

£NORTH KOREA

@New information about political prisoners

Introduction

The present document contains information compiled by Amnesty International in recent months, concerning 58 people reported to be detained for political offenses in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, North Korea). Many are believed by Amnesty International to be prisoners of conscience. Some of those named may have died in prison. Others may still be detained, after 30 years or more. Some of the prisoners were last seen alive in 1990, others have not been heard of for decades.

According to information received by Amnesty International, the Government of the DPRK has failed to account for the whereabouts of the prisoners when questioned by relatives and others. Amnesty International is renewing its call on the government to account for the fate of all political prisoners, including those whose cases are described in this document.

The DPRK remains a secretive country. Its Criminal Law has broadly-worded provisions punishing disclosure of information which the authorities deem to constitute secrets. Some Koreans living in foreign countries who visited the DPRK have reported that they were warned not to disclose information about the situation of their relatives in the DPRK. Amnesty International's proposals to visit the DPRK to investigate its human rights concerns have so far remained unanswered. The DPRK government has also failed to respond fully to Amnesty International's requests for information on individual cases and general human rights concerns.

In October 1993 Amnesty International published a report about human rights concerns in North Korea (*North Korea: Summary of Amnesty International's Concerns*, AI Index ASA 24/03/93). The report included information about political prisoners, conditions of detention, ill-treatment, the death penalty and constitutional and legal safeguards.

In a four-page reply, also published by Amnesty International in October 1993 (AI Index ASA 24/04/93), the DPRK Government acknowledged the accuracy of Amnesty International's information about the death penalty and queried the organization's findings on legal and other issues. However it failed to address Amnesty International's concerns about the unacknowledged detention of political prisoners and conditions of detention. In letters to Amnesty International in the first half of 1994, the DPRK government denied that two of the people named by Amnesty International in October were prisoners but there was no independent confirmation of the authorities's statements and no information about other reported prisoners. The silence from the authorities on most other individual cases heightens Amnesty International's fears that many political prisoners may be detained in extremely harsh conditions.

Amnesty International has received reports that the relatives of political prisoners are sometimes detained as well, or put under some form of house arrest or assigned to internal exile. Amnesty International has not been able so far to confirm these reports. The organization is calling on the DPRK Government to publicly account for the whereabouts and legal status of all those named in the present report, and for the situation of their relatives.

The Case of Cho Ho Pyong and Koide Hideko

Cho Ho Pyong was born in 1936 in Japan, of Korean parents. In 1954, after graduating from Tohoku University in Japan, he married Koide Hideko. On 11 February 1962, Cho Ho Pyong and Koide Hideko travelled to North Korea, wishing to settle there. According to letters he wrote from North Korea to his relatives in Japan, Cho became a lecturer in physiology at the Medical University in Hamhung City, a major city on the East coast of the Korean Peninsula.

For an unknown reason, Cho came under official suspicion in the mid-1960s. In 1967, in the last letter his relatives in Japan received from him, he said that he was on his way to a place of "re-education".

According to his relatives in Japan, he was sent to work in an orchard in Hamgyong South Province, which

surrounds Hamhung City. There were no news about Koide Hideko. In 1973, she sent a letter to her relatives in Japan, the first after a five-year gap. She said that she was living alone with her three children, a son born in 1963 and two daughters, born in 1965 and 1966. Her relatives apparently never heard from her again.

The family of Cho Ho Pyong in Japan made several attempts to visit North Korea to meet with Cho Ho Pyong and Koide Hideko, but permission for them to visit North Korea was never granted. On one occasion in 1983, permission was granted, then withdrawn.

It is not known whether Cho Ho Pyong and Koide Hideko are alive or dead. North Korean officials have never given information about their whereabouts to their relatives in Japan, despite numerous requests. Amnesty International is concerned that Cho Ho Pyong may have been taken in detention, or "disappeared".

Amnesty International is calling on the North Korean authorities immediately to publish information about the whereabouts of Cho Ho Pyong, Koide Hideko and their children.

The Case of Kim Duk Hwan

Kim Duk Hwan, a North Korean engineer, has not been heard of since he stopped writing letters to his Russian wife in 1966. He "disappeared" after being taken into custody, apparently because the authorities saw him as a threat. It is not known whether he is still alive. Almost thirty years of attempts to trace him by his Russian wife have remained fruitless because of the silence maintained by the North Korean authorities.

