



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# **Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development**

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SDIR • NUMBER 052 • 2nd SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

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**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, January 29, 2015**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Scott Reid**



## Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

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• (1305)

[Translation]

**The Chair (Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC)):** Order, please.

Today is January 29, 2015, and this is the 52th meeting of the Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. This meeting is televised.

[English]

We are continuing the study on the human rights situation in North Korea that we have been doing over a number of meetings scattered over the last couple of years.

We have today two witnesses to whom I will shortly be turning over the floor. Cheolhyeon Jang is one of the witnesses. He is appearing on his own behalf as an individual. Kyung Bok Lee, who is the president of the Council for Human Rights in North Korea, is our other witness.

**Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC):** On a point, we shouldn't be having photography while we're gavelled in.

**The Chair:** You're quite right.

Mr. Sweet has pointed out that now that we're in session all photography must cease.

Thank you for that, Mr. Sweet.

We're going to turn the floor over to our witnesses.

To the witnesses, I'll just say that you're free to divide your time between you as you see fit. When your testimony is completed, we will go to questions from the members of the committee. The length of each round of questions and answers will be determined by how much time is left in our hour, divided by the six members of Parliament who will be asking questions.

Please feel free to begin your witness testimony.

**Mr. Cheolhyeon Jang (As an Individual) (Interpretation):** Bonjour.

First of all, in 2004 I escaped from North Korea. Before I escaped from North Korea, I was in the United Front Department of the central party of North Korea.

The UFD is basically a counter-intelligence operation of the North Korean government. We look at what we're going to do in our operations and intelligence against South Korea. I was responsible for psychological warfare in that department. When I was there, what I mostly did was look at South Korean poetic styles and then write poetry as someone in South Korea would write poetry. I would put North Korean ideologies into this poetry so that South Koreans would be confused and think that it was a South Korean who was praising North Korea. Through this we tried to get both South Koreans and North Koreans to think that Kim Jong-il and Kim Il Sung were the only road to unification.

Now, North Korea treats everything like this. They want everyone in the world to idolize Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong-il as gods. This is the very central point of their propaganda. This kind of propaganda is being used to brainwash North Korean residents. Through all the domestic outlets in North Korea, this propaganda is used to brainwash all of their residents into thinking that the Kim dynasty people are gods.

Today what I want to tell you is that when you look at human rights in North Korea, you mostly focus on the political labour camps there. But if you look at North Korea from a more accurate perspective, the labour camps themselves might be prisons, but society as a whole is also a prison. Every rule in the labour camps is also reflected outside those camps in North Korean society. It's a physical dictatorship. The North Korean government engages in both physical control and mind control. North Korean residents' bodies and minds are completely controlled by the authorities. Like the Gestapo of the Nazis, they go out and hunt people down for their thoughts that might be different from what is prescribed, and they run the labour camps. But North Koreans are worse than the Nazis. The Nazis had labour camps that were directed at people who were not of their nation. North Koreans are putting their own people into these labour camps and under the hardships there.

I'd like to talk a little bit about the mind control aspect of North Korea. Along with physical oppression, North Korea uses mind control to control the minds and hearts of people so that they will deify their leader. All of this is done through propaganda. For mind control, all of the art and literature in North Korea is controlled by the authorities. There is a council that reviews every single piece of art that is released. If that council does not approve, you cannot let a single song out into the public in North Korea.

Everything starts from control of language in North Korea. We have built Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong-il, and Kim Jong-un into a cult. Specific language is used when we are talking about the leaders. By controlling the language first, North Korean authorities are brainwashing the North Korean residents and gaining control over them, in both mind and body.

If we look at the slogans that are forced upon North Korean residents, they talk about how you're only a piece of meat if you don't have your ideologies straight. Basically, a political life is what they're talking about, which means loyalty to the leader. If you don't have loyalty to the leader, then you're not a real human, you're just a piece of meat. That's what that slogan is saying.

You probably have heard of the many public executions that North Korea is carrying out. They're doing this because they want loyalty to their leader, loyalty to the party. If someone no longer has that loyalty, then they're not human.

