



NEW RELEASE 2023

**Tariq Zaidi**  
***North Korea***  
***The People's Paradise***

Photographs and text by Tariq Zaidi

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**Tariq Zaidi's book allows us to embark on an intriguing journey that challenges misconceptions and stereotypes surrounding this often-misunderstood country and its people.**

In January 2020, North Korea officially closed its borders. But even before that date, photographing the enigmatic landscapes of North Korea posed immense challenges due to the regime's strict control and prohibition of unauthorized photography. However, from a vast archive of images captured painstakingly over two years, in this book Tariq Zaidi curates a selection of more than 100 remarkable photographs that offer a wider perspective on a society often misunderstood and overshadowed by stereotypes.

North Korea is associated with its absolute rule under Kim Jong Un and state-controlled propaganda. Central to its political ideology is the philosophy of Juche, credited to Kim Il Sung. Juche emphasises self-sufficiency, independence, and the supremacy of the state over the individual. It permeates all aspects of society through propaganda, education, and cultural activities. However, North Korea demands a more humanistic understanding of its culture beyond politics. While most information about the country offers a one-dimensional perspective, photography emerges as a vital medium to grasp and appreciate its complexities.

From Dandong (on the Chinese border) in the north to Kaesong and the Demilitarized zone (DMZ) in the south, across the country from Nampo and the capital Pyongyang on the west to Wonsan on the east coast and then north towards Hamhung, Chongjin and Hoeryong (near the Chinese-Russian border), the photographer immerses himself in diverse landscapes and cities to take a closer look at this country and its people. Zaidi's lens skilfully captures the resilience, spirit, and cultural nuances of the North Korean people in their everyday lives. Each photograph acts as a window into a hidden reality, unveiling the intricate interplay between tradition and modernity while illuminating the complex dynamics of a nation navigating its path amid global scrutiny.

**Tariq Zaidi**, a London-based photographer, transitioned his career in 2014 to pursue his passion for capturing the dignity, strength, and soul of people in their environments. His photography focuses on critical social issues, systemic inequalities, cultural traditions, and marginalized communities worldwide.

In 2020, Zaidi gained recognition for his debut book, *Sapeurs: Ladies and Gentlemen of the Congo*, which received acclaim as a finalist for the Lucie Photo Book Award, Photography Book of the Year by Pictures of the Year International (POYi), and African Photobook of the Year. Vogue also named it one of the Best Fashion Books of the Year, and it was showcased at the Visa pour l'Image International Festival of Photojournalism. His second book, *Sin Salida*, released in 2021, delved into human rights issues in El Salvador, earning him top honours at the 2020 Media Awards by Amnesty International and the International Photography Awards (IPA) in 2022. The book was also a finalist for the Lucie Photo Book Prize and POYi's 'Photography Book of the Year' in 2023.

Zaidi's photography has been featured in over 1,000 publications across 90 countries, including The Guardian, BBC, National Geographic, CNN, Washington Post, Newsweek, Der Spiegel, GQ, Marie Claire, and Vogue. With over 70 international awards, including honours from Sony World Photography Awards and the National Press Photographers Association's (NPPA) Best of Photojournalism Awards his work has been exhibited in more than 90 international exhibitions, spanning projects in 25 countries across four continents.

Tariq Zaidi is a self-taught photographer with an M.Sc. degree from University College London, his work can be explored on Instagram (@tariqzaidiphoto), Facebook (@tariqzaidiphotography), and website [www.tariqzaidi.com](http://www.tariqzaidi.com).

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## Press images



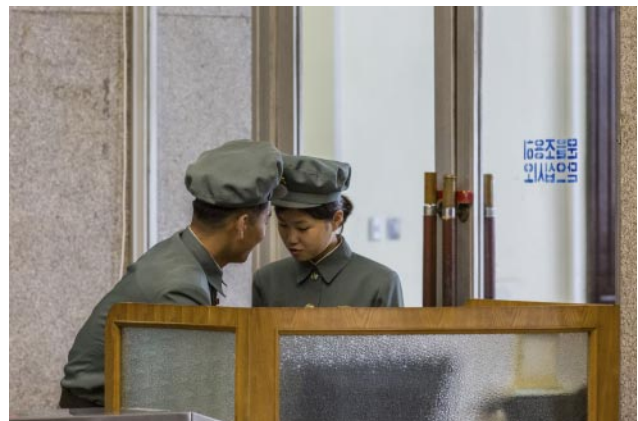
01\_ A coat adorned with medals hangs in a home. Migok Cooperative Farm, Sariwon. © Tariq Zaidi



02\_ The Mansudae Grand Monument, located in Pyongyang, features massive bronze statue of President Kim Il Sung and General Kim Jong Il. The image was taken the day before Liberation Day when military personnel visited the monument to lay flowers in honour of the leaders. © Tariq Zaidi



03\_ A porter and a woman in the Kumgangsan Hotel at Mt Kumgang, This hotel is known for hosting reunion meetings between families from North and South Korea. © Tariq Zaidi



04\_ Two entrance guards share a private moment at the Grand People's Study House, the main library in the capital city of Pyongyang. © Tariq Zaidi



05\_ Street scenes of Hoeryong as seen from the monument of Kim Jong Suk. © Tariq Zaidi



06\_ Man in military uniform watches over beachgoers near Wonsan. © Tariq Zaidi



07\_ People wash cars and collect gravel at a riverbank on the road between Ulim Waterfalls and Hamhung in the country's east. © Tariq Zaidi



08\_ People have a picnic near the Ulim Waterfalls, named after the Korean word for echo, as its rumbling sound resonates across a four-kilometre radius. © Tariq Zaidi



09\_ City view taken from the Tower of Juche Idea, Pyongyang. The Monument to Party Founding, top right of the image, portrays a worker, a farmer, and an intellectual holding hammer, sickle, and brush, respectively. © Tariq Zaidi



10\_ School girls. Pyongyang. © Tariq Zaidi



11\_ Drawing class at the Mangyongdae Schoolchildren's Palace in Pyongyang, the largest facility for children's after-school activities in North Korea. © Tariq Zaidi



12\_ Girl plays a cello at Chongam Kindergarten, Chongjin. © Tariq Zaidi