

[EN](#) | [DE](#)

- **Source:**
FCO - UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- **Title:**
Democratic People's Republic of Korea - Country of Concern: latest update 30 June 2014
- **Publication date:**
30 June 2014
- **ecoi.net summary:** Quarterly update on human rights situation [ID 285966]
- **Countries:**
Korea, Democratic People's Republic
- **Original link** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/democratic-peoples-republic-of-korea-dprk-country-of-concern/democratic-peoples-republic-of-korea-country-of-concern-latest-update-30-june-2014>

Recommended citation:

FCO - UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Democratic People's Republic of Korea - Country of Concern: latest update 30 June 2014, 30 June 2014 (available at ecoi.net)
http://www.ecoi.net/local_link/285966/403635_en.html (accessed 14 May 2015)



Democratic People's Republic of Korea - Country of Concern: latest update 30 June 2014

Contents

There has been no significant change in the human rights situation in DPRK between April and June 2014, although a number of developments have confirmed DPRK authorities' near total lack of respect for human rights and unwillingness to engage meaningfully with the international community on this issue.

On 18 May, the DPRK press agency Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported that an accident had taken place at a building site in Pyongyang and that this had caused casualties. This kind of negative report is unusual in the DPRK, and this new openness could perhaps be viewed as a positive change. However, the international media reported that the accident, apparently the collapse of an apartment block, may have caused hundreds of casualties and that several of the individuals who had been involved in the apartment's construction had been secretly executed.

On 30 May, the DPRK Supreme Court sentenced South Korean national, Kim Jong-uk, to life with hard labour, after convicting him of espionage and attempting to establish an underground church. On 30 June, KCNA reported that the "relevant organ of the DPRK is...making preparations for bringing [two US citizens] before court on the basis of the already confirmed charges". This statement and other reporting on these cases suggest that the results of trials have already been decided before they start. One of the latest detainees was allegedly arrested for leaving a bible at a hotel, again confirming that the DPRK sees religious materials as an unacceptable and illegal threat to the regime.

Bilaterally, Foreign & Commonwealth Office officials visiting Pyongyang have raised human rights with both the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Workers' Party of Korea. They underlined the high level of concern in the UK and internationally about the findings of the [UN Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry \(COI\) report on human rights in DPRK](#), and called for constructive DPRK engagement.

Our Embassy in Pyongyang has continued to engage on disability rights, supporting a sports and cultural event for disabled children to celebrate National Day of People with Disability and raise awareness of disability and inclusiveness. Following the revision of relevant domestic legislation in November 2013, we understand the DPRK is aiming to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities by the end of 2016.

Internationally, the UK has continued to play an active role in raising awareness of human rights violations in the DPRK following the publication of the COI's report and the subsequent adoption of the Human Rights Council's resolution on the DPRK. In April the UK's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN in New York met members of the COI and expressed our strong support for its work. This was followed by participation in a public "[Arria-formula](#)" briefing with other UN Security Council member states to consider DPRK human rights.

In May, we emphasised the need for continued focus on the DPRK human rights situation during a UN Security Council Sanctions Committee meeting, and raised concerns during closed consultations between the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Security Council. In the same month, a human rights review of the DPRK took place at the UN Human Rights Council, as part of the UN's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. While the DPRK rejected criticism of its human rights record and the majority of recommendations made by the international community, including the UK, it did accept some recommendations, primarily related to social and economic rights. This represents a small sign of progress compared to their first UPR in December 2009.

In June, Minister for the Far East, Hugo Swire, visited Geneva, where he took part in an Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the DPRK, Mr Mazuki Darusman. He discussed UN action on this issue in private meetings with the Special Rapporteur, the Deputy UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Chinese Permanent Representative and traditional partners. Mr Swire also stressed the importance of UN action on human rights in DPRK with the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon.

published on

