2024 Year in Review

NORTH KOREA AND THE WORLD

A YEAR IN HEADLINES

EDITED BY
ALBERT BUIXADÉ FARRÉ
EMILY SONG

HRNK
THE COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA

The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea

2024

YEAR IN REVIEW

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ABOUT THE COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA

The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) is the leading U.S.-based nonpartisan, non-governmental organization (NGO) in the field of North Korean human rights research and advocacy, tasked with focusing international attention on human rights abuses in that country. It is HRNK's mission to persistently remind policymakers, opinion leaders, and the general public that more than 20 million North Koreans need our attention. Since its establishment in October 2001, HRNK has played an important intellectual leadership role in North Korean human rights issues by publishing over 50 major reports (available at https://www.hrnk.org/documentation/). Recent HRNK reports have addressed issues including North Korea's overseas workers, the influx of outside information into North Korea and the regime's response, the health and human rights of North Korean children, and North Korea's political prison camps.

HRNK is the first and only NGO that solely focuses on North Korean human rights issues to receive consultative status at the United Nations (UN). It was also the first organization to propose that the human rights situation in North Korea be addressed by the UN Security Council. HRNK was directly and actively involved in all stages of the process supporting the work of the UN Commission of Inquiry (COI) on North Korean human rights. Its reports have been cited numerous times in the report of the COI, the reports of the UN Special Rapporteur on North Korean human rights, a report by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, two reports of the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, and several U.S. Department of State Democratic People's Republic of Korea Human Rights Reports. HRNK has also regularly been invited to provide expert testimony before the U.S. Congress.

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(https://web.archive.org/web/20241219010213/https://www.hrnk.org/about/our-team/)

FOREWORD

After its establishment in 2001, the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) has assumed intellectual leadership of researching, investigating and reporting on the North Korean human rights situation. In addition to our reporting, HRNK has conducted robust outreach to think tanks, universities, civil society organizations, U.S. Government agencies, Congressional offices, members of the European Parliament, members of the South Korean National Assembly and the Japanese Diet as well as the UN, especially since acquiring UN ECOSOC consultative status in April 2018.

As HRNK embarked on a mission to find out and tell the truth about North Korea's human rights violations, our organization has relied on youthful energy and enthusiasm rather than large budgets. HRNK has trained around 450 interns over the past 14 years. Our research interns execute multiple tasks. One product that keeps attention constantly focused on our work and mission is our Daily Press, a daily compilation of relevant articles on Korean peninsula issues. This is entirely the mission of our interns, who take turns and work in teams to ensure not a single day is missed.

The Daily Press requires effort, discipline, and teamwork. HRNK Managing Editor Albert Buixadé Farré had the brilliant idea of collecting and categorizing all headlines of the daily press issued throughout a calendar year and publishing them in one volume. We started this past June by publishing as a pilot project the first volume, covering the year 2023. Now we are expanding the series by launching four more volumes covering the years 2018, 2020, 2021, and 2024. In this one, Albert has worked with HRNK research intern Emily Song, covering the calendar year 2024.

This will be an essential tool, meant to enable researchers and students of North Korea to get a firm grip on the timeline, nature, and implications of relevant developments throughout a given calendar year.

Greg Scarlatoiu

President and CEO
Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)
September 25, 2025

CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is the result of the dedicated efforts of our team throughout 2024. Emily Song compiled the daily news digests and crafted its summary sections, ensuring a comprehensive overview of the year's events.

We also acknowledge the diligent work of the authors listed below, who created the original daily news digests compiled in this report. Their commitment and expertise ensure that our readers remain well-informed about the latest developments.

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YEAR IN REVIEW

This report is part of HRNK's *Year in Review* series. The series is primarily composed of the annual *North Korea and the World: A Year in Headlines* reports, which present a curated collection of news coverage capturing global and regional developments related to North Korea.[1] This collection provides context for our work and for those in related fields, ensuring that significant events are documented and their record preserved for reference.

Through this series, HRNK seeks to provide a reliable resource for academics, policymakers, advocates, and others interested in the evolving landscape of North Korean human rights.

[1] As of September 2025, the following *Year in Review – North Korea and the World: A Year in Headlines* reports have been published (release date in parentheses) or are slated for imminent release: 2018, 2020, 2021, 2023 (June 2025), and 2024.

INTRODUCTION

A. OVERVIEW

The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) is dedicated to providing comprehensive and up-to-date information on developments related to North Korea through our daily email digests. This report consolidates an entire year's worth of monitoring into a single, accessible document, offering valuable insights for the general public and researchers.

The report is divided into three distinct parts:

- Part I: A concise one-page executive summary offering a snapshot of the year's key events and trends.
- Part II: A seven-page chronological account, organized by topic, providing a more detailed overview of the events of 2024.
- Part III: The complete collection of HRNK's daily news digests, spanning eight hundred pages, preserving the original content for in-depth research and reference.

By organizing the information in this manner, we strive to accommodate various preferences for detail and to enhance the utility of the report for all readers.

B. SCOPE OF NEWS COVERED

HRNK staff compile a daily list of news articles focused on North Korea, its relations, key developments in the U.S.-South Korea relationship, and significant domestic events in South Korea. Most of the news is sourced from the following outlets:

- NK News: North Korea News
- Korea JoongAng Daily
- The Korea Times
- The Korea Herald
- Radio Free Asia
- 38 North
- BBC
- The Guardian
- The Daily Telegraph
- Reuters
- Associated Press News
- CNN
- The National Interest
- North Korea Leadership Watch
- North Korea Economic Watch
- The New York Times
- PIIE: Peterson Institute for International Economics
- UPI: United Press International
- VOA: Voice of America
- The Washington Post
- HRNK Insider

PART I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2024 North Korea intensified its military posture, deepened strategic ties with Russia and China, and dismantled formal structures of inter-Korean cooperation. The regime continued to face scrutiny over systemic human rights abuses and grappled with persistent economic challenges

Militarily, North Korea accelerated weapons modernization. It declared that all missile systems were now solid-fuel and nuclear-capable, successfully tested new hypersonic intermediate-range ballistic missiles, unveiled new launch platforms, and advanced its nuclear submarine program. Kim Jong-un personally directed inspections of uranium enrichment facilities and called for mass production of explosive drones. The state carried out multiple missile launches, including nuclear trigger system tests, and engaged in other cross-border provocations.

Economically, performance remained poor. Kim promoted his "20x10" regional development plan (a ten-year initiative to build modern factories in every county), alongside infrastructure projects. Yet food shortages persisted, and despite longstanding restrictions, citizens increasingly relied on direct one-on-one exchanges, reflecting deep distrust of both state distribution and formal markets. Severe flooding prompted internal migration to Pyongyang. Kim continued to frame nuclear expansion and party discipline as central to economic revival.

South Korea sought to strengthen deterrence with measures including AI-enhanced surveillance, new drones, and laser weapon systems. President Yoon Suk Yeol advanced a new vision for unification, while stressing deterrence of North Korea's nuclear threat without pursuing nuclear arms. Domestically, his December martial law decree triggered a political crisis, culminating in his impeachment. Seoul also advanced its human rights agenda, establishing a dedicated government center to address abuses in the North.

Internationally, North Korea faced repeated censure for supplying weapons to Russia, becoming a major source of arms and even deploying tens of thousands of troops in support of Moscow's war in Ukraine. Relations with China remained steady through ceremonial diplomacy.

Overall, 2024 for North Korea was marked by sustained military advancement and hostility toward South Korea, underpinned by closer alignment with Russia and stable ties with China. Despite regime-driven development initiatives, economic hardship and entrenched human rights abuses persisted without meaningful improvement.

PART II. CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

A. IN NORTH KOREA

HUMAN RIGHTS

- **February 29, 2024, Political Prison Renovation**: North Korea renovated a major political prison, likely in preparation for a new influx of prisoners.
- **April 6, 2024, UNHRC Opposition**: North Korea called a resolution adopted by the U.N. Human Rights Council (UNHRC) denouncing its human rights abuses as fraudulent and politically motivated.
- **August 31, 2024, Execution**: Two North Korean women were executed for helping fellow North Koreans in China escape to South Korea.
- **September 28, 2024, Crimes Punishable by Death**: Anti-state propaganda and illegal manufacturing were added to the list of crimes punishable by death.
- **November 22, 2024, U.N. Resolution Opposition**: North Korea denounced a resolution adopted by a U.N. committee regarding its human rights violations as politically motivated.

MILITARY ACTIVITY

- **January 1, 2024, Illegal Weapons Activity**: North Korea announced its intention to double down on illegal weapons activity from the prior year, with political cover from Russia and China.
- **January 5, 2024, Artillery Fired & ICBMs:** North Korea fired approximately 200 artillery shells off its west coast into the water. Meanwhile, Kim Jong-un visited a factory that produces intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launchers, emphasizing the country's need to strengthen its nuclear deterrence.
- **January 15, 2024, IRBM Success**: North Korea announced the successful testing of a solid-fuel intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM).
- **February 2, 2024, Fourth Missiles**: North Korea launched its fourth round of cruise missiles off its west coast into the Yellow Sea.
- **April 3, 2024, IRBM**: North Korea successfully tested a new hypersonic IRBM, claiming that all missiles developed are now nuclear capable, solid-fuel, and have warhead control capability.
- **April 23, 2024, Nuclear Trigger System Test**: North Korea conducted a salvo missile launch to test its nuclear trigger system.

- **May 11, 2024, Multiple Rocket Launcher**: Kim Jong-un supervised a test firing of a modernized multiple launch rocket system (MLRS) with 240mm artillery, planned for deployment from 2024-2026.
- **September 11, 2024, New Launcher**: North Korea unveiled a new 12-axle transporter erector launcher, potentially for a new, longer-range missile.
- **September 12, 2024, Launch of Missiles**: North Korea launched multiple missiles into the East Sea.
- **September 15, 2024, Calls for Increased Centrifuges**: Kim Jong-un called for an increase in the number of centrifuges to boost the country's nuclear arsenal after inspecting a uranium enrichment facility.
- **October 7, 2024, Nuclear-Powered Submarine**: South Korean military spotted North Korea building a nuclear-power submarine.
- **October 16, 2024, Army Volunteers**: State media claimed that more than 1.4 million people had volunteered to join the North Korean army.
- **October 23, 2024, Calls for Modernization**: Leader Kim Jong-un publicly visited a missile base, calling for modernization to improve nuclear deterrence.
- **November 16, 2024, Explosive Drone Mass Production**: Kim Jong-un called for the immediate mass production of self-detonating explosive drones, stressing their essentiality.

ECONOMICS

- **January 25, 2024, Regional Development 20x10 Policy**: Facing food shortages, Kim Jong-un laid out his "regional development 20x10 policy," a 10-year plan to improve the country's regional economy and build modern factories in every county.
- **August 17, 2024, Flood**: North Koreans flocked to the capital after flooding devastated the countryside.
- **September 10, 2024, Fixing Economic Conditions**: Kim Jong-un announced plans to build more nuclear weapons and enforce stricter party discipline as a way to address what he called 'backward' economic conditions.

B. IN SOUTH KOREA

- **January 5, 2024, Evacuations**: After North Korea fired artillery shells off its west coast, civilians on western border islands were ordered to take shelter and evacuate. Residents expressed frustration over the delay in receiving evacuation messages from their own military.
- **January 9, 2024, AI Surveillance:** South Korea announced plans to integrate artificial intelligence into its surveillance system along the front line, incorporating features like AI image analysis and thermal imaging.

- **January 24, 2024, Drone Production**: South Korea began producing its version of the American hunter-killer MQ-9 Reaper drone to enhance military surveillance over North Korea.
- **January 29, 2024, Human Rights Center**: Seoul announced it would host the first government center dedicated to documenting human rights abuses by the North Korean regime.
- **February 7, 2024, Nuclear Development**: President Yoon Suk-yeol announced that South Korea was capable of rapid nuclear weapon development but refrained from doing so to avoid sanctions like those levied against North Korea.
- **February 15, 2024, Cuba Ties**: South Korea established diplomatic ties with Cuba, which North Korea considers a brother country.
- **May 5, 2024, Cyber Exercises**: South Korea participated in a multinational cyber exercise led by the U.S. to strengthen its capabilities in countering malicious cyber activities.
- **June 3, 2024, Human Rights Amendment**: The South Korean government amended a regulation pertaining to North Korean human rights, adding "the formulation and implementation of foreign policy relating to North Korean human rights" to the remit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' North Korea Policy Cooperation division.
- **June 3, 2024, Oil and Gas Reserves**: President Yoon Suk-yeol approved large-scale exploratory drilling of potentially massive gas and oil reserves.
- **July 11, 2024**: South Korea announced the mass production of an anti-aircraft laser weapon capable of shooting down North Korean drones.
- **July 14, 2024, Preventing Forced Repatriation**: President Yoon Suk-yeol pledged to exert all necessary diplomatic efforts to prevent the forced repatriation of North Korean defectors.
- **August 15, 2024, Unification Vision**: President Yoon Suk-yeol announced a new vision for unification with North Korea.
- **September 20, 2024, Nuclear Response**: President Yoon Suk-yeol stated that South Korea already has an established system that can effectively deter the North Korean nuclear threat without its own nuclear arsenal.
- **October 1, 2024, Weapon Parade**: South Korea paraded its powerful weapons through Seoul's streets to inspire public confidence in its military capabilities.
- **October 18, 2024, Chunmoo MLRS**: South Korea conducted an exercise with a Chunmoo multiple launch rocket system that's designed to counter North Korea's long-range artillery, serving as a warning signal to Pyongyang.
- **November 18, 2024, U.S. and China Relations**: President Yoon Suk-yeol pledged to work closely with both the U.S. and China, stating that South Korea's relations with both great powers were not about choosing sides.
- **November 27, 2024, Ukrainian Partnership**: President Yoon Suk-yeol met with a Ukrainian delegation, agreeing to share information on North Korea's deployment of troops to Russia and other military cooperation.

- **December 3, 2024, Martial Law**: President Yoon Suk-yeol declared emergency martial law against "antistate forces" in an unprecedented political move, with parliament voting hours later to lift the declaration.
- **December 8, 2024, Impeachment Attempt**: President Yoon Suk-yeol survived an impeachment vote after backlash from declaring martial law.
- **December 14, 2024, Impeachment**: The motion to impeach Yoon Suk-yeol passed in parliament over his short-lived martial law decree.

C. INTER-KOREAN RELATIONS

- **January 1, 2024, Dismantling Agencies**: Leader Kim Jong-un stated that there was no point in seeking unification and reconciliation with South Korea. Consequently, North Korea began to discuss dismantling agencies responsible for inter-Korean relations, as reported by state media.
- **January 11, 2024, Threats to Annihilate**: Leader Kim Jong-un declared South Korea as North Korea's "principal enemy," with threats to annihilate it if provoked.
- **January 16, 2024 Constitutional Amendments**: Leader Kim Jong-un called for constitutional amendments that would define South Korea as the North's "principal enemy." He also ordered the removal of all symbols of cooperation and reconciliation.
- **February 7, 2024, Economic Cooperation**: North Korea voted to abolish all laws on inter-Korean economic cooperation amid rising tensions.
- **June 1, 2024, Balloons**: North Korea began sending balloons carrying trash and manure to South Korea.
- **June 3, 2024, Military Agreement Suspended**: The South Korean government fully suspended the 2018 inter-Korean military reduction pact due to North Korea's sending trash-filled balloons.
- **June 9, 2024, Propaganda Broadcasts**: South Korea resumed propaganda loudspeaker broadcasts near the inter-Korean border for the first time in years.
- **September 20, 2024, Detained Nationals**: Kim Yung-ho, South Korea's Unification Minister, harshly condemned North Korea's illegal detention of six South Koreans, demanding their immediate release.
- **October 9, 2024, Roads Severed**: North Korea severed road and railway access to South Korea, permanently blocking its border and boosting its front-line defense posture.
- **October 15, 2024, Roads Destroyed**: North Korea blew up sections of its roads connected to South Korea in a move symbolizing the erasure of inter-Korean legacy.
- **October 23, 2024, Leaflet Propaganda**: North Korea scattered anti-South Korea leaflets using balloons across Seoul, marking the first use of leaflet propaganda in years.

- **November 4, 2024, Anti-South Korea Institute**: North Korea revealed the existence of an anti-South Korea institute, rebranding an organization that formerly focused on inter-Korean unification.
- **November 21, 2024, Cryptocurrency Theft**: South Korean police confirmed that North Korean hackers were behind the 2019 theft of 58 million won worth of cryptocurrency.
- **December 11, 2024, Martial Law Condemnation**: North Korea's state media reported on the martial law attempt in South Korea, accusing South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol of trying to establish a "fascist dictatorship."

D. INTERNATIONAL

UN SECURITY COUNCIL & SANCTIONS

- **January 15, 2024, Missile in Violation**: Pyongyang's firing of an apparent intermediate-range missile into the sea was in violation of UN resolutions.
- **January 25, 2024, Arms Transactions Criticized**: South Korea criticized arms transactions between North Korea and Russia, condemning them as a direct violation of UN Security Council sanctions.
- **February 22, 2024, Gift in Violation**: Russia apparently violated UNSC resolutions when President Vladimir Putin gave a luxury car to Kim Jong-un.
- **September 11, 2024, North Korea-Russia Arms Trade Condemnation**: In a joint statement, defense chiefs from UN member nations condemned the North Korea-Russia arms trade as dangerous.
- **September 17, 2024, Sanctions Exemptions for Vaccines**: The World Health Organization received a sanctions exemption to ship vaccine equipment to North Korea as part of a campaign to vaccinate over 1 million North Koreans.
- **November 28, 2024, North Korea Refusal**: During a UN Security Council meeting, North Korea refused to deny or confirm whether it had sent troops to Russia to assist against Ukraine.

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- **January 12, 2024, Accusations Dismissed**: North Korea's ambassador to the UN dismissed accusations that Russia had launched missiles obtained from North Korea into Ukraine, calling them "groundless."
- **February 14, 2024, Calls for Disengagement**: The United States urged all UN member states to halt any financial services that could help North Korea's prohibited weapons programs.

- **March 16, 2024, Defectors Speak Out**: North Korean defectors spoke at a UN event, describing human rights conditions in North Korea as "hell," and advocating for a strengthened UN mandate to investigate.
- **May 13, 2024, Rare Alignment**: In a rare display of political alignment, North Korea and South Korea endorsed a UN resolution that backed Palestine's bid to become a member state.
- **October 15, 2024, South Korea on Human Rights Council**: South Korea was elected to the UN Human Rights Council for the 2025-2027 term.
- **November 20, 2024, Resolution on North Korean Human Rights**: For the 20th consecutive year, a UN General Assembly committee passed a resolution on North Korean human rights, calling on the whole UN system to continue addressing the North's "grave" situation.

CHINA

- **January 27, 2024, Cooperation Strength**: North Korea and China agreed to strengthen cooperation and defend common interests during a visit to Pyongyang by Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong.
- **February 6, 2024, Improving Inter-Korean Relations**: Amid rising tensions on the Korean Peninsula, China reaffirmed its support for improving inter-Korean relations.
- **March 22, 2024, Citizens Return**: North Koreans who had traveled to China during the COVID-19 pandemic began to return, but some questioned whether they should have stayed due to restrictions on items being brought back into North Korea.
- **April 13, 2024, Year of Friendship**: High-ranking North Korean and Chinese officials met in Pyongyang to celebrate a year of friendship and reinforce ongoing relations.
- **July 9, 2024, Visa Workers**: The Chinese government demanded that North Korea return all of its workers whose visas had expired, a move that would limit Pyongyang's earnings.
- **July 22, 2024, Dependency**: An NK Pro analysis of trade data found that Beijing continued to outsource production to North Korea.
- **September 9, 2024, Correspondence**: President Xi Jinping vowed to strengthen "strategic communication" with North Korea.
- **September 23, 2024, Restrained Greetings**: North Korean leader Kim Jong-un sent President Xi Jinping restrained greetings as Pyongyang moved closer to Russia.
- **October 6, 2024, 75th Anniversary**: North Korean Leader Kim Jong-un and President Xi Jinping pledged to further develop their countries' relations on the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties.

RUSSIA

- **January 5, 2024, Ballistic Missiles**: North Korea provided Russia with several dozen ballistic missiles and ballistic missile launchers, which were used to strike Ukraine.
- **January 11, 2024, Travel Packages**: Authorities began advertising a travel package through which residents could visit North Korea, marking the first return of foreign tourists since the COVID-19 border shutdown.
- **January 21, 2024, Arms**: Kyrylo Budanov, chief of Ukraine's defense intelligence, reported that North Korea was Russia's largest supplier of arms.
- **February 13, 2024, War Advantage**: Russia started gaining an advantage in its war against Ukraine, largely due to support from allies like China and North Korea, according to Norway's intelligence service.
- **March 26, 2024, Direct Oil Supply**: Russia started directly supplying oil to North Korea, defying UN sanctions.
- **June 13, 2024, Passenger Rail Service**: Passenger rail service between Russia and North Korea was restored for the first time in four years.
- **June 19, 2024, Partnership Agreement**: North Korea and Russia signed a comprehensive strategic partnership agreement, including a mutual defense pledge, as Russian President Vladimir Putin arrived in North Korea.
- **September 6, 2024, Munitions**: By this date, Russia had obtained over 16,500 munitions containers from North Korea.
- **October 7, 2024, Birthday Message**: North Korean Leader Kim Jong-un sent President Vladimir Putin a birthday message in which he referred to him as his "closest comrade."
- **October 18, 2024, Troops**: North Korea began deploying a large number of troops to support Russia against Ukraine.
- **November 20, 2024, Deployment**: North Korea continued deploying up to 100,000 troops to aid Moscow, alongside long-range artillery systems. In return, Vladimir Putin gifted Kim Jong-un with 70 wild animals to symbolize friendship.

UNITED STATES

- **January 6, 2024, Calls for Dialogue**: Following Pyongyang's firing of artillery shells, the United States called on North Korea to limit its destabilizing actions and return to dialogue.
- **January 26, 2024, Calls for Military Cooperation**: Faced with growing concern about military cooperation between North Korea and Russia, U.S. Senators emphasized the need for continued U.S. support for Ukraine.
- **February 24, 2024, Sanctions**: The U.S. announced a major package of sanctions and export control restrictions to ensure accountability for the ongoing war against Ukraine.
- **March 4, 2024, Spring Drills**: The U.S. military, together with the South Korean military, kicked off spring drills.

- **March 26, 2024, North Korean Labor**: HRNK submitted a formal letter to U.S. Customs and Border Protection calling for an immediate halt of shipments of seafood from nearly twelve Chinese companies found to be using North Korean labor.
- **March 27, 2024, Oil Task Force**: The U.S. launched a task force in collaboration with South Korea aimed at preventing North Korea from procuring illicit oil.
- **May 20, 2024, Trilateral Cooperation**: The House Foreign Affairs Committee unanimously passed a resolution recognizing the importance of trilateral cooperation among South Korea, the United States, and Japan.
- **September 7, 2024, Nuclear Simulation Drills**: The U.S. and South Korea held simulation drills in Washington to enhance nuclear deterrence cooperation.
- **September 12, 2024, Ballistic Missiles Condemned**: The U.S. condemned North Korea's ballistic missile launch, reaffirming its security commitment to South Korea.
- **November 7, 2024, Trump Reelected**: Former U.S. President Trump was reelected, leading to speculations regarding diplomacy with North Korea in his second term.
- **December 13, 2024, Rewards**: The U.S. announced that it would provide rewards of up to $5 million for information on North Korean IT workers and companies that engage in illegal activity.

E. PAST DEVELOPMENTS REVEALED THIS YEAR

- **February 6, 2024, Internal Trade**: A report revealed that North Koreans increasingly resort to one-on-one trade due to growing distrust in their government and a sluggish economy, despite state-led efforts to suppress market forces.
- **February 29, 2024, Political Prison Renovation**: A report revealed that North Korea renovated a major political prison, likely in preparation for an influx of prisoners.
- **June 18, 2024, Land Mine Explosions**: Reports emerged that several North Korean soldiers were killed or injured by land mine detonations while laying explosives in the Demilitarized Zone.

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I. PART III. DAILY PRESS

1. JANUARY

Monday, January 1st, 2024

Korea enters 2024 in fog of uncertainties

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un's 2024 Wish List: More Nuclear Bombs, Spy-Satellite Launches (*The Wall Street Journal*, 01/01/2024)
N. Korea broadcasts images of Camp David summit while leader Kim delivers speech (*Yonhap*, 01/01/2024)
N.K. leader says Korean Peninsula inching closer to armed conflict (*Yonhap*, 01/01/2024)
North Korea's Kim says military should 'thoroughly annihilate' US and South Korea if provoked (*AP*, 01/01/2024)
North Korea's Kim says armed conflict becoming reality because of US - KCNA (*Reuters*, 12/31/2023)
North Koreans celebrate the New Year in Pyongyang (*Reuters*, 01/01/2024)
What Kim Jong Un's Changing Outfits Reveal About North Korea (*The Wall Street Journal*, 01/01/2024)

In South Korea:
Full text of Yoon's New Year address (*Yonhap*, 01/01/2024)
Korea enters 2024 in fog of uncertainties (*The Korea Herald*, 01/01/2024)
Main opposition party taking route to division (*The Korea Times*, 01/01/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Defense chief warns NK's reckless provocations will become 'prelude to destruction' (*Yonhap*, 01/01/2024)
Kim Jong Un: N. Korea is preparing to put S. Korea under control (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 01/01/2024)
N. Korea begins discussions on dismantling agencies handling inter-Korean affairs (*Yonhap*, 01/01/2024)

International:
'Beyond Utopia' tracks desperate North Koreans trying to escape to freedom (*Los Angeles Times*, 01/01/2024)
N. Korea leader Kim, Xi exchange New Year's greetings (*Yonhap*, 01/01/2024)
North and South Korea brace for tsunami after Japan quake (*Reuters*, 01/01/2024)
North Korean-Russian Military Cooperation Could Threaten Global Security (VOA, 01/01/2024)

Russian media provides clearest evidence to date of North Korean arms in Ukraine (*NK News*, 01/01/2024)
S. Korea vows responsibility as elected UNSC member as 2-year term begins (*Yonhap*, 01/01/2024)
S. Korea, US to complete enhanced extended deterrence against N. Korea: president (*The Korea Times*, 01/01/2024)
US Overtakes China as South Korea's Top Export Market (*Bloomberg*, 12/31/2023)
Yoon says S. Korea, U.S. will complete strengthened extended deterrence regime in first half of 2024 (*Yonhap*, 01/01/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea, with political cover from Russia and China, wants to double down on its illegal weapons activity of the prior year. (Dasl Yoon, Timothy Martin, *The Wall Street Journal*)
- North Korea's state TV on Monday used images of the leaders of South Korea, the United States and Japan holding a summit in the background while broadcasting leader Kim Jong-un delivering a recent speech. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un called for perfecting the military's readiness posture, saying the Korean Peninsula is "inching closer to the brink of armed conflict" and a clash could happen at any time, state media said Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said his military should "thoroughly annihilate" the United States and South Korea if provoked, state media reported Monday, after he vowed to boost national defense to cope with what he called an unprecedented U.S.-led confrontation. (Hyung-Jin Kim, AP)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un told the country's military commanders the most powerful means must be mobilized to destroy the United States and South Korea if they choose military confrontation, state media reported on Monday. (Jack Kim, *Reuters*)
- North Koreans danced, skated and watched fireworks as they ushered in the New Year in Pyongyang. (*Reuters*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's appearance in public has shifted since he came to power a decade ago. WSJ analyzes the subtle changes in Kim's attire and what it signals about the future of his regime. (*The Wall Street Journal*)

In South Korea:

- The following is the full text of President Yoon Suk Yeol's address to the nation on New Year's Day on Monday. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- In charting its course forward, Korea will need to navigate rising diplomatic complexities and elevated security risks -- especially the possibility of inter-Korean clashes -- while protecting its economic security amid the strategic competition between the United States and China. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- The main opposition Democratic Party of Korea is now on the verge of splitting in two ahead of the general elections slated for April. (Jun Ji-hye, *The Korea Times*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea should be made to realize that provocative acts threatening South Korea will only serve as a prelude to its own destruction, Defense Minister Shin Won-sik said in a New Year's Day message Monday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un defined the two Koreas not as the same ethnic nations but warring countries against each other, seemingly making an official declaration to fundamentally change his viewpoint of South Korea. (Kyu-Jin Shin, *Dong-A Ilbo*)
- North Korea began discussions on dismantling agencies in charge of inter-Korean relations, state media reported Monday, after leader Kim Jong-un said there is no point in seeking reconciliation and unification with South Korea. (*Yonhap*)

International:

- "Beyond Utopia," an eye-opening thriller that captures a family's desperate and dangerous escape from North Korea, is one of the year's most acclaimed documentaries. (Steve Dollar, *Los Angeles Times*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and Chinese President Xi Jinping exchanged New Year's greetings, vowing to enhance their bilateral ties in 2024 as the two countries celebrate the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations, Pyongyang's state media reported Monday. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- A tsunami measuring under one metre (3.3 ft) reached South Korea's east coast in the wake of a massive earthquake that hit Japan on Monday, South Korea's meteorological agency said, which added there may be more and larger waves in the next hours. (Jack Kim, *Reuters*)
- The renewed military cooperation between North Korea and Russia in 2023 could increase threats to global security in coming years, analysts said. (Sangjin Cho, Christy Lee, VOA)
- Multiple images and videos published in Russian media in recent weeks show Moscow's troops using several types of North Korean rockets and artillery shells against Ukraine. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- South Korea vowed Monday to do its part "responsibly" to contribute to international efforts in addressing global challenges that threaten peace and security, as it began its two-year term as an elected member of the United Nations Security Council. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol announced, Monday, that an enhanced version of the South Korea-U.S. extended deterrence scheme will be fully established within the first half of this year. (Lee Hyo-jin, *The Korea Times*)
- South Korean exports to the US exceeded shipments to China for the first time in two decades last month, in a sign of shifting ties amid global tensions over economic security and tech supply chains. (Sam Kim, Hooyeon Kim, *Bloomberg*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol said Monday that South Korea and the United States will complete a strengthened "extended deterrence" regime in the first half of 2024 to seal off North Korea's nuclear and missile threats at their source. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250715072844/https://mailchi.mp/fdf41d2c4f0d/hrnk-news-items-0101-2024?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, January 2nd, 2024

Sister of North Korean leader derides South Korea's president but praises his predecessor

In North Korea:

N. Korea's Kim attends student performance on New Year's Day (*Yonhap*, 1/2/2024)

North Korea expected to increase cyberattacks this year: experts (*The Korea Herald*, 1/2/2024)

In South Korea:

South Korean opposition leader recovering from surgery after being stabbed in the neck (CNN, 1/2/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

N. Korea apparently aims to use its animosity against S. Korea to boost military capability: Seoul (*Yonhap*, 1/2/2024)

Sister of North Korean leader derides South Korea's president but praises his predecessor (AP, 1/2/2024)

Unification minister vows stronger deterrence against N.K. provocations (*Yonhap*, 1/2/2024)

Unification ministry launches early warning system for defectors at risk (*Yonhap*, 1/2/2024)

International:

Don't visit North Korean restaurants in China, South Korean Embassy warns (NK *News*, 1/2/2024)

North Korea scheduled to host Japan women's soccer team for Olympic qualifier (NK *News*, 1/2/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un attended a New Year's Day performance by young students and emphasized the importance of education, state media said Tuesday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- In a key year-end message, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un described the two Koreas as "warring countries," and vowed to "mobilize all physical means and other capabilities to cause a big stir" in the South. The anticipated rise in North Korean provocations will likely include cyberattacks, experts and officials in Seoul say. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's main opposition party leader Lee Jae-myung is recovering from surgery after being stabbed in the neck during a visit to the southern city of Busan on Tuesday. (Gawon Bae, Yoonjung Seo and Nectar Gan, CNN)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea has voiced its hostile stance against South Korea on a stronger note during a year-end key party meeting in a bid to use it as an excuse to bolster its military capability and intensify internal solidarity, Seoul's unification ministry said Tuesday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has derided South Korea's conservative president for being "foolishly brave" but called his liberal predecessor "smart" — rhetoric likely meant to help stoke domestic divisions in South Korea. (Hyung-Jin Kim, AP)
- South Korea plans to bolster its alliance with the United States in a bid to build a stronger deterrence system against North Korea's possible military provocations, Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho, Seoul's pointman on the North said Tuesday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The unification ministry said Tuesday it has activated a comprehensive data system to better detect North Korean defectors going through difficulties and better provide necessary support. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

International:

- The South Korean Embassy in Beijing has warned ROK nationals not to visit North Korean restaurants in China, citing the potential for conflict with staff. In a statement released last Friday, the embassy's consular department explained that DPRK-run restaurants do not allow South Koreans to visit and have "forcibly expelled them from the premises upon identification." (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- North Korea is scheduled to host the Japanese women's soccer team for an Olympic qualifying match in late February, setting the stage for the possible return of international sporting events to the country after four years of border closures. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

Prepared by Mohona Ganguly, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250715073433/https://mailchi.mp/ddf7b7755b8e/hrnk-news-items-sister-of-north-korean-leader-derides-south-koreas-president-but-praises-his-predecessor?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Wednesday, January 3rd, 2024

Delays in Reauthorizing the North Korean Human Rights Act: A Disappointing Lack of Leadership by Congress

Top News:
Delays in Reauthorizing the North Korean Human Rights Act: a Disappointing Lack of Leadership by Congress (*VOA Korea*, 12/28/2023)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
Daughter Ju-ae Kim Jong-un's 'most likely successor': Seoul spy service (*The Korea Herald*, 1/3/2024)
N. Korea likely aims to raise military tensions to secure nuclear power status (*Yonhap*, 1/3/2024)
N. Korean leader attends farm machinery exhibition (*Yonhap*, 1/3/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korean military rings in new year with drills against North Korea (*NK News*, 1/3/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Kim Yo Jong thanks 'stupid' ROK president for helping justify North Korean nukes (*NK News*, 1/3/2024)
N. Korean leader's sister jeers at Seoul in New Year's greeting, boasts of nuclear prowess (*UPI*, 1/3/2024)
N. Korean leader's sister raps Yoon over his New Year's Day speech (*Yonhap*, 1/3/2024)
Seoul pledges to push for unification after North Korea deems it 'impossible' (*NK News*, 1/3/2024)

International:
Ex-U.S. ambassador stresses need to step up allied drills against N. Korean threats (*Yonhap*, 1/3/2024)
Nicaraguan ambassador to N. Korea to take up post amid signs of Pyongyang resuming diplomacy with selected countries (*Yonhap*, 1/3/2024)

Top News:

- According to HRNK Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu, "there continue to be champions of North Korean human rights in the U.S. Congress, such as Congressman Chris Smith and Congresswoman Young Kim on the House side and Senator Marco Rubio on the Senate side. However, failure to reauthorize the act also signals a lack of broader leadership on the issue in Congress." (Lee Jo-eun, *VOA Korea*)

In North Korea:

- South Korea's spy agency sees North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's only publicly known child Ju-ae as his "most likely successor," according to its latest analysis. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea appears to define its ties with South Korea as those between "two belligerent states" in an effort to intensify tensions on the Korean Peninsula so as to be recognized as a nuclear state by the United States, an expert said Wednesday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un attended an exhibition featuring agricultural machinery, such as an unmanned helicopter, and called for the development of farming technology, state media said Wednesday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- The South Korean military kicked off the new year with a series of maritime and land exercises on Wednesday, including at the inter-Korean border, aiming to bolster readiness against North Korean threats and set the tone for 2024. (Lina Park, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un's powerful sister mocked South Korean president Yoon Seok-Yeol in a New Year's message on Wednesday, stating that his "stupid and honest" inter-Korean policy focused on deterrence has provided Pyongyang "justification" to develop nuclear weapons (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, mocked South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol as "stupid" and sarcastically praised his hardline policies for giving a boost to Pyongyang's own weapons program in a New Year's greeting directed at Seoul. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has unleashed a sarcasm-filled tirade over South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's New Year's Day address that unveiled a plan to complete a sturdier deterrence system with the United States to counter North Korean threats this year. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's top official handling inter-Korean affairs called for stepped-up efforts to prepare for reunification with North Korea this week, days after Kim Jong-Un declared unification an "impossible" dream. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

International:

- A former U.S. ambassador to South Korea called Tuesday for beefed-up defense drills between Seoul and Washington to counter North Korean threats, stressing the pursuit of dialogue with the recalcitrant regime should not come at the expense of the allies' military readiness. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Nicaragua's new ambassador to North Korea is set to take up his position in Pyongyang soon, according to a news report and diplomatic sources Wednesday, amid signs of the North apparently resuming diplomacy with countries considered to be at odds with the United States. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Delays in Reauthorizing the North Korean Human Rights Act: A Disappointing Lack of Leadership by Congress

Lee Jo-eun
VOA Korea
December 28, 2023

With the U.S. Congress failing to approve the reauthorization of the North Korean Human Rights Act again this year, the 'North Korean Human Rights Act gap' has now entered its 15th month, the longest in its history. While there is currently no significant problem with the amount of funding available to the U.S. government and civil society organizations to address North Korean human rights issues, some have expressed disappointment about the lack of congressional leadership on North Korean human rights. This is reporter Lee Jo-eun.

The U.S. Congress concluded its legislative session this year without approving a reauthorization of the North Korean Human Rights Act.

The North Korean Human Rights Act, not extended for a second year, has now entered its longest-ever 'vacancy' period, spanning 15 months.

The North Korean Human Rights Act, first enacted in 2004, was extended three times in 2008, 2012, and 2018. It last expired on September 30, 2022.

In 2018, Congress reauthorized the law after it had expired, but this is the first time that reauthorization has been delayed for over a year.

VOA requested comment from Senator Marco Rubio and Representative Young Kim, who spearheaded the reauthorization bill, regarding the reasons for the delay in passing the bill, and is awaiting their responses.

Previously, a member of Senator Rubio's office informed VOA that voting on the Foreign Affairs Committee's agenda, including the bill to reauthorize the North Korean Human Rights Act, is being delayed due to a hold by Senator Rand Paul.

Sen. Paul is reportedly demanding access to internal documents related to the cause of the COVID-19 pandemic.

There were significant delays this year in congressional work across the board, with a close split between the two parties in both the House and Senate, as well as an unprecedented vote to remove the Speaker of the House.

Human rights experts expressed disappointment that the North Korean Human Rights Act, which celebrates its 20th anniversary next year, remains in limbo.

Speaking to VOA on December 27, Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, noted that “Over the past two decades, Congress has been the most active branch of the U.S. government on North Korean human rights. Next year we will celebrate two decades since the signing into law of the U.S. North Korean Human Rights Act. There continue to be champions of North Korean human rights in the U.S. Congress, such as Congressman Chris Smith and Congresswoman Young Kim on the House side and Senator Marco Rubio on the Senate side. However, failure to reauthorize the act also signals a lack of broader leadership on the issue in Congress.”

Scarlatoiu added that “in South Korea, the North Korean Human Rights Act has been passed, but its implementation has been hampered by partisan disagreement. One can say that the trouble facing the U.S. and ROK acts is a reflection of both bipartisan and bilateral failure to elevate the importance of North Korean human rights in North Korea policy. Left practically on their own, civil society organizations [CSOs] are facing an increasingly daunting challenge.”

The U.S. North Korean Human Rights Act authorizes funding to the U.S. government and civil society organizations for activities to improve access to information, promote democracy, and provide humanitarian assistance to North Korean escapees.

Despite the delay in reauthorizing the law, experts noted that there is currently no disruption in terms of funding and support.

This is because relevant funding, as noted in the North Korean Human Rights Act, is pre-approved and allocated. It can be designated as part of the State Department's budget.

Rather, the delay in reauthorizing the bill can be seen as weakening the U.S. position on North Korean human rights issues.

Robert King, former U.S. Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Issues, criticized the delay in extending the North Korean Human Rights Act.

He noted that "It's more an indictment of Congress's inability to get things done than it is any kind of problem with disagreement over the principles and the purposes of the North Korea Human Rights Act... Although it's very difficult because we don't have control over those individuals who are responsible for repatriating North Koreans from China, symbolically it is important and it does say something about U.S. policy."

In particular, the latest reauthorization bill included provisions imposing sanctions on those responsible for the forcible repatriation of North Korean refugees.

This is Lee Jo-eun of VOA News.

Translated by Diana Woo, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Mohona Ganguly, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Bryan Clark, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250715075708/https://mailchi.mp/d5879636dda1/hrnk-news-items-sister-of-north-korean-leader-derides-south-koreas-president-but-praises-his-predecessor-12237931?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, January 4th, 2024

N. Korea warns of 'highest' risk of clashes in 2024; U.S. says dialogue 'most preferred route' to achieve peninsula denuclearization

In North Korea:
N. Korea removes sections on unification from propaganda outlets (*Yonhap*, 1/4/2024)
N. Korea warns of 'highest' risk of clashes in 2024 (*Yonhap*, 1/4/2024)
North Korea offers sneak peek at new skyscraper streets set to open soon (NK *News*, 1/4/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
In threatening shift, North Korea moves to redefine relations with South (*Reuters*, 1/4/2024)
Unification ministry accuses N. Korea of attempting to divide society ahead of elections (*Yonhap*, 1/4/2024)
Unification ministry to dissolve foundation handling affairs of Kaesong complex (*Yonhap*, 1/4/2024)

International:
Ex-Secretary Pompeo mentions N. Korea while accusing Biden of 'decay of deterrence' (*Yonhap*, 1/4/2024)
S. Korea, U.S., Japan note N.K. arms transfers violate UNSC resolutions (*Yonhap*, 1/4/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. troops hold joint firing drills near border with N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 1/4/2024)
U.S. says dialogue is 'most preferred route' to achieve peninsula denuclearization amid tough N.K. rhetoric (*Yonhap*, 1/4/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea appears to have removed sections providing information on unification from its propaganda media outlets, their websites showed Thursday, just days after leader Kim Jong-un said there is no point in seeking reconciliation and unification with South Korea. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea strongly denounced a series of military drills that South Korea has conducted in the new year, warning that chances of a clash between the two sides will be the highest this year. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean television published the first images of two new skyscraper street projects and a large-scale greenhouse farm in Pyongyang this week, announcing new deadlines of February and April. (Colin Zwirko, NK *News*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea is shaking up the way it handles relations with South Korea, enacting changes to policy and government organisations that would effectively treat the South as a separate, enemy state. (Hyonhee Shin, Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- The unification ministry in charge of inter-Korean affairs on Thursday denounced North Korea for attempting to divide South Korean society with threats and far-fetched criticisms ahead of the general elections in April. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The unification ministry said Thursday it has decided to dissolve the foundation in charge of assisting the operation of a now-shuttered joint industrial complex in North Korea's border city of Kaesong amid frosty inter-Korean ties. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has slammed President Joe Biden for causing what he called a "decay of deterrence" as he voiced concerns over a "dangerous" security

landscape marked by the authoritarian leaders of North Korea, China and Russia. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

- Senior officials of South Korea, the United States and Japan noted Thursday that any arms transfer by North Korea is a violation of U.N. Security Council (UNSC) resolutions, the presidential office said. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the United States have staged a joint live-fire exercise near the border with North Korea to bolster their joint combat readiness, the Army said Thursday. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- The United States on Wednesday reiterated its commitment to diplomacy with North Korea, casting dialogue as the "most preferred route" to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Valerie Xu, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250715080406/https://mailchi.mp/fb9c10ad0f0a/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-warns-of-highest-risk-of-clashes-in-2024-us-says-dialogue-most-preferred-route-to-achieve-peninsula-denuclearization?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, January 5th, 2024

N. Korea fires some 200 artillery shells off western coast; N. Korea sent several dozen ballistic missiles to Russia

In North Korea:
N. Korea fires some 200 artillery shells off western coast: S. Korean military (*Yonhap*, 1/5/2024)
N. Korea rebuilds destroyed guard posts inside DMZ with concrete (*Yonhap*, 1/5/2024)
N. Korean leader inspects factory producing launchers for solid-fuel ICBMs (*Yonhap*, 1/5/2024)

In South Korea:
Island residents frustrated by delayed warning alert after North Korean shelling (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 1/5/2024)
S. Korea orders civilians on western border islands to evacuate over N.K.'s artillery firing (*Yonhap*, 1/5/2024)
Veterans minister vows to strengthen ties with countries that helped S. Korea in Korean War (*Yonhap*, 1/5/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Tensions escalate as North Korea fires artillery shells off west coast (*The Korea Times*, 1/5/2024)

International:
N. Korea recently sent several dozen ballistic missiles to Russia: U.S. official (*Yonhap*, 1/5/2024)

Pentagon stresses 'main focus' on regional stability amid N. Korea's bellicose rhetoric (*Yonhap*, 1/5/2024)
Russia hit Ukraine with missiles from North Korea- Kyiv (*Reuters*, 1/5/2024)
S. Korea urges Russia to stop 'self-contradictory' arms deal with N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 1/5/2024)
S. Korean, U.S. defense officials strongly condemn N. Korea's announcement to launch more spy satellites (*Yonhap*, 1/5/2024)
Trump refused to sanction Chinese bank accused of helping North Korea: Report (*NK News*, 1/5/2024)
U.S. designates N. Korea for religious freedom violation for 22nd straight year (*Yonhap*, 1/5/2024)
U.S. officials, experts pick N.K.-triggered crisis among plausible top-tier contingencies in 2024 (*Yonhap*, 1/5/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea fired some 200 artillery shells into waters off its western coast Friday morning, Seoul's military said, in its latest saber-rattling after it scrapped a 2018 inter-Korean military accord in November. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea appears to be rebuilding all of its destroyed guard posts inside the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating the two Koreas with concrete structures, a military source said Friday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has visited a factory producing mobile launchers for intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), stressing the need to strengthen the country's nuclear deterrence for a "military showdown" with its enemy, state media reported Friday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- Residents of South Korean islands along the maritime border with North Korea are frustrated over the delayed warning messages they received from their own military after the North fired artillery shells into nearby waters. (Lee Chan-Kyu, Lee Ho-Jeong, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Civilians on the western border islands of Yeonpyeong and Baengnyeong were ordered to evacuate to shelters Friday, officials said, as North Korea fired hundreds of artillery shells off its west coast. (Kim Hyun-soo, *Yonhap*)
- The veterans ministry seeks to strengthen ties with countries that backed South Korea during the 1950-53 Korean War by hosting a veterans affairs ministerial meeting this year, its new minister has said. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Tensions are rising on the Korean Peninsula, as North Korea is stepping up its military provocations, including firing of artillery shells and rebuilding demolished guard posts. (Kim Hyun-bin, *The Korea Times*)

International:

- North Korea recently provided Russia with several dozen ballistic missiles as well as ballistic missile launchers, a U.S. official said Thursday, as Moscow seeks to replenish its weapons stockpiles amid its protracted war in Ukraine. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

- The U.S. Department of Defense on Thursday highlighted its "main focus" on maintaining regional stability and its opposition to conflict, as North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has called for strengthening war preparation efforts. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Russia has hit Ukraine with missiles supplied by North Korea, Ukrainian presidential aide Mykhailo Podolyak said on Friday following an earlier assertion by Washington. (Max Hunder, *Reuters*)
- South Korea renewed its call Friday for Russia to stop arms transactions with North Korea in violation of international sanctions it has voted for, as the United States revealed the North's delivery of ballistic missiles and other equipment to Moscow. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Senior defense officials of South Korea and the United States strongly condemned North Korea's recent provocative acts, including its announcement to launch more spy satellites, Seoul's defense ministry said Friday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- Former U.S. President Donald Trump refused to blacklist a Chinese bank that was a "well-paying tenant" at Trump Tower despite evidence that it helped North Korea evade U.S. sanctions, according to a new report by congressional Democrats. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- The United States on Thursday designated North Korea and 11 other countries as "countries of particular concern" for religious freedom violations, marking the 22nd consecutive year the North has appeared on the annually updated list. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. officials and experts have singled out a possible North Korea-triggered security crisis as one of top-tier contingencies deemed plausible this year, a U.S. think tank report showed Thursday, as Pyongyang has ratcheted up tensions through hardened rhetoric and its focus on military reinforcement. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Valerie Xu, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250715081328/https://mailchi.mp/a3a53f10954f/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-fires-some-200-artillery-shells-off-western-coast-n-korea-sent-several-dozen-ballistic-missiles-to-russia?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, January 6th, 2024

U.S. Experts Welcome S. Korea's Plans to Create a N. Korean Human Rights Center

Top News:
U.S. Experts Welcome South Korea's Plans to Create a North Korean Human Rights Center (VOA, 12/27/2023)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
N. Korea fires artillery shells from western coast for 2nd day: JCS (*Yonhap*, 1/6/2024)

North Korea fires more than 60 rounds of artillery near Northern Limit Line: JCS (*NK News*, 1/6/2024)

In South Korea:
Kim Ju-ae likely heir to North Korea's Kim Jong-un, says South's spy agency (*The Guardian*, 1/5/2024)
South Korea fires 400 artillery shells in response to North's provocation (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 1/6/2024)
South Korea says the North has again fired artillery shells near their sea border (*AP News*, 1/6/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N.K. leader taking offensive policy on S. Korea to divert public attention from internal woes: unification minister (*Yonhap*, 1/6/2024)

International:
Mercedes-Benz Investigates How Its Cars Surface in North Korea Despite Ban (VOA, 1/5/2024)
N. Korean leader sends condolence message to Japanese PM over recent earthquake (*Yonhap*, 1/6/2024)
Russia uses North Korean missiles in strikes on Kharkiv (*The Telegraph*, 1/6/2024)
S. Korea, U.S., Japan condemn N.K. nuke program, note China's 'unlawful' South China Sea claims (*Yonhap*, 1/7/2024)
South Korean minister says U.S. troops likely to stay even if Trump is re-elected (*Reuters*, 1/5/2024)
U.S. calls on N. Korea to refrain from 'provocative, destabilizing' action following artillery firing (*Yonhap*, 1/6/2024)

Top News:

- Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, noted that establishing the National Center for North Korean Human Rights will help raise awareness of the crimes that North Korea continues to commit against its population. (Cho Eun-jung, VOA)

In North Korea:

- North Korea fired some 60 artillery shells into waters off its western coast Saturday, South Korea's military said, conducting live-fire drills near the tensely guarded western border for the second consecutive day. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea fired more than 60 rounds of artillery near the maritime Northern Limit Line off the west coast on Saturday evening, according to a statement from the South Korean military. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- The young daughter of Kim Jong-un is seen as her father's heir apparent, South Korea's spy agency has said, after speculation that the North Korean ruler is grooming her to become the fourth member of the dynasty to lead the country since its foundation more than seven decades ago. (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)

- The South Korean military fired 400 shells into waters south of the Northern Limit Line, the maritime border between the two Koreas, on Friday in response to the 200 shells fired by North Korea earlier in the day. (Lee Ho-jeong, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea conducted a new round of artillery drills near the disputed sea boundary with South Korea on Saturday, officials in Seoul said, a day after the North's similar exercises prompted South Korea to respond with its own firing drills in the same area. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un appears to have taken a more offensive policy stance toward South Korea to divert internal attention from economic difficulties and discontent over the hereditary power succession, Seoul's top point man on inter-Korean relations said Saturday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- German automaker Mercedes-Benz is launching an investigation into how its high-end vehicles have turned up in North Korea despite sanctions that ban the export of luxury goods to the country. (Christy Lee, Sangjin Cho, VOA)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has sent a message to Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida expressing his condolences over the recent series of deadly earthquakes in western Japan, state media reported Saturday, a rare move apparently aimed at painting himself as a global leader. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- Russia has used North Korean missiles to bombard Ukraine for the first time with barrages targeting the eastern region of Kharkiv. (Joe Barnes, *The Telegraph*)
- South Korea, the United States and Japan condemned North Korea's nuclear and missile programs and pointed out China's "unlawful" claims in the South China Sea during the inaugural meeting of their trilateral Indo-Pacific dialogue this week, a joint statement showed Saturday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States is unlikely to cut back its forces in South Korea even if former U.S. president Donald Trump wins re-election, the South's minister tasked with matters related to neighbouring North Korea said in a television interview. (*Reuters*)
- The United States on Friday called on North Korea to refrain from further "provocative" and destabilizing" action and return to dialogue, after Pyongyang ratcheted up tensions with the firing of artillery shells in waters off its west coast. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

U.S. Experts Welcome South Korea's Plans to Create a North Korean Human Rights Center

Cho Eun-jung, VOA *News*

December 27, 2023

U.S. human rights experts welcomed the South Korean government's announcement of a plan to build a National Center for North Korean Human Rights, a "Korean equivalent" of the Holocaust Museum. This center is expected to help inform the international community of the horrific human rights situation in

North Korea and contribute to future efforts to hold perpetrators of human rights abuses accountable. Reporter Cho Eun-jung reports.

Robert King, the former U.S. Special Envoy for North Korean human rights, said on December 26 that establishing the National Center for North Korean Human Rights, which will record and document human rights violations in North Korea, is a very appropriate step for the South Korean government to take.

On December 26, South Korea's Ministry of Unification, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Justice jointly announced that they plan to spend $20 million over three years to create the National Center for North Korean Human Rights by 2027.

Representative Ji Seong-ho, a North Korean escapee and a member of the National Assembly for the People Power Party, has referred to this center as a "Korean equivalent" of the Holocaust Museum, as has the South Korean press.

Holocaust museums around the world, including in the United States, Germany, Poland, and Australia, warn humanity of the inhumane nature of totalitarian regimes.

Former Special Envoy King stated that "[the center] certainly is appropriate because of the similarities to the actions that were taken, in Germany during World War Two and the actions that the North Koreans have taken in terms of controlling their population and, you know, the kind of actions that have been taken and continue to be taken there."

He said that Holocaust museums in America focus on educating students and other members of the public. These museums also facilitate academic conferences and discussions, he added, saying that a North Korean human rights center would similarly help raise awareness in South Korea of the grave human rights situation in North Korea.

The Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. features photographs and videos about Nazi Germany's genocide against Jews during World War II. The Museum also preserves and displays items left behind by victims, including an exhibit that shows victims' shoes. Since its opening in 1993, 47 million people have visited the Holocaust Memorial Museum.

David Maxwell, Vice President of the Asia-Pacific Strategy Center said, "I think that it will be an opportunity to bring together researchers, experts, legal scholars, human rights experts who will really be able to have a place to document the human rights abuses and to do it in a just manner doing it. correctly, and so that it will contribute to transitional justice."

On December 26, the South Korean government released its "Comprehensive Plan for Promoting Human Rights in North Korea." This plan not only includes creating the National Center for North Korean Human Rights, but also systematically investigating and recording human rights violations in North Korea, including through interviews with recently arrived escapees who enter the Hanawon Settlement Support Center.

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, noted that establishing the National Center for North Korean Human Rights will help raise awareness of the crimes that North Korea continues to commit against its population.

Scarlatoiu explained that "When conservatives are in power, North Korean human rights feature prominently. When progressives are in power North Korean human rights are basically more or less downplayed, ignored for the sake of trying to engage North Korea. I'm not playing Korean politics here. I'm not blaming the side over the other. I think that both sides have their share of blame for the politicization of North Korean human rights."

Sue Mi Terry, a former U.S. National Security Council official, welcomed the South Korean government's announcement of a comprehensive policy on North Korean human rights issues. Terry is one of the co-producers of the documentary film Beyond Utopia, which depicts the remarkable journey of North Korean refugees' escape to freedom. This film was recently shortlisted in the Documentary Feature Category for the 96th Academy Awards.

"For too long, we have not focused on human rights issues, particularly in South Korea, because the South Korean government was so eager to engage with North Korea that it did not prioritize raising awareness on human rights issues in general. So I do think this trend is a good one, a productive one, because it is very important that we do whatever we can to raise awareness on human rights atrocities that are happening in North Korea, whether they are political prison camps or everything else that is happening in North Korea. I do think this emphasis on human rights, rather than just focusing on the weapons of mass destruction, I think that is in general a positive development," said Terry.

In accordance with its "Comprehensive Plan," the South Korean government has also announced its intent to improve access to information for the North Korean people and address the issues of separated families, abductees, South Korean citizens detained in North Korea, and South Korean prisoners of war who have yet to return from the north.

This is Cho Eun-jung for VOA News.

Translated by Angela Yoon, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Mohona Ganguly, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Rachel Baek, HRNK Research Intern

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Sunday, January 7th, 2024

N. Korea fires shells near western sea border for third day

In North Korea:
N. Korea fires artillery shots off western coast for 3rd day: S. Korean military (*Yonhap*, 01/07/2024)
N. Korea fires shells near western sea border for third day (*The Korea Herald*, 01/07/2024)
North Korea fires 90 shells toward South for third straight day (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/07/2024)

In South Korea:
Only school in DMZ holds graduation ceremony amid heightened inter-Korean tension (*Yonhap*, 01/07/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Kim Yo Jong says North Korea 'deceived' South with fake artillery drills (NK News, 01/07/2024)
North Korea again fires near the sea border with the South, as its leader's sister mocks Seoul (AP, 01/07/2024)
North Korea vows military strike if any provocation, fires artillery rounds (*Reuters*, 01/07/2024)

International:
N. Korea's sympathy message to Japan meant to weaken trilateral ties: experts (*The Korea Times*, 01/07/2024)
S. Korea, US, Japan address China, NK, Russia at 1st Indo-Pacific Dialogue (*The Korea Herald*, 01/07/2024)
South Korea, U.S., Japan hold first trilateral Indo-Pacific talks (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/07/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea fired some 90 artillery shots into waters off its western coast Sunday, South Korea's military said, the latest in a series of drills near the tensely guarded western border. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has continued to fire shells near the western maritime border area for the third consecutive day since Friday, despite South Korea's repeated calls for an immediate cessation of such military action defying the Sept. 19, 2018, inter-Korean military agreement. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea on Sunday fired artillery shells near Yeonpyeong Island for the third consecutive day, according to the South Korean military. North Korea fired some 90 shots near the island around 4 p.m., the same time it reportedly launched 60 shells on Saturday. (Lee Ho-Jeong, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

In South Korea:

- On Friday, five sixth-graders of Daeseongdong Elementary School, the only school inside the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), enjoyed their unforgettable moment with parents and teachers during a graduation ceremony, which was guarded by armed soldiers from the United Nations Command (UNC) security battalion. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Kim Yo Jong said the North Korean military "deceived" South Korea into believing the DPRK conducted artillery drills on Saturday and thus "exposed" problems with the ROK's detection abilities, according to a statement released via state media on Sunday. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea again fired artillery shells near its tense sea boundary with the South on Sunday, as the influential sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un mocked the South's ability to detect its weapons launches. (Hyung-Jin Kim, AP)

- North Korea will launch a military strike immediately in response to any provocation, Kim Yo Jong, the sister and key ally of leader Kim Jong Un, said on Sunday, as it fired artillery shells near its border with the South for the third day in a row. (Jihoon Lee, *Reuters*)

International:

- Experts told The Korea Times on Sunday that the timing of the two contrasting North Korean messages — one conveyed by its warm remarks and the other by military action — was no coincidence. They said the North may be trying to isolate South Korea as part of its effort to sabotage the Seoul-Tokyo-Washington security cooperation by taking a different strategy to each country. (Jung Min-ho, *The Korea Times*)
- South Korea, the United States and Japan jointly condemned deeper military cooperation between Russia and North Korea, and reaffirmed the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait during the first Indo-Pacific Dialogue. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea, the United States and Japan held their first trilateral Indo-Pacific dialogue in Washington on Friday. (Lee Ho-Jeong, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Prepared by Jiwoo (Katie) Choi, HRNK Research Intern

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Monday, January 8th, 2024

N. Korea's Kim turns 40. But there are no public celebrations of his birthday

In North Korea:
Kim Jong-un's daughter on track to assume power as aunt fades from spotlight: analysts (*The Korea Times*, 01/08/2024)
Kim Jong Un visits 'model' chicken farm, orders similar one be built within year (*NK News*, 01/08/2024)
North Korea's Kim turns 40. But there are no public celebrations of his birthday (*AP*, 01/08/2024)

In South Korea:
Defense chief calls for stronger anti-drone measures against N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 01/08/2024)
S. Korea to launch two more military spy satellites this year (*Yonhap*, 01/08/2024)
S. Korean military reaffirms N. Korea's Jan. 6 firing drills (*Yonhap*, 01/08/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

North Korea broke now-defunct military pact with South 3,600 times: JCS (*The Korea Herald*, 01/08/2024)
South scraps maritime buffer zone after North fires artillery shells (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/08/2024)

International:
Kim Jong Un sends condolences to Japanese PM over New Year's Day quake (*NK News*, 01/08/2024)
S. Korea's spy agency confirms Hamas' suspected use of N. Korean weapons (*Yonhap*, 01/08/2024)

In North Korea:

- "Based on the media coverage over the past year, it now seems certain to me that Kim Ju-ae is on track to assume power. I would say the chances are 70 percent or higher," Ko Young-hwan, a former North Korean diplomat, said. (Jung Min-ho, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and his daughter visited a newly opened "model" chicken farm Sunday that he said will help solve the country's food problems. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un turned 40 on Monday with no announced public celebrations at home, after he entered the new year with artillery barrages into the sea and vows to expand his nuclear arsenal. (Hyung-Jin Kim & Jiwon Song, AP)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's Defense Minister Shin Won-sik called Monday for the military to beef up its defense posture and combat capability against rising threats posed by North Korean drones. He visited the Drone Operations Command in Pocheon, 52 kilometers northeast of Seoul, to inspect small stealth drones and unmanned attack aerial vehicles, which are soon to be deployed by the military. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea plans to launch two more military spy satellites this year to better monitor North Korea, the state arms procurement agency said Monday, a move that could heat up the inter-Korean space race. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- The South Korean military on Monday reaffirmed that North Korea conducted live-fire drills from its western coast Saturday, denying Pyongyang's claims it detonated explosives as "a deceptive operation." (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea breached the recently scrapped 2018 inter-Korean military accord approximately 3,600 times, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said Monday. The JCS in Seoul told the press that due to North Korea's firing of artillery shells near South Korean border islands over the past three days, there are now no areas where military measures are halted. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- The South Korean military said the buffer zone outlined in the 2018 inter-Korean military agreement has become invalid since North Korea fired artillery over the past three days. (Lee Ho-jeong, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- Kim Jong Un has sent a letter to Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida to express condolences over casualties from the powerful earthquake that struck the island nation on New Year's Day, in what appears to be the first time a North Korean leader has sent such a message to his Japanese counterpart. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- The National Intelligence Service in South Korea confirmed suspicions that North Korean-made weapons are being used by the Hamas militant group in its war with Israel despite Pyongyang's repeated denial of its arms transactions, releasing a new photo of a F-7 rocket-propelled grenade launcher manufactured in North Korea. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Diana Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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/web/20250715083341/https://mailchi.mp/22853246553c/hrnk-news-items-n-koreas-kim-turns-40-but-there-are-no-public-celebrations-of-his-birthday?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, January 9th, 2024

S. Korea to hold forums on N.K. human rights in Washington, Geneva

In North Korea:
North Korea debuts new holiday to mark launch of largest nuclear missile (*NK News*, 01/09/2024)
Will Kim Jong Un's Daughter Succeed Him? High-Ranking North Korean Officials Have Doubts. (*The Diplomat*, 01/09/2024)

In South Korea:
New tensions stir old fears on island near North Korean border (*Reuters*, 01/09/2024)
S. Korea to hold forums on N.K. human rights in Washington, Geneva (*Yonhap*, 01/09/2024)
South Korean military to integrate AI in frontline surveillance (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/09/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Military set to resume drills halted under 2018 inter-Korean accord buffer zones (*Yonhap*, 01/09/2024)

International:
Eurasia Group calls N. Korea, Russia, Iran 'axis of rogues' in 2024 'top risk' forecast (*Yonhap*, 01/09/2024)
Kremlin has 'no comment' on U.S., Ukraine claims it fired North Korean missiles (*Reuters*, 01/09/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has created a new holiday to mark the successful launch of its biggest nuclear-capable missile last year, according to state media, in a move that one expert said may be an attempt to strengthen the legitimacy of Kim Jong Un's daughter introduced for the first time at the test. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Much attention is focused on whether Kim Ju Ae will succeed her father, but North Korean officials have other explanations for her increased visibility. (Seulkee Jang, *The Diplomat*)

In South Korea:

- Friday's scare came after North Korea fired off more than 200 shells a few miles from the island, and still more over the weekend, in what it described as artillery drills. The South responded on Friday with its own live-fire exercises. (Ju-min Park & Minwoo Park, *Reuters*)
- South Korea's unification ministry in charge of inter-Korean affairs said Tuesday it plans to organize forums in the United States and Switzerland this year as part of efforts to highlight dire human rights situations in North Korea. The forums will each take place in Washington in June and in Geneva in November, according to the ministry. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The South Korean military has announced plans to upgrade the surveillance system along the front line facing North Korea by integrating artificial intelligence (AI). The Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA) announced on Tuesday the development of a science-based border security system featuring AI image analysis, thermal imaging and short-wave infrared capabilities. (Lee Ho-jeong, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- South Korea's military is expected to resume exercises in buffer zones set under a 2018 inter-Korean military accord as they have become effectively invalid after North Korea's recent artillery firing, officials said Tuesday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- A U.S.-headquartered political risk consultancy named North Korea, Russia and Iran an "axis of rogues" in a report on its forecast of this year's "top risks" on Monday, warning their deeper alignment and mutual support will pose a growing threat to global stability. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The Kremlin declined on Tuesday to comment on U.S. and Ukrainian assertions that Moscow had fired North Korean missiles at Ukrainian targets, but it also accused Kyiv of using missiles produced by Western nations to strike targets in Russia. (Felix Light, *Reuters*)

Prepared by Diana Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250715083459/https://mailchi.mp/dccfd06c102c/hrnk-news-items-s-korea-to-hold-forums-on-nk-human-rights-in-washington-geneva?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Wednesday, January 10th, 2024

Why North Korea blurred out the muffler of a child in a propaganda video

Top News:
Why North Korea blurred out the muffler of a child in a propaganda video (*RFA*, 12/28/2023)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
Demand for Chinese yuan grows in N. Korean private markets: report (*Yonhap*, 01/10/2024)
Kim Jong Un visits missile launcher factory, demands 'flaws' in production fixed (*NK News*, 01/10/2024)
N. Korea conducts public execution over COVID-19 violations: human rights white paper (*Yonhap*, 01/10/2024)
North Korea doubles down on reign of terror: white paper (*The Korea Times*, 01/10/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N.K. leader says he has 'no intention of avoiding war' with S. Korea (*Yonhap*, 01/10/2024)
N. Korea likely to carry out psychological warfare ahead of general elections: official (*Yonhap*, 01/10/2024)

International:
Foreign ministers condemn North Korea's missile transfer to Russia (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/10/2024)
Russia fired more N. Korean ballistic missiles at Ukraine: White House (*Yonhap*, 01/10/2024)

Top News:

- North Korea blurred out foreign lettering on a child's muffler in a propaganda video promoting a newly built outdoor ice rink in Pyongyang. Analysts have suggested that this was for the purpose of shutting out foreign influences. (Jamin Anderson, RFA)

In North Korea:

- Some 68.4 percent of North Korean defectors who left their home country between 2016 and 2020 said they used the Chinese yuan in unofficial private markets, known as "jangmadang," compared with 6.4 percent of those who defected before 2000, according to a draft report on the North Korean economy and society compiled by the unification ministry (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspected a factory producing ballistic missile launch vehicles this week, where he demanded officials fix "flaws" in production to prepare for war with South Korea, according to state media on Wednesday. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea has carried out a public execution of people for violating the country's COVID-19 regulations, a South Korean human rights white paper showed Wednesday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

- Despite international calls for the improvement of human rights, the Pyongyang regime is doubling down on its reign of terror with draconian new laws and cruel practices, according to a white paper released, Wednesday. (Jung Min-ho, *The Korea Times*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Kim also threatened to annihilate the South if it attempts to use force against the North, as he inspected major munitions factories Monday and Tuesday, the North's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea could continue its psychological warfare against South Korea ahead of the South's general elections in April, a senior official in Seoul said Wednesday. South Korea will beef up measures against cyberattacks and dissemination of false information by North Korea, Vice Unification Minister Moon Seoung-hyun said. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

International:

- The foreign ministers of South Korea, the United States, Japan and 45 other countries condemned North Korea's transfer of ballistic missiles to Russia and their use in the latter's ongoing aggression against Ukraine in a joint statement on Wednesday. (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Russia recently fired additional North Korean ballistic missiles into Ukraine following earlier such launches, a White House official said Tuesday, reiterating the arms transfers between Moscow and Pyongyang violate multiple U.N. Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Why North Korea blurred out the muffler of a child in a propaganda video

Jamin Anderson
Radio Free Asia
December 28, 2023

North Korea blurred out foreign lettering on a child's muffler in a propaganda video promoting a newly built outdoor ice rink in Pyongyang. Analysts have suggested that this was for the purpose of shutting out foreign influences. Reporter Jamin Anderson has the story.

"The outdoor ice rink that has been newly set up in the center of Pyongyang officially opened today."

A video of the opening was released on the website of the Korean Central News Agency on December 28th.

The three-minute and twenty-second video shows dozens of people skating on the outdoor ice rink—located among tall buildings—at sunset. In the video, it is a child's muffler that stands out the most.

"I will become a great person by becoming a skilled skater."

The orange muffler looks ordinary, but parts of it have been blurred out, as if the editors are trying to cover something.

In an interview with RFA on December 28, Hyun-seung Lee, a North Korean escapee who is pursuing a master's degree at Columbia University, said that "It appears that letters in English or another language or the brand's logo have been censored."

North Korea has been aggressively blocking the influence of foreign cultures as it seeks to promote its own culture. It thus has to hide the fact that North Korean people are using foreign products.

Lee added that "North Korean products are of relatively low quality and foreign products are of high quality. This is an open secret, but North Korean media does not openly advertise foreign products. Because North Korean products have to be shown as the best, the authorities censor foreign letters or logos."

The video constantly emphasizes that General Secretary Kim Jong-un has created facilities for the health and leisure of Pyongyang residents.

"The youth and workers [in Pyongyang] can now have fun as they strengthen their bodies and minds by partaking in winter activities...it is a facility planned by our beloved General Secretary, and it shows his faithful devotion for his people. The facility provides all necessary services for the convenience of the people."

There are also criticisms that North Korea is building and promoting recreational facilities for the core elite people in Pyongyang at a time when there have reportedly been deaths due to starvation as a result of severe food shortages.

Greg Scarlatoiu, the Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, pointed out to RFA that "While many North Koreans are starving and a third of children are malnourished, it is more important for Kim to keep the Pyongyang elite happy." Scarlatoiu added that "one of the characteristics of the Kim Jong-un regime is that while North Koreans are facing a very poor humanitarian situation, the regime continues to invest resources to keep the elite loyal, creating a space for their leisure and consumption. Whenever these recreational facilities are built, it takes away resources from providing food for the population and young children, among other things."

Meanwhile, on December 27th, while Pyongyang residents in warm winter clothes were happily skating on ice rinks, Jagang Province recorded a minimum temperature of -19.4 degrees Celsius.

Translated by Jiwoo (Katie) Choi, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Mohona Ganguly, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Alejandro Cassal, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250715083854/https://mailchi.mp/518252738978/hrnk-news-items-why-north-korea-blurred-out-the-muffler-of-a-child-in-a-propaganda-video?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Thursday, January 11th, 2024

New FM says not right time to shift NK denuclearization policy

In North Korea:
2.4 magnitude earthquake strikes near N. Korea's nuclear test site (*Yonhap*, 01/11/2024)
Is Kim Jong Un Preparing for War? (*38 North*, 01/11/2024)
N. Korea holds Cabinet plenary meeting over economic issues (*Yonhap*, 01/11/2024)
North Korea: Covid-19 Still Used to Justify Repression (*HRW*, 01/11/2024)
State media review: North Korea holds mass rallies to support 2024 policy goals (*NK News*, 01/11/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Kim calls South Korea a principal enemy as his rhetoric sharpens in a US election year (*AP News*, 01/11/2024)
Measures needed to prevent unintentional inter-Korean military clashes (*The Korea Times*, 01/10/2024)
New FM says not right time to shift NK denuclearization policy (*The Korea Times*, 01/11/2024)
N Korea erases 'one people' notion with South, opens door for nuclear use (*Radio Free Asia*, 01/10/2024)

International:
At UN, Russia rejects claims it used North Korean missiles as disinformation (*NK News*, 01/011/2024)
Mother of North Korea abductee awaits reunion as health woes mount (*Japan Times*, 01/11/2024)
Russian authorities promote tour to North Korea in early February (*NK News*, 01/11/2024)
Russia Is Revealing North Korea's Ballistic Missile Secrets (*Newsweek*, 01/11/2024)
Russia-North Korea Military Cooperation Under UN Spotlight (*VOA News*, 01/10/2024)

In North Korea:

- A 2.4 magnitude earthquake struck near a North Korean nuclear test site Thursday, South Korea's state weather agency said, noting it appeared to have occurred naturally. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- The situation on the Korean Peninsula is more dangerous than it has been at any time since early June 1950. That may sound overly dramatic, but we believe that, like his grandfather in 1950, Kim Jong Un has made a strategic decision to go to war. (Robert Carlin, *38 North*)
- North Korea has discussed ways to enhance the Cabinet's role in implementing this year's economic goals, state media reported Thursday, amid the country's protracted economic difficulties caused by U.N. sanctions imposed due to Pyongyang's nuclear and missile programs. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The North Korean government in 2023 continued to use the Covid-19 pandemic as a pretext to maintain "shoot on sight" orders on its northern border to restrict movement, maintain restrictions on trade, and strengthen ideological control, Human Rights Watch said today in its *World Report 2024*. The government's repressive policies deepened North Korea's isolation while worsening the country's humanitarian crisis. (*HRW*)

- Tens of thousands of North Korean citizens joined state-organized rallies around the country this week, in a massive propaganda campaign to unite people around the leadership's policies for the new year. The country's Cabinet held a three-day meeting to review flaws in the implementation of 2023 plans and strengthen rule and control over national economic affairs. (Seung-Yeon Chung, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has called South Korea "our principal enemy" and threatened to annihilate it if provoked, as he escalates his inflammatory rhetoric in an election year in South Korea and the U.S. (Hyung-Jin Kim, *AP News*)
- The removal of military buffer zones between South and North Korea has significantly increased the risk of unintentional military clashes, warned analysts, who called for the establishment of a minimal level of communication channels to prevent such incidents. (Lee Hyo-Jin, *The Korea Times*)
- South Korea will continue to focus on strengthening deterrence against North Korea's intensifying threats, said new Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul on Thursday, rejecting any possibility of altering the country's long-held denuclearization policy. (Jung Min-ho, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korea has eliminated the idea of "one people" shared with South Korea from its media outlets, defining the South as a separate entity rather than the "same Koreans," a shift experts said could rationalize the use of nuclear weapons in future conflicts with Seoul. North Korea's leading propaganda website DPRK Today has removed its "reunification" section, as confirmed Thursday. (Kim Hong-Ji, *Radio Free Asia*)

International:

- Russia dismissed claims that it is using North Korean ballistic missiles against Ukraine as U.S. disinformation on Wednesday, as Washington, Kyiv and others accused Moscow of violating sanctions at a U.N. Security Council meeting. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- Sakie Yokota, 87, is increasingly fearful that time is ticking away, robbing her of the chance to once again see her daughter Megumi, who was abducted in Japan and taken to North Korea at the age of 13 some 45 years ago. (Junko Horiuchi, *Japan Times*)
- Authorities in the Russian Far East have started advertising a travel package for residents to visit North Korea from early next month, signaling what could be the first return of foreign tourists since the country shut its borders due to COVID-19 in 2020. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- Russia's use of North Korean-made ballistic missiles could reveal crucial new information about the secretive nation's missile programs in the face of increasingly aggressive rhetoric from Pyongyang. (Ellie Cook, *Newsweek*)
- Russia's military cooperation with North Korea to further its war in Ukraine is drawing international condemnation, including at the U.N. Security Council, where Russia is a permanent member. (Margaret Besheer, *VOA News*)

Prepared by Annie Heitmeier, HRNK Research Intern

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Friday, January 12th, 2024

North Korea poised to admit first known tourists since 2020; Expect North Korean provocations in low earth orbit

In North Korea:
Expect North Korean Provocations in Low Earth Orbit (*The Diplomat*, 1/12/2024)
North Korea poised to admit first known tourists since 2020 (*Reuters*, 1/11/2024)
North Korea's rural housing push expands nationwide, adding 20K homes in 2023 (NK *News*, 1/12/2024)

In South Korea:
Defense chief calls for maintaining capabilities to strike N.K. leadership (*Yonhap*, 1/12/2024)
S. Korea successfully test-fires modified version of ground-based tactical missile (*Yonhap*, 1/12/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
North Korea's New Unification Policy: Implications and Pitfalls (38 *North*, 1/11/2024)
Veteran sculptor appointed special adviser for envisioned N.K. human rights center (*Yonhap*, 1/12/2024)
Websites of N. Korean propaganda outlets inaccessible for 2nd straight day (*Yonhap*, 1/12/2024)

International:
N.K. envoy calls Russia's use of Pyongyang missiles 'groundless accusation' (*Yonhap*, 1/12/2024)
S. Korea, 9 others lambast Houthi attacks, back coalition strikes in joint statement (*Yonhap*, 1/12/2024)
US sanctions Russian entities for transfer and testing of North Korean missiles (NK *News*, 1/12/2024)

In North Korea:

- Space is a new realm for Pyongyang to engage in its strategy of extracting diplomatic or economic concessions from the United States and South Korea, and offers North Korea new opportunities to engage in more diplomacy provocation cycle gaming. (John Hickman, *The Diplomat*)
- A group from Russia is poised to be the first known tourists allowed into North Korea since anti-pandemic border lockdowns began in early 2020, according to a post from Russian provincial authorities and a Western tour guide. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- North Korea's ambitious project to build new "modern" villages in rural areas picked up steam in 2023 after a slow start the previous year, according to *NK Pro* analysis of state

media, resulting in new neighborhoods in nearly every city and county nationwide. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's defense chief on Friday called for maintaining operational capabilities to eliminate the North Korean leadership in a contingency in order to deter its nuclear threats, his ministry said. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea has successfully test-fired a modified version of the homegrown Korean Tactical Surface to Surface Missile-I (KTSSM-I), military sources said Friday, as the country is bolstering its defense capabilities against North Korea. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- At the Ninth Enlarged Plenum of the Eighth WPK Central Committee in late December 2023, North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un declared a "new stand on the north-south relations and the reunification policy." This marked a significant departure from previous policies and carries profound implications. (Ruediger Frank, *38 North*)
- South Korea's unification minister on Friday appointed renowned sculptor Yoo Keun-sang as a special adviser for an envisioned center designed to shed light on North Korea's dire human rights situation. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- Websites of major North Korean propaganda media outlets targeting South Korea were inaccessible for the second straight day Friday morning for an unknown reason. This failure could be related to North Korea's move to overhaul the websites of its propaganda outlets in line with leader Kim Jong-un's order to reform agencies in charge of inter-Korean affairs. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- North Korea's ambassador to the United Nations has dismissed the claim that Russia launched North Korean missiles into Ukraine in its war against the country as a "groundless accusation," Pyongyang's state media said Friday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- Ten countries, including South Korea, issued a joint statement Thursday in support of precision strikes that the United States and Britain conducted against Iran-backed Houthis in response to their repeated attacks in the Red Sea. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. has slapped new sanctions on a Russian individual and three entities involved in the transfer and testing of North Korean ballistic missiles, after Moscow appeared to use the weapons against Ukraine in recent weeks. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

Prepared by Ryan Beane, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250715084425/https://mailchi.mp/4d3c7ade0c18/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-poised-to-admit-first-known-tourists-since-2020-expect-north-korean-provocations-in-low-earth-orbit?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Saturday, January 13th, 2024

N. Korea halts radio station known for sending coded messages to spies in Seoul

In North Korea:
Over 17 North Koreans prosecuted for using S. Korean slang: Human Rights Watch (*The Korea Times*, 1/13/24)
Speculation that Kim Jong-un's daughter could succeed him as North Korean leader comes of age (*The Guardian*, 1/11/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N. Korea halts radio station known for sending coded messages to spies in Seoul (*Yonhap*, 1/13/24)

International:
Blinken, senior Chinese official discuss N. Korea, Taiwan, Russia's war in Ukraine (*Yonhap*, 1/13/24)
Foreign Minister emphasizes North Korea coordination in China relationship (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 1/12/24)
N. Korea reportedly trades arms in Russian luxury goods (*The Dong-A Ilbo*, 1/13/2024)
North Korea reopens borders to Russian tourists for first time since pandemic (*The Korea Times*, 1/13/24)
US imposes sanctions over North Korean missiles to Russia (*Radio Free Asia*, 1/12/24)

In North Korea:

- More than 17 young North Koreans were prosecuted for watching unsanctioned videos and using South Korean slang in 2023 as the regime strengthened its control over almost every aspect of people's lives, according to a report published Thursday (U.S. time). (Jung Min-ho, *The Korea Times*)
- For every theory suggesting 10-year-old Ju-ae is next in line, there is another saying she is being used to soften her father's image. (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea is pressing ahead with measures to disband its inter-Korean organizations, apparently stopping a radio station previously used to send encrypted messages to its spies in South Korea. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)

International:

- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and a visiting senior Chinese official held talks in Washington on Friday over a range of issues concerning North Korea, Taiwan, Russia's war in Ukraine and the Middle East, a State Department spokesperson said. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The new South Korean Foreign Minister, Cho Tae-yul, emphasized the importance of taking small steps to improve the estranged relationship with China. (Lee Ho-jeong, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- The South Korean government authorities believe that North Korea imported millions of dollars worth of luxury goods from Russia last year. These imports are likely part of a deal to provide artillery shells and ballistic missiles to Russia. (Jin-Woo Shin, *The Dong-A Ilbo*)
- A group of Russian tourists are expected to enter North Korea next month after the regime decided to open its borders to foreign visitors for the first time since the COVID-19 outbreak. (Jung Min-ho, *The Korea Times*)
- The United States has imposed sanctions on three entities and one individual involved in the transfer and testing of ballistic missiles from North Korea to Russia for use in the invasion of Ukraine. (Alex Willemyns, *Radio Free Asia*)

Prepared by Angela Yoon, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250715084425/https://mailchi.mp/4d3c7ade0c18/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-poised-to-admit-first-known-tourists-since-2020-expect-north-korean-provocations-in-low-earth-orbit?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, January 14th, 2024

N. Korea claims to have successfully test-fired solid-fuel IRBM

In North Korea:
N. Korea claims to have successfully test-fired solid-fuel IRBM (*Yonhap*, 1/15/2024)
N. Korea fires suspected IRBM into East Sea: S. Korean military (*Yonhap*, 1/14/2024)
North Korea fires first ballistic missile of the year Sunday (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 1/14/2024)
People's incomes have risen, but discontent is still deep (*Rimjin-gang*, 1/12/2024)

International:
Missiles from Iran and North Korea boost Russia's onslaught on Ukraine (*Financial Times*, 1/14/2024)
N. Korea sends delegation to Non-Aligned Movement summit in Uganda (*Yonhap*, 1/14/2024)
N. Korea's foreign minister to visit Russia this week (*Yonhap*, 1/14/2024)
North Korea accused of launching missile that could hit US bases (*The Telegraph*, 1/14/2024)
North Korea fires missile, minister to visit Russia as tensions rise (*Reuters*, 1/14/2024)
North Korea launches a suspected intermediate-range ballistic missile that can reach distant US bases (AP, 1/14/2024)
North Korea Test-Fires Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (*The New York Times*, 1/14/2024)
North Korea tests ballistic missile, fired toward Japan (UPI, 1/14/2024)
S. Korea says it hopes for continued peace, stability across Taiwan Strait after presidential election (*Yonhap*, 1/14/2024)
Taiwan election result could put S. Korea-China relations to test (*The Korea Herald*, 1/14/2024)
Taiwan presidential vote result holds diplomatic significance for Korea (*The Korea Times*, 1/14/2024)
Trump says America was 'safe' while boasting ties with N. Korean leader Kim (*Yonhap*, 1/15/2024)

U.S. condemns N. Korea's missile launch as breach of UNSC resolutions (*Yonhap*, 1/15/2024)
US, South Korea, Japan Seek to Expand Cooperation to Counter China (VOA, 1/14/2024)
White House race brings into focus U.S. foreign policy outlook (*Yonhap*, 1/15/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea said Monday it successfully test-fired a solid-fuel intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) the previous day as part of regular activities to develop powerful weapons systems. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea fired a suspected IRBM into the East Sea on Sunday, South Korea's military said, in Pyongyang's first missile launch this year amid heightened tensions over its continued saber-rattling. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea fired its first ballistic missile of the year toward the East Sea on Sunday, South Korean military authorities said. The Joint Chiefs of Staff said it detected the launch on Sunday afternoon and that it believes the missile in question was an IRBM. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A significant increase in wages should be good news. But North Koreans aren't reacting well to the wage hike. (Kang Ji-won, Ishimaru Jiro, *Rimjin-gang*)

International:

- Russia's alleged use of North Korean ballistic missiles in Ukraine, which would violate UN sanctions, has underlined how the balance of supplies might be moving in Moscow's favour, said officials and military analysts. (John Paul Rathbone, Christian Davies, Roman Olearchyk, Christopher Miller, *Financial Times*)
- North Korea has sent a government delegation to the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit in Uganda, state media said Sunday. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui will visit Russia this week, state media said Sunday, amid indications of growing military cooperation between Pyongyang and Moscow. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and Japan say Pyongyang fired an apparent intermediate-range missile into the sea in violation of UN resolutions. (Louise Watt, *The Telegraph*)
- North Korea fired an apparent intermediate-range missile into the sea on Sunday, South Korea and Japan said, as tensions run high after Pyongyang's recent launches of an intercontinental ballistic missile and its first military spy satellite. (Ju-min Park, Makiko Yamazaki, *Reuters*)
- North Korea fired a suspected IRBM into the sea on Sunday, South Korea's military said, two months after the North claimed to have tested engines for a new harder-to-detect missile capable of striking distant U.S. targets in the region. (Hyung-Jin Kim, AP)
- The launch, the first such test by the North this year, came amid signs that the country was developing a new missile that could threaten U.S. military bases in the region. (Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*)
- Japan's Defense Ministry condemned the missile test in a statement, adding that it is currently analyzing the results of North Korea's test. (Adam Schrader, *UPI*)
- South Korea hopes to see peace and stability maintained across the Taiwan Strait, a foreign ministry official said Sunday, following the election of a U.S.-friendly president. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)

- The victory of Lai Ching-te of Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party in the presidential election on Saturday will put the relationship between South Korea and China to the test. (Son Ji-hyoung, Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- The outcome of the presidential election in Taiwan is expected to pose significant diplomatic challenges for Korea, particularly in navigating relations with China and neighboring countries. (Nam Hyun-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- Former President Donald Trump on Sunday boasted his personal ties with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un that he had built during his presidency, stressing America was "safer" then. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States on Sunday condemned North Korea's latest ballistic missile launch as a violation of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions, while reiterating America's "ironclad" security commitment to South Korea and Japan. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States, South Korea and Japan have expanded their security cooperation beyond North Korea with their Indo-Pacific Dialogue, which one expert called a "significant" development aimed at deterring Beijing from escalating threats in the region. (Christy Lee, VOA)
- As the U.S. presidential race officially kicks off this week, global attention is gravitating to the outlook for America's post-election foreign policy that would have profound implications for its alliances, approach to North Korea and rivalry with China. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Gabrielle Drinkwine, HRNK Research Intern

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Monday, January 15th, 2024

N. Korea confirms new hypersonic missile test as minister heads to Russia

In North Korea:
N. Korea claims to have successfully launched solid-fuel hypersonic IRBM (*Yonhap*, 1/15/2024)
N. Korea to convene key parliamentary meeting amid animosity toward S. Korea (*Yonhap*, 1/15/2024)
North says it launched IRBM carrying hypersonic warhead (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 1/15/2024)
North Korea Boasts of Missile Success (*Newsweek*, 1/15/2024)
North Korea claims another successful test of its hypersonic glide missile tech (CNN, 1/15/2024)
North Korea says it tested a solid-fuel missile tipped with a hypersonic weapon (AP, 1/15/2024)
North Korea says it tested new solid-fuel missile with hypersonic warhead (UPI, 1/14/2024)
Why is North Korea testing hypersonic missiles and how do they work? (*Reuters*, 1/15/2024)
Why North Korean websites are suddenly vanishing from the internet (*NK News*, 1/15/2024)

In South Korea:
Moon government accused of lax oversight of NK guard post demolition (*The Korea Times*, 1/15/2024)
S. Korea considering support measures for safe passage in Red Sea (*Yonhap*, 1/15/2024)
S. Korea incapable of intercepting N. Korea's solid-fuel hypersonic missiles (*The Korea Times*, 1/15/2024)

International:
An inside look at escaping from North Korea (CNN, 1/14/2024)
Hamas fights with a patchwork of weapons built by Iran, China, Russia and North Korea (AP, 1/15/2024)
Is North Korea preparing for war in 2024? (*Deutsche Welle*, 1/15/2024)
Military intelligence: North Korea supplying 122 mm, 152 mm shells to Russia (*The Kyiv Independent*, 1/15/2024)
Missile test a sign North Korea 'more willing' to challenge South, US as tensions rise (*South China Morning Post*, 1/15/2024)
N. Korea confirms new hypersonic missile test as minister heads to Russia (RFA, 1/14/2024)
N. Korean FM arrives in Russia amid deepening military ties (*Yonhap*, 1/15/2024)
North Korea tests first solid-fuel 'hypersonic' missile (*Financial Times*, 1/15/2024)
North Korea's Foreign Minister in Russia as Arms Ties Build (*Bloomberg*, 1/15/2024)
North Korean foreign minister arrives in Russia for official visit (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 1/15/2024)
North Korean hackers, criminals share money laundering networks in Southeast Asia - UN (*Reuters*, 1/15/2024)
Nuclear envoys of S. Korea, U.S., Japan condemn N. Korea's missile launch (*Yonhap*, 1/15/2024)
Russia says it will build ties with North Korea as foreign ministers set to meet (*Reuters*, 1/15/2024)
Russian Far East eyes launch of passenger rail service to North Korea in 2024 (*NK News*, 1/15/2024)
Test of latest North Korean weapon adds to threat facing Japan (*The Japan Times*, 1/15/2024)
U.S. calls deepening N.K.-Russia cooperation trend of 'great concern' (*Yonhap*, 1/15/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea said Monday it successfully test-fired a solid-fuel intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) carrying a hypersonic warhead the previous day as part of regular activities to develop powerful weapons systems. (Kim Soo-yeon, Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea is scheduled to convene a key parliamentary meeting Monday amid key attention over whether its rubber-stamp parliament will approve a constitutional revision on inter-Korean unification. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea said Monday it successfully tested a solid-fuel IRBM bearing a hypersonic warhead the previous day. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea boasted about firing a solid-fuel ballistic missile tipped with a hypersonic maneuverable warhead on Sunday in the first successful test of the new system, according to state media. (Giulia Carbonaro, *Newsweek*)
- North Korea on Monday claimed to have again tested a missile that could become one of the world's fastest and most accurate weapons -- with the potential to ultimately be fitted with a nuclear warhead. (Brad Lendon, Yoonjung Seo, CNN)

- North Korea on Monday said it flight-tested a new solid-fuel intermediate-range missile tipped with a hypersonic warhead as it pursues more powerful, harder-to-detect weapons designed to strike remote U.S. targets in the region. (Kim Tong-Hyung, AP)
- North Korea on Monday said it had test fired a new solid-fuel ballistic missile with a hypersonic warhead, according to state-run news. (Adam Schrader, Darryl Coote, UPI)
- North Korean state media said Sunday's test was aimed at checking the reliability of new multi-stage, high-thrust solid-fuel engines and an intermediate-range hypersonic manoeuvrable controlled warhead. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- Experts say DPRK appears to be overhauling its propaganda strategy, with many decade-old channels likely gone for good. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- The previous Moon Jae-in government in facing accusations of lax monitoring regarding the 2018 demolition of North Korean guard posts, after the current defense minister suggested that North Korea may not have fully destroyed its guard posts as stipulated in the inter-Korean military tension reduction pact. (Lee Hyo-jin, *The Korea Times*)
- South Korea is considering various measures to secure safe passage for cargo ships in the Red Sea amid rising tensions on the major shipping route, the defense ministry said Monday. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- The latest launch has sent alarm bells ringing in South Korea as there is currently no system in place to intercept such missiles, according to experts. (Jung Min-ho, *The Korea Times*)

International:

- Fareed Zakaria discusses the new film "Beyond Utopia" -- an eye-opening, up-close documentary about North Korean defectors -- with director Madeleine Gavin and producer Sue Mi Terry. (Fareed Zakaria, CNN)
- An Associated Press analysis of more than 150 videos and photos taken in the three months of combat since Hamas launched its Oct. 7 surprise attack on Israel shows the militant group has amassed a diverse patchwork arsenal of weapons from around the world -- much of it smuggled past a 17-year blockade that was aimed at stopping just such a military buildup. (Michael Biesecker, AP)
- North Korea's regime is once again ratcheting up its war rhetoric against South Korea and the US. This time, however, some analysts warn the threat goes beyond the usual bluster from Kim Jong Un. (Julian Ryall, *Deutsche Welle*)
- North Korea has supplied Russia with around one million rounds of ammunition, mainly made up of 122 mm and 152 mm artillery shells, Vadym Skibitskyi, a representative of Ukraine's Military Intelligence (UHR), said in an interview with RBC Ukraine on Jan. 15. (Elsa Court, *The Kyiv Independent*)
- The missile could neutralise South Korea's missile defence system and threaten US strategic assets such as its aircraft-carrier strike groups in the West Pacific, analysts say. (Park Chan-kyong, *South China Morning Post*)
- North Korea has confirmed testing a hypersonic ballistic missile with a new type of engine as its foreign minister embarked on a visit to Russia amid accusations that both nations are engaged in arms trading. (Lee Jeong-Ho, RFA)

- North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui arrived in Russia on Monday for an official visit, state media reported, as the Kremlin said it aims to further develop ties with the North in all areas. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has said it successfully fired a solid-fuel "hypersonic" missile for the first time, demonstrating Pyongyang's increasingly sophisticated missile capabilities as the regime deepens defence co-operation with Russia. (Christian Davies, *Financial Times*)
- North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui arrived in Russia for a trip that could facilitate a visit by President Vladimir Putin to Pyongyang and enhance arms transfers that have replenished the Kremlin's arsenal to attack Ukraine. (Jon Herskovitz, *Bloomberg*)
- North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui has arrived in Russia for a meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, according to Moscow's Foreign Ministry on Monday. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean hackers are sharing money-laundering and underground banking networks with fraudsters and drug traffickers in Southeast Asia, according to a United Nations report published on Monday, with casinos and crypto exchanges emerging as key venues for organised crime. (Tom Wilson, *Reuters*)
- The top nuclear envoys of South Korea, the United States and Japan have condemned North Korea's latest ballistic missile launch during their phone talks earlier this week, Seoul's foreign ministry said Monday. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- Russia will develop ties with North Korea in all areas building on agreements between their leaders in September, the Kremlin said on Monday, as their foreign ministers were set to meet in Moscow. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- A Russian Far East region hopes to start passenger railway service to North Korea to facilitate tourism before the end of this year, the regional chief reportedly announced, adding that technical difficulties currently pose a roadblock to these plans. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- North Korea on Monday claimed to have added another potent weapon that poses a grave threat to Japan to its already formidable arsenal, with Pyongyang confirming that it had "successfully" tested a solid-fueled IRBM missile a day earlier. (Jesse Johnson, *The Japan Times*)
- Deepening cooperation between North Korea and Russia is a trend of "great concern," a State Department spokesperson said Sunday, as North Korea's top diplomat is set to visit Russia this week in a sign of growing bilateral ties. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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Tuesday, January 16th, 2024

North Korea Ends Policy of Reunification with South Korea; Yoon vows multiple-times stronger punishment in event of N.K. provocation

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un brands South Korea primary foe and rules out unity (BBC, 01/16/2024)
Kim Jong-un urges constitutional change to define South as 'No. 1 hostile country' (Korea JoongAng Daily, 01/16/2024)
New North Korean film reveals secret Kim Jong Un visits to weapons factories (NK News, 01/16/2024)
N.K. leader calls for defining S. Korea as 'invariable principal enemy' in constitution (Yonhap, 01/16/2024)
No North Korean activity at Kaesong zone after signs of life last year: Photos (NK News, 01/16/2024)
North Korea Ends Policy of Reunification with South Korea (VOA News, 01/16/2024)
North Korea's 'empty' economic policies created major wealth gap: Kim Jong Un (NK News, 01/16/2024)
North Korea's Kim vows to dismantle father's unification arch as he declares South Korea 'principal enemy' (CNN, 01/16/2024)
North Korea to redefine border, purge unification language from constitution (NK News, 01/16/2024)
N. Korea abolishes agencies handling inter-Korean affairs at parliamentary meeting (Yonhap, 01/16/2024)

In South Korea:
After North declares 'hostile' relations, Yoon vows to 'punish' regime in case of a provocation (Korea JoongAng Daily, 01/16/2024)
Defense chief says N. Korea appears to have made 'some progress' in hypersonic missile development (Yonhap, 01/16/2024)
Former government accused of ignoring North's cheating during DMZ guard post demolition (Yonhap, 01/16/2024)
Stocks plummet as Kim Jong-un calls for war (Korea JoongAng Daily, 01/16/2024)
Unification ministry slams N.K. leader's hostile rhetoric toward S. Korea (Yonhap, 01/16/2024)
Yoon presents letters of appointment to FM, spy chief (Yonhap, 01/16/2024)
Yoon vows multiple-times stronger punishment in event of N.K. provocation (Yonhap, 01/16/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Inter-Korean ties hit new low as NK calls Seoul 'primary foe' (The Korea Herald, 01/16/2024)
International:
First tour to North Korea already at capacity, Russian travel firm says (NK News, 01/16/2024)
North Korea lauds 'comradely' ties with Russia, Putin to meet Kim's foreign minister (Reuters, 01/16/2024)
North Korean delegation to attend Non-Aligned Movement summit in Uganda (NK News, 01/16/2024)
Putin to meet N. Korean foreign minister later Tuesday: Kremlin (Yonhap, 01/16/2024)
South Korea, US to start defence cost talks early, before U.S. elections-media (Reuters, 01/16/2024)
Ukraine examining Russia's use of North Korean missiles as possible war crime (NK News,

01/16/2024)
U.S. voices disappointment over N. Korea's hostile rhetoric toward S. Korea (Yonhap, 01/16/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has said unification with the South is no longer possible, and that the constitution should be changed to designate it the "principal enemy". (Oliver Slow, BBC)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has called for constitutional amendments defining South Korea as the North's "No. 1 hostile country" and committing the regime to "completely occupying" South Korean territory should armed hostilities break out, Pyongyang's state media reported Tuesday. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A new North Korean propaganda film has revealed that leader Kim Jong Un made an array of previously unannounced weapons inspections last year, including visits to factories producing artillery launchers and the construction site for the country's main space launch complex. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has called for revising the country's constitution to define South Korea as its "invariable principal enemy" and to codify the commitment to "completely occupying" the South Korean territory in the event of war, state media reported Tuesday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- No signs of life were visible at the shuttered Kaesong Industrial Complex from a vantage point on the inter-Korean border this month, despite recent reports that North Korea is illegally operating some 30 South Korean facilities at the shuttered complex. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- Kim said the constitution should also include plans for "occupying, subjugating and reclaiming" the South if another war breaks out between the two bitter rivals. (*VOA News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un admitted that decades of party policy has failed to bring economic development to the country, introducing a new plan to build industrial centers in 200 cities and counties within ten years, according to state media on Tuesday. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Monday vowed to remove a massive monument to the possible reunification of the Korean Peninsula that his father constructed in Pyongyang, calling it an "eyesore." (Brad Lendon, Gawon Bae, CNN)
- North Korea will change its constitution to better define the border with the ROK and ensure its population learns that South Korea is the "number one hostile country," physically destroying inter-Korean symbols such as a cross-border rail line and unification monument in Pyongyang, state media reported on Tuesday. (Colin Zwirko, Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korea has decided to abolish agencies in charge of inter-Korean affairs at a key parliamentary meeting, state media reported Tuesday, as leader Kim Jong-un said South Korea should be marked "No. 1 hostile country" in the Constitution. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- "Should North Korea make a provocation, we will punish it many times over," Yoon said at the Yongsan presidential office. "The fake peace tactic of threatening 'war or peace' no longer works." (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- North Korea appears to have made "some progress" in its pursuit to develop a hypersonic missile, Seoul's defense chief said Tuesday, after Pyongyang claimed to have successfully tested a solid-fuel one earlier this week. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- The former Moon Jae-in administration may have turned a blind eye to the North's incomplete demolition of its guard posts in the border region as the liberal administration sought more reconciliatory relations with the North. (Lee Keun-pyung, Esther Chung, *Yonhap*)
- Shares slid more than 1 percent Tuesday as escalating geopolitical tensions surrounding the Korean Peninsula weakened investors' appetite for risky assets. The local currency sharply fell in value against the dollar. (Kim Ju-yeon, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The ministry said North Korea is attempting to divide South Korean society with such a "politically provocative act" and reaffirmed the government's will to respond to such provocations in a strong and firm manner. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol on Tuesday presented letters of appointment to Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul and Cho Tae-yong, South Korea's new spy chief. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol vowed Tuesday to punish North Korea multiple times as hard in the event it carries out a provocation against South Korea, after North Korean leader Kim Jong-un called for defining South Korea as a "primary foe and invariable principal enemy." (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Inter-Korean relations hit a new low as North Korean leader Kim Jong-un ordered the removal of all symbols of reconciliation and cooperation between the two Koreas, a highly volatile and intricate relationship that endured for over 50 years, despite changes in South Korean governments and hereditary power succession in North Korea. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)

International:

- The Russian travel company organizing the first tour to North Korea for foreign visitors since the start of the pandemic has stopped taking bookings due to the high volume of applications it has already received. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- North Korea's foreign minister lauded comradely ties with Russia on Tuesday ahead of a rare meeting in Moscow with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has been invited by Kim Jong Un to visit the reclusive nuclear-armed country. (Guy Faulconbridge, *Reuters*)
- A North Korean delegation will attend the 19th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit in Uganda this month, according to state media, as Pyongyang looks to refocus its diplomacy toward countries that oppose the West. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin will meet North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui on Tuesday evening, the Kremlin said, amid the two nation's deepening military cooperation. (Yo Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the United States have agreed to start early talks on how to share the cost of keeping U.S. forces in the country in a bid to reach a deal before the possible reelection of Donald Trump as president, local media reported on Tuesday. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- Ukrainian prosecutors are investigating Russia's use of a presumed North Korean missile as part of a probe into war crimes, in a move that experts said could lead to international war

crime charges against Pyongyang if it knew how the weapons would be used. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

- The United States expressed disappointment over the escalation of North Korea's rhetoric against South Korea on Monday, stressing inter-Korean cooperation is vital to fostering lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Haeun Moon, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250715094736/https://mailchi.mp/0a89aefa21f6/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-ends-policy-of-reunification-with-south-korea-yoon-vows-multiple-times-stronger-punishment-in-event-of-nk-provocation?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, January 17th, 2024

S. Korea imposes sanctions on 11 vessels over N. Korea's illegal ship-to-ship transfers

In North Korea:
N. Korea broadcasts map highlighting only northern Korean Peninsula in red (Yonhap, 01/17/2024)

In South Korea:
Lawyers accuse China of repatriating 100 more North Korean defectors (Korea JoongAng Daily, 01/17/2024)
N. Korean refugee-turned-scholar joins prominent think tank (The Korea Times, 01/17/2024)
Number of N. Korean defectors coming to S. Korea estimated at 190 last year (Yonhap, 01/17/2024)
S. Korea imposes sanctions on 11 vessels over N. Korea's illegal ship-to-ship transfers (Yonhap, 01/17/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Unification minister visits front-line Army unit amid heightened tensions (Yonhap, 01/17/2024)

International:
Dutch firm organizing North Korea trip for foreign journalists in April (NK News, 01/17/2024)
Idea of Trump willing to allow N. Korea to keep nukes 'not implausible': U.S. expert (Yonhap, 01/17/2024)
Putin meets N. Korean FM amid deepening military cooperation (Yonhap, 01/17/2024)
Pyongyang likely to be Putin's 1st destination after May inauguration: experts (The Korea Times, 01/17/2024)
S. Korea, U.S., Japan stage joint naval drill involving aircraft carrier (Yonhap, 01/17/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea's state-run broadcasting station on Wednesday aired a map that highlights only the northern part of the Korean Peninsula in red after its leader vowed to no longer seek reconciliation and unification with South Korea. (Kang Yoon-seung, Yonhap)

In South Korea:

- Nearly 100 more North Korean defectors have been repatriated from China, according to a group of lawyers in Seoul. (Esther Chung, Korea JoongAng Daily)
- At age 4, she lost the tip of her finger due to an accident. Two years later, she lost her mother to tuberculosis. To take care of her sick grandmother, she decided not to go to college. After being deported by Chinese authorities, she even spent months in a North Korean prison. (Jung Min-ho, The Korea Times)
- The number of North Korean defectors coming to South Korea almost tripled to around 190 last year from a year ago, with defections by North Korean diplomats and trade officials on the rise, South Korea's vice unification minister said Wednesday. (Kim Soo-yeon, Yonhap)
- South Korea on Wednesday imposed independent sanctions on 11 vessels and five individuals and entities engaged in illegal ship-to-ship transfers of oil and other products to North Korea, tightening the sanctions against the North's maritime activities. (Kim Seung-yeon, Yonhap)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho visited a military base near the border with North Korea on Wednesday, the latest in a series of inspection tours by top South Korean officials amid heightened tensions. (Kim Soo-yeon, Yonhap)

International:

- A Dutch consultancy firm has announced that it is organizing a trip to North Korea for foreign journalists, stating that its DPRK partners asked it to start making preparations for what would likely be the first press mission to the country since the pandemic began. (Joe Smith, NK News)
- A U.S. expert said Tuesday that it is "not implausible" that former President Donald Trump, if reelected, could allow North Korea to keep its nuclear program under certain conditions, including its halt on intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launches. (Song Sang-ho, Yonhap)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin has met with North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui amid deepening military cooperation between the two countries. (Kang Yoon-seung, Yonhap)
- As Russian President Vladimir Putin cordially greeted North Korea's top diplomat in Moscow on Tuesday (local time), a Kremlin spokesman confirmed that the Russian leader will visit Pyongyang "at a convenient time." (Jung Min-ho, The Korea Times)
- South Korea, the United States and Japan have jointly conducted naval drills in waters south of the Korean Peninsula following North Korea's recent launch of a hypersonic missile, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Wednesday. (Kim Eun-jung, Yonhap)

Prepared by Kate Refolo, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250715094903/https://mailchi.mp/a2e056e43f86/hrnk-news-items-s-korea-imposes-sanctions-on-11-vessels-over-n-koreas-illegal-ship-to-ship-transfers?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Thursday, January 18th, 2024

Experts Urge South Korea to Address Forced Repatriation with China Actively

Top News:
Experts call on South Korea to actively raise the issue of forced repatriation with China, stressing international solidarity (VOA, 01/10/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
N. Korean leader spotted using Mercedes-Benz SUV despite sanctions (*Yonhap*, 01/18/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Farewell, Pyongyang Broadcasting? (*38 North*, 01/18/2024)
North Korea: Rare footage shows teens sentenced to hard labour over K-drama (*BBC*, 01/18/2024)
Number of N. Korean defectors entering S. Korea nearly triples in 2023 (*Yonhap*, 01/18/2024)

International:
How the Ukraine War Is Aiding North Korea's Illicit-Arms Business (*The Wall Street Journal*, 01/18/2024)
N. Korea slams Japan Self Defense Forces members' visit to Yasukuni Shrine (*Yonhap*, 01/18/2024)
Top diplomats of N. Korea, Russia discuss 'upcoming political contacts': reports (*Yonhap*, 01/18/2024)
UNSC to hold consultations on N. Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 01/18/2024)

Top News:

- Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, urged the South Korean government to raise the issue of forced repatriation of North Korean refugees in the UN Human Rights Council's upcoming Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC). (Ahn Jun-ho, VOA)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un was seen getting out of what appeared to be a luxury Mercedes-Benz SUV, state media footage has shown, despite international sanctions banning the North's imports of luxury goods. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- The recent closure of Pyongyang Broadcasting Station, in operation since 1955, suggests a significant change in North Korea's inter-Korean policy, indicating a broader shift in relations with South Korea. Despite no official acknowledgment, along with other signs like Kim Jong Un's call to dismantle the Arch of Unification, it signifies a noteworthy and likely irreversible shift in North Korea's approach. (Martyn Williams, *38 North*)
- North Korea sentences teens to 12 years of hard labor for watching banned South Korean dramas in rare BBC footage from 2022. The video suggests a harsher crackdown, reflecting North Korea's ideological concerns. Pyongyang made watching South Korean entertainment punishable by death in 2020. Defectors note the popularity of Korean dramas as a form of escapism in North Korea. (Sangmi Han, *BBC*)
- The number of North Korean defectors who arrived in South Korea came to 196 last year amid a rise in defections by North Korean diplomats and trade officials, government data showed Thursday. The defections by 32 men and 164 women raised the total number of the North's defectors in South Korea to 34,078, according to the data from Seoul's unification ministry in charge of inter-Korean affairs. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- In recent weeks, Russian forces have fired short-range ballistic missiles in Ukraine provided by North Korea, according to assessments from Washington, Seoul and Kyiv. Pyongyang has provided Moscow with dozens of the weapons, the U.S. says. (Dasl Yoon/Timothy W. Martin, *The Wall Street Journal*)
- North Korea on Thursday lambasted senior officers of the Japan Self-Defense Forces for visiting a war shrine seen as a symbol of Japan's militaristic past.
  The criticism came after Lt. Gen. Hiroki Kobayashi, vice chief of staff of the Ground Self-Defense Force, and dozens of officials visited the Yasukuni Shrine last week, prompting Tokyo's defense ministry to investigate whether they violated a regulation that bans military units from visiting religious facilities. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui discussed political contacts, summit agreements, and trade cooperation with Russian officials. The visit hinted at ongoing collaboration in space technology, and the Kremlin expressed interest in strengthening relations, amid accusations of North Korea supporting Moscow's arms efforts. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- The UNSC is scheduled to hold the "closed" consultations at 10 a.m. Thursday (New York time) on the issues of North Korea, non-proliferation and other matters, according to the website. South Korea, along with the United States and Japan, are said to have requested the consultations. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)

Experts Call on South Korea to Actively Raise the Issue of Forced Repatriation with China, Stressing International Solidarity

January 10, 2024
VOA *News*
Ahn Jun-ho

Human rights experts have called on the South Korean government to actively raise with China the issue of forced repatriation of North Korean refugees. They also emphasized solidarity with the international community, saying that human rights are core values that cannot be sacrificed for economic reasons. Ahn Jun-ho reports.

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, urged the South Korean government to raise the issue of forced repatriation of North Korean refugees in the UN Human Rights Council's upcoming Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

"Human rights are at the very core of the fundamental values that define South Korea as a country," he said, adding that "Human rights should not be sacrificed for the sake of economic and other issues…I would urge the South Korean government to consider in particular the inclusion of the forcible repatriation of North Korean refugees in the PRC UPR."

The UPR is a unique procedure of the UN Human Rights Council, in which all 193 UN member states regularly take turns reviewing each other's human rights records. The fourth cycle of the UPR for China is scheduled for January 23rd.

UN member states can raise human rights concerns during the UPR by submitting written inquiries or raising questions during the in-person proceedings.

January 9th is the deadline for submitting written questions for China's UPR. This day also marks three months since the Chinese authorities forcibly repatriated hundreds of North Korean refugees on October 9th last year.

South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said it was still "reviewing" whether to submit questions for China's UPR as of today, which is the deadline for submitting written questions.

During a press briefing, the spokesperson for South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that "We are reviewing options for participating in China's UPR," adding that "we are continuing to review the option of submitting written questions before the proceedings."

North Korean human rights groups argued that the South Korean government should actively raise human rights issues, including the forced repatriation of North Korean refugees, during China's UPR.

North Korean human rights groups based in South Korea, including the Transitional Justice Working Group (TJWG) and the Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights, along with Kim Gyu-ri, the older sister of Kim Cheol-ok, who was forcibly repatriated on October 9th last year, sent a letter to President Yoon Seok-yeol on January 3rd.

This letter urged the South Korean government—in accordance with the Yoon administration's vision of acting as a "global pivotal state"—to raise the issue of forced repatriation of North by submitting written questions before China's upcoming UPR, scheduled for January 23rd.

In a call with VOA on the 9th, Shin Hee-seok, TJWG's Legal Analyst, once again called upon South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to "raise the issue with the Chinese government by specifically referring to North Korea in written questions and recommendations."

Shin stated, "in particular, it is known that there were family members of South Korean prisoners of war among the North Korean refugees who were forcibly repatriated on October 9th." He added that "by submitting written questions, South Korea must call upon China to provide an explanation and disclose all relevant information about North Korean refugees who have been forcibly repatriated. This includes the case of Mr. Han Man-taek, a South Korean prisoner of war, who escaped North Korea but was forcibly repatriated in January 2005."

Ambassador Robert King, former U.S. Special Envoy for North Korean human rights issues, said in a phone call with VOA, "I'm sure that one of the issues that will be raised with regard to China and should be raised is the question of Chinese dealing with North Korean refugees,
people from North Korea who have fled, and the only way they can get out of North Korea is to China…And I'm sure that the issue will be raised and I hope it will be discussed strongly during the course of China's Universal Periodic Review."

However, it is unclear whether the South Korean government will raise the issue of forced repatriation of North Korean escapees during China's UPR.

According to reports by South Korean media, including Yonhap News, National Assembly member and former North Korean diplomat Thae Yong-ho (People Power Party) asked Ambassador Cho Tae-yeol, the nominee for Foreign Minister, during his confirmation hearing on January 8th whether the government intended to raise the forcible repatriation issue with China.

In response, Cho stated, "I understand the matter is under review." He added that "it appears that this is being seen as 'quiet diplomacy' [toward China], but in fact, the government is taking necessary steps at the bilateral and multilateral levels."

Legal Analyst Shin also stated, "If the South Korean government truly wants to become a global pivotal state, it must confidently raise all necessary issues with China without hesitation." In this vein, Shin said that "South Korea must be proactive in raising the issue of forced repatriation with China through both written submissions and in-person remarks."

Executive Director Scarlatoiu stated, "Strategically for South Korea, it would be very important to walk away from dependency on China. Because of human rights, because of North Korean human rights, because of national security and because of the lessons that we learned under COVID. While dependence on this economic relationship with China may be regarded as unavoidable, on the other hand, not looking for alternatives is dangerous… So strategically, South Korea needs to find a way to diminish its dependence on economic relations with China."

Considering its economic relationship with China, some experts noted that South Korea, which finds itself in a difficult position, should build international solidarity with like-minded countries that share the same values.

According to Ambassador King, "It's a sensitive issue for the Korean government. The South

Korean government has significant economic interests with the Chinese. The Chinese have interests with the South Korean government. It's a sensitive issue…I hope there are other countries that will also raise the issue because this is not just a South Korea issue."

It has also been suggested that the issue of forced repatriation could be raised by cooperating with other countries that share the same values.

In a call with VOA, Roberta Cohen, former U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for human rights, stated, "It doesn't always have to be your government to do that. There are other courses you can approach other governments to ask the questions and mobilize them to support this issue, even though you're not out front on it."

Cohen stated that South Korea publicly raised the issue of forced repatriation at the UN Security Council in August last year, and that the South Korean government's position is already well known.

At the United Nations, many countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union, as well as South Korea, have clearly stated their opposition to the forced repatriation of North Korean refugees.

According to Cohen, "I know that everybody is opposed to forced repatriation. And that is clear, the question is what you do about it and how you do it. And there are various roads to these problems… I myself have always recommended that the UN Secretary-General put together a group of States and try to work this out diplomatically because he used to be the High Commissioner for Refugees and he knows the situation very well and he has spoken out against forced repatriations."

South Korea was previously silent with regards to the issue of forced repatriation during China's third UPR cycle in 2018 during the Moon Jae-in administration. During China's second UPR cycle in 2013 under the Park Geun-hye administration, South Korea delivered remarks on refugee protection, including the need to observe the principle of non-refoulement, but North Korean refugees were not explicitly discussed.

This is Ahn Jun-ho of VOA News.

Translated by Diana Woo and Haeun Moon, HRNK Research Interns; edited by Mohona Ganguly, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Gloria Guo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250715095042/https://mailchi.mp/5832b574eaa8/hrnk-news-items-s-korea-imposes-sanctions-on-11-vessels-over-n-koreas-illegal-ship-to-ship-transfers-12238045?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, January 19th, 2024

North Korea teens get 12 years' hard labour for watching K-pop - video

In North Korea:
N. Korea holds cabinet plenary meeting to discuss economic plans (*Yonhap*, 01/19/2024)
N.K. says it tested underwater nuclear weapons system in response to trilateral drills (*Yonhap*, 01/19/2024)
North Korea teens get 12 years' hard labour for watching K-pop - video (*Reuters*, 01/19/2024)
No signs of imminent preparations for nuclear test at N. Korea's Punggye-ri site: U.S. monitor (*Yonhap*, 01/19/2024)

In South Korea:
Opposition leader urges N.K. leader to stop provocations (*Yonhap*, 01/19/2024)
UN should 'break silence' over NK provocations: S. Korean envoy (*The Korea Herald*, 01/19/2024)

International:
N. Korean foreign minister returns home after trip to Russia (*Yonhap*, 01/19/2024)
Nature of N.K. threat could change 'drastically' due to Pyongyang-Moscow cooperation: U.S. official (*Yonhap*, 01/19/2024)
North Korean health official set to make first appearance on WHO executive board (*NK News*, 01/19/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. agree to boost cooperation against N. Korea's cyber threats (*Yonhap*, 01/19/2024)
Senior S. Korean general calls for int'l response against N.K. threats at NATO meeting (*Yonhap*, 01/19/2024)
UNSC holds closed-door meeting on N. Korean issues amid heightened peninsula tensions (*Yonhap*, 01/19/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has held a plenary meeting of the cabinet to discuss plans for economic development this year, state media reported Friday. (Lee Min-ji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea said Friday it has tested an underwater nuclear weapons system under development in response to the latest joint maritime exercise involving South Korea, the United States and Japan. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Video footage released by an organisation that works with North Korean defectors shows North Korean authorities publicly sentencing two teenagers to 12 years' hard labour for watching K-pop. (Minwoo Park, Jimin Jung, *Reuters*)
- Recent satellite imagery of North Korea's Punggye-ri nuclear test site does not suggest imminent preparations for a new nuclear experiment despite apparent maintenance activity related to one of the underground tunnels there, a U.S. monitor said Thursday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- Main opposition leader Lee Jae-myung urged North Korean leader Kim Jong-un to stop its missile provocations, saying it will only lead to further isolation of the regime and intensify the suffering of its people. (Kang Jae-eun, *Yonhap*)
- The United Nations should break its silence over the growing North Korean provocations, including the latest test-firing of long-range missiles, said Hwang Joon-kook, permanent representative of South Korea to the UN, on Thursday. (Song Ji-hyoung, *The Korea Herald*)

International:

- North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui returned home Friday after a visit to Moscow that involved a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin amid deepening military cooperation between the two countries. (Lee Min-ji, *Yonhap*)
- The nature of North Korean threats could change "drastically" over the next decade due to an "unprecedented" level of military cooperation between Pyongyang and Moscow, a senior U.S. official warned Thursday. (Song Sang-ho, Cho Joon-hyung, Kim Dong-hyun, *Yonhap*)
- The new North Korean member of the World Health Organization's (WHO) executive board, Dr. Jong Min Pak, director at the Department of External Affairs for the Ministry of Public Health in Pyongyang, is set to make his first appearance at a meeting on Monday, following the DPRK's controversial election to the board last year. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- South Korea and the United States held a working-level cyber policy meeting Friday to bolster efforts against North Korea's growing threats in cyberspace, the foreign ministry said. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- A senior South Korean general has highlighted the need for international response and cooperation against North Korea's evolving military threats at a major gathering of top North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military officials, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Friday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- The U.N. Security Council (UNSC) held closed-door consultations on North Korea-related issues on Thursday, sources said, amid tensions heightened by Pyongyang's recent launch of a claimed hypersonic missile and its hardening rhetoric against Seoul. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Jiwoo Hwang, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250715123022/https://mailchi.mp/4847a230a547/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-teens-get-12-years-hard-labour-for-watching-k-pop-video?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, January 20th, 2024

U.S. diplomat calls for world not to stay silent on N. Korean human rights

In North Korea:
Airfields are disappearing, suggesting a shift to drones (*Radio Free Asia*, 01/20/2024)

In South Korea:
Defector-turned-lawmaker says 'Kim Jong-un's provocations a bluff, no need for concern' (*The Chosun Daily*, 01/19/2024)

International:
As North Korea stokes 'invasion' fears over Japan troops' Yasukuni visit, South Korea and China stay seemingly silent (*South China Morning Post*, 01/20/2024)
Haley to air New Hampshire ad with mother of student who died after North Korea detention (CNN, 01/20/2024)
Haley's new New Hampshire ad features mother of US student who died after North Korean imprisonment (AP, 01/20/2024)
'If I don't have a dream, what on Earth is the point of living?' (*Radio Free Asia*, 01/19/2024)
North Korea's Hostility Could Snag China's Bid for Better US Ties, Analysts Say (VOA, 01/19/2024)
North Korea's Missiles Are Being Tested on the Battlefields of Ukraine (*The Wall Street Journal*, 01/19/2024)
Senior U.S. diplomat to visit S. Korea for annual bilateral economic dialogue (*Yonhap*, 01/20/2024)
The Korean peninsula is as divided as ever (*The Economist*, 01/18/2024)
UN Security Council holds meeting on North Korean nonproliferation issue (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/19/2024)
U.S. calls on N. Korea to refrain from 'provocative' actions after claimed underwater nuclear weapons system test (*Yonhap*, 01/20/2024)
U.S. diplomat calls for world not to stay silent on N. Korean human rights (*Yonhap*, 01/20/2024)

In North Korea:

- Satellite imagery shows 9 airfields have vanished or been converted into farms or horseback-riding fields. (Cheon Soram, Han Dukin, *Radio Free Asia*)

In South Korea:

- In an interview with Chosunilbo on Jan. 17, PPP lawmaker Tae Yong-ho said, "It doesn't make sense for North Korean leader Kim Jong-un to claim he is preparing for war while selling his weapons to other countries." (Kim Seung-jae, Kim Seo-young, *The Chosun Daily*)

International:

- Pyongyang accused Tokyo of trying to revive its dream to 'reinvade the Korean peninsula' after SDF members visited the controversial temple. (Julian Ryall, *South China Morning Post*)
- Nikki Haley's campaign will begin airing a three-minute TV ad in New Hampshire on Monday featuring the mother of an American college student who died in 2017 after being detained by North Korea the previous year. (Kylie Atwood, CNN)
- Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley is making part of her closing argument to New Hampshire before Tuesday's primary with supportive words from the mother of Otto

Warmbier, the American college student who died in 2017 after being imprisoned by North Korea. (Meg Kinnard, AP)

- Three North Korean immigrants in the UK talk about their escapes and dreams. (Seo Hye Jun, Jamin Anderson, *Radio Free Asia*)
- In recent weeks, Russian forces have fired short-range ballistic missiles in Ukraine provided by North Korea, according to assessments from Washington, Seoul and Kyiv. (Dasl Yoon, Timothy W. Martin, *The Wall Street Journal*)
- China could face a dilemma dealing with Pyongyang this year as it finds North Korea's threats and deepening ties with Russia disruptive to Beijing's efforts to improve its relationship with Washington, analysts say. (Christy Lee, VOA)
- A senior U.S. diplomat will travel to South Korea to discuss cooperation in critical minerals, semiconductors, energy security and other areas at an annual bilateral economic meeting, the State Department said Friday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Although America insists that denuclearisation must be on the table and North Korea clings to its nukes, neither side is keen to talk. But Mr Kim can afford to wait, perhaps for the return of Mr Trump. (*The Economist*)
- The United Nations Security Council held closed-door consultations on nonproliferation issues regarding North Korea on Thursday, in the wake of its recent military provocations and reports of arms trade with Russia. (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The United States on Friday called on North Korea to refrain from further "provocative" and "destabilizing" actions, and to return to dialogue, after Pyongyang claimed to have tested an underwater nuclear weapons system under development. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- A senior U.S. diplomat made an emphatic call Friday for the international community not to remain silent about human rights abuses in North Korea, as "Beyond Utopia," an Oscar short-listed film on North Korean defectors, was screened at the State Department in Washington. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Tessa Aguilar, HRNK Research Intern

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Sunday, January 21st, 2024

Putin willing to visit Pyongyang soon, N. Korea says

In North Korea:
NK parliament's longest-serving chairman dies (*Yonhap*, 01/21/2024)

In South Korea:

S. Korea sees NK's claimed test of underwater nuclear attack drone as 'exaggerated, fabricated' (*Yonhap*, 01/21/24)
Seoul dismisses North Korea's claims of undersea nuclear weapons test (*The Korea Herald*, 01/21/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Is Kim Jong-un Really Planning an Attack this time? (*The New York Times*, 01/21/2024)
North Korea fires artillery shells, drops reunification goal with the South (NPR, 01/21/2024)

International:
Kyrylo Budanov: the Ukrainian military spy chief who 'likes the darkness' (*Financial Times*, 01/21/2024)
N. Korea condemns U.N. Security Council meeting on its hypersonic missile test (*Yonhap*, 01/21/2024)
N.K. says Putin expressed willingness to visit Pyongyang at early date (*Yonhap*, 01/21/2024)
North says Putin willing to visit Pyongyang 'at early date' (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/21/2024)
North Korea now aiding overstretched Russia, stepping into role as top weapons provider — intel head (*The New Voice of Ukraine*, 01/21/2024)
North Korea stresses alignment with Russia against US and says Putin could visit at an early date (AP, 01/21/2024)
Putin willing to visit Pyongyang soon, North Korea says (*Reuters*, 01/20/2024)
Russia brushes off arms deal allegations, flaunts ties with North Korea (*The Korea Times*, 01/21/2024)
Weathering the turbulent wave from the strait (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/21/2024)

In North Korea:

- Choe Thae-bok, a former chairman of the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA), North Korea's rubber-stamp legislature, has died, the North's official news agency reported Sunday. Choe was 93. (Kang Jae-eun, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's presidential office said Sunday it is weighing the possibility that North Korea's latest purported test of an underwater nuclear weapons system is an "exaggerated and fabricated" claim. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The South Korean presidential office on Sunday said North Korea's claims of having carried out a test of an underwater nuclear weapons system were probably overstated. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea fired hundreds of artillery shells in waters near South Korean border islands on Jan. 5. Last week, it said it no longer regarded the South as inhabited by “fellow countrymen” but as a “hostile state” it would subjugate through a nuclear war. (Choe Sang-hun, *The New York Times*)

- North Korea has fired artillery shells near South Korea and dropped the goal of reunification. Ayesha Rascoe talks with Edward Howell, a lecturer at the University of Oxford, about what this means. (Ayesha Rascoe, NPR)

International:

- North Korea is Russia's biggest arms supplier at present, Budanov said. "They did transfer a significant amount of artillery ammunition. This allowed Russia to breathe a little." He added: "Without their help, the situation would have been catastrophic." (Christopher Miller, *Financial Times*)
- North Korea on Sunday strongly condemned a recent meeting of the U.N. Security Council convened to discuss Pyongyang's recent test-fire of a hypersonic missile and other issues. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea said Sunday that Russian President Vladimir Putin has expressed his willingness to visit Pyongyang at an early date and the country is ready to "greet the Korean people's closest friend with the greatest sincerity." (Yoo Jee-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea said Sunday that Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed his willingness to visit Pyongyang at an early date following Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui's visit to Moscow last week. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea is the largest supplier of weapons to Russia, chief of Ukraine's Defense Intelligence Kyrylo Budanov said in an interview with the *Financial Times* published on Jan. 21. (*The New Voice of Ukraine*)
- North Korea said Sunday that Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed his willingness to visit the North at an unspecified "early date" as the countries continue to align in the face of their separate, intensifying confrontations with the United States. (Kim Tong-Hyung, AP)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed his willingness to visit Pyongyang soon when he met with North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui in Russia last week, North Korea's state news agency KCNA reported on Sunday. (Hyunsu Yim, *Reuters*)
- In the face of growing condemnation of the alleged arms transfers between North Korea and Russia, Moscow's ambassador to Seoul has rejected the speculation, saying that there was no evidence vindicating the accusations of its violation of international law. (Kim Hyun-bin, *The Korea Times*)
- After China sided with North Korea and invaded South Korea, we suffered massive losses during the Korean War. We have the high moral ground on the issue over China to warn against any greedy attempt to unify Taiwan. (Sohn In-joo, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Prepared by Jason Lebeck, HRNK Research Intern

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Monday, January 22nd, 2024

North Korea emerges as primary issue for GOP

In North Korea:
Fertilizer chemical tops North Korea's imports from China in December (*NK Pro*, 01/22/2024)
New North Korean propaganda poster depicts tank crushing South Koreans (*NK News*, 01/22/2024)
N. Korea calls for economic development in provincial regions (*Yonhap*, 01/22/2024)
N. Korea defends its stepped-up military measures at int'l forum (*Yonhap*, 01/22/2024)
N. Korea's exports of beauty products jump over 13 times in 2023: data (*Yonhap*, 01/22/2024)
North Korean hackers target DPRK experts and media in new phishing attacks (*NK Pro*, 01/22/2024)
North Korean minister talked arms and space cooperation with Putin, photos show (*NK News*, 01/22/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
South Korea needs multifaceted strategy to bring NK to dialogue (*The Korea Times*, 01/22/2024)

International:
North Korea emerges as primary issue for GOP (*The Korea Times*, 01/22/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. discuss bolstering cooperation in U.S. arms maintenance (*Yonhap*, 01/22/2024)
UK sends UN experts photographs of North Korean shipments to Russia (*The Guardian*, 01/22/2024)
U.S. flies spy plane after N. Korea's test of underwater nuclear attack drone (*Yonhap*, 01/22/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea procured record quantities of a fertilizer chemical from China in December, knocking imports of human hair for wigs off the top spot. (Anton Sokolin, *NK Pro*)
- North Korea will display a new propaganda poster in public depicting a tank crushing Americans and South Koreans to death and urging people to "destroy" them, according to state media on Sunday. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea called Monday for developing the country's provincial regions to improve the livelihood of people living outside the capital area. The North's main newspaper, Rodong Sinmun, carried an article on its front page stressing that developing the economy in provincial regions is an "important task" that can no longer be postponed or neglected. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has defended its measures to bolster military capabilities as a just exercise of the sovereign right against Washington-led military confrontations at the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit in Uganda, state media reported Monday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's exports of beauty products to China, such as wigs and false eyelashes, soared more than 13 times last year from the previous year amid the North's border opening, Chinese customs data showed Monday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean cybercriminals targeted leading DPRK experts and media organizations in a series of phishing attacks toward the end of last year, while laying the groundwork for a new campaign against cybersecurity professionals, according to a U.S. security firm. (Nils Weisensee, Shreyas Reddy, *NK Pro*)

- A top North Korean military official joined the country's foreign minister for recent talks with Russian leader Vladimir Putin, while photos show the two sides also discussed space cooperation when they met in Moscow last week. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Park Jae Kyu, a former South Korean unification minister and current president of Kyungnam University, advised that Seoul should pursue a "multifaceted strategy" toward its nuclear-armed neighbor, instead of its current one-sided policy, which focuses on deterrence. (Lee Hyo-jin, *The Korea Times*)

International:

- Washington's foreign policy on North Korea is emerging as one of the key issues of the GOP primary as Nikki Haley tries to draw a contrast between her tough stance on the regime and that of her rival in the presidential race, Donald Trump. (Jung Min-ho, *The Korea Times*)
- South Korea and the United States have discussed ways to expand the participation of South Korean companies in the maintenance of U.S. military equipment in the Indo-Pacific region, the defense ministry said Monday. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- The UK has provided satellite photographs of North Korean cargo shipments to Russia to a panel of UN experts as part of an attempt to trigger an official investigation into arms deals in violation of international sanctions. (Andrew Roth, *The Guardian*)
- A U.S. surveillance aircraft flew over South Korea on Monday, aviation trackers showed, on an apparent mission to monitor North Korea following its claimed test of an underwater nuclear attack drone. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Valerie Xu, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250715124036/https://mailchi.mp/40f827d8a99e/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-emerges-as-primary-issue-for-gop?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, January 23rd, 2024

S. Korea urges China to protect N.K. defectors' human rights at U.N. review

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un: Is North Korea's leader actually considering war? (*BBC News*, 1/23/2024)
North Korea demolishes symbolic unification arch, satellite imagery suggests (*NK News*, 1/23/2024)
North Korea Releases War Propaganda Art: 'Destroy the US Imperialists' (*Newsweek*, 1/23/2024)
North Korea tears down monument symbolizing union with the South - report (*Reuters*, 1/23/2024)

North Korea urges mothers to snitch on their kids who watch South Korean media (RFA, 1/22/2024)
North Korea's Artificial Intelligence Research: Trends and Potential Civilian and Military Applications (*38 North*, 1/23/2024)
North Korean Workers' Party assembly chair Choe Thae Bok dead at 93 (*NK News*, 1/23/2024)

In South Korea:
Defector-turned-lawmaker proposes designating commemorative day for N.K. defectors (*Yonhap*, 1/23/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
North Korea, Korean Unification, and the Prospects of a 2024 Crisis (*The Diplomat*, 1/23/2024)
S. Korea says N. Korean leader Kim's hostile rhetoric will not affect gov't blueprint on unification (*Yonhap*, 1/23/2024)
Tensions Set to Rise as North Korea Drops Unification Goal (*The Diplomat*, 1/23/2024)

International:
A New Concern on the Ukrainian Battlefield: North Korea's Latest Missiles (*The New York Times*, 1/23/2024)
Evidence of North Korea's Weapons Shipments to Russia Given to UN (*Newsweek*, 1/23/2024)
Kim Jong-un nostalgic for Trump-era diplomacy: Seoul defense chief (*The Korea Herald*, 1/23/2024)
Number of North Koreans entering Russia surges to 365 in Q3 2023: Data (*NK News*, 1/23/2024)
Over 40 countries condemn Pyongyang-Moscow arms transfers (*The Korea Times*, 1/23/2024)
S. Korea urges China to protect N.K. defectors' human rights at U.N. review (*Yonhap*, 1/23/2024)
S. Korean envoy lambasts N. Korea-Russia cooperation, UNSC resolution breach (*Yonhap*, 1/23/2024)
South Korea slams weapons transfers between North Korea and Russia (*NK News*, 1/23/2024)

In North Korea:

- While it's important for South Korea, the US and allies to prepare for the worst-case scenario, it is also worth a thorough examination of the internal situation in North Korea and the wider geopolitics, analysts say. (Frances Mao, *BBC News*)
- North Korea appears to have demolished a large monument in Pyongyang symbolizing hope for unification with South Korea, according to *NK News* analysis of satellite imagery, after leader Kim Jong Un ordered it be removed earlier this month. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- As North Korea's supreme leader makes a show of abandoning all efforts at a formal detente with Seoul, state media in Pyongyang this week published a series of patriotic posters targeting the United States and its treaty ally South Korea. (Micah McCartney, *Newsweek*)
- North Korea has demolished a major monument in its capital that symbolized the goal of reconciliation with South Korea on the orders of leader Kim Jong Un, who last week called the rival a "primary foe" and said unification was no longer possible. (Jack Kim, *Reuters*)
- North Korea is asking mothers to snitch on their kids who steal government property and watch illegal media, promising forgiveness if they report their actions to authorities, residents in the country told *Radio Free Asia*. (Son Hye-min, *RFA*)
- This analysis presents an initial survey of North Korea's AI/ML research, shedding light on the country's AI/ML development efforts across North Korea's government, academia and industry. (Hyuk Kim, *38 North*)

- High-ranking North Korean official Choe Thae Bok died at the age of 93 during the weekend, according to an obituary published in the DPRK's state-run newspaper *Rodong Sinmun* on Jan. 21. (Fyodor Tertitskiy, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- Rep. Tae Young-ho, a North Korean defector-turned-lawmaker of the ruling People Power Party, said Tuesday he has proposed a bill calling for the designation of a commemorative day for North Korean defectors. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- What does North Korea's abandonment of Korean unification portend? (Ankit Panda, Catherine Putz, *The Diplomat*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's recent hostile rhetoric toward Seoul will not affect South Korea's decades long blueprint for unification, an official said Tuesday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- This conversation with Dr. Soo Kim -- principal technical advisor at LMI and a former analyst at the Central Intelligence Agency -- is the 399th in "The Trans-Pacific View Insight Series." (Mercy Kuo, *The Diplomat*)

International:

- In an interview with *The Korea Herald* on Monday, the South Korean defense chief said North Korea's Kim may seek to leverage the US presidential election in November to get the incoming administration in Washington to accede to his demands. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- The United Kingdom has submitted satellite images to United Nations experts allegedly showing North Korean cargo shipments to Russia, bringing calls for an investigation into arms deals that may contravene international sanctions. (Aadil Brar, *Newsweek*)
- When Russia turned to Kim Jong-un of North Korea to help it through its war with Ukraine, it came with a big shopping list that included a million rounds of artillery to shoot at Ukrainian troops dug into trenches across the south and east, and dozens of North Korea's newest, barely tested missiles. (David E. Sanger, Julian E. Barnes, Eric Schmitt, *The New York Times*)
- The number of North Koreans entering Russia sharply increased in the third quarter of 2023, nearly matching the total for the entire first half of the year, a surge that experts attribute to ongoing transfers of laborers and the deepening ties between Pyongyang and Moscow. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- South Korea and more than 40 other nations jointly condemned Pyongyang and Moscow for their arms transfers on Monday as concerns are rising that Ukraine could be used as a testing ground for North Korean missiles. (Jung Min-ho, *The Korea Times*)
- Yun Seong-deok, South Korean ambassador to the U.N. office in Geneva, called on Beijing to provide North Korean defectors with the required protections and humanitarian support at China's fourth universal periodic review. (Choi Kyong-ae, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's top envoy to the U.N. renewed Seoul's criticism of arms transactions between North Korea and Russia during a U.N. Security Council meeting on Monday, as Russia's top diplomat shifted the blame to the West for the prolonging of the war in Ukraine. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

- South Korea condemned the transfer of weapons between North Korea and Russia as a direct violation of United Nations Security Council sanctions at a council meeting on Monday. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)

Prepared by Bryan Clark, HRNK Research Intern

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Thursday, January 25th, 2024

With US resources stretched thin, North Korea is pounding the war drum

Top News:
With US resources stretched thin, North Korea is pounding the war drums (The Hill, 01/23/2024)

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un just destroyed part of his father's legacy. Here's how (CNN, 01/25/2024)
Kim Jong Un lays out 10-year plan to fix 'backward' economy at Politburo meeting (NK News, 01/25/2024)
N. Korea-linked hackers stole US$1 billion worth of crypto from record 20 attacks last year: report (Yonhap, 01/25/2024)
N. Korean leader calls weak regional economy 'serious political issue' (Yonhap, 01/25/2024)
North Korea claims cruise missile upgrade (The Korea Herald, 01/25/2024)
North's Kim alludes to food shortages in call for regional development (Korea JoongAng Daily, 01/25/2024)

In South Korea:
Korea begins long-awaited production of Reaper combat drones (Korea JoongAng Daily, 01/25/2024)
S. Korea begins production of spy drones for N. Korea surveillance (Yonhap, 01/25/2024)

International:
Biden to host Japan PM Kishida for official visit in April (Reuters, 01/25/2024)
Mongolian ambassador and embassy staff arrived in Pyongyang in Dec: Sources (NK News, 01/25/2024)
Russian foreign minister evades topic of North Korea arms trade in interview (NK News, 01/25/2024)
U.S. Is Watching North Korea for Signs of Lethal Military Action (The New York Times, 01/25/2024)

Top News:

- North Korea has abolished key government organizations tasked with managing relations with South Korea, state media said Tuesday, as authoritarian leader Kim Jong Un said he would no longer pursue reconciliation with his rival. Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, stated, "This is just justification for more appeasement." (Gordon G. Chang, *The Hill*)

In North Korea:

- Satellite images of Pyongyang, North Korea show the demolition of the "Arch of Reunification," once a sign of hope for reconciliation with South Korea. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un had previously vowed to dismantle the monument after declaring South Korea as a "principal enemy." (Rosemary Church, CNN)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un led a Politburo meeting this week on his new "regional development 20×10 policy," laying out a 10-year plan to mobilize the army and fix the country's chronic "backwardness" by building modern factories in every county nationwide. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea-linked hackers stole US$1 billion worth of cryptocurrency through 20 attacks last year, a report by an analysis firm showed Wednesday, marking the highest number of their hacks since record-keeping began in 2016. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Kim Jong-un called for an improvement in the country's regional economy and rebuked officials over their lukewarm attitude in tackling the "serious political issue," state media said Thursday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The missiles North Korea launched toward the sea west of the Korean Peninsula on Wednesday had been its new strategic cruise missiles, according to its official media. The state official Korean Central News Agency said Thursday that it had test-fired the new strategic cruise missile, whose name Pulhwasal-3-31 means fire arrow in Korean, for the first time the previous day. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- Kim spoke harshly of officials' lukewarm attitude to the issue and ordered that the North's so-called "regional development 20x10 policy" be carried out thoroughly as the country continues to face food shortages. (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea began production of its version of the U.S. hunter-killer MQ-9 Reaper drone to enhance its defense surveillance capabilities against North Korea, ending the 18 years of delay, announced its defense procurement agency. (Lee Keun-pyung, Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea has begun production of medium-altitude unmanned aerial vehicles (MUAVs) to enhance the military's surveillance over North Korea. In December, the Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA) signed a 471.7 billion-won (US$353.6 million) deal with Korean Air, South Korea's biggest airline, along with two defense firms, LIG Nex1 and Hanwha Systems, to manufacture advanced spy drones by 2028. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

International:

- U.S. President Joe Biden will host Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida for an official visit to the United States on April 10, the White House said on Thursday. The formal event, which

includes a lavish state dinner and a policy meeting, follows a promise by Biden to host the closely allied nation key to the United States' strategy toward China, North Korea and other Asian security issues. (Jeff Mason, David Brunnstrom, *Reuters*)

- Mongolia's new ambassador to North Korea took up his position in Pyongyang in December, multiple informed sources have told *NK News*, marking the first time a country excluding China or Russia has replenished its embassy staff since the DPRK shut its borders due to COVID-19. (Chad O'Carroll, Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- Russia's foreign minister repeatedly deflected questions about arms trade with North Korea in an interview on Monday, echoing Moscow's continued dismissal of Washington's allegations that Pyongyang supplied ballistic missiles to Russia for its war against Ukraine. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- U.S. officials are expressing concern that North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un, may take lethal military action against South Korea in the coming months. They believe that Kim has shifted to a policy of open hostility, with recent declarations being more aggressive than before. While there is no perceived imminent risk of a full-scale war on the Korean Peninsula, officials warn that Kim could carry out limited strikes to avoid rapid escalation. The recent aggressive actions include the firing of cruise missiles, testing a new missile with a hypersonic warhead, and firing artillery shells into waters near South Korean islands. Jonathan Finer, the White House deputy national security adviser, stated that North Korea has chosen a "very negative path." (Edward Wong, Julian E. Barnes, *The New York Times*)

Prepared by Diana Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250715124443/https://mailchi.mp/6f74ee404015/hrnk-news-items-with-us-resources-stretched-thin-north-korea-is-pounding-the-war-drums?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, January 26th, 2024

Chinese vice foreign minister meets his North Korean counterpart in Pyongyang

In North Korea:
A New Wharf at Nampho (*38 North*, 01/26/2024)
Inequality worsening in N. Korea's capital, rural areas: ministry (*Yonhap*, 01/26/2024)
North Korea blasts 'rampant violence' against youth and women in UK (*NK News*, 01/26/2024)
North Korea signals confrontation, no signs of war preparation (*Reuters*, 01/26/2024)

International:
Chinese vice foreign minister meets his North Korean counterpart in Pyongyang (*NK News*, 01/26/2024)
N. Korea could turn to nukes 'more easily' in crisis: U.S. think tank report (*Yonhap*, 01/26/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. hold 1st joint cyber security drill (*Yonhap*, 01/26/2024)

U.S. not seeing indications of 'direct' N. Korean threat at this time: Washington official (*Yonhap*, 01/26/2024)
US Senators Express Concern Over North Korea-Russia Cooperation (VOA, 01/26/2024)

In North Korea:

- Commercial satellite imagery shows a new wharf is well under construction at a petrochemical facility in Nampho. The wharf sits alongside four others and is the latest of many efforts to expand capabilities at this facility. (Martyn Williams, Peter Makowsky, *38 North*)
- The economic gap between Pyongyang and North Korea's provincial areas appears to be further widening in terms of food rationing, housing and health services, South Korea's unification ministry said Friday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea slammed the U.K. for "rampant violence" against youth and women in what an expert called a "tabloid-style" propaganda statement, which blatantly omits reported crime data. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- North Korea is stepping up confrontation with the United States and its allies, but officials in Washington and Seoul say they have spotted no signs Pyongyang intends to take imminent military action. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)

International:

- A Chinese delegation led by Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong arrived in Pyongyang on Thursday, according to a report from the state-run *Rodong Sinmun*, in what is likely a visit geared toward bolstering the two nations' ties as they mark the 75th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral relations this year. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- North Korea could resort to nuclear weapons in a crisis "more easily" as it is making "significant" progress toward implementing a more robust nuclear strategy, a U.S. think tank report said Thursday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the United States have conducted their first cyber security drills to bolster their joint posture against rising cyber threats, the defense ministry said Friday. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- The United States is not seeing indications of a direct military threat from North Korea at the moment, a U.S. official said Thursday, after Washington officials were reported to have warned North Korean leader Kim Jong-un could take some "lethal" military action against South Korea in the coming months. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- A bipartisan group of U.S. senators expressed growing concern Friday about military cooperation between North Korea and Russia, saying it places new emphasis on the need for continued U.S. support for Ukraine. (VOA)

Prepared by Rachel Baek, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250715124835/https://mailchi.mp/007a746515cb/hrnk-news-items-with-us-resources-stretched-thin-north-korea-is-pounding-the-war-drums-12238108?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Saturday, January 27th, 2024

China's Repatriation of N. Korean Defectors Supports Pyongyang's Authoritarian Rule

Top News:
Analysts: China's Repatriation of North Korean Defectors Supports Pyongyang's Authoritarian Rule (VOA, 01/26/2024)

In North Korea:
North Korea cracks down on theft of electricity meant for industry (*RFA*, 01/26/2024)

International:
FM Cho discusses bilateral ties, N. Korea issues with visiting U.S. congressman (*Yonhap*, 01/26/2024)
N. Korea's foreign minister meets visiting Chinese vice FM: state media (*Yonhap*, 01/27/2024)
North Korea, China agree to defend common interests as senior envoys meet (*Reuters*, 01/26/2024)
S. Korea delivers state medal for U.S. Gen. MacArthur after 74 years (*Yonhap*, 01/27/2024)
The End of North Korea (*Newsweek*, 01/27/2024)
Top nuclear envoy discusses N. Korea issues with U.N. official, ambassadors in Geneva (*Yonhap*, 01/26/2024)
U.S. will work to 'make sure' it can protect allies over N. Korea threats: White House official (*Yonhap*, 01/27/2024)
US and China to hold counter-narcotics talks after back-channel Thai meeting (*Financial Times*, 01/27/2024)

Top News:

- Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director for the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, said that for China to consider North Korean defectors as refugees, it would have to honor its obligation under the 1951 Convention "instead of engaging in blatant breaches of these international human rights instruments it ratified." (Christy Lee, VOA)

In North Korea:

- North Korea is cracking down on electricity theft, punishing not only residents who tap into factory supply wires, but also the corrupt officials that sell them access, residents in the country told *Radio Free Asia*. (Ahn Chang-gyu, RFA)

International:

- Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul met with U.S. Congressman Joe Wilson (R-SC) on Friday, and discussed the bilateral alliance and other common issues, including mutual cooperation with Japan and North Korea, Cho's office said. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

- North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui has met with a visiting Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong in Pyongyang, North Korean state media reported Saturday. The North appears to be seeking to strengthen ties with Beijing amid its stepped-up cooperation with Russia. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea and China agreed to strengthen tactical cooperation and defend common interests, the North's official KCNA news agency said on Saturday, reporting on Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui's meeting with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong. (*Reuters*)
- South Korea delivered a state military medal for late U.S. Gen. Douglas MacArthur, who led U.N. troops against North Korea in the 1950-53 Korean War, 74 years after deciding to confer the decoration, the defense ministry said Saturday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- As the global order reshuffles, attention is once again turning to the "Hermit Kingdom" and whether it can survive the decades to come. (Ellie Cook, *Newsweek*)
- South Korea's top nuclear envoy has met with a senior U.N. official on human rights and foreign ambassadors in Geneva and discussed North Korea's nuclear and human rights issues, Seoul's foreign ministry said Friday. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The United States will do what it has to do to "make sure" that it can protect itself and its allies, said John Kirby, the National Security Council coordinator for strategic communications on Friday. This is amid a rise in tensions caused by North Korea's bellicose rhetoric and continued weapons tests. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The White House said they also held "candid, substantive and constructive discussions" on issues that included Russia's war against Ukraine, the Middle East, North Korea and the South China Sea. (Demetri Sevastopulo, *Financial Times*)

Prepared by Ava Jane Moorlach, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250715125205/https://mailchi.mp/4e518f71b16c/hrnk-news-items-chinas-repatriation-of-n-korean-defectors-supports-pyongyangs-authoritarian-rule?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, January 28th, 2024

Kim Jong Un's sister 'not to be underestimated,' author says

Top News:
Kim Jong Un's sister 'not to be underestimated,' author says (RFA, 01/28/2024)

In North Korea:
N. Korea fires several cruise missiles from its east coast: JCS (*Yonhap*, 01/28/2024)
North Korea fires cruise missiles from sea near Sinpo (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/28/2024)
North Korea fires cruise missiles off east coast (*Reuters*, 01/28/2024)
North Korea fires cruise missiles off east coast, Seoul reports (*BBC News*, 01/27/2024)
North Korean cruise missiles fired near shipyard for submarines: JCS (*The Korea Herald*, 01/28/2024)

South Korea says North Korea fired several cruise missiles, adding to provocative weapons tests (*AP News*, 01/27/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Kim Jong Un's rejection of Korean reunification opens perilous new era (*Financial Times*, 01/27/2024)
Kim Jong-Un rips up plan to reunify Korea, raising fears of all-out war (*The Telegraph*, 01/28/2024)

International:
China unlikely to play constructive role in resolving N. Korea's threats (*The Korea Times*, 01/28/2024)
China, North Korea vow to deepen ties 'at all levels', no let-up in missile tests by Pyongyang (*South China Morning Post*, 01/27/2024)
Sullivan voices concerns over N. Korea's weapons tests, ties with Russia in talks with Wang: official (*Yonhap*, 01/28/2024)
U.S. to work with S. Korea, Japan to address N.K. threats: Pentagon spokesperson (*Yonhap*, 01/29/2024)
US will 'protect our allies' from North Korean aggression, Kirby says (*Fox News*, 01/27/2024)

Top News:

- "She is really the mastermind of this family campaign to expand their influence over South Korea and beyond," Lee [Sung-Yoon] said at a book-signing event hosted by the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea at DACOR Bacon House in Washington, D.C. on Thursday morning. (Alex Willemyns, *RFA*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea fired several cruise missiles from its east coast on Sunday, the South Korean military said, days after Pyongyang test-fired new strategic cruise missiles from the west coast. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea launched multiple cruise missiles from a location in the East Sea near Sinpo, South Hamgyong Province, the Joint Chiefs of Staff said on Sunday, marking the North's second launch of cruise missiles within a week. (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea fired multiple cruise missiles off its east coast on Sunday, its second such launch in less than a week, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- North Korea has fired several cruise missiles in waters off its east coast, South Korea's military says. (George Wright, *BBC News*)
- The JCS said in a message to reporters that the missiles landed at around 8 a.m. in waters near the North Korean port city of Sinpo, South Hamgyong Province, on the eastern coast. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea's military said Sunday that North Korea fired several cruise missiles that flew over waters near a major military shipyard on the country's eastern coast, extending a streak in weapons tests that are worsening tensions with the United States, South Korea and Japan. (*AP News*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Kim's dramatic policy shift this month has opened a dangerous new phase in the frozen conflict between the two Koreas, analysts say, with some even fearing that he is laying the ideological groundwork for a new war. (Christian Davies, *Financial Times*)
- The North Korean leader's warmongering tone shows no sign of abating after the arch of reunification is destroyed and missiles are launched off the east coast. (Nicola Smith, *The Telegraph*)

International:

- China is either unwilling or unable to play a constructive role in addressing North Korea's nuclear threats despite repeated calls from the international community. This observation comes in the wake of the latest appeal made during a recent meeting between the top security official of the United States and China's top diplomat. (Lee Hyo-jin, *The Korea Times*)
- China and North Korea have vowed to "strengthen strategic communication at all levels" amid renewed tensions on the Korean peninsula. (Holly Chik, *South China Morning Post*)
- U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan raised concerns with China over North Korea's recent weapons tests and growing ties with Russia during his talks with China's top diplomat, Wang Yi, in Bangkok this week, a senior U.S. official said Saturday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States will continue to work together with South Korea and Japan to tackle North Korean military threats, a Pentagon spokesperson said Sunday, after Pyongyang fired several cruise missiles, the latest in a recent series of its weapons tests. (Song Sang-ho, Kim Dong-hyun, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. is prepared to ensure the safety of its East Asian allies in the event of North Korean aggression, according to the National Security Council. NSC Coordinator John Kirby said during a White House Press Conference that the US has worked with Japan and South Korea to ensure defensive capabilities. (Timothy H.J. Nerozzi, *Fox News*)

Prepared by Jiwoo-Katie Choi, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250715125515/https://mailchi.mp/3c7bc60fed69/hrnk-news-items-kim-jong-uns-sister-not-to-be-underestimated-author-says?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Monday, January 29th, 2024

First public center exposing NK human rights to open in Seoul; N. Korean official killed by protesters in China

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un boosts underwater nuclear threat, urges fast submarine build (RFA, 01/28/2024)
Kim Jong Un Warns North Korea Reaching Poverty Crisis (*Newsweek*, 01/29/2024)

N.K. leader oversees submarine-launched cruise missile test: state media (*Yonhap*, 01/29/2024)
North Korea Shares Ominous Kim Jong Un Photos (*Newsweek*, 01/29/2024)
North Korea tested new submarine-launched cruise missile, state media says (UPI, 01/29/2024)
North Korea tests submarine-launches cruise missiles, KCNA says (*Reuters*, 01/29/2024)
North Korea threatens 'ruthless punishment' after first-ever US-ROK cyber drills (NK *News*, 01/29/2024)
North Korean cruise missile tests add to country's provocative start to 2024 (AP, 01/29/2024)

In South Korea:
First public center exposing NK human rights to open in Seoul (*The Korea Herald*, 01/29/2024)
FM Cho praises Navy's 'hard work' to keep country safe during visit to battle unit (*Yonhap*, 01/29/2024)
S. Korea to develop spy drone deployable from warships by 2028 (*Yonhap*, 01/29/2024)
S. Korean military sees N. Korea's claimed submarine-launched cruise missile test as 'exaggerated' (*Yonhap*, 01/29/2024)
Seoul denies avoiding drills near border (*The Korea Herald*, 01/28/2024)
South Korea to develop drones for surveilling North Korea near sea border (NK *News*, 01/29/2024)
Tae Yong-ho announces second bid for Assembly (*The Korea Herald*, 01/29/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N. Korea's diversified missile platforms pose challenges to S. Korea's air defense (*Yonhap*, 01/29/2024)
Unification minister says designating day for defectors also meaningful for N. Korean people (*Yonhap*, 01/29/2024)

International:
How Serious Are the Latest Threats From North Korea? (*The Diplomat*, 01/29/2024)
North Korea, China vow to deepen ties as Pyongyang conducts new missile tests (*South China Morning Post*, 01/29/2024)
North Korean official killed by protesters in China (*The Korea Times*, 01/29/2024)
Putin in Pyongyang? Proposed trip to meet Kim Jong-un reveals Russia's growing reliance on North Korea (*South China Morning Post*, 01/29/2024)
Russia's new ambassador to ROK denies any weapons trade with North Korea (NK *News*, 01/29/2024)
S. Korea renews hope for resolution over imminent removal of memorial stone for forced labor victims (*Yonhap*, 01/29/2024)
S. Korea-Russia relations hit new low following defense minister's remarks on Ukraine aid (*The Korea Times*, 01/29/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. discuss space cooperation (*Yonhap*, 01/29/2024)
This Ambush Shows How Ukraine Is Holding the Line (*The Wall Street Journal*, 01/29/2024)
Vice veterans minister meets new UNC deputy commander (*Yonhap*, 01/29/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un has overseen the test-firing of submarine-launched cruise missiles and ordered officials to expedite the North's nuclear submarine development, state media reported on Monday. (Lee Jeong-Ho, RFA)

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un acknowledged last week that his country's economy was in "terrible situation" as he touted a new development scheme to stimulate the isolated regime. (Micah McCartney, *Newsweek*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has overseen the test-fire of submarine-launched cruise missiles and reviewed a project to build a nuclear-powered submarine, state media reported Monday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has presided over new missile tests, images published by Pyongyang's state media appear to show, in the latest show of military force from the secretive nation. (Ellie Cook, *Newsweek*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un oversaw the test-firing of new submarine-launched cruise missiles and reviewed a project to build a nuclear submarine, state-run media reported Monday. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- North Korea tested its new submarine-launched cruise missiles (SLCM) on Sunday, firing an upgraded missile for the second time in a week and accelerating its navy's nuclear armament, state media reported on Monday. (Jack Kim, *Reuters*)
- North Korea condemned a landmark joint cyber exercise between the U.S. and South Korea as preparation for war and warned that any conflict would result in "ruthless punishment." (Joon Ha Park, Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Korea's weekend test of new cruise missiles for submarine launches added to its provocative start to 2024, as leader Kim Jong Un flaunts his growing nuclear arsenal and threatens nuclear conflict with Washington, Seoul and Tokyo. (Kim Tong-Hyung, *AP*)

In South Korea:

- Seoul will be home to the first-ever government-run center dedicated to shed light on the North Korean regime's human rights abuses and violations and enhance public awareness of the issue, the Unification Ministry announced Monday. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul praised the work of the South Korean Navy dedicated to protecting the country during a visit to a battle unit Monday, saying strong security is what buttresses diplomacy. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea aims to develop an unmanned reconnaissance aircraft deployable from warships by 2028, the state arms procurement agency said Monday, amid efforts to boost surveillance against North Korean threats. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's military said Monday it is putting weight on the possibility that North Korea's latest purported test of submarine-launched cruise missiles is "exaggerated," noting that a detailed analysis is under way with the United States. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- The Ministry of National Defense in Seoul on Sunday denied reports that the South Korean military was still putting off drills near the shared border, as per the 2018 inter-Korean agreement that North Korea withdrew from earlier. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea will develop new spy drones that can be loaded on warships near the western maritime border to better surveil North Korea, the country's Defense Acquisition Program Association announced on Monday. (Jeongmin Kim, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- Ruling People Power Party Rep. Tae Yong-ho, who was formerly a senior diplomat for North Korea, said Monday he will run for a second term in the National Assembly in a Seoul district typically lenient toward the rival party. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea's recent series of missile launches using diverse platforms indicate its efforts to develop more powerful and harder-to-detect weapons, posing a challenge to South Korea's missile defense system, experts said Monday. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's point man on North Korea said Monday that designating a day for North Korean defectors would not only be meaningful for those who have settled in South Korea but also those living in the North. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

International:

- In this video, recorded on January 26, *The Diplomat*'s Shannon Tiezzi interviews Ankit Panda. They discuss North Korea's military build-up, the international response, and the potential for South Korea to go nuclear. (Shannon Tiezzi, *The Diplomat*)
- North Korean foreign vice-minister Pak Myong-ho hosted a meeting with his Chinese counterpart, Sun Weidong, in the capital Pyongyang on January 26, 2024, as the two countries marked 75 years of diplomatic ties. (Miguel Perez, *South China Morning Post*)
- At least one North Korean government official was killed and three others were seriously injured in China after a series of protests by North Korean workers there earlier this month, an expert at a state-funded think tank claimed on Monday, citing multiple sources. (Jung Min-ho, *The Korea Times*)
- Vladimir Putin's coming meeting with Kim Jong-un highlights the Russian president's "limited travel options" -- and an increasingly emboldened North Korea -- amid both countries' international isolation, analysts said. (Maria Siow, *South China Morning Post*)
- Russia's new ambassador to South Korea denied that any arms deals with North Korea have occurred and repeated warnings that ROK support for Ukraine beyond humanitarian assistance would cross a "red line" and trigger retaliation from Moscow. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- South Korea on Monday restated its hope for a resolution after a Japanese local government began removing a memorial stone for Korean victims of Japan's wartime forced labor at a public park. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's already-strained relations with Russia have worsened further following Defense Minister Shin Won-sik's remarks on offering "full support" to Ukraine. (Lee Hyo-jin, *The Korea Times*)
- Senior officials from South Korea and the United States discussed cooperation in space exploration as Seoul pushes ahead with the establishment of its independent space agency in May, officials said Monday. (Kim Na-young, *Yonhap*)
- As Western support for Kyiv hangs in the balance, Moscow has secured supplies of missiles from Iran and North Korea while ramping up domestic industrial production. (Isabel Coles, *The Wall Street Journal*)
- Vice Veterans Minister Lee Hee-wan on Monday met with the new deputy commander of the U.N. Command (UNC) to discuss strengthening cooperation on veterans affairs projects commemorating UNC troops. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250715125710/https://mailchi.mp/c372eed80d39/hrnk-news-items-0129-2024?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Tuesday, January 30th, 2024

Rising N.K. threats raise questions over U.S. policy efficacy

In North Korea:
N. Korea forms committee to carry out regional economic policy (*Yonhap*, 01/30/2024)
N. Korea pulls out of Hong Kong, Libya in series of embassy closures: official (*Yonhap*, 01/30/2024)
N. Korea regains status as country implementing global anti-doping rules (*Yonhap*, 01/30/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korea says North launched third round of cruise missiles (*The Hill*, 01/30/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
With tensions between North and South Korea high, border island could be a flashpoint (*NPR*, 01/30/2024)

International:
China's art delegation visits NK, signaling revival in cultural exchanges (*The Korea Herald*, 01/30/2024)
Rising N.K. threats raise questions over U.S. policy efficacy (*Yonhap*, 01/30/2024)
Russia supplied some 100,000 barrels of refined petroleum to N. Korea last year (*Yonhap*, 01/30/2024)
U.S. stresses 'ironclad' security commitment to S. Korea after N.K. missile launch (*Yonhap*, 01/30/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has formed a committee led by a key aide of leader Kim Jong-un to oversee the construction of modernized factories in backward provinces to spur regional development, state media said Tuesday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has shut down its diplomatic missions in Hong Kong and Libya, a foreign ministry official said Tuesday, as the recalcitrant regime struggles with economic challenges amid prolonged sanctions. They are the latest in the list of overseas missions Pyongyang has shut down in the past months, including Angola, Nepal, Bangladesh, Spain and Uganda. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has been removed from a list of countries that are non-compliant with global anti-doping rules after a period of more than two years, the global anti-doping body has said. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea said Tuesday that North Korea launched cruise missiles for the third time this month. (Tara Suter, *The Hill*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Yeonpyeong Island near the maritime border between North and South Korea has seen clashes in the past, and with military tensions running high, it's seen as a potential flashpoint. (Anthony Kuhn, NPR)

International:

- A Chinese cultural and art delegation hailing from the northeastern province of Liaoning arrived in Pyongyang on Monday, marking a revival in friendship events commemorating the Lunar New Year's holiday that had been paused the last few years. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- Calls for Washington to pay more heed to evolving North Korean threats have risen as North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's rhetoric against Seoul and his regime's tests of apparent nuclear weapon delivery platforms raised the specter of potential armed conflict on the Korean Peninsula. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Russia reported to the United Nations that it had supplied around 100,000 barrels of refined petroleum to North Korea last year, data showed Tuesday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The United States on Monday reiterated its "ironclad" security commitment to South Korea as tensions flared anew following North Korea's recent test-firing of a claimed submarine-launched cruise missile. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Diana Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250715130045/https://mailchi.mp/fb62f1b5e805/hrnk-news-items-rising-nk-threats-raise-questions-over-us-policy-efficacy?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, January 31st, 2024

UN Invites N. Korean Human Rights Organizations to Apply for Support from Fund for Victims of Torture

Top News:
UN Invites N. Korean Human Rights Organizations to Apply for Support from Fund for Victims of Torture (VOA, 01/16/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
N. Korea says it conducted strategic cruise missile "Hwasal-2" launch Tuesday (*Yonhap*, 01/31/2024)

In South Korea:
Unification minister slams NK war rhetoric backers as 'anti-state' (*Yonhap*, 01/31/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
North Korean drones pose major risk to South Korean airports, lawmaker says (*NK News*, 01/31/2024)
S. Korea's Yoon warns N. Korea may try to disrupt April poll (*Reuters*, 01/31/2024)
S. Korea labels Kim regime irrational, calls for an end to provocation (*RFA*, 01/30/2024)

International:
Bolton warns Trump could seek 'reckless' deal on N.K. nuclear program if reelected (*Yonhap*, 01/31/2024)
The Dangers of Overreacting to North Korea's Provocations (*Foreign Affairs*, 01/30/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea said Wednesday it conducted a drill to launch the Hwasal-2 strategic cruise missile the previous day to check its rapid counterattack posture and improve its strategic striking capability. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho on Wednesday condemned some liberal South Koreans supportive of North Korea's war rhetoric for having an "anti-state" mindset that could undermine the foundation of the South. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Only small fraction of airfields have drone detection tech, Seoul confirms, but level of danger posed is less certain. (Jeongmin Kim, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- S. Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol warned on Wednesday that N. Korea could stage provocations such as armed actions near the shared border, drone intrusions, cyber attacks or spreading fake news to interfere in April's parliamentary elections. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- S. Korea's President Yoon Suk Yeol issued a fresh warning to N. Korea Wednesday, as Pyongyang continued its military provocation, with missile tests potentially placing the US and its allies within the range of its nuclear capabilities. (Lee Jeong-Ho, *RFA*

International:

- Former U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton warned in his memoir published Tuesday that former President Donald Trump, if reelected, could attempt to reach a "reckless" deal on North Korea's nuclear program that would alienate South Korea. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. power has kept the peace for more than 70 years on the Korean Peninsula. There is no reason that it cannot continue to do so. (Sue Mi Terry, *Foreign Affairs*)

UN Invites N. Korean Human Rights Organizations to Apply for Support from Fund for Victims of Torture

Kim Young-kwon
VOA News
January 16, 2024

A United Nations human rights office has announced a funding opportunity for programs to support the rehabilitation of torture victims and their families worldwide. It is expected that some benefits will also be provided to North Korean escapees who have suffered from torture in North Korea, which is sometimes called "the Republic of Torture." Reporter Kim Young-kwon has the story.

