

The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission

Unparalleled and Unspeakable:
North Korea's Crimes Against Humanity

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Foreword by Fiona Bruce MP

Humanity has rightly determined never to forget the suffering of those in the Holocaust of the Nazi concentration camps. Those concentration camps endured for some six years; those in North Korea have now done so for some sixty years. In them, today, countless individuals are suffering unimaginable torture; frequent summary executions take place; people are gassed, burnt and worked to death; even children are imprisoned for life and told they are worse than animals -and treated as such. Few ever leave.

Outside those camps, people across North Korea suffer appallingly. Severe malnutrition is commonplace, and, in a country where free speech is non-existent, many live in constant fear of a "knock at the door", knowing that even the most minor offence caused to the authorities may well result in not only their incarceration, but also that of up to three generations of their family.

Those of us who live in the developed world who hear of this are incredulous that this can be happening in the 21st Century – yet it is – and by recent accounts, it is getting worse. Not for nothing has the human rights situation in North Korea been referred to as *sui generis* – in a category of its own. Yet for so many decades too little has been said, heard or done to alleviate the terrible suffering of our fellow human beings in North Korea or to challenge the brutal and dehumanising regime which causes it. This must change.

When North Korea does receive media or political attention, it is usually in relation to the nuclear question. Yet security and human rights are inter-linked, the regime's expenditure on its nuclear programme has had a dire effect on human rights, resulting in the squandering of vast resources, depriving its population of access to health care, food and shelter, and perpetuating its pariah status, to the detriment of its population. The international discourse around North Korea needs to place human rights alongside security issues at every opportunity.

For this reason the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission has conducted this Inquiry, and for this reason too the Commission wholeheartedly welcomes the recent in depth report of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Encouragingly, within the British Parliament, an increasing number of voices are being raised, challenging both the UK Government and the International Community more widely to take action on behalf of the people of North Korea – the most persecuted on earth. May this Inquiry contribution serve to raise those voices even more loudly, and may we see that change occur.

On behalf of my fellow Commissioners may I express our heartfelt thanks to all those who have contributed to this Inquiry, particularly to those for whom that has meant speaking of painful experiences. Our sincere thanks are also due to Benedict Rogers, not only for compiling this report of our inquiry, but also for all that he has done over so many years to be a clarion voice for the people of North Korea.

As William Wilberforce said, "We can no longer plead ignorance – we cannot turn aside".

Introduction

On 17 February 2014, the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) published its report, following an investigation mandated by the UN Human Rights Council in March 2013. The Commission of Inquiry concluded that a wide array of crimes against humanity, arising from "policies established at the highest level of State," have been committed and are continuing in the DPRK, entailing "extermination, murder, enslavement, torture, imprisonment, rape, forced abortions and other sexual violence, persecution on political, religious, racial and gender grounds, the forcible transfer of populations, the enforced disappearance of persons and the inhumane act of knowingly causing prolonged starvation".¹ The 400-page report, based on extensive first-hand testimony from victims and witnesses, documents what it describes as "unspeakable atrocities" and concludes that "the gravity, scale and nature of these violations reveal a State that does not have any parallel in the contemporary world".

North Korea is arguably the world's most closed nation, with the worst human rights record. The former UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the DPRK has described it as *sui generis* – in its own category. The unanimous decision by the UN Human Rights Council in March 2013 to establish a Commission of Inquiry shone a long overdue spotlight on the horrific situation in the DPRK, bringing North Korea's human rights crisis much further up the international agenda. The decision by the Human Rights Council a year later, on 28 March 2014, to adopt a resolution endorsing the Commission of Inquiry's report,² including its call for a referral to the UN Security Council to consider mechanisms to address accountability, with 30 members voting in favour, six against and 11 abstaining, was a significant step forward.

In October 2011, the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission met Shin Dong-hyuk, who was born in a North Korean prison camp and witnessed his mother and brother executed in front of him. His story is told in Blaine Harden's book *Escape from Camp 14*.³ Two years later, the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission decided to undertake its own inquiry into North Korea's human rights record, resulting in this report.

The inquiry, chaired by Fiona Bruce MP, involved three hearings in which oral evidence was presented by experts including Lord Alton of Liverpool, Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group on North Korea; Rajiv Narayan, then North Korea researcher at Amnesty International; James Burt, European Alliance for Human Rights in North Korea and author of *An Unmet Need: A Proposal for the BBC to Broadcast A World Service in the Korean Language*;⁴ and four North Korean defectors

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, A/HRC/25/CRP.1, 7 February 2014

<http://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/oidprk/pages/commissioninquiryonhrindprk.aspx>

² UN Human Rights Council, resolution on the Situation of human rights in the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea, 26 March 2014 - http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/HRC/25/L.17

³ Blaine Harden, *Escape from Camp 14*, 2012 - http://www.amazon.co.uk/Escape-Camp-14-remarkable-odyssey/dp/0330519549/ref=tmm_pap_title_0?ie=UTF8&qid=1396176960&sr=1-1

⁴ European Alliance for Human Rights in North Korea, *An Unmet Need: A Proposal for the BBC to Broadcast A World Service in the Korean Language*, 2013 – available in the appendices and at <http://www.eahrnk.org/reports/>

including former North Korean army captain Kim Joo-il, who is now Secretary-General of the North Korean Residents Society in the UK, Director of the Democratisation Broadcasting System and founder of Free NK, a newspaper covering North Korean issues.

In addition, written submissions were received from Liberty in North Korea (LiNK); Free the NK Gulag and North Korea Strategy Center; Korean War POW Affairs-USA; Human Rights in Asia; the European Alliance for Human Rights in North Korea; Christian Solidarity Worldwide; and an independent expert on the situation for North Korean refugees in China, who is not named for security reasons. Further information is drawn from reports from Human Rights Watch, Christian Solidarity Worldwide and Open Doors.

It is not the intention of this report to repeat in detail evidence of human rights violations which is already well-documented and available in other reports, and which is referenced here. Instead, this brief report aims to serve as a policy document for the Conservative Party, summarising the scale of the challenge and then focusing on possible ways forward for the United Kingdom in helping to lead the international community's effort to end the climate of impunity in North Korea, enhance mechanisms for accountability and justice, break the regime's information blockade, and bring an end to more than half a century of horrific suffering endured by the North Korean people. The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission believes that if the Conservative-led Coalition Government in the United Kingdom is to be true to its pledge to place human rights "at the very heart of foreign policy",⁵ nowhere is such an approach more needed or more justified than North Korea.

