



DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

UPDATED ASSESSMENT OF R2P IMPLEMENTATION 2022



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The following Updated Assessment Annex provides an overview of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's efforts in implementing R2P as of 2022. For a full description of the methodology used in this study, see Part II of 'Implementing the Responsibility to Protect in the Asia Pacific: An Assessment of Progress and Challenges', available [here](#). For more information on R2P implementation in the Asia Pacific in 2022, see the updated assessment [here](#).

Photo Acknowledgement: Tomas Van Houtryve, 2007-2008, at http://content.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1903919_1895454,00.html.

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

A systematic perpetrator of crimes against humanity, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea) continues to perform poorly in areas relating to the protection of its population from atrocity crimes. Millions of North Koreans have died as a result of either direct killing and torture by the government or government-induced famine. This circumstance has continued in the past few years with little discernible change.

The two indicators in which the DPRK rate 'Weak' rather than 'Very Weak' concern participating in peer review processes (in recognition of at least participating in the Universal Periodic Review process of the Human Rights Council), and the fact that the government has control over its military (although they act with impunity and are responsible for widespread human rights violations).

In terms of international law and human rights, the DPRK ratified seven of the twelve key international legal instruments most relevant to R2P. However, it has voiced reservations about many of them and utterly failed to uphold their core principles in practice. The domestic promotion and protection of human rights is practically non-existent. Despite constitutional claims that the courts are independent, in practice the Party and the Supreme Leader create law and determine the constitution; hence, there is no independent judiciary. There remains clear evidence of the systematic commission of crimes against humanity, and the law provides little to no protection for vulnerable groups, especially in the context of sexual and gender based violence.

There is no civil society to speak of and no independent press. The DPRK has voted against all General Assembly resolutions relating to R2P and has taken no steps to build dialogue in the region on human protection matters.

Regarding peacekeeping, the DPRK has not contributed to UN peacekeeping operations and has voiced strong opposition to international action to prevent atrocity crimes.

The DPRK remains the worst performer in the region in terms of R2P, as of 2022.

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Assessment	Indicator
Weak	Ensure a legitimate, effective and civilian controlled security sector
	Participate in international, regional and national discussions on the further advancement of R2P
Very Weak	Protection of populations from atrocity crimes
	Reduction of atrocity crime risks
	Dealing with past atrocities
	Appoint national R2P Focal Point
	Incorporate atrocity crime risks and dynamics into conflict analysis and/or development partnerships
	Establish domestic mechanisms to hold the government accountable for upholding its responsibility to protect
	Sign, ratify and implement relevant instruments of international law
	Sign and ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and cooperate fully with the Court
	Establish and maintain National Human Rights Institutions in accordance with the Paris Principles
	Ensure domestic promotion and protection of human rights, focusing on the elimination of discrimination
	Cooperate fully with UN Human Rights mandate holders and those of relevant regional organisations
	Ensure equal access to justice
	Criminalise incitement to commit genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity
	Take measures to counter and prevent violent extremism
	Enact and implement laws protecting vulnerable groups, particularly in relation to sexual and gender-based violence
	Protect individuals and groups fleeing atrocity crimes and their risk, in accordance with International Refugee Law
	Conduct a national assessment of risk and resilience
	Cultivate and protect an active, diverse and robust civil society
	Ensure the education system reflects the ethnic, national and cultural diversity of society, and sets examples of inclusiveness
	Prevent nationals committing atrocity crimes overseas
	Participate in international peer review processes, including the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the UN Human Rights Council
	Leverage existing mechanisms and institutions (including regional and sub-regional organisations) to encourage States to fulfil their responsibility to protect
	Encourage and assist States to fulfil their R2P in situations of emerging and ongoing crisis, such as good offices and preventive diplomacy
Strengthen regional and international networks for atrocity crime prevention	
Strengthen the role and capacity of regional organisations	