On January 16, the UN Human Rights Office in Seoul posted a notice on the online social networking service X regarding the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT), calling for the submission of applications by the March 1 deadline.

This fund was established 40 years ago to support rehabilitation programs for torture victims and their families. Every year, it disburses grants to non-governmental organizations that provide medical, psychological, legal, or social assistance to torture victims and their families.

On January 15, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) posted a notice calling for applications for 2025, stating that it plans to provide between $30,000 and $100,000 each to organizations for programs that directly assist victims and their families, as well as capacity-building programs.

Last year, the UNVFVT provided $9 million to 190 organizations and programs in 90 countries, assisting over 53,380 individuals.

Greg Scarlatoiu, the Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), which holds consultative status at the UN, told VOA on January 16 that "This fund means that the voices of victims of torture from North Korea will be heard. These are not very sizable grants, but nevertheless, they will provide support for capacity building. Capacity building for civil society organizations that have endeavored to work with North Korean victims of torture to listen to their stories, to understand their stories."

North Korea is known among the UN and international human rights organizations as the "the Republic of Torture" due to the severity of torture in the country.

The UN Commission of Inquiry (COI) on human rights in North Korea noted in its 2014 final report that "the use of torture is an established practice of the interrogation process" in North Korea, identifying torture as one of the crimes against humanity occurring in the country.

In a statement issued on the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture last year, President Joe Biden stated that "In North Korea, there are widespread credible reports of torture and other forms of cruel, inhumane, and degrading punishment by the government, including in political prison camps, and against women specifically, such as sexual violence, forced abortion, and forced sterilization."

Based on VOA's examination of OHCHR records, the only organization to receive UNVFVT support among North Korean human rights organizations as of 2022 was the Database Center for North Korean Human Rights (NKDB).

The Director of NKDB, Yoon Yeo-sang, told VOA that through this fund, NKDB is assisting the physical and psychological recovery of North Korean escapees who have experienced torture.

Yoon explained that "since the impact of torture extends throughout one's lifetime, long-term intervention and support are necessary." He emphasized that "this is particularly true because the damage is not only physical, but also significant in terms of mental health."

Yoon added, "we provide individual and group counseling, as well as medical treatment. Specialized counselors and social workers work together as a team in this effort."

NKDB states on its website that it has received funding from the UN for the tenth consecutive year to provide support to North Korean escapees who have experienced torture. This includes group counseling and cultural experiences, including a program called "healing camp."

The UN Human Rights Office in Seoul, which is responsible for addressing North Korean human rights issues, directly posted the notice of this funding opportunity on X. This was interpreted as an invitation and encouragement for more North Korean human rights organizations to apply.

A representative of a North Korean human rights organization based in South Korea told VOA on January 16 that "the maximum grant is not large, around 100 million won at most. Nevertheless, it seems that they are seeking to raise awareness of the severity of torture in North Korea by inviting applications from a wider range of organizations."

This individual and Scarlatoiu both emphasized the need for the South Korean government to not only increase its efforts to document instances of torture through the testimony of North Korean escapees, but also enhance efforts to raise awareness, given the high level of international interest in the issue of torture.

Earlier, South Korea's Ministry of Unification stated to VOA that it "does not have specific programs" to support escapees who have experienced torture in North Korea before resettling in South Korea.

However, the Ministry added that it had "a budget of 88.3 billion won [approximately $65 million] to provide medical care and psychological support for North Korean escapees who resettle in South Korea, including 54.5 billion won for administrative support and 33.8 billion won for social adjustment."

This is Kim Young-kwon for VOA News.

Translated by Haeun Moon, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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Prepared by Emily Charley, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250715130230/https://mailchi.mp/f7592aa2d850/hrnk-news-items-un-invites-n-korean-human-rights-organizations-to-apply-for-support-from-fund-for-victims-of-torture?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

2. FEBRUARY

Thursday, February 1st, 2024

Number of NK defectors entering S. Korea nearly triples in 2023

In North Korea:
How Kim Jong-Un's North Korea Will Pushback Against the West (*National Interest*, 02/01/2024)
Is North Korea Getting Ready for War? No, and the Reason Is Obvious (*National Interest*, 02/01/2024)
Kim Jong Un secretly visits new luxury mall in Pyongyang with China connections (*NK News*, 02/01/2024)
N. Korea's ruling party holds workshop to strengthen discipline (*Yonhap*, 02/01/2024)
N.K. posters on festival marking ex-leader's birth anniversary (*Yonhap*, 02/01/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korea discloses symbol of S. Koreans abducted, detained by N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 02/01/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Number of NK defectors entering S. Korea nearly triples in 2023 (*The Korea Herald*, 02/01/2024)

International:
Cuba's new envoy to N.K. assumes post amid Pyongyang's move to resume diplomacy (*Yonhap*, 02/01/2024)
North Korean delegation to visit Moscow, Russian lawmaker says (*Reuters*, 02/01/2024)
John Bolton warns of 'reckless deal' with North Korea should Trump be reelected (*NK News*, 02/01/2024)
Vietnamese envoy marks diplomatic ties with N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 02/01/2024)

In North Korea:

- Kim appears to have set a course to generate more tensions in 2024. (Scott A. Snyder, *National Interest*)
- If Kim Jong-un is preparing for a war, it is one that he should not want and cannot win. He lacks a plausible theory of victory regardless of how many missiles he tests. (Patrick M. Cronin, *National Interest*)
- Amid 'communism' revival, North Korea signals elite class remains priority and driver of sanctions evasion efforts (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea's ruling Workers' Party has hosted a workshop on party discipline for officials, state media said Thursday, in what appeared to be part of efforts to tighten its grip over its people. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

- A propaganda poster on the 2nd People's Art Festival celebrating the birth anniversary of the late North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, named "the Day of the Shining Star." The festival will be held at theatres and halls in Pyongyang from Feb. 11-18, according to the newswire. (*Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's unification ministry said Thursday it has created a symbol of South Koreans abducted and detained in North Korea with an image of three forget-me-nots in a bid to raise public awareness of the issue. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- The number of North Korean defectors who arrived in South Korea came to 196 last year amid a rise in defections by North Korean diplomats and trade officials, government data showed. (Nam Kyung-don, *The Korea Herald*)

International:

- Cuba's new ambassador to North Korea has begun his duties, according to the North's state media Thursday, as countries having friendly ties with North Korea have ramped up diplomatic activities in the secretive regime since the opening of its border. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- A North Korean delegation will visit the lower house of Russia's parliament on Feb 13, state news agency RIA quoted a deputy from the opposition Communist Party as saying on Thursday. Communist lawmaker Kazbek Taysaev also said that a Russian parliamentary delegation planned to travel to North Korea in March. (Felix Light, *Reuters*)
- Former national security adviser John Bolton warns that Donald Trump may pursue a "reckless deal" with North Korea, endangering the U.S. and allies. Bolton claims Trump "almost gave away the store to Pyongyang" during summits with Kim Jong Un and speculates that Trump could try again in a second term, potentially alienating Japan and South Korea while extending China's influence. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- Officials from the Vietnamese Embassy in Pyongyang, including the ambassador, offer flowers in front of the statues of North Korea's late founder, Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il, at Mansudae Hill in the North's capital on Jan. 31, 2024, on the occasion of the 74th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two nations. (*Yonhap*)

Prepared by Diana Woo, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250715131011/https://mailchi.mp/407aa28c4dda/hrnk-news-items-number-of-nk-defectors-entering-s-korea-nearly-triples-in-2023?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Friday, February 2nd, 2024

North Korea's Kim Jong Un calls for 'war preparations' during first-ever Naval shipyard inspection in Nampho

In North Korea:
N. Korea fires several cruise missiles off west coast: JCS (*Yonhap*, 02/02/2024)
North Korea tests more cruise missiles as leader Kim calls for war readiness (*AP News*, 02/02/2024)
North Korea's Kim Jong Un calls for 'war preparations' during first-ever Naval shipyard inspection in Nampho (*Fox News*, 02/02/2024)
Postech to create international admissions track for undergraduates (*Korea Joongang Daily*, 02/02/2024)
U.S. calls on N. Korea to refrain from 'provocative, destabilizing actions' after cruise missile launches (*Yonhap*, 02/02/2024)

In South Korea:
U.S. and South Korean special forces conduct drill amid North's belligerence (*NBC News*, 02/02/2024)
Vice unification minister highlights role of N. Korean defectors for unification (*Yonhap*, 02/02/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Air and Space: The New Frontier of Conflict on the Korean Peninsula (*38 North*, 02/02/2024)

International:
China and the U.S. Are Talking, but Their Détente Has Limits (*The New York Times*, 02/02/2024)
Prepare for the loss of U.S. deterrence (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/02/2024)
U.S. admiral says 'symbiotic' N.K.-Russia cooperation runs counter to global peace principles (*Yonhap*, 02/02/2024)
U.S. calls on N. Korea to refrain from 'provocative, destabilizing actions' after cruise missile launches (*Yonhap*, 02/02/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea conducted another cruise missile launch off its west coast, marking the fourth such launch this year. The South Korean military detected the launch and expressed concern, as these cruise missiles are harder to detect and pose a threat to South Korea's air defense system. North Korea has been enhancing both its cruise missile and ballistic missile capabilities in recent tests. (Kim Eun-Jung, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea on Friday extended a provocative series of weapons tests by firing cruise missiles into the sea, as leader Kim Jong Un called for his military to step up war preparations and toured a shipyard. (Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)
- North Korean ruler Kim Jong Un reasserted his goal that the military step up "war preparations" on Friday, state media said. (Lawrence Richard, *Fox News*)
- Pohang University of Science and Technology (Postech) is set to receive 1.2 trillion won ($900 million) in investments over the next decade. The university plans to use the funding to establish an international admissions track for undergraduates, boost research

competitiveness, extend the retirement age for professors, offer financial aid to students, and create a Future Campus Town with enhanced facilities for learning and research. (Lee Tae-Hee, *Korea Joongang Daily*)

- The United States urged North Korea to cease "provocative" actions and return to diplomacy after North Korea conducted its fourth round of cruise missile launches in the Yellow Sea. The U.S. expressed concern over the launches and emphasized its commitment to diplomacy with North Korea. (Song Sangho, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- South Korean and U.S. special forces held their first combined drills of the new year at the northern South Korean city of Pocheon near the Korean border. (*NBC News*)
- Vice Unification Minister Moon Seoung-hyun on Friday emphasized the importance of North Korean defectors, calling them "precious assets" who can serve as South Korea's link to the North Korean people. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- The Korean Peninsula is witnessing an escalated military conflict, triggered by the suspension of the Comprehensive Military Agreement, leading to an arms race and expanding the conflict into air and space domains. (Sangsoo Lee, *38 North*)

International:

- Negotiations have resumed on restricting the flow of fentanyl into the United States. But Beijing may prove less cooperative on Iran and North Korea. (David Pearson, Olivia Wang, *The New York Times*)
- Former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta warned at a House hearing on the Strategic Competition Between the U.S. and the Chinese Communist Party that America is losing global military deterrence, with Pompeo specifically expressing concern about the potential loss of deterrence in Asia. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Adm. Samuel Paparo, the nominee for U.S. Indo-Pacific Command chief, expressed deep concerns over the military partnership between North Korea and Russia, calling it "symbiotic" and detrimental to global peace. He also highlighted the importance of extended deterrence and the South Korea-U.S. alliance in maintaining peace in the Pacific region. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States called on North Korea to cease "provocative" actions and return to diplomacy after North Korea's fourth round of cruise missile launches. The State Department expressed concern and emphasized the absence of hostile intent towards North Korea. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Ashley Park and Diana Woo, HRNK Research Interns

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250715131126/https://mailchi.mp/4d9ee60e1d5a/hrnk-news-items-north-koreas-kim-jong-un-calls-for-war-preparations-during-first-ever-naval-shipyard-inspection-in-nampho?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Saturday, February 3rd, 2024

How N. Korean eyelashes make their way to West as 'made in China'

In North Korea:
Kim Jong-un instructs North Korea's navy to prepare for war (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/02/2024)
N. Korea says it conducted 'cruise missile super-large warhead power test' (*Yonhap*, 02/03/2024)
North Korea ramps up cruise missile tests as Kim emphasizes naval build-up (*The Washington Times*, 02/02/2024)
North Korea says it tested cruise missiles with 'super-large' warheads in its latest weapons display (*AP*, 02/02/2024)
North Korea says it tested new 'super-large' cruise missile warhead (*NK News*, 02/03/2024)

In South Korea:
Victims fume at Lee Jae-myung for 'flattering' North Korean regime (*The Korea Herald*, 02/02/2024)

International:
How North Korean eyelashes make their way to West as 'made in China' (*Reuters*, 02/03/2024)
Korea summons Russian ambassador over 'ignorant remarks' (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/03/2024)
N.Korea slams Japan over planned purchase of US Tomahawk missiles (*NHK World*, 02/03/2024)
Russia arms deal revives North Korea's struggling economy (*Deutsche Welle*, 02/01/2024)
S. Korea summons Russian ambassador over commentary on Yoon's remark (*Yonhap*, 02/03/2024)
Senior U.S. official visits major S. Korean companies to discuss supply chain cooperation (*Yonhap*, 02/02/2024)
South Korea summons Russian envoy over criticism of President Yoon's remarks (*Reuters*, 02/03/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un called on the country's navy to be ready for "war preparations at present" at a shipyard on Friday as U.s. and South Korean forces released footage from a joint drill that simulated the taking out of the North Korean leader. (Lee Yu-jung, Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea said Saturday it conducted what it calls a "cruise missile super-large warhead power test" and test-fired a new type of anti-aircraft missile the previous day. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea test-fired yet another barrage of cruise missiles off its west coast Friday morning, its fourth such test just since the start of the year, as leader Kim Jong Un intensified his drive for a refocus on naval power. (Andrew Salmon, *The Washington Times*)

- North Korea said it tested cruise missiles outfitted with new "super-large" warheads as well as a new type of anti-aircraft missile, extending a streak in weapons demonstrations that has rival South Korea worried. (Kim Tong-Hyung, AP)
- North Korea launched cruise missiles carrying new "super-large" warheads on the west coast Friday, according to state media the following day, confirming a report from the South Korean military saying it detected the test in real time. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- South Korean opposition Democratic Party of Korea chair Rep. Lee Jae-myung is facing criticism from the families of victims of North Korean abuses and defectors over his remarks "flattering" the Kim Jong-un regime. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)

International:

- The processing and packaging of North Korean false eyelashes - openly conducted in neighbouring China, the country's largest trading partner - gives Kim Jong Un's regime a way to skirt international sanctions, providing a vital source of foreign currency. (Ju-min Park, Eduardo Baptista, *Reuters*)
- The Foreign Ministry in Seoul summoned the Russian ambassador on Saturday to protest recent comments made by the Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson about President Yoon Suk Yeol. (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea has reacted furiously to plans by Japan to purchase cruise missiles from the United States. (*NHK World*)
- North Korea's economy benefits from an arms deal with Russia, providing a much-needed boost amid sanctions. (Nik Martin, *Deutsche Welle*)
- South Korea's foreign ministry on Saturday summoned the top Russian envoy to Seoul to protest a recent statement by a Russian foreign ministry official on President Yoon Suk Yeol's view of the North Korean regime. (Kang Yoon-seung, *Yonhap*)
- A senior United States State Department official recently visited major South Korean companies in Seoul to discuss bilateral cooperation in areas related to supply chains, according to his social media Friday. (Chang Dong-woo, *Yonhap*)
- The South Korean foreign ministry on Saturday summoned Russia's envoy in Seoul to lodge a complaint over Moscow's criticism of recent remarks by South Korea President Yoon Suk-yeol on North Korea's pursuit of a nuclear arsenal. (*Reuters*)

Prepared by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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Sunday, February 4th, 2024

U.S. nuclear envoy says no indications of 'direct' N.K. military action

International:
Navy chief visits U.S. naval base housing nuclear submarines (*Yonhap*, 02/04/2024)
Russian deputy foreign minister visits Seoul amidst war of words (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/04/2024)
S. Korea calls on Moscow to act responsibly as Russian deputy FM visits Seoul (*Yonhap*, 02/04/2024)
Trump win likely to pose enormous defense costs, diplomatic challenges to Korea (*The Korea Times*, 02/04/2024)
U.S. nuclear envoy says no indications of 'direct' N.K. military action, stresses 'sincerity' in dialogue (*Yonhap*, 02/04/2024)
Xi Jinping is playing deadly games with Myanmar and North Korea (*The Guardian*, 02/04/2024)

International:

- South Korea's top naval officer visited a key naval submarine base in the United States for the first time and stressed the need to strengthen ties against growing North Korean threats, the South's Navy said Sunday. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- Deputy Foreign Minister Chung Byung-won met with Andrey Rudenko, the Russian deputy foreign minister overseeing the Asia-Pacific region, on Friday to address the war in Ukraine and international affairs. During the meeting, Chung urged Moscow to behave responsibly and cooperate in preventing infringements on the rights of Korean citizens and businesses in Russia. (Cho Jung-woo, Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea has called for Moscow to act responsibly, the foreign ministry said Sunday, as a senior Russian diplomat visited Seoul for talks on regional security. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- With Donald Trump cruising to a rematch with United States President Joe Biden in the presidential election in November, the world, including South Korea, is preparing for a possible second Trump presidency, which is anticipated to force many countries to recalibrate their diplomatic strategies. (Nam Hyun-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- The United States has not detected indications of "direct" North Korean military action, its top nuclear envoy has said, pledging to make "relentless" efforts to deter and constrain evolving threats from the recalcitrant regime. (Song Sang-ho, Kim Dong-hyun, *Yonhap*)
- President Xi Jinping continues to lecture the West regarding non-interference in other countries' affairs, while continuing China's extensive influence on Myanmar and North Korea. (Betsy Reed, *The Guardian*)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
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Monday, February 5th, 2024

North Korean clinics lack medicine and know how to treat childhood disease: UN

In North Korea:
N. Korea slams Seoul defense chief's anti-Pyongyang warning as 'catalyst' for clash (*Yonhap*, 02/05/2024)
North Korea calls ROK defense minister's comments 'prelude' to war (*NK News*, 02/05/2024)
North Korean clinics lack medicine and knowhow to treat childhood disease: UN (*NK News*, 02/05/2024)

In South Korea:
Over 60% of S. Koreans lack trust in US nuclear umbrella: survey (*The Korea Herald*, 02/05/2024)
Over 90 pct of S. Koreans say N. Korea's denuclearization impossible (*Yonhap*, 02/05/2024)
S. Korea to push for DNA tests on bodies of N. Koreans Pyongyang refuses to accept (*Yonhap*, 02/05/2024)
Unification minister stresses importance of principle-based policy on N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 02/05/2024)
Yoon's comments on North Korea trigger back and forth between Seoul and Moscow (*NK News*, 02/05/2024)

International:
Over 1,000 North Koreans visited Russia in 2023 marking five-fold increase (*NK News*, 02/05/2024)
S. Korea Urges Russia to Halt Military Cooperation With N. Korea (*Bloomberg*, 02/05/2024)
South Korea, Saudi Arabia sign agreement on defence cooperation (*Reuters*, 02/05/2024)

In North Korea:

- Minister Shin Won-sik warned on Jan. 24 that Pyongyang will face the end of its regime in the event it wages a war, hours after North Korea fired several cruise missiles into the Yellow Sea. North Korea denounced South Korea's defense minister, calling his remark a "catalyst" for a physical clash. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea calls ROK defense minister's comments 'prelude' to war. 'Typical rhetoric' out of Pyongyang reflects efforts to maximize gains from current tensions, expert says. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- Based on visits to medical facilities "in nine provinces and 41 counties" by North Korean staff, UNICEF "identified insufficient supplies of medicines, drugs, vaccines and medical consumables at the facility level," according to the report. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- Over 60 percent of South Koreans are skeptical that Washington would use its nuclear weapons in the event of a Korean Peninsula contingency, according to a survey conducted by the Chey Institute for Advanced Studies on Monday. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- According to the Gallup Korea poll of 1,043 adults, commissioned by the Chey Institute for Advanced Studies, 91 percent replied that the North's denuclearization was "impossible." (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- The unification ministry said Monday it will push to conduct genetic testing on the bodies of North Koreans found in South Korean waters or coastlines in case North Korea refuses to accept them. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- "At times like this, the government will push for a firm and principle-based policy on unification and inter-Korean affairs that is rooted in Article 3 and Article 4 of the Constitution," Minister Kim said in a roundtable session with the leaders of four policy research institutions, including the Institute for National Unification and the Korea National Diplomatic Academy. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea slams Russian support for Pyongyang while Kremlin cries foul over ROK-US cooperation (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- The Korean Peninsula is witnessing an escalated military conflict, triggered by the suspension of the Comprehensive Military Agreement, leading to an arms race and expanding the conflict into air and space domains. (Sangsoo Lee, *38 North*)

International:

- Last year, over a thousand North Koreans entered Russia, a five-fold increase from 2022, accompanied by a similar number of Russians traveling to North Korea. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- South Korea expressed its objection to Russia's military cooperation with North Korea during a visit to Seoul by Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko, urging an immediate halt to such collaboration. (Hooyeon Kim, *Bloomberg*)
- South Korea and Saudi Arabia on Sunday signed a memorandum of understanding to expand defence cooperation, Seoul's Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA) said, as Seoul looks to ink further arms sales in the region. (Hyunsu Yim, Josh Smith, *Reuters*)

Prepared by Diana Woo, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250715131820/https://mailchi.mp/959910d9126f/hrnk-news-items-north-korean-clinics-lack-medicine-and-knowhow-to-treat-childhood-disease-un?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Tuesday, February 6th, 2024

Recent defectors hold Kim Jong-un in lower regard, report shows; U.S. spy plane flies over S. Korea amid heightened tensions

In North Korea:
Criticism of hereditary succession grows in N. Korea: report (The Korea Herald, 02/06/2024)
Market forces expand in North Korea despite repression (The Korea Times, 02/06/2024)
More N. Koreans negative about leader Kim Jong-un, hereditary power succession: report (Yonhap, 02/06/2024)
North Korean websites briefly go offline amid wave of internet strategy changes (NK News, 02/06/2024)
North Koreans' consumption of foreign media grows over last decade: Survey (NK News, 02/06/2024)
Recent defectors hold Kim Jong-un in lower regard, report shows (Korea JoongAng Daily, 02/06/2024)

In South Korea:
South Koreans stay calm as they see showmanship in the North's escalating threats (The Hill, 02/05/2024)
Survey: Almost 73% of South Koreans want country to develop nukes (UPI, 02/06/2024)

International:
China reaffirms support for inter-Korean ties amid peninsula tensions (Radio Free Asia, 02/05/2024)
Halfway Deal: How Joe Biden Can Cap North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Program (The National Interest, 02/05/2024)
N.K. slams Japan's removal of memorial stone for Korean victims of wartime forced labor (Yonhap, 02/06/2024)
U.S. spy plane flies over S. Korea amid heightened tensions (Yonhap, 02/06/2024)
U.S. stresses close trilateral coordination with S. Korea, Japan over 'destabilizing' N.K. actions (Yonhap, 02/06/2024)

In North Korea:

- Discontent among North Koreans toward the hereditary succession of the country's leadership has grown over time, coupled with a pervasive negative public assessment of the performance of leader Kim Jong-un, according to a report from the Unification Ministry in Seoul. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- Despite state-led efforts to suppress market forces in North Korea, people there increasingly resort to one-on-one trade for survival amid a sluggish economy and growing distrust in their government, according to a report revealed Tuesday. (Jung Min-ho, *The Korea Times*)
- A growing number of North Koreans have negatively assessed Kim Jong-un as a political leader and harbored doubts about whether the Kim family's hereditary power succession is legitimate, a report showed Tuesday. (Kim Soo-yeon, Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

- A select few North Korean websites went offline briefly on Monday for apparent maintenance, which one expert views as part of bigger changes to the country's internet infrastructure as Pyongyang looks to overhaul its online activities. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Koreans' consumption of foreign media grew in the years immediately before the COVID pandemic, a previously classified survey of DPRK escapees shows, a development that one expert said may have gone into reverse due to a nationwide crackdown on culture imports. (Ifang Bremer, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- North Koreans who fled their repressive homeland in recent years have expressed greater negative sentiment than earlier defectors regarding regime leader Kim Jong-un and the legitimacy of his family's hereditary hold on power in a report released by South Korea's Unification Ministry on Tuesday. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

In South Korea:

- "North Korea has mastered a cycle of raising tensions with weapons demonstrations and threats before eventually offering negotiations aimed at extracting concessions. The result is that many South Koreans believe North Korea is using its old playbook to get attention during an election year in South Korea and the United States." (Jiwon Song, *The Hill*)
- Roughly three out of four South Koreans think their country should develop its own nuclear weapons amid concerns about the growing threat from neighboring North Korea, according to a new survey conducted by Gallup Korea. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)

International:

- China has reaffirmed its stance that it would consistently support the improvement of inter-Korean relations amid rising tensions on the Korean Peninsula. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)
- The Biden administration has done a generally good job in managing the U.S.-South Korean alliance and also in tightening links between that bilateral relationship and the U.S.-Japan alliance. The August 2023 Camp David summit of the leaders of Japan, the United States, and the Republic of Korea was a reflection and further reinforcement of this desirable trend. (Michael O'Hanlon, *The National Interest*)
- North Korea on Tuesday denounced a Japanese local government for tearing down a memorial stone for Korean victims of Japan's wartime forced labor and called on it to immediately restore it. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- A U.S. reconnaissance aircraft flew over South Korea on Tuesday in an apparent mission to monitor North Korea, aviation trackers showed, amid heightened tensions over North Korea's continued weapons tests. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- The United States highlighted its focus on close trilateral security coordination with South Korea and Japan on Monday, criticizing North Korea's recent cruise missile launches as "deeply destabilizing." (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Kate Refolo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250715132055/https://mailchi.mp/b14bdfbf32c9/hrnk-news-items-recent-defectors-hold-kim-jong-un-in-lower-regard-report-shows-us-spy-plane-flies-over-s-korea-amid-heightened-tensions?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Wednesday, February 7th, 2024

U.S. envoy urges N. Korea to begin 'reform' process to improve human rights

Top News:
U.S. envoy urges N. Korea to begin 'reform' process to improve human rights (*Yonhap*, 02/08/2024)

In North Korea:
Kim Jong-un ups ante to shift attention away from defiant millennials at home (*The Korea Times*, 02/07/2024)
North Korean citizens increasingly skeptical of Kim family, escapees say (*Fox News*, 02/06/2024)
North Korea defectors cite dwindling food rations, market reliance -study (*Reuters*, 02/06/2024)
N. Korean high schools set to adopt elective course system (*Yonhap*, 02/07/2024)

In South Korea:
Ruling party chief compares rival camp to North Korea over election rule decision (*The Korea Times*, 02/07/2024)
South Korean president reiterates that Seoul will not seek its own nuclear deterrent (*AP News*, 02/07/2024)

International:
A Russian Bank Account May Offer Clues to a North Korean Arms Deal (*The New York Times*, 02/07/2024)
First tour to North Korea already at capacity, Russian travel firm says (*NK News*, 02/07/2024)
Over 82% of family reunion applicants in North America uncontactable: unification ministry (*The Korea Times*, 02/07/2024)
Russian envoy to DPRK predicts 'breakthrough' in two sides' relations in 2024 (*NK News*, 02/07/2024)
U.S. diplomat: Russia has launched North Korean missiles at least 9 times in Ukraine (*UPI*, 02/07/2024)
US, Russia clash at UN over North Korea, Patriot missiles in Ukraine (*Reuters*, 02/07/2024)
US-North Korea Arms Control Talks or Denuclearization? Analysts Are Divided (*VOA*, 02/06/2024)

Top News:

- As a part of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea's (HRNK) series commemorating the 10th anniversary of the landmark United Nations Commission of Inquiry (COI) report, Ambassador Julie Turner, the U.S. Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Issues, made remarks in a video message shared by HRNK's YouTube channel. Turner called on Pyongyang to launch a "reform" process to enhance its rights situation, stressing

promoting respect for human dignity in the reclusive state remains a "top" priority for Washington. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

In North Korea:

- Fear mongering could be real motive behind N. Korean leader's war rhetoric. (Kang Hyun-kyung, *The Korea Times*)
- Over half of escapees now report negativity toward the ruling family, according to South Korea. (Timothy H.J. Nerozzi, *Fox News*)
- The majority of North Koreans who resettled in South Korea over the last decade said they never received government rations in the isolated state and had to rely on an informal market to survive, a study issued by Seoul's unification ministry showed. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- The North has expanded its elective course system at universities and a school in Pyongyang for gifted students. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- The interim chief of the ruling People Power Party, Han Dong-hoon, criticized the main opposition party, likening it to North Korea, as he condemned its chairman, Lee Jae-myung, for unilaterally deciding to retain a problematic election law just two months before the April 10 general elections. (Jung Min-ho, *The Korea Times*)
- Yoon insisted that South Korea clearly has the technology to quickly acquire nuclear weapons capabilities if it ever decides to do so. But taking that step isn't a realistic option as it would ruin a trade-dependent economy, he said. (Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)

International:

- Moscow may be trying to help Pyongyang with access to the international financial system in exchange for missiles and ammunition, U.S.-allied intelligence officials suggest. (Motoko Rich, *The New York Times*)
- Over 100 people have reportedly signed up for tour organized with Far East region in effort to promote travel to DPRK. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- The Ministry of Unification said on Wednesday that it was able to reach 146 out of the total 825 people it contacted in the United States and Canada last year for its research. After being separated by the 1950-53 Korean War for more than 70 years, many of those who did not respond to the ministry may not be alive. (Jung Min-ho, *The Korea Times*)
- Alexander Matsegora told Russian state media Kim Jong Un and Vladimir Putin will sign agreement on mutual trips. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Russia has attacked Ukraine at least nine times with ballistic missiles supplied by North Korea, a U.S. diplomat said, highlighting concerns over the growing military cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- The United States accused Russia on Tuesday of firing at least nine North Korean-supplied missiles at Ukraine, while Moscow labeled Washington a "direct accomplice" in the downing of a Russian military transport plane last month. (Michelle Nichols, *Reuters*)
- As Pyongyang continues to enhance its nuclear and missile programs while refusing to engage with Washington, analysts are divided on whether the U.S. should continue pursuing denuclearization or consider possible arms control options. (Christy Lee, *VOA*)

Prepared by Diana Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250715132214/https://mailchi.mp/21cccdcf8414/hrnk-news-items-us-envoy-urges-n-korea-to-begin-reform-process-to-improve-human-rights?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Thursday, February 8th, 2024

Event Held at HRNK Highlights Calls for Updated UN Report on NK's Human Rights

Top News:
UN should update North Korea rights report: experts (*Radio Free Asia*, 02/07/2024)
Seoul to take DNA samples from bodies North Korea refuses to repatriate (*NK News*, 02/07/2024)

In North Korea:
North Korea forces residents to buy photos of recent satellite rocket launch (*Reuters*, 02/08/2024)
N. Korean leader berates officials during visit to provincial factories (*Yonhap*, 02/08/2024)
N. Korea renews call for combat readiness on military founding anniversary (*Yonhap*, 02/08/2024)

In South Korea:
North Korea scraps all economic cooperation with South Korea (*Reuters*, 02/08/2024)
N. Korea scraps laws on inter-Korean economic cooperation (*Yonhap*, 02/08/2024)
S. Korea urges N. Korea to improve human rights on 10th anniv. of U.N. report (*Yonhap*, 02/08/2024)
Yoon says ROK can build nukes but doesn't want sanctions like North Korea (*NK News*, 02/08/2024)

International:
Exclusive: UN experts investigate 58 cyberattacks worth $3 bln by North Korea (*Reuters*, 02/08/2024)
North Koreans working in China 'exploited like slaves' (*BBC News*, 02/08/2024)
Russia again uses North Korean missiles to strike Ukrainian city: Police (*NK News*, 02/08/2024)
Signs of rare unrest among North Korean workers in China, researchers say (*Reuters*, 02/08/2024)
S. Korea voices regret over Russian envoy's remarks blaming allies for possible N.K. nuclear test (*Yonhap*, 02/08/2024)
U.S. envoy urges N. Korea to begin 'reform' process to improve human rights (*Yonhap*, 02/08/2024)
US faces heightened risk from Russia, North Korea, Treasury financing report finds (*Reuters*, 02/07/2024)

Top News:

- Experts recommend the UN to update its 2014 report on North Korea's human rights, highlighting abuses under Kim Jong Un's regime. The call was made at an event hosted by

the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea at DACOR Bacon House in Washington, emphasizing the need for a current assessment amid increased crackdowns and pandemic measures. (Alex Willemyns, *Radio Free Asia*)

- "This measure will bring closure to families of the North Koreans who are likely listed as missing persons since North Korea would not take back the bodies," Scarlatoiu told NK News. "South Korea is trying its best from a humanitarian perspective. The whole point is to inform the families at a later point when that communication becomes possible." (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea is forcing its citizens to buy large decorative photos depicting a recent rocket launch to display in their homes as a sign of patriotism. But the people are pushing back, saying the launches and the photos themselves are a waste of money that could be better spent on feeding the people, residents in the country told Radio Free Asia. (Kim Jieun, *Reuters*)
- North Korea on Thursday urged its armed forces to be equipped with full combat readiness as the country marked the 76th founding anniversary of the Korean People's Army (KPA). In an editorial, the North's main newspaper, Rodong Sinmun, claimed the KPA is well-equipped with "overwhelming" military capability to deter war schemes by imperialist powers and called on the military to further beef up its combat power against hostile forces. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un reprimanded officials over "shortcomings" in regional factories during a visit that came as part of his push on developing the economy in the North's backward provinces. Kim made the remarks as he gave a "field guidance" to factories that produce foodstuffs, daily necessities and paper in Kimwha County in the North's Kangwon Province on Wednesday, according to the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly has voted to scrap all agreements with South Korea on promoting economic cooperation, as the two Koreas' ties continue to deteriorate. The assembly, which takes formal steps to adopt policy decisions of the ruling Workers' Party, also voted to abolish laws governing economic ties with Seoul, including the special law on the operation of the Mount Kumgang tourism project. (Jack Kim, *Reuters*)
- North Korea has abolished laws on inter-Korean economic cooperation, as tensions between the two Koreas have deepened after the North declared there is no point in seeking reunification with the South. During a year-end party meeting, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un defined inter-Korean ties as relations between "two states hostile to each other" and vowed to "suppress" South Korea's whole territory in the event of a contingency. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The foreign ministry of South Korea called on North Korea to cease all provocations and work on improving the basic human rights of its people as this year marks the 10th anniversary of the U.N. Commission of Inquiry (COI) report. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- President Yoon Suk-yeol asserted that South Korea is capable of quickly developing nuclear weapons but would refrain from doing so to avoid sanctions such as those levied on North Korea."Some say that, unlike North Korea, South Korea’s lack of granite layers would

complicate underground nuclear testing. However, I tell you, if we set our minds to it, the process wouldn't take as long as some might think," Yoon said during a pre-recorded interview with state-sponsored broadcaster KBS. (Jeongmin Kim/Lina Park, *NK News*)

International:

- United Nations sanctions monitors are investigating dozens of suspected cyberattacks by North Korea that raked in $3 billion to help it further develop its nuclear weapons program, according to excerpts of an unpublished U.N. report reviewed by Reuters." The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) continued to flout Security Council sanctions," a panel of independent sanctions monitors reported to a Security Council committee, using North Korea's formal name. (Michelle Nichols, *Reuters*)
- North Korean workers in China reportedly rioted over unpaid wages, purportedly used for Pyongyang's weapons development. These rare protests highlight the exploitation and harsh conditions faced by North Korean overseas workers, tightly controlled by the state, contributing significantly to the regime's income through foreign currency earnings. Concerns are raised about their well-being amid extreme surveillance, withheld payments, and punitive measures for underperformance. (Jean Mackenzie, *BBC News*)
- Russia appears to be continuing to use North Korean missiles to strike targets in Ukraine, according to a Ukrainian police official, following launches in December and early January. Moscow fired five missiles on the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, according to the city's Regional Prosecutor's Office, striking civilian businesses and injuring a 52-year-old woman and two men aged 59 and 64. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- South Korea's intelligence agency says poor conditions for North Koreans working overseas have led to "incidents and accidents", while researchers report rare protests and unrest in China among workers from a North Korean military-linked trading company. (Ju-min Park, *Reuters*)
- South Korea expressed strong regret Thursday over the remarks by Russia's top envoy to North Korea that the likelihood of another nuclear test by Pyongyang will depend on how far Seoul and Washington will go in taking their deterrence measures against the North. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. special envoy for North Korean human rights called on Pyongyang to launch a "reform" process to enhance its rights situation, stressing promoting respect for human dignity in the reclusive state remains a "top" priority for Washington. Ambassador Julie Turner made the remarks as she marked the 10th anniversary of the release of a landmark U.N. Commission of Inquiry (COI) report that accused North Korean officials of "systematic, widespread and gross" human rights violations and made related recommendations. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States faces heightened risk from Russia, which is trying to acquire goods with military applications, the U.S. Treasury Department said in fresh National Risk Assessments on Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing, and Proliferation Financing. Russia has expanded efforts to illegally buy U.S.-origin goods that could be used for military purposes - hiding transactions using obfuscation techniques such as front companies and transshipment points - to support Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, the department said in a statement. (Daphne Psaledakis, *Reuters*)

Prepared by Gloria Guo, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250715132214/https://mailchi.mp/21cccdcf8414/hrnk-news-items-us-envoy-urges-n-korea-to-begin-reform-process-to-improve-human-rights?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Friday, February 9th, 2024

Kim Jong-un shuns talks with South and threatens 'annihilation'

In North Korea:
Anti-South Korea policy change secures 'lawful' basis to attack: Kim Jong Un (*NK News*, 02/09/2024)
N.K. leader calls S. Korea 'primary foe,' vows to protect country with power (*Yonhap*, 02/09/2024)
N Korean leader shuns talks with South, threatens 'annihilation' (*Radio Free Asia*, 02/09/2024)
North Korean hackers drop new malware to steal data from South Korean targets (*NK News*, 02/09/2024)
North Korea's Kim says he has no desire for talks and repeats a threat to destroy South if provoked (*AP News*, 02/08/2024)

In South Korea:
JCS chief inspects military readiness at missile command, fighter wing (*Yonhap*, 02/09/2024)
Smaller political powers agree to merge into new party ahead of general elections (*Yonhap*, 02/09/2024)
South Korean President Reiterates That Seoul Will Not Seek Its Own Nuclear Deterrent (*The Diplomat*, 02/08/2024)

International:
Korea eyes long-term defense partnership with Arab nations: defense minister (*The Korea Times*, 02/09/2024)
Russian tourists embark on 1st post-COVID group trip to N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 02/09/2024)
S. Korea joins elephant walk during U.S.-led multinational air exercise (*Yonhap*, 02/09/2024)
U.S. expresses deep concern over Russia's reported move to release frozen N.K. assets (*Yonhap*, 02/09/2024)
U.S. State Dept. spokesperson decries Russian envoy's remarks on odds of N.K. nuclear test (*Yonhap*, 02/09/2024)
Unification minister says Seoul to share data on Japanese abductees with Tokyo: interview (*Yonhap*, 02/09/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has secured the "lawful" right to "annihilate" South Korea if provoked by recently redefining its policy toward Seoul, leader Kim Jong Un said to the country's military in a visit to the defense ministry headquarters Thursday, according to state media. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has again called South Korea the North's "primary foe" and vowed to guard the country through power rather than negotiations, state media said Friday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said this week that cutting ties with Seoul allows North Korea to "strike and destroy the South," according to Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency. (Mike Firn, *Radio Free Asia*)
- A North Korean cybercrime group is distributing new malware to steal information from South Korean targets, potentially including administrative and public organizations, according to security researchers. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un restated he has no desire for diplomacy with South Korea and that the North would annihilate its rival if provoked, state media said Friday, in the latest of his belligerent statements that are raising tensions in the region. (Kim Tong-Hyung, *AP News*)

In South Korea:

- Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Adm. Kim Myung-soo on Friday inspected the military readiness at an Army missile command and an Air Force fighter wing against North Korea's nuclear and missile threats. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- Four political parties and factions led by politicians who have left the ruling People Power Party (PPP) and the main opposition Democratic Party (DP) have agreed to merge into one new party ahead of the April general elections, officials said Friday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's President Yoon Suk-yeol reiterated that the country would not seek its own nuclear deterrent in the face of threats from nuclear-armed North Korea as he vowed further efforts to sharpen nuclear deterrence strategies with ally United States. (Kim Tong-Hyung, *The Diplomat*)

International:

- Korea is actively pursuing the establishment and strengthening of a long-term defense partnership with a number of Arab countries. This effort comes in response to promising developments following a $3.2 billion export deal with Saudi Arabia, Defense Minister Shin Won-sik said on Thursday. (Jung Min-ho, *The Korea Times*)
- Russian tourists on Friday departed for their first group trip to North Korea since the pandemic amid deepening ties between the two countries. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea has been conducting a U.S.-led multinational air exercise, along with four other nations, in Guam since earlier this month to enhance joint operability, the Air Force said Friday. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- A U.S. State Department spokesperson expressed deep concern Thursday over a media report that Russia has allowed the release of millions of dollars in frozen North Korean assets and may be helping the North with access to international banking networks. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- A U.S. State Department spokesperson on Thursday criticized as "destabilizing" and "risky" a Russian diplomat's remarks that North Korea may opt to conduct another nuclear test should Washington continue to take what he claimed to be "provocative steps" against Pyongyang. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

- South Korea's point man on North Korea said in an interview published Friday that the government will acquire information on Japanese abductees in North Korea from defectors and share it with the Japanese government. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Tessa Aguilar, HRNK Research Intern

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Saturday, February 10th, 2024

U.S. envoy for N.K. human rights to visit S. Korea, Japan this month

In North Korea:
N. Koreans celebrate Lunar New Year with traditional food, folk games: state media (*Yonhap*, 02/10/2024)
What to Make of North Korea's Forward-looking Economic Strategy and Prospects (*38 North*, 02/09/2024)

In South Korea:
Defector-turned-lawmaker proposes designating commemorative day for N.K. defectors (*Yonhap*, 02/10/2024)
Unification minister vows to push for reunion of separated families despite N. Korean provocations (*Yonhap*, 02/10/2024)
Yoon visits Marine corps on Lunar New Year holiday (*Yonhap*, 02/10/2024)

International:
These false eyelashes are 'Made in China,' wink wink (*RFA*, 02/09/2024)
U.S. envoy for N.K. human rights to visit S. Korea, Japan this month (*Yonhap*, 02/10/2024)
UN experts investigating 58 suspected North Korean cyberattacks valued at about $3 billion (*AP*, 02/09/2024)
US special envoy on North Korea to visit Tokyo, Seoul (*Reuters*, 02/10/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Koreans celebrated the Lunar New Year on Saturday dining on traditional food and playing folk games, while also paying tribute to their two late former leaders on one of the country's biggest holidays, Pyongyang's state media reported. (Yoo Jee-ho, *Yonhap*)
- While increased trade with China and the re-establishment of trade with Russia provide Kim with both political wins as the country opens back up, and lay the foundation for increased sanctions evasion and expanded trade, North Korea's needs for capital investment and trade

are much larger than is likely to be satisfied by these developments. (Bradley Babson, *38 North*)

In South Korea:

- Rep. Ji Seong-ho, a North Korean defector-turned-lawmaker of the ruling People Power Party, proposed a bill calling for the designation of a commemorative day for North Korean defectors, his office said Saturday. (Kang Jae-eun, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's point man on North Korea said Saturday the government will keep pushing for the reunion of families separated by the 1950-53 Korean War, saying Pyongyang's provocations will not deter Seoul's drive. (Yoo Jee-ho, *Yonhap*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol visited a Marine Corps unit Saturday to show appreciation for the troops' service and order strong readiness against North Korea, his office said. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

International:

- North Korean eyelashes exported to China are repackaged and sold worldwide in possible violation of sanctions. (Cho Jinwoo, Kim Jieun, RFA)
- The U.S. special envoy for North Korean human rights will visit South Korea and Japan this month to mark the 10th anniversary of the release of a landmark U.N. report on the North's rights violations, the State Department said Friday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- U.N. experts say they are investigating 58 suspected North Korean cyberattacks between 2017 and 2023 valued at approximately $3 billion, with the money reportedly being used to help fund its development of weapons of mass destruction. (Edith Lederer, AP)
- The U.S. special envoy on North Korean human rights issues, Julie Turner, will travel to Tokyo and Seoul from Monday, the State Department said. (*Reuters*)

Prepared by Jiwoo Hwang, HRNK Research Intern

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Sunday, February 11th, 2024

Lunar New Year - The London suburb where N. and S. Koreans unite

In North Korea:
N. Korea sets sights on Fourth Industrial Revolution technology (*Yonhap*, 02/11/2024)

In South Korea:

S. Korea to begin development of shipborne missile interceptor this year (*Yonhap*, 02/10/2024)

International:
Like North Korea, Iran Could Gain Valuable Insights If Russia Uses Its Missiles Against Ukraine (*Forbes*, 02/11/2024)
Lunar New Year: The London suburb where North and South Koreans unite (*BBC*, 02/11/2024)
North Korea criticizes U.S. influence in Israel and the Middle East (*UPI*, 02/11/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea appears to be setting its sights on Fourth Industrial Revolution technology, such as artificial intelligence, in a bid to explore ways to expand its applications. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea seeks to start developing an advanced ship-based missile interceptor this year, the state arms procurement agency has said, amid efforts to counter evolving North Korean military threats. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Moscow's action is expected to give Pyongyang rare insight into how its homegrown missiles fare against formidable Western-made air defenses. Iran could gain similar insights if it supplies its missiles to Russia in the near future. (Paul Iddon, *Forbes*)
- As millions of people around the world ring in the Lunar New Year, the celebrations in one London suburb are bringing North and South Koreans together. (Je Seung Lee, BBC)
- North Korea has criticized the influence of the United States in Israel and the Middle East as world leaders cozied up to Iran on Sunday in the wake of Israel's war in Gaza. (Adam Schrader, UPI)

Prepared by Colleen Burns, HRNK Research Intern

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Monday, February 12th, 2024

N. Korea says it newly developed shells for multiple rocket launcher

In North Korea:
Anti-doping agency says it recently tested athletes inside North Korea (*NK News*, 02/12/2024)
N. Korea moves to complete construction of general hospital in Pyongyang (*Yonhap*, 02/12/2024)
N. Korea says it newly developed shells for multiple rocket launcher (*Yonhap*, 02/12/2024)
North Korea tests 'superiority' of new 240mm artillery system: State media (*NK News*, 02/12/2024)

In South Korea:
Number of fines for exchanges with North Korea increases under Yoon government (*NK News*, 02/12/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. experts to meet in Seoul on 10th anniv. of U.N. report on N.Korea (*Yonhap*, 02/12/2024)

International:
Russia eyeing new rail, ferry and car routes to North Korea: Ambassador (*NK News*, 02/12/2024)

In North Korea:

- Visit by International Testing Agency likely marked first non-political entry into DPRK in four years. (Brian Oliver, *NK News*)
- North Korea has been stepping up efforts to complete the stalled construction of a general hospital in Pyongyang by the end of the year, state media reports showed Monday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea said Monday it has newly developed controllable shells for a multiple rocket launcher and its ballistic control system as part of its push to expand its weapons arsenal. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- Latest rocket advancement may soon be deployed near inter-Korean border as DPRK seeks to amplify war readiness. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea imposed six fines for violations of exchange act in 2023, which expert says could impact civilian channels. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- Experts from South Korea and the United States will gather in Seoul this year to discuss North Korea's human rights situation in celebration of the 10th anniversary of a U.N. report on the North's rights violations. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Russia's ambassador to North Korea says the two countries are eyeing the establishment of a "direct rail service," among other transportation links, as the first group of Russian tourists in years returned from the DPRK on Monday. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)

Prepared by Diana Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250716161913/https://mailchi.mp/87dfec7d7c13/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-says-it-newly-developed-shells-for-multiple-rocket-launcher?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Tuesday, February 13th, 2024

North Korea's ruling party delegation visiting Russia for international forum

In North Korea:
North Korea cracks down on homes converted into Airbnb-style lodgings (*RFA*, 02/12/2024)
N. Korea discusses follow-up measures to improve regional economy (*Yonhap*, 02/13/2024)
N. Korea's ruling party delegation visiting Russia for int'l forum (*Yonhap*, 02/13/2024)
Pyongyang International Film Festival set to return after 4-year hiatus (*NK News*, 02/13/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korea vows 'overwhelming response' if N. Korea provokes (*Yonhap*, 02/13/2024)

International:
Allies Like North Korea, China Giving Russia Advantage Over Ukraine: Norway (*Newsweek*, 02/12/2024)
Even With Trump, Kim Jong Un May Spurn Talks, Analysts Warn (VOA, 02/13/2024)
Japan's PM Fumio Kishida seeks summit with North Korea's Kim Jong Un (*Financial Times*, 02/13/2024)
U.S. official stresses cooperation with S. Korea, Japan over N.K.-Russia military cooperation (*Yonhap*, 02/13/2024)
US raises concerns about cozying relations between Russia and North Korea (CNN, 02/13/2024)
White House touts trilateral cooperation with S. Korea, Japan as key feat in Indo-Pacific Strategy (*Yonhap*, 02/13/2024)

In North Korea:

- As North Korea prepares for two important holidays, authorities declared an "emergency security period" and began cracking down on people who turn their homes into lodging for holiday travelers, a move that residents told RFA was also aimed at curbing prostitution. (Moon Sung Hui, *RFA*)
- North Korea's provincial committees have discussed measures to carry out the national policy of developing regional economies, state media said Tuesday, amid worsening inequality in the North's capital and rural areas. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- A delegation of North Korea's ruling party officials have left for Russia to attend an international forum, state media reported Tuesday, amid deepening bilateral cooperation in the military and other sectors. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The 18th Pyongyang International Film Festival (PIFF) is set to go ahead this year, its sponsors told *NK News*, in what could mark the first return of the event since before the COVID-19 pandemic. However, whether international films will be screened or foreign visitors will be able to attend remains to be seen. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- The South Korean military said Tuesday it is ready to "overwhelmingly" respond to any North Korean provocations as Pyongyang is dialing up tensions with a series of new weapons tests. North Korea said Monday it has developed a 240 mm-caliber controllable multiple rocket launcher shell and its ballistic control system to expand its weapons arsenal. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Russia is starting to gain an advantage in its war against Ukraine thanks to support from its allies like China and North Korea, according to Norway's military intelligence service. (Kaitlin Lewis, *Newsweek*)
- Analysts warn that Trump's North Korea policy will likely look much like it did the first time – lots of "bluster and showmanship…without getting into anything really concrete." (William Gallo, VOA)
- Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida is intensifying efforts to meet North Korea's Kim Jong Un, as he pushes for a diplomatic breakthrough with the dictator in a bid to save his faltering premiership. The summit being pushed by Kishida would seek to secure the release of Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea decades ago, according to people in Washington and Tokyo familiar with the diplomatic talks. (Demetri Sevastopulo, Kana Inagaki, Christian Davies, *Financial Times*)
- A U.S. diplomat on Monday highlighted America's commitment to working in tandem with South Korea and Japan to address growing military cooperation between North Korea and Russia, which he said serves only to prolong Moscow's war in Ukraine. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea watchers in Washington have fixated recently on Pyongyang's abrupt destruction last month of a key monument dedicated to reunifying the Korean Peninsula. But US officials and North Korea analysts who spoke to CNN on the condition of anonymity say the uproar over the reunification arch obscures a far greater strategic threat: North Korea's burgeoning partnership with Russia. (Katie Bo Lillis, CNN)
- A White House official on Monday highlighted strengthened trilateral cooperation with South Korea and Japan among key achievements of the Joe Biden administration's Indo-Pacific Strategy unveiled two years ago. During which he stated: "I could go on and on, including adding capabilities in and around the Korean Peninsula to keep a better eye on what (North Korean leader) Kim Jong-un is doing and of course, bolstering all the rest of our alliances and partnerships in the region". (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Katherine Mitchell, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250716162220/https://mailchi.mp/9e947f5826a0/hrnk-news-items-north-koreas-ruling-party-delegation-visiting-russia-for-international-forum?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Wednesday, February 14th, 2024

North Korea conducts fifth cruise missile launch of year

In North Korea:
N. Korea fires several cruise missiles off east coast: JCS (*Yonhap*, 02/14/2024)
North Korea conducts fifth cruise missile launch of year (*Korea Herald*, 02/14/2024)
North Korea shows off Russian robot designed to help educators (*NK News*, 02/14/2024)
North Korea's New Regional Development Plan Off to a Fast Start (*38 North*, 02/13/2024)

In South Korea:
N. Korea could conduct localized provocation on border island: ex-Seoul official (*Yonhap*, 02/14/2024)
N. Korea may stage Jihad-style terrorist attack on S. Korea: Seoul expert (*Yonhap*, 02/14/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N. Korea sold illegal gambling websites to S. Korean criminal ring: spy agency (*Yonhap*, 02/14/2024)
North Korea hacked emails of South Korea president's aide (*BBC*, 02/14/2024)

International:
'I love seeing the quiet power that she really exudes in these pictures.' (*Radio Free Asia*, 02/13/2024)
Around 300 N. Korean workers arrived in Russia via train: expert (*Yonhap*, 02/14/2024)
N. Korea's ruling party delegation chief meets Russian communist party leader: report (*Yonhap*, 02/14/2024)
North Korea Vacations Pushed on Russian TV (*Newsweek*, 02/13/2024)
Pyongyang, Moscow boost tourism exchanges as more Russians set to visit (*The Korea Times*, 02/14/2023)
Trump's NATO remarks renew worries about U.S. commitment to alliance, N.K. deterrence (*Yonhap*, 02/14/2024)
U.S. calls for precluding financial services aiding N.K. weapons programs (*Yonhap*, 02/14/2024)
U.S. takes N.K. weapons development efforts 'very seriously': White House official (*Yonhap*, 02/14/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea fired several cruise missiles off the east coast Wednesday, the South Korean military said. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea on Wednesday conducted a launch of cruise missiles for the fifth time since the start of the year. (Kim Arin, *Korea Herald*)
- North Korea has acquired a Russian robot in a bid to modernize its education system, the company that produced the model confirmed to *NK News*, with an expert raising concerns over how such a technology transfer could breach international sanctions. (Anton Sokolin, Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

- Less than a month after Kim Jong Un announced plans to boost regional development with the construction of 200 new factories over the next decade, the foundations for one of the first factories are already apparent. (Martyn Williams, *38 North*)

In South Korea:

- North Korea could undertake localized provocations this year, such as suddenly occupying a South Korean border island, a former senior Seoul official said Tuesday, amid concerns over the possibility of the North's saber-rattling ahead of the April parliamentary elections in the South. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea may attempt to mobilize its spies or sympathizers in South Korea to stage a terrorist attack on the South in a manner similar to attacks by Islamic Jihad, an expert said Wednesday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- A North Korean entity under its Workers' Party has made thousands of illegal online gambling websites and sold them to a South Korean cyber crime ring for hefty profits, the spy agency here said Wednesday. (Kim Na-young, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea hacked into the personal emails of an aide to the South Korean president, his office has confirmed to the BBC. The breach occurred in the run-up to President Yoon Suk Yeol's state visit to the UK last November. (Jean Mackenzie, *BBC*)

International:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un uses force and missile launches to demonstrate his control. His pre-teen daughter and presumed heir Kim Ju Ae exudes “quiet power” – through the way she dresses. That’s according to Lauren A. Rothman, a Washington-based stylist who offers fashion advice to celebrities, politicians and business executives (Park Jaewoo, *Radio Free Asia*)
- Around 300 people presumed to be North Korean workers arrived in Russia via train earlier this month, a South Korean expert said Wednesday, amid deepening cooperation between Pyongyang and Moscow. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's ruling party chief delegate has held talks with Russian Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov, Russian media said, amid deepening bilateral ties in the military and other sectors. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- Kremlin-operated media outlets have begun promoting tourism in North Korea, according to a BBC reporter. (Jon Jackson, *Newsweek*)
- Pyongyang and Moscow are stepping up efforts to boost cultural exchanges as more Russian tourists are expected to visit the reclusive country next month. (Jung Min-ho, *The Korea Times*)
- Former President Donald Trump's recent controversial remarks on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is stoking a renewed yet consequential question for South Korea: Would America's security commitment remain steadfast in the midst of seemingly unbridled North Korean threats? (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. mission to the United Nations called Tuesday for "all" U.N. member states to prevent any offer of financial services that could help North Korea's prohibited weapons programs, following a report that Russia has allowed the partial release of frozen North Korean assets. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

- The United States takes North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's efforts to advance sophisticated weapons systems "very seriously," a White House official said Tuesday, amid concerns that growing military cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang could complicate deterrence efforts by Seoul and Washington. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Rachel Baek, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250716162409/https://mailchi.mp/8bd3f0d43e56/hrnk-news-items-north-koreas-ruling-party-delegation-visiting-russia-for-international-forum-12238265?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Thursday, February 15th, 2024

U.S. Special Envoy for N. Korean Human Rights Calls for Continued Efforts to Highlight Human Rights Abuses and Advance Accountability

Top News:
U.S. Special Envoy for N. Korean Human Rights Calls for Continued Efforts to Highlight Human Rights Abuses and Advance Accountability (*Newsis*, 02/08/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
All eyes on N. Korea's reaction over S. Korea's establishment of diplomatic ties with Cuba (*Yonhap*, 02/15/2024)
N.K. leader oversees test-fire of new surface-to-sea missile (*Yonhap*, 02/15/2024)
N. Korea moves to idolize leader to boost unity amid economic woes: ministry (*Yonhap*, 02/15/2024)
N. Korea threatens U.S. envoy for N.K. human rights with insulting remarks (*Yonhap*, 02/15/2024)
North Korea leader's sister says Japan PM's comments positive - KCNA (*Reuters*, 02/15/2024)
North Korea preparing for 'quantum leap' in weapons production: Kim Jong Un (*NK News*, 02/15/2024)
North Korean hackers take phishing efforts to next level with AI tools: Report (*NK News*, 02/15/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korea's forming of diplomatic ties with Cuba signals deeper Latin America ties, deals blow to N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 02/15/2024)
Seoul pastor sentenced to 5 years for molesting North Korean defector children (*NK News*, 02/15/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N.K. leader calls for using force against S. Korean vessels violating its waters (*Yonhap*, 02/15/2024)

N Korea peddles illicit gambling sites to South's criminal ring (RFA, 02/15/2024)
S. Korea reaffirms commitment to defending de facto maritime sea border (*Yonhap*, 02/15/2024)

International:
Cuba's alignment with Seoul could be Kim Jong-un's biggest diplomatic failure: experts (*The Korea Times*, 02/15/2024)
Establishment of S. Korea-Cuba diplomatic relations likely to deal 'blow' to N. Korea: official (*Yonhap*, 02/15/2024)
FM highlights N. Korean rights violations in talks with U.S. special envoy (*Yonhap*, 02/15/2024)
NSC 'fundamentally engaged' in S. Korea-U.S. nuclear deterrence body: Sullivan (*Yonhap*, 02/15/2024)
U.S. official stresses need to use 'all tools available' to deter potential aggression by N. Korea, Russia (*Yonhap*, 02/15/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has given no reaction yet to South Korea's establishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba, but the surprise announcement is a blow to Pyongyang that has long boasted brotherly ties with the Caribbean nation. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has supervised the test-firing of a new surface-to-sea missile and ordered a tighter defense posture near the western maritime border, state media reported Thursday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea appears to be idolizing leader Kim Jong-un, modeling him after his grandfather and national founder Kim Il-sung, in an effort to strengthen internal unity amid prolonged economic difficulties, South Korea's unification ministry said Thursday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea on Thursday released a barrage of harsh-worded insults against the U.S. special envoy for North Korean human rights who is visiting Asia on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of a landmark U.N. report on the North's rights abuses. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The influential sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said there is no impediment to closer ties with Japan and there may come a day Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida visits Pyongyang, state news agency KCNA said on Thursday. (Jack Kim, *Reuters*)
- Kim Jong Un recently visited a weapons factory and highlighted the importance of increasing munitions to combat North Korea's enemies, state media reported Thursday. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Korean cybercriminals have turned to artificial intelligence (AI) to advance their spear-phishing efforts targeting DPRK-focused experts and organizations, Microsoft and OpenAI announced Wednesday, a move that one expert called "frightening." (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- The establishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba marks a turning point in South Korea's diplomacy, with the prospect of broadening its foothold in Latin America, government officials and experts said Thursday. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- A Seoul court sentenced a South Korean pastor to five years in prison on Wednesday for molesting five North Korean defector students who attended his private boarding school, a

significantly lighter sentence than the 13 years recommended by prosecutors. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has called for using force against South Korean vessels violating its waters, state media said Thursday, amid concern the North could undertake provocations in the coming months. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- A North Korean information technology group has created illegal online gambling websites and sold them to a South Korean cybercrime ring, the South's National Intelligence Service revealed. (Taejun Kang, RFA)
- The South Korean military said Thursday it remains firmly committed to the defense of the de facto maritime border with North Korea, after North Korean leader Kim Jong-un refused to recognize the border and vowed to defend its own boundary with force. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Cuba, a socialist country regarded by North Korea as one of its most trusted allies, made an unexpected announcement on Wednesday that it restored diplomatic relations with South Korea after 65 years, a move that some experts described as "a shocking decision" for Pyongyang. (Jung Min-ho, *The Korea Times*)
- South Korea's establishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba will likely deal a "blow" to North Korea, given the close brotherly ties Pyongyang and Havana have maintained for decades, a senior presidential official said Thursday. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul on Thursday met with the U.S. special envoy for North Korean human rights in Seoul on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of a landmark U.N. report on the North's rights abuses. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. National Security Council (NSC) remains "fundamentally engaged" in a key South Korea-U.S. nuclear deterrence dialogue platform, its top security official said Wednesday, as the two countries' defense authorities are now tasked with leading the body. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- A U.S. diplomat highlighted the need Wednesday to employ "all tools available" to fend off potential aggression by North Korea and Russia as she voiced concerns over growing military cooperation between the two countries. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

U.S. Special Envoy for N. Korean Human Rights Calls for Continued Efforts to Highlight Human Rights Abuses and Advance Accountability

Newsis

February 8, 2024

Julie Turner, the U.S. Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights, emphasized on February 7th (local time) that "we remain committed to shining a spotlight on human rights abuses and violations, promoting accountability for those responsible for them, increasing access to information inside the DPRK, and supporting civil society efforts."Speaking in a video released by the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the publication of the UN

Commission of Inquiry (COI) report on North Korean human rights, Turner stated that "promoting respect for human rights and human dignity the DPRK remains a top priority for the United States government."

The UN Human Rights Council created a commission of inquiry in March 2013 to investigate human rights issues in North Korea. On February 7th the following year, the COI published a report that detailed widespread and systematic human rights abuses in North Korea. It received significant attention, as it marked the first effort by the international community to comprehensively assess the human rights situation in North Korea.

Special Envoy Turner also explained, "the report concluded that systemic, widespread and gross human rights violations have been and are being committed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, its institutions and officials. In many instances, the violations of human rights found by the commission constitute crimes against humanity."

She further stated, "[This report] became the gold standard for commissions of inquiry and further solidified the international consensus that the human rights situation in the DPRK was and remains among the worst in the world."

"Today, 10 years later," Turner added, "I urge the international community to reflect on those recommendations and to consider what more can be done to carry them forward. In particular, we call on the DPRK to initiate a reform process to implement the recommendations of the 2014 UN COI report and to respect human rights."

Additionally, she reiterated "the COI's recommendation to the People's Republic of China…to respect the principle of non-refoulement and to abstain from forcibly repatriating any persons to the DPRK, unless treatment there, verified by international monitors, markedly improves."

Turner also noted that "the DPRK will undergo its Universal Periodic Review this year, which offers an additional opportunity for the international community to make concrete recommendations to improve for human rights."

Translated by Ashley Park, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations and Research

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Prepared by Valerie Xu, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250716163114/https://mailchi.mp/e856e4e57a62/hrnk-news-items-us-special-envoy-for-n-korean-human-rights-calls-for-continued-efforts-to-highlight-human-rights-abuses-and-advance-accountability?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, February 16th, 2024

N. Korea Urges Loyalty for Kim Jong-un on Late Leader's Birthday

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un has broken with decades of North Korean policy – does it mean he's planning for war? (CNN, 02/16/2024)
North Korea's national anthem drops unification reference amid ongoing purge (*NK News*, 02/16/2024)
N. Korea urges loyalty for Kim Jong-un on late leader's birthday (*Yonhap*, 02/16/2024)

In South Korea:
Defense chief calls for 'sternly' punishing N.K. border provocations (*Yonhap*, 02/16/2024)
DP slams Yoon for using national security as pretext for postponing trip to Europe (*Yonhap*, 02/16/2024)
Yoon taps retired Maj. Gen. Seok as DAPA head (*The Korea Herald*, 02/16/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
North Korea hacked emails of South Korea president's aide (*BBC*, 02/14/2024)
North Korea sold illegal gambling sites to South Korean criminals: NIS (*NK News*, 02/16/2024)
S. Korea calls on N. Korea to make 'right choice' on 10th anniv. of U.N. rights report (*Yonhap*, 02/16/2024)

International:
Japan 'paying attention' to remarks from N. Korean leader's sister: top gov't spokesman (*Yonhap*, 02/16/2024)
North Korean vessel with shady past spotted loitering in Russian waters (*NK News*, 02/16/2024)
S. Korea, Japan hold nonproliferation consultations (*Yonhap*, 02/16/2024)
South Korea says opening diplomatic relations with Cuba would shock North Korea (*AP News*, 02/16/2024)
S. Korea, UNFPA hold 1st policy meeting to discuss global population (*Yonhap*, 02/16/2024)
S. Korean, U.S. Marines stage joint wintertime drills (*Yonhap*, 02/16/2024)
Seoul, Washington nail down NCG details as 'Trump risk' looms (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/16/2024)
The Arsenal of Autocracy; How North Korean Weapons Fuel Conflict—and How to Stop the Flow (*Foreign Affairs*, 02/15/2024)
US eases restrictions on humanitarian and journalism activities in North Korea (*NK News*, 02/16/2024)

In North Korea:

- As war in Ukraine grinds toward its third year and fighting in Gaza inflames a broader crisis across the Middle East, global security observers are keeping a close watch on another part of the world – North Korea, where Kim Jong Un's latest provocations are raising questions about his military intentions. (Simone McCarthy, CNN)

- North Korea appears to have amended its national anthem to remove a reference to the Korean Peninsula amid a wider purge of anything representing unification with South Korea. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Korea praised leader Kim Jong-un and called for loyalty as the country marked the 82nd birthday of Kim's late father and former leader Kim Jong-il on Friday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's Defense Minister Shin Won-sik on Friday called for "sternly" punishing any North Korean provocation south of the sea and land borders, his office said, amid tensions from Pyongyang's continued weapons tests and increasingly harsh rhetoric. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- Opposition leader Lee Jae-myung accused President Yoon Suk Yeol on Friday of using national security as a pretext for his decision to put off a planned trip to Germany and Denmark, saying it could send the wrong signal to foreign investors. (Kang Jae-eun, *Yonhap*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol on Thursday tapped Army Reserve Maj. Gen. Seok Jong-gun as the new minister of the Defense Acquisition Program Administration, the presidential office announced Friday. (Son Ji-hyoung, *The Korea Herald*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea hacked into the personal emails of an aide to the South Korean president, his office has confirmed to the BBC. The breach occurred in the run-up to President Yoon Suk Yeol's state visit to the UK last November. (Jean Mackenzie, *BBC*)
- A press release from the National Intelligence Service (NIS) earlier this week states this is the first time ROK authorities have publicly disclosed “concrete evidence” of North Korea’s involvement in online gambling in South Korea. (Joon Ha Park and Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- South Korea's unification ministry urged North Korea on Friday to make the "right choice" of ceasing its nuclear and missile programs and improving the human rights of its people. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Japan is "paying attention to" the remarks by the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un about her openness to mending ties and discussing a possible visit to Pyongyang by Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- A North Korean vessel with a shady past has made an unusual voyage in Russian waters, with one expert suggesting its route could point to a possible ship-to-ship transfer in violation of international sanctions. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- South Korea and Japan held disarmament and nonproliferation consultations to discuss ways to address growing military threats from North Korea, Seoul's foreign ministry said Friday. (Yi Won-ju, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea’s presidential office claimed Thursday that the country’s move to establish diplomatic relations with Cuba would deal a “political and psychological blow” to the South’s war-divided rival North Korea. (Kim Tong-Hyung and Jiwon Song, *AP News*)
- The foreign ministry said Friday it held a policy meeting with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) earlier this week to address issues related to the global population and humanitarian assistance. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)

- South Korean and U.S. Marines have conducted combined wintertime drills in an eastern alpine county as part of an ongoing regular bilateral exercise, the South's Marine Corps said Friday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean and U.S. defense authorities signed a framework document on the Nuclear Consultative Group (NCG) earlier this week to strengthen extended deterrence in light of the North's nuclear threat. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea's leadership thrives in moments of global upheaval. Although the Kim regularly denies that it is supplying weapons overseas and is prohibited by UN Security Council resolutions from buying or selling various arms, it has nonetheless become a de facto arsenal for the United States' adversaries. (Jonathan Corrado and Markus Garlauskas, *Foreign Affairs*)
- The U.S. will significantly ease sanctions regulations on humanitarian and journalistic activities in North Korea, a decision one expert lauded as a welcome move. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

Prepared by Ryan Rohrbach, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250716164824/https://mailchi.mp/631b0b134061/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-urges-loyalty-for-kim-jong-un-on-late-leaders-birthday?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, February 17th, 2024

Why do N. Koreans escape their own country?

Top News:
Why do North Koreans escape their own country? (RFA, 02/15/2024)

In North Korea:
N. Korean leader apparently skips visit to mausoleum on late father's birthday (*Yonhap*, 02/17/2024)
North Korea Begins Dismantling Quarantine Import Facility (*38 North*, 02/15/2024)

In South Korea:
Chun Ki-won: Hero pastor jailed for sexually abusing North Korea teenage escapees (*BBC*, 02/16/2024)

International:
Japan-North Korea talks must help denuclearize peninsula, Seoul says (*The Korea Herald*, 02/16/2024)
Kim Jong-un's sister welcomes Kishida's comments, but with caveats (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/16/2024)
Kim Yo Jong floats possible engagement between North Korea and Japan (*NK News*, 02/16/2024)
N. Korea denounces S. Korea, U.S. over aerial surveillance (*Yonhap*, 02/17/2024)

New evidence of North Korean military aid to Russia: Ukrainian police official (*The Korea Herald*, 02/16/2024)
North Korea Teases Potential Thaw in Japan Relations (VOA, 02/16/2024)
Seoul sees Kishida's possible Pyongyang visit won't bring fundamental changes (*The Korea Times*, 02/16/2024)
Ukrainian data casts doubt on precision of N.Korea missiles fired by Russia (*Reuters*, 02/16/2024)
U.S. calls for N.K. reform process to improve human rights (*Yonhap*, 02/17/2024)
U.S. envoy vows to work to prevent forced repatriation of N.K. defectors (*Yonhap*, 02/17/2024)
US deploys half of its aircraft carriers to China's doorstep (*The Telegraph*, 02/16/2024)

Top News:

- This video, featuring HRNK Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu, explores why North Koreans risk their lives to flee, linking their motivations to the country's long-standing human rights issues, traced back to the severe economic hardships of the "Arduous March" in the 1990s. (Hye-Jun Seo, RFA)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un appears to have skipped a visit to a mausoleum for his late father, Kim Jong-il, for yet another year on the occasion of the former leader's 82nd birthday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- Commercial satellite imagery indicates North Korea has begun dismantling warehouses at Uiju Airfield, the country's largest quarantine import center for goods. The work at the airfield began almost four years to the day since the country shut its borders in response to growing cases of COVID-19. (Martyn Williams, *38 North*)

In South Korea:

- A South Korean pastor once hailed as a hero for smuggling out hundreds of North Koreans has been jailed for sexually abusing teenage defectors. (Frances Mao, BBC)

International:

- The South Korean government said Friday it is closely communicating with Japan and the US over North Korea extending an invitation to Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida a day earlier. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- The North Korean leader's influential sister, Kim Yo-jong, welcomed the Japanese prime minister's recent comments about meeting with the North Korean leader. (Esther Chung, Chung Yeong-Gyo, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Kim Yo Jong, the influential sister of North Korea's leader, issued a response to Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Thursday night, floating the possibility of engagement between Pyongyang and Tokyo. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korea on Saturday accused South Korea and the United States of heightening tensions on the Korean Peninsula with aerial reconnaissance activities. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- In a latest sign of military cooperation between North Korea and Russia, a senior Ukrainian police official Sergei Bolvinov said Wednesday that part of a weapon that Russia used to attack Ukraine had Korean writing on it. (Cho Chung-un, *The Korea Herald*)

- At the beginning of the year, as western Japan reeled from an earthquake that killed more than 200 people and damaged tens of thousands of homes, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un sent Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida a message of "sympathy and condolences." (Willam Gallo, VOA)
- South Korea's presidential office expressed a negative outlook on remarks by North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's sister on the regime's openness to discussing a visit by Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida to Pyongyang. (Nam Hyun-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- Russia hit only two military targets upon firing 24 North Korean ballistic missiles at Ukraine in recent weeks, Ukraine's top prosecutor said on Friday, casting doubt on the reliability of Pyongyang's much-feared, but little-known weaponry. (Tom Balmforth and David Gauthier-Villars, *Reuters*)
- A State Department spokesperson on Saturday reiterated calls for North Korea to begin a reform process to improve human rights, as this month marks the 10th anniversary of the release of a landmark U.N. report on the reclusive state's rights situation. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. special envoy for North Korean human rights has vowed to work with the international community to prevent the forced repatriation of North Korean defectors, South Korea's unification ministry said Saturday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The United States is expected to deploy almost half of its aircraft carriers in the Western Pacific this year, as military tensions continue to rise over North Korea's nuclear ambitions and China's territorial claims. (Nicola Smith, *The Telegraph*)

Prepared by Jiwoo-Katie Choi, HRNK Research Intern

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Sunday, February 18th, 2024

G7 foreign ministers strongly condemn N. Korea's arms transfers to Russia

In North Korea:
North Korea mum on establishment of South Korea-Cuba ties (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/18/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korea hopeful for economic benefits from diplomatic ties with Cuba (*Yonhap*, 02/18/2024)
Short film about army life depicts North Korea's caste system (RFA, 02/17/2024)

International:

Diplomacy's untimely death leaves Koreas on 'extremely bleak' brink -- amid fears of a Trump redux (*South China Morning Post*, 02/18/2024)
G7 foreign ministers strongly condemn N. Korea's arms transfers to Russia (*Yonhap*, 02/18/2024)
S. Korea, U.S., Japan call for N. Korea to take 'immediate' steps to end 'all' human rights abuses (*Yonhap*, 02/18/2024)
S. Korea's top diplomat expected to cement stance with U.S., Japan against N. Korea at G20 meetings (*Yonhap*, 02/18/2024)
Top diplomats from US, China hold 'constructive' talks on issues dividing them (AP, 02/16/2024)
Vacation in North Korea? Reclusive State Reopens to Tourism -- But Only for Russians (*The Wall Street Journal*, 02/18/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has so far remained mum on South Korea's forging of formal diplomatic relations with Cuba, its longtime fraternal partner, and is instead highlighting its recent exchanges with Russia. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

In South Korea:

- The recent establishment of diplomatic ties with Cuba could have positive economic impacts on the South Korean economy, the presidential office said Sunday, citing Cuba's rich natural resources. (Woo Jae-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The main point of the 23-minute film is not so much to reveal hardships facing soldiers, but more to illustrate the unfairness of North Korea's *songbun* system of ascribed status, Jeong said. It was this caste-like system that drove Jeong to risk everything to get to South Korea, where he became a film director. (Lee Hyunju, Mok Yong Jae, RFA)

International:

- Dialogue between North and South Korea has given way to fiery rhetoric and mutual threats of destruction that neither side seems inclined to walk back. (Park Chan-kyong, *South China Morning Post*)
- The top diplomats of the Group of Seven (G7) countries have condemned North Korea's arms transfers to Russia, calling it a direct violation of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. (Woo Jae-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea, the United States and Japan urged North Korea on Saturday to take "immediate" steps to end "all" human rights violations as they marked the 10th anniversary of the release of a landmark U.N. report on the reclusive state's rights abuses. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea, the United States and Japan are expected to reiterate their strong stance against North Korea, as the top diplomats of the three nations are likely to meet on the sidelines of the Group of 20 (G20) foreign ministers' meeting in Rio de Janeiro this week. (Woo Jae-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Top diplomats from the U.S. and China on Friday held a "candid and constructive" discussion on issues vexing their strained relations over Taiwan, the situation in the South China Sea, Russia's war against Ukraine and synthetic opioids, the State Department said. (Matthew Lee, AP)
- It is no coincidence that Russian nationals were the first foreign tourists to the country since the Kim Jong Un regime slammed its borders closed in early 2020. The two countries have

significantly deepened economic and military ties since President Vladimir Putin hosted Kim in Russia for a rare summit last September. (Dasl Yoon, *The Wall Street Journal*)

Prepared by Jiwoo-Katie Choi, HRNK Research Intern

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Monday, February 19th, 2024

U.S. envoy - 'Double down' on sending information into N. Korea

In North Korea:
N. Korea erases image of Korean Peninsula from major websites (*Yonhap*, 02/19/2024)
N. Korea touts sole leadership system on key anniversary (*Yonhap*, 02/19/2024)
North Korean hackers use AI for more sophisticated scams (*Financial Times*, 02/19/2024)

In South Korea:
Democratic Party recruits ex-official suspected in 2019 forced return of North Koreans (*The Korea Herald*, 02/19/2024)
New DAPA chief vows to speed up weapons procurement process (*Yonhap*, 02/19/2024)
Rights advocates call for renewed focus on North Korea 10 years after UN report (*The Korea Times*, 02/19/2024)

International:
Aboard a U.S. Aircraft Carrier, a Front-Row Seat to China Tensions (*The Wall Street Journal*, 02/19/2024)
Decade after UN report, NK human rights 'worst in world': Turner (*The Korea Herald*, 02/19/2024)
Enraged N Korean workers in China beat factory manager to death: report (RFA, 02/19/2024)
FM Cho may hold talks with U.S., Japanese counterparts at G20 gathering (*Yonhap*, 02/19/2024)
S. Korea voices condolences over death of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny (*Yonhap*, 02/19/2024)
South, U.S., Japan urge North to end rights violations on anniversary of U.N. report (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/19/2024)
'The whole trip was a complete shock and surprise.' (RFA, 02/19/2024)
U.S. envoy: 'Double down' on sending information into North Korea (UPI, 02/19/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has erased an image of the Korean Peninsula, viewed as a unification reference, from its major websites, as its leader Kim Jong-un has called South Korea the North's "primary foe" and vowed not to seek unification with the South. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

- North Korea called Monday for loyalty to its leader Kim Jong-un and touted the monolithic leadership system as it marked the 50th anniversary of the announcement of the country's key guiding principle. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean cyber criminals are turning to artificial intelligence to help Pyongyang steal cutting-edge technologies and secure funds for its illicit nuclear weapons programme. (Christian Davies, *Financial Times*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's main opposition Democratic Party of Korea recruited a former National Intelligence Service official who was suspected of alleged wrongdoing in the forced repatriation of North Korean defectors in 2019, when former President Moon Jae-in was in office. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- The new head of South Korea's state procurement agency vowed Monday to speed up the weapons acquisition process to bolster the military's capabilities against North Korea's threats in a timely and efficient manner. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- Human rights advocates called for renewed efforts to bring international attention to North Korea on Monday, as this month marks the 10th anniversary of the publication of a landmark U.N. report that sheds light on "unspeakable atrocities" committed by the regime. (Jung Min-ho, *The Korea Times*)

International:

- During recent exercises in the Philippine Sea, U.S. jet fighters screamed into flight from the USS Carl Vinson as two Chinese intelligence-gathering ships lingered a few miles away. (Alastair Gale, *The Wall Street Journal*)
- The human rights situation in North Korea has remained the worst in the world, even 10 years after the UN released its first report unveiling systematic human rights abuses and violations by the North Korean regime, the US special envoy for North Korean human rights said Monday. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korean workers in China who reportedly occupied a factory last month to protest over unpaid wages took a monitoring officer hostage and beat a management representative to death, according to Japan's Yomiuri newspaper. (Taejun Kang, RFA)
- Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul could hold separate bilateral talks with his U.S. and Japanese counterparts, and also meet trilaterally, on the margins of the foreign ministers' meeting of the Group of 20 (G20) countries in Brazil this week. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's foreign ministry on Monday offered condolences for the death of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny and called for a thorough investigation into the case. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea, the United States and Japan urged North Korea to end its human rights violations on the 10th anniversary of the release of a landmark United Nations report on abuses under the regime. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- In this interview with RFA, a Russian travel blogger describes the first guided tour to North Korea in 4 years. (Jamin Anderson, RFA)
- Washington's top envoy for North Korean human rights called Monday for a greater push in sending information about the outside world into the isolated state through broadcasts, leaflets and media such as USB hard drives. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)

Prepared by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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Tuesday, February 20th, 2024

N. Korean gov't delegations visiting Russia for cooperation and N.K. leader receives Russian-made car from Putin as gift

In North Korea:
N. Korean gov't delegations visiting Russia for cooperation (*Yonhap*, 02/20/2024)
N.K. leader receives Russian-made car from Putin as gift (*Yonhap*, 02/20/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korea to host 3rd Summit for Democracy on March 18-20 (*Yonhap*, 02/20/2024)
S. Korea's spy agency seeks to block access to N. Korea's propaganda YouTube channel (*Yonhap*, 02/20/2024)
Yoon seeks Germany, Denmark's understanding on postponed state visits (*Yonhap*, 02/20/2024)

International:
Blinken likely to visit S. Korea on occasion of upcoming democracy summit (*Yonhap*, 02/20/2024)
Chinese man in Australia faces extradition to US over North Korea smuggling (*NK News*, 02/20/2024)
Japan's Nadeshiko head to Jeddah for Olympic qualifier against North Korea (*Reuters*, 02/20/2024)
North Korean missile fired by Russia against Ukraine contained US and European components (*CNN*, 02/20/2024)
South Korea, Germany warn of North Korean cyberattacks against defense industry (*NK News*, 02/20/2024)
S. Korea notes U.N. sanctions obligations after report on Putin's gift to N.K. leader (*Yonhap*, 02/20/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean delegations, focusing on technology, fisheries, and sports, have visited Russia to enhance bilateral cooperation. Key officials participated in various forums and discussions in Moscow, including a global IT forum emphasizing digital sovereignty. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin gifted North Korean leader Kim Jong-un a Russian-made Aurus Senat luxury car, highlighting their close relationship. (Kim Eun-Jung, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea will host the third Summit for Democracy from March 18 to 20 under the theme "Democracy for Future Generations," the presidential office said Tuesday. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's spy agency on Tuesday asked the country's internet censorship body to block access to a North Korean propaganda YouTube channel, officials said. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol held back-to-back phone talks with German and Danish leaders Tuesday to explain his decision to postpone his state visits to the European countries and ask for their understanding. (Kim Eun-Jung, *Yonhap*)

International:

- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is likely to visit South Korea next month on the occasion of the upcoming session of the Summit for Democracy. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- A Chinese man is being held in Australia over his alleged role in a tobacco smuggling scheme that generated $700m (£570m) for North Korea. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Japan's women's team are flying to Saudi Arabia on Tuesday for the first leg of their Paris Olympics qualifier against North Korea. (Nick Mulvenney, *Reuters*)
- A North Korean ballistic missile fired last month by the Russian military in Ukraine contained hundreds of components that trace back to companies in the US and Europe. (Natasha Bertrand, CNN)
- Joint advisory asserts DPRK cybercriminals are stealing military tech to develop weapons like satellites and submarines. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- South Korea said Tuesday that Russia has an obligation to comply with U.N. sanctions resolutions against North Korea as a member state, after a report on President Vladimir Putin's gift of a luxury car to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Ashley Park, HRNK Research Intern

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Wednesday, February 21st, 2024

North Korea reopens to Russian Tourists

In North Korea:
North Koreans gather cigarette butts to sell to clothing makers (*Radio Free Asia*, 02/21/2024)
North Korea reopens to Russian Tourists (CNN, 02/21/2024)
What is behind North Korea's rise as a women's football power? (*The Guardian*, 02/20/2024)

In South Korea:

South Korea jails former hero pastor for sexually abusing North Korean teenage defectors (CNN, 02/20/2024)
S. Korea to push to designate July 14 as day for N. Korean defectors (*Yonhap*, 02/21/2024)

International:
FM Cho holds 1st in-person talks with Japanese counterpart at G20 (*Yonhap*, 02/21/2024)
North Korean Missile Used In Ukraine Was Packed Full Of U.S. Parts (TWZ, 02/20/2024)
Putin gives Kim Jong Un a luxury limousine. It's a violation of UN sanctions on North Korea (*AP News*, 02/21/2024)
Russia claims 'sanctions war' against Moscow after criticism over Putin's gift to N.K. leader (*Yonhap*, 02/21/2024)
Seoul official discusses N. Korean human rights with US envoy (*Yonhap*, 02/21/2024)
Seoul's Ties With Havana Seen as Setback for Pyongyang (VOA, 02/20/2024)
U.S. restates its goal of 'full' Korean Peninsula denuclearization (*Yonhap*, 02/21/2024)

In North Korea:

- Hungry North Koreans are swooping in ahead of cleaning crews for large public events to collect the butts of filtered cigarettes, which they then sell for meager sums of cash, residents in the country told Radio Free Asia. (Kim Won Jin, *Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korea welcomed about 100 Russian tourists in the first trip of its kind since the pandemic. (CNN)
- The fact that North Korea is ranked in the top 10 of the world's best women's football sides – higher than Brazil and Australia among others – may come as a surprise to some, but in the next week, the team known as the Eastern Azaleas are attempting to cement their position as one of the best sides in the world by beating Japan in a two-legged Olympic qualification playoff to reach the 2024 Olympics in Paris. (Alex Bishop, *The Guardian*)

In South Korea:

- Chun Ki-won was sentenced to five years in prison last week for abusing six teenage victims between 2016 and 2023, all of whom are either North Korean refugees or children of refugees, according to the Seoul Central District Court. (Yoonjung Seo, CNN)
- South Korea will push to designate July 14 as an official day for North Korean defectors, Seoul's point man on Pyongyang said Wednesday, in a move to provide better support to the people who have fled the North and raise awareness for unification. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul held bilateral talks with his Japanese counterpart Wednesday on the margins of the foreign ministers' meeting of the Group of 20 countries in Brazil. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- A short-range ballistic missile (SRBM) produced by North Korea and recently used against Ukraine by Russia relied on more than 290 foreign-sourced components, many of them originating from U.S. manufacturers. This is the alarming result of a study by Conflict Armament Research (CAR), a U.K.-based investigative organization. (Thomas Newdick, TWZ)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin has gifted North Korean leader Kim Jong Un a Russian-made luxury limousine for his personal use, both countries announced Tuesday, in another sign of their expanding cooperation. (Hyung-Jin Kim, *AP News*)

- Russia accused South Korea and the Western countries Wednesday of waging a "sanctions war" against Moscow, after Seoul implied Russia violated U.N. sanctions with its gift of a luxury car to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap)*
- A foreign ministry official met with Julie Turner, the U.S. special representative for North Korean human rights, on Wednesday and discussed joint efforts to promote the human rights situation in the reclusive state, the ministry said. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Seoul's newly forged diplomatic ties with Havana are a diplomatic setback for North Korea, which views Cuba as a brother country, according to analysts. (Christy Lee, VOA)
- The State Department on Tuesday reiterated the United States' goal to achieve the "full" denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, after North Korea signaled openness to improving ties with Japan as long as Tokyo does not take issue with its "right to self-defense. (Song Sang-Ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Annie Heitmeier, HRNK Research Intern

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Thursday, February 22nd, 2024

Seoul confirms existence of mass burial site for UN forces in North Korean city

In North Korea:
North Korea accuses U.S. of 'double standard' toward human rights (*Yonhap*, 02/22/2024)
North Korea bans more than 100 patriotic songs that refer to reunification (RFA, 02/21/2024)
North Korean hackers ramp up efforts to funnel overseas funds into nuclear, missile programs (*The Korea Times*, 02/22/2024)

In South Korea:
Defense chief downplays concerns over U.S. taking softer stance on North Korean nukes under Trump (*Yonhap*, 02/22/2024)
ROK pro-unification group disbands in response to North Korea policy changes (*NK News*, 02/21/2024)
Ruling party proposes new security council against North Korean threats (*The Korea Herald*, 02/21/2024)
South Korea to designate July 14 as 'North Korean Defector Day' (*NK News*, 02/22/2024)
Unification ministry budgets $300K for new YouTube channel about North Korea (*NK News*, 02/22/2024)
Vice FM to address N. Korean human rights issues at U.N. session next week (*Yonhap*, 02/22/2024)

International:

A Gift From Russia to Kim Jong Un: A New Armored Limousine (WSJ, 02/22/2024)
Cautious hopes reemerge for Japan's role over North Korean nuclear conundrum (*Yonhap*, 02/22/2024)
North Korea attempts to hack Russian foreign ministry (RFA, 02/22/2024)
North Korea, Russia sign protocol on sports exchanges (*Yonhap*, 02/22/2024)
Russia apparently violating UNSC resolutions by giving N.K. leader luxury car: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 02/22/2024)
Russian luxury car gift to North Korea likely violates U.N. sanctions, says U.S. (UPI, 02/22/2024)
South Korea foreign minister to meet Blinken in US this month (*Reuters*, 02/22/2024)
Seoul confirms existence of mass burial site for UN forces in North Korean city (NK *News*, 02/21/2024)
The World Must Keep a Wary Eye on North Korea (*Time Magazine*, 02/21/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea denounces the United States, claiming that the U.S. overlooks the situation of the Gaza-Israel conflict. The North released this statement in commentary with U.S. special representative Turner during her visit to South Korea on occasion of the 10th anniversary of the landmark U.N. COI report on North Korea's human rights abuses. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has banned more than 100 patriotic songs because they refer to reunification with the South – the latest step making it clear that unifying the divided peninsula is no longer a priority for Pyongyang, generating confusion among residents. (Kim Ji Eun, Taejun Kang, RFA)
- North Korean hackers have amassed virtual assets worth billions of dollars, largely through cyber theft between 2020 and 2022, according to the U.S. Treasury Department (Kim Hyun-bin, *The Korea Times*)

In South Korea:

- Defense Minister Shin Won-sik addressed concerns about the potential impact of a second term for former U.S. President Donald Trump on North Korea's nuclear program, asserting that yielding to North Korean blackmail would weaken U.S. global leadership. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- The ROK branch of the Pan-national Alliance for Korea's Reunification announced on Saturday that it will reorganize as the tentatively named "Korean Independence Movement Alliance" and focus on opposing the U.S. and the Yoon administration in protest of the recent policy changes regarding North Korea. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- On Wednesday, the floor leader of the ruling party advocated for creating a trilateral security council comprising Cabinet members and representatives from the two major parties to address threats from North Korea. (Jung Min-kyung, *The Korea Herald*)
- Seoul will designate July 14 as "North Korean Defector Day," the Ministry of Unification announced on Wednesday, a move that escapees welcomed while raising concerns that the day could be politicized. (Ifang Bremer, Lina Park, *NK News*)
- South Korea's unification ministry has budgeted $300,000 to start a new YouTube channel focused on providing "objective information about North Korea," supplementing the ministry's current channel and will be focusing on "understanding the reality of North Korea," taking special aim towards foreign viewers. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

- Second Vice Foreign Minister Kang In-sun will attend the upcoming session of the U.N. Human Rights Council next week and address North Korea's human rights violations, the foreign ministry said Thursday. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- North Korea's Kim Jong Un just added a new trophy vehicle to his sanctions-defying fleet of luxury cars, thanks to Russia's leader Vladimir Putin. (Timothy W. Martin, Dasl Yoon, WSJ)
- Japan, amidst estranged relations between South Korea, the United States, and North Korea, is exploring diplomatic engagement with Pyongyang, with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida expressing readiness for unconditional talks with Kim Jong-un. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's cyber-espionage efforts have been directed at infiltrating the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, according to a German cybersecurity firm, which has discovered a malware sample concealed within a backdoored software installer for Moscow. (Taejun Kang, RFA)
- North Korea and Russia have signed a sports exchange agreement as of Wednesday that includes the facilitation of training courses, seminars, and participation not only in training, but also for the upcoming BRICS Games and World Friendship Games being held in Russia later this year. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- Russia appears to have violated U.N. Security Council (UNSC) resolutions if it had given North Korean leader Kim Jong-un a luxury car, a State Department spokesperson said Wednesday, noting the supply of transportation vehicles to the North is prohibited under the resolutions. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Russia likely in violation of U.N. sanctions when President Vladimir Putin gave a luxury car to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, a U.S. State Department spokesman said, joking that Kim should have gotten an "extended warranty." (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- South Korea's foreign minister Cho Tae-yul will visit the United States and hold a meeting with his counterpart Antony Blinken on February 28, the ministry said on Thursday. (*Reuters*)
- South Korea's unification ministry reports the potential location of a mass gravesite in North Korea where hundreds of U.N. and South Korean soldiers lie based on the testimony of North Korean defectors. (Jeongmin Kim, Lina Park, *NK News*)
- Amidst decades of periodic threats from North Korea towards the South, the U.S., and Japan, recent aggressive actions and rhetoric from Kim Jong Un's regime, along with closer ties to Russia and China, suggest an increased risk of provocation against South Korea, particularly in the lead-up to its legislative elections in April. (Ian Bremmer, *Time Magazine*)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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Friday, February 23rd, 2024

US, China officials discuss Russia-N. Korea military cooperation, State Dep't says

In North Korea:
North Koreans left without clear national vision after unification policy shift (*The Korea Times*, 02/23/2024)
Key developments on North Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 02/23/2024)

In South Korea:
ROK police seize Supreme Court servers compromised in North Korean cyberattack (*NK News*, 02/22/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
North Korea could task 1st vice FM with handling affairs with South Korea (*Yonhap*, 02/23/2024)
Summary of inter-Korean news this week (*Yonhap*, 2/23/2024)

International:
Abduction Issue May Preclude Resumption of Japan-North Korea Talks (*VOA News*, 02/22/2024)
Biden issues new sanctions against Russia in response to Navalny death (*Financial Times*, 02/23/2024)
Debris from NK missile in Ukraine could expose procurement networks (*Reuters*, 02/22/2024)
North Korea keeps door shut to aid groups despite opening for Russian tourists (*NK News*, 02/23/2024)
North Korea sends more delegations to Russia, focusing on IT and sports (*NK News*, 02/23/2024)
Sanctions and North Korea: The Good Old Days Are Gone for Good (*38 North*, 02/22/2024)
South Korea, US, Japan concur on 'stern' response to NK-Russia arms deal (*The Korea Herald*, 02/23/2024)
SSU documents facts of Russian strikes on Ukraine with North Korean ballistic missiles (*Ukrinform*, 02/22/2024)
Summary of external news of North Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 02/23/2024)
The Next Tripartite Pact? (*Foreign Affairs*, 02/19/2024)
US and South Korea fly warplanes in interception drills after North Korea's missile tests (*AP News*, 02/23/2024)
US won't abandon alliance with Seoul over North Korean nukes: ROK defense chief (*NK News*, 02/23/2024)
US, China officials discuss Russia-North Korea military cooperation, State Department says (*Reuters*, 02/23/2024)

In North Korea:

- Deeply embedded in North Korea's founding principle and the lives of its people for decades, the vision of a united Korea cannot be denied or abandoned even if its leader Kim Jong-un demands it, experts said on Friday. (Jung Min-ho, *The Korea Times*)

- North Korea erased image of Korean Peninsula from major websites and touted the sole leadership system on a key anniversary. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- South Korean police launched search and seizure operations on a Supreme Court digital data bureau this month to confiscate servers compromised in cyberattacks by North Korea's Lazarus Group. (Joon Ha Park, Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea may create the post of first vice foreign minister in charge of affairs with South Korea, as the country has been pushing to abolish agencies in charge of inter-Korean ties, a Seoul official said Friday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The following is a summary of inter-Korean news this week. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- For a possible summit between Pyongyang and Tokyo to be successful, it would have to address the issues of abduction and North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile programs, said analysts. (Christy Lee, *VOA News*)
- The US also sanctioned several shipping companies involved in transferring munitions from Iran and North Korea, which have proved crucial in helping Russia turn the tide on the battlefield against an outgunned Ukrainian army. (Felicia Schwartz, Chris Cook, Max Seddon, *Financial Times*)
- Revelations that a North Korean missile fired by Russia in Ukraine contained a large number of components linked to U.S.-based companies underline the difficulty of enforcing sanctions against Pyongyang, but could help uncover illicit procurement networks, experts say. (David Brunnstrom, *Reuters*)
- North Korea continues to keep its doors shut to foreign aid workers despite the efforts of humanitarian groups to return to deliver much-needed humanitarian assistance, multiple international organizations have told *NK News*. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- A record number of North Korean delegations have visited Russia this month, with the two sides focusing on deepening sports and cyber ties while celebrating their shared anti-Western stance. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- In 2024, geopolitics trumps finance and foreign perceptions of US policy now and its likely future behavior, undermining any hope that we can achieve the psychological dominance necessary to coerce better behavior in Pyongyang through sanctions. (Joseph DeThomas, *38 North*)
- The foreign ministers of South Korea, the United States and Japan agreed on the need for a firm response to North Korea's provision of arms to Russia for its war against Ukraine, as well as on enhancing cooperation to address North Korean threats, South Korea's Foreign Ministry said Friday. (Lee Jung-joo, *The Korea Herald*)
- The SSU has documented the facts of Russian air attacks on the civilian infrastructure of Ukraine with the use of long-range weapons from North Korea. (*Ukrinform*)
- The following is a summary of external news for North Korea this week. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

- Although today's circumstances are different, familiar signs of unease are already visible among China, North Korea, and Russia--rifts the United States can exploit. (Oriana Skylar Mastro, *Foreign Affairs*)
- South Korea and the United States flew advanced stealth fighters in a joint missile-interception drill Friday over the Korean Peninsula, South Korea's air force said, an apparent response to a spate of weapons tests this year by rival North Korea. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)
- South Korean defense minister Shin Won-sik said the U.S. will have to "give up its global leadership" if it gives into North Korean extortion and abandons its alliance with Seoul, responding to concerns of a shift in American policy if Donald Trump returns to office. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- A top U.S. official on North Korea held a video call this week with China's envoy on Korean Peninsula affairs in which they discussed the growing military cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang, the State Department said on Friday. (David Brunnstrom, Katharine Jackson, *Reuters*)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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Saturday, February 24th, 2024

S. Korean FM Cho voices concerns over N. Korea-Russia military cooperation

In North Korea:
Efforts to implement the "20x10 policy for regional development" begin (*Rimjin-gang*, 02/23/2024)
Kim Jong Un 'has a secret son who is kept out of the public eye' (*Daily Mail*, 02/23/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
North Korea assumes control of border industrial zone (RFA, 02/23/2024)

International:
FM Cho meets with top diplomats of G7 in Brazil (*Yonhap*, 02/24/2024)
N. Korea has sent more than 10,000 containers of munitions, materials to Russia since Sept.: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 02/24/2024)
Olympic berth in balance as North Korea hold Japan to draw (*Reuters*, 02/24/2024)
Russia's Hunt for Arms Meets North Korea's Need for Cash (*Bloomberg*, 02/23/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. stage joint air drills with F-35 fighters (*Yonhap*, 02/24/2024)
S. Korean FM Cho voices concerns over N. Korea-Russia military cooperation (*Yonhap*, 02/24/2024)
Should South Korea Enhance Its Role in the Eurasian Battlefield? (*38 North*, 02/22/2024)

Top nuclear envoys of U.S., China discuss N.K. behavior, Russia ties in video talks: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 02/24/2024)
U.S. unveils new major sanctions package for Russia's war against Ukraine, Navalny's death (*Yonhap*, 02/24/2024)
Ukrainian ambassador urges South Korea to change stance on lethal aid (*The Korea Times*, 02/24/2024)
War in Ukraine: Implications for North Korea (*38 North*, 02/22/2024)

In North Korea:

- In a speech to the Supreme People's Assembly on January 15, Kim Jong-un pointed out the gap between the capital and the provinces, and between urban and rural areas, and ordered factories to be built for rural development, dubbing it the "20 x 10 policy for regional development." A month later, the government has now moved to begin to build factories in various regions. (Kang Ji-won, Ishimaru Jiro, *Rimjin-gang*)
- Kim Jong Un has a son but he's too 'pale and thin' for North Korean tastes and is kept out of the public eye, a former spymaster says. The bombshell claim was made by Choe Su-yong, a retired official from the National Intelligence Service (NIS) in neighbouring South Korea. (Michael Havis, *Daily Mail*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Pyongyang is using factories and equipment in the Kaesong Industrial Complex without Seoul's permission. (Hyemin Son, RFA)

International:

- Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul met with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu this week and discussed various bilateral issues, such as strengthening their countries' bilateral relations, the foreign ministry said Saturday. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has shipped over 10,000 containers of munitions or munition-related materials to Russia since September, the State Department said Friday, as Moscow strives to replenish its weapons stockpile for use in Ukraine. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Kim Kyong Yong hit the crossbar 17 minutes from time out to miss out on giving North Korea a first-leg lead in their Olympic Games women's football playoff against Japan in Jeddah on Saturday, as the teams shared a 0-0 draw. (Michael Church, *Reuters*)
- North Korea has been accused of supplying Russia with missiles and ammunition for the war in Ukraine. Today on the Big Take podcast, what a deal like that could mean for the isolated North Korean economy and its leader Kim Jong Un. (Janet Paskin, Yang Yang, *Bloomberg*)
- South Korea and the United States staged joint air drills with advanced F-35A fighter jets Friday, the Air Force said, amid joint efforts to strengthen deterrence against North Korean threats. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul expressed concerns Friday over growing military cooperation between North Korea and Russia, saying it could potentially help Pyongyang's ability to "threaten security on the Korean Peninsula and beyond." (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The Republic of Korea should consider evolving its support scheme for Ukraine in a comprehensive way to help preserve a liberal international order, and in the process, increase South Korea's hard and soft power. (Kil Joo Ban, *38 North*)

- The top nuclear envoys of the United States and China have held video talks to discuss North Korea's "destabilizing" behavior and its deepening military cooperation with Russia, the State Department said Friday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States on Friday announced a new major package of sanctions and export control restrictions, including one against a South Korea-based firm, to ensure accountability for Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine and the death of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Ukrainian Ambassador to South Korea Dmytro Ponomarenko has urged South Korea to reassess its stance on supplying lethal weapons to the war-torn country as Russia continues to extensively utilize arms sourced from Iran and North Korea. (Kim Hyun-bin, *The Korea Times*)
- As the war grinds on, the world is left to grapple with ever-deepening ties between Pyongyang and Moscow. (Rachel Minyoung Lee, *38 North*)

Prepared by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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Sunday, February 25th, 2024

Mentions of Cuba in N. Korean media abruptly halt after establishment of Seoul-Havana ties

In South Korea:
Across the river from North Korea, a laser light show for peace (UPI, 02/24/2024)
Aegibong Peace Ecopark poised to become popular border-area tourism spot (*The Korea Herald*, 02/25/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N. Korea's removal of unification references could cause ideological confusion: minister (*Yonhap*, 02/25/2024)

International:
Abductees' families to conditionally accept lifting of North Korea sanctions (*The Japan Times*, 02/25/2024)
Foreign minister criticizes North-Russia military cooperation at UNSC (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/25/2024)
Inside North Korea's Forced-Labor Program (*The New Yorker*, 02/06/2024)
Mentions of Cuba in N. Korean media abruptly halt after establishment of Seoul-Havana ties (*The Korea Times*, 02/25/2024)

S. Korea investigating company on U.S. sanctions list over Russia connection (*Yonhap*, 02/25/2024)

In South Korea:

- On a snowy Saturday night, the South Korean city of Gimpo held a laser light show and performance for two audiences: local residents and -- perhaps -- their North Korean neighbors across a narrow river. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- Aegibong Peace Ecopark, celebrated the country's annual Jeongwol Daeboreum festival on Saturday with a lighting show, media performance, magic show and concert. (Lee Si-jin, *The Korea Herald*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea's recent removal of unification references could create an ideological vacuum or confusion among the elite ranks, leading the regime to carry out a military provocation to bring stability, Seoul's point man on Pyongyang said Sunday. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)

International:

- A group of families of abductees to North Korea and a group supporting them held a joint meeting in Tokyo on Sunday and adopted a policy of conditionally accepting the lifting of Japan's sanctions against North Korea. (*The Japan Times*)
- Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul voiced concerns over growing military cooperation between North Korea and Russia at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in New York on Saturday. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Workers sent from the country to Chinese factories describe enduring beatings and sexual abuse, having their wages taken by the state, and being told that if they try to escape they will be "killed without a trace." (Ian Urbina, *The New Yorker*)
- North Korean media outlets are no longer mentioning Cuba whatsoever since the establishment of formal diplomatic ties between South Korea and the Caribbean nation on Feb. 14. (Kim Hyun-bin, *The Korea Times*)
- A South Korea-based company sanctioned by the United States over its alleged connection to Russia is currently under investigation by authorities here, a foreign ministry official said Sunday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Gabrielle Drinkwine, HRNK Research Intern

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Monday, February 26th, 2024

Inside North Korea's Forced-Labor Program

Top News:
Inside North Korea's Forced-Labor Program (*The New Yorker*, 02/06/2024)

In North Korea:
North Korea kicks off fourth 10,000-home project in capital in four years (*NK News*, 02/26/2024)

International:
Defense minister, U.S. naval chief discuss N. Korea, defense industry cooperation (*Yonhap*, 02/26/2024)
EU blacklists North Korea's defense chief over arms transfers to Russia (*NK News*, 02/26/2024)
Experts say concerns about new North Korea-Russia defense treaty are overblown (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/26/2024)
Families of North Korea abductees give Japan breathing room for summit (*The Japan Times*, 02/26/2024)
Japan-South Korea ties under scrutiny over future of continental shelf in East China Sea (*South China Morning Post*, 02/26/2024)
North Korea once again fails to pay its contribution to UN budget on time (*NK News*, 02/26/2024)
N Korea reduces Cuba coverage as its ally enhances ties with South (*RFA*, 02/26/2024)
South Korea to tighten export controls on Russia, Belarus (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/26/2024)
Trump could see trade deficit with S. Korea with 'concern' if elected: U.S. expert (*Yonhap*, 02/26/2024)

Top News:

- Workers sent from the country to Chinese factories describe enduring beatings and sexual abuse, having their wages taken by the state, and being told that if they try to escape they will be "killed without a trace." (Ian Urbina, *The New Yorker*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has started a project to build 10,000 more homes in residential skyscrapers in the capital over the next year, according to state media, framing this as part of leader Kim Jong Un's efforts to "deepen the people's trust" in the government. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

International:

- Defense Minister Shin Won-sik held talks with the visiting U.S. secretary of the Navy in Seoul on Monday to discuss ways to boost cooperation in regional security and the defense industry, the ministry said. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- The European Union blacklisted North Korea's defense chief and key missile bureau on Friday over arms transfers to Russia, while the U.S. designated entities involved in a related shipping operation in sanctions marking two years since Moscow launched its war in Ukraine. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Concerns have been rising over how far Pyongyang's ties with Moscow would go since North Korea's state media called for reinforcing the partnership based on a "new legal foundation" last month. (Jung Min-ho, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- Relatives of abductees snatched away to North Korea decades ago have conditionally accepted the lifting of Tokyo's sanctions on Pyongyang, giving the Japanese government breathing room to attempt a breakthrough with its nuclear-armed neighbor. (Jesse Johnson, *The Japan Times*)
- As a critical bilateral agreement nears expiry in 2028, Japan and South Korea face renewed tensions over Block 7, an underexplored zone in the East China Sea that could hold vast oil reserves, presenting a serious challenge to their recent diplomatic progress. (Julian Ryall, *South China Morning Post*)
- North Korea has once again failed to pay its contribution to the U.N budget on time, in what one expert said may be a sign of the DPRK's post-pandemic financial difficulties. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- North Korean state-run media outlets have minimized their coverage of Cuba after the longtime ally since the Cold War established diplomatic ties with South Korea on Feb. 14. (RFA)
- South Korea will tighten export controls on Russia and Belarus for items that can potentially be used for military purposes, the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy said Monday. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Former President Donald Trump could view America's growing trade deficit with South Korea with "concern" if reelected, a prominent U.S. expert has said, as his campaign proposal for new tariffs has raised worries among nations. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Kate Refolo, HRNK Research Intern

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Tuesday, February 27th, 2024

Is North Korea Preparing for War?

Top News:
Is North Korea Preparing for War? (*AEI*, 02/26/2024)

In North Korea:
New Building in Hamhung Area: North Korea's Chemical Facilities (*RUSI*, 02/27/2024)
Size of N. Korea's rice paddies down 1.1% in 2023 (*Yonhap*, 02/26/2024)
While the World Was Looking Elsewhere, North Korea Became a Bigger Threat (*The Wall Street Journal*, 02/27/2024)

In South Korea:
Defense chief says N.K. munitions factories operating at full capacity to supply Russia (*Yonhap*, 02/27/2024)

N. Korea feared to launch 2nd spy satellite ahead of general elections (*The Korea Times*, 02/27/2024)
North has shipped 6,700 containers of munitions to Russia, says South's defense chief (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/27/2024)
North Korea has sent 6,700 containers of munitions to Russia, South Korea says (*Reuters*, 02/27/2024)
North Korea's Spy Satellite Not Functioning, South Says (*Newsweek*, 02/27/2024)
Russia sending North Korea food in return for arms: Seoul defense chief (*The Korea Herald*, 02/27/2024)

International:
Half of Russia's North Korea-Made Artillery Shells Don't Work: Ukraine (*Newsweek*, 02/27/2024)
Japan, North Korea hint they are ready for high-level talks (*Deutsche Welle*, 02/27/2024)
Moscow Plans to Produce 2.7 Million Rounds of Ammunition, Ukrainian Intel Says (*Kyiv Post*, 02/27/2024)
N. Korea sends youth delegation to Russia to attend festival (*Yonhap*, 02/27/2024)
N. Korea, China expected to have 'vibrant' exchanges in key year: Seoul official (*Yonhap*, 02/27/2024)
North Korea Speeds Up Pace of Secretive Weapons Shipments to Putin (*Bloomberg*, 02/27/2024)
Russian tourists share their impressions of North Korea after rare four-day trip (*NK News*, 02/27/2024)
South Korea and Japan need new joint declaration, Yoon adviser says (*Nikkei Asia*, 02/27/2024)
Tourists have returned to North Korea for the first time since the pandemic. Here's what they saw (CNN, 02/26/2024)
U.S. Commerce secretary highlights 'tough' talks under way with chipmakers over grants (*Yonhap*, 02/27/2024)
U.S. diplomat voices hope for S. Korea to offer more defense material support to Ukraine (*Yonhap*, 02/27/2024)
Vice FM urges N. Korea to cease provocations at U.N. disarmament conference (*Yonhap*, 02/27/2024)

Top News:

- Nicholas Eberstadt speaks to Jamie Weinstein of *The Dispatch* to explain the recent fear that North Korea is preparing for war. (*AEI*)

In North Korea:

- Analysis of satellite imagery of the Hamhung region of North Korea has identified a recently constructed building of interest in the immediate vicinity of a series of buried facilities and storage tanks. (Lennie Phillips OBE et al., RUSI)
- The size of North Korea's rice paddies decrease 1.1 percent in 2023 from a year earlier, data showed Monday, amid lingering concerns over the North's chronic food shortages. (Kang Yoon-seung, *Yonhap*)
- Kim Jong-un has exploited a fractured global order to harden North Korea into a menacing nuclear state--a potent new complication for a world already enmeshed in wars in Europe and the Middle East. (Timothy W. Martin, Dasl Yoon, *The Wall Street Journal*)

In South Korea:

- North Korean munitions factories are operating at full capacity to supply weapons to Russia in exchange for much-needed food and other necessities, South Korea's defense chief has said. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea could launch a second military spy satellite as early as March, according to Defense Minister Shin Won-sik, amid fears that Pyongyang might resort to provocations leading up to the April 10 general elections in South Korea. (Lee Hyo-jin, *The Korea Times*)
- Speaking at a press conference on Monday, Defense Minister Shin Won-sik said the South Korean government estimates that the scale of the North's shipments to Russia is equivalent to approximately 3 million rounds of 152-millimeter artillery shells or 500,000 122-millimeter shells. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea has shipped about 6,700 containers carrying millions of munitions to Russia since July to support its war against Ukraine, in a sign of ongoing arms transfers, South Korean media reported on Tuesday, citing the defence minister. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- North Korea's recently launched reconnaissance satellite is in orbit but does not appear to be functioning, the South said. (John Feng, *Newsweek*)
- North Korea has provided Russia with 6,700 shipping containers' worth of artillery shells over the past six months, according to Seoul's defense chief Shin Won-sik. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)

International:

- Half of more than a million artillery shells shipped to Russia from North Korea are faulty, a senior Ukrainian defense official has said. (John Feng, *Newsweek*)
- Japan wants the return of its nationals abducted by North Korea, while Pyongyang is looking for sanctions relief. However, big hurdles remain to opening lines of communication. (Julian Ryall, *Deutsche Welle*)
- Russians are trying to increase both quantity and quality of weapons it has been exhausting, after acquiring old munitions from Belarus and North Korea, but is hampered by Western sanctions and foiled by Western air defense systems, according to a recent interview with Ukrainian intelligence. (*Kyiv Post*)
- A delegation of North Korean youths has left for Russia to take part in the World Youth Festival, Pyongyang's state media said Tuesday, as the two nations have been deepening cooperation. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea and China are expected to have "vibrant" exchanges this year on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic ties, Seoul's unification ministry said Tuesday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has shipped containers that could hold millions of artillery shells to Russia, a top South Korean official said, allowing President Vladimir Putin to maintain his assault on Ukraine as Kyiv's stocks of ammunition dwindle. (Jon Herskovitz, *Bloomberg*)
- Nearly a hundred Russian tourists visited North Korea earlier this month, becoming the first foreign travelers to enter the country in years. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Japan and South Korea should consider issuing a new joint statement in 2025 as they mark key milestones in bilateral relations, said Park Cheol-hee, a key foreign policy adviser to South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol. (Tetsuya Fujita, *Nikkei Asia*)
- Many Russian tourists have found themselves locked out of tourism destinations. But North Korea -- as a key Russian ally -- offered a rare opportunity to travel. (Lilit Marcus, Mayumi Maruyama, *CNN*)

- U.S. Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo reiterated Monday that "tough" talks have been under way with advanced semiconductor companies over grants to be awarded under a program to reinvigorate chip manufacturing in the United States. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- A U.S. diplomat expressed hopes Monday for South Korea to provide more defense material support to Ukraine, stressing the importance of air defense assistance for Ukrainian forces striving to fend off Russian attacks. (Song Sang-ho, Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- Second Vice Foreign Minister Kang In-sun urged North Korea to return to denuclearization talks and to cease its nuclear and missile programs, the foreign ministry said Tuesday. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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Wednesday, February 28th, 2024

Yoon warns North against pre-election provocations; U.S. takes step toward signing defense procurement pact with S. Korea

In North Korea:
N. Korea deletes commemorative stamps of inter-Korean summits from issuer's website (*Yonhap*, 02/28/2024)
North Korea's first spy satellite is 'alive', can manoeuvre, expert says (*Reuters*, 02/28/2024)

In South Korea:
Rival heir to Kim Ju-ae unlikely to appear: unification minister (*The Korea Herald*, 02/28/2024)
S. Korea to spend 610 mln won for DNA tests on divided families this year (*Yonhap*, 02/28/2024)
Seoul doesn't oppose NK engaging with US, Japan: unification minister (*The Korea Herald*, 02/28/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Yoon warns North against pre-election provocations (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/28/2024)

International:
Allies to begin annual Freedom Shield military exercise next week (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/28/2024)
Kim Jong-Un has sent Russia three million shells, claims South Korea (*The Telegraph*, 02/28/2024)
Large-scale US-ROK drills to start March 4 amid elevated North Korean tensions (*NK News*, 02/28/2024)

North Korean factories making arms for Russia are 'operating at full capacity,' South Korea says (CNN, 02/28/2024)
Plan B needed to brace for Trump 2.0 and security turmoil on Korean Peninsula (*The Korea Times*, 02/28/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. defense chiefs vow to sternly deal with arms transfers between N. Korea, Russia (*Yonhap*, 02/28/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. to launch annual joint military drills next week (*Yonhap*, 02/28/2024)
South Korean and US troops will begin major exercises next week in response to North Korean threats (*AP News*, 02/28/2024)
U.S. takes step toward signing defense procurement pact with S. Korea (*Yonhap*, 02/28/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has erased commemorative stamps with unification references from the website of its state-run stamp company, including those of inter-Korean summits, after its leader Kim Jong-un defined South Korea as the nation's "primary foe." (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's first spy satellite is "alive", a Netherlands-based space expert said on Tuesday, after detecting changes in its orbit that suggested Pyongyang was successfully controlling the spacecraft - although its capabilities remain unknown. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)

In South Korea:

- Another heir emerging for North Korea besides Kim Jong-un's publicly promoted preteen daughter Ju-ae is unlikely because it would spark confusion within the isolated totalitarian society, according to South Korea's unification minister. (Ji Da-gyum, Cho Chung-un, *The Korea Herald*)
- The unification ministry said Wednesday it has approved a plan to spend 610 million won (US$457,270) to conduct DNA tests on families separated by the 1950-53 Korean War. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The Yoon Suk Yeol government "does not oppose North Korea engaging with the United States and Japan," the South Korean unification minister said, concurrently acknowledging that obstacles remain for North Korea to overcome to improve relations with the two countries. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- President Yoon Suk Yeol warned on Wednesday that Seoul would respond "immediately and overwhelmingly" to "provocations" by Pyongyang before the South Korean general election due to take place in April. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- South Korea and the United States plan to commence their springtime joint military exercise next week, Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Wednesday, amid heightened tensions over the North's recent cruise missile tests and live-fire artillery drills in the Yellow Sea. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea may have sent more than three million artillery shells to Russia to fuel its war in Ukraine, South Korea's defence minister has said. (Nicola Smith, *The Telegraph*)

- The U.S. and South Korea will kick off large-scale spring military exercises next week, featuring twice as many rounds of field training as last year and live-fire drills on shooting down North Korean cruise missiles, the allies announced on Wednesday. (Kim Jeong-min, *NK News*)
- North Korea's munitions factories are "operating at full capacity" to produce weapons and shells for Russia, according to South Korea's defense minister, as Moscow's devastating war in Ukraine grinds into a third year. (Seo Yoon-jung, Helen Regan, CNN)
- A debate has intensified in South Korea regarding the upcoming U.S. presidential election slated for Nov. 5 and its potential implications for the country. There are increasing calls to prepare for the possibility of former U.S. President Donald Trump's return to office, prompting discussions and considerations about the potential ramifications for South Korea's foreign policy and domestic affairs. (Kang Hyun-kyung, *The Korea Times*)
- The defense chiefs of South Korea and the United States spoke by phone Wednesday and vowed to sternly deal with North Korea's arms transfers to Russia in coordination with the international community, Seoul's defense ministry said. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the United States plan to kick off major combined military drills next week, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Wednesday, as the allies seek to bolster joint readiness against evolving military threats from North Korea. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean and U.S. troops will begin their expanded annual military drills next week in response to North Korea's evolving nuclear threats, the two countries said Wednesday, a move that will likely enrage North Korea because it views its rivals' joint training as an invasion rehearsal. (Kim Hyung-jin, *AP News*)
- The U.S. Defense Department has started a process to solicit industry feedback on its pursuit of a defense procurement agreement with South Korea to allow easier access to each other's market amid growing security uncertainties from North Korean threats and other challenges. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Jiwoo Hwang, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250716172420/https://mailchi.mp/e1f286afd24e/hrnk-news-items-yoon-warns-north-against-pre-election-provocations-us-takes-step-toward-signing-defense-procurement-pact-with-s-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, February 29th, 2024

N. Korean workers refuse to go to work in Dandong; Experts contradict Seoul's claim that North Korean satellite is 'just orbiting'

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un says he's 'ashamed and sorry' for neglecting economy (*NK News*, 02/29/2024)

N. Korea starts construction of factories under regional economy development policy (*Yonhap*, 02/29/2024)
N. Korea wants Trump's reelection, will raise tensions until presidential vote: ex-German envoy (*Yonhap*, 02/29/2024)
N. Korean workers refuse to go to work in Dandong: Seoul expert (*Yonhap*, 02/29/2024)

In South Korea:
Possible radiation exposure suspected among some N. Korea defectors (*Yonhap*, 02/29/2024)

International:
Experts contradict Seoul's claim that North Korean satellite is 'just orbiting' (*NK News*, 02/29/2024)
Loss to Japan scuppers North Korean women's soccer's hopes for Olympic return (*NK News*, 02/29/2024)
Shipping Issues Halt Russia's Weapons Resupply from North Korea (*Newsweek*, 02/29/2024)
UK in talks with North Korea about sending team to inspect shuttered embassy (*NK News*, 02/29/2024)
Sweden's ambassador-designate to Pyongyang visiting N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 02/29/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader calls for 'rural industrial revolution' in speech at ceremony kicking off '20x10 policy'. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea has begun the construction of factories, state media reported Thursday, as its leader Kim Jong-un called for the development of backward provinces amid prolonged economic difficulties. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea hopes for former President Donald Trump's win in the Nov. 5 U.S. presidential election and will continue to raise tensions with Seoul and Washington until the election. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean workers have refused to go to work in the Chinese border city of Dandong, demanding their return to North Korea. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- Some North Korean defectors, who came from areas near the Punggye-ri nuclear test site in North Korea, showed signs of suspected radiation exposure. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Researchers say satellite recently used thrusters to adjust position, demonstrating it is 'alive' and functional. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- North Korea's women's soccer team suffered a narrow loss to Japan in a make-or-break Olympic qualifier on Wednesday, missing out on its chance to secure a spot at the global sporting contest just months after returning to international soccer. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- Alleged weapons shipments from a North Korean port to Russia have stopped—at least for now. (Micah McCartney, *Newsweek*)
- Swedish ambassador also reportedly arrived in Pyongyang following visit by German delegation to inspect embassy building. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)

- Sweden's ambassador-designate to Pyongyang has been visiting North Korea amid prospects that European countries may reopen their diplomatic missions in the reclusive country following years of North Korea's COVID-19 border shutdown. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Diana Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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3. MARCH

Friday, March 1st, 2024

Images show N. Korea renovated major concentration camp during pandemic; Yoon touts improved Japan ties on Independence Movement Day

In North Korea:
Illegal nighttime markets pop up in North Korea (*Radio Free Asia*, 02/28/2024)
Kim Jong Un's Confidence, and How It Factors Into His Economic Plan (*38 North*, 03/01/2024)
Kim Jong Un is now 'Great Comrade,' no longer 'Great Leader' (*Radio Free Asia*, 02/29/2024)
North Korea renovated major concentration camp during pandemic, imagery shows (*NK News*, 03/01/2024)

In South Korea:
No significant level of radiation detected among N. Korean defectors: ministry (*Yonhap*, 02/29/2024)
S. Korea to update unification vision for 1st time in 30 years (*Yonhap*, 03/01/2024)
South Korea's Yoon slams 'truly deplorable' North Korean remarks, calls for unification (*UPI*, 03/01/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Seoul denying requests to contact North Korea about aid shipments, NGOs say (*NK News*, 03/01/2024)

International:
Cho, Blinken pledge 'watertight' response to any NK provocations (*The Korea Herald*, 02/29/2024)
Cooperation among N. Korea, Russia, China, Iran raises possibility of 'simultaneous conflicts': U.S. general (*Yonhap*, 03/01/2024)
For China, North Korea Is 'Card to Play' in Competition With US, Experts Say (VOA, 02/29/2024)
N.K. again close to bottom in global freedom index: report (*Yonhap*, 03/01/2024)
President calls Korea, Japan 'partners' at March 1 address (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/01/2024)
Russia hails Pyongyang for supporting its war against Ukraine (*Radio Free Asia*, 02/29/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. voice 'deep concern' over N.K.'s definition of S. Korea as 'hostile' country (*Yonhap*, 03/01/2024)
South Korea's Yoon says better Japan ties helping deter North Korea threat (*Reuters*, 02/29/2024)
South's top diplomat meets U.S. counterpart for first time, says allies 'moving in lockstep' on North (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/29/2024)
Yoon touts improved Japan ties on Independence Movement Day as gateway to 'new world' (*The Korea Herald*, 03/01/2024)

In North Korea:

- Merchants in North Korea are flocking to illegal night markets to sell their goods because the government has introduced new laws that prohibit the sale of goods that they did not make themselves, residents in the country told Radio Free Asia. (Ahn Chang Gyu, *Radio Free Asia*)
- Despite veiled threats, the title of his speech, "On the Immediate Tasks for the Prosperity and Development of Our Republic and the Promotion of the Wellbeing of Our People," underscores Kim Jong Un's emphasis on the economy and welfare, not war. (Eul-chul Lim, *38 North*)
- North Korea's supreme leader Kim Jong Un has received a new title, "Great Comrade," signaling that the leadership wants to emphasize his achievements over his predecessors, father Kim Jong Il and grandfather Kim Il Sung, residents told Radio Free Asia. (Cheon Soram, *Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korea renovated a major political prison in the country's remote northeast during the pandemic, *NK Pro* analysis shows, in what one expert described as likely part of preparations for an influx of prisoners. (Ifang Bremer, Jacob Bogle, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- No significant level of radioactive contamination was detected among 80 North Korean defectors who came from areas near the Punggye-ri nuclear test site in North Korea, the unification ministry said Thursday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The government of President Yoon Suk Yeol plans to draw up a new vision for unification with North Korea to include the principle of liberal democracy, a presidential official said Friday. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol called for unification with North Korea in a speech Friday, while condemning the "repressive rule" of the Pyongyang regime. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- South Korea's unification ministry has rejected humanitarian groups' requests to contact North Korean partners to arrange aid shipments since last year, two ROK organizations told *NK News* this week. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

International:

- The top diplomats of South Korea and the United States on Wednesday concurred on "watertight responses" to any North Korean provocations amid escalating hostilities from the Kim Jong-un regime directed toward South Korea, the Foreign Ministry in Seoul said. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- Growing military cooperation among North Korea, Russia, China and Iran raises the possibility of "simultaneous conflicts with multiple nuclear-armed adversaries," a top U.S. general warned Thursday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Beijing is unlikely to help Washington disrupt military cooperation between North Korea and Russia because China sees that move as undermining itself while bolstering U.S. goals in Europe and Asia, analysts said. (Christy Lee, *VOA*)

- North Korea was again assessed as one of the most repressive countries in the world in an annual report by the U.S.-based freedom watchdog, receiving only three out of 100 points on the freedom index. (Kang Jae-eun, *Yonhap*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol called South Korea and Japan "partners" seeking global peace against North Korea's military threats and said his government would pursue "a unification that brings freedom" to all Koreans, in a speech marking the 105th anniversary of the March 1 Independence Movement on Friday. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Russia has expressed its gratitude to North Korea again for supporting its aggression against Ukraine in a show of solidarity as fresh claims of arms trading between the two authoritarian regimes emerged. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)
- South Korea and the United States expressed "deep concerns" Thursday over North Korea's definition of the inter-Korean relationship as one between two hostile states and its potential attempt at changing the status quo in the Yellow Sea, Seoul's foreign ministry said. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said on Friday improved ties with Japan were helping to combat threats from Pyongyang's weapons developments and called for help from the international community to bring about unification with North Korea. (Hyunsu Yim, *Reuters*)
- Strengthening cooperation between South Korea and the United States in response to North Korea's continued threats and other challenges was discussed during the first bilateral meeting between the two countries' top diplomats on Wednesday. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol hailed Seoul's thawing relationship with Tokyo as a chance to move the two East Asian countries toward a "new world," stressing that now is the time for South Korea to leave historical grievances in the past. (Son Ji-hyoung, *The Korea Herald*)

Prepared by Colleen Burns, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250717163208/https://mailchi.mp/c322c0c1118e/hrnk-news-items-images-show-n-korea-renovated-major-concentration-camp-during-pandemic-yoon-touts-improved-japan-ties-on-independence-movement-day?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, March 2nd, 2024

Poland preparing technical inspection at diplomatic mission in N. Korea

In North Korea:
Ford vans seen in Kim Jong Un's entourage (*Radio Free Asia*, 03/01/2024)
Kim Jong Un's Confidence, and How It Factors Into His Economic Plan (*38 North*, 03/01/2024)

Traveling to North Korea? No wifi, limited hot water and bring your own TP (*Radio Free Asia*, 03/01/2024)
Will North Korea's next leader be a woman with Kim Jong-un's daughter on the rise? (*South China Morning Post*, 03/01/2024)

In South Korea:
Address by President Yoon Suk Yeol on the 105th March 1st Independence Movement Day (*The Korea Herald*, 03/01/2024)
Conservative political film 'The Birth of Korea' causes a stir (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/29/2024)
Yoon says S. Korea, Japan are partners as they overcome 'painful past' (*Yonhap*, 03/01/2024)
South Korea's Yoon calls for unification, on holiday marking 1919 uprising against colonial Japan (*AP*, 03/01/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
The Failure of the 9/19 Comprehensive Military Agreement: What Now? (*38 North*, 03/01/2024)

International:
How We Interviewed North Koreans Working In China (*TIME*, 03/01/2024)
North Korea's arms supply to Russia must be halted: Czech top diplomat (*Nikkei Asia*, 03/02/2024)
S. Korea takes part in multinational drills in Thailand (*Yonhap*, 03/02/2024)
South Korean and US Troops to Begin Major Exercises Next Week (*The Diplomat*, 02/29/2024)
Poland preparing technical inspection at diplomatic mission in N. Korea: VOA (*Yonhap*, 03/02/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency released at least two photos of vans used in Kim Jong Un's motorcade that appeared to be made by Ford Motor Co., suggesting that Pyongyang has again evaded U.N. sanctions. (Jisoo Kim, *Radio Free Asia*)
- While there are still many unknowns and data from North Korea is hard to come by, delving into the intricacies of speeches can enable us to better see the interplay between the country's economic objectives, geopolitical complexities, and the pivotal role of Kim Jong Un's leadership and confidence that factor into the nation's strategic trajectory. (Eul-Chul Lim, *38 North*)
- North Korea is opening back up to foreign tourists, and Russians planning on visiting this month have been given a long list of travel guidelines and tips. (Cho Jinwoo, *Radio Free Asia*)
- Few political observers predicted Kim Jong-un's daughter Ju-ae would be his likely successor when she made her first public appearance in November 2022. (Sophie Li, *South China Morning Post*)

In South Korea:

- This is the full text of the address given by President Yoon Suk Yeol on the 105th March 1st Independence Movement Day. (*The Korea Herald*)
- The political documentary film "The Birth of Korea" is basking in the glory of its success, to the surprise of many -- including the director himself. (Moon So-Young, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- President Yoon Suk Yeol said Friday that South Korea and Japan are partners in the pursuit of global peace and prosperity as they work to overcome their "painful past" and move toward a new future. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's president lambasted North Korea on Friday over what he called its repressive rule and vowed to achieve a free, unified Korean Peninsula, weeks after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un rejected the idea of peaceful unification and threatened to occupy the South in the event of war. (Hyung-Jin Kim, AP)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- For all the flaws and ambiguities that existed within the CMA, its greatest value was in promoting a more stable security environment on the Korean Peninsula. This is unlikely to be replicated any time soon. (Sukjoon Yoon, *38 North*)

International:

- Perhaps the only thing tougher than interviewing workers in China about human rights is doing the same in North Korea. (Ian Urbina, *TIME*)
- The international community must block North Korea's military assistance to Russia for its war in Ukraine, Czech Foreign Minister Jan Lipavsky told Nikkei during a visit to Tokyo, calling Pyongyang's arms sales to Moscow "very concerning." (Shigeru Seno, *Nikkei Asia*)
- South Korea's Navy and Marine Corps joined the United States and Thailand in a large-scale annual multinational exercise in the Southeast Asian country to enhance amphibious landing capabilities and humanitarian operations, officials said Saturday. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean and U.S. troops will begin their expanded annual military drills next week in response to North Korea's evolving nuclear threats, the two countries said Wednesday. (Hyung-jin Kim, *The Diplomat*)
- Poland is in talks with North Korea to conduct a technical inspection at its diplomatic mission in Pyongyang, a U.S. news outlet reported Saturday. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Tessa Aguilar, HRNK Research Intern

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Sunday, March 3rd, 2024

First indigenous S. Korean military spy satellite has successfully transmitted "good-resolution" images of central Pyongyang

In South Korea:

Deputy speaker's defection to PPP spotlights DP's factional chasm (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/03/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
S. Korea's 1st spy satellite transmits 'good-resolution' images of central Pyongyang (*Yonhap*, 03/03/2024)

International:
A spiritual bridge between not only two armies, but two cultures (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/03/2024)
European embassies in North prepare to reopen after four-year closure (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/03/2024)
U.S. investigations into F-16 crashes in S. Korea ongoing amid public safety concerns (*Yonhap*, 03/03/2024)

In South Korea:

- Kim Young-joo, National Assembly deputy speaker and a fourth-term lawmaker who recently defected from the majority Democratic Party, is set to join the rival People Power Party on Monday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- The first indigenous South Korean military spy satellite has successfully transmitted "good-resolution" images of central Pyongyang back home following the satellite's launch in December. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Capt. Kim Joo-il appears at first glance as another mild-mannered chaplain with the 532nd Military Intelligence Battalion of the U.S. 8th Army's 501st Military Intelligence Brigade at Camp Humphreys. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- European countries are reportedly preparing to reopen embassies in North Korea after four years of closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The U.S. military's investigations into three recent F-16 fighter jet crashes in South Korea remain ongoing, a U.S. Air Force official has said, as safety concerns remain unabated over the series of crashes. (Chae Yun-hwan, Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Gloria Guo, HRNK Research Intern

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Monday, March 4th, 2024

North Korea ranks among world's most repressive nations in global freedom index

In North Korea:
N. Korea deletes state media articles using unification references (*Yonhap*, 03/04/2024)
North Korea celebrates Kim Jong Un's Hanoi trip, but not his summit with Trump (*NK News*, 03/04/2024)
North Korea preps for major construction near Wonsan Kalma beach resort: Imagery (*NK News*, 03/04/2024)
North Korea ranks among world's most repressive nations in global freedom index (*NK News*, 03/04/2024)

In South Korea:
NK's Lazarus hacked South Korean top court: police (*The Korea Times*, 03/04/2024)
North Korea broke into S. Korean chip equipment firms, Seoul's spy agency says (*Reuters*, 03/04/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
North Korean midfielder poised to join K League 2 in South (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/04/2024)
South Korea's Spy Satellite Begins Watching Kim Jong Un's North (*Newsweek*, 03/04/2024)

International:
North Korea stops sending shells to Russia, Seoul claims (*The Telegraph*, 03/04/2024)
South Korea, US troops Kick off annual drills over North threats (*Reuters*, 03/04/2024)
Washington will consider 'interim steps' toward N.K. denuclearization: U.S. official (*Yonhap*, 03/04/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has removed articles with unification references from the website of its state-run media outlet after leader Kim Jong-un called South Korea the North's "primary foe" and vowed not to seek unification with the South. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- State media marks fifth anniversary of summit with Vietnam while making no mention of failed US-DPRK talks on same visit. (Joe Smith, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- Worker camp appears near unopened resort as hundreds of homes demolished, suggesting resumption of work or new project. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Freedom House cites DPRK's pervasive surveillance and prison camps, placing country with likes of Syria and South Sudan. (Lina Park, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- North Korean hacking group Lazarus was behind last year's cyberattack on the South Korean top court's online network, the National Policy Agency said, Monday. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korea's hacking groups have broken into at least two South Korean manufacturers of chipmaking equipment, as the country looks to evade sanctions and turn out its own semiconductors for weapons programmes, South Korea's spy agency said on Monday. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korean midfielder Ri Yong-jik is reportedly set to join K League 2 side FC Anyang this season, becoming the latest North Korean national team alum to bring his professional career to the South. (Mary Yang, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea's first homemade surveillance satellite has begun transmitting images of the North, including central Pyongyang, at a time when relations between the two neighbors are at their most acrimonious in decades. (Micah McCartney, *Newsweek*)

International:

- Satellite photos seem to confirm no more arms have been left since Kim Jong-un sent three million to Vladimir Putin. (James Kilner, *The Telegraph*)
- South Korean and U.S. militaries kicked off their spring drills on Monday with twice the number of troops joining compared to last year, officials said, as the allies seek to better counter North Korea's increasing nuclear and missile threats. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- The United States will consider laying out "interim steps" on the path to North Korea's denuclearization, a White House official said Monday. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Samantha Garcia, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250717164156/https://mailchi.mp/c3e20c4c20a1/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-ranks-among-worlds-most-repressive-nations-in-global-freedom-index?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, March 5th, 2024

Why does secretive North Korea have no problem sending workers overseas?

Top News:
Why does secretive North Korea have no problem sending workers overseas? (*The Week*, 02/27/2024)

In North Korea:
N. Korea warns U.S.-S. Korea to pay 'dear price' for joint military drills (*Yonhap*, 03/05/2024)
North Korea threatens to take military moves in response to US-South Korean drills (*AP News*, 03/04/2024)
North Korean hackers upload malware to popular open-source software repository (*NK Pro*, 03/05/2024)
Soccer association sends inspectors to North Korea ahead of World Cup qualifier (*NK News*, 03/05/2024)

International:
S. Korea, U.S. name new chief negotiators for defense cost sharing talks (*Yonhap*, 03/05/2024)
U.N. chief appoints new resident coordinator for N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 03/05/2024)
U.S. seeks talks with N. Korea to reduce risk of inadvertent conflict: NSC spokesperson (*Yonhap*, 03/05/2024)
Ukraine military official: half of all North Korean shells are duds (*RFA*, 03/05/2024)

Top News:

- The hermit state commonly outsources forced labor to China, Russia and other countries. For North Korea, "renting out its workers to other countries allows the Kim regime to fund its prohibited nuclear and missile programs, as well as pay for imported luxury goods," Anthony Ruggiero and Greg Scarlatoiu said for Foreign Policy. (Justin Klawans, *The Week*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea on Tuesday denounced an annual joint military exercise that South Korea and the United States launched this week, warning they will pay a "dear price" for what it called their large-scale war drills. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- In a statement carried by state media, the North's Defense Ministry said it "strongly denounces the reckless military drills of the U.S. and (South Korea) for getting more undisguised in their military threat to a sovereign state and attempt for invading it." (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)
- North Korean cybercriminals uploaded malicious packages to the official repository for the Python programming language, a Japanese cybersecurity organization warned last week, in an apparent attempt to infect the machines of users who download tools from the website. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK Pro*)
- The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has sent an inspection team to North Korea this week, ahead of a World Cup qualifying match between the DPRK and Japan's men's soccer team in Pyongyang later this month. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)

International:

- South Korea and the United States announced Tuesday their chief negotiators for talks on the sharing of the costs for the upkeep of U.S. troops stationed here, heralding the launch of the crucial talks soon. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres has appointed a new U.N. resident coordinator for North Korea in a personnel decision confirmed by the reclusive regime, his spokesperson said Monday. Joe Colombano of Italy assumed his role on Friday, Stephane Dujarric said, in a

development that raised hopes for Pyongyang to allow the entry of other personnel from key U.N. agencies. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

- The United States seeks dialogue with North Korea, including on mitigating the risk of an inadvertent conflict on the Korean Peninsula, a National Security Council (NSC) spokesperson said, stressing its goal for the "complete" denuclearization of the peninsula remains unchanged. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- Russia has imported more than 1.5 million artillery shells from North Korea to cover its insufficient arms production as the war with Ukraine rages on, but about half of the shells are duds, a Ukrainian military official said. (Cho Jinwoo, *RFA*)

Prepared by Valerie Xu, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250717164347/https://mailchi.mp/7613bbe61235/hrnk-news-items-why-does-secretive-north-korea-have-no-problem-sending-workers-overseas?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, March 6th, 2024

Experts suggest North Korea's recent silence indicates depleted weapons inventories

In North Korea:
Experts suggest North Korea's recent silence indicates depleted weapons inventories (*Korea Times*, 03/06/2024)
Hardwired for propaganda: North Korean homes inspected for working speakers (*Radio Free Asia*, 03/06/2024)
N. Korean leader sends tractors to northeastern province: state media (*Yonhap*, 03/06/2024)
North Korean hackers upload malware to popular open-source software repository (*NK Pro*, 03/05/2024)
North Korean political prisoners forced to work at nuke sites: defector (*Radio Free Asia*, 03/06/2024)
Public activities of N. Korean leader, key officials jump 50 pct: report (*Yonhap*, 03/06/2024)

In South Korea:
ROK air force conducts simulation on intercepting North Korean cruise missiles (*NK News*, 03/06/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
A year later, top court finally admits North may have hacked its network (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/06/2024)
North Korea is arming Russia and threatening war with South Korea (*The Economist*, 03/06/2024)

International:
Ex-consul general in Sydney named chief negotiator for defense cost sharing with U.S. (*Yonhap*, 03/05/2024)
UN names new coordinator for North Korea but remains locked out of country (*NK News*, 03/06/2024)
U.S. nuclear envoy underlines need for 'interim steps' toward ultimate N. Korea denuclearization (*Yonhap*, 03/06/2024)
U.S. seeks talks with N. Korea to reduce risk of inadvertent conflict: NSC spokesperson (*Yonhap*, 03/06/2024)
US warns of major new Windows vulnerability exploited by North Korean hackers (*NK News*, 03/06/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has notably refrained from military provocations following a string of displays of force in recent weeks, prompting analysts to speculate that this relative silence could be linked to the reclusive nation's prioritization of shipments of weapons and munitions to Russia, potentially leading to shortages domestically. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *Korea Times*)
- North Korean authorities are going door-to-door to ensure that all homes have a working speaker hardwired to receive the government's propaganda broadcasts, residents told Radio Free Asia. (Ahn Chang Gyu, *Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korean cybercriminals uploaded malicious packages to the official repository for the Python programming language, a Japanese cybersecurity organization warned last week, in an apparent attempt to infect the machines of users who download tools from the website. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK Pro*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has sent tractors to the northeastern province of Ryanggang, state media said Wednesday, in an apparent move to boost crop output amid chronic food shortages. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- A North Korean defector's recent account has shed light on Pyongyang's enforcement of forced labor at nuclear sites. The comments mark the first instance of an explicit testimony on a practice that puts political prisoners at risk of radiation exposure. (*Radio Free Asia*)
- The number of public activities of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and three key officials soared in recent months following the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, a report showed Wednesday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- The South Korean air force held a drill simulating an air-to-air interception of North Korean cruise missiles on Wednesday, following the DPRK's test launches of new cruise missiles earlier this year. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- The Supreme Court admitted on Monday that a North Korean hacking group may be behind last year's cyber attack on their network. The top court's apology came three months after the allegation was first raised and a year after the attack occurred in February last year. (Kim Jeong-yeon, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- If North Korea's state news agency is to be believed, Vladimir Putin, Russia's president, will soon visit the hermit kingdom for the first time in just over two decades. It comes at a time when Kim Jong Un, the country's hereditary dictator, is embarking on a new round of bellicosity towards South Korea. (*The Economist*)

International:

- A senior South Korean diplomat who previously served as the consul general in Sydney has been named to lead the negotiations with the United States on the sharing of costs for the upkeep of U.S. troops here, the foreign ministry said Tuesday. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Joe Colombano will oversee UN organizations but will work remotely as talks continue on return of foreign staff to DPRK (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- The top U.S. nuclear envoy pointed out the need Tuesday for "interim steps" to be taken on a path towards North Korea's ultimate denuclearization, which she stressed would not happen "overnight." (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States seeks dialogue with North Korea, including on mitigating the risk of an inadvertent conflict on the Korean Peninsula, a National Security Council (NSC) spokesperson said, stressing its goal for the "complete" denuclearization of the peninsula remains unchanged. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. government's cybersecurity agency has flagged a new Microsoft Windows vulnerability that North Korean cybercriminals are exploiting to compromise core parts of computer systems. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

Prepared by Ryan Rohrbach, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250717164548/https://mailchi.mp/c49c795f19b5/hrnk-news-items-experts-suggest-north-koreas-recent-silence-indicates-depleted-weapons-inventories?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, March 7th, 2024

U.S. focus on 'interim' steps with N. Korea raises questions about policy direction

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un leads military drill simulating takeover of South Korean guard posts (*NK News*, 03/07/2024)
N.K. leader calls for intensifying war drills (*Yonhap*, 03/07/2024)
North Korea breaks ground on five new factories in a week in development push (*NK News*, 03/07/2024)
North Korea leader Kim Jong Un orders heightened war preparations, KCNA says (*Reuters*, 03/07/2024)

North Korea's Kim calls for stronger war fighting capabilities against the US and South Korea (*AP News*, 03/07/2024)
Sohae Satellite Launching Station: Construction Resumes as Spring Unfolds (*38 North*, 03/07/2024)

In South Korea:
Defense chief calls for realistic training to end N. Korean regime in event of invasion (*Yonhap*, 03/07/2024)
Foreign ministry shakes up bureau handling N.K. nuclear issue amid prolonged impasse in talks (*Yonhap*, 03/07/2024)
Foreign Ministry to disband peninsula peace bureau amid NK threats (*The Korea Herald*, 03/07/2024)
ROK live-fire drills rehearse strikes on North Korean missiles, artillery (*NK News*, 03/07/2024)

International:
N. Korea set to take part in tourism exhibition in Moscow to lure Russian tourists (*Yonhap*, 03/07/2024)
U.S. focus on 'interim' steps with N. Korea raises questions about policy direction (*Yonhap*, 03/07/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un led military drills on Wednesday simulating the takeover of a South Korean border guard post, according to state media, saying they were necessary to counter "the enemies' ever-constant threats." (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un called for intensifying "practical actual war drills" during a visit to a military training base, state media said Thursday, as a joint military exercise between South Korea and the United States was under way. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea broke ground on five more factories for an ambitious new regional development initiative this week, according to state media, as the regime looks to show it is making efforts to address severe underdevelopment in rural areas. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspected field training of troops at a major military operations base in the western region of the country on Wednesday and ordered heightened readiness for war, state KCNA news agency reported on Thursday. (Jack Kim, *Reuters*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called for greater war fighting capabilities against the United States and South Korea, state media reported Thursday, after his defense ministry vowed to respond to the ongoing South Korean-U.S. military drills that it views as an invasion rehearsal. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)
- Since North Korea's successful reconnaissance satellite launch last November, little activity has taken place around the complex. Recent commercial satellite imagery indicates, however, that construction has started to pick back up. (Peter Makowsky, Jack Liu, Iliana Ragnone, Jenny Town, *38 North*)

In South Korea:

- Defense Minister Shin Won-sik on Thursday called on troops to conduct "realistic" training to ensure the end of the North Korean regime if it invades the South, his office said, amid an ongoing South Korea-U.S. exercise that began earlier this week. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

- The foreign ministry will scale back the bureau handling the North Korean nuclear issue and create a broader strategy department focused on foreign policy intelligence-gathering, officials said Thursday, a major shakeup that mirrors the prolonged impasse in nuclear talks with Pyongyang. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's Foreign Ministry on Thursday unveiled plans to restructure the office responsible for negotiations on North Korean nuclear issues and the establishment of a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula, amid escalating North Korean nuclear threats and a prolonged absence of nuclear talks. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- The South Korean air force conducted live-fire drills to practice intercepting cruise missiles and responding with guided bomb strikes into enemy territory on Thursday, simulating a conflict with North Korea. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

International:

- North Korea appears to be preparing to take part in a tourism exhibition set to be held in Moscow this month as the reclusive country moves to attract Russian tourists amid deepening cooperation between the two countries. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. officials' recent focus on the idea of "interim steps" for a path towards North Korea's ultimate denuclearization is raising a flurry of questions about their intentions and the direction of America's policy on the recalcitrant regime. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Bryan Clark, HRNK Research Intern

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Friday, March 8th, 2024

North Korea's Kim guides artillery firing drill in range of Seoul

In North Korea:
Images show North Korea sealing its border with China (*BBC*, 03/08/2024)
N. Korea attempted to disrupt GPS signals on S. Korean border islands (*The Korea Herald*, 03/08/2024)
North Korea COVID-19 measures were 'overbroad, excessive', activists say (*Reuters*, 03/07/2024)
North Korea's 'draconian' COVID response exacerbated humanitarian crisis: Report (*NK News*, 03/08/2024)
North Korea's Kim guides artillery firing drill in range of Seoul (*Reuters*, 03/08/2024)

In South Korea:
Japan-born North Korean soccer player joins South Korean domestic team (*NK News*, 03/08/2024)

S. Korea to draw up new unification vision based on liberal democracy (*Yonhap*, 03/08/2024)
Unification ministry to help North Korean defectors become lawyers, doctors (*Korea Times*, 03/08/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Seoul's foreign ministry to dissolve headquarters for North Korea peace talks (*NK News*, 03/08/2024)

International:
Another Russian tour group visits North Korea as it slowly opens to travelers (*NK News*, 03/08/2024)
Canadian Embassy hosts seminar on women's rights in North Korea (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/08/2024)
Ukraine presses peace plan, points to N. Korean involvement in talks with Chinese envoy (*Reuters*, 03/08/2024)
US court orders forfeiture of 145 crypto accounts tied to North Korea cybercrime (*NK News*, 03/08/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has used the Covid-19 pandemic to seal up its northern border with China, new images from a leading human rights group show. Human Rights Watch (HRW) describes a situation which has seen "intensifying repression", with "drastically reduced" cross-border movement and trade. (Michael Sheils McNamee, *BBC*)
- North Korea attempted to disrupt the reception of Global Positioning System signals on the front-line islands of South Korea in the West Sea for three consecutive days from Tuesday, coinciding with annual combined military drills between Seoul and Washington, the South Korean military confirmed on Friday. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea's border closings and other anti-pandemic measures were "overbroad, excessive, and unnecessary" and severely affected food security and the availability of essential products, U.S.-based rights activists said in a new report. As the pandemic gripped the world in 2020, Kim Jong Un's regime embarked on a massive exercise to seal its borders with China and Russia, cutting off routes plied by smugglers and defectors. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- North Korea's "draconian" measures to keep COVID-19 at bay by sealing its borders and further limiting freedoms had "devastating consequences" for the average citizen, according to a leading international human rights organization. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un guided an artillery firing drill by the Korean People's Army, the country's military force, state media KCNA reported on Friday. The drill, carried out on Thursday, involved units near the border that are in firing range of "the enemy's capital," KCNA said, referring to the South Korean capital of nearly 10 million residents and added it "fulfilled important military missions for war deterrence." (Hyunsu Yim, *Reuters*)

In South Korea:

- An ethnic Korean soccer player from Japan who has played for the North Korean national soccer team has made the move to South Korea's domestic league, joining a short list of players whose careers have spanned both sides of the peninsula. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)

- The unification ministry said Friday it will draw up a new vision for unification between the two Koreas to include the principle of liberal democracy amid North Korea's vow not to seek unification with the South. In a 2024 policy briefing to President Yoon Suk Yeol on Thursday, the ministry said there is a need to take into account changes in the security situation and muster global support for Seoul's unification policy in drawing up a new unification vision. (Kim Soo-yeon and Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The Ministry of Unification is set to help North Korean defectors become lawyers and doctors in South Korea as part of its efforts toward integrating them into South Korean society and helping them rebuild their lives.The announcement was made Friday as the ministry made its 2024 policy briefing to President Yoon Suk Yeol. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *Korea Times*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- South Korea's foreign ministry will dissolve a division responsible for negotiating peace and denuclearization with North Korea, the ministry announced Friday, a move that experts say reflects the Yoon administration's policy approach emphasizing military deterrence over dialogue. (Jeongmin Kim and Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

International:

- The second Russian tour to North Korea since the start of the pandemic left for Pyongyang on Friday, as the DPRK pushes forward efforts to normalize tourism and market itself as a destination for Russian travelers. Natalya Zinina of Vostok Intur, the agency organizing the tour, told *NK News* that 47 people have joined the trip running from March 8-11, less than half the nearly 100 travelers on the first tour in early February. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- The rights of women in North Korea remain a grave concern, with the reality of their everyday lives very different from what the regime declares it to be, experts at a forum held by the Canadian Embassy in Seoul on Friday pointed out. In light of International Women's Day, the embassy held a seminar titled "Conference on Women's Rights in North Korea" on Friday. (Lim Jeong-Won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Senior Ukrainian officials, in a meeting with a Chinese regional envoy on Thursday, pressed Kyiv's plan to end the two-year conflict with Russia and presented what they said was evidence of North Korean weaponry supplied to Moscow. (Ron Popeski and Oleksandr Kozhukhar, *Reuters*)
- A U.S. court has ordered the forfeiture of nearly 150 cryptocurrency accounts allegedly used by two Chinese nationals to launder some $100 million in stolen assets for North Korea, U.S. court documents show. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)

Prepared by Katherine Mitchell, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250717165126/https://mailchi.mp/26a4ce976b3f/hrnk-news-items-north-koreas-kim-guides-artillery-firing-drill-in-range-of-seoul?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, March 9th, 2024

She fled North Korea but was sold to a man in China. Her second escape came nearly 20 years later.

In North Korea:
'I want to be myself, not someone's mom.' (*Radio Free Asia*, 03/08/2024)
N.K. leader guides artillery firing drills involving border units capable of striking 'enemy's capital' (*Yonhap*, 03/08/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
North Korea tried to jam US-ROK navigation system during drills, Seoul says (*NK News*, 03/08/2024)

International:
She fled North Korea but was sold to a man in China. Her second escape came nearly 20 years later. (CNN, 03/08/2024)

In North Korea:

- Kang Ju-young, a North Korean escapee in her 20s who now lives in Seoul, said her desire to get married faded as she watched her mother toil long hours in the marketplace – on top of doing all the household chores and childcare. (Seo Hye Jun, Choen Soram, *Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has guided artillery firing drills involving front-line units capable of striking the "enemy's capital," state media reported Friday, in an apparent response to an ongoing joint military exercise between South Korea and the United States. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea attempted to jam a U.S.-ROK military navigation system throughout the allies' large-scale exercises this week, Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Friday. This is the first time South Korea has reported such a DPRK operation since 2016. (Jeongmin Kim, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

International:

- Female North Korean escapees become victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation in China due to a gender imbalance creating a market for "brides." Some manage a second escape to South Korea, but experts suggest that opportunities have diminished since the pandemic. Many North Korean girls and women, some as young as 12, remain trapped in servitude few other options. (Jessie Yeung, Yoonjung Seo, CNN)

Prepared by Rachel Baek, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250717165418/https://mailchi.mp/bf2486ea61c2/hrnk-news-items-she-fled-north-korea-but-was-sold-to-a-man-in-china-her-second-escape-came-nearly-20-years-later?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Sunday, March 10th, 2024

S. Korea to dismantle support foundation for Kaesong complex as early as next week

In North Korea:
N. Korean delegation departs for Mongolia (*Yonhap*, 03/10/2024)

In South Korea:
Top general visits Air Force missile defense center amid N.K. threats (*Yonhap*, 03/10/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
S. Korea to dismantle support foundation for Kaesong complex as early as next week (*Yonhap*, 03/10/2024)

International:
North Korea: Kim Jong Un and Kim Yo Jong's First Messages to Japan (*The Diplomat*, 03/10/2024)
North Korean missiles developed with foreign help, Nikkei finds (*Nikkei Asia*, 03/10/2024)

In North Korea:

- A North Korean diplomatic delegation led by Vice Foreign Minister Pak Myong-ho has departed for Mongolia, the North's state media reported Sunday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's top military officer on Sunday called for responding "overwhelmingly" against any enemy provocations as he visited an Air Force missile defense operations center, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- South Korea is expected to pass a proposal to shut down a support foundation for the now-shuttered inter-Korean industrial complex in the North's border city of Kaesong as early as next week, the unification ministry said Sunday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- There is no doubt that Japan and North Korea have been in contact with each other in a third country since last spring, but in fact Japan has done no more than ask to be able to send a special envoy to Pyongyang. (Atsuhito Isozaki, *The Diplomat*)
- North Korea is strongly suspected of using joint research with other countries to develop missile and other military technologies, a *Nikkei* investigation has found. (Yuichiro Kanematsu, Toru Tsunashima, Shoji Yano, *Nikkei Asia*)

Prepared by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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Monday, March 11th, 2024

North Korea's vice foreign minister in Mongolia on rare visit

In North Korea:
North Korea clears remains of inter-Korean liaison office it blew up 4 years ago (*NK News*, 03/11/2024)
N. Korea starts construction of regional factories in 13 counties (*Yonhap*, 03/11/2024)
North Korea's vice foreign minister in Mongolia on rare visit (*Reuters*, 03/11/2024)

In South Korea:
Government advisory committee on N.K. human rights to begin second term with new members (*Yonhap*, 03/11/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
[Editorial] 'Peace' out (*The Korea Herald*, 03/11/2024)

International:
How to avoid the Taiwan catastrophe (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/11/2024)
Russian cargo ship returns to North Korean port in sign of arms trade restart (*NK Pro*, 03/11/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has removed the remnants of an inter-Korean liaison office it blew up four years ago, a development one expert saw as further evidence of Kim Jong Un's recent push to distance the country from past engagement with South Korea. (Lina Park, Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

- North Korea has begun the construction of factories in more than 10 counties, state media reported Monday, as leader Kim Jong-un called for the development of backward provinces to bolster the regional economy. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Pak Myong Ho held talks in Mongolia with his counterpart Amartuvshin Gombosuren on Monday, Mongolia's foreign ministry said, marking a rare foreign trip by a diplomatic delegation from the isolated state. (Hyunsu Yim, *Reuters*)

In South Korea:

- The South Korean unification ministry said Monday that an advisory committee on enhancing the human rights situation in North Korea will begin its second term this week, as part of efforts to tackle the dire rights conditions in the North. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- With Kim Jong-un having defined inter-Korean relations as that of two enemy states, and vowing to delete from its constitution the concept that South Koreans and North Koreans are one people, there is nothing much of a dialogue that Seoul can formally seek. (*Korea Herald*)

International:

- Authors analyze that Korea and Japan already have the capacity to develop nuclear weapons, remarking, "Beijing would have the power to complicate U.S. access to East Asia, Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean — the littoral of the most populous, economically active part of the world." (Lee Ha-kyung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A Russian cargo ship has returned to a North Korean port that allegedly facilitates arms transfers for use against Ukraine, according to *NK Pro* analysis of satellite imagery, likely signaling a restart of the shipping operation after a one-month pause. (Colin Zwirko, *NK Pro*)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250717165755/https://mailchi.mp/f16ff6c48037/hrnk-news-items-north-koreas-vice-foreign-minister-in-mongolia-on-rare-visit?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, March 12th, 2024

U.S. intel believes N.K. leader has no intentions of negotiating away nuclear program

In North Korea:

North Korea takes top communist moms sightseeing on rare flights to nowhere (*NK News*, 03/12/2024)
Now you can subscribe to a North Korean state TV streaming service (*RFA*, 03/11/2024)
Surveillance cameras are popping up in markets, restaurants, roadsides... "They are used to identify those responsible for increased crime and disturbances" (*Rimjin-gang*, 3/08/2024)

In South Korea:
Unification minister calls for ceaseless efforts to improve N.K.'s human rights situation (*Yonhap*, 03/12/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Civilian sector to take over tasks of foundation for shuttered inter-Korean factory park (*Yonhap*, 03/12/2024)

International:
EU Leaders to Urge New Sanctions for Belarus, North Korea, Iran (*Bloomberg*, 03/12/2024)
N. Korea's vice FM, Mongolian president discuss strengthening ties (*Yonhap*, 03/12/2024)
North Korean soccer team to face Japan in Pyongyang this month as scheduled (*NK News*, 03/12/2024)
Japan's push for North Korea summit 'very important', IAEA chief says (*Reuters*, 03/12/2024)
South Korean held in Russia for spying was a missionary, say media reports (*Reuters*, 03/11/2024)
Top U.S. General Sees Changing Nuclear Threat From North Korea (*The Wall Street Journal*, 03/12/2024)
US Intel Sounds Alarm on North Korea's Use of Chemical Weapons (*Newsweek*, 03/11/2024)
U.S. intel believes N.K. leader has no intentions of negotiating away nuclear program (*Yonhap*, 03/12/2024)

In North Korea:

- Air Koryo trots out Soviet-era Ilyushin Il-18 to show off new skyscrapers in Pyongyang in novel form of domestic tourism (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- For the first time, subscribers around the world can pay to watch North Korean state-run TV. (Jamin Anderson, RFA)
- North Korean cities are rapidly installing surveillance cameras amid efforts to strengthen control and surveillance of the population as social disorder and crime are on the rise due economic troubles caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. (Kang Ji-won, *Rimjin-gang*)

In South Korea:

- Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho said Tuesday continued efforts to improve North Korea's human rights situation could bring a positive change to North Koreans suffering from Pyongyang's human rights records. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- The Cabinet on Tuesday approved a revision that would transfer the tasks of a foundation meant to support the now-shuttered inter-Korean joint factory park to the civilian sector. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

International:

- EU leaders will hold summit talks in Brussels next week to call for new sanctions targeting Belarus, North Korea and Iran over their role in helping Russia conduct its war against Ukraine (Richard Bravo, Alberto Nardelli, *Bloomberg*)
- North Korea's Vice Foreign Minister Pak Myong-ho has met with Mongolian President Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh for talks on advancing bilateral ties, state media reported Tuesday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- AFC says men's World Cup qualifier will not be relocated, setting stage for return of international sport to DPRK (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has said he wants to hold talks with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un "without any preconditions" and is personally overseeing efforts to realise the first such leaders summit in 20 years. (John Geddie, Sakura Murakami, *Reuters*)
- A South Korean citizen arrested in Russia on suspicion of espionage was a missionary who supported North Korean labourers based in Russia's Far East, South Korean media reports said on Tuesday. (Ju-min Park, Jack Kim, Lidia Kelly, *Reuters*)
- Head of American forces in South Korea says 'readiness is perishable,' as joint exercises double in scale. (Timothy W. Martin, *The Wall Street Journal*)
- "The use of chemical weapons, particularly in situations other than state-on-state military operations, could increase in the near future," the report explained. "During the past decade, state and non-state actors have used chemical warfare agents in a range of scenarios, including the Syrian military's use of chlorine and sarin against opposition groups and civilians, and North Korea's and Russia's use of chemical agents in targeted killings. (Thomas Kika, *Newsweek*)
- The 2024 Annual Threat Assessment also noted that Kim will continue to pursue nuclear and conventional military capabilities that threaten the United States and its allies. (Yi Won, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Diana Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250717170435/https://mailchi.mp/4e6c241101a0/hrnk-news-items-us-intel-believes-nk-leader-has-no-intentions-of-negotiating-away-nuclear-program?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, March 13th, 2024

HRNK-NGA Report Shows Continued Operation of North Korea's Chongjin Political Prison Camp

Top News:
HRNK-NGA Report Shows Continued Operation of North Korea's Chongjin Political Prison Camp
(VOA *News*, 02/27/2024)

*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
North Korea's state-run TV to be beamed around the world (*The Telegraph*, 03/12/2024)

In South Korea:
North Korean workers' unrest in Russia 'behind South Korean's arrest' (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/13/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Defense chief highlights training to neutralize N. Korean nuclear, missile threats (*Yonhap*, 03/13/2024)

International:
Japan's push for North Korea summit 'very important', IAEA chief says (*Reuters*, 03/12/2024)
Putin says North Korea has its own 'nuclear umbrella' (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/13/2024)
Russia Could Soon Receive More Weapons From North Korea, Analysts Say (*Newsweek*, 03/12/2024)
Sanctioned Russian cargo plane visited Pyongyang, say media reports (*Reuters*, 03/13/2024)
US intel downplays NK full-scale war risks, noting Putin as influencer (*The Korea Herald*, 03/13/2024)

Top News:

- The report, authored in partnership with the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), discusses the continued use of forced labor at Camp 25. HRNK has previously used commercial satellite imagery to monitor and document the situation in North Korea's political prison camps. (Cho Sang-jin, *VOA News*)

In North Korea:

- Soap opera fans tired of Netflix can now tune in to the best dramas from the hermit kingdom of North Korea. (Nicola Smith, *The Telegraph*)

In South Korea:

- The arrest of a South Korean national on suspicion of espionage by Russian authorities suggests Moscow is trying to put pressure on individuals and groups that help North Korean workers in Russia. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Defense Minister Shin Won-sik called on troops Wednesday to master operational systems to neutralize North Korean nuclear and missile networks as he visited a key command bunker amid an ongoing South Korea-U.S. military exercise. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- The head of the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog said on Tuesday he supports Japan's push to hold summit talks with North Korea, even if discussion about Pyongyang's nuclear build-up is initially off the table. (John Geddie, Sakura Murakami, *Reuters*)

- Russian President Vladimir Putin said in a media interview Wednesday that North Korea possesses its own nuclear umbrella and hasn't made any requests to Moscow regarding nuclear weapons. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Maritime shipments of North Korean weapons to Russia appear to have resumed after a monthlong pause. (Micah McCartney, *Newsweek*)
- A Russian cargo plane sanctioned by the United States touched down in North Korea's capital Pyongyang this week, the DongA Ilbo newspaper reported on Wednesday. (Hyunsu Yim, *Reuters*)
- The US intelligence community currently assesses that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un is unlikely to escalate tensions into a full-scale war on the Korean Peninsula, even as concerns persist over the potential for his closer alignment with the Russian president to embolden his aggressive actions. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)

HRNK-NGA Report Shows Continued Operation of North Korea's Chongjin Political Prison Camp

Cho Sang-jin, VOA News

February 27, 2024

According to a report released by the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, the North Korean regime continues to operate one of its most notorious political prison camps, the Chongjin kwan-li-so. The report notes that detainees are suffering from forced labor on farms and in factories. Cho Sang-jin has the story. The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) released an analysis of North Korea's political prison camps (kwan-li-so) no. 25, noting that North Korea continues to operate this facility and reinforce its surveillance capabilities. The report released by the NGA, an intelligence agency that collects and analyzes high-resolution aerial photographs and videos, states the following.

