

February 13, 2015

# North Korea Imagery Analysis of Camp 15

Joseph S. Bermudez Jr., Andy Dinville, and Mike Eley



THE COMMITTEE FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA  
북한인권위원회

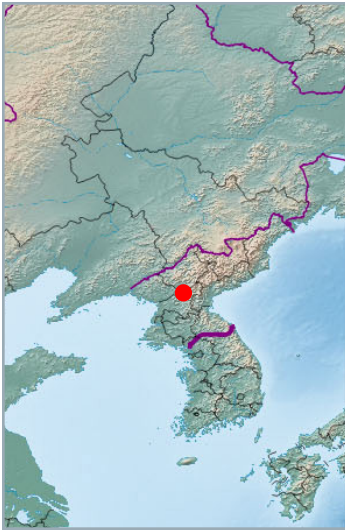


ALLSOURCE ANALYSIS





## North Korea: Imagery Analysis of Camp 15

**Location:**

Yodök-gun, Hamgyöng-namdo

**Coordinates:**

39.671450, 126.852357

**Date of Report:**

February 13, 2015

**Date of Imagery:**

March 2011–December 2014

**Introduction**

As part of a joint undertaking with the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) to use satellite imagery to shed light on human suffering in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, more commonly known as North Korea), AllSource Analysis has been monitoring activity at political prison facilities throughout North Korea. This report details activity at the facility commonly known as Camp 15.

**Executive Summary**

AllSource Analysis analyzed imagery of the North Korean political prison facility known as Camp 15 (also known as *Kwan-li-so* 15, Political Prison Facility 15 or Yodök Political Prison Camp) and its immediate environs using pan-sharpened multispectral satellite imagery collected by DigitalGlobe and Airbus Defense and Space from March 2011 through December 2014. The imagery from September 2013 through December 2014 provides the focus of this report; March 2011 imagery was used to validate or negate analytical findings. Imagery analysis helped determine the operational status of Camp 15 based on changes in the following features:

- ▶ Guard positions and entrances

- ▶ Housing and agricultural support facilities and activity
- ▶ Hydroelectric facilities
- ▶ Internal road network
- ▶ Light industrial facilities
- ▶ Mining and forestry activity
- ▶ Miscellaneous activity
- ▶ Security perimeter and associated road network

Based on analysis of these features, Camp 15 remains an operational political prison camp and is, by DPRK standards, a mature and well-maintained facility.

It is important to reiterate the analytical caution presented in previous reports produced by HRNK and AllSource Analysis (e.g., *North Korea's Camp 22*, *North Korea's Camp 25*, etc.). North Korean officials, especially those within the Korean People's Army and the internal security organizations, clearly understand the importance of implementing camouflage, concealment and deception (CCD) procedures to mask their operations and intentions. It would not be unreasonable to assume that they have done so here, as was the case with the closure of Camp 22 in Hoeryöng, Hamgyöng-bukto. If this is true, it would lend credence to recent

reports that indicate North Korean authorities have transferred prisoners out of Camp 15. If farmers and laborers from other locations have replaced the prisoners at Camp 15, such activity would not be readily discernible on satellite imagery.

**Location and Organization**

Camp 15, located 119 kilometers (km) north-east of the capital city of P'yöngyang and 65 km southwest of Hamhüng, is isolated deep in a forested mountainous region of the Puktaebong-sanmaek (i.e., mountain range). It occupies an irregularly shaped area that measures approximately 23.5 km by 25.7 km, has a perimeter of approximately 85 km, and encompasses 36,500 hectares (365 square kilometers) with 42 named villages. It is generally bisected by the Ipsök-ch'ön (i.e., stream) that runs from north to south and is further divided by its tributary system consisting of the Tae-suk-gang, Sösukgang, Yangjadong-gang, and Yongch'öng-gang. Functionally, the majority of villages and agricultural, mining and light industrial activities are located along these waterways. The primary entrance to Camp 15 is approximately 9.25 km by road north of the city of Yodök in Yodökgun, Hamgyöng-namdo, at the village of Sörim-dong. A minor secondary entrance is located on the northern



## North Korea: Imagery Analysis of Camp 15

perimeter near the village of Mayu-dong. The camp has a secondary road that connects it indirectly to the national highway system. There is no direct rail link to the camp. However, there is a rail station 21 km south of the camp. Power for the camp appears to be provided by the camp's own small hydroelectric power plants rather than the national grid.

