

# DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

## 2020 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea) is an authoritarian state led by the Kim family since 1949. Shortly after Kim Jong Il’s death in 2011, his son Kim Jong Un was named marshal of the country and supreme commander of the Korean People’s Army. His titles also include chairman of the Central Military Commission of the Worker’s Party of Korea, chairman of the State Affairs Commission, and supreme representative of the Korean People. Kim Jong Un’s grandfather, the late Kim Il Sung, remains “eternal president.” The most recent national elections, held in March 2019, were neither free nor fair.

The internal security apparatus includes the Ministries of Social Security and State Security and the Military Security Command. A systematic and intentional overlap of powers and responsibilities existed between these organizations to prevent any potential subordinate consolidation of power and assure that each unit provides a check and balance on the other. Authorities maintained effective control over the security forces. Members of the security forces committed numerous abuses.

Significant human rights issues included: unlawful or arbitrary killings by the government; forced disappearances by the government; torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment and punishment by government authorities; harsh and life-threatening prison conditions, including in political prison camps; arbitrary arrests and detentions; political prisoners and detainees; politically motivated reprisals against individuals located outside the country; no judicial independence; arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy; serious restrictions on free expression, the press, and the internet, including violence, threats of violence, or unjustified arrests and prosecutions against journalists, censorship, and site blocking; substantial interference with freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association; severe restrictions of religious freedom; serious restrictions on freedom of movement;



































































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### **Endnote: Note on Sourcing**

The United States does not have diplomatic relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The DPRK does not allow representatives of foreign governments, journalists, or other invited guests the freedom of movement that would enable them to assess fully human rights conditions or confirm reported abuses.