	Support the development and work of regional human rights and other preventive capacities
	Support atrocity prevention through development and assistance partnerships
	Support the early warning and capacity building efforts of the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and R2P
	Support the strengthening of the UN's capacity for atrocity prevention, including through the UN Human Rights system
	Support preventive actions on atrocity crimes
	Contribute to United Nations peacekeeping operations (especially those with a protection of civilians mandate)
	Develop the capacities needed to support civilian protection, including through the training of military and civilian personnel for peacekeeping
	Support the Kigali Principles
	Support UN Security Council veto restraint on issues relating to atrocity prevention

DPRK 2022 Score: 1

DPRK 2019 Score: 2

Difference: - 1 

According to a UN Commission of Inquiry, the DPRK commits systematic crimes against humanity against its own population. No evidence could be found of this circumstance having changed since 2019. One of the most repressive states in the world, the DPRK is manifestly failing to protect its own population and it continues to actively block efforts to protect populations from atrocity crimes. It is the region's worst performer of R2P implementation by a considerable margin.

Thematic Area	Indicator	Assessment	Notes
Basic Compliance	Protection of populations from atrocity crimes.	Very Weak Unchanged	The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) continues to commit crimes against humanity against its own citizens. It maintains itself as a dynastic dictatorship under the leadership of Kim Jong-un. Under the philosophy of <i>juche</i> (self-reliance), the country maintains a military-first stance, with strict control of daily life and the imposition of a social hierarchy (<i>songbun</i> , see relevant Indicators below) that discriminates against those who are perceived as disloyal to the Kim regime. No civil society exists, and the security forces act with widespread impunity. A wide network of prison camps holds thousands of prisoners, political and otherwise, where widespread human rights violations and crimes against humanity are committed. This is done with the full knowledge and complicity of the authorities, and the DPRK remains one of the world's worst violators of human rights, with no regard for the wellbeing of its citizens. The isolated nation has receded further from the international community in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. What little information that has emerged from the country paints a bleak picture of repression, violence, and mass atrocities. ¹
	Reduction of atrocity crime risks.	Very Weak Unchanged	The chances of atrocity crimes continually being committed in the DPRK remains very high. ²
	Dealing with past atrocities.	Very Weak Unchanged	There is no evidence that the DPRK has dealt with past atrocities to promote forgiveness and reconciliation.
Policy Mechanisms	Appoint national R2P Focal Point.	Very Weak Unchanged	The DPRK has yet to appoint a national R2P Focal Point. ³
	Incorporate atrocity crime risks and dynamics into conflict analysis and/or development partnerships.	Very Weak Unchanged	There remains no evidence of the DPRK accounting for risk dynamics of atrocity crimes in any analysis or partnerships they undertake.
	Establish domestic mechanisms to hold the government accountable for upholding its responsibility to protect.	Very Weak Unchanged	Impunity is rife amidst the one-party State that is the DPRK. As such, there are no domestic mechanisms in place that encourage the government to uphold its responsibility to protect.
International Human Rights Obligations	Sign, ratify and implement relevant instruments of international law.	Very Weak Unchanged	Of the twelve treaties of international human rights law most relevant to R2P, the DPRK has ratified seven of them. ⁴ They are:

¹ For example: U.S Department of State, 2021. *2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Democratic People's Republic of Korea*, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/north-korea/>. See also: Human Rights Watch (HRW), 2020. *North Korea: Systematic Repression*, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/01/14/north-korea-systematic-repression>; Lee, Sung-Yoon, 2021. 'Kim Jong-un's decade in power: Starvation, repression and brutal rule – just like his father and grandfather'. *The Conversation*, 18 December. Available at: <https://theconversation.com/kim-jong-uns-decade-in-power-starvation-repression-and-brutal-rule-just-like-his-father-and-grandfather-173809>; Liberty in North Korea, n.d. *The North Korean People's Challenges*, <https://www.libertyinnorthkorea.org/learn-nk-challenges>.

² See: Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (APR2P), 2021. *Atrocity Crimes Risk Assessment Series – Democratic People's Republic of Korea*, https://r2pasiapacific.org/files/6480/Risk_Assessment_dprk_vol17_april2021.pdf.

³ Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (GCR2P), 2020. *Members of the Global Network of R2P Focal Points*, <https://www.globalr2p.org/resources/members-of-the-global-network-of-r2p-focal-points/>.

