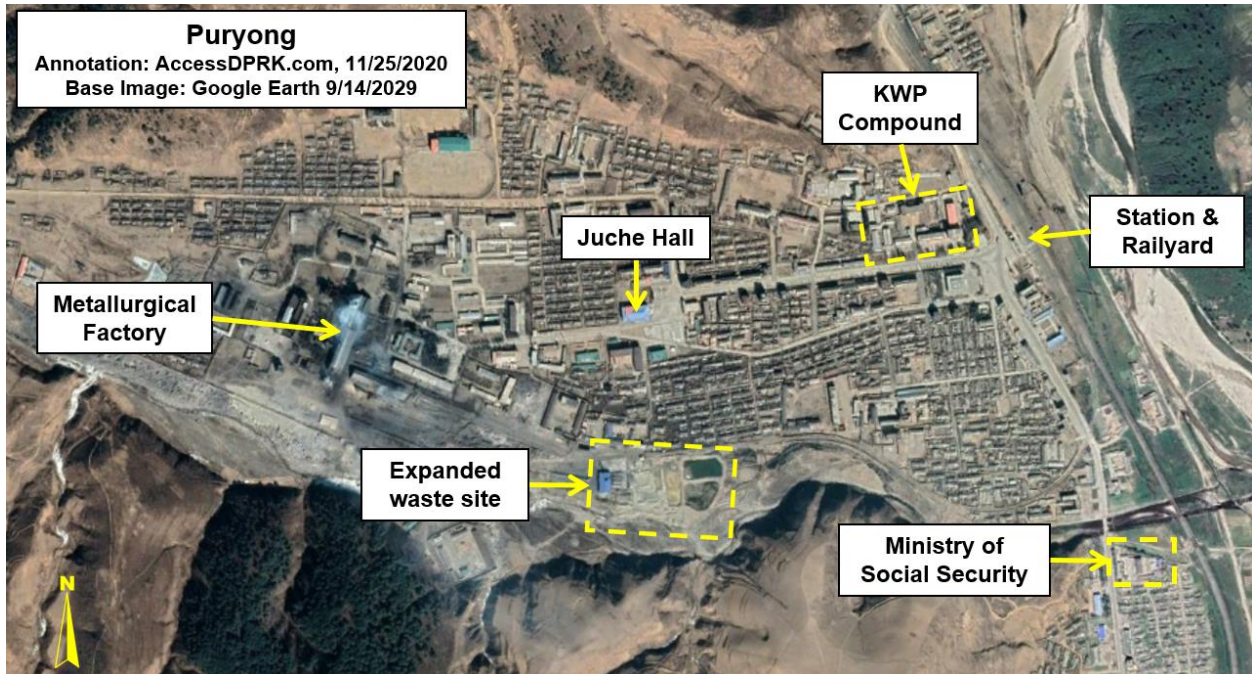


**AccessDPRK analysis provided exclusively\* for a [Patreon](#) supporter by Jacob Bogle, Nov. 25, 2020.**

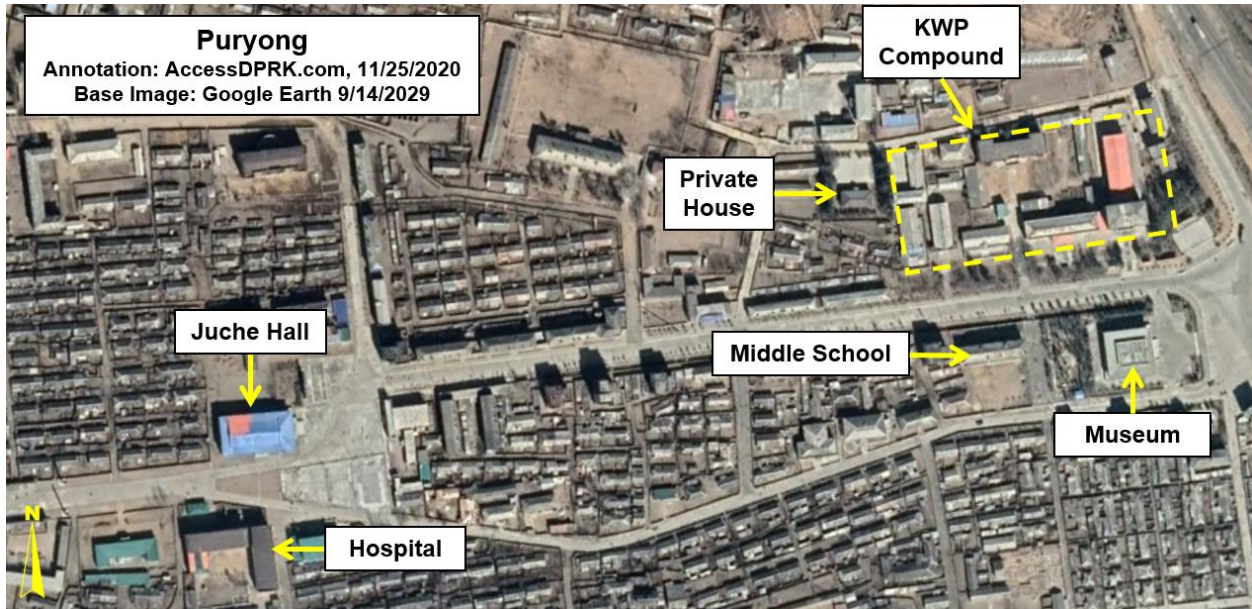
**Puryong** is a county seat in North Hamgyong Province and is situated next to the Susŏngch'ŏn River within the Hamgyong Mountain Range. The 2008 census gave a population of 48,958. There has been little-to-no additional housing built since then, so I doubt its population has grown to more than 52,000 as of 2020.

Despite being in the Susŏngch'ŏn River valley, which runs directly down to the major port city of Chongjin, I haven't been able to locate any historic forts south of Puryong. Three 15<sup>th</sup> century forts exist at the valley's far northern end, near Komusan. I mentioned one of them in the Komusan report, the other two are farther north and are basically the same as the Komusan fort. (Coords: 42.176881° 129.613093° and 42.206672° 129.644029°) These created one of six key garrison areas to protect the Hamgyong region from Chinese invasion and Manchu raids.



The economy is largely reliant on the Puryong Metallurgical Factory and nearby smaller factories, some agriculture, and the Komusan mine. Electricity is provided by one medium-sized hydroelectric power station (42.061150° 129.672907°) and several smaller “low-head” stations built on the Susŏngch'ŏn River. The city is connected to the country's rail system through the Musan Line. It has a typical train station but there is a small railyard attached for freight and rolling stock for the Komusan and [Musan](#) mines.

Puryong actually become a source of [scandal](#) and an example of “anti-socialist” excess due to the actions of the former Workers' Party of Korea leader. In North Korea, housing is assigned to each person. There is almost no genuine private home ownership allowed. However, in 2009, the county Party leader Eung-seon Koh built for himself a private home next to the WPK complex and surrounded it with a wall and trees for privacy.



The house is about 240 sq. meters, which is five times the size of the average Chinese residence and is even larger than the average American home according to [Elle Décor](#). For added context, the individual housing units in the nearby “harmonica houses” in which most North Koreans live are only around 60 sq. m. The house and relatively lavish lifestyle weren’t limited just this party boss. The trend has spread to other local officials throughout the northern regions of the country resulting in both popular discontent and government crackdowns on corruption.

Elsewhere in town, a new stadium facility was built in 2016, the now ubiquitous “Children’s Driving Park” was constructed in late 2018, and the factory added a new waste storage site that has slowly grown over the past five years, indicating that the factory is still active. It’s also worth noting that until 2015, the city lacked the traditional “House of Culture” (Juche Hall) that nearly all populated places have. Construction of the building took four years.

Puryong’s market is approx. 950 sq. m. in area.

