
North Korea

**Total area:**

120,540 km²

Population:

25,155,317 (2015)

Literacy:

99%

Official languages:

Korean

GDP (PPP) per capita:

\$1,800 (2014 est.)

Life expectancy:

69 years

Religions:

64% Agnostic or Atheist, 16% Korean shamanist, 13% Cheondoist, 5% Buddhist, 2% Christian

Prayer points

Arrests in China

Media reports have indicated that large numbers of South Koreans have been arrested in North East China over recent months. They are thought to have been involved in ministry to North Korean refugees escaping to China. Some reports have suggested that more than 1,000 South Koreans have been detained or deported over recent months as China continues its crackdown along their border with neighbouring North Korea. Some westerners were also arrested in August 2014 and remain in detention. Pray for the Lord to free those detained. Ask Him to guard His people. Pray that China's authorities would exercise justice and mercy towards the many minority groups in the country, including those from North Korea who are frequently repatriated. (AsiaLink - November 2014)

Rockets fired into the sea

During April, North Korea returned from several months of relative quiet by firing rockets into the sea. This in itself is not unusual - North Korea often puts on an aggressive show of strength during South Korea's joint annual military drills with America. Many believe the rockets are simply a demonstration of their anger at the drills, which they say are 'preparation for invasion'. However, on this occasion over 30 rockets released - considerably more than the usual amount. Please pray that the rockets remain nothing more than harmless demonstration. Ask the Lord to use political talks to reach agreements that benefit ordinary North Koreans and increase stability on the troubled peninsula. (AsiaLink - May 2014)

Few signs of reform

After the death of Kim Jong-Il in December 2011, power transferred to his son, Kim Jong-Un, but so far there have been few signs of genuine reform. Most North Koreans are chronically malnourished and

live miles below the poverty line and more than 1% of the population lives in labour camps. For Christians the suppression is still severe. All religious activity is seen as a revolt against the cult of the Kim dynasty. Owning a Bible could get you killed or sent to a labour camp. Many North Korean Christians have to keep their faith secret because it's too dangerous to meet with other believers. Their isolation means they must rely even more on the prayers of their worldwide family. (Open Doors UK and Ireland - January 2013)

Infant mortality

New statistics on infant mortality rates appear to reflect improving conditions as North Korea emerges from the devastating famine that killed millions. A recent UNICEF report stated that the under-five mortality rate had fallen to 3.3% (from 5.8% in 2000). This compares favourably to many other developing countries yet is far behind South Korea at 0.5%. Despite these improvements, conditions are still highly unfavourable for North Korean children. Pray for creative ministry opportunities and for the government to be held to account for its actions so that reform can be realised. (AsiaLink - September 2012)

Prison camps

It is estimated that there are 200,000 people in prison camps in North Korea of which 50-70,000 are Christians. Prisoners are exposed to severe violations of human rights, such as torture, execution and use of humans for weapons testing. Many die from starvation and overwork. Pray for the closure of the prison camps and the release of the captives. Ask God to sustain the thousands of Christians in prison camps and that during their captivity they would be a witness to their fellow prisoners. (Open Doors UK and Ireland - January 2010)

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