

MAPPING THE FATE OF THE DEAD

PROGRESS REPORT
JUNE 2019

Killings and Burials in North Korea



TRANSITIONAL
JUSTICE
WORKING GROUP

Transitional Justice Working Group

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About TJWG

The Transitional Justice Working Group (TJWG) is a Seoul-based NGO founded by human rights advocates and researchers from five countries in 2014. TJWG aims to pursue advanced methods for addressing grave human rights violations and advocating justice for victims in pre- and post-transition societies. We collaborate and share our practices with other organizations and individuals concerned with the pursuit of accountability for mass atrocities and human rights abuses.

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QGIS and OSGEO
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All romanisation for Korean-language words used in this report follow the translations and spellings provided by the *Korean-English Glossary of North Korean Human Rights Terms*.¹

1. "Korean-English Glossary of North Korean Human Rights Terms", National Human Rights Commission of Korea, 2016; ["한·영 북한인권용어집", 국가인권위원회, 2016].

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents findings from four years of research to document and map three types of locations connected to human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK/North Korea): 1. state-sanctioned killing sites; 2. sites where the dead are disposed of by the state; and 3. official locations which may house documents or other evidence related to these events. This is the second report from the Transitional Justice Working Group's Mapping Project. It serves as an update to the first, published in 2017, but presents new data and more advanced analysis of the sites we document.

This report finds that summary or arbitrary executions and extra-judicial killings in state custody have continued under the leadership of Kim Jong Un, despite international criticism of the DPRK's application of the death penalty without due process. The project uses satellite imagery during interviews with North Korean escapees to geolocate the above sites, and applies Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology throughout the research process, from data-gathering to analysis. Geographical mapping of sites connected to human rights abuses provides important information about patterns of killing and burial that are often not visible in interviewee testimonies.

Almost all of the state-sanctioned killings reported were public executions by firing squad. Brief "trials" almost always occur on the spot immediately before a public execution, where charges are stated and a sentence given without legal counsel for the accused. Interviewees reported a recent incident when the guards used hand-held metal detectors to find and confiscate mobile phones from witnesses at a public execution to prevent them recording the events. This suggests regime concern about information on public executions getting out of the country.

We continued to document reports of sites where dead bodies have been disposed of by the state, including burial sites and cremation sites. We also began to record information about locations of deaths resulting from accidents, starvation or illness in state-run facilities, or as a result of state policy.

Interviewees told us the bodies of individuals killed by the regime are not usually returned to family members, nor are the burial locations revealed to families. Most North Korean citizens continue to follow traditional burial practices where scarce resources allow. However, the inability to access information on the whereabouts of a family member killed by the state, and the impossibility of giving them a proper burial, violates both cultural norms and the “right to know”. Of our research participants, 92 percent thought exhumations of burial sites of individuals killed by the regime would be necessary after a transition in the DPRK, to identify victims, return remains to families and to find out the truth of human rights abuses committed by the state.

Future work to investigate crimes in the DPRK will involve preservation of certain sites as crimes scenes. Knowing the geographical locations of such sites, along with a detailed understanding of the surrounding environment, increases the likelihood of securing protection for such sites at an early stage. Geospatial mapping also provides information about on-the-ground limitations to investigations ahead of time, such as access and cost. We intend to use the data to assist ongoing efforts internationally to pursue accountability for human rights abuses, and to support future activities focused on redress for the abuses carried out in the DPRK.

KEY FINDINGS

- The report includes data from 610 interviews conducted over four years.
- The research has documented 323 reports of sites of state-sanctioned killings from relatively high information source types (i.e., from a first- or second-hand witnesses) and all of these reports are accompanied by geographical coordinates of the location.
- The most commonly cited offences for the death penalty include (in descending order): murder or attempted murder, stealing copper, human trafficking, stealing cows and other forms of property, and economic crimes. When grouped by category, property crimes were cited most often, followed by violent crime, political crimes, human trafficking and economic crimes. However, given the lack of due process in the North Korean judicial system, it is difficult to know whether the charges announced at an execution actually match the act committed by the accused.
- The research has found 318 reports of public execution sites (from relatively high information source types, and where the interviewee was able to provide geographical coordinates of the location). Public executions of more than 10 people at once were reported 19 times.
- Public executions most often occur in places such as river banks, open spaces and fields, market places, hills/mountains, sports grounds and school grounds. The size of the assembled crowd can vary, often in the hundreds of people, but a number of interviewees described seeing crowds of 1,000 or more people.
- Interviewees reported incidents in the mid-2010s when the authorities used hand-held metal detectors to search and confiscate mobile phones from witnesses before a public execution to prevent them recording the events.
- Brief “trials” almost always occur on the spot immediately before a public execution, where charges are stated and a sentence given without legal counsel for the accused, who very often appears “half dead” when brought to

“Without justice, peace remains an illusion.”

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet (15 April, 2019)

the site by the authorities.

- 25 reports were recorded of sites where dead bodies have been disposed of by the state, including burial sites and cremation sites (reports from relatively high information source types, and for which we have geographical coordinates). Seven of these sites are reported to contain more than two bodies together.
- We recorded 20 reports of deaths in detention that were not executions, and a small number of secret killings for particularly serious crimes.
- Of a sample of the research participants, 83 percent had witnessed a public execution in their lifetime and 53 percent of those were forced by the authorities to watch an execution on one or more occasions. The youngest age an interviewee reported witnessing a public execution was seven years old.
- 16 percent of our research participants reported having had a family member killed or executed by the North Korean authorities.
- 27 percent of our research participants claim to have immediate family members who have been victims of enforced disappearance by the North Korean regime; 83 percent of those disappeared are still missing.
- 92 percent of our research participants thought exhumations of burial sites of individuals killed by the regime would be necessary after a transition in North Korea, to identify victims, return remains to families and to find out the truth of human rights abuses committed by the state.
- North Korean escapee interviewees told us that investigating sites of killings and disposal of dead bodies by the regime may “help to prosecute the North Korean regime” in the future. They also told us that “the dead bodies should be returned to their families as the dead are human beings.”

INTRODUCTION

The North Korean government's routine killing of its citizens and the denial of the right of family members to give the dead a proper burial has profound effects that last long after the event. For many in the DPRK, grieving for the lost involves remembering scenes of a public execution, or wondering about the fate of a relative or friend sent to a political prison camp (*gwalliso* /관리소).

Many people who have died as a result of the regime's practice of summary or arbitrary executions and extra-judicial killings in state custody, or of gross neglect, torture or hard labour while in state-run detention, have not just been

In a culture where ancestors are believed to continue to play a role in the lives of the living, the DPRK's human rights violations constitute an affront from all sides.

denied due process in the prosecution of the alleged crime(s). They have also been denied the right to be returned to their families for burial. In a culture where ancestors are believed to continue to play a role in the lives of the living, the DPRK's human rights violations constitute an affront from all sides.

This report presents the findings of four years of research and 610 interviews to document sites of 1. state-sanctioned killings; 2. sites where the dead are disposed of by the regime; and 3. locations which may house documents or other evidence related to these events. The project combines interviews with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology to map these locations geographically, in anticipation of future investigations into these sites. In years three and four of the project we also began recording sites of deaths resulting from torture, starvation or illness in state-run facilities, or as a result of state policy. This is the second report from TJWG's Mapping Project. It serves as an

update to the first report published in July 2017² but presents new data and more advanced analysis of the sites we seek to document.

The data gathered may be used to serve a variety of institutions and objectives in the future. These include locating sites where victims of the regime have been killed and buried, to help discover the truth of the injustices committed and to provide families and communities with knowledge about those who have been killed or disappeared by the state. Future examinations of body disposal sites will be an important part of North Korea's transition from authoritarianism, when a new government may seek to launch investigations into serious violations of international criminal law, international human rights law and international humanitarian law via a transitional justice process.³ Finding and often exhuming the remains are core aspects of the "right to know".⁴ It is also the legal responsibility of states to resolve cases of missing persons.⁵

The significance of locating the dead and missing is not limited to criminal procedures and formal record-creation. As post-conflict/post-authoritarian exhumation work done in many settings globally has found, exhumations are always powerful interventions.⁶ The experiences of people in contexts as diverse as Afghanistan, the former Yugoslavia and Guatemala prove strongly that such work is a central part of the recovery of communities from the trauma and suffering caused by human rights abuses. Exhumations may also be prioritised if certain sites become the location of future economic and infrastructural development in North Korea. The range of judicial and non-judicial activities aimed at pursuing truth, justice and non-

**Exhumations are
always powerful
interventions.**

2. Sarah A. Son et al., "Mapping Crimes Against Humanity in North Korea: Mass Graves, Killing Sites and Documentary Evidence" (Seoul: Transitional Justice Working Group, July 2017), [https://en.tjwg.org/TJWG_Report-Mapping_Crimes_Against_Humanity_in_North_Korea\(July2017\)-Eng_Final.pdf](https://en.tjwg.org/TJWG_Report-Mapping_Crimes_Against_Humanity_in_North_Korea(July2017)-Eng_Final.pdf).

3. International humanitarian law outlines the obligations to search for the dead victims of conflict or other violent situations, to maintain their dignity, identify and return remains to families, note the location of gravesites, and facilitate access to victims and gravesites (Pierre Guyomarc'h and Derek Congram, "Mass Fatalities, Mass Graves, and the *Forensic Investigation of International Crimes*," in *Forensic Anthropology: A Comprehensive Introduction*, ed. N.R. Langley and M.T.A. Tersigni-Tarrant, 2nd Ed (Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2017), 335-45).

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Godofredo Pereira, "EX-HUMUS: Collective Politics from Below," *Dispatches Journal*, no. 1 (February 15, 2019), <http://dispatchesjournal.org/articles/ex-humus/>.

recurrence of atrocities, constitutes a **transitional justice process**.⁷

Mapping the locations of atrocities with geographical coordinates adds a layer of data that can be especially helpful in gaining a comprehensive understanding of abuses that have taken place in the DPRK over many decades. Although mapping and testimonial data gathered by human rights organisations cannot generally serve as ‘evidence’ in a criminal law sense, it does provide leads for those with the requisite authority to start looking for evidence. Geographical mapping supports and adds to data from narrative testimonies in a number of ways:

- Geographical coordinates provide an **easily visible starting point for targeted investigations** both now and in the future;
- A Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology makes it easy to **view and analyse those coordinates and their relationships to spatial and other variables**. For instance, a GIS technology allows adding and removing layers of data by date, associated charges or information about the source of the report, in conjunction with spatial aspects like proximity to certain government facilities. **With properly coded data the possibilities for analysis are vast**;
- Geographical mapping of sites connected to human rights abuses and violations of international law **provides critical information related to patterns of killing and burial that are often not visible in interviewee testimonies**. Data such as site elevation, relationships to neighbouring sites, proximity to roads and other infrastructure, and natural features in the landscape are all elements of the “**spatial thinking**” that can help investigators understand behaviours around state-sanctioned killings and body disposal, including when modelling potential burial site locations;⁸

7. The United Nations defines transitional justice as “the full set of processes and mechanisms associated with a society’s attempts to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuse, in order to secure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation” (UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict and Post-conflict societies, UN Doc. S/2004/616 (2004), iii, para.8).

8. Derek Congram, Michael Kenyhercz, and Arthur Gill Green, “Grave Mapping in Support of the Search for Missing Persons in Conflict Contexts.” *Forensic Science International*, vol.278 (September 2017): 260, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forsciint.2017.07.021>; for examples of pioneering work in this area, see Eyel Weizman, *Forensic Architecture: Violence at the Threshold of Detectability*, (Boston: MIT Press, 2019).

- Future work to investigate crimes believed to have been committed in North Korea will involve **preservation of certain sites as crime scenes**. Knowing the location of such sites on a map, along with an understanding of the surrounding environment, increases the likelihood of securing protection for such sites at an early stage in a transition process, while also providing information about on-the-ground limitations to investigations ahead of time, such as access and cost;⁹
- Adding geographical mapping as part of the event documentation process offers the potential to garner **support from mapping specialists**, who have experience in other contexts and can bring valuable expertise to analysis of North Korean human rights issues. For instance, an experienced analyst with access to relevant high-resolution imagery may be able to corroborate or rule out a given interpretation of events;¹⁰
- For advocacy and awareness-raising, **geospatial mapping provides a visual element to testimonies** which are usually unaccompanied by images due to the closed nature of North Korea. In today's visually-oriented media environment, this can increase the exposure of the accompanying narratives, adding an additional channel to make the extent of the issues known.¹¹

Alongside the Mapping Project, TJWG has conducted research with the North Korean escapee community in South Korea to gain an understanding of the needs that arise from the experience of abuses committed by the DPRK. We also explore what 'accountability' means to this community. This research has found a firm desire to know the fate of loved ones missing or killed, as well as a wish to see the truth told about the situation in North Korea.¹²

9. Susan R. Wolfenbarger, "Remote Sensing as a Tool for Human Rights Fact-Finding," in *The Transformation of Human Rights Fact Finding* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 466.

10. See the work by the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) employing satellite imagery analysis: <https://www.hrnk.org/publications/hrnk-publications.php>.

11. "Visualising Information for Advocacy" (The Netherlands: Tactical Technology Collective, 2014), https://visualisingadvocacy.org/sites/drawingbynumbers.ttc.io/files/VIFA_singlepage_small.pdf.

12. Sarah A. Son, "Exploring Grassroots Transitional Justice: North Korean Escapee Views on Accountability for Human Rights Abuses" (Seoul: Transitional Justice Working Group, February 2019), https://en.tjwg.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/TJWG_Survey_Report-Exploring_Grassroots_Transitional_Justice_North_Korean_Escapee_VIEWSFebruary2019-Eng.pdf.

LIMITATIONS

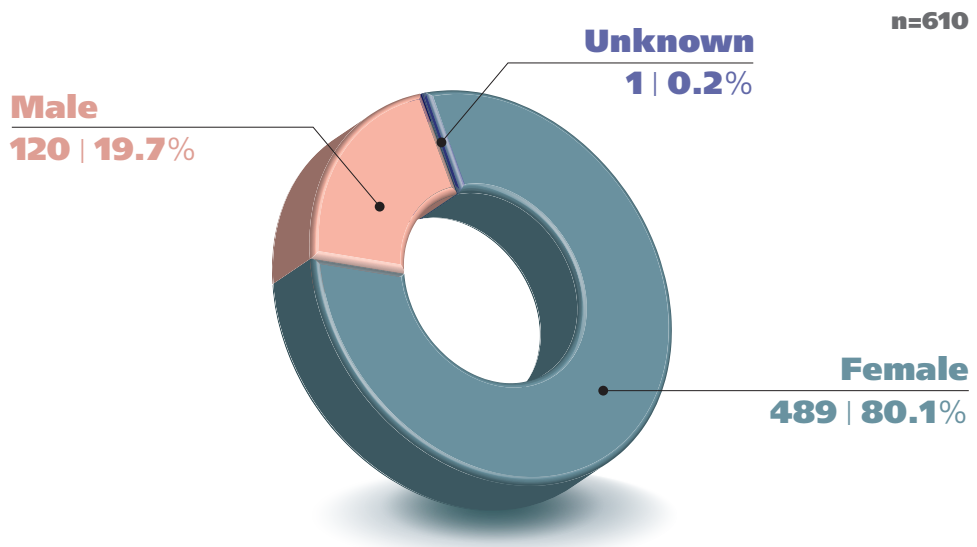
The findings in this report are not definitive, primarily due to the fact that we do not have direct access to the country and cannot visit sites we have been told about or easily find other potential witnesses from the area. A number of civil society, government and international organisations are collecting incident-based accounts of human rights abuses.¹³ Our focus on location-based documentation (mapping) is designed to complement existing human rights documentation initiatives, while providing credible methods of mapping the locations of infrastructure, events and evidentiary leads mentioned in interviewee testimonies. We do not evaluate the criminal, civil, administrative or legislative remedies which might apply to specific sites and the events which are believed to have occurred there. Nor do we attempt to predict when or how a political transition may occur in North Korea, of the kind that would allow a transitional justice process to be implemented. However, in the interests of preparedness, we intend to use the data to support the ongoing effort to pursue accountability for human rights abuses, and to support future, post-transition activities focused on redress for the abuses carried out in North Korea.