● (1310)

In this regard, I would like to give you an example of something that I myself experienced. In the United Front Department division that I worked for, one person who also worked there was sent to a labour camp. We went to the home of my colleague to help him pack up as he prepared to go to the labour camp. But you see, this too was about control and brainwashing, a part of life in the organization of the party. What I saw happen at the home of my colleague surprised me. Once he was all packed and ready to move, some North Korean security people came and asked the wife, "Are you going to follow your husband to the labour camp or are you going to follow the party?" The wife was forced to say that she would follow the party. What else could she do? If she said she would follow her husband, then she too would be sent to a political labour camp. The authorities were forcing her to choose on the spot, right then, loyalty to the party or to her husband.

But as soon as she chose, the North Korean security authorities took her infant child away from her. Why? Because North Korea has punishment by association. That baby was this guy's son: he was going to the labour camp with his dad. So the mom lost her baby even though she chose the party, and we really could do nothing but cry. We couldn't show our tears, as that would have been seen as treason as well. We had to be very careful, but all of us were sobbing in our hearts. Think about it; her baby was just taken away from her. She was nursing her baby, and the baby was just taken away from her. She started crying as her milk began to come in again, and for the first time in my life I saw tears in the form of milk coming from a nursing mother's breasts. All of us were sobbing in our hearts.

Public executions in North Korea are a normal happening. In the rural areas, you usually have these public executions held in the market areas, because that's where most of the people are. They choose a place where a lot of people are. It's not just a form of punishment; it's a means of propaganda and it's a means of brainwashing the residents of North Korea.

I escaped from North Korea, and I went into China first. In my heart I realized the cruelty of North Korea when I escaped and looked back on the country I'd left. What I want to tell you today is that we need to make sure we reach the people of North Korea who

are suffering under this situation of mind control and physical oppression in North Korea. We need outside help to do this.

When you look at North Korea, you can't think of it as just one entity. You have to separate it into the North Korean authorities and then the residents. I wish Canada would stand on the side of the North Korean residents. What can Canada do? I think the legislation of a North Korean human rights act would be the first step. I'm here today to testify and to urge you to please work on this North Korean human rights act.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Please begin, Mr. Lee.

**Mr. Kyung Bok Lee (President, Council for Human Rights in North Korea):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and honourable members of the subcommittee.

As you all know, in February of last year, the UN commission of inquiry report that was released effectively branded North Korea as a totally tyrannical state, worse than a Nazi state, as Mr. Jang stated a minute ago. At the same time they branded the so-called supreme leader, or supreme ruler I would say, as a criminal to be tried before the International Criminal Court. So it is no longer arguable that North Korea or the so-called DPRK, has lost its statehood or sovereignty as a state from a R2P perspective. The COI report says, "The international community must accept its responsibility to protect the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from crimes against humanity, because the Government of the DPRK has manifestly failed to do so".

Personally I would like to liken the human rights situation in North Korea to hostage-taking situations in which the people are being taken hostage by a criminal and therefore need to be protected and rescued.

I understand there are five R2P principles as they apply to the international community's obligation towards the offending states, which have been set out by Professor Irwin Cotler, the international authority on the R2P doctrine, who happens to be a member of this respectable subcommittee.

Thank you, Professor Cotler.

These five R2P principles are the responsibility to remember, the responsibility to prevent, the responsibility to protect, the responsibility to prosecute, and the responsibility to rebuild.

I would add one more if I might, which is the responsibility to rescue, in the case of the North Korean situation, because the situation there is an ongoing situation in which there is an urgent need for rescue more than anything else.

Now let me list some specific measures to be applied in the North Korean situation. Firstly, there are measures for the people being held hostage. As I said, we have to rescue the escapees from the yoke of the hostage-taker, those refugees in danger of repatriation back to North Korea from China and elsewhere.

We have to extend humanitarian assistance, in terms of the people's right to know, for those who are sealed off from the outside world. The tragedy is that many if not most North Koreans in North Korea do not realize that they are being held hostage. They believe they are being protected and cared for by their supreme ruler, the deified personality cult, because they are brainwashed, dehumanized, and enslaved from their birth.

The provision of outside information into North Korea will certainly serve as a strong and effective tool to deprogram the brainwashed people and de-deify the personality cult.

• (1315)

Secondly, for measures towards the region, the ruler, such as prosecuting him as a criminal at the International Criminal Court through the UN mechanism, you know what it is and what it takes.