⁴ United Nation Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (UNOHCHR), n.d. *View the ratification status by country or by treaty*, <https://tbinetnet.ohchr.org/layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=47&Lang=EN>; United Nations Treaty Collection, 2021. *1. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=IV-1&chapter=4&clang=en; United Nations Treaty Collection, 2021. *8. Arms Trade Treaty*, https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XXVI-

- **Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide** (Ratification/Accession: 1989).
- **Geneva Conventions** (Ratification/Accession: 1957).
- **Geneva Protocol I** (Ratification/Accession: 1988).
- **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights [ICCPR]** (Ratification/Accession: 1981).
- **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights [ICESCR]** (Ratification/Accession: 1981).
- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women [CEDAW]** (Ratification/Accession: 2001).
- **Convention on the Rights of the Child [CRC]** (Ratification/Accession: 1990).

The DPRK has yet to sign or ratify the **Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court**, the **1951 Refugee Convention** and its **1967 Protocol**, the **Arms Trade Treaty [CAT]**, the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination [CERD]**, and the **Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment [CAT]**. While not closely related to atrocity prevention, in 2016, the DPRK ratified the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [CRPD]**.

Sign and ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and cooperate fully with the Court.

Very Weak
Unchanged

The DPRK has yet to sign or ratify the **Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court**.⁵ It's non-member status to the **Rome Statute** means that Kim Jong-un and other members of the DPRK's government cannot be tried for atrocity crimes, despite calls for them to be so.⁶

Establish and maintain National Human Rights Institutions in accordance with the Paris Principles.

Very Weak
Unchanged

There remains no national human rights institution within the DPRK.⁷

Ensure domestic promotion and protection of human rights, focusing on the elimination of discrimination.

Very Weak
Unchanged

The human rights situation in the DPRK remains dire, with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR) finding a "...growing body of information confirming consistent patterns of human rights violations committed in places of detention in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea."⁸ The country runs up to six different types of prisons and detention centres under direct control of State authorities. These centres cater for different prisoners and

[8&chapter=26](#); International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), n.d. *Treaties, States Parties and Commentaries: Democratic People's Republic of Korea*, https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/vwTreatiesByCountrySelected.xsp?xp_countrySelected=KP; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2019. *The 1951 Refugee Convention*, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-au/1951-refugee-convention.html> (A list of signatories to both the Convention and the 1967 Protocol can be found by following the links on this page); International Criminal Court (ICC), n.d. *The States Parties to the Rome Statute*, https://asp.icc-cpi.int/en_menus/asp/states%20parties/pages/the%20states%20parties%20to%20the%20rome%20statute.aspx#D.

⁵ ICC, n.d. *The States Parties to the Rome Statute*, https://asp.icc-cpi.int/en_menus/asp/states%20parties/pages/the%20states%20parties%20to%20the%20rome%20statute.aspx#D.

⁶ For example: So-hyun, Kim, 2019. 'International Criminal Court says it has no jurisdiction over NK leader'. *The Korea Herald*, 6 December. Available at: <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20191206000481>.

⁷ Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), 2021. *Members*, <https://ganhri.org/membership/>.

⁸ United Nations, General Assembly, Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 28 July 2021, A/76/242, p. 4.

account for the systematic forced labour upon which relies the country's economy.⁹

Conditions in these centres are harsh, with widespread allegations of violence and abuse at the hands of prison authorities. "Defectors described witnessing public executions in political prison camps. According to defectors, prisoners received little to no food or medical care in some places of detention. Sanitation was poor, and former labor camp inmates reported they had no changes of clothing during their incarceration and were rarely able to bathe or wash their clothing."¹⁰

DPRK citizens are sent to these camps for wide ranging crimes that are not recognised internationally, including practicing religion, possessing or disseminating foreign media and music, and leaving or attempting leave the country. Numerous human rights bodies and the UN conclude that the DPRK has eliminated or severely curtailed freedoms of expression, association and assembly, movement, information, religion, thought and conscience of its citizens.¹¹

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, these restrictions were tightened with schools and businesses closing, along with its land border with China. The lack of movement both inside and outside the country has increased food insecurity, which was already high, and there is the potential of mass starvation,¹² which has been officially acknowledged by the government.¹³

The caste system of *songbun* remains intact, with the government at the beginning of 2020 restructuring some of the sub-categories to better classify the younger generation of North Korean citizens, who are perceived to hold undesirable ideological differences when compared to their parents and grandparents.¹⁴ The continuation of the *songbun* system ensures the continued stratification of society based upon loyalty to the Kim dynasty. In turn, systematic discrimination based upon this class system remains a central pillar of North

⁹ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁰ U.S Department of State, 2021. *2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Democratic People's Republic of Korea*, 'Section I. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from: Prison and Detention Center Conditions'.