13. These include the South Korean government's Center for North Korean Human Rights Records, the Database Center for North Korean Human Rights (NKDB), the UN Human Rights Office (Seoul) and the Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU). The data gathered by the Center for North Korean Human Rights Records under the Ministry of Unification (established by the 2016 North Korean Human Rights Act) is transferred to the North Korean Human Rights Documentation Office in the Ministry of Justice for legal analysis. However, since the inauguration of the Moon Jae In government in 2017, the activities of both these bodies have largely stalled and they have yet to publish a report (조재연, "북한인권기록센터 출범 2년 넘도록 보고서 한편도 안 낸것은 직무유기", [Jaeyeon Cho, "Failing to meet their commitments, Center for North Korean Human Rights Records has not published a report since its establishment over 2 years ago"] *Munwhailbo*, April 26, 2019, <http://www.munhwa.com/news/view.html?no=2019042601071327328001>).

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

The participant sample for this research is drawn from the North Korean escapee community in South Korea.¹⁴ This group is not representative of the population in the DPRK, given the biases present in the escapee population (see Methodology).¹⁵

Chart 1 **Participant Gender**



14. The term “escapee” has been chosen for this report on the basis of the evolving preferences of the North Korean community who have left North Korea. The terms “defector” and “refugee” are also commonly used, although there is no single agreed-upon term.

15. For a recent analysis of the methodological challenges associated with conducting research with the North Korean escapee population see Jay Song and Steven Denney, “Studying North Korea through North Korean migrants: lessons from the field”, *Critical Asian Studies*, (2019), <https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2019.1611462>.

Chart 2 **Participant Age**

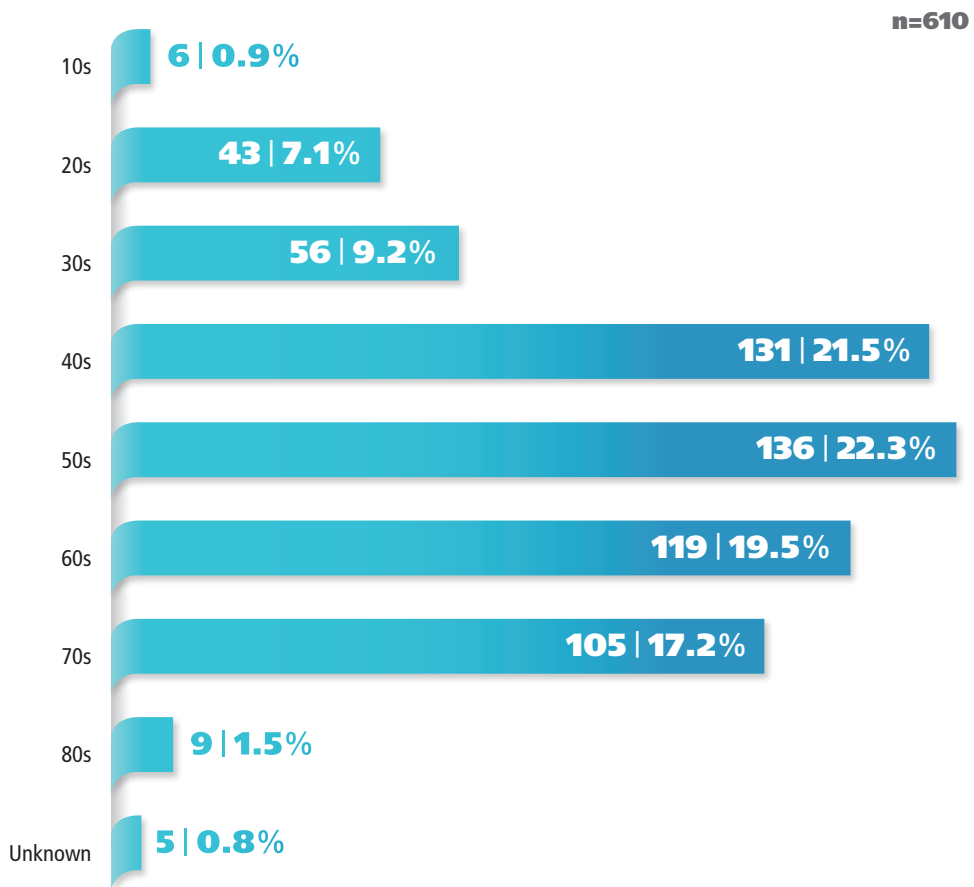
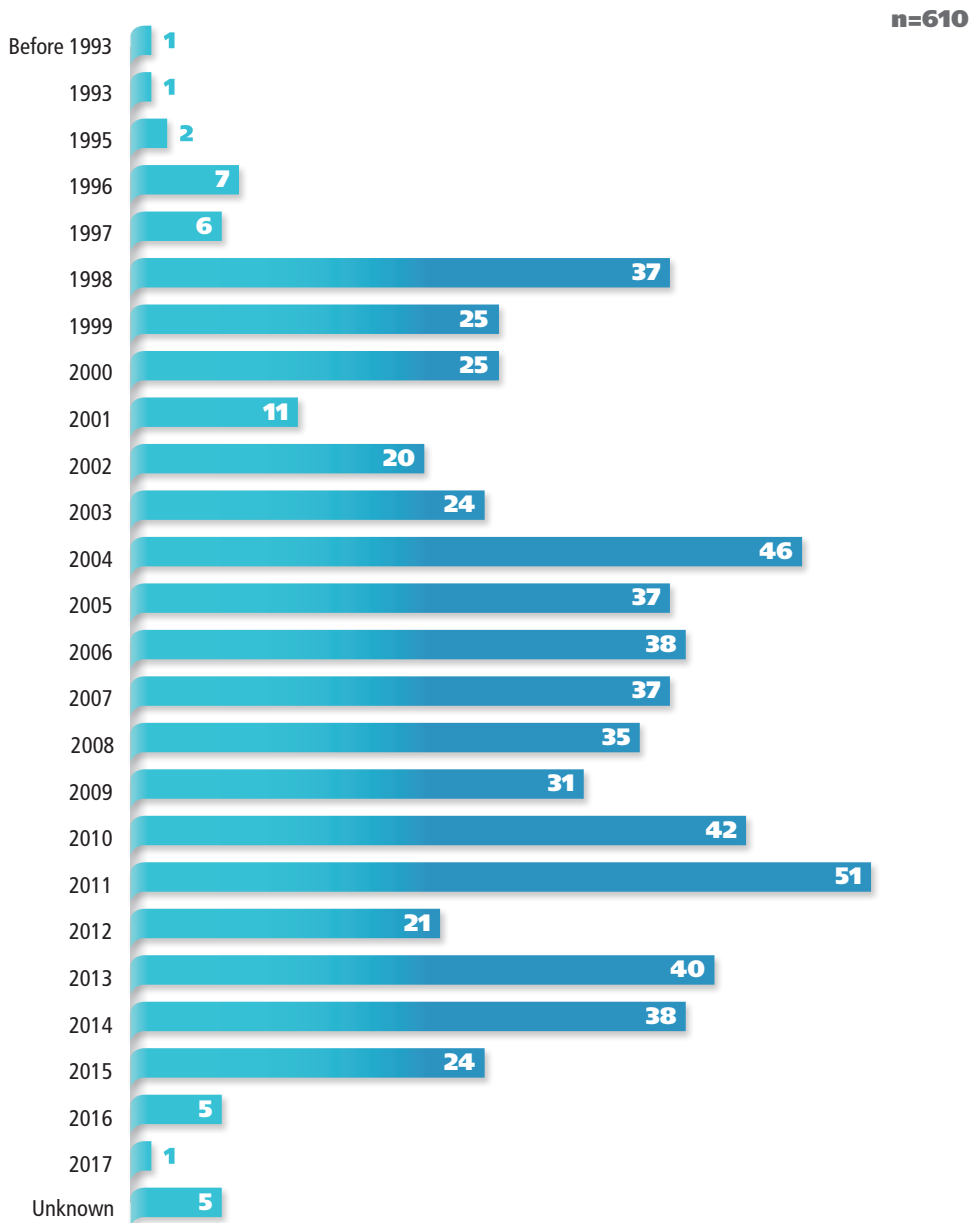
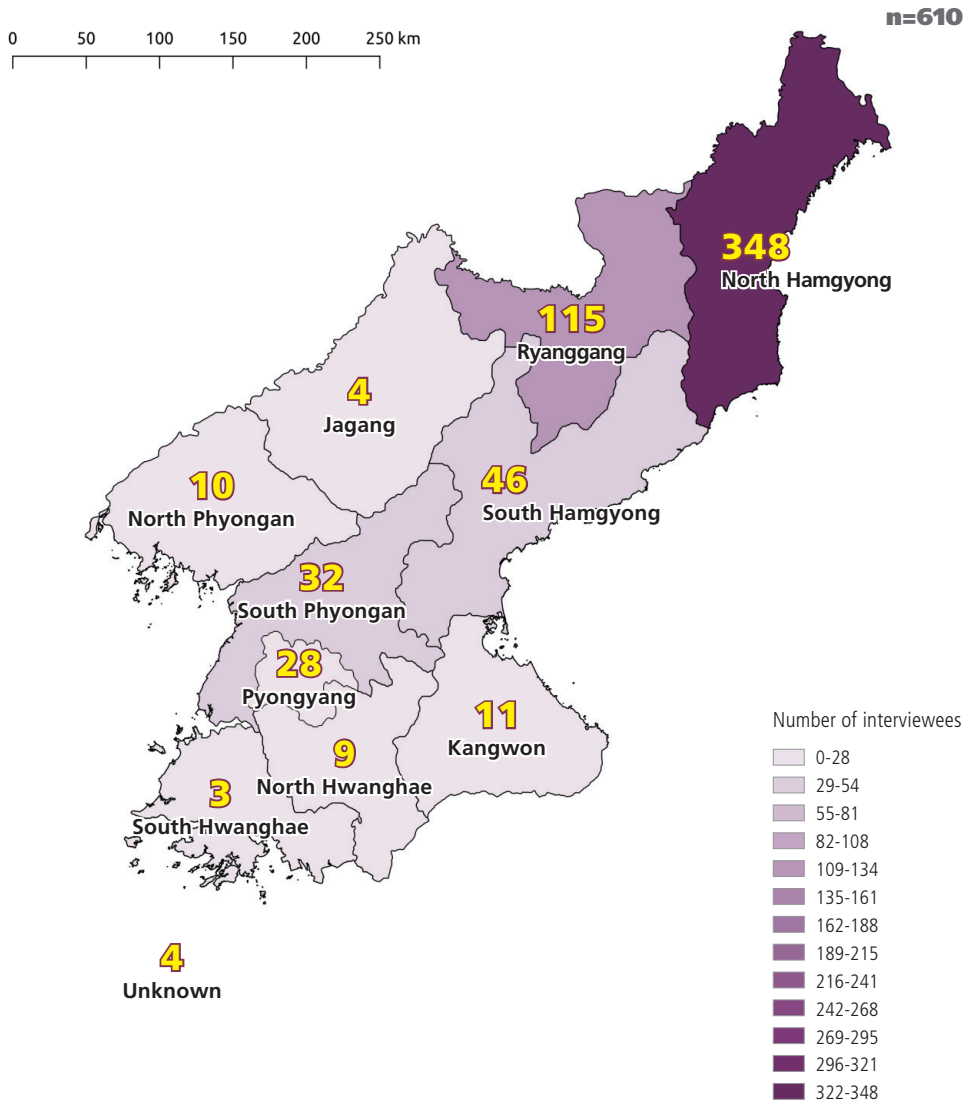


Chart 3 Year of Last Escape¹⁶



16. As of March 2019, the total number of North Koreans to defect to South Korea was 32,705: 28% of those are men, and 72% are women. This number reflects the total who have entered South Korea; however, some of these individuals have left the South to settle in third countries or may have passed away since first arriving, hence the actual number resident in the South is slightly lower. Several defectors have also returned or are alleged to have been abducted and returned to North Korea. “북한이탈주민정책” 통일부 [“Policy on North Korean Defectors,” Ministry of Unification, Republic of Korea], 2019, <https://www.unikorea.go.kr/unikorea/business/NKDefectorsPolicy/status/latest/>.

Map 1 Province of Primary Residence¹⁷



17. Nampo City (남포시) is classified together with South Pyongan (평안남도), and Kaesong City (개성시) is classified together with North Hwanghae (황해북도). Province borders generated using GADM 2.8 data from Global Administrative Areas (<http://www.gadm.org/>), but modified to conform with the 10 top-level administrative areas (nine provinces and the city of Pyongyang) and their spellings used by North Korea (DPR Korea 2008 Population Census: National Report, Central Bureau of Statistics, Pyongyang, DPR Korea, 2009, https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/wphc/North_Korea/Final%20national%20census%20report.pdf).

In our 2017 report we displayed our data using the geographic coordinate system WGS 84 (EPSG:4326), which is a common format for mapping data that Google Earth and many others use, but for this report we have transformed all data to WGS 84/UTM Zone 52N (EPSG:32652), which does a much better job preserving the shape of North Korea and its provinces when making maps and allows for more accurate distance measurements.

METHODOLOGY

Organisations collecting data through interviews with North Korean escapees face a number of challenges in sampling the escapee population, in addition to limits on resources and the institutional environment.¹⁸ Our research process involves sourcing interviewees by referral from the North Korean escapee community in South Korea (a snowball, or convenience sample).¹⁹ **This means that the information provided by the participants cannot be assumed to be representative of the knowledge and experiences of the entire North Korean population.**

Data collection to date has not been targeted at investigation of any specific event, location or time period. We record information on the three site types regardless of the time, date or place in the DPRK, in order to see where patterns may begin to emerge through the clustering of geographical points, providing direction for targeted, investigative interviews later in the research process. Participants are shown satellite images from Google Earth with only basic information to help orient them, such as town and city names and

18. Similar limitations affect organisations globally when adopting GIS technologies (“Promoting Accountability in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea,” Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (Geneva: Human Rights Council, March 7, 2019), 4-5, https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session40/Documents/A_HRC_40_36.docx; Wolfenbarger, 2016, 463-477; “Broadly Accepted Practices Regarding the Use of Geospatial Technologies for Human Rights,” AAAS *Geospatial Technologies Project* (American Association for the Advancement of Science, October 24, 2016), https://www.aaas.org/sites/default/files/s3fs-public/Broadly%2520Accepted%2520Practices_GTP_HRDT.pdf).

19. The non-random nature of the sample means that findings presented in this report are not representative of the experiences of the North Korean population as a whole and there are certain biases present. For example, our interviewees consisted of around 8 percent more women than the North Korean escapee population in South Korea, which is already very high, at 72 percent (“북한이탈주민정책” [“Policy on North Korean Defectors”], 2019). More women tend to escape North Korea as, unlike men, they are less often required to attend state employment, and may find it easier to leave unnoticed (Jihae Lee and George Swartz, “‘Jangmadang Generation’ at the Core of Change in NK,” *Daily NK*, July 6, 2015, <http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?num=13323&catald=nk02501>).

railway stations.²⁰ Beginning with an area where they have either resided or with which they are very familiar, the researcher asks a range of questions about the specific types of sites and events we seek to identify. Interviewees are asked to point out the locations of the events they describe on the satellite imagery, without being led by the researcher. If they cannot pinpoint a location, no geographical coordinates are recorded, although descriptive details of the location will be kept for future analysis and further interviews.

