



Human Rights Council
Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
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Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Compilation of information prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

I. Background

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21, taking into consideration the outcome of the previous review.¹ It is a compilation of information contained in relevant United Nations documents, presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints.

II. Scope of international obligations and cooperation with human rights mechanisms

2. The Secretary-General recommended that the Government ratify all the core human rights treaties not already ratified, as well as their optional protocols and complaints and inquiry procedures, and submit all reports due to the treaty bodies.²

3. The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea recommended that the Government ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.³

4. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) recommended that the Government ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.⁴

5. The Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea recommended that the State become a member of the International Labour Organization with a view to adhering to the core labour standards and enhancing economic cooperation with other countries.⁵

6. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommended that the State ratify the Convention against Discrimination in Education.⁶

7. The Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea recommended that the Government urgently allow for the return of United Nations agencies, other international organizations and the diplomatic community and allow economic activity and the movement of people.⁷

8. The Secretary-General stated that the country continued to reject cooperation sought pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 25/25, including with the OHCHR field-based



structure in Seoul and with the Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. No standing invitation had been issued to special procedure mandate holders.⁸

III. National human rights framework

1. Constitutional and legislative framework

9. The Secretary-General stated that the systematic repression of rights and freedoms flowed from the constitutional and institutional characteristics of the State, which served to control the population and centralize power rather than enable the realization of human rights.⁹

10. The Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea recommended that the Government review the Criminal Code and other laws to redefine the acts that constituted "threats to national security" and review the necessity and proportionality of restrictions on freedom of information.¹⁰

2. Institutional infrastructure and policy measures

11. The Secretary-General stated that the lack of governmental checks and balances in the country, including an independent, competent and impartial judiciary, fundamentally compromised the rule of law.¹¹

12. The Secretary-General stated that the Workers' Party of Korea continued to control all institutions, with decisions of the Party and the Supreme Leader overriding formal laws.¹²

13. The Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stated that those who sought to leave the country, watch or listen to foreign media or criticize the Government's actions were viewed as criminals or traitors, with serious repercussions. The surveillance and close monitoring of citizens and other severe restrictions of basic freedoms resulting from extreme militarization had been further strengthened during the border shutdown related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) response.¹³

IV. Promotion and protection of human rights

A. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

1. Equality and non-discrimination

14. The Secretary-General stated that the *songbun* social categorization system enabled the State to effectively monitor people and marginalize those deemed to challenge the legitimacy of its rule. The system influenced people's access to higher education, housing, food, employment, participation in public affairs, married and family life and place of residence.¹⁴

15. The Secretary-General recommended that the Government end discrimination against citizens on the basis of their perceived political loyalty or the sociopolitical background of their families, in particular under the *songbun* system of categorization.¹⁵

16. The Secretary-General recommended that the Government address the growing disparities between Pyongyang and other parts of the country – in particular, rural and border areas – in the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.¹⁶

2. Right to life, liberty and security of person, and freedom from torture

17. The Secretary-General recommended that the Government declare an immediate moratorium on the use of the death penalty followed, without undue delay, by its abolition, and ensure that, pending its abolition, the death penalty was imposed only for the most serious crimes and carried out pursuant to a final judgment issued by a competent court.¹⁷

18. The Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stated that torture and ill-treatment remained widespread and systematic in detention facilities operated by the Ministry of State Security and the Ministry of People's Security. Law enforcement officials regarded torture and ill-treatment as a way to secure confessions and punish detainees.¹⁸

19. The Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stated that there were long-standing and credible reports that indicated that a number of escapees that had been forcefully returned to the State had been subjected to torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment as well as other grave human rights violations.¹⁹

20. The Secretary-General recommended that the Government immediately cease the use of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment in places of detention, including the practice of beatings as part of the system of interrogation to extract confessions, and develop forensic expertise and move away from reliance on confessions.²⁰

