattled-by-83-North-Korean-ghost-ship-arrivals>; Ivan Watson, Yoko Wakatsuki and Junko Ogura, "Ghost ships: Bodies and boats unsettle Japanese community," *CNN*, December 23, 2017. <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/12/22/asia/japan-north-korea-ghost-ships-intl/index.html>; see also Yi Whan-Woo, "N. Koreans forced into deadly fishing," *Korea Times*, December 5, 2017. [http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2017/12/103\\_240452.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2017/12/103_240452.html).

251 "Under international law—the Forced Labour Conventions and ILO Convention 29 [note: North Korea is not a signatory]—the key points when considering the definition of forced labor are the extent to which: "(i) the works or services are exacted involuntarily; (ii) the exaction of labor or services takes place under the menace of penalty; and (iii) these are used as a means of political coercion, education or as a method of mobilizing and using labor for purposes of economic development, as well as means of labor discipline. More recent international law in this area has been concerned with outlawing forced labor altogether. The Convention Concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour (1957) requires state parties to "suppress and not to make use of any form of forced or compulsory labour: (a) as a means of political coercion or education... (b) as a method of mobilizing and using labour for purposes of economic development; as a means of labour discipline." (Human Rights Watch, *Service for Life: State Repression and Indefinite Conscription in Eritrea*, April 16, 2009. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/04/16/service-life/state-repression-and-indefinite-conscription-eritrea>.) The ICCPR, in Article 8(c) allows limited exceptions to the prohibition on forced or compulsory labor, but restricts these to hard labor as part of a punishment for a crime, and: (iii) Any service exacted in cases of emergency or calamity threatening the life or well-being of the community."

252 "N. Korea forecast to suffer severe economic trouble from March: state-run institute," *Yonhap News*, December 18, 2017. <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2017/12/18/0401000000AEN20171218006751315.html>.

253 Kang Mi-Jin, "Markets provide relief for ordinary people hurting from sanctions," *Daily NK*, January 2, 2018. <http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk01500&num=14918>.

In July 2018, *Rodong Sinmun*, the KWP's official newspaper, called on all North Koreans to prepare for "belt-tightening." It likely did so due to the effects of international sanctions imposed in response to the North's nuclear and missile programs. In doing so, the newspaper reminded readers of the "Arduous March" in the 1990s.<sup>254</sup> The economy of each North Korean village will be impacted in some way by these sanctions, particularly when the Kim regime chooses to tighten its belt around Pyongyang as it did during the "Arduous March"—when those in the provinces suffered far more than those in the nation's capital.

---

254 "N. Korea's media urge people to be ready for belt-tightening," *Yonhap News*, July 23, 2018. <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2018/07/23/0401000000AEN20180723006800315.html>.

**SECTION 12: MILITARY ISSUES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**

255

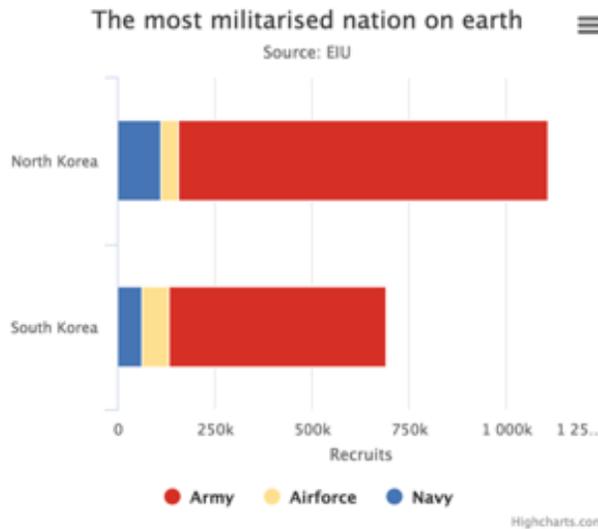
North Korea's society is highly militarized. The state maintains a universal draft, where all men must serve up to ten years in the active-duty military after high school or college, with few exceptions. North Korea's military dwarfs all other countries' in terms of armed forces personnel as a percentage of the labor force. As of 2016, the global average was 0.80%, which is approximately what the United States maintains (0.83%). The ROK maintains a large military at 2.29% as do other states confronted by significant security threats. However, North Korea maintains a staggering 9.09% of its labor force on active duty, which greatly compounds economic inefficiency.<sup>256</sup>

North Korea's military strategy reflects a 1962 KWP decision to pursue a self-reliant national defense line by arming the military and the general population politically and ideologically

255 Propaganda slogan states, "Let's become bombs to protect the leaders of the revolution." Photo by William Proby, No. 29232463214\_3de2715f1f\_z, at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/145294362@N05/albums/72157674200672805/page36>. Top right photograph by Roman Harak [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:North\\_Korea\\_\(5015863062\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:North_Korea_(5015863062).jpg). Bottom right photograph by Roman Harak, taken September 8, 2010, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/roman-harak/5015272691/in/album-72157624888383265/>.

256 "Armed forces personnel (% of total labor force)," *World Bank Databank*. Accessed November 20, 2018. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.TOTL.TF.ZS>.

through four military lines: 1) arming the entire population; 2) turning the entire country into a fortress; 3) converting the entire army into a cadre of the people; and 4) modernizing the entire army.<sup>257</sup> Arming the entire populace is aimed at providing military training for the entire population so that they can be converted into conventional forces when necessary. Mass conscription not only supports military readiness, but also contributes to major national construction projects, supplements farming efforts, and provides the Kim regime with the opportunity to carry out intensive anti-American and anti-South Korean indoctrination.<sup>258</sup>



Military issues at the local level primarily impact human rights denial due to age-related considerations and the absence of the right to be a conscientious objector. Local civil defense is also a significant factor that compounds human rights challenges. The Party-state's allocation of resources away from local communities is also a major problem that exacerbates human rights denial. Furthermore, the Kim regime prioritizes resources for the families of those communities that provide the labor for high-priority munitions industries.<sup>259</sup>

In rural areas, local-level military matters are managed and directed by the military committee subordinate to the county Party committee. Military issues at the local level include local defense, organization of effort, task assignment, and coordination with active-duty forces when required. The county military committee, sometimes referred to as the county military department, receives the themes and policies sent down from the KWP Central Military Committee (CMC) through the KWP Civil Defense Department. The county military committee then applies them to local

257 See Kongdan Oh and Ralph Hassig, *North Korea: Through the Looking Glass* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), 108.

258 The chart below is from Mehreen Kahn, "Six charts that show how North Korea became the most miserable place on earth," *The Telegraph*, December 1, 2014. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/11260650/Six-charts-that-show-how-North-Korea-became-the-most-miserable-place-on-earth.html>. South Korea's total population is approximately twice the size of North Korea's total population.

259 Kim, *Hyeondaejeon-gwa Bukan-ui jijeokbangwi*, 248–52.

conditions,<sup>260</sup> just as the county Party committee takes its guidance from the KWP Central Committee.<sup>261</sup> This organizational structure is also reflected in urban and suburban areas.

A Civil Defense Headquarters was established under the control of the Ministry of People's Armed Forces (MPAF) in 2003 to oversee requirements associated with local civil defense. This unit receives guidance and directives from the KWP CMC.<sup>262</sup> The directives are enforced by local-level KWP military committees at the province, small city, and county levels. In this regard, local Party military committees, not the KPA, command local defense. However, the KPA shapes the Party-state's overall response to security issues and likely integrates reserve units into the KPA as needed during a national crisis.

Both the KPA and local civil defense forces participate in local defense against regional security threats. The leadership of local KWP military committees is comprised of local Party committee officials, students, and workers from factories, farms, or mines. Local Party committee officials exercise the greatest influence. These local leaders are highly indoctrinated with anti-American and anti-Japanese propaganda to motivate their decisions and actions.<sup>263</sup>

As discussed in Section Two, social control is a key Kim regime policy that directly enables the continued rule of the Kim family. The key elements of this control are organizational and ideological control (the KWP and its political-social organizations), legal control (courts, prosecutors, and lawyers), physical control (police, secret police, and the *inminban*), and military organizational control. Although the last element is dominant in North Korea's military personnel policy, all of these apply during civil defense.<sup>264</sup>

North Korea's civil defense forces are primarily comprised of retired military personnel, who serve locally as reserve forces. They are capable of executing the core role in defending their local communities, as they have undergone the requisite military training for several years. They complement the KPA's active-duty force of 1.2 million personnel, and approximately 7.7 million men and women comprise North Korea's military reserve force. This number is approximately 30% of the population between the ages of 14 and 60. Reserve military training units consist of men between the ages of 17 and 50 and unmarried females between the ages of 17 and 30. Male and female middle and high schoolers, between the ages of 14 and 16 make up the Red Youth Guards. Other military and paramilitary units, such as the Guards Command, the national police, the Logistics Mobilization Guidance Bureau,

---

260 Kim Byung-Wook and Kim Young-Hui, "Party (Central) Military Commission Activities for Creation of 'Civilian-centered Regional Defense System,'" *Hyeondae Bukan Yeongu* [Modern North Korea Research] 12.3 (2009): 48-92; see also Choi, *Hyeondae Bukan Haengjeong-ron*, 128-29.

261 Choi, *Hyeondae Bukan Haengjeong-ron*, 127.

262 Kim and Kim, "Party (Central) Military Commission Activities for Creation of 'Civilian-centered Regional Defense System'."

263 Kim Byung-Wook and Kim Young-Hui, "A Study on the Establishment of the 'Civilian Centered Regional Defense Systems' in North Korea in 1990s," *The Quarterly Journal of Defense Policy Studies* 24.2 (2008): 81-117.

264 Kim, *Hyeondaejeon-gwa Bukan-ui jiyekbangwi*, 284-85.

and rapid youth assault units, consist of individuals between the ages of 14 and 60.<sup>265</sup> This military personnel commitment effort is shaped by North Korea's four primary military lines, one of which is "militarizing and arming the population."<sup>266</sup> During any crisis that could potentially lead to war, all North Koreans will be locked down in local civil defense. Therefore, under the aforementioned structures, the local population plays an important role in local defense throughout North Korea. This makes all participants in local defense lawful targets in combat under international law. This has a significant impact on every village, particularly on the youth and the elderly.

These policies are in direct contravention of Articles 1 and 38 of the CRC.<sup>267</sup> Individuals under the age of 18 are generally considered minors and must not be compelled to participate in combat.<sup>268</sup> What compounds this violation is the fact that an 18-year-old in Korea's traditional age system is only 17 years old in actuality.<sup>269</sup> For the same reason, those children between the ages of 14 and 18 who are required to serve in the rapid youth assault units are between the ages of 13 and 17.<sup>270</sup>

---

265 *Civil-Military Operations Handbook, Republic of Korea-United States Combined Forces Command*, ed. Jang Seok-Chol (Seoul: Republic of Korea Army Printing Office, 2012), 37-41.

266 *Ibid.*, 37.

267 CRC Article 1 defines children as all human beings below the age of 18 "unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier" (in some countries majority is attained with marriage, military service, or economic independence). See Child Rights International Network, "Age is Arbitrary: Setting Minimum Ages," [https://www.crin.org/sites/default/files/discussion\\_paper\\_-\\_minimum\\_ages.pdf](https://www.crin.org/sites/default/files/discussion_paper_-_minimum_ages.pdf).

268 A child soldier is defined as "[a] child associated with an armed force or armed group refers to any person below 18 years of age who is, or who has been, recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to children, boys and girls, used as fighters, cooks, porters, spies or for sexual purposes" (Paris Principles on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict 2007, <https://www.unicef.org/emerg/files/ParisPrinciples310107English.pdf>). This is prohibited under international law. "Human rights law declares 18 as the minimum legal age for recruitment and use of children in hostilities. Recruiting and using children under the age of 15 as soldiers is prohibited under international humanitarian law—treaty and custom—and is defined as a war crime by the International Criminal Court. Parties to conflict that recruit and use children are listed by the Secretary-General in the annexes of his annual report on children and armed conflict." See Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, "Child Recruitment and Use," <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/six-grave-violations/child-soldiers/>.

269 In Korean culture, a child is one year old at the time of birth. Therefore, when a North Korean is drafted out of high school at the Korean age of 17, he is only 16.

270 See Article 38 of the CRC.

**FROM THE START**

## Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea



271

Elderly village residents are not exempt from participation in local defense. Older men and women are mobilized for duties in transportation, nursing, and production. Local residents are trained to “defend my house, defend my place of work.”<sup>272</sup> This means that each and every North Korean resident is mobilized for national defense purposes. That policy does not account for the rights of conscientious objectors. The essence of the policy is there are no exceptions for military service for conscientious objectors.<sup>273</sup>

Military production of all types, from food and clothing to bullets and aircraft, is a key defense priority for any military. North Korea’s civil defense at the local level is no different. Local defense units focus on sites that need to be defended, such as factories and other defense industries. Within the KWP CMC’s regional defense command system, there are regular forces that defend specialized military supply production. There are also local-level irregular forces, as mentioned above, that defend and support wartime mobilization factories and other economic enterprises that contribute to national defense.<sup>274</sup> The latter are of lower priority, but are important to national defense nonetheless.

---

271 Photograph by Roman Harak, taken September 7, 2010, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/roman-harak/5024197672/in/album-72157624888383265/>.

272 Kim and Kim, “Party (Central) Military Commission Activities for Creation of ‘Civilian-centered Regional Defense System’.”

273 “However, the right of conscientious objection to military service has become an established international norm—a legitimate exercise of the right of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion,” as laid down in Article 18 of the UDHR and Article 18 of the ICCPR (Human Rights Watch, *Service for Life: State Repression and Indefinite Conscription in Eritrea*, April 16, 2009. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/04/16/service-life/state-repression-and-indefinite-conscription-eritrea>). Emphasis added.