¹¹ HRW, 2021. *North Korea: Events of 2020*, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/north-korea>; Amnesty International, 2021. *North Korea 2020*, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/east-asia/north-korea/report-korea-democratic-peoples-republic-of/>; United Nations, General Assembly, A/76/242, p. 8.

¹² Alsford, Niki JP, 2021. 'North Korea's costly COVID response is pushing Kim Jong-un to play political games'. *The Conversation*, 12 October. Available at: <https://theconversation.com/north-koreas-costly-covid-response-is-pushing-kim-jong-un-to-play-political-games-168589>.

¹³ United Nations, General Assembly, A/76/242, p. 9-11. BBC, 2021. 'Kim Jong-un warns of North Korea crisis similar to deadly 90s famine'. *BBC News*, 9 April. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-56685356>. Kim Jong-un, in a conference speech for the Worker's Party of Korea, made reference to another 'Arduous March' that the Party may have to wage. This was in reference to the famine that hit the country in the 1990s following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the country's public distribution system. Estimates suggest at least one million people died.

¹⁴ Yoon Ah, Ha, 2021. 'N. Korea orders reorganization of the country's caste system'. *Daily NK*, 21 February. Available at: <https://www.dailynk.com/english/north-korea-orders-reorganization-countrys-caste-system-songbun/>.

Participate in international peer review processes, including the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the UN Human Rights Council.	Weak Unchanged	<p>Korean society,¹⁵ despite denial by the regime of its enforcement.¹⁶</p> <p>The government of the DPRK does make some effort to engage with the UPR process, even if this effort amounts to nothing but rhetoric. At its last UPR in May of 2019, many countries commended the DPRK for its establishment of the ‘National Committee for the Implementation of the Human Rights Treaties’,¹⁷ a body to further facilitate UPR reporting processes and implementation of international treaties into government processes. There is doubt that this body does anything substantive, especially regarding the ICCPR and the ICESCR, to which the DPRK acceded to in 1981 but has done little to implement in practice.¹⁸</p> <p>While it remains a chronic violator and repressor of human rights, the country maintains it has “...highly valued dialogue and cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights, in particular through the universal periodic review mechanism.”¹⁹</p>
Cooperate fully with UN Human Rights mandate holders and those of relevant regional organisations.	Very Weak Unchanged	<p>The DPRK remains non-compliant and indeed hostile to Special Rapporteurs of the UN Human Rights Council, citing bias in the reporting processes.²⁰ With border closures due to COVID-19, foreign observers and aid cannot access the country.²¹</p> <p>There remains no standing invitation for UN mandate holders to visit the country.²²</p>
Ensure equal access to justice.	Very Weak Unchanged	<p>There is very limited access, let alone equal access, to justice in the DPRK. Judicial independence is non-existent, with the judicial system and security forces under the direct control of the Workers’ Party of Korea. Concepts of fair trials, a presumption of innocence and due processes in the legal profession are not respected within the country.²³ Those who are convicted of political crimes seem to be treated considerably worse than those convicted of non-political or minor offences.</p> <p>Like many, if not all, aspects of North Korean society, corruption plays a large role in the</p>

¹⁵ For more information about how the *songbun* system works and its effects on daily life, see: Park, Sokeel J., 2019. *Songbun: Social Class in a Socialist Paradise*, <https://www.libertyinnorthkorea.org/blog/songbun>; and Collins, Robert, 2012. *Marked for Life: Songbun: North Korea’s Social Classification System*, https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/HRNK_Songbun_Web.pdf.

¹⁶ United Nations, General Assembly, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, 25 June 2019, A/HRC/42/10, para. 70.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3-9.