21. The Secretary-General stated that pretrial detention continued to occur outside effective judicial control. Suspects were arbitrarily detained for prolonged periods without being convicted of any crime.²¹

22. The Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continued to receive testimonies that in pretrial detention facilities (*kuryujang*), detainees were beaten, kicked or forced to sit in a still position all day with short or no breaks. Such violence was commonly used to compel suspects to confess to a crime.²²

23. The Special Rapporteur noted that information continued to indicate that, based on the mere judgment of the officials at the Ministry of State Security that certain persons were disloyal to the State and its ideology, people continued to be arbitrarily deprived of their liberty and confined to indefinite detention in political prison camps (*kwanliso*) without the prospect of release, enduring inhumane conditions without access to adequate food, clean water and sanitation and subjected to mistreatment, including beatings that often amounted to torture. Political prisoners were denied contact with the outside world and even with their families.²³

24. The Special Rapporteur welcomed the information that the prison period of one family in a *kwanliso* had been shortened, children had been released from *kwanliso* in a few cases and children had been exempted from imprisonment in *kwanliso* when families had been arrested for having attempted to defect to the Republic of Korea. He encouraged the Government to continue such efforts and progressively release those who were detained in *kwanliso*.²⁴

25. OHCHR reported that former detainees it had interviewed had consistently described harsh conditions of detention, in particular widespread malnourishment causing severe health problems among prisoners, and physical and psychological violence, including during interrogations by officers of the Ministry of State Security and the Ministry of People's Security. Several interviewees had reported cases of prisoners who had died in detention centres from malnutrition, overwork or untreated diseases, or a combination of those factors. Some women had reported having been sexually assaulted by guards while in detention. The accounts given by former detainees suggested a total lack of judicial oversight of detention centres and no system for inmates to report abuse.²⁵

26. The Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stated that in prisons, access to safe drinking water was limited, sanitation facilities were inadequate and health services barely existed.²⁶

27. The High Commissioner stated that several interviewees had mentioned the denial of medical care to detainees, except where families provided all supplies and bribed doctors. Some interviewees had witnessed other detainees die as a result of the lack of medical care. Interviewees had described severe cold and appalling hygiene conditions, including the denial of menstrual hygiene products for women.²⁷

28. The High Commissioner reported that information provided by a small number of interviewees suggested that since 2014, there might have been some improvement in the physical treatment of detainees in at least some detention facilities. Some interviewees had

been aware of guards or other officials being disciplined for misconduct, including for beating prisoners. A former prison guard who had worked in an ordinary prison (*kyohwaso*) had told OHCHR that beatings had decreased, that the Ministry of People's Security had issued guidelines not to beat prisoners and that he had been instructed not to do so.²⁸

29. The Secretary-General recommended that the Government release all political prisoners, disband all political prison camps (*kwanliso*) and immediately cease the arbitrary arrest and imprisonment of persons on the grounds of their political or other opinion, or their social background.²⁹

30. The Secretary-General recommended that the Government conduct a comprehensive review of conditions in detention facilities and take steps to ensure that conditions in those facilities were in compliance with its obligations for the humane treatment of persons in detention, as outlined in the relevant provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and were consistent with the minimum standards elaborated in the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) and the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules).³⁰

31. The Secretary-General stated that OHCHR was concerned about the numerous cases of individuals who remained disappeared, some of them for decades. A large number of enforced disappearances by the country comprised enforced disappearance, inside the country, of its own nationals, including following their forcible repatriation from neighbouring countries. Once detained, the fate and whereabouts of the forcibly disappeared persons were concealed.³¹

32. The Secretary-General joined the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in calling for the Government to reveal the fate and whereabouts of the missing, to return them to their loved ones or to return their remains, and to take other steps to recognize the rights of victims, including holding perpetrators accountable.³²

3. Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law

33. The Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stated that the Government had still not addressed the entrenched culture of impunity for perpetrators responsible for human rights violations, including its highest authorities, and had taken no significant steps to ensure accountability.³³