For the findings shown in this report, we have applied a higher standard for counting site reports than was applied in our previous report. First, the site report figures provided **are from interviewee testimonies which come from what we term *relatively high information source types***. These consist of events the interviewee witnessed directly (first-hand), where they heard the information directly from a person who witnessed the event (second-hand), or from another source assessed as being credible by both the interviewee and the researcher. The large majority of reports from the interviews processed so far fall into this category. Reports we designate as being from *relatively low information source types* at this time include those based on rumour or speculation by the interviewee.²¹ Second, given that the focus of the research is on geographical mapping, the site report figures presented here also include **primarily those reports for which we have been given geographical coordinates by the interviewees**. A lack of coordinates results from instances where the interviewee is unable to inform the researcher of a specific location on the satellite imagery. For some of the anecdotes and descriptions of less common site categories in this report, we include event information for which we do not have accompanying geographical coordinates. As shown in later sections of the report, site data which is assessed as being from a lower information

20. This information comes from pre-existing, publicly available base maps created by Curtis Melvin: North Korea Uncovered, Version 18, June 25, 2009, <http://www.nkeconwatch.com/north-korea-uncovered-google-earth/>; OpenStreetMap, <https://www.openstreetmap.org/#map=14/41.4089/128.1953>; The 38 North DPRK Digital Atlas, <http://38northdigitalatlas.org/>; and an online map produced by South Korea's National Geographic Information Institute, <http://map.ngii.go.kr/ms/map/NlipMap.do>.

21. This is similar to the methodology followed by the Korea Institute for National Unification in their reporting on North Korean human rights issues, which includes information on events witnessed directly, as well as hearsay, specifically for data on the prison camp system (Kyung-ok Do et al. *2017 White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea* (Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification, 2017), 39).

source type at this stage, or which does not come with geographical coordinates, serves as supporting information for other data where versions of events overlap.

During the course of our research, we have continually sought to improve our methodology. Some of the early data has yet to be coded according to our new standards, which is especially important regarding the information source type. As we process more of the early data, the information source type of some reports will likely be upgraded. Our first report (2017) presented site figures for all interviewee reports, regardless of the information source type (see Appendix 1 for a visual explanation of the process for refining the figures).

As the majority of our participants come from the northern-most provinces of the country, geographic distribution of our data is mostly in these areas (76% of our participants come from North Hamgyong and Ryanggang provinces).²²

As the majority of our participants come from the northern-most provinces of the country, geographic distribution of our data is mostly in these areas.

All site figures presented in this report reflect **the number of reports recorded from research participants and are not de-duplicated or consolidated at this time**. De-duplicating reports of events requires site-by-site analysis of both the location data and the recorded narratives. Many of the sites we record have been used for a large number of public executions, spanning decades. Memories of executions can be old or confused with other events, resulting in insufficient specificity in the testimony to match them with other testimonies for de-duplication. However, while de-duplication is not possible at this stage (and can never be definitive without direct access to North Korea), sometimes certain stories overlap in ways which suggest a high likelihood that multiple participants are referring to the same event. Looking at the specific locations on the maps provides another dimension which can help clarify suspicions or suggest where further research is needed. This provides helpful leads for

22. For comparison, the Korea Institute of National Unification's 2017 White Paper stated that 82% of its research participants came from North Hamgyong and Ryanggang provinces, (Ibid. 36).

targeted investigations, either within our own research, between organisations sharing data, or in the case of future fact-finding following a transition in North Korea.

Table 1 shows features of reports from eight different interviewees regarding public executions that overlapped with each other in a number of aspects. The white cells show where an aspect of the report overlaps with the majority of the other reports; the shading shows where a report differs from the majority of others; and the black shows where we do not have information. The accompanying maps show the geographical cluster of the coordinates associated with the reports. Each dot on the map is representative of a single report of a public execution and its geographical location.²³ The red dot on each map corresponds with the geographical coordinates identified by the interviewee listed at the top of the map. One report that was heard second hand did not come with coordinates and is thus absent from the maps (Interviewee 3).

By comparing the details of these events side-by-side and looking at the precise coordinates on the map, we can make a tentative judgement as to which reports we believe are the same event, and which we believe to be different events. In this case, we believe that four of the reports are likely to be about the same event. The final map shows the dots (in green) which we assess as likely being the same event, pending further investigation. Minus the report which did not come with coordinates, the three green dots we believe to be the same event are within 600 metres of each other. This would seem some distance, except that this location is an open space with no nearby buildings to orient the witness when viewed from above.

Initially, we also considered whether the report from Interviewee 5 may have been the same event; however, viewing the satellite image showed a degree of proximity to buildings which would be difficult to mistake. It is also another 550 meters from the nearest green dot. This, along with the discrepancies in the

23. At this time, the underlying topography of this location cannot be revealed on account of the risk that an effort may be made by the North Korean authorities to clear or tamper with the site. As will be seen later on in this report, the North Korean regime has cleared burial sites in the past, to reduce their visibility.

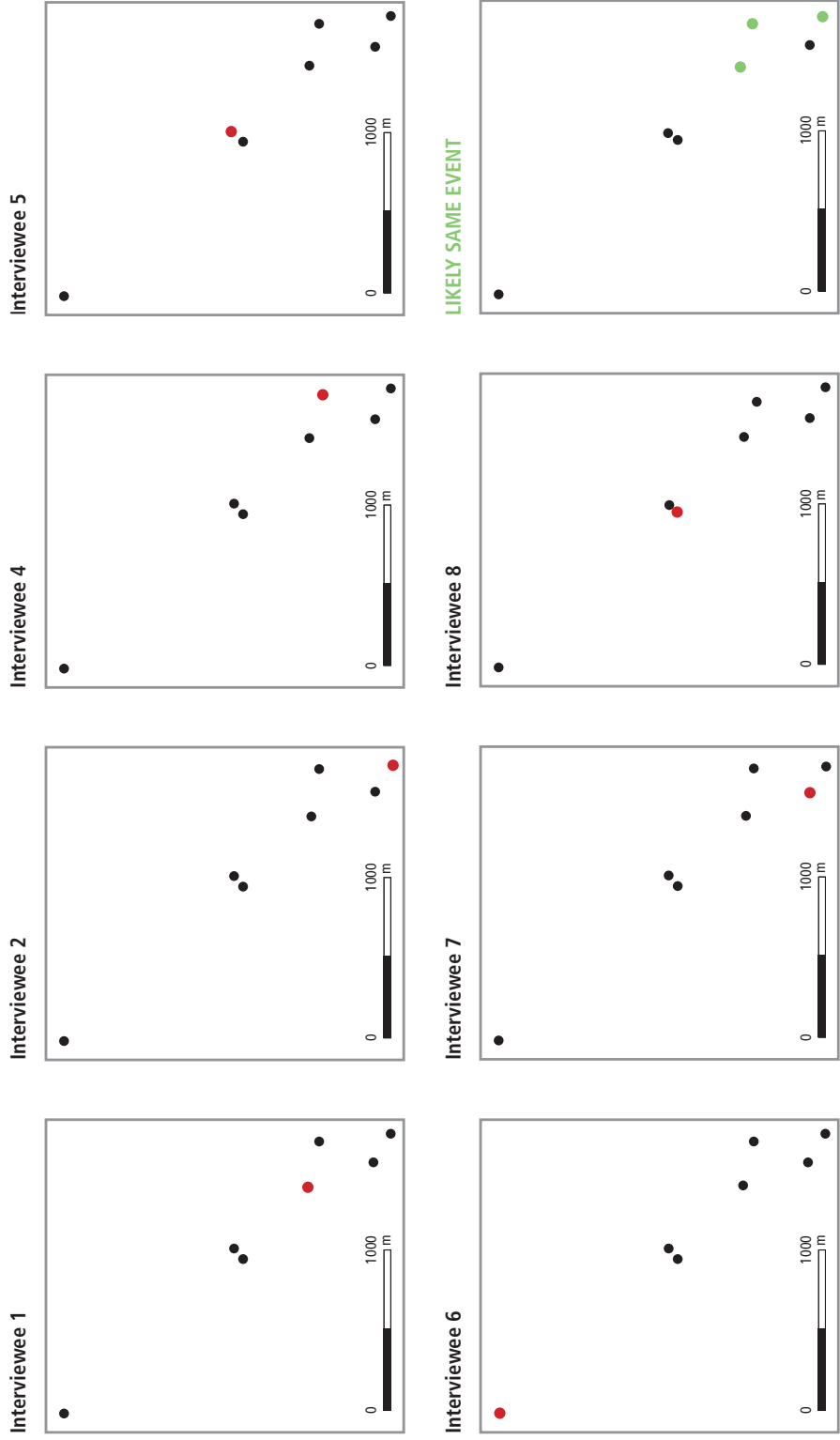
testimony, led to us ruling this report out.

This is one way of attempting to de-duplicate reports of events, especially at sites such as this one, which our data shows has been the location of public executions of varying size and for different charges since the 1960s.

Table 1 Cross-Referencing Reports of Killing Sites

Report	Consistent			Inconsistent			No information		
	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5	Interviewee 6	Interviewee 7	Interviewee 8	
Location	Province A, City A	Province A, City A	Province A, City A	Province A, City A	Province A, City A	Province A, City A	Province A, City A	Province A, City A	
Site type	Near site type A	Near site type A	Near site type A	Near site type A	Near site type B	Near site type C	Near site type A	Near site type B	
Geographical coordinates provided	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Date of execution	2013 July, 2pm (summer)	2014 June, 12pm	2013 (summer)	2013 (summer)	2013 July or August (summer)	2013 June	2014 June	2014 (spring)	
Who executed	Two men (40s) (leaders of ring)	Two men (leader of ring)	Two men and one woman	Two men (leaders of the ring)	One man (40s) (leader of ring)	Five men	Six men and women	One man	
Charges for executed individuals	Watching South Korean video, organising prostitution	Watching South Korean video, organising prostitution	Watching South Korean video, organising prostitution	Watching pornography and organising prostitution	Watching South Korean video, organising prostitution	Watching South Korean dramas with women	Illegal crossing, human trafficking to China	Brokering forced marriage	
Others on trial	15 female prostitutes	18 female prostitutes	No information	No information	8 female prostitutes	No information	10 women (illegal crossing)	No information	
Sentence for others on trial	None, pardoned	Not executed, maybe given labour camp sentences	No information	No information	Labour camp	No one was pardoned	None, pardoned	No information	
Execution method	Firing squad	Firing squad	Firing squad	Firing squad	Firing squad	Firing squad	Firing squad	Firing squad	
Memorable aspects	When pardoned, the women cheered, "Long live Kim Jong Un"; Crowd were searched with hand-held metal detector, mobile phones confiscated during event and returned	Crowd were searched with hand-held metal detector, mobile phones confiscated during event and returned	No information	No information	No information	No information	No information	No information	
Information source type	Interviewee directly witnessed the event	Interviewee directly witnessed the event	Interviewee heard about event from a direct witness	Interviewee directly witnessed the event	Interviewee directly witnessed the event	Interviewee directly witnessed the event	Interviewee directly witnessed the event	Interviewee heard about event from someone else	
Age at time of interview	60s	40s	20s	60s	30s	60s	30s	30s	
Date of interviewee escape	Mid 2010s	Mid 2010s	Mid 2010s	Mid 2010s	Mid 2010s	Mid 2010s	Mid 2010s	Mid 2010s	
Determination	Likely same event	Likely same event	Likely same event	Likely same event	Different event	Different event	Different event	Different event	

Map 2 Cross-Referencing Reports of Killing Sites



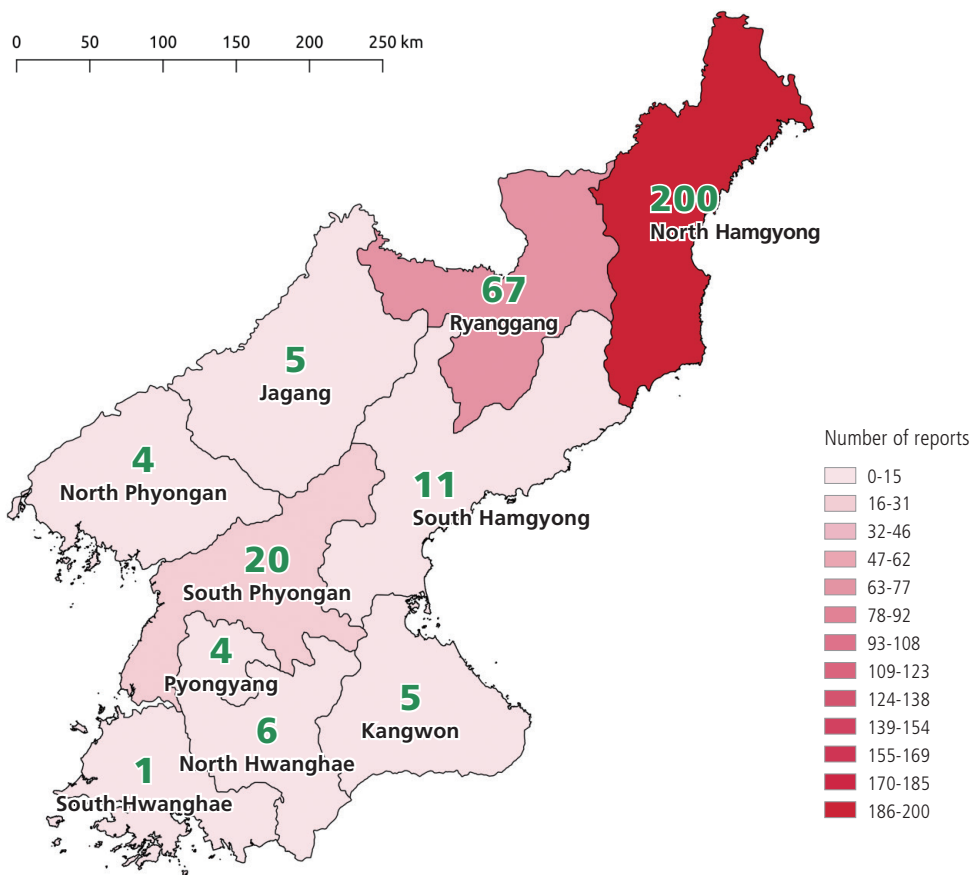
The following sections of the report present selected mapping data and information gathered during the interviews, as they are relevant to the three main site types that are the focus of our research: state-sanctioned killing sites, body disposal sites and sites where documents connected to these events may be kept. The information presented throughout has been anonymised to protect the informants.