### Imagery Analysis

For analytical purposes, the camp is divided into the security perimeter, 21 discrete locations, and miscellaneous activities (Figure 1).

### Security Perimeter

The 85 km security perimeter surrounding the camp consists of a patrol road and barbed wire fence, punctuated by two entrances and 25 guard positions (Figure 2). The main entrance and checkpoint is located on the southern perimeter at Sorim-dong. The smaller secondary entrance and checkpoint is on the northern perimeter, approximately 2.1 km north of the village of Mayu-dong. Although not all guard positions are positioned to provide overlapping fields-of-view of the camp, they are located along the most obvious routes of escape and appear to be well maintained and in good repair. The patrol road and barbed wire fence are well maintained. The absence of any vehicles along the perimeter patrol

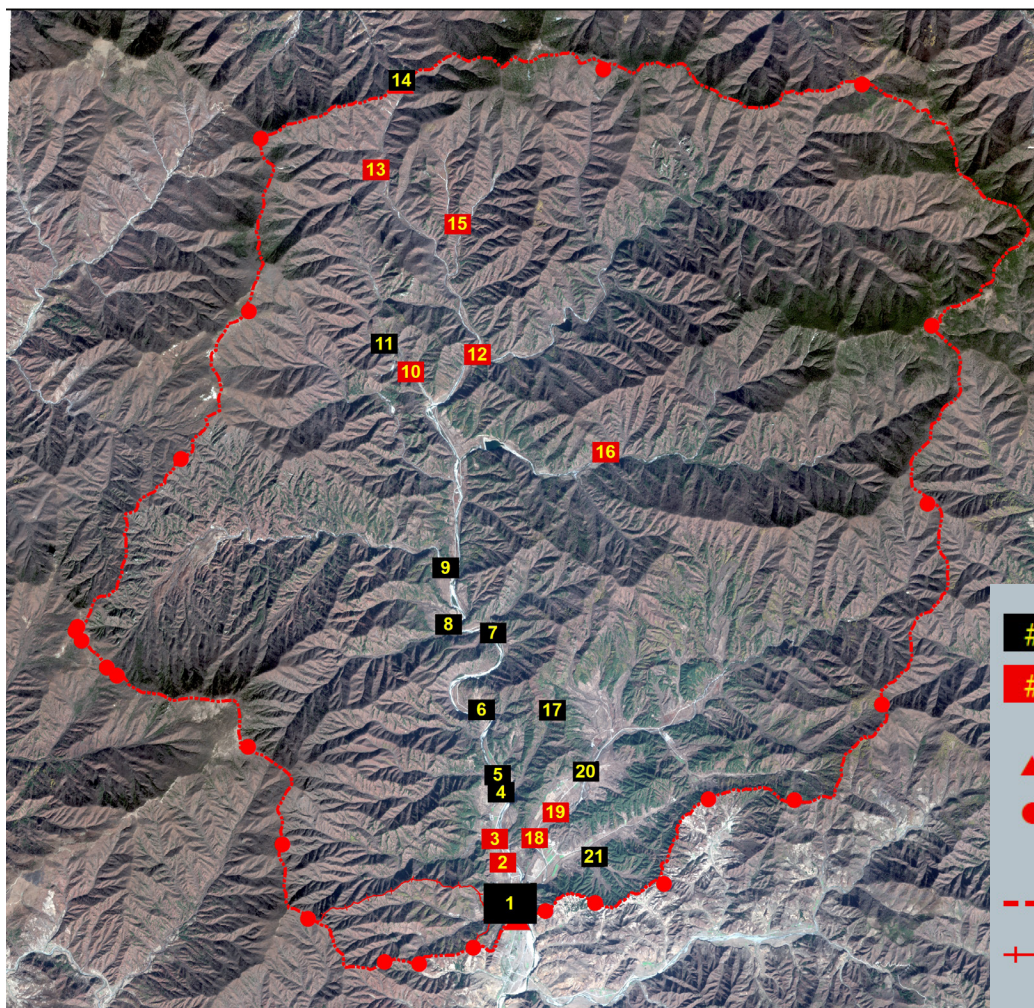


Figure 1





## North Korea: Imagery Analysis of Camp 15

road, or at the guard positions, suggests that guards rotate positions on foot rather than by vehicle. Neither the security perimeter of the camp nor the entrances and checkpoints have changed between September 2013 and December 2014.

### Area 1, Sörim-dong - Camp entrance and administration, support and housing areas

The village of Sörim-dong, located at the confluence of the Ipsön-ch'on (i.e., stream) and the Yongch'ön-gang (i.e., river), serves as Camp 15's main entrance and primary administrative, support, and housing area (Figure 3). The area is active and all buildings and roads are well maintained. No changes of significance are identifiable in the imagery between September 2013 and December 2014.

### Area 2, Maehae-dong South

The area immediately south of Mae-hang-dong is primarily dedicated to agriculture with what appears to be a light industrial building and several support and guard buildings (Figure 4). A small hydroelectric power plant on the east side of the Ipsön-ch'on receives its water from a diversion dam 1.7 km to the north. The only changes of significance in the imagery collected between September 2013 and December 2014 are the removal of one housing building and three small support buildings.