Additionally, I would suggest to Parliament that it ban him, the supreme ruler, from entering Canada. Of course I don't expect him to apply for a visa to enter Canada, but the implication here, the significance, is that a travel ban by the Government of Canada, if it is known to the people of North Korea, will serve as a strong and effective tool in the de-deification of the personality cult, which says that he is actually a hero.

We want these measures to be included in a human rights in North Korea act of Canada that we are petitioning Parliament and the government to legislate. I'm sure that this is what Canada can do, and therefore should do, under the circumstances. Regime collapse is inevitable and is forthcoming, as Mr. Jang predicts. I believe that the human rights in North Korea act of Canada will give hope to the people of North Korea and will serve as the last straw to break the camel's back.

Thank you.

• (1320)

**The Chair:** Thank you to our two witnesses.

Colleagues, we have enough time for six-minute rounds of questions and answers.

Mr. Sweet, would you like to begin?

**Mr. David Sweet:** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you very much for your testimony, Mr. Jang and Mr. Lee.

Mr. Jang, you were in a department that dealt with psychological and physical warfare. You mentioned that your job was to write poems so that South Koreans would idolize North Korea. What other practices were going on in that department with regard to your other colleagues?

**Mr. Cheolhyeon Jang (Interpretation):** In the UFD, we would write novels, songs, videos, and magazines. These are produced by the people in that department. It's not just poetry that comes out from that department. All kinds of different media come out of that department. The UFD that I was in is like a cultural liaison. From the 1970s up to the current date, they have been engaged in those kinds of activities that produce all forms of literature and art that is used for propaganda.

If you were to look at a publication called *Uri Minjok Kkiri*, which means "Us Together", you would see that it's published by the UFD. Through this media outlet, North Korea provides op-eds and various articles, all of which are used as tools for psychological warfare against South Korea. There are various periodicals and also literature produced by this division. From the 1970s on, we used Japan as a channel, because there is a group of Koreans in Japan who are pro-North Korea. This group was used to channel these publications into South Korea.

In the past, movements for democratization in South Korea were actually anti-government movements in South Korea, so North Korea was trying to use these people who were engaged in democratization movements in the past as a channel for their psychological warfare against South Korea.

**Mr. Kyung Bok Lee:** Let me correct the answer. UFD, for whom he was working, was not dealing with physical control, physical dictatorship.

• (1325)

**Mr. David Sweet:** Mr. Jang, some of this activity must have affected you. Once you experienced freedom here in this country, how long did it take you to deal with the psychological effects of all of this programming that was going on in North Korea?

**Mr. Cheolhyeon Jang (Interpretation):** The department I worked for thought we needed to learn as much as we could about South Korea. To provide counter-intelligence, we needed to know the enemy to actually be able to fight against the enemy. So we went in and we read and we experienced everything, but when I actually came into South Korea, things were totally different from what I'd read in the publications. So for me too it was very difficult to adapt to this new society, and I had various trials and errors that I had to go through in order to reach where I am right now.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Have you had, either electronically or face to face, any kind of threats from any North Korean agents since you've escaped?

**Mr. Cheolhyeon Jang (Interpretation):** Right from the time I defected, when I escaped, North Korean authorities put out a search warrant for me. Since I defected I have received open physical threats through the North Korean official media outlets. I really can't count the threats, because there have been so many against me. Now when I'm in South Korea, I always receive 24-hour protection from the government.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Marston, go ahead, please.

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Lee and Mr. Jang, welcome.

Mr. Lee, we've worked with your Committee for Human Rights in North Korea for, I would say, nine or 10 years at this point. You referenced the UN commission's report, which you have with you here today. Ms. Sgro and I received copies last night at your forum. Do you have enough copies available to leave for the remainder of the committee? If not, could you table the report at the end of the committee so we could have the benefit of it?

You mentioned the responsibility to protect but you referred to it as R2P. For our audience watching, I just wanted to clarify that was “responsibility to protect” on the part of the United Nations. I have no real question for you, sir, at this point.

Mr. Jang, you spoke last night and today about the risk of regime collapse in North Korea. I'm not so sure that people really understand the significance of the risk to the population of North Korea. In 2007 I visited South Korea. I was in the DMZ and we saw up close North Korean army guards. They were emaciated. They were very small, clearly not well fed, and as most people know, a country will feed its army first. So it was an indicator of how terrible things were in North Korea for the population.

But if there were a regime collapse, I don't think the world would be prepared for it, sir. Are you bringing these warnings everywhere you travel?