34. The Secretary-General recommended that the Government take necessary measures to address the findings and recommendations of the commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the group of independent experts on accountability for human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and OHCHR as contained in the High Commissioner's report on promoting accountability in the State.³⁴

35. The High Commissioner recommended that the Government ensure that victims of serious human rights violations, including those amounting to international crimes, and their families were provided with adequate, prompt, effective and gender-sensitive reparation and remedies, including public acknowledgment of the truth of the violations suffered.³⁵

36. The Secretary-General stated that, despite the country being a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, due process and fair trial rights as protected under article 14 of the Covenant continued to be systematically violated. Trials continued to be either non-existent or of a perfunctory nature. People continued to rely on bribes rather than the courts to protect their right not to be subject to arbitrary detention.³⁶

37. The Secretary-General reported that those suspected of acts that challenged State power remained vulnerable to prosecution for "political" crimes by the Ministry of State Security, whose wide-ranging powers over the accused and their family members were exercised without judicial oversight.³⁷

38. The Secretary-General stated that when trials were held for detainees who were found not to have been engaged in anti-State conduct, witness accounts revealed that proceedings

were, with very few exceptions, little more than a formality. People were not able to choose their defence counsel, and access to a lawyer was limited to presence at trial but with the lawyer presenting no defence. There were no reported acquittals. Accused were generally sentenced to two to five years' imprisonment in an ordinary prison (*kyohwaso*) run by the Ministry of People's Security.³⁸

39. The Secretary-General stated that the Workers' Party of Korea continued to screen and appoint all judges and, once in position, they reportedly took orders from the Party and based legal decisions on political considerations. Lawyers were strictly controlled by the State.³⁹

40. The Secretary-General stated that alleged corruption in the judicial system had enabled payments to be made to judges, prosecutors and Ministry of People's Security officials to lessen sentences and to secure early release from detention.⁴⁰

41. The Secretary-General stated that control over citizens' lives through "life review sessions" and political education was reportedly weakening, as the payment of bribes was enabling people to avoid such sessions.⁴¹

42. The Secretary-General stated that accounts documented by OHCHR revealed the prevalence of corruption in the country's penal system. Bribes could be paid to avoid arrest and detention, to mitigate or avoid prison sentences, to avoid beatings, to ameliorate the harshness of forced labour and to secure family visits. OHCHR had also received reports of detainee exploitation that went beyond extortion of money, involving sexual violence, including rape.⁴²

43. The High Commissioner recommended that the Government initiate reform of criminal justice legislation and rule of law institutions, including the judiciary and law enforcement and corrections systems, in accordance with international human rights norms and standards.⁴³

4. Fundamental freedoms and the right to participate in public and political life

44. The Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stated that the surveillance and close monitoring of citizens and other severe restrictions on basic freedoms were widespread in the country. Remarks that were perceived to be critical of the ruling family, the Government or the ruling party were not tolerated. The media was fully controlled by the Government and played a dominant role in disseminating State messages. Internet access and electronic media remained limited to those which were provided by the Government, and mobile phones could only be used for making domestic calls. Making international phone calls or travelling outside of the country without the required permission were punishable crimes.⁴⁴

45. The Secretary-General stated that individual freedoms appeared contingent on the ability to pay bribes, including moving freely within the country, watching foreign media, making international phone calls and avoiding dress code regulations.⁴⁵

46. The Secretary-General reported that in interviews with OHCHR, escapees had described the absolute denial of freedom to express views or criticism of the Government. Together with the *songbun* system of social classification and the extensive system of State surveillance, the existence of political prison camps (*kwanliso*) created a climate of fear and uncertainty to discourage any form of opposition to the ruling elite.⁴⁶

47. The Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stated that in 2021, the Government had reportedly enacted the Youth Education Guarantee Act to stop young people from copying foreign culture and reorienting them towards a socialist lifestyle.⁴⁷

