

BACKGROUND

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Why the U.S. Must Discuss North Korea's Prison Camps at the Trump–Kim Summit

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Abstract

President Donald Trump and North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un are scheduled to meet this month in Singapore for the much-anticipated Trump–Kim summit. Complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantlement (CVID) of North Korea's nuclear program will likely be the top priority for U.S. negotiators. While the focus of the summit should no doubt be on convincing North Korea to abandon its missile and nuclear weapons programs, the U.S. should also raise concerns over North Korea's abhorrent human rights record. If the U.S. is prepared to call for complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear program, it should also be prepared to call for complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantlement of its vast system of prison camps.

This month, President Donald Trump and North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un are scheduled to meet in Singapore for the much-anticipated Trump–Kim summit. Slated for June 12, the summit will be the first time that a sitting U.S. President has ever met directly with a North Korean leader.¹ Complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantlement (CVID) of North Korea's nuclear program will likely be the top priority for U.S. negotiators.²

An inter-Korean summit between North and South already took place on April 27. South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha indicated before the summit that human rights issues would not be discussed, and that Seoul needed additional time to prepare in order to discuss the politically sensitive subject.³ Consistent with the actions of previous progressive South Korean presidents, human rights issues were indeed not raised by South Korean negotiators at the inter-Korean summit.⁴

KEY POINTS

- The planned June 12 summit with North Korea is an opportunity to raise concerns about North Korea's track record of human rights abuse, especially those occurring in prison camps.
- Some of the world's worst human rights abuses occur in these prison camps which contain between 80,000 and 120,000 prisoners. The Kim regime denies the existence of political prison camps, but defector testimony and satellite imagery confirm their existence. The U.S. has known about these camps for decades, and yet, has done little more than criticize them.
- While the focus of the summit should no doubt be on convincing North Korea to abandon its missile and nuclear weapons programs, the U.S. should also raise concerns over North Korea's abhorrent human rights record.
- If the U.S. is prepared to call for complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear program, it should also lay the groundwork for eventual complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantlement of North Korea's prison camps.

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at <http://report.heritage.org/bg3322>

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While the focus of the summit should no doubt be on convincing North Korea to abandon its missile and nuclear weapons programs, the U.S. should also raise concerns over North Korea's abhorrent human rights record. If the U.S. is prepared to call for complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear program, it should also be prepared to call for complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantlement of its vast system of prison camps.

North Korea's political prison camps are estimated to hold between 80,000 and 120,000 prisoners.⁵ The Kim regime denies the existence of political prison camps, but defector testimony and satellite imagery confirm their existence.⁶ The U.S. has known about these camps for decades, and yet, has done little more than criticize them.

It was a bold gesture by the Trump Administration to accept the invitation from Pyongyang to meet. Raising human rights issues at the summit would be yet another bold move, but not one that would automatically derail discussions on denuclearization, as is often assumed by U.S. diplomats. The time for bold gestures is now. The U.S. should make dismantlement of North Korea's prison camps an additional facet of U.S. policy toward North Korea.

What Do We Know About North Korea's Prison Camps?

There are two types of prison camps in North Korea—the *kyo-hwa-so* (so-called ordinary prison camps) and the *kwan-li-so* (political prison camps).⁷

- **Kyo-hwa-so.** Although they are referred to as ordinary prison camps, the *kyo-hwa-so* are anything but ordinary. Prisoners are sent to these camps for both criminal and political offenses. Unlike the political prison camps where prisoners receive infinite detention sentences, prisoners of the ordinary camps usually have fixed-term sentences and may receive minimal judicial procedures. Currently, there are over 30 known *kyo-hwa-so* prison camps, and the Kim regime does not dispute their existence.⁸
- **Kwan-li-so.** People are sent to political prison camps if suspected of political offenses against the Kim regime, and they are often imprisoned for conduct that would not be criminal outside North Korea. When someone is suspected of political crimes, three generations of his or her family are often sent to the camps due to guilt by association.⁹ Unlike the *kyo-hwa-so*, the North Korean

1. Choe Sang-hun, "South Korea's Leader Floats 3-Way Talks with Trump and Kim Jong-un," *The New York Times*, March 21, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/21/world/asia/moon-jae-in-meeting-kim-jong-un-trump.html> (accessed April 6, 2018).
2. "US, N. Korea Discussing Denuclearization Mechanism; Summit in '3-4 Weeks,'" *The Mainichi*, April 30, 2018, <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20180430/p2a/00m/0na/021000c> (accessed May 8, 2018), and "FM Says S. Korea, U.S. Share Goal of Complete Denuclearization of N.K.," *Yonhap*, April 4, 2018, <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2018/04/04/0401000000AEN20180404006800315.html> (accessed May 8, 2018).
3. Dagyum Ji, "Seoul Needs 'More Preparation' Before Raising Human Rights at Inter-Korean Talks," *NK News*, April 4, 2018, https://www.nknews.org/2018/04/seoul-needs-more-preparation-before-raising-human-rights-at-inter-korean-talks/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter (accessed May 8, 2018).
4. Mathew Ha, "Seoul's Concessions Expose Limitations of Inter-Korean Summit," *The Hill*, May 2, 2018, <http://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/385784-seouls-concessions-reveal-limitations-of-hosting-inter-korean> (accessed May 8, 2018).
5. United Nations Human Rights Council, "Report of the Detailed Findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," February 7, 2014, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G14/108/71/PDF/G1410871.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed May 8, 2018).
6. Anna Fifield, "New Images Show North Korea's Extensive Network of 'Reeducation Camps,'" *The Washington Post*, October 26, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/new-images-show-north-koreas-extensive-network-of-re-education-camps/2017/10/25/894afc1c-b9a7-11e7-9b93-b97043e57a22_story.html?utm_term=.42f5070fe2a1 (accessed April 6, 2018), and David Hawk and Amanda Mortwedt Oh, "The Parallel Gulag," Committee For Human Rights in North Korea, October 2017, p. 16, https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/Hawk_The_Parallel_Gulag_Web.pdf (accessed May 21, 2018).
7. Jin Seo Lee, "North Korean Political Prison Camps," *Radio Free Asia*, 2016, <https://www.rfa.org/english/bookshelf/youngjung.pdf> (accessed April 6, 2018).
8. *Ibid.*
9. David Hawk, "The Hidden Gulag: The Lives and Voices of 'Those Who Are Sent to the Mountains,'" 2nd ed., Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2012, https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/HRNK_HiddenGulag2_Web_5-18.pdf (accessed May 21, 2018).