Kim Duk Hwan was born in 1935 in South Hamgyong Province (then a Japanese colony, now North Korea). In 1953, he was sent to the Pskov, in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), to study engineering. While there, he married a Russian woman, Valentina Dimitrievna Kurashova. After graduating from Pskov Construction Technical School in 1957, Kim returned to North Korea. He became an engineer at the Central Scientific Research Institute for Construction in Pyongyang. Valentina Kurashova joined him there in May 1958. They had a son, born in 1959.

Starting in 1960, relations between North Korea and the USSR deteriorated, as a result of ideological conflicts between the USSR and the People's Republic of China. According to Valentina Kurashova, the tension generated by the ideological rift led to an atmosphere of suspicion and harassment against USSR nationals in North Korea. Valentina Kurashova therefore returned to Pskov in June 1961, with her son. Kim Duk Hwan was not permitted to follow her.

According to Valentina Kurashova, the North Korean authorities requested Kim Duk Hwan to divorce her (many North Koreans with East European or Soviet spouses were asked to do the same, and many apparently did). She believes that it is his refusal to divorce her that led to his internment in a "re-education" camp in late 1961 or early 1962. The legal basis for Kim Duk Hwan's internment is unclear, he does not appear to have been formally charged with any offence, or tried.

For the following five years, Kim wrote to his wife in Pskov. He mentioned being ill and going hungry at times. His place of detention was in Sinyang District, in Pyongan South Province, about 100 kilometres northeast of Pyongyang. Valentina Kurashova was concerned that Kim's illness may have been related to his handling radio-active material, but this cannot

be confirmed. He wrote to her that he had been interned because he had been educated in the USSR, and refused to divorce her. He last wrote to her in 1966.

Kim Duk Hwan, if still alive, is a prisoner of conscience. Amnesty International believes that he was detained solely because of his personal background and private life, and fell victim to arbitrary decisions taken by the North Korea's Government, led by the Korean Workers' Party.

Amnesty International is calling on the North Korean authorities to make public the whereabouts of Kim Duk Hwan, indicate the reasons for his detention in the 1960s, and explain the reasons why Valentina Kurashova's repeated requests for information have remained unanswered.

Political Prisoners Held in 1990 in Sungho Township

Amnesty International has received information concerning a place of detention in Sungho Township, about 70 kilometres East of Pyongyang, where at least 49 long-term political prisoners were reportedly held as at the end of 1990. Amnesty International believes that the detainees named below may still be held, although they may have been transferred elsewhere since 1990.

Conditions at the Sungho Township detention centre were reportedly harsh, with little light and no heating in cells. In at least one case a prisoner held in Sungho reportedly died of beatings inflicted by prison guards. The detention centre was reported in 1990 to hold several hundred (about 600) "ordinary" North Korean political prisoners - that is, prisoners with no distinctive personal background - as well as dozens of "special" political prisoners, such as former high-ranking officials, former Korean residents of Japan, etc. Drawings of the Sungho detention centre provided by North Korean sources are appended to this document.

At the end of 1990 the following political prisoners were reportedly held in a detention centre for political prisoners in Sungho Township. The date of their detention is not known. Some have reportedly been accused of espionage, others of crimes against the state. Many are former Korean residents in Japan. Since 1958, according to sources in Japan, about 93,000 ethnic Koreans who were born in Japan, or had been sent to Japan from Korea during Japan's colonization of the Peninsula, settled in the DPRK. Many of them have not been heard of since the mid-1960s and are believed by their relatives in Japan to have been imprisoned or assigned to remote places of residence in North Korea. Some may still be detained (or otherwise physically restricted) as prisoners of conscience.

The table below lists 49 political prisoners held in 1990 in Sungho. Amnesty International does not have information about their whereabouts since 1990. It believes most of them are still detained. The organization is calling on the Government of the DPRK to

make public full details of their current whereabouts, the reason for their detention at Sungho, the circumstances of their trials and the whereabouts of their relatives.