"Kwan-li-so no. 25 remains a mature and well-maintained prison facility by North Korean standards. Perimeter walls, fences, and gates are well-maintained and in good repair. Guard positions are well positioned to provide overlapping fields-of-view of the prison and are well maintained and in good repair. Administrative buildings, barracks, housing, cultural buildings, support buildings, and grounds are well maintained and in good repair."

The report also stated that, based on analysis of satellite imagery from 2021 to 2023, minor extensions and maintenance activities have continued at the facility. In addition, the maximum capacity of the camp is estimated to be around 5,000 detainees.

Established in 1968, North Korea's political prison camp kwan-li-so no. 25 is also called "Chongjin kwan-li-so" or "Suseong kwan-li-so" because it is located in Suseong-dong, Chongjin, North Hamgyong Province. The camp is known to operate as a "total control zone," along with Kaechon kwan-li-so no. 14 and Myonggan kwan-li-so no. 16.

In particular, it is the most notorious political prison camp in North Korea along with Yoduk kwan-li-so no. 15, and it is known to detain individuals only for political or ideological violations.

The report, authored in partnership with the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), discusses the continued use of forced labor at Camp 25. HRNK has previously used

commercial satellite imagery to monitor and document the situation in North Korea's political prison camps.

"The current prisoner population is employed to both maintain the agricultural fields, orchards, and livestock and to work in the prison's wood products and light industrial factories. The grounds and buildings (i.e., wood products factory, light industrial facility, and prisoner housing) of the central compound appear to be moderately well maintained and in a moderate state of repair. The wood products and light industrial factories appear to be operating, as suggested by the presence of various numbers of vehicles, supplies, and the changing size and shape of the associated wood chip/sawdust piles. All agricultural fields are well-defined, maintained, and irrigated. The fields to the north of the prison have crops under cultivation through almost all four seasons of the year."

The report also states that "there are at least 3 military garrisons… and 11 air defense artillery sites observed within 5 kilometers of the prison," stressing that all of these facilities are well-positioned to protect and monitor the camp. It further states that even if they are not used to directly monitor the camp, these military facilities would help further strengthen security.

North Korea's political prison camps have been consistently criticized by the international community as the site of some of the most serious human rights violations in North Korea.

The UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in North Korea (COI) concluded in its report that "crimes against humanity have been committed in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, pursuant to policies established at the highest level of the State." The COI report also noted that "Persons detained in political and other prison camps" are among the "primary targets" of crimes against humanity.

Noting murder, enslavement, torture, imprisonment, rape, and enforced disappearances as examples of egregious human rights violations occurring in North Korea, the COI report states that "the unspeakable atrocities that are being committed against inmates of the kwan-li-so political prison camps resemble the horrors of camps that totalitarian States established during the twentieth century."

There has been continued criticism about forced labor in North Korea's political prison camps.

In a satellite imagery report released last October, HRNK confirmed that North Korea's Punggye-ri nuclear test site and the adjacent political prison camp (Camp no. 16) were connected by an unpaved road.

The report raised the possibility that detainees at Camp 16 may have been used to construct, maintain, or repair the nuclear testing facility.

This is Cho Sang-jin reporting for VOA News.

Translated by Jiwoo (Katie) Choi, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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Prepared by Angela Yoon, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250717170836/https://mailchi.mp/017caf42509a/hrnk-news-items-hrnk-nga-report-shows-continued-operation-of-north-koreas-chongjin-political-prison-camp?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, March 14th, 2024

What can still be done about widespread human rights abuses in North Korea

Top News:
Forced labour from North Korea is tainting the world's seafood supply (*The Globe and Mail*, 03/09/2024)
What can still be done about widespread human rights abuses in North Korea (*NK News*, 03/14/2024)

In North Korea:
North Korea's Kim test drives a new tank and orders troops to prepare for war (*AP News*, 03/15/2024)
N. Korean leader boasts striking power of new battle tank (*Yonhap*, 03/14/2024)
North Korea deploys new warship, sends another to border amid US-ROK drills (*NK Pro*, 03/13/2024)
North Koreans try to avoid forced construction work (*Radio Free Asia*, 03/12/2024)

In South Korea:
North Korean defectors eye Assembly bids with Seoul's conservative party (*The Korea Herald*, 03/14/2024)
Victims of North Korean repatriation campaign sue for compensation in ROK court (*NK News*, 03/14/2024)

International:
S. Korea to seek cooperation with U.S., Japan over N.Korea's abductee issue (*Yonhap*, 03/14/2024)
US-ROK exercises on combatting North Korea end with a bang of tank guns (*NK News*, 03/14/2024)
U.S. military unveils top-secret, nuclear weapon-proof bunker (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/13/2024)

Top News:

- The labour program is run by various entities in the North Korean government, including a secretive agency called Room 39, which oversees activities such as money laundering and cyberattacks, and which funds the country's nuclear- and ballistic-missile programs, according to reports from Ritsumei University and the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea. (Ian Urbina, *The Globe and Mail*)

- Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director at the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, suggested that a "coalition of like-minded U.N. member states" — including South Korea, Japan, the EU and the U.S. — can still "press for significant measures at the U.N" despite Chinese and Russian opposition. (Gabriela Bernal, *NK News*)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un joined troops training on a new tank model and drove one himself, state media reported Thursday, as his rivals South Korea and the U.S. wrapped up their annual military exercises. (Kim Hyung-Jin, *AP News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un drove a new tank himself during the "training match" between tank units Wednesday in a bid to inspect tank troops' actual combat capabilities, according to the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). Calling them "the most powerful tanks in the world," Kim expressed satisfaction over their striking power and maneuverability, it said. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- A new North Korean warship has made its first appearance at a naval base on the east coast, according to NK Pro analysis of satellite imagery, suggesting that the DPRK has finally deployed the corvette after a lengthy development. (Colin Zwirko, *NK Pro*)
- Rural factory workers in North Korea are doing whatever they can to avoid being conscripted as construction workers on a major state project to build tens of thousands of homes in the capital of Pyongyang because the hours are long, the conditions are harsh and they cannot return home even in emergencies, residents told Radio Free Asia. (Ahn Chang Gyu, *Radio Free Asia*)

In South Korea:

- At least three North Korean defectors are seeking to debut in Seoul's political scene with the People Power Party, the ruling conservative party in South Korea. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- A Seoul-based human rights organization is set to sue Pyongyang over a decades-long campaign to lure ethnic Koreans to move to North Korea through false promises, the first-ever South Korean lawsuit over the operation. (Lina Park, Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

International:

- South Korea plans to seek cooperation with the United States and Japan to help resolve the issue of South Koreans abducted and detained by North Korea as those nations saw some of their nationals fall victim to the North's inhumane act, the unification ministry said Thursday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The Joint Integrated Firepower Exercises in Pocheon, some 35 miles northeast of the South Korean capital, featured some 300 ROK military personnel and 30 U.S. soldiers and focused on boosting joint interoperability. (Chad O'Carroll, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- The U.S. military unveiled a top-secret, nuclear weapon-proof bunker complex that serves as the command center of joint operations for the first time to local and foreign media amid the allies' ongoing Freedom Shield exercise. (Jun Min-Kyu, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Prepared by Gayeong Lee, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250717171410/https://mailchi.mp/236c10d96318/hrnk-news-items-what-can-still-be-done-about-widespread-human-rights-abuses-in-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, March 15th, 2024

North Korea bans keeping dogs as pets

Top News:
North Korea bans keeping dogs as pets (*Daily Mail*, 03/14/2024)

In North Korea:
N. Korea's IT minister discusses cooperation with Chinese envoy (*Yonhap*, 03/14/2024)
NK reduces tensions as major diplomatic engagements with China, Russia loom (*The Korea Times*, 03/15/2024)

In South Korea:
North Korean defectors eye Assembly bids with Seoul's conservative party (*The Korea Herald*, 03/14/2024)
S. Korea kicks off process to draw up new vision for inter-Korean unification (*Yonhap*, 03/15/2024)
Uproar as ex-spy chief, accused of negligence in North Korea killing, is named to run as lawmaker (*The Korea Herald*, 03/15/2024)

International:
Another U.S.-N.K. summit unlikely even if Trump is reelected: U.S. expert (*Yonhap*, 03/14/2024)
Congresswoman submits resolution urging U.S. gov't to protect N.K. defectors in China (*Yonhap*, 03/15/2024)
Despite Sanctions, North Korea Runs More Than 50 Restaurants in China (VOA, 03/14/2024)
Nonprofits urge UN to update 'historic' report on North Korea human rights abuse (*NK News*, 03/15/2024)
North Korea's Kim orders troops to prepare for war as US, South Korea wrap up exercises (*The Hill*, 03/14/2024)
North Korean defectors seek more U.N. monitoring of abuses (*Reuters*, 03/15/2024)
Prosecutors: Russia has launched around 50 North Korean missiles at Ukraine (*Yahoo! News*, 03/14/2024)
Russian port receives first suspected North Korean weapons shipment in month (*NK Pro*, 03/15/2024)
U.S. general voices concerns over 'increasingly advanced' long-range N.K. missiles (*Yonhap*, 03/14/2024)
U.S., South Korea conduct live-fire air drills to counter North Korea threat (*UPI*, 03/15/2024)
U.S. commandos train for the unexpected in North Korea's shadow (*Reuters*, 03/15/2024)

Top News:

- North Koreans risk the wrath of the regime if they keep dogs as pets, Pyongyang has decreed, warning that canines should only be kept for meat and fur. Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), which documents the atrocities of the Kim regime, said it was a 'ludicrous' decree. (Michael Havis, *Daily Mail*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea's minister of information technology (IT) has met with the Chinese envoy to the country for talks on boosting cooperation, Beijing's embassy in the North said Thursday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea, which has strongly responded to joint military drills between South Korea and the United States through major provocations, remained relatively quiet during the latest exercise. This in consideration of key political events involving its friendly nations, including the 75th anniversary of its relations with China and the imminent possibility of a visit by Russian President Vladimir Putin, according to experts, Friday. (Kim Hyun Bin, *The Korea Times*)

In South Korea:

- At least three North Korean defectors are seeking to debut in Seoul's political scene with the People Power Party, the ruling conservative party in South Korea. According to the People Power Party, three North Korean defectors in their 30s are running for a National Assembly seat through proportional representation in the upcoming general election slated for April 10. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- The unification ministry said Friday it has started discussions to draw up a new vision for unification between South and North Korea as it pushes to unveil the blueprint this year that espouses the principle of freedom. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The Democratic Party of Korea's decision to nominate the former National Intelligence Service chief Park Jie-won to run in the upcoming general election has provoked uproar from the bereaved family of the South Korean fisheries official, Lee Dae-jun, who was killed by North Korean soldiers in September 2020. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)

International:

- Another summit between the United States and North Korea is unlikely even in the event of the reelection of former U.S. President Donald Trump, who has held rare meetings with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, a U.S. expert said Thursday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap)*
- A Korean American lawmaker has submitted a bipartisan resolution calling on the U.S. government and its allies to protect North Korean defectors in China, who it said face "humanitarian and human rights crises." (Song Sang Ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea uses restaurants it sets up overseas as "fronts for laundering cash from forced labor, cybercrimes and other illicit activities." (Jiha Ham, Christy Lee, VOA)
- Twenty groups operating out of more than 100 countries urged the U.N. Human Rights Council to mandate a "comprehensive" update to the 2014 Commission of Inquiry (COI) report, speaking on the sidelines of the ongoing council session in Geneva. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

- Kim Jong-un ordered his troops to make preparations for war during an exercise with his troops this week, making the comments as the U.S. and South Korea are wrapping up large-scale military exercises. (Brad Dress, *The Hill*)
- North Koreans defectors spoke at a U.N. event in Geneva on Friday to expose human rights violations in a country one of them described as "hell" and to advocate for a strengthened U.N. mandate to investigate and document them. (Emma Frage, Cecile Mantovani, *Reuters*)
- Russia has used around 50 North Korean missiles to attack six Ukrainian oblasts since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, Oleksandr Filchakov, the head of the Kharkiv Oblast prosecutor's office, said on March 14 during a press conference. (Kateryna Hodunova, *Yahoo! News*)
- Imagery shows Lady R cargo ship at center of alleged arms operation delivered cargo from Rason to Vostochny this week. (Colin Zwirko, *NK Pro*)
- A US general took note of military threats from "increasingly advanced" long-range North Korean missiles on Thursday, while highlighting evolving security challenges from China, Russia and Iran. (Song Sang Ho, *Yonhap*)
- This week, the U.S. and South Korean air forces conducted a joint live-fire exercise in the Yellow Sea involving 40 aircraft, aimed at countering potential North Korean cruise missile and artillery threats. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- U.S. special operations troops in South Korea are training and preparing for unexpected threats. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)

Prepared by Annie Heitmeier, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250717171825/https://mailchi.mp/0647d32f5079/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-bans-keeping-dogs-as-pets?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, March 16th, 2024

N. Korean defectors seek more U.N. monitoring of abuses

In North Korea:
N. Korean leader guides military drills of paratroopers, calls for war preparations (*Yonhap*, 03/16/2024)
N. Korean leader uses car gifted by Putin in public event: KCNA (*Yonhap*, 03/16/2024)
North Korean hackers are laundering millions worth of crypto through a sanctioned 'mixer' (*Business Insider*, 03/16/2024)
Nursing homes for North Korean war heroes are becoming resorts (RFA, 03/15/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korea reconvenes advisory body on unification plans with North Korea (*NK News*, 03/15/2024)

The hidden village just metres from North Korea (*BBC News*, 03/12/2024)

International:
Congresswoman submits resolution urging U.S. gov't to protect N.K. defectors in China (*Yonhap*, 03/16/2024)
Nonprofits urge UN to update 'historic' report on North Korea human rights abuse (*NK News*, 03/15/2024)
North Korea's Kim enjoys a Russian luxury limousine gifted by Putin as the two nations expand ties (*AP*, 03/15/2024)
North Korean defectors seek more U.N. monitoring of abuses (*Reuters*, 03/16/2024)
Senior U.S. diplomat to visit S. Korea, Indonesia for talks on democracy, human rights (*Yonhap*, 03/16/2024)
The 'quiet transformation' of women in North Korea (*SBS News*, 03/16/2024)
U.S. lawmakers send letter to Blinken, Austin to reaffirm alliance ahead of democracy summit in S. Korea (*Yonhap*, 03/16/2024)
US, ROK hold live-fire air drills on bombing North Korean targets (*NK News*, 03/15/2024)
Why Did North Korea's Deputy Foreign Minister Visit Ulaanbaatar? (*The Diplomat*, 03/16/2024)
Yoon to open leaders' plenary at 3rd Summit for Democracy (*Yonhap*, 03/15/2024)

In North Korea:

- Kim Jong-un led military drills stressing war preparedness and showcasing his daughter Ju-ae, hinting at her significant role. Amidst escalating tensions, North Korea also focuses on projects like a new greenhouse farm. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Kim Jong-un publicly used a gifted limousine from Vladimir Putin, marking a visible sign of North Korea and Russia's close relationship. This move breaches UN sanctions against luxury goods entering North Korea. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's Lazarus Group laundered $13 million in stolen ether through Tornado Cash, despite sanctions. This part of a larger $100 million theft showcases the challenges of regulating decentralized financial activities. (Yuheng Zhan, *Business Insider*)
- Built to show Kim Jong Un cares about the veterans, the facilities are now catering to wealthy elite. (Kim Jieun, RFA)

In South Korea:

- South Korea reconvenes a committee to update its North Korea unification strategy, seeking input from defectors, youth, and international perspectives, amidst skepticism about its effectiveness and in response to North Korea's stance against peaceful reunification. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- To reach Freedom Village, known in Korean as Taesung, we have to pass through several checkpoints. From there we drive north, beyond rows of armoured tanks, until the land opens out to reveal dozens of golden rice fields and a small cluster of homes. (Jean Mackenzie, *BBC News*)

International:

- Rep. Michelle Park Steel and fellow lawmakers introduced a bipartisan resolution urging the U.S. and allies to protect North Korean defectors in China from human rights abuses, including forced labor and human trafficking. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

- Civil society groups are urging the U.N. to update its 2014 investigation into North Korean human rights abuses. They call for a comprehensive review to reflect on North Korea's continued violations and the global response's effectiveness. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un used a Russian luxury limousine gifted by President Vladimir Putin, Kim's sister said Saturday, praising the car's "special function" and the two countries' deepening bilateral ties. (Hyung-Jin Kim, AP)
- North Korean defectors spoke at a U.N. event in Geneva on Friday to expose human rights violations in a country one of them described as "hell" and to advocate for a strengthened U.N. mandate to investigate and document them. (Emma Farge, Cecile Mantovani, *Reuters*)
- A senior U.S. diplomat will travel to South Korea and Indonesia for talks on democracy, human rights and other issues, the State Department said Friday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The Sydney exhibition showcases North Korean women's growing economic role and resilience, indicating a societal shift towards matriarchy amidst challenges. It's based on defector stories and highlights their significant yet risky contributions to family and economy. (Sydney Lang, *SBS News*)
- A group of U.S. lawmakers sent a bipartisan letter to Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Friday to reaffirm the South Korea-U.S. alliance ahead of the third Summit for Democracy to be hosted by Seoul next week. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean and U.S. forces conducted targeted live-fire drills to counter North Korean artillery. These exercises demonstrate a focused deterrent strategy against potential North Korean provocations. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- The first visit to Mongolia by a North Korean official in five years is part of a broader diplomatic gambit from Pyongyang. (Sumiya Chuluunbaatar, *The Diplomat*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol and the leaders of Denmark and Kenya will jointly open the leaders' plenary during the third Summit for Democracy to be hosted by South Korea next week, the presidential office said Friday. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Ashley Park, HRNK Research Intern

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Sunday, March 17th, 2024

Summit for Democracy opens in Seoul in mega-election year

In North Korea:
Kim Jong-un rides in Russian-made limo gifted by Vladimir Putin (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/17/2024)

In South Korea:

Gov't urged to be more active in resolving abductees, detainees, POWs issue (*The Korea Times*, 03/17/2024)
Less than half of South Korean students think unification is necessary (*The Korea Times*, 03/17/2024)
S. Korean convicted for bringing in and selling NK books (*The Korea Herald*, 03/17/2024)
South Korea conducts large-scale military exercises near border islands (*Yonhap*, 03/17/2024)

International:
Blinken in S. Korea to attend democracy summit (*Yonhap*, 03/17/2024)
N. Korea replacing ambassador to Cuba after establishment of diplomatic ties between Seoul, Havana (*Yonhap*, 03/17/2024)
Summit for Democracy opens in Seoul in mega-election year (*The Korea Herald*, 03/17/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un took a ride in a Russian-made luxury vehicle gifted by Russian President Vladimir Putin for the first time during a public event, in a move his powerful younger sister Kim Yo-jong described on Saturday as further proof of the two countries' friendly ties. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

In South Korea:

- The government is facing growing calls to be more active in resolving the issue of South Koreans abducted and detained by North Korea by addressing it at international forums and other high-level events. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)
- In an online survey of 73,991 elementary, middle and high school students, conducted by the unification ministry and education ministry from Oct. 20 to Nov. 20, 2023, 49.8 percent replied that unification is necessary, while 38.9 percent said it is not needed. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)
- The Seoul Central District Court handed down a verdict of guilty to the chair of a civic organization who had been accused of bringing in and selling North Korean novels, officials said Sunday. (Lee Jaeeun, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea has conducted large-scale military exercises around western border islands to practice deploying forces in the event of North Korean provocations, the military said Sunday. (*Yonhap*)

International:

- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in South Korea on Sunday to attend a session of the Summit for Democracy, a U.S.-led multination gathering formed to boost solidarity and shared values among democratic countries. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's ambassador to Cuba has paid a visit to Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel before concluding his mission, the Cuban presidential office said, as Pyongyang is preparing to replace the envoy after Cuba's surprising establishment of diplomatic ties with South Korea. (Woo Jae-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea is set to launch the three-day Summit for Democracy on Monday, with a focus on fostering democracy for future generations, particularly in this pivotal year of elections -- a fundamental pillar of democracy. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)

Prepared by Gabrielle Drinkwine, HRNK Research Intern

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Monday, March 18th, 2024

North Korea fires unspecified ballistic missile toward East Sea

In North Korea:
Kim Jong-un's daughter referred to as 'great leader,' seen as potential successor (*The Korea Times*, 03/18/2024)
North Korea fires unspecified ballistic missile toward East Sea (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/18/2024)
North Korea nabs $112M from crypto exchange, launders funds via sanctioned mixer (*NK News*, 03/18/2023)

In South Korea:
4 out of 10 Korean youths say 'reunification not necessary' (*The Korea Herald*, 03/18/2024)
ROK military holds drills on defending border islands if North Korea attacks (*NK News*, 03/18/2024)
S. Korea says succession by N. Korean leader's daughter cannot be ruled out (*Yonhap*, 03/18/2024)
South Korean defense chief says North Korea has supplied 7,000 containers of munitions to Russia (*AP News*, 03/18/2024)

International:
N. Korea confirms return of its ambassador to Cuba (*Yonhap*, 03/18/2024)
N. Korean leader congratulates Putin on reelection (*Yonhap*, 03/18/2024)
Son of S. Korean missionary detained in N. Korea to urge repatriation at U.N. session (*Yonhap*, 03/18/2024)
U.S. condemns N. Korea's ballistic missile launches (*Yonhap*, 03/18/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's young daughter has been referred to as a "great person of guidance," fueling speculation that she is her father's potential heir. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korea fired an unspecified ballistic missile toward the East Sea Monday morning, the South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean cybercriminals stole over $100 million in cryptocurrency from a leading exchange and laundered part of the proceeds using a blacklisted mixer, according to a U.S. blockchain analytics firm, underscoring the difficulty of enforcing sanctions on decentralized crypto tools. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- The South Korean military recently held large-scale reinforcement drills on border islands in the Yellow Sea, training to deploy forces in the event of a North Korean attack amid concerns about inter-Korean tensions. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- Four out of 10 students in South Korea believe that reunification between the divided Koreas is no longer necessary, a government survey showed. (Choi Jeong-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)
- The unification ministry handling inter-Korean affairs said Monday there is a possibility that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's daughter could become his successor in what could mark the third hereditary power succession. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has shipped around 7,000 containers filled with munitions and other military equipment to Russia since last year to help support its war in Ukraine, South Korea's defense minister said Monday. (Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)

International:

- North Korea said Monday its ambassador to Cuba has paid a farewell visit to Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel before concluding his mission in what marked Pyongyang's rare state media report on the Caribbean country after its surprise establishment of diplomatic ties with South Korea. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un on Monday congratulated Russian President Vladimir Putin for being reelected as Moscow's leader, state media said, amid deepening military cooperation between the two nations. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- A son of Choi Chun-gil, a South Korean missionary detained in North Korea, plans to call for international cooperation for North Korea's repatriation of his father and other detainees at a U.N. session in Switzerland, Seoul's unification ministry said Monday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The United States on Sunday condemned North Korea's ballistic missile launches this week as a violation of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions, and called for the recalcitrant regime to return to dialogue. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Kate Refolo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250717172442/https://mailchi.mp/9bd1fe832857/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-fires-unspecified-ballistic-missile-toward-east-sea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, March 19th, 2024

The 2024 IC Annual Threat Assessment; France condemns the launch of ballistic missiles

Top News:
The 2024 IC Annual Threat Assessment: Analytic Authority and Policy Relevance (*CSIS*, 03/18/2024)
North Korea – France condemns the launch of ballistic missiles (*Ministry for Europe & Foreign Affairs*, 03/18/2024)

In North Korea:
COVID symptoms kill 5 North Korean children, schools and daycares shuttered (*RFA*, 03/18/2024)
North Korea's Kim oversees 'super-large' rocket launcher drills (*Al Jazeera*, 03/19/2024)
North Korea rejects six media requests to cover World Cup qualifier in Pyongyang (*NK News*, 03/19/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korean envoy lambasts N. Korean nuclear, missile programs (*Yonhap*, 03/19/2024)
South Korean military to deploy bunker-buster missiles this year (*Korea Joongang Daily*, 03/19/2024)

International:
China spars with UN human rights envoy over forced repatriation of North Koreans (*NK News*, 03/19/2024)
Japan prepared to host and then travel to North Korea for back-to-back FIFA World Cup qualifiers (*Independent*, 03/19/2024)
Russian cultural delegation visits N. Korea amid deepening ties (*Yonhap*, 03/19/2024)
U.S. watchful for N. Korea's 'gray zone' activities shy of attack: Washington official (*Yonhap*, 03/19/2024)

Top News:

- This past week Director of National Intelligence (DNI) Avril Haines and other leaders of the U.S. intelligence community including CIA director Bill Burns and DIA director Jeffrey Kruse, gave their annual threat assessment, dedicating a critical section that helps policymakers understand the current humanitarian challenge with North Korea. (Sydney Seiler, CSIS)
- France condemns in the strongest possible terms North Korea's launch of three ballistic missiles on March 18, which constitutes another violation of the UN Security Council resolutions. (*Ministry for Europe & Foreign Affairs*)

In North Korea:

- Ryanggang province enacts mask mandate and advises children to stay home for 10 days. (Kim Jieun, *RFA*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has overseen live-fire drills involving "newly-equipped super-large" multiple rocket launchers, a day after South Korea and Japan reported the country's launch of several short-range ballistic missiles, its first such test in about two months. (*Al Jazeera*)
- North Korea's soccer association has rejected the applications of six news organizations to cover a World Cup qualifying match in Pyongyang later this month, including *NK News*. (Kosuke Takahashi, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- Ambassador Hwang Joon-kook issued sharp criticism at the North during a U.N. Security Council (UNSC) briefing on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as tensions flared anew on the Korean Peninsula due to Pyongyang's launch of short-range ballistic missiles on Monday morning. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The South Korean military will deploy domestically developed bunker-buster missiles capable of striking subterranean enemy targets this year, the Defense Ministry said Tuesday. (Michael Lee, *Korea Joongang Daily*)

International:

- Beijing's delegate disparages defectors as illegal migrants, rejecting concerns that escapees face torture back in DPRK. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- Even with the top continental ranking and players of vast international experience, Hajime Moriyasu's Japan squad faces a journey into the unknown in back-to-back World Cup qualifiers against North Korea. (John Duerden, *The Independent*)
- A Russian delegation led by Moscow's vice culture minister has arrived in Pyongyang, state media said Tuesday, as the two nations have been strengthening their ties following a rare summit of their leaders in September. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The United States remains "always watchful" for the possibility of North Korea conducting "gray zone" activities short of a major attack, a U.S. diplomat said Monday, restating Washington sees no signs of the recalcitrant regime preparing for a near-term attack. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Jason Lebeck, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250717172630/https://mailchi.mp/224e0d0e651f/hrnk-news-items-the-2024-ic-annual-threat-assessment-france-condemns-the-launch-of-ballistic-missiles?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, March 20th, 2024

Are Sanctions Worsening Conditions for North Koreans?; UK Statement on human rights in DPRK

Top News
Are Sanctions Worsening Conditions for North Koreans? (VOA, 03/19/2024)
UN Human Rights Council 55: UK Statement on human rights in Democratic People's Republic of Korea (*Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office*, 03/19/2024)

In North Korea:
N. Korea conducts ground engine test for new hypersonic missile (*Yonhap*, 03/20/2024)

N. Korean defectors recall 'jangmadang' markets as places for desperate survival amid economic woes (*Yonhap*, 03/20/2024)
North Korean wig exports hold strong despite overall decline in trade with China (*NK Pro*, 03/20/2024)
North Korea footage shows Kim Jong Un overseeing rocket launcher drills (*BBC*, 03/20/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korean man fined for illegally publishing North Korean historical novel (*NK News*, 03/20/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Expert proposes new unification strategies based on existing formula (*Yonhap*, 03/20/2024)
Support foundation for Kaesong complex set to be dismantled (*Yonhap*, 03/20/2024)

International:
North Korea's military is getting more than weapons testing can offer by letting Russia fire its missiles at Ukraine (*Business Insider*, 03/19/2024)
North Koreans shocked as Cuba establishes ties with South Korea (*Radio Free Asia*, 03/19/2024)
Security Council impasse threatens to shut down North Korea sanctions panel (*NK News*, 03/20/2024)
U.S. urges N. Korea to refrain from 'provocative, destabilizing' actions after missile engine test (*Yonhap*, 03/20/2024)

Top News:

- Greg Scarlatoiu, the Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), said Friday in an email to VOA, "North Korean sanctions do not target the people of North Korea." He said U.N. sanctions were passed to prevent North Korea from developing and proliferating its nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, and to punish the North Korean elite in charge of those activities by ending their ability to make hard currency from abroad by exporting items the sanctions banned. (William Kim, Christy Lee, VOA)
- British Ambassador for Human Rights, Rita French, delivered a statement on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including gender-based violations, abductions, arbitrary detention and executions of its citizens. (Rita French, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, *Gov.UK*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea said it has successfully conducted a ground jet test of a solid-fuel engine for a new type of intermediate hypersonic missile amid heightened tensions on the Korean Peninsula. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- On Capitol Hill on Tuesday, three female defectors gave vivid eyewitness accounts of their experience with jangmadang, or local markets, from which they grew disenchanted with the grim reality of the tightly controlled country: hard work that results in the accumulation of wealth could lead to accusations of an unexpected crime. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Expert says slump in bilateral exchange in first two months of 2024 likely due to downturn in Chinese economy. (Anton Sokolin, *NK Pro*)

- North Korea's state broadcaster has aired footage of the country's leader, Kim Jong Un, overseeing a missile test. Mr Kim was animated as he spoke to a military official in a field next to several large rocket launchers. (BBC)

In South Korea:

- Seoul court says sale of book about 15th century physician violated inter-Korean exchange rules. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Cho Han-bum, a senior research fellow at the state-run Korea Institute for National Unification, voiced concerns about a potential revision in the National Community Unification Formula (NCUF), citing a difficulty in bipartisan agreements and the possibility of an attempt to renew it depending on government changes. South Korea should maintain its official unification formula adopted in 1994 but needs to recalibrate detailed strategies in pushing for unification with North Korea, Cho said. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The foundation, set up in 2007, meant to support the now-shuttered inter-Korean factory park in the North Korean border city of Kaesong was set to hold a board meeting to approve its dissolution amid frosty inter-Korean ties, government officials said. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- North Korea is gathering invaluable data by letting Russia use its missiles and ammo in Ukraine; A South Korean official warned Ukraine has become a "test site" for North Korea's missiles. (Chris Panella, *Business Insider*)
- North Koreans reacted in shock when they learned that their “socialist brethren” in Cuba established official relations with capitalistic South Korea, residents in the North told Radio Free Asia. Seoul and Havana announced the move on Feb. 14, when their respective representatives to the United Nations in New York sent each other diplomatic notes acknowledging that the two countries would restore formal relations. (Ahn Chang Gyu, *Radio Free Asia*)
- Russia could refuse to extend Panel of Experts’ mandate if proposals to curtail its work aren’t accepted, sources say. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- The United States called on North Korea on Tuesday to refrain from "provocative" and "destabilizing" actions after Pyongyang claimed to have tested a solid-fuel engine for a new intermediate hypersonic missile. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Gloria Guo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250717172931/https://mailchi.mp/1c62911c438b/hrnk-news-items-are-sanctions-worsening-conditions-for-north-koreans-uk-statement-on-human-rights-in-dprk?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, March 21st, 2024

N. Korean infants not properly vaccinated; 100K North Koreans still earning money for regime overseas

In North Korea:
'Malicious' N.K. cyberactivities account for half of foreign currency income, fund WMD programs: UN report (*Yonhap*, 03/21/2024)
N. Korean infants not properly vaccinated: unification minister (*Yonhap*, 03/21/2024)
North Korean citizens ordered to provide cloths for soldiers to wrap their feet (*RFA*, 03/21/2024)
Russian troupe performs 'Sleeping Beauty' in Pyongyang (*Yonhap*, 03/21/2024)

In South Korea:
US, ROK forces train for subterranean combat in tunnels of North Korea (*NK News*, 03/21/2024)

International:
100K North Koreans still earning money for regime overseas: UN report (*NK News*, 03/21/2024)
North Korean man used companies in SE Asia to illicitly acquire brandy: Report (*NK News*, 03/21/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. agree to form consultative body to address N. Korea's oil smuggling (*Yonhap*, 03/21/2024)
Second Russian travel agency joins rush to take tourists to North Korea (*NK News*, 03/21/2024)
Son of S. Korean missionary detained in N. Korea urges int'l support for repatriation (*Yonhap*, 03/21/2024)

In North Korea:

- A UN panel report disclosed that North Korea gains half of its foreign currency revenue through "malicious" cyberactivities, funding 40% of its weapons programs illicitly via cybermeans. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho outlines that North Korean infants have not received essential vaccinations during the COVID-19 pandemic in a sign of the country's poor health care system. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Residents laugh that the 'invincible' Korean People's Army cannot afford cloth scraps for foot wraps. (Kim Jieun, RFA)
- A Russian troupe has performed the ballet "Sleeping Beauty" in Pyongyang, North Korea's state media reported Thursday, the latest in a series of growing exchanges between Pyongyang and Moscow following a rare summit of their leaders in September. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- Drills inspired by underground warfare in Gaza likely include operations against WMD storage facilities, expert says. (Jeongmin Kim, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

International:

- Information provided to Panel of Experts suggests DPRK laborers generate $500M per year in violation of UN sanctions. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- UN Panel of Experts recommends blacklisting Nam Chol Ung, alleging he owns resorts and restaurants that support regime. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- South Korea and the United States have decided to create a joint consultative body to address North Korea's illicit smuggling of refined oil, aiming to enhance bilateral cooperation. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- Plans for trips in early June come as DPRK pushes to boost tourism from Russia, while shutting out other countries. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Choi Jin-young, the son of Choi Chun-gil, a South Korean missionary detained in North Korea, appeals to the international community to pressure North Korea to repatriate his father and other detainees during his visit to Geneva for U.N. Human Rights Council support. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Diana Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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Friday, March 22nd, 2024

'Strong possibility' Russia will veto resolution on North Korea sanctions

In North Korea:
Long lens glimpses of everyday life in North Korea – in pictures (*The Guardian*, 03/22/2024)
North Korea breached oil import cap, smuggling up to 1.5M barrels: Report (*NK News*, 03/22/2024)

In South Korea:
All aboard... DMZ Peace Train Music Festival announces first lineup for 2024, shares vision (*The Korea Times*, 03/22/2024)
Yoon warns N. Korea of 'larger price' for 'reckless' provocation (*Yonhap*, 03/22/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Govt. agencies probed for alleged neglect in NK guard post verification (*The Korea Herald*, 03/22/2024)

International:

'Strong possibility' Russia will veto resolution on North Korea sanctions -UN diplomat (*Reuters*, 03/22/2024)
Chinese residents of North Korea worry about returning from China (RFA, 03/21/2024)
Dior can't confirm authenticity of handbag of Kim Jong-un's sister (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/21/2024)
Moscow says no clear proof North Korea stole Russian weapons data: UN report (*NK News*, 03/22/2024)
North Korea pulls out of hosting a 2026 World Cup qualifier (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/22/2024)
N. Korea's ruling party delegation embarks on trip to China, Vietnam, Laos (*Yonhap*, 03/22/2024)
N. Korean international department head meets China's No. 4 in Beijing (*The Korea Herald*, 03/22/2024)
USFK chief says U.S. should maintain 28,500 troops in Korea amid Trump fears (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/22/2024)

In North Korea:

- AFP photographer Pedro Pardo gained access to a remote stretch of frontier in China's north-east Jilin province. Between rusting factories and peeling housing blocks were glimpses of daily life in North Korea. (Pedro Pardo, *The Guardian*)
- North Korea blew past a U.N.-imposed cap on oil imports last year, smuggling in up to three times the allowed volume in defiance of international sanctions. according to a new assessment by U.N. member states. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- The DMZ Peace Train Music Festival in Cheorwon County, Gangwon Province announced the first lineup for this year, featuring a mix of international artists and local musicians. (Jamie Finn, *The Korea Times*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol warned Friday that North Korea will pay a "larger price" in the event it carries out a "reckless" provocation as tension ran high over the regime's continued weapons tests. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- The South Korean Board of Audit and Inspection has initiated an inquiry into allegations that the Defense Ministry and other government agencies neglected to verify the demolition of front-line guard posts, which North Korea was supposed to undertake according to the 2018 inter-Korean military agreement. (Lee Jung-joo, *The Korea Herald*)

International:

- There is "a strong possibility" Russia will veto a UN resolution on Friday calling for continuation of the current sanctions regime on North Korea, a UN diplomat told Reuters. (David Brunnstrom, *Reuters*)
- Chinese residents of North Korea who went to China during the COVID-19 pandemic are starting to return, but some are wondering if they should have stayed in China given all the restrictions on bringing things into the country, sources told Radio Free Asia. (Ahn Chang Gyu, RFA)

- French luxury brand Christian Dior told a United Nations panel of experts that it cannot confirm whether a bag photographed on the arm of regime leader Kim Jong-un's sister is a genuine Lady Dior bag. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- There is no clear evidence that North Korean cybercriminals sought to deal weapons data from Russian defense companies, Moscow has told a U.N. sanctions panel, despite research linking the DPRK to cyberattacks on its ally. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Korea will not host a 2026 World Cup qualifier against Japan in Pyongyang next Tuesday due to concerns regarding the recent increase of streptococcal toxic shock syndrome (STSS) patients in Japan. (Lee Soo-jung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea's ruling party delegation has arrived in Beijing on a three-nation tour, state media reported Friday, in a move seen aimed at strengthening ties with countries sharing the socialist ideology. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The Chinese Communist Party's No. 4 official Wang Huning met Kim Song-nam, who serves as North Korean director of the international affairs department of the Party Central Committee and is recognized as a China expert, on Thursday in Beijing, the Chinese Embassy in North Korea said Friday. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- The commander of U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) called for maintaining the American troop presence in South Korea at its current size as concerns grow that former President Donald Trump could slash the deployment if reelected. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Prepared by Colleen Burns, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250717173128/https://mailchi.mp/e2edb5c06140/hrnk-news-items-strong-possibility-russia-will-veto-resolution-on-north-korea-sanctions?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, March 23rd, 2024

EU requests updates to U.N. report on N.K. human rights on 10th anniv.

In South Korea:
253 candidates sign up for 46 proportional seats in parliamentary elections (*Yonhap*, 03/23/2024)
S. Korea approves plan to start production of 20 KF-21s this year (*Yonhap*, 03/22/2024)
S. Korea offers condolences over Russian concert shooting (*Yonhap*, 03/23/2024)
S. Korea voices strong regrets over Japan's school textbooks distorting wartime history (*Yonhap*, 03/22/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Documentary 'Beyond Utopia' captures harrowing odyssey of 2 defector families (*The Korea Times*, 03/22/2024)
South Korea launches probe into demolition of North Korean guard posts (*NK News*, 03/22/2024)

International:
Beijing's senior party official stresses steadfast ties with Pyongyang (*Yonhap*, 03/23/2024)
Bolton says Trump wants to be treated like N. Korean leader Kim (*Yonhap*, 03/22/2024)
EU requests updates to U.N. report on N.K. human rights on 10th anniv. (*Yonhap*, 03/22/2024)
US delays vote to extend UN sanctions panel on North Korea (NK *News*, 03/23/2024)
US 'may be sending strong message' to China with hypersonic missile test as arms race heats up (*South China Morning Post*, 03/22/2024)
U.S. official notes Korean firms' move not to sell used chip equipment to China as 'encouraging' (*Yonhap*, 03/22/2024)
Why democracy summit may signal South Korea's shift to harder stance on China (*South China Morning Post*, 03/23/2024)

In South Korea:

- A total of 253 candidates have registered to compete for the 46 proportional representation seats up for grabs in the April 10 parliamentary elections, according to the National Election Committee on Saturday. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's defense authorities on Friday approved a plan to begin building 20 KF-21 fighter jets this year -- half of what was originally planned -- after a report last year called for slashing the homegrown fighter's initial production volume. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea on Saturday expressed condolences to the victims and their families of a tragic shooting attack at a concert venue in Moscow, which resulted in the loss of more than 90 lives. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- The foreign ministry voiced strong regrets Friday after Japan approved school textbooks diluting the degree of wartime atrocities and reinforcing its territorial claims to South Korea's easternmost islets of Dokdo. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Korean society needs to pay more attention to the plight of North Korean refugees, and warring political parties need to establish some "don't touch policies" to support them, and remain consistent even as administrations change, according to a leading activist in Seoul. (Michael Breen, *The Korea Times*)
- South Korean auditors have launched an investigation into allegations that the former Moon administration failed to properly verify North Korea demolished front-line guard posts (GP) under an inter-Korean military deal. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*).

International:

- China's senior party leader Wang Huning has stressed unwavering ties with North Korea despite changes in international situations, Pyongyang's official media outlet reported Saturday. (Park Sang-soo, *Yonhap*)
- Former U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton has said that former President Donald Trump wants Americans to treat him the way North Korean leader Kim Jong-un is treated in the reclusive country. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The European Union and other countries have requested updates to a landmark U.N. report on the human rights situation in North Korea as this year marks the 10th anniversary of its release. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)

- The United States delayed a much anticipated Security Council vote on Friday that would decide whether the Panel of Experts (PoE) would continue, multiple sources told NK News. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- Washington's latest hypersonic missile test sends "a strong message" to Beijing regarding its advanced weapons technology development, analysts said, as the United States reshapes its competition with China and Russia. (Seong Hyeon Choi, *South China Morning Post*)
- A senior U.S. official on Thursday portrayed South Korean companies' reported move to stop selling used semiconductor manufacturing equipment to China as "encouraging," as Washington has been seeking tighter export controls on key technologies amid an intensifying Sino-U.S. rivalry. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's "values-based diplomacy" could see the country come more closely into line with the United States and its other allies in its policy towards China after Seoul played host to this week's Summit for Democracy. (Seong Hyeon Choi, *South China Morning Post*)

Prepared by Tessa Aguilar, HRNK Research Intern

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Sunday, March 24th, 2024

U.S. lawmakers to visit S. Korea this week

In North Korea:
N.K. leader visits tank unit credited for being first to enter Seoul during Korean War (*Yonhap*, 03/25/2024)

In South Korea:
Yoon, Han show unity in remembering fallen West Sea warriors (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/24/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Cheongung-II: S. Korea's homegrown interceptors in spotlight amid N.K. missile threats (*Yonhap*, 03/24/2024)

International:
'If Trump wins, Yoon may be pushed aside in US talks with North Korea' (*The Korea Herald*, 03/24/2024)
N. Korean leader sends condolences to Putin over Russian concert hall shooting (*Yonhap*, 03/24/2024)
N. Korean official calls for boosting ties with China (*Yonhap*, 03/25/2024)

South Korea expresses condolences to victims of deadly attack at Moscow concert hall (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/24/2024)
U.S. lawmakers to visit S. Korea this week: sources (*Yonhap*, 03/24/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has visited a tank unit bearing "Seoul" in its name for being the first to enter the South Korean capital during the Korean War, praising the unit as a "model for the entire army," state media said Monday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- President Yoon Suk Yeol warned that North Korea will "pay a larger price" if it carries out reckless provocations as he took part in a ceremony marking the 9th West Sea Defense Day in Pyeongtaek, Gyeonggi, on Friday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Nestled in a small farming town in South Korea's southeastern region, an Air Force unit stands ready to provide mid-range air defense against missile threats from North Korea under this motto: "One shot, one kill." (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

International:

- If former US President Donald Trump returns to the White House, Seoul may be excluded from Washington's potential negotiations with Pyongyang due to the Yoon Suk Yeol administration's hard-line stance on North Korea, according to former Army general-turned-lawmaker Rep. Kim Byung-joo. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has sent a message of condolence to Russian President Vladimir Putin following a deadly shooting at a concert venue in Moscow, Pyongyang's state media said Sunday. (Yoo Jee-ho, *Yonhap*)
- A senior North Korean official has called for further strengthening ties with China, North Korea's state media said Monday, the latest in a series of meetings with senior Chinese officials. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- Seoul expressed its deep condolences to the victims of a deadly shooting at a concert venue in Moscow on Friday, killing more than 130 people. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A bipartisan U.S. congressional delegation will visit Seoul this week for talks with South Korean officials, multiple sources said Saturday. (Yoo Jee-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Jiwoo Hwang, HRNK Research Intern

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Monday, March 25th, 2024

North Korea says Japan's prime minister offered to meet with leader Kim Jong Un soon

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un expresses condolences to Putin over deadly Moscow terrorist attack (*NK News*, 03/25/2024)
N.K. leader visits tank unit credited for being first to enter Seoul during Korean War (*Yonhap*, 03/25/2024)
N. Korean official calls for boosting ties with China (*Yonhap*, 03/25/2024)

In South Korea:
Minister calls on U.S. Congress to back Seoul's unification vision (*Yonhap*, 03/25/2024)
S. Korea to launch 2nd spy satellite in early April (*Yonhap*, 03/25/2024)
Sirens Sound, Anxieties Rise on Tiny Island Near North Korean Shores (WSJ, 03/25/2024)

International:
North Korea going for short-range missiles a 'Japan-conscious move': Seoul's ex-vice defense chief (*The Korea Herald*, 03/25/2024)
North Korea says Japan's prime minister offered to meet with leader Kim Jong Un soon (*AP News*, 03/25/2024)
UN investigating claims of rampant North Korean wildlife trafficking in Africa (*NK News*, 03/25/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has expressed condolences to Vladimir Putin over the deadly terrorist attack at a concert hall in Moscow last week. (Lina Park, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has visited a tank unit bearing "Seoul" in its name for being the first to enter the South Korean capital during the Korean War, praising the unit as a "model for the entire army," state media said Monday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- A senior North Korean official has called for further strengthening ties with China, North Korea's state media said Monday, the latest in a series of meetings with senior Chinese officials. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho on Monday asked for U.S. lawmakers' bipartisan cooperation and support for South Korea's efforts to seek a peaceful unification with North Korea. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea plans to launch its second military satellite in early April, the defense ministry said Monday, under a project to launch five satellites to better monitor North Korea. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

- Residents on Yeonpyeong fear the Kim Jong Un regime could launch another attack. (Dasl Yoon, Timothy W. Martin, WSJ)

International:

- Shin Beom-chul, who until recently served as the deputy national defense minister, said that North Korea limiting its weapons testing to short-range missiles last week "may have been a Japan-conscious move." (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea said Monday that Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida offered to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un "as soon as possible," but stressed that prospects for their countries' first summit in about 20 years would depend on Tokyo tolerating its weapons program and ignoring its past abductions of Japanese nationals. (Hyung-Jin Kim, Kim Tong-Hyung, *AP News*)
- The U.N. Panel of Experts overseeing DPRK sanctions is investigating allegations that North Korean officials engaged in multiple wildlife trafficking schemes in Africa between 2022 and 2023, according to its latest report. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

Prepared by Valerie Xu, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250717174622/https://mailchi.mp/af9b13195ffe/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-says-japans-prime-minister-offered-to-meet-with-leader-kim-jong-un-soon?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, March 26th, 2024

NGO Files Federal Petition to Block Seafood Tied to N. Korean Workers; State Dept. vows to advocate for N. Korean women

Top News:
Human Rights NGO Files Federal Petition to Block Seafood Tied to North Korean Workers (*The Outlaw Ocean Project*, 03/25/2024)
U.S. State Department vows to advocate for the rights of North Korean women on International Women's Day (VOA, 03/09/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
N. Korea refuses all contact, including summit, with Japan (*Yonhap*, 03/26/2024)
North Korea Images Spark Nuclear Fears (*Newsweek*, 03/26/2024)
North Korean TV censors blue jeans while airing British gardening show (NK *News*, 03/26/2024))

In South Korea:

S. Korea making diplomatic efforts for extension of U.N. expert panel on N. Korea sanctions (*Yonhap*, 03/26/2024)

International:
'Impossible' to gauge North Korean humanitarian need without access: Aid groups (*NK News*, 03/26/2024)
Key N. Korean officials pay condolence visit to Russian Embassy in Pyongyang over Moscow attack (*Yonhap*, 03/26/2024)
North Korean IT workers impersonating Japanese nationals to secure jobs: Tokyo (*NK News*, 03/26/2024)
Russia supplies oil to North Korea as UN sanctions regime nears 'collapse' (Financial Times, 03/26/2024)
U.S. restates importance of dialogue after N. Korea says Kishida seeks summit with Kim (*Yonhap*, 03/26/2024)
Wagner Group helped smuggle North Korean weapons to Russia: Report (*NK News*, 03/26/2024)

Top News:

- On March 21, 2024, HRNK submitted a formal letter to U.S. Customs and Border Protection, calling for an immediate halt of seafood shipments from nearly a dozen Chinese companies that were found to be using North Korean labor, in violation of U.S. law and U.N. sanctions. The letter is based on an investigation by the Outlaw Ocean Project and calls for stronger enforcement of existing laws, including Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), which specifically bans the import of products tied to North Korean labor. The letter also calls for stricter monitoring mechanisms to prevent the importation of goods produced through forced labor, among other tangible actions that could be taken by the U.S. government. (Ian Urbina, Austin Brush, *The Ocean Outlaw Project*)
- On International Women's Day, the U.S. government and South Korea's Ambassador for North Korean Human Rights urged heightened global support for the rights of North Korean women, with the U.S. State Department calling for intensified efforts to promote women's and girls' rights in North Korea. (Kim Young-kwon, VOA)

In North Korea:

- North Korea will refuse all contact with Japan, after Tokyo took issue with the problem of Japanese abductees and the North's nuclear program, the sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said Tuesday. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- The reported expansion of the Kangson site near Pyongyang suggests advancements in North Korea's nuclear capabilities amid escalating tensions with South Korea, highlighting the urgent need for international diplomacy and monitoring to address proliferation concerns and maintain regional stability. (Ellie Cook, *Newsweek*)
- North Korean state television censored British broadcaster Alan Titchmarsh's blue jeans in an episode of the BBC TV series "Garden Secrets," reflecting the regime's ban on jeans since the early 90s. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea is making diplomatic efforts to extend the mandate of a U.N. expert panel on the monitoring of the implementation of sanctions on North Korea, a foreign ministry official

said Tuesday, amid reports of prospects of a possible veto by Russia. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Humanitarian organizations say North Korea's ongoing border closure has made it "impossible" to accurately assess the level of need inside the country, according to the latest U.N. Panel of Experts report, with no information from Pyongyang on when foreign aid workers will be able to return. (Gabriela Bernal, *NK News*)
- Senior North Korean officials visited the Russian Embassy in Pyongyang on Tuesday to express their deep condolences to the victims of the recent terrorist attack in Moscow and their bereaved families, state media reported. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Japan advisory echoes warnings that DPRK overseas laborers are earning millions to fund Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- Russia has started supplying oil directly to North Korea in defiance of UN sanctions, further cementing ties between the two authoritarian regimes and dealing a new blow to international efforts to contain Pyongyang. (Christian Davies, *Financial Times*)
- The United States on Monday reiterated the importance of dialogue with North Korea, after Pyongyang claimed Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has expressed his intention for a summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Russian nationals with ties to the mercenary Wagner Group conspired with North Korean officials in Syria to orchestrate weapons transfers, according to information in a new U.N. report. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)

U.S. State Department vows to advocate for the rights of North Korean women on International Women's Day

Kim Young-kwon, VOA *News*
March 9, 2024

On International Women's Day, the U.S. government emphasized its commitment to continue advocating for the rights of North Korean women. South Korea's Ambassador for North Korean Human Rights also called for increased international attention and solidarity. This is from reporter Kim Young-kwon.

On March 8, the U.S. State Department stated that "On International Women's Day, the international community should redouble our efforts to promote the rights of women and girls, in all their diversity, in the DPRK."

The State Department spokesperson responded to an inquiry from VOA, stating that "Women and girls are subject to endemic gender-based violence and discrimination and are particularly vulnerable to a wide range of violations, including trafficking, resulting from restrictions on freedom of movement."

The spokesperson then emphasized to North Korean women, "To the women of the DPRK, we see you and will continue to advocate for your rights."

He added, “And to the brave North Korean women who have made their way to freedom and are doctors, business owners, faith leaders, politicians, and academics who are now making meaningful contributions to their communities—thank you for being a living example of the strength and entrepreneurism of North Korean women."

South Korea’s Lee Shin-wha, Ambassador for International Cooperation on North Korean Human Rights, expressed concern that North Korean women are suffering from severe human rights abuses, contrary to the North Korean government's external propaganda.

The ambassador responded to a written inquiry from VOA, stating, "While extolling women as the 'flower of the nation' and 'one wheel of the revolution' in reality, they are burdened with the responsibility of providing for their families amidst severe economic difficulties, suffering from hard labor, and being forced into endless dedication to the state’s demands,” adding that “this is a clear violation of human rights and an issue that the international community must pay attention to.”

The ambassador also mentioned that North Korean refugee women continue to suffer from human trafficking, forced marriage, and the threat of forced repatriation from China, stating, "The suffering experienced by North Korean women who are forcibly repatriated is a serious human rights violation that the international community must pay attention to" she said.

She also expressed her view that "When everyone pays attention to, shows solidarity with, and makes an effort on this important issue, I believe that the human rights situation of North Korean women can be improved."

Reem Alsalem, the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, also expressed concern about the situation of North Korean refugee women in a brief video message sent to the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK).

Alsalem pointed out that many North Korean refugee women, who leave North Korea to seek safety, face threats to their lives or the risk of cruel and inhumane torture and degrading treatment upon being forcibly repatriated. She emphasized that "We must not forget their plight. We must continue to amplify their voices, and needs for protection and human rights.”

She also urged that “Countries to which women and girls from the DPRK arrive must be given safety and protection, and it must be ensured that they have access to immediate care and assistance, including mental and psychosocial support."

Meanwhile, the Seoul Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights posted a video on social media on International Women's Day, recommending actions North Korea should take to ensure gender equality.

James Heenan, the head of the office, said in the video, "Now, no country has achieved gender equality or equality in terms of women’s rights anywhere around the world. The information we have from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea suggests fairly widespread violations of women’s rights but also, there’s a concerning situation about the position of women in society.”

North Korean escapees featured in this video criticized the imposition of hard labor on North Korean women by the Women's Union, the absence of basic rights, and other related issues.

[Kim Eun-ju] "Joining and leaving the Women's Union should be voluntary. I hope that the international community can shed light on the structure of exploitation inside the Women's Union, and remove the requirement of compulsory membership so that North Korean women are relieved of this heavy burden."

[Kim Il-hyeok] "Only when human rights and freedom are guaranteed will the status of women be improved and gender equality be ensured."

[Kim Soo-hyang] "In party or political universities that train officials, there are extremely few women. Providing women with more opportunities is crucial because policies for women are more likely to be implemented with a higher number of female cadres in important positions."

Volker Türk, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, emphasized in a statement released on International Women's Day, "Women have lived through centuries of patriarchal power structures...We need more women in our governance systems and greater investments in peace, social protection and climate justice."

The Rodong Sinmun, the official newspaper of the Korean Workers' Party, emphasized the need for women to fulfill their duties in an editorial commemorating International Women's Day, stating that "it is the greatest fortune and happiness for our women to revere and serve [Kim Jong-un] as the father of our socialist family."

Translated by Ashley Park, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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Prepared by Rachel Baek, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250717174909/https://mailchi.mp/701eacad399a/hrnk-news-items-ngo-files-federal-petition-to-block-seafood-tied-to-n-korean-workers-state-dept-vows-to-advocate-for-n-korean-women?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, March 27th, 2024

Satellite Images Show North Korea's Increasing Isolation

In North Korea:
N. Korea to hold arts festival marking late founder's birth anniversary (*Yonhap*, 03/27/24)
Satellite Images Show North Korea's Increasing Isolation (*Wall Street Journal*, 03/27/24)
Sohae Satellite Launching Station: New Activity at the Coastal Launch Pad (*38 North*, 03/25/24)
2.9 magnitude natural earthquake hits near N. Korea's Kilju: weather agency (*Yonhap*, 03/27/24)

In South Korea:
Incheon says it will bid for 2025 APEC summit (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/27/24)
S. Korea making diplomatic efforts for extension of U.N. expert panel on N. Korea sanctions (*Yonhap*, 03/26/24)
Unification Ministry nurtures hope for detainees in N. Korea (*Korea Herald*, 03/27/24)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Unification minister slams N. Korea's abduction, detention of S. Koreans as inhumane (*Yonhap*, 03/27/24)

International:
Air Koryo Flight Brings North Korean Defense Researchers, Students to Russia (*The Diplomat*, 03/27/24)
Minister calls on U.S. Congress to back Seoul's unification vision (*Yonhap*, 03/25/24)
N. Korean, Vietnamese party officials call for boosting bilateral ties (*Yonhap*, 03/27/24)
S. Korea, U.S. launch task force to block N. Korea's nuclear, missile programs (*Yonhap*, 03/27/24)
US, South Korea set up task force to block North Korea oil shipments (*Reuters*, 03/26/24)

In North Korea:

- North Korea said Wednesday it will hold an international arts festival next month on the occasion of the 112th birth anniversary of the country's late founder Kim Il-sung. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea, already one of the world's most isolated countries, has walled itself off further over the past years, data and satellite images show, with devastating effects for its population. (Liyan Qi and Ming Li, *Wall Street Journal*)
- Commercial satellite imagery shows an expanse of blue material on North Korea's coastal launch pad at the Sohae Satellite Launching Station, the site used to conduct the last three satellite launch attempts. (Martyn Williams, Peter Makowsky, and Iliana Ragnone, *38 North*)
- A 2.9 magnitude earthquake struck near North Korea's northeastern county of Kilju, where the country's nuclear test site is located, on Wednesday, the South Korean weather agency said, determining it to be naturally occurring. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- The city of Incheon announced plans to bid to host the 2025 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit. The Incheon Metropolitan Government announced that it began preparing its bid on Wednesday, one day ahead of when the Foreign Ministry will give the details of the bidding process to competing cities. (Cho Jung-woo, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea is making diplomatic efforts to extend the mandate of a U.N. expert panel on the monitoring of the implementation of sanctions on North Korea, a foreign ministry official said Tuesday, amid reports of prospects of a possible veto by Russia. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's Ministry of Unification has intensified efforts to raise awareness, both domestically and internationally, regarding South Koreans who have been abducted, detained forcibly and held as prisoners of war in North Korea. (Ji Da-gyum, *Korea Herald*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho on Wednesday condemned North Korea's abduction and detention of South Korean nationals as an "inhumane" act, vowing the government's utmost efforts to resolve the urgent issue. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

International:

- A flight from Air Koryo, North Korea's state airline, recently brought new workers, defense researchers, and students to Russia, highlighting the expanding exchanges between North Korea and Russia as the two nations grow closer. (Seulkee Jang, *The Diplomat*)
- Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho on Monday asked for U.S. lawmakers' bipartisan cooperation and support for South Korea's efforts to seek a peaceful unification with North Korea. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- A senior North Korean official has reached a consensus with his Vietnamese counterpart on boosting cooperation and advancing their bilateral ties to a new level, Pyongyang's state media said Wednesday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the United States have launched a task force to effectively block North Korea from financing its unlawful nuclear and missile programs, the foreign ministry said Wednesday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States and South Korea this week launched a new task force aimed at preventing North Korea from procuring illicit oil, as deadlock at the United Nations Security Council casts doubts over the future of international sanctions. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)

Prepared by Ryan Rohrbach, HRNK Research Intern

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Thursday, March 28th, 2024

UNSC fails to extend mandate of expert panel monitoring N.K. sanctions enforcement

In North Korea:
Construction at North Korea's Kangson Facility: Probable Storage or Offices (*38 North*, 03/27/2024)
N. Korea may scrap inter-Korean basic agreement at next parliamentary meeting: Seoul (*Yonhap*, 03/28/24)
Russia's foreign intelligence chief visits N. Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 03/28/24)

In South Korea:
S. Korean military says no signs of imminent N. Korean satellite launch (*Yonhap*, 03/28/24)

Inter-Korean Relations:
ROK holds naval exercises near border to commemorate those killed by North Korea (*NK News*, 03/27/24)

International:
Chinese part of Mt. Paekdu named UNESCO global geopark (*Yonhap*, 03/28/24)
Japan's PM voices willingness to push for summit with N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 03/28/24)
N. Korean party official stresses need to solidify friendly unity with Vietnam (*Yonhap*, 03/28/24)
South Korea, U.S. launch task force to choke off North's nuclear program (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/27/24)
UNSC fails to extend mandate of expert panel monitoring N.K. sanctions enforcement (*Yonhap*, 03/29/24)
U.S. slaps new sanctions against 6 N. Koreans, 2 entities for financing N.K. WMD programs (*Yonhap*, 03/28/24)
Why did North Korea walk away from talks with Japan abruptly? (*The Korea Times*, 03/27/24)

In North Korea:

- Commercial satellite imagery over the past few weeks indicates construction is underway at North Korea's Kangson facility. (Peter Makowsky, Olli Heinonen, Jack Liu, and Jenny Town, *38 North*)
- North Korea may scrap an inter-Korean basic agreement signed in 1991 at its next parliamentary meeting as its leader Kim Jong-un has defined South Korea as its "primary foe," Seoul's unification ministry said Thursday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Russia's foreign intelligence chief visited North Korea earlier this week to discuss ways to bolster cooperation in responding to spying and plotting activities by hostile forces, Pyongyang's state media reported Thursday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- North Korea appears to be making preparations for its next launch of a spy satellite, although there are no signs of an imminent launch, South Korea's military said Thursday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- The South Korean navy is conducting live-fire exercises all along the country's coastlines this week to bolster readiness against North Korean naval threats, while commemorating those killed in past DPRK attacks, the military announced on Wednesday. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News)*

International:

- The Chinese part of Mount Paekdu has been listed as one of UNESCO's new global geoparks in the name of "Mount Changbaishan," the U.N. cultural agency's website showed Thursday. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- Fumio Kishida on Thursday expressed his intent to continue efforts to hold a summit with North Korea despite Pyongyang's recent refusal of all contact with Tokyo. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

- A senior North Korean party official has underscored the need to solidify friendly ties with Vietnam during his meeting with a ranking Vietnamese official in Hanoi, Pyongyang's state media reported Thursday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the United States launched a bilateral task force to more effectively block key resources and funding for North Korea's nuclear and missile development, the Foreign Ministry announced Wednesday. (Lim Jeong-Won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A divided U.N. Security Council (UNSC) failed Thursday to extend the mandate of the expert panel charged with monitoring the enforcement of sanctions against North Korea, in an unprecedented move likely to undermine global efforts to curb Pyongyang's nuclear and missile threats. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States on Wednesday imposed new sanctions on six North Korean nationals and two third-country entities for their role to help finance Pyongyang's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs, the Treasury Department said. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's decision to walk abruptly away from talks with Japan is due to a failure in reaching an agreement on the agenda for a possible summit between the two countries. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)

Prepared by Samantha Garcia, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718120437/https://mailchi.mp/ff9e9f9fa60e/hrnk-news-items-unsc-fails-to-extend-mandate-of-expert-panel-monitoring-nk-sanctions-enforcement?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, March 29th, 2024

HRNK Statement on Russia's Veto of UN Panel of Experts Renewal

Top News:
HRNK Statement on Russia's Veto of UN Panel of Experts Renewal (HRNK, 03/29/2024)

In North Korea:
Desperate farmers in North Korea steal insulating plastic film from each other (RFA, 03/28/2024)
N. Korea revs up project to build factories with troops (*Yonhap*, 03/29/2024)
North Korea hawks marked-up luxury goods to Russian tourists despite sanctions (NK *News Pro*, 03/29/2024)
Pro-North Korea friendship groups to gather in Pyongyang for first time in years (NK *News*, 03/29/2024)
Russian spy chief visits North Korea, holds talks with head of secret police (NK *News*, 03/28/2024)

In South Korea:

In Seoul, high-rises double as army outposts in war against North Korean drones (*NK News*, 03/28/2024)

International:
North Korea rules out any meetings with Japan (*Reuters*, 03/29/2024)
Russian veto ends U.N. panel monitoring North Korea sanctions (*Washington Post*, 03/29/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. stress close collaboration against N.K. cyberthreats during working group talks (*Yonhap*, 03/29/2024)

Top News:

- A Russian veto has terminated the UN Panel of Experts, a subsidiary body established pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1718. Several HRNK Board members react to this distressing development, deploring the failure to renew the Panel's mandate and calling on the UN to establish an alternative monitoring procedure. (*HRNK*)

In North Korea:

- It's planting season in North Korea, and farmers are stealing plastic film from each other so that they can protect their rice seedlings from frost as they worry about meeting their quotas, residents told Radio Free Asia. The plastic film and other farm supplies such as fertilizer are in short supply as imports from China have not picked up after the shutdown in trade during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Son Hyemin, *RFA*)
- North Korea has been accelerating a project to construct regional factories, with mobilized troops completing excavation work so that modernized factories can be built, state media reported Friday. Ordered by its leader Kim Jong-un, North Korea kicked off a project last month to build modernized factories in 20 counties over the next decade to raise the "basic material and cultural living standards of the people." (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- A wide range of foreign luxury cosmetics continue to be available for purchase in North Korea, exclusive photos obtained by *NK Pro* show, despite sanctions prohibiting their import and ongoing border controls. In the new photos, expensive beauty products by American brand Estée Lauder, Japanese brand Shiseido and French brands Christian Dior, Yves Saint Laurent and Lancome are visible on store shelves at Pyongyang International Airport and the Masikryong Ski Resort on the east coast. (Joe Smith, *NK Pro*)
- Representatives of pro-North Korea friendship groups in the U.K., Russia and several other countries will travel to Pyongyang in April for a major holiday, marking the first time such foreign delegates will visit the DPRK since before the pandemic. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- The chief of Russia's foreign intelligence agency traveled to North Korea this week for talks on countering espionage, according to DPRK state media, a visit that an expert called a telltale sign of preparations for Vladimir Putin to visit Pyongyang in the coming months. Sergei Naryshkin, director of Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service, arrived in Pyongyang on Monday and held talks with the DPRK's minister of state security Ri Chang Dae before departing on Wednesday, the party daily *Rodong Sinmun* reported. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- To protect Seoul against DPRK air raids and drone attacks, the Capital Defense Command maintains outposts on top of some of the city's tallest buildings. Relatively little is known about these secretive units, including how many the military operates and where they are

located. But the South Korean military has acknowledged their existence, with such units participating in drills on downing unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) just this week, and experts say they will only grow more important to the city's defense as drones take on an increasingly prominent role in modern warfare. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

International:

- North Korea has no interest in dialogue with Japan, state media KCNA reported on Friday, citing foreign minister Choe Son Hui. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has said he wants to hold talks with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un "without any preconditions" and is personally overseeing efforts to realise the first such leaders' summit in 20 years in an attempt to defuse decades of tensions. But North Korea has said, opens new tab it had no interest in a summit with Japan and would reject any talks, signalling no thaw in relations between the two countries. (Hyunsu Yim, *Reuters*)
- A veto by Russia on Thursday ended the United Nations' monitoring of sanctions against North Korea over its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs, dissolving a U.N. body that for 14 years was responsible for keeping a close eye on Pyongyang's illicit activities. (Michelle Ye Hee Lee and Min Joo Kim, *Washington Post*)
- Diplomats from South Korea and the United States underscored close bilateral collaboration to counter North Korea's "malicious" cyber activities meant to fund its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs during a working group meeting in Washington this week, the State Department said Thursday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Katherine Mitchell, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718120822/https://mailchi.mp/58986e289759/hrnk-news-items-hrnk-statement-on-russias-veto-of-un-panel-of-experts-renewal?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, March 30th, 2024

Why Russia Is Protecting North Korea From Nuclear Monitors

In North Korea:
North Korean Foreign Ministry Website: Overview (*38 North*, 03/29/2024)
Returning from China, North Korean workers are paid in dubious IOUs (RFA, 03/29/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship
Space race between South, North heats up with launches expected in April (*The Korea Times*, 03/29/2024)

International:
After veto, Russia says big powers need to stop 'strangling' North Korea (*Reuters*, 03/29/2024)

Failed UN panel extension unlikely to lead to more provocations by North: experts (*The Korea Times*, 03/29/2024)
N. Korea's FM reaffirms unwillingness to talk with Japan over abduction issue (*Yonhap*, 03/29/2024)
Officials from S. Korea, U.S., Japan discuss cooperation against N.K. cyberthreats (*Yonhap*, 03/30/2024)
Russia vetoes UN panel's mandate to monitor North Korea sanctions (*NK News*, 03/29/2024)
UN Security Council fails to extend sanctions panel for North Korea (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/29/2024)
Why Russia Is Protecting North Korea From Nuclear Monitors (NYT, 03/29/2024)

In North Korea:

- In June 2017, the DPRK announced that it had opened its own Foreign Ministry website. A review of the website's mechanics and the apparent rise and fall of its importance for analysts since 2017 shows that the website was particularly useful for tracking major changes in North Korea's foreign policy in the summer of 2021. (Robert L. Carlin, Rachel Minyoung Lee, *38 North*)
- North Korean workers returning from China with hopes of a big payday are incensed because the government is not paying them in cash. Instead, it's giving them bank-issued money vouchers, which the workers are worried might end up being worthless, residents told Radio Free Asia. (Kim Jieun, *RFA*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- The space race between South and North Korea is expected to heat up in April, with Seoul planning to launch its second military reconnaissance satellite soon amid reports suggesting Pyongyang's readiness for a similar effort. (Kim Hyun-bin, *The Korea Times*)

International:

- Moscow's move, which strikes a blow at the enforcement of a myriad of UN sanctions imposed after Pyongyang carried out its first nuclear test in 2006, underscores the dividend that Kim Jong Un has earned by moving closer to President Vladimir Putin amid the war in Ukraine. (Guy Faulconbridge, *Reuters*)
- The U.N. Security Council's (UNSC) failure to extend the mandate of an expert panel that monitors the enforcement of sanctions against North Korea is unlikely to lead to more military and nuclear provocations by the reclusive regime as other U.N. measures and resolutions still remain in effect, according to experts, Friday. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *Korea Times*)
- The North Korean foreign minister on Friday reaffirmed Pyongyang's stance that it does not have any intention to hold talks with Japan on the abduction issue, a day after Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida voiced willingness to push for a summit with the North. (Kim Na-young, *Yonhap*)
- Diplomats from South Korea, the United States and Japan discussed trilateral cooperation to counter North Korea's evolving cyberthreats during their working group talks in Washington on Friday, Seoul's foreign ministry said. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Russia on Thursday vetoed the extension of the mandate for the U.N. Panel of Experts tasked with monitoring sanctions implementation against North Korea, arguing that the sanctions regime has lost its relevance and become detached from reality. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)

- "The Korean government deeply regrets that a draft UN Security Council resolution to extend the mandate of the Panel of Experts was not adopted on the morning of March 28 (New York time) due to the veto by the Russian Federation, despite the overwhelming support by the absolute majority of the Security Council members," said the Foreign Ministry in a statement released Thursday. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- On Thursday, Russia used its veto power in the United Nations Security Council to kill off a U.N. panel of experts that has been monitoring North Korea's efforts to evade sanctions over its nuclear program for the past 15 years. (David E. Sanger, NYT)

Prepared by Katie-Jiwoo Choi, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718121613/https://mailchi.mp/d05f21f75672/hrnk-news-items-why-russia-is-protecting-north-korea-from-nuclear-monitors?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, March 31st, 2024

Trilateral summit reportedly in the works for NATO event

In North Korea:
N.K.'s No. 2 man inspects vegetable farm (*Yonhap*, 03/29/2024)
N. Korea's Kim inspects construction site of ruling party's training school (*Yonhap*, 03/31/2024)
N. Korea holds meeting of Olympic Committee (*Yonhap*, 03/30/2024)
'Luxury' skiing in North Korea: the Russians allowed behind the border (*The Guardian*, 03/31/2024)

International:
N. Korean delegation visits Laos: KCNA (*Yonhap*, 03/31/2024)
Trilateral summit reportedly in the works for NATO event (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/31/2024)

In North Korea:

- Choe Ryong-hae, president of the Presidium of North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly, inspects the Mangyongdae Vegetable Farm in Pyongyang. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un inspected a construction site of the North's ruling party training school, the North's state media reported Sunday. (*Yonhap*)
- Members of North Korea's Olympic Committee attend a general assembly in Pyongyang to discuss plans for the Paris 2024 Olympics. (*Yonhap*)
- Kim Jong-un's selected few are '100% satisfied' but find a country steeped in hopelessness under sanctions. (*Pjotr Sauer*, *The Guardian*)

International:

- A North Korean delegation led by a senior official visited Laos and stressed the North's policy of bolstering defense capabilities, the North's state media reported Sunday. (*Yonhap*)
- The U.S. is in talks with South Korea and Japan to arrange a trilateral NATO summit to be held in Washington in July. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Prepared by Bryan Clark, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718120950/https://mailchi.mp/fa7dd090cff1/hrnk-news-items-trilateral-summit-reportedly-in-the-works-for-nato-event?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

4. APRIL

Monday, April 1st, 2024

Kim Jong Un building new university to train officials to support family's rule

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un building new university to train officials to support family's rule (*NK News*, 04/01/2024)
N. Korea reaffirms plan to launch multiple spy satellites this year (*Yonhap*, 04/01/2024)

In South Korea:
ROK intel agency accused of spying on student group to frame as pro-North Korea (*NK News*, 04/01/2024)
S. Korea detects no signs of preparations in N. Korea for military parade (*Yonhap*, 04/01/2024)

International:
Russia backs North Korea's nuclear challenge to world order (*Washington Examiner*, 04/01/2024)
Russia calls sanctions panel an 'obedient tool' of North Korea's foes after veto (*NK News*, 04/01/2024)
The New Autocratic Alliances (*Foreign Affairs*, 03/29/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader tours cadre training school amid push to reform institution central to regime survival. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea vowed Monday to push for space development and reaffirmed its plan to launch multiple reconnaissance satellites this year after putting its first spy satellite into orbit in November. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- A South Korean student association, The Korean University Progressive Union, alleges that members of the group caught a National Intelligence Service (NIS) agent secretly taking photos of them on March 22. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- The South Korean military said Monday it has not detected any imminent signs of preparations for a military parade in North Korea ahead of two major holidays in the communist country. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Russia's veto of the renewal of the UN Security Council's independent panel for monitoring North Korea sanctions sparks concerns over cooperation and reinforces divided international stances on countering nuclear proliferation. (Joel Gehrke, *Washington Examiner*)

- Moscow's foreign ministry accuses West of killing UN Panel of Experts by rejecting Russian proposals for sunset clauses. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- For decades, North Korea's alliance with China has constrained Washington from responding more firmly to its provocations. More recently, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's increasing belligerence may be fueled by an expectation (warranted or not) that Putin will have his back. (Hal Brands, *Foreign Affairs*)

Prepared by Diana Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718121248/https://mailchi.mp/240033972bce/hrnk-news-items-kim-jong-un-building-new-university-to-train-officials-to-support-familys-rule?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, April 2nd, 2024

DOS will continue to press Beijing to uphold its non-refoulement obligations

Top News:
U.S. Department of State will continue to press Beijing to uphold its non-refoulement obligations (VOA, 03/16/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
Civilian drone footage shows signs of life in sleepy North Korean city (*The Korea Times*, 04/02/2024)
North Korea fires intermediate-range ballistic missile into East Sea (*Yonhap*, 04/02/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korea condemns N. Korea's attempt to meddle in April general elections (*Yonhap*, 04/02/2024)

International:
N. Korea's ruling party delegation wraps up trip to China, Vietnam, Laos (*Yonhap*, 04/02/2024)
South Korea sanctions Russian ships over alleged arms shipments to North Korea (*NK News*, 04/02/2024)
US, ROK and Japan hold nuclear bomber drills after North Korean missile launch (*NK News*, 04/02/2024)
US Indo-Pacific Command condemns N. Korean missile launch (*Yonhap*, 04/02/2024)

Top News:

- On March 15, Greg Scarlatoiu, the Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), told VOA that the resolution "plays a very important role" by

"refocus[ing] attention on the critical issue of North Korean refugees," especially at a time when the reauthorization of the U.S. North Korean Human Rights Act has been delayed. (Lee Jo-eun, VOA)

In North Korea:

- Rare photos and footage from inside North Korea gave a glimpse into the daily lives of people in the reclusive state. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korea fired an intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) into the East Sea on Tuesday, the South Korean military said, in its third ballistic missile launch of the year. (Kim Eun-jung, Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- The unification ministry on Tuesday denounced North Korea's attempt to meddle in South Korea's upcoming parliamentary elections, citing an increase in Pyongyang's state media reports disparaging President Yoon Suk Yeol and seeking to drive a wedge in the South. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- North Korea's ruling party delegation has departed Laos, wrapping up a three-nation trip apparently aimed at strengthening traditional ties with countries sharing the socialist ideology. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea sanctioned two Russian ships linked to North Korea's arms trade with Moscow on Tuesday, as well as Russian individuals and companies allegedly involved in Pyongyang's deployment of overseas information technology workers. (Shreyes Reddy, *NK News*)
- Seoul says first trilateral air drills of the year seek to deter DPRK's 'advancing nuclear and missile threats'. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command condemned North Korea's latest ballistic missile launch Monday, calling on the regime to refrain from "unlawful" and "destabilizing" acts. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

U.S. Department of State will continue to press Beijing to uphold its non-refoulement obligations

Lee Jo-eun, VOA
March 16, 2024

The U.S. government has stated that it will continue to urge China to comply with its non-refoulement obligations. It also emphasized that China should provide appropriate protection for North Korean escapees. Reporter Lee Jo-eun has the story.

The U.S. Department of State reaffirmed its commitment to continue pressuring the Chinese government to stop forcibly repatriating North Korean escapees.

On March 14, the spokesperson for the Department of State responded to VOA's request for comment on the recent proposal of a resolution in the House of Representatives urging the U.S. government to actively protect the human rights of North Korean escapees in China.

[Department of State spokesperson] "As a general matter, we do not comment on pending legislation. However, I can say that we have repeatedly expressed our concerns that the PRC has

repatriated large numbers of North Koreans, including asylum seekers. According to numerous UN and NGO reports, returnees are subjected to torture, sexual and gender-based violence, forced labor, or executed."

The spokesperson further stated, "We will continue to press Beijing to uphold its non-refoulement obligations under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, its 1967 Protocol, and the 1984 Convention Against Torture. The PRC should offer appropriate protection to North Korean asylum seekers and allow their transit to a safe third country, if they wish."

On March 13, Representatives Michelle Steel (R-CA), Young Kim (R-CA), Anthony D'Esposito (R-NY), and Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ) proposed a resolution calling on the President and the Secretary of State to take concrete measures to address the humanitarian crisis faced by North Korean escapees and overseas workers suffering from forced labor in China.

The resolution called for pressuring the CCP to end human rights abuses against North Korean escapees in China and using existing sanctions authorities to hold officials of the CCP and other UN member states accountable for their involvement in the forcible repatriation of North Korean escapees.

Experts welcomed the resolution, noting that it called attention to the plight of North Korean escapees who are facing a humanitarian crisis, especially in China.

On March 15, Greg Scarlatoiu, the Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), told VOA that the resolution "plays a very important role" by "refocus[ing] attention on the critical issue of North Korean refugees," especially at a time when the reauthorization of the U.S. North Korean Human Rights Act has been delayed.

[Greg Scarlatoiu] "This resolution plays a very important role. It refocuses attention on the critical issue of North Korean refugees, in particular North Korean refugees in China…I definitely think that the U.S. government should do more to address this issue...Together with our allies, together with like-minded UN Member states, we need to find ways to pressure China, to persuade China to abandon this policy and practice of forcibly repatriating North Korean refugees."

Suzanne Scholte, the Chairman of the North Korea Freedom Coalition, also spoke to VOA about the resolution.

[Suzanne Scholte] "It's addressing a critical, critical issue, which is the repatriations... You have to do more than just talk about it. You've got to do something to hold them accountable. You have to sanction them. The Chinese don't adhere to these international human rights standards. That's why I'm encouraged by the items that these members of Congress have included in here."

It has been reported that China forcibly repatriated 500 to 600 North Korean escapees across the Sino-North Korean border last October, and the international community has repeatedly demanded China to stop the forcible repatriation of North Korean escapees.

However, China has repeatedly claimed that it does not recognize North Korean escapees as refugees, but instead as "illegal immigrants" who escaped for economic purposes, and that it has been treating them in accordance with international & domestic laws and humanitarian principles.

This is Lee Jo-eun, reporting for VOA News.

Translated by Jiwoo (Katie) Choi, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718121739/https://mailchi.mp/7c6b340a2ec9/hrnk-news-items-dos-will-continue-to-press-beijing-to-uphold-its-non-refoulement-obligations?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, April 3rd, 2024

N. Korea claims successful launch of new IRBM tipped with hypersonic warhead

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un adds Cadillac and Bentley SUVs to growing luxury car collection (*NK News*, 04/03/2024)
N. Korea claims successful launch of new IRBM tipped with hypersonic warhead (*Yonhap*, 04/03/2024)
North Korea aims to adopt solid-fuel missiles for faster launches (*Reuters*, 04/03/2024)
Why is North Korea testing hypersonic missiles and how do they work? (*Reuters*, 04/03/2024)

In South Korea:
PPP chief urges voters to polls amid tight nationwide races (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/03/2024)
S. Korea seizes vessel suspected of violating U.N. sanctions on N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 04/03/2024)
South Korea: Arrest after 40 spy cameras found in polling stations (*BBC*, 04/02/2024)

International:
Biden stresses 'enduring' U.S. commitment to Korean Peninsula denuclearization to Xi: White House (*Yonhap*, 04/03/2024)
FIFA fines North Korea $11K for scrapping World Cup qualifier against Japan (*NK News*, 04/03/2024)
NATO invites S. Korea to Washington summit in July (*Yonhap*, 04/03/2024)
Russia says S. Korea's sanctions on Russian ships, individuals 'unfriendly (*Yonhap*, 04/03/2024)
South Korea, U.S. to practice crippling North's nuclear command (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/02/2024)
Tokyo police confirm death of North Korea abduction suspect (*The Japan Times*, 04/03/2024)
US turns to allies to monitor North Korea sanctions (VOA, 04/02/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader appears to obtain new vehicles after warning nation to expect increasing economic challenges. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea said Wednesday it has successfully test-fired a new intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) tipped with a hypersonic warhead, saying that all missiles the country has developed are now solid-fuel and nuclear capable with warhead control capability. (Kim Soo-yeon, Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- Analysts say solid-fuel missiles can be faster to deploy than liquid-fuel variants. (Joyce Lee, Josh Smith, *Yonhap*)

- North Korea has tested a new solid-fuel hypersonic missile with intermediate range, it said on Wednesday, in an intensifying race for the next generation of long-range rockets hard to track and intercept. (Shin Hyonhee, *Reuters*)

In South Korea:

- People Power Party interim leader Han Dong-hoon on Wednesday urged voters to cast their ballots in the April 10 general election, citing the tight competition in 55 districts nationwide. (Cho Jung-Woo, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea has seized a stateless vessel that allegedly engaged in activities in violation of U.N. sanctions in waters off the country's south coast. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea is seeking to arrest two men for allegedly helping a YouTuber to install dozens of spy cameras at voting stations. (Kathryn Armstrong, *BBC*)

International:

- President Biden underscored the United States' "enduring" commitment to the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula during phone talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping on Tuesday, the White House said. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Pyongyang unlikely to pay fine and will see minimum penalty as 'reward' for last-minute cancellation, expert says. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- The NATO chief said Wednesday leaders of South Korea and three other nations in the Indo-Pacific region were invited to the upcoming summit scheduled in July in Washington. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- Russia's foreign ministry criticized South Korea's decision to impose sanctions on Russian ships and others, and vowed to take actions in response to the "unfriendly step." (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the United States plan to conduct drills to paralyze North Korea's nuclear weapons command during their joint exercise in August. (Chung Yeong-gyo, Lee Keun-pyung, Lee Yu-jeong, Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- On Tuesday, Tokyo police officially confirmed the death of a suspect in the abduction of a Japanese national by North Korea from June 1980. (*The Japan Times*)
- The U.S. and like-minded countries must find new ways to monitor the enforcement of sanctions on North Korea after the mandate of a U.N. expert group expires this month. (Christy Lee, VOA)

Prepared by Gayeong Lee, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718121935/https://mailchi.mp/d4cfe7cfe121/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-claims-successful-launch-of-new-irbm-tipped-with-hypersonic-warhead?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, April 4th, 2024

NK kids face death penalty for distributing K-dramas - Seoul envoy

In North Korea:
Casualties reported during N. Korea's military drills involving paratroopers last month (*Yonhap*, 04/04/2024)
N. Korea says Q1 economic goals attained as it holds cabinet plenary meeting (*Yonhap*, 04/04/2024)
NK kids face death penalty for distributing K-dramas: Seoul envoy (*The Korea Herald*, 04/04/2024)

In South Korea:
HD Heavy Industries delivers 3,000-t Shin Chae-ho submarine to Navy (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/04/2024)
S. Korean envoy stresses N.K. children exposed to 'egregious' human rights violations (*Yonhap*, 04/04/2024)

International:
Kim Jong Un's correspondence with Putin shoots up amid cooperation over Ukraine (*NK News*, 04/04/2024)
NATO invites Korea to summit for third consecutive time (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/04/2024)
North Korean insurance firms dodging sanctions with foreign help: UN report (*NK News*, 04/04/2024)
North Korean restaurant staff insult South Koreans, calling them 'puppets' (*NK News*, 04/04/2024)
Russia's Asian alliances have security consequences, NATO chief warns (*Reuters*, 04/04/2024)
Russia says new South Korean sanctions are 'unfriendly', will respond (*Reuters*, 04/04/2024)
S. Korea to chair first UN Security Council meeting with focus on cyber threats (*The Korea Herald*, 04/04/2024)

In North Korea:

- Multiple casualties occurred during military drills involving paratroopers supervised by North Korean leader Kim Jong-un last month, South Korean government sources said Thursday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea said Thursday it has accomplished major economic plans for the first quarter as it held a plenary meeting of the cabinet to review economic performances and discuss measures. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean Ambassador to the UN Hwang Joon-kook stated that children in North Korea face grave human rights abuses, including receiving the death penalty for distributing South Korean dramas, during a UN Security Council meeting at UN headquarters in New York on Wednesday. (Lee Jung-joo, *The Korea Herald*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's latest homegrown 3,000-ton diesel submarine, the Shin Chae-ho, was delivered to the Navy Thursday to serve as a centerpiece of the "Kill Chain" system meant to deter North Korean threats. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- South Korea's top envoy to the U.N. expressed concerns Wednesday over "egregious" human rights violations facing children in North Korea, including what he called the death penalty for distributing South Korean dramas. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Correspondence between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin has shot up since Moscow launched its invasion of Ukraine, according to *NK News* analysis of state media, but Syrian leader Bashar Assad remained Kim's most frequent pen pal. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- The chief of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) invited President Yoon Suk Yeol and the leaders of three other nations in the Indo-Pacific region to the upcoming summit in Washington scheduled for July for the third consecutive year. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean insurance firms have continued to conduct business overseas in the past five years, according to information in the latest U.N. Panel of Experts report, despite concerns that their profits help fund the DPRK's weapons of mass destruction program. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- The South Korean YouTuber Lee Jae-ho was eating at a North Korean barbecue restaurant in China this year when a waitress posed an unexpected question. "Which country are you from? Are you Korean-Chinese, or are you a puppet?" she asked, in an encounter captured on video. (Lina Park, NK News)
- NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg stated China, North Korea and Iran's military support propping up Russia's war economy has serious global security consequences that the 32-member NATO alliance cannot ignore. (John Irish, *Reuters*)
- Russia considers South Korea's decision to impose sanctions against Russian individuals and entities as an unfriendly move and will respond in due course, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on Wednesday. (Dmitry Antonov, *Reuters*)
- South Korea is poised to chair a UN Security Council meeting on cybersecurity on Thursday to shed light on the repercussions of cyber threats and malicious cyber activities, including North Korea's sanctions-busting maneuvers in cyberspace, on international peace and security. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)

Prepared by Gabrielle Drinkwine, HRNK Research Intern

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Friday, April 5th, 2024

Human Rights Council requests update to landmark report on North Korean abuses

In North Korea:
Author Who Defected From North Korea Wins Defamation Lawsuit (*The New York Times*, 04/05/2024)
N. Korea's education minister embarks on Russia trip (*Yonhap*, 04/05/2024)
N. Korea ramping up preparations for art festival marking late founder's birth (*Yonhap*, 04/05/2024)
North Korea bans wearing bags 'off the shoulder' as symbol of western decadence (*The Telegraph*, 04/05/2024)
Why North Korea's news agency deleted hundreds of articles from website (*NK News*, 04/05/2024)

In South Korea:
North Korea's millennial defectors now seek political power in the South (*The Washington Post*, 04/05/2024)
S. Korea to launch 2nd spy satellite on April 8 (*Yonhap*, 04/05/2024)
S. Korea urges N. Korea to resolve abductee issue after UN resolution adoption (*Yonhap*, 04/05/2024)

International:
China will use AI to disrupt elections in the US, South Korea and India, Microsoft warns (*The Guardian*, 04/05/2024)
Human Rights Council requests update to landmark report on North Korean abuses (*NK News*, 04/05/2024)
Relatives of Japanese abducted by N. Korea hope Kishida raises issue in U.S. (*The Japan Times*, 04/05/2024)
Russia Summons South Korean Envoy as Ties Worsen Over Sanctions (*Bloomberg*, 04/05/2024)
S. Korea, U.S., Japan highlight N. Korea's cyberthreats in co-hosted informal UNSC meeting (*Yonhap*, 04/05/2024)
Senior UNHCR official stresses need for mechanisms in place for asylum-seekers (*Yonhap*, 04/05/2024)
U.S. ambassador to U.N. to visit Japan and South Korea this month (*The Japan Times*, 04/05/2024)
U.S. expert decries China's abstention in U.N. panel vote as sign of 'incompetence,' 'cowardice' (*Yonhap*, 04/05/2024)
What Does ROK-NATO Cooperation Mean for Relations on the Korean Peninsula? (*38 North*, 04/05/2024)

In North Korea:

- An author who defected from North Korea has won a defamation lawsuit filed in S. Korea against a fellow defector who accused him of rape and the broadcaster who first reported her allegations. (Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*)
- North Korea's Education Minister Kim Seung-doo leads a delegation to Russia for talks on education cooperation, aiming to strengthen ties between the two countries. (Chae Yun-Hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea is gearing up for the 33rd April Spring Friendship Art Festival to commemorate Kim Il-sung's 112th birthday, with participation expected from Russia, China, and Mongolia.(Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean patriot patrols are enforcing a ban on citizens carrying bags over one shoulder. (Julian Ryall, *The Telegraph*)

- North Korea's state-run KCNA has seemingly purged its archive, erasing content predating 2023. (Martin Weiser, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- North Korean defectors of the Jangmadang Generation are looking to effect change and bring their insights as millennials to fulfill leadership roles in South Korea. (Michelle Ye Her Lee, *The Washington Post*)
- South Korea plans to launch its second military spy satellite from the U.S. next week to enhance North Korea surveillance. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea hailed a UN resolution condemning North Korea's severe human rights abuses, urging the North to address detainee, abductee, and POW issues. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Microsoft warns that China, with some involvement from North Korea, may use AI-generated content to disrupt elections in the US, South Korea, and India, building on tactics observed during Taiwan's election. (Dan Milmo, *The Guardian*)
- Activist says call to update Commission of Inquiry is council's most ambitious action on DPRK human rights in years. (Ifang Bremer, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- Relatives of Japanese nationals abducted by North Korea decades ago hope that Prime Minister Fumio Kishida will bring up the long-unresolved issue during his state visit to the United States next week. (Francis Tang, *The Japan Times*)
- Russia summoned the South Korean ambassador on Friday to protest Seoul's sanctions over Moscow's alleged arms trade with North Korea, deepening a spat between the two countries. (Henry Meyer, *Bloomberg*)
- South Korea, the U.S., and Japan led a U.N. meeting on North Korea's cyber threats after a panel monitoring sanctions was not renewed. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- U.N. official Raouf Mazou emphasized the importance of countries having mechanisms to assist refugees and asylum-seekers, during his visit to Seoul. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield is planning to travel to Japan and South Korea this month to discuss responses to North Korea, diplomatic sources said Thursday. (*The Japan Times*)
- Victor Cha labeled China's abstention in a UN vote on extending a panel to monitor North Korea sanctions as incompetence or cowardice, highlighting risks to global efforts against Pyongyang's nuclear threat and urging China to take responsibility. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and NATO are building closer ties. There are as many risks as there are opportunities to growing ties. (Bo Ram Kwon, *38 North*)

Prepared by Ashley Park, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718122244/https://mailchi.mp/e8040f18d28f/hrnk-news-items-human-rights-council-requests-update-to-landmark-report-on-north-korean-abuses?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Saturday, April 6th, 2024

U.S. nuclear envoy to visit Romania, Poland, Sweden to discuss N. Korea's threats, ties with Russia

In North Korea:
Dictator's dilemma: Kim's unquestioned power cuts both ways for North Korea (*The Washington Times*, 04/05/2024)
N. Korea fumes over U.N. Human Rights Council's adoption of resolution on N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 04/06/2024)
Second Flight of North Korea's Solid IRBM Also Second Flight of HGV (*38 North*, 04/05/2024)

In South Korea:
In South Korean election, North Korea and its nukes barely move the needle (*NK News*, 04/05/2024)

International:
Biden 'would support' Japan-North Korea summit, U.S. official says (*Nikkei Asia*, 04/06/2024)
Chinese tourist tower overlooking North Korea could be demolished (*RFA*, 04/05/2024)
North Korea sends arms to Russia. Now Putin pays back Kim Jong Un. (*The Washington Post*, 04/05/2024)
Russia summons South Korean envoy to protest against sanctions (*Reuters*, 04/05/2024)
US-Japan summit: What defense shakeup will involve and why (*Reuters*, 04/05/2024)
U.S. nuclear envoy to visit Romania, Poland, Sweden to discuss N. Korea's threats, ties with Russia (*Yonhap*, 04/06/2024)
Warning To China and North Korea – B-52H Stratofortress Bombers Are Back in the Indo-Pacific (*The National Interest*, 04/05/2024)
Yellen warns China of 'significant consequences' if its companies support Russia's war in Ukraine (*Financial Times*, 04/06/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's unchallenged leadership at home makes him strategically unpredictable to the U.S. and its allies. But that same unquestioned grip on power makes Mr. Kim tactically vulnerable, due to systemic weaknesses built into his top-down chain of command. (Andrew Salmon, *The Washington Times*)
- North Korea has bristled at the U.N. Human Rights Council (UNHRC)'s adoption this week of a resolution denouncing its human rights abuses, calling the resolution "nothing but a politically motivated fraud document." (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- On April 2, North Korea conducted the second test flight of a solid-propellant intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM), which it designated the Hwasong-16B. The missile carried a hypersonic glide vehicle (HGV) payload akin to one first flown in September 2021 on a liquid-propellant booster. (Vann H. Van Diepen, *38 North*)

In South Korea:

- South Koreans are set to go to the polls in less than a week to choose their lawmakers for the next four years, but despite heightened inter-Korean tensions and even warnings about the possibility of war, North Korea has been almost completely absent from the election. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

International:

- U.S. President Joe Biden would conditionally support a summit between Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, a senior American official said. (Yukihiro Sakaguchi, Nishant Annu, *Nikkei Asia*)
- A gigantic steel tower in China that leans almost over the Yalu River between the two nations could be demolished after several tense interactions between Chinese tourists and North Koreans below, residents in both countries told Radio Free Asia. (Moon Sung Hui, *RFA*)
- U.S. policy has wavered between drift, incentives, Mr. Trump's failed summitry and back to drift. As always in the atomic age, the danger is of disastrous miscalculation and misperception in a confrontation. (Editorial Board, *The Washington Post*)
- The Russian Foreign Ministry said on Friday it had summoned South Korea's ambassador to protest over sanctions by Seoul against Russian individuals and legal entities. (*Reuters*)
- On Wednesday in Washington, leaders are expected to discuss plans to reform the U.S. military command in Japan to make it better able to function with Japanese forces in a crisis and to announce steps to allow more joint development, and potentially co-production, of military and defense equipment. (David Brunnstrom, *Reuters*)
- The top U.S. nuclear envoy will visit Romania, Poland and Sweden next week to discuss North Korea's military threats and its growing ties with Russia, the State Department said Friday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- A pair of B-52H Stratofortress long-range strategic bombers took part in trilateral aerial exercises this week. The U.S. Air Force bombers flew alongside Japanese and South Korean fighters. (Peter Suciu, *The National Interest*)
- Moscow has been able to keep its economy running and scale up its defence industry owing in larger part to expanded trade with China, imports from third countries of so-called dual-use goods that can be used to make weapons, and direct military supplies from North Korea and Iran. (Henry Foy, Felicia Schwartz, Demetri Sevastopulo, Claire Jones, *Financial Times*)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718122614/https://mailchi.mp/0ea92492244e/hrnk-news-items-0406-2024?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, April 7th, 2024

Lessons for an Unserious Superpower: The “Scoop” Jackson Legacy and US Foreign Policy

Top News:
Lessons for an Unserious Superpower (*AEI*, 04/2024)

In North Korea:
North Korea says it tested a new hypersonic intermediate-range missile that’s easier to hide (*AP News*, 04/03/2024)

International:
North Korea’s Ballistic Missiles Are Getting Valuable Battlefield Testing in Ukraine (*Bloomberg*, 04/05/2024)

Top News:

- Nick Eberstadt, senior adviser to the National Bureau of Asian Research and a founding director of the US Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, draws inspiration from the visionary approach of Sen. Henry M. "Scoop" Jackson (D-WA) to underscore forgotten lessons on safeguarding US interests, including, but not limited to addressing the North Korean nuclear challenge. (Nicholas Eberstadt, *AEI*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea said Wednesday it had tested a new hypersonic intermediate-range missile powered with solid propellants, extending a run of weapons tests that’s deepening a nuclear standoff with neighbors and the United States. (Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)

International:

- Ukraine says dozens of North Korean missiles used in war. (Soo-Hyang Choi, Jon Herskovitz, *Bloomberg*)

Prepared by Diana Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718122816/https://mailchi.mp/0b778818349c/hrnk-news-items-lessons-for-an-unserious-superpower-the-scoop-jackson-legacy-and-us-foreign-policy?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Monday, April 8th, 2024

‘Beyond Utopia’, Beyond Wishes; South Korea launches second spy satellite into orbit

Top News:
‘Beyond Utopia’, Beyond Wishes (*Perth USAsia Centre*, 03/27/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korea bolsters space surveillance amid rising N. Korean threats (*Yonhap*, 04/08/2024)
South Korea launches second spy satellite into orbit (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/08/2024)
South Korea launches 2nd spy satellite amid space race with North Korea (*The Korea Herald*, 04/08/2024)
ROK launches second spy satellite in pursuit of 24/7 monitoring of North Korea (*NK News*, 04/08/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Regular inter-Korean liaison contact remains severed for 1 year amid frosty ties (*Yonhap*, 04/07/2024)

International:
Former Japanese abductee starts work on North Korea abductions issue (*NHK World Japan*, 04/08/2024)
Kishida makes 'high-level approaches' for a summit with North's Kim (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/08/2024)
N. Korea's Kim sends message to Putin over flooding in Russia (*Yonhap*, 04/08/2024)
Russia to hold talks with North Korea on increasing quota for DPRK students (*NK News*, 04/08/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. to hold regular defense talks on deterrence against N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 04/08/2024)
S. Korea's unilateral sanctions against Russia show significant downturn in bilateral ties (*The Korea Times*, 04/08/2024)

Top News:

- I wish that the horrific human rights abuses that mandated the “5th International Conference on North Korean Human Rights and Refugees” in Warsaw Poland in 2004 were no longer an issue. *Beyond Utopia* makes it clear that these issues remain as urgent now as they were 20 years ago. My participation in that conference inspired me to spend nearly two decades on the Board of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, seeking to shed light on one of the darkest corners of the planet. (Gordon Flake, *Perth USAsia Centre*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea placed its second military spy satellite in space Monday to beef up its space-based surveillance of North Korea and deter its nuclear and missile threats amid Pyongyang's own push to launch more satellites. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- Korea successfully launched its second domestically developed spy satellite into orbit via a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from Florida, according to the Defense Ministry on Monday. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- South Korea on Monday succeeded in sending its second domestically made military reconnaissance satellite into space from the US to enhance its space-based surveillance of North Korea and deterrence against nuclear and missile threats. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea successfully launched its second military spy satellite into orbit on Monday, pushing forward an initiative to improve the country's ability to monitor North Korea. (Joon Ha Park, Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Regular communication between the two Koreas through cross-border hotlines has remained severed for one year as the North continues to be unresponsive to calls from the South amid increasingly frosty ties. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Former Japanese abductee Soga Hitomi, who returned home from North Korea in 2002, has started work as a city official in charge of the abductions issue. (*NHK World Japan*)
- Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said his government is making "high-level approaches" to Pyongyang for a summit between himself and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un during an interview with U.S. media Sunday. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has sent a message consoling Russian President Vladimir Putin over heavy floods that hit Russia's southern region, state media said Monday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- A delegation from North Korea's education ministry is visiting Russia to discuss expanding the quota of DPRK students at Russian institutions, in what one expert called a likely "ploy" to evade sanctions and hire more workers. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- South Korea and the United States will hold regular defense talks this week to discuss ways to bolster security cooperation and deter North Korean nuclear and missile threats, Seoul's defense ministry said Monday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's unilateral sanctions on Russia point to a downturn in the bilateral relations between Seoul and Moscow, experts said Monday. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)

Prepared by Kate Refolo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718122957/https://mailchi.mp/c8a5fb7549b2/hrnk-news-items-beyond-utopia-beyond-wishes-south-korea-launches-second-spy-satellite-into-orbit?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, April 9th, 2024

Marriage and Family Life in North Korea: Cultural Norms and Challenges

Top News:
Marriage and Family Life in North Korea: Cultural Norms and Challenges (*NK Hidden Gulag Blog*, 04/09/2024)

In North Korea:
N. Korean state media not referring to late founder's birthday as Day of Sun (*Yonhap*, 04/09/2024)
North Korean Paratroopers Injured in Kim-Led Drills, Agency Says (*Newsweek*, 04/09/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korea's 2nd spy satellite makes contact with local ground station (*Yonhap*, 04/09/2024)
Top military officer visits east coast units amid N. Korean threats (*Yonhap*, 04/09/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
North Korean media takes stab at South's president on eve of elections (Reuters, 04/09/2024)

International:
Austin reaffirms U.S. commitment to 'shore up' Korean Peninsula peace despite N.K. threats (*Yonhap*, 04/09/2024)
China's No.3 official to visit N. Korea (*The Korea Herald*, 04/09/2024)
Japan's outreach to N. Korea unlikely to affect trilateral cooperation against Pyongyang (*The Korea Times*, 04/09/2024)
Japanese ambassador says North Korea not ready to resolve abductee issue (*NK News*, 04/09/2024)
N. Korea does not appear ready to address 'outstanding' issues with Japan: Tokyo envoy (*Yonhap*, 04/09/2024)
N. Korea's state media highlights ties with Russia amid deepening cooperation (*Yonhap*, 04/09/2024)
U.S. ambassador to UN to visit South Korea, Japan as sanctions panel sunsets (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/09/2024)
US-ROK forces hold joint naval drills on mine warfare against North Korea (*NK News*, 04/09/2024)

Top News:

- Former HRNK Research Intern, Abbigail Thacker, examines marriage and family life in North Korea as understood through escapee testimony. The article highlights societal taboos, political influences, and human rights violations. Dating is secretive, marriage involves loyalty pledges to former leaders, and divorce is rare due to stigma. North Korea's failure to uphold the fundamental rights of families results in discrimination against women and children. Protecting families must be a priority in ongoing efforts to improve the human rights situation in North Korea. (Abbigail Thacker, *NK Hidden Gulag Blog*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has been ramping up a festive mood to celebrate the upcoming 112th birthday of late founder Kim Il-sung, but its state media has been recently referring to it as "the April holiday" instead of what's commonly called the Day of Sun. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

- An unknown number of North Korean paratroopers are said to have been injured last month during a high-profile military exercise meant to demonstrate that Kim Jong Un's forces were "fully prepared for war." (John Feng, *Newsweek*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's second military reconnaissance satellite launched into space this week has made contact with a ground station in the country and is undergoing initial operations normally. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Chairman Adm. Kim Myung-soo visited the headquarters of the Navy's 1st Fleet in Donghae, 182 kilometers east of Seoul, amid concerns of possible North Korean provocations near the inter-Korean sea border. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea's state-controlled media has called President Yoon Suk Yeol of its neighbour South Korea a "fascist dictator" and a "warmonger" a day before elections that will determine the makeup of parliament. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)

International:

- U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Tuesday reiterated America's commitment to "shore up" stability on the Korean Peninsula in the midst of persistent North Korean threats, as Washington is stepping up bilateral and trilateral cooperation with South Korea and Japan. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- China's No. 3 official, Zhao Leji, is set to visit North Korea from Thursday to Saturday as the two countries mark the 75th anniversary of establishing diplomatic ties this year. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- Japan's attempts to reach out to North Korea to hold a summit are unlikely to affect the trilateral partnership's overall objectives against Pyongyang. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)
- Japan's ambassador to the U.S. said Pyongyang is not ready to resolve the issue of North Korea's abduction of Japanese citizens, as Tokyo continues to make efforts to set up a meeting between the leaders of the two countries. (Joon Ha Park, Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- North Korea does not appear to be ready to deal with "outstanding" matters with Japan, including the issue of Japanese nationals abducted by Pyongyang decades ago, Tokyo's top envoy to the United States said Monday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's state news agency has established an archive of articles on the country's ties with Russia in the latest sign of their growing cooperation following a rare summit last year. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield will visit South Korea and Japan from April 14 to 20, the U.S. mission to the UN said on Monday. (Park Hyun-ju, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Expert says training typically practices both removing DPRK mines from ports and installing mines in enemy waters. (Jeongmin Kim, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

Prepared by Jiwoo Hwang, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718123401/https://mailchi.mp/a4c9d551016e/hrnk-news-items-marriage-and-family-life-in-north-korea-cultural-norms-and-challenges?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, April 10th, 2024

S. Korea's 22nd National Assembly Elections & the Likely Effect on N. Korean Human Rights

Top News:
S. Korea's 22nd National Assembly Elections & the Likely Effect on N. Korean Human Rights (*HRNK Insider*, 04/10/2024)

In North Korea:
In new movie, the South started the Korean War, as Pyongyang has always claimed (*RFA*, 04/10/2024)
Kim Jong Un reveals expansive plans for new apartments and offices in Pyongyang (*NK News*, 04/08/2024)

International:
Biden, Kishida hold high-profile summit on stronger alliance cooperation (*Yonhap*, 04/11/2024)
Blinken renews concerns over support for Russia's defense industrial base from N. Korea, Iran, China (*Yonhap*, 04/10/2024)
How South Korea can aid Ukraine (*The Korea Times*, 04/10/2024)
NATO and the Republic of Korea: The AP4 in the Indo-Pacific (*38 North*, 04/10/2024)
New Zealand to deploy new aircraft to monitor North Korean sanctions evasion (*NK News*, 04/10/2024)
S. Korea, Canada, New Zealand under consideration for AUKUS Pillar II partners: U.S. official (*Yonhap*, 04/10/2024)
US pushes back at Russia's protest over South Korean sanctions (VOA, 04/10/2024)
White House official reaffirms openness to N. Korea dialogue on 'wide' range of issues (*Yonhap*, 04/10/2024)

Top News:

- Today, as South Korea held its 22nd National Assembly elections, the Democratic Party of Korea is poised for a significant victory, possibly securing over 200 seats. While North Korean human rights were not a primary focus, the election outcome could certainly impact these issues. The establishment of the North Korean Human Rights Foundation may face hurdles with the opposition's win, reflecting ongoing political tensions within South Korea. (Greg Scarlatoiu, Raymond Ha, Colleen Burns, Gayeong Lee, *HRNK Insider*)

In North Korea:

- Produced by the Propaganda and Agitation Department of North Korea's Central Committee, the new North Korean movie "72 Hours" presents a false narrative about the start of the Korean War, depicting the South as initiating the conflict. This portrayal aligns with Pyongyang's official stance that the South, under U.S. orders, provoked the war, with Washington seeking an excuse to send troops to Korea and eventually conquer the entire peninsula. Despite its propaganda nature, "72 Hours" is gaining popularity due to its relatively higher production quality compared to other North Korean films. (Kim Ji Eun, RFA)
- North Korean leader inspects second-stage 10K home project nearing deadline, while showing scale of next stages. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

International:

- U.S. President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida began a summit in Washington on Wednesday with a shared aim to cement the two countries' evolving alliance in the midst of China's assertiveness, Russia's war in Ukraine and North Korea's persistent threats. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken reiterated concerns Tuesday over military support for Russia's defense industrial base from North Korea, Iran and China, as Moscow continues its protracted war against Ukraine. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Aiding Ukraine would not directly stop Russia providing new technology to North Korea, but it would deepen South Korea's ties with NATO, help a fellow democracy, mitigate long-term Russia-North Korea ties and lessen the chances of China taking similar action against Taiwan. (Troy Stangarone, *The Korea Times*)
- The ROK's engagement with NATO provides a platform and network for building a more comprehensive security policy. (Michael Reiterer, *38 North*)
- Boeing P-8A Poseidon will operate out of Okinawa from mid-April and watch for illegal ship-to-ship transfers. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- The United States, Britain and Australia are considering South Korea, Canada and New Zealand as potential partners for cooperation on advanced capability projects of their AUKUS security partnership. (Song Sang-ho, Kang Byeong-cheol, *Yonhap*)
- The United States is welcoming South Korean sanctions imposed on Russian vessels suspected of transporting weapons from North Korea, despite Russian protests. (Christy Lee, VOA)
- Mira Rapp-Hooper, the National Security Council senior director for East Asia and Oceania, elaborated on her earlier remarks about Washington's openness to considering interim steps for a path toward the North's denuclearization. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Diana Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718123529/https://mailchi.mp/bb2fc13b407b/hrnk-news-items-s-koreas-22nd-national-assembly-elections-the-likely-effect-on-n-korean-human-rights?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Wednesday, April 11th, 2024

Pattern of Collapse in North Korea

Top News:
Pattern of Collapse in North Korea (*Small Wars Journal*, 04/11/2024)

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un inspects model of Seoul, says military ready for full mobilization (*NK News*, 04/11/2024)
N. Korean leader aboard Aurus limo gifted by Putin (*Yonhap*, 04/11/2024)
North Korea appears to start work on major tidal power station on west coast (*NK News*, 04/12/2024)

In South Korea:
High-profile defector-lawmaker Tae Yong-ho loses parliament seat in ROK election (*NK News*, 04/11/2024)

International:
Biden says U.S. welcomes allies' opportunity for N.K. dialogue amid Japan's outreach to Pyongyang (*Yonhap*, 04/11/2024)
China is sending its highest-level delegation to North Korea since 2019 to kick off a 'friendship year' (CNN, 04/11/2024)
Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida addresses Congress amid skepticism about US role abroad (AP, 04/11/2024)
S. Korea, Britain stage joint maritime patrol to enforce N. Korea sanctions (*Yonhap*, 04/11/2024)
UN Panel of Experts: The Final Act (*38 North*, 04/11/2024)

Top News:

- This critical research examines foreseeable patterns of social infrastructure collapse, as brought on by severe resource shortage, and provides a perspective of the subsequent effects upon the nKorean administrative and political systems. (Robert Collins, *Small Wars Journal*)

In North Korea:

- Kim Jong Un warned that his military is ready for "full mobilization" to "completely annihilate" the country's enemies if provoked, a day after parliamentary elections in South Korea. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Kim Jong-un is seen disembarking from an Aurus Senat, the Russian-made limousine gifted to him by Vladimir Putin. (*Yonhap*)
- Construction in Haeju Bay may be for long-planned tidal plant that Kim Jong Un said could help solve power shortages. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- Ex-North Korean diplomat's defeat brings number of defectors in National Assembly to one, drawing concern from experts. (Jeongmin Kim, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

International:

- "We welcome the opportunity for our allies to initiate dialogue with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," President Biden said. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- China's highest-level visit to North Korea in nearly five years is set to get underway Thursday. (Simone McCarthy, CNN)
- Japan is seen as a key U.S. partner in a fraught region where China is asserting its strength and North Korea is developing a nuclear program. (Stephen Groves, AP)
- South Korea and Britain wrapped up a joint maritime patrol in waters near the Korean Peninsula on Thursday to enforce U.N. Security Council sanctions resolutions against North Korea. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- It is easy to see why the Russians killed the United Nations Panel of Experts established under UN Security Council Resolution 1874. It witnessed too much and had to be silenced. (Joseph DeThomas, *38 North*)

Prepared by Jason Lebeck, HRNK Research Intern

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Friday, April 12th, 2024

Beyond Utopia Screening & Discussion, Apr. 22

Top News:
Beyond Utopia Screening & Discussion, Apr. 22 (*HRNK*, 04/12/2024)

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un 'Desperate' to Control Narrative in North Korea: US Official (*Newsweek*, 04/12/2024)
North Korea's Kim says 'now is time to be prepared for war': State media (*Al Jazeera*, 04/11/2024)

International:
After Russia's Veto: The Future of the Sanctions Regime Against North Korea (*38 North*, 04/12/2024)
China's top legislator Zhao meets key N. Korean official over ways to bolster bilateral ties (*Yonhap*, 04/12/2024)
Deterring an Emerging Nuclear Axis in Northeast Asia (*38 North*, 04/12/2024)
North Korea Is Ghosting the Biden Administration (*Foreign Policy*, 04/11/2024)

North Korea says it wants to send as many citizens to study in Russia as it can (*NK News*, 04/12/2024)
Russia has violated UN resolutions by procuring weapons from North Korea and Iran to use in Ukraine: UK statement at the UN Security Council (*Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office*, 04/12/204)
S. Korea, U.S. begin large-scale annual air drills (*Yonhap*, 04/12/2024)
S. Korea, U.S., Japan hold trilateral drills involving aircraft carrier (*Yonhap*, 04/12/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. reaffirm plan for tabletop exercise on nuclear use by N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 04/12/2024)
Seoul envoy says Russia vetoed U.N. panel mandate extension to hide its 'dark spot' (*Yonhap*, 04/12/2024)
Some 50 members of pro-North Korea groups arrive in Pyongyang for major holiday (*NK News*, 04/12/2024)
Study ranks North Korea seventh greatest cyber threat out of all countries (*NK Pro*, 04/12/2024)
The New Great-Power Politics (*The New York Times*, 04/12/2024)
UN General Assembly could monitor North Korea sanctions, countries suggest (*NK News*, 04/12/2024)
U.S., Japan, Philippines stress Korean Peninsula denuclearization goal, decry N.K. threats (*Yonhap*, 04/12/2024)

Top News:

- HRNK is delighted to invite you to a screening of Beyond Utopia on April 22, followed by a discussion with co-producer Dr. Sue Mi Terry (Senior Fellow for Korea Studies, *Council on Foreign Relations*) and protagonist Pastor Kim Seung-Eun. (*HRNK*)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's public moves to stop pursuing eventual unification with the South is rooted in a "desperate" effort to control the flow of information in country, according to a Biden administration diplomat. (Micah McCartney, *Newsweek*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un says now is the time to be more prepared for war than ever as he visited the country's main military university, state media reported. (*Al Jazeera*)

International:

- Russia's March 2024 veto was a tangible step toward fully undermining the UN sanctions regime against North Korea and has far-reaching consequences. (Eric Ballbach, *38 North*)
- China's top legislator, Zhao Leji, has met with Choe Ryong-hae, a senior North Korean official, to discuss ways to further develop bilateral ties, Pyongyang's state media said Friday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The contrarian move by Russia and China undermines international efforts to restrain North Korea's expanding nuclear arsenal while accelerating prospects for regional instability. (George Hutchinson, *38 North*)
- For three years, North Korea has completely ghosted the Biden administration on any and all efforts to talk, a fact the Biden administration openly admits. (Robbie Gramer, *Foreign Policy*)
- North Korea wants to send as many citizens as possible to study at Russian universities, the DPRK's education minister reportedly said this week, amid concerns that such academic exchange is a ploy to send more workers to the country. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

- Russia has repeatedly violated resolutions of the UN Security Council by procuring weapons from North Korea and Iran to use in Ukraine. (Thomas Phipps, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, *Gov.UK*)
- South Korea and the United States kicked off a joint annual air exercise Friday, involving some 100 warplanes, to strengthen their readiness against North Korean military threats, their air forces said. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea, the United States and Japan have held naval drills involving a U.S. aircraft carrier to improve their joint operability against North Korea's nuclear and missile threats. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the United States on Friday reaffirmed a plan to hold a discussion-based exercise simulating North Korea's use of a nuclear weapon as part of efforts to strengthen their joint response to Pyongyang's nuclear threats. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's top envoy to the U.N. renewed his criticism Thursday for Russia having vetoed the mandate renewal of an expert panel monitoring anti-North Korea sanctions violations, highlighting Moscow's apparent intention not to reveal its "dark spot" through the panel. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- At least 50 members of pro-North Korea friendship groups from around the world have gathered in Pyongyang ahead of the country's biggest holiday, according to state media, in what one expert said is a "positive sign" the DPRK may be relaxing its strict border policies. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- A new survey has ranked North Korea as the seventh greatest cybercrime threat globally, drawing attention to the country's aptitude for carrying out cyberattacks and stealing data. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK Pro*)
- On one side is the largely democratic alliance — including the United States, Japan, South Korea and Western Europe — that has dominated global affairs since the demise of the Soviet Union. On the other side are China, Russia, Iran and North Korea as well as Iran-backed groups like the Houthis. These authoritarian powers "are more and more aligned," Jens Stoltenberg, the head of NATO, the Western alliance, told the BBC this week. (David Leonhardt, *The New York Times*)
- The U.N. General Assembly convened on Thursday to discuss Russia's veto of a resolution to extend the mandate of the expert panel monitoring North Korea sanctions, with several countries proposing that the assembly play a greater role in maintaining pressure on Pyongyang's nuclear weapons programs. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- The United States, Japan and the Philippines affirmed their commitment to the "complete" denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and denounced North Korea's growing military threats in their joint statement Thursday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Colleen Burns, HRNK Research Intern

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Saturday, April 13th, 2024

North Korea's New Hwasong-16B Missile; Chinese official meets Kim Jong Un

Top News:
Yoon trimmed by the legislative election (*The John Batchelor Show*, 04/10/2024)

In North Korea:
North Korea appears to start work on major tidal power station on west coast (*NK News*, 04/12/2024)
North Korea's New Hwasong-16B Hypersonic Glider Heralds a New Missile Era (*The Diplomat*, 04/13/2024)

In South Korea:
How a North Korean missile researcher became a South Korean MP (*BBC News*, 04/13/2024)

International:
A Chinese official meets North Korean leader Kim in Pyongyang in highest-level talks in years (*AP News*, 04/13/2024)
China Feels Boxed In by the U.S. but Has Few Ways to Push Back (*The New York Times*, 04/12/2024)
Japan may be the U.S.'s most important ally (*The Washington Post*, 04/12/2024)
Pyongyang, Beijing vow strong friendly ties: KCNA (*Yonhap*, 04/13/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. agree to hold trilateral industry ministers' talks with Japan in H1: Seoul official (*Yonhap*, 04/13/2024)
U.S. envoy to stress 'ironclad' security commitment, openness to N.K. dialogue during DMZ visit: official (*Yonhap*, 04/13/2024)
U.S. has not given up on renewing mandate of U.N. panel monitoring N.K. sanctions: official (*Yonhap*, 04/13/2024)
US, Japan and South Korea hold drills in disputed sea as Biden hosts leaders of Japan, Philippines (*AP News*, 04/12/2024)
US, ROK and Japan hold joint drill on countering North Korean submarine missiles (*NK News*, 04/12/2024)

Top News:

- HRNK Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu comments on the results of South Korea's legislative election this past Wednesday. (*The John Batchelor Show*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea appears to have taken the first step toward constructing a long-planned tidal power station that could become the world's largest once built, according to NK Pro analysis of satellite imagery, weeks after leader Kim Jong Un said such a project could help solve "power shortages." (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

- On April 2, North Korea unveiled the long awaited successor to its Hwasong-12 "Guam Killer" intermediate range ballistic missile. The test launch of the Hwasong-16B followed years of reports on the testing of associated technologies facilitating a generational leap in performance. (A. B. Abrams, *The Diplomat*)

In South Korea:

- As a young man, Park Choong-Kwon helped build the nuclear missiles that his homeland, North Korea, blasted off from time to time to threaten the West. Now he sits in its democratic neighbour's legislature – a member of South Korea's parliament elected just this week. (Frances Mao, Sangmi Han, *BBC News*)

International:

- A top ranking official Chinese official reaffirmed ties with North Korea during a meeting Saturday with the country's leader Kim Jong Un in the capital Pyongyang, China's state media reported, in the highest-level talks between the allies in years. (*AP News*)
- President Biden's effort to build American security alliances in China's backyard is likely to reinforce the Chinese leader Xi Jinping's view that Washington is leading an all-out campaign of "containment, encirclement and suppression" of his country. And there is not much Mr. Xi can do about it. (David Pierson, Olivia Wang, *The New York Times*)
- In a landmark address to Congress, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida hailed the United States as an "indispensable" nation. (Ishaan Tharoor, *The Washington Post*)
- High-ranking officials from North Korea and China attended the opening ceremony of the "year of DPRK-China friendship" in Pyongyang to bolster their ongoing relations, Pyongyang's state media said Saturday. (Woo Jae-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the United States have agreed to hold bilateral talks on supply chain and commercial issues and a trilateral industry ministers' meeting with Japan in the first half of the year, a senior Seoul official said Friday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The top U.S. envoy to the U.N. will reaffirm America's "ironclad" security partnership with South Korea and its openness to "unconditional" dialogue with North Korea during her visit to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating the two Koreas next week, a senior U.S. official said Friday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States has not given up on extending the mandate of a U.N. expert panel monitoring the enforcement of anti-North Korea sanctions, a senior U.S. official said Friday, voicing hope for a "change of attitude" by Russia that recently vetoed its renewal. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- A U.S. carrier strike group led by the USS Theodore Roosevelt has held a two-day joint exercise with its allies Japan and South Korea as U.S. President Joe Biden met for talks with leaders from Japan and the Philippines at the White House. (Mari Yamaguchi, *AP News*)
- The U.S., South Korea and Japan held a joint maritime drill this week on countering submarine-launched ballistic missiles and other "underwater threats" from North Korea, the ROK navy announced on Friday, with a U.S. aircraft carrier taking part. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

Prepared by Tessa Aguilar, HRNK Research Intern

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Sunday, April 14th, 2024

The N. Korea Hypersonic Missile Threat Is Real; Deterring an Emerging Nuclear Axis in NE Asia

Top News:
The North Korea Hypersonic Missile Threat Is Real (*The National Interest*, 04/12/2024)
Deterring an Emerging Nuclear Axis in Northeast Asia (*38 North*, 04/12/2024)

In South Korea:
Defense chief says N. Korea's hypersonic missile 'unsuccessful' in last-stage glide flight (*Yonhap*, 04/14/2024)

International:
A Chinese official meets North Korean leader Kim in Pyongyang in highest-level talks in years (*AP*, 04/13/2024)
N. Korea elevates high-level exchanges with China, Russia (*The Korea Herald*, 04/14/2024)
N. Korea's health minister heads for Russia: KCNA (*Yonhap*, 04/14/2024)
N. Korea's Kim sends educational aid to pro-Pyongyang Koreans in Japan: KCNA (*Yonhap*, 04/14/2024)
N. Korea's Kim vows to further develop ties with China (*Yonhap*, 04/14/2024)
S. Korea 'strongly condemns' Iran's attack on Israel (*The Korea Herald*, 04/14/2024)
Top North Korea, Chinese leaders mark 75 years of close diplomatic ties (*UPI*, 04/13/2024)
U.S. ambassador to UN to stress 'ironclad' security with Seoul visit (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/14/2024)

Top News:

- The missile's range at least in theory allows it to target Japan, all of South Korea, and even Guam. Thus, developing advanced BMD capabilities on the ground and on the seas should now be a high priority for U.S. and allied forces in the region. (Bruce E. Bechtol Jr., *The National Interest*)
- The emerging China-Russia-DPRK axis is not merely a transient gesture of defiance or disruption; it is indicative of a profound strategic shift in the geopolitical context of Northeast Asia. (George Hutchinson, *38 North*)

In South Korea:

- South Korean Defense Minister Shin Won-sik said that North Korea's hypersonic missile launched earlier this month was "unsuccessful in its last glide flight" but predicted that the North's hypersonic missile with an intermediate range could be "successful one day." (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)

International:

- A top ranking Chinese official reaffirmed ties with North Korea during a meeting in Pyongyang on Saturday with the country's leader, Kim Jong-un, China's state media reported, in the highest-level talks between the allies in years. (Kim Tong-Hyung, AP)
- North Korea has been intensifying high-level diplomatic exchanges with China and Russia, as evidenced by the visit of China's third-highest ranking official to Pyongyang and the dispatch of ministers to Russia this week. (Lee Jaeeun, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea's delegation, led by health minister Jong Mu-rim, left for Russia to bolster cooperation in the fields of science and medicine, the North's Korean Central News Agency reported. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un sent an educational aid fund and stipends to a group of pro-Pyongyang ethnic Koreans in Japan ahead of the upcoming 112th birthday of late founder Kim Il-sung. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un met with China's top legislator, Zhao Leji, in Pyongyang and discussed ways to further deepen bilateral ties. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- The South Korean government issued a statement Sunday denouncing Iran's direct drone and missile attack on Israeli territory late Saturday, urging all involved parties to exercise restraint. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un pledged to strengthen his country's ties with China during bilateral meetings with senior Chinese officials, including its No. 3 leader, in Pyongyang on Saturday. (Simon Druker, *UPI*)
- U.S. ambassador to the UN, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, will arrive in Seoul on Sunday, for the first visit to South Korea in eight years by a person in the position. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Prepared by Gloria Guo, HRNK Research Intern

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Monday, April 15th, 2024

U.S. and allies seek new ways to enforce North Korea sanctions

In North Korea:

'Day of Sun' reference over N. Korean late founder's birthday reemerges in state media (*Yonhap*, 04/15/2024)
HGV Unproven at IRBM Ranges: Analysis of the April 2 Hwasong-16Na Hypersonic Missile Test (*38 North*, 04/12/2024)
North Korea lauds event with pro-regime groups on promoting 'Juche idea' (*NK News*, 04/15/2024)

International:
Kim Jong Un holds talks with top Chinese official as two sides celebrate ties (*NK News*, 04/15/2024)
NK leader's meeting with China's top legislator raises Kim-Xi summit possibility (*The Korea Times*, 04/14/2024)
U.S. and allies seek new ways to enforce North Korea sanctions (*Reuters*, 04/15/2024)
U.S. envoy, FM Cho discuss ways to build new mechanism for N.K. sanctions monitoring (*Yonhap*, 04/15/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean state media referred to the birthday of North Korean late founder Kim Il-sung as the Day of the Sun on Monday after stopping using the term in recent weeks while calling it "the April holiday." (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- With tests thus far at limited speed and range, it is hard to validate both HGVs at intermediate-range ballistic missile-class (IRBM) ranges. (Tianran Xu, *38 North*)
- North Korea held a seminar on the state ideology of Juche for over 20 international friendship groups on Sunday, with experts telling NK News that official coverage of the event is aimed at convincing citizens that foreigners admire the ideas of the Kim family regime. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)

International:

- Kim Jong Un met the leader of China's national legislature on Saturday and stressed the importance of bilateral ties, though an expert told NK News that Beijing is likely taking a cautious approach with the "rogue state." (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- Kim Jong-un's meeting last week with China's Zhao Leji in Pyongyang suggests deepening bilateral relations, raising speculation that Kim might be preparing for a potential meeting with Xi Jinping later this year. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)
- The U.S. and its allies are looking for new ways to enforce sanctions against North Korea, Washington's envoy to the United Nations said on Monday, amid concerns Pyongyang may now be more emboldened to advance its weapons programme. (Jack Kim, *Reuters*)
- The top U.S. envoy to the United Nations and Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul discussed ways to build a new mechanism for monitoring the enforcement of U.N. sanctions on North Korea after Russia vetoed a resolution meant to renew the monitoring mandate. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Jiwoo Choi, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718124647/https://mailchi.mp/46a7025f2178/hrnk-news-items-us-and-allies-seek-new-ways-to-enforce-north-korea-sanctions?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Tuesday, April 16th, 2024

Hobbling sanctions on North Korea: Russia and the demise of the UN's Panel of Experts

Top News:
Hobbling sanctions on North Korea: Russia and the demise of the UN's Panel of Experts (*Peterson Institute*, 4/15/2024)
Chinese Civilian Drone Flies over North Korea, Records Footage of Sinuiju (VOA, 4/3/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
Digital Surveillance in North Korea: Moving Toward a Digital Panopticon State (*38 North*, 4/16/2024)
North Korea can use gene-editing tech to craft military bioweapons, US warns (*NK News*, 4/16/2024)
North Korea is buying Chinese surveillance cameras in a push to tighten control, report says (*ABC News*, 4/16/2024)
North Korean state media makes first mention of recent ROK election (*NK News*, 4/16/2024)
Russian firm restarts coal project in North Korea after over 4-year suspension (*NK News*, 4/16/2024)

In South Korea:
Russian ballet shows in South Korea cancelled for a second time (*Reuters*, 4/15/2024)
S. Korea reaffirms capabilities to respond to N. Korean attack after Iran's missile salvo (*Yonhap*, 4/16/2024)
Vice Foreign Minister, ICAO Chief share concerns over N. Korean missile launches (*Yonhap*, 4/16/2024)

International:
Pro-Russian hacking group paralyzes website of North Korea's airline (*RFA*, 4/16/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. hold N.K. human rights talks in Washington (*Yonhap*, 4/16/2024)
US envoy to UN urges Russia, China not to 'reward' North Korea's bad behaviour (*Reuters*, 4/16/2024)

Top News:

- In a largely overlooked action, on March 28, Russia vetoed the renewal of the Panel of Experts (PoE), an independent body established by United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR). China and Russia have sought to end sanctions on North Korea, and unless the Panel is revived before April 30, sanctions violations are likely to escalate and not be reported to the Security Council. But while the PoE's prospective demise is a blow for implementation of international economic sanctions, it need not be a death blow. (Marcus Noland, *Peterson Institute*)

- A Chinese user's drone footage of the North Korean city of Sinuiju went viral on Reddit, one of the largest social networking platforms in the United States, after being posted on March 26. The user shared three videos and more than ten photos, all of which clearly show people in the streets of Sinuiju, portraits of late rulers Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il, and propaganda slogans. Additionally, some citizens were caught spotting and looking up at the drone in wonder. (Kim Young-kwon, VOA)

In North Korea:

- According to our research, North Korea is building surveillance capabilities that reach across various facets of public and private life. While the state may not yet have the capacity to fully utilize all the data it can collect, it is moving towards even greater surveillance of its citizens, enhanced by digital technology. In this report, we look at the North Korean state's steps further into the digital world and how this is being or might be used for surveillance purposes. (Martyn Williams and Natalia Slavney, *38 North*)
- North Korea is capable of engineering bioweapons for military purposes with gene-editing technology like CRISPR, according to a new U.S. government report, highlighting possible efforts to advance the country's secretive biowarfare program. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Korea is putting surveillance cameras in schools and workplaces and collecting fingerprints, photographs and other biometric information from its citizens in a technology-driven push to monitor its population even more closely, a report from 38 North said Tuesday. (Kim Tong-Hyung, *ABC News*)
- North Korean state media mentioned South Korea's recent parliamentary election for the first time on Tuesday, a move one expert said may be aimed at whipping up social unrest in the ROK. The party-run Rodong Sinmun and Cabinet daily Minju Joson did not report on the election result itself, instead indirectly quoting South Korean protesters who referred to the ruling party's defeat. (Lina Park and Seung-Yeon Chung, *NK News*)
- Coal has started to pile up at a Russian-operated pier in North Korea for the first time in over four years, according to NK Pro analysis of satellite imagery, in what could signal the restart of a key joint project between the two countries. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- A ballet show in South Korea featuring principal dancers from Russia's Bolshoi Ballet was cancelled a day before opening night, the organiser said on Monday, amid tensions between Seoul and Moscow over Ukraine and North Korea. (Joyce Lee, *Reuters*)
- The defense ministry on Tuesday reaffirmed capabilities to respond to North Korean missile threats amid renewed attention to the country's air defense system after Israel repelled a missile barrage by Iran. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- Second Vice Foreign Minister Kang In-sun held talks with the chief of a United Nations agency on international civil aviation to discuss ways to strengthen their partnership, the foreign ministry said Tuesday. Kang met with Juan Carlos Salazar, secretary-general of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), to share concerns over North Korea's missile launches and explore ways to enhance cooperation. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

International:

- A pro-Russian hacking group said it attacked and paralyzed the website of North Korea's state-owned Air Koryo and later posted a mocking message on the Telegram messaging app about the airline's inadequate cybersecurity standards. (Han Dukin, RFA)
- Diplomats from South Korea and the United States held a new session of their bilateral dialogue on North Korean human rights in Washington on Monday, as the two sides see a close link between Pyongyang's weapons programs and its rights conditions. Chun Young-hee, director general for the Korean Peninsula peace regime at Seoul's foreign ministry, and Julie Turner, the U.S. special envoy for North Korean human rights issues, led the second session of the dialogue that was relaunched in November following a yearslong hiatus, according to the ministry. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations urged Russia and China on Tuesday to reverse course, and stop rewarding North Korea's bad behaviour and shielding it from sanctions evading activities over its weapons programs. (Hyunsu Yim, *Reuters*)

Chinese Civilian Drone Flies over North Korea, Records Footage of Sinuiju

Kim Young-kwon,

VOA News

April 3, 2024

Video footage taken by a civilian drone that flew over Sinuiju (a city on North Korea's border with China) went viral on social media. The video was shared by a media outlet in Belarus, a North Korean ally, where it received over a million views. There are hopes that new technology can help breach North Korea's information barrier. This is Kim Young-kwon reporting.

A Chinese user's drone footage of the North Korean city of Sinuiju went viral on Reddit, one of the largest social networking platforms in the United States, after being posted on March 26.

The user shared three videos and more than ten photos, all of which clearly show people in the streets of Sinuiju, portraits of late rulers Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il, and propaganda slogans. Additionally, some citizens were caught spotting and looking up at the drone in wonder.

The user also posted screenshots of the smartphone screen synced with a DJI drone (made in China), along with the captured screen shot presenting the altitude of 120 meters, to prove the authenticity of the footage.

The video and photo received nearly 140,000 upvotes on April 2 on Reddit, where upvotes are the equivalent of "likes" or "recommendations." Considering the usual tenfold difference between views and "likes" on social media, this reflects a significant level of interest.

Moreover, with 6,800 comments within two days and discussions spread across 25 communities, the actual engagement is likely to be much higher.

Users on Reddit commented, “I can't believe he infiltrated North Korea by himself,” and “I'm worried about his safety,” with some questioning whether the posts really showed North Korea. Recent advances in artificial intelligence made it possible to generate fake photos and videos.

These videos and photos spread rapidly worldwide on YouTube, Facebook, and X. In particular, Nexta, a widely used online media channel based in Belarus, North Korea's only other ally alongside Russia in Europe, shared the post on “X” on March 31, where it reached over 1 million views and received 3,600 likes.

While drone footage of cities and nature landscapes has already become very common around the world, it is the closed and isolated nature of North Korea, often referred to as the “Hermit Kingdom,” that makes the footage so remarkable.

“The fact that even Belarusian media, which is a friendly nation of North Korea, is talking about it in surprise, and that it has over a million views, shows how closed North Korea is,” Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), told VOA on April 2.

[Greg Scarlatoiu] “This is proof that new technology will eventually bring down North Korea’s information firewall. Tiananmen 1989 was the fax revolution. Bucharest 1989 was the TV revolution. Will drones bring dramatic change to North Korea?”
Indeed, some North Korean escapee activists secretly funneled outside information into North Korea via drones from Chinese border cities in 2015 and 2016.

However, the activity was reportedly halted in 2016 after Chinese authorities arrested and deported Park Jung-oh, a North Korean escapee who is the director of “Kuen Saem,” which was sending information into North Korea via drones.

Park told VOA on April 2 that he had “floated the idea of damaging or bombing (with drones) the Kim regime’s symbols, such as the ‘Victorious Battle of Pochonbo Memorial Tower’ in Hyesan city, but the Chinese authorities saw through it all.”

[Park Jung-oh] “We can’t target everything, but if you hit Kim Il-sung’s head [on the statue] directly with a drone, you can do significant damage. You can bring down the statue. But the Chinese agents knew all about our plans, which surprised me.”

Although their information-sending activities were not discovered, Park said they had to shut down their drone activities afterwards.

North Korea's inter-Korean propaganda outlet Uriminzokkiri later claimed that the Park brothers, Park Sang-hak and Park Jung-oh, had infiltrated the Sino-North Korea border and conducted a drone strike test on a statue of the Supreme Leader, with the active encouragement and financial backing of the Park Geun-hye administration.

China's Land Border Law, which came into effect in 2022, and the Anti-espionage Law, which came into effect in July 2023, have heightened surveillance and increased criminal punishments for anyone engaged in illegal activities in the Sino-North Korean border area.

Jung Gwang-il said that "unlike other North Korea-China border areas, Sinuiju has no fence and many apartments along the river, making it an easy place to send drones across." He added that "the situation is much more difficult now, so it would be impossible to try something like the 2020 footage that went viral online."

According to a 2022 photo of a warning sign at the Sino-North Korean border that VOA obtained from No Chain, "the use of drones, balloons and other aircraft is strictly prohibited within one kilometer of the border, and violators will be punished."
This is Kim Young-kwon for VOA News.

Translated by Gayeong Lee, Research Intern; edited by Raymond Ha, Director of Operations & Research

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Prepared by Katherine Mitchell, HRNK Research Intern

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Wednesday, April 17th, 2024

HRNK Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of the DPRK; Patriarchal Norms and Guilt-by-Association

Top News:
HRNK Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of the DPRK (HRNK, 04/08/2024)
Dating Not Premised on Marriage is Taboo in North Korea, Where Patriarchal Norms and Guilt-by-Association Persist (*Newsis*, 04/10/2024)

*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un debuts new song praising himself at grand opening of housing project (*NK News*, 04/17/2024)
N.K. leader celebrates completion of 10,000 new homes in Pyongyang (*Yonhap*, 04/17/2024)

In South Korea:
Army, Marine Corps conduct live-fire drills near border with N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 04/17/2024)
Beyond the Ballot: Analysis and Implications of the South Korean General Election in 2024 (*38 North*, 4/16/2024)
Panel confirms 1,700 religious people massacred around time of Korean War (*Yonhap*, 04/17/2024)

International:
Andrei Lankov unveils complex reality of North Korean workers in Russia (*The Korea Times*, 04/17/2024)
Austin expresses concerns over N.K. provocations in video talks with Chinese counterpart (*Yonhap*, 04/17/2024)
Belarusian deputy FM visits N. Korea: KCNA (*Yonhap*, 04/17/2024)
Digital, human surveillance could extinguish 'all but the tiniest' freedoms for N. Koreans: U.S. think tank (*Yonhap*, 04/17/2024)
Ex-N. Korean diplomat indicted on sanctions evasion, money laundering charges in U.S. (*Yonhap*, 04/17/2024)
NIS monitoring possible use of N. Korea's weapons technology for Iran's attack on Israel (*Yonhap*, 04/17/2024)
U.S. 'incredibly concerned' about suspected N.K.-Iran military ties (*Yonhap*, 04/17/2024)
U.S. to seek ways to continue sanctions monitoring on N.K. despite uncooperative Russia, China: envoy (*Yonhap*, 04/17/2024)

Top News:

- HRNK made a written submission ahead of the 4th cycle of the UPR for the DPRK, scheduled for later this year. Please click on the link to view the full text of the submission. (HRNK)
- Dating not premised on marriage is still a taboo in North Korea, where patriarchal and rigid family norms continue to persist. On April 9, the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) published an article on marriage and family life in North Korea, authored by Abbigail Thacker, former HRNK Research Intern. (Yoonhee Lee, *Newsis*)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un oversaw a bombastic ceremony to celebrate the ground opening of a new 10,000-home development in the capital on Tuesday, featuring a new song praising him as the nation's "friendly father" working to ensure a "brighter future" for the country's people. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has attended a ceremony marking the completion of building another 10,000 new homes in Pyongyang, state media said Wednesday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- The Army and Marine Corps held live-fire artillery drills near the border with North Korea on Wednesday to bolster their deterrence against North Korea's provocations, the Army said. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- Geopolitical shifts, including US-China rivalry and North Korea-Russia cooperation, may pose challenges for South Korea's domestic politics until the next presidential election in three years. (J. James Kim, *38 North*)
- Approximately 1,700 South Korean religious people were massacred by North Korean military and other hostile forces around the time of the 1950-53 Korean War, a state truth panel said Wednesday. (Yoo Cheong-mo, *Yonhap*)

International:

- At first look, the employment of North Korean laborers in Russia appears straightforward, characterized by plain power differentials meaningful of a bygone era of the last century. Andrei Lankov, a respected authority on North Korean history and society, recently presented a lecture to the Royal Asiatic Society (RAS) Korea on this complex phenomenon, unveiling a contrast that challenges conventional perceptions. (Bereket Alemayehu, *The Korea Times*)
- U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin voiced concerns Tuesday over North Korea's recent provocations during video talks with his Chinese counterpart, the first conversation between the two countries' defense chiefs in about 17 months. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Belarusian Deputy Foreign Minister Evgeny Shestakov has arrived in Pyongyang to boost bilateral ties. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The North Korean regime's growing use of digital technology, coupled with its extensive human surveillance system, could make "all but the tiniest freedoms" for its people evaporate, a U.S. think tank warned Tuesday, saying Pyongyang is moving toward a "panopticon" state. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- A former North Korean diplomat serving in Thailand was indicted on charges of sanctions evasion, a conspiracy to commit bank fraud and money laundering. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's spy agency is monitoring whether North Korea's weapons technology was used in the ballistic missiles that Iran launched against Israel last week. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The United States is "incredibly concerned" about long-suspected military cooperation between North Korea and Iran, a State Department spokesperson said Tuesday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Washington will continue to work with South Korea and other countries to establish an alternative to the U.N. monitoring panel on North Korean sanctions. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Dating Not Premised on Marriage is Taboo in North Korea,
Where Patriarchal Norms and Guilt-by-Association Persist

Yoonhee Lee, *Newsis*
April 10, 2024

Dating not premised on marriage is still a taboo in North Korea, where patriarchal and rigid family norms continue to persist.

On April 9, the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) published an article on

marriage and family life in North Korea, authored by Abbigail Thacker, former HRNK Research Intern.

According to a North Korean escapee interviewed by the author, dating is still very taboo, and it is embarrassing for couples if someone discovers the relationship.

Dating in North Korea is limited to casual relationships before marriage. Young North Koreans are afraid of ruining future marriage opportunities when word gets out that they have dated someone who they are not going to get married to.

According to the article, public displays of affection are almost nonexistent in dating relationships. Pre-marital relationships are very private and often include no physical intimacy beyond holding hands. Hyeonseo Lee wrote of her dating experience in North Korea as follows: "like any other boyfriend and girlfriend in North Korea of this age, we did not even kiss. Holding hands was as far as it went."

Another escapee stated that there was no sex education, and teenagers feared that even holding hands could result in an unwanted pregnancy. Lee, for example, said that "for all its interference in our lives, the Party was extraordinarily bashful when it came to telling us how life itself was made."

North Korea has strong patriarchal norms. This directly affects the situation of women's rights, including that of married women. Even if witnesses or victims of domestic violence report it to the police, the police completely disregard the case and send them back home.

The article also pointed out that women's status in North Korea has improved recently, as they have taken a more active role in markets, but patriarchal norms remain prevalent in North Korea.

The divorce rate is relatively low because divorce in North Korea requires a court decision. Divorced individuals are likely to be subject to social discrimination even if they get a divorce through the complex proceedings. They are issued a new registration card marked with a "divorce" label, perpetuating the stigma.

North Korean women who have many children are given special privileges in society and are regarded as maternal heroes. However, escapees reported that the average family in North Korea will only have one or two children due to economic difficulties.

The rigid set of patriarchal norms in North Korean society often manifests itself in discriminatory treatment. For example, if a family cannot afford to send two children to school, the female child will often be the one that stops going to school in favor of her brother continuing to have educational opportunities.

North Korea is still maintaining the *songbun* system of socio-political classification and the system of guilt-by-association where, if an individual is found guilty of a crime or political offense, up to three generations of their family may be punished.

North Koreans frequently take drastic measures to avoid collective punishment. Lee explained that her aunt divorced her husband and put the three children up for adoption to avoid punishment when her husband was arrested and imprisoned.

According to the article, the system of guilt-by-association also explains why many North Koreans are hesitant to escape the country. If they are caught during an escape attempt, their whole family can be put at risk.

The article states that North Korea fails to protect human rights relating to family life. North Korea

disregards the pledges it has made as a UN member state—as well as the legal obligations it has assumed as a party to the ICESCR, ICCPR, CRC, and CEDAW—by failing to protect the fundamental rights of families and children.

Translated by Jiwoo (Katie) Choi, Research Intern; edited by Raymond Ha, Director of Operations & Research

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Prepared by Valerie Xu, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718125203/https://mailchi.mp/82a9bc54fca3/hrnk-news-items-hrnk-submission-to-the-universal-periodic-review-of-the-dprk-patriarchal-norms-and-guilt-by-association?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, April 18th, 2024

HRNK Advisory Opinion to H.E. Tomoya Obokata; Putin and Kim Jong Un, partners in crime

Top News:
HRNK Advisory Opinion to H.E. Tomoya Obokata (*HRNK*, 04/12/2024)
Putin and Kim Jong Un, partners in crime (*The Hill*, 04/16/2024)

In North Korea:
N. Korea removes street lamps along inter-Korean roads (*Yonhap*, 04/18/2024)
North Korea tears down street lamps on roads connecting two Koreas (*The Korea Times*, 04/18/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korean parliamentary chief calls for stronger S. Korea-U.S. efforts to address N.K. threats (*Yonhap*, 04/18/2024)

International:
North Korean oil tanker appears to pose as freighter in identity-spoofing scheme (*NK News*, 04/18/2024)
Russia, China efforts won't halt new NK sanctions monitoring: US envoy (*The Korea Herald*, 04/17/2024)
U.N. envoy: U.S., allies seeking new ways to monitor sanctions on North Korea (*UPI*, 04/17/2024)
US crypto guru who helped North Korea evade sanctions requests reduced sentence (*NK News*, 04/18/2024)
US envoy to the UN vows support for families of Japanese who were abducted and taken to North Korea (*AP*, 04/18/2024)
Yoon and Kishida discuss North Korea, U.S.-Japan summit (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/17/2024)

Top News:

- UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, H.E. Tomoya Obokata, will be submitting a report to the 57th Session of the UN Human Rights Council on currently and formerly incarcerated people and contemporary forms of slavery. HRNK's advisory opinion on the subject has been published online by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The full text of the submission is also available on HRNK Insider. (*HRNK*)
- N. Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin's blooming bromance has likely captured Beijing's attention. In a timely fashion, Sung-Yoon Lee, Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, warns that inaction against the Putin-Kim partnership only invites greater threats for Washington and the international community at large. (Sung-Yoon Lee, *The Hill*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has dismantled street lamps along its side of two rare roads connecting the two Koreas, a source said Thursday, in an apparent move to completely shut down the routes once seen as symbols of inter-Korean cooperation and exchange. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has demolished street lamps on land routes connecting the two Koreas, in what observers say is a signal to South Korea that its leader Kim Jong-un is serious about abandoning the goal of peaceful unification with the South. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's National Assembly Speaker Kim Jin-pyo stressed the need Wednesday to beef up joint deterrence efforts by Seoul and Washington to address evolving North Korean military capabilities, which he said pose a "direct" threat to the continental United States. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

International:

- A sanctioned North Korean oil tanker appears to have posed as a soon-to-be scrapped freighter thousands of miles away this week, in what experts said may have been a test of a new identity-spoofing scheme to conceal illicit activities. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- The United States and its allied countries will ultimately develop an alternative mechanism to replace the soon-to-be-dissolved UN panel of experts tasked with monitoring sanctions on North Korea, said the US ambassador to the United Nations on Wednesday in response to Russia's recent exercise of veto rights on the matter at the UN Security Council. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- The United States is working on options "both inside and outside the U.N. system" to monitor sanctions against North Korea, Washington's top envoy to the United Nations said Wednesday during a visit to Seoul. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- Virgil Griffith hopes new guidelines will shave as much as one year off his 5-year prison sentence. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- “The United Stats stands with all the families, with all of Japan and with the international community in pressing for a resolution that will allow all families separated by the regime’s

policies to be reunited," Thomas-Greenfield said at the outset of her meeting with five relatives of the abductees. (Mari Yamaguchi, AP)

- President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida agreed to strengthen bilateral ties and trilateral cooperation with the United States over a phone call Wednesday evening. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Prepared by Bryan Clark, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718125448/https://mailchi.mp/71e95770fdc5/hrnk-news-items-hrnk-advisory-opinion-to-he-tomoya-obokata-putin-and-kim-jong-un-partners-in-crime?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, April 19th, 2024

U.S., South Korea, and Japan hold North Korean Human Rights event in Argentina

Top News:
U.S., South Korea, and Japan hold North Korean Human Rights event in Argentina (VOA, 04/18/2024)*
Iran's Attack on Israel was Enabled by North Korean Missile Technology (*The National Interest*, 04/18/2024)
**This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.*

In North Korea:
Coffee in North Korea: It's not just for capitalists anymore (*Radio Free Asia*, 04/17/2024)
North Korea deploys new malware to remotely control tech workers' systems (*NK News*, 04/19/2024)

In South Korea:
Army explores hiring civilians to guard supplies as population shrinks (*The Korea Times*, 04/19/2024)
S. Korea not invited to G7 summit meeting this year: sources (*Yonhap*, 04/19/2024)
S. Korea to build F-35 maintenance facility at Cheongju Air Base (*Yonhap*, 04/18/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. special operations forces stage airborne drills (*Yonhap*, 04/19/2024)

International:
Korean War veterans from Commonwealth nations to revisit S. Korea (*Yonhap*, 04/19/2024)
N. Korea, Belarus agree to strengthen high-level exchange (*Yonhap*, 04/19/2024)
N. Korea slams U.S. envoy's Asian tour as 'aid-begging' trip to enliven sanctions (*Yonhap*, 04/19/2024)
North Korea's trade with China jumps in March after slumping the previous month (*NK News*, 04/19/2024)

Trilateral talks acknowledge 'serious' slumps of won, yen (*The Korea Herald*, 04/19/2024)
U.N. grants sanctions exemptions for WHO's humanitarian aid in N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 04/19/2024)
U.S. envoy stresses 'imperative' to keep N.K. human rights at 'forefront' of UNSC agenda (*Yonhap*, 04/19/2024)
WHO, UNICEF receive approval to send disaster and vaccine aid to North Korea (*NK News*, 04/19/2024)

Top News:

- The United States, South Korea, and Japan held a meeting in Argentina to explore ways to improve human rights in North Korea. The U.S. Ambassador to Argentina emphasized that protecting human rights in North Korea is a top priority for the United States. (Kim Young-kwon, VOA)
- Where did the Iranians get the technology to assemble these long-range ballistic missile systems, however well or poorly they fared? The answer is, unquestionably, North Korea. (Bruce E. Bechtol Jr., *The National Interest*)

In North Korea:

- Though coffee has long been derided as a symbol of imperialist capitalism, privileged North Koreans are developing a taste for it, residents in the country told Radio Free Asia. (Ahn Chang Gyu, *Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korean cybercriminals have been using new malware to remotely control victims' systems as part of a broader campaign targeting technical professionals through fake job offers, according to a Czech cybersecurity firm. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- The Korean Army is exploring the possibility of entrusting the private sector with guarding ammunition depots as it anticipates a significant drop in the number of military conscripts due to the nation's sharply-declining birthrate. (Kim Hyun-bin, *The Korea Times*)
- South Korea appears not to have been invited to this year's summit of the Group of Seven (G7) countries set for June in Italy, diplomatic sources familiar with the matter said Friday. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea will build its own maintenance facility for its F-35A stealth jets by 2027, a move that would enhance operational efficiency and reduce costs, the state arms procurement agency said Thursday. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- Special operations forces of South Korea and the United States have staged an airborne training to enhance their joint operability as part of ongoing air drills between the two nations. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Korean War veterans from Commonwealth nations will revisit South Korea next week to mark the 73rd anniversary of the Battle of Gapyeong and other commemorative events, the veterans ministry said Friday. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea and Belarus have agreed to strengthen high-level exchanges during talks between their senior diplomats, state media reported Friday, as both nations are seeking to deepen bilateral ties. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

- North Korea on Friday denounced the recent visit to South Korea and Japan by the top U.S. envoy to the United Nations, calling it an "aid-begging" trip to invigorate the "weakened illegal" sanctions against Pyongyang. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's trade with China jumped in March from the previous month but failed to match last year's highs, with bilateral exchange slumping on-year in the first quarter of 2024. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- The top finance policymakers of South Korea, the US and Japan shared their concern on the recent devaluation of the Korean won and the Japanese yen during their first trilateral talks Wednesday. (Im Eun-byel, *The Korea Herald*)
- A U.N. Security Council committee has approved sanctions exemptions for the World Health Organization (WHO), allowing the delivery of tents and thermometers to North Korea, its website showed Friday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The top U.S. envoy to the U.N. on Thursday highlighted the "imperative" to maintain North Korea's human rights issues at the "forefront" of the U.N. Security Council (UNSC)'s agenda as she met with the families of Japanese citizens abducted by Pyongyang decades ago. (Soon Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The UN sanctions committee on North Korea has granted exemptions for two aid agencies to ship tents, thermometers, and vaccine storage equipment to the country. (Alannah Hill, *NK News*)

U.S., South Korea, and Japan hold North Korean Human Rights event in Argentina

Kim Young-kwon, VOA

April 18, 2024

The United States, South Korea, and Japan held a meeting in Argentina to explore ways to improve human rights in North Korea. The U.S. Ambassador to Argentina emphasized that protecting human rights in North Korea is a top priority for the United States. Reporter Kim Young-kwon has the story.

A large-scale North Korean human rights event was held on the 16th in Argentina's capital, Buenos Aires, to highlight the human rights situation in North Korea and seek improvements.

The event commemorating the 10th anniversary of the UN Commission of Inquiry (COI) Report on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was hosted by the South Korean government and sponsored by the United States, Japan, and others.

Elizabeth Salmón, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Tomás Ojea Quintana, former UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Lee Shin-wha, South Korea's Ambassador for International Cooperation on North Korean Human Rights, Lee Han-byeol, Director of the Improving North Korean Human Rights Center, two female North Korean escapees, and experts from Human Rights Watch and the Latin American Center for Democratic Opening and Development, a leading human rights organization in Argentina, attended the event.

The South Korean Embassy in Argentina stated in a press release it was the largest North Korean human rights event held in Latin America to date, with more than 150 people from all walks of life attending. It was particularly emphasized as "significant in terms of utilizing the cooperation

mechanisms of the three countries to conduct outreach to the international community," including close cooperation between the three countries' embassies.

The ambassadors of the United States, South Korea, and Japan in Buenos Aires showcased their cooperation at the event, stating the international community must strengthen cooperation to improve North Korea's poor human rights situation.

After the event, U.S. Ambassador Marc R. Stanley emphasized on X, "Protecting human rights in North Korea is a top U.S. priority."

[Ambassador Stanley] "Protecting human rights in North Korea is a top U.S. priority. We must spotlight human rights violations and abuses, promote accountability for those responsible, and increase access to independent information inside North Korea. Proud to stand with the ROK, Japan, and Argentina in defense of human rights."

In his welcoming address, South Korean Ambassador to Argentina, Lee Yong-soo, criticized the North Korean regime for "further intensifying repression and control over its people and wasting scarce resources on developing nuclear weapons and missile programs while citizens suffer from starvation."

Japanese Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Hiroshi Yamauchi, also emphasized the importance of trilateral cooperation between the United States, Korea, and Japan, pointing out the correlation between North Korea's illegal weapons development and human rights issues.

Quintana, former UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, stressed to VOA on this day the importance of the international community's joint response to the North Korean regime's crimes against humanity.

[Former Special Rapporteur Quintana] "The 2014 COI determined that such heinous crimes were committed and are being committed in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Argentina, which has been recognized as a fervent defender of human rights originated in its own history of human rights abuses, can contribute with its experience and knowledge to address the situation in North Korea."

In Argentina, more than 30,000 citizens disappeared and many anti-regime activists and intellectuals were detained or killed due to the brutal repression of the Videla regime that came to power in 1976.

Argentina's Ministry of Foreign Affairs previously announced on its website that it had joined as a co-sponsor on the human rights resolutions in North Korea, Iran, Ukraine, and Myanmar at the 55th session of the UN Human Rights Council, which concluded earlier this month.

[The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Argentina] "The Argentine Government thus implements a genuine and consistent State policy for the protection of Human Rights across the world, based on unconditional respect for freedom, representative democracy and the rule of law, without any ideological bias."

Argentina has not co-sponsored the North Korean human rights resolution for the past several years, but has been actively participating in the process of condemning countries oppressing human rights since right-wing President Javier Milei took office in December last year.

Prior to the UN Human Rights Council adopting the North Korean human rights resolution by consensus on April 4th, Argentina attracted attention by making the only public statement of support along with the European Union (EU).

Carlos Foradori, the Permanent Representative of Argentina to the UN Office at Geneva, called for an international response.

[Foradori] “We express our concern that the situation of human rights in the DPRK restrictions on the freedom of expression and the right to food, as well as all human rights, are not being guaranteed.”

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), told VOA on April 17th that the event is significant in expanding interest in North Korean human rights to the southern hemisphere, including South America.

[Scarlatoiu] "Because Argentinians experienced a military dictatorship in the past, they understand North Korea's human rights situation well and the need for reform and opening. Former Special Rapporteur Quintana is also from Argentina, so he could play a more constructive role as well as have a positive impact on neighboring countries."

Female North Korean escapees who attended the seminar also appealed to Argentina, which has suffered from severe human rights violations in the past, to take interest in the dire human rights situation in North Korea, one of the worst in the world, and join international cooperation.

Lee Han-byeol, Director of the Improving North Korean Human Rights Center, told VOA on April 17 that she hopes freedom-loving Argentinians, such as the “Mothers of Plaza de Mayo,” which led the anti-dictatorship and pro-democracy fight in Argentina, would lend weight to improve the rights of North Korean women.

Lee also requested Argentina to actively participate within the UN to pressure the North Korean regime to reform and take accountability.

[Lee] “In order to stop the abuse of human rights by perpetrators, the international community, which has universal jurisdiction, must stand in solidarity to apply stronger pressure and achieve judicial justice for victims. I asked Argentina to join in this solidarity. I also requested their active participation and recommendations in the UN’s discussion of human rights in North Korea, especially the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on North Korea in November."

The U.S., South Korea, and Japan holding a seminar in Argentina reflects the three countries’ growing trilateral cooperation not only on security issues, but also on North Korean human rights since the Trilateral Leaders’ Summit at Camp David last year.

Ambassador Lee Shin-wha told VOA on April 17 that “global outreach is very important to improve human rights in North Korea, including the issue of abductees,” emphasizing that “it is important for

the U.S., South Korea, Japan and like-minded countries and partners to further expand cooperation following the Camp David Summit."

Last December, to mark the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United States, Korea, and Japan, together with Albania, issued a joint statement condemning North Korea's poor human rights situation and emphasizing accountability.

Additionally, in February, they issued a joint statement commemorating the ten year anniversary of the UN Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In March, they co-hosted a side event for human rights in North Korea of the UN Human Rights Council.

[Scarlatoiu] "We see that Japan has become even more active on all North Korean human rights issues, not only on the abduction issue. So, this tells us that indeed, the Camp David summit amongst the three leaders—President Biden, Prime Minister Kishida, and President Yoon—did a lot of good things in terms of trilateral coordination."

Scarlatoiu analyzed that this development is a positive contribution to raising international interest in North Korean human rights and urging for a response.

This is Kim Young-kwon for VOA News.

Translated by Gayeong Lee, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Diana Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Ryan Rohrbach, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718125705/https://mailchi.mp/84e6971acf27/hrnk-news-items-us-south-korea-and-japan-hold-north-korean-human-rights-event-in-argentina?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, April 20th, 2024

N.K. conducts cruise missile warhead test; Seoul envoy for N.K. human rights urges solidarity in Argentina, Mexico

In North Korea:
N. Korea says it conducted 'super-large warhead' test for strategic cruise missile (*Yonhap*, 04/20/2024)
North Korea conducts cruise missile warhead test on Friday, KCNA says (*Reuters*, 04/20/2024)
North Korea launched cruise and anti-aircraft missiles on Friday: State media (*NK News*, 04/20/2024)
North Korea releases song praising leader Kim as 'friendly father' (*Reuters*, 04/19/2024)
North Korea says it has test 'super-large warhead' during cruise missile drill (*UPI*, 04/20/2024)

North Korea says it tested 'super-large' cruise missile warhead and new anti-aircraft missile (AP, 04/19/2024)

In South Korea:
How general elections will affect South Korea's foreign policy (*The Korea Times*, 04/20/2024)
Foreign ministry denounces heightening tensions in Middle East (*Yonhap*, 04/20/2024)
Yoon proposes first-ever meeting with opposition leader (*Yonhap*, 04/19/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Kim Jong Un's New Way to Express Anger at the South: Turn the Lights Out (*The Wall Street Journal*, 04/18/2024)

International:
Blinken to discuss N. Korea, Taiwan, Middle East during China visit next week: official (*Yonhap*, 04/21/2024)
Blinken to warn China over weapons-related exports to Russia (*Financial Times*, 04/20/2024)
Blinken will be the latest top US official to visit China in a bid to keep ties on an even keel (AP, 04/20/2024)
G7 FMs vow to counter N.K. sanctions evasion amid looming end of U.N. expert panel (*Yonhap*, 04/20/2024)
S. Korea votes in favor of Palestinian bid for UN membership (*The Korea Herald*, 04/19/2024)
Seoul envoy for N.K. human rights urges solidarity in Argentina, Mexico (*Yonhap*, 04/19/2024)
Was the US-South Korea-Japan drill just about North Korea? China might beg to differ (*South China Morning Post*, 04/20/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea conducted a "super-large warhead" power test for a strategic cruise missile and test-fired a new anti-aircraft missile this week, state media reported Saturday, further ratcheting up tensions on the Korean Peninsula. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea conducted a cruise missile warhead test and test launch of its new anti-aircraft missile in the West Sea of Korea on Friday, the North's KCNA news agency said on Saturday. (*Reuters*)
- North Korea conducted "regular" tests of new cruise and anti-aircraft missiles on Friday, according to state media, the first such launches in over two months. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea has released a new song praising leader Kim Jong Un for being a "friendly father" and a "great leader", in a move that appears to be part of a propaganda drive to enhance his standing in the reclusive state. (*Reuters*)
- North Korea said Saturday it has conducted a cruise missile test with what its state-run media called a "super-large warhead." (Simon Druker, UPI)
- State media said North Korea's missile administration on Friday conducted a 'power test' for the warhead designed for the Hwasal-1 Ra-3 strategic cruise missile and a test-launch of the Pyoljji-1-2 anti-aircraft missile. (AP)

In South Korea:

- Government officials and experts expect little change in Seoul's principle of aligning its diplomatic stance with the United States on major global issues and being more vocal about what Yoon calls "authoritarian forces." (Nam Hyun-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- The foreign ministry expressed concerns Saturday over the escalating tensions in the Middle East, calling on all stakeholders to refrain from actions that could worsen the crisis. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol called main opposition leader Lee Jae-myung on Friday and proposed that they meet at the presidential office next week, his office said. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- In recent weeks, the Kim regime removed dozens of roadside lights that had lined two rare inter-Korean roads built during more harmonious times, according to Seoul officials. (Timothy W. Martin, *The Wall Street Journal*)

International:

- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken will travel to China next week to discuss an array of issues, including North Korea's "threatening" rhetoric and "reckless" actions, a senior U.S. official has said. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- During a visit to China next week, Blinken will tell his counterparts that the US and its allies are becoming increasingly impatient with Beijing's refusal to stop providing Moscow with everything from chips to cruise missile engines to help rebuild its industrial base. (Demetri Sevastopulo, Lucy Fisher, *Financial Times*)
- Secretary of State Antony Blinken will travel to China this coming week as Washington and Beijing try to keep ties on an even keel despite major differences on issues from the path to peace in the Middle East to the supply of synthetic opioids that have heightened fears over global stability. (Matthew Lee, *AP*)
- The top diplomats of the Group of Seven (G7) countries stressed their commitment to counter evasion of anti-North Korea sanctions Friday, as a U.N. expert panel monitoring sanctions enforcement faces its termination this month due to Russia's veto. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Ambassador Kim Sang-jin, deputy permanent representative of South Korea to the UN, reiterated the imperative of the two-state solution as the "most viable long-term resolution" to the Israel-Palestine conflict during a Security Council meeting held after the vote. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea's envoy for North Korean human rights visited Argentina and Mexico for discussions on improving the rights situation in Pyongyang, the foreign ministry said Friday. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- Washington's military cooperation with Seoul and Tokyo may be targeted mainly at North Korea but is also likely to unnerve China, adding impetus to the "transactional" relations between Beijing and Pyongyang, according to analysts. (Seong Hyeon Choi, *South China Morning Post*)

Prepared by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718130035/https://mailchi.mp/dcf69eed7fc4/hrnk-news-items-0420-2024?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, April 21st, 2024

S. Korean retail giants suspend sales of Chinese seafood linked to N. Korean forced labor

Top News:
S. Korean retail giants suspend sales of Chinese seafood linked to N. Korean forced labor (*Chosun Ilbo*, 04/10/2024)
**This article has been translated into English. Please see below for the translated text.*

In North Korea:
NK tests missiles in response to allied drill, Israel-Iran conflict: experts (*The Korea Times*, 04/21/2024)
The Dire State of Women's Rights in North Korea (*The Diplomat*, 04/18/2024)

International:
High-level North Korea agriculture delegation visits Russia, KCNA reports (*Reuters*, 04/21/2024)
S. Korea signs framework agreement to provide Ukraine with economic cooperation funds (*Yonhap*, 04/21/2024)
S. Korea voices deep regret over Japanese PM's offering to Yasukuni Shrine (*Yonhap*, 04/21/2024)
Top N. Korean agriculture official departs for Russia (*Yonhap*, 04/21/2024)
Ukraine is the frontline of a much larger conflict (*Financial Times*, 04/21/2024)

Top News:

- Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director, told *Chosun Ilbo*, "Seafood processing plants in China are notorious for forcing North Korean workers to work [in harsh conditions]. The South Korean government must stop activities that enable Kim Jong-un to develop nuclear weapons." (Lee Min-seok, Song Hye-jin, *Chosun Ilbo*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea's latest tests of a "super-large" cruise missile warhead and a new anti-aircraft missile came in response to the South Korea-U.S. joint annual air exercise, analysts said Sunday. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)
- While the country espouses an official commitment to gender equality, the reality for women is one of discrimination and limited opportunities. (Sang Yong Lee, *The Diplomat*)

International:

- A North Korean delegation led by a high-ranking agricultural official is visiting Russia, the North's official KCNA news agency said on Sunday, in the latest exchange by Moscow and Pyongyang, which is grappling with chronic food shortages. (*Reuters*)
- South Korea has signed a framework agreement with Ukraine to provide the war-torn country with economic cooperation funds, the finance ministry said Sunday, paving the way for Seoul to carry out its pledge to supply US$2.1 billion in low-interest loans. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea expressed "deep disappointment and regret" Sunday over Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida sending a ritual offering to a war shrine seen as a symbol of Japan's militaristic past. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's top agriculture official has embarked on a trip to Russia, Pyongyang's state media said Sunday, amid chronic food shortages in the North. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- The regimes in Pyongyang and Tehran have become vital suppliers of weaponry for Moscow. China also recently proclaimed its "deep friendship" with North Korea, and dispatched a very senior official to Pyongyang for talks. (Gideon Rachman, *Financial Times*)

S. Korean retail giants suspend sales of Chinese seafood linked to N. Korean forced labor

Lee Min-seok, Song Hye-jin
Chosun Ilbo, April 10, 2024

Members of Congress have warned South Korea to immediately halt the importing and distribution of Chinese seafood produced with North Korean forced labor.