**Mr. Cheolhyeon Jang (Interpretation):** I always try to speak about the atrocities of North Korea, the situation in North Korea, and I always argue that we need to prepare for that eventual collapse. If that happens, there will be total chaos that we cannot deal with. North Korea is different because its punishment system involves three generations of guilt by association. They have oppressed their people that way, and the anger against the regime will be immeasurable when it erupts.

We need to prepare for that eventual collapse, for that future. We need to take measures to prepare for that right now.

• (1330)

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** When I was in South Korea, in the DMZ, there was a train station built on the border by the South Korean government, and it was to be connected to the north eventually, to allow transfers. That kind of highlights to me how unprepared South Korea actually is, if it is that optimistic that it would be that simple a change. I don't see the government, the regime, giving up power. They may lose it. As you say, the anger may take it away from them, so there's that huge gap in between.

You mentioned, Mr. Lee, the request of the Canadian government to have a human rights in North Korean act. Would you like to elaborate some more on that as to what you think should be in it, and what impact you think it would have? Do you really believe that would have a direct impact on the regime in North Korea?

**Mr. Kyung Bok Lee:** As mentioned, there are two ways the government survives. One is deification of the supreme leader and the other is physical control. Let's say, if we have a human rights in North Korea act here in Canada, first of all, whatever it contains and whatever the contents are, the implication here is that—oh, Canada has an act on human rights? When we're talking about human rights in the human rights act, we mean human rights abuses in North Korea. Ultimately, it originates because of the deification of the supreme leader and the system. Effectively, it's an insult to the regime, to the supreme leader, who is actually a hero. If this were known to the general public in North Korea, it would serve as a deification of the personality cult. I think, more than anything else, that's important, even if it is a symbolic one.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** I have one quick question for Mr. Jang.

The leader of North Korea recently or today visited Russia. Have you any thoughts as to what that might suggest?

• (1335)

**Mr. Cheolhyeon Jang (Interpretation):** North Korea is trying to move away from just relying on the popularity of its government among its people, because if you look, basically, at North Korean markets, everything is dependent on China. They're trying to move away from China and this situation. At this point, China is not very favourable towards North Korea so North Korea has to move away from this reliance on China. Here we have China as a success story of reform in terms of the economy, but North Korea is not in a position to reform. This cultification has distorted all of the history of North Korea. They've idealized the Kims, so the minute they open their society and they open their economy, then everyone will see the truth about the Kims and this regime will collapse because the ideology that has been sustaining it so far will collapse. So in this position, they just can't open their doors, but China keeps on pressuring North Korea to open up.

In this situation, North Korea can only turn to Russia. They also need a starting point for this, right? Here we see that it's the 70th anniversary of the liberation of North Korea, so it's a celebration of how Russia came in, the Soviet Union came in, 70 years ago, to liberate North Korea from Japan. North Korea believes that this 70th anniversary celebration is more pro-Russian whereas any celebration of the end of the Korean War is pro-Chinese, because the Chinese came in and helped after the Korean War. Their focus on the 70th anniversary of liberation also tells us that they are leaning more towards Russia than towards China.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Grewal, please.

**Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you very much for coming to speak with us today, Mr. Jang and Mr. Lee. I appreciate your willingness to come and speak to us on the human rights abuses in North Korea and how we as Canadians can help the North Korean people.

Mr. Jang, you are a defector, so how has your family been treated since you left the country? Also, what specific measures does North Korea employ to ensure that other high-level workers don't defect as well?

**Mr. Cheolhyeon Jang (Interpretation):** When I worked in the UFD in North Korea, I was treated very specially compared to the regular residents of North Korea. That is shown in the supplies that I received, the rationing.

In North Korea, people are divided into classes according to the type of rations that you get there. There are daily rations, rations every three days, weekly rations, and then monthly rations. Most of the people in North Korea receive monthly rations, but people in the central party receive rations daily, every three days, or weekly.

As an employee of the UFD, I, like most of my colleagues, basically received all the humanitarian aid that was sent to North Korea from South Korea. We were responsible for it. We got it first. The people in my department were supplied first with aid that came from South Korea. After I defected and went to South Korea, I worked for a while in a national institute, so in North Korea I worked on South Korea, and in South Korea I worked on North Korea's issues.