No	Name	Remarks
1	An Am Jun	Former Korean resident of Japan
2	An Hung Kap	Former Korean resident of Japan
3	An I Jun	Former Korean resident of Japan
4	Cho Bok Ae	Took part in the Korean War
5	Cho Byong Uk	South Korean
6	Cho Jong Kap	Former Korean resident in Japan
7	Choi Kyong Sik	
8	Jong Jong Do	South Korean
9	Jong U Taek	Former Korean resident in Japan
10	Kang Dae Yong	Former Korean resident in Japan
11	Kang Jung Sok	South Korean
12	Kang Su Ho	Former Korean resident in Japan
13	Kang Yong Su	Former Korean resident in Japan
14	Kim Bo Kyom	South Korean
15	Kim Byong Hun	Former Korean resident in Japan
16	Kim Chon Hae	Former Korean resident in Japan
17	Kim In Bong	Former Supervisor at DPRK Trade Ministry
18	Kim Jin Ho	Former Korean resident in Japan
19	Kim Jong Ho	Former Deputy Commander of Eastern Coast Front Army
20	Kim Sang Il	Former Councillor at DPRK Trade Ministry
21	Kim Yong Kil	Former Korean resident in Japan

22	Koh Dae Ki	Former Korean resident in Japan
23	Koh Sang Mun	South Korean
24	Kwak Chol (Kwak Jong Ku)	Former Korean resident in Japan
25	Kwon Bong Hak	Former Korean resident in Japan
26	Lee Chi Su	South Korean
27	Lee Dae Chul	Former Korean resident in Japan
28	Lee Dong Ho	Former Deputy Chief of Third Administrative Unit (counter-intelligence department)
29	Lee Jae Yong	Political supervisor during the Korean War
30	Lee Jae Yong	North Korean - occupation unknown - unrelated to person named above
31	Lee Jang Su	South Korean
32	Lee Jun Kwang	South Korean
33	Lee Ra Yong	DPRK Historian - wrote a book on "Youth and the Revolution" - unheard of since the 1960s
34	Min Yong Il	Former Korean resident in Japan
35	Mun Hoi Jang	Former Deputy Chief of Third Administrative Unit (counter-intelligence department)
36	Oh Hyon (Kim Si Taek)	Former Korean resident in Japan
37	Park Chang Sop	DPRK Korean War veteran
38	Park Mu	Former Korean resident in Japan
39	Park Un Chol	Former Korean resident in Japan
40	Roh Jun Woo	South Korean
41	Ryu Song Kun	South Korean
42	Seo Yong Chil	Former Korean resident in Japan

43	Shin Jae Wha	Former Korean resident in Japan
44	Shin Muk	Former Korean resident in Japan
45	Son Jae Sok	Former Korean resident in Japan
46	Son Kwi Ik	Former Korean resident in Japan
47	Song Kwan Ho	Former Korean resident in Japan
48	Yom Kil Song	Former Supervisor at DPRK Trade Ministry
49	Yom Kwi Whan	South Korean

Other Reported Political Prisoners

In May 1992, Amnesty International sought information from the North Korean Government about the following political prisoners but has received no response.

Han Kyong Ji, formerly Secretary at the Foreign Languages Publishing House. She was reported to have been arrested in 1967, accused of espionage and sent to a detention centre.

Hu Ik, a Korean from the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and formerly Dean of the Higher School of the Workers' Party of Korea. He was reported to have been removed from his post in the late 1950s and sent to a labour camp.

Kim Yong Soo, a Korean from the former USSR and formerly Director of the Press Bureau. She was reported to have been removed from her post in the late 1950s and sent to a labour camp.

Yi Ki Sok, formerly Minister of Light Industry. He was reported to have been removed from his post in August 1953 and may have been arrested.

Yu Chang Sik, formerly Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alternate Member of the Politburo and Secretary of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea. He was reported to have been dismissed from all his official posts in October 1975 and charged with espionage.

Yun Sun Dal, formerly Deputy Chief, Liaison Department of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea. He was reported to have been arrested between October and December 1952, charged with espionage and sentenced to 60 years' imprisonment in 1953.

Amnesty International is concerned that some of these people may be, or may have been, prisoners of conscience. It urges the Government of the DPRK to disclose the current situation and whereabouts of the people named above and, where relevant, any information about their detention or trial.

Drawings of Sungho detention centre

The drawings below have been received by Amnesty International from North Korean sources. Amnesty International is unable to confirm the accuracy of these drawings. The organization has also received unconfirmed reports that prisoners held in Sungho in 1990 were transferred elsewhere in 1991, and that the Sungho detention centre may not be currently in use.