48. The Special Rapporteur reported that the 2020 Reactionary Thought and Culture Denunciation Law explicitly prohibited books, songs, movies, photographs, videos or similar materials from "hostile" nations such as the United States of America, the Republic of Korea and Japan. The law stipulated that speaking or writing in a South Korean style, singing a song in a South Korean style or making a publication in a South Korean font would be, depending on the circumstances, punished by up to two years of reform through labour. The Government

appeared to be concerned about the increasing influence of movies and music from the Republic of Korea on the younger population, viewing it as a serious threat to the unitary political system.⁴⁸

49. The Secretary-General stated that Internet access was limited to high-ranking State officials and other designated persons. The Korea Computer Centre filtered the information made available to users. A tightly controlled and regulated “intranet” was reportedly available to a slightly larger group of users, including selected research institutions and some government employees.⁴⁹

50. The Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea recommended that the State ease restrictions on access to information and communications.⁵⁰

51. The Secretary-General stated that the right to freedom of association continued to be denied. No community-based civil society organizations that were independent of the Workers’ Party of Korea were allowed to exist.⁵¹

52. The Secretary-General stated that every adult was required to belong to one of five organizations: the Workers’ Party of Korea, the Youth League, the Trade Union, the Union of Agricultural Workers or the Women’s Union. Each organization met three times a week, including for self-criticism and mutual criticism sessions, with the constant threat that a session might expose significant ideological deviations leading to serious human rights violations for the accused and their families, including loss of employment, increased violations of the right to privacy and arbitrary detention.⁵²

53. The Secretary-General stated that the only public assembly allowed consisted of government-led meetings and crowd mobilization.⁵³

54. The Secretary-General stated that the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion continued to be denied, with no alternative belief systems tolerated by the authorities.⁵⁴

55. The Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea noted that it was reported that Christians were categorized as a “hostile class” under the *songbun* system of social classification and continued to be particularly targeted as a serious threat to loyalty to the State.⁵⁵

56. The Secretary-General stated that a travel permit system remained in place, enabling State control of all travel within and between provinces. Violations of the travel permit system could result in detention without trial for up to three months in a labour camp (*rodongdanryonda*).⁵⁶

57. The Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea recommended that the State recognize the fundamental right to leave and enter the country, both in law and in practice, and ensure that those who were repatriated were not subjected to punishment such as torture, enforced disappearance and imprisonment upon repatriation.⁵⁷

58. The Secretary-General stated that there remained no opportunity for people to meaningfully participate in the selection of their own representatives. Elections to legislative bodies were only perfunctory for the approval of appointments made by the Workers’ Party of Korea. The ballot was not secret, and voters feared punishment for not voting for the selected candidates.⁵⁸

5. Right to privacy

59. The Secretary-General stated that the country continued to maintain a level of surveillance over the population rarely seen elsewhere. People’s right to privacy was systematically violated, with homes subjected to random searches, including for possession of information that had not been authorized by the State. That was combined with a system of punishments that might also constitute gross human rights violations. Such punishments could include extrajudicial killing and enforced disappearance into one of the country’s political prisons for exercising rights to freedom of expression, thought, conscience, religion, peaceful assembly and association.⁵⁹

60. The Secretary-General stated that the Government retained total control of organized social life. It ran a pervasive system of surveillance through entities such as the Youth League, the Union of Agricultural Workers, the Socialist Women's Union and the neighbourhood watch units (*inminban*).⁶⁰

61. The Secretary-General stated that accounts documented by OHCHR pointed to children being used by the State's sweeping surveillance system to reveal family members who had accessed foreign media content.⁶¹

6. Right to marriage and family life

62. The Secretary-General recommended that the Government immediately enable separated family members to communicate with each other, including via videoconference technology and the exchange of letters.⁶²