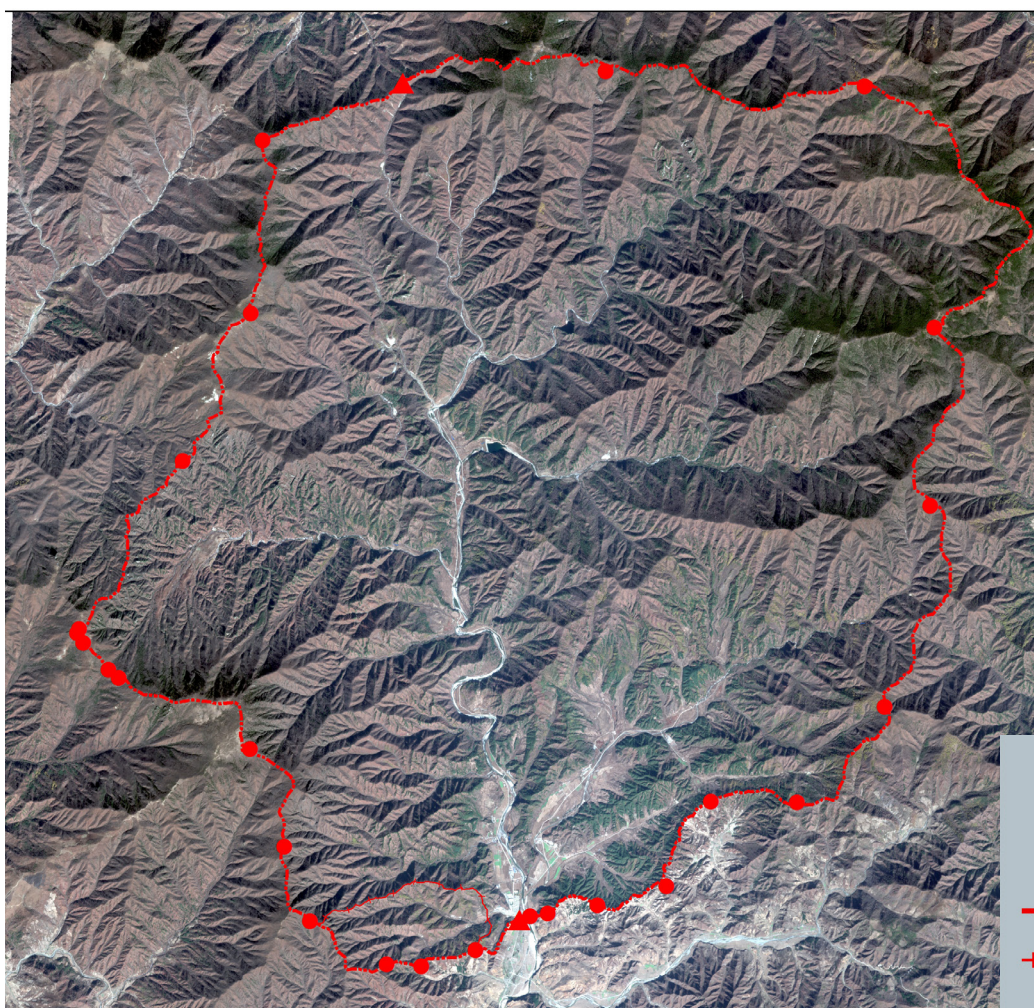


Figure 2





## North Korea: Imagery Analysis of Camp 15

### Area 3, Maehae-dong

The village of Maehang-dong is located on the Ipsŏn-ch'ŏn and consists of what is reported to be the housing area for Worker Unit #2, administration and guard buildings, additional housing, a threshing house and what is reported to be a Leadership Museum (Figure 5). Defectors report that prisoner executions have been conducted on a sandbar along the Ipsŏn-ch'ŏn immediately southeast of the village. The only significant change in the imagery collected between September 2013 and December 2014 is the removal of one small support building. Two housing buildings are having some work done to their roofs.

### Area 4, Sanghwadŏk South

The Sanghwadŏk South area is immediately south of the village of Sanghwadŏk along the Ipsŏn-ch'ŏn. This area is dedicated to agriculture and what defectors identify as a housing area for unmarried prisoners (Figure 6). A series of five unknown circular excavations are located on the west side of the valley. Extending across the Ipsŏn-ch'ŏn are both a bridge and a diversion dam that feeds the small hydroelectric plant at Maehae-dong, 1.7 km to the south. Since 2011, there has been a low level of activity in the riverbed immediately north and south of the dam that consists of an

open grid of neatly constructed piles of rock. North of the dam, there were four in 2011, none in 2013, and ten in 2014. The purpose of this activity is unclear. There were no significant changes observed in the imagery between September 2013 and December 2014.