274 Kim and Kim, “Party (Central) Military Commission Activities for Creation of ‘Civilian-centered Regional Defense System’.”

Regional civil defense planning in North Korea was decentralized in the 1990s based on Kim Jong-il's 1992 order down to provinces, smaller cities, and counties to provide for their own wartime supplies for conducting regional defense; such supplies would not come from the central government or the active-duty military.<sup>275</sup> Consequently, in the event of a crisis, drastic measures by the Kim regime would grossly complicate ongoing food security, health, and welfare issues for the North Korean populace. Local civil defense forces will likely be devoid of critical information regarding the true progress of a crisis and the expected impact on their community.<sup>276</sup> Panic and miscalculation at the tactical level within a village-oriented civil defense system will leave local civilians confused and vulnerable. At some point in the mid to long term, energy and food supplies, which are already key weaknesses for the North Korean state even before a crisis will be prioritized for the most important facilities. This will have a significant impact on the majority of local communities, which are less important to military production. Furthermore, as farming communities have their agricultural production confiscated by Party and military authorities, civil defense capabilities will inevitably deteriorate for most villages, regardless of their primary form of economic activity. No doubt, civilians will begin to suffer based on internal dynamics alone as all civilian production facilities immediately transition to wartime production. As a crisis develops, food and medicine will be increasingly prioritized by the regime for the military. Many within the local population—especially the young, elderly, and those in orphanages—will undoubtedly be deprived of critical necessities and supplies. This will force the local population to choose between remaining in defense mode and starving, or abandoning their post to find food to survive.



277

275 Kim and Kim, "A Study on the Establishment of the 'Civilian Centered Regional Defense Systems' in North Korea in 1990s."

276 For photo on the left described by author as "civil defense in villages," see <http://www.cfr.org/proliferation/six-party-talks-north-koreas-nuclear-program/p13593>. For photo on the right described by author as "civil defense in suburban areas," see <http://www.gagdaily.com/facts/4056-combat-ready-north-korea-vows-to-settle-accounts-with-us-39-photos.html>.

277 This photograph taken on March 6, 2013 by North Korea's official KCNA shows soldiers of the KPA in military training at an undisclosed place in North Korea. Photograph by AFP Photo/KCNA via KNS.

**DENIED**

## FROM THE START

### Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

One credible defector account explains that North and South Hwanghae Provinces, which are known as North Korea's breadbasket, suffered through a policy-induced local famine in 2012 that caused tens of thousands of deaths from starvation. Local officials were ordered to search not only farm facilities, but also the homes of local agricultural workers in order to confiscate everything, leaving nothing for the farmers and their families. There were also reports of cannibalism in the Hwanghae Provinces during that period.<sup>278</sup>

Lastly, deception and camouflage efforts at the local level are simplistic. Structural preparedness at the local level focuses on economic protection as opposed to individual protection. North Korean defectors in South Korea testify that local-level bunkers designed to protect people from enemy attack are inadequate for meaningful protection.<sup>279</sup>

---

278 "North Korea: Report on the Famine in the Hwanghae Provinces and the Food Situation," *Asia Press International*, 2012. [http://www.asiapress.org/rimjin-gang/pdf/2012-2013\\_Hwanghae\\_Report\\_ASIAPRESS\\_North\\_Korea\\_Reporting\\_Team\\_V004.pdf](http://www.asiapress.org/rimjin-gang/pdf/2012-2013_Hwanghae_Report_ASIAPRESS_North_Korea_Reporting_Team_V004.pdf).

279 Author's interviews with defectors. See also testimony of Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director, in Wilson Dizzard, "North Korea Far Outscores South Korea on Civil Defense Prep," *The Cipher Brief*, August 31, 2017. <https://www.thecipherbrief.com/north-korea-far-outscores-south-korea-civil-defense-prep>.

## SECTION 13: HEALTHCARE CHALLENGES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

---



280

In a report published in 2000, the World Health Organization (WHO) rated North Korea 167th out of 190 countries in terms of the quality of its “health system performance” as of 1997.<sup>281</sup> This is primarily due to the fact that in North Korea, the right to healthcare and food is directly impacted by Party policies and priorities. The *songbun* system provides the foundation for differentiating the quality and amount of healthcare and food provided to each North Korean.<sup>282</sup> The lower the *songbun* classification, the lower the quality of healthcare and food; the higher the *songbun* classification, the higher the quality of each.<sup>283</sup> Another major reason for this situation is that the North Korean healthcare system is vastly underfunded. Many healthcare facilities are dilapidated and lack a reliable supply of running water and electricity. Among other low-income countries, North Korea spends the least of its resources on healthcare: less than \$1 per person.<sup>284</sup> A 2009 report by the UN International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) found that North Korea was “one of 18 countries with the highest prevalence of stunting (moderate and severe) among children under 5 years old.” It was estimated at the time that 11,400 children died each year before their

---

280 Photograph by Roman Harak [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:North\\_Korea\\_\(5015869798\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:North_Korea_(5015869798).jpg).

281 WHO, *The World Health Report 2000 – Health Systems: Improving Performance* (2000), 152. [http://www.who.int/whr/2000/en/whr00\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/whr/2000/en/whr00_en.pdf).

282 See Article 2(2) and Article 11(1) of the ICESCR.

283 See Collins, *Marked for Life*, 65–70 & 82–83.

284 WHO, “Global Health Expenditure Database.” Accessed November 8, 2018. <http://apps.who.int/nha/database/ViewData/Indicators/en>.

fifth birthday.<sup>285, 286</sup> The UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mark Lowcock, stated during a July 2018 visit to North Korea that “more than half the children in rural areas, including the places we’ve been to, have no clean water, only contaminated water sources.”<sup>287, 288</sup> In its October 2018 assessment, the WFP reported that 28% of children between the ages of 6 months and about 5 years old suffer from chronic malnutrition.<sup>289</sup>

An overall breakdown in the North Korean healthcare system began in the 1990s due to the famine. Economic problems led to a critical shortage of pharmaceutical and medical supplies, mostly because domestic pharmaceutical factories ceased operating properly due to resource shortfalls. Medical equipment was also in short supply. This is a far greater problem at the local level in the provinces than in Pyongyang, where all resources, including healthcare resources, are prioritized. Furthermore, the overall quality of medical personnel has declined due to a lack of proper education. Hospital facilities are not sufficiently maintained and medical resources have been depleted, leading to inadequate services for patients.<sup>290</sup>

There are significant issues in North Korea regarding the quality of life that negatively impact citizens’ health. Even Kim Jong-un has publicly admitted this problem in a report carried by the *KCNA*. When visiting a medical appliances factory in August 2018, *KCNA* quoted Kim as saying, “there is nothing to be proud of in the public health sector.”<sup>291</sup> As discussed in Section 11, the famine of the 1990s has had lasting health-related consequences for the North Korean population. Moreover, a reliance on “environmentally unsustainable [farming] techniques” involving the heavy use of fertilizers “has contributed to acidification of the soil and a reduction in [agricultural] yields.”<sup>292</sup> The prevalence of communicable diseases and

---

285 Stephanie Nebehay, “Millions at risk due to North Korea food crisis-UNICEF,” *Reuters*, November 1, 2011. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-missiles-un-children/60000-north-korean-children-may-starve-sanctions-slow-aid-unicf-idUSKBN1FJ1FL>.

286 See Article 11 and 12 of the ICESCR.

287 Benjamin Hass, “One in five North Korean children malnourished, says UN chief during rare visit,” *The Guardian*, July 12, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/12/north-korea-children-malnourished-un-visit>.

288 “On 28 July 2010, through Resolution 64/292, the UN General Assembly explicitly recognized the human right to water and sanitation and acknowledged that clean drinking water and sanitation are essential to the realisation of all human rights. The Resolution calls upon States and international organisations to provide financial resources, help capacity-building and technology transfer to help countries, in particular developing countries, to provide safe, clean, accessible and affordable drinking water and sanitation for all. In November 2002, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted General Comment No. 15 on the right to water. Article I.1 states that “The human right to water is indispensable for leading a life in human dignity. It is a prerequisite for the realization of other human rights”. Comment No. 15 also defined the right to water as the right of everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable and physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic uses” (International Decade for Action ‘Water for Life’ 2005-2015, [https://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/human\\_right\\_to\\_water.shtml/](https://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/human_right_to_water.shtml/)).

289 WFP, “DPR Korea Country Brief” (October 2018). <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000100473/download/>.

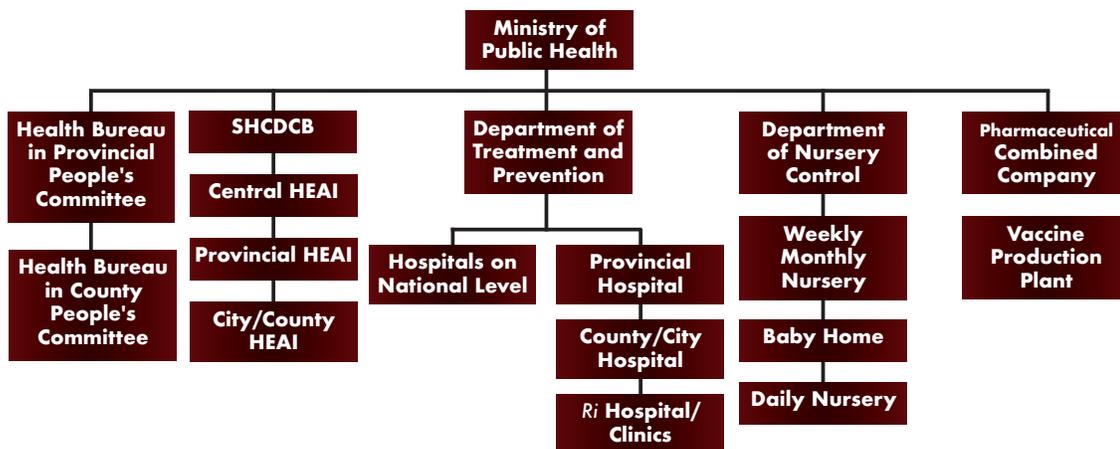
290 Kim Soo-Am et al., *White Paper on North Korean Human Rights 2012* (Seoul: KINU, 2012), 357–58.

291 “North Korean leader says his country’s health sector has ‘nothing to be proud of,’” *CNBC*, August 20, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/08/21/kim-jong-un-reportedly-criticizes-north-koreas-health-sector.html>.

292 Marcus Noland, Sherman Robinson, and Tao Wang, “Famine in North Korea: Causes and Cures,” *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 49.4 (2001): 743.

malnutrition has also seriously impacted the overall health of the North Korean populace. Poor sanitation practices and the discontinuation of public health services, including vaccinations, have contributed to this development. Lastly, inadequate public infrastructure has created logistical problems for medical treatment. Consequently, the North Korean medical system is unable to adequately respond to emergencies.<sup>293</sup>

North Korea's constitution provides for the establishment and maintenance of a "district physician system" that offers free preventive care. This system was created so that doctors at the local level could provide healthcare for all citizens. However, this system, which is the core of North Korea's healthcare program for providing primary integrated preventive care and treatment, is dysfunctional. Each district physician is responsible for five to eight *inminban* (neighborhood watch unit), which correspond to 1,200 residents in urban areas and 1,500 in rural areas. The shortage of pharmaceutical supplies, including basic antibiotics, only worsens this dysfunction.<sup>294</sup> Defector testimony indicates that doctors perform surgery without anesthetics and re-use needles without proper sterilization.<sup>295</sup> Moreover, "[in]-kind payments such as cigarettes and alcohol" are often necessary to obtain medical care.<sup>296</sup>



The diagram above shows the organization of North Korea's healthcare system.<sup>297</sup> As of 2007, there were "more than 800 general and specialized hospitals at the central, provincial, and county levels." In addition, there were around 1,000 hospitals and 6,500 polyclinics at the *ri* (rural village) and *dong* (city sub-district) levels, employing approximately 300,000 medical

293 Kim et al., *White Paper on North Korean Human Rights 2012*, 357-58.

294 Seok Yeong-Hwan, *Bukan-ui ui-ryo siltae* [The State of Medical Care in North Korea] (Seoul: Ministry of Unification Institute for Unification Education, 2006), 13-14.

295 Amnesty International, *The Crumbling State of Health Care in North Korea* (2010), 22-24. <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA24/001/2010/en/13a097fc-4bda-4119-aae5-73e0dd446193/asa240012010en.pdf>

296 Ibid., 20.

297 WHO, "Democratic People's Republic of Korea: Country profile 2007," February 8, 2007. Accessed November 20, 2018. <https://web.archive.org/web/20110706053415/http://www.dprk.searo.who.int/EN/Section11.htm>.

**FROM THE START**

## Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

staff. North Korea's Ministry of Public Health also manages nurseries and pharmaceutical industries.<sup>298</sup> The level of training and expertise of North Korean health workers is low by international standards. The North Korean medical system suffers from resource scarcities and "little exposure to new developments in international best practice."<sup>299</sup>

As of 2012, North Korea "[operated] one university hospital and central hospital at the seat of each provincial people's committee, one or two people's hospitals in each city and county seat, one village clinic in each township and workers' district, and one general clinic for every few small townships or neighborhood."<sup>300</sup> Hospitals have "pre-defined subjects and grades of treatment." Predictably, access to medical services in North Korea is differentiated by *songbun* classification.<sup>301, 302</sup> For example, there are exclusive hospitals in Pyongyang for Kim family members and the highest members of North Korea's ruling elite (Bonghwa Clinic) as well as a separate hospital for military officers (Eoeun Hospital), and officials of vice-ministerial rank or above and famous actors (Namsan Clinic).<sup>303</sup> The latest available information indicates that there is "a widening gap in physical and financial accessibility to medical services between Pyongyang and other major cities and the provinces."<sup>304</sup>

State-supported medical treatment has become nearly nonexistent. Lack of medicine, equipment, sanitation, and reliable energy supplies makes quality healthcare unobtainable outside of Pyongyang. Persistent limitations placed by the regime on international health expertise and assistance makes significant short-term improvements unlikely, especially given the Kim regime's priorities of "guns over butter."