government denies the existence of the *kwan-li-so*. Currently, there are six known operational political prison camps.¹⁰

Conditions in both types of camps are abysmal. Testimony from defectors and prison guards corroborate the horrific findings of the 2014 United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (UN COI) that crimes against humanity occur inside these modern gulags.¹¹ The U.N. defines crimes against humanity as “[c]rimes [that] entail gross human rights violations of a scale and level of organization that shock the conscience of humanity.”¹²

A follow-on report conducted by the International Bar Association (IBA) in 2017 concluded that the Kim regime committed 10 of 11 recognized crimes against humanity as enumerated in the Rome Statute.¹³ These include murder, extermination, enslavement, forcible transfer, imprisonment, torture, sexual violence, persecution, enforced disappearances, and other inhumane acts—almost all of which occur, but are not limited to, the prison camp context.¹⁴ The only crime against humanity that the IBA found that North Korea did not commit was apartheid.

The human rights violations inside the prison camps include, but are not limited to:

- **Murder.** The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea estimates that more than 400,000 people have perished in North Korea's prison

camps.¹⁵ Many die from malnutrition and harsh working conditions, but others are brutally executed in front of other prisoners either on a whim or for disobeying camp authorities.¹⁶ Some prisoners are killed just to demonstrate that the regime has the authority to take any life.

- **Severe malnutrition and forced starvation.** Amnesty International estimates that 40 percent of inmates die from malnutrition.¹⁷ As Roberta Cohen, an expert on humanitarian issues in North Korea, noted,

A recent report by the Asan Institute for Policy Studies in Seoul—based on interviews with former inmates at *Kyo-hwa-so No. 12* who observed some 276 prisoners—estimated that the fatality rate at North Korea's labor camps was close to 25 percent, with most of the deaths caused by undernourishment and disease. It considered ‘notable that 8 in 10 North Korean prisoners suffered from malnutrition before death.’¹⁸

Kang Chol-Hwan, a survivor and defector from Yodok, one of North Korea's political prison camps, recalled his food rations saying, “Our corn rations were extremely meager: adults who worked from sunup to sundown had a daily allowance of 500 grams; others, including children, were allotted 400 grams. Vegetables were not distributed at all, and the few cabbages and turnips we managed to

10. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, “Prisons of North Korea,” August 25, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/fs/2017/273647.htm> (accessed April 6, 2018).

11. United Nations Human Rights Council, “Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea,” <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/CoIDPRK/Pages/CommissionInquiryonHRinDPRK.aspx> (accessed May 8, 2018).

12. United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, “Definitions: Crimes Against Humanity,” <http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/crimes-against-humanity.html> (accessed April 6, 2018).

13. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, “Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,” <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/InternationalCriminalCourt.aspx> (accessed May 8, 2018).

14. International Bar Association, “North Korea: Inquiry Finds Kim Jong-un Should Be Investigated and Prosecuted for Crimes Against Humanity,” December 12, 2017, <https://www.ibanet.org/Article/NewDetail.aspx?ArticleUid=8ae0f29d-4283-4151-a573-a66b2c1ab480> (accessed April 6, 2018).

15. Paul Szoldra, “The Stories from Inside North Korea's Prison Camps Are Horrifying,” *Business Insider*, March 24, 2017, <http://www.businessinsider.com/un-north-korea-prison-camp-2017-3> (accessed May 21, 2018).

16. Kang Chol-hwan and Pierre Rigoulot, *The Aquariums of Pyongyang: Ten Years in the North Korean Gulag* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), p. 140.

17. “Report: Torture, Starvation Rife in North Korea Political Prisons,” CNN, May 4, 2011, <http://www.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/asiapcf/05/04/north.korea.amnesty/index.html> (accessed May 8, 2018).

18. Roberta Cohen, “A Challenge for Humanitarian Action in North Korea,” *HRNK Insider*, May 17, 2017, <http://www.hrnkinsider.org/2017/05/a-challenge-for-humanitarian-action-in.html> (accessed May 8, 2018).

grow in our little plot were nowhere near enough to feed a household.”¹⁹ Kang estimates that more than a hundred people a year died in Yodok—of a population of two to three thousand. Prisoners often resort to eating rodents, frogs, snakes, and anything else they can get their hands on to deal with the conditions that UN COI refers to as forced starvation.²⁰

- **Torture.** Forced starvation, physical torture, and psychological torture are common in North Korea. Examples of physical torture include systematic beatings. Sadistic prison guards often force inmates to torture fellow prisoners, or force prisoners into stress positions for inordinate periods of time. Other forms of physical torture include “placing a plastic bag over the head of a victim and submerging them under water, sleep deprivation, bamboo slivers under the fingernails, and suspending prisoners whose feet and hands have been bound behind them.”²¹ In addition to physical torture, prisoners are also subject to psychological torture, including long stints in solitary confinement, and verbal defamation.
- **Rape, sexual violence, and forced abortions.** Sexual assault and rape are common in the prison camps.²² Women who become pregnant through rape or consensual sexual encounters in the camp are typically either forced to abort their baby or are killed for disobeying the regime’s usual requirement that prisoners abstain from sex dur-

ing imprisonment. The sexual abuse is often brutal; one report described “an abortion induced by three men standing on a wooden plank placed on a pregnant prisoner’s stomach, a prisoner’s newborn baby fed to guard dogs, and a prisoner raped by a guard who pushed a wooden stick inside her vagina; resulting in her death within a week.”²³