When it comes to defectors right now and what North Korea is doing, they're trying their best to prevent any other high-level people from defecting from the country. First of all, for the people who have the most power, they're not allowing them to travel abroad at all. At the OGD, which is the Organization and Guidance Department of North Korea, people who are in management there are not allowed to travel abroad at all. The people who are diplomats of course have to go abroad, and, for those people, what North Korea does is take their family members hostage. They keep them in the country. They don't let the family members follow. Only the diplomats themselves, and maybe just one of their family members, are allowed to go to a different country, so the rest of the family members are held hostage in the country.

Thank you.

**Mrs. Nina Grewal:** This question goes to both of you. Anyone can answer. As previous witnesses to this committee have mentioned, the North Korean regime uses food as a weapon. What end is massive famine supposed to serve for the regime? Also, how does North Korea have the capacity or the means to feed the general population?

**Mr. Cheolhyeon Jang (Interpretation):** There are two classes in North Korea. There are people who hand out, people who are on top, and then there are people who are in the market. There are people who rely on rations and who get a lot of rations compared to people who are relying on the markets. People with sufficient rations are loyal to the party, of course, and only a limited number of people receive sufficient supplies. But most of the people in North Korea are in the market class because they really can't expect to live on rations.

From 1994 to 1999, about three million people died of starvation in North Korea. Why? Because we didn't have a market. That was the first reason. Second, it's not because we didn't have enough rice: it's a matter of system. We didn't have human rights. That's why they starved to death.

What I'm saying is that North Korea could just as easily have given up its nuclear program and then spent that money to buy rice for their people, but they made a choice to develop their nuclear program even further. They used more money.... When three million people were dying of starvation, they spent about \$800 million on a mausoleum for the tomb of Kim Il Sung. When the people of North Korea starved to death, they didn't really think of them as people. They just thought of them as another number. They weren't important. They weren't people.

Now, North Korea keeps asking the outside world for food. Are they asking for food for their people? No. I think it's for the people who are loyal to them, the ration class of people who can be sustained on the rations, the very few. They just want to feed those

very few. In this totalitarian system, they want to keep it alive, of course, and because of that, to keep their system alive, they're asking for food aid from the outside.

• (1340)

**Mrs. Nina Grewal:** Do you see any tangible progress towards an open and free society in North Korea? When do you envision North Korea opening up to the rest of the world?

**Mr. Cheolhyeon Jang (Interpretation):** As I said to you before, as long as North Korea focuses on this cultification, this deification, of the Kims, then opening up the society is just out the question. They need their leader to be a god, and everyone else in the country is held hostage to this cause.

Right now, though, the North Korean authorities have basically lost their ability to provide rations, so they're losing their control over the society. They just look away when they see markets sprouting up. I think this probably will be what pushes back against the North Korean government. They're not fighting against the external enemies; they're fighting against the markets that are sprouting up within the country. If these grassroots markets continue to flourish, I think North Korea will change a bit. People in the past thought about loyalty to the party, but now, with these markets, they're thinking about materials and what they can buy. In the past there was a very simple line of command, and people would just follow that, but now we have a new order of demand and supply in this market. There's a new life order because of these markets.

So if you want to change North Korea, as long as the regime insists on cultification, we can never have any top-down change in North Korea. We can only hope for change to start at the grassroots. You and other countries around the world shouldn't be talking with the North Korean authorities; you should be looking more at the people in North Korea and what you can do to support their efforts to make more markets flourish in that country.

**The Chair:** Mr. Cotler, you're next.

**Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I first want to commend Mr. Lee for bringing up the importance of a North Korea human rights act. As I think you put it, this would give hope to the North Korean people themselves. It has importance as a symbolic as well as substantive statement. I have drafted in the past a comprehensive motion on North Korea, and would like to do a North Korea human rights act, but it would go nowhere as a private member's bill, unfortunately. I'm hoping that perhaps at the end of testimony today this committee might consider a motion to recommend to the government that it consider a North Korea human rights act, because it would be much more important if it came from the government.

The second thing I want to express my appreciation for is adding the sixth consideration to R2P, regarding the responsibility to rescue.

Let me get to the particular question. Recently UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed purported overtures by North Korea's government to improve access, as the Secretary-General put it, in support of human rights monitoring and indications that it would allow greater access to humanitarian relief organizations. What do you make of the Secretary-General's statement, and how does this affect our whole approach with regard to North Korea and the findings regarding their ongoing commission of crimes against humanity?