Food insecurity poses a fundamental threat to the health of North Korea's population outside of Pyongyang. According to the FAO, "[food] insecurity exists when people are undernourished as a result of the physical unavailability of food, their lack of social or economic access to adequate food, and/or inadequate food utilization."<sup>305</sup> Moreover, "[food]-insecure people are those individuals whose food intake falls below their minimum calorie requirements as well as those who exhibit physical symptoms caused either by energy and nutrient deficiencies."<sup>306</sup> This definition also applies to North Koreans at the local level outside Pyongyang.

---

298 Ibid.

299 WHO, "WHO Country Cooperation Strategy 2004-2008: Democratic People's Republic of Korea," June 2003, as cited in Amnesty International, *The Crumbling State of Health Care in North Korea* (2010), 20.

300 Kim et al., *White Paper on North Korean Human Rights 2012*, 358.

301 Ibid.

302 See Article 2(2) of the ICESCR.

303 Kim et al., *White Paper on North Korean Human Rights 2012*, 359.

304 Do et al. *White Paper on North Korean Human Rights 2018*, 274.

305 Food and Agricultural Organization, "Guidelines for National FIVIMS: Background," 2000. Accessed November 20, 2018. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/X8346E/x8346e02.htm>.

306 Ibid.



has led to a series of destructive floods.<sup>310</sup> During the famine in the 1990s, farmers began to cultivate fields along mountain slopes without building terraces to ensure soil stability. The subsequent use of chemical fertilizers accelerated acidification, and the indiscriminate use of agricultural chemicals hastened soil pollution. As rain falls, the soil and fertilizer flow downhill, depleting the growing capacity of the fields while pouring more silt and fertilizer into the rivers and streams. This leads to flooding and contamination of the water supply. As confirmed by international sources, such as the FAO and the WFP, both of these developments resulted from poor agricultural management practices.

Although North Korea has a wealth of rivers and underground aquifers with which to provide adequate water supplies, contamination and waterborne diseases restrict fresh water availability. Overall, an “estimated 13.7 million people are in need of safely managed water which is accessible on premise, available when needed and free from contamination.”<sup>311</sup> According to the latest available estimates by UNICEF, 39 per cent of households do not have access to clean water and “50 per cent of schools and health facilities and 38 per cent of nurseries lack adequate water and sanitation facilities.”<sup>312</sup>

Due to severe malnourishment, much of the North Korean population suffers from nutritional distress and weakened immune systems. The North Korean state had to “lower minimum height and weight requirements for military service” because of widespread stunting, and a 2008 estimate concluded that “17 to 29 percent of potential North Korean military conscripts between 2009 and 2013 will have cognitive deficiencies disqualifying them for service.”<sup>313</sup> Infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis, scarlet fever, and measles, are prevalent,<sup>314</sup> and internal parasites are also a major problem due to poor pest control.<sup>315</sup> Of particular concern, a 2010 report estimates that “five per cent of the North Korean population...is infected with TB.”<sup>316</sup>

The North Korean state provides very little in terms of a safety net for residents at the local level. Food provision and healthcare systems have broken down to the point of being nonfunctional. The dietary dependence North Koreans have on the natural environment has already affected the existing diversity of plant and animal life. This will leave the remaining 17-18 million people in North Korea to fend for themselves through any potential crisis

---

310 Victor Teplyakov, “20년 동안 산림 면적의 30%가 사라진 북한” [North Korea has lost 30% of its forests in two decades], *Chosun Ilbo*, September 27, 2011. [http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2011/09/27/2011092702461.html](http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2011/09/27/2011092702461.html).

311 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *2018 DPR Korea Needs and Priorities*, 22.

312 UDHR UNICEF, “Democratic People’s Republic of Korea: Water, Sanitation & Hygiene.” Accessed November 20, 2018. <https://www.unicef.org/dprk/water-sanitation-hygiene>.

313 Karen Monaghan, “Strategic Implications of Global Health,” (Washington, D.C.: National Intelligence Council, 2008), 6. [https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/Special%20Report\\_ICA%20Global%20Health%202008.pdf](https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/Special%20Report_ICA%20Global%20Health%202008.pdf).

314 *Ibid.*, 46.

315 Lee Hye-Kyung, “Hygiene in Pyongyang,” *Korea JoongAng Daily*, December 14, 2017. <http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3042071>.

316 Amnesty International, *The Crumbling State of Health Care in North Korea*, 14.

until food security and healthcare can be restored. An extended period of food shortages combined with pre-existing malnutrition and the absence of adequate healthcare will quickly lead to higher starvation rates and cause incapacitation in a large segment of the population, thus restricting personnel movements to areas with relief operations in local counties. Food insecurity and poor healthcare are severe hurdles in the everyday lives of North Koreans at the local level.

**SECTION 14: SAENGHWAL CHONGHWA, THE KIM REGIME'S ULTIMATE SOCIAL CONTROL TOOL AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**

317

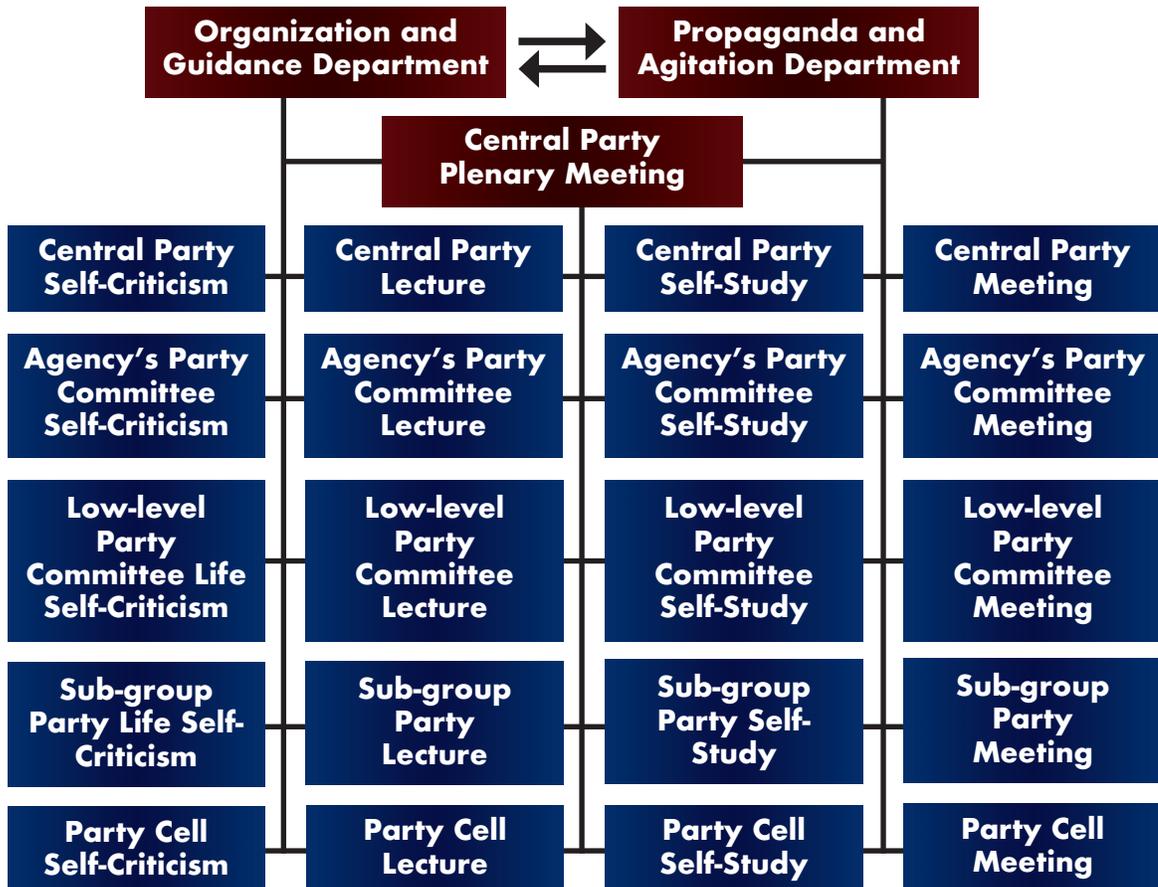
The KWP's most effective tool in controlling the population is its control over Party members' work and private lives. Control and surveillance of North Korea's highest class—the Party members—is carried out by the Party Life Guidance Section of the KWP OGD. Party life is assessed in two areas: Party organizational life and Party private life. The Party Life Guidance Section controls and watches over every move and action of KWP members' ideological trends and organizational life. Everyone from KWP Politburo members to state ministers belongs to a Party cell led by a cell secretary.<sup>318</sup> At the core of Party life is the practice of *saenghwal chonghwa* (self-criticism). Indeed, Thae Yong-ho, a recent high-ranking defector from North Korea who last served as North Korea's deputy ambassador

317 North Korean official media picture of a self-criticism session at a clothing factory in the 1970s. Link at <http://v.media.daum.net/v/20170330221606396>.

318 Hyun, "Bukan sahoe-e daehan nodongdang-ui tongjecheje," 18.

to the United Kingdom, insisted in his memoir that *saenghwal chonghwa* was the “most fundamental principle of the North Korean slave state.”<sup>319</sup>

## Party Organizational Life



“Party organizational life” and one’s participation in various aspects of organizational life are tools through which the Party assesses the loyalty and political suitability of every individual, from middle school students to five-star generals.<sup>320</sup> Party organizational life is an intricate part of the Kim regime’s overall societal control policy. The Party Life Guidance Section oversees Party organizational life at every level, including all central government agencies, the military, and the security agencies. Under Kim Jong-il, Party life guidance practices

319 Thae Yong-Ho, *Sam-cheung Seogisil-ui Ambo [Password to the Third Floor Secretariat]* (Seoul: Kiparang Publishing, 2018), 19.

320 This chart is a translated version of the Korean-language chart depicted in Jang Jin-Sung, “주연은 김정은, 연출은 당 조직지도부” [Kim Jong-un is the Lead Actor, and the KWP OGD is in Charge of Production], *New Daily*, May 21, 2015. <http://www.newdaily.co.kr/site/data/html/2015/05/19/2015051900006.html>.

changed from monthly self-criticism sessions to daily or weekly sessions, enabling tighter control for the Party and the Supreme Leader.<sup>321</sup>

As discussed in Section 8, North Korea's elite class is not exempt from the regime's mechanisms of political and social control. In fact, punishment for the elite can be immediate and significant. Kang Sok-ju, a cousin of Kim Jong-il, was serving as the DPRK Vice Foreign Minister when, during one *saenghwal chonghwa* session, a woman accused Kang of wrongdoing and cried while mutually criticizing Kang. Kim Jong-il observed this and was moved to send his high-ranking cousin to a farm for one month of re-education.<sup>322</sup>

*Saenghwal chonghwa* is a method by which those in close proximity of one another can report on others' political motivations. Self-criticism is also an important part of the Kim regime's program for indoctrinating the North Korean citizen. The Kim regime has long used the *saenghwal chonghwa* system as a means to suppress human rights at the local level. Kim Il-sung introduced the practice of *saenghwal chonghwa* in 1962 to monitor internal dissension amidst a rift with the Soviet Union. In 1973, Kim Jong-il intensified the implementation of *saenghwal chonghwa* sessions to neutralize internal resistance, prevent the "yellow wind of capitalism" from invading North Korea, and protect the values of socialism, thereby unifying the populace in its support of the Supreme Leader and the MIS.<sup>323</sup>

Self-criticism is required for every North Korean regardless of age, sex, or station in life. Every North Korean working within the arts must conduct *saenghwal chonghwa* sessions every other day because they have the opportunity to express themselves more than any other North Korean. Farmers conduct their *saenghwal chonghwa* sessions every ten days due to the farming operational cycle being conducted on a ten-day basis. Everyone else must conduct their *saenghwal chonghwa* on a weekly basis.<sup>324</sup>

There are weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual versions of these *saenghwal chonghwa* sessions. Monthly and quarterly sessions focus on producing "trend" reports for submission to higher levels. Annual sessions address overall accomplishments and shortfalls. At the Seventh Party Congress in May 2016, Kim Jong-un gave an annual Party-level *saenghwal chonghwa* about what was accomplished by the Party and what was not.<sup>325</sup>

---

321 Choi Da-Mi, "현성일 박사가 밝힌 당 조직지도부의 절대적 위상" [Dr. Hyun Seong-II Reveals the OGD's Absolute Power], *New Focus*, December 22, 2013. <http://www.newfocus.co.kr/client/news/viw.asp?cate=C01&mcate=M1001&nNewsNumb=20131211631>. This article quotes the book by Hyun, *Bukan-ui gukga jeollyak-gwa pawo ellipseu*.

322 Thae, *Sam-cheung Seogisil-ui Ambo*, 19.

323 Lee Woo-Young and Hwang Gyu-Jin, "A Study on Formation of 'The Review Meeting of The Party Life' in North Korea," *North Korean Studies Review* 12.1 (2008): 121–22.