7. Prohibition of all forms of slavery, including trafficking in persons

63. The Secretary-General stated that OHCHR had received information that the Government had been increasingly relying on forced mobilization of men and women, without remuneration, to maintain the operation of key sectors of the economy, such as construction, mining and agricultural production. The announcement of large development projects had also raised human rights concerns over the increased use of forced labour to meet State-set targets.⁶³

64. The Secretary-General reported that the State had a number of means to extract forced labour, often in hard and hazardous forms of work, including through the prison system and the military, as well as through "shock brigade" (a term derived from expressions relating to inspirationally productive, enthusiastic labour) deployments, neighbourhood watch units (*inminban*) and "community" groups, and the school system.⁶⁴

65. OHCHR had interviewed men who had allegedly been sent to work overseas by the State to generate income for the State. They had reported having to pay between 80 and 90 per cent of their salary to the Government of the State. They had described having virtually no freedom of movement, with restrictions on leaving their work sites and having to reside in cramped living quarters imposed by the Ministry of State Security officials stationed at the overseas workplaces.⁶⁵

66. The Secretary-General recommended that the Government abolish the practice of domestic and overseas forced labour, including in the prison system and the military, as well as, inter alia, through "shock brigade" deployments and the mobilization of children and students for labour.⁶⁶

67. The Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stated that reports suggested that numerous women continued to fall victim to trafficking, forced marriage or involvement in the sex trade.⁶⁷

68. The Special Rapporteur reminded the Government of its duty to address the protection of women and girls from exploitation and to incorporate and implement legislative measures to prevent trafficking and exploitation and to take steps to ensure the economic empowerment of women and girls, provide victim assistance through counselling, reintegration and rehabilitation, collect data on trafficking and the impact of trafficking interventions and cooperate with other countries in the fight against trafficking.⁶⁸

8. Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work

69. The Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stated that all men and unmarried women were assigned work at a State-owned workplace. According to personal accounts, they were poorly paid or not paid at all.⁶⁹

70. The Special Rapporteur stated that absence from State-assigned workplaces for more than a prescribed period was a punishable crime. Article 90 of the Administrative Penalty Law provided for detention, without judicial oversight, of up to three months in a labour training camp (*rodongdanryondae*) as punishment for absence from work.⁷⁰

71. The Special Rapporteur stated that people had increasingly been relying on commercial activities, mainly in markets (*jangmadang*), to make a living. The Government had initiated reforms to legalize and regulate some markets; however, it had not yet recognized or regulated the right to work in non-State jobs.⁷¹

72. The Special Rapporteur recommended that the Government ensure the right to gain a living by work that was freely chosen or freely accepted and take measures to protect women working in *jangmadang* from exploitation and gender-based violence.⁷²

73. The Secretary-General reported that the World Health Organization and the International Labour Organization had released a global monitoring report, raising concerns about occupational health and safety in the country.⁷³

74. The Secretary-General stated that no independent trade unions were allowed to exist to help to democratize the workplace and ensure the protection of workers' interests.⁷⁴

75. The Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stated that the Government should put into place and implement a robust labour standards and regulatory framework that ensured the right to freely choose work and receive fair wages, respected the physical and mental integrity of workers, ensured occupational health and safety, promoted social dialogue between the employer and employees and allowed for the right to association and collective bargaining. The policies should also be committed to eradicating forced labour in all its forms, abolishing child labour and prohibiting all forms of discrimination.⁷⁵

9. Right to social security

76. The Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stated that *songbun* played an important role in all aspects of citizens' lives, determining whether they received social services.⁷⁶

10. Right to an adequate standard of living

77. The Secretary-General stated that serious concerns had persisted over the food situation in the country. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)-World Food Programme food security assessment in 2019 had reported that 10.1 million people, 40 per cent of the population, had been food insecure and in need of food assistance. Available information had suggested that the food security situation had worsened further. In a 2022 FAO report, it had been found that a large portion of the population had suffered from low levels of food consumption and poor dietary diversity, with the food security situation expected to remain fragile given persisting economic constraints aggravated by a below-average 2022 agricultural output.⁷⁷