- **Religious persecution.** Many North Koreans are brutally murdered for mere possession of a Bible. The alternative is being sent to a political prison camp for engaging in religious activities not sanctioned by the state, which include praying, singing hymns, or reading the Bible.²⁴ North Korean refugees caught and repatriated by Chinese authorities are usually asked whether they had contact with a Christian missionary during their escape. If they answer yes, they usually face torture at the hands of the North Korean authorities and are sent to ordinary or political prison camps.²⁵ Justice Michael Kirby, who oversaw the creation of UN COI, expressed deep concern that one of the most-overlooked findings of the COI were severe violations of religious freedom.²⁶

It is clear now that Kim Jong-un is no less brutal than his father or grandfather.²⁷ In fact, Kim Jong-un continues his predecessors’ commitment to using prison camps as a brutal method of instilling absolute loyalty to his regime. South Korea’s Ministry of Unification reported that there were fewer defections from North Korea in 2017 than at any other point since Kim Jong-

19. Kang and Rigoulot, *The Aquariums of Pyongyang: Ten Years in the North Korean Gulag*, pp. 85 and 86.

20. Ryan Pickrell, “North Korea’s Nightmare Prison Camps Revealed in Terrifying New Report,” *The National Interest*, October 26, 2017, <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/north-koreas-nightmare-prison-camps-revealed-terrifying-new-22915> (accessed May 8, 2018).

21. “Report: Torture, Starvation Rife in North Korea Political Prisons.”

22. Human Rights Watch, “UN: Expose Abuses of Women in Detention in North Korea,” November 6, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/11/06/un-expose-abuses-women-detention-north-korea> (accessed May 8, 2018).

23. International Bar Association, “North Korea: Inquiry Finds Kim Jong-un Should Be Investigated and Prosecuted for Crimes Against Humanity,” December 12, 2017, <https://www.ibanet.org/Article/NewDetail.aspx?ArticleUid=8ae0f29d-4283-4151-a573-a66b2c1ab480> (accessed April 6, 2018).

24. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2016*, August 15, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm?year=2016&dclid=268738#wrapper> (accessed May 8, 2018).

25. United Nations Human Rights Council, “Report of the Detailed Findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea,” February 7, 2014, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G14/108/71/PDF/G1410871.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed May 8, 2018).

26. Olivia Enos, “North Korea Should Be Held Accountable for Persecuting Christians,” Heritage Foundation *Issue Brief* No. 4379, April 10, 2015, <https://www.heritage.org/religious-liberty/report/north-korea-should-be-held-accountable-persecuting-christians>.

27. Amanda Mortwedt Oh, “The Human Rights Factor: Changes Under Kim Jong-un,” *HRNK Insider*, August 15, 2016, <http://www.hrnkinsider.org/2016/08/the-human-rights-factor-changes-under.html> (accessed May 8, 2018).

un came to power.²⁸ This is likely due to a crackdown at the border. Due to the perceived crackdown, it is possible that the population in the prison camps, especially the ordinary prison camps, has grown since he took the helm.²⁹ Recent satellite imagery details infrastructure upgrades in the labor camps.³⁰ North Korea's prison camps show no signs of disappearing anytime soon. The number of deaths in prison camps are more difficult to ascertain now that Kim Jong-un refuses to fully cooperate with international investigations and falsifies death statistics inside the prison camps.³¹

Current U.S. Policy on North Korea's Prison Camps

At present, U.S. policy on prison camps in North Korea is limited. While the U.S. government has stepped up efforts to deal with human rights challenges in North Korea, it still falls woefully short of addressing atrocities committed by the brutal regime in Pyongyang.

The release of the UN COI report in 2014 was a pivotal moment in the debate over the relevance of human rights to broader U.S. strategy regarding North Korea.³² The UN COI confirmed reports of the serious human rights abuses occurring in North Korea and provided a clear label—crimes against humanity—for what was going on above the 38th parallel. The report galvanized international support to address human rights abuses occurring there, making it almost impossible for security experts to discuss the threat posed by North Korea's missile and nuclear program without simultaneously raising serious concerns about North Korea's human rights track record.

The report also elicited a response from North Korea. David Hawk, in a report for *38 North*, identified three steps that North Korea took in response:

- 1. Issued a human rights report.** Authorities in Pyongyang issued a DPRK Association for Human Rights Studies report that outlines North Korea's human rights policies and discounts the findings of the U.N. COI. While the report was not a serious attempt at reconciling concerns about North Korea's myriad human rights challenges, it was a response to the COI that demonstrates that the leadership in Pyongyang was not unmoved by the criticism it received in the U.N. COI.
- 2. Shifted its participation in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).** In spite of its flat-out rejection of the U.N. COI's findings, North Korea shifted how it participated in the UPR process at the U.N. by responding to and considering the 167 recommendations issued by the U.N. to North Korea during the first review process. It also participated in the second review period where the U.N. presented North Korea with 268 recommendations; at least 113 of the recommendations were acknowledged by the North Korean government.
- 3. Increased high-level diplomatic engagement on human rights grounds.** North Korea sent representatives to meetings at the U.N. General Assembly (the first time in 15 years) in 2014. North Korea also issued a statement in October 2014 opposing the U.N. COI and U.S. diplomatic efforts to raise North Korea's human rights track record at the U.N.³³

28. Sofia Lotto Persio, "North Korean Defector Numbers Fall to Lowest Level Since Kim Jong Un Took Power," *Newsweek*, January 5, 2018, <http://www.newsweek.com/north-korean-defector-numbers-fall-lowest-level-kim-jong-un-took-power-772109> (accessed May 23, 2018).

29. Roberta Cohen, "Time to Address North Korea's Prison Labor Camps," *The Brookings Institution*, July 5, 2013, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/time-to-address-north-koreas-prison-labor-camps/> (accessed May 8, 2018), and *ibid.*

30. Amanda Holpuch, "North Korea Satellite Images Show Prison Camps Accused of 'Atrocities,'" *The Guardian*, November 29, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/29/north-korea-prison-camps-satellite-images> (accessed May 8, 2018).