324 Hyun, "Bukan sahoe-e daehan nodongdang-ui tongjecheje," 19.

325 Albert Hong, "북, '70일 전투' 성과 대대적 조사" [North Korea's Major Inspection of the 70-Day Battle Results], *Radio Free Asia*, May 16, 2016. [https://www.rfa.org/korean/in\\_focus/food\\_international\\_org/seventyday-05162016145355.html](https://www.rfa.org/korean/in_focus/food_international_org/seventyday-05162016145355.html).

All weekly Party cell and workplace *saenghwal chonghwa* sessions begin at 7:30 a.m. on Saturdays.<sup>326</sup> Party members participate in Party cell *saenghwal chonghwa* sessions led by the cell secretary. Non-Party personnel must participate in sessions held by the workers' organization that oversees their workplace.<sup>327</sup> This rule is strictly enforced.

At the beginning of one's self-criticism session, one must quote Kim Il-sung's or Kim Jong-il's directives or teachings, usually some portion of the TPMI applicable to one's self-criticism. According to the TPMI principle eight sub-principle five, one must criticize oneself according to a standard of political ideology that elevates one's life and work based on the Supreme Leader's directives and Party policy.<sup>328</sup> Through self-criticism, one can "ideologically struggle to revolutionize oneself."<sup>329</sup> During the self-criticism session, one must openly and publicly criticize oneself regarding one's own words, deeds, and thoughts while addressing or analyzing the causes of one's mistakes. One must state one's ideological shortcomings or failures to adhere to workplace objectives and also recommend corrective action.<sup>330</sup>

Mutual criticism is an important component of the *saenghwal chonghwa* session. After self-criticism, one must criticize another member of the group. The group leader expects the mutual criticism to be sharp and succinct. If someone does not conduct mutual criticism in a forthright and decisive manner, that person is subject to further criticism. Nevertheless, there are some limits to mutual criticism. Many team members at the workplace work under dangerous or physically challenging conditions. Sharply criticizing a team member who plays an important role in maintaining others' safety is rarely accepted due to the potential of revenge through injurious or even life-threatening actions. In this case, team members frequently build a shared understanding in the following manner: "person A criticizes person B this week from an agreed-upon understanding, and person A will receive the same criticism the following week." This type of arrangement prevents resentment and actions that would destroy the team or group.<sup>331</sup>

Once everybody in the session has completed their self-criticism and mutual criticism session, the person leading the *saenghwal chonghwa* session records the criticisms and issues warnings, corrective actions, or punishments. The session then concludes. At the last *saenghwal chonghwa* session of the month, the session leader compiles a monthly assessment. The group leader prepares a report for the group that is passed up the Party or workplace chain of authority and ultimately to the Party Life Guidance Section of the KWP OGD.

---

326 The sessions start at a later time for students in schools.

327 The session is led by a local Party official.

328 See "Ten Great Principles of the Establishment of the Unitary Ideology System," *Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights*, June 29, 2012. [https://eng.nkhumanrights.or.kr:444/board/bbs\\_view.php?no=3&board\\_table=bbs\\_literature&page=1](https://eng.nkhumanrights.or.kr:444/board/bbs_view.php?no=3&board_table=bbs_literature&page=1).

329 Hyun, "Bukan sahoe-e daehan nodongdang-ui tongjecheje," 18.

330 Ibid., 19.

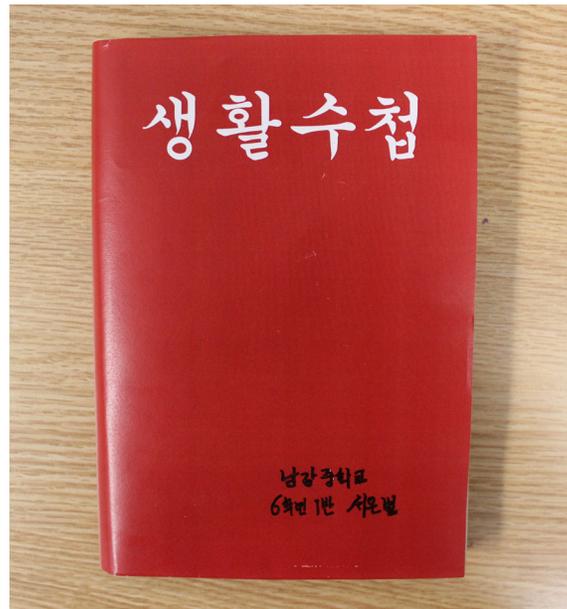
331 Author interview of North Korean escapees who performed such dangerous work.

**FROM THE START**

## Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

A video produced by *NK Intellectuals Solidarity* in November 2012, in which North Korean defectors simulate a *saenghwal chonghwa* session, clearly shows how a group of people under the leadership of a single person leading the political session must “confess” their shortcomings in terms of failing the Supreme Leader or the Party.<sup>332</sup> Others then criticize that person for their shortcomings as the confessing person hangs their head in shame. Just as Party members conduct their *saenghwal chonghwa* sessions at the Party cell and workers do the same at their workplace, the elderly and housewives conduct their *saenghwal chonghwa* sessions at their *inminban* (neighborhood watch unit) under the *inminban* leader’s guidance.<sup>333</sup>

Students conduct their *saenghwal chonghwa* sessions beginning in middle school. The *saenghwal chonghwa* session takes place on Saturdays and the class teacher leads the session. A student sits with the teacher and takes notes of each student’s *saenghwal chonghwa*. The teacher calls upon a student to begin. The student takes out her red book, opens to the page he or she prepared for the event, and begins reading. Below is a simulation of one of these books and the process of *saenghwal chonghwa* in schools. All names are pseudonyms.<sup>334</sup>



**Front Cover:** Life Notebook, Namgang Middle School, Sixth Grade, Classroom One, [owned by] Suh Un-byol.

332 This video is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKdOqQSNnsc>. An in-depth television interview of a North Korean defector on the subject of *saenghwal chonghwa* is also available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWYO8G5hGjc>.

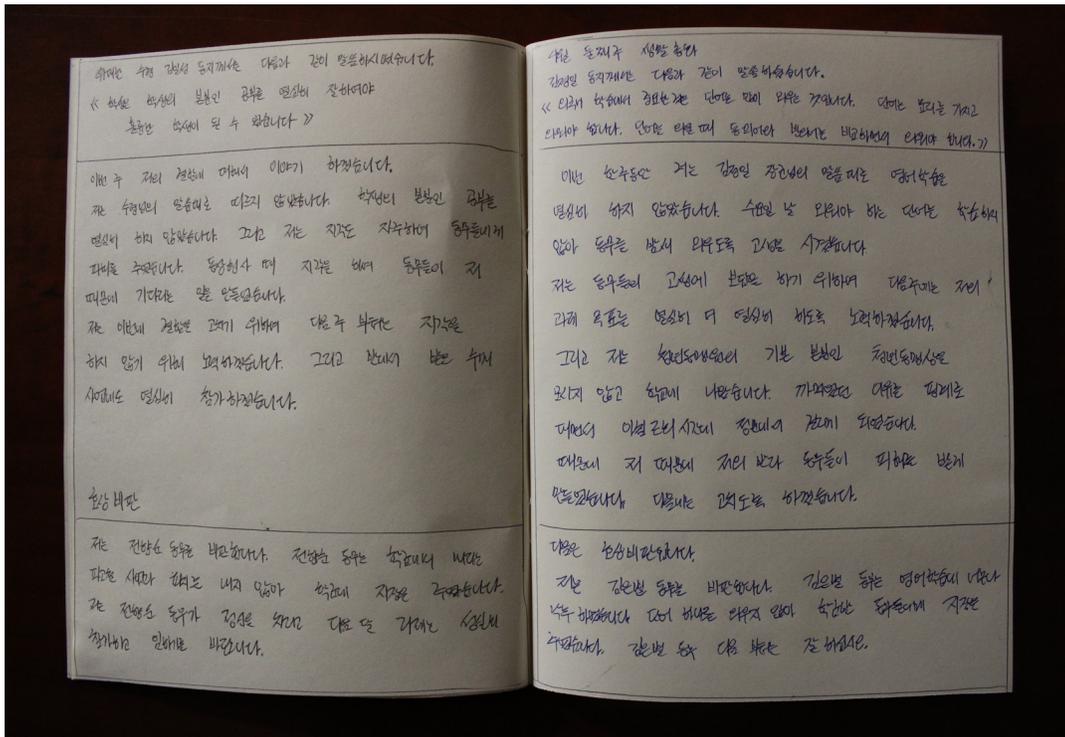
333 Choi Shin, “北주민 '생활총화' 현장 녹음 최초 공개” [Audio Recording of North Korean Residents’ Self-criticism Session Revealed for the First Time], *Daily NK*, July 24, 2006. <http://www.dailynk.com/korean/read.php?num=26047&cataId=nk00100>.

334 This sample was prepared by North Korean defector Ms. Kim Hye-soo (pseudonym) for this report. She prepared this sample based on her own experiences while attending school in North Korea.

The designated student opens the book for the criticism pages for the day. At the top of the left page is a quote that the student has prepared from her ideology studies. In this simulation, the student quotes:

위대한 수령 김일성 동지께서는 다음과 같이 말씀하시었습니다.  
 <학생은 학생의 본분인 공부를 열심히 잘 하여야 훌륭한 학생이 될 수 있습니다.>

*“Great Suryong Kim Il-sung said the following: “Students must study hard, like they are supposed to, if they are to become good students.”*



Then, in the middle of the page, the student presents her self-criticism. In this simulation, the student writes:

이번주 저의 결함에 대해서 이야기하겠습니다. 저는 수령님의 말씀대로 따르지 않았습니니다. 학생의 본분인 공부를 열심히 하지 않았습니니다. 그리고 저는 지각도 자주하여 동무들에게 피해를 주었습니다. 동상 행사 때 지각을 하여 동무들이 저 때문에 기다리는 일을 만들었습니다. 저는 이번에 결함을 고치기 위하여 다음주부터는 지각을 하지 않기 위해 노력하겠습니다. 그리고 반에서 받은 파찰사업에도 열심히 참가하겠습니다.

*“I will talk about my mistakes this week. I did not follow the Supreme Leader’s advice. I did not study hard as a student should. Also, I was late to class frequently, which hurts my fellow students. I was late for the lesson at the Supreme Leader’s statue and caused my fellow students to wait. In order to rectify my mistakes, I will endeavor not to be late next week. Also, for this class, I will endeavor greatly to collect scrap iron for recycling.”*

At the bottom of the page is the section for mutual criticism (호상비판).

저는 전향순 동무를 비판합니다. 전향순 동무는 학급에서 내리는 파고철사업과 파지를 내지 않아 학교에 지장을 주었습니다. 저는 전향순 동무가 정신을 차리고 다음 달 과제는 성실히 참가하고 임하기를 바랍니다.

*“I will criticize fellow student Chun Hyang-soon. Comrade Chun Hyang-soon did not submit recycled iron and paper, causing a problem for the school. I hope comrade Chun Hyang-soon recovers her senses next month and completes her assignment in an earnest fashion next time.”*

On the right, the second page begins with a record of the date (“Self-criticism for the second week of April”).

The student prepares another quote from one of the Supreme Leaders:

김정일 동지께서는 다음과 같이 말씀하셨습니다. <외국어 학습에서 중요한 것은 단어를 많이 외우는 것입니다. 단어는 분리를 가지고 외워야 합니다. 단어를 외울 때 동의어와 반의어를 비교하면서 외워야 합니다.>

*“Comrade Kim Jong-il said the following: ‘In studying foreign languages, it is important to memorize lots of vocabulary and to be able to classify the vocabulary. When memorizing the vocabulary, one must compare synonyms and antonyms.’”*

The student then presents another self-criticism:

이번 한 주 동안 저는 김정일 장군님의 말씀대로 영어학습을 열심히 하지 않았습니다. 수요일 날 외워야 하는 단어를 학습하지 않아 동무를 밤새 외우도록 고생을 시켰습니다. 저는 동무들의 고생에 보답을 하기 위하여 다음주에는 저의 과제 목표를 열심히, 더 열심히 하도록 노력하겠습니다. 그리고 저는 청년동맹원의 기본 본분인 청년동맹상을 모시지 않고 학교에 나왔습니다. 까먹었던 이유를 핑계로 대면서 아침 조회시간에 정문에서 걸리게 되었습니다. 때문에 저 때문에 저의 반과 동무들이 피해를 받게 만들었습니다. 다음에는 고치도록 하겠습니다.

*“This week, I did not intensely study English and failed to follow the directives of General Kim Jong-il. I did not study Wednesday’s vocabulary while my fellow students struggled to do so all night. My fellow students worked so hard. I have to do something to repay them. So, next week, I will endeavor to achieve my goals. I also did not attend the Socialist Labor Youth League as I was supposed to. Finally, I had the poor excuse of being forgetful, and I was late to morning roll call. Consequently, I harmed my class and fellow students. I will do better next time.”*

The student then conducts another mutual criticism:

다음은 호상비판입니다.

*“Next, I will criticize another student.”*

저는 김은별 동무를 비판합니다. 김은별 동무는 영어학습에 너무나 낙후하였습니다. 단어 하나를 외우지 않아 학급반 동무들에게 지장을 주었습니다. 김은별 동무, 다음부터는 잘하십시오.