The employment of North Koreans by third-country companies violates UN Security Council sanctions against North Korea, which aim to ensure that foreign currency earned by North Korean workers is not used for nuclear weapons and missile development. There is concern in Congress about the possibility that South Korea may neglect sanctions enforcement when international sanctions against North Korea are being loosened by China, Russia, and others.

In response to recent reports, South Korean retail giants Coupang and Lotte Mart suspended sales of the products in question on April 9. The companies reportedly made the decision in accordance with their internal policy of not advertising and not selling products that are deemed problematic due to international sanctions.

“Seafood that North Koreans have been [forced] to process in China is ending up on plates around the world,” said Republican congressman Chris Smith, Co-Chair of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC), in a statement to *Chosun Ilbo*. “This import [practice] must stop immediately.”

The CECC is a bipartisan congressional body created in 2000 to monitor human rights and rule of law issues in China, and has been a major influence on U.S. policy toward China.

It is unusual for Congress to publicly criticize an ally’s import practices. This indicates that Congress is taking the issue seriously, since South Korea is importing large quantities of seafood processed using North Korean “slave labor.” There is also great concern that it will be more difficult to monitor

North Korea's sanctions evasion, since Russia recently vetoed the continued operation of the UN Panel of Experts, which reported on sanctions evasion activities to the Security Council.

Representative Smith said in a statement to *Chosun Ilbo* that "North Koreans who are treated inhumanely in China are deprived of most of their paychecks, which in turn are used to fund North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile programs," adding that "no consumer in South Korea, the United States, or Japan would want this outcome."

Smith has been an outspoken critic of human rights abuses in authoritarian countries, including North Korea and China. He also serves as the Co-Chair of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission. He has taken a principled stance on human rights issues, speaking out against the Moon Jae-in administration regarding the "anti-leaflet law" and the forced repatriation of two North Korean fishermen in 2019.

Smith stressed that "The United States, South Korea, and Japan need strengthen their trilateral cooperation," adding that "we can send a stronger message to North Korea and China when we work together." He called on South Korea, the United States, and Japan to share information about North Korean forced labor in China to stop imports, and also coordinate the enforcement of sanctions against companies that are implicated in this practice.

Republican congresswoman Young Kim, Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Indo-Pacific, also released a statement, saying that "I am concerned about the [*Chosun Ilbo*] reports that Chinese seafood imported into South Korea was produced with North Korean forced labor," and urged South Korean companies to immediately suspend imports of affected products.

There are voices in Congress calling on the South Korean government to take the lead in investigating the use of North Korean workers for forced labor, stop the import of related seafood products, and enforce sanctions. When Representative Kim began her term as Subcommittee Chair last March, she told *Chosun Ilbo* that she would "prioritize human rights in North Korea."

In her statement, Representative Kim said that "North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un has repeatedly stated that he will use anyone and anything to increase his nuclear arsenal. North Korean forced labor is a prime example," adding that "the UN Security Council should not tolerate [South Korea's import of Chinese seafood]." Violations of Security Council sanctions will be met with economic sanctions by the international community, in other words.

There is also great concern among civil society organizations and academics.

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), told *Chosun Ilbo*, "Seafood processing plants in China are notorious for forcing North Korean workers to work [in harsh conditions]. The South Korean government must stop activities that enable Kim Jong-un to develop nuclear weapons."

Ramon Pacheco Pardo, Professor of International Relations at King's College London, said that "The South Korean government needs to clarify the facts of the situation, and the National Assembly should overhaul relevant legislation."

The Outlaw Ocean Project, a U.S. non-profit organization, interviewed more than twenty North Korean workers in Chinese factories last year and found that at least fifteen Chinese companies employed more than 1,000 North Korean laborers. Seafood products produced with North Korean forced labor are distributed in large quantities to South Korea, the Outlaw Ocean Project said.

Despite repeated warnings from the international community, Chinese seafood products imported by South Korean companies continue to be sold in the country's top supermarkets and online shopping malls.

Short neck clams exported to South Korea by Dandong Taihua, one of the companies in question, are in popular demand at Market Kurly. A South Korean importer of shellfish and other seafood from another Chinese company, Dandong Taifeng, advertises on its website that its products are sold in the ready-to-eat seafood section of E-Mart.

A representative of a major South Korean supermarket told *Chosun Ilbo* that "when a South Korean importer of short neck clams, in response to an inquiry from a U.S. non-profit organization, asked a Chinese company to confirm whether it had employed North Korean workers, the company said that 'we have sent back all North Korean workers and will not employ them in future production'." Chinese companies have denied employing North Korean workers, since it is a violation of UN Security Council sanctions to do so.

There are some in Washington, D.C. who noted that Congress' immediate response to North Korea's sanctions violations and human rights abuses contrasts with the response from the South Korean authorities.

At its regular briefing on April 8, the Ministry of Unification only said that "hiring North Korean workers in third countries is a violation of UN Security Council sanctions resolutions, and we call on all member states to comply with their obligations." When asked about the distribution of seafood products produced with North Korean forced labor in South Korea, the ministry said "we have no information to confirm."

☞ UN Security Council Sanctions on North Korean Overseas Labor

In response to North Korea's nuclear weapons test, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2375 in September 2017, prohibiting UN member states from granting work permits to North Korean workers. Resolution 2397, adopted later that year, requires all North Korean workers abroad who were already working to return to North Korea by December 22, 2019. However, North Korean laborers have continued to be employed in Russia, China, and other countries.

Translated by Gayeong Lee, Research Intern; edited by Raymond Ha, Director of Operations & Research

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Prepared by Samantha Garcia, HRNK Research Intern

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Monday, April 22nd, 2024

North Koreans may have helped create Western cartoons; It Is High Time to Engage North Korea

In North Korea:
Experts see possibility of N.K. conducting nuclear test before U.S. presidential vote (*Yonhap*, 04/22/2024)
New work underway at DPRK space launch site but Seoul says liftoff not imminent (*NK News*, 04/22/2024)
North Korea fires several short-range ballistic missiles toward East Sea (*Yonhap*, 04/22/2024)
What We Learned Inside a North Korean Internet Server: How Well Do You Know Your Partners? (*38 North*, 04/22/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korea's air force to retire key assets that defend against North Korea (*NK News*, 04/22/2024)

International:
It Is High Time to Engage North Korea (*The Diplomat*, 04/19/2024)
JSC chairman meets with SPACECOM commander amid N.K. satellite launch speculation (*Yonhap*, 04/22/2024)
North Koreans may have helped create Western cartoons, report says (*Reuters*, 04/22/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea may carry out what would be its seventh nuclear test before the U.S. presidential election in November in efforts to increase its bargaining power in future talks with Washington, experts said Monday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has started new construction at the country's main space launch complex in recent days, according to *NK News* analysis of satellite imagery, as South Korean military authorities said the country's next military satellite launch doesn't appear imminent. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea fired several rounds of short-range ballistic missiles toward the East Sea on Monday, the South Korean military said, three days after it launched cruise missiles into the Yellow Sea. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's F-4E Phantom fighter jet completed its final live-fire exercises last week, marking the end of an era for the assets that were once vital to the ROK's air defense against North Korea. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

International:

- Efforts to improve relations with Pyongyang, even if they do not yield immediate results, can still lower tensions and, even for that reason alone, should be tried. (Jongsoo Lee, *The Diplomat*)
- Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Chairman Adm. Kim Myung-soo met with the commander of the U.S. Space Command on Monday to discuss ways to bolster their joint capabilities in space to fend off evolving North Korean threats. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean animators may have helped create popular television cartoons for big Western firms, including Amazon and HBO Max, despite international sanctions on North Korea. (David Brunnstrom, *Reuters*)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718130640/https://mailchi.mp/c9a578f914b6/hrnk-news-items-north-koreans-may-have-helped-create-western-cartoons-it-is-high-time-to-engage-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, April 23rd, 2024

Beyond Utopia: More Than a Tale of Two Countries

Top News:
Beyond Utopia: More Than a Tale of Two Countries (*NK Hidden Gulag Blog*, 04/22/2024)

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un leads salvo missile launch in first test of 'nuclear trigger' system (*NK News*, 04/23/2024)
N. Korea says Kim guided simulated nuclear counterattack drill (*Yonhap*, 04/23/2024)
New Construction at Sohae Satellite Launching Station (*38 North*, 04/22/2024)

In South Korea:
Korean, Romanian leaders discuss defense tech, nuclear energy (*The Korea Herald*, 04/23/2024)
S. Korea warns N. Korea will face end of regime if it uses nuclear weapons (*Yonhap*, 04/23/2024)
Seoul's top diplomat to meet secretary of Chinese province bordering NK (*The Korea Herald*, 04/23/2024)
South Korean defense companies hacked by North: Police (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/23/2024)

International:
Breaking the deadlock: When China took the lead in talks with North Korea (*NK News*, 04/23/2024)
U.S. annual report highlights forced repatriations, numerous human rights abuses in N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 04/23/2024)
U.S. decries latest N.K. missile launches (*Yonhap*, 04/23/2024)

Top News:

- *Beyond Utopia* sheds light on the experiences of the North Korean people, following the Roh family's escape from North Korea and Lee So-yeon's attempt to rescue her son. Their testimonies reveal the harrowing experiences North Koreans continue to endure today. Providing rare and valuable footage of the perilous trek North Korean escapees take to escape the Kim regime, *Beyond Utopia* is a timely and important call to remember the ongoing and egregious suffering of the North Korean people. (Diana Darae Woo, *NK Hidden Gulag Blog*)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un led a salvo missile launch to test the country's "Nuclear Trigger' system" for the first time on Monday, while blaming the U.S. and South Korea for raising tensions. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea has conducted a tactical drill simulating a nuclear counterattack involving super-large multiple rocket launchers, state media said Tuesday, a day after South Korea said the North fired short-range missiles into the East Sea. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- Commercial satellite imagery shows an uptick in construction work at North Korea's Sohae Satellite Launching Station. Several new projects around the coastal launch pad area have begun, while work continues on longer-running projects. (Martyn Williams, Jack Liu, Peter Makowsky, *38 North*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea and Romania's leaders, meeting in Seoul, agreed to pursue cooperation across multiple sectors, notably emphasizing defense and nuclear energy collaboration. (Son Ji-hyoung, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea will face the end of its regime if it attempts to use nuclear weapons, the defense ministry warned, after the North said it conducted rocket drills simulating a nuclear counterattack. (Kim Eun jung, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's top diplomat is set to meet with Hao Peng, the party secretary of Liaoning province in China, which shares a border with North Korea, on Wednesday. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korean hackers breached the internal networks of 10 South Korean defense companies and stole technical data over the past 18 months. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- Beijing has demonstrated a willingness in the past to take the lead in orchestrating complex talks by pressuring North Korea to participate. China has preferred to take a backseat on DPRK issues and prioritize regional stability since Xi Jinping took power. It's unclear what it would take to convince Beijing to take responsibility for diplomacy again. (Gabriela Bernal, *NK News*)
- North Koreans endured various human rights abuses last year, including forced repatriations, extrajudicial killings, forced abortion, and severe child labor, according to the State Department's 2023 Human Rights Practices report. The report highlights the regime's failure to address these abuses or hold officials accountable. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

- The United States condemned North Korea's latest round of ballistic missile launches as a violation of multiple U.N. Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Gayeong Lee, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718131102/https://mailchi.mp/15a497f9d837/hrnk-news-items-beyond-utopia-more-than-a-tale-of-two-countries?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, April 24th, 2024

HRNK Quoted 12 Times in U.S. Dept. of State's DPRK 2023 Human Rights Report

Top News:
HRNK Quoted 12 Times in the U.S. Department of State's *DPRK 2023 Human Rights Report* (HRNK, 04/23/2024)

In North Korea:
N. Korea calls on party propaganda officials to work harder (*Yonhap*, 04/24/2024)
North Korea leader Kim's sister: we will build overwhelming military power (*Reuters*, 04/24/2024)
North Korea likely to reopen to Western tourists in second half: Tour company (*NK News*, 04/24/2024)
Pukchang Military Airfield Modernization Making Progress (*38 North*, 04/24/2024)
Students, residents pressed into North Korean construction projects (*Radio Free Asia*, 04/23/2024)

In South Korea:
Korea launches 1st nanosatellite to monitor military movements on Korean Peninsula (*The Korea Times*, 04/24/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. stage space training against N.K. GPS jamming threats (*Yonhap*, 04/24/2024)
Yoon says N. Korea must not dare challenge S. Korea (*Yonhap*, 04/24/2024)

International:
N. Korea calls envisioned U.S. aid to Ukraine 'hallucinogen' (*Yonhap*, 04/24/2024)
N. Korea sends economic delegation to Iran amid suspected military cooperation (*Yonhap*, 04/24/2024)
Pentagon stresses close consultation with S. Korea after simulated N.K. 'nuclear counterattack' drill (*Yonhap*, 04/24/2024)
U.S. SPACECOM commander says N.K.'s satellite launch violates U.N. resolutions (*AP*, 04/24/2024)

Top News:

- On Monday, April 22, the U.S. Department of State released its annual *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* for 2023. The country report for North Korea, which can be accessed at this link, quotes HRNK 12 times. (*HRNK*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has held a workshop for ruling party officials tasked with propaganda activities and called for their stronger commitment to the party, in what appeared to be efforts to shore up internal unity. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, said the country will continue to build overwhelming and the strongest military power to protect its sovereignty and regional peace. (David Brunnstrom, *Reuters*)
- North Korea will likely reopen to tourists from all over the world in the second half of the year, after Russian tourists recently became the first foreign travelers to visit the country since the start of the pandemic. (Ifgang Bremer, Lina Park, *NK News*)
- Commercial satellite imagery indicates that major progress has been made on modernizing North Korea's Pukchang military airfield. (Martyn Williams, Jenny Town, Iliana Ragnone, *38 North*)
- North Korean authorities are addressing a labor shortage by conscripting ordinary residents and students as young as 12 to work on state-mandated construction projects. (Ahn Chang-Gyu, Moon Sung Hui, *Radio Free Asia*)

In South Korea:

- Korea launched its first nanosatellite or mini-satellite, NEONSAT-1, into space, to enhance its surveillance system and better monitor natural disasters on the Korean Peninsula. (Baek Byung-yeul, *The Korea Times*)
- South Korea and the United States have conducted joint space exercises to fend off North Korea's global positioning system (GPS) jamming attacks and other space-based threats. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- President Yoon called on the military Wednesday to maintain a firm readiness posture so North Korea does not dare challenge South Korea. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)

International:

- North Korea on Wednesday called a U.S. aid package to war-torn Ukraine awaiting final approval a "hallucinogen," saying that such support cannot put a brake on Kiev's war with Russia. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has sent an economic delegation to Iran, Pyongyang's state media reported Wednesday, a rare trip that raises suspicions of cooperation between the two nations over weapons programs. (Kim Soo-Hyun, *Yonhap*)
- The United States continues close consultation with South Korea and Japan to deter evolving North Korean threats, a Pentagon spokesperson said Tuesday, after Pyongyang said it carried out drills simulating a nuclear counterattack this week. (Song Sang-Ho, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. Space Command said Wednesday that North Korea's satellite launch violates U.N. Security Council resolutions and its preparations for additional launches have been under close watch. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Valerie Johnson, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718131353/https://mailchi.mp/424a2a808b26/hrnk-news-items-hrnk-quoted-12-times-in-us-dept-of-states-dprk-2023-human-rights-report?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, April 25th, 2024

Thousands of North Korean propaganda workers gather to boost Kim Jong Un worship

In North Korea:
North Korea's Air Koryo changes logo to comply with new anti-unification policy (*NK News*, 04/25/2024)
Thousands of North Korean propaganda workers gather to boost Kim Jong Un worship (*NK News*, 04/24/2024)

In South Korea:
INTERVIEW: 'If I had stayed in North Korea, I might have been on the gravy train.' (*RFA*, 04/24/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
North Korean hackers stole files from 10 South Korean weapons manufacturers (*NK Pro*, 04/24/2024)

International:
Australian Navy chief pledges continued support for N.K. sanctions enforcement (*Yonhap*, 04/25/2024)
Exclusive: China harbors ship tied to North Korea-Russia arms transfers, satellite images show (*Reuters*, 04/24/2024)
Exclusive: EU's proposed Russia sanctions to target oil tankers, ships moving North Korean equipment (*Reuters*, 04/24/2024)
How North Korea's Man in the West Ran Afoul of US Authorities (*Bloomberg*, 04/25/2024)
N. Korea says expansion of AUKUS will turn Asia-Pacific region into 'nuclear minefield' (*Yonhap*, 04/25/2024)
N. Korea touts ties with Russia on Kim-Putin summit anniversary (*Yonhap*, 04/25/2024)
North Korea accuses US of 'profiting' off Ukraine war, slamming new aid bill (*NK News*, 04/24/2024)
North Korea and Iran to hold talks on economic cooperation in Tehran (*NK News*, 04/24/2024)
North Korea puts unusual focus on Russia as it raises alarm about COVID overseas (*NK News*, 04/25/2024)
North Korea warns of forceful response if U.S. tightens sanctions monitoring (*UPI*, 04/25/2024)
Russia and North Korea to sign agriculture cooperation documents, says TASS (Reuters, 04/25/2024)

U.S. sent ATACMS missiles to Ukraine following Russia's use of N.K. missiles: White House (*Yonhap*, 04/25/2024)

In North Korea:

- Removal of Korean Peninsula from flag carrier's logo is in line with sweeping changes to inter-Korean symbols this year. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader not attend conference where top official demanded attendees become 'powerful megaphones' for Kim's teaching. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- Escapee elected to National Assembly talks about unusual path to the South, political goals. (Lee Jeong Eun, *RFA*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Seoul police find DPRK cybercriminals targeted companies in new campaigns since 2022 to steal defense tech. (Joon Ha Park, Shreyas Reddy, *NK Pro*)

International:

- In an interview with *Yonhap*, Vice Adm. Mark Hammond said the Australian military will continue monitoring and deterring illegal ship-to-ship transfers of sanctioned goods to North Korea. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- China is providing moorage for a U.S.-sanctioned Russian cargo ship implicated in North Korean arms transfers to Russia, according to satellite images obtained by Reuters, as U.S. concerns grow over Beijing's support for Moscow's war in Ukraine. (Michael Martina, David Brunnstrom, *Reuters*)
- The European Commission is expected to propose sanctions on ships delivering North Korean military equipment to Russia as well as tankers that flout the G7 price cap on Russian oil. (Julia Payne, Kate Abnett, *Reuters*)
- Alejandro Cao de Benós has been accused of violating sanctions in connection with a 2019 cryptocurrency conference. "I am not afraid," he says. (Brent Crane, *Bloomberg*)
- North Korea criticized the US, UK, and Australia for expanding their AUKUS security partnership, claiming that it could turn the Asia-Pacific into a "nuclear minefield." (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea reaffirmed its commitment to strengthen ties with Russia on the fifth anniversary of Kim Jong-un and Vladimir Putin's first summit. They met in Vladivostok in April 2019 and again at Russia's Vostochny spaceport last year. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- Foreign ministry criticism of $61B aid package comes as Kim Yo Jong issues scathing attack on US-led military drills. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- External Economic Relations minister leads first DPRK delegation to Iran in almost five years. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- State media continues to cover global disease spread even as it reopens, an apparent effort to show DPRK is safe. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- North Korea criticized new monitoring efforts for sanctions enforcement and cautioned the United States about a potential "upward readjustment of force" in response. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)

- Russia and North Korea plan to sign several documents on cooperation in agriculture, the TASS news agency said on Thursday, citing the North Korean embassy in Moscow. (*Reuters*)
- The White House confirmed that the United States has sent longer-range tactical missiles to Ukraine to aid in its fight against Russian forces, following Moscow's use of North Korean ballistic missiles against Ukraine. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan stated that President Biden directed the shipment of a "significant" number of Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS) missiles in February, which have already arrived in Ukraine. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718132516/https://mailchi.mp/1187b2ae810e/hrnk-news-items-thousands-of-north-korean-propaganda-workers-gather-to-boost-kim-jong-un-worship?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, April 26th, 2024

HRNK Board Elects New Co-Chair and Co-Vice-Chair, Bids Farewell to Outgoing Directors

Top News:
HRNK Board Elects New Co-Chair & Co-Vice-Chair, Bids Farewell to Outgoing Directors (*HRNK*, 04/25/2024)

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un rolls up with six new Toyota SUVs in convoy at latest appearance (*NK News*, 04/26/2024)
N. Korean leader calls for nurturing more military commanders on key military anniversary (*Yonhap*, 04/26/2024)
N. Korean leader oversees test-firing of new multiple rocket launcher shells (*Yonhap*, 04/26/2024)
Smuggling of used cars into North Korea rises amid post-COVID demand (*Radio Free Asia*, 04/22/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korea to acquire SM-3 shipborne missiles by 2030 (*Yonhap*, 04/26/2024)
South Korea to launch space security center under spy agency (*The Korea Herald*, 04/26/2024)

International:
Chinese shipyard hosts cargo vessel linked to North Korea-Russia arms trade (*NK News*, 04/26/2024)

Japanese firm says its part found on North Korean missile is fake: report (*Radio Free Asia*, 04/25/2024)
Unification minister, U.S. envoy to visit site of N.K. abduction next month (*Yonhap*, 04/26/2024)
U.S. and South Korea to meet on American troop costs this week (*Reuters*, 04/23/2024)
U.S. calls for China to help monitor sanctions on North Korea (*Voa News*, 04/25/2024)

Top News:

- At its 55th meeting on April 24th, HRNK's Board of Directors unanimously elected The Honorable Jack David as its new Co-Chair and The Honorable Robert Joseph as its new Co-Vice-Chair. The Board also expressed deep gratitude to outgoing Co-Chair Gordon Flake and Co-Vice-Chair Suzanne Scholte for their significant contributions to the North Korean human rights cause and HRNK's mission. (*HRNK*)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un unveiled his acquisition of a half dozen new Toyota SUVs. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Kim Jong-un called for fostering more military commanders to boost North Korea's combat capabilities and instill fear among its enemies. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Kim Jong-un supervised a test-firing of new shells for a multiple rocket launcher, indicating their strategic importance in strengthening North Korea's artillery force. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- A recent surge in demand for used cars in North Korea has triggered an increase in car smuggling from China. (Cheon Soram, *Radio Free Asia*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea will buy Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) shipborne interceptors from the United States to bolster the missile shield against North Korean threats. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea is establishing a National Space Security Center under the National Intelligence Service to address space threats, develop technologies, and collaborate with the science minister. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)

International:

- A Chinese shipyard that hosted a Russian vessel implicated in arms trade with North Korea is likely violating U.N. sanctions. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- A suspected Japanese-made component found in a North Korean missile fired by Russia forces towards Ukraine is likely fake. (*Radio Free Asia*)
- Kim Yung-ho, South Korea's point man on North Korea, and Julie Turner, the U.S. special envoy for North Korean human rights, plan to make a visit next month to areas where then South Korean teens were abducted by the North in the 1970s. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. and South Korean officials will meet in Hawaii this week to discuss sharing the cost of American troops stationed in South Korea. (David Brunnstrom, *Reuters*)
- The United States is calling on China to do more to monitor North Korean sanctions violations as a U.N. panel charged with that task is set to expire this month. (Christy Lee, VOA)

Prepared by Smaranda Gheorghe, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718132837/https://mailchi.mp/88639b339caf/hrnk-news-items-hrnk-board-elects-new-co-chair-and-co-vice-chair-bids-farewell-to-outgoing-directors?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, April 27th, 2024

North Koreans forced to process seafood that ends up in U.S.

In North Korea:
Annual hunger crunch: North Koreans scour fields for leftovers (RFA, 04/26/2024)
N. Korea denounces U.S. condemnation of human rights violations (*Yonhap*, 04/27/2024)
N. Korea reaffirms plan to bolster space reconnaissance capabilities (*Yonhap*, 04/27/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Why South Korean pop culture rocks and North Korea's does not (*The Economist*, 04/22/2024)

International:
North Koreans forced to process seafood that ends up in U.S., investigation reveals (*PBS*, 04/26/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. lay out respective visions for new defense cost-sharing deal: U.S. negotiator (*Yonhap*, 04/27/2024)
The Axis of Upheaval (*Foreign Affairs*, 04/23/2024)
This moment, this platform: North Korean human rights at Harvard University and beyond (*The Korea Times*, 04/27/2024)

In North Korea:

- It's April, hunger crunch time in North Korea. (Moon Sung Hui, Son Hyemin, Noh Jung Min, RFA)
- North Korea on Saturday lashed out at the recent release of the United States' annual report on human rights situations in the reclusive country, calling it an act of interfering in the country's "internal affairs." (Kim Na-young, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea on Saturday reiterated its commitment to launching more reconnaissance satellites this year after putting its first spy satellite into orbit in November. (Kim Na-young, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Gangnam style v gulag style - when it comes to hard power, the two Koreas are in the same weight class, thanks to the North's nuclear weapons, But culturally, the South is a colossus,

whereas the North's soft power is as weak as the rationale for making a communist dictatorship hereditary. (*The Economist*)

International:

- A series of new investigations by the Outlaw Ocean Project reveals that the way a lot of that seafood ends up in our stores and on our plates comes at an extraordinary human cost, specifically, workers from North Korea who are forced to work in Chinese factories. (William Brangham, Teresa Cebrián Aranda, *PBS*)
- South Korea and the United States outlined their respective visions for a new bilateral defense cost-sharing deal during their first round of negotiations in Honolulu this week. (Song Sang-ho, Kang Byeong-cheol, *Yonhap*)
- The growing cooperation among China, Iran, North Korea, and Russia is fueled by their shared opposition to the Western-dominated global order, an antagonism rooted in their belief that that system does not accord them the status or freedom of action they deserve. (Andrea Kendall-Taylor, Richard Fontaine, *Foreign Affairs*)
- Kim Myeong-hee, one of seven North Korean refugees who gave speeches, was the Grand Prize winner of the 19th "I am from North Korea" English speech contest, presented by Freedom Speakers International, at Harvard University on April 13, 2024. (Kim Myeong-hee, *The Korea Times*)

Prepared by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718132942/https://mailchi.mp/b851c2442aa0/hrnk-news-items-north-koreans-forced-to-process-seafood-that-ends-up-in-us?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, April 28th, 2024

Kim Jong-un's motorcade challenges UN sanctions; Blinken calls on China to press N. Kore

In North Korea:
Luxury on Display: Kim Jong-un's motorcade challenges UN sanctions (*Chosun Ilbo*, 04/28/2024)

International:
Blinken calls on China to press N. Korea to end its 'dangerous' behavior (*Yonhap*, 04/27/2024)
North Korea's Kim Jong Un seeks to build on Russia ties to resuscitate economy (*Financial Times*, 04/27/2024)

In North Korea:

- Kim Jong-un was seen in a motorcade featuring luxury vehicles, including six Toyota Land Cruiser 300s, during a visit to the Kim Il-sung Military University. These vehicles, with their logos removed and equipped with flashing lights, hint at North Korea's disregard for UN sanctions on importing restricted luxury vehicles. The Land Cruiser models, valued at around $80,000 each, suggest a circumvention of sanctions imposed since 2017. The parade also showcased two Mercedes-Benz Maybach SUVs, two Lexus LX SUVs, two Ford Transit vans, five older Mercedes sedans, and one unidentified SUV. Kim also owns other high-end vehicles, including a Cadillac SUV and a Russian-made Aurus limousine gifted by Vladimir Putin. This display of foreign cars raises concerns that North Korea may be importing weapons and related equipment in further violation of sanctions. (Kim Hwee-won, Lee Jung-soo, *Chosun Ilbo*)

International:

- "I encouraged China to use its influence to discourage Iran and its proxies from expanding the conflict in the Middle East, and to press Pyongyang to end its dangerous behavior and engage in dialogue," Blinken said. "Going forward, we will have high-level discussions on these and other issues." (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Kim Jong Un's "20x10" initiative aims to build a factory in each of North Korea's 200 counties and cities over a decade, but experts doubt its feasibility. Strengthened ties with Russia have boosted North Korea's economy, potentially reducing reliance on China. However, skepticism remains about the plan's rationality given existing factory underutilization. (Christian Davies, *Financial Times*)

Prepared by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250718133111/https://mailchi.mp/5dde22007e33/hrnk-news-items-kim-jong-uns-motorcade-challenges-un-sanctions-blinken-calls-on-china-to-press-n-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Monday, April 29th, 2024

North Korea demolished facilities along roads connecting Koreas

In North Korea:
North Korea phasing out 'Day of Sun' as name for biggest holiday: Tour agencies (*NK News*, 04/29/2024)
The Hollowing Out of Kim Jong Un's North Korea (*Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 04/29/2024)

In South Korea:

South Korean hotel removes name of Kim Jong Un aide from marketing for VIP suite (*NK News*, 04/29/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
North Korea demolished facilities along roads connecting Koreas, Seoul says (*NK News*, 04/29/2024)
N. Korea installs mines on inter-Korean road within DMZ (*Yonhap*, 04/29/2024)

International:
Imagining a Future for the DPRK Panel of Experts Monitoring Regime (*38 North*, 04/29/2024)
Iran Says North Korean Delegation Visiting Tehran for Trade Expo (*Bloomberg*, 04/29/2024)
Japan's Leader Fumio Kishida on Countering Threat of China and North Korea (*Newsweek*, 04/29/2024)
North Korea criticizes US for supplying long-range missiles to Ukraine, KCNA says (*Reuters*, 04/28/2024)
Kin of Japanese abducted by North Korea departs for U.S. to seek support (*Kyodo News*, 04/28/2024)
Russia to gift eagles, snakes and other animals to North Korea's biggest zoo (*NK News*, 04/29/2024)

In North Korea:

- Changes in how to refer to birthdays of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il may be effort to elevate current leader. (Seung-Yeon Chung, *NK News*)
- Despite North Korea's presence on the world stage with its nuclear weapons, the Kim dynasty is slowly and irreversibly breaking down. (Chung Min Lee, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*)

In South Korea:

- Skybay Hotel drops Hyon Song Wol from name of room where senior official stayed as interest in North Korea declines. (Chad O'Carroll, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Local media report the DPRK has laid anti-tank and -personnel mines at multiple crossings. (Jeongmin Kim, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- North Korea has installed land mines on an inter-Korean road within the DMZ separating the two Koreas, the latest of moves to shut down cross-border roads. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Former coordinator of the UN's Panel of Experts for DPRK, Eric Penton-Voak provides insights and solutions on how to continue the important monitoring mission. (Eric Penton-Voak, *38 North*)
- Official confirms visitors from Pyongyang attended trade event. Spokesman said visit also involves bilateral trade talks. (Golnar Motevalli, *Bloomberg*)
- "In terms of diplomacy as well as security, we are in a very uncertain situation. Therefore, diplomacy, the leader-level diplomacy shall be strengthened," Kishida said. "We need to have defense capabilities as to back up this diplomacy." (Tom O'Connor, *Newsweek*)

- The director of the Department of Foreign Military Affairs of North Korea's Ministry of National Defence was quoted as saying: "The U.S. has secretly supplied long-range missiles to Ukraine, sparking off uneasiness and concern of the international community." (Hyunsu Yim, *Reuters*)
- The families of Japanese nationals abducted by North Korea decades ago departed for Washington on Monday to seek support from U.S legislators and government officials for their return. (*Kyodo News*)
- Russia pledged to donate eagles, pythons and dozens of other animals to North Korea's main zoo last week, in a move that one expert compared to China's panda diplomacy and described as an attempt to take bilateral ties beyond geopolitics. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)

Prepared by Jason Lebeck, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250718133439/https://mailchi.mp/1e8da76d4232/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-demolished-facilities-along-roads-connecting-koreas?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, April 30th, 2024

Number of N. Korean defectors to S. Korea increases

In North Korea:
Quick Take: North Korea's "National Defence Industrial Enterprise" (*38 North*, 04/29/2024)

In South Korea:
Gov't to open 10 trails near DMZ for visitors next month (*Yonhap*, 04/30/2024)
NIS sees possibility of N. Korean terrorist attacks involving drones, paragliders (*Yonhap*, 04/30/2024)
Presidential advisory panel to launch special committee of talented overseas S. Koreans (*Yonhap*, 04/30/2024)
Slim majority of ROK elites oppose going nuclear to counter North Korea: Report (*NK News*, 04/30/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Number of N. Korean defectors entering S. Korea reaches 43 in Q1 (*Yonhap*, 04/30/2024)
Unification minister meets pastors to talk missionaries detained in North Korea (*NK News*, 04/30/2024)

International:
3 North Korean refugees share stories of terror, perseverance in US tour that stops at SMU (*The Dallas Morning News*, 04/30/2024)
Exclusive: UN experts say North Korea missile landed in Ukraine's Kharkiv (*Reuters*, 04/29/2024)

Iran denies North Korean delegation is visiting to discuss military cooperation (*NK News*, 04/30/2024)
North Korea Will Soon Be Able to Flout Sanctions More Easily (*The Wall Street Journal*, 04/30/2024)
S. Korea vows efforts to ensure U.N. sanctions enforcement on N.K. continues despite end to monitoring panel (*Yonhap*, 04/30/2024)
S. Korean, Australian defense chiefs agree to bolster defense industry ties (*Yonhap*, 04/30/2024)
South Korea, Cuba to set up permanent missions in each other's capitals (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/29/2024)

In North Korea:

- On April 26, North Korean media mentioned a "newly established national defence industrial enterprise under the Second Economy Commission" while reporting that Kim Jong Un, on the previous day, had watched "the evaluation test-fire" of a 240-mm multiple rocket launcher shell produced by this enterprise. (Rachel Minyoung Lee, *38 North*)

In South Korea:

- Ten peace-themed trails near the Demilitarized Zone will open to the public in mid-May, the government said Tuesday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's spy agency said it cannot rule out the possibility of North Korea staging attacks involving drones and motorized paragliders amid suspicions over Pyongyang's ties with the Hamas militant group. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The presidential advisory panel on unification said it will launch a special committee on global strategy this week that consists of 101 talented overseas South Koreans from 33 nations in a bid to help muster global support for the two Koreas' unification. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- A slim majority of South Korea politicians and foreign policy decision-makers oppose the ROK acquiring nuclear weapons to counter North Korea, according to a new survey of 175 "strategic elites" by a Washington think tank. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- The number of North Korean defectors who successfully reached South Korea came to 43 in the first quarter, marking an increase from the same period last year. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's unification minister met with Protestant church leaders on Monday to ask for their help to "ensure the return of detained missionaries, abductees, detainees and prisoners of war." (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

International:

- Since early April, a panel of three North Korean refugees has been traveling to different parts of the U.S. to share stories of escaping from North Korea at a young age. (Hojun Choi, *The Dallas Morning News*)
- The debris from a missile that landed in the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv on Jan. 2 was from a North Korean Hwasong-11 series ballistic missile, United Nations sanctions monitors told a Security Council committee in a report seen by Reuters. (Michelle Nichols, *Reuters*)

- Iran has dismissed speculation that a North Korean delegation traveled to the country to discuss military cooperation, stating the visit was purely for business opportunities. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- After Russian opposition, the United Nations panel goes dark, removing the global monitor on Pyongyang's rules-busting behavior. (Timothy W. Martin, *The Wall Street Journal*)
- South Korea will make efforts to ensure that U.N. sanctions enforcement on North Korea will continue even though the U.N. monitoring panel is ending after Russia's veto on extending its mandate. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The defense chiefs of South Korea and Australia held talks in Melbourne on Tuesday and discussed ways to step up cooperation for regional security and defense industry. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and Cuba will open permanent missions in each other's countries. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Prepared by Colleen Burns, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718133536/https://mailchi.mp/79b895646e41/hrnk-news-item-number-of-n-korean-defectors-to-s-korea-increases?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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5. MAY

Wednesday, May 1st, 2024

Sung-Yoon Lee, Sue Mi Terry Join HRNK's Board of Directors; US Needs to Issue an Atrocity Determination for N. Korea

Top News:
Sung-Yoon Lee, Sue Mi Terry Join HRNK's Board of Directors (*HRNK*, 04/30/2024)
The US Needs to Issue an Atrocity Determination for North Korea (*Hudson Institute*, 04/30/2024)
[Expert Talk] "North Korea-Iran nuclear and missile cooperation will expand... North Korea's weapons proliferation rapidly increases" (VOA, 04/30/2024)

In North Korea:
Kim Jong-un spends $1.82 billion per year on elite perks, report says (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/01/2024)
NK leader openly flouts UN sanctions in recent outing (*The Korea Times*, 04/30/2024)
North Korean hackers impersonate blockchain firm to steal data from developers (*NK Pro*, 05/01/2024)
North Korean restaurants violate sanctions, but they make big bucks for Pyongyang (*RFA*, 05/01/2024)
Toy model of North Korea's biggest missile on sale for tourists in Pyongyang (*NK News*, 05/01/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
[New faces of Assembly] Architect behind 'audacious initiative' believes in denuclearized North Korea (*The Korea Herald*, 05/01/2024)

International:
America and the new 'axis of evil' (*The Hill*, 04/29/2024)
Declassified Video Shows US Reaper Drone Striking Target in Air Force Drill (*Newsweek*, 05/01/2024)
Experts warn of consequences as UN sanctions panel on North Korea ends (*NK News*, 05/01/2024)
N. Korean media makes no mention of Cuba among nations sending congratulatory messages over late founder's birthday (*Yonhap*, 05/01/2024)
North Korea criticizes U.S. sanctions against Iran (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/01/2024)
US and EU eye North Korea-Iran military cooperation (VOA, 05/01/2024)
U.S. calls on N. Korea to give 'full' accounting of Japanese abductees (*Yonhap*, 05/01/2024)

Top News:

- HRNK is delighted to announce that Dr. Sung-Yoon Lee and Dr. Sue Mi Terry have joined HRNK's Board of Directors. We look forward to their contributions to our work and mission. (Greg Scarlatoiu, *HRNK*)

- Ten years have passed since the United Nations released its seminal Commission of Inquiry (COI) report on human rights in North Korea. The report's conclusion was damning: the North Korean people face ongoing crimes against humanity that three generations of the Kim regime have perpetrated. (Olivia Enos, *Hudson Institute*)
- VOA's Liz Kim spoke with David Albright, Director of the Institute for Science and International Security in Washington, D.C and Bruce Bechtol, Professor at Angelo State University to discuss nuclear and missile cooperation between North Korea and Iran. (Liz Kim, VOA)

In North Korea:

- Kim Jong-un has spent up to 2.5 trillion won ($1.82 billion) per year on perks enjoyed by his regime's elites to reward and maintain their loyalty. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Kim Jong-un's recent public appearances with newly purchased high-end luxury vehicles cast doubt on the effectiveness of international sanctions against the secretive regime. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korean cybercriminals are targeting LinkedIn users in the cryptocurrency sector in a new phishing campaign, posing as recruiters using fake profiles. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK Pro*)
- Workers use student visa loopholes to get around sanctions to take jobs as servers and entertainers. (Chin Min Jai, *RFA*)
- A huge toy model of North Korea's largest intercontinental ballistic missile appears to be available to purchase at a store for foreign visitors in Pyongyang, in what one expert called a "reminder for tourists" that the weapons are a point of pride for the country. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- The complete denuclearization of North Korea is not only the ultimate goal but also a viable aim of the security efforts of South Korea and the US, according to Kim Gunn, who was until recently Seoul's top nuclear envoy. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)

International:

- What counts, as we recognize the collaboration between Iran and North Korea, is our will to stand up against each of these very different, geographically distant but closely bound dictatorships — and their much larger friends. (Donald Kirk, *The Hill*)
- The largest American and allied air-power exercise on the Korean Peninsula, which last month drew strong words from North Korea, has featured its first live-fire drills with an MQ-9 Reaper. (John Feng, *Newsweek*)
- The U.N. panel that has been at the center of global efforts to monitor the implementation of sanctions on North Korea's nuclear weapons program officially disbanded on Tuesday, following the failure of efforts to keep it alive for another year. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- North Korea's state media on Wednesday did not mention Cuba when it reported a list of countries that have sent congratulatory messages over the 112th birthday in April of the North's late founder Kim Il-sung. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea declared its support of Iran through state media on Tuesday as it criticized the latest round of U.S. sanctions against Tehran. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- The United States and the European Union say they are keeping their eyes on Pyongyang and Tehran for any possible military cooperation between the two as Iran confirms a North Korean delegation's visit to the country. (Christy Lee, VOA)
- A U.S. State Department spokesperson called on North Korea Tuesday to offer a "full" account of Japanese citizens abducted by it decades ago, amid reports that a group of their families will visit the United States to seek America's support to secure their repatriation. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Andrew Chan, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718131854/https://mailchi.mp/3ebefbd16ea8/hrnk-news-items-sung-yoon-lee-sue-mi-terry-join-hrnks-board-of-directors-us-needs-to-issue-an-atrocity-determination-for-n-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, May 2nd, 2024

HRNK Co-Chair Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett Receives Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation Dissident Human Rights Award

Top News:
HRNK Co-Chair Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett Receives Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation Dissident Human Rights Award (*HRNK*, 05/01/2024)
U.S. and South Korean Human Rights Organizations Express Concern About Modern-day Slavery in North Korea... Must Press via Targeted Sanctions (VOA, 04/24/2024)
**This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.*

In North Korea:
N. Korea dismantles S. Korean building near shuttered Kaesong complex (*Yonhap*, 05/02/2024)
N. Korea holds 1st meeting of police officials in 12 years amid drive to tighten social control (*Yonhap*, 05/02/2024)
North Korea clears strip of mountain near border, possibly for new guard post (*NK News*, 05/02/2024)
North Korea demands police combat 'illegal activities' at first meeting in years (*NK News*, 05/02/2024)
North Korea Emphasizes Theater Strike Missiles in the First Third of 2024 (*38 North*, 05/01/2024)
Reconstruction at North Korea's Quarantine Import Facility (*38 North*, 05/01/2024)

In South Korea:
Seoul alerts overseas missions to NK terror threats (*The Korea Herald*, 05/02/2024)

International:
China further repatriates hundreds of N. Korean defectors: civic group (*Yonhap*, 05/02/2024)
50 UN members eye alternative to disbanded North Korea monitoring panel (*RFA*, 05/01/2024)
Russia shipping fuel to North Korea above UN cap - White House (*Reuters*, 05/02/2024)

Top News:

- On behalf of HRNK's Board of Directors and staff, we are delighted to congratulate our Board Co-Chair Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett on being the recipient of this year's Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation's Dissident Human Rights Award. (*HRNK*)
- As the UN Human Rights Council is set to address the issue of contemporary slavery in September, human rights groups from the U.S. and S. Korea have urged the international community to increase pressure on North Korea through targeted sanctions. (Kim Young-kwon, VOA)

In North Korea:

- North Korea appears to have taken down a building located near the now-shuttered inter-Korean factory park in the North Korean border city of Kaesong. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has held a meeting of chiefs of branch public security stations earlier this week to tighten the country's grip on "social discipline." (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean workers are clearing a swath of a mountain directly opposite South Korea on the east coast, a video taken by *NK News* reveals. It may be construction for an observation post or another military installation. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- North Korean police officials from across the country gathered in Pyongyang this week for their first conference in 12 years, underscoring the country's efforts to combat outside influence and strengthen public discipline through the regime's basic units of social control and surveillance. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- All of North Korea's known missile activities during the first four months of 2024 have involved theater strike systems. (Vann H. Van Diepen, *38 North*)
- Commercial satellite imagery shows renewed construction at Uiju Airfield, North Korea's largest import quarantine facility located northeast of Sinuiju City. (Iliana Ragnone, *38 North*)

In South Korea:

- The South Korean government has raised its terror alert level from the lowest to the third-highest tier due to potential terror threats from North Korea targeting five overseas diplomatic missions in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, Vladivostok, and Shenyang. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)

International:

- Chinese authorities have resumed the forced repatriation of hundreds of North Korean defectors detained in China, a Seoul human rights group claimed Thursday, despite Seoul's repeated calls to stop the act. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Fifty U.N. members, including the United States, Japan, and South Korea, are considering alternatives to ensure continued "objective and independent" monitoring of sanctions on

North Korea after the recent dissolution of a panel investigating suspected violations, they said in a statement. (Taejun Kang, *RFA*)

- Russia has been quietly shipping refined petroleum to North Korea at levels that appear to violate a cap imposed by the UN Security Council. (Steve Holland, *Reuters*)

U.S. and South Korean Human Rights Organizations Express Concern About Modern-day Slavery in North Korea... Must Press via Targeted Sanctions

Kim Young-kwon, VOA
April 24, 2024

As the UN Human Rights Council is set to address the issue of contemporary slavery in September, human rights groups from the United States and South Korea have raised concerns about North Korea's slave labor issue through a report. They urged the international community to increase pressure on North Korea through targeted sanctions. This is Kim Young-kwon reporting.

North Korean human rights organizations from the United States and South Korea have submitted reports to the UN to draw attention to the serious issue of forced labor in North Korea.

According to the United Nations OHCHR website, the **Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)**, an American civil society organization, stated in its report, "The gravity, scale, and nature of the DPRK's violations of human rights reveal a state that has no parallel in the contemporary world," citing the Commission of Inquiry (COI) report and pointing out the lack of reform today even after 10 years.

In particular, it raised the issue of slave labor for prisoners in detention facilities, including political prisoners.

[HRNK Report] "Under Kim Jong-un's rule, the scale and scope of these violations have continued to worsen and intensify. Contemporary forms of slavery in North Korean detention facilities represent a grave and systematic violation of human rights. In these facilities, detainees, including political prisoners, are subjected to forced labor."

HRNK pointed to examples where detainees are forced to work in hazardous mining, agriculture and logging operations under harsh conditions without safety equipment.

They also criticized that forced labor is carried out regardless of gender, age, or health conditions, often resulting in injuries, diseases, and deaths.

In particular, detainees are subjected to labor exploitation seven days a week, for more than 10 to 12 hours a day, with only minimal rest, adding that sexual exploitation and abuse of female prisoners is widespread.

HRNK also pointed out that although North Korea formally prohibits forced labor on paper and has ratified several international human rights treaties, the North Korean authorities are not complying with them, especially in detention facilities.

[HRNK Report] "Continue and intensify international pressure on the North Korean government to adhere to international human rights standards, using targeted sanctions against individuals and entities responsible for human rights abuses."

"Encourage diplomatic dialogue that puts human rights at the core of the agenda alongside denuclearization and security issues and use diplomatic channels to call for the closure of political prisons and the release of political prisoners," HRNK recommended.

Additionally, HRNK added that the use of technological tools, such as satellite image analysis, should be expanded to monitor detention facilities and collect relevant evidence.

South Korea's Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights (NKHR) also pointed out similar problems in its report, emphasizing that North Korea's modern-day slave labor is directly linked to national policy.

NKHR noted that the UN COI report had concluded that crimes against humanity continue in North Korea because "the underlying policies, institutions, and practices of impunity remain intact," and pointed out that such practices continue today.

[NKHR Report] "The DPRK has been able to strengthen its economic profit and weapons program through the utilization of crimes against humanity including enslavement, torture, sexual and gender-based crimes (SGBC), and persecution based on religion, class, gender and/or political opinion."

NKHR added that North Korea's slave labor could also contribute to North Korea's production and proliferation of weapons that destabilize many parts of the world.

However, the report pointed out that the issue of slave labor occurring in supply chains that strengthen North Korea's military power has never been investigated by the COI or the UN Security Council, nor has it been raised at any human rights related meeting.

[NKHR Report] "Therefore, we strongly urge that the UN Security Council holds a briefing dedicated to the situation in the DPRK, with a primary focus on the connection between its military and security forces, their international supply chain connected to the mining and light industries and crimes against humanity attached to them."

Previously, the UN Special Rapporteur on modern slavery, Tomoya Obokota, called on Member States, civil society organizations, and academia to submit reports ahead of the 57th session of the

UN Human Rights Council in September, where he will focus on the global issue of contemporary forms of slavery.

According to the UN Human Rights Organization and the International Labor Organization (ILO), modern slavery includes victims of forced labor, child labor, human trafficking, inheritance of status such as slavery, and forced marriage.

The UN specifically notes that victims often face situations of exploitation that they cannot refuse or escape through threats, violence, deception, abuse of power or other forms of coercion.

In its 2023 World Slavery Index report released last year, the Work Free Foundation (WFF), an international human rights organization in Australia, said, "North Korea has the highest rate of modern slavery of any country in the world, with an estimated 104.6 cases of modern slavery per 1,000 people."

This is Kim Young-kwon for VOA *News*.

Translated by Gayeong Lee, Research Intern; edited by Diana Darae Woo, Research Intern

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Prepared by Kate Refolo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718132017/https://mailchi.mp/2480498409e3/hrnk-news-items-hrnk-co-chair-dr-katrina-lantos-swett-receives-victims-of-communism-memorial-foundation-dissident-human-rights-award?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, May 3rd, 2024

Support for NKHR Reauthorization Act Surges – Set to Pass This Year; N. Korea approves 1st post-pandemic entry of Chinese students

Top News:
Support for North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act Surges in Congress – Green Light to Pass this Year (*Radio Free Asia*, 04/30/2024)
**This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.*

In North Korea:
N. Korea approves 1st post-pandemic entry of Chinese students (*Yonhap*, 05/03/2024)
N. Korea touts disabilities education policy amid rights abuse criticism (*Yonhap*, 05/03/2024)

North Korea appears to test rocket engine amid preparation for satellite launch (*NK Pro*, 05/03/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korean military shoots down unidentified balloon near western maritime border in March (*Yonhap*, 05/03/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
North Korea is plotting attacks on South Korean embassies, spy agency warns (*The Telegraph*, 05/03/2024)
South Korea to double military drone fleet to counter North Korean UAV threats (*NK News*, 05/03/2024)

International:
Bracing for security risks ignited by Trump (KOR) (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/03/2024)
China repatriated at least 260 more North Koreans last month, rights groups say (*NK News*, 05/03/2024)
East German commissioner calls on S. Korea to seize unexpected opportunities for unification (*The Korea Herald*, 05/03/2024)
Flight of the Concorde? North Korea's brief flirtation with supersonic airliners (*NK News*, 05/03/2024)
Germany has yet to decide whether to reopen embassy in Pyongyang: envoy (*Yonhap*, 05/03/2024)
N. Korean economic delegation returns from Iran amid suspected military ties (*Yonhap*, 05/03/2024)
North Korea cancels visits by European delegations at last minute, sources say (*NK News*, 05/03/2024)
North Korean tanker docks in Russia as US accuses Moscow of breaching oil cap (*NK News*, 05/03/2024)
Russia sent more than 165,000 barrels of refined petroleum to N. Korea in March: White House (*Yonhap*, 05/03/2024)
Toy Story's animated character found at N. Korea's fashion show in suspected trademark violation (*Yonhap*, 05/03/2024)
U.S. releases new cybersecurity advisory against N.K.-linked cyber incursion group (*Yonhap*, 05/03/2024)
US remains committed to diplomacy despite North Korea's nuclear escalation (VOA, 05/02/2024)

Top News:

- Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), an American human rights group, told RFA on April 29 that support for the North Korean Human Rights Act Reauthorization Act is gaining ground and that expectations are growing for the bill to pass this year. (Han Duk-in, RFA)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has approved the entry of more than 80 Chinese students seeking to study in the North in the first such acceptance of overseas students after years of stringent border lockdowns aimed at fending off the pandemic. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- A ceremony welcoming new students was held at a vocational school run by the Central Committee of the Korean Federation for the Protection of the Disabled on Thursday, the Rodong Sinmun, the North's main newspaper, said. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea appears to have tested a rocket engine in recent weeks at the country's main space launch complex, according to *NK Pro* analysis of satellite imagery, as Pyongyang continues to prepare its first satellite launch of the year. (Colin Zwirko, NK Pro)

In South Korea:

- The Marine Corps stationed in Baengnyeong Island near the Northern Limit Line (NLL), a de facto inter-Korean maritime border, detected the unidentified flying object measuring up to 2 meters and drifting without a power device, according to the sources familiar with the issue. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- The National Intelligence Service (NIS) said it had recently "detected numerous signs that North Korea is preparing for terrorist attacks against our embassy staff or citizens in various countries, [such as] China, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East". (*The Telegraph*)
- South Korea is set to double its military drone fleet by 2026 to bolster its defense capabilities against threats from North Korea unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

International:

- Former U.S. President Donald Trump made it clear that he would stick to his previous position of demanding more defense co-sharing from South Korea than the current level, which he perceives as "free of charge," if he returns to the White House upon winning the presidential election in November. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- China forcibly repatriated at least 260 more North Koreans in late April, according to two South Korean human rights groups, the latest in a series of reported forced repatriations since last year that have raised concerns about the punishment that those sent back face in the DPRK. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- Eastern Germany Commissioner Carsten Schneider on Friday emphasized the paramount importance of South Korean leadership steadfastly pursuing the goal of unification and remaining vigilant in monitoring the North Korean situation, in order to capitalize on any unforeseen opportunity for achieving unity on the Korean Peninsula. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- German Ambassador to Seoul Georg Schmidt said Friday his country has yet to decide whether to reopen its embassy in North Korea following its withdrawal in early 2020 due to Pyongyang's COVID-19 border shutdown. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- For all its advancements in ballistic missile technology, North Korea is hardly known for excellence in the realm of commercial air travel, maintaining a ragtag fleet of aging Soviet jets that are only becoming harder to repair. But there was a time when the DPRK had high

hopes for its civilian airline, and even harbored dreams of breaking the sound barrier with its commercial jets. (Daniel Salisbury, *NK News*)

- A North Korean economic delegation has returned home from Iran, Pyongyang's state media said Friday, ending a rare trip that raised suspicions of possible weapons cooperation between the two nations. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- Delegations from several European countries that were poised to visit North Korea to discuss reopening embassies and aid operations recently had their trips canceled at the eleventh hour, informed diplomatic and NGO sources told *NK News*. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- A presumed North Korean oil tanker has recently docked at a Russian Far Eastern port, according to *NK Pro* analysis of satellite imagery, a sign Russia continues to supply fuel to the DPRK as the U.S. accuses Moscow of breaching the U.N. cap on oil deliveries. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Russia delivered more than 165,000 barrels of refined petroleum to North Korea in March alone, a White House official said Thursday, noting its shipments thus far have already pushed Pyongyang's imports above an annual cap mandated by the U.N. Security Council (UNSC). (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea appears to have violated trademark rights as it displayed clothing with a famous animated character from Disney-Pixar's 2010 movie "Toy Story 3" at the latest fashion exhibition, photos carried by state media showed Friday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The United States issued a cybersecurity advisory against a North Korea-linked cyber incursion group Thursday, accusing its actors of using malicious emails to glean intelligence for Pyongyang to inform its foreign policy and advance its national interests. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. says it has been trying to engage North Korea by sending messages repeatedly despite Pyongyang's apparent lack of interest in dialogue and its escalation of threats in the region. (Christy Lee, VOA)

Support for North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act Surges in Congress – Green Light to Pass this Year

Han Duk-in, *RFA*
April 30, 2024

It has been one year since the North Korean Human Rights Act reauthorization bill was proposed in the 118th U.S. Congress, but it is still pending.

Radio Free Asia (RFA) examined the progress of the North Korean Human Rights Actreauthorization bill and found that co-sponsors and support from both Republican and Democratic parties have recently increased. Former officials and human rights activists predicted that there is a growing possibility that the bill will be passed within the year, and that this could be an opportunity for the United States to reaffirm interest in North Korean human rights issues.

This is Han Duk-in reporting.

21 more co-sponsors in the House of Representatives this year... Bipartisan Support

The North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act of 2023 was proposed in the 118th U.S. Congress by Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA) in the Senate (S.584) and by Congresswoman Young Kim (R-CA-40) and Congressman Ami Bera (D-CA-6) in the House of Representatives (H.R.3012).

By examining the trends and distribution of signatures in support of the North Korean Human Rights Act Reauthorization Act of 2023 over the past year on the U.S. Congress website, RFA found that as many as 28 co-sponsors were added to the House bill this year.

Compared to the addition of just four co-sponsors (one Democratic, three Republican) from April to December last year, support for the bill appears to be expanding this year. It is particularly noteworthy that the number of supporting signatures has increased each month, with as many as twenty one co-sponsors in March and four added in April, compared to one in January and two in February.

Currently, in the House of Representatives, the bill has been co-signed by 33 members, excluding the lead sponsor, Rep. Young Kim, of which 12 are Democrats and 21 are Republicans, indicating bipartisan support.

Although the majority belong to the Republican Party, the bill shows that support between the Democratic and Republican parties is relatively even compared to some other issues with a partisan nature, signaling bipartisan support for improving human rights issues in North Korea.

In addition, the North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act of 2023 (S.584) introduced in the Senate last March, a month ahead of the House of Representatives, is currently before the Committee on Foreign Relations. Senator Rubio (R-FL) introduced the bill, and Senators Tim Kaine (D-VA), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), and Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) are listed as co-sponsors.

Similar to the House bill, the Senate bill also has bipartisan support from two Democratic lawmakers and two Republican lawmakers.

As support for the pending North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act of 2023 increases, attention is focused on it possibly passing within the year.

In an interview with RFA in January, **Rep. Young Kim** said she would continue efforts to pass the bill within this session.

[Rep. Kim] Once a bill is introduced, a decision should be made within two years. Since it was submitted during the 118th session, this is the last time to get it passed. It just needs to be taken care of by the end of this session in 2024. Because we have bipartisan support, we are diligently trying to get it passed in the House and Senate, and will continue to strive to have it become law within the year.

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the **Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)**, an American human rights group, told RFA on April 29 that support for the North Korean Human Rights Act Reauthorization Act is gaining ground and that expectations are growing for the bill to pass this year.

[Scarlatoiu] I have also been following the progress of this bill. Of course, it took a long time to make this progress. Although it has already been delayed by about a year and a half, I am confident that this bill will be passed within the year. I cannot reveal their names, but according to some Congress members, it is encouraging that support is increasing. I'm optimistic about the chances of it passing within the year. Scarlatoiu stated that Congress has traditionally been the most active branch of government on North Korean human rights issues, adding that it would be encouraging if Congress takes the lead again on North Korean human rights issues.

Robert King, the former U.S. Special Envoy for North Korea human rights issues, recently emphasized to RFA that the North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act of 2023 conveys a very important message.

[Amb. King] It's an interesting and paradoxical situation. Although there was no special envoy for the past four years with the Trump administration, the law was maintained. But now, there is no law, only special envoys. The North Korean Human Rights Act is important. In the United States, legal procedures require that the law be updated every four to five years, which is a useful process. It is important to update legislation and not leave it outdated. In addition, various activities that were carried out within the law can continue, and the State Department can continue its activities carried out in accordance with the bill.

Former Special Envoy **King** also added that the bill is a means of making clear the United States' interest and concern about the human rights situation in North Korea, and at the same time, an important way to declare to the world that "human rights in North Korea are important."

Must be passed before January 3, 2025

The North Korean Human Rights Act Reauthorization Act, jointly proposed by theSenate and House of Representatives, aims to extend the North Korean Human RightsAct, which expired in fiscal year 2022, for another five years until fiscal year 2028.The bill includes provisions to promote reunions for separated families between theUnited States and North Korea, appoint a Special Envoy for North Korean human rights,cooperate with the UNHCR for the protection and resettlement of North Korean refugees, and continue support for non-governmental organizations' broadcasting activities to North Korea.

In addition to extending support for the U.S. government's broadcasting, humanitarian aid, and democracy programs towards North Korea, the bill also includes a plan for the State Department to establish refugee coordinators at U.S. embassies in Asia and make efforts for North Korean escapees to participate in resettlement programs.

However, although this bill was proposed in both the Senate and the House of Representatives in the 117th session, it only passed the Senate and automatically expired in the House of Representatives in favor of other bills.

The North Korean Human Rights Act was extended three times in 2008, 2012, and 2018, but has now been adrift for over a year.

Julie Turner, the U.S. Special Envoy on North Korean human rights issues, expressed her expectations for the passage of the North Korean Human Rights Act Reauthorization bill in an interview with RFA in February, saying, "The North Korean Human Rights Act has helped create policies to promote human rights in North Korea."

[Amb. Turner] We must reflect back to when the North Korean Human Rights Act was first passed in 2004, which called for attention to human rights in North Korea. My current position was created through the Act which also helped create U.S. policies focused on advocating for human rights in North Korea. We also established programs to promote human rights, document human rights abuses, and facilitate the free flow of information within and outside of North Korea. What I would like to say to those currently working for North Korean human rights and the North Korean people is that we will do our best to improve the human rights situation in North Korea, and we must continue to look for these positive changes.

Scarlatoiu also emphasized that reauthorization of the North Korean Human Rights Act could be helpful to the U.S. Special Envoy on North Korean human rights, which in turn would also be helpful to the State Department's overall North Korean human rights activities.

In order for the North Korean Human Rights Act to be extended for another five years, one of the bills either in the Senate or House of Representatives must go through deliberation and receive the president's signature before finally being enacted into law. The 118th session of Congress, which started on January 3, 2023, will end on January 3, 2025. Bills that have not been voted on by then will automatically expire.

Some suggest that because many bills often end up adrift in the committee stage before the session ends, prompt review and voting by committees and expeditious procedures in the Senate and House of Representatives will be necessary for the bill to be passed this year.

Translated by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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Prepared by Ada Trybuchowska, HRNK Research Intern

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Saturday, May 4th, 2024

North Korean hackers using new tactics to bypass email security

Top News:
Exploitation and Desperation: Human Rights Violations and Labor Conditions of North Korean Workers Dispatched Overseas (*Shuddhashar*, 05/01/2024)

In North Korea:
Why North Korea's latest propaganda bop is a huge TikTok hit (*BBC News*, 05/04/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korea Considers Joining AUKUS Pillar II (*The Diplomat*, 05/03/2024)
Unusual terror alert for South Korea's embassies fuels tensions with North (*South China Morning Post*, 05/03/2024)

International:
Chinese students back in North Korea as post-Covid exchanges return to life (*South China Morning Post*, 05/04/2024)
Defense chiefs of U.S., Australia, Japan decry N.K.-Russia military cooperation (*Yonhap*, 05/04/2024)
North Korean hackers using new tactics to bypass email security, US warns (*NK Pro*, 05/04/2024)
S. Korea, China, Japan to hold trilateral summit May 26-27: report (*Yonhap*, 05/03/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. share need for joint response to China's solar panel excess capacity (*Yonhap*, 05/04/2024)
U.S. will press North Korea to resolve abductions issue: envoy (*Nikkei Asia*, 05/04/2024)

Top News:

- In this essay, Diletta De Luca (HRNK Research Associate) and Damian Reddy (HRNK Legal Counsel & Project Development Associate) discuss the situation of North Korean workers dispatched overseas. They stress that "the international community must do more to end these egregious labor practices and ensure their human rights are upheld." (Diletta De Luca, Damian Reddy, *Shuddhashar*)

In North Korea:

- When North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un released his latest song two weeks ago, surely he couldn't have foreseen it becoming a hit on TikTok. But the propaganda tune has gone viral online with Gen Z users bopping around to the synthy-electro pop. (Frances Mao, *BBC News*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea is considering sharing advanced military technology with the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia through the so-called AUKUS partnership, South Korean Defense Minister Shin Won-sik said. (Rod McGuirk, *The Diplomat*)

- A rare terrorism alert for South Korea's diplomats this week is fuelling tensions with Pyongyang while allowing a welcome respite for the South's ruling conservatives, who are still in shock from an election loss, observers say. (Park Chan-kyong, *South China Morning Post*)

International:

- A group of 41 Chinese students on government scholarships has arrived in North Korea, as post-pandemic exchanges between the neighbours gather pace amid growing tensions on the Korean peninsula. (Laura Zhou, *South China Morning Post*)
- The defense chiefs of the United States, Australia and Japan denounced growing military cooperation between North Korea and Russia, including their weapons transactions, during their trilateral talks in Hawaii this week, according to a joint statement released Friday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. has warned that a North Korean cybercrime has adopted new tactics to bypass email security protocols and boost its social engineering operations against researchers, nonprofits and media organizations. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK Pro*)
- South Korea, China and Japan are likely to hold a long-stalled trilateral summit of their leaders on May 26 and 27, a news report said Friday. (Park Sang-soo, *Yonhap*)
- Senior diplomats from South Korea and the United States discussed the need for a joint response to potential ramifications from overcapacity in China's solar industry during their talks on energy security in Houston, Texas this week, a Seoul official said Friday. (Song Sang-ho, Kim Dong-hyun, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. is committed to working with Japan to bring home Japanese nationals abducted by North Korea, the American special envoy on North Korean human rights issues recently told Nikkei. (Yukihiro Sakaguchi, Nishant Annu, *Nikkei Asia*)

Prepared by Tessa Aguilar, HRNK Research Intern

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Sunday, May 5th, 2024

N. Korea slams U.S., other countries for seeking alternative to U.N. sanctions monitoring panel

In North Korea:
Former North Korean diplomat on the drawbacks of being elite (*Radio Free Asia*, 05/05/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korea, China, Japan in talks to hold trilateral summit May 26-27: official (*Yonhap*, 05/04/2024)

Veterans minister to visit France, Germany this week (*Yonhap*, 05/05/2024)

International:
North Korean weapons are killing Ukrainians. The implications are far bigger (BBC, 05/05/2024)
N. Korea slams U.S., other countries for seeking alternative to U.N. sanctions monitoring panel (*Yonhap*, 05/05/2024)
S. Korea to participate in U.S.-led cyber exercise this week (*Yonhap*, 05/05/2024)
South Korea brings hypersonic tech to the AUKUS table in a sign Seoul is moving closer to the US and its other allies (*South China Morning Post*, 05/05/2024)
U.S. will do 'all' it can to back S. Korea in case of China's economic coercion: official (*Yonhap*, 05/05/2024)

In North Korea:

- Ryu Hyun-woo, a former North Korean diplomat, defected to South Korea in 2019 to offer his daughter a better future. In an interview with RFA Korean, he expressed concerns for the safety of his family left in North Korea and discussed the repressive nature of the regime that drives such defections. (*Radio Free Asia*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea is in final consultations with China and Japan to hold a long-stalled trilateral summit of their leaders on May 26 and 27, according to the foreign ministry. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- Veterans Minister Kang Jung-ai will visit France and Germany this week to strengthen cooperation in veterans affairs with countries that participated in the 1950-53 Korean War, her office said Sunday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Ukrainian inspector Khrystyna Kimachuk identified clear evidence of North Korea's involvement, challenging global efforts to isolate Pyongyang's arms trade. This revelation underscores North Korea's capability to influence international conflicts and exposes the limitations of current sanction regimes, raising critical questions about global security and diplomatic strategies. (Jean Mackenzie, BBC)
- North Korea denounced the United States and other countries for seeking an alternative to the United Nations monitoring panel that enforced sanctions against Pyongyang, saying that such a move will be doomed to face "self-destruction." (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's Cyber Operations Command will participate in a U.S.-led multinational cyber exercise this week to strengthen its capabilities to counter malicious cyber activities, Seoul's defense ministry said Sunday, amid growing security threats from North Korea. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Advanced South Korean hypersonic technology would be a "good contributor" to AUKUS in standing up against China's weapons, sand Seoul's desire to join the security pact signals it is leaning further towards the US and its other allies, analysts say. (Seong Hyeon Choi, *South China Morning Post*)

- The United States will do "all" it can to support South Korea in the event of China's economic coercion against the Asian ally, a U.S. official has said, driving home an emphatic message: Washington has Seoul's back. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Gloria Guo, HRNK Research Intern

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Monday, May 6th, 2024

Former N. Korean diplomat on the drawbacks of being elite; N. Korea bolsters leader Kim with birthday loyalty oaths

In North Korea:
INTERVIEW: Former North Korean diplomat on the drawbacks of being elite (*Radio Free Asia*, 05/05/2024)
N.K. leader calls on public security officials to 'firmly defend' state unity (*Yonhap*, 05/06/2024)
North Korea bolsters leader Kim with birthday loyalty oaths (*Reuters*, 05/06/2025)
North Korea could open border city to foreign tourists this month: Tour agency (*NK News*, 05/06/2024)
North Korea tears down buildings at Kim Jong Un's winter palace complex (*NK News*, 05/06/2024)
North Korea's UN ambassador says new sanctions monitoring groups will fail (*Reuters*, 05/05/2025)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Five tourism routes near DMZ to open starting next Monday (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/06/2024)

International:
The Hague dismisses case against Dutch firms accused of using North Korean labor (*NK News*, 05/06/2024)
Why North Korea's latest propaganda bop is a huge TikTok hit (*BBC*, 05/05/2024)

In North Korea:

- Ryu Hyun-woo was North Korea's acting ambassador to Kuwait when he defected to South Korea in 2019. As one of the elites in North Korea, he had rights and privileges that ordinary citizens do not. (*RFA Korean*)
- Kim Jong-un has called on neighborhood police chiefs to "firmly defend" the country's unity in an apparent effort to tighten the country's grip on social discipline. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

- For the first time since leader Kim Jong Un took power in 2011, North Koreans were asked to take loyalty oaths on his birthday, a South Korean research institute said, amid other steps the country is taking to solidify his rule. (Minwoo Park, Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- North Korea could allow foreign tourists to visit a city on the Chinese border as soon as the end of this month, according to a company specializing in DPRK tours, though non-Russian travelers will likely still be unable to visit Pyongyang. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- North Korea has demolished multiple buildings at a location south of Pyongyang known as Kim Jong Un's winter palace complex, *NK Pro* analysis shows, a move one expert said could be part of a transfer of the residence to the military. (Anton Sokolin, NK News)
- Efforts led by the U.S. and other Western countries to form new groups to monitor sanctions on North Korea will fail, the country's U.N. envoy said on Sunday. (Hyunsu Yim, *Reuters*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Five tourism routes near the demilitarized zone (DMZ) in the Cheorwon, Hwacheon, Yanggu, Inje and Goseong counties in Gangwon will open to the public starting next Monday. (Park Jin-ho, Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- The Hague appeals court has dismissed a case against two Dutch shipbuilding companies accused of profiting from North Korean forced laborers. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- When North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un released his latest song two weeks ago, surely he couldn't have foreseen it becoming a hit on TikTok. (Frances Mao, *BBC*)

Prepared by Samantha Garcia, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718134704/https://mailchi.mp/57b6463fdc7a/hrnk-news-items-former-n-korean-diplomat-on-the-drawbacks-of-being-elite-n-korea-bolsters-leader-kim-with-birthday-loyalty-oaths?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, May 7th, 2024

U.S. Human Rights Expert: "North Korean Political Prisoners Forced to Work in Punggye-ri – Possibility of Radiation Exposure"

Top News:
U.S. Human Rights Expert: "North Korean Political Prisoners Forced to Work in Punggye-ri – Possibility of Radiation Exposure" (*The JoongAng*, 04/29/2024)
**This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.*

In North Korea:
Biting Humor: North Korea's forgotten embrace of satirical cartoons (*NK News*, 05/07/2024)
N. Korea's premier calls for enhancing irrigation amid food shortages (*Yonhap*, 05/07/2024)
N. Korea promotes maternity protection policy amid low birthrate (*Yonhap*, 05/07/2024)
North Korea sounds out cooperation with Iranian automaker Saipa (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/07/2024)
North Korea tests liquid propellant rocket engine: research group (*RFA*, 05/06/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Four more tourism trails near DMZ to open next Tuesday (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/07/2024)

International:
Australia says Chinese warplane fired flares near its navy helicopter on North Korea sanctions mission (*The Independent*, 05/07/2024)
North Korea and Iran — a new alliance? (*DW*, 05/07/2024)
Russia exports 2K tons of flour and corn to North Korea amid signs of shortages (*NK News*, 05/07/2024)
Ukraine examines N.Korean missile debris amid fears of Moscow-Pyongyang axis (*Reuters*, 05/07/2024)

Top News:

- **Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)** said, "the weapons and ammunition that North Korea produced by exploiting its citizens are going through Iran to Hamas, Hezbollah, and Russia. This is becoming a serious threat." **Scarlatoiu** also stated, "There is a very clear connection between North Korea's human rights violations and its nuclear and weapons of mass destruction programs." He emphasized, "Kim Jong-un is benefiting greatly from the disorder between the world's democracies and authoritarian regimes." (Hyoung Gu Kim, *The JoongAng*)

In North Korea:

- Magazine *Hwalsal* once prominently featured social criticism, revealing openness of early DPRK until regime cracked down. (Choi Hyun Jun, *NK News*)
- North Korea's Premier Kim Tok-hun has inspected regional farms and called for enhancing an irrigation system to cope with droughts and heat waves amid the country's chronic food shortages. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea on Tuesday promoted its maternity protection policy amid its low birthrate, saying the country provides pregnant women with pre-and post-natal care services 11 times. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea expressed interest in cooperation with Iranian automaker Saipa during a recent trip by an official delegation from Pyongyang to Tehran. Yun Jong-ho, North Korea's external economic relations minister, was quoted in a post on Saipa's Instagram account that the two countries could "cooperate in the automotive industry given favorable bilateral political ties." (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- North Korea tested a liquid propellant rocket engine last month and bolstered construction resources and funding for its satellite launching station as it aims for more launches in defiance of U.N. sanctions. (Taejun Kang, RFA)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Four additional tourism routes near the DMZ will open to the public next week, the Gyeonggi provincial government announced Tuesday. The additional routes will open in Gimpo, Goyang, Paju and Yeoncheon. (Lim Jeong-Won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- Australia has protested a Chinese warplane's "unprofessional and unacceptable" use of flares near one of its helicopters flying a United Nations mission to enforce sanctions against North Korea in international waters. The country's Defence Department said the pilot of the MH-60R Seahawk was forced to take evasive action after a People's Liberation Army fighter jet ejected flares in its flight path over the Yellow Sea on Saturday. (Shweta Sharma, *The Independent*)
- North Korea is building new ties with like-minded nations and entrenching older alliances beyond its powerful neighbors Russia and China. Recently, the Iranian regime seems to be of particular interest to Pyongyang and the North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. (Julian Ryall, DW)
- Multiple regions in Siberia and the Russian Far East have supplied thousands of tons of flour and corn to North Korea since the start of 2024, though an expert raised doubts that the quantities are enough to alleviate food shortages in the country. At least five Russian regions have shipped over 1,270 tons of wheat flour and at least 1,000 tons of corn to North Korea in the first months of 2024. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Ukrainian state prosecutors say they have examined debris from 21 of around 50 North Korean ballistic missiles launched by Russia between late December and late February, as they seek to assess the threat from Moscow's cooperation with Pyongyang. (Tom Balmforth, David Gauthier-Villars, *Reuters*)

U.S. Human Rights Expert: "North Korean Political Prisoners Forced to Work in *Punggye-ri* – Possibility of Radiation Exposure"

Hyoung Gu Kim, *The JoongAng*
April 29, 2024

"The issue of human rights in North Korea is no longer confined to North Korea. It is a global problem that poses a serious threat to international security."

In a video interview with *The JoongAng* on the 22nd (KST), **Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)** said, "the weapons and ammunition that North Korea produced by exploiting its citizens are going through Iran to Hamas, Hezbollah, and

Russia. This is becoming a serious threat."

Scarlatoiu also stated, "There is a very clear connection between North Korea's human rights violations and its nuclear and weapons of mass destruction programs." He emphasized, "Kim Jong-un is benefiting greatly from the disorder between the world's democracies and authoritarian regimes."

Scarlatoiu, originally from Romania, studied international human rights law in the United States and studied in Korea. He has gained a reputation as an expert on North Korean human rights since taking on the role of Executive Director at **HRNK**, a non-governmental organization based in Washington, D.C., in 2011.

The U.S. government and the United Nations also highly rely on **Scarlatoiu** and **HRNK** when it comes to North Korean human rights.. The State Department's 2023 country report on human rights in North Korea quotes HRNK's research, which also formed the basis for its submission to North Korea's fourth UPR cycle and Special Rapporteur Tomoya Obokata.

Regarding Japanese abductees, one of the issues highlighted in HRNK's submission for the UPR, **Scarlatoiu** stated that "this is an area where South Korea and Japan can cooperate more closely," since "South Korean nationals detained in North Korea, including Christian missionaries, should also be returned."

He also pointed out that "North Korean women's rights have worsened since the Covid-19 pandemic," noting with concern that "not only are female detainees subjected to sexual abuse and violence in detention facilities, but they are also often exposed to widespread gender-based violence in society." Regarding the Kim Jong-un regime in North Korea, **Scarlatoiu** stressed that "no dictatorship lasts forever."

Q. What is the human rights situation of North Korean citizens?

A. "North Korea is having a field day after the renewal of the UN Security Council's Panel of Experts assisting the Sanctions Committee on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was canceled due to Russia's veto. They (North Korea) are dealing arms to Iran, delivering them to Hamas (a Palestinian armed group), Hezbollah (a Lebanese armed group), and Houthi rebels (pro-Iranian rebels in Yemen) through Iran, and sending artillery shells to Russia. All of these weapons and ammunition are the result of North Korea's exploitation of its own people. Now we know that it is no longer just North Korea's problem. It has spread to Ukraine and the Middle East, posing a serious threat to our friends and allies."

Q. The recently released UPR submission focused on the abduction of Japanese citizens to North Korea.

A. "North Korea claims it abducted thirteen Japanese citizens, saying that excluding the five who returned to Japan, the remaining eight are dead. According to official Japanese records, however, there are seventeen abductees at minimum. It is also difficult to believe the circumstances of the deaths disclosed by North Korea. Most of them allegedly died because of car accidents, but are there that many car accidents in North Korea? It is also strange that all the death certificates were issued by the same hospital within a very short period of time."

Q. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida is pushing for a North Korea-Japan summit in hopes of resolving the abduction issue.

A. "The issue of abductees is very important in Japanese politics. There are strong demands from victims' families and civil society organizations for a resolution. I am not saying that a North Korea-Japan summit will happen, but Japan will not rule out the possibility. There has been good cooperation on North Korean human rights issues since the trilateral summit between South Korea, the United States, and Japan last August, and the abductees issue is an opportunity for South Korea and Japan to cooperate more closely. There are many kidnapped South Korean fishermen, priests, and missionaries held in North Korea. They are citizens of the Republic of Korea. South Korea needs to get them back."

Q. What is the current status of political prison detention facilities in North Korea?

A. "As stated in our UPR submission, we confirmed the location of twenty-seven detention facilities. They are strategically located in remote, mountainous areas, near the North Korea-China border, and along the coast. We are investigating the possibility that there may be more. We are trying to piece together the truth based on satellite imagery and testimonies, but it was difficult to confirm accurate information and identify witnesses during Covid-19."

Q. How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted human rights in North Korea?

A. "Married women's human rights and safety have been hit the hardest. It became impossible to sell home-cooked food on the streets, making it difficult to make ends meet. Torture, rape, forced abortions, and sexual abuse of women imprisoned in political prison camps and detention facilities are still severe, and a culture of sexual abuse and gender-based violence is pervasive in North Korean society. There is no place to raise issues and the laws are weak."

Q. In its recent UPR submission, HRNK confirmed the existence of a path connecting the

Punggye-ri nuclear test site and a political prison camp (Kwan-li-so No. 16).

A. "Using satellite imagery, we confirmed that Camp No. 16 is located about 1.5 kilometers east of the Punggye-ri nuclear facility. It's highly likely prisoners are used for forced labor at the nuclear test facility. It is very likely they are used for tunneling and post-test cleanup without protective equipment." In a report released last October, HRNK stated there is a 5.2-kilometer road connecting the Punggye-ri nuclear testing facility and Kwan-li-so No. 16. It denounced the high possibility that prisoners could be forcibly mobilized to construct or maintain the nuclear testing facility using this road. "The North Korean regime views political prisoners as a 'poisonous weed' that needs to be eradicated," HRNK said, adding that "we have obtained testimonies that prisoners here are subjected to harsh forced labor in dangerous conditions, exposed to radioactive contamination, and poor food rations."

Q. What is HRNK's latest focus?

A. "The North Korean system is based on border control, market control, and information control. We pay attention to the recent information crackdown. Young North Koreans like American movies like John Wick and the Mission Impossible series, and South Korean dramas. Nowadays, if you are caught watching South Korean content, it is a very serious matter. It's not that South Korean dramas have political overtones, but the North Korean authorities are not okay with scenes of Korean people living in nice apartments, driving nice cars, and drinking good coffee."

Q. How much longer can Kim Jong-un's regime last?

A. "No dictatorship lasts forever. But unfortunately, Kim Jong-un is currently in a very good position. He is selling millions of shells to the front lines in Ukraine. He is 'killing two birds with one stone' by being able to test his weapons while making money. Kim Jong-un is benefiting greatly from the current global disorder, in which the rift between the democratic world—such as the United States, South Korea, the European Union, and Japan—and authoritarian countries—such as China, Russia, Iran, Venezuela, and Cuba—is deepening. To change the North Korean regime, we must consistently tell the truth. We need to tell North Koreans stories about human rights, the outside world, and the value of democracy and freedom."

Q. If former President Donald Trump is re-elected, will he meet Chairman Kim Jong-un again?

A. "He'll take a more cautious approach. I just hope that North Korean human rights will continue to be emphasized, whether former President Trump comes back to power or President Joe Biden is re-elected."

☞ Greg Scarlatoiu

Scarlatoiu studied in Seoul for 10 years starting in 1990 as the first Romanian to study on a South Korean government scholarship after the fall of the Ceaușescu regime. He became interested in North Korean human rights issues after realizing that Romania under Ceaușescu, which enforced a cult of personality, was very similar to the North Korean regime.

Afterwards, he moved to the United States to study international human rights law. In August 2011, he was appointed as Executive Director of HRNK, where began his career as a North Korean human rights activist in earnest. Based in Washington, D.C., HRNK is a non-governmental organization that strives to improve human rights in North Korea through research, investigation, and publishing reports. Scarlatoiu has frequently appeared as a witness at U.S. congressional hearings to testify about North Korean human rights, and is **a**ctively engaged in activities such as publishing the submission to North Korea's UPR every four and a half years.

Translated by Gayeong Lee, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern and Raymond Ha, Director of Operations & Research

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Prepared by Katherine Mitchell, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718135058/https://mailchi.mp/b9244fbf05f1/hrnk-news-items-us-human-rights-expert-north-korean-political-prisoners-forced-to-work-in-punggye-ri-possibility-of-radiation-exposure?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, May 8th, 2024

Increased Attention on Japanese Citizens Abducted by North Korea; More NGOs Release Joint Reports

Top News:
Increased Attention on Japanese Citizens Abducted by North Korea (KEI, 05/07/2024)
More NGOs Release Joint Reports as Amnesty International Criticizes N. Korea's Crackdown on Freedom of Expression (VOA, 05/02/2024)
**This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.*

In North Korea:
Kim family's master propagandist dies at 94 (BBC, 05/08/2024)

Sinpho South Shipyard: Indications of New Submarine Construction (*38 North*, 05/08/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korea holds live-fire drills to defend islands on North Korea's doorstep (*NK News*, 05/08/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Former North Korean diplomat named president of unification institute (*The Korea Times*, 05/08/2024)

International:
China fired flares at aircraft monitoring North Korea sanctions, Australia says (*NK News*, 05/08/2024)
N. Korean leader congratulates Putin on inauguration (*Yonhap*, 05/08/2024)
Russia is shipping oil to North Korea above UN mandated levels - US official (*Reuters*, 05/08/2024)
Washington's willingness to engage Pyongyang exposes a rare rift with Seoul (VOA, 05/08/2024)
Why a private US citizen decided to take down North Korea's internet on his own (*NK News*, 05/07/2024)

Top News:

- Despite little interest from North Korea on its abduction of Japanese citizens, a new generation of global leadership is keeping the issue in the spotlight, urging North Korea to address unresolved cases. (Robert King, *KEI*)
- The U.S. **Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)** also released its submission to North Korea's fourth UPR, highlighting horrific human rights abuses in detention centers, sexual and gender-based violence against women, and enforced disappearances. (Kim Young-kwon, VOA)

In North Korea:

- North Korea's former propaganda master Kim Ki Nam has died at the age of 94. (Kelly Ng, *BBC*)
- North Korea unveiled the "Sinpo-C" class ballistic missile submarine, the Hero Kim Kun Ok, on September 6, 2023, marking the second phase of its submarine-launched ballistic missile program. Recent satellite imagery suggests a new submarine construction campaign at the Sinpho South Shipyard, indicating progress towards expanding the country's submarine fleet. (Jack Liu, Peter Makowsky, Iliana Ragnone, *38 North*)

In South Korea

- South Korea kicked off live-fire military exercises on defending border islands against North Korean attack on Wednesday, warning residents to avoid going outside during the drills. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- A North Korean diplomat-turned-defector has recently been appointed the president of the National Institute for Unification Education. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)

International:

- A Chinese fighter jet fired flares toward an Australian helicopter participating in a mission to monitor North Korea sanctions in the Yellow Sea this month, according to Canberra, accusing China of endangering the aircraft and its crew. (Lina Park, *NK News*)
- Kim Jong-un has sent a congratulatory message to Vladimir Putin for formally starting his fifth term as Moscow's leader, amid deepening military cooperation between the two nations. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- Russia has been quietly shipping refined petroleum to North Korea at levels that appear to violate the mandates of the United Nations Security Council, a U.S. official said on Thursday, adding the U.S. is planning new sanctions in response. (Steve Holland, *Reuters*)
- The Biden administration's apparent willingness to engage North Korea is causing a rare public rift with one of Washington's key allies in Asia over how to achieve Pyongyang's denuclearization. (Christy Lee, VOA)
- In interview, hacker Alejandro Caceres shares why he went public, what he learned and why he backs cyberwarfare. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

More NGOs Release Joint Reports as Amnesty International Criticizes N. Korea's Crackdown on Freedom of Expression

Kim Young-kwon, VOA
May 02, 2024

International human rights groups have criticized the North Korean regime for intensifying repression against its citizens and ignoring its promises to promote freedom of expression. It has also become more common for civil society organizations to publish joint reports to pressure North Korea to improve its human rights record. This is Kim Young-kwon reporting.

Amnesty International, the world's largest human rights organization, and other groups have published their submissions for the UN Human Rights Council's (HRC) fourth Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of North Korea.

On April 8, the HRC closed the submission of stakeholder reports—including those by civil society organizations—ahead of North Korea's fourth UPR, scheduled for November.

In its report, Amnesty International pointed out that North Korea had failed to implement most of the 132 recommendations it accepted in the third UPR cycle.

Specifically, the report noted that the situation in North Korea has worsened with respect to

freedom of opinion and expression—an issue of growing concern in the international community.

[**Amnesty International**] "Despite the DPRK accepting nine recommendations on freedom of opinion and expression including a review of legislation and national policies to ensure these rights, restrictions continued to intensify with communication and information flows continuing to be monitored and a subject to punishment. Laws such as the ban on reactionary thought and the Youth Education Guarantee Law enacted in 2020 and 2021 respectively further restrict access to information."

The report also noted that the Reactionary Ideology and Culture Rejection Act, which came into effect in 2020, and the Youth Education Guarantee Act, which came into effect in 2021, have further restricted access to information.

Furthermore, the report stated that the Pyongyang Cultural Language Protection Act, which increased punishments for speaking in a South Korean style or accent, reflects greater hostility toward South Korean culture and media.

During its last UPR, North Korea pledged to implement nine recommendations on freedom of opinion, expression, and information, including a recommendation to "introduce a law on freedom of information in line with international standards."

Amnesty International recommended that North Korea "reform or amend all legal articles that unduly restrict the right to freedom of expression that are used to punish individuals for watching South Korean films and television shows to bring them into line with international law and standards."

Moreover, Amnesty International urged North Korea to "allow free access to the internet, social media, international communications, and foreign broadcasting and publications, including popular culture from other countries.

Other recommendations included ensuring freedom of movement and ensuring that all workers, inside and outside the country, enjoy fair, safe, and healthy working conditions and reasonable working hours.

Korea Future, a British non-governmental organization, published two reports that it submitted for North Korea's fourth UPR cycle.

In the first report, Korea Future highlighted human rights abuses in various detention centers and recommended that North Korea should not arrest individuals for exercising their right to leave the country, and stop detaining those who have been forcibly repatriated.

[**Korea Future**] "Prohibit the practice of arresting individuals based on the legitimate exercise of their right to exit the country and cease the detention of DPRK citizens who have been forcibly repatriated… Ensure the independence and impartiality of judicial authorities and guarantee the right to a fair trial for individuals subject to administrative sanctions."

Korea Future also called on North Korea to ensure the independence and impartiality of judicial authorities and guarantee individuals facing administrative sanctions the right to a fair trial.

Lee Hyeon-sim, head of accountability at Korea Future, told VOA that the organization's goal is to draw greater attention to the serious human rights violations committed against North Korean women in detention facilities after they are forcibly repatriated.

[**Lee Hyeon-sim**] "It may not receive much attention, but sexual and gender-based violence is incredibly widespread in [the detention facilities]. It would be a great outcome if we can draw international attention to this issue."

The U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (**HRNK**) also released its submission to North Korea's fourth UPR, highlighting horrific human rights abuses in detention centers, sexual and gender-based violence against women, and enforced disappearances.

In particular, **HRNK** pointed out a range of human rights abuses, including torture and forced labor, that are committed in political prison camps—the site of some of the worst human rights violations in North Korea.

HRNK called on North Korea to "dismantle all political prison camps and unconditionally release all prisoners," "ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED)," and "provide a comprehensive and transparent record of all abductions and take concrete measures to facilitate their repatriation to the ROK and Japan."

Representatives of North Korean human rights organizations observed that it is becoming more common for these groups to write joint submissions with international human rights groups and

also with other partners.

For instance, South Korea's Database Center for North Korean Human Rights (NKDB) submitted a joint report with the France-based International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), which is regarded as one of the world's leading human rights organizations.

The Transitional Justice Working Group (TJWG) submitted a joint report with Human Rights Watch, which monitors human rights conditions in more than 100 countries, and another joint report with the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty

Dr. Shin Hee-seok, TJWG's legal analyst, told VOA that "TJWG hopes to contribute to making human rights abuses in North Korea more widely known by raising the issue in partnership with international human rights organizations working on universal human rights issues, such as the abolition of the death penalty and the prevention of torture."

Korea Future also submitted a report to the HRC in collaboration with two South Korea-based organizations led by North Korean escapee women, Uniseed and the E-um Research Institute, addressing gender-based violence against women in North Korea. Korea Future's Lee Hyeon-sim explained the rationale behind submitting a joint report.

[**Lee Hyeon-sim**] "We can have a much greater impact when we can speak in one voice with people who are working in the field. We can also amplify the voice of victims and survivors, which is why we submitted a joint report."

Lee Young-hwan, head of the Transitional Justice Working Group, said that joint reports provide a range of information to UN member states, allowing civil society organizations to create maximum pressure on the North Korean regime.

[**Lee Young-hwan**] "When international organizations, organizations within South Korea, North Korean refugee organizations, and organizations in the U.S. work together to submit joint reports, or when organizations with an interest in specific issue areas write joint reports, it provides more material for other member states to reference or cite when raising the North Korean issue."

Lee added that "various UN member states can ask pointed questions to North Korean diplomats based on specific information in these reports," emphasizing that "this will create pressure on the North Korean regime, which will try to speed through its UPR in a perfunctory manner."

This is Kim Young-kwon for VOA *News*.

Translated by Gayeong Lee, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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Prepared by Bryan Clark, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718135423/https://mailchi.mp/3f5c5f004801/hrnk-news-items-increased-attention-on-japanese-citizens-abducted-by-north-korea-more-ngos-release-joint-reports?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, May 9th, 2024

East Asia's Coming Population Collapse; China Forcibly Returns 60 Refugees to North Korea

Top News:
East Asia's Coming Population Collapse And How It Will Reshape World Politics (*Foreign Affairs*, 05/08/2024)

In North Korea:
N. Korean leader voices 'firm support' in his message to Putin over Victory Day (*Yonhap*, 05/09/2024)
North Korea Appears to Be Building New Submarine for Attacks, Group Says (*Bloomberg*, 05/09/2024)

In South Korea:
Seoul to pursue amicable ties with Moscow despite North Korean arms trade: Yoon (*NK News*, 05/09/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Unification ministry to install artwork symbolizing N.K. abductees at Seoul festival (*Yonhap*, 05/09/2024)

International:
Canada to deploy aircraft to monitor illegal North Korean ship-to-ship transfers (*NK News*, 05/09/2024)
China Forcibly Returns 60 Refugees to North Korea (*Human Rights Watch*, 05/08/2024)

Hundreds of North Koreans enter Russia in first quarter amid burgeoning ties (*NK News*, 05/09/2024)
Korean War monument established in Germany for 1st time (*Yonhap*, 05/09/2024)
Russia's Cover up of Its Dangerous Dealings With North Korea Leaves Us All Less Secure (*The Diplomat*, 05/09/2024)
US discusses North Korea with China, airs repatriation concerns (*BBC*, 05/09/2024)
U.S. nuclear envoy stresses concerns about N.K-Russia ties during talks with Chinese counterpart (*Yonhap*, 05/09/2024)

Top News:

- In upcoming decades, East Asia will experience perhaps the modern world's most dramatic demographic shift, bestowing on the United States a great strategic gift in the Asia-Pacific. (Nicholas Eberstadt, *Foreign Affairs*)

In North Korea:

- Kim extended his "warm congratulations and comradely greetings" to Putin in the message celebrating the 79th anniversary of the Soviet Union's World War II victory over Nazi Germany. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Satellite photos show submarine components at shipyard. (Jon Herskovitz, *Bloomberg*)

In South Korea

- South Korea will pursue an "amicable" relationship with Russia despite being in a difficult place due to the arms trade between Pyongyang and Moscow. (Jeongmin Kim, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- The unification ministry in charge of inter-Korean affairs said Thursday it will install an artwork inspired by three forget-me-nots at an upcoming garden show in efforts to raise awareness of South Koreans being held in North Korea. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Canada will deploy a patrol aircraft to Japan from early May to early June to monitor illegal ship-to-ship transfers by North Korean vessels. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- The Chinese government forcibly returned about 60 North Korean refugees on April 26, putting them at grave risk of enforced disappearance, torture, sexual violence, wrongful imprisonment, forced labor, and execution. (Lina Yoon, *Human Rights Watch*)
- Close to a thousand North Koreans entered Russia in the first quarter of 2024, according to official data from Moscow, while a similar number of Russian nationals visited the DPRK amid burgeoning tourism and bilateral exchanges. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- A monument marking Germany's support for South Korea during the 1950-53 Korean War was unveiled in Berlin earlier this week, the veterans ministry said Thursday, marking the first one of its kind in the European country. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

- Moscow killed a U.N. body overseeing North Korea sanctions compliance for one simple reason: Russia is flagrantly violating the U.N. sanctions. (Jung H. Pak, *The Diplomat*)
- U.S. Deputy Special Representative Jung Pak discussed North Korea with her Chinese counterpart in Tokyo on Thursday, expressing concerns about the forcible repatriation of North Koreans from China, the U.S. State Department said. (David Brunnstrom, *Reuters*)
- The top U.S. nuclear envoy for North Korea reiterated concerns over growing military cooperation between North Korea and Russia during talks with her Chinese counterpart in Tokyo on Thursday, the State Department said. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Valerie Xu, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718135531/https://mailchi.mp/a7d4387ca606/hrnk-news-items-east-asias-coming-population-collapse-china-forcibly-returns-60-refugees-to-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, May 10th, 2024

Congressional report notes need to examine N.K. sanctions implementation

In North Korea:
N. Korea holds funeral for ex-propaganda chief Kim Ki-nam (*Yonhap*, 05/10/24)

In South Korea:
S. Korea considering deployment of commandos for DMZ security operations (*Yonhap*, 05/10/24)
S. Korea stages defense drills for western border island (*Yonhap*, 05/10/24)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N. Korea tears down S. Korean-built fire station at Mount Kumgang resort: Seoul (*Yonhap*, 05/10/24)

International:
Congressional report notes need to examine N.K. sanctions implementation (*Yonhap*, 05/10/24)
End of U.N. North Korea panel creates gap in sanctions monitoring (*Nikkei Asia*, 05/08/24)
Foreign ministers of South Korea, China to meet in Beijing (*The Korea Herald*, 05/10/24)
North Korea sounds out cooperation with Iranian automaker Saipa (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/07/24)
Nuclear envoys of S. Korea, U.S., Japan underline 'resolve' against N. Korea's threats, ties with Russia (*Yonhap*, 05/09/24)
Russia's Missiles From North Korea Are Exploding midair: Kyiv (*Newsweek*, 05/07/24)
US court orders forfeiture of 279 crypto accounts tied to North Korea laundering (*NK News*, 05/10/24)

U.S. military official stresses need not to 'overreact' or 'underreact" to N.K. threats (*Yonhap*, 05/10/24)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has held a state funeral for Kim Ki-nam, known as the master of propaganda operations for the North's ruling family, with leader Kim Jong-un in attendance. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea is considering the deployment of special forces for security operations inside the DMZ in response to North Korea's restoration of demolished guard posts along the border. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's military has staged joint defense drills for western border islands to bolster readiness against North Korean threats. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea dismantled a fire station built with the South Korean government's budget at the Mount Kumgang resort on the North's east coast last month. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

International:

- A U.S. congressional report has noted the need for Congress to look into the implementation of anti-North Korea sanctions, saying the North's violation of the sanctions challenges Washington's policy to persuade the recalcitrant regime to renounce its nuclear arms. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- After the Russian veto abruptly ended the UN panel monitoring sanctions against North Korea., U.S. and allies seek ways to keep eye on Pyongyang. (Junnosuke Kobara, Rieko Miki, Shogo Kodama, *Nikkei Asia*)
- Cho Tae-yul, the South Korean minister of foreign affairs, will visit Beijing on May 13-14 at the invitation of his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea expressed interest in cooperation with Iranian automaker Saipa during a recent trip by an official delegation from Pyongyang to Tehran. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The top nuclear envoys of South Korea, the United States and Japan emphasized their "resolve" against North Korea's "grave" security threats and its growing military cooperation with Russia during a meeting in Tokyo on Thursday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Around half the North Korean missiles launched by Russia on Ukraine have exploded in midair due to malfunction, according to the Ukraine's Prosecutor General's Office. (Jon Jackson, *Newsweek*)
- A U.S. court has ordered the forfeiture of nearly 300 cryptocurrency accounts linked to North Korea’s laundering of millions of dollars in stolen assets, underscoring Washington’s increasing efforts to crack down on illicit cyber activities funding Pyongyang’s nuclear ambitions. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

- A senior U.S. military official has cautioned against "overreacting" or "underreacting" in the midst of tensions heightened by North Korea's persistent nuclear and missile threats and its tough rhetoric against South Korea and the United States. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Ryan Rohrbach, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718135854/https://mailchi.mp/819c5217d1f8/hrnk-news-items-congressional-report-notes-need-to-examine-nk-sanctions-implementation?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, May 11th, 2024

Seoul, Washington and Tokyo's nuclear negotiators reaffirm cooperation on threats from Pyongyang

In North Korea:
Architecture of control: North Korea's bizarre, post-modern cityscapes (*Reuters*, 05/10/2024)
Assessing Kim Jong Un's Rural Development Initiative (*38 North*, 05/10/2024)
Kim Jong Un guides live-fire test of new precision rockets, third this year (*NK News*, 05/11/2024)
N. Korea says to deploy new multiple rocket launcher starting this year (*Yonhap*, 05/11/2024)
North Korea leader Kim supervises latest test of new multiple rocket launcher (*AP*, 05/10/2024)
North Korea leader Kim Jong Un inspects artillery weapon system, attends test firing, KCNA says (*Reuters*, 05/10/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N.K. hacking group stole massive amount of personal info from S. Korean court computer network (*Yonhap*, 05/11/2024)

International:
Abductee families renew call for Japan, North Korea to resolve issue (*NHK World*, 05/11/2024)
How a Second Trump Term Could Shape the South Korea-U.S. Alliance (*The Diplomat*, 05/11/2024)
N.K. appoints new ambassador to U.N. office in Geneva (*Yonhap*, 05/11/2024)
Seoul, Washington and Tokyo's nuclear negotiators reaffirm cooperation on threats from Pyongyang (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/10/2024)
U.S. 'deliberately' excluded Moon from 2018 Trump-Kim summit under 'America first' policy: ex-official (*Yonhap*, 05/11/2024)

In North Korea:

- Futuristic skyscrapers meet socialist monuments in the reclusive state. (*Reuters*)

- This article is the first in a series to assess the status, implications, and challenges of North Korea's ongoing rural construction. It examines the significance and possible limitations of the rural development initiative launched in December 2021. (Rachel Minyoung Lee, Iliana Ragnone, *38 North*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un guided a live-fire test of a modernized multiple launch rocket system (MLRS) on Friday, according to state media. The State media boasted of 240mm artillery's 'destructive power,' announcing plans to deploy the weapon from 2024-2026. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- North Korea said Saturday it will deploy a new 240mm multiple rocket launcher to its military starting this year, voicing expectations that the weapon system will strengthen the country's artillery combat capabilities. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un supervised another test firing of a new multiple rocket launch system the country plans to deploy to its forces starting this year, state media said Saturday, part of its move to bolster its lineup of weapons targeting South Korean population centers. (Kim Tong-Hyung, AP)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Friday inspected the country's artillery weapon system and attended the test-firing of such weapons, the North's state media KCNA news agency reported on Saturday. (*Reuters*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- A North Korean hacking group had stolen a massive amount of personal information from a South Korean court computer network for about two years, probe results showed Saturday. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Families of Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea have renewed their call for a swift resolution of the issue so that aging parents can be reunited with their children. (*NHK World*)
- Three points of friction could emerge over policy toward North Korea, host-nation support, and China policy. (Jihoon Yu, Erik French, *The Diplomat*)
- North Korea has appointed a new ambassador to its mission at the United Nations office in Geneva, the U.N. website showed Saturday. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- Negotiators on the North Korean nuclear issue from South Korea, the United States and Japan met in Tokyo on Thursday to reinforce their commitment to deepening cooperation. (Lim Jeong-Won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The United States "deliberately" excluded then South Korean President Moon Jae-in from its first-ever summit with North Korea in Singapore in 2018 as he was "too willing" to make concessions, a State Department spokesperson during the former Trump administration said in a book published this week. (Song Sang-ho, Kang Byeong-cheol, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Jiwoo-Katie Choi, HRNK Research Intern

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Sunday, May 12th, 2024

NIS looking into N. Korea's suspected provision of weapons to Russia

In South Korea:
NIS looking into N. Korea's suspected provision of weapons to Russia (*Yonhap*, 05/12/2024)
Spy agency seeks to block access to propaganda song praising NK leader (*The Korea Times*, 05/12/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
North Korean hackers stole 1,014GB of data from South (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/12/2024)

International:
Kishida again vows to strive for summit with North Korea (*The Japan Times*, 05/12/2024)
N. Korea expresses full support for Palestinian U.N. membership (*Yonhap*, 05/12/2024)
Seoul remains low-key on China's forced repatriation of NK defectors in hope for fence-mending, 3-way summit (*The Korea Times*, 05/12/2024)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's spy agency said Sunday it is looking into suspicions that North Korean weapons made in the 1970s have been supplied to Russia for its war in Ukraine amid deepening military cooperation between Pyongyang and Moscow. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's spy agency has asked the country's internet censorship body to block access to a North Korean propaganda song, citing national security concerns. (Kwak Yeon-seo, *The Korea Times*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korean hackers stole 1,014 gigabytes of data and documents from a South Korean court network over two years, according to the results of a joint probe released on Saturday. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Saturday reiterated his eagerness to hold a summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in an effort to swiftly resolve the issue of Japanese nationals abducted by Pyongyang decades ago. (*The Japan Times*)
- North Korea supports a United Nations resolution for Palestine's full membership, Pyongyang's foreign ministry said Sunday, criticizing the United States for vetoing the move. (Kang Yoon-seung, *Yonhap*)

- The South Korean government's response to China's forced repatriation of North Korean escapees has seemed somewhat subdued, amid desperate efforts to maintain the cautious improvement of bilateral ties between Seoul and Beijing and eventually pave the way for a long-delayed three-way summit including Japan, anticipated later this month. (Lee Hyo-jin, *The Korea Times*)

Prepared by Rachel Baek, HRNK Research Intern

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Monday, May 13th, 2024

N. Korea slams U.N. members' sanctions enforcement as 'provocations'; N. Korean municipal delegation heads for Russia's Far East

In North Korea:
N.K. leader calls for increased artillery capabilities during visit to arms factories (*Yonhap*, 05/13/2024)
North Korean hackers stole one terabyte of personal data from ROK courts: Police (*NK Pro*, 05/13/2024)
U.S. researcher: North Korea is expanding digital surveillance on its citizens (*UPI*, 05/13/2024)

In South Korea:
Navy conducts live-fire drills in East Sea with Army, Air Force (*Yonhap*, 05/13/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N. Korean defectors send balloons carrying anti-Pyongyang leaflets to North (*Yonhap*, 05/13/2024)

International:
Both North and South Korea back UN resolution calling for Palestinian membership (*NK News*, 05/13/2024)
'My life is in danger,' says Marine vet who tried to help North Korean diplomats defect (*The Hill*, 05/13/2024)
N. Korea slams U.N. members' sanctions enforcement as 'provocations' (*Yonhap*, 05/13/2024)
North Korea appoints new ambassador to UN office in Geneva (*RFA*, 05/12/2024)
N. Korean municipal delegation heads for Russia's Far East (*Yonhap*, 05/13/2024)
Unification minister discusses N.K. threats, bilateral ties with Slovak FM (*Yonhap*, 05/13/2024)

In North Korea:

- Kim Jong-un has urged efforts to ramp up the military's artillery capabilities as he visited key munitions factories that produce sniper rifles and rocket launcher vehicles. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean cybercriminals stole almost one terabyte of personal data from South Korean courts' networks over the course of two years, an ongoing joint investigation into the breaches has revealed. (Joon Ha Park, Shreyas Reddy, *NK Pro*)
- North Korea is already one of the most repressive regimes in the world but is steadily adding a slate of digital surveillance tools to further control its citizens. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)

In South Korea:

- The South Korean Navy said Monday it conducted live-fire drills in the East Sea jointly with the Army and Air Force to bolster their readiness against North Korean threats. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- A North Korean defectors' group has sent about 20 large plastic balloons carrying propaganda leaflets against the North Korean regime across the border into the North. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Both North and South Korea endorsed a recent U.N. resolution backing Palestine's bid to become a full member state, a rare display of political alignment between the archrivals that contrasted with U.S. opposition. (Lina Park, *NK News*)
- A Marine veteran said his life is in danger after he claims he attempted to help North Korean diplomats defect by staging a fake kidnapping. (Nick Robertson, *The Hill*)
- North Korea on Monday denounced efforts by the international community to implement U.N. Security Council (UNSC) sanctions resolutions against the North as "provocations" that spark tension and instability in the region. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has appointed a new ambassador to its mission at the United Nations office in Geneva, the U.N. said on a website. (Taejun Kang, RFA)
- A North Korean delegation from the country's border city of Rason has left for Russia's Far East, the latest in a series of deepening exchanges between Pyongyang and Moscow. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's point man on North Korea discussed North Korea's continued provocations Monday with the Slovak foreign minister and called for joint efforts to tackle such threats. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Andrew Chan, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250718140359/https://mailchi.mp/6eca43860492/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-slams-un-members-sanctions-enforcement-as-provocations-n-korean-municipal-delegation-heads-for-russias-far-east?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Tuesday, May 14th, 2024

South Korean foreign minister calls for China to stop repatriating North Koreans

In North Korea:
Kim Jong-un orders military to modernise artillery forces (*The Telegraph*, 05/14/2024)
Kim Jong Un triggers cheers with surefire aim during factory visit: State media (*NK News*, 05/14/2024)
North Korea appears to repurpose defunct car factory to produce rocket launchers (*NK Pro*, 05/14/2024)
Young North Korean recruits tell parents they are fed meager rations (*Radio Free Asia*, 05/13/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korean military holds drill on repelling massive North Korean air attack (*NK News*, 05/14/2024)
Unification minister reiterates need for new unification blueprint (*Yonhap*, 05/14/2024)

International:
China calls for stable ties with South Korea despite 'difficulties' (*Reuters*, 05/14/2024)
How Chinese surveillance technology helps North Korea keep its citizens on a tight leash (*SCMP*, 05/14/2024)
Key S. Korean, USFK special operations officials to hold rare meeting amid N.K. threats (*Yonhap*, 05/14/2024)
North Korea Suspected of Sending 1970s Weapons to Russia (*Newsweek*, 05/14/2024)
N. Korean science, technology delegation leaves for Russia (*Yonhap*, 05/14/2024)
North Korean science delegation visits Moscow amid concerns of tech cooperation (*NK News*, 05/14/2024)
Passenger rail service linking Russia to N. Korea set to resume: official (*Yonhap*, 05/14/2024)
Russia freighter returns to North Korean port amid new allegations of arms trade (*NK Pro*, 05/14/2024)
South Korean, Chinese foreign ministers discuss North, trilateral summit, supply chains (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/14/2024)
South Korean foreign minister calls for China to stop repatriating North Koreans (*NK News*, 05/14/2024)

In North Korea:

- Kim made the call to expand "scientific and technological capabilities to strengthen the artillery power" of the army as he inspected production lines at major defence industrial complexes. (Nicola Smith, *The Telegraph*)
- North Korean state media shared a photo of a shooting target on Monday, seemingly to showcase Kim Jong Un's excellent marksmanship. An expert noted this could be an effort to draw parallels between Kim and his revered grandfather, the founder of North Korea. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- Expert says facility Kim Jong Un visited used to be inter-Korean automobile factory, underscoring focus on arms sales. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK Pro*)
- New North Korean army recruits are pleading with their parents through the military base fence, begging them to buy them food as they aren't getting enough during the weeklong registration. (Ahn Chang Gyu, *Radio Free Asia*)

In South Korea:

- Frontline exercise draws lessons from Hamas and Iran's strikes on Israel to simulate DPRK attack with drone, missiles. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- South Korea's point man on North Korea said Tuesday the government's new unification vision under way should factor in changes such as heightened inter-Korean tensions and increased instability in global politics. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

International:

- China and South Korea should seek stable ties despite their recent "difficulties", Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told his South Korean counterpart, Cho Tae-yul, on Monday at a rare meeting in Beijing held amid tensions over Taiwan and other regional issues. "It is hoped that South Korea will abide by the one-China principle, properly and prudently handle Taiwan-related issues, and consolidate the political foundation of bilateral relations," Wang added. (Ryan Woo, Ju-min Park, Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- Martyn Williams of the Stimson Center cautioned that North Korea heavily relies on Chinese technology for its pervasive digital tracking system, which risks extinguishing most freedoms for its people. (Park Chan-kyong, *SCMP*)
- The South Korean defense ministry disclosed plans for a rare meeting between major South Korean and U.S. Forces Korea special operations officials later this month, aimed at improving special warfare capabilities in response to North Korea's threats. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's intelligence service is investigating reports that North Korea has shipped decades-old munitions to Russia for use against Ukrainian forces. (Micah McCartney, *Newsweek*)
- A North Korean science and technology delegation has departed for Russia. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- DPRK officials to join talks and tour Russia's Silicon Valley, as two sides also discuss resuming passenger rail service. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- The governor of a Russian northeastern region bordering North Korea has said passenger trains connecting Vladivostok to the North are set to resume after years of a COVID-19 pandemic-related suspension. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- Lady R's first known visit to Rason in month follows reports DPRK is sending decades-old weapons for use against Ukraine. (Anton Sokolin, *NK Pro*)

- "We do not recognize foreign relations as a zero-sum game, nor do we manage them as such," said South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul during a meeting with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Beijing, China, late Monday. (Lim Jeongwon, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- In talks with Chinese counterpart, Cho Tae-yul also raised concerns about Russia-DPRK weapons trade and Korea tensions. (Lina Park, *NK News*)

Prepared by Jongjin Lee, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250718140512/https://mailchi.mp/17f3e3934e0b/hrnk-news-items-south-korean-foreign-minister-calls-for-china-to-stop-repatriating-north-koreans?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, May 15th, 2024

Insights From the UN Panel of Experts on North Korea

In North Korea:
N. Korea's Kim, daughter attend ceremony for new street in Pyongyang (*Yonhap*, 05/15/2024)
N. Korean leader inspects new tactical missile system (*Yonhap*, 05/15/2024)

In South Korea:
US, ROK special forces tasked with North Korea infiltration to hold first talks (*NK News*, 05/14/2024)

International:
As China opposes foreign interference in ties, South Korea rejects 'zero-sum' diplomacy (*SCMP*, 05/15/2024)
Comrades In Arms: The Mutual Benefits Of Increased North Korean-Iranian Military Cooperation (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 05/14/2024)
Exclusive: North Korea laundered $147.5 mln in stolen crypto in March, say UN experts (*Reuters*, 05/14/2024)
Insights From the UN Panel of Experts on North Korea (*38 North*, 05/14/2024)
Seoul's decision to attend Putin inauguration leaves door open for diplomatic relations (VOA, 05/14/2024)
UN extends sanctions exemption request for NGO to send aid to North Korea (*NK News*, 05/15/2024)
U.S. has no choice but to 'double down' on deterrence due to N.K. unwillingness to talk: official (*Yonhap*, 05/15/2024)
What Is the KN-23? North Korean Missile Shows 50% Failure Rate in Ukraine (*Newsweek*, 05/14/2024)
Will North Korea be a bigger threat under Biden or Trump? (*L.A. Times*, 05/15/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and his "beloved daughter" Ju-ae attended a ceremony marking a newly built street at the north gateway of Pyongyang, the North's state media reported Wednesday. (Deok-Hyun Kim, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has inspected a new tactical missile weapons system and called for an "epochal change" in war preparations by attaining arms production plans, state media said Wednesday. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- Meeting this month could discuss joint decapitation drills against DPRK leadership. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

International:

- Beijing and Seoul should aim for the stable development of bilateral ties amid "challenges and difficulties", Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told his South Korean counterpart on Monday while calling for an end to external interference in the relationship. (Alyssa Chen, SCMP)
- Iran and North Korea have a long history of working together to advance their respective military arsenals. Now, increased trade efforts between the two heavily sanctioned countries have raised concerns that they could share advanced missile and nuclear technology. (Michael Scollon, *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*)
- North Korea laundered $147.5 million through virtual currency platform Tornado Cash in March after stealing it last year from a cryptocurrency exchange, according to confidential work by United Nations sanctions monitors seen by Reuters on Tuesday. (Michelle Nichols, *Reuters*)
- With the United Nations Panel of Experts (UN POE) on North Korea recently dissolved, Joel Wit, Distinguished Fellow in Asian and Security Studies at the Henry L. Stimson Center and co-founder of 38 North, interviewed Stephanie Kleine-Ahlbrandt, who was the finance and economics expert on the Panel from 2015 to 2019. (Joel S. Wit, *38 North*)
- In a move that contrasts with the United States, South Korea had its ambassador in Moscow attend Russian President Vladimir Putin's inauguration, seemingly leaving its options open for maintaining diplomatic relations with Russia amid Moscow's deepening ties with Pyongyang. (Christy Lee, VOA)
- The U.N. Security Council (UNSC) extended a sanctions exemption request from a South Korean nongovernmental organization (NGO) to ship aid to North Korea, a notice posted by the U.N. last month shows. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- The United States has been left with no option but to "double down" on security cooperation with South Korea and Japan, and the enforcement of anti-North Korea sanctions due to the recalcitrant regime's rejection of dialogue, a senior U.S. diplomat said Tuesday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Russia has been deploying North Korean-developed short-range ballistic missiles on the battlefields of Ukraine that are showing a remarkably high failure rate. (Jesus Mesa, *Newsweek*)

- Faced with other more pressing developments in Ukraine and Gaza, the Biden administration has largely kept the threat of North Korea's nuclear program on the back burner. (Max Kim, *L.A. Times*)

Prepared by Wu Yang, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718140844/https://mailchi.mp/41781f14fde4/hrnk-news-items-insights-from-the-un-panel-of-experts-on-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, May 16th, 2024

The Coming North Korean Crisis And How Washington Can Prevent It

Top News:
The Coming North Korean Crisis And How Washington Can Prevent It (*Foreign Affairs*, 05/16/2024)
Turning Back the Clock: The Changing Nature of North Korean Food Insecurity (*East-West Center*, 05/15/2024)

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un inspects new missile system amid growing Russia military ties (*UPI*, 05/15/2024)
Kim Jong Un Making Rocket Launchers in Old Car Factory, Analyst Says (*Newsweek*, 05/15/2024)
N.K leader visits newly built ruling party training school (*Yonhap*, 05/16/2024)
North Korea displays Marx and Lenin portraits for first time in over decade (*NK News*, 05/16/2024)
North Korea opens more app stores for smartphone users (*Radio Free Asia*, 05/15/2024)
North Korean leader oversees tactical missile weapons system, KCNA says (*Reuters*, 05/14/2024)

In South Korea:
Artwork symbolizing S. Korean abductees in N. Korea on display at garden show (*Yonhap*, 05/16/2024)

International:
Abandoning the U.S.-ROK Alliance Won't Prevent War (*The National Interest*, 05/15/2024)
Arizona woman charged in North Korean IT worker scheme that raised millions (*CNN*, 05/16/2024)
China and Russia Disagree on North Korea's Nuclear Weapons (*The Diplomat*, 05/15/2024)
Dutch court sentences developer of crypto mixer used for North Korean laundering (*NK News*, 05/16/2024)
Japan and the US move ahead in co-developing hypersonic weapons interceptor as regional threats grow (*AP News*, 05/16/2024)

Korean, Cambodian leaders agree to form bilateral strategic partnership (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/16/2024)
N. Korea denounces S. Korean top diplomat's visit to China as 'begging diplomacy' (*Yonhap*, 05/16/2024)
North Korea accuses Seoul of attempting to conspire with China against it (*NK News*, 05/16/2024)
Russia, China oppose 'military intimidation' against N. Korea by U.S., allies: report (*Yonhap*, 05/16/2024)
UN extends sanctions exemption request for NGO to send aid to North Korea (*NK News*, 05/16/2024)

Top News:

- U.S. President Joe Biden has plenty of foreign policy crises on his hands. But unfortunately for him, as the United States heads into November's elections there's a high chance of yet another emergency: renewed provocations from North Korea. (Sue Mi Terry, *Foreign Affairs*)
- Over the past several years, North Korea has adopted legal changes that are increasing the centrality of the Workers Party of Korea and the state in agricultural production, distribution, and consumption. (Marcus Noland, *East-West Center*)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspected a new tactical missile system and called for an "epochal change" in war preparations, state media reported Wednesday, as the authoritarian regime continues to ramp up production of weapons that may be intended for sale to Russia. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- A facility holding rows of mobile missile launchers inspected by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Monday was once an automobile factory, a security analyst said. (Micah McCartney, *Newsweek*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has visited a newly built school for the country's ruling party officials, lauding it as a "perfect" facility to ensure the North's political principles, state media reported Thursday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un toured a newly built campus for training ruling party cadres on Wednesday, according to state media, revealing portraits of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin on display for the first time in a decade in a sign of the regime's renewed emphasis on communist ideology. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- North Korea is opening more information technology exchange centers across the country – facilities that sell apps to the growing number of smartphone users, residents told Radio Free Asia. (Son Hyemin, *Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Tuesday oversaw a tactical missile weapons system that will be newly installed at missile units of its army, state media KCNA reported on Wednesday. (Jihoon Lee, *Reuters*)

In South Korea:

- The unification ministry on Thursday unveiled an artwork inspired by three forget-me-nots at a garden show in an effort to raise public awareness of South Koreans detained in North Korea. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Last week, former Trump administration defense official Elbridge Colby suggested that South Korea should take more responsibility for its own defense. (David Maxwell, *The National Defense*)
- US federal prosecutors on Thursday charged an Arizona woman with participating in an elaborate fraud scheme to help foreign IT workers pose as Americans, get hired by major US companies and earn $6.8 million in revenue that could benefit the nuclear-armed North Korean regime. (Sean Lyngaas, Holmes Lybrand, Evan Perez, CNN)
- China and Russia hold differing perspectives on North Korea's nuclear program. While China considers North Korea a strategic liability due to its pursuit of instability, Russia has shifted its approach and now views North Korea's nuclear capability as a tactical countermeasure against the United States. (Wooyeal Paik, *The Diplomat*)
- A Dutch court has sentenced a founder of a cryptocurrency laundering service used by North Korean cybercriminals to over five years in prison, finding that the Russian national "created a shortcut for financing crimes and terrorism." (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- Japan and the United States on Wednesday signed an arrangement to jointly develop a new type of missile defense system as the allies seek to defend against the growing threat of hypersonic weapons, which are possessed by China and Russia and being tested by North Korea. (Mari Yamaguchi, *AP News*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol and Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet agreed in a joint statement Thursday to establish a bilateral strategic partnership to expand cooperation in various sectors, including defense, trade and development. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea on Thursday slammed South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul's visit to China earlier this week, deriding his call for Beijing to play a constructive role for peace on the Korean Peninsula as "begging diplomacy," state media reported. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea bashed a visit to China by South Korea's foreign minister this week as a bid to conspire with foreign powers against Pyongyang after the ROK official raised concerns about the DPRK's arms sales to Russia and other activities. (Alannah Hill, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- The leaders of Russia and China issued a joint statement opposing what they call "acts of military intimidation" against North Korea by the United States and its allies, a Russian news report said Thursday. (Kim Na-young, *Yonhap*)
- The U.N. Security Council (UNSC) extended a sanctions exemption request from a South Korean nongovernmental organization (NGO) to ship aid to North Korea, a notice posted by the U.N. last month shows. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

Prepared by Ray Matsumoto, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718140941/https://mailchi.mp/5d3fc0293128/hrnk-news-items-the-coming-north-korean-crisis-and-how-washington-can-prevent-it?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Friday, May 17th, 2024

House committee passes N. Korean human rights reauthorization act

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Ex-president Moon recalls in memoir N.K. leader voiced will not to use nukes (*Yonhap*, 05/17/2024)
N. Korea fires short-range ballistic missiles toward East Sea: JCS (*Yonhap*, 05/17/2024)
N. Korea installing mines, reinforcing barbed wire inside DMZ: source (*Yonhap*, 05/17/2024)

International:
3 North Koreans infiltrated US companies in 'staggering' alleged telework fraud: DOJ (*ABC*, 05/16/2024)
Arizona woman charged in North Korean IT worker scheme that raised millions (*CNN*, 05/16/2024)
Australia sanctions entities linked to North Korea-Russia arms deal (*Radio Free Asia*, 05/17/2024)
House committee passes N. Korean human rights reauthorization act (*Yonhap*, 05/17/2024)
Kim's sister denies North Korea has supplied weapons to Russia (*AP News*, 05/16/2024)
N. Korea's denial of arms transfers to Russia suggests fears of tougher sanctions: experts (*The Korea Times*, 05/17/2024)
N. Korea slams planned S. Korea-U.S. military drills, warns of 'catastrophic aftermath' (*Yonhap*, 05/17/2024)
North Koreans worked remotely for American companies, US says (*Radio Free Asia*, 05/16/2024)
Russia, China leaders warn US against intimidating North Korea militarily (*NK News*, 05/17/2024)
Treasury sanctions 2 individuals, 3 companies with Russia-North Korea weapons ties (*UPI*, 05/16/2024)
Trump may like to 'solve' N. Korean nuclear problem if reelected: ex-official (*Yonhap*, 05/17/2024)
UK imposes sanctions over Russia-North Korea 'arms-for-oil' trade (*Reuters*, 05/17/2024)
US announces new sanctions over North Korea-Russia arms transfers (*Reuters*, 05/16/2024)
US woman accused of stealing identities to give North Koreans jobs (*BBC*, 05/17/2024)
U.S. announces US$5 mln reward for info on N. Korean IT workers (*Yonhap*, 05/17/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un had voiced frustration over global skepticism on his will for denuclearization, stressing he had no intention to use nuclear weapons, a memoir written by former President Moon Jae-in showed Friday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea fired several short-range ballistic missiles toward the East Sea on Friday, the South Korean military said, a day after South Korea and the United States staged combined aerial drills involving advanced stealth jets. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has been installing mines and reinforcing barbed-wire fences in multiple locations inside the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating the two Koreas more actively than usual, a South Korean military source said Friday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- The Justice Department on Thursday charged three North Korean workers and a United States citizen with allegedly engaging in "staggering fraud" through securing illicit work with a number of U.S. companies and government agencies. (Alexander Mallin, ABC)
- US federal prosecutors on Thursday charged an Arizona woman with helping foreign IT workers pose as Americans, get hired by major US companies and earn $6.8 million in revenue that could benefit the nuclear-armed North Korean regime. (Sean Lyngaas, Holmes Lybrand, Evan Perez, CNN)
- Australia has imposed targeted sanctions against entities linked to the unlawful weapons trade between North Korea and Russia. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)
- A committee of the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bipartisan bill Thursday to reauthorize and update the 2004 North Korean Human Rights Act aimed at promoting rights and freedom in the reclusive state. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The influential sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un again denied Friday that her country has exported any weapons to Russia, as she labeled outside speculation on North Korea-Russian arms dealings as “the most absurd paradox.” (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)
- North Korea’s denials of providing Russia with weapons to be used in its war against Ukraine shows that it is concerned about damaging its image further in the West and the potential for tougher sanctions, according to experts, Friday. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korea on Friday denounced a plan by South Korea and the United States to stage their joint annual military drills in August, warning that they could face a "catastrophic aftermath" if they carry out the exercise. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- The United States on Thursday charged an American citizen, a Ukrainian citizen and three North Koreans with fraud over an elaborate scam that used identity theft to trick businesses into remotely hiring North Korean IT workers. (Alex Willemyns, *Radio Free Asia*)
- Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping said they oppose U.S. "military intimidation" of North Korea, which "may lead to armed conflict." (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- The U.S. Treasury said on Thursday it sanctioned two Russian nationals and three Russian-based entities for transferring illicit weapons between Moscow and North Korea. (Clyde Hughes, *UPI*)
- Former President Donald Trump may like to "solve" North Korea's nuclear quandary if reelected, a former U.S. official during Trump's presidency said Thursday, noting how to address the issue is "unpredictable." (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Britain announced sanctions on Friday against three companies and one individual over what it called the "illicit ‘arms-for-oil’ trade" between Russia and North Korea. (Muvija Murugaiyan, *Reuters*)
- The United States announced sanctions on Thursday on two Russian individuals and three Russian companies for facilitating arms transfers between Russia and North Korea, including ballistic missiles for use in Ukraine. (Doina Chiacu, David Brunnstrom, *Reuters*)
- US prosecutors have accused an American woman of helping North Koreans find remote jobs in the US and then send their wages back to North Korea. (Max Matza, BBC)
- The United States offered Thursday to provide a reward of up to US$5 million for information on three North Korean IT workers and their manager who were engaged in a scheme enabling the workers to get illicit telework employment with false identities belonging to U.S. citizens. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

- The United States on Thursday imposed sanctions on five Russia-based individuals and entities in connection with arms transfers between North Korea and Russia. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Wu Yang, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250718141324/https://mailchi.mp/b8b90c3d8c1d/hrnk-news-items-house-committee-passes-n-korean-human-rights-reauthorization-act?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, May 18th, 2024

HRNK report sheds light on human rights abuse of N. Korean nuclear scientists

Top News:
HRNK report sheds light on human rights abuse of N. Korean nuclear scientists (*Yonhap*, 05/18/2024)

In North Korea:
Kim Jong-un guides tactical missile test with 'autonomous navigation' (*NK News*, 05/18/2024)
Kim Jong-un's daughter draws attention for unusual attire at public appearance (*Chosun Daily*, 05/17/2024)
Mid-May frost damages crops in northern North Korea (RFA, 05/17/2024)
North Korea's Kim seeks to shore up nuclear force, oversees missile test, KCNA says (*Reuters*, 05/17/2024)

International:
N. Korea slams U.S. over redesignation as uncooperative country in counterterrorism efforts (*Yonhap*, 05/18/2024)
U.S. condemns N. Korea's missile launches as UNSC resolution violation (*Yonhap*, 05/18/2024)
U.S. expert says N. Korea might ignore Trump if he returns to White House (*Yonhap*, 05/18/2024)

Top News:

- Casting the North's nuclear science personnel as "slaves to the bomb," the report delves into the human rights context of the North's nuclear program -- an aspect eclipsed in part by North Korean media highlighting the ostensible loyalty and devotions of the regime's scientists and related workers. Robert Collins, a senior HRNK advisor, authored it. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea tested a tactical ballistic missile system off its east coast with an "autonomous navigation system" on Friday, party daily *Rodong Sinmun* reported Saturday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's daughter, Kim Ju-ae, garnered attention for her attire during a public appearance. On May 14, Ju-ae attended the completion ceremony of a new street in Pyongyang's northern region, named 'Jeonwi Street,' wearing a see-through blouse. (Kim Myeong-il, *Chosun Daily*)
- A late-spring frost, combined with a severe lack of manpower in rural parts of North Korea, is a major setback this year in a country with yearly chronic food shortages, residents in the country told Radio Free Asia. (Moon Sung Hui, *RFA*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ordered accelerated production to strengthen the country's nuclear force more rapidly, on the same day he oversaw a test of tactical ballistic missiles with new guidance system, state media KCNA said on Saturday. (Joyce Lee, *Reuters*)

International:

- North Korea denounced the United States on Saturday over its recent redesignation as a country not cooperating fully with U.S. counterterrorism efforts, insisting that no area in which the two countries can cooperate exists. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- The United States on Saturday condemned North Korea's ballistic missile launches this week as a violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions, stressing its close coordination with allies and partners to address Pyongyang's "dangerous" provocations. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un may not be "eager" to engage with former U.S. President Donald Trump if he wins the White House in the Nov. 5 election, a U.S. expert has said, noting Pyongyang has already been "burnt" by Trump. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Andrew Chan, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718141520/https://mailchi.mp/9a532aab414c/hrnk-news-items-0518-2024?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, May 19th, 2024

Putin briefed on tourist exchanges with N. Korea, prep for visit under way - Kremlin

In North Korea:
N.K. delegation returns home from visit to Russia's Far East (*Yonhap*, 05/19/2024)

In South Korea:
Moon memoir stirs the pot with accounts of North's Kim, Trump, Abe (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/19/2024)

International:
Behind Putin Visit, Unease in Beijing Over His Potential Next Stop: North Korea (*The Wall Street Journal*, 05/19/2024)
Putin briefed on tourist exchanges with N. Korea, prep for visit under way: Kremlin (*Yonhap*, 05/19/2024)
U.S. House committee resolution highlights Seoul-Washington-Tokyo cooperation (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/19/2024)
Xi's Warm Embrace of Putin in China Is a Defiance of the West (*The New York Times*, 05/18/2024)

In North Korea:

- The Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said the delegation led by the chief of the Rason Municipal People's Committee arrived back home on Saturday. The delegation had left for the trip on May 12. (*Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- Former President Moon Jae-in stirred controversy on Friday when he released his memoir, breaking his longtime silence regarding his administration's foreign and defense policy. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- The diplomatic dance among the three countries, which share an interest in dulling the U.S.'s influence in the world, has grown more complicated as Kim has sought to reduce his country's reliance on China—most dramatically by wooing Putin with public support and weapons for the Russian war effort. (Lingling Wei, Ann M. Simmons, Timothy W. Martin, *The Wall Street Journal*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin has been briefed on tourist exchanges between Moscow and Pyongyang and preparations for his visit to North Korea are underway, the Kremlin has said. (Yoo Jee-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee unanimously passed a resolution on Thursday recognizing the importance of trilateral cooperation between South Korea, the United States and Japan. (Lim Jeong-Won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Russia's war machine is bolstered by Chinese semiconductors and other dual-use technologies; by North Korean missiles and shells; and by Iranian drones. The war has provided an opportunity for Russia, China, North Korea and Iran to deepen military coordination and evade sanctions by facilitating trade outside the reach of the U.S.-led financial system. (David Pierson, *The New York Times*)

Prepared by Alexander Kim, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250718141623/https://mailchi.mp/3738f0794e88/hrnk-news-items-0519-2024?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Tuesday, May 21st, 2024

South Korea cracks down on viral North Korean song praising Kim Jong Un

In North Korea:
Rare photos show life inside North Korea's top-secret military (*Business Insider*, 05/20/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korea cracks down on viral North Korean song praising Kim Jong Un (*NK News*, 05/21/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
North Korea has demoted key department handling inter-Korean affairs, Seoul says (*NK News*, 05/21/2024)
Prepare for 'gray area' terror attacks (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/21/2024)
Seoul investigating possible North Korean breach of defense officials' emails (*NK News*, 05/21/2024)

International:
N. Korean leader voices condolences over death of Iranian president in helicopter crash (*Yonhap*, 05/21/2024)
North Korea Reacts to 'Nuclear Threat' From US (*Newsweek*, 05/21/2024)
Rate increases, 'Trump risk' at heart of second round of USFK cost sharing talks (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/21/2024)
Russian delegation arrives in Pyongyang: KCNA (*Yonhap*, 05/21/2024)
US Spy Plane Sweeps North Korean Border (*Newsweek*, 05/21/2024)
U.S. cites disunity at U.N. Security Council as reason for escalation of N.K. missile launches (*Yonhap*, 05/21/2024)
U.S. envoy for N. Korean human rights to visit Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 05/21/2024)

In North Korea:

- Despite being known as the "hermit kingdom," these rare images offer a rare glimpse into the secretive life within North Korea's military. (Nina Godlewski, Talia Lakritz, *Business Insider*)

In South Korea:

- Ban on 'Friendly Father' music video under Cold War-era law is excessive and undermines democratic freedoms, experts say. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea has demoted its main department handling inter-Korean affairs and tasked it with conducting "psychological warfare" against South Korea. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- South Korean intelligence authorities have raised the alert level for five diplomatic missions in response to signs of North Korean threats against its citizens and embassies in China, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. (Kim Ho-hong, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korean authorities are investigating a possible North Korean cyberattack that compromised the email accounts of over 100 South Koreans, including senior defense officials. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

International:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has expressed his "deep" condolences over the death of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in a recent helicopter crash. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's foreign ministry condemned the United State's actions and highlighted the increased frequency of its ballistic missile tests, which it asserts are a necessary deterrent against perceived U.S. nuclear threats. (Micah McCartney, *Newsweek*)
- The second round of negotiations for the 12th Special Measures Agreement was held in Seoul on Tuesday. (Park Hyun-ju, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A Russian delegation visited Pyongyang this week, the latest in a series of deepening exchanges between the two countries. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- An American surveillance aircraft performed a full sweep of the Korean Peninsula's heavily armed demilitarized zone last week. (John Feng, *Newsweek*)
- A U.S. State Department spokesperson on Monday singled out disunity at the U.N. Security Council as a reason for North Korea's stepped-up ballistic missile launches. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. special envoy for North Korean human rights will visit South Korea this week for talks on a range of issues, including the "inextricable" links between Pyongyang's human rights and security issues. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Faith Osinloye, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250718141921/https://mailchi.mp/212afd005224/hrnk-news-items-south-korea-cracks-down-on-viral-north-korean-song-praising-kim-jong-un?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Monday, May 20th, 2024

North Korean nuke scientists are ‘slaves’ of regime’s weapons programs

Top News:
North Korean nuke scientists are ‘slaves’ of regime’s weapons programs: Report (*NK News*, 05/20/2024)

In North Korea:
N. Korea changes name of key party organ in charge of inter-Korean affairs (*Yonhap*, 05/20/2024)
N. Korean leader mourns military official known for close ties with him on 2nd annv. of death (*Yonhap*, 05/20/2024)
North Korea vows to boost nuclear posture after US subcritical nuke test (*NK News*, 05/20/2024)
North Korean store hawks new fireworks modeled on its mightiest missile (*NK News*, 05/20/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korea to designate July 14 as day for N. Korean defectors (*Yonhap*, 05/20/2024)
S. Korea to set up monuments in hopes of repatriation of 5 abductees (*Yonhap*, 05/20/2024)
South Korea bans viral North Korea propaganda video praising Kim (*Reuters*, 05/20/2024)
Unification minister criticizes ex-liberal President Moon's memoir (*Yonhap*, 05/20/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
South Korean town looks for rural rejuvenation in shadow of the DMZ (*UPI*, 05/17/2024)

International:
China's exports to North Korea swing to growth in April (*Reuters*, 05/20/2024)
N. Korea slams U.S. subcritical nuclear test, vows measures to bolster nuclear deterrence (*Yonhap*, 05/20/2024)
World Cup qualifier in North Korea scrapped again; DPRK to face Syria in Laos (*NK News*, 05/20/2024)

Top News:

- **HRNK's report, “Slaves of the Bomb,”** focuses on North Korea's violations of the rights of its nuclear scientists and engineers, emphasizing how they face unsafe conditions and are not just privileged elite. “North Korea’s scientists and engineers are forced to work on the nuclear weapons program regardless of their own personal interests, preferences or aspirations. They do not have the freedom to choose their occupations. As such, these individuals may be described as ‘modern-day slaves’ for the Kim regime’s nuclear weapons program,” **HRNK's report** states. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has renamed the United Front Department (UFD), a key party organization responsible for inter-Korean affairs, to the WPK Central Committee Bureau 10. The

renaming is linked to the entity's involvement in psychological warfare against South Korea amid ongoing hostility. (Kim Soo-yeon, Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

- Kim Jong-un has visited the cemetery of Hyon Chol-hae, known to have helped groom the current leader, on the occasion of the second year of his death. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- DPRK slams US for destabilizing global security through no-expolosion experiment. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Fireworks based on Hwasong-17 ICBM seek to capitalize on people's pride in weapon capable of striking US. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea will designate July 14 as the official day for North Korean defectors, in its latest effort to better embrace individuals who have fled the reclusive regime. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's unification ministry will set up two monuments in hopes of the repatriation of five South Koreans who were abducted by North Korea on two southwestern islands in the 1970s. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's media regulator said it was banning access to a North Korean propaganda music video that glorifies Kim Jong Un as a "friendly father" and "great leader." (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho criticized a memoir published by former liberal President Moon Jae-in. Moon, who held inter-Korean summits with the North's leader in 2018, said he believes Kim Jong-un's promise to abandon the country's nuclear weapons. (Kim Soo-yeon, Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Young South Koreans are choosing rural life over metropolis Seoul. Kim, for example, thrives in Yeoncheon County, located near the DMZ, by leveraging government subsidies, a successful fishing-based business, and a popular YouTube channel, showcasing rural living advantages. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)

International:

- On month-on-month base, China's exports to North Korea appear to have risen 28.9% in April. (*Reuters*)
- North Korea threatened Monday to take powerful deterrent action against what it claims is the U.S. nuclear threat, denouncing Washington for its recent subcritical nuclear test. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Relocation marks third time a match has been moved from Pyongyang this year and could hurt DPRK's chances of advancing. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)

Prepared by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250718142044/https://mailchi.mp/4d7ce593a963/hrnk-news-items-north-korean-nuke-scientists-are-slaves-of-regimes-weapons-programs?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Wednesday, May 22nd, 2024

U.S. envoy discusses N.K. human rights with S. Korean official ahead of visit to abduction site

In North Korea:
N.K leader again visits newly built ruling party training school (*Yonhap*, 05/22/2024)
Portraits of N. Korean leader, two late predecessors displayed side by side (*Yonhap*, 05/22/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korea, U.S. hold rare meeting of special operations commanders amid North's threats (*Yonhap*, 05/22/2024)
U.S. envoy discusses N.K. human rights with S. Korean official ahead of visit to abduction site (*Yonhap*, 05/22/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
South Korea bans videos using North's catchy propaganda song (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/22/2024)

International:
Fox in the Henhouse: The Growing Harms of North Korea's Remote IT Workforce (*The Diplomat*, 05/21/2024)
N. Korean science, technology delegation returns home from visit to Russia (*Yonhap*, 05/22/2024)
Russia likely offering N. Korea technology aid to expand threats to U.S., others: Pentagon official (*Yonhap*, 05/22/2024)
The next North Korea crisis could come this year (*Business Insider*, 05/21/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un attended the opening ceremony of a newly built school for the country's ruling party officials, state media reported on Wednesday, marking his second visit to the site in less than a week. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- The portraits of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un were hung side by side with those of his two late predecessors, according to photos released by state media on Wednesday, in the latest sign of boosting his idolization to near the level of his grandfather Kim Il-sung and father Kim Jong-il. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- Key South Korean and U.S. Forces Korea special operations officials discussed ways Wednesday to enhance special warfare capabilities amid North Korea's evolving threats, Seoul's Defense Ministry said. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

- The U.S. special envoy for North Korean human rights discussed Wednesday ways to coordinate with South Korea on promoting the rights situation in the reclusive regime during a meeting with an official here. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- The Korea Communications Standards Commission convened a committee on Monday and blocked access to 29 videos across social media platforms featuring the song, aiming to restrict exposure to the efforts by Kim's regime to glorify its leader. (Woo Ji-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- Pyongyang has infiltrated its IT workers into contractors and subcontractors serving the United States' largest and most profitable companies. (Glenn Chafetz, *The Diplomat*)
- A North Korean science and technology delegation has returned home after a weeklong visit to Russia, state media said Wednesday, as the two countries are deepening their bilateral ties following the summit of their leaders in September. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- Russia has likely given technology assistance to North Korea and Iran in return for their arms transfers to Moscow, a senior Pentagon official said Tuesday, casting it as an apparent move to expand security threats to the United States and others. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- While there's no indication full-scale war is coming, a provocation from North Korea — heightened in an election year for South Korea and the US — could prompt retaliation from South Korea's hawkish president. (Chris Panella, *Business Insider*)

Prepared by Gary Tetreault, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250718142346/https://mailchi.mp/a9148fefcd58/hrnk-news-items-us-envoy-discusses-nk-human-rights-with-s-korean-official-ahead-of-visit-to-abduction-site?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, May 24th, 2024

High Expectations for Reauthorization of N. Korean Human Rights Act in Congress

Top News:
High Expectations for Reauthorization of N. Korean Human Rights Act in Congress (VOA, 05/14/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.
North Korean defectors repatriated by China face persecution (DW, 05/23/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korea to assume presidency of UN Security Council in June (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/24/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
At site of kidnapping, ROK demands North Korea repatriate abducted students (*NK News*, 05/24/2024)
S. Korean military detects suspected signs of N.K. preparations for spy satellite launch (*Yonhap*, 05/24/2024)
S. Korea unveils monument hoping for return of 5 nationals abducted by N. Korea in 1970s (*Yonhap*, 05/24/2024)

International:
A song praising North's leader Kim Jong Un is a surprise viral hit (*NPR*, 05/23/2024)
Japan underlines qualitative improvement of North Korean nukes (*The Japan Times*, 05/23/2024)
Massive North Korean Fraud Planted Tech Workers, Hit 300 U.S. Companies (*Forbes*, 05/20/2024)
N. Korean parliamentary leader meets Russian delegation: KCNA (*Yonhap*, 05/24/2024)
Seoul, Tokyo take aim at North Korea-Russia cooperation with new sanctions (*NK News*, 05/24/2024)
South Korea sanctions 7 North Koreans, 2 Russian ships for UNSC resolution violations (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/24/2024)
Trilateral summit's statement to possibly include resolution of N. Korea's abduction: sources (*Yonhap*, 05/24/2024)
Tour company in talks to send Russian children to summer camp in North Korea (*NK News*, 05/24/2024)
Why China wants North Korea and Russia's help in gaining access to the sea (*NK News*, 05/24/2024)
Why state-of-the-art US missile defenses may not stop new North Korean threats (*NK Pro*, 05/24/2024)

Top News:

- **Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea**, told VOA, "The legislative branch of the US government has been by far the most active of all USG branches for over two decades now...This will be a strong statement that the legislative branch of the US government stands firmly behind efforts to bring human rights, opportunity and prosperity to the oppressed people of North Korea." (Jo-eun Lee, VOA)
- "We know that 2,000 North Korean refugees were forcibly repatriated between August and September 2023, and through this policy of refoulement, China aids and abets the Kim family regime that is committing crimes against humanity," said **Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director** of the Washington-based **Committee for Human Rights in North Korea.** (Julian Ryall, *DW*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea will assume the rotating presidency of the UN Security Council (UNSC) in June, its first time in a decade. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Top South Korean and U.S. officials have called on North Korea to repatriate five high school students abducted from coastal islands, unveiling a new memorial on Friday at the location where DPRK agents kidnapped a 15-year-old boy nearly a half-century ago. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- South Korea's military has detected suspected signs of North Korea making preparations to launch a military spy satellite, an official said Friday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- Kim Tae-ok, mother of Lee Min-gyo who was abducted by North Korea in 1977 on a southwestern island, has been living in the desperate hope of meeting her son before she dies. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- The South Korean government has banned a music video praising North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. The video has been a surprising global hit, going viral on TikTok and other platforms. (Anthony Kuhn, NPR)
- Japan's 2024 defense white paper will emphasize North Korea's sustained focus on achieving qualitative improvements in its nuclear and missile capabilities, according to an early draft of the upcoming annual report. (*The Japan Times*)
- Prosecutors allege that North Korea-linked IT workers have infiltrated and defrauded hundreds of U.S. companies, including big ones. They call it the largest scheme of this type ever charged. (Kelly Phillips Erb, *Forbes*)
- The chairman of North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly met with a visiting Russian delegation in Pyongyang earlier this week, North Korea's state media reported Friday, the latest in a series of deepening exchanges between the two countries following a summit of their leaders in September. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and Japan announced new sanctions against North Korean and Russian targets on Friday, expanding on recent multinational efforts by the U.S. and its allies to crack down on activities supporting Moscow's war against Ukraine and Pyongyang's weapons development. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- The South Korean government on Friday imposed new unilateral sanctions on several North Koreans and a pair of Russian ships involved in suspected arms transactions between Pyongyang and Moscow in violation of UN Security Council resolutions. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea is in talks with China and Japan to try to include a clause calling for the resolution of North Korea's abduction and detention of South Korean nationals in a joint statement from their trilateral summit next week, multiple Seoul government sources said Friday. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- Russian schoolchildren could become the first foreign kids to spend their summer vacation in North Korea since before the pandemic, with talks underway for a group to visit a DPRK children's camp in the coming months. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- An inconspicuous sentence in the China-Russia joint statement issued after last week's summit referred to North Korea's role in allowing Chinese vessels to sail on the Tumen River, underlining an overlooked area for trilateral cooperation that could give Beijing easier access to the sea. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

- The U.S. has long relied on a network of advanced missile interceptors along its West Coast to defend against a North Korean nuclear attack, and Washington now plans to spend tens of billions of dollars to augment this system. (Ankit Panda, *NK Pro*)

High Expectations for Reauthorization of N. Korean Human Rights Act in Congress

Jo-eun Lee, VOA

May 14, 2024

[Editor's Note: This article was published on May 14. On May 16, the House Foreign Affairs Committee passed the North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act.]

A bill to reauthorize the North Korean Human Rights Act, which had stalled in the U.S. Congress for almost two years, was put on the House Foreign Affairs Committee's agenda this week. Experts welcomed this development, emphasizing the importance of the bill. Reporter Jo-eun Lee has the story.

House Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10) announced that the Committee will consider and vote on a total of fifteen bills and resolutions, including the North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act, on May 16.

McCaul's senior adviser told VOA on May 12 that he could not guarantee the passage of the North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act in Committee but explained that placing it on the agenda reflects a bipartisan consensus on passing the bill.

This adviser also noted that that while some provisions may be revised during the Committee's deliberations, the bill is expected to pass without significant amendments.

A staffer for Representative Young Kim (R-CA-40), who introduced the bill, also told VOA that the bill is expected to easily pass committee with bipartisan support this week.

If the House Foreign Affairs Committee approves the bill, it must pass a floor vote in the House and the Senate before it is sent to the President for signature, after which the bill comes into effect.

The main intent of the North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act is to extend the North Korean Human Rights Act for another five years.

In addition, the bill calls for sanctions on individuals and entities responsible for forcibly repatriating North Korean refugees.

The North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act was introduced by Representatives Young Kim (R-CA-40) and Ami Bera (D-CA-6) in the House and Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Tim Kaine (D-VA) in the Senate.

The North Korean Human Rights Act expired on September 30, 2022. It has been twenty months since, resulting in the longest-ever gap between reauthorizations of the Act.

The North Korean Human Rights Act was first enacted in 2004, and it was extended three times in 2008, 2012, and 2018. In 2018, Congress also passed the North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act after the expiration deadline, but this is the first time that the process has been delayed by nearly two years.

Congress, which is narrowly divided between Democrats and Republicans in both the House and Senate, faced considerable delays in its work last year due to extended negotiations over the budget and an unprecedented vote to recall the House Speaker.

Even bipartisan issues, such as the North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act, have been sidelined this year as political attention was focused on passing spending bills.

This delay in extending the North Korean Human Rights Act did not affect federal funding for relevant activities. However, it has been noted that ensuring the prompt passage of the reauthorization bill is critical, especially since this year marks the 20th anniversary of the bill's enactment.

Suzanne Scholte, Chair of the North Korean Freedom Coalition, told VOA on May 13, "I'm obviously really excited that it's going to pass. It's just a shame it's taken so long. I think that it's really important to recognize how united the Republicans and Democrats are on the North Korea human rights issues, and we expect it to go through."

She added, "We've always seen the North Korean Human Rights Act as an important tool for the administration to be able to push forward on these issues… it's really, really important to put these issues at the forefront and this sends a powerful message to the people of North Korea of the shared concerns the American people have about what's happening under that cruel dictatorship."

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, told VOA, "The legislative branch of the US government has been by far the most active of all USG branches for over two decades now…This will be a strong statement that the legislative branch of the US government stands firmly behind efforts to bring human rights, opportunity and prosperity to the oppressed people of North Korea."

Meanwhile, the House Foreign Affairs Committee's agenda for May 16 also includes a resolution on cooperation among the U.S., South Korea and Japan, in addition to the bill for reauthorizing the North Korean Human Rights Act.

This resolution, introduced by Representative Gerry Connolly (D-VA-11) in March, declares support for the improvement of ROK-Japan relations and encourages closer trilateral cooperation between the ROK, Japan, and the United States.

This is Jo-eun Lee for VOA.

Translated by Alexander Kim, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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Prepared by Gary Tetreault, HRNK Research Intern

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Thursday, May 23rd, 2024

N. Korean Nuclear Scientists & Engineers Exposed to Serious Risks

Top News:
N. Korean Nuclear Scientists & Engineers Exposed to Serious Risks (VOA, 05/17/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
Can Gen MZ shake the regime? (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/22/2024)
Kim's portrait is publicly displayed in North Korea. Here's a look at what it means (*AP*, 05/22/2024)
N.K. leader praises construction workers of newly built ruling party training school (*Yonhap*, 05/23/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
S. Korean border troops harness AI-powered surveillance tech against N.K. threats (*Yonhap*, 05/23/2024)

International:
Blinken vows to ensure support for US Envoy for N. Korean human rights (*The Korea Times*, 05/23/2024)
Canada and New Zealand impose sanctions to counter North Korea-Russia arms trade (*NK News*, 05/22/2024)
Defense minister discusses S. Korea-U.S. alliance with RAND Corp. chief (*Yonhap*, 05/23/2024)
Leaders of South Korea, China, and Japan will meet Monday for their first trilateral talks since 2019 (*AP*, 05/23/2024)
Limits and chances from the limitless alliance (*The Korea Herald*, 05/23/24)
Russian travel company cancels kids tour to North Korea, citing low demand (*NK News*, 05/23/2024)
S. Korea says N.K. threats undermine peace after Lavrov's criticism of joint drills with U.S., Japan (*Yonhap*, 05/23/2024)
S. Korea, Czech Republic discuss nuclear cooperation at bilateral economic talks (*Yonhap*, 05/23/2024)
20 years since last summit, North Korea-Japan ties still vexed by same concerns (*NK News*, 05/23/2024)

Yoon meets ex-U.S. Secretary Pompeo, discusses Korean Peninsula issues (*Yonhap*, 05/23/2024)

Top News:

- On May 17, the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, issued a new report, ***Slaves to the Bomb: The Role and Fate of North Korea's Nuclear Scientists*** authored by Robert Collins, stating that scientists working on North Korea's nuclear weapons program are exposed to deadly risks. (Kim Young-kwon, VOA)

In North Korea:

- In a ceremony to celebrate last week's completion of a new high-rise street built by "our inexperienced youth" in Pyongyang, Kim Jong-un praised their "wisdom and bravery." Kim also condemned the defiance of the North's Gen MZ as they continue to absorb South Korean culture through marketization. (Kim Byung-yeon, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The portrait of Kim Jong Un was publicly displayed along with those of his father and grandfather for the first time, sparking speculation about the message it sends. (Hyung-jin Kim, AP)
- Kim Jong-un has praised construction workers of a newly built school for the country's ruling party officials, state media reported Thursday. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- An outpost located in Yeoncheon County is at the forefront of the military's adoption of advanced technologies, serving as a test ground for AI-powered systems to better monitor growing North Korean threats. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken pledged Wednesday to ensure his top envoy for North Korean human rights has what she needs for her mission amid claims of insufficient internal support for the diplomat. (*The Korea Times*)
- Canada and New Zealand have joined other members of the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing alliance in imposing sanctions to disrupt North Korea's arms supplies to Russia, underscoring the group's coordinated efforts targeting Moscow's military activities. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- Defense Minister Shin Won-sik discussed Thursday bolstering the South Korea-U.S. alliance with a delegation led by Jason Matheny, chief of the U.S. think tank RAND Corp., his office said. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- Leaders of South Korea, China and Japan will meet next week in Seoul for their first trilateral talks in more than four years to discuss how to revive their cooperation. (Hyung-jin Kim, AP)
- In last week's summit between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Beijing, the two affirmed their anti-US solidarity. Both parties maintain North Korea as a powerful ally through diplomatic and military support. (Wang Son-taek, *The Korea Herald*)

- A Russian tour company has canceled a trip for children to North Korea due to low demand, after parents previously expressed skepticism about a similar proposal to send Russian kids to DPRK summer camps. (Anton Sokolin, Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- South Korea asked the Czech Republic on Thursday to pay closer attention to the ongoing bilateral efforts for cooperation in the commercial nuclear power plant sector. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea said Thursday that North Korea's nuclear and missile threats are what undermine peace and security on the Korean Peninsula, after Russia's top diplomat denounced Seoul's joint military exercises with the United States and Japan as a source destabilizing the region. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- This week marks the 20th anniversary of a pivotal moment in Tokyo-Pyongyang ties — the second meeting between Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and North Korean leader Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang. (Justin Yeo, *NK News*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol met with former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to discuss issues surrounding the Korean Peninsula, as well as the Seoul-Washington alliance. (Yoo Jee-ho, *Yonhap*)

N. Korean Nuclear Scientists & Engineers Exposed to Serious Risks

Kim Young-kwon, VOA

May 17, 2024

A U.S. civil society organization stated in a report that North Korean nuclear scientists and engineers' health and safety are under threat. Although safety standards are poorly followed, it is virtually impossible for them to voice concerns. This is Kim Young-kwon reporting.

On May 17, the **Committee for Human Rights in North Korea**, a civil society organization based in Washington D.C., stated in a new report, titled ***Slaves to the Bomb: The Role and Fate of North Korea's Nuclear Scientists***, that scientists who work on North Korea's nuclear weapons program are exposed to deadly risks.

Based on interviews with North Korean escapees familiar with the nuclear program and information from private sources, the report stated that "North Korea's nuclear scientists, engineers, and workers in nuclear laboratories and installations, in uranium mines, and at nuclear weapons testing sites are caught in a forced labor environment. They are deprived of basic freedoms and exposed to grave physical dangers."

The report explained that these human rights violations are occurring because the North Korean regime prioritizes the goals of its leadership over the health and safety of workers in nuclear weapons facilities.

This is why workers in the nuclear sector have to work long hours in dangerous environments and are highly vulnerable to radiation exposure.

A North Korean escapee who worked at a uranium processing facility in North Korea testified in an interview that "workers are forced to enter uranium tanks and work in a space filled with uranium dust."

The report also pointed out that long-term exposure to high doses of radiation can cause leukemia, lung cancer, thyroid cancer, skin cancer, and can even affect their children.

The report noted that the emphasis on meeting the goals and demands of the leadership forces scientists and engineers to take shortcuts with little regard for workers' safety.

The report notes, however, that "It is virtually impossible for scientists or engineers to voice their concerns about safety issues. Just like everyone else in North Korea, all scientists and engineers involved in the nuclear program must undergo weekly self-critique sessions (*saenghwal chonghwa*), where they must publicly confess to their professional and ideological shortcomings. Complaining about lax safety standards would be tantamount to asking for direct political punishment."

The report pointed out that because of these issues, the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), a U.S. non-profit organization, ranked North Korea last out of 22 countries in 2020 for nuclear material safety.

In its 2023 Nuclear Security Index report last year, NTI ranked North Korea as the world's least safe country for both nuclear material safety and protection of nuclear facilities for the sixth year in a row.

Slaves to the Bomb notes that North Korea's nuclear scientists, engineers, and workers are exposed to working conditions that violate international standards, including Article 23.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Article 7 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), to which North Korea is a party, "recognizes the right of everyone to just and favorable conditions of work, including safe and healthy working conditions," which the report says North Korea is not complying with.

According to the report, North Korea is also failing to observe Article 7 by not "minimizing hazards in the work environment."

Moreover, the report criticized North Korea's practice of selecting students as young as 10 years old who are gifted in math and science and assigning them to the nuclear sector, which violates their right to choose their own occupation.

The report also pointed out that nuclear scientists and engineers, like everyone else in North Korea, are given work assignments based on their *songbun* [North Korea's system of socio-political classification], with those with poor *songbun* being assigned to nuclear test sites, where they are at greater risk of radiation exposure.

The author, Robert Collins, a former U.S. Department of Defense employee, told VOA that while Kim Jong-un is treating nuclear scientists and engineers better than his father and grandfather did, their health and safety are still being sacrificed.

[Collins] "They didn't pay any attention to it, and so they all suffered from radiation poisoning. Not all of them, but, you know, a large percentage of them, and it infected their families."

This is Kim Young-kwon for VOA.

Translated by Gayeong Lee, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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Prepared by Alena Nosel, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718142705/https://mailchi.mp/b4d2af818c86/hrnk-news-items-n-korean-nuclear-scientists-engineers-exposed-to-serious-risks?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, May 24th, 2024

High Expectations for Reauthorization of N. Korean Human Rights Act in Congress

Top News:
High Expectations for Reauthorization of N. Korean Human Rights Act in Congress (VOA, 05/14/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.
North Korean defectors repatriated by China face persecution (DW, 05/23/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korea to assume presidency of UN Security Council in June (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/24/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
At site of kidnapping, ROK demands North Korea repatriate abducted students (*NK News*, 05/24/2024)
S. Korean military detects suspected signs of N.K. preparations for spy satellite launch (*Yonhap*, 05/24/2024)
S. Korea unveils monument hoping for return of 5 nationals abducted by N. Korea in 1970s (*Yonhap*, 05/24/2024)

International:
A song praising North's leader Kim Jong Un is a surprise viral hit (NPR, 05/23/2024)
Japan underlines qualitative improvement of North Korean nukes (*The Japan Times*, 05/23/2024)
Massive North Korean Fraud Planted Tech Workers, Hit 300 U.S. Companies (*Forbes*, 05/20/2024)
N. Korean parliamentary leader meets Russian delegation: KCNA (*Yonhap*, 05/24/2024)

Seoul, Tokyo take aim at North Korea-Russia cooperation with new sanctions (*NK News*, 05/24/2024)
South Korea sanctions 7 North Koreans, 2 Russian ships for UNSC resolution violations (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/24/2024)
Trilateral summit's statement to possibly include resolution of N. Korea's abduction: sources (*Yonhap*, 05/24/2024)
Tour company in talks to send Russian children to summer camp in North Korea (*NK News*, 05/24/2024)
Why China wants North Korea and Russia's help in gaining access to the sea (*NK News*, 05/24/2024)
Why state-of-the-art US missile defenses may not stop new North Korean threats (*NK Pro*, 05/24/2024)

Top News:

- **Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea**, told VOA, "The legislative branch of the US government has been by far the most active of all USG branches for over two decades now...This will be a strong statement that the legislative branch of the US government stands firmly behind efforts to bring human rights, opportunity and prosperity to the oppressed people of North Korea." (Jo-eun Lee, VOA)
- "We know that 2,000 North Korean refugees were forcibly repatriated between August and September 2023, and through this policy of refoulement, China aids and abets the Kim family regime that is committing crimes against humanity," said **Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director** of the Washington-based **Committee for Human Rights in North Korea.** (Julian Ryall, DW)

In South Korea:

- South Korea will assume the rotating presidency of the UN Security Council (UNSC) in June, its first time in a decade. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Top South Korean and U.S. officials have called on North Korea to repatriate five high school students abducted from coastal islands, unveiling a new memorial on Friday at the location where DPRK agents kidnapped a 15-year-old boy nearly a half-century ago. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- South Korea's military has detected suspected signs of North Korea making preparations to launch a military spy satellite, an official said Friday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- Kim Tae-ok, mother of Lee Min-gyo who was abducted by North Korea in 1977 on a southwestern island, has been living in the desperate hope of meeting her son before she dies. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- The South Korean government has banned a music video praising North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. The video has been a surprising global hit, going viral on TikTok and other platforms. (Anthony Kuhn, NPR)

- Japan's 2024 defense white paper will emphasize North Korea's sustained focus on achieving qualitative improvements in its nuclear and missile capabilities, according to an early draft of the upcoming annual report. (*The Japan Times*)
- Prosecutors allege that North Korea-linked IT workers have infiltrated and defrauded hundreds of U.S. companies, including big ones. They call it the largest scheme of this type ever charged. (Kelly Phillips Erb, *Forbes*)
- The chairman of North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly met with a visiting Russian delegation in Pyongyang earlier this week, North Korea's state media reported Friday, the latest in a series of deepening exchanges between the two countries following a summit of their leaders in September. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and Japan announced new sanctions against North Korean and Russian targets on Friday, expanding on recent multinational efforts by the U.S. and its allies to crack down on activities supporting Moscow's war against Ukraine and Pyongyang's weapons development. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- The South Korean government on Friday imposed new unilateral sanctions on several North Koreans and a pair of Russian ships involved in suspected arms transactions between Pyongyang and Moscow in violation of UN Security Council resolutions. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea is in talks with China and Japan to try to include a clause calling for the resolution of North Korea's abduction and detention of South Korean nationals in a joint statement from their trilateral summit next week, multiple Seoul government sources said Friday. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- Russian schoolchildren could become the first foreign kids to spend their summer vacation in North Korea since before the pandemic, with talks underway for a group to visit a DPRK children's camp in the coming months. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- An inconspicuous sentence in the China-Russia joint statement issued after last week's summit referred to North Korea's role in allowing Chinese vessels to sail on the Tumen River, underlining an overlooked area for trilateral cooperation that could give Beijing easier access to the sea. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- The U.S. has long relied on a network of advanced missile interceptors along its West Coast to defend against a North Korean nuclear attack, and Washington now plans to spend tens of billions of dollars to augment this system. (Ankit Panda, *NK Pro*)

High Expectations for Reauthorization of N. Korean Human Rights Act in Congress

Jo-eun Lee, VOA

May 14, 2024

[Editor's Note: This article was published on May 14. On May 16, the House Foreign Affairs Committee passed the North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act.]

A bill to reauthorize the North Korean Human Rights Act, which had stalled in the U.S. Congress for almost two years, was put on the House Foreign Affairs Committee's agenda this week. Experts

welcomed this development, emphasizing the importance of the bill. Reporter Jo-eun Lee has the story.

House Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10) announced that the Committee will consider and vote on a total of fifteen bills and resolutions, including the North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act, on May 16.

McCaul's senior adviser told VOA on May 12 that he could not guarantee the passage of the North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act in Committee but explained that placing it on the agenda reflects a bipartisan consensus on passing the bill.

This adviser also noted that that while some provisions may be revised during the Committee's deliberations, the bill is expected to pass without significant amendments.

A staffer for Representative Young Kim (R-CA-40), who introduced the bill, also told VOA that the bill is expected to easily pass committee with bipartisan support this week.

If the House Foreign Affairs Committee approves the bill, it must pass a floor vote in the House and the Senate before it is sent to the President for signature, after which the bill comes into effect.

The main intent of the North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act is to extend the North Korean Human Rights Act for another five years.

In addition, the bill calls for sanctions on individuals and entities responsible for forcibly repatriating North Korean refugees.

The North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act was introduced by Representatives Young Kim (R-CA-40) and Ami Bera (D-CA-6) in the House and Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Tim Kaine (D-VA) in the Senate.

The North Korean Human Rights Act expired on September 30, 2022. It has been twenty months since, resulting in the longest-ever gap between reauthorizations of the Act.

The North Korean Human Rights Act was first enacted in 2004, and it was extended three times in 2008, 2012, and 2018. In 2018, Congress also passed the North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act after the expiration deadline, but this is the first time that the process has been delayed by nearly two years.

Congress, which is narrowly divided between Democrats and Republicans in both the House and Senate, faced considerable delays in its work last year due to extended negotiations over the budget and an unprecedented vote to recall the House Speaker.

Even bipartisan issues, such as the North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act, have been sidelined this year as political attention was focused on passing spending bills.

This delay in extending the North Korean Human Rights Act did not affect federal funding for relevant activities. However, it has been noted that ensuring the prompt passage of the reauthorization bill is critical, especially since this year marks the 20th anniversary of the bill's enactment.

Suzanne Scholte, Chair of the North Korean Freedom Coalition, told VOA on May 13, "I'm obviously really excited that it's going to pass. It's just a shame it's taken so long. I think that it's really important to recognize how united the Republicans and Democrats are on the North Korea human rights issues, and we expect it to go through."

She added, "We've always seen the North Korean Human Rights Act as an important tool for the administration to be able to push forward on these issues… it's really, really important to put these issues at the forefront and this sends a powerful message to the people of North Korea of the shared concerns the American people have about what's happening under that cruel dictatorship."

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, told VOA, "The legislative branch of the US government has been by far the most active of all USG branches for over two decades now…This will be a strong statement that the legislative branch of the US government stands firmly behind efforts to bring human rights, opportunity and prosperity to the oppressed people of North Korea."

Meanwhile, the House Foreign Affairs Committee's agenda for May 16 also includes a resolution on cooperation among the U.S., South Korea and Japan, in addition to the bill for reauthorizing the North Korean Human Rights Act.

This resolution, introduced by Representative Gerry Connolly (D-VA-11) in March, declares support for the improvement of ROK-Japan relations and encourages closer trilateral cooperation between the ROK, Japan, and the United States.

This is Jo-eun Lee for VOA.

Translated by Alexander Kim, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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Prepared by Gary Tetreault, HRNK Research Intern

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Saturday, May 25th, 2024

N. Korea's Nuclear Scientists are "Slaves to the Bomb," Says New Report; Former North Korean abductee who made it home talks to NHK

Top News:

N. Korea's Nuclear Scientists are "Slaves to the Bomb," Says New Report (*RFA*, 05/17/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
N. Korea to convene key party meeting next month (*Yonhap*, 05/25/2024)
N. Korean parliamentary leader meets Russian delegation: KCNA (*Yonhap*, 05/24/2024)
Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center: Construction at the Radiochemical Laboratory (*38 North*, 05/23/2024)

In South Korea:
North Korea preparing to launch military satellite, South says (*Reuters*, 05/24/2024)

International:
Are Russia and North Korea planning an 'October surprise' that aids Trump? (*NBC News*, 05/24/2024)
Austin to attend trilateral talks with South Korean, Japanese counterparts in Singapore: Pentagon (*Yonhap*, 05/25/2024)
Can the U.S. Defend South Korea and Taiwan Simultaneously? (*National Interest*, 05/24/2024)
Ex-U.S. diplomat notes Trump's apparent distrust toward N. Korean leader in FP interview (*Yonhap*, 05/25/2024)
Former North Korean abductee who made it home talks to NHK (*NHK*, 05/24/2024)
Low expectations for rare summit between China, Japan and South Korea (*Reuters*, 05/25/2024)
Russia-North Korea Arms Trade Takes a Hit (*Newsweek*, 05/25/2024)
U.S. girding for possibility of N. Korea taking most provocative military actions in decade near election: NBC (*Yonhap*, 05/25/2024)

Top News:

- In his recently published report, *Slaves to the Bomb: The Role and Fate of North Korea's Nuclear Scientists*, Robert Collins, a senior advisor for the **Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK),** describes the human rights violations committed against North Korea's nuclear program personnel. He elaborates on students gifted in science who are identified as early as middle school and sent to universities to study fields related to nuclear weapons or missile development. These individuals are then assigned to uranium mines and other nuclear facilities, where they live like "slaves." They have no freedom, and they are exposed to grave political and physical dangers. (Kim So-young, RFA)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has decided to convene a key ruling party meeting next month to review progress in its ongoing projects for the first half of the year. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- The chairman of North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly met with a visiting Russian delegation in Pyongyang earlier this week, the latest in a series of deepening exchanges between the two countries following a summit of their leaders in September. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- Commercial satellite imagery of Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center shows renovations have been underway at the Radiochemical Laboratory's (RCL) Thermal (Steam)

Plant since late March and activities continue at a steady, deliberate pace, with construction activity observed throughout the site. (Peter Makowsky, Jack Liu, Iliana Ragnone, *38 North*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's military said on Friday it had detected signs in North Korea of possible preparations for a satellite launch in what would be the nuclear-armed North's effort to place a second military reconnaissance craft in orbit. (Hyunsu Yim, *Reuters*)

International:

- The Biden administration is increasingly concerned that the intensifying military alliance between Putin and Kim Jong Un could vastly expand Pyongyang's nuclear capabilities and increase tensions in the Asia-Pacific region. (Courtney Kube, Carol E. Lee, *NBC News*)
- U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin will attend a trilateral meeting with his South Korean and Japanese counterparts on the margins of an annual security forum in Singapore slated to begin next week, the Pentagon said Friday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. currently lacks the military capability to defend South Korea, Taiwan, and other allies simultaneously. To ensure security in Northeast Asia, the U.S. needs to increase its military investments and enhance allied cooperation. (Bruce W. Bennett, *National Interest*)
- Trump viewed Kim Jong-un as someone who would "knife" him in the stomach if there was a chance to do so, a former U.S. diplomat said in a media interview released this week. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Soga Hitomi, who was abducted by North Korean agents as a teenager 46 years ago but returned to Japan in 2002, met with NHK for her first-ever solo TV interview. She talked about her life in North Korea and her mother, who was abducted with her but has never been seen again. (*NHK*)
- When South Korea hosts the first trilateral summit with China and Japan in four years beginning on Sunday, the three neighbours may struggle to go. (Hyonhee Shin, Antoni Slodkowski, Kaori Kaneko, *Reuters*)
- South Korea has sanctioned seven North Korean nationals and a pair of ships over their suspected role in the arms trade with Russia. (Micah McCartney, *Newsweek*)
- U.S. officials are bracing for North Korea to potentially take its "most provocative" military action in a decade ahead of the Nov. 5 presidential election, possibly at the urging of Russian President Vladimir Putin. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap)*

N. Korea's Nuclear Scientists are "Slaves to the Bomb," Says New Report

Kim So-young, RFA

May 17, 2024

A newly published report states that North Korea's nuclear scientists and others assigned to develop nuclear weapons under Kim Jong-un's orders suffer from human rights abuses and are subject to forced labor without basic safety and health protections. This is Kim So-young reporting.

Robert Collins, a senior advisor for the **Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)**, is a Korean Peninsula expert who served for over thirty years in the U.S. military in South Korea. In his recently published report entitled *Slaves to the Bomb: The Role and Fate of North Korea's Nuclear Scientists*, Collins explains the human rights violations committed against the personnel involved in North Korea's nuclear program.

While there have been numerous reports on North Korea's population as a whole, this is the first report to specifically investigate and report on the individuals involved in the nuclear program.

The report states that the Kim regime's pursuit of nuclear weapons has been enabled through the sacrifice of thousands of North Koreans who work at nuclear facilities.

One North Korean escapee, for example, testified that "North Korean nuclear workers are being forced into uranium tanks and are working in spaces where uranium dust fills the air."

The report explains that workers are subject to forced labor at nuclear facilities without adequate protection equipment or safety measures. As a result, these workers face serious threats to their health and safety, with many showing symptoms of radiation exposure.

Collins also points out that students who are gifted in science are identified—starting in middle school—and sent to universities to study fields related to nuclear weapons or missile development. These individuals are then assigned to uranium mines and other nuclear facilities, where they live like "slaves." They have no freedom, and they are exposed to grave political and physical dangers.

On May 17, Collins told *RFA* that these workers are at a high risk of radiation exposure. Their personal liberty is severely restricted, and the regime decides whom they will marry.

[**Collins**] "As they grow up, [the students] are heavily restricted in terms of what they can and cannot do. Their human rights are being ignored, since the only focus is on what role they will play in the nuclear program."

Collins emphasized that these "slaves to the bomb" should be freed in any denuclearization process, and that they should receive proper medical treatment to deal with the effects of radiation exposure and other health issues.

Moreover, Collins added that there should be a thorough assessment of the environmental damage in areas near nuclear facilities, along with medical treatment for residents of these areas.

Collins further explained it is essential to hold the officials who led the development of nuclear weapons accountable for human rights abuses.

Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director, told *RFA* on May 17 that this report has significant value in terms of linking the nuclear issue and the human rights issue.

[**Scarlatoiu**] "This report links political security and military affairs—nuclear weapons and missiles—with human rights."

Editor Park Jung-woo, Web team Lee Kyung-ha

Translated by Gayeong Lee, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director

of Operations & Research

Prepared by Maria Fernanda de Almeida, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250718143020/https://mailchi.mp/d858ff0c67e6/hrnk-news-items-n-koreas-nuclear-scientists-are-slaves-to-the-bomb-says-new-report-former-north-korean-abductee-who-made-it-home-talks-to-nhk?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, May 26th, 2024

South Korean, Chinese and Japanese leaders discuss thorny topics and ways to boost cooperation

In North Korea:
N. Korea warns of military action over alleged sea border incursions (*Yonhap*, 05/26/2024)
North Korea accuses US, South Korea of flying spy planes, ships (*Reuters*, 05/26/2024)

In South Korea:
Capital Defense Command to run annual defense drills from Monday to Wednesday (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/26/2024)

International:
South Korean, Chinese and Japanese leaders discuss thorny topics and ways to boost cooperation (*AP*, 05/26/2024)
Large number of Russian experts enter N. Korea to help spy satellite launch efforts: source (*Yonhap*, 05/26/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea's defense ministry accused the United States and South Korea of ramping up reconnaissance activities around the inter-Korean border. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- North Korea threatened Sunday to take action against South Korea over what it claims are violations of the de facto western maritime border, ratcheting up tensions ahead of a trilateral summit in Seoul. (Woo Jae-yeon, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- The Capital Defense Command and Capital Corps are set to conduct joint defense drills from Monday through Wednesday in parts of Seoul and Gyeonggi. (Cho Jung-woo, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- Observers say that resuming the highest-level talks among the three Northeast Asian neighbors is a good sign. (Hyung-Jin Kim, AP)
- Many Russian technicians have entered North Korea after Putin pledged to support the North's satellite program last year. (Lee Minji, Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Maria Fernanda de Almeida, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250719075314/https://mailchi.mp/17abfa983b0c/hrnk-news-items-south-korean-chinese-and-japanese-leaders-discuss-thorny-topics-and-ways-to-boost-cooperation?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Monday, May 27th, 2024

CCP Subverting Democracies, North Korea Aiding Instability in Middle East: Director of HRNK; NK satellite launch exploded in flight

Top News:
CCP Subverting Democracies, North Korea Aiding Instability in Middle East: Director of Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (*NTD News*, 05/23/2024)

In North Korea:
Chronology of North Korea's space vehicle launches (*Yonhap*, 05/28/2024)
North Korea condemns denuclearisation call at neighbours' summit in Seoul (*Reuters*, 05/27/2024)
North Korea say it plans to launch another satellite within a week (*NK News*, 05/27/2024)
North Korea says its latest satellite launch exploded in flight (*Reuters*, 05/27/2024)
North Korea to hold major party meeting after overhauling inter-Korean policy (*NK News*, 05/27/2024)

In South Korea:
91-year-old mother writes Yoon, North's Kim to reunite with abducted son (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/27/2024)
S. Korean military stages air drills in response to N. Korea's planned satellite launch (*Yonhap*, 05/27/2024)

International:
Are Russia and North Korea planning an 'October surprise' that aids Trump? (*NBC News*, 05/24/2024)
China silent on North Korea's satellite launch plans at Seoul trilateral summit (*NK News*, 05/27/2024)
China premier agrees on cooperation with Seoul, Tokyo but issues veiled rebuke against their US ties (*AP News*, 05/27/2024)
Drawing fire: The line from Asia's animation industry to North Korea (*Nikkei Asia*, 05/27/2024)
Economic woes push Japan, China, South Korea to restart 3-way summit (*Nikkei Asia*, 05/27/2024)
Japan Issues North Korea Missile Alert: 'Take Refuge' (*Newsweek*, 05/27/2024)
North Korea Accuses US of Spying at Border (*Newsweek*, 05/26/2024)
North Korea announces plans to launch satellite by June 4 (*The Japan Times*, 05/27/2024)
Russia, China Seek New Gas Route as 'Siberia 2' Becomes Putin's Pipe Dream (*Newsweek*, 05/27/2024)
S. Korea, U.S, Japan to hold vice foreign ministerial talks in Virginia this week (*Yonhap*, 05/27/2024)
U.S. calls on N. Korea to refrain from 'unlawful' space rocket launch (*Yonhap*, 05/27/2024)

Top News:

- **Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director** of the **Committee for Human Rights in North Korea**, explains to NTD how North Korea is contributing to instability in the Middle East, while its enabler, communist China, is subverting democracies. (Steve Lance, *NTD News*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea launched a projectile assumed to be a military spy satellite today after putting its first one into orbit in November. *Yonhap*'s Lee Minji provides a chronology of the North's purported space vehicle launches since 1998. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea condemned China, Japan and South Korea on Monday for committing to denuclearise the Korean peninsula, describing their joint declaration after a rare summit in Seoul as a "grave political provocation" that violates its sovereignty. (Cynthia Kim, Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- Announcement of May 27-June 4 launch window for latest space rocket coincides with South Korea-Japan-China summit. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Korea said its attempt to launch a new military reconnaissance satellite ended in failure on Monday when a newly developed rocket engine exploded in flight. (Josh Smith, Cynthia Kim, Satoshi Sugiyama, *Reuters*)
- Expert says plenum likely to consider constitutional revisions, while Politburo 'almost certainly' discussed Putin visit. (Seung-Yeon Chung, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- A 91-year-old South Korean mother wrote to Kim Jong-un and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, pleading to see her son, Hong Gyeon-pyo, who was kidnapped by North Korean agents 40 years ago. She expressed her dying wish to be reunited with him. The letter was delivered during a memorial ceremony commemorating five high school students kidnapped by North Korea between 1977 and 1978. (Lee Ji-young, Lee Soo-jung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- South Korea's military on Monday staged an air exercise near the border with North Korea in response to North Korea's planned launch of what it claims to be a military spy satellite. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Much is unknown about the Russia-North Korea alliance — and where it could go from here. (Courtney Kube, Carol E. Lee, *NBC News*)
- South Korean and Japanese leaders call for denuclearizing DPRK, as Chinese premier stresses need for "restraint." (Jeongmin Kim, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- China's premier, Li Qiang, agreed Monday to revive three-way cooperation with South Korea and Japan in the face of shared challenges, but issued a veiled rebuke against the two countries' expanding security cooperation with the United States. (Hyung-jin Kim, Huizhong Wu, *AP News*)
- Studios worry about risk of unintentionally outsourcing work to North Korean regime through China. (Ryohtaroh Satoh, Cissy Zhou, *Nikkei Asia*)
- Economic growth in Japan and South Korea has been lackluster, while China's economy has lost momentum compared with the early 2000s. (Kana Baba, *Nikkei Asia*)
- Japan warned citizens in the Okinawa Prefecture about a North Korean missile launch. A statement released by the Prime Minister's Office said: "A missile appears to have been launched from North Korea. Please take refuge inside a building or underground." (Ben Kelly, *Newsweek*)
- A senior North Korean official on Sunday accused the United States of "hostile air espionage," detailing what he said were more than a dozen aircraft involved in reconnaissance missions against Pyongyang this month. (John Feng, *Newsweek*)
- North Korea has notified Tokyo that it plans to launch its second military spy satellite by June 4, the Japan Coast Guard said early Monday. (Jesse Johnson, *The Japan Times*)
- With negotiations on Russia's proposed natural gas pipeline to China in limbo, Russian President Vladimir Putin hopes to recover lost European business by routing natural gas to Central Asian states and through them to the energy-hungry Chinese market. (Micah McCartney, *Newsweek*)
- South Korea, the United States and Japan will hold a trilateral vice foreign ministerial meeting in Virginia this week to discuss North Korean threats, cooperation on economic security and critical technologies and other issues, the State Department said Monday. (Song Sang-Ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States urged North Korea on Monday to refrain from further "unlawful" activities and return to dialogue, after Pyongyang has notified Japan of a plan to launch a space rocket to put a satellite into orbit before June 4. (Song Sang-Ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250719075615/https://mailchi.mp/03bdc30611d2/hrnk-news-items-ccp-subverting-democracies-north-korea-aiding-instability-in-middle-east-director-of-hrnk-nk-satellite-launch-exploded-in-flight?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, May 28th, 2024

This nascent trilateral relationship is the best possible answer to China

Top News:
This nascent trilateral relationship is the best possible answer to China (*The Washington Post*, 05/27/2024)

In North Korea:
North Korea blames 'new-type engine' for satellite launch failure (*Radio Free Asia*, 05/28/2024)
North Korea says spy satellite launch failed due to midair blast during first-stage rocket flight (*Yonhap*, 05/28/2024)

In South Korea:
ROK foreign ministry downgrades North Korea division in sweeping reorganization (*NK News*, 05/28/2024)
S. Korean military vets presumed N.Korean propaganda leaflets (*Yonhap*, 05/28/2024)
Seoul says N. Korea's next spy satellite launch likely to take 'considerable' time (*Yonhap*, 05/28/2024)
Seoul weighs increased support for North Korean children born in third countries (*NK News*, 05/28/2024)
South Korean military releases footage showing view of North Korean rocket explosion (AP, 05/28/2024)

International:
China calls for dialogue with North Korea rather than pressure (NHK, 05/28/2024)
N. Korea apparently voices complaint against China via rebukes on trilateral summit: Seoul (*Yonhap*, 05/28/2024)
Nuclear envoys of S. Korea, U.S., Japan condemn N.K. spy satellite launch attempt (*Yonhap*, 05/28/2024)

Top News:

- A pro-American trilateral alignment is the best possible answer to the menace posed by the anti-American trilateral alignment of China, Russia and North Korea. But, because the Japanese-South Korean-U.S. relationship is so recent, it might be imperiled by changes of leadership in those countries. (Max Boot, Sue Mi Terry, *The Washington Post*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea's latest attempt to launch a military reconnaissance satellite was unsuccessful because of a problem with the reliability of a new rocket, which led to a mid-air explosion during the first-stage flight. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korea said Tuesday that its latest attempt to launch a new rocket carrying a military reconnaissance satellite ended in failure due to the midair explosion of the rocket during the first stage flight this week. (Song Sang-Ho, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's foreign ministry carried out a mass reshuffle of divisions responsible for North Korea on Tuesday, reorganizing its headquarters for denuclearization talks and downgrading the rank of its lead nuclear envoy. (Jeongmin Kim, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- South Korea's military said Tuesday it is vetting objects assumed to be propaganda leaflets distributed by North Korea. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The South Korean military said Tuesday that engine combustion problems are behind North Korea's botched space rocket launch and Pyongyang would need "considerable time" to prepare for its next spy satellite launch. (Lee Minji, Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea will consider offering 24-hour childcare support services to North Korean defectors and increasing education support for their children born in third countries, Seoul's unification ministry announced on Tuesday. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- The South Korean military on Tuesday released a video showing its surveillance of a North Korean rocket exploding in mid-air shortly after its launch. The footage was filmed by a military patrol ship deployed in the country's northwestern island region, the South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff said. (AP)

International:

- A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson has stressed that the response to North Korea's attempt to launch a satellite on Monday should involve dialogue with Pyongyang rather than pressure. (*NHK World*)
- North Korea appears to have indirectly expressed its complaint against Beijing when it slammed a joint declaration issued after the latest trilateral summit among leaders of South Korea, China and Japan, Seoul's unification ministry said Tuesday. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Nuclear envoys of South Korea, the United States and Japan on Tuesday strongly condemned North Korea's latest attempt to launch a military spy satellite, casting it as a blatant violation of U.N. resolutions and a serious threat to peace. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Valerie Johnson, HRNK Research Intern

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Wednesday, May 29th, 2024

"From Defection to Policy Advocacy" with Rep. Ji Seong-ho (May 21)

Top News:
Event Video: "From Defection to Policy Advocacy" with Rep. Ji Seong-ho (*HRNK*, 05/21/2024)
The North Korean and Chinese Threats Are Growing. But so Is the Trilateral Response (*CFR*, 05/28/2024)

In North Korea:
Changing North Korea's Future Through Its Women (*USIP*, 05/28/2024)
N. Korea appears to be struggling to secure parts for spy satellite: presidential office (*Yonhap*, 05/29/2024)
North Korea's Fiery Spy-Satellite Test Shows More Than Failure (*WSJ*, 05/28/2024)
North Korean leader vows never to give up space reconnaissance project (*Reuters*, 05/29/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Music by South Korean singer beloved by Kim Jong Il is now banned (*Radio Free Asia*, 05/28/2024)
N. Korean leader slams S. Korea's show of force against Pyongyang's satellite launch (*Yonhap*, 05/29/2024)
N. Korea sends over 260 balloons carrying trash into S. Korea: Seoul military (*Yonhap*, 05/29/2024)
S. Korea mulls suit against N. Korea in case of Pyongyang's full-scale use of Kaesong complex (*Yonhap*, 05/29/2024)

International:
North Korea Jabs at China in Reaction to Trilateral Summit (*38 North*, 05/28/2024)
North Korea shifts away from toxic rocket fuel with Russian help (*Nikkei Asia*, 05/29/2024)
North Korea warns denuclearization will bring 'hastened war' in possible message to Beijing (*UPI*, 05/28/2024)
U.N. Secretary-General Guterres denounces N. Korea's rocket launch (*Yonhap*, 05/29/2024)
U.N. Security Council to convene session to discuss N.K. spy satellite launch: Seoul official (*Yonhap*, 05/29/2024)
U.S. restates need for China's 'productive' role in addressing N. Korean threats (*Yonhap*, 05/29/2024)

Top News:

- On May 21, the **International Republican Institute** (IRI) and the **Committee for Human Rights in North Korea** (HRNK) hosted ROK National Assembly **Representative Ji Seong-ho** for a conversation on his global advocacy of North Korean human rights, insights into what South Korea's recent National Assembly election will mean for North-South Korea relations, and how the international community can work to ensure North Korea's threat to global security remains contained. The recording of the event, provided courtesy of IRI, is now available online. (*HRNK*)

- With renewed support from Russia and China, there are fears that a North Korean crisis is coming. (Sue Mi Terry, *CFR*)

In North Korea:

- While speculation about female leadership in North Korea centers on Kim Jong Un's sister and daughter, ordinary women, with their resilience and potential, may ultimately play a more significant role in the country's future. (Kyung-joo Jeon, USIP)
- North Korea's botched attempt to launch a military spy satellite was likely due to its difficulties in procuring related parts and developing technology because of ongoing sanctions. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- Pyongyang makes a debut attempt to use propellant technology used by space powers like the U.S. and China (Dasl Yoon, *WSJ*)
- Kim Jong Un said space reconnaissance capabilities are crucial for national self defence against enemy threats. (Jack Kim, *Reuters*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- A South Korean singer has been suddenly banned in North Korea. (Kim Jieun, *Radio Free Asia*)
- Kim Jong-un has vowed to take "overwhelmingly stern" actions against South Korea's show of force in response to the North's spy satellite launch attempt. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has launched hundreds of balloons carrying trash and waste across the inter-Korean border. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- The unification ministry said Wednesday it plans to take legal actions against North Korea if Pyongyang expands its unauthorized use of the now-shuttered joint industrial complex. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- North Korea swiftly condemned the inclusion of "denuclearization" in the Ninth ROK-Japan-China Trilateral Summit's joint statement. (Rachel Minyoung Lee, *38 North*)
- North Korea's unsuccessful satellite launch on Tuesday likely involved a new rocket that uses a safer fuel, experts say, as the country advances its rocket technology with Russian assistance. (Junnosuke Kobara, *Nikkei Asia*)
- North Korea angrily responded to a trilateral summit by South Korea, Japan and China, calling it a "grave political provocation" that would speed up a military confrontation. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday condemned North Korea's botched launch of a military reconnaissance satellite this week. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea has requested a meeting, alongside the United States and Japan, following Pyongyang's unsuccessful launch of the spy satellite late Monday. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. urged China to help counter North Korea's weapons programs after a summit with South Korea, China, and Japan did not commit to full denuclearization. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

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Thursday, May 30th, 2024

As Escapee Testimonies Become More Diverse, a Greater Spotlight on NK Human Rights; NK Missile show for prospective customers

Top News:
As Escapee Testimonies Become More Diverse, a Greater Spotlight on North Korean Human Rights (VOA, 05/21/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un vows to overcome failed satellite launch at military academy visit (*NK News*, 05/29/2024)
N. Korea bans people from naming children with words of unification, unified Korea (*Yonhap*, 05/30/2024)
N. Korea fires around 10 short-range ballistic missiles into East Sea: JCS (*Yonhap*, 05/30/2024)
New North Korean cybercrime group demands millions in ransom payments (*NK Pro*, 05/29/2024)
North Korea appears to transfer $20M from crypto wallet in push to cash out (*NK Pro*, 05/29/2024)
North Korea Claims "Autonomous" Guidance and Big Deployments of Its New Small Solid SRBM (*38 North*, 05/29/2024)
The Challenges of a North Korea Breakthrough (*The Diplomat*, 05/29/2024)
Top N. Korean official handling emergency disasters leaves for Russia to attend exhibition (*Yonhap*, 05/30/2024)

In South Korea:
Seoul weighs increased support for North Korean children born in third countries (*NK News*, 05/28/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N. Korea stages GPS jamming attacks after sending hundreds of balloons into S. Korea (*Yonhap*, 05/30/2024)
S. Korea condemns Kim Yo-jong's statement on N. Korea's sending of balloons carrying trash (*Yonhap*, 05/30/2024)

International:
Analysts see signs of strain in North Korea-China ties (VOA, 05/30/2024)

Ex-US nuke negotiator says normalizing relations with NK should come before denuclearization talks (*The Korea Times*, 05/30/2024)
North Korean missile debris found in Ukraine: Defense intelligence report (*The Hill*, 05/30/2024)
Rare spat shows China, North Korea still at odds on nuclear weapons (*Reuters*, 05/29/2024)
Retired North Korean striker Jong Tae-se joins Montedio Yamagata as a coach (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/29/2024)
South Korea, U.S., Japan, China to hold relay of meetings in Washington (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/30/2024)
Trump touts Kim Jong Un as North Korea's 'absolute leader' (MSNBC, 05/29/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un acknowledged this week's failed satellite launch in a speech at the Academy of Defense Science (ADS) on Tuesday and vowed to continue development due to threats from the U.S. and South Korea, according to state media. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea has ordered people not to use the words of unification or a unified Korea for their children's names as the repressive regime has been ramping up its drive to erase unification references, Seoul's unification ministry said Thursday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea fired around 10 short-range ballistic missiles into the East Sea on Thursday, the South Korean military said, a day after sending hundreds of large balloons carrying trash and manure into the South. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- A newly designated group of North Korean cyber criminals is demanding ransoms of nearly $7 million in exchange for decrypting files on computers they have compromised, cybersecurity researchers at Microsoft Threat Intelligence warned in a report published on Tuesday. (Nils Weisensee, *NK Pro*)
- North Korean cybercriminals appear to have transferred over $20 million on Tuesday from a U.S.-flagged cryptocurrency account, a move one expert highlighted as a sign the regime needs cash to fund strategic military activities. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK Pro*)
- North Korean media reported the use of a "new autonomous navigation system" on a May 17 test of a small solid-propellant short-range ballistic missile (SRBM) first flight-tested in April 2022. (Vann H. Van Diepen, *38 North*)
- While North Korea's nuclear and missile program is seen as a threat in Japan and South Korea, for its part, Pyongyang considers the United States, Japan, and South Korea to be the greater threat. (Atsuhito Isozaki, *The Diplomat*)
- The top North Korean official in charge of emergency disaster affairs has left for Russia to attend an exhibition on security means in Moscow, state media reported Thursday, amid deepening bilateral cooperation in various sectors. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea will consider offering 24-hour child care support services to North Korean defectors and increasing education support for their children born in third countries, Seoul's unification ministry announced on Tuesday. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea attempted to jam GPS signals for a second straight day Thursday, the South Korean military said, a day after the North sent hundreds of balloons carrying waste and manure to the South. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The unification ministry on Thursday condemned a statement issued by Kim Yo-jong, the sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, who claimed Pyongyang's sending of balloons carrying trash to South Korea came out of North Koreans' exercise of freedom of expression. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Tensions between North Korea and China surfaced publicly this week for the first time in years, after Pyongyang lashed out at a joint statement signed by Beijing mentioning the possibility of denuclearization. (William Gallo, VOA)
- Robert Gallucci, the chief negotiator during the 1994 North Korean nuclear crisis, said normalizing relations with North Korea should come before discussing denuclearization. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)
- Remnants of ballistic missiles produced in North Korea have been found throughout Ukraine, further confirming U.S. accusations that Pyongyang is arming Russia's war effort, according to a new unclassified report released Wednesday by the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). (Ellen Mitchell, *The Hill*)
- North Korea's rare swipe at China this week underscored how Beijing and Pyongyang do not entirely see eye-to-eye on the latter's illicit nuclear weapons arsenal, despite warming ties in other areas, analysts and officials in South Korea said. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- Former North Korean national team striker Jong Tae-se has joined J2 League team Montedio Yamagata as an instructor, the club announced Wednesday, though his exact role is unclear. (Paik Ji-hwan, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- As tensions on the Korean Peninsula increased recently due to North Korea's launch of spy satellites and deepening military cooperation between Pyongyang and Moscow, South Korea, the United States, Japan and China will hold bilateral and trilateral discussions in Washington. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Donald Trump's appreciation for foreign dictators remains highly unsettling. Take his latest praise for North Korea's Kim Jong Un, for example. (Steve Benen, MSNBC)

As Escapee Testimonies Become More Diverse, a Greater Spotlight on North Korean Human Rights

Young-kwon Kim, VOA

May 21, 2024

Testimonies by North Korean escapees on the international stage are becoming increasingly diverse and specialized. By speaking persuasively about their experiences in English, persons with disabilities, former soldiers, and those with direct experience of forced repatriation are garnering greater sympathy. This is Kim Young-kwon reporting.

Maeng Hyo-sim escaped from North Korea six years ago with her parents, her father carrying her paraplegic mother on his back.

Now a college student in South Korea, Maeng gave testimony in English about the situation of persons with disabilities in North Korea at the 2024 Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy on May 15.

[**Maeng Hyo-sim**] "People with disabilities are not allowed to go to university in North Korea. My mom worked so hard to help support our family, she worked at the convenience stores, she sewed, and she did everything."

Last month, at a UN Human Rights Council side event in Geneva co-hosted by twenty international civil society organizations, a family member of a victim of forcible repatriation gave testimony in English.

[**Kim Kyu-li**] "She has lived in China for 25 years and has a family. How could they separate a family? North Korean refugees are not criminals; their only crime was being born in North Korea."

Last October, Eom Young-nam, who served in the North Korean military's capital construction unit, testified in English about the condition of soldiers suffering from forced labor at an International Conference on North Korean Human Rights held at the British Parliament.

Additionally, on May 13, Kim Jung-ah, a North Korean escapee with children in China and the head of the Tong-il Mom [Unification Mothers] Association, met with members of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and appealed to them to help North Korean escapee women safely meet their children in China.

As these examples illustrate, it is becoming increasingly common for victims of human rights violations in North Korea—and their relatives—to provide testimony on the international stage about specific areas of human rights.

In the past, it was common to have testimonies that broadly addressed the human rights situation in North Korea. Now, there are more and more testimonies about specific themes and issues, such as the rights of persons with disabilities, soldiers, forcible repatriation, human trafficking, and torture.

North Korean escapees say that direct testimonies from those who have experienced human rights violations—or their family members—are powerful, since they can provide a high level of detail based on first-hand experiences.

Speaking to VOA on May 20, Maeng Hyo-sim stressed that her testimony could help refute the false propaganda disseminated by North Korea's state-controlled media.

[**Maeng**] "North Korea has the *Rodong Sinmun*, as you know. It ran stories about how the state provided various benefits for persons with disabilities, giving TVs and such. But when we were in North Korea, we didn't get any benefits like that. It was all for show. That's what made me so angry. They were putting out complete lies."

Maeng stated that when she came to South Korea and saw the many benefits her mother received due to her disability, she wanted to properly inform the international community about the dire situation of persons with disabilities in North Korea.

[**Maeng**] "She got discounts for surgeries. She got a wheelchair. There are subsidies for the disabled. No matter where you go, there are discounts for people with disabilities. There are so many things they do for people with disabilities. This is why I wanted to speak out about the lives of people with disabilities in North Korea. If it reaches the ear of the North Korean government, maybe—just maybe—they might do something for people with disabilities."

Eom Young-nam, a former North Korean soldier who was mobilized for various construction projects in Pyongyang for seven years, said he wanted to accurately inform the international community about the human rights situation of North Korea's soldiers, which is hidden behind flashy military parades, nuclear weapons, and missiles.

[**Eom**] "The media tends to show North Korean soldiers as aggressive and hostile. When they talk about the North Korean military, the focus is usually on nuclear weapons or missiles. It seemed to me that little attention was paid to the human rights of North Korean soldiers."

It is widely known that North Korea uses the military to carry out major construction projects. Kim Jong-un has publicly emphasized his intent to mobilize soldiers for large-scale construction.

[**Kim Jong-un**] "Once again, our Party has put our military at the vanguard of a ten-year revolution to boost the regional economy."

Changjeon Street, Mirae Scientist Street, Ryomyong Street—all in Pyongyang—and even Masikryong Ski Resort, which North Korea boasts to the outside world, were all built by soldiers.

Eom pointed out that numerous soldiers are killed or injured at these construction sites.

[**Eom**] "If you are a soldier, you follow orders no matter what. This is the same all over the world. So when Kim Jong-un gives an order, you follow it unconditionally, live or die. A lot of soldiers actually lose their lives. The conditions are terrible. They aren't even given basic safety equipment, like hard hats, shoes, gloves, or harnesses. Many people fall to their death or are killed by falling objects."

Eom added that "the North Korean authorities view construction projects as battles, so it is not considered to be a problem if a soldier dies during a 'battle' to capture high ground."

He said that many attendees showed great interest when he testified about these issues at the British Parliament and at Oxford University, adding that "I want to emphasize that we need to make this situation more known to the international community and send outside information to North Korean soldiers to open their eyes."

A South Korean publisher will soon release a book about Eom's experiences in the North Korean military.

Kim Kyu-li has been campaigning to save the life of her younger sister, who was forcibly repatriated from China last year. She said that many people sympathize with the situation when a family member gives detailed testimony.

[**Kim**] "Because I am speaking out about my own sister, I think it has a greater emotional impact. They are directly exposed to the situation of a loved one. This draws greater sympathy from the audience, and that's an advantage. They also ask a lot of questions too."

Kim also said, "I think the testimony has greater force because it is based on direct experiences about an issue where both China and North Korea are denying responsibility." She added that she will continue to raise her voice on behalf of her sister and other victims of forcible repatriation whenever she has a chance.

More and more young North Korean escapees—armed with English language skills and professional expertise—are speaking out about North Korean human rights violations at international forums, including the UN Security Council. This trend is expected to help draw greater attention to North Korean human rights issues across the world.

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), stated that having greater opportunities for the international community to hear detailed testimonies from North Korean escapees with varied backgrounds is a very positive development.

[**Scarlatoiu**] "There's a very big impact of this diversity of opinion. The international media, international public opinion, decision-makers, and international organizations will all realize that North Korean human rights are not simple. There is not simply a violation of one set of human rights; each and every human right is violated in North Korea."

This is Young-kwon Kim for VOA.

Translated by SoEun Park, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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Prepared by Gayeong Lee, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250719075947/https://mailchi.mp/f771998e8da4/hrnk-news-items-as-escapee-testimonies-become-more-diverse-a-greater-spotlight-on-nk-human-rights-nk-missile-show-for-prospective-customers?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, May 31st, 2024

Kim Jong-un's Fears Could Be Exploited; U.S. intel agency confirms N.K. ballistic missile debris found in Ukraine

Top News:
Kim Jong-un's Fears Could Be Exploited (*The National Interest*, 05/30/2024)

In North Korea:
Beguiling Photos That Lift the Curtain on North Korea (*The New York Times*, 05/31/2024)
N. Korea conducts GPS jamming attack for 3rd day (*Yonhap*, 05/31/2024)
N. Korea warns of 'unpredictable disaster' over U.S. spy plane's latest flyover (*Yonhap*, 05/31/2024)
Why plans to overhaul North Korean constitution are likely behind election delay (*NK News*, 05/31/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korean expert reelected member of U.N. human rights committee (*Yonhap*, 05/30/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Calls grows for resumption of DMZ loudspeaker campaign (*The Korea Times*, 05/31/2024)
N. Korean leader guides firing drill using super-large multiple rocket launchers targeting S. Korea (*Yonhap*, 05/31/2024)
North Korea claims it launched 18 missiles at once in warning to South (*NK News*, 05/31/2024)
North Korea's trash rains onto South Korea, balloon by balloon. Here's what it means (*AP News*, 05/30/2024)
S. Korea warns of 'unendurable' actions against N. Korea unless it stops provocations (*Yonhap*, 05/31/2024)
2 Koreas see no cross-border trade last year amid frozen ties: unification ministry (*Yonhap*, 05/31/2024)

International:
EU slaps new sanctions on North Korea in response to its missile program and support for Russia (*AP News*, 05/31/2024)
North Korea's latest provocations signal frustration with Beijing (*Nikkei Asia*, 05/31/2024)
Russian gunmaker claims North Korea copied his sniper rifle design (*NK News*, 05/31/2024)
Talks on South Korea-Japan defense meeting in Singapore enter final stage (*The Korea Herald*, 05/31/2024)
US, allies 'gravely concerned' by North Korea-Russia cooperation (*Reuters*, 05/31/2024)
US exports over $200K in goods to North Korea, likely humanitarian aid (*NK News*, 05/31/2024)
U.S. condemns N.K. satellite, missile launches in 'strongest possible terms' (*Yonhap*, 05/31/2024)
U.S. has no plans to forward-deploy nuclear arms to Korean Peninsula: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 05/31/2024)
U.S. intel agency confirms N.K. ballistic missile debris found in Ukraine (*Yonhap*, 05/31/2024)

Top News:

- 30-year veteran of the United States Army and HRNK Board member, **David Maxwell,** pens his unique insights on exploiting Kim Jong-un's fears as a beneficial strategy for the ROK-U.S. alliance. **Col. Maxwell** advises for the use of psychological warfare and an information campaign to address Kim's primary fears which include assassination or coup by close aides, preemptive strikes on his nuclear capabilities, the influx of outside information, exposure of his and his family's faults, the impact of reform and opening up, and the ultimate collapse of his regime. (David Maxwell, Ri Jong Ho, *The National Interest*)

In North Korea:

- A woman pokes her head out from a hidden room at the Kumgangsan Hotel — a place known for hosting reunions between families from North and South Korea — disrupting the sweeping autumnal landscape painted on the wall. The image offers a metaphor for a country shrouded in secrecy. (Miguel Salazar, *The New York Times*)
- North Korea denounced a U.S. reconnaissance aircraft's latest flight over South Korea, warning that its enemies could face an "unpredictable disaster" if they continue reckless military moves. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea announced last week that it will hold a major party meeting in June to discuss progress toward annual goals, but state media's report was conspicuously silent about the timing of another high-profile event - delayed elections for the country's parliament. (Martin Weiser, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- A South Korean expert, Soh Chang-rok, has been reelected as a member of the U.N. Human Rights Committee monitoring civil and political rights, the foreign ministry said Thursday. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- As North Korea has ramped up hostility toward South Korea with a series of provocations, there are increasing calls to resume operating loudspeakers along the inter-Korean border as a countermeasure. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korea test-fired about 10 short-range ballistic missiles into the sea off its east coast on Thursday while launching GPS jamming attacks against the South. (Taejung Kang, *RFA*)
- Kim Jong-un has supervised an artillery firing drill involving 600 mm super-large multiple rocket launchers. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea conducted a major missile salvo launch of 18 rockets at the same time on Thursday as a warning to South Korea, emphasizing a resolve to carry out preemptive strikes. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Manure. Cigarette butts. Scraps of cloth. Waste batteries. Even, reportedly, diapers. This week, North Korea floated hundreds of huge balloons to dump all of that trash across rival South Korea — an old-fashioned, Cold War-style provocation that the country has rarely used in recent years. (Hyung-Jin Kim, Kim Tong-Hyung, *AP News*)
- The unification ministry warned Friday that "unendurably" painful measures would be taken against North Korea if it continues to stage "irrational" provocative acts, such as this week's sending of balloons carrying trash to South Korea. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South and North Korea had no cross-border trade last year and Seoul's humanitarian aid to Pyongyang hit an all-time low amid frozen inter-Korean ties. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- The EU Council said Friday that nine additional individuals and entities will be hit by asset freezes and travel bans. (*AP News*)
- China joining South Korea and Japan at summit spurs missile, balloon barrage. (Steven Borowiec, *Nikkei Asia*)

- A Russian gunmaker has claimed that North Korea copied the design of a sniper rifle produced by his company after state media released photos of leader Kim Jong Un firing a similar gun during a factory visit earlier this month. (Anton Sokolin, NK News)
- South Korea and Japan are in the final stages of arranging a bilateral defense ministers dialogue in Singapore, according to Seoul military sources on Friday. South Korea's Minister of National Defense Shin Won-sik will likely meet his Japanese counterpart Minoru Kihara on Saturday on the sidelines of the Asia Security Summit, also known as the Shangri-La Dialogue, according to officials. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- The United States and its main allies on said on Friday they are "gravely concerned" by deepening cooperation between North Korea and Russia and called for an end to North Korean arms transfers for use against Ukraine. (*Reuters*)
- The U.S. has exported goods to North Korea for the first time in seven years, according to U.S. government data, in what appears to have been a series of private aid shipments worth over $200,000. (Lina Park, *NK News*)
- The United States condemned North Korea's recent launches using ballistic missile technology "in the strongest possible terms" on Thursday, vowing to continue efforts to disrupt Pyongyang's revenue generation meant to fund its banned weapons programs. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States has no plans to forward-deploy nuclear weapons to the Korean Peninsula, a State Department spokesperson said Thursday, amid a resurgent debate over the idea of Washington redeploying tactical nuclear arms to Korea for deterrence against North Korean threats. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- A U.S. intelligence agency on Thursday released an analysis report confirming Russia's use of North Korean ballistic missiles in its war against Ukraine, as Pyongyang has denied weapons transactions with Moscow. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250719080227/https://mailchi.mp/569d0fa02e14/hrnk-news-items-kim-jong-uns-fears-could-be-exploited-us-intel-agency-confirms-nk-ballistic-missile-debris-found-in-ukraine?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

6. JUNE

Saturday, June 1st, 2024

N. Korea floats more rubbish balloons over S. Korean border; U.S., Japan, S. Korea to form permanent secretariat to align policies

In North Korea:
Sohae Satellite Launching Station: Activity Prior to Failed SLV Launch Attempt (*38 North*, 05/31/2024)

In South Korea:
Defense minister denounces N. Korea's launch of manure-carrying balloons as 'shameful', 'base' (*Yonhap*, 06/01/2024)
He Lost His Job, His Wife Went to Prison, Now He Wants to Take Down South Korea's President. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 06/01/2024)
More evidence points to Russia-North Korea military cooperation, South Korea defence minister says (*Reuters*, 05/31/2024)
Seoul defense chief accuses Russia of using North Korean weapons in Ukraine attack (*The Korea Herald*, 06/01/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N. Korea continues GPS jamming attack for 4th day (*Yonhap*, 06/01/2024)
N. Korea sending balloons carrying trash to S. Korea again: Seoul's military (*Yonhap*, 06/01/2024)
North Korea floats more rubbish balloons over South Korean border (*BBC News*, 06/01/2024)
Seoul warns public of more balloons being sent from North Korea (*Reuters*, 06/01/2024)

International:
10 countries, EU voice 'resolute' opposition to N.K.-Russia arms transfers (*Yonhap*, 05/31/2024)
Austin voices concerns over N. Korea's provocations in talks with Chinese counterpart (*Yonhap*, 05/31/2024)
Chinese accuses US of seeking 'Asia-Pacific Nato' (*Financial Times*, 06/01/2024)
Japan and South Korea are getting friendlier. At last (*The Economist*, 05/30/2024)
Korean bid for Australian shipbuilder hobbled by security concerns (*Financial Times*, 05/31/2024)
S. Korea, Japan agree to prevent repeat of 2018 maritime spat over Japanese patrol aircraft (*Yonhap*, 06/01/2024)
S. Korea, U.S., Japan condemn N.K. launches, reaffirm peninsula denuclearization goal (*Yonhap*, 06/01/2024)
Seoul defense chief thanks Congress for bill keeping US troops in South Korea (*The Korea Herald*, 06/01/2024)
Seoul envoy lambasts N.K. satellite launch as 'one of the most expensive fireworks' (*Yonhap*, 06/01/2024)

U.S., Japan, South Korea to form permanent secretariat to align policies (*Nikkei Asia*, 06/01/2024)
US, Japan, S. Korea reaffirm cooperation on economic, regional security (VOA, 05/31/2024)
US and allies clash with China and Russia over North Korea's launches and threats to use nukes (*AP*, 05/31/2024)
US doubtful it could help S. Korea on nuclear-powered subs (*Reuters*, 05/31/2024)

In North Korea:

- Commercial satellite imagery of the Sohae Satellite Launching Station from May 27—11 hours prior to the launch—and May 28 reveal suspected launch preparation signals, particularly the presence of vehicles and equipment near the launch pad covered by camouflage netting in the lead-up to the launch. (Peter Makowsky, Jack Liu, Iliana Ragnone, *38 North*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's Defense Minister Shin Won-sik on Saturday denounced the North's recent launch of balloons carrying trash and manure into the South as a "shameful" and "base" act. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- Cho Kuk's rise, fall and comeback has captivated South Korea—a country with a worse political divide than the U.S. (Dasl Yoon, Timothy W. Martin, *The Wall Street Journal*)
- South Korean defence minister Shin Won-sik said on Saturday that more evidence suggests weapons used by Russia in the war in Ukraine were illegally imported from North Korea. (Joyce Lee, Shri Navaratnam, *Reuters*)
- South Korean Defense Minister Shin Won-sik said Saturday growing evidence pointed to Russia getting weapons from North Korea to attack Ukraine and aiding the Kim Jong-un regime's military program. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea attempted to jam GPS signals near the western sea border for the fourth consecutive day Saturday, the South's military said. (Shim Sun-ah, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea is sending balloons carrying trash and manure to South Korea on Saturday, Seoul's military said, after it launched hundreds of similar balloons across the inter-Korean border earlier this week. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea is sending more balloons carrying rubbish across the heavily fortified southern border, South Korea's military has said. (Thomas Mackintosh, *BBC News*)
- Seoul warned the public on Saturday to avoid more balloons sent from North Korea and to report them to the military or police. (Joyce Lee, *Reuters*)

International:

- Ten countries, including South Korea, and the European Union expressed firm opposition Friday to the expanding arms transfers between North Korea and Russia, urging the two countries to stop the illegal activities meant to aid Moscow's war in Ukraine. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin expressed concerns over North Korea's recent provocations and its contributions to Russia's war effort in Ukraine during a meeting with his Chinese counterpart in Singapore on Friday, the Pentagon said. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

- A top Chinese general has accused the US of trying to build an "Asia-Pacific version of Nato", underlining tensions between Washington and Beijing one day after the two countries' defence chiefs met for the first time since 2022 in an effort to improve military communications. (Demetri Sevastopulo, Kathrin Hille, *Financial Times*)
- The newfound amity goes beyond personalities. It reflects a growing realisation that, at a time when America and China are turning inward, the two export powerhouses have many interests—and challenges—in common. (*The Economist*)
- Australia's only listed defence company is at the centre of a dealmaking tussle likely to shape Washington and Canberra's ability to respond to China's maritime military build-up. (Christian Davies, Song Jung-a, Nic Fildes, *Financial Times*)
- The defense chiefs of South Korea and Japan agreed Saturday to take measures to prevent the recurrence of a 2018 maritime spat over Japanese patrol aircraft, an incident considered a major hindrance to efforts to strengthen bilateral military cooperation. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- Senior diplomats of South Korea, the United States and Japan "strongly" condemned North Korea's recent satellite and missile launches, and reaffirmed their commitment to the "complete" denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula as they held trilateral talks in Virginia on Friday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Seoul's Minister of National Defense Shin Won-sik on Saturday credited the bipartisan support from the US Congress for its role in protecting the US troop presence in South Korea. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea's top envoy to the U.N. denounced North Korea's failed satellite launch this week as "one of the most expensive fireworks" on Friday, stressing that it has used its scarce resources for the launch despite persistent food shortages. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S., Japan and South Korea will create a permanent secretariat to enhance engagement and align policies, as the trilateral grouping emerges as a key bulwark to maintain peace and security across the Indo-Pacific. (Ken Moriyasu, *Nikkei Asia*)
- The United States, Japan and South Korea "strongly oppose" any unilateral attempts to change the status quo in the Indo-Pacific waters and "strongly condemned" North Korea's recent launches using ballistic missile technology. (Nike Ching, VOA)
- The United States and allies South Korea and Japan clashed with China and Russia Friday over North Korea's latest satellite and ballistic missile launches and threats to use nuclear weapons that have escalated tensions in northeast Asia. (Edith M. Lederer, AP)
- The United States is unlikely to help South Korea build nuclear-powered submarines at the moment, as it is stretched by AUKUS commitments to Australia, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said at the Shangri-La security dialogue in Singapore. (Tom Westbrook, Gerry Doyle, *Reuters*)

Prepared by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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Sunday, June 2nd, 2024

N. Korea sends some 720 more trash-carrying balloons to S. Korea, continues GPS jamming for 5 days

In North Korea:
N. Korea's Kim inspects 1st lecture at newly built ruling party training school (*Yonhap*, 06/02/2024)

In South Korea:
At rock bottom: Moon Chung-in surveys the ruins of North Korea diplomacy (*NK News*, 05/31/2024)
PM denounces N. Korea's launch of trash-carrying balloons as vile provocation (*Yonhap*, 06/02/2024)
Police receive over 800 reports on trash-carrying balloons from N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 06/02/2024)
South Korea seeks to join top arms dealers with new fighter jet engine (*Financial Times*, 06/02/2024)
Vehicle damaged by trash-carrying balloons from N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 06/02/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N. Korea says it will stop sending trash-filled balloons, will resume if S. Korea sends leaflets (*Yonhap*, 06/02/2024)
N. Korea sends some 720 more trash-carrying balloons to S. Korea, continues GPS jamming for 5 days (*Yonhap*, 06/02/2024)
North Korea sends hundreds more trash-carrying balloons to South Korea (AP, 06/02/2024)
North Korea to suspend sending trash balloons to South Korea (*Reuters*, 06/02/2024)
S. Korea to take 'unendurable' measures vs. N. Korea over trash balloons, mulls loudspeaker campaign (*Yonhap*, 06/02/2024)
Why Did North Korea Bombard the South With Trash Balloons? (*The New York Times*, 06/02/2024)

International:
S. Korea, U.S. defense chiefs condemn 'reckless' N.K. provocations (*Yonhap*, 06/02/2024)
S. Korea, U.S., Japan to launch trilateral 'Freedom Edge' exercise this summer (*Yonhap*, 06/02/2024)
Senior diplomats of S. Korea, U.S. condemn N. Korea's offensive rhetoric, provocative acts (*Yonhap*, 06/01/2024)
South Korea, Japan defense chiefs agree to put past behind them at Singapore meeting (*The Korea Herald*, 06/01/2024)
U.S. defense chief welcomes S. Korea-Japan agreement in Singapore (*Yonhap*, 06/02/2024)
Why the US seeks dialogue with North Korea on human rights – Ep. 344 (*NK News*, 05/29/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un inspected the first lecture held at a newly built school for the country's ruling party officials. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- In an interview with *NK News*, former presidential adviser Moon Chung-in raises the alarm about the risk of conflict and laments the sidelining of peace advocates. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- Prime Minister Han Duck-soo on Sunday denounced North Korea's launch of trash-carrying balloons to the South as a "depraved" provocation, saying that Seoul would calmly respond to the North's recent series of hostile moves. (Kim Boram, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean police said Sunday they have received over 800 reports related to trash-filled balloons sent by North Korea. (Yoo Jee-ho, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's largest defence company is developing a fighter jet engine as the country works to move up the arms exporter value chain and boost its security self-sufficiency. (Song Jung-a, *Financial Times*)
- A North Korean balloon, filled with pieces of trash, such as cigarette butts, paper and plastic bags, came down on a passenger car in a multi-complex housing area in Ansan, just 30 kilometers south of Seoul. (Kim Boram, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea said Sunday it will temporarily stop sending trash-filled balloons across the border to South Korea, though it also threatened to resume such operations if Seoul sends more anti-Pyongyang leaflets. (Yoo Jee-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has sent around 720 more balloons carrying trash to South Korea and continued jamming GPS signals for five straight days against the South, Seoul's military said Sunday, as South Korea's presidential office was considering taking countermeasures. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea launched hundreds more trash-carrying balloons toward the South after a similar campaign a few days earlier, according to South Korea's military, in what Pyongyang calls retaliation for activists flying anti-North Korean leaflets across the border. (Kim Tong-Hyung, AP)
- North Korea said on Sunday it would stop sending balloons carrying trash over the border to South Korea but vowed to resume the practice if anti-North Korean leaflets are flown over again from the South. (Hyunsu Yim, *Reuters*)
- South Korea will take "unendurable" measures against North Korea for sending trash-filled balloons across the border. (Yoo Jee-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The unusual offensive, across the world's most heavily fortified border, is a revival of a Cold War era tactic. The South has threatened to respond by blasting K-pop. (Choe Sang-hun, *The New York Times*)

International:

- The defense chiefs of South Korea and the United States denounced North Korea on Sunday over its latest provocations, including the launches of trash-carrying balloons and a military spy satellite, and vowed a firm response, the defense ministry said. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The defense chiefs of South Korea, the United States and Japan agreed Sunday to launch a trilateral multidomain exercise this summer, Seoul's defense ministry said, amid joint efforts to strengthen security cooperation against evolving North Korean threats. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

- Senior diplomats of South Korea and the United States have held talks in Washington and strongly denounced North Korea for raising tensions on the Korean Peninsula with offensive rhetoric and provocative acts. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's Minister of National Defense Shin Won-sik and Japan's Minister of Defense Minoru Kihara agreed to look to the future in a bilateral meeting held at the Asia Security Summit or the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin on Saturday welcomed an agreement by defense chiefs of South Korea and Japan to take measures to prevent the recurrence of a 2018 maritime spat over Japanese patrol aircraft. (*Yonhap*)
- Ambassador Julie Turner discusses her work as the U.S. envoy on DPRK human rights and how the global community can help North Koreans. (Jacco Zwetsloot, *NK News*)

Prepared by Smaranda Gheorghe, HRNK Research Intern

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Monday, June 3rd, 2024

Experts Welcome the Formal Inclusion of N. Korean Human Rights to the Work of the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Top News:
Experts Welcome the Formal Inclusion of N. Korean Human Rights to the Work of the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs (RFA, 05/28/2024)
**This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.*

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un sends top officials to reeducation in push to enforce obedience (*NK News*, 06/03/2024)

In South Korea:
Korea bets big on gas, oil prospects in East Sea (*The Korea Herald*, 06/03/2024)
Korea's east coast may harbor 14 billion barrels of oil and gas, Yoon says (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/03/2024)
Oil dream revived, yet pitfalls remain (*The Korea Herald*, 06/03/2024)
Oil, gas stocks skyrocket on massive drilling prospects (*The Korea Herald*, 06/03/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Activists mull suspending leaflet operation if Kim Jong-un apologizes for balloon campaign (*Yonhap*, 06/03/2024)
Border residents call for halt to sending anti-Pyongyang leaflets to N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 06/03/2024)
Defectors to send leaflets, pop music to NK (*The Korea Herald*, 06/03/2024)

Loudspeaker broadcasts at DMZ could be effective tool against North: Experts (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/03/2024)
NSC decides to fully suspend 2018 inter-Korean peace pact after N.K. trash balloon campaign (*Yonhap*, 06/03/2024)
S. Korea considering raising N. Korea's GPS jamming attacks with U.N. bodies (*Yonhap*, 06/03/2024)
S. Korea's plan to halt 2018 military pact heralds loudspeaker broadcasting resumption, border training against N.K. (*Yonhap*, 06/03/2024)
Seoul mulls complete suspension of inter-Korean military accord over trash balloons (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/03/2024)
South Korea to suspend inter-Korean military agreement (*The Korea Times*, 06/03/2024)
South Korea to suspend military pact with North over trash balloons (*Reuters*, 06/03/2024)

International:
EU blacklists Russian governor for gifting kamikaze drones to Kim Jong Un (*NK News*, 06/03/2024)
How the North Korea-Russia alliance could damage Biden in 2024 (*The Hill*, 06/02/2024)
South Korea, U.S., Japan to launch trilateral exercise (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/03/2024)
US, ROK and Japan to launch new drills to defend against North Korean threats (*NK News*, 06/03/2024)

Top News:

- The South Korean government has amended a regulation relating to North Korean human rights issues. For the first time, "the formulation and implementation of foreign policy relating to North Korean human rights" has been added to the remit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' North Korea Policy Cooperation Division. North Korean human rights experts called this a positive development and a step in the right direction. (Kim Ji-soo, RFA)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader King Jong Un has sent top officials in the country's elite Politburo to an ideological reeducation program, according to state media on Sunday, as part of his ongoing push to enforce obedience to his instructions and boost his personality cult. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea has approved a large-scale project to carry out exploration drilling of potentially massive gas and oil reserves, which could hold up to 14 billion barrels of gas and oil in the deep sea off the country's southeastern coast, President Yoon Suk Yeol announced Monday. (Kan Hyeong-woo, *The Korea Herald*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol said Monday that a large amount of oil and gas is likely buried in waters off Korea's east coast near Yeongil Bay in Pohang, North Gyeongsang, and announced further exploration of the area. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Importing nearly all the oil and gas it consumes, South Korea has long desired its own fuel wells. Yet, a discovery of one with massive deposits within its territory seemed almost too good to be true. (Lee Sun-young, *The Korea Herald*)

- Stock prices of oil- and gas-related companies spiked Monday, following President Yoon Suk Yeol's approval for exploratory drilling of potentially massive reserves of natural resources off the country's southeastern coast. (Choi Ji-won, *The Korea Herald*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- A North Korean defectors' group said Monday it could consider temporarily halting the scattering of anti-Pyongyang leaflets across the border if the North's leader Kim Jong-un apologizes for the sending of trash-carrying balloons to South Korea. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Residents near the inter-Korean border called on South and North Korea to halt hostile acts against each other Monday as tensions have been running high in the wake of the North's massive sending of trash-carrying balloons into the South. (Kim Hyun-soo, *Yonhap)*
- A Seoul-based North Korean defectors' group on Monday said it would send more leaflets and digital copies of popular South Korean songs across the border in a growing cross-border tit-for-tat that most recently saw Pyongyang send balloons loaded with waste to the South. (Yoon Min-sik, *The Korea Herald*)
- Loudspeakers blaring condemnations of the North Korean regime will likely be effective psychological warfare tools and a deterrent to Pyongyang's aggressive behavior, according to South Korean security experts. (Lee Keun-pyung, Park Hyun-ju, Lee Soo-jung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The presidential National Security Council (NSC) decided Monday to fully suspend the 2018 inter-Korean reduction pact until mutual trust is restored in response to North Korea's massive sending of trash-carrying balloons into South Korea. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea is considering taking up North Korea's repeated jamming of GPS navigation signals with related U.N. bodies and other international organizations to bring its illegality to attention and stop Pyongyang's acts, officials said Monday. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's plan to suspend a 2018 inter-Korean military agreement in its entirety will pave the way for Seoul to resume loudspeaker broadcasting along the border, a key tool for psychological warfare against North Korea, and hold front-line military training. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- The South Korean government said Monday it would raise a motion to suspend the entire 2018 inter-Korean military agreement "until trust between the two Koreas is fully restored" during a Tuesday cabinet meeting. (Lee Soo-jung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The National Security Council (NSC) decided Monday to suspend the 2018 inter-Korean military agreement in response to North Korea's sending of trash-filled balloons over the border. (Kwak Yeon-soo, Lee Hyo-jin, *The Korea Times*)
- South Korea plans to suspend a military agreement signed with North Korea in 2018 aimed at easing tensions, the presidential office said on Monday, after Seoul warned of a strong response to balloons launched by Pyongyang carrying trash to the South. (*Reuters*)

International:

- The European Union has slapped sanctions on the governor of a Russian Far East region and a Russian transportation company over their alleged roles in facilitating arms trade with North Korea. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- An intensifying military alliance between Russia and North Korea could spell trouble for President Biden in November. The U.S. has made no significant headway with the Kim regime

since Biden has been in office, despite multiple offers to begin talks without any conditions. (Ellen Mitchell, *The Hill*)

- South Korea, the United States and Japan plan to launch a trilateral exercise this summer under an agreement between their defense chiefs in Singapore on Sunday, according to Seoul's Defense Ministry. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoonAng Daily*)
- The U.S., South Korea and Japan will launch a series of new trilateral drills this summer as the three countries look to strengthen military cooperation against advancing North Korean threats. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)

Experts Welcome the Formal Inclusion of N. Korean Human Rights to the Work of the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ji-soo Kim, *RFA*

May 28, 2024

[Editor's Note: the revised regulation (in Korean) can be accessed at this link.]

Anchor: *The South Korean government has amended a regulation relating to North Korean human rights issues. For the first time, "the formulation and implementation of foreign policy relating to North Korean human rights" has been added to the remit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' North Korea Policy Cooperation Division. North Korean human rights experts called this a positive development and a step in the right direction. This is a report by Kim Ji-soo.*

The South Korean government has added "the formulation and implementation of foreign policy relating to North Korean human rights" to the remit of the North Korea Policy Cooperation Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

However, the revised regulation notes that "foreign policy relating to North Korean human rights" excludes policies relating to international organizations, including the United Nations.

This change, published on May 28, was part of a series of revisions to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' regulations about its internal organization and division of responsibilities.

This measure is expected to lead to proactive steps by South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to promote human rights in North Korea.

"Conservative administrations in South Korea have generally paid more attention to [North Korean] human rights," Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, told RFA on May 28, noting that "this is a very positive development."

Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu: "This is a big step in the right direction. I think it will ensure sustainability in efforts to address human rights in North Korea."

Scarlatoiu added that he hoped for the position of Ambassador for International Cooperation on North Korean Human Rights—currently held by Professor Lee Shin-wha—to be upgraded to a paid, full-time position, so that the Ambassador can devote greater time and attention to addressing North Korean human rights issues.

Shin Hee-seok, a Legal Analyst at the Transitional Justice Working Group, told RFA that there is now a clearer division of responsibilities within the South Korean government on North Korean human rights.

Legal Analyst Shin Hee-seok: "There was no explicit mention of North Korean human rights in the areas of work for the North Korea Policy Cooperation Division. Now that it has been added to the [Division's] list of responsibilities, there is now a clearer basis for addressing North Korean human rights."

Shin also explained that there is a reason why policies relating to the United Nations and other international organizations was specifically excluded from "policy relating to North Korean human rights" in the revised regulation.

Legal Analyst Shin Hee-seok: "It is also important to note that policies relating to the United Nations and other international organizations are excluded [from the Division's work]. North Korean human rights is often discussed at the United Nations. When it comes to government entities, they try to delineate their areas of work as clearly as possible to avoid conflicting areas of responsibility."

Meanwhile, as part of these latest revisions to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' regulations, the task of "formulating foreign policy relating to and providing assistance to overseas North Korean escapees" was transferred from the North Korea Policy Cooperation Division to the Korean Peninsula Future Policy Division.

Translated by Alexander Kim, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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Prepared by Ada Trybuchowska, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250719082914/https://mailchi.mp/5cd85f2d1a30/hrnk-news-items-experts-welcome-the-formal-inclusion-of-n-korean-human-rights-to-the-work-of-the-rok-ministry-of-foreign-affairs?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, June 4th, 2024

Seoul spotlights North Korean human rights abuses as UNSC chair; N. Korean companies scrambling to send workers to Chinese factories

In South Korea:
Presidential office orders compensation for damage caused by N.K. trash balloons (*Yonhap*, 06/04/2024)

Seoul deploys border loudspeakers after scrapping military deal with North Korea (*NK News*, 06/04/2024)
South Korea to blast K-pop across border in revenge for balloons carrying rubbish (*The Telegraph*, 06/04/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Cabinet approves full suspension of inter-Korean tension reduction pact (*Yonhap*, 04/06/2024)
Why North Korea dumped trash on South Korea (*Vox*, 06/04/2024)
Yoon endorses motion fully suspending inter-Korean tension reduction pact (*Yonhap*, 06/04/2024)

International:
Cargo ship docks at Russian coal terminal in North Korea for first time in years (*NK News*, 06/04/2024)
On warship, Dutch military chiefs sound alarm over North Korea-Russia arms trade (*NK News*, 06/04/2024)
Russian government VIP jet lands in North Korea as two sides plan Putin visit (*NK News*, 06/04/2024)
North Korean companies 'scrambling' to send workers to Chinese factories (*RFA*, 06/03/2024)
S. Korea sets out on UNSC presidency, plans meeting on N.K. human rights (*Yonhap*, 06/04/2024)
S. Korea told relevant countries of decision to suspend inter-Korean tension reduction pact in advance: Seoul official (*Yonhap*, 06/04/2024)
Seoul spotlights North Korean human rights abuses as UN Security Council chair (*NK News*, 06/04/2024)
South Korea Plans to Convene UN Meeting on North Korea Rights Abuses (*U.S. News*, 06/03/2024)
U.S. State Dept. denounces N. Korea's trash-filled balloons as 'disgusting' tactic (*Yonhap*, 06/04/2024)
U.S. watching tensions on Korean Peninsula with 'great concern': White House official (*Yonhap*, 06/04/2024)

In South Korea:

- The presidential office said Tuesday the government will come up with measures to compensate people who suffered property damage from North Korea's trash-filled balloons. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea has redeployed propaganda loudspeakers and will resume normal military operations near the inter-Korean border. (Joon Ha Park, Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- South Korea has launched a campaign to blast K-pop music across the border with the north in response to a bombardment of rubbish-carrying balloons sent by Pyongyang last week. (*The Telegraph*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- The South Korean Cabinet on Tuesday approved a motion calling for the full suspension of a 2018 inter-Korean tension reduction pact after North Korea sent hundreds of trash-filled balloons across the border. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)

- President Yoon Suk Yeol on Tuesday endorsed a motion calling for the full suspension of a 2018 inter-Korean tension reduction pact after North Korea sent hundreds of balloons carrying trash across the border. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's decision to drop literal trash across its southern border has led South Korea to weigh pulling out of a 2018 deal the two had made to ease military tensions. (Li Zhou, *Vox*)

International:

- A cargo ship has docked at a Russia-operated coal terminal in the North Korean port of Rason for the first known time since before the pandemic, *NK Pro* analysis of satellite imagery shows, appearing to mark the resumption of coal transshipment through the port. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- North Korean weapons trade with Russia deteriorates the security situation in the Indo-Pacific, the Netherlands' defense minister said Monday, speaking aboard a Dutch warship deployed to the region to support monitoring of DPRK sanctions violations. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- A Russian government jet typically used by high-ranking officials has landed in North Korea, according to flight tracking data, amid planning for a visit by Russian leader Vladimir Putin. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean trading companies have been contacting factories and companies in China about hiring more North Korean workers as Pyongyang seeks to bring in more foreign currency for its struggling economy. (Ahn Chang Gyu, Kim Jieun, *RFA*)
- South Korea officially began its rotating monthlong presidency of the U.N. Security Council on Monday, unveiling a plan to hold an open meeting on North Korea's human rights situation. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea informed the United States, China and other relevant countries in advance of its decision to suspend a 2018 tension reduction pact with North Korea prior to announcing the plan. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea will use its monthlong term as president of the U.N. Security Council to spotlight North Korea's human rights abuses and military escalations. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- South Korea plans to convene in mid-June a public United Nations Security Council meeting on human rights abuses in North Korea, a move that is likely to anger Pyongyang and face opposition from Russia and China. (Michelle Nichols, *U.S. News*)
- A U.S. State Department spokesperson on Monday condemned North Korea's recent sending of trash-filled balloons across the border into South Korea as a "disgusting" tactic, calling for an end to what he called the "childish" move. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States is watching growing tensions on the Korean Peninsula with "great concern," a White House official said Monday, stressing ongoing efforts to ensure that America is "best-postured" to support South Korea. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Kate Refolo, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250719163616/https://mailchi.mp/1314879e13d7/hrnk-news-items-seoul-spotlights-north-korean-human-rights-abuses-as-unsc-chair-n-korean-companies-scrambling-to-send-workers-to-chinese-factories?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Wednesday, June 5th, 2024

Event Video - Slaves to the Bomb by Robert Collins; North Korea expanding and rebuilding prison camps around country, imagery shows

Top News:
Event Video - *Slaves to the Bomb* by Robert Collins (*HRNK*, 06/04/2024)
North Korea expanding and rebuilding prison camps around country, imagery shows (*NK Pro*, 06/05/2024)

In North Korea:
North Korea's Rural Development: Touching Every Corner of the Country (*38 North*, 06/04/2024)
North Korea clearing land inside DMZ in possible armistice violation: Imagery (*NK News*, 06/05/2024)
North Korea Ship Sank, Killing 90 Soldiers: Report (*Newsweek*, 06/04/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korea holds interagency response meeting against N.K. trash-carrying balloons (*Yonhap*, 06/05/2024)
South Korea residents on border with North fear spike in tensions (*Reuters*, 06/05/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Prepare for an armed clash with North Korea (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/05/2024)
Signs detected of N. Korea demolishing part of Donghae inter-Korean railway: NIS (*Yonhap*, 06/05/2024)
Tensions rise again on Korean peninsula (*The Hill*, 06/04/2024)

International:
Biden says North Korea is not a greater threat now than it has been in past (*NK News*, 06/05/2024)
Russian youth delegation discusses ways to promote cooperation with N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 06/05/2024)
Trump has no interest in leaving S. Korea undefended: Gingrich (*Yonhap*, 06/05/2024)
U.S. B-1B bomber holds joint bombing drills in S. Korea: defense ministry (*Yonhap*, 06/05/2024)
U.S. strategic bomber drops precision weapon in drills with South Korea fighters (*Reuters*, 06/05/2024)
Unification minister meets global experts over new unification vision (*Yonhap*, 06/05/2024)

Top News:

- On May 17, **HRNK** released its latest report, ***Slaves to the Bomb* by Robert Collins**, at the DACOR Bacon House in Washington, D.C. The video of the report release is now available online. (*HRNK*)
- Planet Labs imagery shows construction on new buildings in recent weeks inside at least three small "kyohwaso" prison facilities, after demolition started on each around the same time late last year. The U.S.-based **Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)**, which has published detailed reports on many of the prisons, calls them "long-term prison-labor facilities." (Colin Zwirko, Ifang Bremer, *NK Pro*)

In North Korea:

- Kim Jong Un's rural development initiative is only two and a half years old, but its impact can already be seen nationwide. Analysis of both North Korean state media and commercial satellite imagery suggest that since Kim announced the plan at a Workers Party of Korea plenary meeting in December 2021, new housing developments have been opening at a pace of more than one a week in counties all over the country—with more to come. (Martyn Williams, Iliana Ragnone, *38 North*)
- North Korea has cleared a 1.8-mile strip of land that extends into the demilitarized zone at the country's easternmost border, according to *NK News* analysis of satellite imagery, in an apparent effort to strengthen its south-facing border. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- A North Korean vessel overloaded with soldiers capsized last month in waters in the country's southern border area, killing an estimated 90 people. (John Feng, *Newsweek*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea on Wednesday held an interagency meeting to discuss safety measures against North Korea's recent series of provocative acts, including its sending of trash-carrying balloons, the Joint Chiefs of Staff said. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- When North Korea sent hundreds of balloons carrying trash over the border to South Korea last week, the move sparked emergency alerts and round-the-clock media coverage in its neighbour. (Yi Hyun-young, Yim Hyun-su, *Reuters*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- South Korea's government on Tuesday decided to suspend the effectiveness of the Sept. 19 military agreement in response to the North's launch of balloons carrying waste and excrement to the South, its jamming of GPS signals in the West Sea, and its firing of 18 ballistic missiles into the East Sea. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea's spy agency said Wednesday it has detected signs that North Korea has recently been demolishing some sections on the northern side of the inter-Korean railway on the east coast in an apparent move to erase the legacy of inter-Korean exchange and cooperation. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and the Cabinet Council approved a proposal to suspend a 2018 agreement that decreases military activity at the border with North Korea. (Brad Dress, *The Hill*)

International:

- North Korea is no more threatening today than it has been in the past, U.S. President Joe Biden has said, despite Pyongyang's persistent advancement of its nuclear missile capabilities in recent years. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- A Russian youth delegation has met with North Korean officials during a visit to Pyongyang and discussed ways to enhance exchanges and cooperation between their youth associations. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Trump has no interest in leaving South Korea "undefended," though he may want the "wealthy" ally to invest more for its security. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States on Wednesday deployed at least one B-1B bomber for joint bombing drills in South Korea for the first time in seven years, the defense ministry said, amid heightened tensions over the North. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- A U.S. B-1 strategic bomber joined South Korean and U.S. fighter jets in a training mission over the Korean peninsula on Wednesday, dropping a guided JDAM weapon used with so-called bunker-busting munitions. (Jack Kim, *Reuters*)
- Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho met with global experts on issues of the Korean Peninsula on Wednesday to collect their opinions for Seoul's efforts to draw up a new unification vision, his office said. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Jiwoo Hwang, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250719163738/https://mailchi.mp/c961a05cf3a9/hrnk-news-items-event-video-slaves-to-the-bomb-by-robert-collins-north-korea-expanding-and-rebuilding-prison-camps-around-country-imagery-shows?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, June 6th, 2024

U.S. to Address N. Korea's Forced Labor Issues with Sanctions and Other Means, Says Special Envoy for Human Rights Issues

Top News:
U.S. to Address N. Korea's Forced Labor Issues with Sanctions and Other Means, Says Special Envoy for Human Rights Issues (*Yonhap*, 05/18/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
North Korea's Forces Spotted Fortifying Border Post (*Newsweek*, 06/05/24)
North Koreans punish money changers to stop soaring exchange rates (RFA, 06/06/24)
Quick Take: Pukchang Military Airfield Modernization Progresses (38 *North*, 06/06/24)

In South Korea:

Yoon lambasts North's 'despicable provocations' in Memorial Day speech (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/06/24)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Defector group sends leaflets to Pyongyang; no signs of N.K. provocation detected (*Yonhap*, 06/06/24)
South Korea activists defy warning to fly balloons into North (*Reuters*, 06/06/24)
South Korea residents on border with North fear spike in tensions (*Reuters*, 06/06/24)

International:
Japan PM mulls Mongolia trip to ask support for North Korea talks (*Kyodo News*, 06/05/24)
Legal hurdles to board ships hinder North Korea sanctions enforcement: officials (*NK News*, 06/06/24)
Russia to promote ties with North Korea while eyeing collaboration with South (*NK News*, 06/06/24)
Russian tourist train departs for North Korea for first time in four years (*NK News*, 06/06/24)
US Supersonic Bomber Flew First Korea Bombing Drill in 7 Years (*Business Insider*, 06/05/24)
(Yonhap Interview) U.N. rights official voices concern over 'increasing isolation' of N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 06/06/24)
Why it may take a crisis to unlock the US-North Korea nuclear stalemate (*NK News*, 06/05/24)

Top News:

- The United States plans to use various measures, including sanctions, to address the problem of forced labor inside and outside North Korea, according to the U.S. Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights. (Kim Dong-hyun, *Yonhap News*)

In North Korea:

- North Korean troops were spotted constructing new positions at a guard post near the Demilitarized Zone on Wednesday, one day after the South withdrew from an agreement meant to curb tensions at the heavily fortified border. (John Feng, *Newsweek*)
- The US dollar used to hover around the 8,000 won mark, but now it is worth more than 13,000. (Ahn Chang Gyu, *RFA*)
- Commercial satellite imagery indicates modernization efforts at North Korea's Pukchang Military Airfield continue to take shape. (Martyn Williams, Iliana Ragnone, *38 North*)

In South Korea:

- President Yoon Suk Yeol said South Korea will "never overlook" the North's "despicable provocations" and vowed to maintain "ironclad readiness" alongside the United States during his Memorial Day speech at Seoul National Cemetery on Thursday. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- A North Korean defectors' group said Thursday it has sent about 10 large plastic balloons carrying propaganda leaflets against the North Korean regime across the border, raising concerns Pyongyang could resume sending trash-filled balloons. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- An activist group in South Korea said on Thursday it had flown balloons into North Korea carrying leaflets criticising leader Kim Jong Un, just days after Pyongyang sent thousands of balloons carrying trash in the other direction over the border. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- When North Korea sent hundreds of balloons carrying trash over the border to South Korea last week, the move sparked emergency alerts and round-the-clock media coverage for South Korean residents living near the heavily fortified border, as the latest in a worrying rise in tensions between the Koreas. (Hyun Young Yi, Hyunsu Yim, *Reuters*)

International:

- Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida is considering visiting Mongolia in August as part of Tokyo's efforts to advance stalled talks with North Korea on the issue of the past abduction of Japanese nationals, an informed source said Wednesday. (*Kyodo News*)
- Legal constraints related to boarding vessels are the biggest challenge in enforcing sanctions on North Korea, officials from South Korea and the E.U. said at a round table on maritime sanctions enforcement, which was held in Busan on Tuesday. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- Russia will continue to promote ties with North Korea despite international criticism, Russian President Vladimir Putin said in a briefing with the chiefs of major global and Russian news agencies on Wednesday as he defended DPRK's nukes and expressed 'appreciation' to Seoul for not delivering weapons to Ukraine. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Forty-one Russian nationals left from Far East after local governor floated rail resumption last month. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- A US supersonic bomber joined South Korea's Air Force for a live-fire training exercise, conducting runs with 500-pound bombs.It's the first time the B1-B Lancer has dropped live munitions on the Korean peninsula since 2017. (Chris Panella, *Business Insider*)
- The head of the U.N. human rights agency's office in Seoul has praised various moves in South Korea to help victims of North Korea's human rights violations as he voiced concern over the reclusive regime's increasing isolation. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- U.S.-North Korea relations are approaching their lowest point in decades, with no official talks between the two countries since the end of the Trump administration. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)

U.S. to Address N. Korea's Forced Labor Issues with Sanctions and Other Means, Says Special Envoy for Human Rights Issues

Kim Dong-hyun, *Yonhap News*
May 18, 2024

[Editor's note: a video recording of Ambassador Turner's remarks can be viewed at this link.]

The United States plans to use various measures, including sanctions, to address the problem of forced labor inside and outside North Korea, according to the U.S. Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights.

At an event hosted on May 17 by the **Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)** in Washington D.C., Ambassador Julie Turner, the U.S. Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Issues, stated, "We will shine a light on the DPRK's coercive labor practices—both within its borders and among the workers it sends abroad—to labor in mining, logging, seafood processing, information technology, and other industries."

In addition, she noted, "Where possible, we will also address these concerns through sanctions, import restrictions, business advisories, and other tools that the U.S. government has available," doing so "in partnership with like-minded partners."

Ambassador Turner emphasized that North Korea's human rights issues and security issues are inseparable, since North Korea procures the resources needed to develop nuclear weapons by subjecting the population to forced labor.

She observed that the human rights and security issues are "inextricably linked," as North Korea "continues to exploit its own citizens and divert resources from the country's people to build up its unlawful WMD and ballistic weapons programs."

At the same time, she stated that the United States would continue to raise North Korean human rights issues on the international stage, including at the United Nations, and continue to pursue dialogue with North Korea.

At this event, **HRNK** released ***Slaves to the Bomb***, a report that sheds light on the human rights situation of the personnel who are involved in North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

The report notes that scientists, engineers, and other personnel working in North Korea's nuclear laboratories and facilities, uranium mines, and nuclear testing facility are deprived of basic freedoms and exposed to serious physical danger in a forced labor environment.

With few exceptions, according to the report, those who contribute to the development of nuclear weapons in North Korea live under strict control and surveillance. This finding is based on testimonies by North Korean escapees and open-source information. The report also includes a list of North Korean scientists who are believed to have contributed to the nuclear program.

Robert Collins, HRNK senior advisor and report author, said that he wrote the report out of concern that North Korea's nuclear scientists might escape in the event of a contingency in North Korea and share their knowledge with countries that pose a national security threat to the United States.

Translated by SoEun Park, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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Prepared by Gia Yun, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250719164034/https://mailchi.mp/895d2727fb2a/hrnk-news-items-us-to-address-n-koreas-forced-labor-issues-with-sanctions-and-other-means-says-special-envoy-for-human-rights-issues?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Friday, June 7th, 2024

N. Korean leader boosts military-related public activities in recent 3 months; N. Korea pulls railway sleepers on Donghae Line

In North Korea:
N. Korea holds events to celebrate 78th anniversary of youth organization (*Yonhap*, 06/07/24)
N. Korean leader boosts military-related public activities in recent 3 months: report (*Yonhap*, 06/07/24)
North Korea clears land at six locations inside DMZ, satellite imagery shows (*NK News*, 06/07/24)
North Korea revives World Cup qualification hopes with crucial win against Syria (*NK News*, 06/07/24)
North Korea Satellite Images Show Mysterious Activity Along Border (*Newsweek*, 06/06/24)
North Korea urges children to provide weapons to boost country's military power (*NK News*, 06/07/24)

In South Korea:
Former Gyeonggi vice governor convicted for illegal payments to North Korea (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/07/24)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N. Korea pulls railway sleepers on Donghae Line (*The Dong-A Ilbo*, 06/05/24)
Paper provocations: Inside North and South Korea's decades-long leaflet war (*NK News*, 06/05/24)
Tensions Flare Between North and South Korea (*Foreign Policy*, 06/06/24)

International:
Kim Jong Un 'polite' and Trump 'practical'? Former leader's kind words cause an uproar (*Los Angeles Times*, 06/05/24)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has held various events to celebrate the 78th anniversary of the founding of its major youth organization, state media reported Friday, a move seen as aimed at eliciting the younger generation's loyalty for its leader, Kim Jong-un. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- Kim Jong-un significantly increased military-related public activities in the March-May period after he vowed to deal with inter-Korean relations with increased hostility. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- Experts say land clearing is likely aimed at bolstering defense with one section crossing military demarcation line. (Ifang Bremer, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- The match was a must-win for the DPRK men's team, which will now face off against Myanmar next week. (Joe Smith, Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

- Imagery from Planet Labs provided to *Newsweek* reveal at least four locations where newly cleared land has appeared in recent weeks, extending past North Korea's final border fence into the DMZ. (Jesus Mesa, *Newsweek*)
- Expert says directive targeting DPRK youth highlights regime's will to use all available resources to achieve objectives. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- Lee Hwa-young, a former vice governor of Gyeonggi, was sentenced on Friday to nine and a half years' imprisonment by the Suwon District Court on charges of collusion in an underwear manufacturer's illegal payments to North Korea. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- It has been confirmed that North Korea has recently begun dismantling the 'Donghae Line' railway sleepers leading to Mt. Kumgang. This railway was initially connected following the North-South Joint Declaration on June 15, 2000, and the actual tracks were laid in 2006 during the Roh Moo-hyun administration. (Kyu-Jin Shin, *The Dong-A Ilbo*)
- Two sides have often agreed to stop launches, but trash balloons and new dynamics could make it harder to find offramp. (James Fretwell, *NK News*)
- It started with dung-filled balloons and spiraled from there. (Jack Detsch, Robbie Gramer, *Foreign Policy*)

International:

- Though Moon succeeded in bringing Kim and then-President Trump together for three historic summits, those talks sputtered out. (Max Kim, *Los Angeles Times*)

Prepared by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250719164310/https://mailchi.mp/e094bba4ef35/hrnk-news-items-n-korean-leader-boosts-military-related-public-activities-in-recent-3-months-n-korea-pulls-railway-sleepers-on-donghae-line?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, June 8th, 2024

As Inter-Korean Military Agreement is Suspended, Time to Focus on Information Operations; UNSC to discuss NK human rights next week

Top News:
As Inter-Korean Military Agreement is Suspended, Time to Focus on Information Operations (VOA, 06/08/2024)

In North Korea:
North Korea recalls documentary about Kim Jong Un's mother (RFA, 06/07/2024)
Surpass the Cutting Edge: Reflections on North Korea's Failed May 27 Satellite Launch (38 *North*, 06/07/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Defector group sends more propaganda leaflets to N. Korea, raising concern about Pyongyang's trash balloons (*Yonhap*, 06/08/2024)
N. Korea sends balloons carrying trash to S. Korea again: JCS (*Yonhap*, 06/08/2024)
North Korea resumes flying balloons in likely bid to drop trash on South Korea again, Seoul says (AP, 06/08/2024)
North Korea resumes trash balloon launches: JCS (*The Korea Herald*, 06/08/2024)
North Korea sent trash balloons. Activists in the South sent K-pop. (*The Washington Post*, 06/07/2024)

International:
At UN, North Koreans beg China to stop sending escapees back (RFA, 06/08/2024)
N. Korea, China, Russia expanding nuclear arsenals at 'breakneck' pace: White House official (*Yonhap*, 06/08/2024)
On balloon drama, Russian state media sides with North Korea (VOA, 06/07/2024)
S. Korea denounces N.K. provocations in ASEAN meetings (*Yonhap*, 06/08/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. to hold 3rd round of defense cost-sharing negotiations in Washington next week (*Yonhap*, 06/08/2024)
S. Korea's Navy fleet to leave for Hawaii to join biennial RIMPAC exercise (*Yonhap*, 06/07/2024)
South Korea's Role in Countering Chinese and Russian Arms Sales in Latin America (*The Diplomat*, 06/08/2024)
U.N. Security Council to hold meeting on N.K. human rights next week (*Yonhap*, 06/08/2024)
US warns North Korea against providing Putin platform for war aims (VOA, 06/07/2024)
Yoon to pay state visits to Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan next week (*Yonhap*, 06/07/2024)

Top News:

- HRNK Board Members **Col. David Maxwell** and **Dr. Sung-Yoon Lee** discuss recent developments on the Korean Peninsula, addressing in particular the importance of sending outside information into North Korea. (Eun-jung Cho, VOA)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has recalled a 2011 documentary that sang the praises of Kim Jong Un's mother, two sources inside the country told *Radio Free Asia*, but the move is prompting people to wonder why the country has always maintained a level of secrecy about her identity and background. (Kim Jieun, RFA)

- On May 27, 2024, a “new-type” rocket carrying the Malligyong-1-1 spy satellite blasted off from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s (DPRK or North Korea) Sohae Satellite Launching Station. The rocket exploded during the first stage of flight. (Tianran Xu, *38 North*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- A North Korean defectors' group said Saturday that it has sent additional propaganda leaflets critical of the North Korean regime across the border, heightening concerns that Pyongyang may resume sending balloons filled with trash in retaliation. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea is once again sending balloons presumed to be carrying trash to South Korea on Saturday, Seoul's military said, after it launched nearly 1,000 similar balloons across the border since last week. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea resumed flying balloons on Saturday in a likely attempt to drop trash on South Korea again, South Korea’s military said, two days after Seoul activists floated their own balloons to scatter propaganda leaflets in the North. (Hyung-Jin Kim, AP)
- South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said late Saturday that North Korea was flying balloons loaded with trash once again, as the wind was forecast to veer south. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- After North Korea recently sent thousands of waste-filled balloons to South Korea, activists here responded with airborne deliveries that the regime up north might find even more despicable than garbage: K-pop and K-dramas. (Kelsey Ables, Jintak Han, *The Washington Post*)

International:

- Holding back tears, Kim Kyu-li spoke into the microphone to share her sister’s story, pleading with China to stop sending back captured North Korean escapees. Both were raised in North Korea and fled the country as teenagers – but wound up in starkly different places, she told people gathered at an event hosted by the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva on March 15. (Seo Hye Jun, Jamin Anderson, RFA)
- North Korea, China and Russia are expanding and diversifying their nuclear weapons stockpiles at a "breakneck" speed, a White House official said Friday, warning that absent a change in the trajectory of their arsenals, the United States may have to increase its own. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Russian state media attempted to leverage media skepticism to mislead its viewers over Pyongyang’s actions, and Western reporting on them. That is exemplified in an article from *Sputnik Globe*’s Moscow-based correspondent Ilya Tsukanov, titled “What Western Media Isn’t Telling You About North Korea’s Trash Balloon Campaign." (VOA)
- South Korea denounced North Korea's recent provocations, including its trash balloon campaign and GPS jamming attacks, and called for a clear and concerted message by the international community to address such threats, the foreign ministry said Saturday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the United States will hold their third round of cost sharing negotiations for stationing U.S. Forces Korea in Washington next week, the chief U.S. negotiator said Friday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

- A South Korean fleet of warships and maritime aircraft and around 840 Navy and Marine troops were set to depart for Hawaii on Friday to join a U.S.-led multinational maritime exercise slated to kick off later this month, the Navy said. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea stands out as a key U.S. ally with a growing reputation in the hemisphere for delivering quality military hardware on competitive timelines. (Henry Ziemer, Chan Mo Ku, *The Diplomat*)
- The U.N. Security Council (UNSC) will have an official meeting on North Korean human rights issues next week for the first time in less than a year, its work schedule showed Friday, as South Korea--as this month's UNSC president--seeks to highlight the link between the North's security challenge and its repressive political climate. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The Biden administration this week warned North Korea against providing Russian President Vladimir Putin "a platform to promote his war of aggression" against Ukraine ahead of his possible trip to Pyongyang. (Christy Lee, VOA)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol will pay state visits to Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan next week, focusing on expanding cooperation in critical minerals and other key sectors, his office said Friday. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250719164434/https://mailchi.mp/169b83f1be75/hrnk-news-items-as-inter-korean-military-agreement-is-suspended-time-to-focus-on-information-operations-unsc-to-discuss-nk-human-rights-next-week?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, June 9th, 2024

NK leader's sister warns of 'new responses' against S. Korea's loudspeaker broadcast, leafleting

Inter-Korean Relationship:
How South Korea is retaliating against North Korea's trash balloons (CNN, 06/09/2024)
N. Korea launches over 300 trash-carrying balloons toward S. Korea since Saturday (*Yonhap*, 06/09/2024)
N. Korea sends more trash-carrying balloons after S. Korea restarts loudspeaker broadcasts (*Yonhap*, 06/09/2024)
N.K. leader's sister warns of 'new responses' against S. Korea's loudspeaker broadcast, leafleting (*Yonhap*, 06/10/2024)
North Korea launches barrage of balloons toward South for second straight day (*NK News*, 06/09/2024)
Psychological warfare and K-pop: South Korea to blast loudspeakers at North Korea (*Reuters*, 06/09/2024)
S. Korea resumes propaganda broadcasts against N. Korea's trash-balloon campaign (*Yonhap*, 06/09/2024)

S. Korean loudspeakers blare again after North Korean trash balloon barrage (*The Korea Herald*, 06/09/2024)
South Korea responds to 'filth balloons' by blaring news, pop group BTS north across border (*The Washington Times*, 06/09/2024)
South Korea Responds to Trash Balloons From North (*Newsweek*, 06/09/2024)
South Korea restarts anti-North Korea loudspeaker broadcasts in retaliation for trash balloons (*AP*, 06/09/2024)
South Korea resumes North Korea broadcasts over trash balloons (*UPI*, 06/09/2024)
South Korea resumes playing propaganda recordings into the North (*The Telegraph*, 06/09/2024)
South Korea to resume loudspeaker broadcasts over border in balloon row (*BBC News*, 06/09/2024)
Why North Korea launched Another Salvo of Trash Balloons Toward the South (*The New York Times*, 06/09/2024)

International:
Yoon to embark on three-nation Central Asia trip this week (*Yonhap*, 06/09/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Mike Valerio breaks down the tit-for-tat rivalry between North and South Korea and explains how South Korea is retaliating as North Korea continues to send over trash-filled balloons despite the country saying it would stop. (CNN)
- North Korea has launched hundreds more balloons carrying trash toward South Korea over the past two days, Seoul's military said Sunday, amid heightened tensions over Pyongyang's continued balloon campaign. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea flew more trash-filled balloons toward South Korea on Sunday after the South resumed propaganda loudspeaker broadcasts in response to the North's repeated sending of balloons, as tensions are growing in the border regions dividing the two Koreas. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un threatened Sunday to take "new responses" if South Korea keeps sending anti-Pyongyang leaflets across the border and blasting loudspeaker broadcasts, calling it a "prelude to a very dangerous situation." (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea launched suspected "filth balloons" for the second straight day, South Korea's military announced late on Sunday, hours after Seoul resumed long-suspended propaganda broadcasts near the inter-Korean border. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- South Korea said on Sunday it would resume loudspeaker broadcasts at the border directed at North Korea for the first time in six years as a response to balloon launches by Pyongyang sending trash to the South. (Jack Kim, *Reuters*)
- South Korea restarted propaganda loudspeaker broadcasts toward North Korea on Sunday in response to the North's repeated sending of trash-filled balloons across the border since late last month, to which the North reacted with an additional launch of balloons. (Kim Eun-jung, Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea resumed loudspeaker broadcasts into North Korea on Sunday, in response to North Korea's launches of trash-laden balloons into South Korean territory over the weekend, the Joint Chiefs of Staff confirmed. (Lee Jung-joo, *The Korea Herald*)
- Military decontamination squads were in action on Sunday evening in Buahm Dong, a scenic, mountain-side Seoul neighborhood, as South Korea initiated loudspeaker propaganda

broadcasts across the Demilitarized Zone and North Korea renewed its barrage of "filth balloons." (Andrew Salmon, *The Washington Times*)

- South Korea is restarting loudspeaker broadcasts of anti-North Korean messaging for the first time in years, Seoul has said, after Pyongyang dropped hundreds of balloons carrying trash on its southern neighbor over the weekend. (Ellie Cook, *Newsweek*)
- South Korea on Sunday resumed anti-North Korean propaganda loudspeaker broadcasts in border areas in retaliation for the North sending over 1,000 balloons filled with trash and manure over the last couple of weeks. (Kim Tong-Hyung, AP)
- South Korea's military has resumed loudspeaker propaganda broadcasts to undermine the regime of Supreme Leader Kim Jong-Un after North Korea sent around a thousand balloons filled with trash over the border. (Adam Schrader, *UPI*)
- Seoul takes 'measures that may be unbearable' after Pyongyang sent hundreds of balloons carrying faeces and rubbish over the border. (George Styllis, *The Telegraph*)
- South Korea has said it will resume propaganda broadcasts against North Korea for the first time in six years in response to Pyongyang's campaign of sending rubbish-filled balloons across the border. (Shaimaa Khalil, Thomas Mackintosh, *BBC News*)
- The unusual offensive, across the world's most heavily fortified border, is a revival of a Cold War-era tactic. The South is responding by blasting K-pop. (Choe Sang-hun, *The New York Times*)

International:

- President Yoon Suk Yeol is set to pay state visits to Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan this week to explore expanding cooperation in critical minerals and other key sectors. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250719164555/https://mailchi.mp/e345971e9603/hrnk-news-items-0609-2024?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Monday, June 10th, 2024

U.S. Envoy for NK Human Rights Highlights Forced Labor Concerns, as New Report Unveils Fate of N. Korea's Nuclear Scientists

Top News:
U.S. Envoy for NK Human Rights Highlights Forced Labor Concerns, as New Report Unveils Fate of N. Korea's Nuclear Scientists (*News1*, 05/18/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
Up in smoke: Satellite imagery captures North Korea's war against wildfires (*NK Pro*, 06/10/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N. Korea launches some 310 trash-carrying balloons: Seoul military (*Yonhap*, 06/10/2024)
North Korea leader's sister warns of new response against South Korean loudspeakers, leaflets (*Reuters*, 06/10/2024)
North Korea restores loudspeakers in response to South's propaganda broadcast (*NK News*, 06/10/2024)
North Korea sends more trash balloons as Kim's sister warns of 'new counteraction' (*CNN*, 06/10/2024)
North Korea Sent Excrement Balloons. South Korea's Response: Blasting BTS Hits. (*Wall Street Journal*, 06/10/2024)
S. Korea not to turn on border propaganda loudspeakers Monday (*Yonhap*, 06/10/2024)
Seoul kicks off training against North Korean cyberattacks as tensions rise (*NK News*, 06/10/2024)
Why the 'balloon war' between North Korea and South Korea could spiral out of control (*The Independent*, 06/10/2024)

International:
Chinese military harassed Dutch warship enforcing UN sanctions on North Korea, Netherlands say (*CNN*, 06/10/2024)
Putin to visit N. Korea, Vietnam as early as this month: report (*Yonhap*, 06/10/2024)
Russian officials inspect North Korean railway in push to resume rail service (*NK News*, 06/10/2024)
South Korea, US work on joint strategy over North nuclear threat (*Reuters*, 06/10/2024)

Top News:

- While at '**Slaves to the Bomb**' an event hosted by **HRNK**, the U.S. Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Issues said that the United States will use various tools, including sanctions, to address forced labor occurring within and outside of North Korea. (Hyun Kim, *News1*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has repeatedly threatened to turn Seoul into a sea of fire over the years, brandishing artillery and nuclear weapons aimed at its adversaries in the South. But as global warming drives temperatures up and farmers defy rules against slash-and-burn agriculture, the risk is growing that the DPRK will be the one to find itself going up in flames. (Anton Sokolin, *NK Pro*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea has launched around 310 trash-carrying balloons toward South Korea overnight, Seoul's military said Monday, amid escalating tensions over the North's repeated balloon campaign to which South Korea has responded with the resumption of loudspeaker propaganda broadcasts after six years. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

- The influential sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un warned of a new response against South Korea if the South continued with loudspeaker broadcasts and allowing leaflet balloon flights amid simmering tensions. (Ju-min Park and Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- North Korea appears to have reinstalled loudspeakers near the border to air anti-South Korean propaganda, according to the ROK military, even as the South refrained from using its own loudspeakers following an initial test. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Korea sent a new wave of trash-laden balloons toward its southern neighbor late Sunday, after Kim Jong Un's powerful sister warned of further responses if the South keeps up its "psychological warfare." (Yoonjung Seo, Mike Valerio, Kathleen Magramo, CNN)
- After enduring days of balloon bombardment from the Kim Jong Un regime, South Korea countered with an airwaves assault of its own: blaring the chart-topping hits of boyband BTS. For two hours on Sunday, a South Korean loudspeaker near the two countries' border played a local radio program called "Voice of Freedom," run by the Seoul military's psychological warfare unit. (Dasl Yoon, *Wall Street Journal*)
- South Korea's military has decided not to operate its propaganda loudspeakers near the border with North Korea on Monday, a day after turning them on for the first time in six years in response to the North's trash-carrying balloon campaign. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean security agencies launched a two-week exercise to strengthen deterrence against North Korean cyberattacks on Monday, preparing for possible cyber escalations as inter-Korean tensions rise. The National Intelligence Service (NIS) announced in a press release on Friday that it is conducting the "2024 Cyber Attack Response Training". (Joon Ha Park, Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Korean leadership has vowed retaliation after South Korea resumed loudspeaker broadcasts and activists floated propaganda leaflets over the border, escalating the ongoing "balloon war" and damaging their already fraught bilateral relationship. (Maroosha Muzaffar, *The Independent*)

International:

- A Dutch warship was harassed by Chinese military aircraft, becoming the latest country to accuse Beijing's forces of initiating potentially unsafe encounters in international waters. In a statement Friday, the Dutch Defense Ministry said two Chinese fighter jets circled several times, while its marine patrol helicopter was "approached" by two Chinese warplanes and a helicopter during a patrol. (Brad Lendon, CNN)
- Putin is expected to make the trip to Pyongyang as early as this month before paying a visit to Hanoi. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Last week, Russian Far East officials traveled to North Korea aboard the first passenger train to visit the country in years, inspecting local infrastructure as part of plans to resume regular rail service between the two countries. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Senior South Korean and U.S. defence officials met in Seoul on Monday to work on new guidelines to coordinate their response to any nuclear threat from North Korea, officials said. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)

U.S. Envoy for NK Human Rights Highlights Forced Labor Concerns, as New Report Unveils Fate of N. Korea's Nuclear Scientists

Hyun Kim, *News1*

May 18, 2024

The U.S. Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Issues said on May 17 that the United States will use various tools, including sanctions, to address forced labor occurring within and outside of North Korea.

"We will shine a light on the DPRK's coercive labor practices—both within its borders and among the workers it sends abroad—to labor in mining, logging, seafood processing, information technology, and other industries," said Ambassador Julie Turner, the U.S. Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Issues, at an event hosted by the **Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)** in Washington, D.C.

Turner said that "where possible, we will also address these concerns through sanctions, import restrictions, business advisories, and other tools that the U.S. government has available," doing so "in partnership with like-minded partners."

Turner stated that "forced labor, both domestic and overseas, plays a key role in generating revenue that sustains the government in power and allows it to continue its weapons development," emphasizing that human rights and security issues in North Korea are "inextricably linked."

Noting that "these issues cannot be addressed in isolation," Turner added that North Korea "continues to exploit its own citizens and divert resources from the country's people to build up its unlawful WMD and ballistic weapons programs."

"We continue to work with the international community to raise awareness of DPRK human rights issues, document violations and abuses, counter DPRK transnational repression, and increase the free flow of independent information into, out of, and within the DPRK," Turner stated. She also said that "we will also continue to pursue dialogue with the DPRK, including on human rights issues."

At this event, **HRNK** released ***Slaves to the Bom***b, a report on the human rights situation of North Korea's nuclear personnel.

The report was authored by HRNK Senior Advisor Robert Collins—an expert on Korean Peninsula security issues who served 31 years in various assignments with the U.S. military in Korea—based on escapee testimonies and open-source information.

The report states that nuclear scientists, engineers, and workers at North Korea's nuclear laboratories and facilities, uranium mines, and testing facilities are deprived of basic freedoms and exposed to serious physical risks in forced labor conditions.

The report states that "North Korea's scientists and engineers are forced to work on the nuclear weapons program regardless of their own personal interests, preferences, or aspirations." Since "they do not have the freedom to choose their occupations," they "may be described as 'modern-day slaves' for the Kim regime's nuclear weapons program." In other words, "they are 'slaves to the bomb'."

According to Collins, children with an IQ of above 150 or those who show promise in math and science are identified by the Korean Workers' Party (KWP) as early as elementary school and sent to

specific educational institutions. If they maintain good grades through high school, they are admitted to one of five universities to study electrical engineering, computer science, quantum physics, or nuclear science and engineering. Upon graduation, the KWP assigns them to work on weapons development projects.

The report adds that these nuclear scientists and engineers cannot choose whom to marry, and those who raise complaints about their situation are punished and deprived of their privileges. Despite their sacrifices, the report explains, some of these individuals are subject to dangerous environments.

In addition, the report provides information about high-ranking officials that are leading North Korea's nuclear program, including Ri Pyong-chol, the Vice Chair of the KWP Central Military Commission. It also discloses the identities of current and former North Korean scientists involved in WMD production, and provides a list of hundreds of North Korean scientists who may have contributed to weapons development.

At the event, Collins explained that North Korea's nuclear scientists will seek freedom in the event of a regime collapse, warning that these individuals could provide critical information to countries that pose a security threat to the United States.

Translated by Gayeong Lee, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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Prepared by Katherine Mitchell, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250719164856/https://mailchi.mp/6d329d0124ed/hrnk-news-items-us-envoy-for-nk-human-rights-highlights-forced-labor-concerns-as-new-report-unveils-fate-of-n-koreas-nuclear-scientists?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, June 11th, 2024

U.S. official urges 'all' countries to honor UNSC resolutions amid Putin's reported plan to visit N. Korea

In North Korea:
N.K. leader sends message to Putin marking Russia's nat'l day (Yonhap, 06/11/2024)
N. Korea's vice public security minister leaves for Russia (Yonhap, 06/11/2024)
North Korean public security officials to visit Russia as ties grow (Reuters, 06/11/2024)
In South Korea:
Seoul-based activists develop tech to send messages deep into North Korea (Reuters, 06/11/2024)
Unification ministry mulls meeting with activists over anti-Pyongyang leaflet campaign (Yonhap, 06/11/2024)

Yoon denounces N. Korea's nuclear development as threat to nonproliferation regime (Yonhap, 06/11/2024)
Inter-Korean Relationship:
Bizarre psychological warfare using K-pop and trash balloons raises tensions between the 2 Koreas (AP News, 06/10/2024)
N. Korean soldiers briefly cross inter-Korean border, return after warning shots (Yonhap, 06/11/2024)
International:
Changes at N.K. missile bases hint at effort to enhance Strategic Force status, readiness: U.S. monitor (Yonhap, 06/11/2024)
Chinese jets harassed Dutch warship on North Korea sanctions patrol: Netherlands (NK News, 06/11/2024)
U.S. official urges 'all' countries to honor UNSC resolutions amid Putin's reported plan to visit N. Korea (Yonhap, 06/11/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un sent a congratulatory message to Russian President Vladimir Putin on the occasion of its national day, amid growing speculation that Putin would visit Pyongyang soon. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's vice public security minister has left for Russia. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- A group of North Korean officials in charge of public security was set to visit Russia. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)

In South Korea:

- In the balloon warfare between North Korea and South Korean activists, one Seoul-based group has honed its tech expertise to develop balloons capable of dispersing leaflets and electronic speakers hundreds of kilometres across the border. (Ju-min Park, Adolfo Arranz, Han Huang, Jackie Gu, Jitesh Chowdhury, *Reuters*)
- The unification ministry is considering meeting with North Korean defectors' groups dedicated to sending anti-Pyongyang leaflets across the inter-Korean border. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol condemned North Korea's nuclear development for threatening the international nonproliferation regime, as he was set to embark on a state visit Tuesday to Kazakhstan, a country that voluntarily gave up its nuclear arsenal. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Mammoth South Korean loudspeakers blaring BTS music. Large North Korean balloons carrying manure, cigarette butts and waste batteries. Small South Korean civilian leaflets slamming North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Day after day, the Cold War-style yet bizarre campaigns continue at the heavily fortified border of the rivals who haven't had any serious talks for years. (Hyung-jin Kim, Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)
- About 20 North Korean soldiers briefly crossed the inter-Korean land border earlier this week and went back to the North's side after the South's military fired warning shots. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- North Korea has made numerous changes at most of its ballistic missile bases over the last five years in an indication of its efforts to elevate the status of its Strategic Force, a unit tasked with operating long-range and other key missile systems. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Chinese fighter jets harassed a Dutch warship conducting patrols to enforce U.N. sanctions on North Korea. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- A State Department official called on "all" countries Monday to honor U.N. Security Council resolutions against North Korea's weapons of mass destruction. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Rachel Baek, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250719164709/https://mailchi.mp/904ec3ff4903/hrnk-news-items-us-official-urges-all-countries-to-honor-unsc-resolutions-amid-putins-reported-plan-to-visit-n-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, June 12th, 2024

The Economics of Re-Unification: Thinking the Unthinkable?; "Crap Attack" Against S. Korea: N. Korea Sends Trash Balloons Across DMZ

Top News:
The Economics of Korean Re-Unification: Thinking the Unthinkable? (AEI, 06/11/2024)
"Crap Attack" Against South Korea: North Korea Sends Balloons Carrying Trash Across the DMZ (KEI, 06/11/2024)

In North Korea:
But how are the woofers? (Korea JoongAng Daily, 06/11/2024)
Inside the world's most secretive soccer team (CNN, 06/12/2024)
Pyongyang airport terminal cleared of planes in sign of prep for Putin visit (NK News, 06/12/2024)

In South Korea:
DP chief Lee Jae-myung indicted for masterminding illegal payments to North Korea (Korea JoongAng Daily, 06/12/2024)
Inter-Korean Relationship:
New Korean flare-up carries greater air of menace (DW, 06/12/2024)
Truth commission confirms mass killings of Christians by communists during Korean War (The Korea Times, 06/12/2024)
Warning shots from South as NK soldiers cross border (BBC, 06/11/2024)
International:
China-Russia-Iran-North Korea axis heightens the risk of WWIII (Nikkei Asia, 06/11/2024)

N. Korea's Kim hopes to continue to develop 'meaningful, close' ties with Putin (Yonhap, 06/12/2024)
North Korea trounces Myanmar to move to next round of men's World Cup qualifiers (NK News, 06/12/2024)
North Korea's Kim boasts of 'invincible' ties with Russia amid talks of Putin visit (Reuters, 06/12/2024)
North Korean security delegation visits Russia for talks with police chief (NK News, 06/11/2024)
US ambassador walks tightrope on anti-North Korea leaflets as tensions rise (NK News, 06/12/2024)

Top News:

- Re-unification is only unthinkable if we fail to think about it; postponing that challenge will only increase the gap between North and South. (Nicholas Eberstadt, *AEI*)
- Although the amount of information disseminated by balloon launches is modest at best, the balloons are a very visible symbol of the real contest between democratic South Korea and totalitarian North Korea. An unfortunate consequence of the confrontation between the two Koreas is that symbolic information balloons could result in the reality of much deadlier violence. (Robert King, *KEI*)

In North Korea:

- In a photo taken from Odusan Unification Observatory in Paju, Gyeonggi, a new massive loudspeaker appears near a North Korean guard post on the Imjin River in Kaepung County, North Hwanghae Province. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Much like the reclusive nation itself, North Korea's soccer team in recent years has fallen back into the shadows. Now in an exclusive interview with CNN Sport, retired North Korean midfielder An Yong Hak, who lives in Japan, has revealed what it's like to play for the team. (Gawon Bae, Hanako Montgomery, Andrew McNicol, CNN)
- North Korea has completely cleared planes from the tarmac in front of Pyongyang International Airport in recent days, a rare activity associated with foreign leader visits that likely signals preparations to host Russian leader Vladimir Putin as early as this week. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- Prosecutors on Wednesday filed an indictment against Democratic Party (DP) leader Lee Jae-myung, accusing him of being the mastermind and primary beneficiary of illegal payments by a South Korean underwear maker to North Korea. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Border tensions are a fact of life on the Korean Peninsula, but analysts warn that the current spike in incidents seems "different" and more alarming than usual. (Julian Ryall, *DW*)
- Dozens of Christians were tortured and killed en masse at a church in Nonsan by communist soldiers during the Korean War, South Korea's Truth and Reconciliation Commission said Wednesday. (Jung Min-ho, *The Korea Times*)

- “Inside [the border area] the vegetation is overgrown, and the border markers are hidden. There are no paths, and they were wading through the overgrowth,” Seoul's military said. (Joel Guinto, BBC)

International:

- Simultaneous conflicts in Europe and Asia could become tomorrow's nightmare. (Hiroyuki Akita, *Nikkei Asia*)
- Kim Jong-un has voiced hope for continuing to develop "meaningful and close" ties with Vladimir Putin amid growing speculation that the Russian leader could soon travel to Pyongyang. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- 4-1 victory in Laos follows rocky campaign that saw it forfeit to Japan and relocate multiple matches from Pyongyang. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- Kim Jong Un has said his country is an "invincible comrade-in-arms" with Russia in a message to Vladimir Putin amid speculation over Putin's impending visit to North Korea. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- Expert says trip underscores growing ties and could feature discussions on overseas workers and security for Putin visit. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Philip Goldberg says Washington believes in ROK activists’ right to launch balloons but also wants to prevent conflict. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

Prepared by Bryan Clark, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250720061825/https://mailchi.mp/7cf3429ba688/hrnk-news-items-the-economics-of-re-unification-thinking-the-unthinkable-crap-attack-against-s-korea-n-korea-sends-trash-balloons-across-dmz?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, June 13th, 2024

Deterring North Korea's Provocations: Sue Mi Terry / Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations

Top News:
Deterring North Korea's Provocations: Sue Mi Terry / Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations (NHK World-Japan, 06/11/24)

In North Korea:
North Korea celebrates deaths of soldiers building greenhouses for Kim Jong Un (NK News, 06/13/24)
Signs of military parade prep visible in Pyongyang ahead of possible Putin visit (NK News, 06/13/24)

In South Korea:
South Korean border province governors bicker over anti-Pyongyang leaflets (The Korea Herald, 06/12/24)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Truth commission confirms mass killings of Christians by communists during Korean War (The Korea Times, 06/12/24)
International:
North Korea, Japan held secret meeting in Mongolia last month: Report (Korea JoongAng Daily, 06/13/24)
North Korea restores train service to Russia, boosting hopes for tourists (Radio Free Asia, 06/13/24)
Putin expected to visit N. Korea in a few days: Seoul official (Yonhap, 06/13/24)
Putin's Pyongyang visit factors Northeast Asia into diplomatic equation (The Korea TImes, 06/13/24)
Putin's visit to N. Korea likely to pave way for deeper military cooperation: experts (Yonhap, 06/13/24)
S. Korea, Cuba agree to open embassies soon (The Korea Herald, 06/13/24)
S. Korea, U.S. wrap up 3rd round of defense cost-sharing talks in Washington (Yonhap, 06/13/24)
UNC investigating N.K. troops' land border incursion, S. Korean loudspeaker broadcasts (Yonhap, 06/13/24)
U.N. Security Council discusses N.K. human rights despite opposition from China, Russia (Yonhap, 06/13/24)
U.S. 'always vigilant' about potential N.K. steps beyond trash-filled balloons: Campbell (Yonhap, 06/13/24)

Top News:

- What future provocations might North Korea undertake and how can the US, Japan and South Korea form closer trilateral cooperation to prevent a potential conflict escalation? Former US National Security Council member and leading expert on the Korean Peninsula and East Asia, Sue Mi Terry, offers her insights. (Del Irani, *NHK World-Japan*)

In North Korea:

- At least two North Korean soldiers died while working and living at a large-scale greenhouse farm construction site last year, state media revealed on Sunday, painting the deaths as a positive example of citizens sacrificing themselves to carry out leader Kim Jong Un's orders. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- New activity in Pyongyang's Kim Il Sung Square appears directly related to preparations for a military parade or other large-scale event as speculation mounts over when Russian leader Vladimir Putin will arrive for a planned summit. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- The governors of two South Korean provinces bordering North Korea on Wednesday clashed on how to deal with activists flying leaflets targeting North Koreans over the border. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Dozens of Christians were tortured and killed en masse at a church in Nonsan by communist soldiers during the Korean War, South Korea's Truth and Reconciliation Commission said Wednesday. (Jung Min-ho, *The Korea Times*)

International:

- North Korea and Japan held a clandestine meeting in Mongolia last month despite Pyongyang's recent public refusal to talk with Japan. (Chung Yeong-gyo, Park Hyun-ju, and Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- After a four-year hiatus due to the coronavirus pandemic, passenger rail service between Russia and North Korea has been restored, with 41 Russian tourists taking the train to North Korea last week. (Cho Jinwoo, *Radio Free Asia*)
- Russian President Vladamir Putin is expected to visit North Korea "in a few days," a South Korean presidential official said Thursday. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- Putin's visit, confirmed by an official at the South Korean presidential office, seems to be Moscow's response to Pyongyang's desire to showcase the close relations between the two sides to the world. (Nam Hyun-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin's impending visit to North Korea is expected to serve as an occasion to elevate the level of military cooperation between the two nations beyond arms transactions amid a new Cold War geopolitical structure, experts have said. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and Cuba held their first high-level talks in Seoul since the establishment of diplomatic ties in February, with a focus on expanding cooperation across various fields. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea and the United States concluded their third round of negotiations to determine Seoul's share of the cost for stationing the 28,500-strong U.S. Forces Korea on Wednesday. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S.-led U.N. Command said Thursday it is investigating a series of incidents at the inter-Korean border earlier this week, including a brief border incursion by North Korean troops and South Korea's resumption of anti-Pyongyang broadcasts. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- The long-festering issue of North Korea's human rights violations took center stage at a U.N. Security Council meeting on Wednesday as diplomats, experts and activists called for undiminished attention to the plight of North Koreans and its security implications. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States remains "always vigilant" about North Korea's potential steps against South Korea that might go beyond its sending of trash-filled balloons to the South. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Ryan Rohrbach, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250720062000/https://mailchi.mp/a0c0ffeb7417/hrnk-news-items-deterring-north-koreas-provocations-sue-mi-terry-senior-fellow-council-on-foreign-relations?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Friday, June 14th, 2024

NK shows strong discontent over UNSC's meeting on its human rights situation; Putin's NK visit about 'more than pleasantries'

In North Korea:
N.K. submarine movements may foreshadow SLBM, SLCM test preparations: U.S. monitor (Yonhap, 06/14/2024)
N. Korea criticizes Swiss-hosted Ukraine peace summit as 'conspiracy gathering' (Yonhap, 06/14/2024)
N. Korea shows strong discontent over UNSC's meeting on its human rights situation (Yonhap, 06/14/2024)
North Korea's Rural Development: The First Projects Open (38 North, 06/13/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
A Tenuous State of Affairs on The Korean Peninsula: Putting the Tension Back in the Bottle (38 North, 06/14/2024)
Six in 10 South Koreans say Seoul should put stop to anti-North Korea leafleting (NK News, 06/14/2024)
Unification minister says N. Korea's socialist rationing system has collapsed (Yonhap, 06/14/2024)
International:
Japan tight-lipped on report of meeting with North Korea in Mongolia (RFA, 06/13/2024)
Putin's North Korea visit about 'more than pleasantries' (VOA, 06/14/2024)
Russia and North Korea eye joint project to protect endangered Amur leopards (NK News, 06/14/2024)
S. Korea, U.S., Japan expected to hold 1st trilateral multidomain exercise late June (Yonhap, 06/14/2024)
South Korea, US sound alarm over North Korea-Russia ties ahead of Putin visit (Reuters, 06/14/2024)
US voices support for South Korean 'balloon war' efforts (VOA, 06/13/2024)
U.S. calls on N. Korea to stop provocative acts, reaffirms security commitment to S. Korea (Yonhap, 06/14/2024)
U.S. reaffirms pursuit of 'mutually beneficial' defense cost-sharing deal with S. Korea (Yonhap, 06/14/2024)
U.S., South Korea hold emergency call over Putin visit to North Korea (UPI, 06/14/2024)
Vice FM Kim discusses Putin's potential visit to N. Korea with Campbell (Yonhap, 06/14/2024)

In North Korea:

- A U.S. monitor on Thursday reported recent North Korean ballistic missile submarine movements at a shipyard on the country's east coast, saying they may presage the start of submarine trials this summer or preparations for a submarine-launched ballistic missile test. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

- North Korea on Friday strongly condemned the Ukraine peace summit to be hosted by Switzerland later this week, describing it as a "conspiracy gathering under the pretext of peace" to exclude Russia. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea expressed strong discontent Friday regarding the U.N. Security Council's meeting on Pyongyang's human rights situation held earlier this week. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- After Kim Jong Un declared the beginning of a new era of "socialist rural construction" in December 2021, construction of new houses and apartments started with characteristic North Korean speed. (Martyn Williams, *38 North*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- The upturn in animosity has the potential to escalate further if prudent, commonsense measures are not taken. (Daniel R. Depetris, *38 North*)
- Six out of 10 South Koreans believe the government should take action to prevent civilian groups from sending anti-regime leaflets to North Korea, according to a new survey by a major pollster, following Pyongyang's launch of thousands of trash-carrying balloons in retaliation to such leafleting. (Joon Ha Park, Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho said Friday that North Korea's socialist rationing system has completely collapsed, leading people to rely on local "jangmadang" markets for survival. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)

International:

- The Japanese government declined to comment on a South Korean media report that officials from Japan and North Korea had a secret meeting in Mongolia last month, saying it was aware of the report but would refrain from commenting due to the nature of the matter. (Taejun Kang, RFA)
- When Putin soon visits North Korea for the first time in 24 years, there may be more than just handshakes, according to some analysts, who say the two sides have likely been working to cement burgeoning military cooperation. (William Gallo, VOA)
- Russia and North Korea are exploring a joint project to protect critically endangered Amur leopards that were once indigenous to the Korean Peninsula, an undertaking that one expert said could see Moscow help Pyongyang reintroduce the species to its territory. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- South Korea, the United States and Japan are preparing to hold their first trilateral multidomain exercise as early as this month. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- A possible impending visit by Russian President Vladimir Putin to North Korea could deepen military ties between the two countries in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions. (Hyonhee Shin, Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- The U.S. expressed its support for providing outside information to the people of North Korea. (Christy Lee, VOA)
- A U.S. State Department spokesperson called on North Korea to stop provocative activities. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- A State Department official on Thursday reiterated the United States' commitment to reaching a "mutually beneficial" defense cost-sharing agreement with South Korea. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

- South Korean and U.S. officials held an emergency phone call over an upcoming visit by Russian President Vladimir Putin to North Korea. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- First Vice Foreign Minister Kim Hong-kyun spoke by phone with U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell on Friday to discuss a potentially imminent visit by Russian President Vladimir Putin to North Korea. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Valerie Xu, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250720062224/https://mailchi.mp/a78345e77a90/hrnk-news-items-nk-shows-strong-discontent-over-unscs-meeting-on-its-human-rights-situation-putins-nk-visit-about-more-than-pleasantries?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, June 15th, 2024

Regular Passenger Rail Service to Soon resume Between NK and Primorsky Krai; NK military construction spotted inside DMZ

Top News:
Regular Passenger Rail Service to Soon Resume Between N. Korea and Primorsky Krai (RFA, 06/10/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
Satellite pictures reveal North Korea is preparing for Putin visit (RFA, 06/14/2024)

In South Korea:
North Korean defector artist relishes freedom in time of tensions (*Nikkei Asia*, 06/15/2024)
Opposition leader calls for inter-Korean talks amid tensions (*Yonhap*, 06/15/2024)
S. Korean envoy rebukes N. Korea for linking trash-filled balloons to freedom of expression (*Yonhap*, 06/15/2024)
Unification ministry holds talks with anti-Pyongyang leafleting group (*Yonhap*, 06/15/2024)
Yoon stresses need for 'strong power' on anniv. of inter-Korean naval skirmish (*Yonhap*, 06/15/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
A Tenuous State of Affairs on The Korean Peninsula (*38 North*, 06/14/2024)
N. Korean military's construction activities spotted inside DMZ (*Yonhap*, 06/15/2024)

International:
G7 leaders condemn N.K.-Russia military cooperation in 'strongest possible terms' (*Yonhap*, 06/15/2024)

Reality Check: South Korea and China Face More Complex Economic Dynamics (*The Diplomat*, 06/15/2024)
The Russia-China-DPRK Strategic Triangle: Phantom Threat or Geopolitical Reality? (*38 North*, 06/13/2024)
US and South Korea sound warning amid reports Putin is headed to North Korea (*The Guardian*, 06/14/2024)
U.S. House passes annual defense policy bill including USFK troop maintenance (*Yonhap*, 06/15/2024)
Yoon focuses on critical minerals during Central Asia trip (*Yonhap*, 06/15/2024)

Top News:

- According to Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director, "Since the mid-to-late 1960s, this railway line has been used for 60 years to send North Korean loggers and construction workers to the Russian Far East. If rail service resumes, we can clearly expect North Korean workers to be sent on those trains." (Jamin Anderson, RFA)

In North Korea:

- Experts say North Korea will seek weapons technology from Russia during a visit which could happen next week. (Cho Jinwoo, Lee Sangmin, Kim Soyoung, RFA)

In South Korea:

- These days, artist Oh Sung-cheol is thinking about what kind of message he wishes he could covey to people in North Korea, the country of his birth. (Steven Borowiec, *Nikkei Asia*)
- Opposition leader Lee Jae-myung on Saturday said the two Koreas should sit together and communicate to ease the escalating tensions over Pyongyang's trash-carrying balloon campaign and Seoul's response. (Park Sang-soo, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's top envoy to the U.N. on Friday criticized as "bizarre" and "deplorable" North Korea's claim that its sending of trash-filled balloons to the South was an exercise of freedom of expression. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The unification ministry on Friday held talks with an activist organization that has launched anti-Pyongyang leaflets into North Korea amid heightened tensions over the North's reaction to the campaign. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol on Saturday stressed the need for the country to maintain a strong military, as the nation marked the 25th anniversary of a 1999 inter-Korean naval skirmish near the maritime border. (Chang Dong-woo, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- It would be unwise for US policymakers to brush the current tensions under the rug or assume the latest tit-for-tat between the two Koreas will burn itself out. (Daniel R. DePetris, *38 North*)
- North Korea's military has been carrying out unexplained construction activities inside the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating the two Koreas, according to a military source Saturday. (Chang Dong-woo, *Yonhap*)

International:

- The leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) countries condemned growing military cooperation between North Korea and Russia in the "strongest possible terms" on Friday amid reports that Russian President Vladimir Putin is likely to visit Pyongyang in the coming weeks. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Domestic, bilateral, and global trends are combining to reshape China-South Korea trade for the long term. (Ray Wang, *The Diplomat*)
- When Putin visits Pyongyang, both Russia and North Korea will be closely monitoring China's perceptions of the trip. Speculation has been brewing about the creation of a Russia-China-North Korea strategic triangle; but does it have substantive foundations? (Samuel Ramani, *38 North*)
- The US and South Korea have warned Vladimir Putin against forging closer military ties with North Korea, as speculation grows that the Russian leader will visit the secretive state in the coming days. (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)
- The House of Representatives on Friday approved an annual defense policy bill that calls for maintaining 28,500 American troops in South Korea and reaffirming the United States' deterrence commitment to the Asian ally. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol's Central Asia tour focused on boosting economic ties with resource-rich countries as part of his diplomatic push to secure critical minerals and energy supplies amid global supply chain uncertainties. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

Regular Passenger Rail Service to Soon Resume

Between North Korea and Primorsky Krai

Jamin Anderson, RFA

June 10, 2024

On June 6, RFA reported that passenger rail service between North Korea and Russia, which had been suspended for four years due to COVID-19, has resumed. There are now reports that there has been a test run ahead of the resumption of regular services. This is Jamin Anderson reporting.

There has been a test run of a passenger train between Khasan Station in Russia and Tumangang Station in North Korea.

In a press release on June 10, the Primorsky Krai (Primorye) Tourism Agency announced that there had been an inspection of a 32-kilometer stretch of railroad between the two stations as part of a test run.

On June 6, a 41-member delegation from Primorsky Krai, consisting of Tourism Agency officials and representatives from the local tourism industry, arrived in North Korea for a three-day visit upon an official invitation from North Korea.

The delegation disembarked at Tumangang Station and traveled by bus to Rason.

During their visit, the delegation met their North Korean counterparts to discuss how to develop tourism programs and how residents of Primorsky Krai could visit Rason. The delegation also visited downtown hotels, beaches, and a recreational park.

Arseniy Krepsky, head of the Primorye Tourism Agency, said that "[the delegation] checked that the rail service is functioning normally," adding that "there may be a possibility of opening a direct rail line from Vladivostok to Tumangang or Rason."

The Primorye Tourism Agency also stated that passenger trains on the Khasan-Tumangang line will operate again on June 28, while regular rail services from Vladivostok, Ussuriysk, and Khasan to Tumangang are still in the works.

Krepsky thanked North Korea for taking steps to prepare efficient, high-quality, and safe trips for future visitors.

While the Russian government is emphasizing the operation of trains for tourism purposes, there are concerns that these trains could be used to dispatch more North Korean workers to Russia.

According to **Greg Scarlatoiu**, **Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)**, "this railway goes in both directions. Of course, Russian tourists can visit North Korea on that train, but it can also be used in the other direction, to dispatch North Korean workers to Russia. Since the mid-to-late 1960s, this railway line has been used for 60 years to send North Korean loggers and construction workers to the Russian Far East. If rail service resumes, we can clearly expect North Korean workers to be sent on those trains."

The railroad between North Korea and Russia runs 54 kilometers from Rason to Khasan Station.

This line was suspended for both passenger and freight trains during the COVID-19 pandemic, but freight trains resumed service in November 2022.

Since the summit meeting last September, North Korea and Russia have been expanding exchanges in a variety of areas, including politics, military, economics, tourism, culture, and sports.

In the midst of these developments, Russian President Vladimir Putin is reportedly planning to visit North Korea as early as this month.

Vedomosti, a Russian media outlet, quoted Russia's Ambassador to North Korea Aleksandr Matsegora as saying that "President Putin's visit to Pyongyang will take place and is now being actively prepared."

Translated by Gayeong Lee, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

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Prepared by Jiwoo-Katie Choi, HRNK Research Intern

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Sunday, June 16th, 2024

Why Russia's Bond With N. Korea Is a Danger to the World

In North Korea:
North Korean company importing EVs as interest in vehicles grows (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/16/2024)

In South Korea:
Meet Park Chan-am: leading South Korea's defense against North Korean cyber attacks (*The Chosun Daily*, 06/16/2024)
Yoon returns amid tensions over Putin's Pyongyang visit (*The Korea Herald*, 06/16/2024)

International:
CSIS advocates for Group of 9 with addition of Korea (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/15/2024)
Putin's Pyongyang trip highlights need for bond in isolation (*The Korea Herald*, 06/16/2024)
S. Korea, Japan, China hold education ministerial talks on cooperation, exchanges (*Yonhap*, 06/15/2024)
U.S. lawmaker stresses bipartisan 'pushback' against Trump's potential USFK drawdown (*Yonhap*, 06/16/2024)
Vladimir Putin's dangerous bromance with Kim Jong Un (*The Economist*, 06/16/2024)
Why Russia's Bond With North Korea Is a Danger to the World (*Bloomberg*, 06/16/2024)

In North Korea:

- A North Korean car importer has been spotted importing and selling electric vehicles, according to a YouTube channel reporting on North Korea. (Han Jee-hye, Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

In South Korea:

- Park Chan-am, 35, CEO of cybersecurity firm STEALIEN, is at the forefront of the North-South hacking conflict. In a recent interview with *The Chosunilbo*, he stated, "North Korea's hacking capabilities are formidable, but we have the best white hat hackers." (Kim Gwang-jin, Park Su-hyeon, *The Chosun Daily*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol returned home Sunday after a weeklong trip to three Central Asian countries amid rising tensions on the Korean Peninsula with an imminent summit between the leaders of Russia and North Korea in Pyongyang this week, which has sparked concerns about closer military ties. (Son Ji-hyoung, *The Korea Herald*)

International:

- The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in the United States suggested expanding the G7 to a G9 by including Korea and Australia, as its current membership is skewed towards Europe, which held more power in the past. (Kang Tae-hwa, Choi Hae-jin, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin's impending trip to North Korea, which Seoul authorities say could happen any moment, reflects a mutual interest in building a closer bond for the two countries facing self-inflicted isolation from the West, experts say. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea, Japan and China held their first education ministerial talks in over four years Saturday to discuss cooperation in related areas and the promotion of exchanges among students. (Kim Boram, *Yonhap*)
- A prominent U.S. lawmaker has highlighted continuing bipartisan 'pushback' against the potential reduction of American troops in South Korea, in a move to assuage concerns that former President Donald Trump could threaten their drawdown or pullout if reelected. (Song Sang-ho, Kim Dong-hyun, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea plays a useful part in Russia's wider confrontation with the West, helping to complicate American strategy in Asia and to undermine multilateral institutions. (*The Economist*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin is preparing to make his first trip to North Korea in 24 years to warm up a newfound bond with its leader, Kim Jong Un, that has helped boost Russia's firepower in its grinding war on Ukraine. (Jon Herskovitz, Soo-Hyang Choi, *Bloomberg*)

Prepared by Samantha Garcia, HRNK Research Intern

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Monday, June 17th, 2024

Russia's Putin to Visit North Korea; Inter-Korea Tensions Subside

In North Korea:
North Korea building apparent anti-tank barriers along border: ROK military (NK News, 06/17/2024)
North Korea dismantles guard posts as it finishes reinforcing border with China (NK Pro, 06/17/2024)
North Korea has added 20 nukes to arsenal since last year, think tank estimates (NK News, 06/17/2024)

In South Korea:

Civic groups, border residents urge restrictions on activists' anti-Pyongyang leafleting (Yonhap, 06/17/2024)
South Korea's loudspeakers face questions over reach into North (Reuters, 06/17/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Inter-Korea tensions subside as both sides review cross-border tit-for-tat (Korea JoongAng Daily, 06/17/2024)

International:
Ambassadors of Brazil and Nicaragua take up posts in North Korean capital (NK News, 06/17/2024)
FM Cho to preside over U.N. Security Council debate on N.K. cyber threats (Yonhap, 06/17/2024)
High-level exchanges between N. Korea, Russia hit record high this year (Yonhap, 06/17/2024)
Seoul cautions Moscow on Putin's NK visit (The Korea Herald, 06/17/2024)
Russia unlikely to transfer advanced military technology to N. Korea: minister (Yonhap, 06/17/2024)
Russia's Putin to visit North Korea in rare trip as anti-West alignment deepens (CNN, 06/17/2024)
U.S. calls deepening N.K.-Russia ties trend of 'great concern' ahead of Putin's Pyongyang visit (Yonhap, 06/17/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has built what appear to be anti-tank barriers along the inter-Korean border, according to South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), in a move that experts identified as part of Pyongyang's efforts to broadcast its readiness for war amid escalating military tensions. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- North Korea has demolished thousands of temporary guard posts that it built along its border with China during the pandemic, NK Pro analysis shows, in a sign that it has wrapped up a sweeping security expansion to stop smuggling and defections. (Jacob Bogle, *NK Pro*)
- North Korea has produced some 50 nuclear warheads and has enough fissile material for up to 90 warheads, a "significant" on-year increase from 2023, according to a new estimate from a Stockholm-based think tank. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- Civic groups and border residents urged the government Monday to restrict activists from launching anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets into North Korea, citing concern it could provoke Pyongyang to send trash-carrying balloons into South Korea again. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- The loudspeakers deployed by South Korea to wage psychological warfare against North Korea faced audits and legal battles claiming they are too quiet, raising questions over how far into the reclusive North their propaganda messages can blast. (Hyun Young Yi, *Reuters*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Tensions triggered by North Korea's sending of waste-laden balloons to South Korea have entered a lull. Detecting subtle changes in North Korea's public stance toward South Korea, Seoul adjusted its loudspeaker broadcasts to North Korea per the principle of proportionality. (Chung Yeong-gyo and Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- Brazil and Nicaragua's ambassadors to North Korea have finally taken up their posts in Pyongyang, NK *News* has confirmed, even as the DPRK keeps its doors shut to diplomats from Europe and humanitarian organizations. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul will preside over a U.N. Security Council (UNSC) open debate on North Korea's growing cyber threats in New York later this week, Seoul's foreign ministry said Monday. (Kim Seung-yeun, *Yonhap*)
- The number of exchanges between high-level officials from North Korea and Russia has reached a record high this year, Seoul's unification ministry said Monday, marking another indication of the deepening ties between the two nations. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- Seoul has warned Moscow against "going beyond a certain point," amid reports that Russia and North Korea are seeking to deepen their military ties during President Vladimir Putin's imminent visit to Pyongyang. (Son Ji-hyoung, *The Korea Herald*)
- The possibility of Russia transferring its most advanced military technology to North Korea is "very low" despite their deepening military cooperation, as Moscow will likely opt to save it as a "last resort," Seoul's defense chief said Monday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- Vladimir Putin is set to travel to North Korea for a two-day visit starting Tuesday, the Kremlin said, in the Russian president's first trip to the country in more than two decades – and the latest sign of a deepening alignment that's raised widespread international concern. (Simone McCarthy and Anna Chernova, CNN)
- A U.S. State Department spokesperson on Monday described deepening military cooperation between North Korea and Russia as a trend of "great concern," after the North said Russian President Vladimir Putin will visit Pyongyang this week. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Andrew Chan, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250720063926/https://mailchi.mp/36e70655efa8/hrnk-news-items-russias-putin-to-visit-north-korea-inter-korea-tensions-subside?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, June 18th, 2024

Dispelling Myths and Misconceptions about North Korea

Top News:
Dispelling Myths and Misconceptions about North Korea (Wilson Center, 06/13/2024)

In North Korea:
Land mine blasts inflicted casualties on North Korean troops in DMZ in recent months, South says (CNN, 06/18/2024)
Landmines kill, hurt North Korean soldiers deployed for 'barren border' project (The Korea Herald, 06/18/2024)

Mine explosions have killed North Korean soldiers working on frontline: ROK (NK News, 06/18/2024)
North Korea builds defensive line along border with anti-tank barriers (The Korea Times, 06/18/2024)
North Korea Has Lost 'Many' Troops to Mines in DMZ, South Says (The New York Times, 06/18/2024)
North Korea troop 'casualties' reported after landmine explosions in DMZ (The Guardian, 06/18/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N. Korean soldiers briefly cross border for 2nd time in less than 2 weeks (Yonhap, 06/18/2024)
NK soldiers cross border prompting warning shots (BBC, 06/18/2024)

International:
North Korea decorates streets with Putin banners (CNN, 06/18/2024)
North Korea lines streets with Putin portraits and Russian flags ahead of visit (NK News, 06/18/2024)
North Korean TV to air Russian film for Putin visit despite ban on foreign media (NK News, 06/18/2024)
Putin set to arrive in N. Korea in rare trip amid deepening concerns about military cooperation (Yonhap, 06/18/2024)
Putin to arrive in North Korea, with new treaty in focus (VOA, 06/18/2024)
Putin travels to North Korea as strategic partnership deepens (CNN, 06/18/2024)
Putin's visit to Pyongyang likely to deepen anti-Western ties (The Korea Times, 06/18/2024)
Putin vows to boost cooperation with North Korea, fight West's sanctions (Radio Free Asia, 06/18/2024)
Russia expects 'good results' from Putin-Kim summit in Pyongyang (The Telegraph, 06/18/2024)
Russia's Putin to meet Kim Jong Un in first visit to North Korea since 2000 (Radio Free Asia, 06/18/2024)
South Korea, China hold bilateral strategic talks amid Putin's visit to North (Korea JoongAng Daily, 06/18/2024)

Top News:

- HRNK Board member and Fellow with the Wilson Center's Indo-Pacific Program, Dr. Sung-Yoon Lee, discusses his project at the Wilson Center, "The Pyongyang Playbook: North Korea's Provocations, Peace Ploys, Propaganda, and Unification Policy." Dr. Lee explains that while many in the West often mock North Korea and the Kim regime, we need to take the self-isolated, totalitarian state much more seriously. (Sung-Yoon Lee, *Wilson Center*)

In North Korea:

- North Korean troops have suffered "multiple casualties" from land mine explosions while laying explosives along the country's heavily armed border with the South in recent months. (Yoonjung Seo, Nectar Gan, *CNN*)
- North Korean soldiers have been injured and killed in landmine explosions on their side of the demilitarized zone that divides the Korean Peninsula. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)

- Multiple landmine explosions have maimed or killed North Korean soldiers clearing land and carrying out mine-related operations in frontline areas, amid evidence that the DPRK is carrying out work inside the demilitarized zone. (Jeongmin Kim, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- North Korea has been erecting anti-tank barriers along the inter-Korean border, according to the South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)
- A number of North Korean soldiers have been killed or injured by land mines in the Demilitarized Zone that divides the Koreas since late last year, when the North began sending them into the buffer zone to do construction work. (Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*)
- North Korea's military has suffered "multiple casualties" after landmines exploded in the heavily armed border that separates the country from South Korea. (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korean soldiers working in the Demilitarized Zone separating the two Koreas briefly crossed into the South again Tuesday before returning to their side after the South fired warning shots. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean soldiers briefly crossed the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) on Tuesday, South Korea has said, ahead of a rare state visit to Pyongyang by Russian President Vladimir Putin. (Gianluca Avagnina, BBC)

International:

- North Korea is preparing for Vladimir Putin's two-day visit to the country. It is the Russian president's first trip to the country in more than two decades – and the latest sign of a deepening alignment that's raised widespread international concern. (Max Foster, CNN)
- North Korea is preparing to roll out the red carpet for Vladimir Putin when he arrives in Pyongyang for a state visit, lining the streets of Pyongyang with Russian flags and portraits of the Russian leader on Tuesday. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- North Korean state-run television will air a recent Russian film about World War II on Tuesday as part of special programming to mark Vladimir Putin's state visit, making a rare exception to stringent laws that ban citizens from consuming foreign media. (Lina Park and Seung-Yeon Chung, *NK News*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin was set to make his first visit to North Korea in 24 years Tuesday for talks with leader Kim Jong-un in a highly symbolic trip showing off their ever-tightening relations amid deepening concerns about military cooperation. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin is set to arrive Tuesday in North Korea, where he is expected to sign a treaty outlining Moscow's expanded cooperation with Pyongyang. (William Gallo, VOA)
- Vladimir Putin is traveling to North Korea for a two-day visit starting Tuesday. It's the Russian president's first trip to the country in more than two decades. (Matthew Chance, CNN)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin is set to make a high-profile visit to North Korea for a two-day stay starting Tuesday, in an action deepening the anti-Western ties between Moscow and Pyongyang and a strategy to weaken the regional influence of the United States. (Nam Hyun-woo, *The Korea Times*)

- Russia and North Korea will develop an "alternative settlement system" to facilitate commercial cooperation outside the control of the West and fight its sanctions, Russian President Vladimir Putin said hours before a visit to Russia's far eastern neighbor. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)
- The two autocratic rulers are meeting in North Korea as Russia looks to secure more arms for its war in Ukraine. (James Kilner, Sarah Newey, *The Telegraph*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin will arrive in North Korea Tuesday for his first visit since 2000, the countries announced, where Putin and Kim Jong Un will sign a new treaty that addresses security issues. (Kim Soyoung, Ann Kim, *Radio Free Asia*)
- South Korea and China engaged in senior-level strategic talks on Tuesday afternoon in Seoul, coinciding with Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to North Korea the same day. (Seo Ji-eun, Park Hyun-ju, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Prepared by Sloane Thor, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250720064042/https://mailchi.mp/e8874aaf945c/hrnk-news-items-dispelling-myths-and-misconceptions-about-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, June 19th, 2024

Accountability at Last? Exploring Prospects of Universal Jurisdiction on the Korean Peninsula; Putin & Kim sign mutual defense pact

Top News:
Accountability at Last? Exploring Prospects of Universal Jurisdiction on the Korean Peninsula (*HRNK YPWP*, 06/18/2024)

In North Korea:
How did North Korean soldiers wander across the world's most heavily guarded border? (*AP*, 06/19/2024)

In South Korea:
DP's Lee, former officals urge gov't to curtail anti-Pyongyang leaflet campaigns (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/19/2024)
Rival parties divided over Kim-Putin summit (*The Korea Herald*, 06/19/2024)

International:
A weapons deal only invites further isolation (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/19/2024)

Blinken vows to do 'everything' to cut off N.K. support for Russia ahead of Kim-Putin summit (*Yonhap*, 06/19/2024)
China keeps its distance as Russia and North Korea deepen ties (*Reuters*, 06/19/2024)
Hear what 'astounded' expert about Putin's visit to North Korea (CNN, 06/19/2024)
How will Kim-Putin summit affect China? (*The Korea Herald*, 06/19/2024)
Limousine, tea set and 'busts' among Putin and Kim gifts (BBC, 06/19/2024)
NATO worried Russia may support North Korea's missile and nuclear programs (*Reuters*, 06/19/2024)
North Korea's Kim hails Russia alliance, promises Putin support on Ukraine (*Radio Free Asia*, 06/19/2024)
North Korea-China trade falls in May for the fifth straight month (NK *News*, 06/19/2024)
North Korea, Russia pledge mutual defense, surprising many observers (VOA, 06/19/2024)
Putin and Kim sign mutual defence pact (*Reuters*, 06/19/2024)
Putin arrives in North Korea ahead of talks with Kim Jong Un (BBC, 06/19/2024)
Putin gifts Kim another limo at Pyongyang summit in open violation of sanctions (NK *News*, 06/19/2024)
Putin says Russia and North Korea will help each other if attacked, taking ties to a 'new level' (CNN, 06/19/2024)
Putin, Kim sign strategic partnership as North backs Russia's war in Ukraine (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/19/2024)
Putin, Kim sign treaty for mutual military support against 'aggression' (*The Korea Herald*, 06/19/2024)
Putin's rare visit to North Korea shortened due to his late arrival (*Yonhap*, 06/19/2024)
Quick Take: Some Musings on Eve of Putin-Kim Summit in Pyongyang (38 *North*, 06/18/2024)
Russia and North Korea sign partnership deal that appears to be the strongest since the Cold War (AP, 06/19/2024)
Russia-North Korea pact includes mutual defence clause, Putin says (*Reuters*, 06/19/2024)
Russia President Vladimir Putin makes a rare visit to North Korea, an old ally (AP, 06/18/2024)
Russia's Putin arrives in North Korea for rare trip as anti-West alignment deepens (CNN, 6/18/2024)
Russia's Putin and Kim Jong Un embrace at beginning of North Korea visit (*Al Jazeera*, 06/18/2024)
Summit of two loners: Kim breaks seclusion with Putin by his side (*The Korea Herald*, 06/19/2024)
What to expect out of Putin's visit to North Korea (NPR, 06/18/2024)
With defence pledge, Putin makes shift towards North Korea (*Reuters*, 06/19/2024)

Top News:

- The lack of progress is frustrating, but have we truly exhausted all means? What other venues are available to hold North Korea responsible for its human rights violations? (Valerie Xu, HRNK YPWP)

In North Korea:

- Don't believe the name: The Demilitarized Zone between the two rival Koreas might be the most heavily armed place on earth. Two million mines, barbed wire fences, tank traps and tens of thousands of troops from both countries patrol a divided swath of land 248

kilometers (154 miles) long and 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) wide. (Foster Klug, Kim Tong-Hyung, AP)

In South Korea:

- Former unification ministers and officials that served during liberal administrations on Wednesday urged the government to restrict defector groups from sending anti-Pyongyang leaflets to the North. (Cho Jung-Woo, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea's political sphere on Wednesday was divided over Russian President Vladimir Putin's first visit to Pyongyang in 24 years. (Jung Min-Kyung, *The Korea Herald*)

International:

- North Korea and Russia have escalated their relations to a "comprehensive strategic partnership" from "friendly, amicable relations." (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken pledged Tuesday to do "everything" to cut off North Korea's support for Russia amid the war in Ukraine. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- China reacted guardedly this week as Russia and North Korea deepened their ties and vowed to resist the U.S.-led West, with Beijing avoiding any trilateral arrangement that might complicate its relations with other countries. (Laurie Chen, Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- Russia expert Jill Dougherty and Ex-CIA officer Steve Hall join CNN's John Berman to discuss Kim Jong Un and Vladimir Putin's new partnership that they announced during Putin's rare visit to North Korea. (CNN)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to Pyongyang on Wednesday to hold talks with his counterpart, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, will likely pose hurdles on China's diplomatic front regardless of the outcome of the meeting, according to reports and observers closely watching the rare encounter between the leaders of the two isolated regimes. (Son Ji-hyoung, *The Korea Herald*)
- A Russian-made limousine, tea set and artwork are among the gifts exchanged by Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korea's Kim Jong Un. (Jemma Crew, *BBC*)
- NATO is concerned about support Russia could provide for North Korea's missile and nuclear programs, the alliance's head said on Tuesday as Russian President Vladimir Putin began his first trip to the reclusive nuclear-armed country in 24 years. (Humeyra Pamuk, David Brunnstrom, *Reuters*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un hailed a "new, high level of alliance" with Russia on Wednesday as he promised President Vladimir Putin full support for his war in Ukraine, media reported. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)
- Trade volume below level for same period in 2023, in what expert calls sign of Russia's growing role in DPRK economy. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- North Korea and Russia have signed a treaty containing a mutual defense clause, Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un announced Wednesday, during a rare Putin visit to Pyongyang. (William Gallo, VOA)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a deal with North Korea's Kim Jong Un on Wednesday that included a mutual defence pledge, one of Russia's most significant moves in Asia for years that Kim said amounted to an "alliance". (Josh Smith, Ju-min Park, *Reuters*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin arrived in North Korea to a red carpet welcome on Tuesday night at the start of his first visit to the totalitarian state in 24 years. (Shaimaa Khalil, George Wright, BBC)

- Russian leader brings Aurus vehicle after pledging to work with North Korea to evade West's economic controls. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Vladimir Putin said Russia and North Korea have ramped up ties to a "new level," pledging to help each other if either nation is attacked in a "breakthrough" new partnership announced during the Russian president's rare visit to the reclusive state. (Simone McCarthy, Manveena Suri, Lucas Lilieholm, Radina Gigova, CNN)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un signed a comprehensive strategic partnership agreement during their summit in Pyongyang on Wednesday. (Lim Jeong-Won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un signed a new partnership deal that resurrected a mutual defense commitment in case either country is attacked in a summit held under the wary eyes of the international community on Wednesday. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin's rare visit to North Korea was shortened to a one-day trip, following his late arrival in Pyongyang early Wednesday morning. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- As important as North Korea-Russia military cooperation is, perhaps the more important question is what the Democratic People's Republic of Korea ultimately seeks to achieve through an improved relationship with Moscow. (Rachel Minyoung Lee, *38 North*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un signed a new partnership that includes a vow of mutual aid if either country is attacked, during a Wednesday summit that came as both face escalating standoffs with the West. (AP)
- A strategic partnership pact signed by the leaders of Russia and North Korea on Wednesday includes a mutual defence clause under which each country agrees to help the other repel external aggression. (*Reuters*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin arrived in North Korea early on Wednesday, after saying the two countries want to cooperate closely to overcome U.S.-led sanctions in the face of intensifying confrontations with Washington. (Kim Tong-Hyung, AP)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin has landed in North Korea for a rare visit that signals the two countries' deepening alignment and Moscow's need to source weapons from Pyongyang to sustain its war on Ukraine. (Simone McCarthy, Anna Chernova, CNN)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin embraced North Korean leader Kim Jong Un as he arrived in Pyongyang for his first visit there in 24 years. Ties between the two are deepening as the nuclear-armed countries face growing international isolation. (*Al Jazeera*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un appeared solemn in the early hours Wednesday as he stood solo on the red carpet laid out at the airport in Pyongyang for the arrival of Russian President Vladimir Putin, who was making his first visit to the country in 24 years. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- NPR's Mary Louise Kelly speaks with Angela Stent, senior non-resident fellow at the Brookings Institution, about Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to North Korea. (Michael Levitt, Linah Mohammad, Mary Louise Kelly, NPR)
- Vladimir Putin, on his first visit to North Korea in 24 years, signed a mutual defence pledge with Kim Jong Un on Wednesday, underscoring just how far Russia has recast its relations with the only country to test a nuclear weapon this century. (Guy Faulconbridge, Josh Smith, *Reuters*)

Prepared by Jongjin Lee, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250720064149/https://mailchi.mp/b6e7eb252507/hrnk-news-items-accountability-at-last-exploring-prospects-of-universal-jurisdiction-on-the-korean-peninsula-putin-kim-sign-mutual-defense-pact?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Thursday, June 20th, 2024

Why is Vladimir Putin visiting North Korea?; Former CIA analyst: North Korea's Kim doesn't look 'healthy'

Top News:
Why is Vladimir Putin visiting North Korea? (*Global with JJ Green*, 06/18/2024)
Former CIA analyst: North Korea's Kim doesn't look 'healthy' (*The Hill*, 06/19/2024)
Russia Struck a Defense Pact With North Korea. What Does It Mean? (*CFR*, 06/19/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korea slams N.K.-Russia treaty; hints at potential arms supply to Ukraine (*Yonhap*, 06/20/2024)
Seoul mulls 'arms support' for Ukraine after Russia-NK pact (*The Korea Herald*, 06/20/2024)
South Korea condemns North Korea-Russia treaty, warns of sending arms to Ukraine (*NK News*, 06/20/2024)
South Korea to consider supplying weapons to Ukraine to counter Russia-NK military cooperation (*The Korea Times*, 06/20/2024)
South to consider arms to Ukraine after North-Russia mutual defense pact (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/20/2024)

International:
Kim-Putin treaty underlines both deeper security guarantees, shared weaknesses (*Yonhap*, 06/20/2024)
Kim gifts pair of Pungsan dogs to Putin after summit: KCNA (*Yonhap*, 06/20/2024)
Kim Jong-un and Vladimir Putin's bromance — in pictures (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/20/2024)
N. Korea, Russia agree to offer military assistance 'without delay' if either is attacked: KCNA (*Yonhap*, 06/20/2024)
New Russia-N.K. treaty signals united front against anti-Pyongyang sanctions (*Yonhap*, 06/20/2024)
North Korea's Kim hails Russia alliance, promises Putin support on Ukraine (*RFA*, 06/19/2024)
North Korea, Russia agree to offer military assistance if either is attacked (*RFA*, 06/20/2024)
North Korea-China trade falls in May for the fifth straight month (*NK News*, 06/20/2024)
Putin-Kim summit treaty feared to heighten security uncertainties on peninsula, beyond (*Yonhap*, 06/19/2024)
Putin and Kim dine on duck liver and sip ginseng tea after signing new treaty (*NK News*, 06/20/2024)
Putin and Kim Sign Pact Pledging Mutual Support Against 'Aggression' (*The New York Times*, 06/19/2024)

Putin gifts Kim another limo at Pyongyang summit in open violation of sanctions (*NK News*, 06/19/2024)
Putin Once Tried to Curb North Korea's Nuclear Program. That's Now Over. (*The New York Times*, 06/19/2024)
Putin takes Pyongyang: How the Russian leader spent his day with Kim Jong Un (*NK News*, 06/20/2024)
Russia, N. Korea ink partnership treaty calling for mutual assistance if either is attacked (*Yonhap*, 06/19/2024)
Russia, North Korea upgrade partnership to deepen military and security ties (*The Korea Times*, 06/20/2024)
Russia-North Korea partnership sends warning to West (*The Hill*, 06/20/2024)
Russia and North Korea vow to defend each other if attacked, new treaty states (*NK News*, 06/20/2024)
U.S. restates N.K.-Russia cooperation is trend of 'great concern' after Kim-Putin summit (*Yonhap*, 06/20/2024)
What's known, and not known, about the partnership agreement signed by Russia and North Korea (*AP*, 06/20/2024)

Top News:

- Ambassador Joe Detrani, former Director of the National Counter Proliferation Center, and former U.S. Special Envoy to the Six-Party Talks with North Korea, says, "It's a very sad day." (JJ Green, *Global with JJ Green*)
- HRNK Board Member and former CIA North Korea analyst, Sue Mi Terry, states that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un does not look healthy, based on footage of him meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin. (Lauren Irwin, *The Hill*)
- The new treaty is a sign of the growing closeness between these two pariah states. As Putin said, "This is a truly breakthrough document, reflecting the desire of the two countries not to rest on their laurels, but to raise our relations to a new qualitative level." (Sue Mi Terry, Stephen Sestanovich, *CFR*)

In South Korea:

- The South Korean government said Thursday it will reconsider its stance on arms supply to Ukraine after North Korea and Russia signed a treaty that involves a mutual pledge to provide immediate military assistance if one of them is attacked. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea on Thursday said it would review its arms support to Ukraine, while expressing serious concern over a summit between the leaders of North Korea and Russia where the two agreed to provide military assistance if either country is under attack. (Son Ji-hyoung, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea has expressed "serious concern" and condemned a new treaty between Russia and North Korea pledging "mutual assistance" against enemy attacks, warning that it could consider sending arms to Ukraine to counter the two countries' growing military cooperation. (Ifang Bremer, Joon Ha Park, Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- South Korea strongly condemned a new treaty signed by North Korea and Russia, which involves providing mutual defense assistance "without delay" in the event of an attack on

either nation, calling it a violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions, Thursday. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)

- South Korea will reconsider supplying arms to Ukraine, the presidential office said Thursday, after North Korea and Russia agreed to increase military cooperation through a comprehensive strategic partnership treaty signed Wednesday. (Lim Jeong-won, Kim Hyoung-gu, Chung Yeong-gyo, Lee Geun-pyung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- A newly clinched partnership treaty between Russia and North Korea this week underscored both a manifestly elevated level of mutual security support, and their weaknesses in the face of crippling sanctions and diplomatic isolation, U.S. experts said Wednesday. (Song Sang-ho, Kang Byeong-cheol, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un gave a pair of Pungsan hunting dogs to Russian President Vladimir Putin as a gift after their summit talks in Pyongyang, the North's state media reported Thursday, the same breed Kim had gifted former President Moon Jae-in with back in 2018. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin made his first visit to Pyongyang in 24 years for a summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un on Wednesday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea and Russia have agreed to offer military assistance "without delay" if either is attacked under a new partnership treaty signed after this week's summit, Pyongyang's state media reported Thursday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The new partnership treaty between North Korea and Russia indicates their strong intent to resist the international sanctions in place against Pyongyang over its nuclear and weapons programs. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un hailed a “new, high level of alliance” with Russia on Wednesday as he promised President Vladimir Putin full support for his war in Ukraine, media reported. (Taejun Kang, RFA)
- North Korea and Russia have agreed to offer military assistance “without delay” if either is attacked under a new partnership treaty signed after a summit between their leaders on Wednesday. (Taejun Kang, RFA)
- Trade between China and North Korea fell on-year in May for the fifth consecutive month, a trend that on expert said could be sign that Russia is playing a bigger role in DPRK's economy. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- The surprisingly sweeping agreement that Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un struck at Wednesday's summit talks in Pyongyang is feared to add to security uncertainties on the Korean Peninsula and beyond, experts said. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- After attending a parade and signing a military pact, Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un enjoyed a lavish meal featuring lobster, duck liver and truffle, according to images posted by RIA Novosti news agency reporters covering Putin's trip. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia and North Korea’s leader, Kim Jong-un, revived a Cold War-era mutual defense pledge between their nations on Wednesday, as the Kremlin deepened its security relationship with North Korea and vowed solidarity in challenging the United States. (Choe Sang-Hun, Paul Sonne, *The New York Times*)

- Russian leader Vladimir Putin brought a limousine to Pyongyang this week as a gift for North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, according to Russian state media, in an open violation of U.N. sanctions prohibiting such a transfer. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- As Vladimir V. Putin's Russia and Xi Jinping's China deepened their confrontation with the West over the past decade, they were always united with the United States on at least one geopolitical project: dismantling or at least containing North Korea's nuclear arsenal. (David E. Sanger, *The New York Times*)
- Russian leader Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un's shorter-than-anticipated summit was marked by the signing of a "comprehensive treaty," which experts call significant but also warn should be taken with "a grain of salt." (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un signed a comprehensive strategic partnership treaty calling for mutual assistance if either is attacked Wednesday as they held summit talks in Pyongyang. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un elevated their countries' bilateral relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership, Wednesday, which includes mutual assistance in the event of an attack on either nation. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)
- Putin and Kim signed a new partnership that includes a vow of mutual aid if either country is attacked, during a Wednesday summit that came as both face escalating standoffs with the West. (Brad Dress, *The Hill*)
- Russia and North Korea vow to "immediately provide military assistance" in the case of an attack on one of them, according to the newly released text of a treaty signed by leaders Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un. (Anton Sokolin, Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- The United States reiterated Wednesday that growing cooperation between Russia and North Korea is a trend of "great concern," after Pyongyang and Moscow signed a pact calling for mutual aid if either side comes under attack. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Both Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un say a new strategic partnership is a breakthrough, but what it means for their relationship is still uncertain. (Kim Tong-Hyung, Jim Heintz, AP)

Prepared by Alexander Kim, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250720064319/https://mailchi.mp/bb35f8d307ec/hrnk-news-items-why-is-vladimir-putin-visiting-north-korea-former-cia-analyst-north-koreas-kim-doesnt-look-healthy?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, June 21th, 2024

Putin warns S. Korea against arming Ukraine; NK defectors send anti-Pyongyang leaflets again

In North Korea:

How did North Korean soldiers wander across the world's most heavily guarded border? (*AP*, 06/21/2024)
N. Korean leader's sister hints at launching more trash-carrying balloons (*Yonhap*, 06/21/2024)
N. Korean soldiers cross border for 3rd time in June on Thursday: JCS (*Yonhap*, 06/21/2024)
N. Korea's vice sports minister leaves for Russia to attend BRICS sports meeting (*Yonhap*, 06/21/2024)
North Korea building border 'wall', satellite images reveal (*BBC*, 06/20/2024)

In South Korea:
N. Korean defectors send anti-Pyongyang leaflets again to N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 06/21/2024)
S. Korea calls in top Russian envoy to protest new treaty with N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 06/21/2024)
S. Korea urges Russia to halt military cooperation with N.K. amid tensions over new treaty (*Yonhap*, 06/21/2024)
South Korea summons Russian ambassador as tensions rise with North Korea (*AP*, 06/21/2024)
South Korea to consider supplying arms to Ukraine after Putin-Kim pact (*Financial Times*, 06/21/2024)
South Korea will consider supplying arms to Ukraine after Russia and North Korea sign strategic pact (*AP*, 06/20/2024)

International:
FM Cho stresses need for UNSC to confront cybersecurity threats 'head-on' amid growing N.K. threats (*Yonhap*, 06/21/2024)
North Korea's Kim declares 'full support' for Russian war in Ukraine (*The Washington Post*, 06/19/2024)
Photos show Kim Jong Un and Putin sharing gifts – including a limo and hunting dogs (*CBS News*, 06/20/2024)
Putin Signs Landmark Security Deal With North Korea (*Foreign Policy*, 06/20/2024)
Putin Threatens to Arm North Korea, Escalating Tension With West Over Ukraine (*The New York Times*, 06/20/2024)
Putin warns S. Korea's potential arms supply to Ukraine would be 'very big mistake' (*Yonhap*, 06/21/2024)
Putin warns South Korea against arming Ukraine (*BBC*, 06/21/2024)
Russian Coal Ship Seized Passing North Korea (*Newsweek*, 06/20/2024)
Russia-North Korea pact could dent China's influence, but Beijing still holds sway over both (*AP*, 06/21/2024)
Takeaways From the Kim-Putin Summit (*38 North*, 06/21/2024)
Time to Bring Kim Jong Un Before the International Criminal Court (*The Diplomat*, 06/21/2024)
The Putin-Kim summit produced an unusual — and speedy — flurry of glimpses into North Korea (*AP*, 06/20/2024)
U.S. official voices concern over N.K.-Russia security treaty, vows to evaluate Indo-Pacific posture (*Yonhap*, 06/21/2024)
Vladimir Putin's Trip to North Korea Reeks of Desperation, Not Strength (*Time*, 06/19/2024)
Why Putin's Visit to North Korea Matters (*The Wall Street Journal*, 06/20/2024)

In North Korea:

- On Friday, South Korea's military said it had fired warnings shots the previous day to repel several North Korean soldiers who briefly crossed the military demarcation line that divides the countries while engaging in unspecified construction work. (Foster Klug, Kim Tong-Hyung, AP)
- The influential sister of North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un hinted on Friday about launching more trash-carrying balloons into South Korea as she condemned "human scum" for sending what she described as "dirty wastepaper and things." (Chae-Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean troops working in the Demilitarized Zone separating the two Koreas have briefly crossed the border into the South before returning to their side after the South fired warning shots, the Joint Chiefs of Staff said Friday. (Lee Minji, Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's vice sports minister has left for Russia to attend an international sports meeting, state media reported Friday, after the leaders of North Korea and Russia signed a treaty to expand cooperation. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Images analysed by BBC Verify also show that land inside the Demilitarised Zone has been cleared, which experts say could be a violation of the long-standing truce with South Korea. (Jake Horton, Yi Ma, Daniele Palumbo, BBC)

In South Korea:

- The Fighters for a Free North Korea said it sent 20 balloons carrying some 300,000 leaflets, USB sticks and U.S. dollars across the border on Thursday night in the border city of Paju. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea summoned the top Russian envoy in Seoul on Friday to lodge a protest over a new treaty signed with North Korea that calls for immediate military assistance if either is attacked. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea urged Russia on Friday to "immediately halt" military cooperation with North Korea and "act responsibly" after Moscow signed a new treaty with Pyongyang on providing each other military assistance in case of an armed attack on either of them. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea summoned the Russian ambassador to protest the country's new defense pact with North Korea on Friday, as border tensions continued to rise with vague threats and brief, seemingly accidental incursions by North Korean troops. (Kim Tong-Hyung, AP)
- South Korea has said that it would consider sending weapons to Ukraine in a warning to Vladimir Putin after the Russian president signed a mutual defence pact with North Korea amid rising tensions on the Korean peninsula. (Song Jung-a, *Financial Times*)
- South Korea said Thursday that it would consider sending arms to Ukraine, a major policy change that was suggested after Russia and North Korea rattled the region and beyond by signing a pact to come to each other's defense in the event of war. (Kim Tong-Hyung, AP)

International:

- South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul called Thursday for the U.N. Security Council to confront "real" and "present" cybersecurity threats "head-on," as he presided over a UNSC meeting as the council's rotating president. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin, looking for diplomatic and military support, signed a 'comprehensive' agreement with Kim Jong Un during a rare visit to Pyongyang. (Michelle Ye Hee Lee, Robyn Dixon, *The Washington Post*)

- Russian President Vladimir Putin's top foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov told reporters Wednesday that the Russian leader had exchanged gifts with North Korea's Kim Jong Un during their summit in Pyongyang. (Tucker Reals, *CBS News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin have agreed to sign a landmark military assistance pact that Pyongyang released on Thursday. The treaty promises immediate military aid if either country faces armed aggression. Putin revived the deal, a version of which was first signed in 1961 but discarded after the Soviet Union's collapse, on Wednesday during his first trip to North Korea since 2000. (Alexandra Sharp, *Foreign Policy*)
- President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia directly warned the United States and its allies that he is willing to arm North Korea if they continue to supply Kyiv with sophisticated weapons that have struck Russian territory, raising the stakes for the Western powers backing Ukraine. (Paul Sonne, *The New York Times*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin has warned it would be a "very big mistake" if South Korea provides lethal weapons to Ukraine after Seoul suggested such a possibility in response to Russia's commitment to military cooperation with North Korea. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Vladimir Putin has warned South Korea it would be making "a big mistake" if it arms Ukraine in the war against Russia. (Kelly Ng, BBC)
- South Korea has intercepted a ship carrying Russian freight via North Korea to China, according to the South Korean government. (Hugh Cameron, *Newsweek*)
- Experts say China's leaders are likely fretting over potential loss of influence over North Korea after its leader Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin signed the deal this week, and how that could increase instability on the Korean Peninsula. But Beijing may also be struggling to come up with a response because of its conflicting goals: keeping peace in the Koreas while countering the U.S. and its Western allies on the global stage. (Didi Tang, Ken Moritsugu, AP)
- On June 19, 2024, Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un were all smiles during Putin's whirlwind state visit to Pyongyang. Amid fanfare and pageantry (as well as some lavish gift giving, including a joy ride in a second luxury car gifted to Kim), the two leaders signed a Treaty upgrading their relationship to a "comprehensive strategic partnership"—the highest level of bilateral relations for Russia. (Jenny Town, *38 North*)
- Similarly, there are growing calls for North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to be held accountable for providing war supplies to Putin. International law experts argue that Kim could be charged with at least aiding and abetting war crimes or even being an accomplice to Putin's crimes. (Lee Min Young, *The Diplomat*)
- The imagery from Pyongyang emerged quickly, notable in its variety — glimpses into North Korea in near-real time that showed its leader, Kim Jong Un, grinning and glad-handing with Russian President Vladimir Putin and showing him around the capital of one of the world's least accessible nations. (Ted Anthony, AP)
- A White House official on Thursday expressed concern over a new security treaty between Russia and North Korea, and vowed to continue to evaluate America's defense posture throughout the Indo-Pacific "as needed." (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- It must be somebody pretty important in your life to warrant a personal airport pickup at 3 a.m. But that's the honor North Korean "Supreme Leader" Kim Jong Un paid to Vladimir Putin on Wednesday morning, greeting the Russian President on a red carpet-laid runway in the wee hours and then riding with him through Pyongyang streets festooned with roses and murals of his stout, balding guest, whom Kim had earlier hailed as an "invincible comrade-in-arms." (Charlie Campbell, *Time*)

- North Korea's Kim Jong Un says he and Russian President Vladimir Putin share an "unbreakable relationship of comrades-in-arms." (Ann Simmons, *The Wall Street Journal*)

Prepared by Alexander Kim, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250720064437/https://mailchi.mp/5ccdcbf22511/hrnk-news-items-0621-2024?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, June 22nd, 2024

Russia & N. Korea's military deal formalizes a bustling arms trade

In North Korea:
North Korea's Rural Development: The Project Hits Full Speed (*38 North*, 06/21/2024)

In South Korea:
Actor Koo Kyo-hwan hunts down Lee Je-hoon in new thriller 'Escape' (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/21/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Why are both Koreas fixated on cross-border propaganda? (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/22/2024)

International:
A New Russia-North Korea Strategic Partnership: Geopolitical Implications for Asia (*The Diplomat*, 06/22/2024)
Blinken condemns Russia-NK military cooperation, reaffirms 'ironclad' alliance (*Yonhap*, 06/22/2024)
Caught Between Allies: China's North Korea Dilemma (*The Diplomat*, 06/22/2024)
Deepening N.K.-Russia ties may drive S. Korea in direction of nuclear option: ex-Trump official (*Yonhap*, 06/22/2024)
Korea, Romania set to sign $920M artillery export deal (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/20/2024)
North Korea and Russia pledge to offer military aid without delay if either side is attacked (*The Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 06/21/2024)
North Korea's Flawed but Winning Strategy in Ukraine (*38 North*, 06/21/2024)
Putin and Kim Bring Back Cold War-Era Military Alliance to Tense Region (*The Wall Street Journal*, 06/21/2024)
Putin Shows He Can Antagonize the U.S. Far Afield From Ukraine (*The New York Times*, 06/21/2024)
Putin's Defense Pact With Kim Jong Un Alarms US and Allies (*Bloomberg*, 06/21/2024)
Russia-North Korea defense pact moves military cooperation out of shadows (VOA, 06/21/2024)
Russia and North Korea's military deal formalizes a bustling arms trade (*The Washington Post*, 06/22/2024)

S. Korea, U.S., Japan agree on close cooperation through 'timely' dialogue after Kim-Putin summit: Seoul minister (*Yonhap*, 06/22/2024)
S. Korea-US-Japan vs. N. Korea-Russia in new cold war (*The Dong-A Ilbo*, 06/22/2024)
South Korea may send lethal weapons to Ukraine (*The Chosun Daily*, 06/21/2024)
South Korea urges Security Council to take action on North Korean cybercrime (*NK News*, 06/21/2024)
UN chief says Russia must uphold North Korea sanctions (*Reuters*, 06/22/2024)
US aircraft carrier arrives in South Korea for military drills (*Reuters*, 06/22/2024)
USS Theodore Roosevelt arrives in Busan in show of force (*Yonhap*, 06/22/2024)

In North Korea:

- When Kim Jong Un launched the rural development initiative, it came with no numerical targets, making it unclear how extensive the campaign would be. However, the scale of the initiative became clearer, with new housing projects being opened at least weekly in the final two months of 2022. (Martyn Williams, *38 North*)

In South Korea:

- The story centers on actor Lee Je-hoon's Lim Kyu-nam, a North Korean soldier who attempts to flee to the South in the pursuit of freedom. (Kim Ji-Ye, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Late in the evening on May 28, mobile phones across South Korea blared warnings that the country's military had detected unidentified airborne objects from the North crossing the inter-Korean border. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- What does Vladimir Putin's embrace of Kim Jong Un portend for Northeast Asian geopolitics? (Ankit Panda, *The Diplomat*)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken condemned growing military cooperation between Russia and North Korea and reaffirmed the "vital" importance of the Seoul-Washington alliance during phone talks with his South Korean counterpart, Friday, according to his spokesperson. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Rapprochement between Moscow and Pyongyang has caused mixed feelings in Beijing, as China's own relations with North Korea are far from close. (Anny Boc, *The Diplomat*)
- A deepening military relationship between North Korea and Russia could be a factor pushing South Korea to consider seeking its own nuclear program, a former U.S. official said Friday, amid growing concerns about the security implications of this week's summit between the two countries. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Korea is poised to secure a $920 million deal with Romania to export K9 self-propelled howitzers to the eastern European country following a defense ministerial meeting. (Seo Ji-Eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The most notable clause in the "Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" between North Korea and Russia, released by the Korean Central News Agency on June 20, is Article 4,

which promises to provide military assistance without delay if either side is attacked by force. (Yoo Sae-seul, *The Kyunghyang Shinmun*)

- In May, US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin recently said the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's assistance helped Russia "get back on its feet" and "turn the tide" of the war. But the other side of this relationship also deserves scrutiny. (Jonathan Corrado, Anton Ponomarenko, *38 North*)
- The revival of a Cold War-era military pact between Russia and North Korea has unnerved the U.S. and its main Asian partners, stirring uncertainty and concern that the agreement could undermine regional security. (Dasl Yoon, Timothy W. Martin, *The Wall Street Journal*)
- Beyond using nuclear weapons or causing more destruction on the battlefield in Ukraine, the Russian leader is seeking to prove he can pressure and antagonize the West in other ways and other places. (Paul Sonne, *The New York Times*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin's trip to Asia won him support to maintain his grinding war on Ukraine while alarming the US and allies such as South Korea, which is now considering supplying Kyiv with weapons that could change the battlefield. (Jon Herskovitz, Soo-Hyang Choi, *Bloomberg*)
- Even without the treaty, military cooperation — including arms transfers from Russia to North Korea — was likely to have gone forward, according to Bechtol and other analysts. (Christy Lee, VOA)
- Russian trade data shows how cash-strapped Pyongyang is transporting shipping containers to munitions-hungry Moscow to help it sustain its war against Ukraine. (Joyce Sohyun Lee, Michelle Ye Hee Lee, *The Washington Post*)
- South Korea, the United States and Japan have agreed on close security cooperation through "timely" consultation, after Russia and North Korea signed a new security treaty during a summit in Pyongyang this week, Seoul's top diplomat said Friday. (Song Sang-ho, Lee Ji-heon, *Yonhap*)
- As Russia emerges as a new security threat to South Korea, with simultaneous retaliation threats from North Korea and Russia, the South Korean government has emphasized joint responses with the US and Japan. (Kwan-Seok Jang, *The Dong-A Ilbo*)
- South Korea's presidential office indicated that the country might support Ukraine with lethal weapons, targeting Russia, which recently signed a military cooperation treaty with North Korea. (Yang Seung-shik, Kim Dong-ha, Park Su-hyeon, *The Chosun Daily*)
- South Korea called on the U.N. Security Council to tackle illicit cyber operations in connection with global threats like nuclear proliferation, drawing attention to North Korea's rampant cybercrime activities to fund its nuclear program. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- Russia must abide by United Nations sanctions on North Korea, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Friday after the two countries this week deepened ties and agreed to provide immediate military assistance if either faces armed aggression. (Michelle Nichols, *Reuters*)
- A nuclear-powered U.S. aircraft carrier, the Theodore Roosevelt, arrived in the South Korean port city of Busan on Saturday to take part in joint military exercises later this month with the host nation and Japan, naval officials said. (Jihoon Lee, Helen Popper, Clarence Fernandez, *Reuters*)
- The USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN-71) arrived at a naval port in the southeastern city of Busan on Saturday, the Navy said, in a show of force against evolving North Korean threats emboldened by the North's deepening military cooperation with Russia. (Kim Seung-yeon, Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Ray Matsumoto, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250720064554/https://mailchi.mp/ed6a667b3147/hrnk-news-items-russia-n-koreas-military-deal-formalizes-a-bustling-arms-trade?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, June 23rd, 2024

'People's Ronaldo' Han Kwang-song trains alone, trapped in the N. Korean embassy

Top News:
"People's Ronaldo" Han Kwang-song trains alone, trapped in the North Korean embassy (*Radio Free Asia*, 06/13/2024)
**This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.*

In North Korea:
N. Korea to hold key party meeting this week after signing new partnership treaty with Russia (*Yonhap*, 06/23/2024)

In South Korea:
Defector group sends more plastic bottles containing rice to N. Korea, raising concerns about Pyongyang's trash balloons (*Yonhap*, 06/23/2024)
Lethal aid to Ukraine depends on Russia's actions, South Korea warns (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/23/2024)
Russia's provision of precision weapons to N.K. would leave no line for Seoul's aid to Ukraine: official (*Yonhap*, 06/23/2024)
S. Korea running out of red lines on Russia-N. Korea cooperation (*The Korea Herald*, 06/23/2024)
S. Korea needs to consider nuclear armament as way to diversify options against N.K. nukes: think tank (*Yonhap*, 06/23/2024)
S. Korean commandos sharpen special operations capabilities amid N.K. threats (*Yonhap*, 06/23/2024)
'Unfeasible' idea of nuclear-armed South Korea resurfaces (*The Korea Times*, 06/23/2024)

International:
'A return to the cold war': Putin and Kim have joined forces as global delinquents (*The Guardian*, 06/23/2024)
EU seeks defence industry partnerships with Japan, South Korea, says Nikkei (*Reuters*, 06/23/2024)
S. Korea, U.S., Japan to hold inaugural industry ministerial meeting this week (*Yonhap*, 06/23/2024)
U.S. expert calls for S. Korea's inclusion into G7, touts its 'trustworthiness' (*Yonhap*, 06/23/2024)

With its new pact with North Korea, Russia raises the stakes with the West over Ukraine (AP, 06/23/2024)

Top News:

- It has been belatedly revealed that North Korean football player Han Kwang-song, known as the "People's Ronaldo," had to train alone for over two years trapped in the North Korean embassy in China. (Kim Jisoo, *Radio Free Asia*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea is expected to hold a plenary meeting of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) this week to review policy performances in the first half, amid attention over whether it would discuss follow-up measures to implement a new partnership treaty signed with Russia. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- A group of North Korean defectors said Sunday that it has sent 200 plastic bottles containing rice across the border, heightening concerns that Pyongyang may resume sending balloons filled with trash in retaliation. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- National Security Adviser Chang Ho-jin stressed Sunday that whether South Korea provides weapons to Ukraine depends on how Russia's military cooperation with North Korea unfolds. (Lim Jeong-Won, Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- National security adviser Chang Ho-jin said Sunday that South Korea will not be bound by anything with regard to its assistance to Ukraine if Russia provides North Korea with precision weapons. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korean national security adviser Chang Ho-jin issued another stark warning Sunday, clarifying that South Korea will have no red lines left to uphold if Russia supplies "high-precision weapons" to North Korea, at a time when Seoul and Moscow are walking a tightrope in their relations. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea needs to consider various options to tackle North Korea's nuclear issue, including Seoul's arming itself with its own nuclear weapons, a state-run think tank said in a report Sunday, amid heightened concerns raised by Russian President Vladimir Putin's latest visit to Pyongyang. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Thursday's training underscored the role some special forces play in one of the pillars of Seoul's "three-axis" deterrence system against the North's evolving nuclear and WMD threats -- Korea Massive Punishment and Retaliation. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- Experts call for rational response to Kim-Putin military pact. The idea of South Korea developing its own nuclear weapons is resurfacing among some U.S. pundits in light of the strengthened military partnership between North Korea and Russia. (Lee Hyo-jin, *The Korea Times*)

International:

- The defiant Russia-North Korea friendship pact raises big questions for Washington and Seoul – but also for Beijing. A quarter of a century ago, Vladimir Putin flew to Pyongyang to sign a "friendship treaty" with Kim Jong-il that helped revive Russia's relations with North

Korea without obliging the two sides to come to each other's aid in case of a military attack. (Andrew Roth, *The Guardian*)

- The European Union is seeking security and defence industry partnerships with Japan and South Korea aimed at joint development of military equipment, the Nikkei reported on Sunday, citing a senior EU commission official. (*Reuters*)
- South Korea, the United States and Japan plan to hold their first industry ministerial meeting in Washington this week to discuss ways of strengthening three-way cooperation on supply chains and economic security, Seoul's industry ministry said Sunday. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)
- A prominent U.S. expert has made an emphatic call for the Group of Seven to consider its membership expansion to include South Korea, touting the Asian democracy's "trustworthiness," performance and potential role to add diversity to the club of the world's leading industrialized nations. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Behind the smiles, the balloons and the red-carpet pageantry of President Vladimir Putin's visit to North Korea last week, a strong signal came through: In the spiraling confrontation with the U.S. and its allies over Ukraine, the Russian leader is willing to challenge Western interests like never before. (AP)

"People's Ronaldo" Han Kwang-song trains alone,

trapped in the North Korean embassy

Kim Jisoo, *Radio Free Asia*

June 13, 2024

[Anchor] It has been belatedly revealed that North Korean football player Han Kwang-song, known as the "People's Ronaldo," had to train alone for over two years trapped in the North Korean embassy in China. Kim Jisoo reports below.