78. The Secretary-General reported that there were particular concerns regarding possible food shortages in the more remote parts of the country, including rural areas and north-eastern border provinces, where people of lower *songbun* resided.⁷⁸

79. The Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stated that, owing to the high level of food insecurity, children in rural areas were particularly vulnerable to malnutrition. Diarrhoea and pneumonia remained the two main causes of death among children under 5 years of age.⁷⁹

80. The Secretary-General stated that information from interviews conducted by OHCHR had suggested that starvation had occurred in some parts of the country, which might have been in part linked to the interruption of trade with neighbouring States and the increased restrictions on freedom of movement within the country.⁸⁰

81. The Secretary-General reported that the closure of schools for extended periods was likely to have led to food-insecure children missing out on food handouts that were usually provided at school.⁸¹

82. The Secretary-General stated that about 33 per cent of the population did not have access to a safely managed water source, and the proportion rose to 50 per cent in rural areas. One in five persons did not have access to basic sanitation facilities. Much of the population was therefore regularly exposed to the risk of waterborne diseases, such as diarrhoea, which was among the leading causes of child mortality and malnutrition in the country.⁸²

11. Right to health

83. The Secretary-General stated that the health infrastructure and the capacity of health-care workers and doctors continued to be weak. The health system suffered from critical shortages of essential medical supplies and an absence of vital equipment and adequately trained staff.⁸³

84. The Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stated that, despite the guarantee of free medical care for all its citizens prescribed in the Constitution and relevant laws, people still had to give money or food in exchange for treatment and medicine.⁸⁴

85. The Special Rapporteur stated that sexual and reproductive health education was not included in formal or other forms of education.⁸⁵

86. The Secretary-General stated that according to estimates by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the infant mortality rate in the country stood at 15.4 per 1,000 live births. The most recent statistics had estimated a maternal mortality rate of 107 deaths per 100,000 births in 2020, which was significantly higher than Sustainable Development Goal target 3.1. Malnutrition, which had likely worsened owing to COVID-19 restrictions, risked compromising the gains made in infant and maternal mortality over the previous decade.⁸⁶

87. The Secretary-General stated that the majority of international humanitarian programmes in the country had been suspended since early 2020, with the last international humanitarian workers having left by March 2021. According to UNICEF, in 2022, no children had been vaccinated against measles/rubella, polio or tuberculosis, nor had any pregnant women been immunized against tetanus/diphtheria, as result of the continued lack of stocks in the routine immunization programme.⁸⁷

12. Right to education

88. The Secretary-General stated that concerns remained over the violation of children's right to education, with education being used by the State as a means of indoctrination, rather than as a means to "the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential".⁸⁸

89. The Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stated that, even though education was free, schools collected materials such as scrap steel, paper and animal fur from students, which put additional pressure on parents and in some cases prevented poorer students from attending school.⁸⁹

90. UNESCO recommended that the State pursue efforts to ensure access to quality education for all, including in rural areas and for children with disabilities.⁹⁰

91. The Secretary-General recommended that the Government reform the system of education to ensure it was directed to ensuring the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to the child's fullest potential.⁹¹

92. The Special Rapporteur noted that UNICEF had reported that the Government was planning a system of inclusive education to gradually include children with disabilities in the regular school system, which was a welcome step.⁹²

B. Rights of specific persons or groups

1. Women

93. The High Commissioner stated that many of the people who crossed the northern frontier in order to trade were married women, who increasingly bore the burden of generating income for their families. Women were also more at risk than men of being trafficked into neighbouring States for the purposes of forced marriage and sexual or labour exploitation.⁹³

94. The Secretary-General stated that on 28 July 2020, OHCHR had issued a report on the situation of women in detention in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in which it had described widespread ill-treatment of women who had escaped the country and had subsequently been repatriated.⁹⁴