*“I will criticize fellow student Kim Un-byol. Fellow student comrade Kim Un-byol did not study her English well and did not memorize one word of vocabulary. This is a problem for the other students in the class. Fellow student Kim Un-byol, please do better next time.”*

The North Korean defector who provided this simulation stated that she used one notebook per school year. There was no requirement to turn in the book at the end of the year; she burned her own notebooks. She stated that individuals in her generation, born in the 1980s, come to terms with the criticism of another student during mutual criticism sessions in no more than a day. However, for those in older generations, prolonged fights and ill will between the person doing the criticizing and the person being criticized were not uncommon.

**SECTION 15: THE FUTURE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA**

335

The ideology-based policies and practices of human rights denial in North Korea are institutionalized, subsidized, and rationalized by a regime that has been historically driven to serve only the needs and requirements of the Supreme Leader.<sup>336</sup> The current system of human rights denial developed slowly, but surely, and initially with communist collective principles under the Soviet occupation forces after liberation from Japanese occupation. Subsequently, there was a twenty-year period of war and major internal challenges to Kim Il-sung's authority. Once he was appointed to the positions of KWP Secretary for Organization and Director of the KWP OGD in 1973,<sup>337</sup> Kim Jong-il redesigned the policies and practices of human rights denial to become what they are today. Today's implementation of Kim Jong-il's policies deters improvements in North Korean human rights, both in terms of ideology and institutions. Under the current system, the Supreme Leader and the KWP OGD establish national priorities and policy objectives. The KWP PAD carries out

335 Photograph by William Proby, No. 29233217634\_3a7e78dc1f\_b, at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/145294362@N05/29233217634/in/album-72157674200672805/>.

336 In its October 2018 submission to the Universal Periodic Review Working Group, the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) recommended that North Korea, "[end] state-sponsored discrimination based on the *"songbun"* system." See "Universal Periodic Review of the DPRK (May 2019), HRNK Submission," (Washington, D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2018), 13, para. 21. <https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/HRNK-UPR-FINAL.pdf>.

337 Unification Education Institute, *2015 Bukan e-hae* [Understanding North Korea] (Seoul: Ministry of Unification, 2015), 34.

the requisite indoctrination themes down to the local level across the entire nation-state. Leadership structures at the local level comply with OGD directives. The individual North Koreans generally comply with local leaders' directives. Individual rights are sacrificed and denied through compelled acquiescence.

To serve this structure, North Korea's political environment operates in an ideological framework supported by a system of political terror so regulated and rigid that organized resistance is nearly impossible under current circumstances. This social control system will continue to impede any meaningful improvement in human rights and prevent the general populace from having any influence on the regime's decision-making process. No political system in the world can match North Korea's demand for obedience to doctrine and ideology as well as disrespect for law. The internal security system overseen by the Kim regime enables the Party-state's social control to be driven by the Supreme Leader through the OGD, which acts as the regime's "control tower."

This system was in place when Kim Jong-un came to power after the death of his father, Kim Jong-il, in December 2011. At the time, there was widespread hope that his Western education would enable him to improve the human rights conditions in North Korea. These hopes were short-lived. Kim Jong-un has brutally eliminated political and personal threats to his authority—both perceived and real—through the most draconian of methods, including anti-aircraft machine guns, mortars, political prison camps, and internment without trial. Moreover, he has reaffirmed the Party-state's emphasis on "guns over butter," at the expense of any improvement in human rights conditions. To this effect, Kim institutionalized the development of nuclear weapons over human rights improvements at the Seventh Party Congress in May 2016 by securing his power base and focusing North Korea's strategic goals on simultaneously developing nuclear weapons and the economy (*byungjin*).<sup>338</sup> There was no mention of human rights; Kim even acknowledged in his full report to the Seventh Party Congress that "our people, though they are not well-off..."<sup>339</sup> As long as the ideology of the *Suryong* and the KWP's institutional rule exist, the denial of human rights in North Korea will continue in full force. As long as the regime prioritizes the personal security of the Supreme Leader and regime survival—for which the regime sees its nuclear and missile programs as critical components—human rights in North Korea will not be observed or practiced.

Any potential advancements in human rights under the Kim Jong-un regime can only begin through concepts that are unimaginable today in the ruling circles of the KWP. Given Kim Jong-un's priorities, changing human rights denial seems nigh impossible. Change would require that the regime implement a complete reversal of Party-based ideology that serves the Supreme Leader. This is only imaginable when the KWP no longer exists or loses power. Upon doing so, the regime would have to reverse its existing economic policies and priorities, which emphasize the North Korean military in general and the nuclear and missile programs specifically. Beyond that, the regime would need to end the prioritization

---

338 This was the first Party Congress since the Sixth Party Congress in 1980.

339 Michael Madden, "KJU Full Report to 7th Party Congress," *NK Leadership Watch*, June 21, 2016. <https://nkleadershipwatch.wordpress.com/2016/06/21/kju-full-report-to-7th-party-congress/>.

of resources to the elite in Pyongyang and curtail the system of privileges provided to the elite and the regime loyalists.

If there is to be such a turn of events in the future, improvements in North Korean human rights will inevitably be initiated in Pyongyang by the elites who live there. They are the ones who are capable of providing the impetus for change. Improvements in economic conditions in Pyongyang and in other isolated areas of special economic advantages will likely give rise to greater demands and expectations. The recent appearance of a wealthy class challenges the regime's emphasis on loyalty above all else, but it has yet to lead to organized demands for political change. However, demands for greater wealth and luxury are evident throughout Pyongyang and the elite class. There will be rising demands to retain that wealth and protect it from state power.

The vast majority of current UN sanctions target the Kim family regime's nuclear and missile programs as well as the regime's financial assets. This will not deter human rights denial and, indeed, will likely lead to further deprivation for the general populace and exacerbated negative impacts on human rights. The rights most severely violated by the Kim regime are identified and defined by the UDHR, ICESCR, ICCPR, CRC, CEDAW, and CRPD.

Imposing standards of equality would be foreign to both North Korean culture and the regime's politics. Enforcing international human rights standards in North Korea that would "level the playing field" would likely take several generations at a minimum. The most critical element in this process would be promoting a greater understanding of human rights issues among the North Korean population. This population, which transitioned from a Confucian dynasty to Japanese colonialism then to a totalitarian dictatorship, has had no exposure whatsoever to the concept of human rights. Though North Koreans certainly understand what is fair, right, or wrong, there is no systematic understanding of individual rights and liberties. Unlike their counterparts in the South, North Koreans have lived in isolation without access to resources to enable education and understanding of human rights concepts.<sup>340</sup>

One group that must be addressed in promoting human rights is the local leadership at the lower levels of government administration and education. This would begin with the central and local authorities changing the "culture" of law enforcement at all levels of the courts and at all levels of the police.<sup>341</sup> The legal system would need to be completely reoriented from ideology-based processes to a system that observes human rights as a core consideration in prosecution, judgment, and sentencing.<sup>342</sup> It would be necessary for local people's committees

---

340 As discussed previously, this is a violation of the right to information at a minimum.

341 In its October 2018 submission to the Universal Periodic Review Working Group, the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) recommended that North Korea, "Educate and train officials, including prison guards and political officers, on international human rights standards and instruments, and increase the number of women guards." "Universal Periodic Review of the DPRK (May 2019), HRNK Submission," (Washington, D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2018), 11, para. 16. <https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/HRNK-UPR-FINAL.pdf>.

342 The 2016 DPRK constitution identifies individual human rights in Chapter V, Articles 62 to 86. However, a detailed examination of the text reveals that collectivism is the focus of these rights, not the individual.

to shift from Party-directed actions to law-based actions. There must also be educational opportunities for school teachers in order to understand human rights and liberties.<sup>343</sup> School curricula would require substantial changes in order to educate multiple generations about human rights and their importance to society.

The flow of outside information into North Korea is also at an all-time high. It is only a matter of time before the combination of wealth accumulation and demands for outside information collide with Party policies and internal security practices. This dynamic, however, is not occurring at the lower level in local villages, with the exception of those villages that are close to the Sino-North Korean border.

None of the above is possible without a regime transition from totalitarian dictatorship to a democratic form of governance. This transition period would be critical for instituting human rights education and adapting human rights standards already acceded to by North Korea. Certainly, the precise scenario through which a North Korean regime transition occurs would greatly affect the extent to which any human rights are adopted by the populace. Unification through confederation, a coup d'état, an internal rebellion, a civil war, an insurgency, or a resumption of the Korean War would each have different impacts on the North Korean population.<sup>344</sup> Each contingency would provide different scenarios for the introduction of human rights as articulated in the international human rights treaties and norms to which the DPRK is obligated.

Resistance to change is a naturally occurring dynamic in any situation involving dramatic changes in governance. It would be no different during a transition away from the Kim regime. An armed insurgency by Kim regime loyalists would make such a transition far more difficult and likely compel the temporary imposition of martial law in various local regions.

According to a leading expert on the concept of insurgency in North Korea, “a post-Kim family regime North Korea will at once have many characteristics of violent extremism and at the same time use many of the already existing asymmetric capabilities developed by the North Korean state.”<sup>345</sup> He further explains that perhaps the most important assumption is that remnants of the KPA, KWP, and elements of the population “will oppose the non-North Korean forces and conduct a uniquely North Korean insurgency to accomplish the classic insurgent goal of ridding a land of an occupying power.”<sup>346</sup>

---

343 As discussed previously, North Korea violates the right of its citizens to receive information, as per ICCPR Article 19.

344 The Korean War of 1950–53 actually never ended. General hostilities ended with an Armistice Agreement signed on July 27, 1953, but a peace treaty has never been signed to technically end the war. However, inter-Korean talks are currently ongoing, with the Moon administration stating it would like an end-of-war declaration by the end of the year (2018).

345 David S. Maxwell, “Irregular Warfare on the Korean Peninsula Thoughts on Irregular Threats for north Korea Post-Conflict and Post-Collapse: Understanding Them to Counter Them,” *Small Wars Journal*, November 2010. <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/irregular-warfare-on-the-korean-peninsula>.

346 Ibid.

**DENIED**

## **FROM THE START**

### Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

The obstacles to transitioning from the Kim regime to a governing system that observes human rights are numerous for the above reasons and beyond. In the event of a transition, the international community will necessarily assist in government reform. Whatever the scenario, North Koreans as a populace face an intimidating and perilous journey to becoming a society that observes and protects human rights.

Improvements in human rights observance are far more dangerous to the survival of the Kim regime than any external threat. Changing the relationship between the Supreme Leader and individual North Koreans creates an opportunity for internal resistance. The focus of the Kim regime is to employ the KWP to suppress human rights at every level from the capital to the smallest rural village to deny any opportunity for any individual or group to oppose any policy or practice of the Party and the Supreme Leader. The control of these policies and practices is overseen by the OGD, which evaluates every leader at every level in their dedication to carrying out the Supreme Leader's and the Party's directives. Altering the human rights equation in North Korea is unquestionably the greatest threat to the regime because it gives an opportunity to individuals and groups to see themselves as inherently deserving something that the regime is unwilling or even unable to provide. The Kim regime will face its greatest threat to date when North Koreans believe that their rights entitle them to speak and assemble freely.

## SECTION 16: RECOMMENDATIONS

---

North Korea's current leader appears to be keen on pursuing the economic side of his *byungjin* policy.<sup>347</sup> However, in order for North Korea to develop economically and qualify for international, bilateral, and multilateral assistance, it would need comprehensive and substantial economic, political, and social reform. The following are the fundamental requirements of reforms aimed at bringing North Korea into the 21st century:

- End reliance on the discriminatory *songbun* system, in particular by:
  - » Discontinuing the classification of every 17-year-old North Korean into a socio-political classification—referred to as *songbun*—for the purpose of designating that person as loyal, wavering, or hostile to the Kim regime.<sup>348</sup>
  - » Separating all citizens' resident information in national police records from socio-political discrimination of *songbun*.<sup>349</sup>
  - » Ending national police collection of data regarding citizens' *songbun* and destroying all current police data relevant to socio-political classification.<sup>350</sup>
  - » Halting the continued socio-political discrimination of *songbun* and discontinuing national police collection of all data regarding citizens' *songbun* status.<sup>351</sup>
  - » Halting continued usage of the *Resident Registration Project Reference Manual*.<sup>352</sup>
  - » Ending the use of *songbun* status to determine housing, food, healthcare provision, and educational opportunities for citizens.<sup>353</sup>
- Allow individual choice of profession by eliminating the practice of designating an individual's profession based on Party-state requirements.<sup>354</sup>
- End favored treatment of Pyongyang by:
  - » Discontinuing preferential treatment of Pyongyang residents over those North Korean residents living in the provinces.
  - » Eliminating differences in identification cards between Pyongyang residents and those in the provinces.
- Eliminate the practice of *saenghwal chonghwa* (self-criticism), which compels every North Korean to confess weekly what they have done wrong relative to the Ten Principles of Monolithic Ideology.<sup>355</sup>

---

347 The *byungjin* policy line implies “parallel” economic and military progress.

348 See Robert Collins, *Marked for Life*, 3, 27, 30.

349 Ibid.

350 Ibid.

351 Ibid.

352 Kim and Ri, *Resident Registration Project Reference Manual*.

353 Robert Collins, *Marked for Life*, 3, 27, 30.

354 See this report's chapter on North Korean Workplace: Controlling the Population at the Local Level.

355 See this report's chapter on *Saenghwal Chonghwa*: Kim Regime's Ultimate Social Control Tool.

**DENIED**

## FROM THE START

### Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

- Destroy all records that compile data on Party-state collection of negative information enforced by the weekly confessions of every North Korean regarding his or her loyalty.<sup>356</sup>
- Eliminate the doctrine of Ten Principles of Monolithic Ideology (*yuil sasang shipdae wonchik* – 유일사상 10대 원칙), which compels all North Koreans to obey ideology over state law.
- Give the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur unimpeded access so that they can look into the human rights situation, including at the local level, and advise about the implementation of any other applicable UN recommendations.