• (1345)

**Mr. Kyung Bok Lee:** Some months ago, when the UN General Assembly was trying to pass the resolution, the North Korean authorities wanted to negotiate. In exchange for deletion of the critical elements of the resolution, they would allow the UN special rapporteur to visit North Korea. At the same time we hear, according to satellite information, that one of the prison camps in North Korea, Yodok, is all of a sudden disappearing and the camp facilities are disappearing. Perhaps this was done in order to assure the special rapporteur that this is not a political prison camp but rather a collective farm only. It's a strategy of deception, in other words. We are saying they have to dismantle the political prison camp system, not the camp facility. They can transfer inmates to other camps. That's not dismantlement in the true sense of the word. I think the same applies to the dialogue. The international community engaged in dialogue for—what?—20 years, over the nuclear issue. What's the result? Nothing.

This authority is impervious and totally impossible. So, diplomatically, yes, the international community, including the South Korean government and the Canadian government, can engage in dialogue, but we have to make sure that we know what they are saying is not really what they are saying. They don't mean what they are saying, so we have to be careful. Most of the time we are the losers, because, as Mr. Jang said, the western societies, the international community, have been deceived for so long and continue to be deceived.

So we have to deal with North Korea.

**Mr. Cheolhyeon Jang (Interpretation):** The North Korean regime gave their reaction to the COI report. The reason is not that they have changed their attitude to human rights, it's that they wanted to refer the supreme leader to the international tribunal. That's why. As I said before, the North Korean regime is based on the deification of their leader. The international community is now referring him. They want him to go before the tribunal. That's why they couldn't help but put on a show. It's not because they genuinely have changed their attitude towards human rights in North Korea. Because if they had, they would have abolished their system of terror. But they still create a lot of political prisoners and they still keep their secret police. The North Korean regime puts on this show, so we shouldn't be deceived by that.

• (1350)

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** I just want to mention parenthetically on that point that in 2014 North Korea was part of the universal periodic review at the United Nations. Canada made seven recommendations regarding what North Korea should be doing. Among the recommendations that were rejected, two of them that were rejected, which I found interesting, were the closure of prison camps and,

again, in relation to what you just said Mr. Jang, ensuring accountability for violations of human rights. Those were two of the four recommendations made by Canada that were rejected.

If I may, I have a very quick question, Mr. Chair.

Recently, as you know, Shin Dong-hyuk recanted parts of his account of escaping from North Korea. Will this have any impact on the findings of the commission of inquiry regarding the crimes against humanity committed by North Korea, and will it in any way affect a prospective referral by the UN Security Council of these crimes against humanity to the International Criminal Court?

**Mr. Kyung Bok Lee:** Please, is the question for me?

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** Yes, to you or to Mr. Jang.

**Mr. Kyung Bok Lee:** It is very unfortunate that he changed his testimony. He has changed his story, but the essence of his testimony is what is happening in North Korea, especially in the political prisoner camps. He changed his story of how he was tortured at age 20 and said 13 instead of 20, and he said that he was ill-treated in Camp 18 instead of Camp 14, and therefore the credibility of his testimony is being tested. That is very unfortunate, but as I said, what's happening in North Korea in the prison camps is true. I think that's why it won't affect much; to some extent, yes, but not really.

**Mr. Cheolhyeon Jang (Interpretation):** I missed some of the question, but I would like to mention one thing, which is that in the political prison camps, as some argue, you cannot get out alive. When people hear about political camps, they always talk about the Yodok camp, but Yodok is a sort of re-education camp. That's why there have been some survivors of that camp.

Some people have been released by the regime, but unfortunately now there are no survivors from those political camps, because the North Korean regime executed those people. That's why we don't have those survivors. Mr. Shin's recanting of his story is based on that reality.

If the North Korean regime is willing to dismantle their political prison camps, if they have a list of people they're willing to release, if they're willing to do that, they should show us that list.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr. Kyung Bok Lee:** It depends how you define a political prison camp. I hear in the testimony of other political prison camp survivors that the degree of the punishment, isolation, and torture is a little bit different. In the case of Camp 18, it is not a total control zone.