### Area 5, Sanghwadŏk

The village of Sanghwadŏk is on the Ipsŏn-ch'ŏn and consists of agricultural support buildings, a livestock confinement area, and a threshing house (Figure 7). Across the Ipsŏn-ch'ŏn is a small hydroelectric power plant, and a small light industrial facility sits on the east side of the stream. The Sanghwadŏk area has been reported in the past to be the location for the Worker Unit #3 flour mill and worker housing area. Neither of these facilities are visible in the imagery collected between September 2013 and December 2014. Since 2011, there has been a low level of activity in the riverbed immediately north and south of the dam that consists of neatly constructed piles of rock. South of the dam, there were no piles in 2011, 40 in 2013 and 40 in 2014. The purpose of this activity is unclear.

### Area 6, Sanggokt'an

The village of Sanggokt'an on the east side of the Ipsŏn-ch'ŏn consists of a worker housing area (reported to be Worker Unit #4), a threshing house, and

a small hydroelectric power plant that is fed from a reservoir 4.1 km to the north (Figure 8). No changes were observed in the imagery collected between September 2013 and December 2014.

### Area 7, Ipsŏk-ri

The village of Ipsŏk-ri is on the east bank of the Ipsŏn-ch'ŏn and consists of a small housing area and agricultural support buildings (Figure 9). On the west side of the village is a small hydroelectric power plant that is probably fed from the diversion dam across the Ipsŏn-ch'ŏn, 1.25 km to the northwest. No changes were observed in the imagery collected between September 2013 and December 2014.