---

356 Ibid.

# ICCPR AND ICESCR HUMAN RIGHTS TREATY ARTICLES VIOLATED BY THE KIM REGIME

---

## AS IDENTIFIED IN *DENIED FROM THE START*

### A. INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

*Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966*

*Entry into force 23 March 1976, in accordance with Article 49*

#### **Preamble**

The States Parties to the present Covenant,

Considering that, in accordance with the principles proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Recognizing that these rights derive from the inherent dignity of the human person,

Recognizing that, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ideal of free human beings enjoying civil and political freedom and freedom from fear and want can only be achieved if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his civil and political rights, as well as his economic, social and cultural rights,

Considering the obligation of States under the Charter of the United Nations to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and freedoms,

Realizing that the individual, having duties to other individuals and to the community to which he belongs, is under a responsibility to strive for the promotion and observance of the rights recognized in the present Covenant,

Agree upon the following articles:

#### **PART I**

##### *Article 1*

1. All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.
2. All peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation,

**DENIED**

## **FROM THE START**

### Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence.

3. The States Parties to the present Covenant, including those having responsibility for the administration of Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories, shall promote the realization of the right of self-determination, and shall respect that right, in conformity with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

## **PART II**

### *Article 2*

1. Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to respect and to ensure to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the present Covenant, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

2. Where not already provided for by existing legislative or other measures, each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to take the necessary steps, in accordance with its constitutional processes and with the provisions of the present Covenant, to adopt such laws or other measures as may be necessary to give effect to the rights recognized in the present Covenant.

3. Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes:

(a) To ensure that any person whose rights or freedoms as herein recognized are violated shall have an effective remedy, notwithstanding that the violation has been committed by persons acting in an official capacity;

(b) To ensure that any person claiming such a remedy shall have his right thereto determined by competent judicial, administrative or legislative authorities, or by any other competent authority provided for by the legal system of the State, and to develop the possibilities of judicial remedy;

(c) To ensure that the competent authorities shall enforce such remedies when granted.

## **PART III**

### *Article 6*

1. Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life.

2. In countries which have not abolished the death penalty, sentence of death may be imposed only for the most serious crimes in accordance with the law in force at the time of the

commission of the crime and not contrary to the provisions of the present Covenant and to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. This penalty can only be carried out pursuant to a final judgement rendered by a competent court.

3. When deprivation of life constitutes the crime of genocide, it is understood that nothing in this article shall authorize any State Party to the present Covenant to derogate in any way from any obligation assumed under the provisions of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

4. Anyone sentenced to death shall have the right to seek pardon or commutation of the sentence. Amnesty, pardon or commutation of the sentence of death may be granted in all cases.

5. Sentence of death shall not be imposed for crimes committed by persons below eighteen years of age and shall not be carried out on pregnant women.

6. Nothing in this article shall be invoked to delay or to prevent the abolition of capital punishment by any State Party to the present Covenant.

#### *Article 7*

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. In particular, no one shall be subjected without his free consent to medical or scientific experimentation.

#### *Article 8*

1. No one shall be held in slavery; slavery and the slave-trade in all their forms shall be prohibited.

2. No one shall be held in servitude.

3. (a) No one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour;

(b) Paragraph 3 (a) shall not be held to preclude, in countries where imprisonment with hard labour may be imposed as a punishment for a crime, the performance of hard labour in pursuance of a sentence to such punishment by a competent court;

(c) For the purpose of this paragraph the term "forced or compulsory labour" shall not include:

(i) Any work or service, not referred to in subparagraph (b), normally required of a person who is under detention in consequence of a lawful order of a court, or of a person during conditional release from such detention;

(ii) Any service of a military character and, in countries where conscientious objection is recognized, any national service required by law of conscientious objectors;

**DENIED**

## **FROM THE START**

### Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

(iii) Any service exacted in cases of emergency or calamity threatening the life or well-being of the community;

(iv) Any work or service which forms part of normal civil obligations.

#### ***Article 9***

1. Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. No one shall be deprived of his liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedure as are established by law.

2. Anyone who is arrested shall be informed, at the time of arrest, of the reasons for his arrest and shall be promptly informed of any charges against him.

3. Anyone arrested or detained on a criminal charge shall be brought promptly before a judge or other officer authorized by law to exercise judicial power and shall be entitled to trial within a reasonable time or to release. It shall not be the general rule that persons awaiting trial shall be detained in custody, but release may be subject to guarantees to appear for trial, at any other stage of the judicial proceedings, and, should occasion arise, for execution of the judgement.

4. Anyone who is deprived of his liberty by arrest or detention shall be entitled to take proceedings before a court, in order that that court may decide without delay on the lawfulness of his detention and order his release if the detention is not lawful.

5. Anyone who has been the victim of unlawful arrest or detention shall have an enforceable right to compensation.

#### ***Article 10***

1. All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person.

2. (a) Accused persons shall, save in exceptional circumstances, be segregated from convicted persons and shall be subject to separate treatment appropriate to their status as unconvicted persons;

(b) Accused juvenile persons shall be separated from adults and brought as speedily as possible for adjudication.

3. The penitentiary system shall comprise treatment of prisoners the essential aim of which shall be their reformation and social rehabilitation. Juvenile offenders shall be segregated from adults and be accorded treatment appropriate to their age and legal status.

*Article 12*

1. Everyone lawfully within the territory of a State shall, within that territory, have the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his residence.
2. Everyone shall be free to leave any country, including his own.
3. The above-mentioned rights shall not be subject to any restrictions except those which are provided by law, are necessary to protect national security, public order (ordre public), public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others, and are consistent with the other rights recognized in the present Covenant.
4. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter his own country.

*Article 17*

1. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his honour and reputation.
2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

*Article 18*

1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.
2. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.
3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.
4. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

**DENIED**

## **FROM THE START**

### Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

#### *Article 19*

1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference.
2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.
3. The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of this article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:
  - (a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others;
  - (b) For the protection of national security or of public order (ordre public), or of public health or morals.

#### *Article 20*

1. Any propaganda for war shall be prohibited by law.
2. Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.

#### *Article 21*

The right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (ordre public), the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

#### *Article 22*

1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of his interests.
2. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those which are prescribed by law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (ordre public), the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. This article shall not prevent the imposition of lawful restrictions on members of the armed forces and of the police in their exercise of this right.

3. Nothing in this article shall authorize States Parties to the International Labour Organisation Convention of 1948 concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize to take legislative measures which would prejudice, or to apply the law in such a manner as to prejudice, the guarantees provided for in that Convention.

*Article 23*

1. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

2. The right of men and women of marriageable age to marry and to found a family shall be recognized.

3. No marriage shall be entered into without the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

4. States Parties to the present Covenant shall take appropriate steps to ensure equality of rights and responsibilities of spouses as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. In the case of dissolution, provision shall be made for the necessary protection of any children.

*Article 25*

Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in article 2 and without unreasonable restrictions:

(a) To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives;

(b) To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors;

(c) To have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his country.

*Article 26*

All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this respect, the law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

**DENIED**

## **FROM THE START**

Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

### **B. INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS**

*Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966*

*Entry into force 3 January 1976, in accordance with article 27*

#### **Preamble**

The States Parties to the present Covenant,

Considering that, in accordance with the principles proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Recognizing that these rights derive from the inherent dignity of the human person,

Recognizing that, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ideal of free human beings enjoying freedom from fear and want can only be achieved if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his economic, social and cultural rights, as well as his civil and political rights,

Considering the obligation of States under the Charter of the United Nations to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and freedoms,

Realizing that the individual, having duties to other individuals and to the community to which he belongs, is under a responsibility to strive for the promotion and observance of the rights recognized in the present Covenant,

Agree upon the following articles:

#### **PART I**

##### ***Article 1***

1. All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.
2. All peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence.
3. The States Parties to the present Covenant, including those having responsibility for the administration of Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories, shall promote the realization of

the right of self-determination, and shall respect that right, in conformity with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

## **PART II**

### *Article 2*

1. Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to take steps, individually and through international assistance and co-operation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the rights recognized in the present Covenant by all appropriate means, including particularly the adoption of legislative measures.
2. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to guarantee that the rights enunciated in the present Covenant will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.
3. Developing countries, with due regard to human rights and their national economy, may determine to what extent they would guarantee the economic rights recognized in the present Covenant to non-nationals.

### *Article 4*

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize that, in the enjoyment of those rights provided by the State in conformity with the present Covenant, the State may subject such rights only to such limitations as are determined by law only in so far as this may be compatible with the nature of these rights and solely for the purpose of promoting the general welfare in a democratic society.

### *Article 5*

1. Nothing in the present Covenant may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights or freedoms recognized herein, or at their limitation to a greater extent than is provided for in the present Covenant.
2. No restriction upon or derogation from any of the fundamental human rights recognized or existing in any country in virtue of law, conventions, regulations or custom shall be admitted on the pretext that the present Covenant does not recognize such rights or that it recognizes them to a lesser extent.

**PART III***Article 6*

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right to work, which includes the right of everyone to the opportunity to gain his living by work which he freely chooses or accepts, and will take appropriate steps to safeguard this right.

2. The steps to be taken by a State Party to the present Covenant to achieve the full realization of this right shall include technical and vocational guidance and training programmes, policies and techniques to achieve steady economic, social and cultural development and full and productive employment under conditions safeguarding fundamental political and economic freedoms to the individual.

*Article 7*

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work which ensure, in particular:

(a) Remuneration which provides all workers, as a minimum, with:

(i) Fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value without distinction of any kind, in particular women being guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men, with equal pay for equal work;

(ii) A decent living for themselves and their families in accordance with the provisions of the present Covenant;

(b) Safe and healthy working conditions;

(c) Equal opportunity for everyone to be promoted in his employment to an appropriate higher level, subject to no considerations other than those of seniority and competence;

(d) Rest, leisure and reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay, as well as remuneration for public holidays

*Article 8*

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure:

(a) The right of everyone to form trade unions and join the trade union of his choice, subject only to the rules of the organization concerned, for the promotion and protection of his economic and social interests. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those prescribed by law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public order or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others;

(b) The right of trade unions to establish national federations or confederations and the right of the latter to form or join international trade-union organizations;

(c) The right of trade unions to function freely subject to no limitations other than those prescribed by law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public order or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others;

(d) The right to strike, provided that it is exercised in conformity with the laws of the particular country.

2. This article shall not prevent the imposition of lawful restrictions on the exercise of these rights by members of the armed forces or of the police or of the administration of the State.

3. Nothing in this article shall authorize States Parties to the International Labour Organisation Convention of 1948 concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize to take legislative measures which would prejudice, or apply the law in such a manner as would prejudice, the guarantees provided for in that Convention.

#### ***Article 10***

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize that:

1. The widest possible protection and assistance should be accorded to the family, which is the natural and fundamental group unit of society, particularly for its establishment and while it is responsible for the care and education of dependent children. Marriage must be entered into with the free consent of the intending spouses.

2. Special protection should be accorded to mothers during a reasonable period before and after childbirth. During such period working mothers should be accorded paid leave or leave with adequate social security benefits.

3. Special measures of protection and assistance should be taken on behalf of all children and young persons without any discrimination for reasons of parentage or other conditions. Children and young persons should be protected from economic and social exploitation. Their employment in work harmful to their morals or health or dangerous to life or likely to hamper their normal development should be punishable by law. States should also set age limits below which the paid employment of child labour should be prohibited and punishable by law.

#### ***Article 11***

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right, recognizing to this effect the essential importance of international co-operation based on free consent.

**DENIED**

## **FROM THE START**

### Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

2. The States Parties to the present Covenant, recognizing the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, shall take, individually and through international co-operation, the measures, including specific programmes, which are needed:

(a) To improve methods of production, conservation and distribution of food by making full use of technical and scientific knowledge, by disseminating knowledge of the principles of nutrition and by developing or reforming agrarian systems in such a way as to achieve the most efficient development and utilization of natural resources;

(b) Taking into account the problems of both food-importing and food-exporting countries, to ensure an equitable distribution of world food supplies in relation to need.

#### *Article 12*

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

2. The steps to be taken by the States Parties to the present Covenant to achieve the full realization of this right shall include those necessary for:

(a) The provision for the reduction of the stillbirth-rate and of infant mortality and for the healthy development of the child;

(b) The improvement of all aspects of environmental and industrial hygiene;

(c) The prevention, treatment and control of epidemic, endemic, occupational and other diseases;

(d) The creation of conditions which would assure to all medical service and medical attention in the event of sickness.

#### *Article 13*

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

2. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize that, with a view to achieving the full realization of this right:

(a) Primary education shall be compulsory and available free to all;

(b) Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational secondary education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education;

(c) Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education;

(d) Fundamental education shall be encouraged or intensified as far as possible for those persons who have not received or completed the whole period of their primary education;

(e) The development of a system of schools at all levels shall be actively pursued, an adequate fellowship system shall be established, and the material conditions of teaching staff shall be continuously improved.

3. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to choose for their children schools, other than those established by the public authorities, which conform to such minimum educational standards as may be laid down or approved by the State and to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

4. No part of this article shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principles set forth in paragraph I of this article and to the requirement that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State.

#### *Article 15*

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone:

(a) To take part in cultural life;

(b) To enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications;

(c) To benefit from the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

2. The steps to be taken by the States Parties to the present Covenant to achieve the full realization of this right shall include those necessary for the conservation, the development and the diffusion of science and culture.

3. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to respect the freedom indispensable for scientific research and creative activity.

**DENIED**

**FROM THE START**

Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

4. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the benefits to be derived from the encouragement and development of international contacts and co-operation in the scientific and cultural fields.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### 1. Books, Journal Articles, and Official Sources

Agrawal, Praveen. "Roundtable Discussion on Agriculture in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea." Briefing, Seoul, Republic of Korea, September 13, 2018.

Amnesty International. *The Crumbling State of Health Care in North Korea*. 2010.

Bermudez, Joseph S., Jr., Andy Dinville, and Mike Eley. *North Korea: Ch'oma-bong Restricted Area*. Washington, D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2016.

Brown, William B. "Special Report: North Korea's Shackled Economy, 2018," *National Committee on North Korea*, March 2018. [https://www.ncnk.org/sites/default/files/issue-briefs/NCNK\\_William\\_Brown\\_NK\\_Shackled\\_Economy\\_Report.pdf](https://www.ncnk.org/sites/default/files/issue-briefs/NCNK_William_Brown_NK_Shackled_Economy_Report.pdf).

*Bukan gaeyo* [Overview of North Korea]. Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification, 2009.

Cheong, Seong-Chang. "Stalinism And Kimilsungism: A Comparative Analysis Of Ideology And Power." *Asian Perspective* 24.1 (2000): 133–61.

Cho, Jeong-Ah et al. *The Everyday Lives of North Koreans*. Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification, 2009.

Choi, Jin-Wook. *Hyeondae Bukan Haengjeong-ron* [Modern North Korean Administration Theory]. Seoul: Myongin Munhwasa, 2008.

Chon, Hyun-Joon. *A Study of the Social Control System in North Korea: Focusing on the Ministry of People's Security*. Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification, 2004.

Collins, Robert. *Marked for Life: Songbun, North Korea's Social Classification System*. Washington, D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2012.

———. *Pyongyang Republic: North Korea's Capital of Human Rights Denial* (Washington, D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2016).

Collins, Robert and Amanda Mortwedt Oh. *From Cradle to Grave: Path of the North Korean Innocents*. Washington, D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2017.

Do, Kyung-Ok et al. *White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea 2017*. Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification, 2017.

Food and Agricultural Organization. "Guidelines for National FIVIMS: Background." 2000. Accessed November 20, 2018. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/X8346E/x8346e02.htm>.

Gause, Ken. *Coercion, Control, Surveillance, and Punishment: An Examination of the North Korean Police State*. Washington, D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2012.

Han, Dong-Ho et al. *White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea 2018*. Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification, 2018.

Hawk, David. *The Hidden Gulag: Exposing North Korea's Prison Camps*. Washington, D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2003.

Hawk, David with Amanda Mortwedt Oh. *The Parallel Gulag: North Korea's "An-jeon-bu" Prison Camps*. Washington, D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2017.

**FROM THE START**

## Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

Human Rights Watch. *Service for Life: State Repression and Indefinite Conscription in Eritrea*. April 16, 2009. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/04/16/service-life/state-repression-and-indefinite-conscription-eritrea>.

———. “*You Cry at Night but Don’t Know Why*” – *Sexual Violence against Women in North Korea*. November 2018. [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report\\_pdf/northkorea1118\\_web2.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/northkorea1118_web2.pdf).

Hyun, Seong-II. *Bukan-ui gukga jeollyak-gwa pawo ellipseu: Ganbu jeongchaeg-ul jungsimero* [North Korea’s National Strategy and Power Elite: Focus on Cadre Policy]. Seoul: Seonin Publishing, 2007.

———. “Bukan sahoe-e daehan nodongdang-ui tongjecheje” [KWP’s Control System Over North Korean Society], *Bukan josa yeongu* (Aug. 1998). North Korean Issues Research Center.

*Introduction to Demography*. Pyongyang: Science and Encyclopedia Publishing House, 1996.

Jang, Seok-Chol, ed. *Civil-Military Operations Handbook, Republic of Korea-United States Combined Forces Command*. Seoul: Republic of Korea Army Printing Office, 2012.

Jeon, Byong-Yu et al. *Reforming North Korea’s Markets and Enterprises and the Work-incentive System*. Seoul: Korea Labor Research Institute, 2004.

Jeon, Yeong-Seon. *Dasi gochyeo sseun Bukan-ui sahoe-wa munhwa* [Revised North Korean Society and Culture]. Seoul: Yeongnak Publishing, 2006.

“The Judiciary.” In *North Korea: A Country Study*, ed. Andrea Matles Savada. Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress, 1993. <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-9648.html>.

Kim, Byeong-Ro and Kim Seong-Cheol. *Bukan sahoe-ui bulpyeongdeung gujo-wa jeongchisahoejeok hamui* [The Structure of Inequality in North Korean Society and its Political-Social Implications]. Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification, 1998.

Kim, Byung-Wook. *Hyeondaejeon-gwa Bukan-ui jiyekbangwi* [Modern Warfare and North Korea’s Regional Defense]. Seoul: Seonin Publishing, 2011.

Kim, Byung-Wook and Kim Young-Hui. “A Study on the Establishment of the ‘Civilian Centered Regional Defense Systems’ in North Korea in 1990s.” *The Quarterly Journal of Defense Policy Studies* 24.2 (2008): 81–117.

———. “Party (Central) Military Commission Activities for Creation of ‘Civilian-centered Regional Defense System’.” *Hyeondae Bukan Yeongu* [Modern North Korea Research] 12.3 (2009): 48–92.

Kim, Chang-ha. *The Path to the True Life*. Pyongyang: Pyongyang Social Sciences Publishing, 1989.

Kim, Hyung-Chan and Dong-Kyu Kim. *Human Remodeling in North Korea: A Social History of Education*. New York: University Press of America, 2005.

Kim, Jong-il. “Sabeop geomchal saeob-eul gaeseon ganghwa halde daehayo” [On Improving Legal Prosecution Tasks]. In *Collected Works of Kim Jong-il*, Vol. 7. Pyongyang: KWP Publishing Company, 1996.

Kim, Sang-son and Ri Song-hi. *Resident Registration Project Reference Manual*, ed. Ri Pang-sun. Pyongyang: Social Safety Department Publishing House, 1993.

Kim, Soo-Am et al. *The Quality of Life of North Korean: Current Status and Understanding*. Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification, 2012.

Kim, Soo-Am et al. *White Paper on North Korean Human Rights 2012*. Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification, 2012.

Lankov, Andrei. *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

- Lee, Keum-Soon et al. *White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea 2009*. Seoul, Korea: Korea Institute for National Unification, 2009.
- Lee, Kwang-Bo et al. *Bukhan-hak* [North Korea Studies]. Seoul: Jinyoung Publishing, 2010.
- Lee, Kyo-Duk et al. *Study on the Power Elite of the Kim Jong Un Regime*. Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification, 2013.
- Lee, Kyu-Chang and Gwang-Jin Chung. "The North Korean Criminal Trial System: Characteristics and Actual Practice." *KINU Research Abstract 11-05* (January 26, 2012).
- Lee, Song-Ro. *Bukhan-ui Saboe Bulpyeongdeung Gujo: Giwon-gwa Simbwa gwajeong, Jeongchi-gyeongjeok Hamui-reul Jungsim-euro* [North Korea's Societal Inequality Structure: Focus on Origins, Intensification Process and the Political-Economic Meaning]. Seoul: Haenam Publishing, 2008.
- Lee, Woo-Young and Hwang Gyu-Jin. "A Study on Formation of 'The Review Meeting of The Party Life' in North Korea." *North Korean Studies Review* 12.1 (2008): 121–45.
- Malinowski, Jon C. "Cultural Geography." In Eugene J. Palka & Francis A. Galgano, eds., *North Korea: A Geographic Analysis*. West Point: United States Military Academy, 2002.
- Monaghan, Karen. "Strategic Implications of Global Health." Washington, D.C.: National Intelligence Council, 2008.
- Myers, B.R. *The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves and Why It Matters*. New York: Melville House, 2011.
- Nam, Bada et al. *Forced to Hate: North Korea's Education System* (Seoul: People for Successful Korean Reunification, 2016).
- Noland, Marcus, Sherman Robinson, and Tao Wang. "Famine in North Korea: Causes and Cures." *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 49.4 (2001): 741–67.
- Oh, Kongdan and Ralph Hassig. *North Korea: Through the Looking Glass*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2000.
- Political Dictionary*. Pyongyang: Social Science Publishing House, 1973.
- Ri, Myeong-Hun. "Nodongdang naebu sa-eob silsang-gwa jojik-jido-bu 65-gwa" [Reality of KWP internal affairs and Section 65 of the OGD]. *Bukhan* (August 2014): 85–91.
- Seok, Yeong-Hwan. *Bukan-ui ui-ryo siltae* [The State of Medical Care in North Korea]. Seoul: Ministry of Unification Institute for Unification Education, 2006.
- Thae, Yong-Ho. *Sam-cheung Seogisil-ui Ambo* [Password to the Third Floor Secretariat]. Seoul: Kiparang Publishing, 2018.
- U.S. Department of State. *2018 Trafficking in Persons Report*.
- Unification Education Institute. *2015 Bukan e-hae* [Understanding North Korea]. Seoul: Ministry of Unification, 2015.
- . *Bukan beob-eul boneun bangbeob* [How to Understand North Korean Law]. Seoul: Ministry of Unification, 2006.
- United Nations. "Human Rights Law." Accessed November 10, 2018. <https://www.un.org/en/sections/universal-declaration/human-rights-law/>.

**DENIED**

## FROM THE START

### Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. "International Decade for Action 'Water for Life' 2005-2015." [https://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/human\\_right\\_to\\_water.shtml/](https://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/human_right_to_water.shtml/).

UN Human Rights Council. *Report of the detailed findings of the commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*. UN Doc. A/HRC/25/CRP.1 (February 7, 2014).

United Nations International Children's Fund. "Democratic People's Republic of Korea: Water, Sanitation & Hygiene." Accessed November 20, 2018. <https://www.unicef.org/dprk/water-sanitation-hygiene>.

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *2018 DPR Korea Needs and Priorities* (March 2018). <https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-peoples-republic-korea/dpr-korea-needs-and-priorities-march-2018>.

UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, "Child Recruitment and Use." <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/six-grave-violations/child-soldiers/>.

"Universal Periodic Review of the DPRK (May 2019), HRNK Submission." Washington, D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2018. <https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/HRNK-UPR-FINAL.pdf>.

World Food Programme. "DPR Korea Country Brief." October 2018. <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000100473/download/>.

———. "Where we work: Democratic People's Republic of Korea." Accessed November 20, 2018. <http://www1.wfp.org/countries/democratic-peoples-republic-korea>.

World Health Organization. "Democratic People's Republic of Korea: Country profile 2007." February 8, 2007. Accessed November 20, 2018. <https://web.archive.org/web/20110706053415/http://www.dprk.searo.who.int/EN/Section11.htm>.

———. "WHO Country Cooperation Strategy 2004-2008: Democratic People's Republic of Korea" (June 2003). <http://apps.who.int/disasters/repo/10414.pdf>.

———. *The World Health Report 2000 – Health Systems: Improving Performance*.

Yonhap News Agency. *North Korea Handbook*. Seoul: M.E. Sharpe Publishing, 2002.

Zook, Darren C. "Reforming North Korea: Law, Politics, and The Market Economy." *Stanford Journal of International Law* 48.1 (2012): 131–83.

## 2. Press and Online Articles

“2018 Index of Economic Freedom,” *Heritage Foundation*. February 2, 2018. <https://www.heritage.org/international-economies/commentary/2018-index-economic-freedom>.

“Armed forces personnel (% of total labor force).” *World Bank Databank*. Accessed November 20, 2018. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.TOTL.TF.ZS>.

Central Intelligence Agency. “The World Factbook: Environment – Current Issues.” Accessed November 20, 2018. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2032.html>.

———. “The World Factbook: GDP – Per Capita (PPP).” Accessed November 20, 2018. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2004rank.html#kn>.

———. “The World Factbook: Ethnic Groups.” Accessed November 20, 2018. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kn.html>.

Cha, Victor and Lisa Collins. “The Markets: Private Economy and Capitalism in North Korea?” *Beyond Parallel*, August 26, 2018. <https://beyondparallel.csis.org/markets-private-economy-capitalism-north-korea/>.

Child Rights International Network. “Age is Arbitrary: Setting Minimum Ages.” [https://www.crin.org/sites/default/files/discussion\\_paper\\_-\\_minimum\\_ages.pdf](https://www.crin.org/sites/default/files/discussion_paper_-_minimum_ages.pdf).

Choi, Da-Mi. “현성일 박사가 밝힌 당 조직지도부의 절대적 위상” [Dr. Hyun Seong-Il Reveals the OGD’s Absolute Power]. *New Focus*, December 22, 2013. <http://www.newfocus.co.kr/client/news/viw.asp?cate=C01&mcate=M1001&nNewsNumb=20131211631>.

Choi, Shin. “北주민 '생활총화' 현장녹음 최초 공개” [Audio Recording of North Korean Residents’ Self-criticism Session Revealed for the First Time]. *Daily NK*, July 24, 2006. <http://www.dailynk.com/korean/read.php?num=26047&catald=nk00100>.

Choi, Song-Min. “Ban tightens on N.Korean songs of ‘resistance’.” *Daily NK*, July 24, 2015. <http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?catald=nk01500&num=13365>.

Daum Encyclopedia. “법무생활지도위원회.” Accessed January 1, 2018. <http://100.daum.net/encyclopedia/view/b09b1517n0>.