⁵ Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Human Rights and Democracy Report 2012, Foreword by the Rt Hon William Hague MP, Foreign Secretary - <http://www.hrdreport.fco.gov.uk/introduction-2/>

Recommendations

The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission, as a body established in 2005 by the Shadow Foreign Secretary when the party was in Opposition and now a party body reporting to the party leadership, including the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the Chairman of the Party, calls on Her Majesty's Government to take a leading role in the international community in addressing the human rights crisis in North Korea, and in particular recommends the following actions:

1. To bring the findings and recommendations of the UN Commission of Inquiry to the UN Security Council, pursuant to the recommendations of the UN Human Rights Council resolution;
2. To call on the UN Security Council to refer a case regarding the DPRK to the International Criminal Court or some other appropriate mechanism for justice and accountability;
3. To work to support the implementation of all the other recommendations of the UN Commission of Inquiry;
4. To ensure that in every discussion on North Korea at the UN, at every level, human rights concerns are placed on the agenda alongside security concerns;
5. To urge the BBC World Service to establish a radio broadcast to the Korean Peninsula, in both Korean and English languages;
6. To continue to pursue critical engagement with the DPRK on questions of human rights at every level;
7. To continue to invest in academic and cultural exchanges with the DPRK;
8. To increase investment in developing skills and education for North Korean refugees in the United Kingdom, to develop tomorrow's leaders, and support democracy-building initiatives;
9. To increase engagement with North Korean refugees, drawing on their own knowledge and experience and current communications as a key source of information in helping to understand the DPRK;
10. To encourage all avenues of contact between the people of DPRK and the Republic of South Korea. An example of this is the Kaesong industrial zone in the DPRK close to the border, where the people of the two countries work together. The DPRK people who participate have the opportunity to earn better wages but above all they interact with their compatriots from the South and absorb ideas;
11. To increase pressure on China to end its policies of forcible repatriation and abide by international norms regarding principles of *non-refoulement*;
12. To urge the government of China to make use of the emergency refugee camp facilities that it is currently reportedly preparing to build, one of many precautionary civil and military measures for a DPRK collapse, for the immediate and constructive purpose of interviewing border-crossers and correctly applying international law to determine refugee status in close cooperation with the UNHCR;⁶
13. To provide humanitarian assistance to the people of the DPRK, while insisting on satisfactory levels of independent monitoring.

⁶ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/10808719/China-plans-for-North-Korean-regime-collapse-leaked.html>

Human Rights Violations

“Nowhere on earth is the human rights situation quite as systematically dire as it is in North Korea,” begins the submission by the European Alliance for Human Rights in North Korea (EAHRNK).⁷ “The protracted humanitarian and human rights crisis in North Korea represents one of the biggest challenges facing humanity today,” Liberty in North Korea (LiNK)’s submission contends.⁸ “Systematic repression operates throughout North Korea at all levels of society. A strict culture of surveillance and propaganda curtails any freedom of expression, in particular openly-expressed criticism of the regime. This level of control is enforced by the harsh punishments meted out to those considered ‘politically hostile’ and their families, in a policy whereby three generations of an offender’s family are also punished for the offender’s acts ... There is a *prima facie* case for the commission of crimes against humanity, namely murder, extermination, enslavement/forced labour, forcible transfer of population, arbitrary imprisonment, torture, persecution, enforced disappearance of persons, other inhumane acts and, perhaps, rape and sexual violence,” concludes Christian Solidarity Worldwide’s report *North Korea: A Case to Answer, A Call to Act*, published in 2007.⁹ Seven years on, all Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) who made oral or written submissions to the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission, and others whose reports the Commission has examined and, most significantly, the United Nations Commission of Inquiry, come to the same conclusions.

LiNK summarises the catalogue of human rights violations in the following way:

- No freedom of movement
- No freedom of speech
- No freedom of information
- Forced leadership adulation
- No religious freedom
- Chronic food shortages
- Dismal public health
- *Songbun* political apartheid system
- Political prison camps
- Collective punishment
- Public executions
- Refugee crisis
- Refugee exploitation
- Sex trafficking
- Stateless children

⁷ See Appendices - European Alliance for Human Rights in North Korea , Submission to the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission

⁸ See Appendices – Liberty in North Korea, Submission to the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission

⁹ Christian Solidarity Worldwide, *North Korea: A Case to Answer, A Call to Act*, 2007 -

<http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/article.asp?t=report&id=35>

A network of at least five political prison camps or *kwan-li-so*¹⁰ hold an estimated 80,000-120,000 people, according to LiNK. Some estimates are as high as 200,000. The camps have been compared to the Nazi concentration camps and the Soviet gulags, and those imprisoned are detained for 'thought' crimes, often inadvertent misdemeanours. Often those jailed do not know the reason for their imprisonment. Satellite images, hundreds of testimonies from survivors and testimonies from former prison guards provide a clear picture of the situation. In many cases political "crimes" are punished up to three generations in one family.¹¹

The regime's *songbun* class system, dividing society into three political classes – "core", "wavering" and "hostile" – based on perceived loyalty to the regime, and more than 50 subcategories, impacts almost every aspect North Koreans' daily lives, from access to employment and education opportunities, health care and food rations, resulting in extreme discrimination and persecution for citizens outside the core elite.¹²

Forced abortion and infanticide is particularly appalling. North Korean refugees who escape to China, are married to Chinese men and have children, and are then forcibly repatriated, either pregnant or carrying an infant, face horrific torture and are forced to have an abortion or see their child killed in front of them. According to the UN Commission of Inquiry report, forced abortion and infanticide is "widespread", as North Korean authorities believe that mixed-race children (of Korean and Chinese parenthood) contaminate "the pureness of the Korean race. One witness told the inquiry: "guards put the baby in a bucket and took it away saying 'the baby is not human' and '[it] does not deserve to live because it is impure'. The Commission of Inquiry report stated: "In most cases, guards at the detention facilities in which repatriated persons are held force either the mother or a third person to kill the baby by drowning it in water or suffocating it by holding a cloth or other item against its face or putting the baby face down so that it cannot breathe".¹³

Violations of freedom of religion, particularly persecution of Christians, are also extremely severe and are documented in depth by the Commission of Inquiry report. This report will not detail these here, but we urge a careful study of the evidence provided in the UN Commission of Inquiry report and reports from organisations such as Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Open Doors, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.

