**Reports: North Korea Leader Sentenced 15 Officials to Death in 2015**

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North Korean leader [Kim Jong-un](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-11388628) [BBC profile] has ordered the execution of 15 officials this year, the[South Korean National Intelligence Service](http://eng.nis.go.kr/svc/index.do) [official website] told a closed parliamentary meeting on Wednesday. These officials were allegedly [executed by firing squad](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-32511431) [BBC report] for spying. Four members of the Unhaso Orchestra are [believed to be among the 15 executed](http://www.cnn.com/2015/04/29/world/north-korea-executions/) [CNN report]. [Two vice-ministers were also killed](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/29/kim-jong-un-executes-15-top-officials-south-korean-spies) [Guardian report], allegedly for disagreeing with or complaining about their orders from Kim. North Korea has not confirmed these executions, but Kim has been known to "purge" his opponents before. In 2013 he put his uncle, [Chang Song-thaek](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-25197601) [BBC profile], to death along with several officials close to him.

In November UN Special Rapporteur on the situation in the People's Republic of Korea Marzuki Darusman said that there is enough evidence to hold North Korean leader Kim responsible for  ["massive" human rights atrocities](http://jurist.org/paperchase/2014/11/un-rights-expert-enough-evidence-to-hold-north-korea-accountable-for-human-rights-violations.php) [JURIST report] committed in the country. Also in November the UN General Assembly  [urged](http://jurist.org/paperchase/2014/11/un-general-assembly-north-korea-should-be-referred-to-icc.php) [JURIST report] the Security Council to call on the  [International Criminal Court](http://www.icc-cpi.int/en_menus/icc/Pages/default.aspx) [official website] to investigate the crimes. The UN has sought to investigate and counter alleged human rights abuses in North Korea in the past. The  [UN Human Rights Council](http://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/pages/hrcindex.aspx) [official website]  [adopted a resolution](http://jurist.org/paperchase/2014/03/un-rights-body-calls-for-justice-in-north-korea.php#.U1EvqFcS-Ca) [JURIST report] last March urging the UN Security Council to take action against those responsible for documented crimes against humanity in North Korea. Last February then-UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay stated that there  [can no longer be any excuses for inaction](http://jurist.org/paperchase/2014/02/un-rights-chief-urges-action-in-north-korea.php#.U1Ev_FcS-CY) [JURIST report] in North Korea following the release of a UN report. In September 2013 the UN Human Rights Commission reported  [widespread human rights abuses](http://jurist.org/paperchase/2013/09/un-rights-commission-finds-serious-violations-in-north-korea.php#.U1EwF1cS-CY) [JURIST report] occurring in the country.