¹⁸ Willis, Ben, 2021. *Scrutinizing North Korea’s Record on Civil and Political Rights: The New ICCPR Reporting Cycle*, https://www.38north.org/2021/09/scrutinizing-north-koreas-record-on-civil-and-political-rights-the-new-iccpr-reporting-cycle/#_ftn13; UPR Info, 2019. *Response to Recommendations: Democratic People’s Republic of Korea*, https://www.upr-info.org/sites/default/files/document/korea_dpr/session_33_-_may_2019/2rps_dprk.pdf. While the DPRK supports many of the recommendations, the majority of the recommendations it does not support relate to the ICCPR and the CAT.

¹⁹ United Nations, General Assembly, A/HRC/42/10, para. 125.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, paras. 12, 124; United Nations, General Assembly, A/HRC/76/242, para. 2; UNOHCHR, 2019. *The price is rights: The violation of the right to an adequate standard of living in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea*, p. 14, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/KP/ThePriceIsRights_EN.pdf.

²¹ Amnesty International, 2021. *North Korea 2020*; United Nations, General Assembly, A/HRC/76/242, para. 2.

²² UNOHCHR, n.d. *View Country visits of Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council since 1998*, <https://spinternet.ohchr.org/ViewCountryVisits.aspx?visitType=all&country=PRK&Lang=en>.

²³ HRW, 2021. *North Korea: Events of 2020, ‘Pretrial Detention, Due Process Violations, and Torture’*; U.S Department of State, 2021. *2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Democratic People’s Republic of Korea*, ‘Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from: E. Denial of Fair Public Trial’.

		judicial system. Bribery to prison guards and security officials can be used to lessen sentences, excuse prisoners from work and secure generally better conditions. The practice of bribing State officials is common practice within the country, and it is used to stop widespread arbitrary arrest and harassment by the security services for acts that are considered disloyal to the State, such as private commercial activity (which exists in a legal grey area), ²⁴ owning a foreign mobile phone or consuming foreign media. ²⁵
Criminalise incitement to commit genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.	Very Weak Unchanged	There is no encouraging update on issues of atrocity crimes within the DPRK due to actions by the international community. In fact, the UK-based All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on North Korea published a report collating findings from 2014 to 2020-2021. The report examined if any action had been taken on human rights abuses and atrocity crimes committed in the DPRK since 2014 (the publication date of the UN's Commission of Inquiry report). Unfortunately, this report found little had changed. There was sufficient evidence to suggest crimes against humanity were (and are) carried out in the DPRK. The report also suggested possible genocide being committed against Christians, half-Chinese children, and those of the 'hostile' class in the <i>songbun</i> system. ²⁶
Take measures to counter and prevent violent extremism.	Very Weak Unchanged	There is no evidence that the DPRK has taken measures to prevent violent extremism at home or abroad. Their support of terrorism in the past has served to both antagonise the U.S and act as a revenue stream. ²⁷ While the DPRK's connections to terrorist groups such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Irish Republic Army, and the Japanese Red Army have waned, they seem to maintain a willingness and an active network of agents to carry out terrorist attacks and criminal activity. ²⁸
		The U.S redesignated the DPRK as a state-sponsor of terrorism in 2017. ²⁹ Although this designation is contingent on the U.S's definition of 'terrorism', ³⁰ the DPRK remains a State where terrorist acts are considered power projections, instead of acts that need to be stopped.
Enact and implement laws protecting vulnerable groups,	Very Weak Unchanged	Given foreign observers are shut out of the country, official information regarding issues of women's

²⁴ Since the collapse of the public distribution system, the informal 'grey economy' is utilised by many North Korean citizens to earn an income by buying and selling basic necessities for life. The 'grey economy', its relationship to endemic corruption, and how that relationship enforces unequal access to justice and further human rights violations, is explored in the UNOHCHR Report: 'The price is rights: The violation of the right to an adequate standard of living in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.' *Supra* note 20.

²⁵ U.S Department of State, 2021. *2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Democratic People's Republic of Korea*, 'Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from: E. Denial of Fair Public Trial'; United Nations, General Assembly, A/HRC/76/242, para. 24-25.