95. The Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stated that domestic violence appeared to be widely tolerated and viewed as a private or family issue in which the State did not need to intervene. While it was prohibited by law, there was no clear definition of its elements, nor was it listed as a crime in the Criminal Code. Victim-survivors had no access to reporting or to protection mechanisms. There were no safe houses, psychosocial support nor shelters for victims of domestic violence.⁹⁵

96. The Special Rapporteur stated that patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes persisted regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society.⁹⁶

97. The Special Rapporteur recommended that the Government review the Criminal Code and other laws to criminalize all forms of gender-based violence against women and ensure that the perpetrators of such violence were prosecuted. He also recommended that the Government establish effective protection and reporting mechanisms for women who were victims of gender-based violence.⁹⁷

2. Children

98. The Secretary-General stated that information received by OHCHR had suggested ongoing practices of child labour, as part of the State's widespread use of forced labour. Boys and girls had long been vulnerable to forced labour mobilizations through the country's schools and organizations such as the Youth League, including mobilizations to "shock brigade" deployments.⁹⁸

99. The Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea recommended that the Government protect children under the age of 18 from child labour.⁹⁹

100. The Special Rapporteur reported that opportunities among children were determined by their family political, social and economic status. Orphans and street children (*kotjebi*) were vulnerable to child labour, including being deployed to shock brigades (*dolgyeokdae*), which usually involved the mobilization of young people to construction sites often affiliated with the Ministry of Defence or the Ministry of People's Armed Forces.¹⁰⁰

101. The Special Rapporteur stated that he had received reports that children often ran away from orphanages owing to the lack of food. The number of street children had also reportedly increased owing to economic difficulties arising from COVID-19 restrictions.¹⁰¹

3. Persons with disabilities

102. The Special Rapporteur reported that children with disabilities were vulnerable to isolation from society. It was concerning that there was a lack of available disaggregated data on the situation of children with disabilities, including those living in State institutions.¹⁰²

103. The Secretary-General stated that the country lacked adequate assistive and mobility devices for persons with disabilities, and qualified professionals who could provide services to them.¹⁰³

Notes

¹ A/HRC/42/10, A/HRC/42/10/Add.1 and A/HRC/42/2.

² A/78/212, para. 57 (r). See also A/HRC/52/64, para. 56 (e); and A/HRC/55/63, para. 57 (g).

³ A/HRC/43/58, para. 52 (m).

⁴ A/HRC/40/36, para. 54 (g).

⁵ A/75/388, para. 50 (g).

⁶ UNESCO submission for the universal periodic review of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, para. 23.

⁷ A/HRC/52/65, para. 43 (j).

⁸ A/78/212, para. 44.