As they said, a real political prison camp may be defined as a total control zone. I hear that even in the Yodok camp, there are two parts. One is a total control zone that you can never leave. We don't know how they are treated because they are destined to die in there. Nobody knows, because there are no survivors so far. For other camps, maybe after years, after serving their term, people can be released. We have survivors.

Generally, labour camps, whether they are total control zones or not, we still think of as political prison camps. In that sense, I don't agree with him that there are no political prison camp survivors; there are, I guess.

•(1355)

**The Chair:** Mr. Hillyer, you're next.

**Mr. Jim Hillyer (Lethbridge, CPC):** Thank you.

You said that getting through to the regime is pretty much hopeless and that we should direct our efforts towards the people themselves.

What are some things that we can do to support and encourage or inspire the people themselves since we have to get through the filter of the government?

**Mr. Cheolhyeon Jang (Interpretation):** I think getting outside information in would be the most effective thing.

Why? Because North Korean residents are actually living in a total control zone. They're living in a society that is totally controlled. They can't move freely, and they can't go abroad. They are in a closed environment and they are just getting the information that is coming down that has been brainwashing them since they were born about the deification of the Kims. They have nothing to compare to. They don't know what it's like out there, and they can't compare what it's like inside. We need to get information on the reality of the outside world in to the North Korean people so that they realize that this is wrong and they're living in a society that is wrong. I think that's the first step that we need to take.

Second, we need to look at how we can help the North Korean people, not the regime. The first way would be to rescue the defectors. The defectors who reached South Korea are about 28,000 in number. They're very lucky. There are many people who are in China or in Southeast Asia who want to come to South Korea but they can't come in. There are about 100,000 of them currently on the run. We need to be able to help these people to go to South Korea or to other free countries. I think that is a role that we need to play, because that also will play a part in bringing about the collapse of the regime.

I told you that there is punishment by association in North Korea. It's three generations of punishment. If someone in your family has defected then your whole family is going to be classified as people who are traitors to the country. In this situation, everyone in North Korean society, the people of North Korea will all be classified as people who are disloyal, because they know someone in their family who has defected. We definitely need to help these people to defect more and defect safely and to go into safe countries.

We need to break down the cultification, the deification of the Kims. How can we do that? I don't think it's that difficult. We need to keep our broadcasts that go into North Korea, that go on the open airwaves. We also need to keep putting pamphlets into the areas of North Korea where we can get them. We need to tell the North Korean people that these three generations of the Kim dynasty have left three generations of slavery for the North Korean people. Just by telling them the truth, I think we can change the thoughts of the North Korean people.

•(1400)

**Mr. Jim Hillyer:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** I'll just advise you that I'm following my own clock, which is a bit different from the one up there. We still have a few minutes left for the committee.

Are you sure you're done, Mr. Hillyer?

**Mr. Jim Hillyer:** Yes. I have to do a Standing Order 31.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Mr. Benskin, please.

**Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP):** Thank you.

As I expressed after hearing one of the previous witnesses from North Korea, my head spins at the testimony you are providing. I thank you both for your testimony as well as for your candour and courage in sharing these stories with us.

As an artist, I have always prided myself in the work done by my artistic colleagues and me, in the firm belief that we can change the world one poem at a time. Your testimony in regard to the tools that are being used to subjugate the people of North Korea is disheartening, to say the least. You shared with us that you yourself were part of creating poems but also novels and other forms of communication in order to contribute to the brainwashing of North Korean residents. We heard through past testimony, and you've just echoed it, that one of the things that will aid in ending this regime and this life is the information filtering in to the North Korean people. We heard how information, through television shows, is being smuggled in on thumb drives and CDs.

What other type of work is being done? It would take the same kind of work to undo, I guess, or deprogram, as you said, what is happening. You mentioned earlier the language of control. Could you elaborate a bit on what that language is and what you mean by that?

**Mr. Cheolhyeon Jang (Interpretation):** I'm not sure if there is anything like this in English, but in Korean we have an honorific system built into the language. You show very high respect, respect, and just.... People with equal status have a different language system, let's say.

The honorific system can only be used for the people in the leader's family, the Kims. They get the highest-respect language. You can't use that style of language for anyone else. So within the language itself you're classifying. You're splitting the people into classes. There's a specific style of language that you can use only with regard to the leader's family and the leader.