SITES OF STATE-SANCTIONED KILLINGS IN NORTH KOREA

Reports of killing site locations

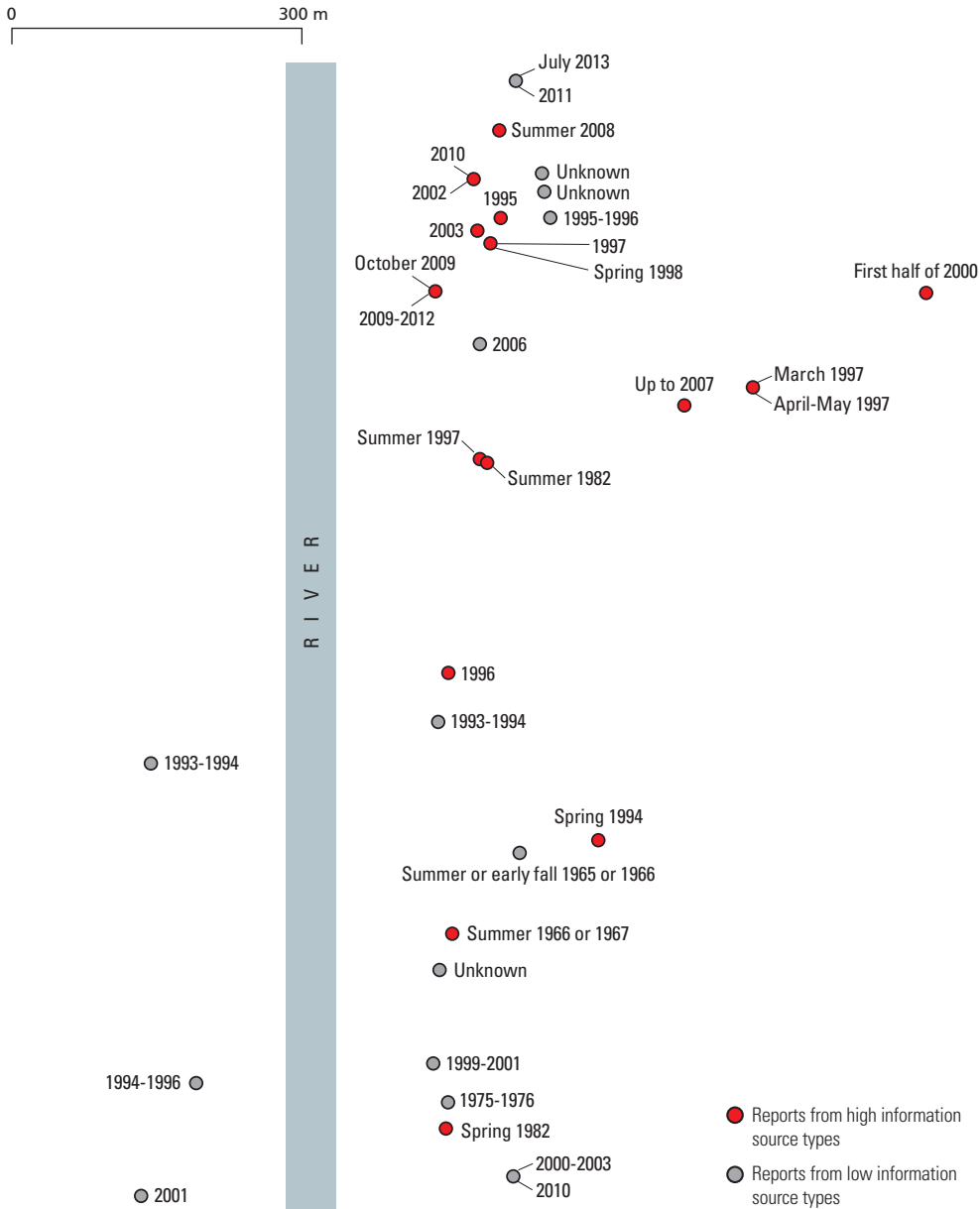
We recorded 323 reports of killing sites that are from relatively high information source types, and for which we have geographical coordinates, as shown in Map 3. The following sections break down the types and circumstances of the killings and other deaths for which the state is reportedly responsible.

Map 3 Reports of Killing Sites by Province



Map 4 Reports of River Bank Public Execution Sites

This image shows an area on and nearby a river bank where we recorded 35 reports of public executions which were reported to have taken place in every decade since the 1960s. These reported executions included six hangings, but the remainder were executions by firing squad.



The death penalty in North Korea

In late 2018, TJWG made a submission to the UN Human Rights Council's Third Cycle Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the DPRK's human rights record that focused on the death penalty and executions in the DPRK. The submission highlighted the many ways in which the DPRK's death penalty and executions, including the lack of fair trials for capital crimes and public executions, violate international human rights standards. These violations also include forcing witnesses to watch executions.²⁴ Despite repeated requests for statistics on the application of the death penalty from UN member states, the DPRK has refused to provide figures. It has acknowledged that "executions [are] not open to the public in principle" but "public executions may occur only in exceptional cases, where the crime committed was exceptionally grave".²⁵ At the latest UPR session on 9 May 2019, the DPRK has maintained that the death sentences are "very rarely... executed in public in serious consideration [sic] of the strong request of the victims' family and people concerned that the criminal be executed in their presence."²⁶ These statements raise the question as to how, when and where *non*-public executions occur. It also raises the question as to how the DPRK defines "exceptionally grave", given the variety of relatively minor offenses recorded in our data as meriting to the imposition of capital punishment. A table breaking down the aspects of the DPRK's use of the death penalty, which violate established international law can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

Our data contains very few reports about non-public executions as a method of carrying out the death penalty. Public executions, by contrast, are widely

24. Transitional Justice Working Group et al. "The Need to Clarify the Procedure and Government Organs responsible for the Executions of Capital Punishment, the Disposal of Bodies of Executed Persons, and the Notification of the Cause and Manner of Death to Their Family Members in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) - Joint Submission to the Human Rights Council at the 33rd Session of the Universal Periodic Review", (4 October 2018).

25. Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Democratic People's Republic of Korea, UN Doc. A/HRC/27/10, 2 July 2014, para. 117, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/HRC/27/10.

26. Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Democratic People's Republic of Korea, UN Doc. A/HRC/13/13, 4 January 2010, para. 88, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/HRC/13/13; Statement by H.E. Mr. Han Tae Song, Ambassador in Geneva of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (Comments and Answers), *Democratic People's Republic of Korea Review – 33rd Session of the Universal Periodic Review*, 9 May 2019, <http://webtv.un.org/search/democratic-people%E2%80%99s-republic-of-korea-review-33rd-session-of-universal-periodic-review/6034760474001/?term=&lan=english&page=4> [1:46:53-1:47:13].

reported. Our findings support existing reports from other organisations that the frequency of public executions may change according to state orders. One interviewee stated that in Pyongyang from 1985 to the mid-1990s, every Sunday, one or two persons would be executed by firing squad and occasionally by hanging, usually in the local marketplace. Although the family of the person executed would often be present at executions, they were not allowed to collect the remains afterwards. The interviewee reported once seeing a body left hanging for 3-4 hours after the execution for public display by the Ministry of People's Security (*anjeonbu*/안전부; currently, *inminboanseong*/인민보안성). As the leader of the local People's Unit (*inminbanjang*/인민반장) at the time, the interviewee also reported that in the early 1990s, the chilling pronouncement from Kim Jong Il (who was soon to become his father's successor), became the norm nationwide: "Let's hear the sound of guns". It was reported that from that time there was a notable increase in public executions, where even "starving people who stole corn from farms were shot".²⁷

"Let's hear the sound of guns."

- Kim Jong Il

Lack of fair trial and due process rights

According to the DPRK's submission ahead of the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review in May 2019,

...in accordance with the Criminal Procedure Law all trials are open to the public. Where there is a danger that a national secret or personal secret would be revealed or there is a fear of exercising a negative effect on society, a trial is closed to the public totally or partially. Even when the court hearing is not open to the public, the sentence is made public.²⁸

Interviewees stated that public executions were usually preceded by on-site summary trials. However, consistent with reports from other organisations, fair trial rights such as "the right to be informed about charges, access to a lawyer,

²⁷. The North Korea Strategy Center reported that in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when the effects of the North Korean famine were still being felt, "Kim Jong-il instructed his high-ranking officers that it was time to wield gunfire toward those trying to break socialism" (Dong-sik Kim, "Executions and Purges of North Korean Elites: An Investigation into Genocide Based on High-Ranking Officials' Testimonies" (North Korea Strategy Center, 2019), 92).

²⁸. National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21: Democratic People's Republic of Korea, UN Doc. A/HRC/WG.6/33/PRK/1, 20 February 2019, para. 28, <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/WG.6/33/PRK/1>.

and the right to be presented before a judge were either denied altogether or offered as a mere gesture”.²⁹ In many instances, interviewees stated that the arrangements for a public execution were in place at the time of the trial, indicating that the death sentence was a foregone conclusion.³⁰

At the pre-trial summary trials described by interviewees, there were no lawyers and only rarely judges present. More often, only officers from the Ministry of People’s Security or, less commonly, officers from the Ministry of State Security (*bowibu*/보위부; currently, *gukga anjeon bowiseong*/국가안전보위성), were present to announce the charge(s) and the sentence. The accused were very often severely injured, or “half dead” on arrival and were dragged by officers from a vehicle to the trial site. We also recorded a number of events in which only a trial took place, without the subsequent execution.

The accused were routinely severely injured, or “half dead” on arrival.

Offenses punishable by the death penalty

As recently confirmed by the UN Human Rights Office in Seoul, the DPRK still prosecutes political crimes labelled as “crimes against the state” or “crimes against the nation”. These encompass extremely broad, vague and indeterminate categories of conduct that effectively make the criminal justice system subservient to political objectives, including the preservation of the state’s ideology.³¹

Common charges for public executions reported in our data included **stealing**

29. “Promoting Accountability in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea”, para. 39.

30. Research by KINU also finds that trials carried out prior to public executions are “only perfunctory” and that “the existence of such trials may not be particularly meaningful” (Kyung-ok Do et al., 2017, 45); North Korea’s criminal code states that criminal proceedings begin with an investigation, followed by a preliminary procedure or pre-trial period (*yeshim*/예심). After this comes the indictment and then a first and second trial to determine the sentence and carry out punishment. However, it is thought that this pre-trial period (*yeshim*), often undertaken by the Ministry of State Security (*gukga bowiseong*), is in fact a period of interrogation, torture and even forced confession, which does not reflect due legal process (Dong Hui Mun, “Inmate Executed for Murdering Guard at Jongori Correctional Labor Camp,” *Daily NK*, January 17, 2019, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/inmate-executed-for-murdering-guard-at-jongori-correctional-labor-camp/>).

31. “Promoting Accountability in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea”, para. 41.

copper (usually wire) and livestock (specifically cows), human trafficking, murder and rape, illegal trading (primarily smuggling goods to and from China), and, less commonly, “anti-state” activities and illegal crossing into China. Reports were also made of individuals being charged with manufacturing, selling or taking drugs, leading to a sentence of public execution. Some of those reports described other charges being made concurrently with drug charges, such as smuggling goods to and from China, but other reports stated that the executions were for drug charges alone. A number of times, interviewees mentioned that individuals were sentenced to death for watching South Korean media of various kinds, including in combination with other charges.³² The most recent report of individuals being charged with watching South Korean media before execution was from 2013/2014 (see Table 1). When grouped together, of the 715 mentions of charges resulting in death sentences, the category of charge that appeared most often was theft or damage to property, including food and livestock (238 mentions), followed by violent crime (115 mentions) and political crime (73 mentions). It should be noted, however, that given the lack of due process practiced in the North Korean judicial system, it is difficult to know whether the charges announced at an execution actually matched the act committed by the accused. For example, charges such as human trafficking may have been applied to individuals involved in brokering defection, while other charges may have been fabricated entirely because there is no fair trial process. Cannibalism as a charge was mentioned 20 times in the reports, with most of the executions associated with this charge having been witnessed directly by the interviewee (i.e. not hearsay). However, especially with a charge as grave as this, it is important for researchers to proceed with caution when speculating as to how often such a crime may have actually occurred.

A number of the interviewees emphasized that an accused person’s *songbun*/성분, or position in the social classification system assigned by the DPRK, can affect the type of punishment handed down. The *songbun* system designates all individuals as members of

Lesser charges can result in the death penalty if the person is of a lower class.

³² The North Korean Strategy Center also reported that in the late 1990s and early 2000s, under orders from Kim Jong-Il, those who had consumed media or films from capitalist states were investigated and executed (Kim, 2019, 92).

either the core, wavering or hostile classes. As a result, seemingly lesser charges can result in the death penalty if a person is of a lower class. One interviewee described an incident where members of the Ministry of People's Security and the Ministry of State Security allegedly needed to improve their performance records for promotion. The interviewee stated that the authorities deliberately targeted some low *songbun* members of the community and charged them with human trafficking, knowing these individuals would not have the money or personal connections to buy their freedom. The actual charges were thought by the interviewee to be different from what was formally announced (possibly illegal trading). Two people were executed.

Public executions

Our research has found 318 reports of public executions that are from relatively high information source types, and where the interviewee was able to provide us with geographical coordinates of the location. Of these reports, 294 described public execution by firing squad, 25 by hanging (all before 2005), and one by the use of hazardous chemicals.³³ 19 reports described the execution of 10 or more people at a time. Reports of executions of less than 10 people numbered 299 (see Appendix 1, Table 3).³⁴

Our research has recorded 318 reports of public executions that are from relatively high information source types.

Consistent with our first two years of research, public executions were described as occurring most commonly in places such as **river banks, open spaces and fields, market places, hills/mountains, sports grounds and school grounds**.³⁵ The size of the assembled crowd would vary, often in the hundreds of people, but a number of interviewees described seeing crowds of 1,000 or

33. Two reports include execution by firing squad and by hanging at the same event, hence these reports are counted twice: once under each execution type.

34. As above.

35. This list is in rank order, starting with the most mentions. In English, the word 산/*san* is usually translated as mountain, but it has broader meaning in Korean than it does in English, and includes smaller features like hills or slopes.

more in other instances.

A sample of our participants found that 83 percent had witnessed a public execution in their lifetime.³⁶ The number of times they witnessed an execution was up to 10, although most people had reported witnessing fewer than five executions. The age at which they saw such an event was as young as seven and as old as their late 60s. In addition, 53 percent of participants reported being forced by the authorities to watch an execution on one or more occasions.

83% had witnessed a public execution in their lifetime, 53% were forced by the authorities to watch on one or more occasions.

Many interviewees described seeing those brought for execution not only being “half dead” but also gagged and sometimes blindfolded. The most common method of carrying out a public execution is by firing squad. Since 2005, public hangings are reported to have ceased or at least decreased markedly in frequency, with some attributing this shift to international pressure to end the practice.³⁷ Interviewees regularly stated that the rules on public execution demand that three shooters fire three rounds each into the body of the condemned person, for a total of nine bullets.³⁸ The North Korean Strategy Center recently reported that methods of execution employed in Pyongyang, particularly for higher-ranking members of the regime, are designed to maximize public intimidation, in the knowledge that information about execution methods will spread throughout the country.³⁹ Executions also happen publicly inside the DPRK’s political prison camps (*gwalliso*). These may occur as a result of charges including damaging equipment, criticising the

Three shooters fire three rounds each into the body of the condemned person, for a total of nine bullets.

36. This was a convenience sample of 84 interview participants in Year 4 of the research. These questions will continue to be included in the survey as research progresses in Year 5.

37. “Pressure on the North Korean Human Rights Problem Is Effective”, *Daily NK*, January 26, 2005, <http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?catald=nk02100&num=13>.

38. NKDB asserted in its 2018 White Paper that while the method of public execution can vary, it is most often carried out by shooting. (임순희 외, *2018 북한인권백서*, (서울: 북한인권정보센터 부설 북한인권기록보존소, 2018) [Sunhee Im et al., *White Paper on North Korean Human Rights 2018*, (Seoul: NKDB North Korean Human Rights Archives)], 113-116); The North Korean Strategy Center also found nine AK Automatic rifle shots as the standard method of execution (Kim, 2019, 76).

39. Kim, 2019, 93.

DPRK leadership, attempting escape or theft.⁴⁰

Consistent with other research on public executions, killings are typically carried out by the Ministry of People's Security. Interviewees reported instances when those responsible for carrying out public executions appeared to be drunk. One interviewee stated that "this is because killing is a hard thing to do emotionally". We were also told of instances when those responsible for carrying out killings covered their faces and wore sunglasses, presumably to hide their identity.

Interviewees reported instances when those responsible for executions appeared to be drunk.

Public participation in executions

An interviewee reported attending a public execution in the 1960s that was "like a festival", with people handing out snacks and "cheerful music" playing. Such features are no longer present at executions. Rather, the atmosphere reflects the fact that these events are a core method of inciting fear and deterring citizens from engaging in activities deemed undesirable by the regime. In cases where the event happens in the local community, people are notified by the authorities about forthcoming executions around the town. In the various prison facilities, inmates can be summoned to watch as a targeted deterrence tactic. An interviewee who had spent time inside a disciplinary labour camp (*rodong dallyeondae*/로동단련대) in the early 2000s described seeing around 80 inmates being forced to watch the execution of three women charged with brokering escapes from North Korea. The inmates had all been caught trying to cross to China or had been repatriated from China. A Ministry of People's Security officer said to the 80 onlookers, "This

40. 윤여상, 이자은, 한선영, *북한 정치범수용소 운영체계와 인권실태* (서울: 북한인권정보센터 부설 북한인권기록보존소, 2011) [Yeosang Yoon, Jaeun Lee, Seonyeong Han, *Operating systems and human rights situation of North Korean prison camps* (NKDB North Korean Human Rights Archives)], 482-496; KINU estimated in 2013 that between 80,000 and 120,000 political criminals are imprisoned in the five political prison camps (*gwalliso*) in operation in North Korea. This was based on escapee testimonies and evaluation of satellite photos (이금순, 김수암, 이규창, *북한 정치범수용소* (서울: 통일연구원, 2013) [Keum-soon Lee, Soo-am Kim, Kyu-chang Lee, *Political Prison Camps in North Korea* (Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification)], 19-21, <https://www.unikorea.go.kr/nkhr/data/research/?mode=view&cntId=53146>).

could happen to you”. In a report from the late 2000s, at a military execution, soldiers were forced to line up to walk past and watch an executed soldier’s mangled body “as a warning”.