Defector testimonies heard by the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission in a hearing in the House of Commons on 18 December, 2013 confirm many of these reported violations.

Ji-hyun Park, for example, escaped from North Korea for the first time in 1998 at the age of 28 after her brother, who was serving in the North Korean army, was severely beaten by an army officer in front of her family. Her father was so horrified by the brutality of his son's beating that he fainted. He then encouraged Ji-hyun and her brother to escape because he knew that his son might be sent

¹⁰ David Hawk, *The Hidden Gulag*, 2012, The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea - http://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/HRNK_HiddenGulag2_Web_5-18.pdf

¹¹ Human Rights Watch, "North Korea: Accounts from Camp Survivors," <http://mm.hrw.org/content/north-korea-ales-camp-survivors>

¹² Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, *Marked for Life: Songbun – North Korea's Social Classification System*, 2012 - http://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/HRNK_Songbun_Web.pdf

¹³ 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, A/HRC/25/CRP.1, 7 February 2014 <http://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/coidrprk/pages/commissioninquiryonhrindrpk.aspx>

to one of the notorious political prison camps or *kwan-li-so*. They fled to China, together with a large group of escapees, but Ji-hyun ended up being sold to a Chinese man by traffickers. The man told her: "I have bought you, and you must do what I say". There were five North Korean women in the village and their movements were very closely monitored by other villagers. They were warned that if they attempted to run away, they would be raped, killed or deported back to North Korea. They were not given proper shoes, to prevent them attempting to run away, and they were forced to work from 4.30am until sunset. The house in which she and the Chinese man lived was dilapidated, with extremely poor sanitation and only half a roof. The women were bought by one family but shared between two or three brothers. If they became pregnant, they were unable to register the baby, rendering the newborn child stateless and illegal in Chinese law.

In 2004, Ji-hyun was arrested by the authorities in China, imprisoned and forcibly repatriated to North Korea. Upon arrival in North Korea, she was stripped completely naked and searched twice a day for several days. She was ordered to sit down and stand up repeatedly, in case she was attempting to hide something, and even when she went to the toilet she was searched before and after. Pregnant women who were forcibly repatriated to North Korea were forced to undergo an abortion, or to watch their baby killed in front of them. When she herself was three months' pregnant, she was forced to do particularly strenuous labour and as a result she had a miscarriage. Women were forced to plough the fields barefoot, and Ji-hyun's legs became infected as a result. She went to hospital, where it was suggested that she have her leg amputated but she refused. Instead, she went to a home for homeless orphans, where she was given some basic treatment.

In October 2004, Ji-hyun escaped again, with her son. "There are so many women in North Korea going through the same experience," she told the Commission. "There are so many children without names". She arrived in the United Kingdom in 2008.

Song-Ju Kim escaped from North Korea in 2005 and arrived in the United Kingdom in 2008. He was captured three times by the Chinese police and repatriated to North Korea three times. His father died from starvation during the famine in North Korea in the mid-1990s, and his mother escaped to China and was arrested and repatriated. She was in such poor health that she was hospitalised, but in hospital she was tied to the bed to prevent her escaping. After one week she died, and her body was never returned to the family for burial. Song-Ju believes her body may have been used for experiments. He told the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission that he had already given his detailed testimony to the UN Commission of Inquiry, and was reluctant to give it again. The trauma of retelling his story is clearly still very vivid. "When I sleep, I dream that I am still in North Korea. When I hear a police siren in London, I hide and feel scared and panicky," he said.

Mr X (unnamed for security reasons) escaped from North Korea at the age of 16 in May 2004. His family had escaped when he was a child, but he remained in North Korea in the hope of joining the Army. However, when he tried to join the Army, he was refused because there was a "black stamp" next to his name due to his family's history. He then escaped, by swimming across the Yalu River to China, where he went to a market. "It was the first time I saw girls wearing short skirts," he said. He then went to a house run by an NGO, and when he arrived he saw a Bible. "In North Korea, I was brought up to believe that the Bible was the most evil book in the world. I was very scared when I saw it, and so I ran away," he recalled. He went to the countryside and met a broker, who arranged for him to go to Mongolia with 16 other North Korean refugees. They were given a metal cutter, and

driven by van to the border at night. They were told which direction to go in. "After about 2000m, we crossed a metal fence into what we thought was Mongolia, but we were captured. The fence did not mark the border, it was in fact the fence around someone's farm land, and a Chinese man reported us," he explained. "The Chinese army chased the group, shooting at us. I was running together with another refugee, holding hands, and my companion was shot in the head. He died. I was shot in the foot, I was traumatised, and I could not run anymore". The group was arrested by the Chinese authorities, imprisoned, and repatriated to North Korea. Upon return to North Korea, he was granted three days' bail to visit his grandmother, and realised this was his last chance to escape again. "If I didn't escape, I would be treated worse than a dog, or executed," he told the Commission. He found another broker and crossed the border into China again. In China, he made his way to Shanghai where he found the American School, together with nine other North Koreans, and sought protection there. The school, however, called the Chinese police and the North Korean refugees were imprisoned. In despair, Mr X attempted suicide. However, in the prison he met a South Korean, and eventually, due to international intervention from the United Nations, the South Korean embassy, and others he and the other North Koreans were released and sent to South Korea.

In response to a question regarding freedom of religion, Ji-hyun Park told the Commission: "I never encountered anyone in North Korea who followed a religion. North Koreans are forced to believe in the Supreme Leader."

These testimonies are merely brief illustrations of the horrific human rights violations in North Korea. For further information, the reports of Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Open Doors, the Database Centre for North Korean Human Rights, the UN Commission of Inquiry and others, as well as books such as *Escape from Camp 14* by Blaine Harden and *Nothing to Envy* by Barbara Demick should be consulted.

Refugee Crisis

North Korean Refugees in China

During the famine in North Korea in the 1990s, thousands of North Koreans fled to China in search of food, escaping deaths from mass starvation. According to the South Korean NGO Good Friends, the number of North Korean escapees in China reached around 300,000 between 1998 and 1999.¹⁴

Today, the number of North Koreans in China has significantly reduced, for several reasons. Firstly, at least 26,000 have reached South Korea; several thousand have been granted asylum in the United Kingdom, other European countries, the United States, Canada and elsewhere; and, most significantly, China's policy of arresting and forcibly repatriating North Koreans, combined with the North Korean and Chinese authorities' tightening of the border, has made it even more difficult and dangerous to escape the DPRK.