²⁶ See: APPG on North Korea, 2021. *Inquiry into Human Rights Violations in North Korea 2014-2020/1*, https://b64a88a3-b1cd-4d11-8279-50610a8df584.filesusr.com/ugd/897883_7740417d3bb04474807a9e9679d6b2ec.pdf.

²⁷ Bechtol Jr., Bruce E., 2010. 'North Korea and Support to Terrorism: An Evolving History'. *Journal of Strategic Security*, vol. 3, no. 2, p. 45-54, <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/jss/vol3/iss2/5/>.

²⁸ Bicker, Laura, 2021. 'Drugs, arms and terror: A high-profile defector on Kim's North Korea'. *BBC News*, 11 October. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58838834>.

²⁹ U.S Department of State, 2019. *Country Reports on Terrorism 2019: People's Democratic Republic of Korea*, <https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019/democratic-peoples-republic-of-korea/>.

³⁰ Byman, Daniel L., 2017. *Putting the North Korea terrorism designation in context*, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/11/21/putting-the-north-korea-terrorism-designation-in-context/>.

	particularly in relation to sexual and gender-based violence.		rights, gender inequality and forms of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) cannot be verified. There is no evidence that the DPRK has improved its standards when preventing SGBV.
			Evidence from defectors points to widespread gender inequality, reinforced by a patriarchal culture, where women are frequently subjected to various forms of violence in and outside of the home. ³¹ This pervasive culture of patriarchal violence means some women internalise victim blaming, and continue to do so even after defecting, with many having been abused in South Korea, where many defectors reside. ³²
Domestic Implementation	Protect individuals and groups fleeing atrocity crimes and their risk, in accordance with International Refugee Law.	Very Weak Unchanged	While DPRK laws consider rape illegal and women and men are equal before the law, there appears to be wilful ignorance on the part of the government on gender inequalities and violence in practice. ³³ The DPRK remains a non-signatory to the <i>1951 Refugee Convention</i> and its <i>1967 Protocol</i> . There is no provision for refugees and asylum seekers in North Korean law, ³⁴ and the State remains a source country for refugees, rather than a destination country due to a small but constant flow of defectors, who mostly end up in South Korea. ³⁵
	Conduct a national assessment of risk and resilience.	Very Weak Unchanged	China also continues to send defectors within their borders back to North Korea, considering them economic migrants, and by doing so contravenes its own obligations and the principle of non-refoulement. The DPRK has long treated defectors as traitors, and they are likely to receive harsh punishments on their return to the North. ³⁶
	Cultivate and protect an active, diverse and robust civil society.	Very Weak Unchanged	There is no evidence that the DPRK has conducted a national assessment of atrocity risk. There is no working civil society sector within the DPRK, and this circumstance is not set to change anytime soon. The country is the epitome of a repressive, one-party dictatorship. Information is strictly controlled and distributed by the Korean Central News Agency, the only official source of information in the country. Judiciaries, worker unions, clubs, and associations independent of the State are non-existent. ³⁷
	Ensure a legitimate, effective and civilian controlled security sector.	Weak Unchanged	The State under the rule of Kim Jong-un keeps tight control of the security forces, in a similar way to all other aspects of North Korean society. Yet, the

³¹ HRW, 2018. *Joint Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of the DPRK*, ‘Women’s Rights’, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/10/12/joint-submission-universal-periodic-review-dprk>; Amnesty International, 2021. *North Korea 2020*, ‘Violence against women and girls’.

³² Kim, Jeongmin, 2020. ‘The violence won’t stop: North Korean women relive sexual assault in South Korea’. *NK News*, 9 September. Available at: <https://www.nknews.org/2020/09/the-violence-wont-stop-north-korean-women-relive-sexual-assault-in-south-korea/>.

³³ U.S Department of State, 2021. *2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Democratic People’s Republic of Korea*, ‘Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons: Women’.

³⁴ Ibid., ‘Section 2. Respect for Civil Liberties, Including: F. Protection of Refugees’.