The North Korean football team has kept all internal matters highly confidential.

Former North Korean football player and Zainichi manager An Yong-hak revealed in an interview with CNN on the 11th that Han Kwang-song, known as the "People's Ronaldo," has had to "train alone for about 2-3 years while trapped in the North Korean embassy in China."

After his contract with the Qatar Stars League football team, Al-Duhail SC, was terminated, Han Kwang-song disappeared from public view for over three years. Manager An Yong-hak conveyed the situation when Han had to train alone while trapped in the North Korean embassy in China.

An Yong-hak has stated it was unfortunate that Han Kwang-song was unable to return to the North Korean national football team sooner during the time that he was confined in China.

Han Kwang-song, born in 1998, is a graduate of the Pyongyang International Football School, established by Kim Jong-un in 2013 with the goal of rearing elite football players.

Subsequently, with the support of the North Korean government, he went on to study in Spain and joined the youth team of Cagliari in Italy's Serie A in 2017.

In 2020, he reached the pinnacle of his career by transferring to Juventus, a prestigious club in Italy's Serie A. Within a few weeks, he moved to Qatar's Al-Duhail SC.

However, as North Korea's development of nuclear missiles continued, the UN Security Council's resolution on sanctions against North Korea, which included provisions for expelling North Korean overseas workers, took effect in 2019. Han could no longer compete overseas.

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the **Committee for the Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)**, pointed out to *Radio Free Asia* (*RFA*) on the 13th that North Korea is wasting young talent.

[Executive Director Scarlatoiu] "Han Kwang-song is a young and talented footballer. He spent some of the most important years of his career in isolation. Because football is a team sport, you cannot train alone. North Korea's isolation and oppression are destroying the future and talent of North Korea's youth."

In particular, overseas North Korean players have offered a certain percentage of their income to the authorities as "loyalty funds." When signing a contract with Al-Duhail SC, Han Kwang-song signed a document stating that he would "not remit money to North Korea." It was later revealed that he had illegally transferred 80,000 pounds (approximately 130 million KRW) to North Korea monthly in violation of this rule, causing controversy.

Mid-August last year, Han returned to North Korea and reappeared three months later, representing North Korea in the World Cup second round qualifier against Syria in November.

Also, on the 11th, the North Korean football team, of which Han Kwang-song is a member, secured a major 4:1 victory in the final Asian region Group B match of the World Cup second qualifying round against Myanmar held in Laos.

Meanwhile, North Korea announced on the 10th via Korean Central Television that it is nurturing talent at the Pyongyang International Football School to achieve its plans of becoming a "sports powerhouse."

The broadcast also boasted that the school is developing promising football players, contributing to the advancement of the country's football skills.

[Korean Central Television] "Comrade General Secretary has stated the need to continuously improve the educational content and methods at the Pyongyang International Football School to meet the demands of evolving reality and strengthen its management and operation to develop more promising junior players. In order to understand global football development trends, electronic multi-media compilations as well as video compilations should be made available at all times."

Translated by Jangyun Yoo, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Jongjin Lee, HRNK Research Intern

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Monday, June 24th, 2024

Unification of South and North Korea Begins with North Korean Human Rights – Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of HRNK

Top News:
Unification of South and North Korea Begins with North Korean Human Rights – Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (*Manna* 24, 06/12/2024)
**This video has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.*

In South Korea:
DP Chairman Lee Jae-myung resigns, eyes second term as party's chief (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/24/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Seoul says North Korea has resumed balloon launches likely to drop trash in South Korea (*AP*, 06/24/2024)
Hello Kitty, parasites: inside North Korea trash balloons according to South (*Reuters*, 06/24/2024)
Human waste and old clothes in North Korea trash balloons (*BBC*, 06/24/2024)
North Korean trash balloons carried parasites from likely human feces: Seoul (*NK News*, 06/24/2024)
S. Korea says parasites detected in trash-filled balloons from N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 06/24/2024)

International:
N. Korea supports Russia's war with Ukraine as 'legitimate act of self-defense' (*Yonhap*, 06/24/2024)
N. Korea vows 'overwhelming, fresh' deterrence measures against arrival of U.D. aircraft carrier (*Yonhap*, 06/24/2024)
N. Korean leader exchanges greetings with Laotian president to mark 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties (*Yonhap*, 06/24/2024)
North Korea blames U.S. for Ukraine support, deployment of aircraft carrier (*Reuters*, 06/24/2024)
Russia risks crossing the 'red line' after military pact with North Korea: Seoul (*NK News*, 06/24/2024)
Russia vows retaliation against US for Ukraine's ATACMS missile attack on Crimea (*Reuters*, 06/24/2024)
South Korea, U.S., Japan slam military cooperation between North, Russia (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/24/2024)
U.N. aviation agency voices grave concern over N. Korea's GPS signal jamming (*Yonhap*, 06/24/2024)
UN approves ROK province's plan to send water purification aid to North Korea (*NK News*, 06/24/2024)
US aircraft carrier arrives in South Korea as Russia-North Korea defense pact deepens regional fears (*CNN*, 06/24/2024)
US aircraft carrier visits peninsula in show of force to deter North Korea (*NK News*, 06/24/2024)
US says Russia could be discussing help for North Korea missile development (*Reuters*, 06/24/2024)

What South Korea Needs Post-Russia-North Korea Mutual Defense Treaty (*The Diplomat*, 06/24/2024)

Top News:

- In an interview with *Manna TV*, **Greg Scarlatoiu**, **Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK),** discusses the impact of North Korea-related films such as *Beyond Utopia* and *Dotori* as well as the need to support North Korean human rights. (*Manna 24*)

In South Korea:

- Democratic Party Chairman Lee Jae-myung resigned from his post as party leader, facing a slew of legal troubles, including corruption charges related to land development scandals in Seongnam, Gyeonggi, during his time as the city's mayor. He was also indicted earlier this month over allegations of involvement in underwear company Ssangbangwool's illegal cash remittance to North Korea. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- South Korea is monitoring an expected change in the wind direction on Monday that could allow North Korea to send more trash-carrying balloons across their heavily armed border, in their latest bout of tit-for-tat psychological warfare. (Hyung-jin Kim, AP)
- Among the trash that balloons carried over from the North were articles printed with Hello Kitty characters, badly-worn clothing, and soil containing traces of human feces and parasites. (Jack Kim, *Reuters*)
- Parasites from human waste and defaced Hello Kitty clothing were found in bags of rubbish carried by North Korean balloons into South Korea. (Tom McArthur, BBC)
- Some of the trash balloons that North Korea has launched over the border since last month carried parasites from likely human feces and other excrement, as well as dirty underwear, socks, and other clothes. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Parasites have been detected in some of the trash-filled balloons sent by North Korea to South Korea, but no harmful substances were found. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

International:

- North Korea on Monday criticized the United States for its military support of Ukraine and supported Russia's actions as a "legitimate act of self-defense," underscoring the growing military ties between Moscow and Pyongyang. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea condemned the U.S. sending a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier to the Korean Peninsula, saying that the North is open to taking "overwhelming and fresh" deterrence measures against such a provocative act. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has exchanged greetings with Laotian President Thongloun Sisoulith to mark the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- Top North Korean military officials criticised the United States on Monday for its expanding military assistance to Ukraine and dispatch of one of its aircraft carriers to join joint drills with South Korea and Japan. (Hyunsu Yim, Ju-min Park, *Reuters*)

- South Korea, the U.S., and Japan condemned North Korea and Russia's military cooperation and pledged to enhance trilateral coordination. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The U.N. aviation agency has adopted a decision raising serious concerns over North Korea's recent jamming of GPS navigation signals. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Russia's signing of a mutual defense agreement with North Korea last week brings Moscow closer to crossing South Korea's "red line." (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- In response to an attack on Crimea, Putin ordered drills to practice the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons, suggested Russia could deploy conventional missiles in striking distance of the United States and its allies, and sealed a mutual defense pact with North Korea. (Dmitry Antonov, Guy Faulconbridge, *Reuters*)
- The U.N. Security Council has approved a sanctions exemption request from South Korea's Gyeonggi Province to ship aid to North Korea. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- A U.S. Navy aircraft carrier has arrived in South Korea for a show of force as Washington, Seoul and Tokyo released a joint statement on Monday condemning deepening military ties between North Korea and Russia. (Brad Lendon, CNN)
- A U.S. nuclear-power aircraft carrier docked in the South Korean port city of Busan over the weekend, a visit that Seoul described as a demonstration of Washington's commitment to providing extended deterrence against North Korean threats. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell said discussions between Russia and North Korea about weapons supplies may involve support for North Korea's nuclear long-range missile development. (David Brunnstrom, Michael Martina, *Reuters*)
- In forging deeper strategic ties with Pyongyang, Russia has tarnished one of the key touchstones of Moscow's relations with Seoul, which has its foundation in the "Agreement on Cooperation in the Military-Technical Sphere, Defense Industry and Logistics between the Government of the Republic of Korea and the Government of the Russian Federation." The key predicate condition of the agreement was the severance of Russia's direct military aid and assistance to North Korea. (Jong Min Lee, *The Diplomat*)

Unification of South and North Korea Begins with North Korean Human Rights – Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea

Manna 24

June 12, 2024

[Greg Scarlatoiu] Hello. How are you? I am Greg Scarlatoiu, the Executive Director of the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea.

[Anchor] Recently, as several North Korea-related films such as *Beyond Utopia* and *Dotori* have had preview screenings in Washington D.C., interest in North Korean human rights has increased among local Koreans. Also, within Korean society, people are equally aware of the importance of Korean unification and North Korean human rights, but have different thoughts on how to solve this issue. As a North Korean human rights expert, do you see Korean unification and North Korean human rights as separate issues or should they be pursued equally? What are your thoughts?

[Greg Scarlatoiu] North Korean related movies and documentaries are very important. Of

course, the older generations can comprehend how dire the North Korean human rights situation is. However, how are younger generations learning about North Korean human rights? Well, you can learn through textbooks, reading, studying and/or from watching movies. Because watching movies is the easiest and most accessible way of gaining exposure, films such as *Beyond Utopia* are quite important. They seem to be quite popular in the Korean community as well.

Of course, if you look at Korean society, there are those who are concerned about North Korea's poor human rights conditions and unification. There are many challenges surrounding the Korean Peninsula, aren't there? In fact, in order to resolve all of these difficult challenges surrounding the Korean peninsula including nuclear weapons development, ballistic missiles, military provocations by the North Korean regime, the human rights situation, and the poor human security situation of North Korean residents, there is only one solution. That would be unification initiated by the democratic and prosperous Republic of Korea.

There is a very close relationship between unification and human rights issues. North Korea cannot achieve economic development or unification without human rights. To resolve the unification issue, we must first start with human rights.

North Korean human rights and unification should not be compromised. From my perspective, this issue should not be viewed as a Korean-only issue. Because human rights are a universal value, everyone around the world should take a deep interest in North Korean human rights issues.

What can Koreans do? First, get involved. Donate. Get active. It's quite important. We must clearly persuade elected representatives that the human rights issue in North Korea is not just an issue between North and South Korea, but one related to U.S. security.

[Anchor] During the pandemic, North Korea shut down its borders and local marketplaces, making North Korean residents economically vulnerable. How is this also closely connected to and affecting North Korean human rights issues?

[Greg Scarlatoiu] During COVID-19, North Korean authorities tightened control over market

activities, incoming information from the outside world, and the North Korea-China border. What could be the reason for this? Didn't millions of people die during the Arduous March in the 1990s? Many people died from starvation at that time. Subsequently, information started flowing into North Korea with the formation of markets, farmers' markets, and black markets. North Korean authorities fear information from the outside world could bring down the regime. Therefore, under the pretext of COVID-19, North Korea tightened control over outside information, the North Korean-Chinese border, and marketplace activities for several years.

Those who can change North Korea are not Americans, South Koreans, or Europeans. Those who can change North Korea are North Koreans themselves. What we can do to support the North Korean people is to provide information. As more and more outside information enters North Korea, the Kim family regime gets weaker. Because they fear such outside information, they restrict information coming in from the outside world, the North Korean-Chinese border areas, and marketplace activities.

Restricting outside information has a significantly negative impact on the human rights situation. This is because North Koreans constantly hear about ideology. There are many who hold Life Review

Sessions at least once a week and receive ideological education every day. The more they are exposed to outside information, they learn and realize that there is a world outside of North Korea.

So, if we want to support North Korean residents, the best way is to send information. We need to continue to communicate three main messages to the North Korean people. First, we need to let people know how corrupt the North Korean regime, especially the Kim family, is at its core and the severity of the corruption. Secondly, we need to let North Korean people know what the outside world is like, especially what the prosperous Republic of Korea, a liberal democracy and U.S. ally, is like. Third, we need to continuously explain how poor the North Korean human rights situation is.

North Korea has ratified various international treaties and conventions, and it also has its own constitution, doesn't? According to the North Korean Constitution, basic human rights such as freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and freedom of association are guaranteed, but they have never been upheld. North Korean people must understand this and know it well.

[Anchor] Has the distribution of leaflets to North Korea made a large impact?

[Greg Scarlatoiu] The distribution of leaflets to North Korea has had a significant influence for many decades. North Korea is quite afraid of such distributions and that is why they have continued to prevent them. Kim Jong-un's younger sister, Kim Yo-jong has also put in a lot of effort to prevent this information that threatens the regime.

[Anchor] What can we make of this back and forth of distributing the leaflets and exchanging

trash balloons?

[Greg Scarlatoiu] What information do South Korean civil society organizations send to the

North? There are Korean movies, K-dramas, K-Pop, and American movies. And what would

North Korea be sending to the South? Who in the South would believe in Kim Il-sung's

ideology, *Juche*, or the Ten Principles? Because they have completely lost that battle, all they can send to the South is trash. They sent trash balloons to South Korea to block the distribution of balloons coming from the South. To that extent, we can say that the Kim family regime has lost the ideological battle.

[Anchor] Are the roles of North Korea's underground churches and parishioners related to

human rights in North Korea?

[Greg Scarlatoiu] North Korea's underground churches are quite important. The underground parishioners are very important. Freedom of religion is a basic human right. However, the Kim family regime is especially vicious in its condemnation of religious freedom. Long ago, was Pyongyang not the Jerusulam of the East? Christianity is protected in the identity of the North Korean residents. To remove that identity, the Kim family has tried to eliminate Christians. They tried to massacre Christians by the masses. Many underground Christians are still imprisoned. They are especially imprisoned in political prison camps (*kwan-li-so*) and reeducation camps (*kyo-hwa-so*).

Why is the Kim family particularly fearful of Christianity? There are many reasons. They are afraid because Christianity is a belief that can prevail against Kim Il-sung's ideology. Secondly, the nature

of the underground. If it's an underground religion, isn't it still possible to have free dialogue to some extent? Evil dictatorships such as North Korea are quite afraid of its citizens gathering and speaking freely. Thirdly, Korea's history is very deep. It's been 5,000 years. North Korea's history did not begin with Kim Il-sung, and North Korea's Christian tradition is proof. Kim Il-sung did not choose or create the identity of North Koreans. North Koreans have a long tradition and Christianity is quite an important element within that long tradition. That is why they fear Christianity to that extent.

[Anchor] Has anything changed from the U.S. and South Korean governments since Julie Turner took office as the State Department's Special Envoy on North Korean Human Rights Issues?

[Greg Scarlatoiu] I think there have been changes to U.S.-Korean cooperation and relations since Ambassador Julie Turner was appointed. Cooperation between South Korea, the United States and Japan has strengthened since the Camp David summit a few months ago. Certainly, Korea-U.S.-Japan cooperation has advanced greatly in the military, security, political, and economic sectors, but this time, human rights issues were also emphasized. I think Ambassador Turner's role has been quite important in that process.

Translated by Gia Yun, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Alena Nosel, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250720065048/https://mailchi.mp/eeb2c9823d98/hrnk-news-items-unification-of-south-and-north-korea-begins-with-north-korean-human-rights-greg-scarlatoiu-executive-director-of-hrnk?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, June 25th, 2024

North Korea makes Olympic return in Paris

In North Korea:
Fabrics top list of North Korea's imports from China for second month in May (*NK News*, 06/21/2024)

In South Korea:
ROK holds live-fire rocket drills on anniversary of North Korea's 1950 invasion (*NK News*, 06/25/2024)
S. Korea to hold survey on separated families every three years (*Yonhap*, 06/25/2024)
Seoul city gov't to compensate victims of North's trash balloons (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/25/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Decades after war, North Korea still builds borders, draws warning shots (*Reuters*, 06/25/2024)
N. Korea launches some 350 trash-carrying balloons overnight: Seoul military (*Yonhap*, 06/25/2024)

North Korea launches more trash balloons toward South Korea: JCS (*NK News*, 06/24/2024)
North Korea relaunches balloons, likely to drop trash in South (VOA, 06/24/2024)
North Korea resumes sending trash-filled balloons across border (UPI, 06/25/2024)
North Korean soldiers cross border for third time amid DMZ construction: ROK (*NK News*, 06/21/2024)
North launches over 350 more trash balloons, Seoul mulls response (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/25/2024)
Seoul littered with trash dropped by North Korean balloons (*The Korea Herald*, 06/25/2024)
South Korea says North Korea is again flying balloons toward the South, probably carrying trash (*AP*, 06/25/2024)
Trash balloons, propaganda leaflets escalate tension on Korean peninsula (*The Korea Times*, 06/25/2024)

International:
Campbell stresses Washington Declaration as deterrence tool amid security concerns over Putin-Kim summit (*Yonhap*, 06/25/2024)
From Reluctant Enforcer to Outright Saboteur: Russia's Crusade Against North Korea Sanctions (*38 North*, 06/24/2024)
North Korea makes Olympic return in Paris, but without medal-winning weightlifters (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/25/2024)
North Korean Munitions Factories: The Other Side of Arms Transfers to Russia (*38 North*, 06/24/2024)
Putin says ties with N. Korea raised to 'unprecedently high-level' in thank-you message to Kim (*Yonhap*, 06/24/2024)
Putin thanks Kim Jong Un for hospitality, as Yoon slams their security pact (*NK News*, 06/25/2024)
Russia's deputy RM hopes S. Korea 'calmly' accepts treaty with N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 06/25/2024)
S. Korea-ASEAN poised for new heights on 35th anniversary: ASEAN chief (*The Korea Herald*, 06/25/2024)
UN aviation authority condemns North Korea GPS jamming near Incheon airport (*NK News*, 06/25/2024)
U.S. report returns S. Korea to Tier 1 group for human traffic elimination efforts (*Yonhap*, 06/25/2024)
US says Russia could be discussing help for North Korea missile development (*Reuters*, 06/24/2024)
Yoon condemns NK-Russia pact as 'step back in history' (*The Korea Herald*, 06/25/2024)
Yoon denounces North-Russia pact as South marks Korean War anniversary (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/25/2024)
Yoon visits U.S. aircraft carrier ahead of trilateral drills with S. Korea, Japan (*Yonhap*, 06/25/2025)

In North Korea:

- North Korea resumed launching balloons filled with trash toward South Korea on Monday night, marking a renewed phase in their ongoing Cold War-style campaign on the Korean Peninsula. (VOA)

- North Korea's imports of fabrics from China surpassed those of human hair for the second consecutive month in May, a sign that Chinese firms are camping up the outsourcing of textile production to the DPRK. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- The South Korean army held live-fire drills with multiple rocket systems on Tuesday in a showcase of its firepower to respond to North Korean threats, marking the anniversary of the DPRK invasion that started the Korean War. (Jeongmin Kim, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- The Seoul Metropolitan Government on Tuesday said that its civil defense division would receive reports on damages caused by the North's trash balloon launches through July 10 and offer compensation after inspections. (Cho Jung-woo, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The unification ministry said Tuesday it will conduct a survey on the fate of South Korean families separated by the 1950-53 Korean War every three years, as more aging Koreans have died without being able to meet their kin in North Korea. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Seventy-four years after the Korean War began, North Korean troops are building new fortifications, occasionally inviting warning shots from South Korean counterparts across a border that has been frozen in a state of war. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- North Korea has launched around 350 trash-carrying balloons toward South Korea overnight, Seoul's military said Tuesday, in what marked the fifth launch of its kind since late last month. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has launched more trash balloons toward South Korea, the ROK military announced Monday night, just hours after Seoul revealed some of the balloons the DPRK had previously sent carried parasites from likely human feces and other excrement. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korea resumed launching balloons filled with trash toward South Korea on Monday night, marking a renewed phase in their ongoing Cold War-style campaign on the Korean Peninsula. (VOA)
- North Korea sent some 350 trash-filled balloons toward South Korea overnight, Seoul's military said Tuesday, as back-and-forth provocations continue across a tense inter-Korean border. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- North Korean soldiers crossed the Military Demarcation Line dividing the Koreas for at least the third time in recent weeks on Thursday, the South Korean military belatedly reported. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- The South Korean military is cautious in countering North Korea's waste balloons, saying it would decide what to do based on North Korea's response rather than immediately retaliate against the latest balloon launch with loudspeaker broadcasts. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea floated balloons filled with trash toward the South for the fifth time late Monday, on the eve of the anniversary of the start of the Korean War, which was June 25, 1950. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea said North Korea was flying balloons likely carrying trash across the border Tuesday for a second straight day, despite South Korea's threat to retaliate with anti-Pyongyang propaganda broadcasts at border areas. (Hyung-jin Kim, AP)

- Trash balloons and propaganda leaflets are escalating tensions on the Korean Peninsula, prompting local governments and civic groups to call for the cessation of hostilities and military activities that provoke war. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)

International:

- U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell on Monday highlighted deterrence steps of last year's summit declaration between South Korea and the United States as tools to harness amid resurgent calls for the allies to craft stronger defense measures following last week's summit between Russia and North Korea. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- After Putin's meeting with Kim Jong Un on June 19, his trip culminated in Russia signing a comprehensive strategic partnership agreement with North Korea, which included a vow of mutual aid if either country was attacked. (Samuel Ramani, *38 North*)
- North Korea will return to the Summer Olympics in Paris this year after skipping the 2020 Tokyo Games due to Covid-19. (Paik Ji-hwan, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea's munitions factories play a crucial role in the arms trade with Russia, supplying ammunition and missiles despite international sanctions and scrutiny. The international community must target both North Korean and Russian entities involved in these transactions to effectively curb North Korea's weapons production and its funding of nuclear ambitions. (Kyung-joo Jeon, Sung-jun Bae, *38 North*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin has thanked North Korean leader Kim Jong-un for showing heartfelt hospitality during his visit to Pyongyang last week, saying bilateral ties have been boosted to an "unprecedentedly high level," the North's state media reported Tuesday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin has thanked North Korean leader Kim Jong Un for hosting him for a state visit last week, claiming relations between the two countries have reached an "unprecedentedly high level." (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- Russia's deputy foreign minister expressed hope Tuesday that South Korea would "calmly" accept Moscow's new partnership treaty with North Korea, a news report said, amid condemnation over deepening military cooperation between the two countries. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations are poised to elevate their relationship to a "comprehensive strategic partnership," marking the highest level that ASEAN's dialogue partners can forge. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- The U.N. aviation authority has sent a warning to North Korea over its jamming of GPS signals near the inter-Korean border this year, after Seoul accused the DPRK of endangering hundreds of civilian aircraft. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- The State Department put South Korea back on a top-tier list of countries for meeting standards for the elimination of human trafficking, while leaving North Korea in the lowest third tier for the 22nd straight year, its annual report showed Monday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Discussions between Russia and North Korea about what Pyongyang gets in return for weapons supplies to Moscow could relate to North Korea's nuclear long-range missile development, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell said on Monday. (David Brunnstrom, Michael Martina, *Reuters*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol on Tuesday denounced a pact signed between North Korea and Russia last week as "an anachronistic act" that goes against the progress of history and

Pyongyang's repeated provocations as "despicable and irrational." (Son Ji-hyoung, *The Korea Herald*)

- President Yoon Suk Yeol on Tuesday slammed North Korea's signing of a comprehensive strategic partnership treaty with Russia as an "anachronistic" act that runs counter to historical progress. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol boarded a visiting U.S. nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Tuesday ahead of joint drills between South Korea, the United States and Japan aimed at enhancing their responses against rising threats from North Korea. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Alena Nosel, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250720065601/https://mailchi.mp/01e0a5c3de43/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-makes-olympic-return-in-paris?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, June 26th, 2024

U.S. envoy reaffirms readiness for dialogue with N. Korea, stresses urgency of separated family issue

In North Korea:
In Attempted Show of Force After Russia Pact, North Korea Missile Launch Fails (*Time*, 6/26/2024)
(3rd LD) N.K. missile launch ends in mid-air explosion amid possibility of hypersonic missile test (*Yonhap*, 6/26/2024)
N. Korea holds mass anti-U.S. rally to mark Korean War anniversary (*Yonhap*, 6/26,2024)
North Korea's Rural Development: The Houses and Move-in Day (*38 North*, 6/26/2024)
This North Korean defector sends 'smart' balloons back home. Here's a look inside his secretive assembly room (CNN, 6/26/2024)

In South Korea:
(News Focus) Deepening Russia-N.K. ties reignite debate over S. Korea's nuclear options (*Yonhap*, 6/26/2024)
South Korea conducts first live-fire artillery drill along maritime border in seven years (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 6/26/2024)
Yoon denounces North-Russia pact as South marks Korean War anniversary (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 6/26/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Civic group, border residents call for immediate halt to sending anti-Pyongyang leaflets across border (*Yonhap*, 6/26/2024)
Meet the North Koreans who haven't been able to return home in over 70 years (NPR, 6/26/2024)
N. Korea launches some 250 trash-carrying balloons overnight: JCS (*Yonhap*, 6/26/2024)

North Korean waste balloons halt flights at Incheon Airport for nearly three hours (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 6/26/2024)
South Korea says North Korea sending more balloons southward (VOA, 6/26/2024)
Suspected North Korean hypersonic missile exploded in flight, South Korea says (*AP News*, 6/26/2024)
Why North Korea is sending its rubbish to the South (*The Economist*, 6/26/2024)

International:
Can Russia send weapons to North Korea amid sanctions? (*DW News*, 6/26/2024)
Moscow plans to help North Korea build new hospital, Russian media reports (*NK News*, 6/26/2024)
Nuclear envoys of S. Korea, U.S., Japan discuss response to N. Korea's missile launch (*Yonhap*, 6/26/2024)
Pentagon spokesperson raises possibility of N.K. troops becoming 'cannon fodder' if sent to Ukraine (*Yonhap*, 6/26/2024)
Russia to resume direct passenger trains to North Korea in July, Interfax says (*Reuters*, 6/26/2024)
South Korean, Russian diplomats spar in Tehran over military ties with North (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 6/26/2024)
U.S. envoy reaffirms readiness for dialogue with N. Korea, stresses urgency of separated family issue (*Yonhap*, 6/26/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea launched a ballistic missile near Pyongyang that failed shortly after takeoff. The missile flew approximately 250 kilometers before exploding midair east of Wonsan. (Jon Herzkovitz, Shinhye Kang, *Time*)
- North Korea launches a ballistic missile toward the East Sea, exploding mid-air, possibly during a hypersonic missile test amid tensions over U.S. military presence and a strategic pact with Russia, highlighting development challenges. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea holds nationwide anti-U.S. rallies to mark the Korean War anniversary, with over 100,000 attendees in Pyongyang condemning U.S. imperialism and South Korea amid ongoing tensions. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's rural housing initiative, launched by Kim Jong Un in 2021, is transforming countryside living with modern housing and amenities. State media extensively covers the project, showcasing varied architectural styles and highlighting move-in ceremonies where residents receive praise from officials and residency permits. The initiative emphasizes propaganda and political ideology, presenting it as crucial for improving livelihoods under Kim's leadership. (Martyn Williams, Iliana Ragnone, *38 North*)
- South Korean activist monitors wind and GPS data to launch "smart" balloons into North Korea. These balloons carry prohibited items like anti-Kim Jong Un propaganda, K-pop music, and South Korean TV shows. (Jessie Yeung, Mike Valerio, Yoonjung Seo, CNN)

In South Korea:

- Russia and North Korea's new treaty, emphasizing military cooperation, fuels debate in South Korea on nuclear strategies amid heightened regional tensions and calls for diversified responses to North Korean threats, including potential U.S. tactical nuclear redeployment or indigenous nuclear programs. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

- South Korea's Marine Corps conducted a live-fire exercise on islands near the inter-Korean maritime border after suspending a 2018 military agreement. Simultaneously, the USS Theodore Roosevelt departed for a trilateral exercise with South Korea and Japan to counter North Korea's threats. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol criticized North Korea's treaty with Russia as an "anachronistic" act, reaffirming South Korea's readiness to respond to any provocations. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Civic groups and border residents in Paju, South Korea, call for halting anti-Pyongyang leaflet launches into North Korea, citing heightened tensions and urging local authorities to enforce measures against these actions. (Kim Hyun-soo, *Yonhap*)
- Abai Village in Sokcho, South Korea, was established by North Korean refugees during the Korean War, hoping to return home eventually. Today, it remains home to a small number of elderly residents and is a cultural tourist destination. (Hannah Yoon, NPR)
- North Korea launched over 250 trash balloons into South Korea overnight, the sixth such incident since late last month. The balloons, mainly carrying scrap paper, caused flight disruptions at Incheon International Airport for about three hours. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean waste-filled balloons caused a nearly three-hour disruption at Incheon International Airport, halting all landings and takeoffs from 1:46 a.m. to 4:44 a.m. due to safety risks posed to flights. Domestic and international operations were affected. (Lee Soo-jung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea recently sent balloons towards South Korea suspected to contain trash, including items like Hello Kitty characters and soil with human feces traces. (VOA)
- North Korea launched a suspected hypersonic missile off its east coast on Wednesday, which exploded shortly after takeoff, according to South Korea's military. (Kim Hyung-jin, *AP News*)

International:

- North Korea's new defense pact with Russia, signed during Putin's visit to Pyongyang, has raised concerns about possible weapon transfers and technology sharing. Analysts worry this alliance could disrupt Northeast Asia's stability despite international sanctions aimed at preventing such exchanges. (Julian Ryall, *DW News*)
- Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un discussed plans to build a new hospital in Pyongyang during their summit. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Nuclear envoys of South Korea, the United States, and Japan condemned North Korea's failed missile launch, a potential hypersonic test from Pyongyang. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- Pentagon spokesperson Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder cautioned against North Korean troops becoming "cannon fodder" in Ukraine amid growing military ties with Russia. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Russia will resume direct passenger rail service to North Korea in July after a COVID-19 hiatus, running from Vladivostok to Rason port. (Miral Fahmy, Lidia Kelly, *Reuters*)
- South Korea's Deputy Foreign Minister Chung Byung-won condemned the North Korea-Russia treaty at the Asia Cooperation Dialogue, citing UN resolution violations. (Lim Jeong-won, Park Hyun-joo, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- U.S. Special Envoy Julie Turner emphasized America's readiness for dialogue with North Korea. She underscored the U.S.'s commitment to facilitating family reunions through official

channels, stressing the emotional urgency and humanitarian imperative of resolving this long standing issue. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Faith Osinloye, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250720065853/https://mailchi.mp/cccaadace408/hrnk-news-items-us-envoy-reaffirms-readiness-for-dialogue-with-n-korea-stresses-urgency-of-separated-family-issue?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, June 27th, 2024

N. Korea slams U.S. human trafficking report

In North Korea:
Moving Past the Kim-Putin Summit: Eyes on the Party Plenary Meeting for Cues (*38th North*, 06/27/2024)
North Korean hackers deploy new backdoor to gain access to victims' computers (*NK News*, 06/27/2024)
N. Korea ramps up public executions of people distributing S. Korean movies: unification ministry (*Yonhap*, 06/27/2024)
N. Korea says it successfully conducted multiple warhead missile capability test (*Yonhap*, 06/27/2024)
N. Korea slams U.S. human trafficking report (*Yonhap*, 06/27/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korean military dismisses N.K. claim of successful multiple-warhead missile test (*Yonhap*, 06/27/2024)
Seventh wave of North Korean trash balloons disrupts Seoul and Gyeonggi (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/27/2024)
South Koreans prefer own nuclear deterrent over U.S. troops: Survey (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/27/2024)
South Korea's military fires on border islands for the first time in 7 years as a North Korean missile fails and the balloon war rages on (*Business Insider*, 06/26/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
'My Friend Kim Jong-un' 'carries message of peace,' Keum Suk Gendry-Kim says (*The Korea Herald*, 06/27/2024)
'The scariest place on earth': inside the DMZ as tensions between North and South Korea rise (*The Guardian*, 06/27/2024)

International:

Italian animation studio to pay $538K fine for outsourcing work to North Korea (*NK News*, 06/27/2024)
N. Korea condemns Ukraine's attack on Crimea with U.S.-supplied weapons (*Yonhap*, 06/27/2024)
No fundamental change in N.K. religious freedom situation: U.S. report (*Yonhap*, 06/27/2024)
Russia warns S. Korea's potential arms supply to Ukraine could lead to 'irreversible' results (*Yonhap*, 06/27/2024)
S. Korea slaps sanctions on N. Korea's Missile Administration, 4 Russian vessels for violating U.N. resolutions (*Yonhap*, 06/27/2024)
S. Korea warns Russia 'not to make mistake' after Moscow's warning against potential arms supply to Ukraine (*Yonhap*, 06/27/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. wrap up 4th round of talks on defense cost sharing (*Yonhap*, 06/27/2024)
Senior Russian diplomat calls for S. Korea to rethink 'confrontational policy' on peninsula: TASS (*Yonhap*, 06/27/2024)
South Korea, U.S. and Japan begin Freedom Edge multi-domain exercise (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/27/2024)
South Korea's Yoon, US spy chief to discuss North Korea-Russia ties, report says (*Reuters*, 06/27/2024)
Top Seoul envoy raises alarm on Putin-Kim treaty in Moscow (*The Korea Herald*, 06/27/2024)
Top U.S. envoy in Seoul calls for int'l cooperation against cybersecurity threats (*Yonhap*, 06/27/2024)
U.S. will oppose potential N. Korean worker dispatch to occupied Ukrainian territory: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 06/27/2024)
North Korea's Kim Jong Un could get his hands on some worrying military tech in exchange for throwing Russia a war lifeline (*Business Insider*, 06/26/2024)

In North Korea:

- A Workers' Party of Korea Central Committee plenary meeting is expected this week to review the first half of the year, likely addressing the recent Kim-Putin summit and its implications. A significant policy decision may emerge from this meeting, especially considering past instances where the Politburo's discussions led to major actions, such as resuming ICBM testing in 2022. (Rachel Minyoung Lee, *38 North*)
- A North Korean cybercrime group known for its spear-phishing campaigns has been using a sophisticated new backdoor to gain access to victims' computers and steal information. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK Pro*)
- North Korea has ramped up public executions of its people who watched or distributed South Korean movies and music in an attempt to block the inflow of outside culture that it views as a threat. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea claimed to have successfully conducted a missile test aimed at securing multiple warhead capability, contradicting South Korea's assessment that the test is believed to have ended in failure. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea denounced the State Department's 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report that put Pyongyang in the lowest tier group for the 22nd straight year. The Korean Central News Agency claimed that Washington is politicizing the issue of human rights as a means of intervening in other countries' internal affairs. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's military dismissed North Korea's claim of successfully conducting a multiple-warhead missile test earlier this week as a form of "deception," reaffirming its assessment the missile exploded in the air. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff reported that as of 9 a.m. Thursday, more than 180 trash-laden balloons sent from North Korea on Wednesday night had been identified, including about 70 that landed in Seoul and Gyeonggi. (Lee Soo-jung, Chai Hye-seon, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- More South Koreans support the development of an independent nuclear deterrent over maintaining the presence of U.S. troops inside the country, according to a poll published by a government-run think tank on Thursday. (Lee Yu-jeong, Lee Keun-pyung, Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The South Korean military resumed live-fire drills on border islands Wednesday after a seven-year pause. The exercise follows a failed North Korean missile test and a flurry of other activity and comes as the two countries battle with balloons. (Ella Sherman, *Business Insider*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Acclaimed graphic novelist Keum Suk Gendry-Kim urged readers not to stop at the title, as she introduced her latest book, *My Friend Kim Jong-un*. (Hwang Dong-hee, *The Korea Herald*)
- With tensions across the increasingly militarised DMZ rising, residents like Park now find themselves hoping this fragile peace can continue. “This all makes us nervous. What if something happens? It’s always on our minds,” he says. (Betsy Reed, *The Guardian*)

International:

- An Italian animation company has agreed to pay a fine of over half a million dollars for violating sanctions by outsourcing work to a North Korean studio. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- North Korea on Thursday condemned Ukraine's recent attack on Crimea using weapons provided by the United States, calling it an "inexcusable, hideous crime against humanity." (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's religious freedom has not fundamentally changed over the past decade, a U.S. report said Wednesday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's possible supply of lethal weapons to Ukraine could result in "irreversible consequences," a Russian foreign ministry official said Wednesday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea has imposed independent sanctions on four Russian vessels and eight North Koreans for engaging in illicit weapons and fuel trade and other activities in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- Russia should not make a mistake that could hurt its relations with South Korea in an "irreversible" way, a Seoul official warned Thursday, in a tit-for-tat exchange of words after Moscow warned against Seoul hinting at potential arms support to Ukraine. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the United States ended Thursday their fourth round of negotiations on determining how much Seoul should shoulder for stationing American troops. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

- A senior Russian diplomat called Wednesday for S. Korea to reconsider what he called a "confrontational" policy of "provoking an escalation of tensions" on the Korean Peninsula. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea, the United States and Japan began their first trilateral multi-domain Freedom Edge exercise Thursday, as North Korea and Russia strengthened military ties through a treaty signed last week. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- U.S. spy chief Avril Haines will be in South Korea and meet President Yoon Suk Yeol on Friday amid rising tensions on the Korean peninsula and a recent pact between Moscow and Pyongyang pledging closer military ties. (Jack Kim, Hyonhee Shin, Jonathan Landay, *Reuters*)
- South Korean Ambassador to Russia, Lee Do-hoon, voiced alarm over increasing military cooperation between North Korea and Russia during his meeting with Andrey Rudenko, the Russian deputy foreign minister in charge of the Asia-Pacific region, on Wednesday. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- The U.S. ambassador to South Korea stressed the importance of international cooperation in building resilience against cybersecurity threats, including those posed by North Korea. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- The United States will oppose any cooperation between Russia and North Korea on Russia-occupied parts of Ukraine's territory, a State Department official said Wednesday, amid speculation that N. Korean workers could potentially be sent there for reconstruction work. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea fueled Russia's war in Ukraine when it needed it most with substantial shipments of ammunition, but North Korean leader Kim Jong Un isn't doing this out of the kindness of his heart. What Moscow is offering Pyongyang in exchange is a mystery, but Korea experts say that some of the possibilities are deeply concerning. (Chris Panella, *Business Insider*)

Prepared by Robert Walker, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250720070005/https://mailchi.mp/c33c5c72fc7c/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-slams-us-human-trafficking-report?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, June 28th, 2024

Resolution Honoring Raymond Ha; International Forum on One Korea 2024 Explores U.S. Support for a Free and Unified Korea

Top News:
Resolution Honoring Raymond Ha (*HRNK*, 06/28/2024)
International Forum on One Korea 2024 Explores U.S. Support for a Free and Unified Korea (*Global Peace Foundation*, 06/06/2024)

In North Korea:

N. Korea says planned party plenary meeting will become 'politically important' event (*Yonhap*, 06/28/2024)
North Korea cracking down on wedding dresses and slang - report (BBC, 06/28/2024)
North Korea executed man for listening to K-pop, report from defectors shows (*The Guardian*, 06/28/2024)
North Korea Says It Tested Multiple-Warhead Missile Technology (*The New York Times*, 06/27/2024)
Phone disruptions to North Korea likely due to Putin's visit, experts say (NK *News*, 06/28/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korean military unveils video of N.K. missile exploding in midair (*Yonhap*, 06/28/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
S. Korea urges N. Korea to give prior notice over border dam water discharge (*Yonhap*, 06/28/2024)
Unification minister vows efforts to bring N. Korea back to dialogue with 'patience' (*Yonhap*, 06/28/2024)

International:
China remains onlooker, losing influence amid deepening N.K.-Russia ties: White House official (*Yonhap*, 06/28/2024)
Closer Russia-North Korea ties may create opportunity for US, China (VOA, 06/27/2024)
Exclusive: From making car that Putin gifted to Kim uses South Korean parts (*Reuters*, 06/28/2024)
S. Korean, Japanese vice ministers pledge close cooperation on Putin-Kim treaty (*The Korea Herald*, 06/28/2024)
'South Korea,' 'Samsung,' 'Kim Jong-un' pepper Biden-Trump debate (*The Korea Herald*, 06/28/2024)
US diplomat says 'everything' should be on table if it helps progress on peninsula denuclearization (*Yonhap*, 06/28/2024)
U.S., Japan and Korea Begin Freedom Edge Exercise, North Korea Attempts Ballistic Missile Test (USNI *News*, 06/27/2024)
With latest missile test, North Korea aims to overwhelm US defenses (VOA, 06/27/2024)

Top News:

- **HRNK** is saddened to announce that **Raymond Ha, Director of Operations and Research,** is leaving our organization after a decade of dedicated service as he embarks on law school. The Board of Directors has adopted a resolution honoring all of **Director Raymond Ha's** contributions. (*HRNK*)
- Amongst other prominent panelists, **HRNK's Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu** and **Board Members David Maxwell** and **Dr. Sung-yoon Lee** joined the Global Peace Foundation's "International Forum: One Korea 2024," held at the U.S. Capitol on June 6, 2024. The forum highlighted providing global support to help end North Korea's human rights abuses and prepare for future unification. As Mr. Maxwell stated, "We must support the Koreans. The Koreans have to solve the Korea question, but I think we all, as human beings, fellow citizens of the world, have a responsibility to help Koreans help themselves. So, with that, I will say we know one dream and one Korea." To learn more, please see a recording of the forum on GPF's Youtube, here. (Robin McDonough, *Global Peace Foundation*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea said Friday a planned plenary meeting of its ruling Workers' Party will be a "politically important" event, amid speculation on whether it would discuss follow-up measures to implement a new partnership treaty signed with Russia. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea is carrying out a widespread crackdown on everything from wedding dresses to slang as it seeks to counter the South's influence. (Flora Drury, BBC)
- A 22-year-old North Korean was publicly executed for watching and sharing South Korean films and music. (Raphael Rashid, *The Guardian*)
- A multi-warhead nuclear missile has long been on Kim Jong-un's wish list. In its test on Wednesday, North Korea's Missile Administration "successfully conducted the separation and guidance control test of individual mobile warheads," according to the state media report. The announcement, coming days after Vladimir V. Putin's visit to Pyongyang, suggests an ambitious attempt to upgrade the North's nuclear arsenal. (Choe Sang-hun, *The New York Times*)
- Problems encountered by people trying to phone North Korea from various nations in recent weeks, including by those who work with the country, may have been related to security surrounding the visit of Russian leader Vladimir Putin to Pyongyang last week. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's military released a video clip Friday showing a midair explosion of a North Korean missile after it spiraled out of control, in yet another dismissal of North Korea's claim of a successful test of a multiple-warhead missile. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- The unification ministry urged North Korea on Friday to give prior notice if it releases water from a dam near the inter-Korean border, citing the need to prevent damage in border areas from possible heavy rains. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho said Friday S. Korea will make efforts with "patience" to bring North Korea back to the dialogue table, while bolstering trilateral cooperation with the United States and Japan against Pyongyang's military threats. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- China remains an onlooker while losing its influence over North Korea as Pyongyang is massively bolstering military cooperation with Russia, a White House official said Thursday, calling for Beijing to play a greater role for stability in the region. (Song Sang-Ho, *Yonhap*)
- The recent defense pact between Russia and North Korea could present a diplomatic opportunity for the United States and China to work together for stability on the Korean Peninsula, an issue of mutual interest to both countries, some experts say. (Young Gyo Kim, VOA)
- Laughing and joking, Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un cruised around Pyongyang last week in a Russian-made Aurus limousine to showcase their strengthened anti-Western alliance. (Gleb Stolyarov, *Reuters*)

- South Korean and Japanese vice foreign ministers on Friday pledged close cooperation to address the Russia-North Korea treaty aimed at enhancing military cooperation, while also agreeing to strengthen coordination on Indo-Pacific regional and global issues, according to the Foreign Ministry in Seoul. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- US President Joe Biden and former US President Donald Trump, in their first televised debate on Thursday night, exchanged barbs on a number of topics, among them South Korea, Samsung and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. (No Kyung-min, *The Korea Herald*)
- "Everything" should be on the table if it helps make progress towards the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S., Japan and South Korea kicked off the first trilateral Freedom Edge exercise on Thursday. (Dzirhan Mahadzir, *USNI News*)
- North Korea claimed progress on testing a missile meant to contain multiple warheads, an advanced weapon aimed at penetrating U.S. missile defenses. (William Gallo, VOA)

Prepared by Gary Tetreault, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250720070117/https://mailchi.mp/d3ab9a043fed/hrnk-news-items-resolution-honoring-raymond-ha-international-forum-on-one-korea-2024-explores-us-support-for-a-free-and-unified-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Saturday, June 29th, 2024

Human Rights versus National Security in Public Opinion on Foreign Affairs – South Korean views of North Korea

Top News:
Human Rights versus National Security in Public Opinion on Foreign Affairs – South Korean views of North Korea (*Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 06/21/2024)

In North Korea:
N. Korea opens party plenary meeting with leader Kim in attendance (*Yonhap*, 06/29/2024)
North Korea begins major party plenum with Kim Jong Un presiding over meeting (*NK News*, 06/29/2024)
North Korea convenes key party meeting after Putin's visit (*Reuters*, 06/28/2024)
North Korea executed man for listening to K-pop, report from defectors shows (*The Guardian*, 06/28/2024)
North Korea executes man for listening to 70 K-pop songs: Report (*The Times of India*, 06/28/2024)
North Korea publicly executed 22-year-old man for watching K-pop (*Independent*, 06/28/2024)
North Korea says it fired a new weapon - is it lying? (BBC, 06/28/2024)
Kim's North Korea Is Executing More Young People in Public (*Newsweek*, 06/28/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korea marks 22nd anniversary of victorious inter-Korean naval skirmish (*Yonhap*, 06/29/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
The Clues Inside North and South Korea's Balloons (*The New York Times*, 06/29/2024)
South Korea rejects North Korean multiple-warhead missile test claim as 'deception' (*UPI*, 06/28/2024)

International:
As North Korean and Chinese threats rise, US looks to lock in defense partnerships with Asian allies (*The Washington Post*, 06/29/2024)
Global powers clash at United Nations over North Korea (*Reuters*, 06/28/2024)
North Korea draws navigable group in round 3 of FIFA World Cup Asian qualifiers (*Radio Free Asia*, 06/28/2024)
Russia, Western nations joust on Pyongyang-Moscow arms cooperation in UNSC meeting (*Yonhap*, 06/29/2024)
S. Korea, U.S., Japan wrap up 1st trilateral 'Freedom Edge' exercise (*Yonhap*, 06/29/2024)
Trump will encourage S. Korea, Japan ties, allies tell foreign officials (*Reuters*, 06/29/2024)
US, allies warn of North Korea-Russia military cooperation (VOA, 06/28/2024)
US official: World should be 'alarmed' by growing North Korea-Russia cooperation (VOA, 06/28/2024)
Yoon to meet U.S. spy chief amid deepening N.K.-Russia ties (*Yonhap*, 06/28/2024)

Top News:

- Human rights are an integral part of liberal democratic rule. However, opinions backing human rights in one's own democracy do not necessarily translate into advocating for the same rights abroad. In their paper, Joonbum (JB) Bae and YuJung Julia Lee, Assistant Professors at Colorado State University's Department of Political Science, show that South Koreans tend to deprioritize human rights in favor of reducing military tension with North Korea when their government seeks better relations with the regime. (Joonbum Bae, YuJung Julia Lee, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has convened a plenary meeting of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea, attended by its leader Kim Jong-un, amid expectations that it would discuss follow-up measures to implement a new partnership treaty with Russia. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- While DPRK is yet to reveal agenda, focus likely on reviewing economic goals and could include talks on Russia summit. (Kim Jeongmin, *NK News*)
- Kim Jong Un kicked off a key meeting of the country's ruling party on Friday, a little over a week after Pyongyang and Moscow struck a military defense pact that raised alarms for the United States. (*Reuters*)
- A 22-year-old North Korean was publicly executed for watching and sharing South Korean films and music, a new report claims, highlighting Pyongyang's desperate attempts to stem the flow of outside information and culture. (Raphael Rashid, *The Guardian*)

- The 2024 Report on North Korean Human Rights highlights a case where a 22-year-old man was publicly executed for consuming and distributing South Korean media, in violation to strict laws against "reactionary ideology." (*The Times of India*)
- A weapons test this week has become the latest point of contention between North and South Korea, with Pyongyang saying they fired an advanced multiple warhead missile and Seoul accusing them of lying. (Tessa Wong, BBC)
- Public executions of young North Koreans are on the rise, as Pyongyang seeks to stamp out South Korea's cultural influence. (Micah McCartney, *Newsweek*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea on Saturday commemorated the 22nd anniversary of its victorious naval skirmish against North Korea, paying tribute to Navy sailors killed in action and vowing to honor their sacrifices with a firmer defense posture. (Yoo Jee-ho, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Hundreds of milky latex balloons from North Korea glided toward its southern neighbor this week, crossing the Demilitarized Zone, the world's most heavily armed border, with unusual payloads: scraps of used paper and other common trash. (Shawn Paik, Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*)
- South Korea's military dismissed Pyongyang's claim that it successfully launched a multiple-warhead missile, providing video evidence on Friday of a mid-air explosion. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)

International:

- The United States wrapped up its first multidomain exercise with Japan and South Korea, a step forward in Washington's efforts to strengthen and lock in its security partnerships with key Asian allies in the face of growing threats from North Korea and China. (David Rising, *The Washington Post*)
- The United States, Britain, France confronted Russia at the United Nations Security Council on Friday over accusations it is violating an arms embargo on North Korea by using missiles and munitions from Pyongyang in its war against Ukraine. (Michelle Nichols, *Reuters*)
- North Korea will face Iran, Qatar, Uzbekistan, the UAE, and Kyrgyzstan in Group A for the third round of qualifiers for the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Avoiding an inter-Korean showdown with South Korea, North Korea has a chance to qualify despite being the lowest-ranked team in their group. (Park Jaewoo, *Radio Free Asia*)
- The U.N. Security Council held an open meeting Friday to discuss arms cooperation between North Korea and Russia, where Western nations condemned the two countries' transactions while Russia called them "completely false." (Song Sang-Ho, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea, the United States and Japan are scheduled to conclude their first trilateral multidomian military exercise Saturday afternoon as the three countries look to strengthen their deterrence against North Korean threats. (Yoo Jee-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Donald Trump's allies are assuring officials in Japan and South Korea that the Republican presidential candidate will support a Biden-era effort to deepen three-way ties aimed at countering China and North Korea. (Trevor Hunnicutt, John Geddie, Hyonhee Shin and Michael Martina, *Reuters*)

- The United States and its allies warned Friday that expanding military cooperation between Russia and North Korea is dangerous, illegal and a growing threat to the wider international community. (Margaret Besheer, VOA)
- U.S. Deputy Ambassador to the United Nations Robert Wood tells VOA that the international community should be concerned by growing cooperation between North Korea and Russia, especially on the military front. (Margaret Besheer, VOA)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol plans to meet with U.S. National Intelligence Director Avril Haines on Friday, sources said, amid growing concerns over a recent military pact between North Korea and Russia. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by SoEun Park, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250720070405/https://mailchi.mp/266905a41522/hrnk-news-items-human-rights-versus-national-security-in-public-opinion-on-foreign-affairs-south-korean-views-of-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, June 30th, 2024

How one family escaped North Korea in a rickety boat on the open sea

In North Korea:
Kim Jong-un's solitary portrait pin officially seen for 1st time (*Yonhap*, 06/30/2024)
How one family escaped North Korea in a rickety boat on the open sea (*The Washington Post*, 06/29/2024)
N. Korea condemns joint military exercise by S. Korea, US, Japan (*Yonhap*, 06/30/2024)
N. Korea state media says there is 'important report' amid key party meeting (*Reuters*, 06/30/2024)
North criticizes South-U.S.-Japan military drill, threatens countermeasures (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/30/2024)
North Korea calls South Korea, US and Japan 'Asian version of NATO' (*Reuters*, 06/30/2024)
North Korean officials sport Kim Jong Un pins for first time (*Reuters*, 06/30/2024)
Portrait badge of Kim Jung-un seen for 1st time (*The Korea Times*, 06/30/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
North's trash balloons rack up over 26 million won in damage across greater Seoul (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/30/2024)

International:
[Herald Interview] Time to open new page for S. Korea-Vietnam ties: Vietnam ambassador (*The Korea Herald*, 06/30/2024)

In North Korea:

- A pin featuring the solitary portrait of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un was officially seen for the first time Sunday, signaling an accelerated effort to glorify the third generation of the Kim family. (Woo Jae-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Kang Gyu-rin and her mother, aunt and a family friend are among the few who escaped from North Korea in these past four years, since Kim Jong Un shut his country's border with China in the earliest days of the pandemic. To do so, they used a perilous route that has become almost the only option for escape: by sea. (Michelle Ye Hee Lee, *The Washington Post*)
- North Korea vowed Sunday to take action to protect its sovereignty as it condemned South Korea, the United States and Japan for their recent joint military exercises. (Woo Jae-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's state news agency said in a one-line dispatch on Sunday there was "important news" but did not provide details. (Ju-min Park, Hyunsu Yim, by Chizu Nomiyama, Daniel Wallis, *Reuters*)
- North Korea's state media on Sunday blasted South Korea, the United States and Japan for carrying out a trilateral exercise, two days after a plenary meeting of North Korea's ruling Workers' Party opened with leader Kim Jong-un in attendance. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea criticised a joint military exercise by South Korea, Japan and the United States held this month, saying such drills show the relationship among three countries has developed into "the Asian version of NATO". (Hyunsu Yim, Ju-min Park, *Reuters*)
- North Korean officials wore pins with a portrait of Kim Jong Un in public for the first time in pictures released by state media on Sunday, the latest step in the development of a cult of personality about the leader. (Hyunsu Yim, *Reuters*)
- North Korean officials have been seen wearing badges bearing the portrait of their leader Kim Jong-un for the first time, suggesting an accelerated effort to glorify the leader. (Kim Hyun-bin, *The Korea Times*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Trash-laden balloons from North Korea resulted in property damage of over 26 million won ($18,824) in the Seoul metropolitan area, according to a lawmaker Sunday. (Lee SooJung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- Over the past 30 years, the relationship between South Korea and Vietnam has undergone a significant transformation, building on a connection that dates back 800 years. On growing instability in the Indo-Pacific region over strengthened Russia-North Korea ties, and worsening inter-Korean relations, the Vietnamese ambassador stressed the role of ASEAN as a diplomatic platform. (Sanjay Kumar, *The Korea Herald*)

Prepared by Maria Fernanda de Almeida, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250720070841/https://mailchi.mp/df7d7973e3c8/hrnk-news-items-how-one-family-escaped-north-korea-in-a-rickety-boat-on-the-open-sea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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7. JULY

Monday, July 1st, 2024

Putin under threat as S. Korea could send shells to Ukraine; S. Korean activists say their balloons will continue to fly

Top News:
Putin under threat as South Korea could send shells to Ukraine (*The Times*, 06/22/2024)
South Korean activists say their balloons will continue to fly, despite North warnings (*Stars and Stripes*, 06/25/2024)
Why the new defence pact between Russia and North Korea will reshape global power dynamics (TRT, 06/24/2024)

In North Korea:
Failed North Korean missile test may have fallen near capital Pyongyang, South Korea says (CNN, 07/01/2024)
Kim Jong-un's pin seen as move to solidify status as sole leader: unification ministry (*Yonhap*, 07/01/2024)
North Koreans are seen wearing Kim Jong Un pins for the first time as his personality cult grows (*AP News*, 07/01/2024)
N. Korea continues party plenary meeting for 3rd day (*Yonhap*, 07/01/2024)
N. Korea fires 2 ballistic missiles; 1 launch possibly fails (*Yonhap*, 07/01/2024)
North Korea intensifies military provocations with Russia's backing (*The Korea Times*, 07/01/2024)
North Korea launches two ballistic missiles east, ROK says one may have failed (*NK News*, 07/01/2024)
North Korea switches TV transmission to Russia satellite from Chinese (*Reuters*, 07/01/2024)
North Korea test-launches 2 ballistic missiles, South Korea says (*CBS News*, 06/30/2024)
North Korean missile may have failed and exploded over land, Seoul says (UPI, 07/01/2024)
North Korean officials appear wearing Kim Jong Un loyalty badges for first time (*NK News*, 07/01/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korean military suspects another North missile failed in flight (*Stars and Stripes*, 06/30/2024)
South Korea should try winning China to its side in wake of North-Russia summit, experts say (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/01/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Don't write off unification (*The Korea Herald*, 07/01/2024)

International:
The Uncertain Russia-North Korea Relationship (*The National Interest*, 06/28/2024)
US and allies slam North Korea-Russia arms trade at Security Council meeting (*NK News*, 07/01/2024)

US shouldn't sleep on major threat from North Korea (*Fox News*, 07/01/2024)

Top News:

- **HRNK Board Member, Dr. Sung-yoon Lee** states South Korea has "firmed up" by saying it could send "artillery shells" and "lethal weapons" to Ukraine. (*The Times*)
- **Dr. Sung-yoon Lee** described South Korean activists' humanitarian and anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets as "arguably the right thing to do" and "the exercise of freedom of speech," referring to Article 19 of the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (David Choi, Yoo Kyong Chang, *Stars and Stripes*)
- **Dr. Sung-yoon Lee** joined other esteemed guests to discuss Russian President Vladimir Putin's historic visit to North Korea after 24 years, the mutual defence pact, and what Beijing and Washington make of this growing alliance. (*TRT*)

In North Korea:

- A ballistic missile launched by North Korea on Monday might have had an "abnormal" flight trajectory and could have fallen inland, possibly near the capital of Pyongyang. (Gawon Bae, Brad Lendon, CNN)
- A pin featuring the solitary portrait of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un is perceived as an effort to reinforce his position as the sole leader. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- For the first time, North Korean officials have been seen wearing lapel pins with the image of leader Kim Jong Un. (Hyung-Jin Kim, *AP News*)
- A plenary Central Committee meeting of North Korea's ruling Workers' Party of Korea has continued for the third day in a row, amid attention being paid to whether it would announce follow-up measures to implement a new partnership treaty with Russia. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea fired two ballistic missiles in a northeastern direction Monday, South Korea's military said, with one of the launches possibly failing and the missile falling inland within the country. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea launched two ballistic missiles Monday, marking its latest military provocation as the reclusive regime continues to escalate cross-border tensions, now with Russia as its main backer. (Lee Hyo-jin, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korea launched two ballistic missiles toward its east coast early Monday morning, according to South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), assessing that one may have failed in flight. (Chad O'Carroll, Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea has switched the transmission of state TV broadcasts to a Russian satellite from a Chinese one. (Daewoung Kim, Ju-min Park, *Reuters*)
- North Korea test-fired two ballistic missiles Monday but one of them possibly flew abnormally, South Korea's military said. (*CBS News*)
- A North Korean missile launched Monday may have exploded in mid-air and rained debris over land, South Korean defense officials said. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- Top North Korean officials wore badges featuring Kim Jong Un's portrait for the first time at a major party meeting this week, a development that experts said reflects expanding efforts to fortify the leader's cult of personality in his 12th year of rule. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's military is trying to determine whether another North Korean ballistic missile, one of two launched early Monday, exploded in midflight. (David Choi, *Stars and Stripes*)
- Experts at a forum in Seoul suggested steering China toward South Korea's side as North Korea and Russia strengthen military ties with their recently signed comprehensive strategic partnership. (Lee Keun-Pyung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Urgent issues include initiating dialogue with North Korea to peacefully manage nuclear threat, balancing deterrence and engagement, achieving independent deterrence capability for greater security leverage, and ensuring policies are durable across changes in administration to stabilize inter-Korean relations. (Lee Kyong-hee, *The Korea Herald*)

International:

- Moscow and Pyongyang's new defense agreement conceals tensions within the bilateral relationship that matter over the long term. (Bruce W. Bennett, *The National Interest*)
- The U.S. and its allies condemned North Korea and Russia's arms trade over the war in Ukraine at a U.N. Security Council meeting on Friday, in Seoul's final effort to draw attention to DPRK issues at the close of its one-month stint as Council president. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- This month marks 71 years since the signing of the Korean War armistice agreement,which ended more than three years of deadly combat and left the Korean Peninsula divided between North and South. Memories of the "Forgotten War" may have faded for many Americans, but for me, they are crystal clear. (Rep. Young Kim, *Fox News*)

Prepared by Smaranda Gheorghe, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250720070954/https://mailchi.mp/165dac8303db/hrnk-news-items-putin-under-threat-as-s-korea-could-send-shells-to-ukraine-s-korean-activists-say-their-balloons-will-continue-to-fly?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, July 2nd, 2024

Report Rollout - North Korea's Political Prison Camp, Kwan-li-so No. 18; Infamous Camp No. 18, Said to be Closed, Still in Operation

Top News:
"North Korea's Political Prison Camp, Kwan-Li-So No. 18:" Report Rollout (HRNK, 07/01/2024)
[Exclusive] Infamous Kwan-li-so No. 18, Said to be Closed 18 Years Ago, Still in Operation (*The JoongAng*, 06/24/2024)

*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
N. Korea says it test-fired new tactical ballistic missile capable of carrying super-large warhead (*Yonhap*, 07/02/2024)
N. Korea's Kim says economic situations markedly on upturn at key party meeting (*Yonhap*, 07/02/2024)
North Korea hails successful test of missile carrying super-large warhead (RFA, 07/01/2024)
North Korea says it tested new tactical missile variant at two different ranges (*NK News*, 07/02/2024)
North Korea switches state TV broadcasts from Chinese to Russian satellite (*NK News*, 07/02/2024)
North Korea's New Must-Have Accessory: The Kim Jong-un Pin (*The New York Times*, 07/02/2024)
North Korean hackers use Google Chrome extension to steal researchers' emails (*NK News*, 07/02/2024)
North Koreans' lives are 'difficult' but improving, Kim Jong Un says at plenum (*NK News*, 07/02/2024)
This Song Is Catchy and Going Viral. It's Also North Korean Propaganda. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 07/01/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korea resumes artillery drills near land border for first time in 6 years (*NK News*, 07/02/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Dossier offers glimpse into inter-Korean talks in 1981-87 following N. Korea's bombing attack in Burma (*Yonhap*, 07/02/2024)
North Korea claims successful test of new missile carrying 'super-large warhead,' South has its doubts (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/02/2024)
Why did NK change its policy toward South Korea? (*The Korea Times*, 07/02/2024)

International:
ADL sues Iran, North Korea and Syria over Hamas's Oct. 7 attack (*The Hill*, 07/01/2024)
Deepening Russia-North Korea ties test US-South Korea deterrence strategy (VOA, 07/01/2024)
Find a breakthrough with Yoon's visit to Beijing (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/02/2024)
N. Korea switches transmission of state-run TV broadcasts to Russian satellite (*Yonhap*, 07/02/2024)
North Korea's Latest Missile Test Suggests Arms Race With South (*The New York Times*, 07/02/2024)
US citizens sue state sponsors of terrorism, Iran, Syria and North Korea, for aiding Hamas mass murder (*Fox News*, 07/01/2024)
U.S. condemns latest N.K. missile launches (*Yonhap*, 07/02/2024)
Victims of Hamas attack sue Iran, Syria, North Korea in U.S. court (*Reuters*, 07/01/2024)

Top News:

- HRNK is delighted to share its latest report, ***North Korea's Political Prison Camp, Kwan-li-so No. 18 (Pukch'ang)***, in an ongoing effort to employ satellite imagery analysis and former detainee testimony to shed light on human suffering in North Korea's detention facilities. The virtual launch featuring a presentation by **Joseph S. Bermudez Jr., Senior Adviser & Imagery Analyst** at HRNK and remarks by **Raymond Ha**, former **Director of Operations &**

Research and **Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director** is now available to view here. The report, along with all other HRNK publications, is also available to view here. (*HRNK*)

- *Kwan-li-so* No. 18, claimed to have been closed in 2006, remains operational as a large-scale detention facility. **Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of HRNK**, assesses that "prisoners' health and safety are threatened as they suffer from hard labor, malnutrition, and poor working conditions," urges the Kim Jong-un regime to acknowledge the existence of political prisons, and proposes continuous international investigation. (Kim Hyoung-gu, *The JoongAng*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has test-fired a new tactical ballistic missile capable of carrying a super-large warhead, a day after South Korea said the North fired two missiles and one of them could have failed. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Kim Jong-un has voiced his satisfaction about economic performances in the first half at a key party meeting, saying that economic situations are markedly on an upturn. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has successfully tested a "new-type" of tactical ballistic missile that can fire a 4.5 ton "super-large" warhead up to 500 km (311 miles), but South Korea's military doubted that the announcement was true. (*RFA*)
- North Korea successfully tested a new short-range ballistic missile variant with improved warhead capacity on Monday at the long and short ends of its range, with one possibly striking an inland target. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea has started broadcasting state television from a Russian satellite after years of using a Chinese one. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- By introducing a pin of his own image, Mr. Kim is elevating his idolization and the personality cult surrounding him to match the level reserved, until now, only for his grandfather, who ruled from 1948 until his death in 1994, and his father, who succeeded him and ruled until 2011. (Choe Sang-hun, *The New York Times*)
- A North Korean cybercrime group known for its espionage campaigns deployed a new extension for the Google Chrome web browser to steal data from South Korean targets. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- Kim Jong Un bemoaned economic "hardships" but expressed optimism about the direction of state policies at the end of a major party meeting, after retreating with hundreds of top officials to a remote mountain over the weekend. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Young people around the world are dancing to 'Friendly Father,' a Pyongyang ditty about strongman Kim Jong-un. (Dasl Yoon, *The Wall Street Journal*)

In South Korea:

- The South Korean military conducted live-fire artillery drills near the inter-Korean land border for the first time in six years on Tuesday. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- The unification ministry on Tuesday unveiled newly declassified documents shedding light on inter-Korean talks on sports and humanitarian cooperation from 1981-87, following North Korea's deadly bombing attack in then Burma in 1983. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

- North Korea announced Tuesday that it successfully test-fired a new missile the previous day carrying a "super-large warhead," while South Korean military authorities raised doubts, calling the claim a "lie." (Lee Keun-Pyung, Seo Ji-Eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A new geostrategic environment, anxiety over information penetration and the widening wealth gap between the two Koreas are the reasons behind North Korea's change of policy toward South Korea. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)

International:

- The Anti-Defamation League is going to court seeking to hold Iran, North Korea and Syria responsible for its role in aiding Hamas's Oct. 7 attack on Israel. The suit comes on behalf of 100 Americans or their families seeking to hold the trio of countries responsible for "the deaths, physical and emotional injuries, and hostage-takings Hamas caused during its barbaric rampage." (Rebecca Beitsch, Laura Kelly, *The Hill*)
- The United States' commitment to providing extended deterrence to South Korea is being put to the test, with some South Korean politicians publicly questioning the effectiveness of the U.S. nuclear umbrella after Russia and North Korea reached a new defense pact. (Young Gyo Kim, VOA)
- How would Chinese President Xi Jinping feel about North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin? There are two interpretations. The first is that it is not bad for China. The other is that Xi is uncomfortable. If North Korea, backed by Russia, commits reckless provocations, the Korea-U.S.-Japan security cooperation will strengthen, and China is concerned of an East Asian equivalent of "NATO." (You Sang-chul, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea has been using a Russian communication satellite, instead of a Chinese one, to transmit its state-run television broadcasts, causing a setback in access in South Korea to the North's broadcasting. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea said on Tuesday that it had tested a new ballistic missile with a "super-large warhead," the most recent development in an arms race with South Korea as the countries vie to introduce weapons of increasingly destructive power. (Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*)
- A group of Americans filed a lawsuit in federal court in the District of Columbia, alleging Iran, Syria and North Korea provided material support to Hamas to commit atrocities during its mass murder of nearly 1,200 people in southern Israel on Oct. 7. (Benjamin Weinthal, *Fox News*)
- The United States condemned North Korea's ballistic missile launches this week, reaffirming its "ironclad" security commitment to South Korea. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- More than 100 victims and relatives of victims of the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas militants in Israel sued Iran, Syria and North Korea on Monday, accusing the countries of providing Hamas support and demanding at least $4 billion in damages. (Joseph Ax, *Reuters*)

[Exclusive] Infamous Kwan-li-so No. 18, Said to be Closed 18 Years Ago, Still in Operation

Kim Hyoung-gu, *JoongAng Ilbo*
June 18, 2024

Kwan-li-so No. 18 (political prison camp), which North Korea announced closed in 2006, is still operational as a large-scale detention facility. **The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)** and the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) under the U.S. Department of Defense revealed this through satellite imagery analysis.

Kwan-li-so (Camp) No. 18 was operated as a political prison camp located in Pukchang County, South Pyongan Province, 66 kilometers (41.01 miles) northeast of Pyongyang, North Korea. There has been talk amongst North Korean defectors indicating that Camp No. 18 is still operational and that prisoners are being mobilized for hard labor, but this is the first time satellite imagery analysis has confirmed the reports. Since creating political prison camps to put away people purged after the August Faction Incident in 1956, North Korea has forcibly detained *hostile classes*, political prisoners, and economic prisoners, but officially denies the existence of the camps.

HRNK's report, ***North Korea's Political Prison Camp, Kwan-li-so No. 18 (Pukch'ang)***, states that although North Korean authorities announced the closure of *Kwan-li-so* No. 18 in 2006, key facilities continued to operate until 2012, after which some infrastructure facilities began to be razed, making Camp No. 18 a still operational large-scale detention facility. Specifically, between 2012 and 2024, approximately 830 structures were dismantled while 225 new structures were erected and 90 remaining structures were renovated.

Additionally, satellite imagery analysis conducted after 2012 showed five new border guards, one internal guard station, and three new security barracks and detention facilities constructed. 35 to 40 small surveillance posts were also identified around the management office.

Kwan-li-so No. 18 remains active and well-maintained with numerous agricultural, light industrial, and mining activities. Cement factories, small light industrial plants, pig farms, livestock facilities, and new group housing have also been identified.

"According to Hwang Jang-yop, the highest-ranking North Korean official to ever defect to South Korea, the detention facility for what would eventually become *Kwan-li-so* No. 18 was first established at the Pukch'ang mine in 1958." The report also states that former Agricultural Secretary Seo Kwan-hee, who was publicly executed for failed agricultural policy during North Korea's *Sim-hwa-jo* campaign in 1997, was imprisoned in Camp No. 18. The *Sim-hwa-jo* incident was a large-scale purge carried out by the Kim Jong-il regime in the late 1990s to control public sentiment worsened by the Arduous March and strengthen its power base.

Camp No. 18 is unusually under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Social Security, which is responsible for security functions, rather than the Ministry of State Security, North Korea's intelligence and counterintelligence agency. Minister of Social Security, General Ri Tae-sop, is in command of *Kwan-li-so* No. 18 and the system is such that Ri Tae-seop reports directly to Chairman Kim Jong-un. Camp No. 14 (Kaechon City, South Pyongan Province), No. 15 (Yodok County, South Hamgyong Province), No. 16 (Myonggan County, North Hamgyong Province), No. 18 (Pukchang County, South Pyongan Province) and No. 25 (Chongjin City, North Hamgyong Province) are called North Korea's "five major camps." The Ministry of National Security is in charge of management and control with the exception of Camp No. 18. The report states that just because Camp No. 18 is under the Ministry of Social Security's jurisdiction "does not diminish the cruelty and severity of the human rights abuses committed" or the exploitation of prisoners at the camp.

In the early 2000s, approximately 50,000 people, including political prisoners and their families, were imprisoned in *Kwan-li-so* No. 18. 30,000 were sentenced to hard labor, and the remaining 20,000 were classified as elderly. In 2020, it was said that the number of prisoners had dropped to about 24,000.

After Kim Jong-un came to power, North Korean media outlets reported that those involved in the Jang Song-thaek incident and those responsible for the so-called "Hanoi No Deal" (the 2019 North Korea-US summit in Hanoi that ended in failure) were imprisoned in large numbers at Camp No. 18, increasing the number of prisoners. Regarding the exact number of prisoners, the report states that "due to a paucity of detailed and reliable information, HRNK is not in a position to… present a reliable estimate of [the] current prisoner population…"

"Based on this analysis of key features, it is clear that large sections of Kwan-li-so No. 18 were deactivated over a period of at least eight years and that smaller sections remain active as a detention facility." Recent changes in mining, light industrial, and agricultural areas of the camp indicate ongoing human rights abuses and forced labor, with the possibility of new detention facilities being established in other remote areas.

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of HRNK, assesses that "prisoners' health and safety are threatened as they suffer from hard labor, malnutrition, and poor working conditions." He urges the Kim Jong-un regime to acknowledge the existence of political prisons and "grant immediate, free, and unimpeded access to international humanitarian organizations" such as the International Committee of the Red Cross. Lastly, he proposes continuous international investigation and monitoring of *Kwan-li-so* No. 18.

Translated by SoEun Park, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250721074122/https://mailchi.mp/fef8bf0943b0/hrnk-news-items-report-rollout-north-koreas-political-prison-camp-kwan-li-so-no-18-infamous-camp-no-18-said-to-be-closed-still-in-operation?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, July 3rd, 2024

N.K. leader inspects munitions factory after key party meeting

In North Korea:
N.K. leader inspects munitions factory after key party meeting (*Yonhap*, 07/03/2024)

In South Korea:

Assembly debates ways to shield state agencies from North Korean cyberattacks (*Korea Herald*, 07/03/2024)
Petition to impeach President Yoon surpasses 1 million signatures in 10 days (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/03/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N. Korea's sending of trash-filled balloons is 'form of soft terrorism' (*Yonhap*, 07/03/2024)
North Korea Uses Google to Steal Passwords (*Newsweek*, 06/28/2024)

International:
Ask a North Korean: What was it like working in Russia during the pandemic? (*NK News*, 07/03/2024)
Firm making car that Putin gifted to Kim uses South Korean parts (*Reuters*, 07/02/2024)
Pentagon decries N. Korea's recent missile launches as 'irresponsible' (*Yonhap*, 07/03/2024)
Russia Kids Will Go to North Korea Summer Camps This Year, Closer Ties (*Business Insider*, 07/02/2024)
Russian Kid Stayed at North Korean Summer Camp, Had Weird Experiences (*Business Insider*, 07/03/2024)
Seoul MP says trash-filled balloons from North Korea disrupted over 10,000 plane travellers (*ABC News*, 07/03/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has visited major munitions and machinery factories, calling for efforts to expand production in the overall economic sector. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- At a National Assembly forum held on the day, ruling People Power Party Rep. Park Choong-kwon said constitutional institutions should be required to observe security practices in light of the recent North Korean cyberattacks against South Korean courts. (Kim Harin, *Korea Herald*)
- Over a million Koreans have signed a parliamentary petition to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol as of Wednesday morning. (Lee Soo-Jung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea's obnoxious sending of trash-filled balloons to South Korea is a "form of soft terrorism," a U.S. think tank report said Tuesday, stressing it should not be taken lightly, though it reflects the recalcitrant regime's "weakness" and "insecurity." (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean hackers have used Google Chrome extensions to gather personal data from South Koreans. The hack, which forms part of a long-running attempt at cyber-espionage by the pariah state, employed a complex act of software trickery to install fake translation programs on the devices of unsuspecting victims. (Hugh Cameron, *Newsweek*)

International:

- Former overseas worker recounts regime's orders to follow strict COVID rules and threats to treat violators as traitors. (Jin Ju-dong, *NK News*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un cruised around Pyongyang last week in a Russian-made Aurus limousine to showcase their strengthened anti-Western alliance. But customs records show that the company that builds it uses millions of dollars in imported parts, many arriving in Russia from what Kim has described as his country's "primary foe", South Korea. (Gleb Stolyarov, *Reuters*)
- A Pentagon spokesperson on Tuesday criticized North Korea's recent ballistic missile launches as "irresponsible," and reiterated the United States' calls for the recalcitrant regime to return to diplomacy. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin is planning to send Russian children to a summer camp in North Korea. This decision follows a meeting between Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in June, where they discussed the initiative. The children, part of the Movement of the First Youth Organization, will be visiting the Songdowon International Children's Camp, a site built in the 1960s by Kim Jong-un's grandfather. Despite concerns from Russian parents about the conditions and political nature of the camp, Russian officials assure that the facilities are adequate. (Joshua Zitser, *Business Insider*)
- "I stayed at a North Korean summer camp. We polished statues and played a game where we destroyed the White House." (Josh Zitser, *Business Insider*)
- Trash-carrying balloons sent by North Korea across the border last month disrupted more than 100 flights carrying 10,000 passengers. (*ABC News*)

Prepared by Valerie Johnson, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250721074440/https://mailchi.mp/790aa6753992/hrnk-news-items-nk-leader-inspects-munitions-factory-after-key-party-meeting?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, July 4th, 2024

Is Kim Jong-un leveraging rise of women for daughter's succession?; North Korea and Russia to build road bridge over Tumen River

In North Korea:
Is Kim Jong-un leveraging rise of women for daughter's succession? (*The Korea Times*, 07/04/2024)
Kim Jong Un tours new weapons factory with party plenum attendees (*NK Pro*, 07/03/2024)
North Korea recalls overseas students for 'political indoctrination' (*RFA*, 07/04/2024)

International:
North Korea and Russia to build road bridge over Tumen River (*RFA*, 07/04/2024)

North Korean soap maker looks to enter Russian market, trademark records show (*NK News*, 07/04/2024)

In North Korea:

- Kim Ju-ae, described as a "great person of guidance" by North Korea's state-run media, has been appearing publicly with her father since late 2022 during inspections of military facilities, fueling speculation that she may be next in line for succession. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)
- Focus on military as first act after major party meeting emphasizes importance of arms development. (Colin Zwirko, *NK Pro*)
- North Korea has issued a directive for students studying overseas to return home for "political indoctrination" sessions. (Taejun Kang, *RFA*)

International:

- North Korea and Russia plan to build a new road bridge over the Tumen River, boosting trade and tourism, following an agreement during President Putin's visit to Pyongyang on June 19, with experts comparing it to the New Yalu River Bridge between North Korea and China. (Seo Hye Jun, *RFA*)
- Experts skeptical DPRK goods can compete as Ryongaksan Soap Factory seeks to win over Russian consumers. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

Prepared by Valerie Johnson, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250721155548/https://mailchi.mp/03ba43030b41/hrnk-news-items-is-kim-jong-un-leveraging-rise-of-women-for-daughters-succession-north-korea-and-russia-to-build-road-bridge-over-tumen-river?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, July 5th, 2024

Dallas man who escaped North Korea credits former President George W. Bush for his freedom

In North Korea:
N. Korea underscores swift, accurate weather forecasts for agriculture during monsoon season (*Yonhap*, 07/05/2024)

In South Korea:

Police endorse charges for man who said ROK should accept North Korean invasion (*NK News*, 07/05/2024)

International:
Dallas man who escaped North Korea credits former President George W. Bush for his freedom (*CBS News*, 07/04/2024)
Yoon to travel to U.S. next week for NATO summit, Indo-Pacific Command visit (*Yonhap*, 07/05/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea on Friday stressed the need for swift and accurate weather forecasts, as heavy rain likely to fall during the summer monsoon season could seriously affect the country's agriculture. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- Activist allegedly violated National Security Act by making pro-DPRK statement and contacting anti-state group. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

International:

- Joseph Kim, who grew up in North Korea experiencing homelessness and hardships, credits the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004 for allowing those who escaped from North Korea's brutal regime to come to the U.S. as legal refugees. He has worked at the Bush Institute for five years helping others who escaped the same dictatorship he did. Kim will attend Harvard University this fall to continue his studies. (Jack Fink, *CBS News*)
- President Yoon is scheduled to join a session of NATO allies and partners and hold a four-way meeting with leaders from Indo-Pacific partner nations to discuss ways to expand security cooperation in response to deepening military ties between Russia and North Korea. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250721155904/https://mailchi.mp/5bbc0861ee6c/hrnk-news-items-dallas-man-who-escaped-north-korea-credits-former-president-george-w-bush-for-his-freedom?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, July 6th, 2024

Will North Korea Soon Have MIRV Capability For Its Ballistic Missiles?

Top News:
Will North Korea Soon Have MIRV Capability For Its Ballistic Missiles? (*National Security Journal*, 07/04/2024)
Russia Claims North Korea-Russia Treaty Not Aimed at South Korea, Intended to Suppress Support for Lethal Weapons to Ukraine (VOA, 06/26/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In South Korea:
Yoon to head to U.S. next week to attend NATO summit, visit Indo-Pacific Command (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/05/2024)

International:
Expectations grow for S. Korea-U.S. cooperation in military logistics, MRO (*Yonhap*, 07/06/2024)
NATO summit to discuss with Indo-Pacific partners resilience, cybersecurity, disinformation: U.S. official (*Yonhap* 07/06/2024)

Top News:

- On June 26, 2024, the North Koreans conducted a test of what they called MIRV technology, claiming the test "aimed at securing the MIRV capability". Pyongyang also claimed that during the test, the North Koreans "successfully conducted the separation and guidance control test of individual mobile warheads." The DPRK also claimed that the mobile warheads were guided to three separate targets. This is the first time that North Korea has publicly announced that it is testing a multiple warhead ballistic missile capability. (Bruce Bechtol Jr., *National Security Journal*)
- American experts dismissed Russia's claim that the newly established North Korea-Russia treaty is not aimed at South Korea. They assess that Russia's intention is to curb South Korea from supplying lethal weapons to Ukraine. **HRNK Board Member, Dr. Sung-yoon Lee**, said in a phone call with VOA, "Since Putin and Kim Jong-un officially and publicly signed a treaty and said they would continue to trade arms, the Yoon Suk-yeol administration has no choice but to respond. Therefore, they considered directly providing lethal weapons to Ukraine, but Putin did not seem to have anticipated such a degree of response." (Ahn Jun-ho, VOA)

In South Korea:

- President Yoon Suk Yeol will embark on a five-day trip to the United States starting Monday to attend the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Summit and visit the Indo-Pacific Command. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- Beyond their trade in flashy weapons, South Korea and the United States appear to be headed for close cooperation in a lesser-known, yet crucial defense area: military logistics and maintenance particularly in the event of a regional crisis. Seoul and Washington signed an arrangement in November to prioritize the supply of defense materials and goods to each

other. They have also been seeking to ink a reciprocal defense procurement agreement designed to curtail trade barriers. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

- The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and its Indo-Pacific partners, including South Korea, plan to discuss resilience, support for Ukraine, disinformation, cybersecurity and emerging technologies during their summit in Washington next week. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Russia Claims North Korea-Russia Treaty Not Aimed at South Korea, Intended to Suppress Support for Lethal Weapons to Ukraine

Ahn Jun-ho, VOA

June 26, 2024

American experts dismissed Russia's claim that the newly established North Korea-Russia treaty is not aimed at South Korea. They assess that Russia's intention is to curb South Korea from supplying lethal weapons to Ukraine. This is reporter Ahn Jun-ho.

On June 25, Joseph DeTrani, former Special Envoy for the Six-Party Talks with North Korea, responded to Russia's claim that the comprehensive strategic partnership treaty it recently signed with North Korea was not aimed at South Korea. "Of course, this treaty is not aimed at South Korea. It is a threat to the Korean people," he said. "The Russian Federation is very deceptive, and this is their normal behavior."

He pointed out, "The treaty targets South Korea because Russia is providing North Korea with weapons that can be used against South Korea," adding, "This is a clear fact."

[DeTrani] "And I think the Russian Federation is concerned that the Yoon Suk-yeol government is considering and possibly would go forward with providing weapons to the Ukrainians to resist the war of aggression in Ukraine against the Russians."

Russian President Vladamir Putin explains that he does not want escalation factors, such as South Korea providing lethal weapons to Ukraine.

As such, he added that Russia's remarks should not be taken at face value.

Ambassador DeTrani forecasted that although Russia might send a special envoy to Seoul and pledge only humanitarian aid to North Korea, a diplomatic solution is unlikely since technical military support has already been promised between North Korea and Russia.

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Andrei Rudenko, told the Russian state-run media outlet, *Sputnik*, that "this treaty is a kind of warning to countries that had expected or planned to resolve issues on the Korean Peninsula and in the region by military means," emphasizing that it is not aimed at South Korea or any third-party country.

He added, "We hope that South Korea understands the new (North Korea-Russia) agreement and prioritizes a sound approach, including its relations with Russia."

Earlier, on June 20, the South Korean government announced it would reexamine its existing policy of not providing lethal weapons to Ukraine in response to the signing of the comprehensive strategic partnership treaty between North Korea and Russia.

In response, on June 21, President Putin threatened it would be a “big mistake” for the South Korean government to provide weapons to Ukraine.

Accordingly, Jang Ho-jin, head of the National Security Office, appeared on a KBS television program on June 23 stating, “If Russia provides high-precision weapons to North Korea, what line is left for us?” Tensions between the two countries have been escalating as he added reconsidering providing lethal weapons to Ukraine would be “up to the Russian side.”

Meanwhile, Deputy Minister Rudenko made a statement aiming to calm the situation.

Former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Evans Revere responded to VOA's request for comment.

[Revere] “Officials of Putin's regime have considerable skill in spreading disinformation and misinformation in furtherance of their diplomatic and political goals. Probably the kindest things that can be said about his remarks is that perhaps Moscow realizes the mistake it has made by trying to blackmail and intimidate the Republic of Korea and by providing military and technology assistance to the DPRK, which is committed to destroying South Korea's democracy and forcibly unifying the Korean Peninsula under Pyongyang's rule.

Wilson Center Fellow and **HRNK Board Member, Dr. Sung-yoon Lee**, said in a phone call with VOA, “Since Putin and Kim Jong-un officially and publicly signed a treaty and said they

would continue to trade arms, the Yoon Suk-yeol administration has no choice but to respond. Therefore, they considered directly providing lethal weapons to Ukraine, but Putin did not seem to have anticipated such a degree of response.”

He added, “If South Korea starts providing artillery shells to Ukraine, even Putin will have to say, “This was a mistake. I provoked South Korea too openly, and it won't help Russia in the Ukraine war.”

[Dr. Lee] “That’s why the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister lies about not provoking South Korea. Russia is supporting North Korea's development of nuclear weapons of mass destruction, such as satellites and nuclear submarines. Who else is this threatening if not South Korea? It is seen as an implicit, false message from Russia when it says South Korea should also exercise restraint since this is not a threat to Korea.”

Some argue that it is still too early to judge the impact of the North Korea-Russia summit on the security of the Korean Peninsula.

Robert Rapson, former Chargé d’Affaires ad interim at U.S. Embassy Seoul, told VOA, “since the North Korea-Russia summit took place less than a week ago, it is still too early to determine what actual impact it will have on security.”

[Rapson] "The post-summit situation seems to be shaping up as one of the sternest foreign policy and diplomacy tests the Yoon administration has faced. Much will depend on how it reacts, or doesn't react, in both the short term and longer term."

This was Ahn Jun-ho for VOA *News*.

Translated by Gia Yun, former HRNK Research Intern; edited by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Gabrielle Drinkwine, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250721160045/https://mailchi.mp/13ba59ad7dc4/hrnk-news-items-will-north-korea-soon-have-mirv-capability-for-its-ballistic-missiles?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, July 7th, 2024

North Korea calls for loyalty to leader ahead of late founder's death anniversary

In North Korea:
N. Korea calls for loyalty to leader ahead of late founder's death anniversary (*Yonhap*, 07/07/2024)
N. Korea honors late founder's legacy ahead of 30th death anniversary (*The Chosun Daily*, 07/07/2024)
N. Korean officials shake down illegal profiteers for bribes (*Daily* NK, 07/05/2024)

International:
NATO to discuss Russia-North Korea military cooperation (VOA, 07/07/2024)
Pyongyang to Manhattan: Escaping North Korea to take a bite of the Big Apple (*Radio Free Asia*, 07/07/2024)
With South Korean Rockets, Ukraine Could Wipe Out Russian Warplanes At Their Bases (*Forbes*, 06/06/2024)

In North Korea :

- North Korea's state media on Sunday called for loyalty to its leader Kim Jong-un ahead of the death anniversary of the founder of the country, Kim Il-sung, later this week, amid tensions over the North's weapons testing and defense pact with Russia. (Chae Yun-Hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea is fostering a commemorative atmosphere ahead of the 30th anniversary of the death of nation founder Kim Il-sung on July 8 through state media articles honoring his

legacy and events organized by civic labor groups involving local residents. (Kang Jung-a and Kim Seo-young, *The Chosun Daily*)

- North Korean law enforcement agents are shaking down individuals profiting from illegal activities in the Kyongwon County, looking into a neighborhood watch unit in mid-June. (Han Jae-deok, *Daily NK*)

International:

- The NATO summit scheduled for this week will include a discussion among the allies about strengthening security ties with South Korea and Japan against deepening military cooperation between Russia and North Korea, experts said. (Christy Lee, VOA)
- Born into a wealthy, elite North Korean family, the siblings fled 10 years ago with their parents. In May, they graduated from Columbia University, among the very few North Korean escapees to do so. (Park Jaewoo, Jamin Anderson, *Radio Free Asia*)
- On June 19, Russian president Vladimir Putin flew to Pyongyang for the first time in 24 years and inked an agreement with North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un. The details of the pact are unclear, but Kim announced the two countries had a "fiery friendship." It's widely assumed the agreement will result in closer industrial and military ties between the authoritarian states—ties that could feed and prolong Russia's costly wider war on Ukraine. (David Axe, *Forbes*)

Prepared by Jennifer Leon, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250721160313/https://mailchi.mp/8afc5df0b9d5/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-calls-for-loyalty-to-leader-ahead-of-late-founders-death-anniversary?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Monday, July 8th, 2024

Sister of North Korean leader denounces South's drills as 'suicidal hysteria'

In North Korea:
N. Korea extols Kim Jong-un's achievements on state founder's 30th death anniv. (*Yonhap*, 07/08/2024)
N.K. leader visits mausoleum to mark late grandfather's death anniversary (*Yonhap*, 07/08/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Kim Yo Jong says ROK resumed border drills to distract from Yoon's unpopularity (*NK News*, 07/08/2024)
N.K. leader's sister slams S. Korea's resumption of live-fire drills as 'suicidal hysteria' (*Yonhap*, 07/08/2024)
North Korean leader's sister denounces South's border drills (RFA, 07/08/2024)

Sister of North Korean leader denounces South's drills as 'suicidal hysteria' (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/08/2024)
Unification education guidebooks published to highlight government's liberal democracy unification vision (*Yonhap*, 07/08/2024)

International:
China rejects calls to protect North Korean refugees in UN human rights review (*NK News*, 07/08/2024)
Donbas youth group plans projects with North Korea after Pyongyang visit (*NK News*, 07/08/2024)
North Korean troops could be sent to Ukraine due to their sheer numbers, not their effectiveness, experts say (*Business Insider*, 07/07/2024)
ROK takes up leadership role in US-led naval exercise with eye on North Korea (*NK News*, 07/08/2024)
South Korea's Yoon to discuss Pyongyang's 'distinct threat' to Europe at NATO (*Reuters*, 07/08/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea's state media highlighted the country's leader Kim Jong-un's major military achievements Monday, the 30th anniversary of the death of state founder Kim Il-sung, in a move seen aimed at intensifying the personality cult for the current leader. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un visited a mausoleum dedicated to his late grandfather, Kim Il-sung, to commemorate the 30th anniversary of his death Monday. (Kang Yoon-seung, *Yonhap*)
- Kim Yo-jong, the North Korean leader's powerful sister, labeled South Korea's recent resumption of artillery drills near the border an act of "suicidal hysteria" in a statement released Monday. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- South Korea has resumed live-fire drills on North Korea's doorstep to distract people from calls to impeach President Yoon Suk-yeol, Kim Yo Jong claimed on Sunday, condemning the military exercises near the inter-Korean border. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un on Monday denounced South Korea's resumption of live-fire artillery drills near the border as "suicidal hysteria" and warned of possible military actions against such acts. (Kim Soo-yeon, Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's powerful sister on Monday denounced South Korea's resumption of live-fire artillery drills near the border as "suicidal hysteria" and warned of possible military action. (Taejun Kang, *RFA*)
- Kim Yo-jong, the North Korean leader's powerful sister, labeled South Korea's recent resumption of artillery drills near the border an act of "suicidal hysteria" in a statement released Monday. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- An institute affiliated with the unification ministry published new unification education guidebooks Monday that highlight the Yoon Suk Yeol government's liberal democracy-based unification vision and North Korea's increased threats against South Korea. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- China has rejected recommendations that it protect North Korean refugees and refrain from forcibly repatriating them, following a comprehensive U.N. review of Beijing's human rights record. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- A youth organization from Russia-occupied Donbas is planning joint projects with North Korea after a visit to Pyongyang in June in what experts called a likely prelude to dispatching DPRK personnel to the war-torn region of eastern Ukraine. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- As of now, the prospect of North Korean soldiers being deployed to Ukraine is speculative and unlikely. But if it did happen, the main advantage Russia would take from it would be North Korea's sheer number of soldiers—not their effectiveness. (Thibault Spirlet, *Business Insider*)
- The South Korean navy is serving as deputy commander for a large-scale U.S.-led multinational maritime exercise near Hawaii for the first time, a move that one expert said aims to broadcast the strength of the U.S.-ROK alliance to North Korea. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said he would discuss with NATO leaders the distinct threat North Korea poses to Europe by deepening military ties with Russia, warning that Moscow must choose between the two Koreas where its true interests lie. (Ju-min Park, Jack Kim, *Reuters*)

Prepared by Kate Refolo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250721160510/https://mailchi.mp/10754402e060/hrnk-news-items-sister-of-north-korean-leader-denounces-souths-drills-as-suicidal-hysteria?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, July 9th, 2024

China's Disruption of Maritime Sanctions Enforcement

Top News:
China's Disruption of Maritime Sanctions Enforcement (HRNK YPWP, 07/09/2024)

In North Korea:
N. Korea appears to have released border dam water without prior notice (*Yonhap*, 07/09/2024)
N. Korea holds grand memorial events on 30th death anniv. of national founder Kim Il-sung (*Yonhap*, 07/09/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
National Assembly launches forum for potential nuclear armament (*The Korea Herald*, 07/09/2024)

International:
China believed to demand N. Korea bring back all of its workers: source (*Yonhap*, 07/09/2024)
N. Korea's military education delegation leaves for Russia amid deepening ties (*Yonhap*, 07/09/2024)
Momentum to replace UN panel on North Korea sanctions has fizzled, sources say (*NK News*, 07/09/2024)
U.S. envoy for N. Korean human rights to visit S. Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 07/09/2024)
U.S. renews 'great concern' over N. Korea-Russia cooperation ahead of NATO summit (*Yonhap*, 07/09/2024)

Top News:

- North Korea's nuclear weapons development and sanctions evasion, aided by sophisticated maritime practices and Chinese interference, challenge global security. Despite UNSC Resolution 2397's strict sanctions, North Korea continues illicit activities. The Pacific Security Maritime Exchange counteracts these evasions, but Chinese harassment of enforcement efforts undermines their effectiveness. China's mixed enforcement of sanctions diminishes their impact, signaling tolerance to North Korea. Effective enforcement is crucial for leveraging negotiations and ensuring North Korea's compliance. (Wu Yang, HRNK YPWP)

In North Korea:

- North Korea appears to have begun releasing water from the Hwanggang dam near the inter-Korean border without giving prior notice to the South, the environment ministry said. The released water, however, is presumed to not be a significant amount. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has held a national memorial service and concert, attended by its leader Kim Jong-un, to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the death of national founder Kim Il-sung. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- The National Assembly forum for potentially arming South Korea with nuclear weapons, the Mugunghwa Forum, kicked off Tuesday. The ruling People Power Party Rep. Yu Yong-weon, the Mugunghwa Forum's founding president, said in remarks delivered at the inaugural ceremony that the forum will discuss policies and strategies for cultivating what he has termed the country's "nuclear potential." (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)

International:

- The Chinese government is believed to have demanded North Korea bring back all of its workers en masse whose visas expire in China, a move that would squeeze Pyongyang's hard currency earnings. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The Korean People's Army military education delegation led by Kim Kum-chol, president of Kim Il Sung Military University, left for Russia on Monday, amid deepening military cooperation between Pyongyang and Moscow. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- International efforts to find a U.N. replacement for the Panel of Experts monitoring North Korea sanctions have largely fizzled out, according to multiple U.N. diplomatic sources, less

than three months after the Panel disbanded due to a Russian veto. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)

- The U.S. special envoy for North Korean human rights will visit South Korea this week to highlight Washington's commitment to supporting North Korean defectors and escapees. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller reiterated "great concerns" over growing military cooperation between North Korea and Russia, as the United States is set to host a summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Washington. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Gloria Guo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250721160645/https://mailchi.mp/b09c6f0e6a48/hrnk-news-items-chinas-disruption-of-maritime-sanctions-enforcement?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, July 10th, 2024

South Korea to launch third spy satellite for monitoring North Korea this fall

In North Korea:
Why North Korea is shunning Chinese tourists who used to be cash cow for regime (*NK News*, 07/10/2024)

In South Korea:
At least 5 dead, 1 missing from heavy rain in central, southern regions (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/10/2024)
Lee Jae-myung formally announces rerun for DP chairmanship (*The Korea Herald*, 07/10/2024)
Lee stresses livelihood issues as he declares bid for second term as DP chief (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/10/2024)
Man cleared of spy charges, wrongful imprisonment and 55 years too late (*The Korea Herald*, 07/10/2024)
Rain batters Korea's southern regions, 'heaviest in 200 years' (*The Korea Herald*, 07/10/2024)
You can't win peace with dialogue (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/10/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
South Korea to launch third spy satellite for monitoring North Korea this fall (*NK News*, 07/10/2024)

International:
Flying aboard the Ghostrider, a deadly aircraft carrying America's biggest gun in the sky (*CNN*, 07/10/2024)

Hanwha Aerospace inks W1.4tr arms deal with Romania (*The Korea Herald*, 07/10/2024)
Indo-Pacific Command's role key to 'rock-solid' Korea-US alliance: Yoon (*The Korea Herald*, 07/10/2024)
(LEAD) 'Anything' South Korea can do for Ukraine's defense ability will be 'warmly welcomed': NATO official (*Yonhap*, 07/10/2024)
N. Korea slams Japan's additional release of treated radioactive water from Fukushima power plant (*Yonhap*, 07/10/2024)
North Korea-China friendship shows signs of strain (*The Korea Times*, 07/10/2024)
Suspect in murder of Korean tourist found in plastic barrel extradited to Korea (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/10/2024)
US soldier charged with desertion to North Korea to face first court hearing **(***NK News*, 07/10/2024)
US top envoy for NK steps down without successor (*The Korea Herald*, 07/10/2024)
[Ylli Bajraktari] NATO must confront disinformation (*The Korea Herald*, 07/10/2024)
Yoon slams 'reckless' North Korea-Russia ties at US Indo-Pacific Command (*NK News*, 07/10/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has slowly restored important aspects of its relationship with China as it has emerged from its pandemic isolation over the last year, ramping up trade, welcoming diplomats and delegations, and resuming exchanges of students and business people. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- Heavy downpours in central and southern regions overnight between Tuesday and Wednesday left at least five people dead and one missing as flooding and landslides destroyed houses and damaged roads. In South Chungcheong, a woman in her 60s was discovered under debris at around 1:50 p.m., three hours after reports of her being buried in a landslide. Similarly, a 72-year-old man was found after his house collapsed in a landslide in Seocheon around 4 a.m. (Woo Ji-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Democratic Party of Korea Rep. Lee Jae-myung on Wednesday officially announced he will run again to be the leader of the main opposition here, with observers saying he is likely to be reelected at the party's convention next month. (Jung Min-kyung, *The Korea Herald*)
- Lee Jae-myung, former leader of the liberal Democratic Party (DP) of Korea, declared his candidacy for a second term as party chief on Wednesday. "Creating a 'rebounding' Korea is the responsibility of the DP, the leading and governing party," Lee said during a press conference in Yeouido in western Seoul. "In Britain, the government changed after 14 years, and in France, the left-wing coalition won the general election." (Han Jee-hye, Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea's highest court recently upheld a lower court ruling that cleared an 82-year-old man of spy charges, for which he served a seven-year prison term after being convicted over five decades ago. The Supreme Court rejected an appeal by the prosecution, who claimed that the man, surnamed Kim, was guilty on some of the charges pressed against him back in 1969. The court said the evidence presented against him did not indicate that Kim could potentially threaten the nation's security or existence, or that he is inclined to. (Yoon Min-sik, *The Korea Herald*)

- Record heavy rains hit South Korea's southern regions Tuesday evening and Wednesday morning, leaving at least four dead and one missing, with weather authorities saying it was the most intense downpour in 200 years. (Park Jun-hee, *The Korea Herald*)
- Two placards put up by the opposition Democratic Party on a street in Seoul attracted my attention in June — the month of patriots and veterans in Korea. "Peace is security!" and "Dialogue, not confrontation!" the placards read. As the two words — "peace" and "security" — are compatible with one another, it seems natural at first glance. But if you think again, the combination looks intriguing. Which really comes first, peace or security? (Chae Byung-gun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- South Korea will launch its third military reconnaissance satellite in November, Seoul's defense ministry announced Tuesday, as it pushes forward a long-term project to improve the country's ability to monitor North Korea threats regardless of weather conditions. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

International:

- As the US Air Force AC-130J flies over South Korea's towering apartment blocks, its powerful cameras can almost see inside windows on the highest floors. Aiming farther afield, the weapons officers on the four-engine aircraft, nicknamed Ghostrider, can pick out objects at 50,000 feet, almost 10 miles away – all potential targets for the biggest gun ever mounted on a fixed-wing plane. (Brad Lendon, Mike Valerio, CNN)
- Hanwha Aerospace has secured a 1.4 trillion won ($1 billion) arms contract with Romania to export 54 units of the K9 self-propelled howitzer and 36 units of the K10 ammunition resupply vehicle. (Kan Hyeong-woo, *The Korea Herald*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol stressed the United States Indo-Pacific Command's role in taking the alliance between Seoul and Washington to a new level, amid growing geopolitical tensions beyond the Korean Peninsula. (Son Ji-hyoung, *The Korea Herald*)
- "Anything" that South Korea can provide to help strengthen Ukraine's defense capabilities will be "warmly welcomed," a senior NATO official said Tuesday, stressing the "strategic" implications of Russia's war in Ukraine for both Europe and Asia. The official made the remarks as Seoul has said it would reconsider its policy ban on the provision of lethal weapons to Ukraine following last month's summit between Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in Pyongyang. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea on Wednesday denounced Japan's additional discharge of treated radioactive water from the crippled Fukushima nuclear power plant, saying that the world cannot help but face a "terrifying nuclear disaster." (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Relations between North Korea and its primary patron, China, appear to be fraying, suggesting that their ties have grown increasingly distant as Pyongyang has strengthened its longstanding partnership with Russia. In January, Chinese President Xi Jinping and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un jointly announced 2024 as the China-North Korea Friendship Year, marking the 75th anniversary of their diplomatic relations. They said various activities will take place to celebrate this milestone. (Lee Hyo-jin, *The Korea Times*)
- A suspect accused of murdering a Korean tourist in Thailand was extradited from Cambodia to Korea on Wednesday. The suspect, aged 27, arrived at Incheon International Airport at around 7:40 a.m. on the same day. He was accused of kidnapping and murdering a

34-year-old Korean man and disposing of the victim's body in a cement-filled plastic barrel in a reservoir in Pattaya, Thailand, with two other accomplices on May 3. He then fled to Cambodia on May 9. (Lee Soo-jung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- Travis King, the U.S. soldier who ran across the inter-Korean border last July in an apparent bid to defect to North Korea, will face his first hearing next week on charges of desertion and soliciting child pornography. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- Jung Pak, who served as the United States' top diplomat for North Korea issues, has recently resigned, leaving the position vacant again amid stalled talks between Washington and Pyongyang since the Biden administration's inauguration in January 2021. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- NATO's July summit in Washington marks the 75th anniversary of the alliance's establishment, and it comes at a critical juncture. As threats to global stability evolve beyond conventional military domains, NATO must confront the barrage of disinformation undermining its unity and values. Specifically, member countries must prevent hostile authoritarian regimes from manipulating public opinion by leveraging technology to wage "cognitive warfare." (Ylli Bajraktari, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol made a rare visit to the military command for all U.S. forces across the Indo-Pacific region on Tuesday, slamming "reckless" North Korea-Russia military ties as a threat to international peace while seeking to showcase the strength of the U.S.-ROK alliance. (Jeongmin Kim, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

Prepared by Ada Trybuchowska, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250721160747/https://mailchi.mp/c192cc5d45c7/hrnk-news-items-south-korea-to-launch-third-spy-satellite-for-monitoring-north-korea-this-fall?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, July 11th, 2024

N. Korea expands inter-Korean railway demolition to Gyeongui line; S. Korea to mass produce lasers to take out drones at $1.50 a hit

In North Korea:
N. Korea expands inter-Korean railway demolition to Gyeongui line (*Yonhap*, 07/11/2024)
North Korea executes 30 teens for watching South Korean TV shows (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/11/2024)

In South Korea:
Defense ministry restructures North Korea policy office to reflect peninsula's tensions (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/11/2024)
Korea's 'Star Wars' era begins as laser drone killer enters mass production (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/11/2024)

Seoul city to become 1st local gov't to host forum on N. Korean human rights (*Yonhap*, 07/11/2024)
Seoul Forum spotlights roles of China, Russia in NK human rights (*The Korea Herald*, 07/11/2024)
Seoul mayor uses North Korean human rights event to call for ROK to go nuclear (*NK News*, 07/11/2024)
South Korea to mass produce lasers that can take out drones at $1.50 a hit (CNN, 07/11/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Seoul's defense ministry to revamp North Korea policy office over new threats (*NK News*, 07/11/2024)

International:
Map shows Putin's recent uptick in foreign trips - and they're mostly to this region (CNN, 07/11/2024)
NATO 'strongly condemns' North Korea arms exports to Russia for Ukraine war (*NK News*, 07/11/2024
NATO, Ukrainian leaders to meet Thursday at Washington summit (VOA, 07/11/2024)
South Korea's Yoon, Japan's Kishida shared concerns over Russia-North Korea ties, Yoon's office says (*Reuters*, 07/10/2024)
Student who visited a North Korea children's camp reveals what happens there (CNN, 07/11/2024)
US plan to boost Pacific air power seen as counterbalance to China (VOA, 07/10/2024)
U.S. wants to 'institutionalize' grouping of NATO's four Indo-Pacific partners (*Yonhap*, 07/11/2024)
Washington and Korean Reunification: What Can America Do? (*The National Interest*, 07/11/2024)
What to make of reports that China plans to send back all North Korean workers (*NK News*, 07/11/2024)

In North Korea:

- Signs that North Korea has been dismantling part of a western inter-Korean railway have been detected, Seoul's defense ministry said Thursday, the latest in Pyongyang's apparent move to eliminate routes once seen as symbols of inter-Korean exchange and cooperation. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has reportedly executed around 30 teenage students for watching South Korean dramas. Citing a South Korean government official, local cable channel TV Chosun reported on Thursday that the North Korean authorities publicly shot the middle school students last week for allegedly watching South Korean dramas stored on USBs. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's Defense Ministry has restructured its North Korea policy office to enhance its independent sanctions strategy while reducing tasks related to the now-suspended inter-Korean military agreement, reflecting the changing dynamics on the Korean Peninsula. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The South Korean military will begin mass production of an anti-aircraft laser weapon capable of shooting down North Korean drones. The Laser Air Defense Weapon, Block-I, will be deployed to the military this year, making South Korea the first known country worldwide to operate such laser weapons in its armed forces. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- The Seoul city government is set to host a forum on North Korea's human rights Thursday to raise awareness of the situation and discuss ways to improve it with the international community. (Kim Hyun-soo, *Yonhap*)
- The inaugural Seoul Forum on North Korean Human Rights 2024 was held Thursday to illuminate egregious human rights violations in North Korea and seek ways for improvement particularly in coordination with all UN member states, including China and Russia. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- Seoul Mayor Oh Se-hoon opened a North Korean human rights conference by calling for South Korea to acquire nuclear weapons on Thursday, risking overshadowing the discussion at hand in an apparent effort to boost his profile ahead of the next presidential elections. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- South Korea is beginning the mass production of a low-cost laser weapon that has successfully shot down small drones during testing, the country's key arms agency said Thursday. (Yoonjung Seo, Brad Lendon, CNN)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- South Korea's defense ministry is restructuring its North Korea policy office to enhance its ability to respond to DPRK threats, reportedly seeking to focus more on sanctions enforcement. (Joe Smith, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

International:

- China, North Korea, Vietnam - over just the last two months, Russia's President Vladimir Putin has been making frequent visits to Asia. He's also been travelling a lot more recently compared to 2023. (Clare Sebastian, CNN)
- NATO leaders condemned North Korean arms exports to Russia for use in its "war of aggression" against Ukraine in a joint statement on Wednesday, kicking off a major summit in Washinton that looks to bolster the alliance's ties with South Korea, Japan and other Indo-Pacific partners. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- NATO and Ukrainian leaders are to meet Thursday in Washington, a day after NATO allies bolstered support for Ukraine to join the alliance. The NATO summit's final day will also include talks with leaders from Australia, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea and the European Union addressing security challenges and cooperation. (Carla Babb, VOA)
- South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida shared concerns over growing ties between Russia and North Korea and agreed to continue their security cooperation, according to a statement from Yoon's office on Thursday. The two leaders met on the sidelines of the NATO summit in Washington. (Hyunsu Yim, *Reuters*)
- CNN's Will Ripley reports on government-run children's camps in North Korea where anti-American propaganda is presented. One Russian student who spent two weeks at a camp told Ripley about his experience. (Will Ripley, CNN)
- A U.S. plan to boost its Pacific air power is seen by analysts as an effort to reinforce deterrence in the Indo-Pacific and counterbalance China's attempt to gain dominance in the region. The U.S. Air Force plans to upgrade more than 80 fighter jets stationed at Japanese bases over the next several years as part of a $10 billion program to modernize its forces there. (Christy Lee, VOA)
- The United States wants to "institutionalize" the grouping of South Korea, Japan, Australia and New Zealand -- the four Indo-Pacific partners of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

amid concerns over a deepening military alignment between North Korea and Russia, and China's growing assertiveness. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

- Korean reunification offers enormous potential for the Korean people and less direct benefits for many others elsewhere. To reap these advantages, many challenges must be overcome. That can be best achieved if the United States seeks to advance the interests of the Korean people and their neighbors as well as Americans. In this effort, Washington should play the long game, seeking a fundamental transformation of Korean relations and Korea's role in Northeast Asia and beyond. (Doug Bandow, *The National Interest*)
- Tens of thousands of North Korean workers are believed to live in China, earning hundreds of millions for Pyongyang every year. But Beijing may be planning to repatriate all of them in one fell swoop, a move that could have sweeping implications for bilateral ties and the regime's effort to finance its weapons programs. (Gabriela Bernal, *NK News*)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250722062933/https://mailchi.mp/5e49165f5c36/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-expands-inter-korean-railway-demolition-to-gyeongui-line-s-korea-to-mass-produce-lasers-to-take-out-drones-at-150-a-hit?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, July 12th, 2024

No senior N. Korean officials attend banquet hosted by Chinese envoy in Pyongyang

In North Korea:
North Korea doubles down on English education amid growing tensions with US (VOA, 07/12/2024)
No senior N. Korean officials attend banquet hosted by Chinese envoy in Pyongyang (*Yonhap*, 07/12/2024)

In South Korea:
59 pct of N. Korean defectors advocate for changing legal terminology: survey (*Yonhap*, 07/12/2024)
DP launches task force to prevent anti-Pyongyang leafleting campaign (*Yonhap*, 07/12/2024)
Ex-chairman of Ssangbangwool gets 2 1/2 years in prison for North Korea money transfer (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/12/2024)
Watch: South Korea planning to deploy £1 'Star Wars' lasers to melt drones (*Telegraph*, 07/12/2024)

International:
China hits back at Nato over Russia accusations (BBC, 07/12/2024)
ROK pastor arrested in Russia still in limbo, raising fears of hostage diplomacy (*NK News*, 07/12/2024)
Russia has shipped 130K tons of coal to North Korea overland since April: Report (*NK News*, 07/12/2024)

South Korea, U.S. form 'integrated' extended deterrence system on sidelines of NATO summit (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/12/2024)

In North Korea:

- The Chinese Embassy in Pyongyang has hosted a banquet to mark the 63rd anniversary of the signing of a bilateral treaty amid North Korea's deepening ties with Russia. However, no senior North Korean officials attended the banquet. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- In contrast to the open hostility toward the United States, North Korea has been doubling down on English education in its public schools under the leadership of Kim Jong Un, according to North Korea internal documents, textbooks and other educational materials reviewed by VOA's Korean Service. (Young Gyo Kim, Kim Hyungjin, VOA)

In South Korea:

- Nearly 60 percent of North Korean defectors believe there is a need to change the legal term describing them, citing persistent negative perceptions associated with it. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- The main opposition Democratic Party (DP) on Friday launched a task force to prevent activists in South Korea from sending anti-Pyongyang leaflets to North Korea. The DP will also propose a bill that bans the distribution of leaflets in a measure intended to prevent provoking the North after it sent thousands of trash-carrying balloons to the South since late May. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- Kim Seong-tae, the former chairman of Ssangbangwool Group (SBW), was sentenced on Friday to two and a half years in prison by the Suwon District Court on charges of transferring illegal payments to North Korea on behalf of the Gyeonggi provincial government in 2019. (Cho Jung-woo, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea is planning to deploy £1 "Star Wars" lasers to melt drones dispatched from the North out of the sky. The new laser weapons are invisible and noise-free and would be operated solely by electricity, downing incoming unmanned aerial vehicles. (Nicola Smith, *Telegraph*)

International:

- China's foreign minister Wang Yi has hit back at Nato's "groundless accusations" that Beijing is helping Russia in its war on Ukraine. He has also warned the Western alliance against stirring up confrontation. (Tessa Wong, BBC)
- The fate of a South Korean missionary who worked with North Korean defectors in Russia remains in question six months after his arrest on espionage charges, raising concerns that Moscow seeks to use him for hostage diplomacy with Seoul. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Russia has shipped over 130,000 tons of coal to North Korea via a rail bridge this year, the first confirmation of overland coal deliveries since 2021. While it is legal for the Russian company involved to transport coal through the DPRK, one expert raised concerns that North Korea could use the shipments to disguise sanctioned coal exports as a way to raise funds for the regime. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol and U.S. President Joe Biden on Thursday reaffirmed the Washington Declaration, which strengthened the South Korea-U.S. alliance to a

nuclear-based partnership last year, and announced a statement on a set of guidelines jointly adopted by the Defense Ministry and the Pentagon aimed at strongly responding to North Korea's nuclear provocations. (Lim Jeong-Won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Prepared by Suha Choi, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250722063232/https://mailchi.mp/a2f6539cc98f/hrnk-news-items-no-senior-n-korean-officials-attend-banquet-hosted-by-chinese-envoy-in-pyongyang?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, July 13th, 2024

N. Korea decries NATO summit declaration, warns of strong 'strategic counteraction'

In North Korea:
N. Korea decries NATO summit declaration, warns of strong 'strategic counteraction' (*Yonhap*, 07/13/2024)
N. Korea threatens 'unimaginably harsh price' following Seoul-Washington nuclear deterrence pact (*Yonhap*, 07/13/2024)
North Korea threatens to combat NATO's Asia-Pacific engagement with 'new force' (*NK News*, 07/13/2024)

In South Korea:
Ruling party hails Seoul-Washington nuclear deterrence pact as 'strong deterrent' (*Yonhap*, 07/13/2024)
Yoon returns home from U.S. trip focused on security (*Yonhap*, 07/12/2024)

International:
FM Cho meets Blinken to discuss alliance, joint response to N. Korea-Russia cooperation (*Yonhap*, 07/12/2024)
National security adviser: Trump camp says not to worry about alliance (*Yonhap*, 07/13/2024)
Senior military official holds talks on nuclear deterrence guidelines at U.S. Strategic Command (*Yonhap*, 07/12/2024)
U.S. strategic assets to be assigned to Korean Peninsula on 'constant' level: ministry (*Yonhap*, 07/12/2024)
Why the Tumen River border could test relations between China, Russia and North Korea (*South China Morning Post*, 07/13/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea bristled Saturday at this week's North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) summit declaration that condemned its weapons exports to Russia, casting it as an "illegal" document and warning of strong "strategic counteraction." (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea condemned the joint nuclear deterrence guidelines signed by Seoul and Washington as a "reckless provocative act," threatening that the allies will pay "an unimaginably harsh price" if they commit further provocations. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. and NATO are "the most serious threat to world peace" after a landmark declaration this week, North Korea claimed, demanding a "new force" to repel potential expansion attempts in Asia. In a statement carried by the ruling party newspaper Rodong Sinmun on Saturday, the DPRK foreign ministry blamed "collusion" between the U.S. and its Asia-Pacific allies for worsening regional tensions by labeling countries like North Korea as a threat. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- The ruling People Power Party (PPP) on Saturday lauded the joint nuclear deterrence guidelines signed by Seoul and Washington, describing them as a potent deterrent against North Korea's provocations. (Woo Jae-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol returned home Friday from his five-day trip to the United States that was focused on bolstering security against rising threats posed by deepening military ties between North Korea and Russia. (Kim Eun-jun, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul has met with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on the sidelines of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization summit and discussed the two nations' alliance and ways to jointly deal with growing cooperation between North Korea and Russia, Cho's office said Friday. (Kim Na-young, *Yonhap*)
- National Security Adviser Chang Ho-jin said Saturday the South Korea-U.S. alliance will remain sturdy regardless of whether former American President Donald Trump regains the presidency. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- A senior South Korean military official has visited the U.S. unit in charge of the country's nuclear arsenal to discuss the allies' guidelines for nuclear deterrence and operations, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Friday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- A joint nuclear deterrence guidelines document signed by South Korea and the United States will significantly expand the assignment of U.S. strategic assets on the Korean Peninsula to a "constant" level, South Korea's defense ministry said Friday, as the allies seek to bolster their cooperation in responding to North Korean threats. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- China has been trying to persuade Russia and North Korea to open a stretch of the Tumen River to Chinese cargo shipping for decades, a step that would provide direct access to the sea from the landlocked northeastern province of Jilin. (Shi Jiangtao, *South China Morning Post*)

Prepared by Tessa Aguilar, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250722063548/https://mailchi.mp/d6fa647a6ced/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-decries-nato-summit-declaration-warns-of-strong-strategic-counteraction?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, July 14th, 2024

President Yoon vows to make South 'place of hope' on first North Korean Defectors' Day; Trump ally says 'strong' POTUS will aid South

In North Korea:
Kim Jong-un reprimands senior officials for Samjiyon development project: report (*Yonhap*, 07/14/2024)
N. Korean leader's sister bristles at anti-Pyongyang leaflets, vows strong response (*Yonhap*, 07/14/2024)
North Korea focused on improving quality of missiles and recon, Japan says (*NK News*, 07/12/2024)

In South Korea:
President Yoon vows to make South 'place of hope' on first North Korean Defectors' Day (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/14/2024)
S. Korea warns of end of N. Korean regime if Pyongyang uses nuclear weapons (*Yonhap*, 07/14/2024)
Yoon promises incentives for companies hiring NK defectors (*The Korea Herald*, 07/14/2024)
Yoon vows efforts to prevent forced repatriation of N. Korean defectors (*Yonhap*, 07/14/2024)

International:
Trump ally says 'strong' U.S. president will help South Korea (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/13/2024)
US Indo-Pacific commander says S. Korea's acquisition of nuclear submarines could be considered in future: Yoon's office (*Yonhap*, 07/14/2024)
Yoon 'appalled' over Trump shooting (*The Korea Herald*, 07/14/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un reprimanded senior officials overseeing a major development project in the northern city of Samjiyon during his recent visit, blaming their "irresponsibility" for causing financial losses. (Yoo Jee-ho, *Yonhap*).
- The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said Sunday that South Korea should be ready to pay "a very high price" for sending anti-Pyongyang leaflets north of the border, calling such an act "dirty play". (Yoo Jee-ho, *Yonhap*)
- New defense white paper underscores advances in solid-fuel weapons and spy satellites, emphasizing 'grave threat'. (Kosuke Takahashi, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- President Yoon Suk Yeol pledged to exert all diplomatic efforts to prevent the forced repatriation of North Korean defectors on Sunday. (Seo Ji-eun, Hyun Il-Hoon, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea warned on Sunday that North Korea will face the end of its regime if it attempts to use nuclear weapons. (Yoo Jee-ho, *Yonhap*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol pledged Sunday to provide financial incentives to South Korean companies hiring North Korean defectors, as the conservative leader commemorated North Korean Defectors' Day designated for the first time. (Son Ji-hyoung, *The Korea Herald*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol said Sunday that South Korea will "spare no diplomatic effort" to prevent the forced repatriation of North Korean defectors overseas. (Yoo Jee-ho, *Yonhap*)

International:

- North Korea and Russia will cease to have a reason to trade weapons once the war in Ukraine ends, and former U.S. President Donald Trump's return to the White House could bring about that change, said Fred Fleitz, deputy director of the America First Policy Institute (AFPI), during a recent interview. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The chief of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command has said the introduction of nuclear-powered submarines (SSNs) in South Korea could be considered in the future depending on its operational analysis, the presidential office said Sunday. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea President Yoon Suk Yeol on Sunday expressed best wishes to former US President Donald Trump, denouncing the shooting attack during his presidential election campaign rally in Pennsylvania that left him wounded Saturday. (Son Ji-hyoung, *The Korea Herald*)

Prepared by Annie Heitmeier, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250722064109/https://mailchi.mp/86fc8e21ac31/hrnk-news-items-president-yoon-vows-to-make-south-place-of-hope-on-first-north-korean-defectors-day-trump-ally-says-strong-potus-will-aid-south?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Monday, July 15th, 2024

Kim Jong Un says tourism 'revitalization' aimed at 'friendly' foreigners; S. Korea warns of possible launch of N.K. trash balloons

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un says tourism 'revitalization' aimed at 'friendly' foreigners (*NK News*, 07/15/2024)

N. Korea holds meetings to discuss follow-up measures for policy goals (*Yonhap*, 07/15/2024)
N. Korea slams Kishida's visit to Germany as 'collusion' of countries that committed war crimes (*Yonhap*, 07/15/2024)
North Korean hackers sent stolen crypto to wallet used by Asian payment firm (*Reuters*, 07/15/2024)
Young North Koreans increasingly favor wealth over loyalty to state (*Korea Times*, 07/15/2024)

In South Korea:
Presidential spokesperson tapped as new vice unification minister (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/15/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
S. Korea warns against possible launch of additional N.K. trash balloons (*Yonhap*, 07/15/2024)

International:
FM Cho discusses cooperation with New Zealand counterpart amid N. Korea-Russia ties (*Yonhap*, 07/15/2024)
Hundreds of patriotic Russian youth compete for free trip to North Korean camp (*NK News*, 07/15/2024)
Seoul could acquire nuke submarine if needed to deter North Korea: US commander (*NK News*, 07/15/2024)
Why the U.S. Navy Sent 4 Iowa-Class Battleships To Strike North Korea (*The National Interest*, 07/15/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea's plans to "revitalize international tourism" will be aimed at tourists from "friendly" nations, leader Kim Jong Un reportedly said, visiting a tourism hub near the country's tallest mountain on the China border. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea has held Cabinet and provincial committee meetings to discuss follow-up measures to implement policy goals set forth during a recent key party meeting. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea on Monday denounced Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's recent visit to Germany aimed at boosting security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, calling it military collusion between two countries that committed war crimes. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- A major Cambodian payments firm received crypto worth over $150,000 from a digital wallet used by North Korean hacking outfit Lazarus, blockchain data shows, a glimpse of how the criminal collective has laundered funds in Southeast Asia. (Tom Wilson, *Reuters*)
- A marked generational divide is emerging in North Korea, characterized by differing attitudes toward the accumulation of wealth and loyalty to the state. (Jung Da-hyun, *Korea Times*)

In South Korea:

- President Yoon Seok Yeol tapped presidential spokesperson Kim Soo-kyung as the new vice minister of unification on Monday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea would be held responsible for any damage incurred by its trash balloon campaign, South Korea's military warned Monday, a day after the North said South Korea should be ready to pay "a very high price" for sending anti-Pyongyang leaflets across the border. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul met with his New Zealand counterpart, Winston Peters, on Monday and discussed ways to bolster bilateral cooperation amid burgeoning ties between North Korea and Russia. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- Russia has picked 50 patriotic teenagers to attend a North Korean summer camp at no cost in the coming weeks, following a contest that saw hundreds of Russian youth explain why they want to visit the isolated country bolstering ties with Moscow. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- South Korea could introduce its own nuclear submarine in the future if Seoul and Washington deem it necessary to counter North Korean threats, according to the commander of U.S. forces in the Indo-Pacific, while stressing that it's not necessary now. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- In the final months of WWII, U.S. Navy battleships bombarded Japanese coastal areas. Post-WWII, most battleships were scrapped, but three Iowa-class battleships were reactivated for the Korean War. (Robert Farley, *The National Interest*)

Prepared by Valerie Xu, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250722064337/https://mailchi.mp/0a31412454f5/hrnk-news-items-kim-jong-un-says-tourism-revitalization-aimed-at-friendly-foreigners-s-korea-warns-of-possible-launch-of-nk-trash-balloons?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, July 16th, 2024

NGOs push companies for update on investigations into Uyghur and North Korean labor in seafood supply chain

Top News:
NGOs push companies for update on investigations into Uyghur and North Korean labor in seafood supply chain (*SeafoodSource*, 07/15/2024)

In North Korea:
N. Korea's Kim calls for developing offshore aquaculture during Sinpho visit (*Yonhap*, 07/16/2024)
N. Korean leader's sister warns of 'gruesome' consequences over anti-Pyongyang leaflets (*Yonhap*, 07/16/2024)

In South Korea:
Former N. Korean diplomat stationed in Cuba defected to S. Korea (*Yonhap*, 07/16/2024)
N. Korean senior diplomat in Cuba defected to S. Korea last year (*The Korea Herald*, 07/16/2024)
North Korean fashion, drums, and jubilation: Here's how South Koreans celebrated the first-ever Defectors' Day (CNN, 07/15/2024)

International:
North Korean hackers sent stolen crypto to wallet used by Asian payment firm (*Reuters*, 07/16/2024)
South Korea's Yoon says alliance with U.S. is now 'nuclear-based' (*UPI*, 07/16/2024)
South Korea-U.S. alliance elevated to 'nuclear-based' one capable of deterring North (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/16/2024)
U.N. report condemns N. Korea's 'extensive, multilayered' system of forced labor (*Yonhap*, 07/16/2024)
UK and its allies face 'deadly quartet' of nations, says defence expert (*The Guardian*, 07/16/2024)
UN report details North Korea's 'deeply institutionalized' forced labor (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/16/2024)

Top News:

- A group of NGOs have sent a letter to separate seafood distributors and retailers asking for an update on their investigations into whether their supply chains were exposed to Uyghur or North Korean labor. The letter calls for an update on the investigations companies said they were performing in the wake of multiple reports by the Outlaw Ocean Project on forced labor in seafood supply chains. The letter was signed by 18 NGOs: Transitional Justice Working Group, Human Trafficking Legal Center, **The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea**, Advocates for Public Interest Law, HanVoice, The Citizens Alliance for North Korean Human Rights, etc. (Chris Chase, *SeafoodSource*)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un called for nurturing offshore fish farming in the port city of Sinpho, state media said Tuesday, as the North seeks to develop backward provinces to narrow widening economic gaps among regions. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un warned Tuesday that South Korea will face "gruesome and dear" consequences if it lets North Korean defectors continue to send anti-Pyongyang leaflets to the North. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- A North Korean diplomat who had been stationed in Cuba defected to South Korea last year, a government source said Tuesday, the latest in a growing number of defections by North Koreans in elite groups. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- Ri Il-kyu, who was serving as a counselor at the North Korean Embassy in Cuba, defected to South Korea in November of last year, South Korea's spy agency confirmed Tuesday. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- In the shadow of what looks like Seoul's colossal chrome space station, Dongdaemun Design Plaza, hundreds of defectors from North Korea gathered for lively celebrations on Sunday

marking the first nationwide North Korean Defectors' Day. (Jessie Yeung, Mike Valerio, Yoonjung Seo, CNN)

International:

- A major Cambodian payments firm received crypto worth over $150,000 from a digital wallet used by North Korean hacking outfit Lazarus, blockchain data shows, a glimpse of how the criminal collective has laundered funds in Southeast Asia. (Tom Wilson, *Reuters*)
- South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said Tuesday that the alliance with the United States has been raised to a "nuclear-based" one capable of warding off threats from North Korea in the wake of new joint deterrence guidelines. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol said Tuesday in a Cabinet meeting that the South Korea-U.S alliance has been elevated to a "nuclear-based" one capable of deterring North Korea's nuclear threats. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea has maintained an "extensive and multilayered" system of forced labor in a bid to use it as a means of controlling and monitoring its people for the interest of the state, a U.N. report showed Tuesday. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- Britain and its allies are facing a "deadly quartet" of China, Russia, Iran and North Korea who are acting together against the west, according to the newly appointed head of Labour's defence review. (Dan Sabbagh, *The Guardian*)
- In a recent UN report, a former North Korean overseas laborer who defected to the South recounts harrowing work conditions where he worked for 15 to 16 hours a day, sometimes even overnight. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Prepared by Bryan Clark, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250722064621/https://mailchi.mp/28df893c769e/hrnk-news-items-ngos-push-companies-for-update-on-investigations-into-uyghur-and-north-korean-labor-in-seafood-supply-chain?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, July 17th, 2024

N. Korean defectors' baseball team to visit U.S. this week

Top News:
N. Korean defectors' baseball team to visit U.S. this week (*Yonhap*, 07/17/2024)
N. Korean defectors' baseball team to visit US this week (*The Korea Times*, 07/17/2024)

In North Korea:
North Korea accused of executing dozens of teens for watching South Korean dramas (*Business Insider*, 07/17/2024)
North Korean cybercriminals posing as employers to spread new MacOS malware (*NK News*, 07/17/2024)

N. Korea urges all-out efforts to minimize damage from torrential downpours (*Yonhap*, 07/17/2024)
Why a report North Korea executed kids for watching K-dramas demands skepticism (*NK News*, 07/17/2024)

In South Korea:
North Korean landmines could float into South Korea, South warns (*The Independent*, 07/17/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Mine explosions have killed more North Korean soldiers working in DMZ, ROK says (*NK News*, 07/17/2024)
New unification vice minister vows to support N. Korean defectors' stable settlement (*Yonhap*, 07/17/2024)
Prominent N. Korean defector likely to be named head of unification council (*Yonhap*, 07/17/2024)
Unification ministry cautious about legislation banning anti-North Korea leaflet launches (*Yonhap*, 07/17/2024)

International:
Japan-Germany security cooperation troubles North Korea, China (VOA, 07/16/2024)
Unification minister to visit U.S. next week (Yonhap, 07/17/2024)

Top News:

- The world's first baseball team of young North Korean defectors will arrive in the United States this week, a non-profit organization said Tuesday, in a program that would enable them to experience first-hand the land of freedom and opportunities. Among the many representatives and ambassadors the team will meet during their visit, they will also be meeting with the **executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, Greg Scarlatoiu.** (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- "The Challengers" will visit New York and Washington between Thursday and July 28. In the U.S. capital, they plan to meet Reps. Young Kim (R-CA) and Michelle Park Steel (R-CA), South Korean Ambassador to the U.S. Cho Hyun-dong, Amb. Turner and **Greg Scarlatoiu, the executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea.** (Song Sang-ho, *The Korea Times*)

In North Korea:

- In North Korea, watching your favorite Korean dramas could end in tragedy. According to a report by South Korean broadcaster Chosun TV, around 30 middle schoolers were publicly shot last week for watching South Korean dramas. (Hannah Abraham, *Business Insider*)
- North Korean cybercriminals are posing as employers to trick jobseekers into downloading malware disguised as a MacOS video call application, a security researcher has found. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- North Korea on Wednesday renewed its call for efforts to minimize potential damage from torrential downpours, urging party officials and residents to thoroughly prepare for it. North Korea is expected to be hit by heavy downpours Wednesday and Thursday, with up to 250 millimeters of rain expected in some areas, including the western province of Hwanghae, according to South Korea's weather agency. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

- A sensational report that North Korea executed over 30 middle school students for watching South Korean dramas should be treated with skepticism, but its dubious sourcing ought not to distract from the reality of Kim Jong Un's sweeping crackdowns on outside information. The report only cited a single anonymous source — a hallmark of past misinformation about North Korea — and the claim and others like it are all but impossible to verify despite making headlines around the world. (Gabriela Bernal, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- North Korean landmines could be swept into South Korea by flooding, South Korea's military warned Wednesday, after the North has recently placed tens of thousands of additional deadly explosives along the rivals' heavily fortified border. (Hyung-Jin Kim, *The Independent*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- Around a dozen landmine explosions along the inter-Korean border have killed "several" North Korean soldiers in recent weeks, the South Korean military stated on Wednesday, as DPRK continues construction work in the area despite the start of the summer monsoon season. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Kim Soo-kyung, the new vice unification minister, said Wednesday that she will strive to make it easier for North Korean defectors to settle in the country. She made the remarks during her inaugural ceremony, as she was appointed to the post Monday, succeeding her predecessor Moon Seoung-hyun. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- A prominent North Korean defector is likely to be named as the new head of the presidential advisory council on unification, people familiar with the issue said Wednesday. Tae Yong-ho, a former North Korean deputy ambassador to Britain, has completed a candidate review process for the secretary general for the Peaceful Unification Advisory Council and the nomination awaits President Yoon Suk Yeol's confirmation, they said. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- The unification ministry on Wednesday struck a cautious note about opposition lawmakers' legislative attempt to ban Seoul activists' sending of anti-Pyongyang leaflets across the border, citing the right of freedom of expression. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- North Korea and China are watching for possible regional impacts from Japan's recent enhanced security cooperation with Germany. This weekend, Japan will hold joint drills with Germany around the Chitose Air Base in Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost main island. Spain is slated to join them there, while France will join Japan next week for drills over Hyakuri Air Base in Ibaraki Prefecture bordering the Pacific Ocean. (Christy Lee, VOA)
- Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho will visit the United States next week for talks with U.S. government officials and experts on issues concerning the Korean Peninsula and North Korea's human rights situation, his office said Wednesday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Katherine Mitchell, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250722064934/https://mailchi.mp/deca8db12da1/hrnk-news-items-n-korean-defectors-baseball-team-to-visit-us-this-week?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Thursday, July 18th, 2024

North Korea says giant deserted 'tourist city' to finally open in May 2025

In North Korea:
FAO chief discusses food security, nutrition in rare visit to N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 07/18/2024)
N. Korea appears to have 'significantly increased' water discharge from border dam: ministry (*Yonhap*, 07/18/2024)
N. Korea discharges border dam water without notice: environment ministry (*Yonhap*, 07/18/2024)
N. Korean leader inspects construction site of tourist zone on east coast (*Yonhap*, 07/18/2024)
N. Korea resumes sending trash-carrying balloons into S. Korea: JCS (*Yonhap*, 07/18/2024)
North Korea says giant deserted 'tourist city' to finally open in May 2025 (NK *News*, 07/18/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korea imposes sanctions on Hong Kong company, North Korean ship over illegal coal transfer (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/18/2024)
Unification minister to meet Campbell during next week's visit to U.S. (*Yonhap*, 07/18/2024)
Yoon taps prominent N. Korean defector as head of unification council; engineering professor as ICT minister (*Yonhap*, 07/18/2024)

International:
Japan's top general lauds closer South Korea military ties as mutual concerns grow over China, North Korea (CNN, 07/18/2024)
Lawyers representing US soldier who crossed into North Korea are in plea negotiations with prosecutors (CNN, 07/17/2024)
North Korea-China trade slumps in first half as Pyongyang focuses on Russia (NK *News*, 07/18/2024)
North Korean man drowns in Russian lake, appears to be head of top army school (NK *News*, 07/18/2024)
Taiwan targets North Korean oil smuggling (*Financial Times*, 07/18/2024)
US crypto guru who helped North Korea evade sanctions gets reduced sentence (NK *News*, 07/18/2024)

In North Korea:

- The head of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has visited North Korea for talks on food security and nutrition, the U.N. agency said, marking the first visit by a ranking U.N. official to the North since its COVID-19-related border closure in 2020. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea appears to have "significantly increased" the amount of water discharged from the upstream of a dam near the inter-Korean border Thursday amid heavy rain, the environment ministry said. (Kang Yoon-seung, *Yonhap*)

- North Korea appears to have started discharging water from the upstream of a dam near the inter-Korean border in the early hours of Thursday without giving prior notice to South Korea, the environment ministry said. (Kim Hyun-soo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has inspected the construction site of a tourist zone in the east coast region of Wonsan, state media reported Thursday, a move seen as aimed at nurturing the tourism industry amid international sanctions over its nuclear and missile programs. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has again launched balloons presumed to be carrying trash toward South Korea, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Thursday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's long-stalled Wonsan-Kalma beach resort will finally open in May 2025 as part of plans to "boost tourism," leader Kim Jong Un said during a visit to the east coast site on Tuesday, according to state media. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea imposed unilateral sanctions on Thursday on a Hong Kong-based shipping company and a North Korean-flagged vessel for their involvement in the illegal transfer of North Korean coal, which is banned under international sanctions. (Seo Ji-Eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho will meet with U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell during his trip to the United States next week, his office said Thursday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- A prominent North Korean defector was tapped to head the presidential advisory council on unification and an engineering professor was named the new science minister, the presidential office said Thursday. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)

International:

- America's two most powerful allies in the Pacific are taking their defense ties to new heights amid increasing concerns over China's assertiveness in the region and North Korean threats, Japan's top general said Thursday. (Oren Liebermann and Brad Lendon, CNN)
- The legal team representing Pvt. Travis King, the US soldier who ran across the border from South to North Korea last year, is in plea negotiations with military prosecutors, according to King's attorney. (Haley Britzky, CNN)
- North Korean trade with its main commercial partner China slumped in the first half of 2024, amid attention on whether Beijing will express displeasure over closer DPRK-Russia ties. (Anton Sokolin, NK News)
- A North Korean man who appears to be the president of an elite army school drowned in a lake in Moscow last week, NK News has confirmed, with Russian law enforcers launching a probe into his death. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Taiwan is seeking to crack down on rampant oil smuggling out of its ports by toughening measures against terrorist financing, in an attempt to combat a trade that has undermined international sanctions against North Korea for years. (Kathrin Hille, *Financial Times*)
- A U.S. cryptocurrency guru convicted of helping North Korea evade sanctions is set to be released early after a court partially reduced his five-year prison sentence, court documents show. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)

Prepared by Jiwoo-Katie Choi, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250722065240/https://mailchi.mp/2af41b8fe0d0/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-says-giant-deserted-tourist-city-to-finally-open-in-may-2025?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Friday, July 19th, 2024

U.S. Congress Members Criticize North Korea's Human Rights Abuses: "Judgement on Oppression of Citizens is Inevitable"

Top News:
U.S. Congress Members Criticize North Korea's Human Rights Abuses: "Judgement on Oppression of Citizens is Inevitable" (VOA, 07/11/24)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In South Korea:
Seoul on alert over N. Korea's land mines floating into South with heavy rains (*The Korea Herald*, 07/19/24)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Detained ship carrying 4,500-ton of N.Korean coal: Seoul (*The Korea Herald*, 07/18/24)
Over 40 North Korean trash balloons detected overnight: JCS (*The Korea Herald*, 07/19/24)
S. Korean military resumes loudspeaker broadcasts near border in response to N.K. balloons (*Yonhap*, 07/19/24)

International:
N. Korean leader discusses military ties with visiting Russian vice defense minister (*Yonhap*, 07/19/24)
S. Korea-U.S. alliance has 'tremendous bipartisan' support: Goldberg (*Yonhap*, 07/19/24)
South Korea imposes sanctions on Hong Kong company, North Korean ship over illegal coal transfer (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/18/24)
State Dept. says 'no surprise' over N.K. diplomat's defection (*Yonhap*, 07/19/24)
Trump flaunts personal ties with Kim, signals apparent desire for N.K. diplomacy (*Yonhap*, 07/19/24)
UNICEF delivered 4 million vaccines for North Korean children and pregnant women (*NK News*, 07/19/24)

Top News:

- At the recent Korean Church Coalition event, U.S. Congress members have criticized the North Korean regime for oppressing and abusing the freedoms of its own people. There was

also a call to widely publicize the horrific human rights abuses in North Korea to improve the situation. **Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea,** emphasized that 'united leadership of like-minded countries, including the U.S., South Korea, Japan, and the EU, is absolutely necessary" to improve North Korean human rights. The **HRNK Executive Director's** speech will follow the original article. (An Jun-ho, VOA)

In South Korea:

- Authorities were on heightened alert Thursday over the possibility of land mines planted by North Korea troops floating into South Korean territory with the heavy rainfall. (Park Jun-hee, *The Korea Herald*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- South Korean authorities have concluded that a detained cargo ship was carrying 4,500 tons of North Korean-produced anthracite coal in breach of UN sanctions, the Foreign Ministry in Seoul announced on Thursday. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- Over 40 balloons carrying trash flew across the border from the North and fell in northern Gyeonggi Province overnight, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff announced Friday. (Son Ji-hyoung, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea has resumed propaganda loudspeaker broadcasts toward North Korea for the first time in more than a month, the military said Friday, in response to the North's latest round of its trash balloon campaign against the South. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

International:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has discussed the "importance and necessity" of military cooperation with Russia's vice defense minister, state media reported Friday, as the two nations signed a mutual defense pact that calls for deeper military ties. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- The top U.S. envoy in Seoul said Friday that there is "tremendous bipartisan support" for the South Korea-U.S. alliance, regardless of the outcome of the U.S. presidential election slated for November. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea imposed unilateral sanctions on Thursday on a Hong Kong-based shipping company and a North Korean-flagged vessel for their involvement in the illegal transfer of North Korean coal, which is banned under international sanctions. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A State Department spokesperson said Thursday that it should be "no surprise" that North Koreans want to leave their homeland in search for basic human rights and freedom, after a North Korean diplomat was reported to have defected to South Korea. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Former U.S. President Donald Trump has boasted about his personal ties with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, anticipating that the recalcitrant leader might like to see him return to office and "misses" him. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- UNICEF delivered vaccines for over 600,000 North Korean children and pregnant women this week, the organization announced on Thursday, while urging Pyongyang to let U.N. aid workers back into the country. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)

U.S. Congress Members Criticize North Korea's Human Rights Abuses: "Judgement on Oppression of Citizens is Inevitable"

An Jun-ho
VOA *Korea*
July 11, 2024

U.S. Congress members have criticized the North Korean regime for oppressing and abusing the freedoms of its own people. There was also a call to widely publicize the horrific human rights abuses in North Korea to improve the situation. This is reporter Junho Ahn.

On the 10th, a rally calling for the improvement of freedom and human rights for North Korean residents was held in front of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., attended by U.S. Congress members and over 150 Korean-American students from more than ten states.

Democratic Congressman Jonathan Jackson stated, "No country can sustain itself without basic respect for its citizens' human rights," and added, "Every nation that has tried to subordinate the basic aspirations of its people has ultimately crumbled in the face of the desire for freedom and human rights."

He continued, "It doesn't matter how many guns, bombs, or weapons of mass destruction they possess," and emphasized, "Any government or regime that oppresses and treats its own people cruelly cannot escape the judgment that will inevitably come."

[Recording: Congressman Jackson] “There is no greater threat to the North Korean government than how it treats and brutalizes its own people. It's not an external force, it's not a foreign nation and no regime of international sanction can put the government of North Korea in greater jeopardy than the tyranny by which it suppresses freedom within its own walls.”

He also said, "The truth is that lies cannot last forever," and that "North Korea must become free, and the trampled truth must rise again."

Congressman Jackson also addressed the issue of separated families, saying, "The North Korean government is abandoning its duty and responsibility," and stressed that "Reunions of separated families must take place, and this is a principle of U.S. foreign policy."

Republican Congresswoman Michelle Steel, who is of Korean descent, emphasized that both of her parents escaped North Korea to flee communism and that efforts must be made to prevent human rights abuses committed by communism.

Congresswoman Steel stated, "It is really important for us to speak out because raising our voices can create change," and emphasized, "We must stop the worst of communism."

[Recording: Congresswoman Steel] “Freedom is the most important thing and everybody comes to the United States or they try to escape from communism because they are asking for democracy and freedom and we really have to speak up.”

Republican Congressman Buddy Carter stated that the most urgent task to improve North Korean human rights is to widely publicize the current human rights situation in North Korea.

He added, "I have visited South Korea several times, but I don't know well what is happening there," and stressed that "therefore, I also need to be educated (about the situation on the Korean Peninsula), and lawmakers need to be educated."

[Recording: Congressman Carter] “Members of Congress need to be educated. So letting us know that families are being torn apart and they need to be put back together, letting us know that we need reports in a timely manner here on what's going on over there- that's very important.”

Given that many Americans are not well aware of the North Korean human rights issues, including the problem of separated families, it is interpreted as a need to widely publicize the terrible human rights abuses currently taking place in North Korea to improve human rights there.

Suzanne Scholte, Chair of the North Korea Freedom Coalition, emphasized that the most urgent task to improve North Korean human rights is the inflow of information.

Chair Scholte said, "The atrocities in North Korea are endless, and horrific human rights abuses continue, including executing teenagers for listening to K-pop," adding, "North Korean residents are hungry not only for food but also for information, and the information campaign is key."

[Recording: Chair Scholte] “The North Koreans are hungry for information. They're hungry for food (and) they're also hungry for information and the information campaign is key. The truth will set them free and the road to peaceful unification and the end of all the tensions in Korea is the end of the Kim regime.”

Park Sang-hak, head of the Free North Korea Movement, who has been carrying out balloon campaigns to North Korea for 20 years, said that the large balloons sent from South Korea contain medicines and information and truths from the outside world that North Korean residents need, and emphasized that they are entirely different from the propaganda balloons sent by North Korea.

[Recording: Representative Park] “During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was no Tylenol or vitamins in North Korea. Korean Americans sent us 7,000 bottles of Tylenol and 140,000 masks and vitamin C. We sent love, medicine, dollars, and truth, but North Korea sends us waste and trash? Where is the inhumane barbarity in that...”

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, emphasized that "united leadership of like-minded countries, including the U.S., South Korea, Japan, and the EU, is absolutely necessary" to improve North Korean human rights.

[Executive Director Scarlatoiu] “We must document violations. We must prepare for transitional justice. We must continue to rescue North Korean escapes. We must continue to aid North Korean escapes. We must continue to enable their voices to be heard.”

The rally was part of an internship conference event hosted by the Korean Church Coalition for North Korea Freedom (KCC), a Korean-American Christian organization in the U.S., which has been held every summer in Washington, D.C., since 2010.

Sam Kim, Secretary-General of KCC, which hosted the event, said the purpose of the event is "to implant in the hearts of second-generation Korean-Americans born in the U.S. the awareness that North Korean residents are our blood-related brothers and sisters," and emphasized that "what we dislike is the North Korean regime that oppresses its people, not the North Korean people."

He added that he hopes students will become representatives for North Korean residents who cannot voice their concerns, not only here but also when they return to their local communities.

[Recording: Secretary-General Kim] “Our objective is to implant within the hearts and minds of our second-generation Korean Americans, many of whom were born in the United States, that the people of North Korea are our blood-related brothers and sisters.”

Timothy Cho, who was born as a North Korean street child and is now the Secretary-General of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on North Korea (APPG-NK) in the UK, testified at the rally about witnessing a public execution of a man when he was 11 years old in North Korea, which left him traumatized.

Cho said that while participating in the KCC program for two nights and three days, he shared a lot about what is happening in North Korea and his personal experiences with the students, emphasizing the cruelty and crimes against humanity in North Korea.

[Recording: Secretary-General Cho] “So I'm sure they have learned and experienced a lot. These are our future, the future of the United States, United Kingdom and the democracy of the world in their hands.”

Jane Jung, a 15-year-old from San Diego who attended the event, said, “And I think it just made me so angry and frustrated and made me want to do something more than I'm doing right now. I am young. I don't have the biggest influence like some of the congressmen and women that visited us today, but I feel like hearing his testimony and hearing what he had to go through made me even more motivated to do something.”

After the rally, participants visited the offices of U.S. Senators and Representatives to appeal for interest and support for North Korean human rights.

VOA News, An Jun-ho.

Translated by Kayleigh Park, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern, and Doohyun Kim, HRNK Social Media Associate

Korean Church Coalition
Capitol Hill West Lawn
Wednesday, July 10, 2024
Greg Scarlatoiu

Executive Director
Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)

Dear Friends and Human Rights Defenders, Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It is a true pleasure to meet you today. Freedom of religion is a fundamental distinctive feature of Korean identity in South Korea, in the United States and elsewhere in the world. Once the cradle of the Korean Presbyterian Church, North Korea suffers under the yoke of tyranny, human rights denial and vicious religious repression.

There are at least three reasons why the Kim family regime, occupying its seat of totalitarian power and privilege in the city of Pyongyang, once known as the Jerusalem of the East, oppressed and suppressed people of all religious beliefs, especially Christians, and continues to do so today.

First, Christianity is very much part of the identity of Korean people living in the North. Just like their brothers and sisters in the South, the long history of North Koreans did not begin with Kim Il-sung and his regime. Christianity can enable the people of North Korea to retrieve the identity almost eradicated by the brutality of the Kim regime, and that is why Kim Jong-un and his henchmen fear and resent Christianity so much.

Second, Christianity provides an alternative understanding of the world, universe, and the natural order of things. This poses a great challenge to the Kim regime's personality cult, ideological indoctrination and the draconian grip on the lives and destinies of the people of North Korea. That is why Kim Jong-un and his henchmen fear and resent Christianity so much.

Third, the underground Christian church of North Korea, always under the threat of brutal repression, detention in political prison camps, and extermination, provides a space where believers can freely exchange views and ideas, outside the coercion, surveillance and indoctrination exercised by the regime. That is why Kim Jong-un and his henchmen fear and resent Christianity so much.
It is our duty to fight hard to bring freedom, in particular religious freedom, human rights, justice, and prosperity to the people of North Korea, by all means available. And this type of gathering presents the potential to mobilize hearts, minds and souls in the free world, so that we can change the trajectory of history on the Korean peninsula.