Estimates of North Korean refugees in China vary. In its written submission to the Commission, Liberty in North Korea (LiNK) estimates 30,000 North Korean refugees in China, "living in a precarious and sometimes desperate situation".¹⁵ The Database Center for North Korean Human Rights puts the figure lower, at between 10,000 and 15,000.¹⁶ Whatever the precise statistics, two facts are clear: that people still attempt to flee North Korea, which is a sign of the desperation they face, and that in China, they live in extremely vulnerable situations.

"Since the famine, North Koreans who have been able to have been fleeing the country in their thousands, even risking their lives to do so," LiNK states in its submission. In China, they face the risk of arrest, repatriation and severe punishment, as well as exploitation. "Their illegal status forces them to work in invisible industries and leaves them vulnerable to various forms of labour or sexual exploitation by unscrupulous employers and sex traffickers, as they have no recourse to any authorities."¹⁷ The testimony of Ji-hyun Park confirms this.

China does not recognise the North Koreans who have escaped from the DPRK as "refugees", instead regarding them as illegal economic immigrants. Three agreements between China and the DPRK provide the basis for China's policy of forced repatriation: the 1960 PRC-DPRK Escaped Criminals Reciprocal Extradition Treaty, the 1986 Border Area Affairs Agreement, the 1993 Jilin Province Ordinance on Border Guards and China's own Criminal Law, Article 8, concerning the "arrest and repatriation of illegal border crossers and immigrants".¹⁸

Since the death of Kim Jong-il in 2012, there has been, according to LiNK, a "marked increase" in crackdowns by the Chinese authorities on North Korean refugees. LiNK reports that: "Chinese authorities have installed more electrified fencing on the Chinese side of the border, more motion detectors and cameras, and have increased their security presence in border regions and around

¹⁴ Database Center for North Korean Human Rights, *North Korean Defectors in China – Forced Repatriation and Human Rights Violations*, 2014, p.23

¹⁵ Liberty in North Korea, Submission to the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission

¹⁶ Database Center for North Korean Human Rights, *Ibid.*, p.23

¹⁷ Liberty in North Korea, Submission to the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission

¹⁸ Database Center for North Korean Human Rights, *Ibid.*, p.31

transport hubs as well as cooperating with the North Korean authorities to disrupt networks providing assistance to North Korean refugees, all in order to prevent North Korean refugees' escape into China and to arrest them and forcibly repatriate them if they do make it to Chinese soil."¹⁹ Another source, unnamed for security reasons, confirms this, noting in particular: "Tighter border patrol scrutiny on the North Korean side, with more frequent rotation of guards to prevent bribery by defectors and heavy border security on the Chinese side of the border, [as well as] heightened Chinese military exercises near the border". These observations have also been reported in media sources such as Reuters²⁰ and The Diplomat.²¹

Testimonies documented over many years by several human rights organisations provide overwhelming evidence that when North Koreans are returned to the DPRK by the Chinese authorities, they are arrested, detained, interrogated, subjected to extreme torture and often sent to the prison camps. In some cases, executions have occurred. If a North Korean is suspected by the DPRK authorities of having had contact with South Koreans while in China, particularly Christian missionaries, is found to have converted to Christianity, or possesses a Bible, they are subjected to especially harsh treatment, including execution.²²

To illustrate the extreme risks which escapees take, the Commission includes in full a testimony received from an expert working on the China-North Korea border, who cannot be named for security reasons. This testimony provides an illustration of the desperate situation facing those who flee North Korea into China:

"In late November 2013, a 17 year-old girl accompanied her mother by foot from a remote city in North Hamkyong Province headed to the Sino-DPRK border at the Tumen River. Not surprisingly in impoverished North Korea, mother and daughter bound for freedom beyond North Korean territory did not have proper footwear for the long trek in the brutal winter temperatures. They continued on despite the piercing cold, finally making their way across the Tumen River.

Though successful, the daughter, Young-hwa, paid an awful price. The days of walking in frigid conditions had resulted in a gravely serious case of frostbite. Providentially, a safe house in China provided respite from the immediate cold, but the desperately needed attention to her medical emergency became a serious dilemma. All North Koreans in China are, of course, deemed 'illegal economic migrants.' As such, undocumented North Korean refugees cannot access the Chinese public health system.

In this emergency, it became necessary for a secret network of aid workers under our NGO's financial support to find a retired doctor to attend to the teenager's grievous frostbite in the limited conditions of the safe house. The doctor's diagnosis was anything but hopeful. He predicted that both of Young-hwa's feet would have to be amputated due to the advanced condition of the frostbite. Upon hearing this news in Seoul, our catacombs fellowship was

¹⁹ LiNK, Submission

²⁰ Reuters, "Few North Koreans fleeing to South Korea, UN rights envoy says," 29 October 2013 - <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/29/us-korea-north-rights-un-idUSBRE99S18J20131029>

²¹ The Diplomat, "China keeping close eye on North Korea," 13 December 2013 - <http://thediplomat.com/2013/12/china-keeping-close-eye-on-north-korea/>

²² Christian Solidarity Worldwide, North Korea country report, July 2013 - <http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/article.asp?t=report&id=176>

stunned with disbelief at the prospect of this young person losing both her feet so early in life. We began to pray earnestly, then also worked with fellow aid workers to try to find a practical solution.

Remarkably, a clinic was located in a large city in an adjoining Chinese province that agreed to provide care clandestinely, as long as some type of local ID was found for her to use. All involved were encouraged.

Just as transport was being arranged for Young-hwa to make the many hours of travel to the clinic, the chilling news of North Korea's Number 2, Jang Song-thaek's, summary execution was beamed around the world. As has been well-documented, the Chinese government swiftly placed its border with North Korea on high military alert against any possible instability within the North.

This grave turn of events was extraordinarily unfortunate for Young-hwa, as the China government's suddenly erected security checkpoints on all the major arteries of transport near the border became a virtual minefield for those transporting an injured North Korean refugee with no knowledge of Chinese in case there were unexpected questions at a highway tollgate or in a passenger car of an inter-city train.

Due to quick thinking and action by activist colleagues in the field (and no doubt a measure of providential intervention), an alternative clinic was located further afield from the border, the management of which showed a willingness to take Young-hwa for the very emergency medical attention she required, with each passing hour and day further jeopardizing the circulation in both her feet.