### Area 8, Kach'ang-dong

Kach'ang-dong is located on the west bank of the Ipsŏn-ch'ŏn and consists of a housing area and a threshing house (Figure 10). The fields to the west have been reported to have been used to cultivate poppies (i.e., an "Opium Farm"). No changes were observed in the imagery between September 2013 and December 2014.

### Area 9, Ogu-dong

The village of Ogu-dong is located on the west bank at the confluence of the Ipsŏn-ch'ŏn and Yangjadong-gang. It consists of a small housing area (Figure

11). This location has been reported to be the site of the "Sosŭk Valley Gold Mine." No significant mines have been observed in the vicinity. Several buildings on the west side of the Yangjadong-gang, however, have the appearance of possibly being used for large-scale panning. No changes were observed in the imagery collected between September 2013 and December 2014.

### Area 10, Pŏm-dong East

Located on the east bank of the Taesuk-gang, this area contained five buildings (possibly related to logging) in September 2013 imagery that are removed in the December 14, 2014, image (Figure 12). No other changes of significance were observed in the imagery.

### Area 11, Pŏm-dong

Located at the head of a small valley, Pŏm-dong is a mining area that consists of administration, storage, garage, and housing buildings (Figure 13). On the north side of the village are a reservoir and earthen dam. The primary mine head and tailings pile is located approximately .5 km to the south. Imagery suggests that this mining facility might have been abandoned by September 2013 and that one support/processing building was razed between the September 2013 and December 2014 image.





Figure 3



Area 1. Sörim-dong - Camp entrance and administration, support and housing areas





Figure 4



Area 2. Maehae-dong South





Figure 5



Area 3. Maehae-dong





Figure 6



Area 4. Sanghwadök South





Figure 7



Area 5. Sanghwadök





Figure 8



Area 6. Sanggokt'an





Figure 9



Area 7. Ipsok-ri





Figure 10



Area 8. Kach'ang-dong





Figure 11



Area 9. Ogu-dong





Figure 12



Area 10. Pöm-dong East





Figure 13



Area 11. Pöm-dong





## North Korea: Imagery Analysis of Camp 15

### Area 12, Taesung-ni

The village of Taesung-ni consists of a small number of agricultural buildings and a diversion dam across the Taesuk-gang for irrigation (Figure 14). A 175-meter (m) bridge along the western edge of the village was washed out during flooding in 2013, but it has been rebuilt by the time of the December 14, 2014, image. No other changes were observed in the imagery collected between September 2013 and December 2014.

### Area 13, Mayu-dong

The village of Mayu-dong consists of several large concrete buildings with a guard tower (Figure 15). Their location, size, and the presence of the guard tower indicates that this facility probably serves as headquarters, administration, and barracks for the security forces guarding the northern sector of Camp 15. It might also house a small number of detainees. The winding road leading west and north of the facility leads to the small secondary entrance to the camp at Manam-nyŏng, approximately 2.1 km to the north. A new dirt road is under construction south of the main building in the December 2014 image that was not there previously. No additional changes were observed on the imagery collected between September 2013 and December 2014.

### Area 14, Northern entrance and check-point

A small secondary entrance and check-point to Camp 15 is located approximately 2.1 km north of the security facility at Mayu-dong (Figure 16) at Manam-nyŏng (i.e., Manam Pass). No changes were observed in the imagery collected between September 2013 and December 2014.

### Area 15, Chik-tong North

The area of Chik-tong north begins at the confluence of two streams then extends up two small valleys (Figure 17). The road up the western valley has been washed out in at least four locations since September 27, 2013. New small-scale logging activity was observed at two locations up the eastern valley since September 2013.

### Area 16, Sosung-ni East

Located 1.5 km up the Sosun-gang and east of the village of Sosung-ni, is a mining activity with a retention pond, processing building, and housing area (Figure 18). Between September 2013 and December 2014, mining activity appears to have ceased and the three processing and one support buildings and some mining infrastructure have been razed.

