

North Korea 2011



Total: 0.83

Quick facts

Population:	24.46 million
Population growth:	0.54 %
GDP:	28 billion \$
GDP growth rate:	-0.9 %
GDP per capita:	1800 \$

Political Freedom

Free and Fair Elections : 0

At the end of 2011 the world witnessed the succession of Kim Jong-Un, youngest son of recently deceased Kim Jong-Il, as dictator of North Korea. This ascension to power confronted the people of North Korea with a fait accompli. Public participation in the transition of leadership was restricted to the expression of grief at the loss of Kim Jong-Il, and then the rejoicing at the immediate advancement of their new Supreme Leader.

However, while on an insignificant scale, elections do happen in North Korea. Polls are held generally every five years. At national level, North Koreans elect a legislature - the Supreme People's Assembly. Additionally, people elect representatives to city, county, and provincial people's assemblies. The term "election", though, is misleading when it comes to North Korea's political system. Candidates for office must be a member of the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland which is a coalition of the country's three political parties. Before elections, each party may nominate candidates for office; the Democratic Front then selects a single nominee for each political post, presents this list to the voters, who then have the choice of either voting for, or against, each candidate. What this means is that the people, themselves, do not choose representatives and are restricted to merely confirming candidates chosen by the unelected Democratic Front. Official figures usually count voter turn-out and approval of candidates as roughly 100 percent, suggesting an actual limited choice in the polling booth.

Political participation and pluralism also have a distinct North Korean touch - besides the all-powerful Worker's Party of Korea (WPK), two other political parties exist who are bound by law

to follow the WPK's political agenda, therefore differing in name only. Individual political participation is forced by the state as a sign of respect to the Supreme Leader, and is therefore mandatory. The refusal to participate in certain political activities is perceived as a lack of support for the government and, in turn, is heavily punished.

Absence of Unconstitutional Veto Players : 0

Since North Korea is, in general, considered to be the world's most repressive political system, there is no force challenging the government. Everything is either state-owned or state-controlled - nothing else exists, so the government holds all effective power to govern. The public has no means of holding government officials accountable, as government policies and actions are never transparent or open. Even though there are no veto players in the political system of North Korea, by democratic standards this cannot be estimated a positive thing, thus leading to the score of 0.00 in the rating of this section.

Freedom of Press : 0.3

All media in North Korea is state owned, so there is absolutely no freedom of press or expression. Internet access is restricted to only a few thousand people and foreign websites are generally blocked. The only way to get uncensored information is through the black market: radios equipped to receive foreign broadcasts, pirated movies or mobile phones provide such alternative sources of information. Trading on the black market is very much a risk, though " people face heavy punishments if authorities become aware of such activities.

Rule of Law

Independence of the Judiciary :

No data available.

Corruption :

No data available.

Protection of Human Rights : 0.53

The human rights situation in North Korea is devastating. Even though the government initiated a revision of the constitution in March 2009 to stipulate that it respects and protects human rights, this step was widely perceived as merely a response to international pressure without any internal consequences. Not only is the death penalty is still in effect, but it is also often the case that executions are held publicly and people are forced to attend. Unlawful detentions and torture are both common practice. People considered to be political dissidents are sent to special detention centres for re-education - which, in many cases, equals a death sentence. Moreover, North Koreans are classified by the government according to their perceived loyalty to the regime. This classification determines every aspect of a person's life, including the access to education or

health facilities, food, and employment opportunities.

Economic Freedom

Security of Property Rights :

No data available.

Size of Government: Expenditures, Taxes, and Enterprises :

No data available.

Regulation of Credit, Labour, and Business :

No data available.

Freedom to Trade Internationally :

No data available.