³⁵ Due to COVID-19 and other factors, the rate of North Korean defectors fleeing to the South has recently dropped. See: King, Robert R., 2021. *Number of North Korean Defectors Drops to Lowest Level in Two Decades*, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/number-north-korean-defectors-drops-lowest-level-two-decades>.

³⁶ Yoon, Lina, 2021. *China Restarts Forced Returns of Refugees to North Korea*, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/07/22/china-restarts-forced-returns-refugees-north-korea>.

³⁷ Reporters Without Borders, 2021, *North Korea*, <https://rsf.org/en/north-korea>; Freedom House, 2021. *Freedom in the World 2021: North Korea*, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/north-korea/freedom-world/2021>.

	Ensure the education system reflects the ethnic, national and cultural diversity of society, and sets examples of inclusiveness.	Very Weak Unchanged	<p>security services act with impunity and commit numerous human rights violations.³⁸</p> <p>There is a paucity of data regarding education in the DPRK. While education seems to be free for everyone up until tertiary level, this education is based primarily on loyalty to the Kim regime, and there remain inequalities between urban and rural students. Claims of a literacy rate up to 100 percent are highly doubtful. Those related to the elite echelons of North Korean society are seen to be given preferable treatment in educational institutions.³⁹</p> <p>Due to COVID-19 restrictions, poorer students are without access to remote learning, and are choosing to work and provide an income for their families instead of studying.⁴⁰</p>
	Prevent nationals committing atrocity crimes overseas.	Very Weak Unchanged	The DPRK remains a non-signatory of the <i>Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court</i> . There is no evidence in their laws of a prohibition of their nationals committing atrocity crimes overseas.
Bilateral and Multilateral Relations	Participate in international, regional, and national discussions on the further advancement of R2P.	Very Weak Decrease	There is no evidence that the DPRK has participated in any recent discussions regarding R2P. Due to the draconian measures the government has put in place to respond to COVID-19, the country, already highly restricted and isolated, is even more isolated from the international community.
	Leverage existing mechanisms and institutions (including regional and sub-regional organisations) to encourage States to fulfil their responsibility to protect.	Very Weak Unchanged	<p>The DPRK has not encouraged States to fulfil their responsibility to protect. They have voted negatively on the following resolutions referencing R2P in the General Assembly:</p> <p>UN General Assembly Resolutions:⁴¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018: Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions A/RES/73/172: abstained. • 2018: Situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea A/RES/73/180: adopted without vote. • 2018: Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic A/RES/73/182: no. • 2019: Situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea A/RES/74/166: adopted without vote. • 2019: Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic A/RES/74/169: no. • 2020: Situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea A/RES/75/190: adopted without vote. • 2020: Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions A/RES/75/189: abstained. • 2020: Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic A/RES/75/193: no.

³⁸ U.S Department of State, 2021. *2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Democratic People’s Republic of Korea*, ‘Executive Summary’.

³⁹ Freedom House, 2021. *Freedom in the World 2021: North Korea*, ‘Civil Liberties D. Freedom of Expression and Belief’; Savage, Isadora, 2019. *Top 10 Facts About Education in North Korea*, <https://borgenproject.org/top-10-facts-about-education-in-north-korea/>.

⁴⁰ Jang, Seulkee, 2021. ‘North Korea sees growing education inequality amid the COVID-19 crisis’. *Daily NK*, 4 March. Available at: <https://www.dailynk.com/english/north-korea-sees-growing-education-inequality-amid-covid-19-crisis/>.

⁴¹ GCR2P, 2021. *UN General Assembly Resolutions Referencing R2P*, <https://www.globalr2p.org/resources/un-general-assembly-resolutions-referencing-r2p-2/>. (Voting records for each resolution were accessed using the UN’s Digital Library: General Assembly of the United Nations, n.d. *Voting Records*, <https://www.un.org/en/ga/documents/voting.asp>.)

- 2021: Promoting a culture of peace and tolerance to safeguard religious sites A/RES/75/258: **adopted without vote.**
- 2021: The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity A/RES/75/277: **no.**

The DPRK retains a mistrust and hostility towards the norm of R2P, seeing it as an excuse for major powers to bring about regime change in minor powers. The country considers the maintenance of sovereignty "...a sacred and inviolable"⁴² facet of international relations.