- ⁹ Ibid., para. 28.
¹⁰ [A/HRC/43/58](#), para. 52 (d).
¹¹ [A/78/212](#), para. 10.
¹² [A/77/247](#), para. 11.
¹³ [A/78/526](#), para. 14.
¹⁴ [A/77/247](#), para. 16.
¹⁵ [A/78/212](#), para. 57 (b).
¹⁶ [A/76/242](#), para. 55 (s).
¹⁷ [A/78/212](#), para. 57 (g).
¹⁸ [A/HRC/40/66](#), paras. 27 and 29.
¹⁹ [A/HRC/55/63](#), para. 7. See also [A/HRC/46/52](#), para. 49.
²⁰ [A/77/247](#), para. 51 (d).
²¹ Ibid., para. 14.
²² [A/HRC/49/74](#), para. 10.
²³ [A/76/392](#), para. 13.
²⁴ Ibid., para. 17.
²⁵ [A/HRC/40/36](#), para. 40.
²⁶ [A/75/388](#), para. 17.
²⁷ [A/HRC/46/52](#), para. 57.
²⁸ Ibid., para. 58.
²⁹ [A/78/212](#), para. 57 (h).
³⁰ [A/76/242](#), para. 55 (e).
³¹ [A/78/212](#), para. 35.
³² Ibid., para. 55.
³³ [A/HRC/55/63](#), para. 15.
³⁴ [A/75/271](#), para. 65 (f), referring to [A/HRC/40/36](#).
³⁵ [A/HRC/52/64](#), para. 56 (d).
³⁶ [A/77/247](#), para. 12.
³⁷ Ibid.
³⁸ [A/74/268](#), para. 14.
³⁹ [A/77/247](#), para. 11.
⁴⁰ [A/76/242](#), para. 24.
⁴¹ [A/74/268](#), para. 34.
⁴² Ibid., para. 18.
⁴³ [A/HRC/52/64](#), para. 56 (c).
⁴⁴ [A/HRC/40/66](#), para. 30.
⁴⁵ [A/76/242](#), para. 24.
⁴⁶ [A/77/247](#), para. 21.
⁴⁷ [A/78/526](#), para. 14.
⁴⁸ [A/76/392](#), para. 26.
⁴⁹ [A/74/268](#), para. 32.
⁵⁰ [A/HRC/55/63](#), para. 57 (c).
⁵¹ [A/77/247](#), para. 24.
⁵² Ibid., para. 23.
⁵³ [A/74/268](#), para. 33.
⁵⁴ [A/77/247](#), para. 24.
⁵⁵ [A/76/392](#), para. 19.
⁵⁶ [A/77/247](#), para. 25.
⁵⁷ [A/HRC/55/63](#), para. 57 (b).
⁵⁸ [A/77/247](#), para. 17.
⁵⁹ [A/78/212](#), para. 31.
⁶⁰ [A/75/271](#), para. 18.
⁶¹ [A/78/212](#), para. 32.
⁶² [A/77/247](#), para. 51 (q).
⁶³ [A/78/212](#), para. 12.
⁶⁴ [A/77/247](#), para. 30.
⁶⁵ [A/HRC/52/64](#), paras. 27, 29 and 30.
⁶⁶ [A/78/212](#), para. 57 (a).
⁶⁷ [A/78/526](#), para. 16.
⁶⁸ [A/HRC/52/65](#), para. 27.
⁶⁹ [A/HRC/43/58](#), para. 29.
⁷⁰ [A/75/388](#), para. 29.
⁷¹ Ibid., para. 30.

- ⁷² [A/HRC/52/65](#), para. 43 (g).
⁷³ [A/77/247](#), para. 32.
⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, para. 31.
⁷⁵ [A/HRC/40/66](#), para. 23.
⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, para. 19.
⁷⁷ [A/78/212](#), para. 21.
⁷⁸ [A/77/247](#), para. 34.
⁷⁹ [A/76/392](#), para. 25.
⁸⁰ [A/78/212](#), para. 22.
⁸¹ [A/77/247](#), para. 34.
⁸² [A/75/271](#), para. 29.
⁸³ [A/76/242](#), para. 35.
⁸⁴ [A/75/388](#), para. 12.
⁸⁵ [A/HRC/52/65](#), para. 29.
⁸⁶ [A/78/212](#), para. 26.
⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, para. 27.
⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, para. 33, citing the Convention on the Rights of the Child, art. 29 (1) (a).
⁸⁹ [A/HRC/43/58](#), para. 28.
⁹⁰ UNESCO submission, para. 29.
⁹¹ [A/78/212](#), para. 57 (j).
⁹² [A/76/392](#), para. 24.
⁹³ [A/HRC/46/52](#), para. 43.
⁹⁴ [A/75/271](#), para. 12.
⁹⁵ [A/HRC/52/65](#), para. 31.
⁹⁶ [A/78/526](#), para. 25.
⁹⁷ [A/HRC/43/58](#), para. 52 (k) and (l).
⁹⁸ [A/78/212](#), para. 13.
⁹⁹ [A/76/392](#), para. 40 (o).
¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, para. 23.
¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*
¹⁰² *Ibid.*, para. 24.
¹⁰³ [A/75/271](#), para. 33.
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