31. Katherine Lam, "North Korean Prison Camps Stopped Reporting Deaths Under Kim Jong Un, Ex-Prisoner Claims," *FoxNews*, November 20, 2017, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2017/11/20/north-korean-prison-camps-stopped-reporting-deaths-under-kim-jong-un-ex-prisoner-claims.html> (accessed May 8, 2018).

32. Scott Busby, "U.S. Strategy to Address the Human Rights Situation in North Korea," address delivered at Institute for Korean-American Studies Fall Symposium at The Heritage Foundation, Washington, DC, October 25, 2016, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/drl/rls/rm/2016/263581.htm> (accessed May 8, 2018).

33. Democratic People's Republic of Korea Permanent Mission to the United States, letter from permanent representative to all permanent representatives of the member states and permanent observer representatives to the United Nations in New York, October 6, 2014, <https://www.38north.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/38N-DPRK-Letter-to-UN-20141006.pdf> (accessed May 15, 2018), and David Hawk, "North Korea Responds to the UN Commission of Inquiry," *38 North*, October 16, 2014, <https://www.38north.org/2014/10/dhawk101614/> (accessed May 15, 2018).

It is clear that diplomatic efforts to address human rights in North Korea, especially the COI, have the ability to shape North Korea's response to human rights. Some even claim marginal improvements in human rights conditions in North Korea since the release of the report.³⁴ The recent release of the three Americans from North Korea further demonstrates that North Korea responds to international pressure on human rights issues.³⁵

In spite of the conclusive findings of the COI, and additional action taken by the international community to address human rights challenges in North Korea,³⁶ the U.S. and the international community have done little to specifically tackle political prison camps in the North.

One State Department official indicated that policy on prison camps is one of the least-developed aspects of U.S. policy toward North Korea. The State Department is looking for ways to craft a more developed U.S. strategy on the prison camps.

State repeatedly references the existence of prison camps in its human rights reports, including the annual *Human Rights Reports*, the *Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report*, and the *International Religious Freedom Report*. Since the inauguration of these reports (in 1999, 2001, and 2001, respectively), Heritage Foundation experts found that prison camps were referenced a total of 296 times.

Of the nearly 300 mentions, the *TIP Report* was the only one to specifically call for the closure of prison camps. In 2012 and 2013, the *TIP Report* request-

ed that North Korea “work with the international community to close forced labor camps.”³⁷ Other years, but not every year, the *TIP Report* called for North Korea to “cease the practice of forced labor in prison and detention facilities”³⁸ and “cease the systematic punishment of trafficking victims in forced labor camp.”³⁹ Since 2014, it has called for North Korea to “end the use of forced labor in prison camps and among North Korean workers abroad.”⁴⁰ All three of these alternate calls seem fundamentally different and fall short of calling for the closure of prison camps. The *Human Rights Report* does not offer recommendations and therefore did not call for the closure of prison camps. The *International Religious Freedom Report* similarly did not call for their dismantlement.

The U.N. General Assembly has issued annual resolutions since 2005, raising concerns over the human rights abuses in North Korea. Every resolution since 2005 has raised concerns regarding prison camps, but the General Assembly did not call on North Korea to close political prison camps and release all prisoners until 2014.⁴¹ The General Assembly reiterated its call for North Korea to dismantle its prison camps and requested that humanitarian actors be granted access to the prison camps every year since 2014.

The U.S. raised concerns about prison camps after the release of the COI report at the U.N. Security Council when U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Samantha Power

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34. Benedict Rogers, “North Korea Human Rights, 4 Years After the UN Inquiry,” *The Diplomat*, February 6, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/02/north-korea-human-rights-4-years-after-the-un-inquiry/> (accessed May 15, 2018).
 35. Olivia Enos, “What the Release of the 3 Detainees Means for the North Korea Summit,” *Forbes*, May 9, 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/oliviaenos/2018/05/09/what-the-release-of-3-detainees-means-for-the-north-korea-summit/> (accessed May 12, 2018).
 36. News release, “Treasury Sanctions North Korean Senior Officials and Entities Associated with Human Rights Abuses,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, July 6, 2016, <https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl0506.aspx> (accessed May 8, 2018), and news release, “Treasury Sanctions Additional North Korean Officials and Entities in Response to the North Korean Regime’s Serious Human Rights Abuses and Censorship Activities,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, January 11, 2017, <https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl0699.aspx> (accessed May 8, 2018).
 37. U.S. Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2013*, June 19, 2013, p. 222, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/210740.pdf> (accessed May 8, 2018).
 38. U.S. Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2011*, June 27, 2011, p. 216, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/164455.pdf> (accessed May 8, 2018).
 39. U.S. Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2010*, June 14, 2010, p. 199, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/143187.pdf> (accessed May 8, 2018).
 40. U.S. Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2014*, June 20, 2014, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/226847.pdf> (accessed May 8, 2018), and U.S. Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2017*, June 27, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/271339.pdf> (accessed May 8, 2018).
 41. U.N. General Assembly, “Situation of Human Rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea,” A/RES/68/183, February 4, 2014, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/183 (accessed May 8, 2018).

called on North Korea to “immediately dismantle political prison camps and release all political prisoners.”⁴²

Current U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley likewise raised the issue of prison camps, but has thus far stopped short of calling on the Kim regime to close prison camps.⁴³

Congress, more than any other branch of government, is seeking to address prison camps. On March 5, 2018, Representatives Mike Conaway (R-TX) and Gerry Connolly (D-VA) introduced H. Res. 763, the first congressional resolution to directly call on the government of North Korea to dismantle its prison camp system.⁴⁴ In addition to calling for the dismantlement of the camps, the resolution calls for the release of all prisoners, requests that access be granted to humanitarian organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross and certain U.N. agencies, and calls for enforcement of sanctions on human rights grounds, among other actions. Senators Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Cory Gardner (R-CO), and Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) introduced a companion resolution, S. Res 481.⁴⁵ Neither the House nor the Senate versions of the resolution have passed.

