

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ADVISORY

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North Korea: Prisoner amnesty

On 1 February, a prisoner amnesty is expected to begin in North Korea, according to official statements. On 10 January, the North Korea state news agency, KCNA, announced the amnesty in honour of Kim Jong-il, who died in December 2011, and his father Kim Il-sung.

No information has been given as to how many prisoners will be released or who, or of the type of detention facility they will be released from.

Amnesty International estimates as many as 200,000 people are being held in political prison camps around North Korea, believed to have been in operation since the 1950s, yet very few detainees are ever known to have escaped and leave North Korea.

In May 2011, Amnesty International published satellite imagery and new testimony that shed light on the horrific conditions in North Korea's network of political prison camps.

The images showed the location, size and conditions inside the camps.

Amnesty International spoke to a number of people, including former inmates and guards from the camps and found that prisoners are forced to work in conditions approaching slavery. Torture and public executions are conducted, prisoners die of malnutrition or due to dangerous work conditions and tens of thousands are believed to be held for 'guilt by association'.

- Amnesty International spokespeople are available for interview.
- Images are available – including satellite images of the camps, and images of inmates – please click here: https://adam.amnesty.org/asset-bank/action/search?attribute_603=Yodok
- Video material is available including an interview with a former inmate of a political prison camp and stock footage of North Korea – please use the same link above.
- For Amnesty International's May 2011 statement on prison camps in North Korea please click here: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/images-reveal-scale-north-korean-political-prison-camps-2011-05-03>.

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