

Interviewing people who have escaped from North Korea: Our guidelines for journalists and publishers

It takes time to build trust with people who have escaped North Korea, because some of their experiences of adversity may have resulted in them being traumatised.

For this reason, we ask:

- That journalists who wish to interview a North Korean person should meet with the person first, with no expectation of an interview, to explain their publication and the purpose of the article, enabling the person to consider the request in context and decide if it is something they are able and willing to participate in. This is important for trust-building, but it also helps journalists gain a better understanding of the experiences of North Korean people and the challenges they still face if they manage to escape the oppression of the North Korean regime.
- If the person wishes to be interviewed, a separate interview time will be arranged. This is important to give them time to assess all the possible risks and so that they may give informed consent. As a result, we are unable to facilitate interviews which require quick turnaround.

Thank you for agreeing to follow our guidelines. Here's a copy for easy reference:

1. The North Korean person who agrees to be interviewed can see the content of the copy before publication.
2. All reporting on escaped North Korean people will be anonymous unless the person or people has explicitly agreed that their real name is published. Their permission must be given in writing via Connect: North Korea.
3. It is understood that the North Korean person can terminate the interview at any point if they feel uncomfortable.
4. The location of the interview – online or in-person – will be determined by the North Korean person.
5. If the person prefers that you write content down rather than record it, you agree to abide by that.
6. No photographs of the person's face will be taken or used for any purpose unless the person provides their explicit consent for this to happen. The discussion on consent will happen with Connect: North Korea before the interview takes place – ideally, at least a week before – and confirmed in writing. This will never be a request made directly to the person by the journalist during either the initial meeting, or during the interview itself.
7. Every escaped North Korean person – unless they express willingness to do so in discussion with Connect: North Korea before the interview – can set their own

redlines about content they do not wish to talk about. If these redlines are broken, they can end the interview immediately.

8. Share questions in advance so that person you are interviewing can prepare.
9. Please don't rush meetings or interviews, give the person you are interviewing time to answer, and understand that people who have experienced extreme adversity may find it difficult to articulate their experiences.
10. All interpretation/translation costs – and if a fee is available for the client – will be borne by the media company. We can provide a list of interpreters that we have worked with before.
11. If you want photographs of the person you are interviewing, and they have agreed to this, we ask that you commission photography.
12. You will link to a relevant programme on our website, or to our homepage, to help build awareness of the work Connect: North Korea does to drive lasting positive change for everyone who escapes North Korea.
We would appreciate the opportunity to include a donation request, where it feels appropriate to the content of any resulting article.

If a North Korean person we are in contact with agrees to meet you, and agrees to be interviewed, we will be able give you – and them – support to navigate this process sensitively, with due consideration to all parties involved.