### Area 17, Lim-san

Located 1.7 km east of Sanggok'tan in a small valley is what has been identified as the "Lim-san Valley Goat Farm" (Figure 19). Imagery collected between March 2011 and December 2014 confirms the presence of a small livestock pen and grazing area. Unknown circular excavations are visible on the western side of the valley.

### Area 18, Yongp'yong-ni West

This area is located 1.5 km northeast of the confluence of the Ipsŏn-ch'on and the Yongch'ŏn-gang, and on the east side of the Yongch'ŏn-gang. This primarily agricultural area consists of a small wood products factory (e.g., furniture, etc.) and agricultural support buildings (Figure 20). Located directly west of these facilities on the west bank appears to be a small-scale mining activity. Although the mining activity appears present and operational in September 2013 and December 2014 imagery, seven buildings immediately south of it have been razed. No additional changes were observed in the imagery collected between September 2013 and December 2014.

### Area 19, Yongsang-ni South

Located 1 km southwest of the village of Yongsang-ni, on the north side of the

Yongch'ŏn-gang, is an agricultural area with a small group of houses and a fish farm (Figure 21). Imagery indicates that between September 2013 and December 2014, a total of seven housing units were razed. An agricultural building has what appears to be a collapsed roof. No additional changes were observed on the imagery collected between September 2013 and December 2014.

### Area 20, Yongsang-ni

The village of Yongsang-ni is located on the south side of the Yongch'ŏn-gang. It consists of a housing area and a threshing house; across the river is a livestock facility and a fish farm (Figure 22). No changes of significance were observed in the imagery collected between September 2013 and December 2014.

### Area 21, Sŏng-ni

The agricultural village of Sŏng-ni is located 2.1 km east-northeast of Sorim-dong. Surrounded by cultivated fields, the village consists of a housing area, agricultural support buildings, and a possible poultry facility (Figure 23). No changes were observed in imagery from September 2013 and December 2014.





Figure 14



Area 12. Taesung-ni





Figure 15



Area 13. Mayu-dong





Figure 16



Area 14. Northern entrance and checkpoint





Figure 17



Area 15. Chik-tong North





Figure 18



Area 16. Sosung-ni East





Figure 19



Area 17. Lim-san





Figure 20



Area 18. Yongp'yong-ni West





Figure 21



Area 19. Yongsang-ni South





Figure 22



Area 20. Yongsang-ni





Figure 23



Area 21. Söng-ni





## North Korea: Imagery Analysis of Camp 15

### Miscellaneous Activities

Immediately outside the western perimeter, on the highest peak of P'yongp'ung-san, there is an air defense or communications facility. Other than this one facility, there are no readily discernible security, military, or other facilities in the immediate vicinity of the camp's perimeter.

There is likely an economic and social relationship between Camp 15 and the city of Yodŏk, however, the nature of this relationship is presently unknown.

### Assessment

Observations and analysis derived from DigitalGlobe and Airbus Defense and Space satellite imagery collected from March 2011 through December 2014—combined with defector reports, previous HRNK satellite imagery reports, and publicly available information—indicate that:

- ▶ If those working at the camp are prisoners, the prisoner population almost certainly maintains the agricultural fields, orchards, and livestock, and works in the camp's wood products and light industrial factories.
- ▶ The security perimeter, which consists of a barbed wire fence, patrol road, two entrance/checkpoints and 25 guard positions, is well maintained and shows no sign of change.
- ▶ Aside from the apparent closure of the small mining activity at Sosung-ni, some minor changes in the number of housing units, and structural changes to agricultural support buildings—all of which are consistent with normal life in rural North Korea—the administrative, barracks, housing, light industrial and support buildings and grounds are well maintained and in good repair. The grounds around these structures and the road network throughout the camp (except in one small, isolated location) are well maintained and in good repair. In fact, significant efforts have been made to repair roads, fords, and bridges damaged by flooding during 2013.
- ▶ There is a diversity of agricultural production, and almost all agricultural fields and orchards are well defined, maintained, and irrigated.
- ▶ The livestock facilities are well maintained and suggest a diversity of herds.
- ▶ The camp's fish farms are well maintained and show no sign of change.

