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NORTH KOREA: Kim Jong-un's sister has officials executed

North Korea: Officials scared after sister of North Korean leader has their colleagues executed

"Devil woman" Kim Yo Jong orders probes of government agencies and executes officials who "get on her nerves," they say.

Radio Free Asia (18.05.2021) – <https://bit.ly/3uVnZmA> – Government officials in North Korea are living in fear after a series of executions of their colleagues on the orders of

leader Kim Jong Un's powerful sister, Kim Yo Jong, two officials told RFA.

Since her brother's rule began in 2011, Kim Yo Jong's rise to power in her own right culminated in her becoming an alternate member of the Politburo in April 2020. At the time, her brother was rumored to be having health issues and some experts believed she could have been an option to replace him in the event of his death.

But she was demoted during the ruling Korean Workers' Party's Eighth Party Congress in January, becoming just a member of the Party's Central Committee, with her rank reduced from first deputy director to deputy director. Still, she remains one of North Korea's most powerful people, and sources said she has ordered executions of government officials simply for "getting on her nerves."

"News that they shot to death a high-ranking official in Pyongyang is spreading among officials in Hyesan right now. We don't know who the executed official was, but I heard from an official close to me that he was executed on the orders of Kim Yo Jong," an official of an administrative agency in central northern Ryanggang province told RFA's Korean Service May 13.

"In November last year, a gold smuggling incident was reported to the Central Party. A total of 10 state security officials and soldiers of the border security command were executed by firing squad in December, while nine residents were imprisoned for life. Dozens of their family members, meanwhile were sent to political prison camps." said the source, who requested

anonymity for security reasons.

RFA reported in November that that two soldiers were caught smuggling some \$10 million worth of gold into China near Hyesan, on Nov. 1. One was arrested immediately, while the other, a border security guard, fled into China and was believed to be in the custody of Chinese authorities, according to local government sources.

Sources in the Ryanggang provincial government told RFA that the soldier caught Nov. 1 revealed during the investigation that they had been working with six residents on what had been their fifth trip smuggling gold to China. The six were arrested on Nov. 16, a judicial official told RFA at the time.

One of the Ryanggang sources told RFA in November there was a possibility that smugglers be executed because gold is strictly controlled by the state. Their offenses also included defying a strict border lockdown imposed to combat coronavirus.

The source who spoke to RFA last week said residents and officials are resentful that the executions were on the orders of Kim Yo Jong.

“She is paying particular attention to officials who are getting on her nerves. She is collecting data that shows they are challenging the party’s authority and reported this to her superior, her brother Kim Jong Un,” the source said.

“There have been a series of executions of officials for being ‘anti-party revolutionists.’ Resentment against Kim Yo Jong is deepening further,” said the source.

The source said the Central Party was currently investigating all officials of Ryanggang province on her orders.

“They say that they are catching reactionaries for handing over confidential data and lecture materials to South Korea’s National Intelligence Service. Many people are sent to political prison camps on charges of being involved in this,” the source said.

Kim’s ruthlessness is causing people to draw up comparisons with other female historical figures they consider to have been without mercy.

“They are starting to call her Empress Dowager Cixi to express their anger,” said the source, referring to the Qing Dynasty de-facto ruler of China, considered by some historians to have been a despot who opposed modern reforms to prolong her own power.

Another source, an official in the northwestern province of North Pyongan, told RFA the same day that Kim ordered investigations in Sinuiju, another city on the border with China.

“Following the execution of Sinuiju customs officials by firing squad in North Pyongan in 2019, a number of officials were also executed after investigations into the Sinuiju city party, administration agencies and the state security department,” said the second source, requesting anonymity to speak freely.

“When word got out that Kim Yo Jong was behind these executions, the officials started calling her ‘devil woman,’” the second source said.

The officials are even afraid to earn Kim Yo Jong’s praise, because that means she has taken notice of them. They fear that they will have to prepare for execution someday if they get on her bad side, according to the second source.

“As these unjust executions increase, even ordinary residents are afraid of her. They say she is a bloodthirsty demon,” the second source said

“This year, she even led the purging of senior officials close to her brother Kim Jong Un, when she mercilessly executed his aides. She is a terror to officials. Even though she is now in a lower position, she is showing off her power by executing the powerful.”

Political purges were instrumental in Kim Jong Un’s efforts to consolidate his leadership following the death of his father Kim Jong Il in 2011.

After assuming control of the country, he swiftly eliminated political rivals, most of whom were top officials under his father's rule, including his uncle Jang Song Theak, who was believed to have once been North Korea's second in command.

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