



January 8, 2012

Kim Jong-un

Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army
Pyongyang
Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Dear Supreme Commander Kim:

We, the undersigned independent international non-governmental organizations, write to recognize the passing of your father and acknowledge your leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), and to raise a number of concerns and ideas which we believe would enhance your leadership, improve the standing of your country and benefit your people.

It is clear that the coming year will be one of great challenges for you and the people of North Korea. It can also be a time of great opportunity, both for your legacy and for the well-being of all the people of North Korea, provided that you seize this moment in history to ensure that your government respects the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the North Korean people.

As organizations that have worked on North Korea issues for many years, we are seriously concerned about what is happening to the people of your country. More than 200,000 men, women and children are still being held in a system of prisons and labor camps. Most are incarcerated for political reasons and are not guilty of any internationally recognized crimes. Many are held simply because they happen to be family members or associates of people arrested previously. Inmates must endure conditions that resemble the worst forms of slavery; many die for lack of food and medical care.

The human rights of the vast majority of the 24.5 million North Korean people are routinely violated, despite the fact that the DPRK government has ratified and is therefore bound to respect the rights contained in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.



North Korean citizens face a constant fear and insecurity, knowing that any deviation from government-scripted norms of behavior could result in the arbitrary loss of their livelihoods, their freedom, their basic human rights, and even their very lives. And they have no recourse to an independent judiciary.

A vast array of government bureaus, offices and security agencies commit arbitrary arrest, false imprisonment, disappearances, forced labor, torture and even executions. Basic rights to freedom of expression, association, public assembly, movement, and religion do not exist. Access to information other than that produced by the government is prohibited.

Millions of North Koreans suffer daily from hunger, malnutrition and inadequate health care. The DPRK government has the capacity and the resources to provide a decent level of care but apparently, either through neglect or a deliberate government policy, it fails to do so.

The DPRK government now stands accused of crimes against humanity and grave violations of international law, which we believe should prompt establishment of an independent and impartial UN Commission of Inquiry.

Supreme Commander Kim, we appeal to you to change course at this critical juncture of North Korean history, just a few months before the April 15, 2012, celebration of the 100th year of the birth of your grandfather, Kim Il-Sung. We urge you to right these wrongs and ensure that the DPRK government that you lead immediately ends its systematic and pervasive violation of human rights.

We strongly urge you to invite the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the DPRK to visit the country, and to provide access for him and for the International Committee of the Red Cross and other international monitors to all areas of detention, including the *kwon-li-so* camps. Another important start for reforms should be the immediate release on humanitarian grounds of all family members imprisoned because of presumed 'guilt by association or relation' in the *kwon-li-so*. By doing so, you would be taking a significant first step towards addressing the suffering of your people. Equally important, you would improve and strengthen your reputation at the UN and in the international community.



We sincerely hope that you will seize this opportunity to build a different legacy for the DPRK that leads to full realization of the North Korean people's human rights, their health and wellbeing, and their individual dignity. Only then will North Korea achieve the respect and security from the world community that it seeks.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

- Advocates International Global Council
- Amnesty International
- Asia Justice and Rights
- Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances
- Asian Human Rights & Humanity Association of Japan
- Burma Partnership (Thailand)
- Christian Lawyers Association for Paraguay
- Christian Solidarity Worldwide
- Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (USA)
- Conectas (Brazil)
- Council for Human Rights in North Korea (Canada)
- Freedom House (USA)
- Free NK Gulag (ROK)
- Free North Korea Radio (ROK)
- Han Voice (Canada)
- HH Katacombs (ROK)
- Human Rights Watch
- Human Rights Without Frontiers (Belgium)
- Inter-American Federation of Christian Lawyers
- International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
- COMJAN (Investigation Commission on Missing Japanese Probably Related to North Korea)(Japan)
- Japanese Lawyers Association for Abduction and Other Human Rights Issues in North Korea
- Jubilee Campaign (USA)
- Justice for North Korea (ROK)
- Kontras (Indonesia)
- Liberty in North Korea - LiNK (USA)



- Life Funds for North Korean Refugees (Japan)
- Network for North Korean Democracy and Human Rights (ROK)
- NK Intellectual Solidarity (ROK)
- NO FENCE <Association for the abolition of concentration camps in North Korea> (Japan)
- North Korea Freedom Coalition
- Odhikar (Bangladesh)
- Open North Korea (ROK)
- People In Need (Czech Republic)
- PSALT NK (Prayer Service Action Love Truth for North Korea)
- The Simon Wiesenthal Center (USA)
- The Society to Help Returnees to North Korea (Japan)
- Students Alliance for Human Rights in North Korea (ROK)
- Young Defectors' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights (ROK)