North Korea

Ethnicity in North Korea

Power relations

North Korea is ethnically, racially and linguistically one of the most homogenous countries in the world ([2652]; [2653]; [2654]; [2655]; [2656]). The population is almost entirely Korean, with a small Chinese minority of approx. 50,000 constituting the only other significant ethnic group (= 0.2%) ([2657]; [2658]; [2659]; [2660]).

Regarding the political context, North Korea is an authoritarian, single-party state, headed by the Kim family, whose members have exercised absolute control over the government and military since 1948 ([2661]; [2662]; [2663]). Its political system is highly centralized under the rigid control of the communist Korean Worker's Party (KWP) ([2664]; [2665]; [2666]), and is guided by the 'military first' philosophy ([2667]). Even though the North Korean constitution provides for democracy, the KWP maintains a monopoly on political power ([2668]): while there are two minor parties (the Social Democratic Party and the Chondoist Chongu Party ([2669]; [2670]; [2671])), they are formally and legally operating under the direction of the KWP, with whom they are allied under the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland, and must closely follow its party line ([2672]; [2673]; [2674]; [2675]; [2676]; [2677]). The US Country Report on Human Rights Practices adds here that "lacking grassroots organizations, they exist only as rosters of officials with token representation in the Supreme People's Assembly" ([2678]). Considered foreign citizens, members of the Chinese minority are not eligible to join the KWP or advance in the military ([2679]). There are national elections, although they too are controlled by the KWP, and are neither competitive, fair nor free ([2680]; [2681]; [2682]; [2683]).

In line with this political ethos, unauthorized meetings are forbidden, and there are no known organizations besides those established by the state ([2684]; [2685]; [2686]).

Given the ethnic constellation and the persisting political situation in North Korea, the existing coding 'irrelevant in national politics' is extended until 2013.

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Political status of ethnic groups in North Korea

From 1948 until 2013

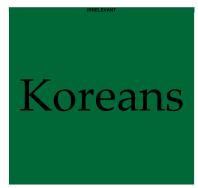| Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Koreans	1.0	IRRELEVANT

Figure 571: Political status of ethnic groups in North Korea during 1948-2013.

Conflicts in North Korea

Starting on 1949-05-31

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of North Korea	Government of South Korea		1949-05-31			