While Congress never previously directly called for the dismantlement of prison camps, the North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act (NKSPEA) of 2016, signed into law by President Barack Obama on February 18, 2016, predicates sanctions suspension or removal on improvement of conditions in the prison camps.

In order to receive a one-year waiver of sanctions levied under the NKSPEA, the law requires the President to certify that North Korea is “taking verified steps to improve living conditions in its political prison camps.”⁴⁶ In order for NKSPEA sanctions to be lifted, the President must certify that North Korea has “releas[ed] all political prisoners, including the citizens of North Korea detained in North Korea’s political prison camps.”⁴⁷ This requirement effectively means that sanctions levied under the NKSPEA cannot be removed without prison camps being dismantled.

Additionally, the NKSPEA requires the State Department to produce a report on the prison camps, with estimates on the total prison population, the geographic coordinates of the camps, reasons for imprisonment, conditions inside the camps, and satellite imagery of the camps, among other indicators, in the first human rights report that was submitted after the enactment of the NKSPEA.⁴⁸ While a report was produced by the State Department on the prison camps, its findings were limited and certainly did not encompass the scope of requirements laid out in the NKSPEA.⁴⁹ The NKSPEA also mandated the creation of a few other reports, including one on “Human Rights and Censorship in North Korea” that make limited reference to prison camps.⁵⁰

Ironically, the North Korean Human Rights Act (NKHRA) of 2004 does not call for the dismantlement of North Korea’s prison camps. Instead, it calls for “reforming the North Korean prison and labor

42. U.N. Security Council, “The Situation in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea,” S/PV.7353, December 22, 2014, http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_pv_7353.pdf (accessed May 8, 2018).

43. U.N. Security Council, “The Situation in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea,” S/PV.8130, December 11, 2017, http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_pv_8130.pdf (accessed May 8, 2018).

44. Calling upon the leadership of the Government of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to dismantle its labor camp system, and for other purposes, H. RES. 763, 115th Cong., 2nd Sess., https://conaway.house.gov/uploadedfiles/dprk_labor_camps_hres_final.pdf (accessed May 8, 2018).

45. News release, “Hatch and Bipartisan Senators Introduce Resolution Condemning North Korea Labor Camps,” Orrin Hatch United States Senator for Utah, April 24, 2018, <https://www.hatch.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2018/4/hatch-and-bipartisan-senators-introduce-resolution-condemning-north-korea-labor-camps> (accessed May 8, 2018).

46. H.R. 757—North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act of 2016, U.S. Congress, February 18, 2016, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/757/text/enr?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22%5C%22hr757%5C%22%22%5D%7D#toc-HE596D37307E544EA97771ECE6445202B> (accessed May 8, 2018).

47. *Ibid.*

48. *Ibid.*

49. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, “Prisons of North Korea,” August 25, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/fs/2017/273647.htm> (accessed April 6, 2018).

50. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, “Report on Human Rights Abuses or Censorship in North Korea,” January 11, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/266853.htm> (accessed May 8, 2018).

camp system, and subjecting such reforms to independent international monitoring.”⁵¹ The bill was up for reauthorization last year and recently passed out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.⁵² It is awaiting passage in the House. The NKHRA reauthorization also does not call for the closure of prison camps.⁵³

The human rights crisis in North Korea is a bipartisan concern and has the attention of President Trump. With Kim Jong-un unexpectedly proposing a summit meeting with the President, the opportunity to directly discuss North Korea’s human rights crisis must not be lost should the meeting take place.

Why Raise Human Rights and Prison Camps at the Summit?

U.S. negotiators are often reluctant to raise human rights concerns at high-level summits with foreign leaders, citing concerns that raising politically sensitive issues could derail other agenda items or might subvert the ability to further U.S. national interests or achieve U.S. national security goals. In the context of North Korea, this could not be further from the truth.

First, human rights abuses in North Korea are directly and indirectly connected to legitimate U.S. national security concerns. The Kim regime employs human rights abuses—including political prison camps—as a way to maintain its grip on power. Prison camps are perhaps the greatest threat to freedom in North Korea, not just to prisoners in the camps, but to those outside the camps, as well. The threat of being sent to a prison camp, and the implications that might have for three generations of one’s family, is often severe enough to suppress an individual’s willingness to express dissent.

Of the North Koreans interviewed inside North Korea by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, almost all of them were ambivalent or expressed concern about the regime’s nuclear program.⁵⁴ More than 70 percent said that the nuclear weapons program was not a source of pride for their country. While the survey was limited—interviewing only 50 North Koreans—it is in the interest of the U.S. to empower the North Korean people to express their dissent. This is impossible so long as the prison camp system continues to exist. In fact, apart from an acquiescent population, North Korea might not be able to continue its missile and nuclear weapons programs.

Second, raising concerns about the human rights of the North Korean people contradicts the regime’s propaganda, which paints the U.S. as the antagonist, only interested in going to war with North Korea.⁵⁵ Raising human rights issues, in fact, have the potential to drive a wedge between the regime and the people, planting a seed of doubt about the truth of what the regime has taught the North Korean people about the U.S. If the U.S. is viewed as an advocate for the North Korean people, it might help drive change in North Korea—change best led by everyday North Koreans.