Encourage and assist States to fulfil their R2P in situations of emerging and ongoing crisis, such as good offices and preventive diplomacy.	Very Weak Unchanged	The DPRK remains an isolated State, especially in the context of COVID-19, in which it has closed its borders with China, its largest trading partner. Given its views on R2P, intervention, and state sovereignty, the DPRK continues to oppose R2P and its application both in and outside of crisis situations.
Strengthen regional and international networks for atrocity crime prevention.	Very Weak Unchanged	Due to its isolation, there is no evidence that the DPRK has been involved in any atrocity prevention networks.
Strengthen the role and capacity of regional organisations.	Very Weak Unchanged	While the DPRK is a member of several regional organisations, these are not related to R2P and atrocity prevention. ⁴³ Furthermore, due to its isolationist demeanour, no evidence was to be found that they engaged with these organisations in a constructive manner.
Support the development and work of regional human rights and other preventive capacities.	Very Weak Unchanged	The DPRK has an atrocious record of human rights domestically, and mirrors this internationally by being at best ambivalent on human rights issues in the region.
Support atrocity prevention through development and assistance partnerships.	Very Weak Unchanged	The DPRK has received foreign aid from its inception, with the Soviet Union subsidising large amounts of its supplies and foodstuffs. China, South Korea, the U.S and others have all given bilateral aid, along with contributions through multilateral initiatives and various UN organs. Much of the assistance given to the DPRK was of a humanitarian nature, without mention of human rights or atrocity prevention. Recently, much of this development aid has stopped, with a freezing of diplomatic relations with many countries and COVID-19 border closures.

United Nations, prevention, Peacekeeping, and assistance	Support the early warning and capacity building efforts of the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and R2P.	Very Weak Unchanged	No evidence was found of the DPRK recently supporting the UN Office. Given its past hostility to the position, and its view on R2P in general, it is likely it continues to not support its mandate.
	Support the strengthening of the UN's capacity for atrocity prevention, including through the UN Human Rights system.	Very Weak Unchanged	As mentioned in previous Indicators, the DPRK has argued against R2P and what it considers the meddling of others in the internal affairs of countries. No evidence was found of the country supporting the UN Human Rights system.
	Support preventive actions on atrocity crimes.	Very Weak Unchanged	The DPRK does not support preventive actions towards atrocity crimes.
	Contribute to United Nations peacekeeping operations	Very Weak Unchanged	The DPRK has not deployed any of its personnel on peacekeeping missions.

⁴² GCR2P, 2017. *Statement delivered by DPRK – Informal Interactive Dialogue on R2P, 6 September 2017 [UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTION FROM WEBCAST]*, <https://www.globalr2p.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/2017-IID-DPRK.pdf>.

⁴³ North Korea in the World, n.d. *North Korean membership in international organizations is organized by category below, 'Regional Organizations'*, <https://www.northkoreaintheworld.org/multilateral/international-organizations>.

	(especially those with a protection of civilians mandate).		
	Develop the capacities needed to support civilian protection, including through the training of military and civilian personnel for peacekeeping.	Very Weak Unchanged	While there is evidence the DPRK has trained foreign personnel in the past (see previous Indicator regarding violent extremism), this was not for the purposes of peacekeeping. No other recent evidence has been found.
	Support the Kigali Principles.	Very Weak Unchanged	The DPRK does not support the Kigali Principles.
	Support UN Security Council veto restraint on issues relating to atrocity prevention.	Very Weak Unchanged	The DPRK remains a non-signatory to the ACT Code of Conduct regarding action on acts of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. ⁴⁴ It has also not signed the French/Mexican initiative on veto suspension in the case of mass atrocities. ⁴⁵

⁴⁴ GCR2P, 2019. *List of Signatories to the ACT Code of Conduct*, <https://www.globalr2p.org/resources/list-of-signatories-to-the-act-code-of-conduct/>.

⁴⁵ GCR2P, 2020. *Political Declaration on Suspension of Veto Powers in Cases of Mass Atrocities*, <https://www.globalr2p.org/resources/political-declaration-on-suspension-of-veto-powers-in-cases-of-mass-atrocities/>.