Consistent with our survey findings, interview participants said that they were not always forced to attend public executions that took place in towns and cities. Many participants who witnessed public executions simply attended out of curiosity. However, a number of reports described the family members of those sentenced to public execution being forced to watch the event, including children. In one instance, the wife of a man about to be executed for taking drugs was forced by members of the Ministry of State Security to shout at her husband as he waited to be shot, “You bastard! How dare you betray this country?”

We recorded several reports of state officials attempting to monitor citizens in attendance during public executions. A number of research participants mentioned plain-clothes security officers taking up positions

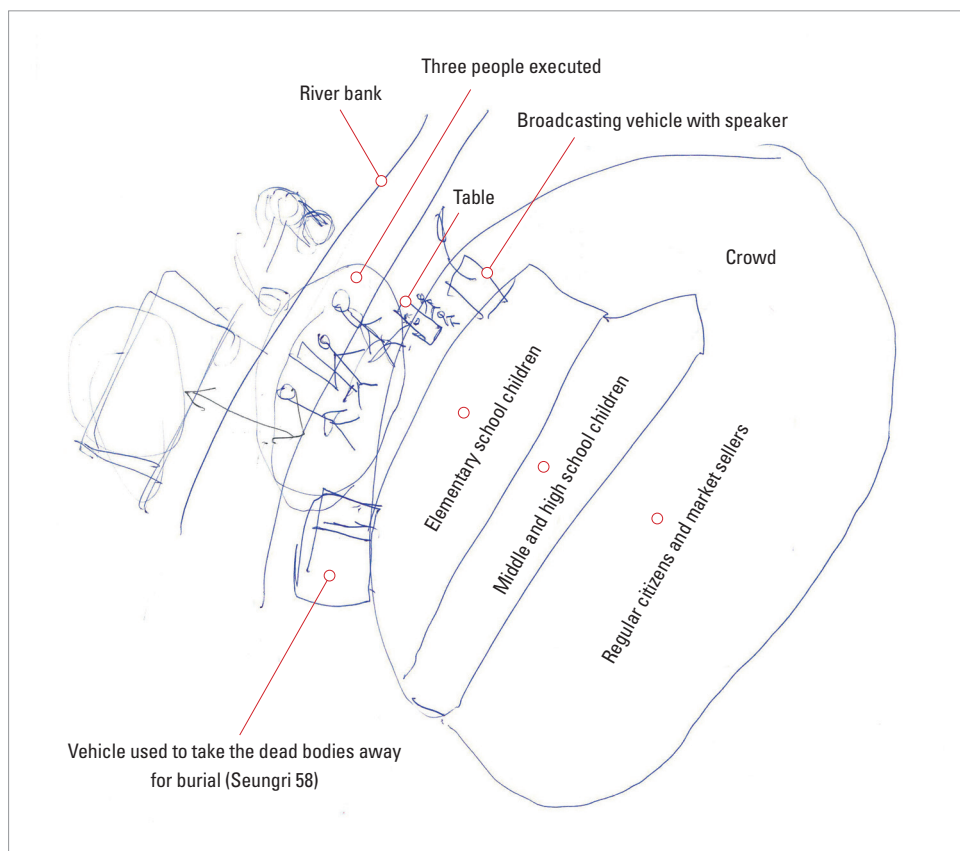
Witnesses were searched using hand-held, airport style metal detectors when entering the site where an execution was to take place. All phones were temporarily confiscated.

among the assembled crowd. Two interviewees described being searched using hand-held, airport-style metal detectors when entering the site where an execution was to take place in 2013 or 2014, to check for metal objects on the body such as mobile phones (see Table 1). All metal items including phones, keys and knives were confiscated and put into a container with a name label identifying the owner. After the execution, witnesses could then reclaim their devices. When asked why the interviewees believed the phones were taken, they replied that the regime is concerned about public executions being photographed or recorded in some way, and the information being sent outside the country, as more people inside North Korea now have contact with individuals outside.⁴¹

Images 1 and 2 are examples of public execution sites drawn by two of our interviewees, where they witnessed multiple executions in different decades.

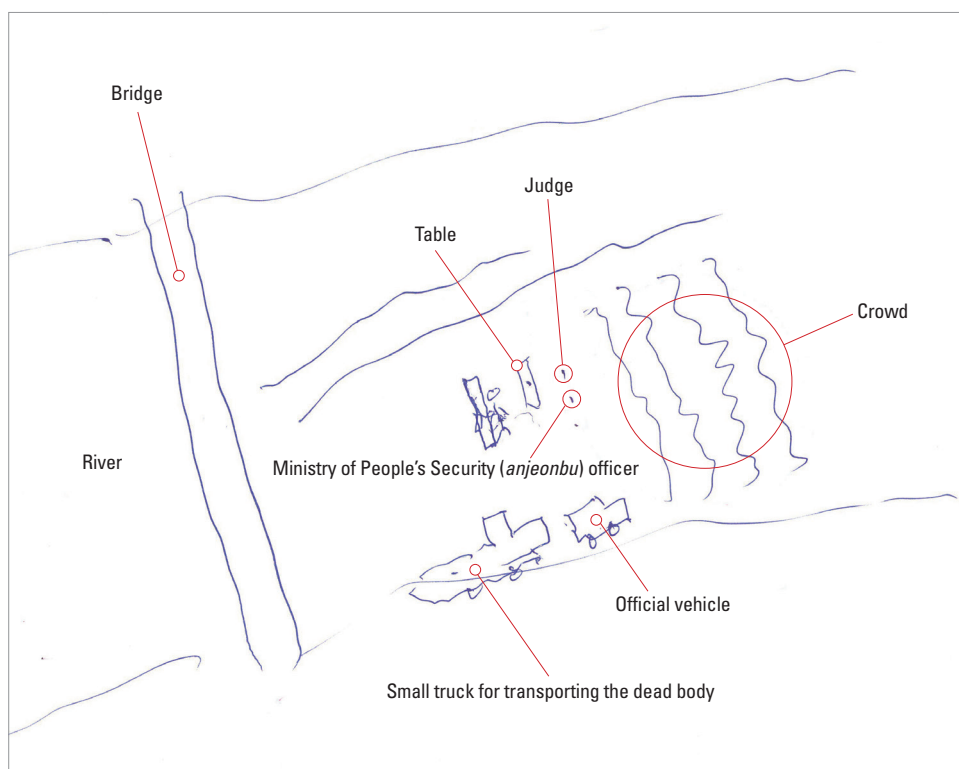
41. NKDB reported in 2018 a similar instance in which a public execution in 2011 was relocated from the bank of a stream to a sports stadium, with only one entrance and exit, so that the authorities could confiscate all mobile phones (Im et al., 2018, 115).

Image 1 Sketch of a Public Execution Site Near a Public Market



This sketch is of an area between a public market (*jangmadang*/장마당) and a river bank where the interviewee witnessed three public executions in the late 1990s. The sketch shows the layout of the scene as it typically appeared in each of these instances. The scene shows the position of three executed individuals tied to wooden posts and a table where three members of the Ministry of People's Security typically sat before the execution. It also shows a regular official vehicle and a larger vehicle known as a *seungri 58* (승리58), used to take the dead bodies away for burial by the authorities after the execution. It also shows the crowd, who were ordered by age, with elementary school-age children at the front, middle and high school children in the middle, and regular citizens and market sellers at the back. There were six members of the firing squad (new recruits from the Ministry of People's Security), who shot the accused in the head, chest and legs.

Image 2 Sketch of a Public Execution Site on a River Bank



This sketch shows a river bank where the interviewee saw six public executions over a period of five years in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The sketch shows the layout of the scene as it typically occurred in each of these instances. According to the interviewee, all those executed were miners charged with murder. There is a table shown in the centre, which was typically where one Ministry of People's Security officer and one judge sat during a summary trial. A crowd of 100-400 people stood behind. The interviewee recalled two vehicles usually being present: one regular official vehicle and a small truck for transporting the dead body. The executions customarily occurred at lunchtime, during the summer months. The firing squad was made up of three new recruits from the Ministry of People's Security. The sketch was drawn before the interviewee was shown the satellite imagery; however, it matches the layout of the area accurately, including the position of the railway bridge and river. Nearby can be seen what looks like a mine on the satellite photo, which may have been where the executed miners worked.

Deaths in detention and secret killings

Deaths in detention (excluding public executions) has appeared in 20 reports since we began documenting these events in 2018, and some of these instances represent the death of multiple people at once (these reports are from relatively high information source types, but we only have geographical coordinates for three of the 20) (see Appendix 1, Table 4). An additional three recorded deaths occurred shortly after release, as a direct result of ill-treatment in detention. Torture, beatings, shortage of food and denial of medical treatment are common in detention, and interviewees stated that the authorities often release the inmates nearing death so as to avoid dealing with dead prisoners. The treatment detainees experience in state custody can be exacerbated by malnutrition and disease, or lack of adequate medical attention, resulting in death with no single clear cause.

Detainees in state custody often experience physical beating and torture.

At times individuals convicted of crimes under state law were reported as being executed in secret, particularly in sensitive or serious cases. A driver who worked in the Ministry of People's Security told of an instance in the late 1990s when two people were executed in a forest in the mountains in secret on the charges of murder and human trafficking. There was no trial prior to execution, and the security forces stood guard nearby. The accused people's families were told not to come to the place of execution. The same interviewee told of hearing from other officers about two secret executions in 2010-2011. According to this information, if a person commits a serious crime such as murder, usury or embezzling state funds, they can be executed in secret.

If a person commits a serious crime, they can be executed in secret.

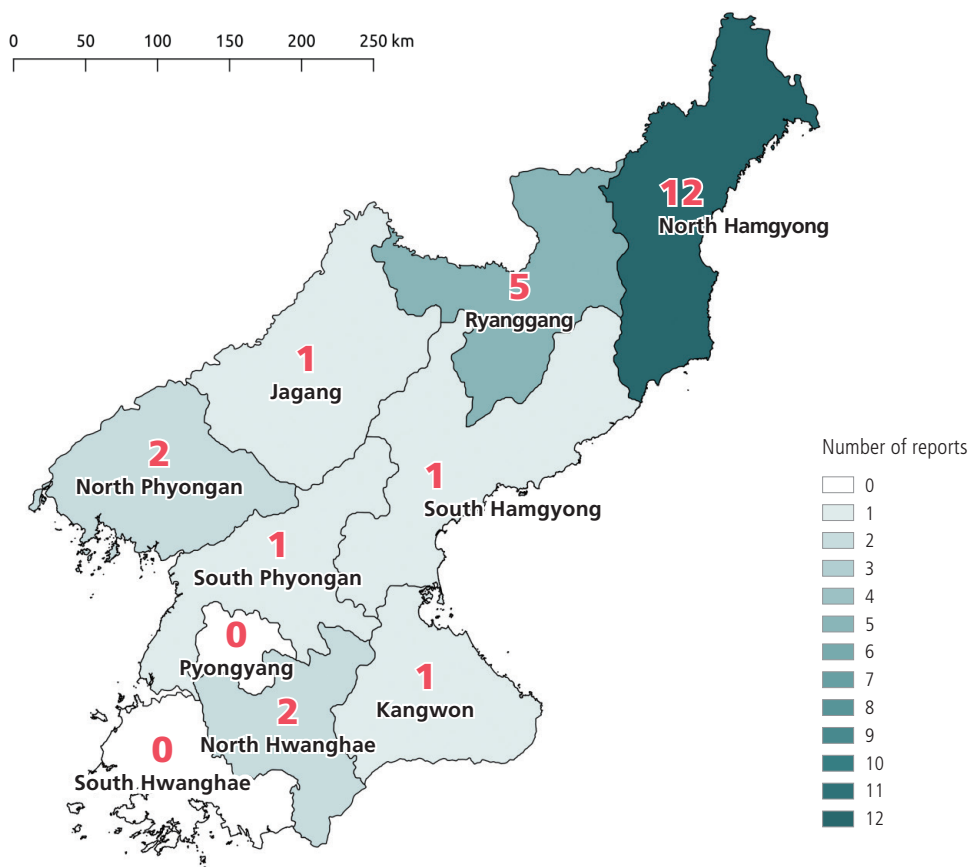
For a detailed concept map of the details, causes, and possible interventions to reduce or eliminate the state-sanctioned killings in the DPRK, see Appendix 3.

SITES OF BODY DISPOSAL IN NORTH KOREA

Reports of body disposal site locations

The body disposal sites we seek to map are those containing the bodies of individuals who have been killed by the regime in public executions, as a result of death in detention, as well as in secret killings. As Map 5 shows, we

Map 5 Reports of Body Disposal Sites by Province



have recorded 25 reports of body disposal sites that are from relatively high information source types, and for which we have geographical coordinates. According to our data, five reports thus far were for sites believed to contain between two and nine bodies together, and two contain more than 10 bodies together.⁴² Of the reports, 20 were about burial sites. Four of the reports were about sites where bodies were burned or cremated, and all of these occurred in or near places of state detention. One report was about a site where a body had been thrown aside or abandoned.

Whose bodies?

Of our survey research participants, 16 percent reported having had a family member killed or executed by the authorities.⁴³ Some of these individuals may have been victims of enforced disappearance, where family and friends have no information about the fate of the person. According to our survey research, 27 percent of participants reported having immediate family members who have been victims of enforced disappearance by the North Korean regime (83 percent of those are still missing).⁴⁴

16% of survey participants have had a family member killed or executed by the authorities.

While many of the body disposal sites we document are in remote locations, such as mountainsides and ravines, we do not rule out the possibility that bodies of victims of state-sanctioned killings may also be found in areas designated for regular citizen burials. One of the primary difficulties in conducting research into burial sites is the question of how to define sites believed to contain victims of the North Korean famine of the mid- to late-

42. There is no accepted international definition of a mass grave or mass burial site, so interpretations vary across contexts. One UN special rapporteur has sought to define a mass grave as one containing three or more bodies of victims of extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, not having died in combat or armed confrontations. The bodies in a mass grave have usually been buried over a limited period, when there is a desire to bury the corpses quickly for sanitation reasons, or to hide the evidence from the public eye (i.e., during the span of a famine or after a massacre) ("International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and for the Former Yugoslavia", *Twin Tribunals ICTY/R*, No. 9/10 14-VIII-1996, (Hague, The Netherlands, 1996)).

43. This data comes from a sample of 486 research participants across all four years of the project.

44. This data comes from a sample of 233 research participants in the last two years of the project.

1990s, who died outside of state custody or detention. Interviewee reports from this time described Ministry of People's Security staff moving dead bodies of the famine victims to mountainous areas where they were buried all together. However, the focus of our research is not on famine victims, so the sites we have presented here do not include body disposal sites for famine victims.

27% of participants have immediate family members who have been victims of enforced disappearance (83% of those are still missing).