For literature, we have the *juche* ideology. That is built into the literature that's coming out of the government departments. If we look at poetry, in North Korea you can't use the word "tears" with a person in general. You can't use that. There was a very famous poet in North Korea by the name of Kim Chul. He wrote "dew" instead of "tears", since he couldn't use the word "tears", but they caught on to that. He was sent to a prison camp for 15 years.

Everything starts from this ideology. We have these prescriptions for every different type of literature. Basically, it's all just used as a tool, and legally as a tool, for propaganda only. There's a people's literature division within the UFD where they come up with the means to control everything in popular culture. But there is no popular culture, because no one's allowed to come up with their own songs. You can't do anything, even on your gravestone. On the gravestone you can put the person's name, their birthdate, and that's it, because people can read that gravestone and they don't want anyone to read something that they haven't prescribed.

You probably can't imagine this type of control, but everything starts from the language, what you can use and what you can't.

• (1405)

**Mr. Kyung Bok Lee:** I want to add one more thing. When we are talking about freedom of expression, that implies freedom of expression of thought. Freedom of opinion means freedom of expression of thought. But when we're talking about expression, we may express our thoughts, and at the same time we may express feelings. Okay? Now, they don't have freedom of expression of thought, of course, and they don't even have freedom of expression, of feeling freely. That's what he means.

In addition, they don't have the freedom of feeling freely. You know what? If you express your feeling, then it is expressed. For instance, Jang Song-thaek, Kim's uncle, was executed. One of the crimes he committed was that he clapped half-heartedly. That was one of the crimes. You have to clap full-heartedly. This means that you cannot express your feelings freely. He clapped half-heartedly because he didn't feel good, you know. In other words, they even control how you feel. If I have time outside of this committee meeting, I can talk with you. Because you said that you are an artist, I hope we can continue our discussion later. Thank you.

**Mr. Tyrone Benskin:** Do I have time left?

**The Chair:** Yes, Mr. Benskin, you do.

**Mr. Tyrone Benskin:** Thank you.

With that in mind, I will follow up on a question my colleague posed. Mr. Jang, you expressed a thought that the regime itself is in a process...or at least that there is the feeling that the regime is going to fall. My colleague posed the question: are we ready for that?

In terms of what you've just expressed in terms of the state of mind of the population, it seems to me that most revolutions—the Arab Spring, the Civil War, all these revolutions—came about through a rejection of certain attitudes, of political attitudes and so forth. But this would be the rejection of a lifestyle, their own lifestyle, their own connection with the world. How do you feel the change of regime or the fall of this regime is going to play out with the people of North Korea when this sort of ideology, this deification, falls to the ground, when it crumbles to the ground?

**Mr. Cheolhyeon Jang (Interpretation):** For the North Korean people, the farther you go up, they realize that something is wrong; those in the higher classes realize that something is wrong. But why isn't a revolution happening? It's probably because if you do something wrong, the three generations of your family are going to be punished. That collective punishment by association is probably the biggest threat. They need to betray their families to do this and to participate in an uprising.

Just because of my words, three generations of my family could be sent to a labour camp. That's what's happening. That is perhaps the most evil law in North Korea.

Among the North Korean people now, a lot of people believe it's not right, but I think that at this point they need some urging and help from the outside world. The free outside world needs to keep giving them information, to keep encouraging them, and to keep assuring them that, yes, this regime is wrong. They need to keep encouraging them and telling them that this cultification and deification are wrong and to have these North Korean people truly believe that in their hearts, and to have more people in North Korea believe that.

I think that for North Korea to change we need to have change in the attitudes of the free countries in the world, and North Korea needs to become more courageous. So do we. I think the North Korean human rights act needs to be more than just a declaration. I think it needs to give comfort and courage to people of North Korea, and I think that it truly will give the North Korean people more courage in what they are doing.

Thank you.

• (1410)

**Mr. Tyrone Benskin:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Benskin.

Thank you to both of our witnesses. You've provided very, very good testimony.

Mr. Lee, go ahead, please.

**Mr. Kyung Bok Lee:** Before I leave I want to leave this formal report of the commissioner of inquiry. I hope you can accept this.

**The Chair:** Our clerk will accept that. That will enter the records of our committee and will be available to all members of the committee. Thank you very much.

Thank you, colleagues. We'll be meeting again on Tuesday. It will be an in camera planning meeting.

The meeting is adjourned.







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