Third, North Korea profits from its human rights abuses. In 2012 alone, North Korea spent \$300 million on luxury facilities, \$644 million on luxury goods, and an estimated \$1.3 billion on its missile program.⁵⁶ In 2015, the U.N. World Food Program asked foreign donors for only \$111 million in contributions for North Korea. North Korea is willfully depriving its people of the food and resources they need and diverting those resources to support the regime’s weapons programs.⁵⁷

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51. An Act to Promote Human Rights and Freedom in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, and for Other Purposes, H. R. 4011, 108th Cong., 2nd Sess., <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-108hr4011enr/pdf/BILLS-108hr4011enr.pdf> (accessed May 8, 2018).
 52. News release, “Rubio, Cardin Applaud Senate Passage of North Korea Human Rights Reauthorization,” Marco Rubio United States Senator for Florida, April 25, 2018, <https://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?id=4DCAB098-3525-4140-815A-2BC5C90BAF90> (accessed May 8, 2018).
 53. A bill to reauthorize the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004, and for other purposes, 115th Cong., 1st Sess., https://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/c6c56e72-135b-47e5-8435-640dd3050900/54D263A7F1E5C9496641F343A0067803.dav17729.pdf (accessed May 8, 2018).
 54. Victor Cha and Marie DuMond, “The Devil’s Weapons: What Ordinary North Koreans Think about their Nuclear Program,” *Beyond Parallel*, March 2, 2018, <https://beyondparallel.csis.org/devils-weapons-ordinary-north-koreans-think-nuclear-program/> (accessed May 8, 2018).
 55. Sean Illing, “America, Explained By a North Korean Propaganda Book,” *Vox*, May 16, 2018, <https://www.vox.com/world/2018/1/9/16773364/north-korea-cancels-summit-kim-jong-un-propaganda> (accessed May 21, 2018).
 56. Joshua Stanton, “UN Must Confront the Political Causes of North Korea’s Food Crisis,” *One Free Korea*, July 22, 2015, <http://freekorea.us/2015/07/22/u-n-must-confront-the-political-causes-of-north-koreas-food-crisis/> (accessed September 9, 2015).
 57. Olivia Enos and Bruce Klingner, “Next Steps for Human Rights in North Korea,” Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 3071, January 12, 2016, http://www.heritage.org/asia/report/next-steps-human-rights-north-korea#_ftn8.
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Fourth, North Korea profits from forced labor in prison camps.⁵⁸ Forced labor in prison camps is free labor for the regime. In some cases, forced labor in prison camps may be used expressly for developing its various chemical, biological, and nuclear and missile programs.⁵⁹ North Korea defense expert Joseph Bermudez encouraged the international community to more closely observe satellite imagery to determine whether prison labor is being used for weapons program development.⁶⁰ Camp 16 (*Hwasong*), a North Korean *kwan-li-so*, is located right next to Punggye-ri, a known underground nuclear weapons testing facility.⁶¹ While there are no North Korean refugees to provide firsthand accounts of assisting in the construction of nuclear facilities or the testing of nuclear weapons, there is speculation based on satellite imagery and testimony from former prison camp guard Ahn Myeongchol that prisoners from Camp 16 likely serve as a source of labor for the Punggye-ri nuclear facility.⁶²

The use of prison camp labor for weapons development is not unprecedented. The Nazis utilized forced labor from concentration camps to proliferate underground secret weapons, such as nuclear weapons and the V-2 missiles during World War II.⁶³ The Mittelbau-Dora Camp was a prison camp with over 10,000 inmates who were worked to death underground.⁶⁴ One Auschwitz survivor compared North Korea's prison camps to concentration camps in Nazi Germany.⁶⁵

Furthermore, while reports are limited, stories long emerged from North Korea that the regime may be testing chemical and biological weapons on prisoners, among other populations, including disabled children.⁶⁶ Such testing could be lethal. Beyond profits from forced labor in the camps, the Kim regime exploits people as guinea pigs for the purpose of advancing its various weapons programs.

Fifth, Kim Jong-un may be persuaded that it is in his interest to eliminate political prison camps in order

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58. Joseph S. Bermudez Jr. and Mike Eley, "North Korea Kyo-hwa-so No. 12, Jöngö-ri," The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea and AllSource Analysis, August 29, 2016, https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/ASA_HRNK_Camp12_201608_v10_LR.pdf (accessed May 8, 2018).
 59. United Nations Human Rights Council, *Report of the Detailed Findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*, February 7, 2014, p. 261, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G14/108/71/PDF/G1410871.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed May 9, 2018); Julian Ryall, "North Korea 'Testing Chemical Weapons on Political Prisoners,'" *The Telegraph*, October 14, 2013, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/10376676/North-Korea-testing-chemical-weapons-on-political-prisoners.html> (accessed May 9, 2018); Anthony Cordesman, "More Than a Nuclear Threat: North Korea's Chemical, Biological and Conventional Weapons," testimony before Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Trade and Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, January 17, 2018, <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA18/20180117/106780/HHRG-115-FA18-Wstate-CordesmanA-20180117.pdf> (accessed May 9, 2018); and John V. Parachini, "Assessing North Korea's Chemical and Biological Weapons Capabilities and Prioritizing Countermeasures," testimony before the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Trade and the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, Foreign Affairs Committee, U.S. House of Representatives, January 17, 2018, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/CT400/CT486/RAND_CT486.pdf (accessed May 9, 2018).
 60. Elizabeth Shim, "North Korea Prison Camps Need Closer Monitoring, Analyst Says," United Press International, December 15, 2015, https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2015/12/15/North-Korea-prison-camps-need-closer-monitoring-analyst-says/3361450237152/ (accessed May 9, 2018).
 61. Robert Collins and Amanda Mortwedt Oh, "From Cradle to Grave: The Path of North Korean Innocents," Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2017, https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/Collins_Cradle_to_Grave_WEB_FINALFINAL.pdf (accessed May 21, 2018).
 62. Joseph S. Bermudez Jr., Andy Dinville, and Mike Eley, "North Korea Imagery Analysis of Camp 16," The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea and AllSource Analysis, December 15, 2015, https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/ASA_HRNK_Camp16_v8_fullres_FINAL_12_15_15.pdf (accessed May 9, 2018).
 63. The Malta Independent, "Nazis' Vast, Secret WMD Facility Uncovered in Austria," December 30, 2014, <http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2014-12-30/world-news/Nazis-vast-secret-WMD-facility-uncovered-in-Austria-6736128019> (accessed May 9, 2018).
 64. German Historical Institute, "Forced Labor for the 'Final Victory,'" <https://www.ghi-dc.org/events-conferences/event-history/exhibitions/forced-labor-for-the-final-victory-mittelbau-dora-concentration-camp-1943-1945.html?L=0> (accessed May 9, 2018).
 65. Anna Fifield, "North Korea's Prison Camps Are as Bad as Nazi Camps, Says Judge Who Survived Auschwitz," *The Washington Post*, December 11, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/north-koreas-prisons-are-as-bad-as-nazi-camps-says-judge-who-survived-auschwitz/2017/12/11/7e79beea-ddc4-11e7-b2e9-8c636f076c76_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.f90e3b0df8f7 (accessed May 21, 2018).
 66. Anthony Cordesman, "More Than a Nuclear Threat: North Korea's Chemical, Biological and Conventional Weapons," testimony before Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Trade and Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, January 17, 2018, <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA18/20180117/106780/HHRG-115-FA18-Wstate-CordesmanA-20180117.pdf> (accessed May 9, 2018), and United Nations Human Rights Council, "Report of the Detailed Findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," February 7, 2014, p. 93, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G14/108/71/PDF/G1410871.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed May 9, 2018).