After surface travel to another province without incident and arrival at the clinic, Young-hwa was provided Chinese ID from a sympathetic ethnic-Korean Chinese person of her gender and of roughly her age. The clinic and its staff provided (finally) the professional environment needed to accurately assess the damage to her feet and treatment to recover the circulation and usefulness of as many of Young-hwa's toes as possible.

The physician in charge made the determination that only two of Young-hwa's toes were beyond healing and needed to be amputated. As tragic as such a loss is, we were nevertheless heartened that the original diagnosis by the retired doctor in the safe house that both feet would require amputation was, in fact, not needed. The two toes were removed.

Young-hwa learned of our NGO's support for her emergency medical care and sent us a personal message thanking us for practical support and prayer.

Largely due to security concerns in China, as soon as the minimum recovery time from the minor surgery was completed in the clinic, Young-hwa was taken from the medical facility and carefully guided to transport to move her to a safer location. Within weeks, she was carefully taken across the border of China and a southeast Asian country and by mid-January, she was escorted to the consulate door of the Republic of Korea in a southeast Asian country where she was received and provided protection. She is safely in the care of diplomatic staff there and is reported doing well, finally and permanently out of grave danger of the violation of her human rights both in the DPRK and China."

The Commission concludes that China is in serious breach of international law, through its policies of forcible repatriation, violating international norms of *non-refoulement* and its obligations as a party to the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the Convention Against Torture. The UN Commission of Inquiry into Human Rights in North Korea reached the same conclusion. The United Kingdom and the European Union should use every opportunity to raise this with China and urge the Government of China to end its policies of forced repatriation and permit safe passage for North Korean refugees through China to South Korea or other destinations, and full access for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

North Korean Refugees in the United Kingdom

In addition to addressing the crisis facing refugees in China, the United Kingdom also has a responsibility to invest in and engage with North Korean refugees living in our own country. As the European Alliance for Human Rights in North Korea (EAHRNK) notes, “the UK hosts more refugees than any other EU state – 619 in 2012 (LSE 2010; UNHCR 2012)”.²³ A significant way in which the UK could contribute to long-term change for North Korea would be to invest in developing the skills and knowledge of North Korean refugees within the UK, in preparation for their eventual return and contribution to rebuilding their society. It would also be in our interests to regard the North Korean refugees in the UK not only as refugees to whom we have provided asylum, but as a valuable source of information. As LiNK notes, many North Korean refugees now “maintain contact with family members still in North Korea, sending information home and increasing the North Korean people’s awareness of the outside world.”²⁴ Refugees also send money home to relatives through brokers, and “have provided much of the information we know about North Korea today”.²⁵

It would therefore be important to consider ways of supporting links between the refugee populations of different EU states, as EAHRNK proposes, to “build a stronger and more flexible network of activists”.²⁶ The United Kingdom could work with other EU member states to collect information from refugees that, in the words of EAHRNK, “go beyond the mere documentation of physical human rights abuses (for example with common databases or ‘testimony banks’).” The Commission supports the United Kingdom’s policy of scholarships and academic and cultural exchanges with the North Korean elite, but proposes that the United Kingdom also consider EAHRNK’s proposal that “for every pound spent by the British government on providing education to members of the North Korean elite, spend an equal amount on scholarships for North Korean refugees.”²⁷ LiNK makes a similar recommendation in its submission, concluding that refugees “are essential proactive agents of progress, because so many of them help channel more information and resources to their family members and communities after resettling, which helps accelerate bottom-up change in North Korea.” North Korean refugees should, therefore, receive as much assistance as possible “to fulfil their potential in new societies”. The United Kingdom’s projects including teaching English language to North Korean refugees through the British Council in Seoul are very welcome and, as LiNK recommends, “such programs and scholarships for North Korea-born students to study

²³ European Alliance for Human Rights in North Korea Submission

²⁴ Liberty in North Korea, Submission

²⁵ Ibid.,

²⁶ European Alliance for Human Rights in North Korea, Submission

²⁷ Ibid.,

in the UK should be increased.”²⁸ North Korean refugees are, as EAHRNK notes, “a road into and out of DPRK in terms of challenging North Koreans’ perceptions of the outside world and their own government, through exchange of information at all levels of society”.²⁹

²⁸ Liberty in North Korea, Submission

²⁹ European Alliance for Human Rights in North Korea, Submission

Breaking the Information Blockade

North Korea is the world's most closed nation, with no free and independent media, no civil society and no organised opposition. Reporters Without Borders' World Press Freedom Index 2014 placed North Korea 179th out of 180 countries for press freedom.³⁰ The regime has continued to hold on to power due, at least in part, to its control of information and its constant propaganda, requiring its citizens to worship the Kim dynasty and suppressing any alternative narrative.

Key to supporting change in North Korea is breaking the regime's blockade on information. This can be done in a variety of ways, including the following:

- Academic and cultural exchanges;
- Scholarships for North Koreans to study abroad;
- Radio broadcasts into North Korea;
- Distribution of USB sticks, DVDs and other portable devices containing films, newspaper articles, reports from human rights organisations and international institutions.

These and other activities are already being carried out by a variety of actors, and should be continued and increased. The United Kingdom provides Chevening scholarships for North Koreans and has engaged in various academic and cultural exchanges. The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission supports this approach, though with two cautionary caveats. Firstly, care should be taken not to inadvertently provide support which could be misused by the regime for its own purposes with potentially dangerous consequences, for example scholarships in the fields of engineering and other sciences where skills developed or enhanced could then be deployed in North Korea's nuclear and other military programmes. Scholarships in the humanities, which expose North Korean students to alternative ideas and concepts in the fields of economics, language, history, philosophy, politics and international relations should be encouraged. Secondly, while we recognise and support the value in providing scholarships and other forms of academic and cultural engagement with representatives from the North Korean elite, we believe, as argued in the previous section, that it is essential that the United Kingdom also invest in developing the skills, knowledge and capacity of North Korean dissidents, defectors and refugees through vocational and academic education.

