



## **ASIA/NORTH KOREA-The "Day of the Sun" obscured by darkness on human rights**

Seoul (Agenzia Fides) - The terrible human rights violations in Korea obscure "the day of the sun", which is celebrated in the country tomorrow, April 15, on the occasion of the centenary of the birth of the founder of North Korea, Kim Il-sung. According to the North Korean government, April 15 "is the day when the country will become a strong and prosperous nation." In reality "it is a vain hope for its citizens," said Rajiv Narayan, an NGO "Amnesty International" researcher for North Korea, in a note sent to Fides.

Nearly a million North Koreans have died of famine that hit the country since the end of the nineties and today approximately two million people suffer the consequences of the ongoing food crisis. Also, a network of an NGO gathered for the "International Coalition of crimes against humanity in North Korea," recalls hundreds of thousands of people suspected of opposing the authorities are held in brutal conditions inside the prison camps, such as the camp for political prisoners of "Yodok".

"To become a strong and prosperous nation, the new leader Kim Jong-un should put an end to decades of repression that has characterized the history of North Korea and give priority to effective measures to ensure food and essential medical care to the entire population," Narayan remarked. "Hundreds of thousands of people are living in prison camps in subhuman conditions, far from the view of the world and almost devoid of all human rights protections," he recalls.

That of Yodok, home to 50,000 inmates between men, women and children, is one of six known prison camps of North Korea, where an estimated 200,000 political prisoners and prisoners of conscience find themselves without ever being put on trial or following irregular trials. Among them we find many Christians, held in prison on because of their faith. According to the testimonies of former detainees, in Yodok prisoners are frequently tortured, forced to carry out forced labor and put to death. The Korean authorities refuse to recognize the existence of camps for political prisoners. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 14/4/2012)