to gain legitimacy in the international community. Arguably, the very reason that North Korea developed its nuclear and missile program is for legitimacy and regime stability. U.S. negotiators should clearly communicate that no leader who imprisons his own people in brutal, concentration-like camps can be viewed as stable or legitimate. The hub-bub and publicity surrounding the inter-Korean summit on April 27, 2018, demonstrates that Kim Jong-un is not immune to the desire for public notoriety. One of the challenges with the inter-Korean summit and U.S.–North Korea summit is that it may inadvertently grant legitimacy to a regime that does not yet merit such credibility. U.S. negotiators should take great pains to emphasize that Pyongyang and its leadership will not be viewed credibly until it accepts international norms, which includes demonstrating that it is a rights-respecting actor. This type of recognition cannot and should not happen until and unless prison camps are dismantled.

Finally, should the Trump Administration choose not to raise human rights at the summit, it will allow authorities in Pyongyang to dictate and define the terms of negotiation. North Korea, in the past, indicated that prison camps and other serious human rights abuses are not up for discussion,⁶⁷ but Kim Jong-un has intermittently signaled a willingness to discuss various issues that were previously off the table during in the lead-up to the summit. North Korea already indicated a willingness to address more limited human rights concerns by releasing the three Americans it had held hostage on May 9, 2018. This sign of good faith ahead of the summit in was welcomed, and should embolden U.S. negotiators to raise other pressing human rights concerns including prison camps. Whether Kim Jong-un is willing to discuss these issues or not, the Trump Administration cannot allow North Korea's leadership to set the agenda.

The Trump Administration already made rhetorical commitments to addressing human rights in

North Korea. President Trump raised human rights in his 2018 State of the Union Address when he powerfully highlighted the story of North Korean defector Ji Seong-ho.⁶⁸ The President also raised the issue on his travels to Asia in his speech before the South Korean National Assembly.⁶⁹ The Administration negotiated the release of American college student Otto Warmbier, and after his tragic passing invited his father, Fred Warmbier, to participate in the official U.S. delegation to the Pyeongchang Olympics.⁷⁰

It is now time for the Administration and Congress to go beyond mere words and take concrete action to address severe human rights abuses, including those taking place in North Korea's modern-day gulags.

Next Steps to Address North Korea's Prison Camps

There are many reasons why it is in U.S. interests to raise human rights challenges at the upcoming summit. There are good, moral reasons to highlight prison camps, but it also serves American interests to advance human rights in North Korea, interests that include, but are in no way limited to, addressing North Korea's rogue nuclear and missile weapons program.

Expectations for the upcoming summit are tepid. Most experts do not anticipate that the summit will achieve denuclearization. The most they expect is for North Korea to commit to taking incremental moves toward CVID of its weapons programs. The U.S. should craft a strategy that similarly requires CVID of prison camps.

The U.S. government should:

- **Press North Korea—before the summit—to permit access to a humanitarian actor, like the International Committee of the Red Cross, the World Food Programme, or a relevant U.N. agency.** Humanitarian actors have

67. David Hawk, "North Korea Responds to the UN Commission of Inquiry," 38 North, October 16, 2014, <https://www.38north.org/2014/10/dhawk101614/> (accessed May 15, 2018).

68. Donald J. Trump, State of the Union Address, January 30, 2018, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trumps-state-union-address/> (accessed May 9, 2018).

69. News release, "Remarks by President Trump to the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea," The White House, November 7, 2017, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-national-assembly-republic-korea-seoul-republic-korea/> (accessed May 9, 2018).

70. News release, "Vice President Pence and Second Lady Karen Pence Meet North Korean Defectors," The White House, February 9, 2018, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/articles/vice-president-pence-second-lady-karen-pence-meet-north-korean-defectors/> (accessed May 9, 2018).

long been denied access to the political prison camps by the North Korean government.⁷¹ This impedes their ability to carry out their mission, which includes serving *the most vulnerable* populations in a given country.⁷² North Korea should permit humanitarian access to the political prison camps as a potential precondition to the Trump–Kim summit as a token of good faith to demonstrate its sincerity in negotiating on other issues. Like with the nuclear strategy, U.S. strategy to address North Korea’s human rights challenges must be incremental. A first request should not be CVID of prison camps, but something that puts in place the infrastructure and oversight for eventual dismantlement.

- **Request that children and families be released from prison camps.** Another potential lower-level request would be that North Korea release all children and families currently held in political prison camps.⁷³ Children are among the most vulnerable populations in North Korea, especially those in political prison camps. At a minimum, international agencies should request access to prison camps to be permitted to provide humanitarian assistance to children and families. As Roberta Cohen, North Korean human rights expert, aptly points out, children pose no threat to the state and are in prison camps due to guilt by association.⁷⁴
- **Make closure of political prison camps an agenda item for the summit.** At the very least, the U.S. should raise the issue as a concern. It serves U.S. interests on the nuclear front to highlight political prison camps because the threat of being sent to a prison camp helped create the acquiescent population in North Korea that permits the continued development of missile and

nuclear weapons. The U.S. should consider calling for the closure of one or more political prison camps as an incremental step toward CVID of the camps. North Korea’s nuclear program will not be dismantled overnight, and the U.S. should not expect the political prison camp system to be eliminated overnight either. Critically, any promise of closure must involve verification that prisoners from one camp were not merely transferred to another camp, as was the case with China’s re-education through labor facilities.⁷⁵