In his book *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia*, scholar Andrei Lankov concludes that "in order to initiate changes in North Korea, it is necessary to put North Korea's rulers under pressure from its people and the lower echelons of the elite. Only North Koreans themselves can change North Korea The only long-term solution, therefore, is to increase pressure for a regime transformation, and the major way to achieve this is to increase North Koreans' awareness of the outside world. If North Koreans learn about the existence of attractive and available alternatives to their regimented and impoverished existence, the almost unavoidable result will be the growth of dissatisfaction toward the current administration. This will create domestic pressure for change, and the North Korean government will discover that its legitimacy is waning even among a considerable part of the elite."³¹ Lankov outlines three approaches: officially

³⁰ Reporters Without Borders, World Press Freedom Index 2014 - <https://rsf.org/index2014/en-index2014.php>

³¹ Andrei Lankov, *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia*, p.215

approved academic, cultural and other interpersonal exchanges; radio broadcasts and digital media; dissemination of information by and through North Korean refugees. In regard to official exchanges, Lankov argues that: “There is no doubt that the top functionaries in Pyongyang and the spoiled brats of the Pyongyang government quarters will be the first to take advantage of international student exchanges or overseas study trips. However, to be frank, they are exactly the type of people who matter most”. Change is most likely to be led, he argues, by “well-informed and disillusioned members of the elite”.³²

Lord Alton, in his evidence to the Commission, also advocates this approach, saying: “We should saturate North Korea with information, hope and goodwill”.

While the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission strongly supports using every tool available to break the information blockade, the remainder of this section of the report will focus specifically on the case for the establishment of a BBC World Service Korean-language station. The Commission heard evidence from James Burt, author of *An Unmet Need: A Proposal for the BBC to Broadcast a World Service in the Korean Language*, published in December 2013 by the European Alliance for Human Rights in North Korea, and from other witnesses, including Lord Alton, and we conclude that the case is overwhelmingly strong. The Commission has examined the arguments made by the BBC, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, for why they will not, at this time, proceed with this proposal, and we conclude that the arguments made against establishing a BBC Korean service are not satisfactory.

Despite the regime’s efforts to maintain total control over information, modern technology has become more available to North Korean people. As the EAHRNK report notes, “in spite of restrictive media policies, severe punishments and radio jamming operations, changes to the global media environment are gradually impacting media consumption within the DPRK. Today, a surprisingly large percentage of North Koreans can access media devices that are capable of receiving foreign media, such as DVD players, televisions and USB drives. Even though the importance of DVDs and USB sticks is significant, the one device that allows for instant, real-time access to credible news from the outside world remains the radio. Alongside the state-manufactured pre-tuned radios, the proliferation of portable Chinese-made radios access across the DPRK is widespread. Commonly available in the country’s *jangmadang* (informal markets), nearly half of all illegal radios are purchased from market vendors, whilst many others are brought from Chinese merchants.” Intermedia reports that almost half North Korea’s radio listeners are able to access illegal radios and over a quarter have actively listened to foreign radio broadcasts. This represents, in EAHRNK’s view, “a significant North Korean audience”. Intermedia notes that “a substantial, consistently measurable portion of the population has direct access to outside media”.

Under the remit of the BBC Trust, one of the specific purposes of the BBC World Service is to “enable individuals to participate in the global debate on significant international issues”. Under the BBC strategy, *Delivering Creative Future in Global News*, a priority for the World Service is to access “a number of information-poor language markets with a clear need for independent information”. The World Service’s Operating Agreement prioritises audiences “which have the least access to news”. Nowhere qualifies under this criteria more than North Korea.

³² Ibid., p.217

In the debate over this question in the past year, both the Government and the BBC have changed their arguments multiple times. Despite initially appearing to be open to considering the idea, the BBC have, for now, decided not to proceed. The reasons given are unsatisfactory. In particular, the Foreign Secretary, William Hague, in a letter to the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee dated 4 January 2014, provides four reasons:

1. A shortwave radio service would reach “an insignificant percentage of the population”;
2. South Korean regulations currently prevent foreign broadcasters from broadcasting FM or MW radio from South Korea;
3. “It would be impossible to offer a TV service that would not be blocked by the government”;
4. “mobile or internet services would achieve very low or insignificant impact”

Few, if any, people have proposed either a television service or exclusively mobile or internet services, and so it is unclear why these should be cited as objections. Regarding the first objection, as James Burt told the Commission in his evidence, “the number of shortwave capable radios within North Korea is unknown, but a considerable amount of empirical and anecdotal evidence from North Korean defectors suggest that SW-capable radios are increasingly available in the country’s *jangmadang* (informal markets)”. In 2005, a survey of 330 North Korean defectors found that 18% had listened to foreign radio. The International Crisis Group reports that radio access is beginning to spread “to a significant extent”.³³ In 2009, Peter Beck of the Asia Foundation collated information that suggested that over 20% of North Koreans had listened to radio broadcasts. In 2012, Intermedia found that nearly half of respondents from the North Korean defector community owned both SW-capable and fixed-dial radios and that “many radio listeners still modify fixed-dial radios in order to receive unsanctioned channels”.³⁴

Jamming is often raised as a concern, but evidence from Intermedia suggest that “many foreign stations appear to be getting through unaffected” and that the DPRK authorities “appear to step up jamming efforts around significant events ... but the huge power requirements may limit them from jamming on a wider scale”. Mark Freeman, an Australian visitor to North Korea confirms in an article for NK News that jamming appears to be of limited impact. “North Koreans are no longer as sealed off as before – something Freeman would realise during the course of his work,” NK News reported. “For instance, he was baffled to find out that, except in Pyongyang, he could listen to unjammed signals from South Korean and Chinese radio on the FM band. ‘Maybe they are more concerned about the educated classes listening to radio, rather than the idea of simple country folk and farmers listening to it ... Once you leave Pyongyang they don’t jam anything at all,’ he said. ‘When I started four years ago there wasn’t as many openings to the outside as there are now. That is changing.’”³⁵

In relation to the second concern, while it is true that South Korea’s broadcasting regulations are among the most restrictive in the region, medium-wave broadcasting appears not to be restricted, and Voice of America broadcasts its Korean-language service from a MW transmitter in South Korea.

³³ International Crisis Group, *North Korean Succession and the Risks of Instability*, July 2012 - <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/north-east-asia/230-north-korean-succession-and-the-risks-of-instability.pdf>

³⁴ Intermedia, *A Quiet Opening: North Koreans in a Changing Media Environment*, 2012 - http://audiencescapes.org/sites/default/files/A_Quiet_Opening_FINAL_InterMedia.pdf

³⁵ NK News, ‘Behind North Korea’s Propaganda Curtain’, by Ole Jakob Skatun, 14 March, 2014 -

Radio Free Asia also previously broadcast in MW from South Korea. Furthermore, there other options for SW transmitters, from elsewhere in Asia.