“Database Center for North Korean Human Rights – ‘At least 182 detention facilities in North Korea, forced prison labor used to produce exports’,” *VOA Korea*, Jul. 21, 2011. <https://www.voakorea.com/a/nk-gulag-125949338/1342241.html>.

Dinville, Andy. “Significant Food Shortages Likely in North Korea.” *38 North*, October 16, 2017. <http://www.38north.org/2017/10/adinville101617/>.

Dizzard, Wilson. “North Korea Far Outscores South Korea on Civil Defense Prep.” *The Cipher Brief*, August 31, 2017. <https://www.thecipherbrief.com/north-korea-far-outscores-south-korea-civil-defense-prep>.

“DPR Korea: UN says \$111 million needed to provide life-saving aid, tackle malnutrition.” *UN News*, April 12, 2018. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/04/1007141>.

“Egypt’s Orascom changes name, retains North Korea business.” *UPI*, August 8, 2018. [https://www.upi.com/Top\\_News/World-News/2018/08/08/Egypt-Orascom-changes-name-retains-North-Korea-business/3701533774370](https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2018/08/08/Egypt-Orascom-changes-name-retains-North-Korea-business/3701533774370).

“The Global Slavery Index 2018: Data – Korea, Democratic People’s Republic of.” *The Walk Free Foundation*. Accessed November 20, 2018. <https://www.globallslaveryindex.org/2018/data/country-data/north-korea/>.

**FROM THE START**

## Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

Hass, Benjamin. "One in five North Korean children malnourished, says UN chief during rare visit." *The Guardian*, July 12, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/12/north-korea-children-malnourished-un-visit>.

Hong, Albert. "북, '70일 전투' 성과 대대적 조사" [North Korea's Major Inspection of the 70-Day Battle Results]. *Radio Free Asia*, May 16, 2016. [https://www.rfa.org/korean/in\\_focus/food\\_international\\_org/seventyday-05162016145355.html](https://www.rfa.org/korean/in_focus/food_international_org/seventyday-05162016145355.html).

Jang, Jin-Sung. "Why Choe Ryong-hae is not North Korea's No. 2." *New Focus International*, November 12, 2014. <https://web.archive.org/web/20160608220805/http://newfocusintl.com/choi-ryong-hae-2/>.

———. "주연은 김정은, 연출은 당 조직지도부" [Kim Jong-un is the Lead Actor, and the KWP OGD is in Charge of Production]. *New Daily*, May 21, 2015. <http://www.newdaily.co.kr/site/data/html/2015/05/19/20150519000006.html>.

Jang, Seul-Gi. "North Korean residents subject to new inspections in nationwide crackdown." *Daily NK*, March 30, 2018. <http://english.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk01500&num=15095>.

"Japan rattled by 83 North Korean 'ghost ship' arrivals." *Nikkei Asian Review*, December 14, 2017. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/Policy-Politics/Japan-rattled-by-83-North-Korean-ghost-ship-arrivals>.

Kahn, Mehreen. "Six charts that show how North Korea became the most miserable place on earth." *The Telegraph*, December 1, 2014. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/11260650/Six-charts-that-show-how-North-Korea-became-the-most-miserable-place-on-earth.html>.

Kang, Mi-Jin. "NK Adds Kim Jong Il to 'Ten Principles'." *DailyNK*, August 9, 2013. <http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk01500&num=10828>.

———. "New MPS Guidelines Portend Hard Times." *Daily NK*, January 7, 2014. <http://english.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk01500&num=11351>.

———. "Authorities encourage residents to report on one another." *Daily NK*, May 8, 2017. <http://english.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk01500&num=14506>.

———. "Bribery culture expands in North Korea throughout 2017." *Daily NK*, December 30, 2017. <http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk01500&num=14913>.

———. "Markets provide relief for ordinary people hurting from sanctions." *Daily NK*, January 2, 2018. <http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk01500&num=14918>.

———. "Some neighborhood watch leaders picked by more democratic process." *Daily NK*, March 26, 2018. <http://english.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk01500&num=15084>.

Kim, Chung-Yeol. "Food insecurity riles North Korea's poorest provinces." *Daily NK*, October 18, 2017. <http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk01500&num=14767>.

"Kim Jong-un's Concluding Speech at the March 2013 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea." *Rodong Sinmun*, April 2, 2013.

Kim, Young-Cheol. "North Korea's Control over its People and the People's Safety Agency: Testimony of a former officer of the People's Safety Agency." *Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights*, June 29, 2012.

[https://eng.nkhumanrights.or.kr:444/board/bbs\\_view.php?no=162&board\\_table=bbs\\_evidence&page=1&word=&searchItem=&cate\\_id=](https://eng.nkhumanrights.or.kr:444/board/bbs_view.php?no=162&board_table=bbs_evidence&page=1&word=&searchItem=&cate_id=)

Lartigue, Casey, Jr. "Why North Korean defectors learn English (3)." *Korea Times*, May 19, 2018. [https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2018/05/113\\_249229.html](https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2018/05/113_249229.html).

Lee, Claire. "Opinions on human rights 'significantly different' among South Koreans and NK defectors: study." *Korea Herald*, September 25, 2018. <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20180925000119>.

Lee, Hye-Kyung. "Hygiene in Pyongyang." *Korea JoongAng Daily*, December 14, 2017. <http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3042071>.

Lee, Jean H. "In North Korea, learning to hate US starts early." *Associated Press*, June 23, 2012. <https://www.yahoo.com/news/north-korea-learning-hate-us-starts-early-120658377.html>.

Lee, Seok-Woo and Choi In-Joon. "North Korea's *kyo-bwa-so*: A barren land where prisoners are given shovels and left to 'fend for themselves'." *Chosun Ilbo*, April 27, 2011. [http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2011/04/27/2011042700232.html](http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2011/04/27/2011042700232.html).

Lee, Wooyoung. "Defector: 'Young North Koreans indifferent to politics'." *UPI*, November 18, 2018. [https://www.upi.com/Top\\_News/World-News/2018/11/18/Defector-Young-North-Koreans-indifferent-to-politics/7191542594173/](https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2018/11/18/Defector-Young-North-Koreans-indifferent-to-politics/7191542594173/).

Madden, Michael. "KJU Full Report to 7<sup>th</sup> Party Congress." *NK Leadership Watch*, June 21, 2016. <https://nkleadershipwatch.wordpress.com/2016/06/21/kju-full-report-to-7th-party-congress/>.

———. "KWP Propaganda and Agitation Department." *NK Leadership Watch*, November 2009. <http://nkleadershipwatch.files.wordpress.com/2009/11/kwppropagandaandagitationdepartment.pdf>.

———. "Workers' Organizations." *NK Leadership Watch*, January 16, 2018. <http://www.nkleadershipwatch.org/workers-organizations/>.

"N. Korea's media urge people to be ready for belt-tightening," *Yonhap News*, July 23, 2018. <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2018/07/23/0401000000AEN20180723006800315.html>.

Maxwell, David S. "Irregular Warfare on the Korean Peninsula Thoughts on Irregular Threats for north Korea Post-Conflict and Post-Collapse: Understanding Them to Counter Them." *Small Wars Journal*, November 2010. <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/irregular-warfare-on-the-korean-peninsula>.

"N. Korea's economy shrinks 3.5 pct in 2017: BOK." *Yonhap News*, July 20, 2018. <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20180720004700320>.

"N. Korea forecast to suffer severe economic trouble from March: state-run institute." *Yonhap News*, December 18, 2017. <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2017/12/18/0401000000AEN20171218006751315.html>.

Nebehay, Stephanie. "Millions at risk due to North Korea food crisis-UNICEF," *Reuters*, November 1, 2011. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-missiles-un-children/60000-north-korean-children-may-starve-sanctions-slow-aid-unicef-idUSKBN1FJ1FL>.

Norman, Greg. "Hungry North Korean soldiers are being given leave to find food, report says." *Fox News*, January 2, 2018. <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2018/01/02/hungry-north-korean-soldiers-are-being-given-leave-to-find-food-report-says.html>.

———. "North Korean officials ransacking farmers' homes to find food for Kim's hungry army, report says." *Fox News*, January 22, 2018. <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2018/01/22/north-korean-officials-ransacking-farmers-homes-to-find-food-for-kims-hungry-army-report-says.html>.

"North Korea 'bought at least \$640 million in luxury goods from China in 2017', in defiance of UN Sanctions." *Reuters*, October 22, 2018. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/10/22/north-korea-bought-least-640-million-luxury-goods-china-2017/>.

"North Korea: Report on the Famine in the Hwanghae Provinces and the Food Situation." *Asia Press International*, 2012. [http://www.asiapress.org/rimjin-gang/pdf/2012-2013\\_Hwanghae\\_Report\\_ASIAPRESS\\_North\\_Korea\\_Reporting\\_Team\\_V004.pdf](http://www.asiapress.org/rimjin-gang/pdf/2012-2013_Hwanghae_Report_ASIAPRESS_North_Korea_Reporting_Team_V004.pdf).

**FROM THE START**

## Human Rights at the Local Level in North Korea

“North Korean leader says his country's health sector has 'nothing to be proud of'.” *CNBC*, August 20, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/08/21/kim-jong-un-reportedly-criticizes-north-koreas-health-sector.html>.

Oh, Grace. “N. Korea again designated as a food-deficit country,” *Yonhap News*, September 22, 2018. <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2018/09/22/0401000000AEN20180922000800320.html>.

Pak, In-Ho. “北 당대표, 비서국 임명 간부들로 채워지나?” [Are Cadre Appointed by the Secretariat Dominating North Korea's Party Representative Posts?]. *Daily NK*, August 27, 2010. <http://www.dailynk.com/korean/read.php?cataId=nk05000&num=86355>.

Park, Sun-Hwa. “A Lifetime of Mass Mobilization in North Korea,” *New Focus International*, August 16, 2015. <https://web.archive.org/web/20160616204537/http://newfocusintl.com/a-lifetime-of-mass-mobilization-in-north-korea/>.

Pickerell, Ryan. “North Korean Soldiers Are Stealing Food To Prepare For 'Imminent War'.” *Daily Caller*, August 31, 2017. <http://dailycaller.com/2017/08/31/north-korean-soldiers-are-stealing-food-to-prepare-for-imminent-war/>

“Ten Great Principles of the Establishment of the Unitary Ideology System.” *Citizens Alliance for North Korean Human Rights*, June 29, 2012. [https://eng.nkhumanrights.or.kr:444/board/bbs\\_view.php?no=3&board\\_table=bbs\\_literature&page=1](https://eng.nkhumanrights.or.kr:444/board/bbs_view.php?no=3&board_table=bbs_literature&page=1).

Peters, Tim. “Reaching Underground Believers & Guiding Others in Flight: Silent Partners Assist North Koreans under Caesar's Sword.” *HRNK Insider*, September 24, 2018. <https://www.hrnkinsider.org/2018/09/reaching-underground-believers-guiding.html>.

Roh, Jeong-Min. “북 공식 시장 꾸준히 증가, 480개 넘어” [Official markets in North Korea steadily increasing in number, now exceeding 480]. *Radio Free Asia*, February 3, 2018. [https://www.rfa.org/korean/in\\_focus/ne-jn-02022018151709.html](https://www.rfa.org/korean/in_focus/ne-jn-02022018151709.html).

*Silberstein, Benjamin Katzeff*. “North Korea's economic growth - from Pyongyang's perspective.” *North Korea Economy Watch*, October 15, 2018. <https://www.nkeconwatch.com/2018/10/15/north-koreas-economic-growth-from-pyongyangs-perspective/>.

Sustainable Development Solutions Network. “Global Profile of Extreme Poverty,” October 15, 2012. <http://unsdsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/121015-Profile-of-Extreme-Poverty.pdf>.

“Ten Great Principles of the Establishment of the Unitary Ideology System.” *Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights*, June 29, 2012. [https://eng.nkhumanrights.or.kr:444/board/bbs\\_view.php?no=3&board\\_table=bbs\\_literature&page=1](https://eng.nkhumanrights.or.kr:444/board/bbs_view.php?no=3&board_table=bbs_literature&page=1).

Tepljakov, Victor. “20년 동안 산림 면적의 30%가 사라진 북한” [North Korea has lost 30% of its forests in two decades]. *Chosun Ilbo*, September 27, 2011. [http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2011/09/27/2011092702461.html](http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2011/09/27/2011092702461.html).

Watson, Ivan, Yoko Wakatsuki, and Junko Ogura. “Ghost ships: Bodies and boats unsettle Japanese community.” *CNN*, December 23, 2017. <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/12/22/asia/japan-north-korea-ghost-ships-intl/index.html>.

Wikisource. “Constitution of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (2016).” December 23, 2017. Accessed November 10, 2018. [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Constitution\\_of\\_the\\_Democratic\\_People%27s\\_Republic\\_of\\_Korea\\_\(2016\)](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Constitution_of_the_Democratic_People%27s_Republic_of_Korea_(2016)).

World Health Organization, “Global Health Expenditure Database.” Accessed November 8, 2018. <http://apps.who.int/nha/database/ViewData/Indicators/en>.

Yi, Whan-Woo. “N. Koreans forced into deadly fishing,” *Korea Times*, December 5, 2017. [http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2017/12/103\\_240452.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2017/12/103_240452.html).

Yoon, Mina. “How do you get a job in North Korea?” *NK News*, November 29, 2013. <http://www.nknews.org/2013/11/how-do-you-get-a-job-in-north-korea/>.



**Committee for Human Rights in North Korea**

1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 435

Washington, DC 20036

[www.hrnk.org](http://www.hrnk.org)