

Week 6: Kim Jong Uk (North Korea)



Kim Jong Uk (61) is a South Korean Baptist missionary who was arrested in October 2013 after he entered North Korea with Bibles and other religious materials. In May 2014 North Korea's Supreme Court found him guilty of spying for South Korea and attempting to start a church. He was sentenced to life imprisonment in labour camp.

Before his arrest Kim Jong Uk (also known as Kim Jung-Wook) spent seven years in China's port city of Dandong, near the North Korean border, caring for North Korean refugees and teaching them from the Bible. North Korean agents infiltrated his network and encouraged him to go into North Korea to contact some returned refugees, so he crossed the border – and was arrested the next day.

At a news conference in February 2014, Missionary Kim read a statement in which he apologised for “*anti-state crimes*” and said he had spied for South Korea's National Intelligence Service. (South Korea has repeatedly denied that he was an agent.) He said he started a church in Dandong to collect information from church members on life in North Korea and also said he had given money to North Koreans to set up five hundred underground churches, stating: “*I was thinking of turning North Korea into a religious country, and destroying its present government and political system.*”

The government's broadcast of the news conference featured a North Korean woman who had joined Missionary Kim's discipleship programme and lured him into North Korea with promises of help to get to Pyongyang and start churches. She admitted deceiving him because she wanted money to start a restaurant.

After Missionary Kim's trial, North Korea's state news agency KCNA said that prosecutors had sought the death penalty but that the court imposed a life sentence after he “*sincerely repented*”. The authorities tracked down 33 North Korean women he had trained, accused them of trying to overthrow the regime by working with him to start five hundred churches and sent them to labour camp. Thousands of Christians are held incommunicado in North Korean labour camps, like Missionary Kim, and no news of them ever emerges.

Family

For security reasons no information can be shared about Missionary Kim's family members. He is not allowed any contact with them.

Latest news

In November 2023 South Korea's Unification Ministry announced “consolation” payments for families of six citizens detained in North Korea, including Kim Jong Uk, in recognition of their status as victims of abduction.

Prayer Diary

Sunday	Ask God to protect Kim Jong Uk in labour camp.
Monday	Pray for good mental and physical health.
Tuesday	Pray for encouragement and spiritual strength.
Wednesday	Pray for his release and for him to return home.
Thursday	Ask God to comfort and bless Missionary Kim's family.
Friday	Pray for all North Korean Christians imprisoned for their faith.
Saturday	Pray for freedom of worship for Christians in North Korea.