Cost and commercial value are sometimes cited as objections. The EAHRNK estimates the cost of such a service to be between £900,000 to £1.8 million, out of a BBC World Service budget which in 2014 is £245 million. Voice of America's Korean service had a budget of just over US\$3 million in 2011, and Radio Free Asia's budget for Korean broadcasts in 2012 was US\$2.2 million. The North Korean-defector run stations, North Korea Reform Radio, Radio Free Chosun, Open North Korea Radio and Free North Korea Radio, funded largely by the US State Department and the National Endowment for Democracy in the United States, each have a budget of between US\$75,000-85,000. It is therefore not a significant cost, when compared with other expenditures by the BBC. In terms of "commercial opportunity", if the broadcast was to the Korean Peninsula, North and South, as proposed, there would be significant commercial opportunities for the BBC, and for British business more widely, in South Korea, as set out in some of the submissions attached in the appendices to this report.

Yet another argument used by the Government is that the BBC is independent and the Government cannot "interfere" or make a decision on this. Yet under the new 2014 Operating License for the BBC World Service, the Foreign Secretary retains his decision-making authority over where, why, how and to whom the World Service is broadcast. The Foreign Office is required to agree to the objectives and priorities of the World Service, and thus can influence where, why and to whom to broadcast. Furthermore, in a letter to the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee in February 2013, the Foreign Secretary states: "I ... provide final agreement to any BBC proposal to open a new service." The current Operating License for the BBC World Service, the new 2014 Operating License, a BBC Trust paper in June 2013 and the Foreign Secretary's own words confirm that any new language service must be agreed between the BBC Trust and the Foreign Secretary.

The Commission therefore strongly urges the Government and the BBC to reconsider this question, to study the report and other submissions by the EAHRNK, and to invest in establishing a BBC Korean service. Furthermore, we recommend that investment is made in training and developing exiled North Koreans as reporters, producers and other staff positions on such a service, deploying BBC Media Action's training resources for this purpose. It is time to seriously increase efforts to break the information blockade around North Korea.

Ending Impunity

Prior to the establishment of the UN Commission of Inquiry, the former chief prosecutor in the trial of Slobodan Milosevic, Sir Geoffrey Nice QC said in a message to the launch of the International Coalition to Stop Crimes Against Humanity in North Korea (ICNK) in Tokyo in September 2011 that “there can be few places in the world where the human rights situation is more egregious and yet more overlooked, than North Korea.”

With the establishment of the Commission of Inquiry, the publication of its findings and recommendations, and the UN Human Rights Council resolution in March 2014, there is at last an opportunity to pursue actions which might lead to accountability, justice and an end to impunity. No one is under any illusions that this will be anything other than a process, rather than an immediate solution, and the length of the process is unpredictable. It could conclude within a relatively short period of time, or it could take many years before the perpetrators of crimes against humanity in North Korea are held accountable and brought to justice. But that such a process is required should not be in any doubt, and it is therefore in the hands of the international community as to how to move forward.

The decision by the United Kingdom to support the conclusions and recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, including its recommendation that a case be referred to the International Criminal Court for further investigation, is most welcome and one which the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission strongly and warmly endorses.

There will be challenges ahead, in persuading certain members of the Security Council to support or at least abstain from using a veto, but it is clear that such a case should be made and that the process should be attempted.

If it is not possible to bring a case to the International Criminal Court, attention should then be given both to pursuing alternative mechanisms for justice and accountability, and to engaging with countries which oppose a referral to the International Criminal Court, to urge them to use their influence with the DPRK to bring an end to the crimes against humanity in the country.

The Commission of Inquiry’s report provides a window of opportunity for the international community to show real moral leadership in the face of perhaps the world’s most horrific human rights crisis and one of its most overlooked. As the former President of East Timor Dr Jose Ramos-Horta and the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission’s Deputy Chairman Benedict Rogers wrote in an article in *The Huffington Post*: “For this to be simply another shocking report, which is then left to gather dust on a shelf, referred to academically in years to come, would be nothing short of a tragedy. Instead, it must be taken as a plan of action, a manifesto for the world to come together around, to stop the continuing suffering of the North Korean people. That task will not be easy, but no one should rest easy in the delusion that the inquiry’s completion means our work is done. Indeed, quite the opposite – it is only just beginning. Yet of one fact we can all be sure: from this day on, no one can claim they did not know what was happening in North Korea. As the great British parliamentarian William Wilberforce said when he introduced legislation to end the slave trade two hundred years ago: “We can no longer plead ignorance. We cannot turn aside.” The spotlight has finally shone on North Korea, and now its beams are cast on the international

community for a response.”³⁶ This Commission hopes that the United Kingdom will continue to play a leading role in the international community in pursuing the required response.

³⁶ Jose Ramos-Horta and Benedict Rogers, “North Korea Is the World’s Worst Human Rights Crisis – It Can No Longer Be Its Most Forgotten,” *The Huffington Post*, 27 February 2014 - http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/ben/north-korea-human-rights_b_4861878.html

Conclusions: The United Kingdom's Role

As Lord Alton reminded the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission in our first hearing, “more British people died in the Korean War than in the Falklands War, Afghanistan and the Iraq War combined” and for this reason alone, the United Kingdom has a responsibility to the people of the Korean Peninsula, north and south. That involves pursuing denuclearisation, stability and peace, but peace will not come without justice and without an end to the barbaric abuses inflicted upon the people of North Korea. Human rights must be central, pivotal and integral to Britain’s foreign policy in regard to North Korea and the Korean Peninsula.

As this report has outlined, and as the written submissions in the appendices detail, there are a wide range of steps the United Kingdom can and should take. These are summarised in the recommendations at the front of this report, and also set out in an article on Conservativehome.com by the Commission’s Deputy Chairman Benedict Rogers on 18 July 2013.³⁷ The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission warmly welcomes and strongly endorses the steps the United Kingdom is already taking, including its support for the UN Commission of Inquiry’s report and recommendations and its investment in academic and cultural exchanges and in critical engagement with the DPRK. But we believe the United Kingdom can do even more, and this is set out in this report.