- ▶ Hydroelectric power is available from a network of diversion dams, reservoirs, and small power plants.

### Recommendations

Continued monitoring of Camp 15 is recommended to develop an objective baseline understanding of the camp's activities, maintain an evidentiary catalog of physical changes at the facility, determine its status, develop more conclusive evidence of prisoner population size, and assist with the identification of possible human rights abuses. Through interviews with former prisoners and guards, as well as individuals or organizations with access to sources in the Camp 15 area, AllSource Analysis and HRNK will endeavor to determine if we are again witnessing a camp closure similar to Camp 22, or whether Camp 15 continues to be a fully functional, albeit "restructured" detention facility.





## Gazetteer

Location	Latitude (N)	Longitude (E)	Location	Latitude (N)	Longitude (E)
Camp 15 entrance	39.671	126.852	P'yŏngjŏl-li	39.740	126.911
Ch'ŏngsong-dong	39.731	126.923	P'yŏngyang	39.083	125.833
Changp'o-dong	39.726	126.910	Paeksan-ni	39.833	126.883
Chebinae	39.710	126.900	Paektong-ni	39.694	126.883
Chik-tong	39.809	126.832	Pŏltang-dong	39.829	126.968
Chiktun-dong	39.800	126.851	Pŏltang-gol	39.829	126.968
Chŏgunch'on	39.774	126.905	Pŏm-dong	39.801	126.808
Hagokt'an	39.714	126.834	Sanggokt'an	39.719	126.841
Hahwadŏk	39.694	126.844	Sanghwadŏk	39.703	126.845
Hamhŭng	39.966	127.489	Sant'aegae	39.752	126.964
Ilgŏn-dong	39.768	126.832	Sasu-gol	39.722	126.900
Ipŏng-ni	39.777	126.836	Sŏng-ni	39.686	126.875
K'ŭn Kanŭn'gae	39.823	126.874	Songŏjik	39.816	126.875
Kach'ang-dong	39.739	126.832	Sŏrim-dong	39.674	126.851
Kŭmsang-gol	39.825	126.870	Sosungni Kogwŏl-tong	39.761	126.879
Maehang-dong	39.690	126.843	Sosung-ni	39.773	126.858
Manam-nyŏng	39.861	126.813	Sosungni-Norugimogi	39.773	126.922
Manŏm-dong	39.839	126.807	Taep'o-dong	39.738	126.909
Mayu-dong	39.839	126.807	Taesung-ni	39.800	126.838
Mukp'o-dong	39.788	126.799	Taesungni-Norumok	39.838	126.923
Nae-dong	39.713	126.940	Ŭdalmal	39.708	126.881
Oe-dong	39.706	126.914	Yangja-dong	39.757	126.799
Ŏgu-dong	39.751	126.829	Yodŏk	39.611	126.843
Sŏngmal-tong	39.780	126.833	Yongch'ŏn-ni	39.683	126.867
P'yŏngbach'i	39.735	126.909	Yongp'yŏng-ni	39.687	126.867
			Yongsang-ni	39.704	126.873