Body disposal site locations

The mountainous nature of North Korea makes it difficult to move bodies to places without road access. The sites we record in this category may include locations where bodies have been cremated or disposed of by means other than burial. Although the DPRK has ordered citizens to increase the use of cremation for the dead over the years, insufficient infrastructure and a lack of fuel has prohibited cremation from becoming the norm. Since Kim Jong Un came to power in 2011, it has been reported that the state has ordered reforestation initiatives and the clearing of easily visible grave sites “peppering the mountains”, due to these sites being viewed as a “national disgrace”.⁴⁵ However, this practice of clearing sites may have started prior to Kim Jong Un becoming leader: one escapee who left in 2012 described an incident when then leader Kim Jong Il was making a visit to a mountain, and citizens were mobilised to clear a local burial site prior to his visit and return the mountainside to its natural state.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Song Min Choi, “Afforestation Efforts Alter Burial Practices,” *Daily NK*, April 5, 2015, <http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?catald=nk01500&num=13147>.

⁴⁶ This account was followed by a second witness account where an escapee reported being mobilised to relocate graves on a mountainside to allow the construction of a Kim Il Sung propaganda slogan sign. Older people were tasked with removing remaining flesh from the bodies, and those who took part drank alcohol before undertaking the task. Both these accounts were reported in interviews broadcast on internet TV: 배나TV, “[탈북 선후배] 8회 - 장례, 제사, 탈북민 남한정착, 북한 장례식, 고민, 북한, 북한이야기,” [Baena TV, “[Senior-Junior North Korean escapees] 8th Episode - Funerals, Ancestral Rituals, North Korean Escapee Resettlement, North Korean ancestral rituals, Worries, North Korea, North Korean story,”] YouTube video, 48:33, April 26, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=xJVjlsjHeSY>.

It was widely agreed by many former residents of North Korea that bodies of individuals killed by state agents are not typically returned to the family and are often disposed of by the authorities in mountainous areas, by being buried in the ground without markers, or thrown into a gorge or ravine.

The bodies of individuals killed by the state are not typically returned to the families.

Information directly linking killing sites with body disposal sites (e.g., via direct witness) appears a number of times in our data. One report that established this link was provided by an interviewee who had directly witnessed four public executions between 1995 and 2000. On one of those occasions, he was assigned the task of transporting four bodies approximately 500m away (as the crow flies). Here he witnessed the bodies being buried by other members of the Ministry of People's Security responsible for burials, known as *gihosungwon* (기호성원). A one-meter deep hole was already dug in the ground when they arrived. Six officers carried the four bodies to the hole and filled it with dirt, all of which took around 20 minutes. The execution and burial site are both located within easy reach of the same road. The location of the public executions had seen a large number of other executions take place over many years. We recorded additional reports, including geographical coordinates and from relatively high information source types, where a public execution took place and the bodies of the dead were buried either in the same place or in a different place.

We recorded a number of reports on methods of disposal of the dead from the political prison camps (*gwalliso*), the correctional labour camps (*gyohwaso*/교화소), and the disciplinary labour centres (*rodong dallyeondae*). In instances where inmates have died from violent abuse, starvation, illness, accident or execution as punishment for an alleged crime, other prisoners are often mobilised to bury the dead by various methods.⁴⁷ These methods can include digging a large hole in the ground and burying multiple bodies together. One former inmate reported being mobilised to help with a burial of this nature, situated on a mountain near the correctional

Other prisoners are often mobilised to bury the dead by various methods.

labour camp (*gyohwaso*), where three people were buried in a large hole, “the depth of a person’s height”. Another interviewee who had spent time detained in a correctional labour camp (*gyohwaso*) described seeing other male prisoners carrying the dead to a storage site, but when the storage site was full, the bodies were disposed of elsewhere. A number of our interviewees were mobilized to help with disposing of bodies while they were in prison facilities, and in several instances, those mobilized were given alcohol and/or food before carrying out this work. One interviewee said that young prisoners were often keen to assist with body removal because of the food and alcohol.

Several interviewees who had spent time in the *Jeongeori* (전거리) correctional labour camp (*gyohwaso*) spoke about a particular site for the disposal of human remains, referring to it by the same name in several

Several interviewees spoke about a particular site for the disposal of human remains: *bulmangsan*.

instances: *bulmangsan* (불망산).⁴⁸ The site was described variously and in different locations as a pile of bones left after the burning of the bodies, or a site where the dead were burned, following death in the camp. One interviewee described seeing a pile of bones – given the name *bulmangsan* – near the detention building, similar in size to “a traditional burial mound typical in South Korea”. Anecdotes from previous research with North Korean escapees by TJWG staff told of a traditional funeral song, which describes a sacred place on the darker side of a mountain used for burials as *bukmangsan* (북망산/mountain in the north). Previous informants stated that as prison guards set fire to piles of dead bodies, colloquially, the term *bukmangsan* may have evolved into *bulmangsan* (불/*bul*/fire, 망산/*mangsan*/mountain). Map 6 shows four geographical points associated with *bulmangsan* or the burning of bodies at this one location. Table 2 shows different reports from seven interviewees which appear to intersect in different aspects, all of which are associated with *bulmangsan* or the burning of bodies

47. NKDB reported in 2011 that executions in the prison camps had reduced over time, in response to growing awareness and the negative attitude of the international community about conditions in the camps. However, NKDB also suggested that concurrently, the number of secret executions may have increased (NKDB states that additional testimonies are needed to verify this information) (윤여상 외 [Yoon et al.], 2011, 482).

48. *Bulmangsan* appeared as a descriptor in a *Daily NK* report in 2016. The fact that this descriptor is already public informed our decision to mention it by name. (“전거리교화소, 시체 태우는 냄새 맡으며 밥 먹는 게 일상,” [“At the Jeongeori Correctional Labor Camp, I could always smell burning bodies while eating,”]) *Daily NK*, November 1, 2016, <https://www.dailynk.com/전거리교화소-시체-태우는-냄새-맡으/>.

in or near the *Jeongeori* labour camp.

Four of the reports in Table 2 come with coordinates of the site where bodies were said to have been burned (as shown on the accompanying Map 6). The remaining three reports in Table 2 present varying descriptions of bodies being moved, seeing bones that had been burned, or seeing bodies being burned directly. Four of the reports mention the term *bulmangsan*, including two which do not have accompanying coordinates. The information in Table 2 provides direction for targeted investigation of this site to attempt to answer questions such as whether *bulmangsan* has always been in the same place, and whether all those who describe having knowledge of *bulmangsan* understand it in the same way. For example, a 2012 report by the National Human Rights Commission of Korea quoted informants who described *bulmangsan* in a different way to our research participants: as being like a “large steel furnace”.⁴⁹

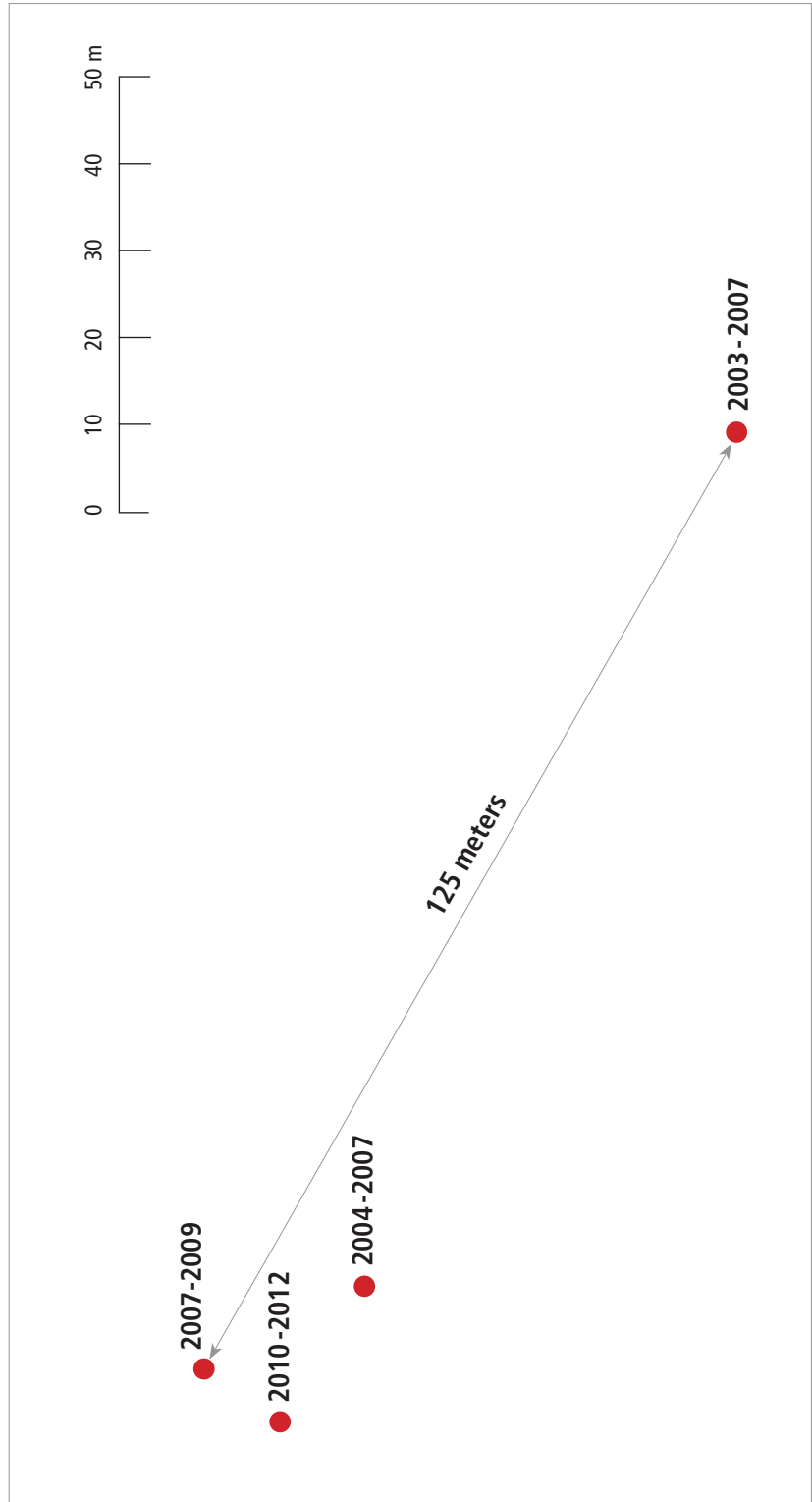
49. 2012 북한인권침해사례집, (서울: 국가인권위원회 정책교육국 인권정책과, 2012, 98,) [2012 Cases of North Korean Human Rights Abuses, (Seoul: National Human Rights Commission of Korea, 2012)], 98, <https://www.humanrights.go.kr/site/program/board/basicboard/view?currentpage=4&menuid=001003001003&pagesize=10&searchcategory=%EC%9D%BC%EB%B0%98%EB%8B%A8%ED%96%89%EB%B3%B8&boardtypeid=17&boardid=604801>.

Table 2 Cross-Referencing Reports of Cremation Sites

Report	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5	Interviewee 6	Interviewee 7
Location	In or near Jeongeori labour camp	In or near Jeongeori labour camp	In or near Jeongeori labour camp	In or near Jeongeori labour camp	In or near Jeongeori labour camp	In or near Jeongeori labour camp	In or near Jeongeori labour camp
Geographical coordinates provided	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Date site was witnessed/heard about	2003-2007	2007-2009	2010-2012	2004-2007	2010-2011	2009-2011	2007-2009
Mentioned bulmangsan by name	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Memorable information	None recorded	Interviewee was involved with moving bodies to the site for burning; smelled burning flesh while in the prison camp.	Interviewee saw a body storage site; smelled burning flesh while in the prison camp; heard from another person that dead bodies were cut up before burning.	Interviewee was involved in moving dead bodies to the site for burning (<i>bulmangsan</i>), located in the mountains; interviewee witnessed bodies being burned first hand; also witnessed ashes being scattered in the fields afterwards.	Near prison building there was an external storage site for bodies; male prisoners carried dead bodies to a cart; did not see the cremation site directly; saw a pile of bones after burning, near the prison building	Interviewee heard from other prisoners that before burning dead bodies; they cut them into pieces; interviewee directly saw other prisoners moving dead bodies.	Interviewee described dead prisoners being moved together to the mountains on a cart; described seeing dead bodies being burned in the mountains nearby.
Information source type	Heard from a person involved with body disposal at the cremation site	Directly witnessed cremation site location	Heard information second hand	Directly witnessed cremation site location	Did not directly witness cremation site; did directly witness body storage site and pile of bones	Heard information about cremation site second hand; directly witnessed bodies being moved	Directly witnessed cremation site
Determination	Likely same site	Likely same site	Likely same site	Likely same site	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

Map 6 Reports of *Bulmangsan* Cremation Sites

Note: Date ranges show the years the interviewee was in detention at this facility.



In rare instances, we recorded reports of alternative means of disposing of publicly executed individuals. An interviewee gave a report from the 1960s where they witnessed an individual being executed by the Ministry of People's Security near a chemical factory which used hydrochloric acid. The person was thrown into the waste-water from the factory in front of a large crowd of witnesses and died. While working as a party secretary, the same interviewee heard stories from other party officers where hydrochloric acid was allegedly used to kill and destroy a person's body in the same factory. A further incident reported in our data involved use of a flame-thrower to burn the bodies of three individuals executed for illegal trading in the late 2000s. After being shot many times with an automatic rifle, gasoline was sprayed on the bodies before being lit with a flame thrower. The remaining bones were taken away by the local Ministry of People's Security to "destroy the evidence", according to the interviewee.⁵⁰

50. The North Korea Strategy Center's recent report, "Executions and Purges of North Korean Elites", identified the use of tanks and anti-aircraft guns in the execution of "counter-revolutionaries", citing such methods as "excessive" (Kim, 2019, 59).

SECONDARY CONSEQUENCES OF STATE-SANCTIONED KILLINGS AND BURIALS

The psychological effects of witnessing a public execution could include nightmares, insomnia, and loss of appetite.

The consequences of state-sanctioned killings for the family members of those killed can extend well beyond the incident itself and the personal loss involved. At the individual level, for example, according to our research, the psychological effects of witnessing a public execution could include nightmares, insomnia and loss of appetite after the event.⁵¹ At the community level, the psychological and socio-cultural impact is deliberately designed to consolidate the regime's control over the behaviour of citizens.

Since its inception, the DPRK has worked to rid the country of the meaningful practice of any form of religion other than the worship of the leadership, deified in state-generated legends. However, traditional views and rituals around treatment of the dead continue. The Korean peninsula's long practice of recognising the continuing presence of ancestors in the afterlife through traditional rituals still influences the way people mark and remember the death of relatives. For example, geomancy is often still used to determine the direction in which a body is placed for burial, to avoid bringing bad fortune on the family.⁵² As in South Korea today, at certain times during the year, pictures, precious items and food and drink offerings are brought to the graves of relatives, as a way of communing with the dead and sharing information with them.⁵³ One interviewee reported her decision to stay in North Korea to observe the traditional three-year mourning period for her mother before making her escape, as she felt it was

51. This is consistent with the findings of other organisations, who have reported witnesses of public execution being so frightened "I could not eat for a week" (Kim, 2019, 76).

52. Email communication with Markus Bell, University of Sheffield, 25 March 2019.

her duty to visit her grave over that time to perform traditional rituals. Thus, as in other national contexts, “the dead are very much alive as a central part of extended kinship structures, wherein afterlives are to be cared for and a proper burial is a matter of reproductive justice”.⁵⁴ Furthermore,

Whatever the motivation, the creation of mass burials violates certain laws and virtually all contemporary cultural traditions, and so they ought to be investigated barring valid cultural objection from victim families.⁵⁵

The DPRK’s practice of executing individuals or allowing deaths in detention and disposing of the bodies without participation from family members violates a deep need not only to treat the dead with dignity, but also to know their whereabouts, or even whether they have died at all.

One interviewee reported how an older brother was publicly executed while in a detention centre, but the family was not notified until a neighbour informed them of the event some time afterwards. The mother attempted to locate her son’s body but failed. In another reported instance in the late 1990s, after a prisoner had died while detained and been buried without the family’s knowledge, the family began to ask the local authorities about the location of the burial site. They were persistent in continuing to ask, until eventually the authorities told them the victim had been buried on a mountainside after dying of disease, but they refused to give any further information on the exact site.

