

Kim Jong Un rules North Korea ruthlessly. He even had his own uncle executed.

In 2012, while many North Koreans went hungry, Kim spent \$645 million on luxury cars, electronics, and handbags.

Kim controls nuclear weapons and a million-man army.



Deadly attack dogs, kidnappings, public executions, starvation, thought-control, religious persecution, and forced marriages. A new United Nations report reveals in grim detail how the North Korean government terrorizes its own people. It also declares the country's young dictator, Kim Jong Un, guilty of crimes against humanity.

"The gravity, scale, and nature of these violations reveal a state that does not have any parallel in the contemporary world," the report says.

With its nuclear weapons, repressive government, and a state-run economy that can't even feed its people, North Korea has long been viewed with concern by the United States. But the 408-page U.N. report—based on the testimony of North Korean escapees—adds shocking evidence of the Communist state's brutality.

"At this point, no one could dispute that North Korea has a serious human rights problem," says Richard Bush, a North Korea expert at the Brookings Institution.

North Korea's Communist state dates to the end of World War II. In 1945, the Soviet Union occupied Korea north of the 38th parallel and installed a Communist regime, while U.S. and Allied forces controlled what became South Korea. The North later tried to take over the South, and the Korean War (1950-53) followed. That conflict, in which 34,000 Americans died, ended in a stalemate, leading to two very different nations (see chart).

South Korea developed into a thriving democracy with a booming and

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'CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY'

The U.N. accuses North Korea's young leader of committing atrocities against his own people BY PATRICIA SMITH

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'Pigeon Torture': This drawing by a former North Korean prisoner shows a form of torture in which people are handcuffed behind their backs and hung for days so they can't sit or sleep. "It was so painful I thought it was better to die," said one victim.

120,000 political prisoners in four camps and says starvation has been used to control and punish North Koreans, both in the camps and in the general population.

A former camp guard told investigators about ferocious dogs used to catch inmates attempting escape. On one occasion, the dogs mauled and killed three children at a school for children of inmates. Another former guard recalled his superior officer using a blowtorch to bludgeon to death a sick prisoner who hadn't worked fast enough. The officer was rewarded with the right to attend a university.

A 14-year-old who accidentally dropped a sewing machine in a prison camp was punished by having his finger cut off.

"I thought my whole hand was going to be cut off, but it was just a finger," the former prisoner recalled. "So, at that time I was grateful, really grateful to the guard."

The U.N. Security Council is expected to consider referring the crimes against humanity charges to the International Criminal Court in The Hague, the Netherlands, but there's little chance that will happen. China, North Korea's closest ally, is a permanent member of the Security Council and will surely veto that move.

North Korea has denounced the U.N. report as lies made up by its enemies, including the U.S. and South Korea. While the report acknowledges that the abuses it documents

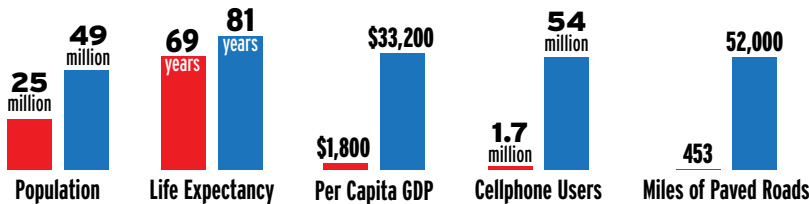
aren't new, they have never been cataloged in such detail, and human rights groups hope the revelations spur international outrage—and action.

"The U.N. has been more or less indifferent about these issues for six decades," says Julie de Rivero of Human Rights Watch. "The panel are trying to jump-start the reaction of the international community. Steps need to be put in place so that North Korea gets the message loud and clear that the issue won't be ignored." •

With reporting by Choe Sang-Hun and Nick Cumming-Bruce of The New York Times.

North Korea vs. South Korea

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technologically advanced economy—the 12th-largest in the world. It's long been a staunch American ally, with 28,000 U.S. troops stationed there.

North Korea, on the other hand, became one of the most repressive and isolated regimes in the world. When Kim, then about 29, inherited the dictatorship after the 2011 death of his father, Kim Jong Il, there was hope that he might modernize the country and improve relations with the international community. But he's proven to be as ruthless as his father (and his grandfather before him). He's continued to test missiles and even threatened a nuclear strike against South Korea and the United States. In December, Kim ordered the execution of his uncle—his second-in-command and mentor—for allegedly plotting a coup. There were also unconfirmed reports that Kim had his uncle's entire family—including children—executed as well.

Big Brother

Under Kim's rule, North Koreans continue to live under Big Brother, George Orwell's famous depiction of a

totalitarian state in which even thoughts are controlled. Ordinary citizens have no Internet access and TVs and radios receive only government channels.

Homes are equipped with loudspeakers that blare state-sponsored slogans and sanitized news all day long and can't be shut off.

Food is scarce. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, North Korea's economy, which long relied on Soviet aid, began a catastrophic decline. While millions have starved, the regime has spent billions on a massive army and a secret nuclear-weapons program.

Anyone who dares challenge the government is treated mercilessly. The U.N. report estimates that there are up to

North Korea has 120,000 political prisoners in four camps.



Kim with Dennis Rodman; the former NBA star is one of the few Americans who has visited North Korea.

KIM KWANG-LI/UNITED NATIONS DRAWING; YONHAP NEWS/NEWSCOM (RODMAN)