- **The U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley, should call on North Korea to close its prison camps.** U.S. leadership on security issues related to North Korea has been critical to driving international efforts to sanction and address North Korea’s nuclear program. Haley and other U.S. leaders should raise these issues at the U.N. and go beyond mere condemnations, actually calling on the Kim regime to pursue complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantlement of North Korea’s prison camps.
- **Ensure that sanctions, especially those instituted on human rights grounds, are not lifted unless prison camps are completely, verifiably, and irreversibly dismantled.** The U.S. should not trade away much-needed sanctions leverage in a desire to get a deal on denuclearization. The NKSPEA conditions sanctions removal on the release of all political prisoners. Future sanctions levied against North Korea under the NKSPEA and other executive and congressional authorities should be similarly conditioned on either the release of all political prisoners, or on the permanent shuttering of North Korea’s vast political prison camp system.

71. David Hawk, *The Hidden Gulag: The Lives and Voices of “Those Who are Sent to the Mountains”* (Washington, DC: The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2012), https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/HRNK_HiddenGulag2_Web_5-18.pdf (accessed May 9, 2018).

72. Roberta Cohen, “A Challenge for Humanitarian Action in North Korea,” *HRNK Insider*, May 17, 2017, <http://www.hrnkinsider.org/2017/05/a-challenge-for-humanitarian-action-in.html> (accessed May 8, 2018).

73. Roberta Cohen, “A Serious Human Rights Negotiation with North Korea,” *38 North*, February 1, 2017, <https://www.38north.org/2017/02/rcohen020117/> (accessed May 21, 2018).

74. Roberta Cohen, “Time to Address North Korea’s Prison Labor Camps,” Brookings Institution, July 5, 2013, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/time-to-address-north-koreas-prison-labor-camps/> (accessed May 21, 2018).

75. Mark P. Lagon, “Trafficking Trends and Key Rankings: Say No to Grade Inflation,” testimony before Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, April 22, 2015, <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA16/20150422/103357/HHRG-114-FA16-Wstate-LagonM-20150422.pdf> (accessed May 9, 2018).

- **Continue to sanction North Korean officials on human rights grounds.** The Obama Administration was the first to sanction Kim Jong-un and other North Korean officials and entities on human rights grounds.⁷⁶ The Trump Administration followed suit with an additional 10 designations in 2017.⁷⁷ Surprisingly when the Trump Administration issued its first round of Global Magnitsky sanctions in December 2017, not a single North Korean was designated.⁷⁸ The Global Magnitsky Act allows the U.S. to target individuals on human rights and corruption grounds to place them on the Specially Designated Nationals list. The Treasury Department should make more liberal use of these tools to target individuals and entities responsible for overseeing and carrying out abuses in the prison camps.
- **Verify that the annual report on the political prison camps, mandated by the North Korean Human Rights Act, is being compiled and issued by the State Department.**
- **Expand and make use of existing U.S.-government-led information-access programs to educate the North Korean people about conditions inside prison camps.** The U.S. already engages in a number of efforts to improve information access in North Korea. The U.S. should first expand these efforts by exploring and implementing new technologies to improve information dissemination. The U.S. should also use strategically placed broadcasts for the purpose of educating North Koreans about human rights abuses both inside and outside the prison camps. If the U.S. raises human rights at the summit and calls for the dismantlement of the prison camps, it will send a clear message that the U.S. cares about the North Korean people. The U.S. should disseminate that message and counter North Korean propaganda

that paints the U.S. as an aggressor who does not care about the rights of the North Koreans.

- **The reauthorization of the NKHRA should include a call for North Korea to close its prison camps.** Neither the previous NKHRA nor the reauthorization bill that recently passed out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee includes a call for North Korea to dismantle its prison camps. As the staple piece of legislation dealing with human rights challenges in North Korea, it should make a clear statement that the U.S. government views prison camp closure as a component of its broader strategy toward the country.
- **Incorporate plans for liberating prison camps into U.S. contingency planning.** The U.S. currently has three contingency plans in anticipation of a potential collapse or instability in North Korea.⁷⁹ Arguably one of the least-developed components is humanitarian and human-rights-focused contingency planning. The U.S. should seek to incorporate liberation of prison camps and rehabilitation of prisoners into its longer-term contingency plans, especially prioritizing the rescue of prisoners from camps that are near pre-existing nuclear sites which the U.S. already plans to secure.

The upcoming summit with Kim Jong-un is an important opportunity for the U.S. to not only address one of the most pressing security situations facing the world, but also to start on the path toward alleviating one of the world's worst human rights crises. North Korea's human rights situation is without parallel in the modern world and demands urgent action and creative solutions. If the Administration seeks comprehensive solutions to address North Korea, it cannot focus on security challenges alone. It is time to move the needle, not just on denuclear-

76. News release, "Treasury Sanctions North Korean Senior Officials and Entities Associated With Human Rights Abuses," U.S. Department of the Treasury, July 6, 2016, <https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl0506.aspx> (accessed May 21, 2018).

77. News release, "Treasury Sanctions Additional North Korean Officials and Entities in Response to the Regime's Serious Human Rights Abuses and Censorship Activities," U.S. Department of the Treasury, October 26, 2017, <https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/sm0191.aspx> (accessed May 21, 2018).

78. News release, "United States Sanctions Human Rights Abusers and Corrupt Actors Across the Globe," U.S. Department of the Treasury, December 21, 2017, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm0243> (accessed May 21, 2018).

79. Olivia Enos, "Perspective: We Need to Prepare for Instability in North Korea," *Tampa Bay Times*, February 12, 2018, http://www.tampabay.com/opinion/perspective/Perspective-We-need-to-prepare-for-instability-in-North-Korea_165415282 (accessed May 23, 2018).

ization, but on human rights, too. It is time to call for complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantlement of North Korea's political prison camps.

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