In particular, as Lord Alton told us, the United Kingdom could make a significant contribution to “breaking the information blockade” by establishing a BBC World Service radio broadcast, in Korean and English, to the Korean Peninsula, north and south. “The BBC World Service is one of the great triumphs of the twentieth century,” Lord Alton said. “People in North Korea are willing to put their lives at risk to listen to the BBC.”

A mixture of “carrots and sticks” should be pursued, as Lord Alton outlined to the Commission. Pursuing the question of a referral to the International Criminal Court or another mechanism for justice and accountability is vital. “The regime must realise that the day may come when there will be a Milosevic or a Nuremberg moment,” Lord Alton argued. However, this approach must be combined with a variety of other initiatives, as outlined in this report, including engagement. Such engagement, however, must be constructive but robust and critical, pursuing the model exemplified in the Helsinki Process with the Soviet Union. “We must never appease,” said Lord Alton. “I object strongly when I hear diplomats say that we need to be quiet. We must engage, but in a constructive and critical way. We must use the scaffold of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is arguably the case that North Korea is in breach of every single article of the UDHR. We should highlight this.”

Free NK Gulag and the North Korea Strategy Center, in their joint submission, emphasised the importance of engaging China, both in relation to using their influence in North Korea and in regard to China’s policy of repatriating North Korean refugees who are “hiding in China” and “living in

³⁷ Benedict Rogers, “Cameron and Hague should press for justice for North Korea,” 18 July 2013 - <http://www.conservativehome.com/platform/2013/07/david-cameron-and-william-hague-should-make-north-korea-a-human-rights-priority.html>

constant fear and threat”.³⁸ The United Kingdom could also play a more active role in supporting the North Korean defector community, as outlined by Free NK Gulag and the North Korea Strategy Center, helping North Korean exiles develop a strategy and pursue activities including education, radio broadcasts and information dissemination. The United Kingdom has, as the Free NK Gulag and North Korea Strategy Center submission concludes, a key leadership role in coordinating European Union policy to ensure that the EU speaks with one voice, “with the objective of bringing democracy and human rights.” Increasing the EU’s role is key, as their submission argues: “the synergy of European countries can be highly effective in bringing the right type of engagement.”

One other measure which the United Kingdom should investigate is the question of implementing targeted sanctions against specific sectors which benefit the regime and generate slave labour. This report has not examined this issue in detail, but in the appendices are submissions from Mr Ken Kato, director of Human Rights in Asia. He appeals to the United Kingdom “to prohibit the export of North Korean resources that are produced by forced labour in political prison camps and to prohibit investment to the country’s mining sector”.³⁹ Mr Kato claims that “experts say gold produced in North Korea [is] sold in the London market through foreign companies. The United Kingdom should investigate this and take action to prevent the trade in “blood minerals”.

The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission agrees, however, with the UN Commission of Inquiry that any sanctions should be carefully targeted and we do not support blanket sanctions that could inflict more misery on the people of North Korea. Furthermore, we strongly agree with both Lord Alton and LiNK in their submissions, who argued that humanitarian aid, including food, should be provided to the people of North Korea. As Lord Alton said, aid should not be commercial or technological or include anything that could be misused, nor should aid “reward” the regime. However, “food should never be used as a weapon of war. You can’t starve people into submission”. LiNK agrees, stating that “the North Korean people bear the brunt of the whole international North Korea challenge, and they should not be punished even indirectly for the international pariah status which the Pyongyang government has earned itself but which ordinary North Koreans have no influence over.” LiNK urges that “all forms of humanitarian assistance, whether it be food aid or public health aid, should be based on a non-politicised needs assessment which is completely delinked from political and security concerns. It is neither morally nor strategically tenable to link these issues to humanitarian assistance.” Questions of monitoring the distribution of aid to ensure it reaches people in need are, of course, extremely important and valid questions. LiNK believes that “given the well-known difficulty” of working with the government with any level of reliability, “it is essential that Korean-speaking international monitors are used in-country”. This is “increasingly possible and strongly recommended for all humanitarian assistance monitoring in-country.”

Finally, another topic which has not been addressed in this report but which should be considered is the issue of South Korean prisoners of war (POWs). The Commission received a submission from the President and Executive Director of Korean War POW Affairs-USA, which is in the appendices. According to this submission, “it is estimated that over 50,000 South Korean POWs were excluded from the POW exchanges at the end of the Korean War, under the pretext that they had voluntarily stayed in North Korea. They have been held in North Korea for decades after the ceasefire of 1953,

³⁸ Free NK Gulag/North Korea Strategy Center, Submission

³⁹ Human Rights in Asia, submission by Mr Ken Kato

and were forced to perform hard labour in mines in the remote Northeastern areas of North Korea". They are classified as part of the "hostile class" in North Korea's *songbun* system. The United Kingdom should find ways to support the efforts of others in raising this issue.

In 2010, *The Times* published an editorial titled "Slave State", which concluded that "the condition of the people of North Korea ranks among the great tragedies of the past century. The despotism that consigns them to that state is one of its greatest crimes."⁴⁰ The time for leadership and action to end these unparalleled and unspeakable crimes is long overdue, and we call on the British Government to increase its efforts to use every possible tool available to address and end the suffering of the North Korean people.

⁴⁰ The Times, 'Slave State', 27 October 2010

Further Reading

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John Everard, *Only Beautiful Please: A British Diplomat in North Korea*, 2012, Water H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center

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David Hawk, *The Hidden Gulag*, 2012, The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea - http://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/HRNK_HiddenGulag2_Web_5-18.pdf

Melanie Kirkpatrick, *Escape from North Korea: The Untold Story of Asia's Underground Railroad*, 2012, Encounter Books

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

The following websites are also worth reading regularly:

www.dailynk.com

www.nknews.com

www.newfocusintl.com

www.38north.org

www.hrnk.org

www.stopnkcrimes.org

www.eahrnk.org

www.northkoreacampaignuk.org

Appendices

1. Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Submission
2. European Alliance for Human Rights in North Korea Submission
3. European Alliance for Human Rights in North Korea, *An Unmet Need: A Proposal for the BBC to Broadcast A World Service in the Korean Language*
4. European Alliance for Human Rights in North Korea – *An Unmet Need*: Powerpoint presentation
5. Free The NK Gulag/North Korea Strategy Center Joint Submission
6. Human Rights in Asia Submission
7. Korean War POW Affairs-USA Submission
8. Liberty in North Korea Submission
9. *Situation of North Korean refugees in China* – expert submission (identity withheld for security reasons)