

Kim Jong Un in coma, sister set to take control, South Korean ex-diplomat alleges

It is not the first time that the leader's absence has prompted rumors of health problems.

A South Korean diplomat is speculating that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has fallen into a coma and that his sister, Kim Yo Jong, is poised to take the rogue nation's reins.

Chang Song-min, a former aide to South Korea's late president Kim Dae-jung, made the sensational claims to South Korean media, according to the New York Post.

Chang suggested that Kim is in a coma, "but his life has not ended."

"A complete succession structure has not been formed, so Kim Yo-jong is being brought to the fore as the vacuum cannot be maintained for a prolonged period."



FILE: Kim Yo Jong, right, helps her brother North Korean leader Kim Jong Un sign a joint statement following the summit with South Korean President Moon Jae-in

at the Paekhwawon State Guesthouse in Pyongyang, North Korea. (Pyongyang Press Corps Pool via AP)

Chang's allegation comes just days after South Korea's spy agency said the North's 36-year-old leader had delegated part of his authority to his close aides, including his younger sister, the Yonhap News Agency reported.

In a private meeting with lawmakers last week, South Korea's National Intelligence Service said that "Kim Yo-jong, the first vice department director of the Workers' Party Central Committee, is steering overall state affairs on the delegation," though Kim her brother still maintains "absolute authority."

KIM JONG UN DECLARES NORTH KOREA WILL REFUSE OUTSIDE AID TO COMBAT CORONAVIRUS, HELP REBUILD AFTER FLOOD DAMAGE

Still, doubt lingers as to the veracity of the diplomat's claims. Nor was it the first time that Kim's prolonged absence from the public spotlight has fueled speculation about his health.

In April, reports circulated that the leader of the Hermit Kingdom had had heart surgery after he was not seen in public for nearly three weeks. The North Korean government never explained Kim's absence, including why he missed a commemoration that celebrated the 108th birthday of his late grandfather, North Korea founder Kim Il Sung.

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After a video was released showing Kim moving around during the completion of a fertilizer factory near Pyongyang, a South Korean government official told Fox News that "our government believes" there was no indication that a medical procedure had occurred.

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