The status quo in North Korea is untenable. No human being, no brother or sister of ours, no Korean, should be subjected to such brutal and abject oppression or prevented from enjoying freedom and prosperity. True change in North Korea, and by that I don't mean violent change, I mean peaceful transformation, can only come from the people of North Korea themselves. There is no civil society in North Korea. And there never will be, under the current circumstances of the repressive Kim family regime. The only grassroots institution that can be conducive to a nascent civil society in North Korea is the underground church. Moving forward, while rescuing, protecting and supporting North Korean escapees, while ardently advocating for the release of South Korean clergymen unlawfully detained in North Korea, we will have to focus our energy on keeping the flame of the underground church in North Korea alive, on ensuring that all Koreans will fulfill their destiny: reunification under a free, democratic, prosperous Korea, a force for good, and a staunch ally, friend, and partner of the United States.

I am truly honored by the opportunity to speak before you today. I very much look forward to working and fighting together for God, faith, peace, human rights, prosperity, freedom, unity for all Koreans! Thank you very much!

Prepared by Ryan Rohrbach, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250722065535/https://mailchi.mp/2a97e8dac466/hrnk-news-items-us-congress-members-criticize-north-koreas-human-rights-abuses-judgement-on-oppression-of-citizens-is-inevitable?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, July 20th, 2024

North Korean athletes set off for Paris Olympics; Blinken decries Russia's cooperation with North Korea, Iran, China

In North Korea:
N. Korean athletes set off for Paris Olympics (*Yonhap*, 07/20/24)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Seoul turns on propaganda loudspeakers over latest North Korean balloon launch (*NK News*, 07/19/24)
S. Korea blares propaganda broadcasts for 3rd day against N.K. balloons (*Yonhap*, 07/20/24)

International:
An F-16 Super Squadron is Being Formed Right in North Korea's Backyard (*The National Interest*, 07/20/24)
Blinken decries Russia's cooperation with N.K., Iran, China (*Yonhap*, 07/20/24)
Developments of North Korea's Land-based Air Defense Systems (*38 North*, 07/20/24)
Mongolia forum proposes engagement with North Korea through tree planting (*UPI*, 07/19/24)
Russian military delegation is in North Korea to help implement agreements reached by Putin, says Kremlin (*Reuters*, 07/19/24)

In North Korea:

- North Korean athletes headed to France for the Paris Olympics on Saturday as the communist country has decided to send its delegation to the international competition for the first time in eight years. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- South Korea's military has turned on propaganda loudspeakers at the inter-Korean border in response to North Korea's latest salvo of trash balloons, the ROK's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) announced Friday. (Ifang Bremer, Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- South Korea's military on Saturday continued to send propaganda loudspeaker broadcasts toward North Korea in response to the North's repeated launch of trash-carrying balloons across the border. (Park Sang-soo, *Yonhap*)

International

- The Seventh Air Force in South Korea is enhancing its F-16 Fighting Falcon force at Osan Air Base by adding nine aircraft from Kunsan Air Base, creating a "Super Squadron" with 31 F-16s. (Peter Suciu, *The National Interest*)
- Secretary of State Antony Blinken reiterated Washington's concerns Friday over Russia's cooperation with North Korea, Iran and China in the midst of its war in Ukraine, stressing it is "not good for your reputation" to work closely with Moscow. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- In any high-intensity war with North Korea, South Korea and the United States will heavily rely on air strikes to attack key North Korean locations and assets. Though the dense network of air defense systems in North Korea provides extensive coverage of the country at medium and high altitudes, the effectiveness of these systems has diminished in the face of evolving air threats, leaving the country vulnerable to air strikes to the extent targets can be located. (Tianran Xu, *38 North*)
- Participants at a recent conference in Mongolia to address inter-Korean issues and the regional desertification crisis have proposed tree planting as a way to address both issues. (Michael Marshall, *UPI*)
- A Russian military delegation is in North Korea to work on implementing agreements reached during President Vladimir Putin's recent visit to Pyongyang, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Friday. (*Reuters*)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250722065832/https://mailchi.mp/bba1f5f3bc3d/hrnk-news-items-north-korean-athletes-set-off-for-paris-olympics-blinken-decries-russias-cooperation-with-north-korea-iran-china?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Sunday, July 21th, 2024

North Korea launches more trash balloons after ROK turns on border loudspeakers

Inter-Korean Relations:
Leadership race heats up for major parties (The Korea Herald, 07/21/24)

North Korea launches more trash balloons after ROK turns on border loudspeakers (*NK News*, 07/21/24)
S. Korea conducts full-scale propaganda broadcasts in response to N. Korea's trash balloons (*Yonhap*, 07/21/24)

International:
Trump continues to flaunt bond with N. Korean leader on campaign trail (The Korea Herald, 07/21/24)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- The leadership race for the two major parties here heated up in recent days, with the main opposition kicking off its primaries and the ruling party wrapping up its weekslong contest with an election scheduled for Tuesday. (Jung Min-kyung, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea launched more trash balloons toward South Korea on Sunday, after Seoul resumed propaganda broadcasts across the border days earlier. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- South Korea's military blared K-pop songs and news through its loudspeakers across the border with North Korea on Sunday as it stepped up its psychological campaign in response to North Korea's repeated launches of trash balloons. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

International

- Former US President Donald Trump once again boasted of his friendship with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un during his campaign rally in Michigan on Saturday, just two days after delivering similar remarks at the Republican National Convention in Wisconsin. (Jung-joo Lee, *The Korea Herald*)

Prepared by Samantha Garcia, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250722161317/https://mailchi.mp/318b1744abf4/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-launches-more-trash-balloons-after-rok-turns-on-border-loudspeakers?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Monday, July 22nd, 2024

New head of unification council vows efforts to let N. Koreans realize Seoul's unification efforts

In North Korea:
North Korea raises alarm about flood risks as monsoon rains lash peninsula (*NK News*, 07/22/24)

In South Korea:

New head of unification council vows efforts to let N. Koreans realize Seoul's unification efforts (*Yonhap*, 07/22/24)

Inter-Korean Relations:
South Korea blares anti-North Korea propaganda across border for 2nd day (*NK News*, 07/22/24)
South resorts to psychological warfare over loudspeakers after North's latest trash balloon launch (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/22/24)

International:
Belarus' foreign minister to visit N. Korea amid deepening Pyongyang-Moscow ties (*Yonhap*, 07/22/24)
Chief Russian prosecutor visits N. Korea for 1st time (*Yonhap*, 07/22/24)
Defense chiefs of South Korea, US, Japan to meet in Tokyo to discuss NK threats (*Yonhap*, 07/22/24)
Fabric and wigs top North Korean exports again as Chinese outsourcing continues (*NK Pro*, 07/22/24)
N. Korea slams U.S.-S. Korea joint military drills ahead of 71st anniversary of armistice signing (*Yonhap*, 07/22/24)
North Korea's economic dependence on China reached new heights in 2023: Report (*NK News*, 07/22/24)
Russia's top prosecutor visits North Korea for first time to discuss cooperation (*NK News*, 07/22/24)
Trump says he invited Kim Jong Un to Yankees baseball game during nuke talks (*NK News*, 07/22/24)
US and Japan to hold security talks on July 28 (*Reuters*, 07/22/24)

In North Korea:

- North Korea raised the alarm about the risk of flooding on Monday, as seasonal monsoon rains lashed the peninsula. In a series of alerts starting from 9 a.m., state television warned of heavy rain, high waves and strong winds, classifying the warning as level two on its three-tier scale of weather advisories. (Ifang Bremer, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- Tae Yong-ho, new secretary general of the presidential advisory council on unification, on Monday vowed efforts to let North Koreans understand South Korea's efforts to craft a peaceful unification vision based on a national consensus. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- South Korea blared anti-North Korea propaganda across the border for the second straight day on Monday, ramping up psychological warfare in retaliation over Pyongyang's repeated trash balloon launches. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Monday that it had identified around 500 waste balloons in the ninth round of launches by North Korea the previous day. Seoul's military began full-scale loudspeaker broadcasts on all fronts along the demilitarized zone (DMZ) from 1 p.m. Sunday in response to the waste balloon launch. (Lim Jeong-won, Lee Yoo-jung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International

- Belarus' foreign minister will visit North Korea this week amid deepening ties between Pyongyang and Moscow, the communist state's state-run media reported Monday. Maxim Vladimirovich Ruzenkov will pay an official visit to Pyongyang from Tuesday to Friday, according to the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). (Park Sang-soo, *Yonhap*)
- Russian Prosecutor General Igor Krasnov has visited North Korea for the first time, his office said Monday, marking another sign of burgeoning ties between the two countries. Krasnov was greeted by a representative of the Supreme Prosecutor's Office upon arrival at the airport in Pyongyang, according to a statement posted on the office's website. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- The defense chiefs of South Korea, the United States and Japan will hold talks in Tokyo next week to discuss issues such as strengthening their trilateral security cooperation in response to North Korea's nuclear and missile threats, the South's defense ministry said Monday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- Fabric, human hair and wigs once again dominated North Korea's trade with China in June, NK Pro analysis of trade data shows, underscoring that Beijing continues to outsource production to the DPRK. (Anton Sokolin, *NK Pro*)
- North Korea said Monday the United States and South Korea have never stopped their joint military drills against the North since the signing of the armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War, claiming that they are crossing a red line of a new nuclear war. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's dependence on its main economic benefactor China rose to a record high last year on the back of expanding commercial exchanges, according to a new report, even as Pyongyang made high-profile efforts to boost ties with Russia. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Russia's chief prosecutor is visiting North Korea for the first time ever, the prosecutor's office announced on Monday, in the latest sign of the two countries' efforts to expand ties beyond arms trade. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Former U.S. President Donald Trump invited North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to watch a New York Yankees baseball game during past nuclear negotiations, the Republican candidate claimed at a rally on Saturday, as he continues to highlight his relationship with the dictator during his election campaign. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- Foreign and defence ministers from Japan and the United States will hold security talks in Japan on July 28 in an effort to push forward what U.S. President Joe Biden called a historic upgrade in the alliance. (*Reuters*)

Prepared by Wu Yang, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250722161558/https://mailchi.mp/8bc993dd24de/hrnk-news-items-new-head-of-unification-council-vows-efforts-to-let-n-koreans-realize-seouls-unification-efforts?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, July 23rd, 2024

North Korean state media weighs in on U.S. election; N. Korean defectors to S. Korea reach 105 in H1

In North Korea:
N. Korea holds crisis meeting to discuss minimizing agricultural damage from natural disasters (*Yonhap*, 07/23/24)
N. Korea says it does not care about Trump's boasting of friendship with Kim (*Yonhap*, 07/23/24)

In South Korea:
S. Korea questions N. Korea's 'modernized' plants outside of Pyongyang in long-term (*Yonhap*, 07/23/24)
Seoul daily defends publication of op-ed by indicted North Korea expert (*NK News*, 07/23/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
N. Korean defectors to S. Korea reach 105 in H1: official (*Yonhap*, 07/23/24)

International:
Children of defectors born in third countries face discrimination, legal blind spots (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/23/2024)
Kim may try to reignite 'bromance' with Trump if he returns to White House: ex-Trump official (*Yonhap*, 07/23/24)
Kim's North Korea Warns of 'Nuclear World War' (*Newsweek*, 07/23/2024)
N. Korea to have 16 athletes in 7 sports in Paris (*Yonhap*, 07/23/24)
North Korean state media weighs in on U.S. election (*Reuters*, 07/22/24)
Russian and North Korean prosecutors sign deal on law enforcement cooperation (*NK News*, 07/23/2024)
Scores of N. Koreans staying overseas make attempt to defect: ex-N. Korean diplomat (*Yonhap*, 07/23/24)
Unification minister, Campbell vow to address N.K. rights abuses, ensure 'unfettered' info access (*Yonhap*, 07/23/24)
Unification minister discusses N.K. defectors' forced repatriation in talks with Campbell (*Yonhap*, 07/23/24)
Young North Korean defectors issue vision statement for dignity, hope, freedom (*Yonhap*, 07/23/24)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has held a crisis response meeting to discuss measures to minimize damage that natural disasters could cause to crops and other agricultural products, state media reported Tuesday. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea said Tuesday that it does not care about former President Donald Trump's remarks about getting along with the regime, marking its first response to the U.S. presidential candidate's frequent boasting of his friendship with leader Kim Jong-un. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's unification ministry on Tuesday questioned the feasibility of North Korea's project to build factories in a move to develop backward provinces. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- A South Korean newspaper has defended its decision to publish an op-ed by the recently indicted North Korea expert Sue Mi Terry, after U.S. prosecutors alleged that the former CIA analyst and White House official wrote the article at the behest of Seoul's foreign ministry. (Joe Smith, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- The number of North Korean defectors arriving in South Korea reached 105 in the first half of the year, slightly up from a year earlier, a unification ministry official said Tuesday. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Monday that it had identified around 500 waste balloons in the ninth round of launches by North Korea the previous day. Seoul's military began full-scale loudspeaker broadcasts on all fronts along the demilitarized zone (DMZ) from 1 p.m. Sunday in response to the waste balloon launch. (Lim Jeong-won, Lee Yoo-jung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International

- Discusses the hardships and discrimination faced by the children North Korean defectors. who were born in third countries. (Cheung Yeong-gyo, Lee Yoo-jung, Woo Ji-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un may try to rekindle his "bromance" with former President Donald Trump if he returns to the White House, a former U.S. official said Monday, predicting Kim could propose a deal to limit his regime's nuclear program in return for American troops' pullout from South Korea. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. and its allies are verging on nuclear war on a global scale, according to North Korean state media. (Micah McCartney, *Newsweek*)
- Making its first Summer Olympics appearance in eight years, North Korea will have 16 athletes competing in seven sports in Paris, data showed Tuesday. (Yoo Jee-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean state media on Tuesday criticized the United States for its elections and cast doubt over hopes of dialogue in the future regardless of the outcome of the U.S. presidential race in November. (*Reuters*)
- The top prosecutors of Russia and North Korea signed a joint cooperation deal on Monday, vowing to bolster efforts to combat crime, including in cyberspace. (Anton Solokin, *NK News*)
- Scores of North Koreans staying abroad, such as diplomats and overseas workers, have attempted to defect to South Korea since North Korea began undoing its COVID-19 border closure last year, a former North Korean diplomat said Tuesday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho and U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell vowed Monday to work together to promote accountability for North Korea's human rights abuses and "unfettered" access to information for people in the reclusive state, the State Department said. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho said Monday he discussed North Korean defectors' forced repatriation, security on the Korean Peninsula and other issues during his talks with a senior U.S. diplomat in Washington. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- A group of young North Korean defectors unveiled a declaration Monday to promote "dignity," "hope," "freedom" for those living in the reclusive country as it stressed their

steadfast commitment to enhancing North Korean human rights as the "voice for the voiceless." (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Andrew Chan, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250722161716/https://mailchi.mp/64bfbc8e73b2/hrnk-news-items-north-korean-state-media-weighs-in-on-us-election-n-korean-defectors-to-s-korea-reach-105-in-h1?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, July 24th, 2024

Shades of Parallel Oppression: South Africa's Apartheid and North Korea's Songbun as Crimes Against Humanity

Top News:
Shades of Parallel Oppression: South Africa's Apartheid and North Korea's Songbun as Crimes Against Humanity (*HRNK YPWP*, 07/24/2024)

In North Korea:
Rise in 'elite' defections suggests ordinary North Koreans more trapped than ever (*The JoongAng Daily*, 07/24/2024)

In South Korea:
Koreas in 'fierce' cultural battle to win hearts of N. Koreans: minister (*The Korea Herald*, 07/24/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Just 105 North Korean escapees arrive in South in first half of 2024: Seoul (*NK News*, 07/24/2024)
N. Korea sends some 300 trash-carrying balloons into S. Korea: JCS (*Yonhap*, 07/24/2024)
North Korean trash balloon falls on Seoul presidential office (*The Korea Herald*, 07/24/2024)
North Korean Trash Balloons Hit South Korean President's Compound (*The New York Times*, 07/24/2024)
North Korean trash balloon lands inside South Korean presidential compound (*NK News*, 07/24/2024)
North Korea's trash balloons fall near South's presidential office (*CNN*, 07/24/2024)
North Korea's trash balloons land on South's presidential compound (*The JoongAng Daily*, 07/24/2024)
S. Korean cultural influence is causing 'cracks' in rigid NK society: unification minister (*Yonhap*, 07/24/2024)
Trash balloons land near S Korea president's office (*BBC*, 07/24/2024)
Trash dropped by a North Korean balloon falls on South Korea's presidential compound (*The Associated Press*, 07/24/2024)

International:
NK's top diplomat vows to expand relations with Belarus comprehensively (*Yonhap*, 07/24/2024)
N. Korea presumed to have sent over 5 mil. artillery shells to Russia: minister (*Yonhap*, 07/24/2024)
North Korean hacker masquerades as IT worker in elaborate infiltration attempt (*NK News*, 07/24/2024)

Top News:

- For many, South Africa's Apartheid evokes images of historical struggle and resilience immortalized in history books, while North Korea's Songbun seems distant in the confines of a closed-off regime. Despite the vast geographical distance between the two countries, these seemingly disparate systems exhibit notable parallels in their mechanisms of oppression and control. As Nelson Mandela and countless others grappled with the chains of Apartheid in South Africa, North Koreans endured—and continue to suffer—the oppressive grasp of the Songbun system. Both Apartheid and Songbun are tainted by state-sanctioned discrimination and human rights abuses. (*SoEun Park*, HRNK YPWP)

In North Korea:

- While the South Korean government has recently highlighted a "rush of high-level defections" prompted by media outreach and loudspeaker broadcasts to North Korea, fewer ordinary North Koreans have defected. As a result, experts suspect that defections may have "polarized." (Chung Yeong-gyo, Lee Yoo-jung, Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

In South Korea:

- Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho on Tuesday emphasized that South Korea's cultural wave is fiercely battling the cultural indoctrination of the Kim Jong-un regime to win the hearts and minds of North Koreans. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- Figure is similar to last year and suggests heightened border controls continue to make it difficult to defect. Sixty-two North Korean escapees arrived in South Korea between April and June this year, according to unification ministry data, bringing the total number of arrivals in the first half of 2024 to just 105. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- North Korea again launched hundreds of trash-carrying balloons toward South Korea on Wednesday, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said, with some pieces of garbage landing on the presidential office compound in Seoul. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- At least one North Korean balloon carrying trash landed on the grounds shared by the South Korean presidential office and the National Defense Ministry in Yongsan, central Seoul, on Wednesday morning. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- Weeks into North Korea's campaign of launching balloons loaded with trash across the world's most heavily armed border, some of them hit a symbolically significant target in South Korea on Wednesday: the presidential office in the heart of Seoul, the capital. (Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*)

- A North Korean trash balloon landed inside the South Korean Presidential Office compound on Wednesday morning, raising alarm following the DPRK's tenth balloon launch to date. (Jeongmin Kim, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- Trash-laden North Korean balloons were found on the grounds of South Korea's presidential office compound, officials said Wednesday, the latest in a series of incidents that have raised tensions and rhetoric on the Korean Peninsula. (Yoonjung Seo, Brad Lendon, CNN)
- North Korea's trash-filled balloons landed on the premises of South Korea's presidential office compound in central Seoul on Wednesday morning, the Presidential Security Service (PSS) said. (Lee Soo-Jung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho on Tuesday underscored the importance of "cultural" approaches to fostering internal change in North Korea, saying the inflow of South Korean pop culture is causing "cracks" in a rigid ideology-based society of the reclusive country. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Balloons carrying rubbish sent by North Korea have landed in South Korea's presidential compound in the capital city of Seoul, say officials. (Annabelle Liang, BBC)
- Trash carried by at least one North Korean balloon fell on the South Korean presidential compound on Wednesday, raising worries about the security of key South Korean facilities during North Korean provocations. (Hyung-Jin Kim, *The Associated Press*)

International

- North Korea's top diplomat has hosted a banquet for her visiting counterpart from Belarus, vowing to expand their relations comprehensively, North Korea's state media said Wednesday, as experts forecast trilateral cooperation involving Russia. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea is believed to have sent containers that can carry more than 5 million artillery shells to Russia, South Korea's defense chief has said, amid persistent concerns over deepening military cooperation between the two nations. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- A North Korean cybercriminal posing as a U.S.-based software engineer nearly infiltrated a prominent cybersecurity firm, according to a report published on Tuesday, using AI images to avoid detection in an effort that highlighted the growing sophistication of DPRK threats. (Nils Weisensee, *NK News*)

Prepared by Sloane Thor, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250722161844/https://mailchi.mp/045ffebe984e/hrnk-news-items-shades-of-parallel-oppression-south-africas-apartheid-and-north-koreas-songbun-as-crimes-against-humanity?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, July 25th, 2024

North Korea trash balloons disrupt flights in Seoul, cause rooftop fire

Inter-Korean Relations:
N. Korea sends some 500 trash balloons into S. Korea earlier this week (*Yonhap*, 07/25/2024)
North Korean trash balloon caught fire after landing on rooftop, Seoul says (*NK News*, 07/25/2024)
North Korea trash balloons disrupt flights in Seoul, cause rooftop fire (*Reuters*, 07/24/2024)
Rooftop blaze ignites after North sends more trash balloons to South Korea (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/25/2024)

International:
N. Korea, Belarus' top diplomats have 'in-depth' exchange on regional, international issues (*Yonhap*, 07/25/2024)
South Korea, China hold long-awaited vice-ministerial strategic talks (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/25/2024)
US blacklists Chinese nationals for supporting North Korean weapons programs (*NK News*, 07/25/2024)
U.S. sanctions China-based individuals, entities accused of supporting N.K. missile, space programs (*Yonhap*, 07/25/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korea's latest round of its balloon campaign involved around 500 balloons carrying scrap paper and plastic sheets, including those that fell on the presidential office compound in the capital, South Korea's military said Thursday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- A North Korean trash balloon caught fire after landing on the roof of a residential building near Seoul on Wednesday, renewing concerns about the dangers that the DPRK's launches pose to South Koreans. (Jeongmin Kim, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- North Korea has sent about 500 balloons laden with trash into South Korea's air space over the past 24 hours, officials in the South said on Thursday, disrupting flights and igniting a fire on the roof of a residential building. (Hyunsu Yim, *Reuters*)
- North Korea sent over more than 480 trash-carrying balloons to South Korea on Wednesday, Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Thursday. (Lee Soo-Jung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International

- North Korea's top diplomat has met with her visiting counterpart from Belarus, and discussed regional and international situations, North Korea's state media reported Thursday, amid speculation that the nations would strengthen trilateral cooperation with Russia. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and China held vice-ministerial strategic talks for the first time in two years and seven months, amid closer military and economic ties between North Korea and Russia. (Seo Ji-Eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The U.S. sanctioned six individuals and five entities based in China for supporting North Korea's weapons programs on Wednesday, revealing a network of companies that allegedly helped Pyongyang procure parts for ballistic missiles and satellites. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

- The United States on Wednesday slapped sanctions on a China-based network of six individuals and five entities for their alleged involvement in the procurement of items supporting North Korea's ballistic missile and space programs. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Ray Matsumoto, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250722162040/https://mailchi.mp/27764891d8e4/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-trash-balloons-disrupt-flights-in-seoul-cause-rooftop-fire?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, July 26th, 2024

North Korea hackers trying to steal nuclear secrets, US and UK warn

In North Korea:
Belarus' president calls for expanding ties with N. Korea in letter to Kim
(*Yonhap*, 07/26/2024)
N. Korea revs up celebratory mood ahead of 71st anniversary of armistice signing
(*Yonhap*, 07/26/2024)
N. Korea's economy expands 3.1 pct in 2023, snapping 3-yr contraction: BOK report (*Yonhap*, 07/26/2024)
North Korea's economy surged in 2023 after years of contraction, South estimates (*Reuters*, 07/26/2024)

International:
North Korea hackers trying to steal nuclear secrets, US and UK warn
(*BBC*, 07/26/2024)
U.S. sets up $10 million reward for info on N.K. malicious cyber actor
(*Yonhap*, 07/26/2024)
US offers $10M bounty for North Korean hacker tied to attacks on NASA, hospitals
(*NK News*, 07/26/2024)

In North Korea:

- The president of Belarus has called for "further expanding cooperation" with North Korea in a message sent to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, Pyongyang's foreign ministry said Friday, amid speculation that the nations will seek to strengthen trilateral cooperation with Russia. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea said Friday it is preparing for a grand event celebrating the upcoming 71st anniversary of the signing of the armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War, with its leader Kim Jong-un sending gifts to war veterans across the nation. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

- North Korea's economy grew by more than 3 percent last year, rebounding from a contraction for a third consecutive year on the back of steady improvement of the manufacturing sector and trade with its allies Russia and China, a central bank report showed Friday. (Park Sang-soo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's economy grew sharply in 2023 after shrinking for three straight years as trade with China increased after COVID-19 pandemic border controls were eased, according to estimates by South Korea's central bank. (Jihoon Lee, *Reuters*)

International

- North Korean hackers are attempting to steal nuclear and military secrets from governments and private companies around the world, the UK, US and South Korea have warned. (Gordon Corera, *BBC*)
- The United States offered Thursday to provide a reward of up to US$10 million for information on a North Korean cyber actor targeting America's critical infrastructure, as it strives to prevent Pyongyang's ability to generate revenue through illicit means to fund its weapons programs. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. has placed a $10 million bounty on a North Korean national tied to a notorious cybercrime syndicate, accusing him of infecting health care systems with ransomware and attacking NASA and the U.S. Air Force. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)

Prepared by Jongjin Lee, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250722162236/https://mailchi.mp/2005982d8c0e/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-hackers-trying-to-steal-nuclear-secrets-us-and-uk-warn?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, July 27th, 2024

Greg Scarlatoiu, director of The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, speaks with The John Batchelor Show on N. Korean news

Top News:
DPRK: Famine. Greg Scarlatoiu, director of The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, @GordonGChang, Gatestone, Newsweek, The Hill (*The John Batchelor Show*, 07/27/2024)

In North Korea:
North Koreans use VPNs, love Apple and stay up late to browse web: Report (*NK News*, 07/26/2024)
North Korea's Kim calls for 'people's paradise' marking Korean War 'Victory Day' (*Reuters*, 07/26/2024)

North Korea to sell gambling rights at vacant 105-floor Ryugyong Hotel in Pyongyang (*Radio Free Asia*, 07/26/2024)

In South Korea:
PM says S. Korea will not tolerate any N.K. provocations (*Yonhap*, 07/27/2024)

International:
IOC 'deeply apologises' after South Korean athletes introduced as North Korean (*The Guardian*, 07/27/2024)
N.K. leader says 'kindred' ties with China to be 'firmly' carried forward (*Yonhap*, 07/27/2024)
South Korea expresses regret after its athletes introduced as North Korea at opening ceremony (*Reuters*, 07/27/2024)
South Korea wrongly introduced as North Korea at Olympics (BBC, 07/27/2024)
U.S. ambassador to South Korea says 'all' American assets available to deter North (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/27/2024)
U.S. expert stresses need to target N.K. overseas workers through secondary sanctions (*Yonhap*, 07/27/2024)
US offers $10M bounty for North Korean hacker tied to attacks on NASA, hospitals (*NK News*, 07/26/2024)

Top News:

- As a guest on *The John Batchelor Show*, **Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea**, speaks on the defection of the Cuba-based North Korean diplomat to South Korea and the current economic state of the North as the state continues under Kim Jong-un's leadership. (*The John Batchelor Show*)

In North Korea:

- North Koreans increasingly use VPN services to break through state censorship and avoid monitoring, adore Apple products and often stay up late to browse the web, according to new research exploring how the tech habits of DPRK citizens changed during the pandemic. (Anton Sokolin, NK News)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said it was a sacred mission of the current generation to build a "paradise for the people" based on the ideology defended by a previous generation of victors with their blood as the country marked the Korean War anniversary on Saturday. (Jack Kim, *Reuters*)
- A North Korean hotel which has been under construction for 37 years has plans to sell the rights to operate a casino on the premises if the operator promises to complete construction of the building's interiors, a resident of the capital Pyongyang told Radio Free Asia. (Son Hye-min, *Radio Free Asia*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea will not tolerate any provocations from North Korea, Prime Minister Han Duck-soo said Saturday, as the country marked the 71st anniversary of the signing of the armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Olympic Games organizers said they "deeply apologize" for introducing South Korea's athletes as North Korean during the opening ceremony in Paris. (*The Guardian*, 07/27/2024)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has said "kindred" relations with China will be "firmly" carried forward as he visited a monument symbolizing bilateral ties, state media reported Saturday, amid suspected signs of strain between the traditionally friendly countries. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea expressed regret that its delegation of athletes at the Paris Olympics opening ceremony on Friday was introduced as from rival North Korea and has demanded assurances from organizers the mistake will not happen again. (Jack Kim, *Reuters*)
- Olympic organizers have issued a "deep apology" after South Korea's athletes were mistakenly introduced as North Korea at the opening ceremony in Paris. (Tiffany Wertheimer, *BBC*)
- U.S. Ambassador to Seoul Philip Goldberg highlighted the readiness of "all" American strategic assets for deployment to the Korean Peninsula, in consultation with South Korea's president. (Yoo Jee-hye, Park Hyun-ju, Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A U.S. expert has called for Washington to request foreign countries drive North Korean workers out to prevent their companies, government agencies and others from facing "secondary sanctions," amid concerns that Pyongyang has used the workers to secure hard currency to fund its weapons programs. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. has placed a $10 million bounty on a North Korean national tied to a notorious cybercrime syndicate, accusing him of infecting health care systems with ransomware and attacking NASA and the U.S. Air Force. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)

Prepared by Rachel Baek, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250722162517/https://mailchi.mp/33d1bcea05bf/hrnk-news-items-greg-scarlatoiu-director-of-the-committee-for-human-rights-in-north-korea-speaks-with-the-john-batchelor-show-on-n-korean-news?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, July 28th, 2024

Four million vaccine doses for children and pregnant women flown to North Korea

In North Korea:

Four million vaccine doses for children and pregnant women flown to North Korea (*The Guardian*, 7/28/2024)

International:
N. Korea's Kim attends events marking 71st anniversary of armistice signing (*Yonhap*, 7/28/2024)
N. Korea's state media reports on Olympics opening (*Yonhap*. 7/28/2024)
South Korea gets official IOC apology for North Korea mix-up (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 7/28/2024)
South Korean foreign minister meets Russian counterpart, slams defense ties with North (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 7/28/2024)
North Korea vows 'total destruction' of enemy on Korean War anniversary (*Reuters*, 7/27/2024)
South Korea Warns North May Do Nuclear Test Nearing US Election (*Bloomberg*, 7/28/2024)
US and Japan to revamp joint military operations to counter China and North Korea (*South China Morning Post*, 7/28/2024

In North Korea:

- More than 4 million vaccine doses have been flown to Pyongyang, raising hopes that North Korea could open up again to UN agencies and NGOs amid reports of a worsening health situation in the authoritarian state. (Rebecca Root, *The Guardian*)

International:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un met with war veterans and attended celebrations marking the 71st anniversary of the signing of the armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War, the North's state media said Sunday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- Pyongyang's state media on Sunday carried a brief dispatch on the opening of the Summer Olympic Games in Paris, a day after the 17-day competition kicked off. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The South Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism said Sunday it received an official apology from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for erroneously introducing South Korean athletes as North Korea during the Opening Ceremony of the 2024 Paris Olympics. (Mary Wang, Jim Bulley, Paik Ji-Hwan, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul conveyed a message condemning increasing Pyongyang-Moscow military ties directly to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at a multilateral forum on Saturday. (Lim Jeong-Won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea vowed to "totally destroy" its enemies in case of war when leader Kim Jong Un gives an order, state media KCNA reported on Sunday. (*Reuters*)
- North Korea may be considering a nuclear test near the time the US presidential election is held to raise its profile, South Korea's defense minister said, as Kim Jong Un rolls out new warheads capable of striking the US and its allies in Asia. (Soo-Hyang Choi, Jon Herskovitz, *Bloomberg*)
- The United States and Japan said they will revamp the US military command structure in Japan to improve joint military operations and expand co-production of air defense missiles, to counter China's increasing assertiveness and the North Korean nuclear threat. (William Zheng, *South China Morning Post*)

Prepared by Jennifer Leon, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250722162720/https://mailchi.mp/a1148b040f35/hrnk-news-items-four-million-vaccine-doses-for-children-and-pregnant-women-flown-to-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Monday, July 29th, 2024

Thousands hit by N. Korean floods as Kim calls 'emergency'; Kim Ju-ae, Kim Jong-un's 12-year-old daughter, under succession training

In North Korea:
Is North Korea planning to join BRICS? (*Radio Free Asia*, 7/29/2024)
Kim Jong-un's daughter under succession training: lawmaker (*The Korea Herald*, 7/29/2024)
Kim Jong Un laments poor preparation after 5000 stranded by floods (*NK News*, 7/29/2024)
N.K. leader's daughter being groomed to succeed Kim: lawmakers (*Yonhap*, 7/29/2024)
N. Korea's Kim guides rescue operation for residents in flood-hit areas (*Yonhap*, 7/29/2024)
North Korea marks Korean War 'victory' with goose-stepping soldiers but no nukes (*NK News*, 7/29/2024)
North Korean economy grows for first time in four years in 2023: Bank of Korea (*NK News*, 7/29/2024)
North Korea's Kim 'inspects' flood response as thousands evacuated from China border region after heavy rains (CNN, 7/29/2024)
Thousands hit by N Korea floods as Kim calls 'emergency' (BBC, 7/29/2024)

In South Korea:
Failed North Korea satellite launch engine points to Russian role, say South Korean lawmakers (*Reuters*, 7/29/2024)
Seoul investigating leak of secret military agents' identities to North Korea (*NK News*, 7/29/2024)
Unification minister calls for patience in dealing with N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 7/29/2024)

International:
ASEAN condemns North Korean missile tests as Koreas shun each other at forum (*NK News*, 7/28/2024)
Quad foreign ministers decry dangerous South China Sea actions (*Reuters*, 7/29/2024)
Quad foreign ministers meet in Tokyo to discuss regional security (*Radio Free Asia*, 7/29/2024)
ROK, Japan, US sign deal to 'institutionalize' military ties against North Korea (*NK News*, 7/28/2024)
Top Olympics official 'deeply sorry' for introducing South Korea as North Korea during opening ceremony (CNN, 7/29/2024)

In North Korea:

- A claim began to circulate online in early 2024 that North Korea was seeking to join BRICS. But the claim lacks evidence. An official from one BRICS member state told AFCL that the North had never formally expressed any intent to join the alliance and there had been no internal discussion of such a matter. (Dukin Han, *Radio Free Asia*)
- Kim Ju-ae, the 12-year-old daughter of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, is seen as being groomed for succession, a lawmaker who attended a meeting of the intelligence committee of the National Assembly told reporters Monday (Son Ji-hyoung, *The Korea Herald*)
- Major flooding hit the northwestern part of North Korea along the Chinese border on Sunday, leaving 5,000 people stranded and leader Kim Jong Un fuming at what he said was a "grave crisis" caused by local officials, according to state media. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's daughter, Ju-ae, is being groomed to succeed her father, though the selection is not final and he could ultimately choose someone else, two lawmakers quoted South Korea's spy agency as saying Monday. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has visited flood-hit areas near the Amnok River and guided an operation to rescue around 5,000 isolated residents with the military's helicopters, Pyongyang's state media reported Monday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea marked the anniversary of the end of the Korean War with a parade of goose-stepping soldiers and a patriotic concert on Saturday, but without a grand display of its latest nuclear weaponry like last year. Kim Jong Un pays tribute to veterans at scaled-down celebrations, but Chinese envoy appears to skip the festivities. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- New report from Seoul's central bank finds economy surged 3.1% as the DPRK eased pandemic border controls. North Korea's economy grew for the first time in four years in 2023, according to South Korea's central bank, reversing a downward trend caused by Pyongyang's border restrictions during the pandemic. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Some 5,000 people were rescued from flood-hit areas along North Korea's border with China over the weekend in efforts supervised by leader Kim Jong Un, the country's state media reported Monday. (Simone McCarthy, Gawon Bae, CNN)
- Record-breaking rain left thousands of people stranded by floods in North Korea over the weekend, prompting leader Kim Jong Un to declare an "emergency", state media reports. (Annabelle Liang, BBC)

In South Korea:

- North Korea appears to have received assistance from Russia for its failed attempt in May to launch a reconnaissance satellite, South Korean lawmakers said on Monday, citing the country's spy agency. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- South Korea reportedly recalled some personnel due to breach, amid growing scrutiny of ROK intel operations. (Jeongmin Kim, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- South Korea's point man on North Korea called Monday for patience in creating conditions to bring Pyongyang back to the dialogue table amid heightened tensions on the divided Korean Peninsula. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) condemned North Korea's recent missile tests while calling for cooperation to reduce peninsula tensions, as

representatives of both Koreas refused to interact at an ASEAN summit over the weekend. (Joe Smith, NK *News*)

- Foreign ministers from Australia, India, Japan and the United States said on Monday they were seriously concerned about intimidating and dangerous manoeuvres in the South China Sea and pledged to bolster maritime security in the region. (Simon Lewis, Rocky Swift, *Reuters*)
- Foreign ministers from the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, commonly known as the Quad, met in Tokyo on Monday to discuss deepening collaboration in various areas, including on security and humanitarian issues in the Indo-Pacific. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)
- South Korea, Japan and the U.S. signed an agreement to solidify defense cooperation on Sunday, seeking to further bolster trilateral ties in the face of North Korean threats and Pyongyang's increasing cooperation with Moscow. (Ifang Bremer, Joon Ha Park, NK *News*)
- Olympics organizers have "deeply apologized" to South Korea over a "human error" that saw its 143 athletes wrongly introduced as North Korean at the opening ceremony. (Xiaofei Xu, Chris Lau, CNN)

Prepared by SoEun Park, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250722162831/https://mailchi.mp/3b60af872275/hrnk-news-items-thousands-hit-by-n-korean-floods-as-kim-calls-emergency-kim-ju-ae-kim-jong-uns-12-year-old-daughter-under-sucession-training?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, July 30th, 2024

North Korean officials seek medicine for Kim's health problems related to obesity, Seoul says

In North Korea:
2.3 magnitude earthquake hits lower western N. Korea: KMA (*Yonhap*, 7/29/2024)
5,000 rescued from flooding in North Korea, state media says (AP, 07/29/2024)
Downpours in border areas apparently cause 'considerable' damage in N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 07/30/2024)
Kim Jong-un 'training' daughter to be his successor (*Telegraph*, 07/29/2024)
N. Korea appoints new top envoys to Vietnam, Singapore (*Yonhap*, 07/30/2024)
North Korean officials seek medicine for Kim's health problems related to obesity, Seoul says (AP, 07/29/2024)
North Korean restaurant in Mongolia still closed despite report on reopening (NK *News*, 07/30/2024)

In South Korea:
Seoul to spend $530K on overseas North Korean human rights conference series (NK *News*, 07/30/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
N.K. trash balloons disrupt Incheon Int'l Airport operations on 12 occasions (*Yonhap*, 07/30/2024)
NK trash balloons have landed at over 3,000 sites in South (*The Korea Herald*, 07/30/2024)
No civilian-level exchanges between Koreas' separated families for over 1 year (*Yonhap*, 07/30/2024)
No exchange between Korea's separated families since Feb. of last year (*The Korea Herald*, 07/30/2024)
ROK court issues arrest warrant over reported leak of intel to North Korea (*NK News*, 07/30/2024)
S. Korea not ruling out N.K nuke test possibility around U.S. presidential election (*Yonhap*, 07/30/2024)
Why a Korea End-of-War Declaration Would Be a Mistake (*National Interest*, 07/29/2024)

International:
Australian foreign minister condemns Russia-North Korea ties after DMZ visit (*Reuters*, 07/29/2024)
Australia's foreign minister says Russia-North Korea defense deal is 'risky for the world' (AP, 07/30/2024)
US, Japan, Australia and India announce efforts to boost maritime security (VOA, 07/29/2024)

In North Korea:

- A 2.3 magnitude earthquake struck North Korea's lower western region Monday night, with no expected damage, the state weather agency said. The quake struck an area 23 kilometers northeast-east of Songlim, North Kwanghae Province, which lies just north of the border, at 9:56 p.m., according to the Korea Meteorological Administration. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- More than 5,000 people isolated by flooding in northwestern North Korea were rescued by airlift and other evacuation work after heavy summer rains caused a river on the Chinese border to swell, state media reported Monday. (Hyung-jin Kim, AP)
- North Korea appears to have sustained "considerable" damage from the latest downpours in its northern border areas along the Amnok River, South Korea's unification ministry said Tuesday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The young daughter of Kim Jong-un is being trained to succeed him, South Korean intelligence sources have alleged, increasing speculation over the reclusive leader's health. (Nicola Smith, *Telegraph*)
- North Korea on Tuesday appointed new ambassadors to Vietnam and Singapore after years of delay due to the North's COVID-19-related border shutdown. North Korea appointed Ri Sung-guk as the country's new top envoy to Vietnam, replacing his predecessor Kim Myong-gil, according to the foreign ministry. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Kim Jong Un has regained weight and appears to have obesity-related health problems such as high blood pressure and diabetes, and his officials are looking for new medicines abroad to treat them, South Korea's spy agency told lawmakers Monday. (Hyung-jin Kim, AP)
- A North Korea-linked restaurant in the Mongolian capital appeared to still be closed during an *NK News* visit this month, despite a recent report stating it reopened in contravention of U.N. sanctions prohibiting overseas labor and DPRK-related joint ventures. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's Ministry of Unification (MOU) has budgeted over half a million dollars for an overseas conference series on North Korean human rights this year, showing the Yoon administration continues to spend heavily on its goal of drawing attention to DPRK abuses. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korea's recent campaign of launching trash-carrying balloons toward South Korea has disrupted operations of Incheon International Airport, the South's main gateway, on 12 occasions, a lawmaker said Tuesday, citing government data. (Chang Dong-woo, *Yonhap*)
- Balloons carrying rubbish sent from North Korea since late May have been discovered at more than 3,000 sites throughout South Korea, a police report showed Tuesday. (Lee Jaeeun, *The Korea Herald*)
- Separated families in South Korea have had no exchanges with their relatives in North Korea either at government or civilian levels for more than a year amid frosty inter-Korean relations, government data showed Tuesday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Koreans with relatives in North Korea have not been in contact with their kin across the border for over a year, government data showed Tuesday, highlighting the increasingly worsening relations between Seoul and Pyongyang. (Yoon Min-sik, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea's Central Military Court has issued an arrest warrant for an intelligence service employee on charges of leaking military secrets, reportedly to North Korea. The issuing comes after the defense ministry confirmed it was investigating the suspected disclosure of a classified list of South Korean military intelligence agents. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- South Korea is not ruling out the possibility of North Korea conducting a nuclear test before or after the U.S. presidential election in November to bolster its leverage, Seoul's defense chief said in a media interview published Monday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean dictators have been attempting to unify South Korea by force for more than half a century. Expecting the North Korean regime to honor the end-of-war declaration and peace agreements without changing the Kim family regime is an unrealistic fantasy. (Ri Jong Ho, National Interest)

International:

- Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong said on Tuesday that a security pact signed by Russia and North Korea was destabilizing the region, adding that North Korea was giving weapons to Russia in "flagrant violation" of U.N. Security Council resolutions. (Hyunsu Yim, Dogyun Kim, *Reuters*)
- Australia's foreign minister said Tuesday the recent defense deal between North Korea and Russia was "destabilizing" and "risky for the world," after she visited the tense border village shared by North and South Korea. (Hyung-jin Kim, AP)
- The United States, Australia, India and Japan announced a series of measures Monday to boost maritime security and voiced concern about intimidation and dangerous actions in the South China Sea. (VOA)

Prepared by Alena Nosel, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250722163126/https://mailchi.mp/7875388c7933/hrnk-news-items-north-korean-officials-seek-medicine-for-kims-health-problems-related-to-obesity-seoul-says?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, July 31st, 2024

N. Korean leader fires public security minister for damage from downpours in border areas

In North Korea:
N. Korean leader fires public security minister for damage from downpours in border areas (*Yonhap*, 7/31/2024)
North Korea appoints new ambassadors to Vietnam, Singapore (*RFA*, 7/31/2024)
North Korea wins first Olympic medal in 8 years with fairytale table tennis run (*NK News*, 7/31/2024)
Recent rains in North Korea flooded thousands of houses and vast farmland, state media says (*AP News*, 7/31/2024)

In South Korea:
Covert agent identity leaks trigger alarm over S. Korea's intelligence operations (*The Korea Herald*, 7/31/2024)
NIS closely watching N.K.-China ties amid signs of rift (*Yonhap*, 7/31/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
The two Koreas in the Olympics (*The Korea Herald*, 7/31/2024)

International:
ASEAN, Indo-Pacific partners call for N.K. to comply with U.N. resolutions (*Yonhap*, 7/31/2024)
China, Russia vying for influence over N. Korea: Campbell (*Yonhap*, 7/31/2024)
Ignore China, North Korea's Kim tells diplomats amid apparent rift in relations (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 7/31/2024)
Singapore nonprofit to resume work in North Korea this fall, a first since COVID (*NK News*, 7/31/2024)
Singaporean woman fined $2600 for helping ship booze, soft drinks to North Korea (*NK News*, 7/31/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un replaced the public security minister and provincial party chiefs due to severe flood damage in border areas, following an emergency meeting. Kim visited flood-hit regions and directed rescue operations, stressing accountability for the neglect. He ordered rapid flood damage repairs and responsible weather forecasting to prevent casualties. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

- North Korea has appointed Ri Sung Guk as ambassador to Vietnam and Ri Kil Song as ambassador to Singapore, ending a long vacancy in these posts. This move comes amid speculation that North Korea was closing diplomatic missions due to financial issues. (Taejun Kang, *RFA*)
- North Korea's Kim Kum Yong and Ri Jong Sik won a silver medal in mixed doubles table tennis at the 2024 Paris Olympics, marking the country's first Olympic medal in 8 years. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- Heavy rains in northwestern North Korea flooded 4,100 homes and 3,000 hectares of farmland, leaving many homeless. Over 5,000 people were rescued. Kim Jong Un has ordered new housing and infrastructure repairs and called for accountability for disaster management failures. (Hyung-Jin Kim, *AP News*)

In South Korea:

- A leak of military secrets, including details of South Korean covert agents, has raised serious concerns about intelligence operations on North Korea. A civilian military employee was arrested for leaking information to a Chinese citizen of Korean ethnicity and the Defense Ministry is investigating possible North Korean involvement. Experts warn that compromised agent identities could severely impact intelligence capabilities, prompting calls for stronger espionage laws and immediate security measures. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea's intelligence agency is monitoring North Korea-China relations amid signs of a growing rift. North Korean leader Kim Jong-un reportedly instructed diplomats in China to disregard Beijing, increasing speculation of strained ties, especially after North Korea denounced a trilateral summit involving China and limited Chinese yuan transactions in markets. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- South Korean table tennis player Lim Jong-hoon briefly shook hands with North Korean player Ri Jong-sik during the Paris Olympics awarding ceremony. Lim and Shin Yu-bin won bronze, while Ri and Kim Kum-yong took silver. Despite recent tensions, both teams congratulated each other in Korean and took a selfie together. Tensions between the Koreas have risen due to North Korean trash balloons and South Korea's resumed border broadcasts. (Lim Jae-seong, *The Korea Herald*)

International:

- Major Southeast Asian nations and Indo-Pacific partners, including South Korea and the U.S., urged North Korea to fully comply with U.N. Security Council resolutions on its nuclear and missile programs. The forum emphasized the need for denuclearization and peaceful dialogue. South Korea's attempt to condemn North Korea-Russia military cooperation was stymied by opposition from Russia and North Korea. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- China and Russia are competing for influence in North Korea, with Beijing worried about Moscow's closer ties to Pyongyang, according to U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell. He emphasized the importance of U.S. partnerships with allies compared to the complex relationships among authoritarian states. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has told diplomats in China to "disregard" China, indicating a growing rift with Beijing as ties with Moscow strengthen. North Korea has

restricted Chinese nationals and banned Chinese cultural content. Tensions have increased since Kim's summit with Putin, and trade with China has dropped significantly. Despite current strains, the relationship could quickly improve if interests align. (Seo Ji-Eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- Choson Exchange, a Singapore-based nonprofit supporting North Korean entrepreneurs, plans to resume in-person workshops in North Korea this fall, suggesting Pyongyang might be open to increased business engagement after years of border restrictions. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- A Singapore court fined shipping employee Koh Poh Choo $2,600 for aiding in the illegal shipment of nearly $500,000 worth of alcohol and soft drinks to North Korea. The sentence was reduced due to her role as an employee following orders, without direct profit. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

Prepared by Faith Osinloye, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250722163316/https://mailchi.mp/01831552fb2e/hrnk-news-items-n-korean-leader-fires-public-security-minister-for-damage-from-downpours-in-border-areas?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

8. AUGUST

Thursday, August 1st, 2024

Floods cut access to Uiju Import Quarantine Center; Monument set up to commemorate N. Korean defectors who died during escapes

In North Korea:
Floods Cut Access to Uiju Import Quarantine Center (*38 North*, 7/31/2024)
N. Korea probably sustains huge casualties from heavy rains in border areas: unification ministry (*Yonhap*, 8/1/2024)
Satellite images reveal devastating floods in North Korea, displacing thousands (*NK News*, 8/1/2024)

In South Korea:
Ruling party policy chief steps down amid internal rift (*The Korea Herald*, 8/1/2024)
S. Korea proposes providing humanitarian aid to N. Korea over flood damage (*Yonhap*, 8/1/2024)
South Korea launches new cybersecurity council to counter North Korean threats (*NK News*, 8/1/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Monument set up to commemorate N. Korean defectors who died during escapes (*Yonhap*, 8/1/2024)
North and South Korea table tennis stars take selfie on Olympics podium in rare show of unity (*The Telegraph*, 7/31/2024)

International:
A fencer, a shooter and a special selfie: World falls in love with Korea's Olympic stars (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8/1/2024)
IP4, EU hold vice ministerial-level meeting to discuss potential areas for cooperation (*Yonhap*, 8/1/2024)
N. Korea's top envoy to Tehran attends inauguration ceremony of Iran's new president (*Yonhap*, 8/1/2024)
No N.K. nuclear attack scenario in upcoming major S. Korea-U.S. exercise: USFK commander (*Yonhap*, 8/1/2024)
North Korean divers tuck, twist and pike their way to Olympic silver (*NK News*, 8/1/2024)
PM meets Thailand's top diplomat in Seoul (*Yonhap*, 8/1/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. hold 1st-ever table-top exercise on integrating nuclear, conventional capabilities (*Yonhap*, 8/1/2024)
Top S. Korean, Australian military officials hold talks on security cooperation (*Yonhap*, 8/1/2024)
With China's order to leave, North Korean workers likely headed to Russia (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8/1/2024)

In North Korea:

- Heavy flooding around Sinuiju, a critical city along North Korea's border with China for facilitating trade between the two countries, appears to have submerged railway lines and cut off access to one of the country's main import quarantine centers. While the full extent of flood damage to the region cannot yet be assessed, this railway blockage is likely to disrupt cross-border trade in the short term. (Martyn WIlliams, *38 North*)
- North Korea may have sustained huge casualties from the latest downpour in border areas along the Amnok River, the unification ministry said Thursday, amid a news report that the number of those who died or went missing could reach as high as around 1,500. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Devastating floods in North Korea have wiped an entire village off the map and wreaked destruction along a river that runs through an area notorious for its weapons factories, according to NK Pro analysis of satellite imagery, indicating that the damage from recent heavy rains is much more severe than state media has let on. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- People Power Party Rep. Jeong Jeom-sig, who is considered part of pro-Yoon Suk Yeol faction within the party, announced his resignation from his post as the party's policy chief, or a member of the party's supreme council, on Thursday. (Jung Min-kyung, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea on Thursday proposed providing humanitarian aid to North Korea over damage from the recent downpours in its northern border areas along the Amnok River, as the North is believed to have sustained huge casualties. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea has launched a new cybersecurity body to coordinate the domestic response to North Korea cryptocurrency theft that funds its nuclear ambitions and other threats, following a wave of major breaches targeting official networks. (Joon Ha-park, Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- The unification ministry on Thursday unveiled a monument near the inter-Korean border to commemorate North Korean defectors who lost their lives during escapes from the repressive regime. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Olympic table tennis players from North and South Korea posed together for a selfie in a rare show of cross-border unity between the hostile neighbors. In what could prove one of the most enduring images of these Games, the two nations nestled together on the medal podium in Paris to take the shot. (Tom Morgan, *The Telegraph*)

International:

- Team Korea is breaking a sweat in its effort to collect medals at this year's Paris Olympics, with the country ranking at No. 6 on the Olympic medal table as of Thursday. There's no doubt that the 12 medals, including six golds, are a testament to the years of blood, sweat and tears of the athletes, but Team Korea is under the spotlight for more than just their talent. (Yim Seung-hye, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- South Korea and its counterparts from Indo-Pacific partner nations, as well as the European Union, have held a vice foreign ministerial-level meeting to discuss potential areas of future cooperation, Seoul's foreign ministry said Thursday. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's ambassador to Tehran has attended the inauguration ceremony of Iran's new President Masoud Pezeshkian and delivered a "warm greeting" from leader Kim Jong-un, state media reported Thursday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the United States will not incorporate a North Korean nuclear attack scenario into their upcoming major military exercise, the U.S. Forces Korea commander said Wednesday, despite expectations that the exercise would feature the nuclear crisis dimension for the first time. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- A pair of young North Koreans twisted and twirled through the air on their way to the country's first-ever Olympic medal in diving on Wednesday, taking silver in the women's synchronized 10-meter platform event. (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- Prime Minister Han Duck-soo met with Thailand's Foreign Minister Maris Sangiampongsa in Seoul on Thursday and discussed bilateral relations and future cooperation, Han's office said. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the United States staged their first-ever table-top exercise on integrating Seoul's advanced conventional forces with Washington's nuclear capabilities this week to better respond to North Korea's nuclear threats, officials said Thursday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's top military officer held video talks with his new Australian counterpart Thursday to discuss ways to enhance bilateral security cooperation, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- Following China's directive that North Korean workers with expired visas return home, Pyongyang has reportedly decided to relocate them to Russia. The move aligns with Pyongyang's growing focus on Moscow, particularly after President Vladimir Putin's visit to North Korea in June, amid strained relations with Beijing. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Prepared by Robert Walker, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250722163943/https://mailchi.mp/b591a21b7a91/hrnk-news-items-floods-cut-access-to-uiju-import-quarantine-center-monument-set-up-to-commemorate-n-korean-defectors-who-died-during-escapes?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, August 2nd, 2024

Four more North Korean companies register trademarks to enter Russian market; ROK Red Cross offers humanitarian aid to North Korea

In North Korea:

Four more North Korean companies register trademarks to enter Russian market (*NK News*, 8/2/2024)
Kim Jong Un wants Trump back, elite defector tells BBC (*BBC*, 8/2/2024)

In South Korea:
ROK Red Cross offers humanitarian aid to North Korea after devastating floods (*NK News*, 8/2/2024)
Ruling party seeks expulsion of opposition lawmaker over defector remarks (*The Korea Herald*, 8/2/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
No response from N. Korea on S. Korea's offer for flood relief: unification ministry (*Yonhap*, 8/2/2024)

International:
Germany joins US-led UN Command in South Korea policing armistice border (*Reuters*, 8/2/2024)
Pentagon official calls NCG 'best solution' to N.K. threats, cautions against S. Korea's nuclear option (*Yonhap*, 8/2/2024)
State Dept. decries N.K. trash balloons as 'reckless,' 'destabilizing' (*Yonhap*, 8/2/2024)

In North Korea:

- Four North Korean companies applied to register trademarks in Russia for products like tranquilizers, sweets, rice, and wine, reflecting a push to expand business ties between the two countries. However, experts question the feasibility and raise concerns about one company's connections to an arms manufacturer. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Ri Il Kyu, a high-ranking North Korean defector, believes that Donald Trump's return to the White House would benefit North Korea. Despite past failed talks, North Korea hopes to use its personal rapport with Trump to gain concessions, such as a freeze on its nuclear program. Ri describes Kim Jong Un as willing to use any means to ensure his survival, including exploiting international relations to strengthen North Korea's nuclear capabilities. (Jean Mackenzie, BBC)

In South Korea:

- Despite extensive damage from recent flooding, North Korea is unlikely to accept humanitarian aid from South Korea's Red Cross, as it emphasizes Kim Jong Un's response to the disaster. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- South Korea's ruling People Power Party has filed a motion to expel Democratic Party Rep. Choi Min-hee for allegedly making discriminatory comments about North Korean defector Park Choong-kwon during a confirmation hearing. (Moon Ki-hoon, *The Korea Herald*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea has not responded to South Korea's offer of humanitarian aid for flood victims in its northern border areas, according to Seoul's unification ministry. Despite attempts to communicate, there has been no reply from the North. (Kang Yoon-seung, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Germany has joined the U.S.-led United Nations Command (UNC) in South Korea as its 18th member. This move highlights the link between European and Indo-Pacific security and aims to strengthen the UNC's capabilities. The addition comes amid growing global alliances and concerns over North Korea's ties with Russia. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- Pentagon official Vipin Narang said the Nuclear Consultative Group (NCG) between South Korea and the U.S. is the best solution to North Korean threats, warning against South Korea developing its own nuclear weapons due to cost and vulnerability. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The State Department criticized North Korea's sending of trash-carrying balloons to South Korea as "reckless" and "destabilizing." The balloons have been found in over 3,300 locations, including Seoul's presidential office and Incheon Airport. The U.S. emphasized the safety of its citizens and will address the issue as needed. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Faith Osinloye, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250722164113/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-four-more-north-korean-companies-register-trademarks-to-enter-russian-market-rok-red-cross-offers-humanitarian-aid-to-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, August 3rd, 2024

Kim Jong Un slams ROK media over flood coverage and claims no deaths in Sinuiju; Flash floods damage North Korean weapons factories

In North Korea:
Flash floods damage North Korean weapons factories (*The Telegraph*, 8/2/2024)
Kim Jong Un slams ROK media over flood coverage and claims no deaths in Sinuiju (*NK News*, 8/3/2024)
North Korea in July 2024: A month in review and what's ahead (*NK News*, 8/2/2024)
North Korean leader accuses South Korea of a smear campaign over floods and hints at rejecting aid (*The Washington Post*, 8/2/2024)
North Korea's former No. 2 diplomat in Cuba describes his dramatic, swift defection (*The Washington Post*, 8/2/2024)
North Korea's Regional Development: The Long Journey Toward "20×10 Policy" (*38 North*, 8/2/2024)
Inter-Korean Relationship:
N.K. leader Kim slams S. Korean 'fabricated' news on flood damage in his 1st reaction to Seoul over downpours (*Yonhap*, 8/3/2024)

International:

Russia Is Desperate in Ukraine: Now Using North Korea 'Tank-Killer' Weapons (*National Interest*, 8/2/2024)
Trump says he got people back from N. Korea amid attention on prisoner swap with Russia (*Yonhap*, 8/3/2024)
Ukraine Will Freak: North Korean Armored Vehicles Now Being Used by Russia (*National Interest*, 8/2/2024)
U.S. will continue to monitor possibility of N.K. conducting nuclear test: Pentagon (*Yonhap*, 8/3/2024)
What Maduro's disputed election win means for North Korea-Venezuela ties (*NK News*, 8/2/2024)

In North Korea:

- Vast floods in North Korea are suspected to have damaged some of the reclusive regime's most important factories, according to new satellite images. (Nicola Smith, *The Telegraph*)
- DPRK leader Kim Jong Un on Friday condemned South Korea's "garbage media" and rejected claims that up to 1,500 have died in recent floods, claiming not a single death was recorded in Sinuiju. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- Every month, NK Proconducts an in-depth analytic review of news on the Korean Peninsula. This Month in Review covers the period of July 1, 2024 to July 31, 2024. In addition to an executive summary providing top-line findings, the review includes detailed analysis on a wide range of other specialist focus areas. (Arius Derr, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un accused South Korea's "rubbish" media of tarnishing the North's image by allegedly exaggerating the death tolls from recent floods that hit the country's northwest region, and hinted that he would refuse Seoul's offer for aid. (Kim Tong-Hyung, *The Washington Post*)
- When Ri Il Gyu, North Korea's No. 2 diplomat in Cuba, finally decided to flee to South Korea in frustration over his highly repressive, corrupt homeland in November, he finished all necessary prep work alone. About a week later, he told his family to be ready to leave Cuba together in less than eight hours. (Hyung-Jin Kim, *The Washington Post*)
- The North Korean leadership appears to be trying to ultimately establish a sustainable "regional innovation system" where industrial facilities for production, educational institutions for training personnel and research institutions for technological support, which North Korea has endeavored to build since 2008, all come together to make one whole. (Hojye Kang, *38 North*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has condemned South Korean media outlets for "fabricating" the scale of damage from recent floods in his country, state media reported Saturday, in his first public reaction to the South over the downpours. (Kim Soo-yeon, Yonhap)

International:

- The war in Ukraine has taken an unexpected turn, forcing Russia to scramble for military resources and turn to allies like Iran and North Korea for support. Isolated on the global stage due to its illegal invasion and allegations of war crimes, Russia has received suicide

drones from Iran and artillery shells from North Korea. (Stavros_Atlamazoglou, National Interest)

- The prospect of South Korean and North Korean military platforms facing off in Europe is becoming increasingly likely as South Korea's K2 Black Panther tanks have been adopted by NATO member Poland, and North Korean-made weapons are now appearing in Ukraine. (Peter Suciu, *National Interest*)
- Former U.S. President Donald Trump has highlighted that he brought back home some people held in North Korea during his presidency, as public attention shifted to a landmark prisoner swap deal that saw the release of 16 people from Russian captivity this week. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States will continue to monitor the possibility of North Korea conducting another nuclear test, a Pentagon spokesperson said Friday, amid concerns that Pyongyang could engage in provocative acts around the U.S. presidential election in November. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Venezuelan strongman Nicolas Maduro claimed victory in the country's disputed presidential election this week, drawing widespread skepticism of the results and triggering major domestic protests alleging fraud. (Gabriela Bernal, *NK News*)

Prepared by Maria Fernanda de Almeida, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250722164227/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-kim-jong-un-slams-rok-media-over-flood-coverage-and-claims-no-deaths-in-sinuiju-flash-floods-damage-north-korean-weapons-factories?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, August 4th, 2024

HRNK's Submission to the Commission on the Status of Women

Top News:
HRNK's Submission to the Commission on the Status of Women (HRNK, 08/01/2024)

International:
N.K. leader expresses gratitude for Putin's offer of help with rain damage recovery (*Yonhap*, 08/04/2024)
Will North Korea accept external aid for flood disaster? (*The Korea Times*, 08/04/2024)

Top News:

Full credit for this submission goes to HRNK team members Diletta de Luca, Rick Herssevoort, Damian Reddy, Begum Tiritoglu, SoEun Park, and Suha Choi. HRNK is grateful for their terrific contributions to our work and mission.

Gender-based violence in North Korea is influenced by the broader socio-political and economic landscape of the DPRK regime; the allocation of already scarce resources to the nuclear program, coupled with international sanctions, exacerbates the humanitarian crisis and heightens women's vulnerability to gender-based violence. This diversion of resources leads to scarcity of essential goods and services, placing women, who are often responsible for securing food and resources for their families, in precarious situations such as exploitative labor or transactional sex.

Nuclear testing leads to severe environmental degradation affecting agricultural production where women are often primary workers, thereby impacting food security. (*HRNK*)

International:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has expressed gratitude for Russian President Vladimir Putin's offer of assistance with rain damage recovery, saying that he will seek Russia's help when necessary. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has not officially accepted any external aid — not even offers from its closest ally, Russia — as it grapples with the fallout from a massive flood in its northwestern region. This approach aligns with its leader Kim Jong-un's apparent strategy to emphasize self-reliance and project an image that "everything is under control," according to observers, Sunday. (Lee Hyo-jin, *The Korea Times*)

Prepared by Maria Fernanda de Almeida, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250722164505/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-hrnks-submission-to-the-commission-on-the-status-of-women?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Monday, August 5th, 2024

North Korean Escapees Announce, "Washington Declaration" : "We Will Fight to the End for Human Rights in North Korea"

Top News:
North Korean Escapees Announce, "Washington Declaration" : "We Will Fight to the End for Human Rights in North Korea" (VOA, 07/25/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:

Authorities issue warning against N. Korean hackers trying to steal construction, machinery data (*Yonhap*, 08/05/2024)
N. Korean leader Kim attends ceremony commemorating tactical ballistic missile weapon system (*Yonhap*, 08/05/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korean commandos on Kim Il-sung mission to get first apology (*The Korea Herald*, 08/05/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N. Korea's 250 new missile launchers could overwhelm South's defense: experts (*The Korea Times*, 08/05/2024)
North Korea says it deployed nuclear-capable missiles to South Korean border (*NK News*, 08/05/2024)
ROK turns up loudspeakers, a North Korean diplomat's testimony and defector art (*NK News*, 07/23/2024)

International:
Kim Jong Un wants Trump back, elite defector tells BBC (*BBC*, 08/02/2024)
North vows to strengthen nuclear arsenal regardless of U.S. election results (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/05/2024)

Top News:

- Young North Korean escapees issued the "Washington Declaration for Dignity, Hope, and Freedom," committing to fight for North Korean human rights. They condemn the regime's oppression and aim to promote rights through their professions and international solidarity. **Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea,** stated that the Washington Declaration is "an important symbolic step in focusing world attention on the human rights violations perpetrated by the Kim regime in North Korea." (Kim Young-kwon, VOA)

In North Korea:

- Cybersecurity authorities on Monday issued a joint warning against North Korean hackers trying to steal construction and machinery data in South Korea. (Kim Na-young, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has attended a ceremony to commemorate the transfer of a new-type tactical ballistic missile weapon system, which serves as the "pivot military hardware" in the armed forces. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- South Korean commandos who died as they escaped from Silmido -- an uninhabited island where they were being trained to kill then-North Korean leader Kim Il-sung -- are due to receive an apology from the country's defense chief for the first time in 53 years. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea said Monday that it is set to deploy 250 ballistic missile launchers to frontline military units, a development that experts warn could pose serious threats to South Korea's missile defense capabilities. (Lee Hyo-jin, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un handed over 250 new “tactical ballistic missile launchers” to “front-line units” on the border with South Korea at a ceremony Sunday (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- South Korea restarted “full-scale” propaganda broadcasts from border loudspeakers this week in retaliation over North Korea’s ninth trash balloon launch to date. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

International:

- North Korean defector Ri Il Kyu sees Trump's potential return as a major opportunity for North Korea, despite past failed talks. He warns that promises to freeze North Korea's nuclear program would be deceptive and ultimately strengthen the regime. (Jean Mackenzie, *BBC*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un pledged to strengthen the country's nuclear deterrence against the United States, labeling it a "hostile state" that North Korea will contend with for generations, irrespective of the outcome of the upcoming U.S. presidential election. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

North Korean Escapees Announce "Washington Declaration" : "We Will Fight to the End for Human Rights in North Korea"

Recently, young North Korean escapees have issued "Washington Declaration for Dignity, Hope, and Freedom" vowing to fight tirelessly for the enhancement of human rights for the people of North Korea. American experts note the growing solidarity among the escapees in their efforts to oppose the North Korean regime. This is Kim Young-kwon reporting.

On July 22nd and 23rd, ten young North Korean escapees, currently working in various professions, announced the "Washington Declaration for Dignity, Hope, and Freedom" during several North Korean human rights events in Washington.

Through the declaration, the escapees stated, "As individuals who have experienced both dictatorship and democracy, we firmly reject all forces that suppress individual freedom and human rights. We strongly condemn all systematic, inhumane acts of the North Korean dictatorship, along with the continuous and systematic brainwashing that justifies these acts."

They emphasized their commitment to promoting North Korean human rights in their daily lives and through their professional fields to foster a sustainable movement through international solidarity and the popularization of these rights.

The declaration also included intentions "to create popular empathy for North Korean human rights through cultural content, to build a community of young, skilled individuals, to devise and

implement various strategies to enhance the self-determination of North Koreans, and to collaborate with activists around the world."

Lee Seong-ju, a visiting researcher at George Mason University and co-leader of the Washington Declaration, told VOA on July 23rd that the young escapees had meticulously prepared the declaration through multiple meetings in Seoul.

[Transcript: Researcher Lee Sung-ju] "We hope this declaration will become a message of hope for the people of North Korea, showing that empowerment and self-determination are possible. As long as we are here, the human rights of North Koreans will not be forgotten. We have come here to send a message that we will always fight together until the values of human rights, freedom, and dignity are achieved for the people of North Korea."

Researcher Lee and other young escapees likened this declaration to the February 28th Independence Declaration made by Korean students in Japan during the Japanese colonial period, which contributed to the later March 1st Movement.

[Transcript: Researcher Lee Sung-ju] "On February 8th, Korean students in Japan drafted a declaration that 33 people gathered to refine during the March 1st Movement. This declaration became part of our provisional government and the first constitution of the Republic of Korea. Therefore, this declaration will not end here; this year it's the Washington Declaration, next will be the Seoul Declaration, followed by Tokyo, London, and we will continue making such declarations around the world."

Participants in the Washington Declaration included various young North Korean escapees working in Korea as artists, journalists, IT entrepreneurs, social influencers, and representatives of civic organizations.

Last month, Kim Geum-hyeok, who spoke at a UN Security Council meeting on North Korean human rights, noted that the declaration also aims to represent the young generation in North Korea, who are suffering more than ever due to the so-called three evil laws (Anti-Reactionary Thought Law, Youth Education Law, and Pyongyang Dialect Preservation Law).

[Transcript: Kim Geum-hyeok] "The Kim Jong-un regime is targeting the market generation with ridiculous laws, making every effort to prevent them from reaching out to the outside world. At this time, it's up to us, who share the same experiences and memories, to start initiating hopeful actions for them. If the situation in North Korea does not change, it is our responsibility as human rights activists."

Webtoon artist Jeon Ju-ok, active in South Korea, mentioned that more young people are escaping North Korea not just for survival but in search of freedom, underscoring the increasingly critical role of young escapees.

[Transcript: Jeon Ju-ok] "Because we have survived through the market system, our perception of and attitude toward capital are different, and we have the ability to decide how to live our lives. As you might have noticed, while we previously discussed the most basic human rights, now we are talking about human rights based on each individual's capabilities and missions, significantly broadening our range of activities, including into cultural areas."

IT startup founder Oh Gwang-myeong expressed his hope to inspire North Korean youth and assist them in future reunification efforts by developing helpful IT-related business ideas.

[Transcript: Oh Gwang-myeong] "We have not abandoned the people of North Korea. Moreover, when reunification happens, we can provide a lot of help and advice on how to conduct business and start startups."

South Korea's Minister of Unification, Kim Young-ho, speaking at a North Korean human rights event in Washington this week, noted that over half of the North Korean escapees who arrived in South Korea last year were from the 20-30 age group and high-ranking officials, reflecting the influence of the Korean Wave.

In this context, Kang Chun-hyuk, a rapper, painter, and writer actively working in South Korea, stated, "The enactment of North Korea's three evil laws is influenced by the power of Hallyu (Korean Wave) culture and arts," and he committed to actively promoting North Korean human rights through his art.

[Transcript: Kang Chun-hyuk] "In a country where the right to see and express is absent, we must use all means—visual, auditory, and everything else—to inject more cultural content into North Korean society. Change must start from within that society because art has always been at the forefront or equally involved in every revolution or societal change. We believe it's crucial to inform both the international community and North Korean society about these changes through art."

Jeong Seo-yun, CEO of the NGO 'Unipivot', spoke about a new campaign to change the perspective within South Korea regarding North Korean human rights, which is often seen through a political lens.

[Transcript: Jeong Seo-yun] "It's disappointing that in South Korean society, discussions about North Korean human rights are divided between conservatives and progressives. We need to focus on the people in North Korea, not political affiliations. By doing so, regardless of being conservative or progressive, everyone can engage in human rights activism for the people in North Korea."

Popular actor and Unification Ministry ambassador for North Korean human rights, Yu Ji-tae, expressed sympathy with the appeals of the young escapees on the 23rd to VOA, advocating for the depoliticization of North Korean human rights issues.

[Transcript: Yu Ji-tae] "I don't believe discussing North Korean human rights is a political activity. It's simply about human rights, which we must protect. Even now, North Korean escapees trafficked in third countries are derogatorily called 'pigs.' They're treated not as people but as pigs, so it's necessary to have a system that provides them protection, and such protection should exist in South Korea."

American experts have evaluated the "Washington Declaration" issued by young North Korean escapees as having significant symbolic importance.

David Maxwell, Deputy Director at the Asia-Pacific Strategy Center, highlighted on VOA on July 24th, "This is an excellent initiative from future leaders of a United Republic of Korea. They will be among the founding mothers and fathers of a new free and unified Korea… It is important for Koreans

remaining in the north to see this vision statement and to know it was written by fellow Koreans from the north. The example of their leadership and their success in the ROK and around the world is a powerful message of hope and inspiration to those who remain enslaved in the Guerrilla Dynasty and Gulag State of the north."

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), described the Washington Declaration as "an important symbolic measure that focuses global attention on the human rights abuses perpetrated by the Kim regime in North Korea." **Scarlatoiu** added, "The Washington Declaration for Dignity, Hope, and Freedom is an important symbolic step in focusing world attention on the human rights violations perpetrated by the Kim regime in North Korea. While acknowledging the contributions of civil society and activists worldwide, the declaration calls for the sustainability of efforts to address the North Korean human rights situation, irrespective of political affiliation or the outcome of elections."

Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, emphasized, "Well, I would say that if there's anything that North Korea fears, it's those who escape the country and tell the truth about the Kim family rule, the impoverishment, the political oppression, and the focus on weapons of mass destruction. This declaration shows the growing unity of those who escape, not only to tell their stories but to join hands to speak directly to the North Korean people and work to counter the oppression of the North Korean Kim regime."

This is Young Kwon Kim reporting for VOA News.

Prepared by Smaranda Gheorghe, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250722165003/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korean-escapees-announce-washington-declaration-we-will-fight-to-the-end-for-human-rights-in-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, August 6th, 2024

North Korea's Nuclear Development Weakens Women's Rights... UN Needs to Form Expert Tea

Top News:
North Korea's Nuclear Development Weakens Women's Rights...UN Needs to Form Expert Team (VOA, 08/02/2024)
*This video has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
Flood-destroyed bridges likely to obstruct North Korean nuke program, arms sales (NK News, 08/06/2024)

North Korean band rocks out to national anthem in unusual show for Kim Jong Un (*NK News*, 08/06/2024)
North Korea set to increasingly use 'gray zone' tactics to challenge US (*NK News*, 08/06/2024)

In South Korea:
Anti-foreign spy bills floated after alleged leak of agents' identities (*The Korea Herald*, 08/06/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
South Korea warns against North's hacking of construction data (*Radio Free Asia*, 08/05/2024)

International:
Peru reaffirms support for Korea joining Pacific Alliance (*The Korea Herald*, 08/06/2024)
N. Korea denounces Germany for joining U.N. Command (*Yonhap*, 08/06/2024)
Top Biden officials tout improved Seoul-Tokyo ties, cooperation against N.K. threats as key policy feats (*Yonhap*, 08/06/2024)
U.S. calls on N. Korea to stop 'unproductive' steps after event for tactical missile launcher transfer (*Yonhap*, 08/06/2024)

Top News:

- A report submitted by **The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea**, a U.S. human rights organization, to the UN Commission on the Status of Women pointed out that the North Korean regime's nuclear weapons development severely infringes on the human rights of North Korean citizens, especially those of women. It recommended that the UN General Assembly form an independent team of experts to thoroughly investigate the link between North Korea's nuclear program and human rights violations. **Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the HRNK**, notes in an interview, "Very generally, women have taken the brunt of oppression out of the Kim Jong-un regime. It's women who have assumed responsibility for the survival of their women." (Kim Young-gwan, VOA)

In North Korea:

- The destruction of multiple bridges by flooding and landslides in North Korea will likely disrupt the country's nuclear program, as well as weapons production and exports to Russia, according to *NK Pro* analysis of satellite imagery taken in recent days. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- A highly unusual performance kicked off a military ceremony in Pyongyang on Sunday, state television footage showed, as a nine-piece band fronted by female musicians in DPRK flag T-shirts played a heavy rock rendition of the country's national anthem, "Aegukka." (Joe Smith, *NK News*)
- North Korea will increasingly exploit the space between peaceful diplomacy and direct conflict to threaten the U.S. without provoking confrontation, according to a new declassified U.S. intelligence report. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- A series of bills targeting foreign espionage were floated in a rare show of bipartisan lawmaking in the National Assembly in the past week, following recent allegations of identity leaks of covert military agents. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- South Korea's cybersecurity authorities warned about attempts by North Korea to hack construction and machinery information to steal data to support its development efforts. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)

International:

- Peru reaffirmed support for South Korea in the Pacific Alliance while celebrating its 203rd Independence Day in Seoul on Thursday. (Sanjay Kumar, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea criticized Germany for its recent entry into the United States-led U.N. Command (UNC), calling it an act of ruining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)
- Top U.S. officials highlighted "unprecedented" defense and economic cooperation between South Korea, the United States and Japan, and tighter multinational collaboration against North Korean threats as feats of President Joe Biden's Indo-Pacific diplomacy in an opinion piece published Monday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States called on North Korea Monday to stop "provocative" and "unproductive" steps and return to dialogue after Pyongyang said it held a ceremony over the weekend for transferring 250 new tactical missile launchers to frontline military units. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

North Korea's Nuclear Development Weakens Women's Rights...UN Needs to Form Expert Team

Kim Young-gwan, VOA

English Translation of the Video:

A report submitted by a U.S. human rights organization to the UN Commission on the Status of Women pointed out that the North Korean regime's nuclear weapons development severely infringes on the human rights of North Korean citizens, especially those of women. It recommended that the UN General Assembly form an independent team of experts to thoroughly investigate the link between North Korea's nuclear program and human rights violations. Report by Kim Young-gwan.

The report on human rights violations against North Korean women was submitted by the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, a human rights NGO in Washington D.C., to the UN Commission on the Status of Women. The report noted that the Kim Jong-un regime's focus on nuclear weapons development neglects the welfare and human rights of its citizens, exacerbating the human rights violations faced by women and girls. It highlighted that gender-based violence in North Korea is heavily influenced by the regime's extensive socio-political and economic impacts, with scarce resources allocated to the nuclear program and international sanctions worsening the

humanitarian crisis, increasing women's vulnerability to gender-based violence. Furthermore, the report pointed out that the diversion of resources leads to a shortage of essential goods and services, essentially putting women— who are responsible for securing food and resources for their families— in precarious situations such as exploitative labor or prostitution.

Interview with **Greg Scarlatoiu**: "Very generally, women have taken the brunt of oppression out of the Kim Jong-un regime. It's women who have assumed responsibility for the survival of their women. It's women who are most active in North Korea's jang-madang (open market), farmer's market, and black market. They are the ones who get arrested for perceived wrongdoing."

The report also pointed out that radiation exposure from North Korea's nuclear tests and facilities has serious effects on women's health. It cited previous radiation exposure investigations by South Korea's Transitional Justice Working Group on defectors from the vicinity of the Punggye-ri nuclear test site, revealing severe health issues faced by women in the area, extending beyond reproductive health to chronic diseases, cancer, and radiation-induced mental health problems, worsening their quality of life. The report criticized the lack of accountability and transparency by North Korea, which leaves women affected by radiation exposure without proper support, perpetuating a vicious cycle of neglect and deterioration. It recommended that the UN General Assembly consider forming a fair and independent team of experts to emphasize both security and human rights issues, including the link between North Korea's nuclear program and the human rights and human security of its citizens, with a special focus on women's health and rights.

Interview with **Greg Scarlatoiu**: "We want to see the two sets of issues being brought together. Human rights violations and security challenges— it's a very simple proposition."

The committee has asked the North Korean delegation of the UN for their stance on the report and is awaiting a response. In a report submitted to the UN Economic and Social Council in 2021, North Korean authorities claimed that they had already achieved gender equality through the proclamation of gender equality laws and had accomplished most of the UN's sustainable development goals. This was reporter Kim Young-gwan from VOA.

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250722165349/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-koreas-nuclear-development-weakens-womens-rights-un-needs-to-form-expert-team?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Wednesday, August 7th, 2024

Seoul says North Korea lured ethnic Koreans from Japan, violating human rights

In North Korea:
Growing defections by high-ranking NK officials suggest possible regime collapse in near future, says defector (*The Korea Times*, 08/07/2024)
Kim Jong Un sends 300K young people to live and work in flood disaster zone (*NK News*, 08/07/2024)
NK leader describes recovery work in flood-hit region as 'revolutionary construction' (*Yonhap*, 08/07/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Seoul says North Korea lured ethnic Koreans from Japan, violating human rights (*NK News*, 08/07/2024)Continue

International:
North Korea belatedly begins Olympic broadcasts after IOC agreement (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/07/2024)
North Korea nabs bronze medals in diving and wrestling; Olympic tally up to 5 (*NK News*, 08/07/2024)
North Korea slams Germany for joining US-led UN Command overseeing armistice (*NK News*, 08/07/2024)
Russia, North Korea sign deal to fight infectious diseases (*Radio Free Asia*, 08/06/2024)
Senior U.S., Swedish diplomats voice concerns over 'worrying' N.K. trends (*Yonhap*, 08/07/2024)

In North Korea:

- Han Seo-hee, a North Korean defector and TV personality, observes that the increasing defections of high-ranking officials, such as former diplomat Ri Il-gyu, indicate a potential regime collapse. Her insights, drawn from personal experience and recent developments, highlight the growing disillusionment within North Korea's elite. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)
- Hundreds of thousands of young North Koreans will be sent to live and rebuild in a major flood disaster zone on the Chinese border, according to state media, as part of leader Kim Jong Un's recent campaign to instill obedience through hard labor. Kim oversaw a ceremony in Pyongyang on Tuesday to encourage Paektusan Hero Youth Shock Brigade enlistees and send them off to rebuild after devastating floods in Sinuiju and Uiju of North Phyongan Province. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has attended a ceremony to dispatch young workers to flood-affected areas on the northern border, describing the restoration efforts as a "gigantic revolutionary construction campaign," state media said Wednesday. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- South Korea's Truth and Reconciliation Commission has found that North Korea systematically violated human rights during a decades-long campaign to lure ethnic Koreans from Japan to North Korea, concluding the first ROK government probe into the issue. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

International:

- North Korea began broadcasting the Paris 2024 Olympics ten days after the opening ceremony, having secured broadcast rights from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) following the cessation of support from South Korean broadcasters. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea added two bronze medals in diving and wrestling at the Paris Olympics on Tuesday, finding success in new and old areas of strength as it brought its medal tally to five at these Games. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Korea has denounced Germany's decision to join the United Nations Command (UNC) overseeing the Korean War Armistice, comparing the move to its actions before World War II and threatening to accelerate military development in response. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- Russia and North Korea have agreed to cooperate on healthcare, medical education and science, Russian state news agency TASS reported. Under the agreement, Russia and North Korea will work together in areas such as child health, healthy lifestyles and the fight against infectious diseases. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)
- Senior U.S. and Swedish diplomats expressed concern over North Korea's "worrying trends," including its growing military cooperation with Russia and the human rights situation in the reclusive state during their talks in Washington this week, the State Department said Tuesday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Gabrielle Drinkwine, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250722165540/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-seoul-says-north-korea-lured-ethnic-koreans-from-japan-violating-human-rights?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, August 8th, 2024

North Korea punishes students and officials for watching banned Korean War film

In North Korea:
North Korea punishes students and officials for watching banned Korean War film (*Radio Free Asia*, 08/07/2024)

In South Korea:
Defense chief apologizes over leak scandal (*Korea Herald*, 08/08/2024)
Gov't draws up measures to better support N. Korean defectors (*Yonhap*, 08/08/2024)
South Korean official accused of exposing undercover agents turned over to prosecutors (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/08/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
1 N. Korean defects through 'neutral waters' between 2 Koreas: military sources (*Yonhap*, 08/08/2024)
N. Korea continues to install mines, barriers inside DMZ despite downpours (*Yonhap*, 08/08/2024)
N. Korean Olympic athletes receiving Samsung smartphones could violate U.N. sanctions: Seoul (*Yonhap*, 08/08/2024)
Yoon expected to unveil new unification vision in Liberation Day speech (*Yonhap*, 08/07/2024)

International:
N. Korea appoints new ambassador to Cuba (*Yonhap*, 08/08/2024)
North Korea expert, missing for months, detained in Switzerland for espionage (*NK News*, 08/08/2024)
South Korean nuclear weapons would fracture US ties, defence chief says (*Reuters*, 08/08/2024)
State Dept. notes 'near consensus' against N.K. actions, for return to diplomacy (*Yonhap*, 08/08/2024)
U.S. extends N.K. travel restriction by another year, cites 'serious' risk of arrest, long-term detention (*Yonhap*, 08/08/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has kicked four university students out of school, sentenced another to eight months of hard labor, and fired government officials because they secretly watched a big budget North Korean propaganda film that was banned only five months after its release. (Moon Sung Hui, *Radio Free Asia*)

In South Korea:

- Minister of National Defense Shin Won-sik apologized Thursday over high-profile allegations that a Defense Intelligence Command official leaked agents' identities to Chinese hackers earlier this year. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- The unification ministry on Thursday approved a package of support measures aimed at helping North Korean defectors better adjust to life in South Korea. The measures, approved in an interagency meeting, include giving priority child care assistance to working mothers and expanding education support for children of defectors born overseas. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- A civilian official of the Korea Defense Intelligence Command (KDIC) accused of leaking the personal information of South Korea's undercover agents overseas to a Chinese national was handed over to military prosecutors on Thursday. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- A North Korean defected to South Korea on Thursday by crossing "neutral waters" between the two Koreas, multiple military sources said. The individual crossed the neutral zone of the Han River estuary located west of the inter-Korean land border and arrived at South Korea's Gyodong Island off the west coast early Thursday and expressed intent to defect. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

- North Korea has continued to install land mines and barriers within the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating the two Koreas despite recent heavy downpours and mine explosions. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- The provision of Samsung smartphones to North Korean Olympic athletes in Paris is subject to a possible violation of U.N. Security Council (UNSC) resolutions banning the North's access to industrial equipment, Seoul officials said Thursday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol is expected to unveil the government's new vision for unification between the two Koreas when he addresses the nation on Liberation Day later this month, ruling party officials said Wednesday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- North Korea on Thursday appointed a new top envoy to Cuba, nearly five months after its former ambassador left the Caribbean nation following the establishment of diplomatic ties between South Korea and Cuba. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- Investigation finds ex-UN official from Canada vanished due to rare arrest on suspicions of spying, likely for China. He has now been in pretrial detainment for several months pending the conclusion of an investigation by the Swiss attorney general's office. (Chad O'Carroll, Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- South Korea could rupture its U.S. alliance and shock financial markets if it started building nuclear weapons, Defence Minister Shin Won-sik told Reuters, dismissing renewed domestic calls for the country's own arsenal to deter North Korea. (Hyonhee Shin, Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- The United States has extended its travel restriction for North Korea by another year, the State Department said Wednesday, citing a "serious" risk to its citizens of arrest and long-term detention in the reclusive state. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- A State Department spokesperson on Wednesday highlighted "near consensus" among many countries against North Korea's provocative actions and for its return to dialogue, after the United States and Australia called for the "complete" denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a joint statement this week. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Valerie Johnson, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250722165827/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-punishes-students-and-officials-for-watching-banned-korean-war-film?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, August 9th, 2024

Footage of Kim Yo-jong bowing signals NK leader's daughter as heir

In North Korea:
Footage of Kim Yo-jong bowing signals NK leader's daughter as heir (*The Korea Times*, 08/09/2024)
N. Korea unilaterally applies for taekwondo's inscription as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage(*Yonhap*, 08/09/2024)

In South Korea:
Yoon visits military headquarters on last day of summer vacation (*Yonhap*, 08/09/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
No sign of North Korean missile launchers arriving on southern border: Seoul (*Radio Free Asia*, 08/09/2024)
More info needed on link between loudspeaker broadcasts, N. Korean's defection: military (*Yonhap*, 08/09/2024)

International:
IOC denies allegations that North Korean athletes received Samsung smartphones (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/09/2024)
Korea's climb in U.S. trade deficit rankings for H1 sparks concerns of retaliation (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/09/2024)
Tennessee man arrested for allegedly using IT worker scheme to raise money for North Korea's weapons program (CNN, 08/08/2024)

In North Korea:

- Recent footage of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's young daughter being escorted to the podium by her aunt, Kim Yo-jong, at a ceremony in Pyongyang has sparked speculation that the child may be considered her father's potential successor. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korea has unilaterally applied to list taekwondo, a traditional Korean martial art, as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), the UNESCO website showed Friday.(Kim Na-young, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- President Yoon Suk Yeol visited the headquarters of the armed forces in the central city of Gyeryong on Friday to inspect security posture and examine preparations for upcoming joint military drills between South Korea and the United States, his office said. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- There is no sign of North Korea deploying missile launchers toward its border with South Korea, the South's military said on Friday, casting doubt on a North Korean announcement that it was sending 250 new tactical ballistic missile launchers to the border. (Kang Tae-jun, *Radio Free Asia*)
- South Korea's military said Friday that further analysis is necessary to determine whether South Korea's propaganda loudspeaker broadcasts affected the recent defection of a North Korean amid speculation the anti-Pyongyang campaign may have prompted the person to flee the North. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

International:

- The International Olympic Committee (IOC) denied allegations that North Korean athletes at the Paris 2024 Olympics received Samsung smartphones, which could have violated international sanctions on Pyongyang for its nuclear and missile programs. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JongAng Daily*)
- The U.S. has recorded a higher trade deficit with Korea than Japan for the first time, driven by increased Korean exports, particularly cars. Experts are concerned that this could lead to tighter tariffs if the next U.S. administration prioritizes reducing trade deficits. (Na Sang-Hyeon, *Korea JongAng Daily*)
- A Tennessee man has been arrested for allegedly working to raise money for North Korea's weapons program, the Justice Department said on Thursday. (Sean Lyngaas, CNN)

Prepared by Jangyun Yoo, HRNK Research Intern

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Saturday, August 10th, 2024

What we've learned from Joseph Kim, North Korean escapee and our friend and colleague

Top News:
What we've learned from Joseph Kim, North Korean escapee and our friend and colleague (*George W. Bush Presidential Center*, 08/09/2024)
No North Korean escapees have entered the U.S. as refugees for over two and a half years... "The escape environment has drastically changed." (VOA, 08/01/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
N. Korean leader rejects international aid to deal with flood damage (*Yonhap*, 08/10/2024)
North Korean leader says thousands of flood victims will be brought to capital for care (VOA, 08/10/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N. Korea launches suspected trash-carrying balloons toward S. Korea again (*Yonhap*, 08/10/2024)
Seoul says North Korea has flown more trash balloons toward South Korea (*AP News*, 08/10/2024)
South Korea could take 'years to rebuild' spy networks after leak exposes undercover agents (*South China Morning Post*, 08/09/2024)

International:
Here's Why All Olympic Athletes Were Gifted Free Smartphones Except The North Koreans (*OutKick*, 08/10/2024)
South Korean Nuclear Weapons Warning Amid North Provocation (*Newsweek*, 08/09/2024)

Top News:

- Joseph Kim is leaving his role as Expert-in-Residence at the Bush Institute to further his education at Harvard. But the North Korean escapee's wisdom has left an indelible mark on all of us at the Bush Institute. (*George W. Bush Presidential Center*)
- The number of North Korean refugees entering the United States has been nonexistent for over two and a half years. This has been attributed to rapidly changing conditions for escapees, such as a drastic decrease in their numbers, increasing difficulties in movement within China, and skyrocketing broker fees. (Kim Young-kwon, VOA)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has pledged to bring victims of recent heavy downpours to the capital city of Pyongyang to take care of them without outside help, state media said Saturday. (Kim Eun-Jung, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea will not seek outside help to recover from floods that devastated areas near the country's border with China, leader Kim Jong Un said as he ordered officials to bring thousands of displaced residents to the capital to provide them better care. (Associated Press, VOA)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea launched balloons presumed to be carrying trash toward South Korea again Saturday, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said, marking a resumption after more than two weeks. (Chae Yun-Hwan, Yonhap)
- South Korea's military says North Korea is again flying balloons likely carrying trash toward the South, adding to a bizarre psychological warfare campaign amid growing tensions between the war-divided rivals. (Kim Tong-Hyung, *AP News*)
- A list containing the names and identities of numerous South Korean undercover agents has been leaked to a suspected North Korean operative, sparking intense criticism over the apparent violation of discipline within Seoul's military intelligence agency. (Park Chan-Kyong, *South China Morning Post*)

International:

- Just like college football players in bowl games, Olympians, too, are greeted with complimentary gifts to "thank" them for their participation. And in the 2024 Paris Games, those goodie bags included a free smartphone. (Amber Harding, *Outkick*)
- One of South Korea's top officials has warned that the country developing its own nuclear weapons could spell catastrophe, and called for "peaceful" means of deterring North Korea's threats of nuclear escalation. (High Cameron, *Newsweek*)

No North Korean escapees have entered the U.S. as refugees for over two and a half years... "The escape environment has drastically changed"

Kim Young-kwon, VOA
August 1, 2024
https://www.voakorea.com/a/7725104.html

The number of North Korean refugees entering the United States has been nonexistent for over two and a half years. This has been attributed to rapidly changing conditions for escapees, such as a drastic decrease in their numbers, increasing difficulties in movement within China, and skyrocketing broker fees. This is Kim Young-kwon reporting.

No North Korean nationals were granted refugee status to enter the United States in the first half of this year.

According to the latest statistics from the Refugee Processing Center (RPC) under the U.S. Department of State, there were no North Korean entries.

Among refugees from East Asia, which includes North Korea, a total of 5,202 individuals from five countries entered the United States between October of last year and the end of June.

The vast majority were from Myanmar (Burma), accounting for 5,035 people, followed by 103 from Vietnam, 55 from Cambodia, 7 from China, and 2 from Indonesia.

The last time a North Korean refugee entered the United States was in November 2021.

Consequently, the number of North Koreans granted refugee status and entering the United States under the North Korean Human Rights Act, enacted by the U.S. Congress in 2004, remains at 224.

A State Department spokesperson, responding to VOA's request for comment on the matter on the 30th, did not provide a direct answer, instead stating, "When North Korean asylum seekers, including escapees, make it safely to other countries, we encourage host countries to take steps to provide protection, ease suffering, uphold human dignity, and provide critical assistance."

North Korean refugees in the United States expressed deep disappointment.

Deborah Choi, who became the first North Korean refugee to enter the U.S. under the North Korean

Human Rights Act in 2006 and is now a U.S. citizen, said she expected at least 1,000 people to have entered by now, noting that 200 over 20 years is far too few.

[Recording: Deborah Choi] "It's very unfortunate. I wish more North Koreans could
experience the freedom we enjoy in America, even just one more person. America still has plenty of opportunities, regardless of one's background. If someone puts in the effort, the opportunities are endless. I hope a good leader is elected in this year's presidential election who can create a system that provides better conditions and opportunities for minorities, especially North Korean refugees."

Support groups and brokers involved in assisting North Korean escapees pointed out that the absence of North Korean refugees entering the United States for over 30 months is due to significant changes in the environment for escapees.

They cited a sharp decline in the overall number of escapees since the COVID-19 pandemic, difficulties in moving within China, and the skyrocketing cost of broker fees, now exceeding $10,000.

Pastor Sung-eun Kim of the Caleb Mission, a South Korean organization that has been assisting North Korean escapees for over 20 years, said that the widespread knowledge within the escapees community expressing that it takes an average of one to two years or more to get to the U.S. has dampened the desire to go there.

[Recording: Pastor Sung-eun Kim] "Defection has only resumed for about a year since the COVID-19 pandemic. It typically takes about a year and a half to two years for those aiming for the U.S., and while the door may be open, it doesn't seem like the right time yet in terms of procedures. There's also a lack of will."

Compared to South Korea, where escapees can typically arrive within three to four weeks after entering a Southeast Asian country, the U.S. remains a distant and unknown land for them.

Pastor Kim also pointed out that the cost of supporting escapees during such long stays in third countries is prohibitively high, making it difficult for most organizations to bear.

[Recording: Pastor Sung-eun Kim] "Organizations find it extremely burdensome. Even for me, it's burdensome when escapees say they want to go to the U.S. Not only do we need to cover their basic living expenses, but we also need people to take care of them. The cost of rescuing escapees has increased tenfold compared to the past, and we have to take care of them for over a year. I think it's almost impossible for most organizations to handle."

Broker K, who is known to have been involved in rescuing over 1,000 North Korean escapees over the past decade, noted that the so-called :direct defection" of North Koreans escaping directly through China to the free world has virtually disappeared since the pandemic. He added that the few escapees entering South Korea after the pandemic are mostly North Korean women who have been in China for a long time and North Korean laborers dispatched abroad, who generally prefer to go to South Korea.

[Recording: Broker K] "There are no more direct defections. It costs tens of millions of won to escape from North Korea, and they've blocked multiple layers of barbed wire and laid landmines. The women in China all go to South Korea because they have friends there."

He also pointed out that while some North Korean workers dispatched to Russia had received refugee status and entered the United States in the past, the U.S. government suspended services in Russia in 2018 due to worsening conditions, blocking the path to the U.S..

According to South Korea's Ministry of Unification, the number of escapees entering South Korea, which had consistently exceeded 1,000 per year before the pandemic, dropped to 229 in 2020, 63 in 2021, 67 in 2022, 196 last year, and 105 in the first half of this year.

Broker L, who had previously assisted escapees, mentioned that the escapees he had helped in the past requested to go to the U.S. mainly for their children's education, but since the pandemic, "there are no escapees with children, so there aren't many people trying to go to the U.S."

Suzanne Scholte, Chairwoman of the North Korea Freedom Coalition, a U.S. private organization that has long supported the rescue of North Korean escapees, said that the current situation is “the result of multiple factors”.

[Recording: Chairwoman Suzanne Scholte] "Well, I think it's a combination of factors. Obviously, the ability for people to get out of North Korea has been severely restricted because of Kim Jong-un planting landmines at the China-North Korea border and trying to cut off all the escape routes. Part of it is that there's just been an extreme drop in the ability of people to escape."

Officials from U.S. organizations involved in North Korean human rights have urged the U.S. government to take more proactive measures to allow North Korean escapees to enter the United States.

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the U.S Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), told VOA on the 31st that "The people of North Korea continue to suffer from tremendous hardship, egregious human rights violations, and crimes against humanity, all perpetrated due to policies established at the top of the Kim family regime. North Korean escapees merit to have more information and more assistance about resettling in the United States."

Scarlatoiu emphasized that if North Korean refugees choose to settle in the U.S., it is the "legal, political, moral, and ethical obligation" of the United States to assist them. He added that, "It's time for the U.S. to take a more proactive role in helping North Korean escapees find a new home in the U.S."

Scholte also called for more active U.S. government involvement, stating, "We have never been proactive in trying to engage in this refugee crisis. There have been a lot of great statements from the Biden administration, but we need to be acting more than just talking about it. If we really care about this, we should be doing more to facilitate the resettlement of those who are reaching these other countries by giving them the opportunity to seek an interview with U.S. refugee officers."

Meanwhile, while there have been no North Korean refugees entering the United States in the past 30 months, it has been reported that several North Koreans have entered the United States through other procedures.

Multiple informed sources previously told VOA that two North Korean overseas dispatch officials who were staying in a third country entered the United States in November 2022 with the help of a private organization after receiving humanitarian parole (HP).

According to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), HP is one of the means by which a foreign national residing outside the United States can apply to enter the United States with approval from USCIS for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public interest.

One of the two individuals recently expressed gratitude to the U.S. government in a statement to VOA. Another U.S. source told VOA on the 30th that a family of North Korean diplomats living in Europe had entered the United States during this period but declined to provide further details.

South Korean media also reported earlier this July, citing sources familiar with North Korea, that a North Korean diplomat's family in France defected to the United States last year.

The U.S. provides humanitarian parole, special immigrant visas (SIVs) for those who have worked for

the U.S. government or made significant contributions to U.S. interests, and other options in addition to refugee status for foreign nationals seeking to urgently leave their host countries and enter the United States.

The State Department spokesperson, in response to VOA's inquiry on the 30th about North Koreans entering the U.S. through means other than refugee status, stated, "We are concerned by public disclosures concerning individual asylum seekers and refugees without their consent. There are substantial negative consequences for DPRK asylum seekers and their families, who are at risk of transnational repression and other retaliatory actions. While there has been an increasing number of reported elite defections over the past year, DPRK law criminalizes defection and attempted defection, especially for government officials. Family members of escapees face these punishments as well."

This is Kim Young-kwon reporting for VOA News.

Translated by Jangyun Yoo, HRNK Research Intern; Edited by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Intern

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Prepared by Jennifer Leon, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250722170335/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-what-weve-learned-from-joseph-kim-north-korean-escapee-and-our-friend-and-colleague?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, August 11th, 2024

North launches more than 240 trash-laden balloons overnight - Only 4 percent land

Inter-Korean Relationship:
North launches more than 240 trash-laden balloons overnight. Only 4 percent land. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/11/2024)
N. Korea sends some 240 trash-filled balloons toward S. Korea: JCS (*Yonhap*, 08/11/2024)

International:
North Korean Missiles Fired on Kyiv in Deadly Russian Attack: Zelensky (*Newsweek*, 08/11/2024)
DFA calls for 'denuclearization' of Korean Peninsula (*Philippine News Agency*, 08/09/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) confirmed Sunday that more than 240 trash-laden balloons were released by North Korea from the previous evening to the early hours of Sunday. Only about 4 percent of the identified balloons fell in South Korean territory. (Lim Jeong-Won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea has sent around 240 balloons carrying trash toward South Korea and about 10 of them landed in the South, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Russia used a North Korean missile to attack Kyiv overnight, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Sunday, a trend which the country's air force described as a "serious threat." (Ellie Cook, *Newsweek*)
- Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Secretary Enrique Manalo has called for the "denuclearization" of the Korean Peninsula and the resumption of peaceful dialogue between concerned parties. (Teresa Montemayor, *Philippine News Agency*)

Prepared by Jennifer Leon, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723050118/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-launches-more-than-240-trash-laden-balloons-overnight-only-4-percent-land?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Monday, August 12th, 2024

U.S., South Korea to start joint military drills next week amid mounting North Korea threats

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un calls for sheltering flood victims in capital, rejecting foreign aid (*NK News*, 08/12/2024)
North Korean leader revisits flooded area, offers plan to bring people to capital (*Reuters*, 08/12/2024)
N. Korean leader seen with new Mercedes-Benz SUV in defiance of sanctions (*Yonhap*, 08/12/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korean badminton player wins landmark Olympic gold — then takes shot at country's governing body (CNN, 08/12/2024)
Yoon names new national security adviser, defense minister in surprise reshuffle (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/12/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

North Korea stole technical data about key ROK military spy planes: Ruling party (*NK News*, 08/12/2024)
North's escalating rhetoric is a strategy to 'minimize internal unrest,' South says (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/12/2024)
N. Korea slams S. Korea to divert public attention over flood damage: unification ministry (*Yonhap*, 08/12/2024)
Yoon names new defense chief in surprise reshuffle over North Korean threats (*NK News*, 08/12/2024)

International:
North Korean missile killed Ukrainian father and son over weekend, Zelensky says (*NK News*, 08/12/2024)
Seoul to hold drill simulating North Korean nuclear attack (*The Korea Herald*, 08/12/2024)
South Korea and US will start summer military drills next week to counter North Korean threats (*AP*, 08/12/2024)
South Korea, US to stage annual drills over North's missile, cyber threats (*Reuters*, 08/12/2024)
South Korea, U.S. to begin Ulchi Freedom Shield exercise next week amid threats from North (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/12/2024)
U.S., South Korea to start joint military drills next week amid mounting North Korea threats (*UPI*, 08/12/2024)
US-ROK summer drills won't train for North Korean nuclear attack, allies say (*NK News*, 08/12/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has rejected international aid for floods that displayed thousands last month, visiting a temporary camp for victims and ordering the most vulnerable sent to Pyongyang for care in a bid to demonstrate the state's ability to provide relief without outside assistance. (Seung-Yeon Chung, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un revisited a flooded area near the country's border with China this week to address plans to support those affected by recent heavy rainfall and floods, including bringing about 15,400 people to the country's capital until new homes are built, state media KCNA said on Saturday. (*Reuters*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un appears to be using a new model of a Mercedes-Benz SUV in a move snubbing international sanctions banning North Korea's imports of luxury items. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's badminton gold medalist An Se-young envisioned a glorious return from Paris, popping open a bottle of champagne with the coveted medal around her neck. But that wasn't the scene at South Korea's Incheon Airport last Wednesday, when reporters surrounded the Olympian, peppering her with questions about her criticism of the Korean Badminton Association and the national team — which have prompted the country's governing body to open an investigation. (Gawon Bae, CNN)

- President Yoon Suk Yeol tapped a new national security adviser and defense minister Monday in an unexpected shake-up of his foreign affairs and security line after returning from summer vacation. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korean cybercriminals have stolen technical data related to two South Korean military reconnaissance aircraft, the ROK's ruling party has revealed, while also confirming a separate leak of critical technologies related to the country's main battle tank. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's continued harsh rhetoric against South Korea, labeling it as "filthy scum," appears to be a strategy to quell domestic dissatisfaction amid the widespread flood damage in North Korea, said the South Korean government on Monday. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un took swipe at South Korean media reports on flood damage in the North in an apparent attempt to divert public attention from the emergency situation, Seoul's unification ministry said Monday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's Presidential Office announced a surprise reshuffle of top security officials responsible for overseeing defenses against North Korean threats, citing increasing global security challenges like Pyongyang's growing military ties with Russia. (Jeongmin Kim, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

International:

- Russia fired a North Korean missile during an attack on the "Kyiv regions" over the weekend, according to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, reportedly killing a father and his four-year-old son and injuring three others. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- South Korea will stage the first government-wide drill against North Korean nuclear attack scenarios as part of Ulchi Freedom Shield, an annual joint and combined exercise with the United States. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea and the United States will begin their annual joint military exercises next week with a focus on improving their combined capabilities to deter and defend against growing North Korean nuclear threats, the allies said Monday. (Kim Tong-hyung, *AP*)
- South Korea and the United States will begin annual summertime military drills next week to ramp up their capability to counter North Korea's weapons and cyber threats, officials said on Monday. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- South Korea and the United States will begin their annual summertime joint military exercise next week to strengthen their combined defense posture and response capabilities, according to Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and United States Forces Korea (USFK) on Monday. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The United States and South Korea will kick off a large-scale joint military exercise next week, both countries announced Monday, with a focus on deterring North Korea's growing nuclear, missile and cyber threats. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- The U.S. and South Korea will kick off large-scale summary military exercises next week but will not conduct training based on a hypothetical North Korean nuclear attack, despite Seoul's past suggestion that they would. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

Prepared by Ada Trybuchowska, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723050456/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-us-south-korea-to-start-joint-military-drills-next-week-amid-mounting-north-korea-threats?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Tuesday, August 13th, 2024

The Challenges Faced by Resettled North Korean Escapees in South Korea; The HRNK submits Advisory Document to UN on Status of Women

Top News:
The Challenges Faced by Resettled North Korean Escapees in South Korea (*HRNK YPWP*, 08/12/2024)
The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) Submits an Advisory Document to the UN... Violations of Human Rights Affecting the Status of Women through Nuclear Development" (*JoongAng Ilbo*, 08/02/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
Sent to flood-ravaged areas, North Korean soldiers steal supplies, townspeople say (*RFA*, 08/12/2024)

In South Korea:
North Korean trash balloon suspected of igniting forest fire in South (*NK News*, 08/13/2024)
Wildfire erupts in Paju with North Korean trash balloon suspected as cause (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/13/2024)

International:
N. Korea slams top U.S. officials' op-ed on Biden's diplomat feats (*Yonhap*, 08/13/2024)
Russia sends hundreds of goats to N. Korea amid deepening bilateral ties (*Yonhap*, 08/13/2024)
Sanctioned North Korean missile official attends Russian defense expo (*NK News*, 08/13/2024)
Sanctioned N. Korean official handling missile programs attends arms exhibition in Moscow: report (*Yonhap*, 08/13/2024)
UN says torrential rains damaged North Korean crops in July, with more to come (*NK News*, 08/13/2024)

Top News:

- In order to understand the significance of such disparities, it remains necessary to examine the impact they have on the life of the resettled escapees. These challenges manifest in a number of ways, especially in defining economic, psychological, and cultural differences and struggles. Thus, it is only by examining such challenges and facilitating communication with escapees themselves that positive changes can be achieved to improve the lives of North Korean escapees in South Korea. (Andrew Chan, *HRNK YPWP*)
- The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), a North Korean human rights organization based in Washington D.C., announced on August 1st (local time) that it had submitted an advisory document to the Commission on the Status of Women (UN Women) focusing on "the impacts of the DPRK's nuclear program on the human rights and human security of North Korean women." (Kang Taehwa, *JoongAng Ilbo*)

In North Korea:

- North Korean soldiers mobilized to rebuild flood-hit towns are stealing food and other supplies because they have been given none by the government, upsetting townspeople, residents told Radio Free Asia. (Son Hyemin, *RFA*)

In South Korea:

- South Korean authorities suspect that a North Korean trash balloon ignited a minor forest fire near the border on Monday, highlighting potential dangers from the balloons that have caused at least one other fire elsewhere. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- A wildfire broke out in Paju, Gyeonggi, with a waste-carrying balloon sent from North Korea suspected to be the cause. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- North Korea on Tuesday denounced top U.S. officials' joint opinion piece that touted "unprecedented" trilateral cooperation among South Korea, the United States and Japan as feats of U.S. President Joe Biden's Indo-Pacific diplomacy. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Russia's agriculture safety watchdog has approved the shipment of 447 goats to North Korea after reviewing related veterinary and sanitary conditions, according to its website, amid deepening cooperation between Pyongyang and Moscow. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- A sanctioned North Korean official who has played a leading role in advancing Pyongyang's weapons programs is attending a Russian defense exhibition this week, a move that one expert said may be part of a push to improve missile capabilities to suit both countries' needs. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- A key North Korean official in charge of the country's ballistic missile programs has attended an arms exhibition in Moscow, a news report showed Tuesday, amid deepening military cooperation between North Korea and Russia. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Heavy rains and flooding damaged North Korea's main food crops in late July, according to a new U.N. report, amid long-standing concerns about the country's food security. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) Submits an Advisory Document to the UN... Violations of Human Rights Affecting the Status of Women through Nuclear Development"

Kang Taehwa, JoongAng Ilbo

August 2, 2024

https://www.joongang.co.kr/article/25267989

The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (**HRNK**), a North Korean human rights organization based in Washington D.C., announced on August 1st (local time) that it had submitted an advisory document to the Commission on the Status of Women (UN Women) focusing on "the impacts of the DPRK's nuclear program on the human rights and human security of North Korean women."

In the advisory paper released on this day, **HRNK** stated, "Under Kim Jong-un's rule, the scale and scope of these violations have worsened and intensified," and revealed, "the international community has been increasingly recognizing the nexus between the DPRK's nuclear weapons development and its widespread human rights abuses."

HRNK also stated "by abusing the human rights of its citizens, the DPRK is able to extract resources to fund its nuclear development program." They pointed out "through their [North Koreans, especially those sent abroad] exploitation, the DPRK manages to obtain fundamental resources to fund its nuclear weapons program." In addition, **HRNK** emphasized, "Consequently, addressing human rights abuses inside the country remains crucial for any effective strategy aimed at halting the nuclear weapons program of the DPRK."

HRNK was particularly alarmed by how the financial structure supporting nuclear programs was exacerbating human rights violations against women in North Korea.

HRNK emphasized that, "The diversion of resources via human rights violations leads to a shortage of essential goods and services," and, "This places women who need to secure food for their families in unstable situations such as exploitative labor or prostitution." Additionally, **HRNK** emphasized the urgent need for a thorough investigation into the exposure to radioactive materials resulting from nuclear testing.

Regarding how to resolve North Korea's human rights issues, **HRNK** stated "increasing diplomatic pressure on the DPRK remains essential, alongside advocating for human rights through global platforms" and advised "the strategic use of economic sanctions targeting specific entities within the DPRK that perpetuate gender-based discrimination and expose women to hazardous conditions can help dismantle the structures that enable the perpetration of these human rights abuses.

Translated by Soeun Park, HRNK Research Intern; Edited by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Kate Refolo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250723050818/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-the-challenges-faced-by-resettled-north-korean-escapees-in-south-korea-the-hrnk-submits-advisory-document-to-un-on-status-of-women?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Wednesday, August 14th, 2024

North Korea will reopen to international tourism this winter, tour operators say; N.K. slams Kishida's call for nuclear-free world

In North Korea:
North Korea will reopen to international tourism this winter, tour operators say (CNN, 08/14/2024)
Severe floods in N. Korea could cut its 2024 crop output: FAO(*Yonhap*, 08/14/2024)
Kim Jong Un flaunts new $200K Maybach SUV in front of homeless flood victims (NK *News*, 08/14/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korea's 1st spy satellite approved for combat suitability (*Yonhap*, 08/14/2024)
Sending balloons with heavy payloads into North Korea poses legal issues: Seoul (NK *News*, 08/14/2024)

International:
N. Korea slams Kishida's call for nuclear-free world (*Yonhap*, 08/14/2024)
In Paris, North Korea's Olympians punched well above their weight (NK *News*, 08/13/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea is to reopen limited international tourism by the end of 2024, nearly five years after it completely sealed the country's borders due to the Covid-19 pandemic, two tour companies with connections to the isolated country have announced. (Gawon Bae, CNN)
- North Korea's crop output for this year could be dented by severe floods from the latest heavy rains and a possible increase in pest infestations, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said Wednesday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un flaunted a new Maybach luxury car in front of newly homeless flood victims last week, as he continues to import high-priced foreign vehicles totaling millions of dollars for his personal use. (Colin Zwirko, NK *News*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's first indigenous military spy satellite launched in December has passed a combat suitability evaluation, the state arms procurement agency said Wednesday, in a feat bolstering the country's space reconnaissance capabilities against North Korean threats. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean activists who send leaflets into North Korea could run into legal problems if they launch balloons carrying payloads that are too heavy, Seoul has warned, announcing

plans to discuss the issue with activists as the DPRK continues retaliatory trash balloon launches. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

International:

- North Korea on Wednesday criticized Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's recent speech advocating for a world without nuclear weapons, accusing Japan of pretending to be a victim of nuclear arms. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's athletes were all smiles as fireworks lit up the Paris night sky at the Olympic closing ceremony, waving the red-starred national flag while celebrating another Games where the impoverished and isolated country punched well above its weight. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

Prepared by Suha Choi, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723051215/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-will-reopen-to-international-tourism-this-winter-tour-operators-say-nk-slams-kishidas-call-for-nuclear-free-world?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, August 15th, 2024

In celebration of Korean Independence Day, The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea announces the launch of our new website

Top News:
The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea announces new website (*HRNK*, 08/15/2024)

In North Korea:
Int'l tourism to N. Korea's Samjiyon to resume in Dec.: tour agency (*Yonhap*, 08/15/2024)

In South Korea:
The Strategic Imperative for South Korea's Nuclear Armament (*The Diplomat*, 08/14/2024)
South Korean president proposes official dialogue channel with North Korea (*Radio Free Asia*, 08/15/2024)
Yoon's speech on 'freedom-based unification' with North Korea (*NK News*, 08/15/2024)
Yoon unveils vision for 'freedom-based unification,' proposes dialogue with N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 08/15/2024)

International:
S. Korea, U.S. holding joint live-fire, maneuver drills (*Yonhap*, 08/14/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. wrap up 6th round of talks on defense cost sharing (*Yonhap*, 08/15/2024)

US expresses frustration that North Korea is blocking efforts to recover remains of American casualties from Korean War (CNN, 08/14/2024)

Top News:

Dear Friends of HRNK,

To celebrate Korean Independence Day, HRNK has launched our new website today, August 15. While continuing to strive to be a thorough human rights investigator and a source of relevant information and analysis, we pledge never to relent in our efforts to bring self-determination, freedom, human rights, and prosperity to Koreans living in the North.

Sincerely yours,
Greg Scarlatoiu

Executive Director
Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (*HRNK*)

In North Korea:

- International tourism to Samjiyon and likely the rest of North Korea will resume in December after a four-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a Beijing-based tour agency said Wednesday. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol delivered a major speech on Thursday announcing a new roadmap for "freedom-based unification" with North Korea, revising a decades-old policy by embracing efforts to bring about a "unified Republic of Korea." (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- South Korea is at a pivotal juncture as the nuclear threat from North Korea becomes increasingly acute. The significant disparity between the military capabilities of the two Koreas has led to a growing movement within South Korea to reconsider its stance on nuclear armament. (Lakhvinder Singh, *The Diplomat*)
- South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol proposed an official dialogue channel with North Korea that can "take up any issue" as tension rises on the Korean Peninsula. In an address marking Liberation Day on Thursday, which celebrates the 1945 end of Japan's colonial rule, Yoon proposed that authorities from both Koreas establish an "Inter-Korean Working Group". (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol unveiled a vision for unification with North Korea on Thursday, pledging to expand outside information in the reclusive nation and proposing an official dialogue channel that can "take up any issue." (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

International:

- South Korea and the United States have been staging a combined live-fire and maneuver exercise, involving a U.S. battalion deployed from the U.S. mainland as part of its deployment readiness exercise, the South's Army said Wednesday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the United States ended another round of negotiations this week on determining Seoul's share of the cost for stationing the U.S. Forces Korea (USFK), a foreign ministry official said Thursday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- The US expressed frustration Wednesday that North Korea is continuing to refuse to allow teams into the reclusive country to recover the remains of American casualties from the Korean War. (Haley Britzky, CNN)

Prepared by Tessa Aguilar, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723051636/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-in-celebration-of-korean-independence-day-the-committee-for-human-rights-in-north-korea-announces-the-launch-of-our-new-website?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, August 16th, 2024

Time is ripe for a new approach: Human rights up front in support of a free and unified Korea

Top News:
Time is ripe for a new approach: Human rights up front in support of a free and unified Korea (*UPI*, 08/14/2024)

In North Korea:
Beaming Kim Jong-un surrounded by flood-stricken North Korean children grasping for food (*Telegraph*, 08/16/2024)
N. Korea's Kim vows to transform backward regions following downpours in border areas (*Yonhap*, 08/16/2024)
North Korea moves World Cup qualifier from Pyongyang due to 'security concerns' (*NK News*, 08/16/2024)

In South Korea:
Defense minister nominee says 'options open' on Seoul getting nukes (*The Korea Herald*, 08/16/2024)
Seoul to establish new North Korea human rights fund, send info into DPRK (*NK News*, 08/16/2024)
Unification minister calls on N. Korea to accept S. Korea's offer for dialogue channel (*Yonhap*, 08/16/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
North Korea threat still overshadows K-culture (*The Korea Herald*, 08/16/2024)
South Korea anticipates North Korea's response to Yoon's 'unification doctrine (*The Korea Herald*, 08/16/2024)
South Korean president proposes official dialogue channel with North Korea (*Radio Free Asia*, 08/15/2024)

International:
Kim Jong Un cheers Putin's 'sacred war' on Ukraine to mark Liberation Day (*NK News*, 08/16/2024)
North Korean leader hails deepening ties with Russia (*Radio Free Asia*, 08/16/2024)

Top News:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is facing immense pressure and in 2023 and 2024 has implemented major policy changes due to his failed promises to the Korean people in the North. His nuclear weapons have not brought peace and prosperity, so he has declared the Republic of Korea (ROK) its enemy and has excised peaceful unification as the regime's strategic objective. However, Kim still seeks to dominate the peninsula under his rule to ensure survival of the regime. (David Maxwell, *UPI*)

In North Korea:

- Kim Jong-un has been pictured surrounded by crying children reaching for food in a dining hall in Pyongyang. More than 15,000 North Koreans have flocked to the capital after devastating flooding struck the country. (Verity Bowman, *Telegraph*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has pledged to transform backward regions, as the recent downpours in the country's northwestern border areas left many flood victims displaced and caused damage. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has relocated a men's World Cup qualifying match against Iran from Pyongyang to Laos due to "security concerns," according to Iranian state media, despite the match taking place just weeks before the country will reportedly reopen to tourists. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- President Yoon Suk Yeol's defense minister nominee Kim Yong-hyun on Friday said "all options are open" on the possibility of arming South Korea with its own nuclear weapons to keep North Korea in check. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea will establish a new North Korea human rights fund and promote efforts to disseminate information inside the country, President Yoon Suk-yeol announced on Thursday, unveiling plans to bring about "freedom-based unification" in a major policy speech. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho on Friday called on North Korea to respond to South Korea's offer for an official dialogue channel, stressing that South Korea does not seek unification by absorption. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- Despite the rapid rise of South Korea's cultural and artistic presence on the global stage -- driven by the growth of K-pop, films, and dramas -- a recent survey reveals that the dominant image foreigners associate with Korea is still the threat from North Korea. (Lee Jung-youn, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korean Minister of Unification Kim Yung-ho on Friday said he believes North Korea will be responsive to the doctrine on the Korean Peninsula unification announced by President Yoon Suk Yeol the day before. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol proposed an official dialogue channel with North Korea that can "take up any issue" as tension rises on the Korean Peninsula, urging North Korea to respond. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)

International:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un cheered on Russia's "sacred war" on Ukraine while celebrating liberation from Japan on Thursday, according to state media, exchanging letters with Russian leader Vladimir Putin and making a rare visit to a war monument celebrating the Soviet army. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un hailed his country's deepening relations with Russia in a message to President Vladimir Putin, telling the Russian leader victory was assured in his "sacred war, following a message from Putin on Korean Independence Day. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723051945/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-time-is-ripe-for-a-new-approach-human-rights-up-front-in-support-of-a-free-and-unified-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, August 17th, 2024

U.S. Congress Handles Only One Korea-Related Issue This Year... North Korean Human Rights Act Extension Adrift for Second Year

Top News:
U.S. Congress Handles Only One Korea-Related Issue This Year... North Korean Human Rights Act Extension Adrift for Second Year (VOA, 08/17/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un shocks listeners by using South Korean terms in speech (*Radio Free Asia*, 08/16/2024)
N. Korean leader exchanges message with Putin on 79th anniv. of Korea's liberation from Japan's colonial rule (*Yonhap*, 08/16/2024)
North Korean leader hails deepening ties with Russia (*Radio Free Asia*, 08/16/2024)

In South Korea:
Air Force prepares pilots for the unknown at sea (*Yonhap*, 08/17/2024)

International:
India's top envoy says partnership with S. Korea mutually enhances economic, technological security (*Yonhap*, 08/17/2024)
S. Korea, U.S., Japan leaders to announce joint statement Sunday to mark Camp David summit (*Yonhap*, 08/17/2024)
The Next Step for Japan-South Korea-US Security Cooperation: An Alternative to the UN Panel of Experts (*The Diplomat*, 08/17/2024)
U.S. official hints at trilateral summit among leaders of S. Korea, U.S., Japan by end of this year (*Yonhap*, 08/16/2024)
What the US Forces Japan Reorganization Means for South Korea (*The Diplomat*, 08/16/2024)
Yoon's new foreign policy adviser visits U.S. to discuss alliance, U.S. election (*Yonhap*, 08/16/2024)

Top News:

- It has been revealed that the U.S. Congress has processed only one Korea-related issue this year. The reauthorization of the North Korean Human Rights Act has been adrift for about two years, with projections suggesting that this trend may continue until the end of the year. (Lee Jo-eun, VOA)

In North Korea:

- Kim Jong Un recently shocked North Korean flood victims when he addressed them in a speech that contained words and phrases commonly used by South Koreans – terms that would get ordinary citizens in hot water, residents told Radio Free Asia. (Ahn Chang Gyu, Park Jaewoo, *Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has exchanged a message with Russian President Vladimir Putin on the occasion of the 79th anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japan's 1910-45 colonial rule and vowed to bolster ties with Moscow, state media reported Friday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un hailed his country's deepening relations with Russia in a message to President Vladimir Putin, telling the Russian leader victory was assured in his "sacred war," the North's state-run media reported. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)

In South Korea:

- Off the southern tip of the Korean Peninsula, an Air Force drillmaster aboard a maritime training ship ordered an instructor to jump overboard to free-fall 4 meters into the sea. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- The deepening partnership between South Korea and India benefits both countries by strengthening their economic and technological security, with significant potential for collaboration in areas such as semiconductors and artificial intelligence, India's top envoy to Seoul has said. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The leaders of South Korea, the United States and Japan will announce a joint statement this weekend to commemorate the first anniversary of the historic Camp David summit, a presidential official in Seoul said Saturday. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- Embarking on a new era of trilateral partnership, the leaders of Japan, South Korea, and the United States held their first-ever stand-alone trilateral summit at Camp David in August 2023. Substantial progress is evident across multiple areas as we reach the first anniversary of the Camp David summit. (Kyung-joo Jeon, Bee Yun Jo, *The Diplomat*)
- A White House official on Thursday suggested the possibility of holding a trilateral summit among the leaders of South Korea, the United States and Japan by the end of this year, following the historic Camp David summit last year. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- The recent decision to reconstitute U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ) under the structure of a Joint Forces Headquarters (JFHQ) marks a profound shift in the strategic and operational posture of the United States' military presence in the Asia-Pacific region. (Jihoon Yu, *The Diplomat*)
- Chang Ho-jin, new foreign policy adviser to President Yoon Suk Yeol, arrived in Washington, D.C., on Thursday to meet with officials and discuss the countries' alliance, the upcoming U.S. election and other bilateral issues. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

U.S. Congress Handles Only One Korea-Related Issue This Year... North Korean Human Rights Act Extension Adrift for Second Year

Lee Jo-eun, VOA *Korea*
08/17/2024
https://www.voakorea.com/a/7743022.html

It has been revealed that the U.S. Congress has processed only one Korea-related issue this year. The reauthorization of the North Korean Human Rights Act has been adrift for about two years, with projections suggesting that this trend may continue until the end of the year. This is reported by reporter Lee Jo-eun.

This year, a total of seven bills and resolutions related to Korea's foreign policy and security have been introduced in Congress.

Among these, the only issue that has completed the congressional approval process is a resolution allowing the remains of Ralph Pucket Jr., a recently deceased Korean War veteran and U.S. Army Colonel, to be enshrined in the Capitol.

The House and Senate unanimously adopted this resolution in April, enabling the remains of Colonel Pucket Jr., the last surviving Korean War veteran to receive the Medal of Honor, to lie in state at the Capitol.

The remaining six issues, including the 'Korean Displaced Families National Registration Bill' and the 'Resolution on the Importance of U.S.-Korea-Japan Cooperation' in the House, and the 'Resolution Urging the Protection of North Korean Defectors' Rights in China' in the House, have all been stalled for over five months.

The Korean Displaced Families Registration Bill, introduced by Democratic Representative Jennifer Wexton, passed the House in June.

However, the same bill, introduced by Democratic Senator Tim Kaine, has been stalled in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for five months.

The resolution to strengthen trilateral cooperation between the U.S., Korea, and Japan, introduced by Democratic Representative Gerry Connolly, passed the House Foreign Affairs Committee in May and is awaiting consideration by the full House.

In the Senate, a similar resolution introduced by Republican Senator Dan Sullivan has been stalled in the Foreign Relations Committee for six months, with no progress on its processing.

Additionally, a resolution introduced by Republican Representative Michelle Steel, urging the protection of North Korean defectors' rights in China, has been stalled in the House Foreign Affairs Committee for five months, and a resolution commemorating Korean American Day, introduced by Democratic Representative Jimmy Gomez, has been stalled in the House Oversight Committee for seven months.

"Automatic Expiration if Not Processed by Year-End"

The status of Korea-related issues in Congress is not significantly different from a year ago.
At the same time last year, the only Korea-related issue that completed the approval process was a Senate resolution commemorating the 70th anniversary of the U.S.-Korea Mutual Defense Treaty.

Including bills and resolutions from the 118th Congress that were not processed last year, a total of 21 Korea-related issues remain pending in Congress.

Among these, 15 issues, including the reauthorization of the North Korean Human Rights Act, the North Korea-Russia military cooperation sanctions bill, and resolutions urging the repatriation of Japanese abductees, have been carried over from the 118th Congress.

Except for the North Korea-Russia military cooperation sanctions bill that passed the House Foreign Affairs Committee last November, none of the other issues have even crossed the threshold of the relevant committees.

As this year marks the final year of the session, any issues not processed by the end of the year will automatically be discarded.

Experts attribute the difficulties in processing legislation to the peculiarities of the 118th Congress, which is divided narrowly between Democrats and Republicans.

Robert King, a former U.S. special envoy for North Korean human rights who worked in Congress for 25 years, told VOA on the 14th, “Part of the problem is there are a lot of resolutions and bills that are introduced and most of them don't go anywhere. It’s just the nature of Congress. This Congress has been particularly dysfunctional… Even on some of these other, more urgent issues, it’s difficult to get legislation approved… Unfortunately, I think that's likely to happen. During a year when an election takes place, less legislation is adopted because people are more argumentative as they are running for reelection.”

"North Korean Human Rights Act Reauthorization Adrift for Second Year"

Among the pending issues in Congress, the reauthorization of the North Korean Human Rights Act is particularly urgent.

The North Korean Human Rights Act, which expired in September 2022, needs Congressional action to be extended for another five years.

The reauthorization bill for the North Korean Human Rights Act passed the House Foreign Affairs Committee in May but is still awaiting consideration by the full House, and has not even reached the relevant committee in the Senate.

The North Korean Human Rights Act expired on September 30, 2022, creating what is known as the "North Korean Human Rights Act Gap," which has lasted nearly two years, the longest in history.

VOA has requested comments from the offices of Republican Representative Young Kim and Senator Marco Rubio, the main sponsors of the reauthorization bill, and is awaiting a response.

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, pointed out that the general fatigue and decreased interest in North Korean issues, including human rights, has led to the longest gap in the North Korean Human Rights Act's history.

Scarlatoiu told VOA on the 14th, “Fatigue and decline… My most serious concern is declining interest in North Korean human rights, and Congress has been the most active branch of the U.S. government when it comes to North Korean human rights… It's simply a matter of attention span. We are dealing with a lot of other issues... I am not very optimistic regarding the reauthorization of the North Korean Human Rights Act at any point soon… The delay could continue until the end of the year. Given that it's an election year and there are so many pressing issues we are dealing with, it may have to wait until next year… Eventually, this is going to result in declining levels of grants and financial support for NGOs.”
VOA News, Lee Jo-eun.

Translated by Kayleigh Park, HRNK Research Intern, Edited by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250723052410/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-us-congress-handles-only-one-korea-related-issue-this-year-north-korean-human-rights-act-extension-adrift-for-second-year?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, August 18th, 2024

DP reelects Lee Jae-myung as leader in landslide at national convention; N. Korean leader with students from flood-hit region

In North Korea:
North Korea condemns Ukraine's incursion of Russia as act of terror (*Reuters*, 08/17/2024)
North Korea to restart international tourism in December. Should you go? (*USA Today*, 08/17/2024)
N. Korean leader with students from flood-hit region (*Yonhap*, 08/17/2024)

In South Korea:
DP reelects Lee Jae-myung as leader in landslide at national convention (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/18/2024)
Unification Minister calls on North Korea to accept proposed working group to reduce tensions (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/16/2024)

International:
A free and unified Korea (*The Korea Times*, 08/18/2024)
Doubting America's 'Nuclear Umbrella,' Some South Korean Want Their Own (*The New York Times*, 08/17/2024)
S. Korea, US to kick off key summertime military exercise this week (*The Korea Times*, 08/18/2024)
S. Korea-US-Japan partnership to face test when Biden, Kishida leave office (*The Korea Times*, 08/18/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea condemned Ukraine's incursion into Russia as an unforgivable act of terror backed by Washington and the West, adding it would always stand with Russia as it seeks to protect its sovereignty. (*Reuters*)
- North Korea will resume international tourism to its northeastern city of Samjiyon in December, and possibly the rest of the country, tour companies said on Wednesday. The move is a sign that the reclusive country is readying to reopen borders to bigger groups of foreign tourists after years of strict COVID border controls. (Ju-min Park, *USA Today*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un (C) meets with children from flood-hit regions at their accommodation in Pyongyang on Aug. 16, 2024, in this photo provided by the North's official Korean Central News Agency (*Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- The liberal Democratic Party (DP) elected its former leader, Lee Jae-myung, as its head for a second term as he broke records at the party's national convention Sunday. Lee, a DP lawmaker representing Incheon's Gyeyang-B District, secured a record 85.4 percent of the votes in an overwhelming victory against his two rivals. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho on Friday called on North Korea to accept President Yoon Suk Yeol's proposal to establish a working group to reduce tensions and resume communications over inter-Korean channels. Speaking at a press conference held at the Central Government Complex in Jongno District, central Seoul, Kim reiterated Yoon's offer of talks on "any issue," including denuclearization, humanitarian aid and people-to-people exchanges. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- President Yoon Suk Yeol's vision for unification, the Unification Doctrine, is something that the nation has been waiting for. In a speech marking the 79th anniversary of liberation, he said Korea's independence from Japan's 35-year colonial rule is losing its significance as the nation is still divided with the two Koreas facing off against each other. (*The Korea Times*)
- Ever since the Korean War was halted in an uneasy truce in 1953, South Koreans have lived under an American promise to defend their country, if necessary, with nuclear weapons. President Biden empathetically reiterated that commitment last year, vowing that any nuclear attack by North Korea would lead to the destruction of its government. (Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*)
- A pivotal moment looms for the trilateral partnership between South Korea, the United States and Japan, as one year has passed since the historic Camp David summit on Aug. 18, 2023, that opened a new era of strategic cooperation between the three nations. (Lee Hyo-jin, *The Korea Times*)

Prepared by Annie Heitmeier, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250723052912/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-dp-reelects-lee-jae-myung-as-leader-in-landslide-at-national-convention-n-korean-leader-with-students-from-flood-hit-region?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Monday, August 19th, 2024

US and South Korea begin military drills aimed at strengthening their defense against North Korea

In North Korea:
Flood damage in North Korea visible from across border; UN agency warns of more rain (*Asia News Network*, 08/19/2024)
North Korea Reacts to Ukraine's 'Invasion' of Russia's Territory (*Newsweek*, 08/19/2024)
North Korea slams US drills with ROK and support for Ukraine, warns of World War (*NK News*, 08/19/2024)
Red Cross receives sanctions exemption to send laptops to North Korea (*NK News*, 08/19/2024)

In South Korea:
Why Yoon's new plan to unify with North Korea is more politics than policy (*NK News*, 08/19/2024)
Yoon calls for bolstering readiness against N. Korea's 'gray zone' provocations (*Yonhap*, 08/19/2024)

International:
Microsoft Patches Zero-Day Flaw Exploited by North Korea's Lazarus Group (*The Hacker News*, 08/19/2024)
North Korea-China trade falls in July as floods damage border infrastructure (*NK News*, 08/19/2024)
US and South Korea begin military drills aimed at strengthening their defense against North Korea (*ABC News*, 08/19/2024)
US Spy Plane Watches North Korea Amid War Games in South (*Newsweek*, 08/19/2024)

In North Korea:

- Following heavy rains that hit North Korea last month, international organisations have warned that the food situation could worsen in the country. Recovery will take time while aid is still being delivered. Cargo believed to be relief supplies was seen being loaded on Friday onto docked boats in Sinuiju, a North Korean city that sits along the Yalu River that borders China. (Shotaro Demizu, *Asia News Network*)
- North Korea has denounced Ukrainian forces' advance into Russia's Kursk region, describing the "invasion" as part of a Western proxy war against Moscow, which invaded its neighbor in February 2022. On Sunday, in a statement carried by state media, a spokesperson for North Korea's Foreign Ministry accused Ukraine of an "extremely grave terrorist crime of killing tens of peaceable inhabitants and injuring hundreds through an armed invasion of the inviolable territory of Russia." (Micah McCartney, *Newsweek*)
- North Korea has slammed large-scale U.S.-ROK military drills this week as a "prelude to nuclear war," while claiming that Washington is setting the stage for a "third World War" by supporting Ukraine as it pushes into Russian territory. The claims in a pair of statements by the DPRK's foreign ministry on Sunday represent Pyongyang's latest effort to seize on current events to brand America as a disruptor of world peace, warning that such "provocations" will result in the "total destruction" of the U.S. and its allies. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- The U.N. Security Council has approved a sanctions exemption request from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to send laptops to North Korea, according to a notice posted by the U.N. The Security Council approval grants the IFRC an exemption until Aug. 6, 2025 to send ten HP Elitebook laptops to the DPRK to support day-to-day office operations in the country. The laptops will be shipped to Pyongyang from China, according to the notice. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- Every year on Aug. 15, the president of South Korea delivers a speech commemorating Korea's liberation from Japanese colonial rule. Yoon Suk-yeol's speech did not discuss Japanese misdeeds but instead proposed a new strategy for dealing with North Korea, in essence embracing regime change and unification by absorption as Seoul's official policy, framing this as part of a historical process to complete liberation by bringing freedom to the DPRK. (Andrei Lankov, *NK News*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol called for bolstering readiness against North Korea's "gray zone" provocations and hybrid warfare as South Korea and the United States kicked off their annual joint exercise on Monday. Yoon said during a Cabinet meeting that this year's Ulchi Freedom Shield exercise will focus on integrating the allies' capabilities under various crisis scenarios to deter North Korea's evolving military threats, psychological warfare and cyberattacks. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

International:

- A newly patched security flaw in Microsoft Windows was exploited as a zero-day by Lazarus Group, a prolific state-sponsored actor affiliated with North Korea. "An attacker who successfully exploited this vulnerability could gain SYSTEM privileges," Microsoft said in an advisory for the flaw last week. It was addressed by the tech giant as part of its monthly Patch Tuesday update. (Ravie Lakshmanan, *The Hacker News*)
- North Korean trade with China fell for a third consecutive month in July, with an expert assessing that devastating flooding at the end of the month may have disrupted exchange. Bilateral trade dwindled to around $145 million in July, down from nearly $179 million in June and $181 million in May, China's General Administration of Customs (GAC) reported on Sunday. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- U.S. and South Korean troops kicked off a large-scale exercise Monday aimed at strengthening their combined defense capabilities against nuclear-armed North Korea, which again accused the allies of practicing an invasion. The exercise began hours after North Korea's Foreign Ministry issued a statement repeating the North's contention that such exercises are "provocative war drills for aggression." (Kim Tong-Hyung, *ABC News*)
- An American reconnaissance aircraft kept tabs on movements behind the North Korean border on Monday as the United States launched its summertime military drills with allied forces in the South. Data recorded on the aircraft tracking website Flightradar24 captured in part the roughly 10-hour sortie by an RC-135W Rivet Joint, the U.S. Air Force's powerful airborne intelligence-gathering platform. (John Feng, *Newsweek*)

Prepared by Katherine Mitchell, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250723053206/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-us-and-south-korea-begin-military-drills-aimed-at-strengthening-their-defense-against-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Tuesday, August 20th, 2024

North Korean crosses DMZ into South in second suspected defection this month; Putin pledges aid after Kim rebuffs Seoul's offer

In North Korea:
N. Korea's Kim apparently concerned about impact of flood damage on his leadership: Seoul (*Yonhap*, 08/20/2024)
North Korea remains conspicuously silent about South's new unification doctrine (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/20/2024)

In South Korea:
Yoon pursues peaceful unification with N. Korea, not through military aggression: office (*Yonhap*, 08/19/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N. Korean soldier crosses border into S. Korea: military (Yonhap, 08/20/2024)
North Korean crosses DMZ into South in second suspected defection this month (NK News, 08/20/2024)

International:
North Korea floods: Putin pledges aid after Kim Jong-un rebuffs Seoul's offer of assistance (The Guardian, 08/20/2024)
US and South Korea hold joint air drills to counter North Korea threat (Reuters, 08/20/2024)
U.S. to stand by S. Korea, other allies against N. Korean threats: 2024 Democratic platform (Yonhap, 08/20/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un appears to be shifting the responsibility for the latest flood damage to provincial officials on concerns that his leadership could be undermined amid increased public discontent, South Korea's unification ministry said Tuesday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Pyongyang had remained mum on President Yoon Suk Yeol's new unification policy for five consecutive days as of Tuesday, a conspicuous silence that sharply contrasted with the regime's invective-fueled responses to the South's past North Korea-related initiatives. (Seo Ji-Eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

In South Korea:

- President Yoon Suk Yeol's unification vision aims to achieve peaceful unification with North Korea in line with the principles of the Constitution, without resorting to military aggression, his office said Monday. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- A North Korean soldier crossed the border into South Korea early Tuesday in the latest defection amid Seoul's propaganda campaign in response to Pyongyang's repeated launches of trash-carrying balloons. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- A North Korean crossed the heavily fortified inter-Korean border on Tuesday, according to the ROK military, marking the second likely defection into South Korea in a month. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

International:

- Russia has pledged humanitarian assistance to North Korea after devastating floods damaged thousands of homes and caused an unknown number of casualties, with reports from South Korea that the number of dead or missing could be as high as 1,500. (*The Guardian*)
- More than 200 South Korean and U.S. fighter jets are due to fly around the clock for five days this week in what would mark the largest number of sorties flown in training by the allies, South Korea's air force said on Tuesday. (Jack Kim, *Reuters*)
- The United States will stand by South Korea and other allies to counter North Korean provocations, the Democratic Party's 2024 policy platform has showed, reiterating the party's commitment to cementing regional alliances for stronger deterrence. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Jiwoo-Katie Choi, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250723065038/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korean-crosses-dmz-into-south-in-second-suspected-defection-this-month-putin-pledges-aid-after-kim-rebuffs-seouls-offer?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, August 21st, 2024

Yoon orders ROK military to deter North Korea from 'communizing' South; Harris campaign says denuclearizing N. Korea remains priority

In North Korea:
Spate of defections show Kim Jong-un regime is crumbling: refugees, experts (*Korea Times*, 08/21/2024)

In South Korea:
Yoon orders ROK military to deter North Korea from 'communizing' South (*NK News*, 08/21/2024)

International:
Biden approved strategy to prepare against coordinated nuclear challenges from N.K., China, Russia (Yonhap, 08/21/2024)
China 'concerned' after report alleging US nuclear strategy change (VOA, 08/21/2024)
China says it is 'seriously concerned' about US nuclear strategic report (Reuters, 08/21/2024)
Harris campaign says denuclearizing North Korea remains priority, despite platform omission (Korea JoongAng Daily, 08/21/2024)
Korea denuclearization would remain goal if Harris wins White House: campaign official (Yonhap, 08/21/2024)
US 'braced for joint Chinese, Russian and North Korean nuclear strike' (The Telegraph, 08/21/2024)
Yoon warns about 'irrational' North during command post visit amid joint exercise with U.S. (Korea JoongAng Daily, 08/21/2024)

In North Korea:

- A North Korean soldier defected to South Korea, Tuesday, by walking across the Military Demarcation Line (MDL) on the heavily fortified inter-Korean border. The defection occurred about two weeks after a North Korean resident crossed the maritime border in the Han River estuary on the west coast. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *Korea Times*)

In South Korea:

- South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol urged military officials to deter North Korea from pursuing unification by "communizing" the South on Wednesday, visiting an army command that oversees a quarter-million troops amid joint summertime drills with the U.S. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

International:

- President Joe Biden approved a secret strategy earlier this year to focus on China's growing nuclear threats and prepare the United States for possible coordinated nuclear challenges from North Korea, China and Russia, The New York Times reported Tuesday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- China on Wednesday said it was "seriously concerned" after a report alleged the United States recently approved a secret plan to shift some of the focus of its nuclear strategy away from Russia to deal with Beijing's nuclear weapons buildup. (William Gallo, VOA)
- China is seriously concerned about a report that said the United Stated approved a nuclear strategic plan to focus on China's rapid expansion in its nuclear arsenal, the Chinese foreign ministry said on Wednesday. (Mei Mei Chu, Bernard Orr, *Reuters*)
- U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris's campaign said Tuesday that denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula will remain a key objective for the United States if the Democratic ticket wins in November. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula would remain a U.S. policy objective should Vice President Kamala Harris win the White House race in November, a former Pentagon official said Tuesday, dispelling concerns about the exclusion of the goal in the Democratic Party's new policy platform. (Song Sang-ho, Kim Kyung-hee, *Yonhap*)

- The United States is making plans to counter the growing possibility of a joint Chinese, Russian and North Korean nuclear strike, according to a classified Pentagon document. (Nicola Smith, *The Telegraph*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol warned Wednesday that the North Korean regime "is the most irrational group on earth, capable of carrying out provocations at any time" during a visit to an Army command post amid a major joint military exercise with the United States. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Prepared by Bryan Clark, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250723070704/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-yoon-orders-rok-military-to-deter-north-korea-from-communizing-south-harris-campaign-says-denuclearizing-n-korea-remains-priority?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, August 22nd, 2024

N.K. could create a 'nuclear domino' effect in Asia; S.K., U.S. to build capabilities against 'any type' of N.K. nuclear threats

In North Korea:
N. Korean children not vaccinated against polio for 3rd straight year in 2023: WHO (*Yonhap*, 08/22/2024)
North Korea could create a 'nuclear domino' effect in Asia: Seoul (*UPI*, 08/22/2024)
North Korea issues heavy rain warnings as tropical storm hits peninsula (*NK News*, 08/22/2024)
North Korean soldier defects on foot across fortified border to South (*RFA*, 08/21/2024)
North Korea's International Network for Artificial Intelligence Research (*38 North*, 08/21/2024)

In South Korea:
In South Korea, 'communist party' joke leads to espionage investigation (*The Korea Herald*, 08/22/2024)
Police probe pro-N.K. media founded by controversial pastor (*Yonhap*, 08/22/2024)
Seoul defends all-male speaker lineup for upcoming forum on North Korea (*NK News*, 08/22/2024)
Unification minister says new doctrine does not call for 'absorbing' North Korea (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/22/2024)

International:
Deputy FM seeks Laos' support in sending stern message against N.K. threats at upcoming ASEAN summits (Yonhap, 08/22/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. to build capabilities against 'any type' of N.K. nuclear threats: foreign ministry (Yonhap, 08/22/2024)
U.S. expected to reaffirm N.K. denuclearization after rival parties make no mention of it: unification minister (Yonhap, 08/22/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean children were not vaccinated against polio for the third straight year in 2023, with key inoculations for its infants also not being properly administered, a report by the World Health Organization (WHO) showed Thursday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Recognizing North Korea as a nuclear state threatens to create a domino effect that will cause an arms race around Northeast Asia, Seoul's top official on inter-Korean affairs warned Thursday, as he called on the United States to reaffirm support for denuclearization on the Peninsula. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- North Korea issued heavy rain warnings for most of the country on Thursday, as a tropical storm passing over the peninsula threatened to dump over a foot of rain in some places. (Alannah Hill, Seung-Yeon Chung, *NK News*)
- For the first time in five years, a North Korean soldier defected to the South, crossing the heavily fortified border on foot early Tuesday, prompting some experts to speculate that the resumption in July of South Korean loudspeaker broadcasts along the border prompted his escape. (Han Do Hyung, *RFA*)
- As part of 38 North's AI-focused series, this report investigates North Korea's foreign collaborations in AI development, drawing from analysis of co-authorships of DPRK scientific journal articles on AI, and select case studies to get a better sense of the country's position within the global AI landscape. (Hyuk Kim, *38 North*)

In South Korea:

- A group of vacationers inadvertently triggered a national security investigation after a photo of their gathering with a banner jokingly referring to it as a "Communist Party" meeting circulated online. (Moon Ki-hoon, *The Korea Herald*)
- Police have opened an investigation into a pro-North Korean online media outlet founded by Korean American pastor Choi Jae-young on suspicion of violating the National Security Act, officials said Thursday. (Yoo Cheong-mo, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's unification ministry has defended its all-male speaker lineup for a high-profile conference on North Korea issues next month, after experts and journalists raised concerns about the absence of women. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- South Korean Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho dismissed claims that President Yoon Suk Yeol's new unification policy advocates for unification through the absorption of North Korea without recognizing its regime. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- A senior South Korean diplomat has asked Laos for support in sending a stern and unified message to North Korea against its military and other provocations at upcoming summits involving major Southeast Asian countries, Seoul officials said Thursday. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the United States will continue efforts to enhance practical capabilities and readiness to respond to "any type" of North Korean nuclear threats, Seoul's foreign ministry said Thursday. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

- South Korea's point man on North Korea said Thursday that the incoming U.S. government will reaffirm its long-standing goal of denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula, regardless of the outcome of the upcoming presidential election. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Valerie Xu, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250723070931/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-nk-could-create-a-nuclear-domino-effect-in-asia-sk-us-to-build-capabilities-against-any-type-of-nk-nuclear-threats?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, August 23rd, 2024

North Korean athletes undergoing 'ideological evaluation' for Olympic selfie; Sung Kim to receive US diplomatic award

In North Korea:
North Korea could create a 'nuclear domino' effect in Asia (*UPI*, 08/22/2024)
North Korea is reopening to tourists after almost five years, but will anyone go? (*The Guardian*, 08/23/2024)
North Korean athletes undergoing 'ideological evaluation' for Olympic selfie (*The Telegraph*, 08/23/2024)

International:
Despite ban, North Korea's global AI collaborations grow (Korea JoongAng Daily, 08/22/2024)
First North Koreans resettle in Canada as part of new pilot project (NK News, 08/23/2024)
Harris says she will not cozy up to dictators like North Korea's Kim (Radio Free Asia, 08/23/2024)
Harris, Trump seen envisioning different approaches to alliances, N.K. threats (Yonhap, 08/23/2024)
New Zealand sends ship to monitor North Korean sanctions evasion for first time (NK News, 08/23/2024)
North Korea slams US sale of Apache helicopters to South Korea as 'provocative' (Reuters, 08/22/2024)
Russian students from elite university arrive in North Korea for exchange (NK News, 08/23/2024)
Russian students return to N. Korea after 4-year hiatus over COVID-19 (Yonhap, 08/23/2024)
Sung Kim to receive US diplomatic award (The Korea Herald, 8/23/2024)

In North Korea:

- Recognizing North Korea as a nuclear state threatens to create a domino effect that will cause an arms race around Northeast Asia, Seoul's top official on inter-Korean affairs warned Thursday, as he called on the United States to reaffirm support for denuclearization on the Peninsula. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)

- North Korea is to welcome back international tourists at the end of the year, according to travel agencies, but experts have warned that the long-awaited opening up could fall victim to political tensions and the country's brutal winters. (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)
- It was a heartwarming moment that captured the Olympic spirit, but North Korea's table tennis champions may be punished for joining a selfie with their opponents from the South. The players are now said to be undergoing "ideological evaluation" along with other athletes who returned from the games this month. (Nicola Smith, *The Telegraph*)

International:

- North Korea has taken steps to strengthen its AI capabilities and participate in related research around the world despite an international ban on scientific collaboration with the regime, a U.S.-based think tank said Wednesday. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A group of North Korean defectors has resettled in Canada through private sponsorship for the first time, a Canada-based human rights organization announced Wednesday. HanVoice said that defectors arrived at Toronto Pearson Airport, where they were greeted by Canadian sponsor groups holding welcome signs. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- U.S. Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris said she will not "cozy up to" dictators like North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, whom she said was "rooting for" her Republican rival Donald Trump. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)
- With the U.S. presidential election a little over 70 days away, global attention is shifting to how Democratic flag-bearer Kamala Harris and her Republican rival Donald Trump would deal with America's alliances, North Korean threats, strategic rivalry with China and other issues if elected. (Song Sang-Ho, *Yonhap*)
- New Zealand has deployed a ship to monitor North Korea's maritime sanctions evasion activities for the first time, adding to growing international efforts to rein in the smuggling activities fueling Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Korea's foreign ministry denounced a U.S. planned sale of Apache helicopters to South Korea, state media KCNA said on Friday, vowing to take additional steps to bolster its self-defense. The Pentagon said on Monday that the U.S. State Department has approved the potential sale of Apache helicopters and related logistics and support to South Korea for an estimated $3.5 billion. (*Reuters*)
- Russian students from an elite diplomatic school are visiting North Korea to attend Kim Il Sung University for the first time in four years, a move which one expert described as another sign of deepening ties between Moscow and Pyongyang. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Five Russian university students have arrived in North Korea for a language program, marking Russian students' first entry to Pyongyang after a four-year hiatus since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian Embassy in Pyongyang said Friday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Sung Kim, a former United States ambassador to South Korea and currently an adviser for Hyundai Motor Group, has been chosen as this year's recipient of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy's George F. Kennan Award for Distinguished Public Service, the Korean auto conglomerate said Friday. (Kan Hyeong-woo, *The Korea Herald*)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250723072220/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korean-athletes-undergoing-ideological-evaluation-for-olympic-selfie-sung-kim-to-receive-us-diplomatic-award?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, August 24th, 2024

N. Korea slams U.S. nuclear strategy, vows to build up nuclear arms; NSC conducts integrated cybersecurity drills

In North Korea:
N. Korea slams U.S. nuclear strategy, vows to build up nuclear arms (*Yonhap*, 08/24/24)

Inter-Korean Relations:
The DMZ Is an Unhealed Wound for Korea. It's Also a Source of Great Honey. (*New York Times*, 08/24/24)

In South Korea:
NSC conducts integrated cybersecurity drills (*Yonhap*, 08/24/24)
Yoon says N. Korea will face 'end of regime' if it invades South (*Yonhap*, 08/24/24)

International:
DAPA chief visits Australia to discuss expanding arms industry ties (Yonhap, 08/24/24)

In North Korea:

- North Korea on Saturday strongly lashed out at a revised U.S. nuclear strategy plan, vowing to further strengthen its nuclear capability. Earlier this week, it was reported that President Biden approved the revision in March to focus on China's growing nuclear threats and prepare for possible coordinated nuclear challenges from North Korea, China and Russia. (Park Sang-seo, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- The presidential National Security Council (NSC) said Wednesday it has conducted cybersecurity drills to enhance integrated response between public and private entities against hybrid threats. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol warned Wednesday that North Korea would face the end of its regime should it attempt to invade South Korea, while inspecting an annual joint exercise with the United States. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- The heavily fortified area separating North and South Korea is home to a biodiverse landscape and is a place of deep meaning for nearby farmers whose bees can fly freely through it. (Mike Ives, Youmi Kim, Jun Michael Park, *NY Times*)

International:

- The head of the state arms procurement agency visited Australia this week to discuss expanding arms industry cooperation, the Defence Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA) said Friday, as Seoul eyes clinching more defense deals with Canberra. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Ryan Rohrbach, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723072540/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-slams-us-nuclear-strategy-vows-to-build-up-nuclear-arms-nsc-conducts-integrated-cybersecurity-drills?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, August 25th, 2024

N. Korea could stage large-scale provocation to influence US election results: analysts

In North Korea:
North Korea table-tennis champs face punishment for 'grinning' in Olympics selfie with rivals (*New York Post*, 08/24/24)
North Korea is reopening to tourists after almost five years, but will anyone go? (*The Guardian*, 08/25/24)

Inter-Korean Relations:
South Korean lawmakers brace for US election as Harris, Trump diverge on North Korea (*The Korea Herald*, 08/25/24)

International:
N. Korea could stage large-scale provocation to influence US election results: analysts (*The Korea Times*, 08/25/24)

In North Korea:

- The North Korean table-tennis silver medalists who practiced some selfie love with the competition at the Paris Olympics could face disciplinary action for "grinning" from the podium. (Lauren Elkies Schram, *New York Post*)

- North Korea is to welcome back international tourists at the end of the year, according to travel agencies, but experts have warned that the long-awaited opening up could fall victim to political tensions and the country's brutal winters. (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- As the US election race enters its final two months, South Korean lawmakers are bracing for the impact of a Harris or Trump administration as the two presidential candidates offer opposing approaches to North Korea and its leader Kim Jong-un. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)

International:

- As the U.S. presidential election nears, speculation is rising about the possibility of North Korea staging major provocations to influence the outcome. Analysts are examining whether Pyongyang might act in a way that could indirectly benefit former U.S. President Donald Trump's campaign, though opinions on the likelihood and effectiveness of such a strategy vary. (Kim Hyun-bin, *The Korea Times*)

Prepared by Sam Garcia, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250723072815/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-could-stage-large-scale-provocation-to-influence-us-election-results-analysts?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Monday, August 26th, 2024

UN Human Rights Rapporteurs Send a Letter to North Korea Expressing Concerns Over Forced Repatriation of escapees

Top News:
Why Kim Jong Un's campaign to compel youth loyalty is bound to backfire (*NK News*, 08/23/2024)
UN Human Rights Rapporteurs Send a Letter to North Korea Expressing Concerns Over Forced Repatriation of escapees; North Korea Rejects it as Political Provocation (VOA, 08/13/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
North Korea unveils new suicide drones, calls for more (*Radio Free Asia*, 08/25/2024)
Former senior North Korean diplomat to Cuba admits he was 'embarrassed' to represent regime (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/26/2024)
Kim Jong-un hoping for Trump's re-election: ex-North Korean envoy (*The Korea Herald*, 08/26/2024)

Kim Jong Un inspects new 'suicide drones,' urges incorporation of AI (*NK News*, 08/26/2024)
(2nd LD) N. Korean leader calls for developing, producing more suicide drones (*Yonhap*, 08/26/2024)
N. Korean leader orders construction of more hospitals in regional development efforts (*Yonhap*, 08/26/2024)
North's latest missile launchers could put half of South in range: NIS (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/26/2024)
North Korea's Kim Jong Un oversees tests of 'suicide drones' (*Reuters*, 08/26/2024)
North unveils new suicide drones as leader Kim aims to accelerate production (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/26/2024)
Why North Korea has toned down its response to US-ROK summer exercises (*NK News*, 08/26/2024)

In South Korea:
South Koreans once chipped in for fighter jets. Now, they make their own. (*The Washington Post*, 08/26/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
North Korea's new missile launchers can reach central South Korea: NIS (*The Korea Herald*, 08/26/2024)

International:
Argentina arrests Russian for laundering crypto stolen by North Korea (*NK News*, 08/26/2024)
Kim Jong-un calls for development of more suicide drones (*The Telegraph*, 08/26/2024)
Kim Jong Un oversees 'suicide drone' test while U.S., South Korea hold joint military drills (*UPI*, 08/26/2024)
NIS voices doubt over N. Korea's ability to supply missiles to launchers (*Yonhap*, 08/26/2024)
North Korean farmland suffered 'minimal' damage from floods, USDA finds (*NK News*, 08/26/2024)
North Korea shows new drone attacking a target as Seoul and US hold large military exercises (*The Washington Post*, 08/26/2024)
Russian government VIP plane makes unannounced trip to North Korea (*NK News*, 08/26/2024)
South Korean, U.S., British marines to begin Ssangyong amphibious landing exercise Monday (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/25/2024)
US-ROK marines train to counter-invade North Korea in case of attack (*NK News*, 08/26/2024)
Yoon, U.S. Senate's armed service committee chief discuss alliance, N.K. threats (*Yonhap*, 08/26/2024)

Top News:

- Concerns that the loyalty of young North Koreans is wavering due to their exposure to K-pop and South Korean media have driven Kim Jong Un to double down on efforts to control youth, and according to one recent report, that campaign is actually working. (Gabriela Burnell, *NK News*)
- Several UN human rights rapporteurs and heads of working groups have sent a letter to the North Korean government, expressing concerns over the forced repatriation of escapees, arbitrary detention, and torture, urging North Korea to provide relevant information. North Korea has rejected the letter, claiming it contains false information. **Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea**, remarks in an

interview, "North Korea, just like some other U.N. member states, has a problem with country-specific rapporteurs such as the UN special rapporteur on human rights in the DPRK." (Eun-jung Jo, VOA)

In North Korea:

- North Korea unveiled new suicide drones with some of them looking in released photographs similar to those used by Russia, as the North's leader called for the development and production of more of the unmanned aerial vehicles. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)
- Ri Il-gyu, a former high-ranking North Korean diplomat who defected to the South in November, made his first public appearance on Monday, where he described the "embarrassment" he felt while representing the regime abroad. (Seo Ji-Eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Tae Yong-ho, who was Pyongyang's envoy to the UK before seeking asylum in South Korea in 2016, said North Korean leader Kim Jong-un would want US presidential nominee Donald Trump to win in November. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspected small new "suicide drones" and urged the military to incorporate artificial intelligence in their development, according to state media on Monday. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has overseen a performance test of various drones, calling for the development and production of more suicide drones to enhance war preparedness, state media reported Monday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has ordered the construction of more modern hospitals as part of ongoing efforts to develop underdeveloped regions outside of Pyongyang, state media reported Monday. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's spy agency believes the range of the North's latest missile launchers could extend to the central Chungcheong region but expressed doubt that the regime could supply missiles to all of the launchers, lawmakers said Monday. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un watched as new "suicide drones" took off and destroyed test targets including a mock tank, and urged researchers to develop artificial intelligence for the unmanned vehicles, state media reported on Monday. (Joyce Lee, Hyunsu Yim, Josh Smith, Sandra Maler, *Reuters*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un emphasized the growing importance of drones in modern warfare and is looking to foster the accelerated production of various suicide drones, according to the country's state media Monday. (Seo Ji-Eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea made the provocative assertion last week that ongoing U.S.-ROK summer military exercises are a "prelude to nuclear war," but despite the bombast, NK Pro analysis of state media output suggests that the DPRK is less concerned about the allies' joint drills this year than it was in 2023. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- Korea and China's 32-year diplomatic relationship has experienced significant economic and cultural growth, but also tensions, particularly over geopolitical issues like the Thaad deployment. These dynamics have influenced academic interest in Chinese studies in Korea, underscoring the need for more experts in navigating the complex relationship. (Song Jung-hwa, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- South Korea, an industrial and tech powerhouse, was once so poor that its citizens donated money so the government could buy five American fighter jets in case of a North Korean invasion. (Michelle Ye Hee Lee, *The Washington Post*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- South Korea's spy service believes North Korea's new tactical ballistic missile launchers unveiled earlier this month may be capable of reaching as far as central South Korea, in the North and South Chungcheong provinces. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)

International:

- Argentine authorities have arrested a Russian national for laundering stolen cryptocurrency from a $100 million North Korean heist, according to a blockchain analytics firm, a development that one expert said shows the DPRK is well integrated into global money laundering networks. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has called for the development of more suicide drones to boost his regime's war readiness. Kim was quoted as saying: "It is necessary to develop and produce more suicide drones of various types to be used in tactical infantry and special operation units, as well as strategic reconnaissance and multi-purpose attack drones." (Nicola Smith, *The Telegraph*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un oversaw a demonstration of exploding "suicide" drones, state-run media reported Monday, while U.S. and South Korean troops continued large-scale joint military drills on the peninsula. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- The National Intelligence Service (NIS) expressed skepticism Monday over North Korea's ability to supply missiles to the hundreds of new launchers it plans to deploy to the front lines, lawmakers said. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- Farmland in North Korea's northwestern regions suffered only limited damage from recent flooding, according to new U.S. government research, concluding that they are unlikely to impact the country's overall crop production this year. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un supervised a demonstration of new exploding drones designed to crash into targets, state media said Monday, as the U.S. and South Korea engage in joint military drills. (Kim Tong-Hyung, *The Washington Post*)
- A VIP Russian government jet made an unannounced trip to North Korea on Monday, possibly to transport a Russian trade delegation, in its second clandestine flight to the country this month. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- South Korean Marines and naval forces are set to kick off the annual Ssangyong amphibious landing exercise with U.S. and British counterparts in Pohang and along the eastern coast on Monday, defense officials said Sunday. (Micheal Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- U.S. and South Korean marines will train how to launch a counter-invasion if North Korea attacks, as part of a large-scale joint amphibious exercise that kicked off on Monday. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol met with the head of the U.S. Senate's armed service committee Monday to discuss ways to bolster the combined defense posture against North Korean threats, his office said. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

UN Human Rights Rapporteurs Send a Letter to North Korea Expressing Concerns Over Forced Repatriation of escapees; North Korea Rejects it as Political Provocation

Eun-jung Jo, VOA

August 13, 2024

https://www.voakorea.com/a/7739812.html

Several UN human rights rapporteurs and heads of working groups have sent a letter to the North Korean government, expressing concerns over the forced repatriation of escapees, arbitrary detention, and torture, urging North Korea to provide relevant information. North Korea has rejected the letter, claiming it contains false information.

Elizabeth Salmón, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in North Korea; Reem Alsalem, UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls; Ganna Yudkivska, Vice-Chair of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; Aua Baldé, Chair of the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; and Dorothy Estrada-Tanck, Chair of the UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, sent a public letter to the North Korean government on May 22, expressing concerns over the forced repatriation of escapees and inhumane treatment in detention facilities.

In accordance with the practice of making such letters public 60 days after they are sent, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) posted the letter on its website on the 12th. The letter highlights information received by the UN regarding serious human rights violations, including arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, gender-based violence, torture, and extrajudicial killings faced by those forcibly repatriated from China to North Korea, and warns of potential violations of international law by North Korea.

The rapporteurs mentioned that they had sent three urgent cases raised during the 131st session of the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID) to North Korea and shared related copies with China.

[Letter] “According to the information received by the UN: In early October 2023, hundreds of escapees from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the vast majority of whom are women, were forcibly repatriated from China to Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Hundreds of individuals reportedly remain in detention in China as well as other countries, facing the same fate."

The letter also detailed specific cases of individuals suspected of being victims of human trafficking, forced pregnancy, and forced marriage who were forcibly repatriated. One case involved a woman who was sold to a rural village on the outskirts of Tonghua City, Jilin Province, in China in 2019, where she was confined, forcibly impregnated, and hospitalized with severe bleeding before being forcibly repatriated to North Korea around September 2023 after being held in Tonghua and Baishan detention centers.

Another case involved a woman who was forcibly married in China in 2013, later imprisoned in Changchun Prison, Jilin Province, on charges of human trafficking, transferred to Baishan Detention Center, and forcibly repatriated to North Korea in October 2023.

A third case involved a woman who was sold to a Chinese man through human traffickers in 2016, gave birth to two children, and was detained in Dandong Prison, Liaoning Province, in May 2022 on charges of receiving smuggled goods, including dried pollock, from North Korea. She was then transferred to Baishan Detention Center and forcibly repatriated in early October 2023.

