

EXPLOSION KILLS OVER 110 IN DPRK

The Human Rights group, 'Good Friends' (Chairman: Venerable Bumnyun) reported on June 19, "An oil pipeline exploded in Sunchun, North Pyongan Province on June 9, killing more than 110 people." South Korean intelligence services also caught wind of the accident, and are currently trying to confirm the story.

Good Friends reported, "While pumping 200 tons of gasoline from the Bongwha Chemical Plant in Pihyun, North Pyongan to Daedong, South Pyongan, the aging pipeline running through rice paddies in Sunchun ruptured, spilling fuel. Residents in the fields all grabbed containers and rushed to collect the pouring gas, and in the commotion, an explosion occurred, resulting in the injuries."

"The explosion killed more than 110 people, but the bodies were charred into [unrecognizable] lumps." According to Good Friends, gasoline in North Korea costs 2500 won per kilogram. With the difficult living conditions in the North, the opportunity to earn money led to a fight over the gasoline, and someone's error led to a spark. The explosion caused a fire that burned for two days, finally being extinguished on June 10. A Good Friend official stated, "The accident has been verified by several North Korean news services, while investigation continues into whether more injuries or deaths have occurred."