## Selected References

- Cho, Joohee. "North Korean Prison Camp Atrocities Detailed in UN Report," ABC News, February 17, 2014, <http://abcnews.go.com/International/north-korean-prison-camp-atrocities-detailed-report/story?id=22550914>
- Database Center for North Korean Human Rights, "Political Prison Camps in North Korea Today," <http://nkdb.org/2012/main.php>.
- Harden, Blaine. "Outside World Turns Blind Eye to N. Korea's Hard-Labor Camps," *Washington Post*, July 20, 2009.
- Hawk, David. *The Hidden Gulag: Second Edition*. Washington, D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2012. [http://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/HRNK\\_HiddenGulag2\\_Web\\_5-18.pdf](http://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/HRNK_HiddenGulag2_Web_5-18.pdf).
- Howard, Young. "Reports leak out of atrocities at North Korean labor camps," U-T San Diego, May 15, 2005, [http://www.utsandiego.com/uniontrib/20050515/news\\_mzle15howard.html](http://www.utsandiego.com/uniontrib/20050515/news_mzle15howard.html)
- Kim, Soo-am, Kook-shin Kim, Soon-hee Lim, Hyun-joon Chon, Kyu-chang Lee, and Jung-hyun Cho. *White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea, 2003-2013*. Seoul, Korea: Korea Institute for National Unification, 2003-2013. [http://www.kinu.or.kr/eng/pub/pub\\_04\\_01.jsp](http://www.kinu.or.kr/eng/pub/pub_04_01.jsp)
- "North Korea's crimes against humanity have 'no parallel' today," *Washington Post*, February 19, 2014, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/north-koreas-crimes-against-humanity-have-no-parallel-today/2014/02/19/dafec350-99a7-11e3-b88d-f36c07223d88\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/north-koreas-crimes-against-humanity-have-no-parallel-today/2014/02/19/dafec350-99a7-11e3-b88d-f36c07223d88_story.html)
- Prison Camps of North Korea - Camp 15 Yodok*, <http://www.humanrights.gov/features/prison-camps-of-north-korea/camp-15-yodok.html>
- Reilly, Jill. "Raped by officials then executed so they stay silent: Horrific secrets of North Korea's gulags revealed - and the satellite images which prove secret camps are still growing," *Daily Mail*, December 4, 2013. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2518152/North-Korean-prison-camp-officials-raped-women-killed-secret.html>
- Williamson, Lucy. "'Life of hard labour' in North Korean camp," BBC, May 3, 2011. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-13268857>





THE COMMITTEE FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA  
북한인권위원회

HRNK is the leading U.S.-based bipartisan, non-governmental organization in the field of North Korean human rights research and advocacy, tasked to focus international attention on human rights abuses in that country. It is HRNK's mission to persistently remind policy makers, opinion leaders, and the general public in the free world and beyond that more than 20 million North Koreans need our attention.

Since its establishment in 2001, HRNK has played an important intellectual leadership role on North Korean human rights issues by publishing twenty major reports (available at <http://hrnk.org/publications/hrnk-publications.php>). HRNK became the first organization to propose that the human rights situation in North Korea be addressed by the UN Security Council. HRNK was directly, actively and effectively involved in all stages of the process supporting the work of the UN Commission of Inquiry. In the past five years, HRNK has been invited five times to provide expert testimony before the U.S. Congress.



ALLSOURCE ANALYSIS

AllSource Analysis, Inc. helps customers by focusing on what's most important—changes that directly impact their organizations. Our team of professional imagery, geospatial and open source research analysts are backed by direct access to the satellite imagery collections from numerous providers of sub-meter resolution imagery. AllSource Analysis keeps a constant eye on the world to provide early insights into the business, market, military and political changes that impact people around the world.

Questions or comments concerning AllSource Analysis can be sent to [info@allsourceanalysis.com](mailto:info@allsourceanalysis.com). Images in this report may be color-corrected for the purpose of publication.

Indemnity: You will indemnify, defend, and hold harmless AllSource Analysis, Inc. and its subsidiaries, affiliates and subcontractors, and their respective owners, officers, directors, employees and agents, from and against any and all direct or indirect claims, damages, losses, liabilities, expenses, and costs (including reasonable attorneys fees) arising from or out of:

(1) Your use of the Product for any purpose; (2) Your actual or alleged breach of any provision of this Agreement; or (3) damage to property or injury to or death of any person directly or indirectly caused by You. AllSource Analysis, Inc. will provide You with notice of any such claim or allegation, and AllSource Analysis, Inc. has the right to participate in the defense of any such claim at its expense.