

# PRISONER PROFILE

Prisoner Name: **Pastor Hyeon Soo Lim**

Location: **North Korea**

Arrested: **February 2015**

Sentence: **Not Known**



## Arrest and background

North Korea recently released footage of Canadian pastor Hyeon Soo Lim confessing before a Pyongyang church congregation that he had committed crimes against the state. The senior pastor of the 3,000-member Light Korean Presbyterian Church in Toronto travelled to North Korea in January this year on a routine humanitarian visit. He has been detained since February.

In the video Pastor Lim appears to be reading from a script as he addresses a sparse congregation at Pyongyang's Pongsu Church, which included some foreign residents of Pyongyang. According to the semi-official propaganda website Uriminzokkiri, the service at the North Korean 'show' church took place on August 2, 2015. Dressed in a dark blue suit and tie the South Korean-born pastor said, 'The worst crime I committed was to rashly defame and insult the highest dignity and the system of the republic.'

Pastor Lim, 60, also appeared before media in Pyongyang, where he confessed to crimes aimed at overthrowing the state, North Korea's official news agency said. KCNA quoted him as telling a news conference he had travelled to North Korea in the guise of humanitarian work and gathered information that he used in sermons outside the country in an attempt to drive the regime to a collapse 'with the love of God'. Lim's purpose was to 'overturn its social system by taking advantage of the hostile policy against it sought by the South Korean authorities and set up a base for building a religious state', it quoted him as saying.

Following the release of the video 'confession', Pyongyang denied allegations that Lim had made a false confession under coercion and accused South Korea and foreign media of 'spreading misinformation'.

Pastor Lim ran various humanitarian projects in North Korea for nearly 20 years. He was born in South Korea, emigrated to Canada in 1986 and has visited North Korea, where he helped to establish an orphanage and a nursing home, more than 100 times since 1997.

Both North Korea and neighbouring China have clamped down on Christian groups over the past year, and several Christians have now been detained by Pyongyang. Pastor Lim's situation is similar to that of other Christian missionaries and those conducting humanitarian work in the region. Several of them have been detained by the North Korean Government and have been forced to make public confessions in order to gain their freedom. There is no way of knowing if this will be the result, or whether Pastor Lim will be given a sentence similar to that passed down to Kim Kuk-gi and Choe Chun-gil. (*see prisoner profile*)

## Please write

When writing, please do not mention Release International, advance your political opinions or include anything which could be insulting to the authorities.

### Send a card of encouragement to Pastor Lim's family

Please consider sending a card or letter of encouragement to Pastor Lim's family to let them know that Pastor Lim and the family are being prayed for. Release will endeavour to forward these cards and letters to Pastor Lim's family and ministry partners.

Mark cards for Hyeon Soo Lim and send to: Release International, PO Box 54, Orpington, BR5 4RT.

To find out more about persecution in North Korea see the country profile at [releaseinternational.org](http://releaseinternational.org).

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