An additional secondary consequence of public executions, also common to criminal convictions more broadly, is the collective punishment delivered to family members of the accused. A number of reports were made of family members and children being exiled to rural or remote locations after a relative

53. Email communication with Markus Bell. According to our interviewees, those who can afford it will bury family members in wooden caskets, which could be purchased from musical instrument factories, for which coffins are a key source of income. A casket can cost around 135,000 North Korean won (around US\$150) meaning that many people instead wrap the dead in woven straw bags for burial. Graves can be marked by a traditional burial mound and a wooden or stone grave marker if the family can afford it, stating the deceased’s name, date of birth and death, and the name of their first son. Family members, workplace colleagues and neighbours often help with the physical task of burying a body. Interviewees stated that due to a shortage of space in designated cemeteries, most people bury family members in the mountains in any area they can find space. This makes it difficult to keep family members together, because in the time between family deaths, the available space may fill up with the relatives of others.

54. Pereira, 2019.

55. Guyomarc’h and Congram, 2017.

Two elementary school-aged children were exiled to a rural town alone after the execution of their mother for human trafficking.

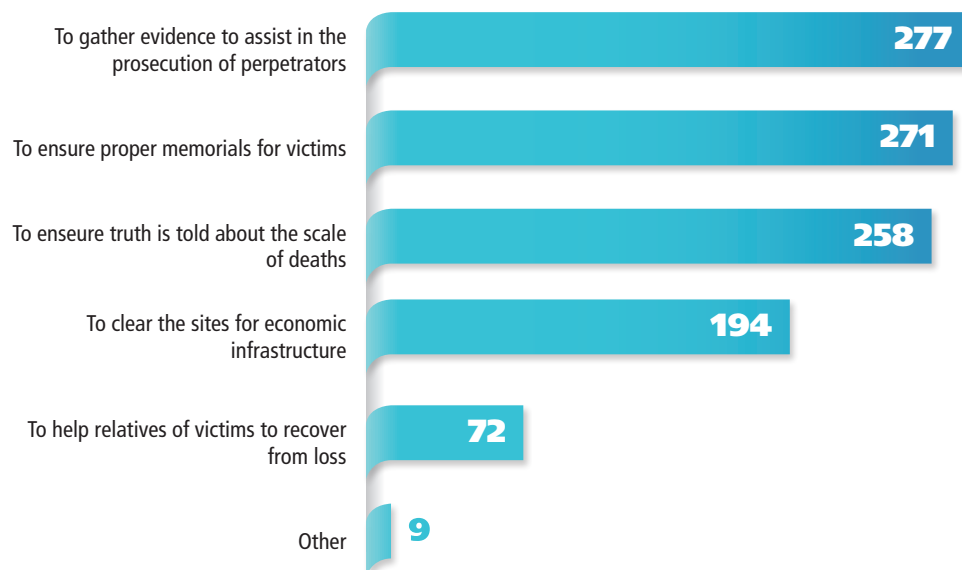
had been executed. According to one report, two elementary school-aged children were exiled to a rural town alone after the execution of their mother for human trafficking (their father had died of disease). The state's

intent to downgrade the class or *songbun* of the family is a further indication of the deliberate desire to maintain a culture of fear and assert control in regard to behaviour the regime deems undesirable.

The interlinked, widespread and long-lasting impact of the state's behaviour on relationships at every level of society is of great importance. This impact will not only inform the analysis of data that might lead to the discovery of burial sites in the future, but also how to meet the needs of the families of the dead and missing. Our survey research found that 92 percent of research participants stated exhumations of burial sites would be necessary after a transition in North Korea, for the following reasons:⁵⁶

56. Data from a convenience sample of 466 interview participants.

Chart 4 **Why are exhumations of burial sites necessary after a transition in North Korea? (Multiple responses)**



We have also recently begun asking survey participants about their views regarding the importance of locating bodies of family members killed and buried by the state, investigating sites, and returning bodies to the families concerned. Thus far, almost all participants consider locating and investigating sites, and returning bodies to the families to be either very or quite important. The main reasons given for locating bodies and investigating the sites was to know what happened to the individuals and where they were buried. The most popular reason cited for why participants thought it important that the bodies be returned to families was the need to conduct a traditional ritual for the dead.⁵⁷ This direction of investigation will continue as the research progresses, and will also be used to inform more advanced analysis of the data as we engage with external expertise.

57. These questions have so far been put to a convenience sample of 85 people, but the survey will continue in the coming year to gain more data.

Chart 5 **Why are exhumations of burial sites NOT necessary after a transition in North Korea? (Multiple responses)**



REPOSITORIES OF DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The Mapping Project also collects data on the location of possible repositories of documents which may contain evidence of human rights abuses. These may prove important for future legal proceedings and creating an historical account of the DPRK's past. As detailed in our 2017 report, these locations include local Ministry of People's Security offices, Ministry of State Security offices, military units and administrative offices. Record-keeping is known to be systematic within the DPRK, particularly because of the *songbun* system. The behaviour of individuals is linked to that of family members in public records, with political crimes in particular having implications for family members according to 'guilt by association' practices dating back to the pre-colonial period. This necessitates keeping a log of the political behaviour of all members of society, which includes records of deaths – natural or otherwise. People who may have been executed for 'political crimes' or in circumstances that might be interpreted as being in violation of their human rights, will have had their deaths recorded to ensure that other individuals who were associated with those people might also be monitored. The consequence of this rigorous monitoring system is the likely possibility that detailed records of unjust killings exist in DPRK institutions, at multiple levels of authority.

Some possible repositories of documentary evidence are well known to local citizens and are relatively easy to identify on the maps shown to interviewees. Our assumption is that document-keeping of this nature is systematic throughout the North Korean system, as was the case in other authoritarian regimes such as the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), where Stasi records played an important part in trials and truth-seeking efforts post-transition. We aim to record the locations of these sites for future seizure of documents when the opportunity should arise.

Map 7 Hoeryong City: Possible Repositories of Documentary Evidence



Map 7 shows Hoeryong City in North Hamgyong Province. It runs along the border with China, which is just to the west (not shown). The locations labeled on the map are those likely to hold documents related to state-sanctioned killings and the disposal of the dead, and have been identified by at least four interviewees, and in one instance by more than a dozen.

We acknowledge that the possibility of replicating results from research such as that contained in this report is important from a scientific perspective. We have benefitted greatly in our research from the availability of open source data and software.⁵⁸ While we are unable to release the coordinates of sites we deem as sensitive, those for the document repository sites we have mapped in Map 7 are available at <https://en.tjwg.org/mapping-project-north-korea/> along with those in the map of Hyesan City displayed in our previous report (2017).

58. Wolfenbarger notes that “The way research results are published today deters the replication of results, as not enough methodological information is provided to allow a researcher within the same field to repeat the project and reach similar conclusions. This should be a source of unease to anyone producing research, not just fact-finders... A system of review is needed for all research, not just academic papers, so that consumers of information can feel comfortable in the results. Human rights documentation needs a much higher level of openness regarding sources, analysis techniques, and data” (2016, 16).

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Five years on from the report of the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the DPRK (UN COI), accountability for grave human rights abuses remains elusive. A series of high-level leadership summits in 2018-2019 between the two Koreas and the United States saw no concrete mention of human rights issues. Yet human rights documentation organisations have continued to monitor and record systematic and widespread abuses tantamount to crimes against humanity.⁵⁹ This work remains vital, especially when state leaders are reluctant to address the ongoing repression of so many. The Mapping Project will continue to expand the body of information available on North Korea's human rights abuses and the structures and institutions that perpetrate them. Concurrently, we will continue our activities in the following areas.

Application of research in advocacy

Our staff make regular contributions to local and international conferences and events related to our research and the dialogue on transitional justice for the Korean Peninsula more broadly. Our research findings have been used in submissions to the UN group of independent experts on accountability, the Universal Periodic Review on the DPRK, regular dialogue with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the DPRK and in other thematic submissions to UN bodies and foreign governments. We will also continue to engage the South Korean and international media on these issues, recognising the importance of these channels for mobilising public opinion and engaging the South Korean government on issues of human rights in North Korea.

59. "Promoting Accountability in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea", 7.

Cooperating with local organisations

We have worked with a number of organisations in South Korea in recent years to support initiatives focused on human rights documentation and advocacy. At present we are working with the Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights (NKHR) and a number of other local NGOs on the creation of a civil society central repository for data about enforced disappearances and abductions to the DPRK, in order to profile and make cases. We will continue to seek to improve our documentation methodology to strengthen the value of what is collected for future accountability processes and ongoing advocacy efforts. We note the aims of the UN Human Rights Office (Seoul) Accountability Team in their work towards the creation of a central electronic repository of evidence and information as mandated by the Human Rights Council in resolution 34/24.⁶⁰ We look forward to working with local and international specialists experienced in this field to investigate methods of integrating data from multiple organisations and sources.

Engaging with the North Korean escapee community

In February 2019, TJWG published the first detailed report on North Korean escapee perceptions of accountability for human rights abuses in the DPRK, titled "Exploring Grassroots Transitional Justice".⁶¹ Based on a survey of 450 escapees, this report highlighted a number of key lessons for stakeholders engaging with the escapee population in South Korea and elsewhere, in terms of understanding their experiences of violence, abuse and trauma, and remedies they see as helpful to addressing their needs. It also drew on escapee feedback to understand how civil society and other stakeholders might better empower North Koreans now and in the future to act as confident architects of a post-authoritarian future. We plan to continue working closely with the North Korean escapee community to consult with them on our work and its potential use in the future. We also seek to promote victim ownership of plans and designs for transitional justice mechanisms when the time comes to deal with the DPRK's violent past.

60. "Report of the Group of Independent Experts on Accountability" (Geneva: United Nations Human Rights Council, February 13, 2017), 5–6, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/KP/A_HRC_34_66_Add_1.pdf.

61. Son, 2019.

Building technical capacity and partnering with technical expertise

In the future, following a political transition in North Korea of the kind that would see an end to totalitarian rule and the freedom to investigate the past crimes, GIS work done now holds strong potential to complement work investigating violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, as well as to locate the missing who are known or believed to have died at the hands of the regime. Additionally, in-house knowledge in GIS developed now could help us more rapidly make use of our own imagery gathered using drones when there is an opening in the country. Of course, witness testimonies remain vital in the process of investigating burial sites. In addition to actual witnesses of “last seen” locations of the missing and dead, local knowledge about language, culture and institutional practices that might be related to these sites and events is crucial to painting a comprehensive picture of what happened, where, why and how.⁶² Yet experts working with GIS in human rights do encourage human rights documentation groups to “think spatially... and consider how people understand and use space with respect to the treatment of bodies”.⁶³ This demands making adjustments to traditional human rights documentation interview questionnaires to consider spatial factors such as distance, elevation, relevant natural and man-made landmarks, as well as sounds or smells which may provide clues as to the environment surrounding a site of concern. Instead of relying exclusively on witness testimony, more advanced methods can examine “common patterns or characteristics of the known locations of body disposal”.⁶⁴

More advanced methods can examine “common patterns or characteristics of the known locations of body disposal”.

In terms of formal legal proceedings dealing with situations of mass atrocities, geospatial technology has been used in cases before the International Criminal Court (ICC), which holds greater power to admit evidence than national courts, as well as the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former

62. Congram, Kenyhercz, and Green, 2017, 262

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

Yugoslavia (ICTY).⁶⁵ However, the impact of the technology itself is difficult to measure, given that judges have so far referred to it only rarely and in vague terms when making judgements. The ICC, tribunal courts and other human rights courts have no clear regulations on the use of geospatial evidence, nor on expert witnesses in this field, so the use of such evidence varies from case to case. This also means that geospatial evidence is more likely to be considered *in support of* conventional evidence such as witness testimonies.⁶⁶ However, deliberate steps have been taken in recent years by a number of organisations such as the Human Rights Center at the University of California, Berkeley, to engage with the ICC Office of the Prosecutor on the role that remote sensing can play in documenting human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law. The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) has also conducted trainings on remote sensing analysis with the European Court of Human Rights, among others, to demonstrate the capabilities of this technology and what makes it a valuable tool for fact-finding.⁶⁷ In future years, it is our intention to advance our application of GIS methods such as by digitising related site information to enable us to conduct new forms of analysis of spatial relationships. To do this we hope to continue to draw on outside expertise.

65. Wolfinbarger, 2016, 5.

66. Harris, Theresa L. et al. *Geospatial Evidence in International Human Rights Litigation: Technical and Legal considerations*. Report (New York and Washington: American Association for the Advancement of Science, 2018) 12, 15, 31, <https://www.aaas.org/sites/default/files/s3fpublic/reports/Geospatial%2520Evidence%2520in%2520International%2520Human%2520Rights%2520Litigation.pdf>.; Ana Cristina Núñez M., *Admissibility of remote sensing evidence before international and regional tribunals Innovations in Human Rights Monitoring Working Paper*. (Amnesty International USA, 2012), 8, 20, <https://www.amnestyusa.org/pdfs/RemoteSensingAsEvidencePaper.pdf>.

66. Wolfinbarger, 2016, 5–6.

APPENDIX 1: DATA TABLES

Figure 1 **Reports of all State-Sanctioned Killing Sites**

Note: Of 642 total reports, 261 reports remain to be processed to assess the source type in the coming phase of the research; 20 reports are from relatively low information source types or have insufficient information to determine source credibility.

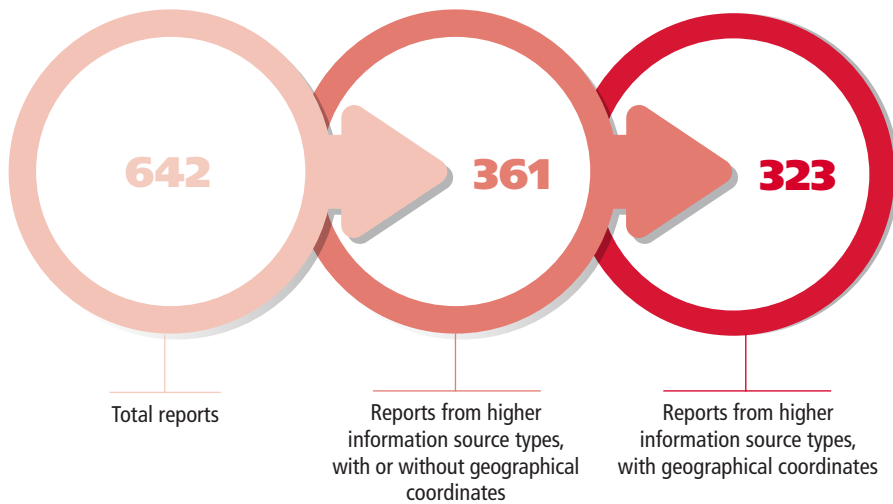


Table 3 **Reports of Public Executions**

Note: Table 3 shows reports of public executions that are from relatively high information source types, and for which we also have geographical coordinates. Two reports include an execution by firing squad and an execution by hanging at the same event, which is why the total number in the table (320) is higher than the total number of reports (318).

KILLING METHOD	SCALE	
	Less than 10	Equal to or greater than 10
Hanging	25	-
Firing squad	275	19
Hazardous substance	1	-

Table 4 **Reports of Deaths in Detention**

Note: Table 4 does not show executions of any kind. In one case there was more than one method of death (malnutrition/starvation and illness), hence the total (21) does not equal the number of reports (20). Many of those who were in detention were unable to find the location described on the map or heard the information second-hand and were unsure of the location. Only three of the reports in Table 4 come with geographical coordinates. Those in detention may have been taken to an unfamiliar location, been blindfolded in transit, or may have had their memory of the location impacted by trauma.