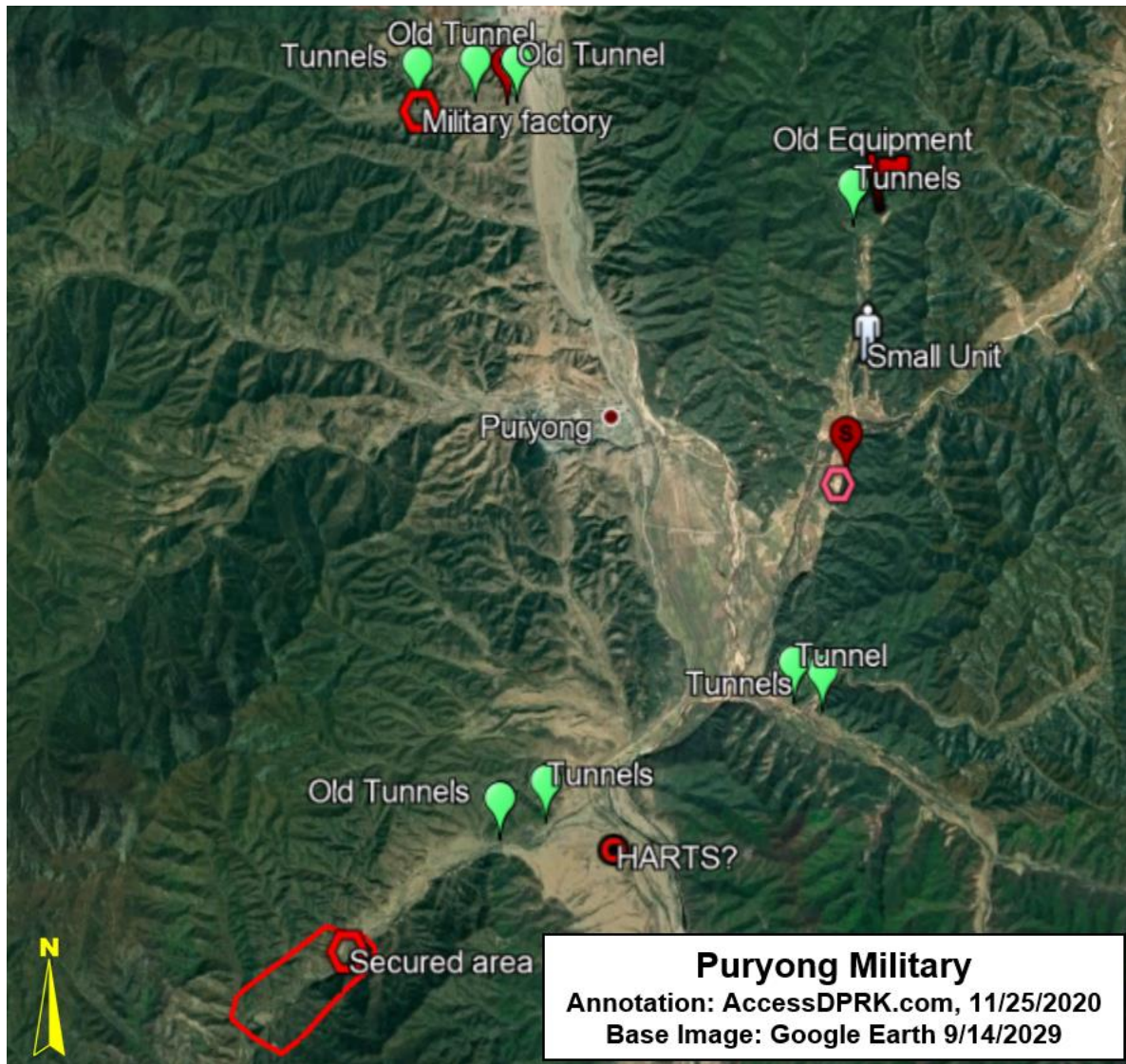
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## Military

The area around Puryong has a number of small military facilities including a secured storage complex, a small training base, and a number of random tunnels (most likely disused or only for emergency situations).

It lacks any local air-defense sites but is covered by the two surface-to-air missile batteries protecting Chongjin which have a much greater range than typical anti-aircraft sites.



**\*Free online access has been granted by the patron. This city brief has been edited for tone, context, and added references when needed.**

--Jacob Bogle, Nov. 25, 2020 (edited November 2022)