



CAMP 14 – TOTAL CONTROL ZONE

Spring
Season
2014

Release: 2012

Cert (UK): 12A

Language: Korean with English sub-titles

Runtime: 104 mins

Director: Mark Weise

Cast: Documentary featuring Shin Donghyuk

Camp 14 is the shortened name for the Kaechon internment camp. The main purpose of the camp is to keep politically unreliable persons, classed "unredeemable", isolated from society, and exploit them with hard labour. The term "unredeemable" is applied to people who want to escape North Korea's repressive government, or people who have spoken harshly about the government or other non-criminal elements. Also actual criminals may be sent to the camp. The labour at the camp is performed in mines and farms with primitive means.

Many prisoners of the camp were born there under North Korea's "three generations of punishment". This means anyone found guilty of committing a crime, which could be as simple as trying to escape North Korea, would be sent to the camp along with that person's entire family. The subsequent two generations of family members would be born in the camp and must also live their entire lives and die there. Shin Donghyuk (born Shin In Geun) (who was in Kaechon from 1982–2005) was born in the camp and would have died there if he hadn't escaped, aged 23. His father was imprisoned because two of his brothers defected to South Korea during the Korean War.



Shin Dong-hyuk describes, hesitatingly, his life in Camp 14. His stories are supported by a former commander of the guards at Camp 22 and an ex-secret policeman who casually admit to murder, rape, torture and other abuses performed with impunity. Today, they live in South Korea and whilst on the surface you may say they live normal lives, do they... can they?

Marc Weise's documentary may be more sober than *The Act of Killing* about the 1965-66 Indonesian genocide (you have the opportunity to compare these as we screen *The Act Of Killing* in the coming Keswick Film Festival), but its revelations about North Korea's political prison camps are no less devastating.