DEATH METHOD	DEATH TYPE			
	Other Death	Infanticide	Accident During Forced Labor	Suicide
Buried alive	-	1	-	-
Illness	2	-	-	-
Suffocation	-	-	-	1
Neglect (left to die)	-	1	-	-
Beating/torture	3	-	-	-
Malnutrition/starvation	5	-	-	-
Received a blow	-	-	1	-
Unknown	7	-	-	-

Figure 2 Reports of all Body Disposal Sites

Note: 45 reports have been assessed as being from lower information source types at this stage.

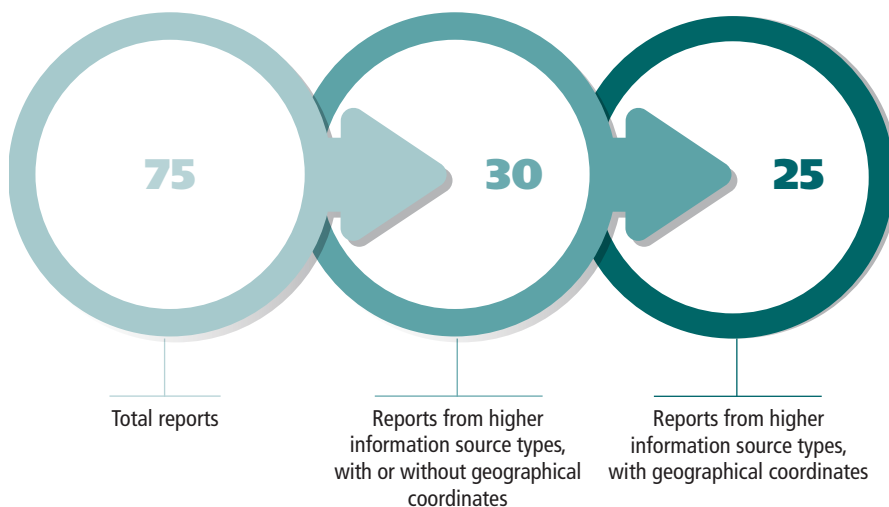


Table 5 Reports of Body Disposal Sites

Note: Table 5 shows only reports which are from relatively high information source types, and for which we have geographical coordinates.

BODY DISPOSAL SITE TYPE	NUMBER REPORTED
Burial	20
Cremation	4
Body dumped or abandoned	1

APPENDIX 2: VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW

Instrument	Violated Provisions
Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by General Assembly resolution 217 of 10 December 1948	Article 3 – The right to life (e.g. extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and intentional or negligent deaths resulting from abuses under state custody)
	Articles 3 and 9 – The right to liberty of person and right not to be subjected to arbitrary detention (e.g. pre-execution detention in violation of the law, for the exercise of human rights, in violation of the right to fair trial and/or on the basis of illegal discrimination)
	Article 3 – The right to security of person (e.g. failure to prevent abuse by prison guards that leads to death of inmates)
	Articles 5 and 25 – The right not to be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and the right to health and well-being of one’s self and one’s family (e.g. forcing family members and residents to watch a public execution)
	Article 5 – The right not to be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment (e.g. torture in detention, public execution and methods of execution)
	Article 6 – The right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law (e.g. secret detention and execution in prisons and labour camps)
	Articles 8, 10 and 11 (1) – The right to an effective remedy, the right to a fair public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal and the right to presumption of innocence (e.g. death sentence and execution without due process and fair trial)
	Article 11 (2) – The principle of legality (e.g. death sentence and execution for vaguely defined or unpublished crimes)
	Articles 13 (2) and 14 – The right to leave one’s own country and to return to it and the right to seek asylum (e.g. execution of repatriated North Korean escapees for fleeing their country)
	Article 18 – The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (e.g. executions of Christians for their religious beliefs and “political crimes”)
	Article 19 – The right to freedom of opinion and expression (e.g. executions for critical statements or possession or dissemination of South Korean media)
	Article 20 – The right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association (e.g. executions for membership in underground churches)
	Article 21 – The right to participation in political and public affairs (e.g. execution of high-level officials for alleged policy failures)
Articles 2, 7 and 25 (2) – The right to legal equality and non-discrimination; the entitlement of motherhood and childhood to special care and assistance and the right of children to social protection (e.g. forced abortion and infanticide of biracial half-Chinese fetuses and babies of women forcibly repatriated from China)	

Instrument	Violated Provisions
<p>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR): a State Party since 1981</p>	<p>Article 6 (1) – The right to life and the right not to be arbitrarily deprived of life (e.g. extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and intentional or negligent deaths resulting from abuses under state custody)</p>
	<p>Article 6 (2) – The right not to be subjected to death sentence except for the most serious crimes (e.g. death sentences for alleged crimes that do not involve intentional killing of human being(s) such as stealing livestock or watching South Korean media)</p>
	<p>Articles 6 (2) and 15 (1) – The principle of legality in the case of death sentence and in general (e.g. death sentence and execution for vaguely defined or unpublished crimes)</p>
	<p>Articles 6 (2), 2 (3), 14 (1), 14 (2), 14 (3) and 14 (5) – The right not to be subjected to death penalty except in pursuance of a final judgment rendered by a competent court; the right to an effective remedy, the right to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law and to make the judgment public; the presumption of innocence; the minimum guarantees of criminal suspects and defendants including the right to be informed promptly and in detail of the nature and cause of the charges and to have adequate time and facilities for the preparation of defence and to communicate with counsel of one's choosing, and not to be compelled to testify against oneself or to confess; the right to appeal criminal conviction and sentence (e.g. death sentence and execution without due process and fair trial)</p>
	<p>Article 6 (4) – The right to seek pardon or commutation of the sentence (e.g. execution immediately following the death sentence without the opportunity for clemency)</p>
	<p>Article 6 (5) – The prohibition of the imposition of death sentence for crime committed by persons below 18 and execution of pregnant women (e.g. execution of children and pregnant women)</p>
	<p>Articles 7 and 10 (1) – The right not to be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and the right of detainees to be treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person (e.g. forcing family members and residents to watch a public execution)</p>
	<p>Article 7 – The right not to be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment (e.g. torture in detention, public execution and methods of execution)</p>
	<p>Article 9 – The right to liberty of person and right not to be subjected to arbitrary detention (pre-execution detention in violation of the law, for the exercise of human rights, in violation of the right to fair trial and/or on the basis of illegal discrimination)</p>
	<p>Articles 12 (2) – The right to leave one's own country (e.g. execution of repatriated North Korean defectors for fleeing their country)</p>
	<p>Article 16 – The right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law (e.g. secret detention and execution in gulags)</p>
	<p>Article 18 – The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (e.g. executions of Christians for their religious beliefs)</p>
	<p>Article 19 – The right to freedom of opinion and expression (e.g. executions for critical statements or possession or dissemination of South Korean media)</p>
	<p>Articles 21 and 22 – The right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association (e.g. executions for membership in underground churches)</p>
<p>Article 25 – The right to participation in political and public affairs (e.g. execution of high-level officials for their alleged policy failures)</p>	
<p>Articles 2 (1), 24, 26, 27 – The right to legal equality and non-discrimination; the right of the child not to be subjected to discrimination, to be registered immediately after birth and to acquire a nationality; the right to protection of persons belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities (e.g. forced abortion and infanticide of biracial half-Chinese fetuses and babies of the women forcibly repatriated from China)</p>	

Instrument	Violated Provisions
<p>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR): a State Party since 1981</p>	<p>Article 10 – The right to protection of the family and children (e.g. forced abortion and infanticide of biracial half-Chinese foetuses and babies of the women forcibly repatriated from China)</p> <p>Article 12 – The right to enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (e.g. forcing family members and residents to watch a public execution)</p>
<p>Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, adopted by General Assembly resolution 3452 (XXX) of 9 December 1975</p>	<p>Articles 3, 4 and 5 – The prohibition and duty to prevent torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (e.g. torture in detention, public execution, methods of execution, intentional or negligent deaths resulting from abuses in state custody)</p> <p>Article 12 – The prohibition of the use of statements obtained under torture in proceedings (e.g. death sentence and execution based on forced confessions)</p>
<p>Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), adopted by General Assembly resolution 39/46 of 10 December 1984</p>	<p>Articles 2 and 16 – The duty to prevent torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (e.g. torture in detention, public execution, methods of execution, intentional or negligent deaths resulting from abuses under state custody)</p> <p>Article 15 – The prohibition of the use of statements obtained under torture in proceedings (e.g. death sentence and execution based on forced confessions)</p>
<p>Declaration on the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance, adopted by General Assembly resolution 47/133 of 18 December 1992</p>	<p>Articles 1, 2, 3 and 7 – The prohibition and duty to prevent enforced disappearance (e.g. secret detention and execution)</p> <p>Article 10 – The right to be held in an officially recognized place of detention and be brought before a judicial authority promptly after detention and the availability of accurate information on detention to family members (e.g. secret detention and execution, secret disposal of remains)</p>
<p>International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICED), adopted by General Assembly resolution 61/177 of 20 December 2006</p>	<p>Article 1 – Prohibition of enforced disappearance (e.g. secret detention and execution)</p> <p>Articles 17 and 18 – The prohibition of secret detention and the duty to make available information concerning the circumstances and cause of death and the destination of the remains in the event of death during the deprivation of liberty (e.g. secret detention and execution, secret disposal of remains)</p>
<p>International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), adopted by General Assembly resolution 2106 (XX) of 4 January 1969</p>	<p>Article 5 (b) – The right to security of person and protection by the State against violence or bodily harm by government officials without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin (e.g. forced abortion and infanticide of biracial half-Chinese foetuses and babies of the women forcibly repatriated from China)</p>

Instrument	Violated Provisions
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW): a State Party since 2001	Article 12 (2) – The right of women to appropriate services in connection with pregnancy (e.g. forced abortion of biracial half-Chinese foetuses and babies of the women forcibly repatriated from China)
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC): a State Party since 1990	Article 37 (1) – The right of the child not to be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or to capital punishment (e.g. forced abortion of biracial half-Chinese foetuses and babies of the women forcibly repatriated from China and execution of children)
Safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty, approved by Economic and Social Council resolution 1984/50 of 25 May 1984	<p>Safeguard 1 – The imposition of capital punishment for the most serious crimes, within the scope of intentional crimes with lethal or other extremely grave consequences (e.g. death sentences for alleged crimes such as stealing livestock or watching South Korean media)</p> <p>Safeguard 2 – The principle of legality (e.g. death sentence and execution for vaguely defined or unpublished crimes)</p> <p>Safeguard 3 – The prohibition of the imposition of death sentence for crime committed by persons below 18 and execution of pregnant women (e.g. execution of children and pregnant women)</p> <p>Safeguard 4 – The requirement of evidence of guilt leaving no room for an alternative explanation for capital punishment (e.g. death sentence based on forced confession)</p> <p>Safeguard 5 – The requirement of fair trial and due process safeguards at least equal to those contained in article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, including adequate legal assistance at all stages of the proceedings (e.g. death sentence and execution without legal representation)</p> <p>Safeguard 6 – Mandatory appeal process for death sentences (e.g. execution immediately after the death sentence without chance for appeal)</p> <p>Safeguard 7 – The right to seek pardon or commutation of the sentence (e.g. execution immediately following the death sentence without the opportunity for clemency)</p> <p>Safeguard 8 – No carrying out of capital punishment pending appeal or commutation proceedings (e.g. execution immediately following the death sentence before availing appeal or clemency process provided under the law)</p> <p>Safeguard 9 – Duty to inflict the minimum possible suffering in capital punishment (e.g. public execution and methods of execution)</p>

View the ratification status by country or by treaty: DPRK
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=47&Lang=EN

The Core International Human Rights Instruments and their monitoring bodies
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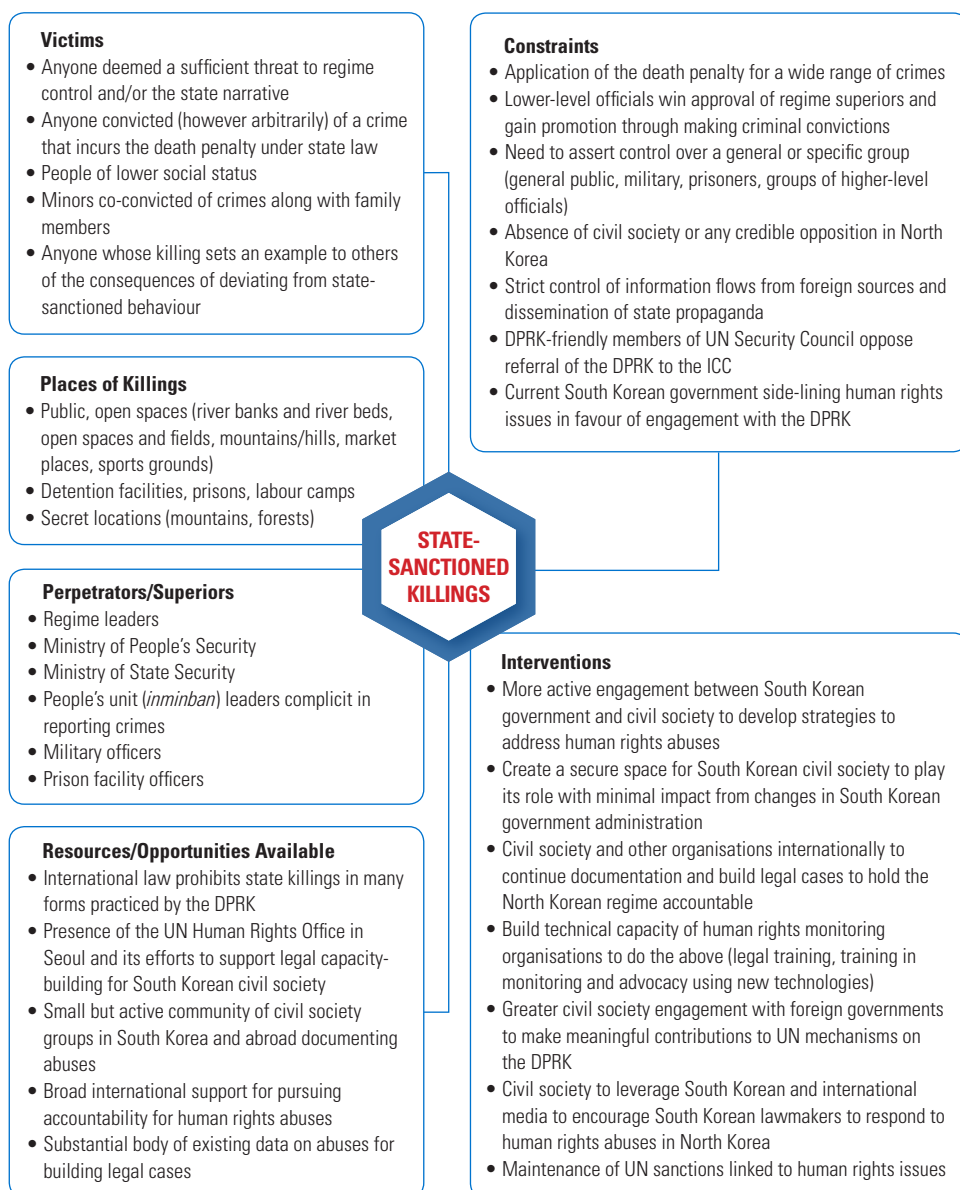
Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
Adopted by General Assembly resolution 3452 (XXX) of 9 December 1975
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/declarationtorture.aspx>

Safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty
Approved by Economic and Social Council resolution 1984/50 of 25 May 1984
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Declaration on the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance
Adopted by General Assembly resolution 47/133 of 18 December 1992
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/enforceddisappearance.aspx>

APPENDIX 3: DIAGRAMMATIC MAP OF STATE-SANCTIONED KILLINGS IN NORTH KOREA

Diagrammatic map based on “Mapping for Human Rights”, Amnesty International, https://www.amnesty.nl/content/uploads/2017/01/mapping_for_human_rights.pdf?x54531





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