The letter also introduced the case of a man who was caught at the North Korea-China border, severely beaten, and last seen with bandaged hands and feet due to the injuries sustained from torture.

The rapporteurs pointed out that those forcibly repatriated to North Korea are subjected to body searches and beatings during the initial interrogation process by the Ministry of State Security, with women being particularly vulnerable to gender-based violence.

This initial interrogation aims to determine the reasons for defection, activities abroad, duration of stay, connections to South Korea or religious groups, and the identity of those who assisted in their defection. Those considered to have committed "treasonous acts" or found to have intended to defect to South Korea remain detained in the Ministry of State Security's facilities.

[Letter] “Reportedly, those who are sent to Kwanliso will be held incommunicado in circumstances that may amount to enforced disappearance, denied release, and be subjected to harsh punishment, in certain cases, extrajudicial killings.”

The rapporteurs expressed "the utmost concern over the risk of severe human rights violations against the mentioned individuals."

They requested North Korea to provide additional information regarding the charges against these individuals, their fate and whereabouts, current health conditions, judicial safeguards, the guarantee of basic freedom of movement in North Korea, and measures to prevent sexual violence against detained women.

The letter requested a response within 60 days, stating that if the deadline passes, both the initial letter sent by the rapporteurs and North Korea's response will be made public on the UN website.

In response, the North Korean mission in Geneva, Switzerland, sent a letter on June 17, stating that “The joint communication of the special mandate holders is a consistent anti-DPRK political provocation document full of falsehood, fabrication and plot that has no relevance with genuine promotion and protection of human rights, and the DPRK categorically denies and rejects it. This act to follow hostile forces to tarnish the dignified image of the socialist system of the DPRK, which enjoys the absolute trust and support of the entire people, is unacceptable.”

North Korea also argued that UN human rights mechanisms should maintain impartiality, objectivity, and neutrality.

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, a Washington-based NGO, told VOA in a phone interview on the 12th that "North Korea, just like some other U.N. member states, has a problem with country-specific rapporteurs such as the UN special rapporteur on human rights in the DPRK. Less so with thematic rapporteurs such as Reem Alsalem. So I think this collaboration is a very powerful one. The big problem with North Korea, of course, is that the North Korean regime will reject anything related to the abysmal human rights situation in the country. Nevertheless, they do care. We remember ten years ago after the report of the UN

Commission of Inquiry, they dispatched the foreign minister to the General Assembly for the first time in ten years."

This is Eun-jung Jo for VOA.

Translated by Jangyun Yoo, HRNK Research Intern; Edited by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Maria Fernanda de Almeida, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250723073117/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-un-human-rights-rapporteurs-send-a-letter-to-north-korea-expressing-concerns-over-forced-repatriation-of-escapees?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, August 27th, 2024

N. Korea sent over 13,000 containers suspected of carrying arms to Russia

In North Korea:
N. Korea sent over 13,000 containers suspected of carrying arms to Russia: lawmaker (*Yonhap*, 08/27/2024)
More than half of N. Koreans experience capitalism: former N. Korean diplomat (*Yonhap*, 08/27/2024)
North Korea dismantles giant import quarantine center on Chinese border (*NK News*, 08/27/2024)
'Rooster hairstyle,' see-thru sleeves now banned in North Korea (*Radio Free Asia*, 08/26/2024)

In South Korea:
Settlement funding for N. Korean defectors to rise to 15 mln won in 2025 (*Yonhap*, 08/27/2024)
Seoul seeks to raise defense budget to record $46B to deter North Korean threats (*NK News*, 08/27/2024)
Seoul's unification ministry looks to cut spending on North Korea cooperation (*NK News*, 08/27/2024)
Unification ministry verifying report on arrest of N. Korean defectors in China (*Yonhap*, 08/27/2024)

International:
Pentagon spokesman calls N. Korea 'complicit' in Russia's invasion of Ukraine (*Yonhap*, 08/27/2024)
Army private who fled to North Korea will plead guilty to desertion (*AP News*, 08/26/2024)
North Korean defectors share inspiring tales from 'extraordinary' visit to United States (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/27/2024)
North Korean embassies cancel founding day events, citing flood relief efforts (*NK News*, 08/27/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has sent more than 13,000 shipping containers suspected of carrying arms to Russia since mid-2022 amid deepening bilateral military ties. The North delivered the shipments that could hold more than 6 million 152-millimeter artillery shells through its eastern port of Najin over the roughly two-year period. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has been imposing a reign of terror as more than half of ordinary North Korean people have experienced capitalism through an inflow of outside information. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has dismantled import quarantine facilities at a converted airport near the Chinese border, signaling a shift in trade policies and possible plan to reopen an important military-civilian airport. Planet Labs imagery shows almost all structures along the Uiju Airport runway were torn down between Aug. 8 and 24. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea has added the "rooster hairstyle" and blouses with see-through sleeves to its banned fashion list, saying they "obscure the image of a socialist system." The new regulations were detailed in a video lecture shown to people, with hairstyle violators forced to shave their heads. (Kim Jieun, *Radio Free Asia*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea has increased funding for North Korean defectors to support their early settlement as part of its budget proposal for next year, in line with its new unification blueprint. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea seeks to raise its defense budget above 60 trillion won ($45 billion won) for the first time in 2025, allocating increased funds to procure weapons like F-35A stealth fighters and Patriot missile upgrades to deter North Korea. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- The Yoon administration has proposed a 3.7% decrease in funding for the unification ministry next year, singling out inter-Korean cooperation and support programs for the largest cuts in line with its focus on military deterrence of North Korea over dialogue. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- The unification ministry said Tuesday it is trying to verify a report that 15 North Korean defectors seeking to flee to South Korea were arrested by Chinese police last week. The defectors were arrested in the southwestern Chinese city of Kunming on Aug. 21 in an ambush. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- A Pentagon spokesperson accused North Korea Monday of being "complicit" in Russia's war in Ukraine as he reiterated the United States' concerns over Pyongyang's provision of munitions and other military equipment to Moscow. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- An Army private who fled to North Korea just over a year ago will plead guilty to desertion and four other charges and take responsibility for his conduct. Travis King's attorney shared that King intends to admit guilt to a total of five military offenses, including desertion and assaulting an officer. (Erik Tucker, *AP News*)
- Six North Korean defectors flew across the Pacific to the United States, where they went busking on a Californian beach pier and shared their lives' trajectories before and after their escape with local college students. (Lee Soo-jung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- North Korean embassies in several countries have abruptly canceled events to celebrate the anniversary of the country's founding on Sept. 9, citing the need to focus resources on flood recovery efforts. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)

Prepared by Suha Choi, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723073434/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-sent-over-13000-containers-suspected-of-carrying-arms-to-russia?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, August 28th, 2024

N. Korea test-fires multiple rocket launcher equipped with new guidance system

In North Korea:
N. Korea imports breed of horses loved by leader Kim from Russia (*Yonhap*, 8/28/2024)
N. Korea, Russia hold economic talks to boost cooperation (*Yonhap*, 8/28/2024)
N. Korea test-fires multiple rocket launcher equipped with new guidance system (*Yonhap*, 8/28/2024)
North Korea has sent over 13K containers of weapons to Russia, Seoul says (*NK News*, 8/28/2024)

In South Korea:
Overdue apology issued to fishers wrongly accused of being NK spies (*The Korea Herald*, 8/28/2024)

International:
Ethnic Korean students in Japan visit North Korea for first time since pandemic (*NK News*, 8/28/2024)
In first, North Korea registers 13 military submarines with UN maritime agency (*NK News*, 8/28/2024)
McMaster's memoir reveals differences between Moon, Trump administrations over N. Korea, other issues (*Yonhap*, 8/28/2024)
Minister plays down US parties' omission of NK denuke goal (*The Korea Herald*, 8/28/2024)
N. Korea has yet to allow entry of U.N. resident coordinator appointed in March (*Yonhap*, 8/28/2024)
Russian TV airs ad promoting sale of North Korean clothes despite sanctions (*NK News*, 8/28/2024)
U.S. takes N.K. 'suicide drone' threat 'seriously': Pentagon (*Yonhap*, 8/28/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea imported 24 Orlov Trotter horses from Russia, known to be favored by leader Kim Jong-un. The shipment marks the first such delivery since 2022. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

- North Korea's external economic minister, Yun Jong-ho, met with Russia's deputy industry and trade minister, Roman Chekushov, to discuss enhancing bilateral economic cooperation, according to state media. This meeting follows ongoing efforts to strengthen ties between North Korea and Russia, including a partnership treaty signed by Kim Jong-un and Vladimir Putin last year. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un oversaw a test of a 240mm multiple rocket launcher with a new guidance system, according to state media, amid speculation that the weapon could be supplied to Russia for use in Ukraine. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has shipped over 13,000 containers to Russia recently, up from 7,000 in March, suggesting it may have supplied around 6 million artillery shells for use against Ukraine. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- A former police chief has apologized for an illegal investigation over 50 years ago that wrongly accused fishermen of being North Korean spies. Lee's apology, given to victims in Goseong, marks the first time an active head of an investigative body has acknowledged the wrongful convictions. (Yoon Min-sik, *The Korea Herald*)

International:

- Students from a pro-Pyongyang university in Tokyo have returned to North Korea for the first time since the pandemic, marking a significant step toward resuming regular ideological education for ethnic Koreans in Japan. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- North Korea has registered 13 military submarines with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) for the first time, indicating a plan to showcase its naval modernization by sending the vessels on international port calls. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- In his memoir, former U.S. National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster details significant disagreements between the South Korean and U.S. administrations over North Korea, including differing views on Kim Jong-un's nuclear ambitions and how to handle missile provocations. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho reassured that South Korea, the US, and Japan remain committed to North Korea's denuclearization, despite its omission from US 2024 party platforms. US and Japanese diplomats stressed ongoing trilateral cooperation, while Ralph Cossa of the Pacific Forum called for more effort to solidify the partnership amid potential political shifts. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea has not allowed U.N. resident coordinator Joe Colombano, appointed six months ago, to enter the country. Discussions are ongoing about the return of U.N. staff to resume operations in North Korea, which has been impacted by recent floods and ongoing food shortages. Despite easing some COVID-19 restrictions, North Korea's borders remain partially closed. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- An expert has labeled recent Russian TV ads for North Korean clothes as the first instance of a media company violating UN sanctions on Pyongyang. The ads, promoting cheap North Korean apparel, highlight a new and significant effort to import and market these textiles despite existing international sanctions. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- The U.S. is taking North Korea's "suicide drones" seriously, according to a Pentagon spokesperson, who emphasized Washington's commitment to working with South Korea and allies to ensure regional security. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Faith Osinloye, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723073817/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-test-fires-multiple-rocket-launcher-equipped-with-new-guidance-system?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, August 29th, 2024

Human Security Risk: Tired Mountain Syndrome; Families of S. Korean detainees in NK appeal to embassies for support

Top News:
Human Security Risk: Tired Mountain Syndrome (*HRNK YPWP*, 08/27/2024)

In South Korea:
Families of S. Korean detainees in NK appeal to embassies for support (*The Korea Herald*, 8/29/2024)
Families of victims of N. Korea's abduction, detention urge int'l solidarity to address issue (*Yonhap*, 8/29/2024)
S. Korea to expand support for civic groups' radio broadcasting projects for N. Koreans (*Yonhap*, 8/29/2024)
South Korean who leaked military secrets was recruited by China in 2017: Seoul (*NK News*, 8/29/2024)
Yoon touts pension reform drive amid stagnant popularity rating (*Yonhap*, 8/29/2024)

International:
Cambodia will maintain its cooperation with North Korea in areas of society, security, peace, analysts say (*ASIA News Network*, 8/29/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. wrap up key summertime military exercise against N. Korean threats (*Yonhap*, 8/29/2024)
Trump's erratic messaging undermined maximum pressure on North Korea: McMaster (*NK News*, 8/29/2024)
US, ROK gather blockchain industry for symposium on North Korean crypto theft (*NK News*, 8/29/2024)

Top News:

- The dangers posed by North Korea's nuclear testing extend beyond immediate geopolitical tensions to significant human rights and environmental concerns. The nuclear tests conducted at North Korea's Punggye-ri nuclear testing site have resulted in what is called "Tired Mountain Syndrome." The short-term consequences of these tests may lead to the collapse of Mt. Mantap. However, the long-term effects may lead to an eruption of Mount Paektu, a mountain that is considered holy in North Korea. North Korea's nuclear testing

poses more than just a national security problem. It endangers the human rights and human security of North Korea's population. (Gary Tetreault, HRNK YPWP)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's Unification Ministry on Thursday organized a first-ever event where families of South Koreans abducted and held captive by North Korea made a direct appeal to foreign missions in Seoul, urging global support in bringing these decades-old unresolved cases to the UN stage for resolution. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- Families of victims of North Korea's abduction and detention on Thursday called for international solidarity to resolve the issue of enforced disappearances by the North, as they appealed for efforts to confirm the fate of their family members and secure their safe return. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea plans to expand its support for civic groups' radio broadcasts targeting North Korean residents in a bid to help North Koreans access external information, the unification ministry said Thursday. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- A South Korean man arrested last month for allegedly leaking military secrets was recruited by a suspected Chinese intelligence agent in 2017, according to ROK prosecutors, though it's still unclear whether the Chinese operative was also working for North Korea. (Jeongmin Kim, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol outlined his blueprints for pension reform proposals in a rare national address Thursday, vowing to make the fund, one of the world's largest with assets worth 1,113.5 trillion won ($834.7 billion) as of May, more sustainable to ensure that younger generations will benefit from the system in the decades to come. (Son Ji-Hyoung, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Analysts suggest that Cambodia will maintain its cooperation with North Korea in areas of society, security and peace, as the Kingdom seeks stability on the Korean Peninsula. (Ry Sochan, *Asia News Network*)
- South Korea and the United States on Thursday wrapped up a major combined military exercise after its 11-day run as the allies sought to bolster their joint defense readiness against evolving North Korean military threats. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- President Donald Trump's inconsistent messaging on North Korea severely undermined the administration's "maximum pressure" strategy to convince Kim Jong Un to denuclearize, former National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster claims in a new book that seeks to show what a second Trump term would look like. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- The U.S. and South Korea hosted a meeting with crypto industry professionals on Tuesday aimed at curbing North Korea's efforts to steal and launder cryptocurrency to raise illicit funds for weapons development. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

Prepared by Gary Tetreault, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723074058/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-human-security-risk-tired-mountain-syndrome-families-of-s-korean-detainees-in-nk-appeal-to-embassies-for-support?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Friday, August 30th, 2024

Sullivan to China: US committed to ‘complete’ Korean peninsula denuclearization

In North Korea:
North Korea reverses decision to publicly register submarines (VOA, 8/30/2024)

In South Korea:
Gov't tracks 4,071 perpetrators, victims in N. Korean human rights probe (*Yonhap*, 8/30/2024)
Unification ministry issues English version of report on N. Korea's economic, social situation (*Yonhap*, 8/30/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
South Korea to allow private groups to contact North Korea for flood relief (*NK News*, 8/30/2024)

International:
N. Korea's ambassador to Singapore takes office (*Yonhap*, 8/30/2024)
North Korea using Chinese warehouses to sell ginseng and accordions overseas (*NK News*, 8/30/2024)
North Korean diplomatic delegation to attend UN General Assembly: Sources (*NK News*, 8/30/2024)
Russia sends 240 goats to North Korea in second shipment this month (*NK News*, 8/30/2024)
Russian power grid experts visit North Korea to discuss energy cooperation (*NK News*, 8/30/2024)
Sullivan to China: US committed to ‘complete’ Korean peninsula denuclearization (RFA, 8/30/2024)
US, South Korea Hold Defense Drills Against the North (*Newsweek*, 8/30/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea this week placed 13 of its several dozen known submarines on a public list maintained by an international maritime agency, only to have them removed a day later. (Jiha Ham, Christy Lee, VOA)

In South Korea:

- South Korea has so far tracked a total of 4,071 perpetrators and victims of North Korea's human rights violations in an ongoing investigation meant to serve as potential evidence in holding human rights abusers accountable, the unification ministry said Friday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The unification ministry said Friday it has published the English version of its report on North Korea's economic and social situation in a bid to help the international community better understand evolving changes in the North's society. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- Seoul emphasizes decision is an exception to de facto ban that aims to help DPRK citizens 'return to their daily lives'. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

International:

- Ri Kil-song officially began his term Tuesday after presenting his credentials to Singapore's President Tharman Shanmugaratnam. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- State media reveals e-commerce scheme to sell goods via website set up with China and Russia, raising sanctions concerns. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- Intelligence source says Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui expected to give speech, after Japanese media reports same. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- Exports come amid plans to ship thousands of goats to the DPRK as part of apparent push to diversify citizens' diets. (Anton Sokolin, *RFA*)
- Two sides reportedly touched on development of power industry in country with deteriorating electrical grid. (Anton Sokolin, *RFA*)
- The absence of references to North Korean denuclearization in US party platforms has raised concern in the South. (Taejun Kang, *RFA*)
- American and South Korean forces on Thursday concluded 11 days of joint military exercises amid flaring tensions between the U.S. ally and North Korea. (Micah McCartney, *Newsweek*)

Prepared by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250723074409/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-sullivan-to-china-us-committed-to-complete-korean-peninsula-denuclearization?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, August 31st, 2024

Activists join US, NYC officials in effort to name street outside North Korea's UN office after Otto Warmbier

In North Korea:
North Korea bans more TV and movies. Surprise! They're Chinese (RFA, 8/30/2024)
North Korea dismantling flooded farm hamlets, photo evidence shows (*Nikkei Asia*, 8/31/2024)

International:
Activists join US, NYC officials in effort to name street outside North Korea's UN office after Otto Warmbier (Fox News, 8/31/2024)
Dispute over border telecom plan further strains China-North Korea ties (VOA, 8/31/2024)
Trump says getting along with Kim Jong-un is 'good thing' (*Yonhap*, 8/31/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Koreans are banned from watching movies and TV shows, including ones from China, according to an updated list. (Ahn Chang Gyu, Kim Soyoung, RFA)
- On Aug. 23, Nikkei took pictures of a flood-damaged hamlet in Uiju from the other side of the Yalu River in the Chinese border city of Dandong. The photos revealed that the hamlet was being dismantled by hundreds of workers. (*Nikkei Asia*)

International:

- Soyeon Lee, a North Korean defector and human rights activistmother whose son is imprisoned in a political prison camp by the Kim Jong Un regime, will speak on Wednesday before the local Community Board Six in support of the initiative to establish 'Otto Warmbier Way' in New York City, where the North Korean Mission to the UN is based. (Eric Shawn, *Fox News*)
- North Korea has expressed opposition to China's plan to install telecommunication facilities near their shared border, alleging that Beijing's failure to consult Pyongyang in advance constitutes a violation of international guidelines. (Christy Lee, VOA)
- During a campaign rally in Pennsylvania, a key battleground state, former President Trump again boasted about his personal ties with the North Korean leader, as he and the vice president are in a tight race with the presidential election just a little over two months away. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250723112300/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-activists-join-us-nyc-officials-in-effort-to-name-street-outside-north-koreas-un-office-after-otto-warmbier?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

9. SEPTEMBER

Sunday, September 1st, 2024

South Korea Says an Official Leaked a Classified Spy Roster to China

In North Korea:
North Korea orders all students abroad to return home for ideological education (RFA, 8/28/2024)

International:
North Korea breaks pattern, stays calm after South Korea-US joint drills (The Korea Times 9/01/2024)
South Korea Says an Official Leaked a Classified Spy Roster to China (*The New York Times*, 8/30/2024)

In North Korea:

- The government is worried that the students have been exposed to freedom too long, observers say. (Chin Min Jai, *RFA*)

International:

- North Korea's unusually restrained response to the recent South Korea-U.S. Ulchi Freedom Shield exercise marks a significant departure from its typical provocative behavior. (Lee Hyo-jin, *The Korea Times*)
- A civilian employee at South Korea's military intelligence agency was arrested for leaking classified data, including a list of undercover operatives, to a suspected Chinese intelligence agent in exchange for cash over several years. (Choe Sang-hun, *The New York Times*)

Prepared by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723112550/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-south-korea-says-an-official-leaked-a-classified-spy-roster-to-china?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Monday, September 2nd, 2024

North Korean table tennis players may be punished for Olympic podium selfie with rivals from South

In North Korea:
Foreign professors to teach at North Korean university, first time since COVID (*NK News*, 9/02/2024)
N. Korean leader stresses 'quality' over 'speed' in regional development project (*Yonhap*, 9/02/2024)
North Korea preparing for large-scale concert in capital to mark foundation day (*NK News*, 9/02/2024)
North Korea's Kim pushes for regional development with construction projects, KCNA reports (*Reuters*, 9/01/2024)
North Korean hackers exploit new Chrome vulnerability for possible crypto theft (*NK Pro*, 9/02/2024)
North Korean Olympian Selfies Spotlight Rights Crisis (*Human Rights Watch*, 9/01/2024)
North Korean table tennis players may be punished for Olympic podium selfie with rivals from South (*The Guardian*, 9/02/2024)

In South Korea:
It's Texas 60 miles from North Korea: the US military's largest overseas base (CNN, 9/02/2024)

International:
Japan seeks record military budget to counter North Korean missile threats (*NK News*, 9/02/2024)
U.S., South Korea stage amphibious assault to counter growing North Korean threats (*UPI*, 9/01/2024)

In North Korea:

- DPRK recently issued visas for teachers at private Pyongyang University of Science and Technology, representative says. (Alannah Hill, Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- Kim Jong-un has emphasized the importance of quality over speed in the construction of factories and other modern facilities as part of ongoing efforts to develop underdeveloped regions outside of Pyongyang. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- Construction of stage points to Sept. 9 celebrations despite cancellation of overseas events due to flood relief efforts. (Chad O'Carroll, Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Kim Jong Un has urged the development of health, science, and education facilities in rural areas, alongside modernized factories, as part of a new initiative to accelerate rural development under his "Regional Development 20×10 Policy." (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- Microsoft attributes zero-day attacks to Citrine Sleet threat group, which may have shared tools with Lazarus Group. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK Pro*)

- Repression of Athletes Shows Overwhelming Ideological Control at Home and Abroad. (Lina Yoon, *Human Rights Watch*)
- Kim Kum-yong and Ri Jong-sik reportedly placed under 'ideological scrutiny' and could face punishment if they fail to criticise inappropriate behaviour. (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)

In South Korea:

- Camp Humphreys, home to more than 40,000 people and covering an area of more than 3,500 acres, is 40 miles south of Seoul and about 60 miles from the Demilitarized Zone that divides North and South Korea. (Brad Lendon, Mike Valerio, Gawon Bae, Yoonjung Seo, Charlie Miller, CNN)

International:

- Japan's 2025 budget proposal allocates billions for satellites and counterstrike weapons in line with proactive defense strategy. (Ifang Bremer, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- The U.S. and South Korea conducted amphibious assault drills in Pohang as part of the Ssangyong exercise to counter North Korean threats. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)

Prepared by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723113054/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korean-table-tennis-players-may-be-punished-for-olympic-podium-selfie-with-rivals-from-south?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, September 3rd, 2024

Kim Jong Un thinks North Korea better off without foreign aid: Ex-DPRK diplomat

In South Korea:
Ex-N. Korean diplomat in Cuba proposes paths to regime collapse from within (*The Korea Herald*, 9/03/2024)
Kim Jong Un thinks North Korea better off without foreign aid: Ex-DPRK diplomat (*NK News*, 9/03/2024)

International:
N. Korea earned over US$6 bln through illicit activities over past 7 years: report (*Yonhap*, 9/03/2024)
North Korea agrees to send lecturers to Russian Far East to teach Korean (*NK News*, 9/03/2024)
Trump says his talks with N. Korean leader Kim prove 'real change' is possible (*Yonhap*, 9/03/2024)
UN chief demands accountability for North Korean human rights abuses (*NK News*, 9/03/2024)

U.S. nuclear umbrella against N.K. threats may weaken under second Trump term: senior security official (*Yonhap*, 9/03/2024)

In South Korea:

- Ri Il-gyu, the former second-ranking North Korean diplomat in Cuba, on Tuesday publicly proposed strategies to destabilize the Kim Jong-un regime from within by promoting societal change in the North, including the inflow of external information to the North Korean populace. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is no longer interested in foreign aid or external support to handle his country's humanitarian problems, a former senior DPRK diplomat said on Tuesday. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)

International:

- North Korea is estimated to have earned more than US$6 billion through hacking and other illicit activities over the past seven years despite facing heavy international sanctions, a state-run think tank report showed Tuesday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has agreed to send lecturers to the Russian Far East to teach the Korean language to local youth, Russian authorities announced Monday, in a bid to boost academic exchanges despite potential sanctions concerns. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Former U.S. President Donald Trump said in a soon-to-be published book that his summitry with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un during his time in office showed "real change" was "indeed" possible, portraying it as "honest, direct and productive." (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The U.N. secretary-general has called for efforts to hold North Korea accountable for human rights violations through "non-traditional justice pathways," citing the failure to prosecute possible crimes against humanity amid increased repression of fundamental freedoms. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- The United States' commitment to providing South Korea with its "nuclear umbrella" against North Korea's nuclear and missile threats might weaken under the presidency of Donald Trump if he is reelected, a senior South Korean security official said Tuesday. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Jongjin Lee, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250723113334/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-kim-jong-un-thinks-north-korea-better-off-without-foreign-aid-ex-dprk-diplomat?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Wednesday, September 4th, 2024

N. Korea begins vaccination program for 800,000 children with UNICEF support; N. Korea launches more trash balloons toward S. Korea

In North Korea:
N. Korea begins vaccination program for 800,000 children with UNICEF support (*Yonhap*, 9/04/2024)
Spy agency monitoring signs of N. Korea executing officials over flood damage (*Yonhap*, 9/04/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korea eyes Polish suicide drones as North's UAV threat rises (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 9/03/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N. Korea apparently yet to institutionalize its '2 hostile states' policy: new council chief (*Yonhap*, 9/4/2024)
N. Korea launches more trash balloons toward S. Korea (*Yonhap*, 9/4/2024)

International:
About 600 Russian tourists Visited North Korea since February (*Radio Free Asia*, 9/4/2024)
Activists call for efforts to protect North Korean Olympians after viral selfie (*NK News*, 9/4/2024)
China, Japan must be convinced that Korean unification in their interests: Former UN chief Ban (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 9/3/2024)
Military readiness decreased 'counterintuitively' despite Trump's summitry with N.K. leader Kim (*Yonhap*, 9/4/2024)
North Korea 'aggressively' targeting crypto industry to steal assets, FBI warns (*NK News*, 9/4/2024)
South Korea, New Zealand leaders condemn North Korea nuclear development (*Reuters*, 9/3/2024)
Unification council to invite advisers from Americas for policy discussion (*The Korea Times*, 9/4/2024)
U.S. renews warning against N. Korea's support for Russia's war in Ukraine (*Yonhap*, 9/4/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has launched a nationwide vaccination campaign for children and pregnant women with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), years after they missed out on essential vaccines due to the COVID-19 pandemic. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

- South Korea's spy agency said Wednesday it is closely monitoring signs of North Korea executing multiple officials to hold them accountable over heavy flood damage earlier this year. (Chae Yun-Hwan, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's military began this year the process of acquiring hundreds of Polish-made self-destructing unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), otherwise known as suicide drones. The move comes in response to North Korea's recent announcement of its intention to mass-produce suicide drones to use against South Korea. (Lim Jeong-Won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea has shown no response to South Korea's new unification vision as it has apparently yet to institutionalize leader Kim Jong-un's policy of "two hostile states." Last month, President Yoon Suk Yeol unveiled a vision for unification with North Korea that focuses on promoting freedom in the unification of the two Koreas. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea again launched balloons likely carrying trash toward South Korea on Wednesday, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said, marking a resumption of its trash-balloon campaign after a near monthlong halt. (Yoo Jee-ho, *Yonhap*)

International:

- About 600 Russian tourists have visited North Korea since it reopened its borders to tourists in February following the COVID-19 pandemic. Most visitors traveled to the capital, Pyongyang, and the city of Rason from the far eastern Russian region of Primorsky Krai. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)
- A global human rights organization has urged the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to protect North Korean athletes amid rumors that they may be punished for taking viral selfies with South Korean rivals at the Paris Olympics. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed the need to persuade China and Japan that a unified Korea would serve their interests, not just the broader international community, during Tuesday's government-led forum on North Korean issues. (Seo Ji-Eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Military readiness of the South Korea-U.S. alliance weakened "counterintuitively" during former President Donald Trump's personal diplomacy with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea is "aggressively" targeting the global cryptocurrency industry with "highly tailored" social engineering campaigns that seek to deploy malware and steal virtual assets. DPRK cybercriminals use "complex and elaborate" social schemes against employees of decentralized finance and cryptocurrency businesses. (Alannah Hill, *NK News*)
- The leaders of South Korea and New Zealand condemned North Korea's nuclear weapons development and its military cooperation with Russia. New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon and South Korea's President Yoon Suk Yeol also agreed to speed up

discussions on elevating their relations to a comprehensive, strategic partnership at a meeting in Seoul. (*Reuters*)

- The Peaceful Unification Advisory Council (PUAC) will invite members of its Municipal Chapter in America to Seoul to reach a global consensus on South Korea's new unification policy. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)
- The United States reiterated Tuesday that it will continue efforts to hold North Korea accountable for its support for Russia's war in Ukraine, as concerns linger that arms transactions between Pyongyang and Moscow could prolong the war in the war-torn Eastern European nation. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Valerie Johnson, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250723144104/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-begins-vaccination-program-for-800000-children-with-unicef-support-n-korea-launches-more-trash-balloons-toward-s-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, September 5th, 2024

Decade After the UN COI Report: Michael Kirby on North Korea's Human Rights Landscape

Top News:
Decade After the UN COI Report: Michael Kirby on North Korea's Human Rights Landscape (*HRNK*, 9/05/2024)

In North Korea:
'Educational videos' show North Korean teens arrested, shamed for watching South Korean TV shows (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 9/05/2024)
North Korean elites 'tire of Kim Jong-un's erratic behaviour' (*The Telegraph*, 9/04/2024)

In South Korea:
Ex-foreign ministers say S. Korea's nuclear armament not realistic option (*Yonhap*, 9/05/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N. Korea sends trash balloons into S. Korea for 2nd consecutive day: JCS (*Yonhap*, 9/05/2024)
S. Korea yet to detect signs of N. Korea preparing for military parade on state founding anniv. (*Yonhap*, 9/05/2024)
Yoon's new vision for unification with North Korea and US-ROK summer drills (*NK News*, 8/20/2024)

International:
Bo Ram Kwon: How cooperation with Russia has emboldened North Korea (*NK News*, 9/05/2024)
How North Korea will seek to play the next U.S. president (*Nikkei Asia*, 9/05/2024)
N. Korea warns S. Korea, U.S. to pay 'dear price' for joint military drills (*Yonhap*, 9/05/2024)
Rob York: How the Global South views North Korean human rights (*NK News*, 8/15/2024)
Russia has procured over 16,500 containers of munitions, related materiel from N. Korea since last Sept.: U.S. official (*Yonhap*, 9/05/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. not ruling out possibility of major N. Korean provocations near U.S. election (*Yonhap*, 9/05/2024)
US, ROK condemn North Korea's 'reckless' behavior along inter-Korean border (*NK News*, 9/05/2024)

Top News:

- In this profound interview with **HRNK's Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu**, Justice Michael Kirby, former Justice of the High Court of Australia and lead investigator of the 2014 UN Commission of Inquiry into Human Rights in North Korea, reflects on the enduring challenges and scant progress in North Korea's human rights issues a decade after the landmark report. Kirby discusses the unchanged and deteriorating conditions in North Korea, the complexities of international intervention, and the intertwined nature of human rights and global security. (*HRNK*)

In North Korea:

- Videos apparently depicting North Korean authorities handcuffing teenagers for watching South Korean dramas and publicly shaming their family members were released by a local public broadcaster on Wednesday. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea's elites are becoming "disillusioned" with Kim Jong-un's erratic behavior, according to a high-level defector who has called for a greater push to destabilize the authoritarian regime. (Nicola Smith, *The Telegraph*)

In South Korea:

- At the Seoul Diplomacy Forum, former diplomats argued that South Korea acquiring nuclear weapons is not a realistic option despite growing uncertainties. They emphasized that such a move could harm the U.S.-South Korea alliance. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea floated trash-carrying balloons into South Korea for a second straight day on Thursday, the latest in its repeated provocations Seoul condemned as "senseless." The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said it detected the North launching some 480 trash balloons from late Wednesday until 12 p.m. Thursday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has not shown signs of preparing for a military parade to mark the country's founding anniversary next week. North Korea is set to commemorate the 76th anniversary of

the regime's foundation Monday, raising speculation as to whether it could hold a military parade or unusual events in celebration. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

- Chad O'Carroll and Jeongmin Kim dissect the South Korean president's Liberation Day speech and Ulchi Freedom Shield. (*NK News*)

International:

- Scholar Bo Ram Kwon talks about how Moscow's war in Ukraine has shifted the security dynamics for South Korea, particularly strategic planning with the U.S. She also discusses the possibility that the DPRK could coordinate with China in the event of a Taiwan contingency, as well as how the international community can effectively respond to Pyongyang's nuclear and missile provocations. (*NK News*)
- North Korea is adjusting its strategy ahead of the U.S. election, aiming to extract concessions and buy time to develop weapons, weaken U.S.-South Korea ties, and push for favorable reunification. Its strategy remains consistent, regardless of the U.S. president. (Anthony W. Holmes, *Nikkei Asia*)
- North Korea on Thursday denounced a major military exercise between South Korea and the United States last month, warning the allies will have to pay a "dear price" for what it called "provocative war" drills. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- The Global South has continued to grow in political importance in recent years, as the U.S., China and Russia battle for influence among countries in the Southern Hemisphere, a contest that also has implications for addressing a range of North Korea issues. Rob York of the Pacific Forum discusses geopolitical battle for influence among countries in the Southern Hemisphere and DPRK's illicit efforts to finance weapons. (*NK News*)
- Russia obtained over 16,500 munitions containers from North Korea, violating U.N. resolutions. In return, Pyongyang is likely seeking military assistance. The U.S. is concerned about growing military ties and remains open to dialogue. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the United States are not ruling out the possibility of North Korea conducting major provocations, like a nuclear test and an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launch, near the U.S. presidential election in November. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. and South Korea condemned North Korea's "recent reckless and dangerous behaviors" along the inter-Korean border on Wednesday, while reiterating their commitment to strengthening defenses against Pyongyang's nuclear threat during high-level extended deterrence talks. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

Prepared by Smaranda Gheorghe, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723144507/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-decade-after-the-un-coi-report-michael-kirby-on-north-koreas-human-rights-landscape?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Friday, September 6th, 2024

Seoul installs anti-drone system to quickly respond to North's incursions; Isolated N.K. Cracks Down on Connections to Outside World

In North Korea:
Isolated North Korea Cracks Down on Connections to Outside World (*Newsweek*, 09/06/2024)
N. Korea revs up festive atmosphere for next week's state founding anniv. (*Yonhap*, 09/06/2024)
Sinpho South Shipyard: Construction and Modernization Efforts Continue (*38 North*, 09/06/2024)

In South Korea:
PM calls for building emergency preparedness amid N. Korea threats (*Yonhap*, 09/06/2024)
Seoul installs anti-drone system to quickly respond to North Korean incursions (*NK News*, 09/06/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
North sends trash balloons for 3rd straight day (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 09/06/2024)
Seoul's new defense chief warns North Korea 'provocations' will lead to its end (*NK News*, 09/06/2024)

International:
A Challenging but Essential Task: Security Cooperation Between South Korea and Japan (*38 North*, 09/06/2024)
Japan's Kishida, South Korea's Yoon call to sustain momentum in improved ties (*Reuters*, 09/06/2024)
N. Korea media cover Cuba's diplomatic activities for 1st time since Seoul, Havana forge ties (*Yonhap*, 09/06/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. stress commitment to disrupting N.K. revenue generation through cyber activities (*Yonhap*, 09/06/2024)
South Korea, Japan 'ready to stop North Korea hiding behind Russia' (*Radio Free Asia*, 09/06/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has punished about 30 of its citizens for contacting the outside world, according to a report on Tuesday, as the isolated regime continued to crack down on illegal cross-border activities. (Ryan Chan, *Newsweek*)
- North Korea has organized various cultural events marking the 76th anniversary of the regime's founding slated for next week, such as The National Art Exhibition and the Stamp Exhibition that opened on Thursday ahead of the anniversary scheduled for Monday. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

- Recent commercial satellite imagery indicates that North Korea's newest ballistic missile class submarine (SSB), the "Sinpo-C" class, is undergoing an extensive fitting-out period at the Sinpho South Shipyard. (Peter Makowsky, Jack Liu, *38 North*)

In South Korea:

- Prime Minister Han Duck-soo called Friday for building the government's emergency preparedness amid North Korea's evolving threats. Han issued the call during a meeting with central and local government leaders convened to assess the results of last month's four-day Ulchi civil defense exercise. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea has begun deploying an advanced anti-drone system to better tackle North Korean unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) incursions, Seoul's ruling party lawmaker Kang Dae-sik's office confirmed on Friday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea sent another round of trash-laden balloons over the border for the third straight day on Friday, causing the Joint Chief of Staffs (JCS) to urge residents of northern Gyeonggi to exercise caution regarding potential falling debris and advised residents against touching any balloons. (Seo Ji-Eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Seoul appointed a controversial retired lieutenant general as defense minister on Friday, who stated that the North Korean regime would face its "end" if it provoked South Korea during his inaugural speech. (Jeongmin Kim, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

International:

- Security cooperation between South Korea and Japan may appear to be a relatively recent development, but over the past 70 years Japan has contributed to South Korean security in various ways, though the likelihood of providing financial or technological assistance has significantly decreased. Japan's capacity to offer logistical, operational assistance however has notably increased in recent years. (Ju Hyung Kim, *38 North*)
- apanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol called on Friday at a summit in Seoul to keep up the momentum behind an improvement in relations, which will be tested by imminent changes of leaders in Tokyo and Washington. (Hyonhee Shin, Hyunsu Yim, *Reuters*)
- North Korea's state media on Friday reported diplomatic activities at the Cuban Embassy in Pyongyang for the first time since Havana established diplomatic ties with South Korea in February. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean and U.S. diplomats highlighted close cooperation in preventing North Korea from generating revenue through malicious cyber activities during their talks on cybersecurity Thursday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Leaders of South Korea and Japan said they would maintain their readiness to stop North Korea hiding behind Russia in its provocative acts, Kim Tae-hyo, South Korea's deputy national security adviser, said on Friday. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723144611/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-seoul-installs-anti-drone-system-to-quickly-respond-to-norths-incursions-isolated-nk-cracks-down-on-connections-to-outside-world?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, September 7th, 2024

N. Korea floats 190 trash balloons in resumed campaign

In South Korea:
Yoon approves appointment of new defense minister (*Yonhap*, 09/06/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N. Korea floats 190 trash balloons in resumed campaign (*Yonhap*, 09/07/2024)
N. Korea launches more trash balloons toward S. Korea: JCS (*Yonhap*, 09/07/2024)
North Korea launches more trash balloons for 4th straight day: JCS (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 09/07/2024)

International:
Elections in America could affect US nuclear umbrella over Seoul (VOA, 09/06/2024)
Kamala Harris and North Korea: What Could Happen (*National Interest*, 09/06/2024)
Korea, US held simulation drills for nuclear deterrence in Washington this week: defense ministry (*Yonhap*, 09/07/2024)
S. Korea, U.S., Japan discuss sanctions, private industry efforts to address N.K. cyberthreats (*Yonhap*, 09/07/2024)

In South Korea:

- President Yoon Suk Yeol approved the appointment of Kim Yong-hyun, former head of the Presidential Security Service, as defense minister and presented a certificate of appointment on Friday, his office said. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea has launched around 190 balloons filled with scrap paper and other waste toward the South in its resumed balloon campaign, with many found in Seoul and surrounding areas, military officials said Saturday. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea sent more balloons likely carrying trash toward South Korea on Saturday, military officials said, marking the fourth straight day of the launches. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

- "North Korea has again launched trash balloons across the border," Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said. "These may fall in the Seoul and Gyeonggi regions." (Lim Jeong-Won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- A South Korean senior official has rekindled debate over the U.S. commitment to that nation's defense, bringing up the possibility of the U.S. rolling back its nuclear umbrella if former President Donald Trump is reelected. (Young Gyo Kim, VOA)
- A Harris administration could risk adopting a near-carbon copy of the largely unsuccessful policy towards North Korea pursued by her predecessor, which will raise eyebrows in Tokyo, Seoul, and in the West. (Edward Howell, *National Interest*)
- South Korea and the US held simulation drills in Washington this week to enhance nuclear deterrence cooperation, both sides said Friday, as the allies are stepping up security coordination to counter evolving North Korean threats. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea, the United States and Japan discussed their approach to autonomous sanctions, private industry efforts and other measures to tackle North Korean cybersecurity issues during their three-way talks in Seoul Friday, the State Department said. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Gabrielle Drinkwine, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723144834/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-floats-190-trash-balloons-in-resumed-campaign?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, September 8th, 2024

N. Korea decries S. Korea-U.S. security exercise Washington as 'nuclear blackmail'

In North Korea
N. Korea's Kim visits several military facilities ahead of regime's founding anniversary (*Yonhap*, 09/08/2024)
NK leader emphasizes importance of strengthening naval power (*The Korea Times*, 09/08/2024)
North Korea reveals new, larger ICBM under development (*NK News*, 09/08/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N. Korea launches trash balloons toward S. Korea for 5th day (*Yonhap*, 09/08/2024)

North Korea Launches New Salvo of Balloons, but the South Barely Shrugs (*The New York Times*, 09/08/2024)

International:
N. Korea decries S. Korea-U.S. security exercise Washington as 'nuclear blackmail' (*Yonhap*, 09/08/2024)

In North Korea:

- Kim Jong-un has inspected several military facilities after nearly a month primarily focused on restoration efforts following severe flood damage. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- Kim Jong-un emphasised the importance of strengthening naval power during a tour of a naval base construction site. (*The Korea Times*)
- North Korea appears to be developing a new nuclear intercontinental ballistic missile that is larger than previously revealed designs. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea sent more trash balloons toward South Korea on Sunday, the South's military said, in what marked the fifth straight day of such launches. (Chang Dong-woo, *Yonhap*)
- Hundreds of propaganda balloons ferrying trash have landed in South Korea in recent days, where officials say they typically do not pose a threat. (Jin Yu Young, *The New York Times*)

International:

- North Korea condemned South Korea and the United States for holding simulation drills in Washington aimed at enhancing nuclear deterrence cooperation, calling them "nuclear threats and blackmail." (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Jennifer Leon, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723145138/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-decries-s-korea-us-security-exercise-washington-as-nuclear-blackmail?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Monday, September 9th, 2024

Human Rights Conditions for Persons with Disabilities in North Korea; China's Xi vows to strengthen ties with N. Korea

Top News:

Human Rights Conditions for Persons with Disabilities in North Korea (*HRNK YPWP*, 09/06/2024)

In North Korea:
N. Korea holds celebrations to mark 76th state founding anniv. (*Yonhap*, 09/09/2024)
N. Korea slams U.N. report on its human rights as 'fabricated' document (*Yonhap*, 09/09/2024)
North Korean trash barrage extends to fifth day, launching over 1200 balloons (*NK News*, 09/09/2024)

In South Korea:
New defense chief inspects readiness at frontline Marine Corps unit (*Yonhap*, 09/09/2024)

International:
China's Xi vows to strengthen ties with N. Korea in message to leader Kim (*Yonhap*, 09/09/2024)
Swedish diplomats set for imminent return to North Korea (*NK News*, 09/09/2024)
Xi promises to 'boost coordination' with Kim Jong Un amid signs of strained ties (*NK News*, 09/09/2024)
Xi's latest message to North Korea's Kim hints at cooling ties (*Radio Free Asia*, 09/09/2024)
Yoon's upcoming visit to Czech Republic to mark 'new chapter' in Seoul-Prague ties: Czech FM (*Yonhap*, 09/09/2024)

Top News:

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) marked a significant advancement in international human rights law by establishing a global standard for disability-specific protections. Although the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) ratified the CRPD in 2016, following the recommendation of the UN Commission of Inquiry, it continues to systematically violate the rights of persons with disabilities through widespread discrimination, inadequate services, and severe mistreatment. This essay aims to expose the grim reality of disability rights in North Korea, drawing from reports and testimonies to reveal systemic abuses, which starkly contrast with the regime's superficial efforts to project a standard compliant image. The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members, and North Korea's actions reveal a significant failure to uphold this principle. (Valerie Johnson, *HRNK YPWP*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has held celebrative events to mark the 76th anniversary of the regime's founding, with senior officials visiting a mausoleum to pay tribute to the country's late former leaders, state media reported Monday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea on Monday condemned a recent United Nations report on the North's human rights abuses as a document "fabricating and distorting" Pyongyang's rights situation. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

- North Korea launched more than 1,200 trash balloons over the course of a five-day blitz through Sunday, with around one-third of the balloons landing in South Korea, according to ROK military estimates. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- New Defense Minister Kim Yong-hyun visited a western frontline unit Monday in his first on-site inspection after taking office last week, the defense ministry said, Kim checked troop readiness at the 2nd Marine Division's observation post at an undisclosed location after assuming his new role Friday, according to the ministry. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Chinese President Xi Jinping has vowed to strengthen "strategic communication" with North Korea in his message to the North's leader Kim Jong-un on the occasion of the 76th founding anniversary of the North Korean regime, state media reported Monday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Sweden is preparing to send diplomats back to Pyongyang soon to work at its embassy, multiple informed sources told NK News on condition of anonymity, marking a notable step toward the return of Western diplomats to North Korea since they left during the pandemic. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- China will reinforce "strategic communication and boost coordination" with North Korea, Chinese President Xi Jinping wrote in a letter to Kim Jong Un, marking just the second-known correspondence between the two leaders amid signs of strained bilateral ties. (Seung-Yeong Chung, *NK News*)
- Chinese President Xi Jinping has vowed to strengthen "strategic communication" with North Korea in a message to the North's leader Kim Jong Un on the anniversary of the regime's founding, the North's state media reported. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol's upcoming visit to the Czech Republic will mark another "new chapter" in the bilateral relations with South Korea as the two countries are deepening cooperation in investment and other areas, the top Czech diplomat said Monday. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Tessa Aguilar, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723145350/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-human-rights-conditions-for-persons-with-disabilities-in-north-korea-chinas-xi-vows-to-strengthen-ties-with-n-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Tuesday, September 10th, 2024

Washington Peaceful Unification Advisory Council Lecture: "A Paradigm Shift in the Human Rights First Strategy for N.K. is Needed"

Top News:
North Korea Prepares for September 9th Anniversary Event Amid Flood Recovery Efforts (*RFA*, 09/03/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.
Washington Peaceful Unification Advisory Council Unification Lecture: "A Paradigm Shift in the Human Rights-First Strategy for North Korea Is Needed" (*manna 24 Christian News*, 08/26/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un makes surprise speech aimed at 'skeptics' of his economic plans (*NK News*, 09/10/2024)
Kim Jong Un says North Korea to increase its arsenal of nuclear weapons (*RFA*, 09/10/2024)
Kim Jong-un's rare speech on Foundation Day intended to bolster internal unity (*The Korea Times*, 09/10/2024)
North Korean leader affirms expansion of nuclear arsenal in founding day speech (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 09/10/2024)
N. Korea's leader vows push for exponential increase in nuclear weapons (*Yonhap*, 09/10/2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
Fires ignited by North Korea's trash balloons likely accidental: South's military (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 09/10/2024)
N. Korean trash balloon blamed for Paju warehouse fire (*The Korea Herald*, 09/09/2024)
North Korea Launches New Salvo of Balloons, but the South Barely Shrugs (*The New York Times*, 09/08/2024)
North Korea's trash balloon causes record damage with fire at Paju warehouse (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 09/09/2024)

International:
German military chief stresses need to coordinate with Seoul over North Korea (*NK News*, 09/10/2024)
Kim Jong Un calls for major nuclear weapons buildup in response to U.S. threat (*UPI*, 09/10/2024)

Pentagon stresses security cooperation with allies after N.K. unveils new mobile launcher (*Yonhap*, 09/10/2024)
S. Korea, UNC member states urge Russia, N. Korea to 'immediately' cease military cooperation (*Yonhap*, 09/10/2024)
Vietnam travel company eyes North Korea tours following reports of reopening (*NK News*, 09/10/2024)

Top News:

- North Korea has been observed preparing for the 76th anniversary of its regime establishment on September 9th through satellite images, which show temporary stages and placement of cameras and lighting equipment. (Jasmine Anderson, Park Jung-woo, Han Deok-in, *RFA*)
- The Washington Chapter of the National Unification Advisory Council (Chair Linda Han) held a lecture on September 25th at the large auditorium on the second floor of the Korean Community Center in Alexandria, inviting **Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the U.S Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)**. The event emphasized the need for international cooperation on North Korean human rights issues and the nuclear threat. (Noh-kyung Park, *manna 24 Christian News*)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un made a surprise speech on "the orientation of state work" to fix "backward" economic conditions, build more nuclear weapons and improve party member obedience on Monday, according to state media, marking the 76th founding anniversary of the DPRK. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea is building up its nuclear force through "geometrical progression," leader Kim Jong Un said, citing the "military security environment" as a reason. In a speech on Monday, Kim said the U.S.-led expansion of a military bloc in the region posed a grave security threat to North Korea and raised the need for it to bolster its nuclear arsenal. (Taejon Kang, *RFA*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's rare speech on Foundation Day was intended to present him as a "leader of the people" in response to devastating floods earlier this summer and bolster internal unity, analysts said, Tuesday. (Kwak Yeon-too, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un declared that his regime will increase its nuclear arsenal exponentially while "strengthening its nuclear force" in a surprise speech delivered on Sept. 9 marking the 76th anniversary of the country's founding. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has vowed to bolster the country's nuclear capabilities to deter any threats by enemies, saying it is steadily carrying out a policy to increase the number of nuclear weapons exponentially, state media said Tuesday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- The South Korean military believes recent fires attributed to trash-laden balloons from North Korea were ignited accidentally. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- The past five days have seen a flurry of trash and debris littering the greater Seoul area again as North Korea resumed its campaign of floating hundreds of trash-carrying balloons over the border into South Korean territory. (Moon Ki-hoon, *The Korea Herald*)
- Over the past five days, North Korea has sent hundreds more drifting toward the South with payloads of trash like waste paper and used plastic bottles. South Korea has stated that the balloons themselves are not a "threat" however, they have become a nuisance as they land in public parks, neighborhoods and even the front steps of the presidential office. (Jin Yu Young, *The New York Times*)
- A fire broke out at a warehouse in Paju, Gyeonggi, after a trash-laden balloon carrying a detonator that was launched from North Korea landed on its roof on Sunday afternoon. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- Germany's military chief emphasized the need for greater coordination with South Korea against threats from North Korea and Russia on Monday, as the European country prepares to participate in a ministerial meeting of the U.N. coalition overseeing the Korean War armistice for the first time. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said his isolated state would increase its nuclear weapons stockpile by "geometrical progression" due to threats from the United States and its allies, state media reported Tuesday. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- A Pentagon spokesperson on Monday reiterated the United States' commitment to close cooperation with its allies to ensure regional security, after North Korea unveiled a new mobile missile launcher this week. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and 17 member states of the U.S.-led U.N. Command (UNC) called on Russia and North Korea on Tuesday to "immediately" cease their military cooperation, expressing "serious" concern over their arms trade and other activities. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- A travel company in Vietnam is reportedly eyeing its first tour to North Korea early next year, in a sign that tourists from smaller non-Western countries could soon return to the DPRK for the first time since the outbreak of COVID-19. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)

North Korea Prepares for September 9th Anniversary Event Amid Flood Recovery Efforts

By Jasmine Anderson, Edited by Park Jung-woo, Web Editing by Han Deok-in, RFA

September 3, 2024

https://www.rfa.org/korean/in_focus/nk_nuclear_talks/nk-flood-recovery-mlitary-parade-day-of-foundation-09032024160912.html

Anchor: North Korea has been observed preparing for the 76th anniversary of its regime establishment on September 9th through satellite images, which show temporary stages and placement of cameras and lighting equipment.

Reporter Jasmine Anderson reports.

Satellite images taken on September 1st show a red structure, presumed to be a temporary stage, in front of the Mansudae Assembly Hall in Pyongyang.

A barrier also appears to be erected in front of this construction site. Compared to images from August 28th, the September 1st satellite images show considerable progress in the construction of the red stage.

Jacob Bogle, a civilian satellite analyst from the U.S., noted, “Preparations for the September 9th event seem to be underway in front of the Mansudae Assembly Hall.”

According to satellite images from Planet Labs, the first observation of this red structure was on August 25th.

Bogle told Radio Free Asia (RFA) on the 3rd that, “Preparations for the event, including temporary stages, have been captured towards the end of August in both 2022 and 2023.”

Across from the assembly hall, a new structure appeared on August 19th that was not previously visible.

Compared with last year's September 9th event photos released by the Korean Central News Agency, this was identified as a tower for mounting cameras and lights.

Bogle analyzed, “At least three towers for cameras and lighting equipment have been newly installed, suggesting that preparations for the event have recently begun.”

However, no significant movements were detected near Pyongyang's Mirim airfield or in front of Kim Il-sung Square.

Sidney Seiler, a former U.S. National Intelligence Council analyst for North Korea, commented to RFA on the 3rd, “With this year being the 76th anniversary, which is not a major jubilee like every five or ten years, the scale of the event will likely be smaller.”

Meanwhile, as flood recovery delays continue in the areas near the Amrok River, residents continue to suffer.

North Korean authorities have rejected offers of international aid for flood recovery, insisting on self-reliance, and have deployed large youth brigades, demanding necessary supplies from the residents.

Concerns have arisen as authorities push forward with preparations for the anniversary event amidst these circumstances.

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, said, “The North Korean people suffer from severe flooding almost every year, and this year is no exception. There is nothing to celebrate. No commemorative event can heal the humanitarian and security instability facing the North Korean people.”

Seiler further explained, “Kim Jong-un may not feel the need to downsize the event due to the floods, as celebrating major anniversaries is a crucial tool for the leadership to build a common identity, pride, and loyalty among the people.”

He added, “Rather, this event may be seen as an opportunity to boost the morale of the North Korean people who are enduring hardships.”

Translated by Doohyun Kim, HRNK Social Media Associate; Edited by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern.

Washington Peaceful Unification Advisory Council Unification Lecture: "A Paradigm Shift in the Human Rights-First Strategy for North Korea Is Needed"

Noh-kyung Park, *manna 24 Christian News*

August 26, 2024

https://www.manna24.com/single-post/2024/08/26/puacwashingtondc21-unification-lecture-greg-scarlatu-need-for-a-paradigm-shift-prioritizing-north-korean-human-rights/

The Washington Chapter of the National Unification Advisory Council (Chair Linda Han) held a lecture on September 25th at the large auditorium on the second floor of the Korean Community Center in Alexandria, inviting **Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the U.S Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)**. The event emphasized the need for international cooperation on North Korean human rights issues and the nuclear threat.

Before the lecture, Chair Linda Han expressed her gratitude, noting that the Washington Chapter has consistently organized events over the past year, inviting competent experts to provide education on unification policy with the support of council members and the Korean American community.

Executive Director Scarlatoiu pointed out that North Korea’s nuclear missile provocations are not just a problem confined to the Korean Peninsula, but have evolved into a global security issue. For instance, North Korea's intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) tests pose a threat to several countries, including the U.S. mainland. He warned that if such threats are ignored, the security and prosperity of liberal democratic nations could be at risk. He particularly stressed the importance of CVID (Complete, Verifiable, and Irreversible Dismantlement) in addressing North Korea's nuclear program.

One of the key points highlighted in the lecture was that South Korea should take the lead in fostering international cooperation. **Scarlatoiu** emphasized that as a prosperous economic power and a democratic nation that respects human rights, South Korea must play a crucial role in the global community. He argued that South Korean leadership is essential in securing continuous international attention and support to address the North Korean issue.

Scarlatoiu also raised the need for a paradigm shift, focusing on North Korean human rights. He pointed out that the Kim Jong-un regime represses its people through policies that deny human rights, using these policies as ideological tools to justify military provocations. This human-rights-first approach asserts that the international community must prioritize North Korean human rights on par with, or even above, the nuclear issue. This is because it goes beyond a simple humanitarian issue, representing a major threat to regional and global peace and security.

Additionally, **Scarlatoiu** emphasized the interconnection between human rights, human security, and political and military security. He noted that 90% of North Korea's population suffers from multi-generational human insecurity, highlighting the structural benefits of prioritizing human rights. He reiterated the importance of addressing the North Korean human rights issue, emphasizing the need to focus on vulnerable groups such as children, women, the elderly, and detainees. Transparency, accessibility, monitoring, and evaluation of humanitarian aid are crucial to this effort.

Lastly, **Scarlatoiu** stressed the importance of helping North Korean escapees settle stably in South Korea, the U.S., and Europe. He underscored that protecting their legal status and assisting in their resettlement is a key part of addressing the North Korean human rights issue, calling for sustained international attention and support to achieve this.

During the Q&A session, a question about the division of the Korean Peninsula stirred the audience. One participant asked, “Wasn’t it the U.S. that divided the Korean Peninsula?” To this, **Scarlatoiu** clearly responded, “It was the Soviet Union that divided the Korean Peninsula, and it was Kim Il-sung’s North Korea that invaded South Korea.”

Meanwhile, the Washington Chapter has several upcoming events, including a Global Strategy Conference in October, a lecture on unification featuring Lieutenant General In-bum Chun (retired), and a general meeting in December.

This is Nohkyung Park reporting for manna 24 Christian News.

Translated by Jangyun Yoo, HRNK Research Intern; Edited by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern.

Prepared by Kate Refolo, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723145733/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-washington-peaceful-unification-advisory-council-lecture-a-paradigm-shift-in-the-human-rights-first-strategy-for-nk-is-needed?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Wednesday, September 11th, 2024

North Korea Punishes Teenage Girls for Watching Forbidden K-Drama: Video

In North Korea:
N. Korea unveils new 12-axle transporter erector launcher (*Yonhap*, 09/09/2024)
North Korea may have executed officials over flood response, reports say (*The Guardian*, 09/05/2024)
North Korea Punishes Teenage Girls for Watching Forbidden K-Drama: Video (*Newsweek*, 09/11/2024)
North Korea's Kim vows to make his nuclear force ready for combat with US (*AP News*, 09/10/2024)
North Korea's New Naval Base: Tapchon (*38 North*, 09/08/2024)
To raise birth rate, North Korea punishes abortion doctors and contraceptive sellers (*RFA*, 09/09/2024)

In South Korea:
Defense chief says 'fundamental' solution to N. Korean threats lies on free, unified Korean Peninsula (*Yonhap*, 09/11/2024)
Incheon celebrates Operation Chromite's 74th anniversary with commemorative events (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 09/11/2024)

International:
Dutch minister warns of 'domino effect' if ROK goes nuclear to deter North Korea (*NK News*, 09/11/2024)
Hezbollah relies on 'sophisticated' tunnel system backed by Iran, North Korea in fight against Israel (*Fox News*, 09/09/2024)
Italian navy ship monitors North Korea sanctions evasion for first time (*NK News*, 09/11/2024)
North Korean Missiles Rain Down on Ukraine Despite Sanctions (*The New York Times*, 09/11/2024)
North's arms are fueling Russia's war effort, German defense chief says during Seoul visit (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 09/10/2024)
S. Korea, Poland discuss ways to strengthen cooperation in defense industry (*Yonhap*, 09/11/2024)

Ukrainian military destroyed Russian depot storing North Korean missiles: Kyiv (NK News, 09/11/2024)
UN Command condemns 'illegal and dangerous' North Korea-Russia arms trade (*NK News*, 09/11/2024)
UN food program still unable to enter North Korea to provide aid, official says (NK News, 09/11/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has unveiled a new 12-axle transporter erector launcher for the first time this week, with the South Korean military closely monitoring whether the vehicle could be used for a new longer missile. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea may have executed multiple officials over damage from devastating floods in July that wrecked thousands of homes and left up to 1,500 people dead or missing. (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)
- Recently surfaced North Korean footage has captured the North Korean government's crackdown on citizens, including teenagers, for consuming banned South Korean media. (Micah McCartney, *Newsweek*)
- Kim Jong Un vowed to redouble efforts to make his nuclear force fully ready for combat with the United States and its allies after the country disclosed a new platform likely designed to fire more powerful intercontinental ballistic missiles targeting the mainland U.S. (Kim Hyung-jin, Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)
- Commercial satellite imagery indicates the new naval base under construction, recently visited by Kim Jong Un, is a long-time naval hovercraft facility in Tapchon (located within Wonsan Bay). This site has been under on-and-off construction for the last decade. (Martyn Williams, Iliana Ragnone, Peter Makowsky, *38 North*)
- North Korea is attempting to slow its declining birth rate by punishing doctors who perform abortions and people who sell smuggled contraceptive pills, residents in the country told *Radio Free Asia*. (Moon Sung-hui, Son Hyemin, *RFA*)

In South Korea:

- Defense Minister Kim Yong-hyun said Wednesday the "fundamental" solution to North Korea's nuclear and missile threats lies on a free and unified Korean Peninsula during an annual security forum in Seoul. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- To celebrate the 74th anniversary of Operation Chromite's success, Incheon Metropolitan City is holding almost a full month of commemorative events, which it said is intended to pave the way for a larger-scale celebration next year. The city has already held several special events in the run up to the anniversary of the Incheon landing. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- Dutch Minister of Defense Ruben Brekelmans says Seoul and partners should pursue nonproliferation, but says decision on nukes is up to South Korea during a meeting with press at the Westin Josun Hotel in Seoul on Tuesday. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- Despite Israel's nearly one-year-long war with Hamas in Gaza after the Oct. 7 attacks, security experts continue to sound the alarm that Jerusalem's greatest threat actually lies to the north in Lebanon, where Hezbollah has developed a sophisticated tunnel system. (Caitlin McFall, *Fox News*)
- An Italian naval ship recently carried out monitoring and surveillance operations around Japan for the first time in a bid to curb North Korea's illicit maritime activities, according to Tokyo's defense ministry. (Alannah Hill, *NK News*)
- North Korea has continued to supply advanced short-range ballistic missiles to Russia in defiance of sanctions meant to prevent Pyongyang from developing such weapons and Moscow from importing them. (John Ismay, *The New York Times*)
- North Korean arms shipments are enabling Russia to maintain its weapons stockpile as it continues its invasion of Ukraine, Germany's chief of defense said on Monday during a visit to South Korea to highlight security cooperation between Berlin and Seoul. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea and Poland have discussed ways to strengthen economic cooperation in various sectors, including the defense industry, Seoul's foreign ministry said Wednesday. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- Ukraine carried out a military strike on a Russian arms depot used to store North Korean missiles over the weekend. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Joint statement by the defense chiefs of nations within the UN condemns North Korea-Russia arms trade to be dangerous, as they view it as a kind of "unprecedented" global tension. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- The World Food Program is still unable to reenter North Korea more than three years after withdrawing staff during the pandemic, says UN top official for DPRK, leaving it unable to provide food aid. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

Prepared by James Campbell, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723150012/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-punishes-teenage-girls-for-watching-forbidden-k-drama-video?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, September 12th, 2024

Ex-Korean Japanese escapees win damages suit against Pyongyang; Unification minister urges N. Korea to improve human rights

In North Korea:
N. Korea appears to have discharged border dam water: environment ministry (*Yonhap*, 9/11/2024)
N. Korea fires multiple short-range ballistic missiles toward East Sea (*Yonhap*, 09/12/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Ex-Korean Japanese who escaped from N. Korea win damages suit against Pyongyang (*Yonhap*, 9/12/2024)
Unification minister urges N. Korea to heed int'l community's call to improve human rights (*Yonhap*, 9/12/2024)

International:
Australian warship sets out on mission to monitor illegal North Korean shipments (*NK News*, 9/12/2024)
Biden nominates Lieut. Gen Xavier Brunson as U.S. Forces Korea Commander (*Yonhap*, 9/12/2024)
Newly made North Korean missile used in Russian strike on Ukraine: Report (*NK News*, 9/12/2024)
North Korea uses Chinese facilities to import millions in goods from Japan, US (*NK PRO*, 9/12/2024)
U.S. describes N.K. missile launches, stresses 'ironclad' commitment to S. Korea (*Yonhap*, 9/12/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea appears to have discharged a "considerable" amount of water from the upstream of its dam near the inter-Korean border. The Ministry of Environment has notified the situation to related authorities, including the military and the local government. (Kim Na-young, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea fired multiple short-range ballistic missiles toward the East Sea on Thursday, the South Korean military said, a week after Pyongyang warned that South Korea and the United States will have to pay a "dear price" for their joint drills. (Lee Minji, Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- Former Korean Japanese people who defected from North Korea after migrating to the North under the communist state's repatriation program decades ago won a damages suit filed in Seoul against Pyongyang. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's point man on North Korea once again urged Pyongyang on Thursday to heed the international community's repeated calls to improve its dismal human rights situation. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

International:

- An Australian warship has joined an operation to monitor the illegal shipment of goods to and from North Korea in violation of U.N. sanctions. (Alannah Hill, *NK News*)

- U.S. President Joe Biden has nominated Lieut. Gen. Xavier Brunson, the commander of I Corps, to lead the South Korea-U.S. Combined Forces Command. His Senate confirmation hearing is slated for Tuesday next week. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Russia has used a North Korean ballistic missile manufactured as recently as this year in its continuing strikes on Ukraine, a finding that one expert said suggests Pyongyang is churning out missiles on demand for the Kremlin's war effort. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- North Korea appears to have imported millions of dollars worth of goods from Japan, South Korea and even the U.S. by way of Chinese entrepot facilities this year. (Anton Solokin, *NK PRO*)
- The United States condemned North Korea's launch of ballistic missiles, reaffirming its "ironclad" security commitment to South Korea. Pyongyang launched multiple short-range ballistic missiles toward the East Sea on Thursday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Jenna Pae, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723150235/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-ex-korean-japanese-escapees-win-damages-suit-against-pyongyang-unification-minister-urges-n-korea-to-improve-human-rights?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, September 13th, 2024

U.S. Department of Labor: North Korea Produces Seven Items Using Forced Labor, Also Evident in China and Russia

Top News:
U.S. Department of Labor: North Korea Produces Seven Items Using Forced Labor, Also Evident in China and Russia (VOA, 9/6/2024)
U.S. Expresses Concern Over Increase in Public Executions in North Korea; Willingness to Accept Escapees Reaffirmed (VOA, 9/6/2024)
*These articles have been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
NK leader inspects special operations forces, test-firing of multiple rocket launcher (*Yonhap*, 9/13/2024)
North Korea gives a glimpse of a secretive uranium-enrichment facility as Kim pushes for more nukes (*AP News*, 9/13/2024)
North Korea launches several ballistic missiles in latest provocation (*UPI*, 9/12/2024)
North Korea releases images of Kim Jong Un visiting a uranium enrichment site, giving rare glimpse inside its nuclear program (CNN, 9/13/2024)

North Korea shows first photos of banned uranium enrichment site (*Reuters*, 9/13/2024)
North Korea slams expanding UN Command as a threat, warns of 'counteraction' (*NK News*, 9/13/2024)
North Korea unveils uranium enrichment facility for the first time (*Radio Free Asia*, 9/12/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
North Korea launches ballistic missiles off Korean peninsula, Seoul says (*France 24*, 9/12/2024)
South Koreans are starkly divided over North Korea's nuclear threat (*AP News*, 9/12/2024)

International:
NIS monitoring N.Korean foreign minister's possible trip to Russia (*Yonhap*, 9/13/2024)
Putin admires Kim Jong Un, unlike other world leaders, North Koreans are told (*Radio Free Asia*, 9/12/2024)
Russian military plane makes rare flight to North Korea from St. Petersburg (*NK News*, 9/13/2024)
Tokyo says it 'lodged a protest' after North Korea fired missiles toward Sea of Japan (*CNBC*, 9/12/2024)
Top Russian security official meets N.K leader in Pyongyang: report (*Yonhap*, 9/13/2024)

Top News:

- The U.S. Department of Labor has pointed out that North Korea continues to produce seven types of goods, including bricks, using forced labor. It has also been revealed that North Korean workers are being forced into labor in mainland China and Russia. (Ahn Jun-ho, VOA)
- Recent reports of multiple North Korean officials being executed for their alleged responsibility in flood-related incidents have raised serious concerns within the U.S. government. The willingness to accept North Korean refugees recommended by the UN Refugee Agency has also been reaffirmed. (Ahn Jun-ho, VOA)

In North Korea:

- Kim Jong-un has inspected a training base for special operations forces and a test-firing of a new 600mm multiple rocket launcher. He toured various facilities and training grounds, commenting that they were effectively organized to simulate real warfare. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea offered a rare glimpse into a secretive facility to produce weapons-grade uranium as state media reported Friday that leader Kim Jong Un visited the area and called for stronger efforts to “exponentially” increase its number of nuclear weapons. (Hyung-jin Kim, Kim Tong-Hyung, *AP News*)
- North Korea launched multiple ballistic missiles into the East Sea on Thursday, days after leader Kim Jong Un called for a nuclear weapons buildup. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- New pictures of Kim Jong Un touring what state media said is a uranium enrichment facility have given an extremely rare glimpse inside the isolated nation’s closely guarded nuclear weapons program. (Yoonjung Seo, Lucas Lilieholm, Mike Valerio, CNN)

- North Korea for the first time showed images of the centrifuges that produce fuel for its nuclear bombs on Friday, as Kim Jong Un visited a uranium enrichment facility and called for more weapons-grade material to boost the arsenal. (Hyunsu Yim, Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- North Korea vowed to take "strategic counteraction" against an expanding United Nations Command on Friday, days after members of the multinational military force condemned DPRK-Russia arms trade. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- North Korea unveiled details of its uranium enrichment facility for the first time, with its leader calling for increasing the number of centrifuges for uranium enrichment so it can increase its nuclear arsenal for self-defense. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- Seoul's Joint Chief of Staff said it was analysing details of a launch of multiple short-range ballistic missiles and "closely sharing information on the North Korean ballistic missile with the USA and Japanese authorities, while strengthening surveillance and vigilance in preparation for further launches." (*France 24*)
- Division in South Korean sentiment on North Korea are now sharper than ever, influenced — or not — by Pyongyang's repeated vows to attack South Korea and its buildup of nuclear-capable weapons. (Foster Klug, Jiwon Song, Jae C. Hong, *AP News*)

International:

- The National Intelligence Service is closely monitoring the possibility that North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui will visit Russia to attend the fourth Eurasian Women's Forum set for Sept. 18-20 in St. Petersburg. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Koreans were told at this week's mandatory neighborhood watch meetings that President Putin deeply admires Kim Jong Un. (Kim Jieun, *Radio Free Asia*)
- A Russian military command and control aircraft flew directly to North Korea from St. Petersburg on Friday, a rare flight route that one expert said suggests the visit is tied to Vladimir Putin's recent activities in the city. (Anton Solokin, *NK News*)
- After North Korea fired several ballistic missiles toward the Sea of Japan, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said Thursday that he "strongly condemns" the move, adding that Tokyo has already "lodged a protest" with the Hermit Kingdom. (Zenith Wong, CNBC)
- A Russian delegation, led by Sergei Shoigu, secretary of Moscow's Security Council, visited North Korea on Friday and was received by the North's leader. The visit came as North Korea and Russia have been bolstering military and other cooperation on the occasion of Moscow's war in Ukraine. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

U.S. Department of Labor: North Korea Produces Seven Items Using Forced Labor, Also Evident in China and Russia

The U.S. Department of Labor has pointed out that North Korea continues to produce seven types of goods, including bricks, using forced labor. It has also been revealed that North Korean workers are being forced into labor in mainland China and Russia. Additionally, the report highlighted that some

raw materials made by child labor are used in indium production in South Korea. Ahn Jun-ho reports.

The U.S. Department of Labor's 'List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor' report released on September 5th states that North Korea continues to produce goods through forced labor.

The report specifies that North Korea produces bricks, cement, coal, gold, iron, textiles, and timber through forced labor.

The Labor Department also disclosed that over a thousand Uighurs and other persecuted ethnic minorities are being forced into labor at squid processing facilities in mainland China, with North Korean workers also being employed in such conditions.

[Report] "Furthermore, workers from North Korea have also been transferred to work at squid processing facilities. Squid processing companies and government entities frequently engage in coercive recruitment, limit workers' freedom of movement and communication, and subject workers to constant surveillance."

The report also noted the use of North Korean forced labor in timber production in Russia.

The Labor Department publishes this report biennially, and the previous 10th report released two years ago also pointed out that North Korea was producing seven types of goods through forced labor.

Forced labor refers to all labor or services provided involuntarily under the threat of punishment.

The international community strictly prohibits forced labor, considering it a form of modern-day slavery.

Earlier, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) issued a report in July on the state of forced labor in North Korea, stating, "The institutionalized forced labor in North Korea constitutes a severe human rights violation."

The report further stated, "People in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are controlled and exploited through an extensive and multi-layered system of forced labor. The system is directed towards the interests of the State rather than the people. Forced labor provides a source of free labor for the State and acts as a means for the State to control, monitor, and indoctrinate the population."

The report urged the North Korean government to abolish all forms of forced labor in violation of international law and all forms of slavery and similar practices.

It also called for the international community to investigate and prosecute those suspected of committing international crimes, and for the UN Security Council to refer the situation to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), told VOA in a phone interview, “Forced labor in North Korea is extraordinarily serious. The North Korean regime relies on repressing, oppressing, and exploiting its own people in order to procure the funding needed to develop nuclear weapons, and ballistic missiles and to keep the elites of North Korea happy through access to hard currency and luxury goods from the outside world. (So,) It's a very serious issue definitely. This is for a regime that relies on forced labor - no doubt about it.”

Scarlatoiu also noted that North Korean forced labor occurs mainly in China, Russia, and the Middle East, primarily in construction and logging sites, and the textile industry.

He also pointed out that "The international community must scrutinize whether products made with North Korean forced labor are being imported."

The U.S. Department of Labor stated in its 11th report that child and forced labor were used to produce 204 types of goods in 82 countries and regions.

Notably, the report added 37 types of goods including lead, nickel, polyvinyl chloride, and squid, and four countries including South Korea, Belarus, the Netherlands, and Mauritius as new entries.

The report mentioned that zinc, used to produce indium in Bolivia, employs child labor, and there is credible evidence that indium produced in South Korea used such zinc.

South Korea imported zinc concentrates worth $385 million from Bolivia in 2022, which included zinc produced with child labor and used in the production of indium.

This is Ahn Jun-ho from VOA *News*.

Translated by Doohyun Kim, HRNK Social Media Associate; Edited by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

U.S. Expresses Concern Over Increase in Public Executions in North Korea; Willingness to Accept Escapees Reaffirmed

Recent reports of multiple North Korean officials being executed for their alleged responsibility in flood-related incidents have raised serious concerns within the U.S. government. The willingness to accept North Korean refugees recommended by the UN Refugee Agency has also been reaffirmed. Human rights experts have pointed out that North Korea is scapegoating these officials for the floods, and that executions without fair trials are clear violations of human rights. Reporter Ahn Jun-ho reports.

On September 5th, a spokesperson from the U.S. State Department expressed concerns related to the announcement by South Korea's National Intelligence Service that North Korea has recently executed multiple officials blamed for flood damages, stating, "The increasing number of public executions in North Korea has intensified an environment of fear and repression."

[State Department Spokesperson] "A continuing rise in the number of public executions in the DPRK has heightened an environment of fear and repression. We remain gravely concerned about the lack of transparency, fairness, and accountability within the DPRK's judicial system, which systematically denies individuals the right to due process, including fair trials."

The National Intelligence Service noted on the 4th that there were trends of multiple officials being executed at the end of July in North Pyongan and Jagang provinces due to their alleged responsibilities for flood damages. It was suggested that Kang Bong-hun, a party secretary from Jagang province, might have been among those executed.

Kim Jong-un, the Chairman of North Korea, had indicated at an emergency expanded meeting of the party's Politburo on July 31st that, "Those responsible for inexcusably severe casualties due to gross negligence in their duties assigned by the party and state would be strictly punished."

Ongoing Concerns About North Korea's Judicial System and Human Rights Violations:

While specific details on the punishments have not been disclosed, testimonies from escapees and reports from UN agencies suggest that arbitrary detentions, torture, and public executions without fair trials are common in North Korea.

[State Department Spokesperson] "While there has been an increasing number of reported elite defections over the past year, DPRK law criminalizes defection and attempted defection, especially for government officials. Family members of escapees face these punishments as well. When North Korean escapees make it safely to other countries, we encourage host countries to take steps to provide protection, ease suffering, uphold human dignity, and provide critical assistance."

U.S. Reaffirms Willingness to Accept North Korean Refugees:

The State Department spokesperson reaffirmed the U.S. willingness to accept North Korean refugees.

[State Department Spokesperson] "We remain willing to accept North Koreans to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program through UNHCR referrals. We continue to work with the international community to raise awareness of DPRK human rights issues, document violations and abuses, counter DPRK transnational repression, and increase the flow of independent information into, through, and out of the DPRK."

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), in a telephone interview with VOA regarding the executions related to flood responsibilities in North Korea, stated, "Kim Jong-un's regime is merely looking for scapegoats."

[Transcript: Greg Scarlatoiu] "Just looking for scapegoats, that's all, so you know that's how North Korea works. The regime, the Supreme leader never assumes responsibility; they always find scapegoats, and this is what's happening right now. So, they've suffered very severe environmental damage; they're simply looking for scapegoats—that's how it goes."

He explained that despite the severe natural disasters being no fault of the party officials, North Korea has executed these officials to placate public discontent.

Scarlatoiu also emphasized that the execution of high-ranking officials without fair trial processes constitutes a clear violation of human rights.

[Transcript: Greg Scarlatoiu] "The execution of senior officials, you know, we have documented this here at HRNK. Senior officials have been executed using ZPU4 anti-aircraft machine guns. That is clearly a violation. There is clearly no proper due process; there's clearly no proper trial. We have tried hard to document this execution, so yes, you know, these executions may amount to crimes against humanity, to human rights violations indeed."

In the past, North Korea used anti-aircraft guns for executions, including in December 2013 for Kim Jong-un's uncle, Jang Song-taek, then the second-in-command, and in April 2015 for Hyon Yong-chol, the Minister of the People's Armed Forces, reportedly for falling asleep in Kim Jong-un's presence.

However, details on how the officials responsible for the recent floods were executed have not yet been disclosed.

This is Ahn Jun-ho for VOA *News*.

Translated by Doohyun Kim, HRNK Social Media Associate; Edited by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Jenna Pae, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250723150500/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-us-department-of-labor-north-korea-produces-seven-items-using-forced-labor-also-evident-in-china-and-russia?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, September 14th, 2024

North Korea Gives First Glimpse of Weapons-Grade Uranium Factory

In North Korea:
First Look at North Korea's Uranium Enrichment Capabilities (38 North, 9/13/2024)
Kim Jong Un tours uranium enrichment facility, demanding more nukes (*NK News*, 9/14/2024)
North Korea Gives First Glimpse of Weapons-Grade Uranium Factory (*The New York Times*, 9/13/2024)
Opium replaces meth as North Korea's drug of choice (*RFA*, 9/11/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
N. Korea launches more trash balloons toward S. Korea: JCS (*Yonhap*, 9/14/2024)

International:
N.K. leader meets top Russian security official on 1st anniv. of Vostochny summit: KCNA (*Yonhap*, 9/14/2024)
Trump says he'll be able to solve 'most' problems related to N. Korea, Iran via 'phone calls' (*Yonhap*, 9/14/2024)
U.S. says 'only viable path' for peace is 'complete' Korean Peninsula denuclearization (*Yonhap*, 9/14/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean media coverage of Kim Jong-un's visit to the uranium enrichment facilities is the first time images of the country's centrifuge program have been shown. While only five photos were provided, it is clear that the uranium enrichment program has advanced

significantly since it was first revealed. (Olli Heinonen, Jack Liu, Peter Makowsky, Jenny Town, Martyn Williams, *38 North*)

- Kim Jong Un inspected a uranium enrichment facility on Friday, emphasizing the increase in nuclear weapon production. During the visit, he oversaw special forces exercises and a tactical nuclear missile test using a new launch vehicle. (Colin Zwriko, *NK News*)
- Although North Korea in 2010 showed a centrifuge plant to a visiting team of former U.S. officials and academics, including a former director of Los Alamos National Laboratory, Siegfried Hecker, the report and photos published in state media on Friday were the first time that the country has unveiled such a facility to the wider world. (Choe Sang-hun, *The New York Times*)
- Decline in methamphetamine supplies from China prompt farmers to grow and sell poppies. (Son Hyemin, *RFA*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- In a message sent to reporters at 10:26 p.m., South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said that North Korea sent more balloons likely carrying trash, warning the public of falling objects and asking people to report balloons to the military or police. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Kim Jong-un has met with the head of Russia's Security Council in Pyongyang and vowed to deepen the bilateral ties between the two countries. The meeting came on the anniversary of a rare summit between Kim and Russian President Vladimir Putin last year, during which Kim pledged his "full support" for Moscow. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump said Friday he will be able to solve "most of the problems" related to North Korea and Iran through "phone calls" and possibly in-person talks, as he commented on Pyongyang's rare disclosure of a nuclear facility and Tehran's supply of missiles to Russia. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The "only viable path" toward lasting peace is through the "complete" denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, a State Department spokesperson said Friday, after North Korea made a rare disclosure of a uranium enrichment facility this week. The spokesperson made the remarks, renewing calls for Pyongyang to return to "constructive" dialogue and reaffirming America's "ironclad" security commitment to South Korea and Japan. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Gloria Guo, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723150732/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-gives-first-glimpse-of-weapons-grade-uranium-factory?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Sunday, September 15th, 2024

Nearly 2,000 aging separated family members die in first 8 months of year: gov't data

In North Korea:
North Korea gives first look at uranium enrichment site amid nuclear weapons push (*UPI*, 09/13/2024
Photos likely show undeclared North Korea uranium enrichment site, analysts say (*Reuters*, 09/15/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
N. Korea launches trash balloons toward S. Korea for 2nd day: JCS (*Yonhap*, 09/15/2024)
Nearly 2,000 aging separated family members die in first 8 months of year: gov't data (*Yonhap*, 09/15/2024)
Yoon says issue of separated families is 'most pressing task' (*Yonhap*, 09/15/2024)

International:
Ukraine's spy chief says North Korean military aid to Russia presents major battlefield problem (*Reuters*, 09/14/2024)
U.S. stresses reconnaissance efforts for Korean Peninsula after N.K. uranium enrichment site disclosure (*Yonhap*, 09/14/2024)

In North Korea:

- Kim Jong Un inspected a uranium enrichment facility and called for an increase in the number of centrifuges to "exponentially" boost the isolated regime's nuclear arsenal, state media reported Friday. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- Photos of North Korea's its uranium enrichment facility may show an undeclared site for building nuclear bombs just outside of its capital, analysts said. (Ju-min Park, Josh Smith, *Reuters*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korea on Sunday launched balloons carrying trash toward South Korea for the second straight day. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- Nearly 2,000 separated family members in South Korea died in the first eight months of this year without having an opportunity to reunite with their loved ones in North Korea after being separated by the 1950-53 Korean War, government data showed Sunday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol said Sunday that addressing the issue of family members separated by the 1950-53 Korean War is "the most pressing task." (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Ukraine's spy chief said on Saturday that Russia's increased production of guided bombs as well as artillery ammunition deliveries from North Korea present major problems for Ukrainian forces on the battlefield. (Anastasiia Malenko, *Reuters*)
- The United States on Friday highlighted it has "devoted" more intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets for security on the Korean Peninsula, after North Korea made a rare disclosure of a uranium enrichment facility this week. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Natalie Razera, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723150929/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-nearly-2000-aging-separated-family-members-die-in-first-8-months-of-year-govt-data?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Monday, September 16th, 2024

Kim Jong Un reviewed plan to attack South Korean missile command HQ; Ukraine 'helpless' to prevent North Korea arms supply to Russia

In North Korea:
North Korea launches biggest vaccination drive since Covid after children left unprotected (*The Telegraph*, 09/16/2024)
N. Korea showcases newly built Western-style beer pub, firework store in Pyongyang (*Yonhap*, 09/16/2024)
North Korea to convene rubber-stamp parliament on Oct. 7 to amend constitution (*NK News*, 09/16/2024)
Photos likely show undeclared North Korea uranium enrichment site, analysts say (*Reuters*, 09/16/2024)
Why Kim Jong Un's uranium enrichment inspection may have little to do with US (*NK News*, 09/16/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Kim Jong Un reviewed plan to attack South Korean missile command HQ, photos show (*NK News*, 09/16/2024)
North Korea sends more trash balloon 'gifts' ahead of fall harvest holiday (*NK News*, 09/16/2024)
Yoon says reuniting South Koreans with relatives in North is 'most pressing task' (*NK News*, 09/16/2024)

International:

North Korean arms shipments to Russia are Ukraine's 'worst problem,' Kyiv says (*NK News*, 09/16/2024)
North Korea's top diplomat visiting Russia to attend forum where Putin to speak (*NK News*, 09/16/2024)
Swedish diplomats return to North Korea, four years after leaving due to COVID (*NK News*, 09/16/2024)
Ukraine 'helpless' to prevent North Korea arms supply to Russia (*The Times*, 09/16/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has launched its biggest vaccine drive since the Covid-19 pandemic after a four year hiatus on routine immunisation that has left children exposed to a myriad of deadly diseases and raised the risk of outbreaks. (Rebecca Root, *The Telegraph*)
- North Korea has showcased a Western-style beer pub and other various modern facilities in its so-called new town district of Pyongyang. According to photos and an article released by the Choson Sinbo, a pro-North Korean newspaper based in Japan, the new district features the pub, a fireworks store and several large-scale restaurants along two major streets. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea will convene its rubber-stamp parliament on Oct. 7 to amend the constitution, state media reported on Monday, in a move experts expect to formalize leader Kim Jong Un's rejection of reunification and potentially redefine the country's borders. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korea for the first time showed images on Friday of the centrifuges that produce fuel for its nuclear bombs, as leader Kim Jong Un visited a uranium enrichment facility and called for more weapons-grade material to boost the arsenal. The photos showed Kim walking between long rows of metal centrifuges, the machines that enrich uranium. (Ju-min Park, Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's decision to publicize his inspection of a secret uranium enrichment facility last week may have had little to do with sending a message to Washington ahead of the U.S. presidential election, despite appearances to the contrary, some experts say. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korean leader observed a special forces training lesson last week on infiltrating South Korea's Army Strategic Missile Command just months after the U.S. and ROK held key nuclear talks at the site. Photos released by the Korean Central News Agency on Friday show soldiers studying both satellite images and street-level photos of the Strategic Missile Command headquarters. (Colin Zwirko, Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korea launched trash balloons on consecutive days over the weekend, ahead of the Chuseok fall harvest holiday, according to the South Korean military. The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) announced at around 10:30 p.m. on Saturday and again at around 5:20 p.m. on Sunday that the DPRK had carried out more balloon barrages, the 19th and 20th launches since late May. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

- Reuniting families separated by the decades-long division of the Korean Peninsula is "the most pressing task" of the South Korean government, President Yoon Suk-yeol said on Sunday, blaming North Korea for the lack of reunions in recent years. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

International:

- North Korea's shipments of weapons to Russia are the "worst problem" that Ukraine currently faces, Kyiv's military intelligence chief said Sunday, identifying Pyongyang as the leading arms supplier supporting Mosco's invasion. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Korea's top diplomat is visiting Russia this week to attend two forums in St. Petersburg, according to the Russian Embassy in Pyongyang, with leader Vladimir Putin also scheduled to attend one of the events. Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui departed Pyongyang for Vladivostok on an Air Koryo flight on Monday. (Alannah Hill, *NK News*)
- Swedish diplomats have returned to work at the country's embassy in North Korea, according to Stockholm's foreign ministry, making Sweden the first Western country to resume operations in the DPRK since most diplomats left during the pandemic. Their arrival marks a significant step toward a wider return of Western diplomats to the DPRK (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- Ukraine can do nothing to prevent North Korea from supplying Russia with artillery shells and ballistic missiles that are "critical" to the war and far exceed military aid provided by any other supporter of President Putin, its intelligence chief has said. (Richard Lloyd Parry, *The Times*)

Prepared by Katherine Mitchell, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723151039/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-kim-jong-un-reviewed-plan-to-attack-south-korean-missile-command-hq-ukraine-helpless-to-prevent-north-korea-arms-supply-to-russia?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, September 17th, 2024

North Korea executes 2 women who fled and were forcibly repatriated from China

Top News:
North Korea executes 2 women who fled and were forcibly repatriated from China (RFA, 09/17/2024)

In North Korea:
N. Korea to hold key parliamentary meeting on Oct. 7 to revise constitution (*Yonhap*, 09/16/2024)

North Korea Sends Top Envoy to Russia as It Girds for Friction With Seoul (*Bloomberg*, 09/16/2024)
North Korea's top diplomat heads to Russia as military cooperation grows (*UPI*, 09/17/2024)

International:
North Korea sends 500 workers to China in violation of sanctions (*RFA*, 09/16/2024)
North Korean cybercriminals steal $22M from Indonesian crypto exchange (*NK News*, 09/17/2024)
North Korean IT workers furtively seeking jobs at British firms, UK warns (*NK News*, 09/17/2024)
Russia's Shoigu visits Iran for security talks, days after North Korea trip (*Reuters*, 09/17/2024)
WHO receives sanctions exemption to send vaccine equipment to North Korea (*NK News*, 09/17/2024)

Top News:

- On August 31, two North Korean women, Ms. Ri and Ms. Kang, were executed in North Korea after being forcibly repatriated from China for helping fellow North Koreans in China escape to South Korea. Nine others were sentenced to life imprisonment, marking the first reported executions since forced repatriations resumed in October 2023. Since the end of the Korean War in 1953, 72% of the 34,000 total escapees have been women. (Jamin Anderson, *RFA*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea will hold a key parliamentary meeting next month to mainly amend the country's constitution, after its leader Kim Jong-un called for the revision to define South Korea as its primary foe. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea sent its foreign minister to Russia for her second trip in less than a year to the major backer of Kim Jong Un's regime. (Jon Herskovitz, *Bloomberg*)
- North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui departed for a trip to Russia to attend the Eurasian Women's Forum and the BRICS Women's Forum. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)

International:

- North Korea has dispatched 500 workers to China – a violation of international sanctions – in the first such deployment since the pandemic. (Kim Jieun, *RFA*)
- North Korean cybercriminals stole more than $20 million in cryptocurrency from a leading Indonesian exchange last week, engineering more than a hundred virtual transactions to stealthily move the illicit funds. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Korean IT workers are posing as freelancers from third countries to secure employment with British companies, seeking to generate revenue to support the DPRK regime and possibly access sensitive information. (Alannah Hill, *NK News*)
- Top Russian security official Sergei Shoigu held talks with his Iranian counterpart in Tehran on Tuesday, days after meeting Kim Jong Un in Pyongyang. (Mark Trevelyan, *Reuters*)
- The World Health Organization has received a sanctions exemption to ship laboratory equipment for vaccines to North Korea, as the U.N. agency supports a new campaign to vaccinate over 1 million people in the country. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

Prepared by Bryan Clark, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723151322/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-executes-2-women-who-fled-and-were-forcibly-repatriated-from-china?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, September 18th, 2024

N. Korea fires short-range ballistic missiles for second time in a week; N. Korea 'modifying' Russian jet as early warning aircraft

In North Korea:
North Korea fires short-range ballistic missiles for second time in a week (*Reuters*, 09/18/2024)
How North Korea's Declining Birth Rate Compares with South (*Newsweek*, 09/18/2024)
Stamps, sticks and stories: looking for traces of baseball in North Korea (*The Guardian*, 09/17/2024)

International:
North Korea 'modifying' Russian jet as early warning aircraft: think tank (*RFA*, 09/18/2024)
North Korea's trade with China sees on-month surge in August but on-year decline (*NK News*, 09/18/2024)
Russia is after more Iranian and North Korean missiles to help it tip the balance in Ukraine, experts say (*Business Insider*, 09/18/2024)
USFK commander nominee calls DPRK weapons program main challenge to peninsula (*NK News*, 09/18/2024)
USFK commander nominee says 28,500 American troops in S. Korea are 'essential' (*Yonhap*, 09/18/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea launched multiple short-range ballistic missiles toward its east coast early Wednesday, according to South Korea and Japan. The missiles were fired from Kaechon, near Pyongyang, and flew around 400 km. This comes just days after North Korea revealed a uranium enrichment facility and pledged to expand its nuclear arsenal. (Hyonhee Shin, Kantaro Komiya, *Reuters*)
- North Korea's fertility rate, or the number of babies expected per woman's lifetime, stands at 1.78 births per woman, according to projections by the United Nations Population Fund. (Micah McCartney, *Newsweek*)
- Like a trail of breadcrumbs, there are signs baseball, the most cherished of American sports, may still be played in a country that calls itself the 'biggest enemy' of the US. (Helen Sullivan, *The Guardian*)

International:

- North Korea is "making progress" in modifying a Russian aircraft to become its first airborne early warning (AEW) platform. (Taejun Kang, RFA)
- Uptick implies economic relations between pair are improving but nominal value suggests overall stagnation. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- In the wake of its invasion of Ukraine, Russia has strengthened its ties with some of its allies, with Iran and North Korea becoming important suppliers of ammunition and weapons for its grinding war of attrition. (Tom Porter, *Business Insider*)
- Lt. Gen. Xavier T. Brunson stressed urgency of North Korean threat and vowed to uphold military readiness. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- Lt. Gen. Xavier Brunson, the nominee for U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) commander, emphasized that maintaining 28,500 American troops in South Korea is "essential" to sustain operational capabilities. This statement comes amid concerns that former President Donald Trump might reduce USFK troop levels if he returns to office. In written answers before his Senate confirmation hearing, Brunson affirmed that this force level is critical for the USFK, South Korea-U.S. Combined Forces Command, and United Nations Command. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723151419/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-fires-short-range-ballistic-missiles-for-second-time-in-a-week-n-korea-modifying-russian-jet-as-early-warning-aircraft?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, September 19th, 2024

Registration for Hearing: Religious Freedom in North Korea and North Korean Refugees: Trends and U.S. Policy Options

Top News:
Invitation to Register: U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom Hearing - Religious Freedom in North Korea and North Korean Refugees: Trends and U.S. Policy Options (*USCIRF*, 9/26/2024)
ROK-U.S. alliance needs public diplomacy, information campaign aimed at North Korea (*UPI*, 09/19/2024)

In North Korea:
North Korea's new missile can carry 'super-large' warhead: state media (RFA, 09/19/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
North Korea launches fresh wave of trash balloons toward South Korea (*Fox News*, 09/19/2024)

International:
US imposes new sanctions related to Russia, North Korea, says Treasury (*Reuters*, 09/19/2024)
USWNT loses to North Korea in semifinals of U-20 Women's World Cup (*USA Today*, 09/19/2024)
Vietnamese military officials visit North Korea for deputy ministerial talks (NK News, 09/19/2024)

Top News:

- On Thursday, September 26, 2024, 10:30 AM-12 PM ET, please join the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom for a virtual hearing on religious freedom conditions in North Korea, North Korean refugees, and policy options for the U.S. government. You may register here.
- Colonel Maxwell, a member of HRNK's Board of Directors, has penned a persuasive piece for *UPI*, prioritizing the urgent need to achieve a free and unified Korea via strategic public diplomacy campaigns focused on human rights, self-determination, and countering North Korean propaganda. (David Maxwell, *UPI*)

In North Korea:

- The new missile, named the Hwasongpo-11-Da-4.5, was tipped with a 4.5-ton super-large conventional warhead in the test-firing conducted on Wednesday by the North's Missile Administration, said North Korea's state-run Korean Central News Agency. (Taejun Kang, *RFA*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- The trash bundle is the latest in a series of Cold War-style exchanges between the Koreas, with the North previously sending balloons filled with waste, cigarette butts, and manure to the South. (Bradford Betz, *Fox News*)

International:

- Vietnamese military officials visited North Korea for deputy ministerial talks this week in a bid to expand defense cooperation between the two countries. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- The new sanctions reveal how Russia aids North Korea in bypassing U.N. sanctions to access the international banking system, according to the U.S. Treasury. This action follows a recent meeting between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Russian security official Sergei Shoigu, where they discussed strengthening strategic ties. (Doina Chiacu, *Reuters*)
- After reaching the semifinals of the Under-20 World Cup with a victory over Germany, the U.S. women's team fell 1-0 to North Korea on Wednesday afternoon. (Nancy Armour, Jim Reineking, *USA Today*)

Prepared by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723151539/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-registration-for-hearing-religious-freedom-in-north-korea-and-north-korean-refugees-trends-and-us-policy-options?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, September 20th, 2024

Allies urge N. Korea to release detainees as 4,000-day captivity persists

Inter-Korean Relations:
Allies urge N. Korea to release detainees as 4,000-day captivity persists (*The Korea Herald*, 09/20/24)
A North Korean Trash Balloon Hits a Seoul Government Compound, Again (*The New York Times*, 09/20/24)
Unification minister urges N. Korea to immediately return detained S. Koreans home (*Yonhap*, 09/20/24)

In South Korea:
Border residents seek compensation for North Korean noise disturbance (*The Korea Times*, 09/20/24)
Ex-President Moon accuses Yoon gov't of creating 'most dangerous' state since Korean War (*Yonhap*, 09/20/24)
Military deploys upgraded radar system for coastal units (*Yonhap*, 09/20/24)
'No need for own nuclear weapon' against North Korea: South Korean president (RFA, 09/20/24)

International:
N. Korea's top envoy to Cuba begins duties, vows to further strengthen ties (*Yonhap*, 09/20/24)
Quad leaders to discuss N. Korean threats, N.K.-Russia cooperation in upcoming summit: U.S. official (*Yonhap*, 09/20/24)
S. Korea, U.S. to hold regular defense talks to discuss deterrence against N.K. threats (*Yonhap*, 09/20/24)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- South Korea's Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho strongly condemned North Korea's unlawful detention of six South Korean nationals and demanded their immediate and unconditional release in a statement released Friday, which also marked the 4,000th day of captivity for missionary Kim Jung-wook, the longest-held detainee. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- Trash from a balloon sent by North Korea was found in a government complex in Seoul on Friday morning, more than a day after one of the North's balloon launches was last detected,

adding to concerns about South Korea's potential vulnerability to the provocative new tactic. (John Yoon, *The New York Times*)

- Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho on Friday called on North Korea to "immediately and unconditionally" send a detained South Korean missionary and five other nationals back home, condemning the North's yearslong arbitrary detention as grave human rights violations. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- The Incheon Metropolitan Government announced on Friday that it will request the central government to establish an administrative framework for compensating residents near the inter-Korean border who have been affected by disruptive noises from North Korean loudspeakers. (Lee Hyo-jin, *The Korea Times*)
- Former President Moon Jae-in lambasted the North Korea policies of the Yoon Suk Yeol administration on Friday, saying they have led to the "most dangerous" state on the Korean Peninsula since the 1950-53 Korean War. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- The military has deployed an upgraded radar system for units monitoring coastal areas to bolster their operational capabilities, the state arms procurement agency said Friday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea has already established a system that can effectively deter and respond to the North Korean nuclear threat without the need for its own nuclear arsenal, said South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, a week after the North unveiled details of its uranium enrichment facility for the first time. (Taejun Kang, RFA)

International:

- North Korea's new ambassador to Cuba has vowed to further strengthen ties with Havana, seven months after South Korea established diplomatic ties with Cuba in a significant diplomatic setback for Pyongyang. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- The leaders of the United States, India, Japan and Australia are expected to discuss North Korea's security challenge and its cooperation with Russia among other topics during their Quad summit set to take place in Delaware this week, a White House official said Thursday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the United States will hold regular defense talks next week to discuss ways to strengthen security cooperation against North Korean nuclear and missile threats, the South's defense ministry said Friday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Ryan Rohrbach, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250723152715/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-allies-urge-n-korea-to-release-detainees-as-4000-day-captivity-persists?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, September 21st, 2024

US Commission on International Religious Freedom to Hold Hearing on N. Korea on the 26th: "Religious Freedom Conditions Remain Dire"

Top News:
US Commission on International Religious Freedom to Hold Hearing on North Korea on the 26th: "Religious Freedom Conditions Remain Dire" (VOA, 09/19/2024)

In North Korea:
North Koreans are getting sick of propaganda song "Friendly Father" (RFA, 09/20/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
A North Korean Trash Balloon Hits a Seoul Government Compound, Again (*The New York Times*, 09/20/2024)

International:
Quad leaders to use strong language on N. Korea, South China Sea in joint statement: senior U.S. official (*Yonhap*, 09/21/2024)
Quick Take: North Korea and BRICS (38 *North*, 09/20/2024)
US soldier who fled to North Korea is free after sentencing (*Reuters*, 09/20/2024)

Top News:

- On Thursday, September 26, 2024, 10:30 AM-12 PM ET, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom will host a virtual hearing on religious freedom conditions in North Korea. (Lee Jo-eun, VOA)

In North Korea:

- North Koreans are growing weary of being bombarded by "Friendly Father," an upbeat propaganda song praising leader Kim Jong Un that has been blanketing the country for months now, sources in the country tell Radio Free Asia. (Kim Jieun, RFA)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- Trash from a North Korean balloon was found in a Seoul government complex on Friday. (John Yoon, *The New York Times*)

International:

- The United States, India, Japan and Australia will issue a joint summit statement that includes "some of the strongest language" on North Korea and the South China Sea on

Saturday, in an apparent show of their leaders' unity against security challenges from Pyongyang and Beijing. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

- North Korea's involvement in BRICS is uncertain, but its interest has grown since mid-2023, likely due to closer ties with Russia. This shift makes its engagement with BRICS and similar networks worth watching. (Rachel Minyoung Lee, *38 North*)
- U.S. Army Private Travis King, who last year ran into North Korea and was taken into custody there, was sentenced on Friday to one year of confinement then freed based on time already served. He pleaded guilty to five charges, and the sentencing was held at Fort Bliss, Texas. (Kanishka Singh, *Reuters*)

US Commission on International Religious Freedom to Hold Hearing on North Korea on the 26th: "Religious Freedom Conditions Remain Dire"

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), an independent entity within the U.S. government, will hold a hearing next week to assess the state of religious freedom in North Korea, emphasizing that conditions remain dire. Lee Jo-eun reports.

The USCIRF recently announced on its website that it will host a hearing titled "Religious Freedom in North Korea and North Korean Refugees: Trends and U.S. Policy Options" on the 26th.

The hearing is set to take place online.

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Julie Turner, the State Department's Special Envoy on North Korean Human Rights Issues, along with representatives from North Korean human rights organizations in the U.S. and South Korea, will testify on the state of religious freedom in North Korea.

The USCIRF pointed out, "Religious freedom conditions in North Korea remain abysmal. The regime's ruling ideology, known as Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism, treats religion as an existential threat, resulting in severe punishment for religious adherents, including torture, forced labor, imprisonment, and execution. North Koreans outside the country face transnational repression and forcible return, especially North Korean refugees in China who have engaged in religious activities or come in contact with Christian missionaries, despite the risk of torture or other severe punishments upon return."

[USCIRF] "Witnesses will discuss religious freedom inside North Korea and the situation for North

Korean refugees in South Korea, China, and other countries. They will also consider U.S. policy approaches towards North Korea, including the intersection between human rights and national security."

"Religious Freedom Must Precede Human Rights Improvements in North Korea"

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), emphasized in a call with VOA on the 18th that "the Kim regime suppresses freedom of religion, particularly Christianity and all other religious beliefs."

[Recording: Greg Scarlatoiu] "This hearing is very important for two particular reasons. Number one, North Korea, the Kim family regime is a great oppressor of religious freedom-- all religious beliefs and Christianity in particular. Number two, there is no civil society in North Korea under the current regime, there will be no semblance of civil society...When it comes to improving the human rights situation in North Korea, we should definitely lead with religious freedom... My mission is going to be twofold: #1 Highlight the connection between human rights and security issues, military issues. #2. Explain ways in which the international community and international organizations can better address the North Korean human rights situation."

Previously, the USCIRF recommended in its '2024 Annual Report' published in May that North Korea be redesignated as a Country of Particular Concern for religious freedom, a status that the country has held since 2001. Countries designated as such face sanctions in trade and other areas according to related laws.

The USCIRF was established in 1998 under the 'International Religious Freedom Act' as an independent government agency tasked with monitoring global religious freedom violations and advising the U.S. government.

This is Lee Jo-eun reporting for VOA *News*.

Translated by Doohyun Kim, HRNK Social Media Associate; edited by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Jiwoo-Katie Choi, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250723152903/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-us-commission-on-international-religious-freedom-to-hold-hearing-on-n-korea-on-the-26th-religious-freedom-conditions-remain-dire?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Sunday, September 22nd, 2024

Video shows enormous explosion at Russian ammunition depot that Ukraine says housed munitions from North Korea

In North Korea:
N. Korea's top diplomat says will not overlook any hostile acts (*Yonhap*, 09/22/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
N. Korea sends more trash balloons toward S. Korea (*Yonhap*, 09/22/2024)

International:
Kim Jong Un Offers Tepid Praise to China as He Cozies Up to Russia (*Bloomberg*, 09/22/2024)
N. Korea's Kim vows to develop friendly ties with China (*Yonhap*, 09/22/2024)
Quad leaders decry N.K. missile launches, reaffirm 'complete' Korean Peninsula denuclearization goal (*Yonhap*, 09/22/2024)
Yoon's trip to Czech Republic focuses on nuclear energy alliance, opens doors to more deals (*Yonhap*, 09/22/2024)
Video shows enormous explosion at Russian ammunition depot that Ukraine says housed munitions from North Korea (*Business Insider*, 09/22/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea's foreign minister has warned that Pyongyang will not overlook any hostile acts on the Korean Peninsula, claiming that the peninsula's security situation is heading for a "more dangerous threshold," the North's state media reported Sunday. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has expressed his intention to develop friendly relations with Beijing in his reply letter to Chinese President Xi Jinping, the North's state media said Sunday. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korea sent more balloons likely carrying trash toward South Korea on Sunday, the South's military said, just four days after a similar launch. (Lee MInji, *Yonhap*)

International:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un sent Chinese President Xi Jinping greetings with what appeared to be restrained rhetoric that comes as Pyongyang moves closer to Russia and depends less on its long-time Asian ally. Kim wished "the Chinese people greater success in building a modern socialist country," in a reply message to Xi for his congratulations on North Korea's birthday, the official Korean Central News Agency reported Sunday. (Jon Herskovitz, *Bloomberg*)
- The United States, India, Japan and Australia denounced North Korea's "destabilizing" missile launches and its nuclear program, and reaffirmed their commitment to the "complete" denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- With eyes set on inking a major nuclear power plant deal next spring, President Yoon Suk Yeol wrapped a four-day official visit to the Czech Republic on Sunday that focused on building a nuclear energy alliance and strengthening the strategic partnership with the Central European nation. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Ukrainian forces targeted a significant Russian ammunition depot in Tikhoretsk, located in Russia's Krasnodar Krai region, resulting in a massive explosion. The strike, captured on camera, reportedly destroyed 2,000 tons of munitions. Ukraine claimed that some of the ammunition originated from North Korea. (Rebecca Rommen, *Business Insider*)

Prepared by Samantha Garcia, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723153156/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-video-shows-enormous-explosion-at-russian-ammunition-depot-that-ukraine-says-housed-munitions-from-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Monday, September 23rd, 2024

North Korea Ramping Up Weapons Production for Russia as Human Rights Abuses Worsen, Seoul Report Warns

Top News:
North Korea Ramping Up Weapons Production for Russia as Human Rights Abuses Worsen, Seoul Report Warns (*The New York Sun*, 09/12/2024)

In North Korea:
N Korea win record third U20 Fifa Women's World Cup (BBC, 09/23/2024)

North Korea blames US for waging a 'new Cold War' in Asia with military alliances (*RFA*, 09/23/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Incheon Airport suspends flights due to trash-laden balloon from North Korea (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 09/23/2024)
South Korea warns of 'stern military action' as North's trash balloon launches continue (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 09/23/2024)

International:
Governor of North Korean province in US to 'promote Yoon's vision for unifying Korea' (*The Korean Herald*, 09/23/2024)
National security adviser warns of possible NK nuclear test around US election (*The Korea Times*, 09/23/2024)

Top News:

- The communist regime at Pyongyang commits every imaginable abuse, ranging from murder and enslavement to rape and sexual violence to repression of speech and dissent. "People in North Korea often describe feeling as though they are trapped in a matchbox, aware their lives are confined within the narrow limits and devoid of freedom." (Donald Kirk, *The New York Sun*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea's state media stated The United States is "fuelling confrontation" in Asia by regularizing its military behavior with South Korea, Japan, Australia, and others to create a giant military alliance. (Taejun Kang, RFA)
- North Korea secured a record-equalling third victory in the Fifa Under-20 Women's World Cup on Sunday, beating Japan 1-0 in Bogota. (Nick Marsh, BBC)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- Takeoffs and landings at Incheon International Airport were temporarily suspended on Monday morning due to trash-laden balloons sent from North Korea. (Park Young-woo, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff on Monday warned that it could take "stern military actions" if Pyongyang's continued trash-laden balloons compromise the safety of the Korean people or when such balloon intrusions "cross the line." (Lee Soo-jung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- Ji Seong-ho, the governor of North Hamgyong Province, is on a trip to Washington to discuss President Yoon Suk Yeol's "doctrine" on Korean reunification with US government officials, senators and think tanks. (Kim Arin, *The Korean Herald*)
- S. Korean National Security Adviser Shin Won-sik warned on Monday that North Korea retains the capability to conduct nuclear tests at any time, with one possible timeframe for

their next test potentially aligning with the U.S. election in November. (Anna J. Park, *The Korea Times*)

Prepared by Natalie Razera, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723153414/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-ramping-up-weapons-production-for-russia-as-human-rights-abuses-worsen-seoul-report-warns?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Tuesday, September 24th, 2024

A new "quartet of chaos" threatens America; UN envoy calls for reparations for victims of North Korean human rights abuse

In North Korea:
North Korea restoring runway at key airbase dismantled for COVID disinfection (*NK News*, 09/23/2024)

In South Korea:
Yoon raps calls to abandon unification goal as 'unconstitutional' (*Yonhap*, 09/24/2024)

International:
A new "quartet of chaos" threatens America (*The Economist*, 09/22/2024)
N. Korean leader's sister vows to 'limitlessly' bolster nuclear war deterrent over U.S. submarine arrival (*Yonhap*, 09/24/2024)
Quad leaders slam military cooperation with North Korea, but don't name Russia (*NK News*, 09/23/2024)
Russian military jet makes series of rare flights to North Korea from Far East (*NK News*, 09/23/2024)
S. Korea, U.S., Japan to finalize trilateral secretariat when leaders meet this year (*Yonhap*, 09/24/2024)
The power of fiction: Why North Korea needs its own 'Moon is Down' (UPI, 09/23/2024)
UN envoy calls for reparations for victims of North Korean human rights abuse (*NK News*, 09/24/2024)
U.S. expert calls N.K. HEU facility disclosure 'bold' move related to U.S. election (*Yonhap*, 09/24/2024)
Why North Korea eyes BRICS membership (*The Korea Times*, 09/24/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea appears to have started restoring the runway at a defunct airbase near the border with China, the move is in line with Kim Jong Un's pledge to revive air force, after years of stagnation. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- President Yoon Suk Yeol denounced political figures who have shifted from advocating for Korean unification to supporting the idea of the two Koreas living as separate states, calling such views "unconstitutional." (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

International:

- China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea are forming deeper military and industrial ties to challenge the US-led global order. Their collaboration creates strategic challenges for the U.S. and its allies, posing an increasing threat to global stability. (*The Economist*)
- Kim Yo-jong vowed to strengthen North Korea's nuclear deterrent, criticizing the arrival of a U.S. submarine in South Korea and boasting of North Korea's ability to detect the vessel through its surveillance capabilities. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The leaders od the U.S., Australia, India and Japan condemned North Korea's ongoing weapons development and military cooperation with partners on Saturday, but avoided direct mentions of Russia in apparent deference to New Delhi's foreign policy priorities. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- A Rusian military plane made a series of flights between North Korea and the Russian Far East over the weekend, including a rare trip to a city where Kim Jong Un previously toured a fighter jet factory, in what experts described as a sign of ongoing sensitive consultations. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- The top diplomats of South Korea, the United States and Japan have reaffirmed their commitment to establishing a trilateral cooperation secretariat, to be finalized when their leaders meet later this year. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- A novel inspired by *The Moon is Down*, but written for and by North Koreans, could be a powerful tool for change. By providing a framework for resistance, offering hope, countering propaganda, and educating about human rights and democracy, it could play a vital role in the long-term transformation of North Korea. (David Maxwell, *UPI*)
- The U.N. special envoy for North Korean humn rights has called for a "victim-centered approach" to supporting those who have suffered under the DPRK regime, even if it's impossible to hold perpetrators accountable. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- Victor Cha suggests North Korea's reveal of a uranium enrichment facility is a strategic move tied to the U.S. election, as Pyongyang often acts more belligerent during election years. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea appears to be stepping up efforts to join the BRICS bloc, a multinational group led by Russia and China, with its top diplomat notably skipping the U.N. General Assembly in favor of attending a BRICS-related event. (Lee Hyo-jin, *The Korea Times*)

Prepared by Smaranda Gheorghe, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250723155904/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-a-new-quartet-of-chaos-threatens-america-un-envoy-calls-for-reparations-for-victims-of-north-korean-human-rights-abuse?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, September 25th, 2024

North Korea's new inland missile target range located in wildlife sanctuary

In North Korea:
North Korea begins blocking road linking South to symbolic Kaesong Industrial Complex (Korea JoongAng Daily, 09/25/2024)
North Korea's new inland missile target range located in wildlife sanctuary (NK News, 09/25/2024)
North Korea's Smartphone Market Expands as Border Restrictions End (38 North, 09/24/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
North Korean cyberattacks on Seoul's unification ministry double since 2022 (NK News, 09/25/2024)

In South Korea:
PM says call for two Korean states violates Constitution (Yonhap, 09/25/2024)
Unification minister denounces those supporting N. Korea's anti-unification stance (Yonhap, 09/25/2024)

International:
Biden makes no mention of N. Korea in final speech to U.N. General Assembly as president (Yonhap, 09/25/2024)
Blinken calls for joint efforts to address Russia's military cooperation with N. Korea, Iran (Yonhap, 09/25/2024)
N. Korea accuses U.S. of using Quad to justify anti-Pyongyang confrontational policy (Yonhap, 09/25/2024)
North Korea vows response to US submarine's visit to South Korea (AP News, 09/24/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. keep 'unwavering' readiness posture against possible N.K. provocations (Yonhap, 09/25/2024)
Zelensky accuses North Korea of abetting Russian war crimes in Ukraine (NK News, 09/25/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has begun constructing barriers blocking a road from South Korea leading to the Kaesong Industrial Complex in an apparent effort to physically sever cross-border ties, according to VOA, which analyzed satellite imagery taken and reported the North had constructed three to four "large-scale" barrier walls. (Michael Lee, Korea JoongAng Daily)
- The inland target range that North Korea used to test a new missile last week is located in a protected wildlife reserve in the country's remote northeast, an NK Pro investigation has found, offering clues about the DPRK's claims of improved precision capabilities. (Colin Zwirko, NK News)
- The variety of smartphones available in North Korea has more than doubled in the last two years, and at least 10 companies are now fighting for the attention of consumers. Some have even started following the marketing strategies of overseas competitors by offering multiple versions and giving consumers more choice than ever before. (Martin Williams, 38 North)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korean cyberattacks on South Korea's unification ministry and associated inter-Korean organizations have almost doubled over the past two years. (Joon Ha Park, Shreyas Reddy, NK News)

In South Korea:

- Prime Minister Han Duck-soo said Wednesday that former presidential chief of staff Im Jong-seok's recent call for South Korea and North Korea to exist as two separate states runs against the Constitution. (Lee Haye-ah, Yonhap)
- Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho on Wednesday denounced those who support North Korea's idea of the two Koreas living as separate states, stressing that unification is the only way to bring peace to the Korean Peninsula. (Kim Soo-yeon, Yonhap)

International:

- U.S. President Joe Biden on Tuesday made no reference to North Korea in his fourth and final speech to the U.N. General Assembly as president, though he stressed his commitment to diplomacy with Pyongyang. (Song Sang-ho, Yonhap)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Tuesday made an emphatic call for international efforts to address Russia's military cooperation with North Korea and Iran, saying it is helping Moscow cause "carnage" in Ukraine and would imperil global security. (Kim Han-joo, Yonhap)
- North Korea on Wednesday denounced the United States for violating the North's sovereign rights and trying to justify its hostile policy against Pyongyang by hosting the Quad summit with the leaders of India, Japan and Australia. (Kim Soo-yeon, Yonhap)
- The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed Tuesday to boost the country's nuclear war capability and take other steps to protest the recent arrival of a nuclear-powered U.S. submarine in South Korea. (Hyung-jin Kim, AP News)
- South Korea is maintaining an "unwavering" readiness posture "around the clock" against potential North Korean provocations through close cooperation with the United States,

Seoul's top envoy to Washington said Tuesday, amid concerns over Pyongyang's growing nuclear and missile threats. (Song Sang-ho, Yonhap)

- Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky slammed North Korea for aiding Russia's "criminal war" against his country at the U.N. on Tuesday, accusing Pyongyang of providing Moscow with weapons that kill Ukrainian citizens. (Anton Sokolin, NK News)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250723160137/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-koreas-new-inland-missile-target-range-located-in-wildlife-sanctuary?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, September 26th, 2024

N. Korea may conduct nuclear test after U.S. election

In North Korea:
2.9 magnitude earthquake hits northwestern N. Korea: weather agency (*Yonhap*, 09/26/2024)
Major Construction at Nampho Port (*38 North*, 09/25/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
S. Korean FM cites N. Korea-Russia arms transactions as case of UNSC 'limitations' (*Yonhap*, 09/26/2024)

In South Korea:
Seoul airports have suspended flights 20 times due to North Korean balloons (*NK News*, 09/26/2024)

International:
'Fishing net': Police quotas, surveillance trap North Koreans in China (*Reuters*, 09/24/2024)
Kim Yo Jong claims North Korean satellite detected US submarine's arrival in ROK (*NK News*, 09/25/2024)
N. Korea may conduct nuclear test after U.S. election: spy agency (*Yonhap*, 09/26/2024)
North Koreans secretly working at foreign firms could carry out attacks: Report (*NK News*, 09/25/2024)
North Korea unveiling uranium enrichment site a US election-conscious move (*The Korea Herald*, 09/26/2024)
Senate confirms new commander of US forces tasked with deterring North Korea (*NK News*, 09/26/2024)

In North Korea:

- A 2.9 magnitude earthquake struck North Korea's northwestern province bordering China on Thursday. The quake struck an area 26 kilometers southeast of Ryongrim, Jagang Province, at 11 a.m., with its epicenter at a latitude of 40.32 degrees north and a longitude of 126.86 degrees east at a depth of 27 kilometers. (Kim Hyun-soo, *Yonhap*)
- Commercial satellite imagery indicates a large structure is under construction on one of the repair ways at Nampho Port. Nampho is North Korea's largest commercial port, known for its extensive coal, petroleum, oil, and commercial goods import and export facilities. While the structure's purpose is unclear, it is unlike other recent construction efforts and will have the effect of concealing any work within it. (Peter Makowsky, Jack Liu, Martyn Williams, Iliana Ragnone, *38 North*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul on Wednesday pointed out "limitations" of the U.N. Security Council in effectively addressing pressing security issues, citing North Korea's transfer of weapons to Russia in breach of relevant UNSC resolutions. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- Seoul's two main airports have shut down their runways 20 times this year due to North Korean trash balloons, amounting to almost seven hours of flight disruptions. The Seoul Regional Aviation Administration stated that the longest disruption took place on June 25, when Incheon International Airport and Gimpo International Airport suspended flights for 166 minutes after the DPRK launched over 250 trash balloons. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

International:

- Border police in China's northeast have been given quotas to identify and expel undocumented migrants, one key aspect of broader surveillance that is making it harder for North Korean defectors to evade capture, according to previously undisclosed official documents and a dozen people familiar with the matter. (Ju-min Park, Eduardo Baptista, *Reuters*)
- The North Korean leader's powerful sister denounced a stopover by a U.S. nuclear-powered submarine in South Korea as a "frantic" attempt to demonstrate American military strength, claiming that a DPRK spy satellite detected the vessel's arrival. (Seung-Yeon Chung, *NK News*)
- North Korea may carry out its seventh nuclear test after the U.S. presidential vote in November. The National Intelligence Service made the assessment to the parliamentary intelligence committee, saying Pyongyang has other options, such as an intercontinental ballistic missile test. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean IT workers who obtain jobs at foreign companies to raise funds for the regime could one day become a vector for massive cyberattacks, a U.S. cybersecurity firm has warned, detailing the methods these workers use to gain employment under pretenses and evade sanctions. (Shreyes Reddy, NK News)

- South Korea's spy agency considers North Korea publicizing leader Kim Jong-un's visit to a previously undeclared uranium enrichment facility earlier this month to be a "US election-conscious move." The National Intelligence Service believes North Korea possesses enough plutonium and uranium to build "double-digit numbers of nuclear weapons." (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- The U.S. Senate has confirmed Xavier T. Brunson as the new commander of U.S. Forces Korea (USFK), promoting the Army officer to general and tasking him with countering North Korea's growing nuclear threat. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

Prepared by Valerie Johnson, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250723160401/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-may-conduct-nuclear-test-after-us-election?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, September 27th, 2024

N.K. leader chooses party-centered system on concerns about military coup; Panmunjom tours for select nationals may resume in October

In North Korea:
N. Korean leader chooses party-centered system on concerns about military coup (Yonhap, 09/27/2024)
N. Korea raises number of criminal charges subject to death penalty (Yonhap, 09/27/2024)
North Korea builds giant construction camp at former joint inter-Korean project (NK News, 09/27/2024)
North Korea resumes printing English newspaper as foreigners trickle back in (NK News, 09/27/2024)
North Korea's Kimsuky adds new malware variants to expanding phishing arsenal (NK News, 09/27/2024)
Sohae Satellite Launching Station: Modernization Efforts Continue Apace (38 North, 09/26/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Panmunjom tours for select Korean nationals may resume in October (The Korea Herald, 09/27/2024)

International:
Expanding access to information in N. Korea is 'key pillar' of U.S. policy (Yonhap, 09/27/2024)

Experts call for placing human rights at center of NK policy (The Korea Times, 09/27/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has implemented a party-centered political system and bolstered state control due to concerns that a potential military coup could bring down the regime, according to a former North Korean diplomat. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has increased the number of criminal charges subject to the death penalty to 16 from 11 by revising the penal code several times between 2022 and 2023, including the latest revision in December 2023. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has built a giant construction workers camp at the site of a former joint inter-Korean tree nursery project, according to *NK Pro* analysis of satellite imagery, underscoring its rejection of cross-border cooperation six years after a South Korean organization started investing a promised $16 million in the site. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea has resumed printing and subscription services for its main newspaper for foreigners living in the country "after a long break," which could potentially be a sign that North Korea is preparing to allow more foreigners to enter in the near future. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- A North Korean cybercrime group known for its prolific phishing operations has added two new malware programs to its growing arsenal of tools to steal information, according to a U.S. cybersecurity firm. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- Commercial satellite imagery reveals modernization efforts at North Korea's Sohae Satellite Launching Station have steadily progressed since the failed launch of a Malligyong-1-1 reconnaissance satellite in May 2024. (Peter Makowsky, Jack Liu, Iliana Ragnone, Martyn Williams, *38 North*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- Tours to the inter-Korean truce village of Panmunjom might resume for Korean nationals in October, more than a year after former US soldier Travis King's crossing into North Korea suspended tours there. (Son Ji-hyoung, *The Korea Herald*)

International:

- Increasing access to information in North Korea is a key pillar of Washington's policy on the reclusive state, the U.S. special envoy for North Korean human rights said Thursday, noting "informed" people can help promote security on the Korean Peninsula and beyond. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- During this year's International Forum on One Korea, political leaders, security experts and human rights activists urged the government and people in the South to reject that shift, saying that permanent division on the peninsula betrays Korea's founding vision and would not bring lasting peace. (Jung Min-ho, *The Korea Times*)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250723160902/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-nk-leader-chooses-party-centered-system-on-concerns-about-military-coup-panmunjom-tours-for-select-nationals-may-resume-in-october?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, September 28th, 2024

North Korea expands list of crimes punishable by death

In North Korea:
North Korea expands list of crimes punishable by death: report (Fox News, 09/28/2024)
North Koreans increasingly unhappy with their leadership: Heritage Foundation founder (The Korea Times, 09/28/2024)

In South Korea:
FM champions multilateralism, stresses S. Korea's vision as 'global pivotal state' (Yonhap, 09/28/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Blinken redoubles calls for pressing N. Korea, China, Iran to stop aid for Russia's war in Ukraine (Yonhap, 09/28/2024)

International:
South Korea's foreign minister says Russia engaging in illegal arms trade with North Korea (Reuters, 09/27/2024)
The UN's nuclear chief says the world needs to pursue dialogue with North Korea over nuclear weapons (AP News, 09/26/2024)

In North Korea:

- Crimes punishable by death seem to now include anti-state propaganda and illegal manufacturing. (Timothy Nerozzi, *Fox News*)
- North Koreans are growing increasingly dissatisfied with their leadership and admire the democracy and economic success enjoyed by South Koreans, according to Edwin Feulner, founder of the U.S. think tank The Heritage Foundation. (Hyo-jin Lee, *The Korea Times*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's foreign minister has made a strong case for multilateralism to address global challenges through international cooperation, stressing that it has undergirded his country's democratic and economic rise. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken reiterated calls Friday for joint efforts to press North Korea, China and Iran to stop providing support for Russia's war in Ukraine, stressing the need to bring a "just and lasting" peace in the war-torn country. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

International:

- South Korea's Foreign Minister said Russia is engaging in illegal arms trade with North Korea, reiterating statements by the United States, Ukraine and independent analysts that Pyongyang is supplying rockets and missiles in return for economic and other military assistance from Moscow. (Joyce Lee, Himani Sarkar, *Reuters*)
- In an interview with *The Associated Press*, Rafael Grossi, director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, wondered whether slamming the door on Kim Jong Un's government has solved anything — "or are we, on the contrary, exacerbating the conditions for a situation that may go out of hand?" (Edith M. Lederer, *AP News*)

Prepared by Hannah Starnes, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250723161127/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-expands-list-of-crimes-punishable-by-death?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Sunday, September 29th, 2024

Citizens rally for Korean unification, show solidarity with Koreans in the North

Inter-Korean Relations:
Citizens rally for Korean unification, show solidarity with Koreans in the North (*UPI*, 09/29/2024)
South Korea to reveal missile carrying massive warhead at military parade amid tensions with North (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 09/29/2024)

International:
FM champions multilateralism, stresses S. Korea's vision as 'global pivotal state' (*Yonhap*, 09/28/2024)
North Korea says US military aid to Ukraine is 'incredible mistake' (*Reuters*, 09/28/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- Koreans and members of the Korean diaspora rallied at Imjingak Peace Park near the DMZ for the 2024 Korean Dream Grand March for a Unified Korea, organized by Action for Korea United to mark Korea's National Foundation Day and promote unification efforts. (Michael Marshall, *UPI*)
- South Korea will showcase its so-called Hyunmoo-5 missile, capable of delivering powerful retaliatory strikes against North Korea, during the 76th Armed Forces Day parade in central Seoul on Tuesday. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- South Korea's foreign minister has made a strong case for multilateralism to address global challenges through international cooperation, stressing that it has undergirded his country's democratic and economic rise. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea, which has been accused of illegally supplying weapons to Russia, said on Sunday that U.S. military aid worth $8 billion to Ukraine is "an incredible mistake" and playing with fire against nuclear superpower Russia. (Jack Kim, *Reuters*)

Prepared by Jennifer Leon, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250723161412/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-citizens-rally-for-korean-unification-show-solidarity-with-koreans-in-the-north?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Monday, September 30th, 2024

Video Testimony before the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom

Top News:
Testimony before the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (HRNK Insider, 09/26/2024)
Hearing on Religious Freedom in North Korea and North Korean Refugees: Trends & U.S. Policy Options (USCRIF, 09/27/2024)
U.S. Special Envoy on North Korean Human Rights Issues: "Possibility of Internal Uprising in North Korea Low" (RFA, 09/26/2024)

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un inspects flood recovery in third visit to affected areas since July (NK News, 09/30/2024)
N.K. leader urges swift reconstruction in flood-devastated regions (Yonhap, 09/30/2024)

North Korea renames subway station, purging reference to reunification (NK News, 09/30/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
ROK lawmaker accuses website of allowing illegal sale of North Korean art (NK News, 09/30/2024)

International:
Kim Yo Jong claps back at Zelensky for saying North Korea is Russia's accomplice (NK News, 09/30/2024)
Korea, Slovakia agree to establish strategic partnership as leaders meet for summit (Korea JoongAng Daily, 09/30/2024)
North Korean museum in Cambodia still closed, years after 'temporary' suspension (NK News, 09/30/2024)
Russian top diplomat's take on North's denuclearization 'irresponsible' (Korea JoongAng Daily, 09/30/2024)

Top News:

- On the 26th, **HRNK's Executive Director, Greg Scarlatoiu,** testified at a US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) hearing, highlighting North Korea's severe religious oppression, which USCIRF designates as a "country of particular concern." Today, Pyongyang is a hub of religious persecution. "Why does the Kim regime fear and resent Christianity so much? Any religious belief and Christianity in particular as well as free, democratic, prosperous South Korea constitute the only challenges to the Kim regime's absolute monopoly on power. The underground church provides a venue for the free exchange of ideas. Underground North Korean Christians are now in the range of tens, if not hundreds of thousands." (*HRNK Insider*)
- Please see a recording of the video hearing here. (*USCIRF*)
- During the USCIRF hearing, **HRNK's Executive Director, Greg Scarlatoiu,** also emphasized that underground churches in North Korea could lead to necessary and important internal change. "Public discourse and advocacy on North Korea has largely focused on markets and information, which are important factors driving change. But there is another agent of change inside North Korea and that is the growing of the underground church in North Korea." (Lee Sang-min, *RFA*)

In North Korea:

- Kim Jong-un inspected efforts to reconstruct homes destroyed by summer floods on Sunday, according to state media, framing the relief work as part of a broader regional development push. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Kim Jong-un has called for swiftly rebuilding homes in flood-devastated regions in the country's northwest. Kim made the remarks during a "field guidance" visit to the flood-stricken regions of North Phyongan Province on Sunday. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has officially renamed a subway station in central Pyongyang that referenced the idea of a reunified Korean Peninsula, the latest effort to purge language about

reunification in line with leader Kim Jong Un's new policy toward the South. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- A South Korean lawmaker has accused the country's largest online platform of potentially violating U.N. Security Council sanctions and domestic law by allowing the sale of North Korean artwork on its showing site. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

International:

- The powerful sister of North Korea's leader has slammed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky for calling the DPRK an accomplice to Russia in its war against Ukraine, while accusing the U.S. of providing financial support to the "neo-Nazi" regime in Kyiv. (Anton Sokolin, NK News)
- Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico held a summit on Monday and released a joint statement on establishing a strategic partnership between the two countries. The two sides also signed two memorandums of understanding (MOU), Korea's presidential office announced the same day. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A Cambodian museum formerly run by North Korea is still closed nearly five years after "temporarily" suspending operations, *NK News* has confirmed, in a sign that sanctions on DPRK workers have derailed the project. (Bryan Betts, *NK News*)
- South Korea's Foreign Ministry expressed "deep regret" over Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's statement where he said he views North Korean denuclearization as a "closed issue." The ministry further emphasized that Russia has obligations to uphold such international nonproliferation efforts. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250723161645/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-video-testimony-before-the-us-commission-on-international-religious-freedom?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

10. OCTOBER

Tuesday, October 1st, 2024

2024 ICKS Annual Conference

Top News:
2024 ICKS Annual Conference (HRNK, 09/25/2024)

In North Korea:
Former 'Office 39' official on how North Korea finances nukes (RFA, 09/30/2024)

In South Korea:
Defector steals village bus to return to North Korea, citing difficult life in the South (Korea JoongAng Daily, 10/01/2024)
Missiles roll through Seoul to reassure citizens against North Korean threats (NK News, 10/01/2024)
NK defector nabbed trying to drive stolen bus across border (The Korea Herald, 10/01/2024)
ROK shows off 'monster' missile at parade in warning to nuclear North Korea (NK News, 10/01/2024)
South Korea unveils missile that can hit the North's bunkers (RFA, 10/01/2024)
Yoon warns North Korea against nuclear attack attempt (The Korea Herald, 10/01/2024)

International:
Chinese man extradited to US to face charges over North Korea tobacco smuggling (NK News, 10/01/2024)
N. Korean leader reaffirms stronger ties with China in message to Xi (Yonhap, 10/01/2024)
N. Korea strongly denounces Israel for attack on Hezbollah (Yonhap, 10/01/2024)
N. Korea warns of 'corresponding' measure over deployment of U.S. strategic assets (Yonhap, 10/01/2024)
N. Korea will never bargain over 'national prestige': Pyongyang envoy (Yonhap, 10/01/2024)
North Korea appears to dismiss return to personal diplomacy with US (Reuters, 09/30/2024)
North Korean policy should be centered on unification, not denuclearization (UPI, 09/30/2024)
North Korea says it won't negotiate away nukes regardless who wins US election (NK News, 10/01/2024)
On a day when isolated nations get their say at the UN, North Korea reups condemnation of US (AP News, 09/30/2024)
U.S. strategic bomber flies over Korean Peninsula on Armed Forces Day (Korea JoongAng Daily, 10/01/2024)

Top News:

- On Wednesday, September 25, the International Council on Korean Studies (ICKS), The Hudson Institute, The New Institute, **HRNK** and Pacific Forum co-hosted the annual ICKS

conference. Centered on U.S.-South Korea-Japan cooperation, the conference featured three panels, addressing human rights, North Korean proliferation of instability and violence, and trilateral cooperation. The conference was hosted by The Hudson Institute. You may view the recording of this event by clicking on this link. (*HRNK*)

In North Korea:

- Former senior economic official Ri Jong Ho, reveals inner workings of Office 39 under Kim Jong-un's rule. Ri reveals the length of their efforts to manage slush funds intended for North Korean leadership, including how the organization overcame international sanctions. (Noh Jung-min, *RFA*)

In South Korea:

- A defector living in South Korea stole a village bus and attempted to cross the Unification Bridge in Paju, Gyeonggi, to return to North Korea before being apprehended. Police said the man testified his motive was a desire to return to North Korea, citing difficulties in life in South Korea. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea paraded its most powerful missiles and weapons systems through the streets of central Seoul on Tuesday afternoon, an event aimed at inspiring citizens' confidence in ROK military capabilities amid escalating North Korean threats. (Joon Ha Park, Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- Police said Tuesday they had nabbed a North Korean defector for allegedly stealing a village bus in Paju, Gyeonggi Province, and attempting to ram the bus northward through the militarized border between the two Koreas, in an apparent bid to return to North Korea. (Son Ji-hyoung, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol announced the establishment of the new Strategic Command to oversee military responses to North Korean nuclear threats on Tuesday, as the country publicly debuted a new "monster" ballistic missile that will be central to plans to take out DPRK leadership in the event of war. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- South Korea unveiled its latest domestically produced ballistic missile, the Hyunmoo-5, on Tuesday as President Yoon Suk Yeol warned North Korea that it would face the end of its regime if it attempted to use nuclear weapons. (Taejun Kang, *RFA*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol said the Kim Jong-un regime would face its destruction should it attempt a nuclear attack at the Armed Forces Day ceremony on Tuesday, in a warning accompanied by a rare showcase of powerful weapons targeting North Korea. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)

International:

- A Chinese national has been extradited to the U.S. to face charges for allegedly raising illicit funds for North Korea through a tobacco-smuggling scheme, the U.S. Justice Department announced Monday. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un reaffirmed Tuesday that relations with China will grow stronger in a message sent to Chinese President Xi Jinping, the North's state media reported.

Kim made the remarks as he congratulated Xi over China's 75th founding anniversary. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

- N. Korea strongly denounced Israel for its recent attack on Hezbollah militants, accusing it of committing a "large-scale massacre" of civilians. A spokesperson from the North's foreign ministry issued the rebuke amid the Israeli offensive, which has killed more than 1,000 people in Lebanon. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea warned of taking a "corresponding" measure against the deployment of U.S. strategic assets to the peninsula ahead of a U.S. heavy bomber's flight over a S. Korean air base. The warning by N. Korea's vice defense minister, came hours before the U.S. heavy bomber flew over Seoul Air Base for a ceremony marking Armed Forces Day. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea will never bargain over its "national prestige," Pyongyang's envoy to the U.N. said Monday, reaffirming the recalcitrant regime's adherence to its nuclear weapons program in defiance of criticism against its growing security threats. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea appeared on Monday to dismiss the possibility of a return to the personal diplomacy its leader Kim Jong Un had with former President Donald Trump, no matter who wins the Nov. 5 U.S. presidential election. (Michelle Nichols, David Brunnstrom, *Reuters*)
- Meeting in Seoul on Friday for the three-day International Forum on One Korea in Seoul, hosted by the Global Peace Foundation, a group of international experts discussed the potential for achieving a unified Korea. (Darryl Coote, *UPI*)
- North Korea will never negotiate away its nuclear weapons program regardless of who wins the upcoming U.S. presidential election, Pyongyang's ambassador to the U.N. told the General Assembly on Monday. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- North Korea condemned the U.S. and its allies Monday for "stirring up military confrontations still further" by engaging in war games in the Asia-Pacific region and "talking unceasingly" about regime change in the diplomatically isolated nation. (Ted Anthony, Jennifer Peltz, *AP News*)
- A U.S. B-1B bomber appeared at South Korea's ceremony celebrating its 76th Armed Forces Day at Seoul Air Base in Seongnam, Gyeonggi, Tuesday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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Wednesday, October 2nd, 2024

Hundreds of homes in N.Korea's Jagang Province swept away by July's heavy rains

In North Korea:
Hundreds of homes in N.Korea's Jagang Province swept away by July's heavy rains (*Yonhap*, 10/02/2024)
North Korea holds first national cadres conference amid border flood crisis (*Yonhap*, 10/02/2024)
North Korea swaps soybean-based doenjang paste with wheat-based imitation (*RFA*, 10/01/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korea to send military aircraft to evacuate nationals from Middle East (*The Korea Herald*, 10/02/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
N. Korea launches over 150 trash balloons toward S. Korea: JCS (*Yonhap*, 10/02/2024)
N. Korea likely to scrap key inter-Korean agreement at next week's parliamentary meeting: Seoul (*Yonhap*, 10/02/2024)

International:
Russian ambassador hopes for improved ties with Seoul (*The Korea Herald*, 10/02/2024)
South Korea's Yoon, Japan's Ishiba agree united response needed against North Korea (*Reuters*, 10/02/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea's northern province of Jagang is presumed to have suffered severe damage from the downpours in late July, with hundreds of houses there being washed away by floods and a landslide, the unification ministry said Wednesday, citing satellite imagery. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has held the first national conference of cadres in an apparent bid to tighten the country's grip on the discipline of officials amid severe flood damage in border areas. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean authorities are providing the public with "foul tasting" wheat paste as a substitute for *doenjang*, the fermented soybean paste that is a staple in Korean cuisine. (Ahn Chang Gyu, RFA)

In South Korea:

- South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol on Wednesday directed the immediate dispatch of military aircraft to evacuate nationals from the Middle East as tensions escalated rapidly with intensified clashes between Israel and Iran as well as its backed militias Hezbollah and Hamas. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korea launched more than 150 trash-filled balloons toward South Korea on Wednesday, the South's military said, in the first such launch in 10 days. The Joint Chiefs of

Staff said some 60 trash bundles have been found in Seoul and the surrounding Gyeonggi Province due to the latest launch. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

- North Korea is likely to scrap a landmark inter-Korean agreement signed in 1991 at next week's key parliamentary meeting, as its leader Kim Jong-un has called for revising the constitution to define South Korea as its primary foe, the unification ministry said Wednesday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Georgy Zinoviev, the Russian ambassador in Seoul, told South Korean lawmakers on Wednesday that although the relations between the two countries were going through a difficult time, he believed they would improve in the future. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol held his first telephone call with Japan's new Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba on Wednesday and agreed a united response together with the United States is needed to counter North Korea's threats, his office said. (Jack Kim, *Reuters*)

Prepared by Jenna Pae, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724053410/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-hundreds-of-homes-in-nkoreas-jagang-province-swept-away-by-julys-heavy-rains?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, October 3rd, 2024

N. Korean leader's sister derides Seoul's new missiles as "useless" ; 35% of S. Koreans view unification "unnecessary"

In North Korea:
N. Korea balks at removal as observer from regional anti-money laundering group (*Yonhap*, 10/03/2024)
N. Korea may revoke 1991 Inter-Korean Basic Agreement in parliament: Seoul (*The Korea Herald*, 10/02/2024)
N. Korea warns of 'corresponding' measure over deployment of U.S. strategic assets (*Yonhap*, 10/01/2024)
N. Korean leader's sister derides Seoul's Hyunmoo-5 missile as 'useless' (*Yonhap*, 10/03/2024)

In South Korea:
35% of S. Koreans view unification 'unnecessary' (*The Korea Herald*, 10/03/2024)
A North Korean defector who struggled in South Korea stole a bus and tried to drive across the border, police say (CNN, 10/03/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Gov't to compensate Hyundai Asan $6 million for discontinued inter-Korean freight train service (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/03/2024)

International:
North Korean hackers linked to failed attempt to extort US companies (*NK News*, 10/03/2024)
Russia blames tighter South Korea-U.S. security ties for making North's denuclearization 'impossible' (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/03/2024)
S. Korean Army chief discusses strengthening partnership with ASEAN counterparts (*Yonhap*, 10/03/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea on Thursday blasted a regional anti-money laundering group for recently stripping it of an observer status, saying the organization had become "a political tool" of the United States. (Yoo Jee-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea may revoke the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement, which has served as a pivotal foundation for the development of inter-Korean relations and efforts toward peaceful reunification for more than three decades, during its parliamentary session scheduled for next week, the Unification Ministry in Seoul said Wednesday. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea on Tuesday warned of taking a "corresponding" measure against the deployment of U.S. strategic assets to the Korean Peninsula ahead of a U.S. heavy bomber's flight over a South Korean air base. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- Kim Yo-jong, the influential sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, on Thursday mocked South Korea's Hyunmoo-5 missile, first showcased in a recent military parade in Seoul, as a "uselessly huge weapon" in a military parade marking Armed Forces Day. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- According to the survey on the public unification perception, released by the Institute for Peace and Unification Studies from Seoul National University on Wednesday, 35 percent of respondents indicated that unification is either "entirely unnecessary" or "not particularly necessary", the highest since 2007. (Lee Jung-joo, *The Korea Herald*)
- A North Korean defector who escaped to the South more than a decade ago was detained after attempting to cross back into North Korea on a stolen bus, police said. The man drove about 800 meters on the Tongil Bridge, the last border checkpoint where civilians can go without a special permit, before ramming into barricades, South Korea's Gyeonggi Bukbu Provincial Police told CNN. (Yoonjung Seo, CNN)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- The government said Thursday it plans to compensate Hyundai Asan 8 billion won ($6.04 million) in unpaid costs related to the operation of inter-Korean freight train service that ran

between the two Koreas from late 2007 to the end of 2008, marking the end of a 17-year-long legal dispute over the project. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- A North Korean cybercrime group known for its espionage operations attempted to deploy ransomware against USA targets to extort money, only a month after law enforcement cracked down on its illicit activities, according to a U.S. cybersecurity company. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- Russia's Foreign Ministry blamed heightened South Korea-U.S. security cooperation for rendering denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula "impossible" in a statement issued on Wednesday. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- According to the Army, multilateral security talks with ASEAN armies "will help create a support base for peace on the Korean Peninsula and strengthen multilevel security cooperation for a joint response to threats in the region." (Yoo Jee-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by James Campbell, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724053737/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-n-korean-leaders-sister-derides-seouls-new-missiles-as-useless-35-of-s-koreans-view-unification-unnecessary?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, October 4th, 2024

Kim Jong Un: Domination, not peaceful unification; North Korean hackers target Southeast Asia with 'stealthy' new malware

Top News:
Kim Jong Un: Domination, not peaceful unification (*UPI*, 10/03/2024)

In North Korea:
N.K. leader calls Yoon 'abnormal man' for talking about military action against nuclear-armed North (*Yonhap*, 10/04/2024)
N. Korea launches over 300 trash balloons toward S. Korea: JCS (*Yonhap*, 10/04/2024)
North Korean hackers target Southeast Asia with 'stealthy' new malware (*NK News*, 10/04/2024)
North Korean special forces don new laser tag tech for military exercise (*NK News*, 10/04/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Incheon Airport flights delayed by more than an hour due to North Korean balloons (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/04/2024)

Kim Jong Un threatens nuke strikes on South Korea if sovereignty 'infringed' (*NK News*, 10/03/2024)
North Korea's Kim Jong Un threatens to destroy the South with nuclear weapons if provoked (CNN, 10/04/2024)
Pyongyang dismantles key railway bridge as it severs inter-Korea relations (*UPI*, 10/03/2024)
S. Korea dismisses Kim's vulgar attack on Yoon as 'intolerable' (*Korea Herald*, 10/03/2024)

International:
CIA seeks informants in North Korea, Iran and China (BBC, 10/03/2024)
LA Study in Korea Information Center opens to attract more North American students (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/03/2024)
Nuclear stalemate sparks debate over information campaign aimed at North Korea (VOA, 10/4/2024)
Solving North Korean abduction issue 'most important task': Japan's new PM (*Radio Free Asia*, 10/04/2024)

Top News:

- The Korean Peninsula remains a flashpoint of geopolitical tension, a remnant of Cold War divisions that have yet to be resolved. The unnatural division of Korea, described as the "Korea question" in paragraph 60 of the 1953 Korean Armistice Agreement and reiterated in UN General Assembly Resolution 811, serves as a stark reminder of an unfinished task: the unification of a people and a land separated by ideology, politics, and a deep chasm of human suffering. At the heart of this issue is the Kim family regime, which has ruled North Korea since 1948. To successfully resolve the Korea question, it is essential to first fully understand the nature, objectives, and strategy of this regime. (David Maxwell, UPI)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has strongly criticized South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, calling him an "abnormal man" for talking about military action against the nuclear-armed North, state media said Friday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea launched some 320 trash-carrying balloons toward South Korea on Friday, the South's military said, marking the second launch of its kind this week. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean cybercriminals are using a new malware to secretly gain control of victim's computers in a "sophisticated and stealthy" campaign targeting Southeast Asian countries. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Korean special forces donned new laser tag-style gear for a training exercise this week, adopting technology long used by foreign militaries amid a push to improve the capabilities of top-tier combat units. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- Flights at Incheon International Airport were delayed by more than an hour Friday morning due to the release of what appeared to be more trash-laden balloons from North Korea. (Kim Jee-hee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un threatened to use nuclear weapons against South Korea "without hesitation" if the U.S.-ROK alliance "infringes" on Pyongyang's sovereignty, disparaging the South's president as "abnormal" for attempting to intimidate a nuclear neighbor. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un threatened to use nuclear weapons to destroy South Korea if attacked, state media reported Friday, after South Korea's president warned that if the North used nuclear weapons it would "face the end of its regime." (Yoonjung Seo, CNN)
- North Korea has reportedly been active around the Kaesong Industrial Complex, dismantling a key railway bridge and planting land mines along the Gyeongui Line, South Korean officials said, as Pyongyang continues to sever relations with Seoul.(Darryl Coote, UPI)
- South Korea's Defense Ministry on Friday condemned North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and his sister Kim Yo-jong's criticism of President Yoon Suk Yeol and the Armed Forces Day celebration in South Korea, calling it "behavior that can never be tolerated." (Ji Da-gyum, *Korea Herald*)

International:

- The US Central Intelligence Agency has launched a new drive to recruit informants in China, Iran and North Korea. The organisation posted messages on its social media accounts in Mandarin, Farsi and Korean on Wednesday, instructing users how to contact it securely. (Nick Marsh, BBC)
- The LA Study in Korea Information Center will open on Friday in hopes of attracting more international students from North America, with the government also hosting a university fair to support the initiative. (Lee Tae-hee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- As a nuclear standoff between the United States and North Korea continues with no diplomatic off-ramp in sight, some experts in Washington say an information campaign aimed at pressing North Korea should be considered as an alternative strategy, while others caution against such an approach. (Young Gyo Kim, VOA)
- Solving the issue of Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea is the "most important task" for the government, said newly elected Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)

Prepared by Rachel Baek, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724053918/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-kim-jong-un-domination-not-peaceful-unification-north-korean-hackers-target-southeast-asia-with-stealthy-new-malware?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, October 5th, 2024

Defense chief reaffirms S. Korea-U.S. alliance during visit to Combined Forces Command

Inter-Korean Relations:
Army displays new bunker buster missile to be deployed this year (Yonhap, 10/04/2024)
PPP urges swift ratification of new S. Korea-U.S. defense cost deal (Yonhap, 10/05/2024)

International:
2 U.S. B-1B bombers conducted joint drill with S. Korean Air Force on Oct. 1 Armed Force Day (Yonhap, 10/05/2024)
Defense chief reaffirms S. Korea-U.S. alliance during visit to Combined Forces Command (Yonhap, 10/04/2024)
FM Cho holds 1st phone talks with Japan's new foreign minister (Yonhap, 10/04/2024)
New S. Korea-U.S. defense cost deal adds stability to alliance, but Trump question lingers: experts (Yonhap, 10/05/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- The Army on Friday showcased a new bunker buster missile capable of striking underground enemy targets amid efforts to strengthen deterrence against North Korean military threats. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- The ruling People Power Party (PPP) on Saturday called for efforts by the opposition-controlled National Assembly to swiftly ratify a new defense cost-sharing deal between South Korea and the United States. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Defense Minister Kim Yong-hyun vowed Friday "no mercy" for threats against South Korea and stressed that North Korea will face an "overwhelming" response from the allies in the event of a provocation. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- Two U.S. B-1B heavy bombers conducted a joint drill with the South Korean Air Force on Oct. 1 Armed Forces Day, before one of them participated in a national ceremony, the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said Saturday. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul on Friday held his first phone talks with Japan's new foreign minister, Takeshi Iwaya, and discussed bilateral ties as well as regional and global issues, Seoul's foreign ministry said. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- This week's conclusion of negotiations over a new defense cost-sharing deal between South Korea and the United States will give stability to their alliance, but uncertainty lingers over whether the deal can endure should former President Donald Trump return to office, experts said Friday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Tessa Aguilar, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724054045/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-defense-chief-reaffirms-s-korea-us-alliance-during-visit-to-combined-forces-command?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, October 6th, 2024

N. Korea to hold parliamentary meeting to amend constitution, remove unification provisions

In North Korea:
N.K. leader oversees live-fire artillery drill ahead of constitutional revision (Yonhap, 10/06/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
N. Korea to hold parliamentary meeting to amend constitution, remove unification provisions (Yonhap, 10/06/2024)
South Korean leader says North Korea wants US attention by showing off nuclear might (AP News, 10/06/2024)

International:
N. Korea's Kim, China's Xi exchange messages marking 75 years of relations (Yonhap, 10/06/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has viewed artillery academy cadets carrying out a live-fire drill and stressed the importance of "constantly training the guerrilla war tactics to wipe out the enemies through rapid mobile and surprise operations." (*Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korea is set to convene the 11th session of the 14th Supreme People's Assembly meeting, where it is expected to revise its constitution by removing unification-related clauses and clarifying the nation's territorial boundaries, nine months after North Korean leader Kim Jong-un redefined inter-Korean relations as being between "two hostile states" and vowed to no longer consider South Korea a partner for reconciliation and unification. (Woo Jae-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's recent disclosure of a nuclear facility was likely an attempt to grab U.S. attention ahead of next month's presidential election, and the North will likely stage major provocations like a nuclear test explosion and a long-range missile test, South Korea's president says. (Hyung-Jin Kim, *AP News*)

International:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and Chinese President Xi Jinping pledged to further develop relations between the two countries as they exchanged messages marking the 75th anniversary of relations. Kim said in the message to Xi that it conforms "with the fundamental interests of the two countries to invariably carry forward and develop the DPRK-China friendship with a long history and good traditions." (*Yonhap*)

Prepared by Gloria Guo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724054345/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-to-hold-parliamentary-meeting-to-amend-constitution-remove-unification-provisions?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Monday, October 7th, 2024

N.K. forgoes celebrations for 75th anniversary of ties with China; N.K. army officers reportedly killed in Ukrainian missile launch

In North Korea:
New 1st Vice Chief of the General Staff (*North Korea Leadership Watch*, 10/06/2024)
North Korea forgoes celebrations for 75th anniversary of ties with China (*NK News*, 10/07/2024)
North Korea simulates attack on island ahead of maritime border announcement (*NK News*, 10/07/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
N. Korea launches some 120 trash balloons toward S. Korea (*Yonhap*, 10/07/2024)
N. Korea's key parliamentary meeting presumed to be held to revise constitution (*Yonhap*, 10/07/2024)
S. Korea to maintain readiness against potential N. Korean provocations (*Yonhap*, 10/07/2024)

International:
N. Korea, China FMs exchange messages marking 75 yrs of relations (*Yonhap*, 10/07/2024)
N. Korea decries NATO's condemnation of its military cooperation with Russia (*Yonhap*, 10/07/2024)
North Korean army officers reportedly killed in Ukrainian missile strike near Donetsk (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/06/2024)
US, ROK reach new defense cost-sharing deal for troops to counter North Korea (*NK News*, 10/07/2024)

In North Korea:

- Lt. Gen. Jong Myong Do has been identified as 1st Vice Chief of the Korean People's Army. General Staff in two 6 October state media reports on Kim Jong Un's public engagements. Jong replaces Song Yong Gon who held the position for about the last year. (*North Korea Leadership Watch*)
- North Korea marked the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties with China on Sunday without hosting any major celebrations, in a sign that Pyongyang's relationship with its biggest economic benefactor has sunk to a nadir as it focuses on military cooperation with Russia. (Seung-Yeon Chung, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un oversaw artillery drills simulating an attack on an enemy island in recent days, ahead of an expected announcement in state media this week on a change to the country's definition of the inter-Korean maritime boundary in the Yellow Sea. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korea launched around 120 trash balloons toward South Korea early Monday, the South's military said, just three days after a similar launch last week. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea appears to have convened a key parliamentary meeting Monday as scheduled to revise its constitution, Seoul's unification ministry said, as its leader Kim Jong-un has called for removing unification-related clauses and clarifying the country's territorial boundaries. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul said Monday that the government will maintain readiness against potential North Korean provocations through close cooperation with the United States. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- The top diplomats of North Korea and China have pledged to further develop relations between their countries as they exchanged messages to mark the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties, the North's state media reported on Monday. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has denounced the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)'s condemnation of military cooperation between the North and Russia, warning that the entity could face "tragic consequences" if it continues to pursue an anti-North Korea stance. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Six North Korean officers were killed in a Ukrainian missile strike on their position along the Russian frontline of the occupied Donetsk region, according to Ukrainian news reports on Friday. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea and the U.S. struck a new five-year defense cost-sharing agreement on Friday, a move that could frustrate North Korea's efforts to drive a wedge between Seoul and Washington even if alliance-skeptic Donald Trump wins the upcoming presidential election. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

Prepared by Jiwoo-Katie Choi, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724054609/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-nk-forgoes-celebrations-for-75th-anniversary-of-ties-with-china-nk-army-officers-reportedly-killed-in-ukrainian-missile-launch?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, October 8th, 2024

Kim urges nuclear weapon buildup in visit to school named after himself; 'Risk of bioterrorism' from NK's trash balloons

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un urges nuclear weapon buildup in visit to school named after himself (*NK News*, 10/08/2024)
Military detects apparent signs of N. Korea building possible nuclear-powered submarine: lawmaker (*Yonhap*, 10/08/2024)
N. Korean leader threatens to use nuclear weapons against enemies' possible attacks (*Yonhap*, 10/08/2024)
N. Korea's state media keeps mum on key parliamentary meeting (*Yonhap*, 10/08/2024)
North Korea detected building nuclear submarine, South's military says (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/08/2024)
South Korea sees signs of North building large nuclear-powered submarine (*Radio Free Asia*, 10/08/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korea restoring 15 military guard posts facing North Korea at cost of $17M (*NK News*, 10/08/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Kim Jong-un vows to thwart S. Korea-US 'nuclear alliance' (*The Korea Herald*, 10/08/2024)
N. Korea sends trash balloons toward S. Korea for 2nd straight day (*Yonhap*, 10/08/2024)
North Korea's Kim again threatens to use nuclear weapons on South (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/08/2024)
North Korean trash balloons could pose bioterrorism threat, Seoul warns (*NK News*, 10/08/2024)
'Risk of bioterrorism' from NK's trash balloons (*The Korea Herald*, 10/08/2024)
South Korea to counter North's potential balloon bioterrorism with new vaccine (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/08/2024)

International:
Kim Jong-un sends birthday message to Putin, praises 'close comradeship' (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/08/2024)
Kim Jong Un threatens to use nuclear weapons against U.S., South Korea (*UPI*, 10/08/2024)

N. Korea appears to focus on restoring ties with China: unification ministry (*Yonhap*, 10/08/2024)
N Korea's Kim calls Putin 'closest comrade' (*BBC News*, 10/08/2024)
N. Korean leader sends birthday message to Putin (*Yonhap*, 10/08/2024)
N. Korea likely to send troops to Ukraine in support of Russia: S. Korea's defense chief (*Yonhap*, 10/08/2024)
North Korea likely to send troops to support Russia: South's defense minister (*Radio Free Asia*, 10/08/2024)
North Korean soldiers supporting Russia have been killed in Ukraine, Kyiv says (*NK News*, 10/08/2024)
North Korean troops killed, wounded in Ukraine war: Seoul defense minister (*The Korea Herald*, 10/08/2024)
Philippines, South Korea boost ties amid threats on their respective borders (*BenarNews*, 10/08/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un insulted South Korea's president and threatened to use nuclear weapons if the U.S. and ROK try to change "the balance of power" on the peninsula. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- The military has detected apparent signs that North Korea has started to build a possible nuclear-powered submarine. In January, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un inspected a project to build a nuclear-powered submarine after vowing to develop such a submarine among other sophisticated weapons systems during a ruling party congress in 2021. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has threatened to use nuclear weapons if the country's enemies attempt to use armed force against it. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea remained silent about whether it convened a key parliamentary meeting the previous day. North Korea earlier announced a plan to hold the 11th session of the 14th Supreme People's Assembly on Monday to revise the nation's constitution. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has been spotted building what appears to be a nuclear-powered submarine. This follows repeated declarations by North Korean leader Kim Jong-un that his country planned to develop such vessels. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The South Korean military has detected apparent signs that North Korea has started to build a large nuclear-powered submarine as North Korea's leader dialed up his threat to use nuclear weapons against its enemies. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea is restoring 15 frontline guard posts on its side of the heavily militarized border with North Korea, four more than it abandoned during a thaw in inter-Korean tensions in 2018. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un warned Monday that Pyongyang would "not tolerate" any disruption to the Korean Peninsula's balance of power, which he claimed is upheld by North Korea's nuclear arsenal and threatened by the growing "nuclear alliance" between South Korea and the United States. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea floated some 100 trash balloons toward South Korea. The Joint Chiefs of Staff said it discovered some 60 trash bundles dropped around parts of Seoul and its surrounding Gyeonggi Province after the latest launch that began in the early hours of the morning. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un again raised the prospect of using nuclear weapons against South Korea, warning that its military would employ its full offensive capabilities if its enemies attempt to use armed force. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea should stockpile vaccines for diseases like smallpox and anthrax due to the possibility that North Korean trash balloons could pose bioterrorism threats as Pyongyang launched balloons. (Alannah Hill, *NK News*)
- The head of the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency has expressed concern over the risk of bioterrorism posed by the trash-carrying balloons from North Korea and is planning to stockpile vaccines in preparation. (Lee Jaeeun, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korean health authority will develop a vaccine to counter potential North Korean biological terrorism using trash-laden balloons. (Lee Soo-jung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un sent a birthday message to Russian President Vladimir Putin, referring to him as one of his "closest comrades." Kim expressed that the “comradely ties” between North Korea and Russia will make a “positive contribution to further consolidating the eternal foundation of DPRK-Russia friendship and strategic cooperative relations." (Woo Ji-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un warned the United States and South Korea that any attack would be met with a nuclear response, as tensions remain high on the Peninsula and concerns swirl about a possible provocation ahead of the U.S. presidential election. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- North Korea appears to be shifting its foreign policy focus toward restoring relations with its long-time ally, China, after designating this year to mark the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has sent a birthday message to Russian President Vladimir Putin, calling him his "closest comrade". Kim added that relations between both countries would be raised to a new level. (Rupert Wingfield Hayes, Yvette Tan, *BBC News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has sent a happy birthday message to Russian President Vladimir Putin, saying their "comradely ties" will further consolidate relations between the two countries. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea is likely to deploy members of its regular armed forces to Ukraine in support of Russia in the latest sign of deepening military cooperation between Pyongyang and Moscow. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

- North Korea is likely to send members of its regular armed forces to Ukraine in support of Russia, which would signal a significant deepening of cooperation between the allies. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korea is sending limited numbers of military personnel to Russia-occupied Ukraine to supervise the use of DPRK weapons, adding that some of the North Korean engineers have already been killed. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- South Korea's national defense minister said North Korean troops appear to have been killed or wounded in Russia's war on Ukraine. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- The presidents of the Philippines and South Korea agreed on Monday to elevate bilateral defense and economic ties to a so-called "strategic partnership," as the two longtime Asian allies contend with security threats along their borders. (Jason Gutierrez, *BenarNews*)

Prepared by Sarah Han, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724054711/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-kim-urges-nuclear-weapon-buildup-in-visit-to-school-named-after-himself-risk-of-bioterrorism-from-nks-trash-balloons?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, October 9th, 2024

North Korea says it will cut off all roads to the South

In North Korea:
North Korea ends assembly session without announcing unification policy changes (*NK News*, 10/09/2024)
North Korea holds key parliamentary meeting amid heightened tension (*Reuters*, 10/09/2024)
North Korea reports fifth test of upgraded 240mm rocket system this year (*NK News*, 10/09/2024)

In South Korea:
Seoul could attack launch sites for North Korea trash balloons, minister warns (*NK News*, 10/09/2024)
Yoon says unified, nuclear-free Korean Peninsula would benefit Indo-Pacific (*Yonhap*, 10/09/2024)
Defense chief urges stronger joint exercises with U.S. during meeting with Admiral Samuel Paparo (*Yonhap*, 10/09/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
North Korea says it will cut off all roads to the South (*BBC News*, 10/09/2024)
North Korea vows to block border with South Korea and boost front-line defense postures (*The Independent*, 10/09/2024)

International:
Anger at UK's 'bonkers' plan to reach net zero by importing fuel from North Korea (*The Guardian*, 10/09/2024)
Ukraine-Russia war latest: Blow to Putin's forces as Kyiv destroys weapons store with North Korean missiles (*The Independent*, 10/09/2024)
U.S. continues to monitor N. Korea's support for Russia: Pentagon (*Yonhap*, 10/09/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly concluded a two-day session on Tuesday without any public announcements on amending the constitution to reflect new policies on rejecting unification and redefining the border, despite leader Kim Jong Un demanding the changes earlier this year. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea held a session of its Supreme People's Assembly this week, state media KCNA said on Wednesday, although there was no mention on whether it had officially changed its stance on unification between the Koreas. Tensions on the Korean peninsula have increased this year amid a series of missile tests and a push by Pyongyang to change how it relates to the South. (Joyce Lee, *Reuters*)
- North Korea test-fired 240mm "controllable multiple rocket launcher shells" on Tuesday, according to state media. The Korean Central News Agency published a three-line report on Wednesday stating the rockets flew a "maximum range" of 41.6 miles (67 km). (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea has pinpointed "approximately 10 sites" that North Korea uses to launch trash balloons across the border, Seoul's defense chief said Tuesday, emphasizing that the military can target those locations in the future "if circumstances warrant." Defense Minister Kim Yong-hyun disclosed the information during the National Assembly's annual defense ministry audit on Tuesday. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol said Wednesday a unified, nuclear-free Korean Peninsula would contribute to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region and unlock new opportunities across a large, interconnected market. Yoon introduced his vision for unification with North Korea based on liberal democracy during a special lecture in Singapore. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- Defense Minister Kim Yong-hyun on Wednesday called for strengthening joint military training and exercises with the United States to maintain an overwhelming defense posture against North Korean provocations, the defense ministry said. The appeal was made during a meeting in Seoul with visiting U.S. Admiral Samuel Paparo, commander of the Indo-Pacific Command. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korea will sever road and railway access to South Korea from Wednesday in a bid to "completely separate" the two countries. Its military said the North would "permanently shut

off and block the southern border" and fortify areas on its side. The Korean People's Army described the move as "a self-defensive measure for inhibiting war". (Gavin Butler, *BBC News*)

- North Korea said Wednesday it will permanently block its border with South Korea and boost its front-line defense posture to cope with "confrontational hysteria" by South Korean and U.S. forces, while not announcing an expected constitutional revision to formally designate South Korea its principal enemy. (Hyung Jin-Kim, *The Independent*)

International:

- A plan by the British government to burn biomass imported from countries including North Korea and Afghanistan has been described as "bonkers", with critics saying it undermines the credibility of the UK's climate strategy. (Isabella Kaminski, *The Guardian*)
- Ukraine's military says it has struck a Russian weapons depot which was holding North Korean missiles more than 60 miles from the border. The military said the arsenal, in Karachev, Bryansk Oblast, stored ammunition for missile and artillery weapons, including those delivered from North Korea, as well as guided aerial bombs. (Arpan Rai, Alex Croft, Tom Watling, *The Independent*)
- The United States continues to monitor North Korea's support for Russia, a Pentagon spokesperson said Tuesday, following a news report that six North Korean military officers were killed in a Ukrainian missile strike on Russian-occupied territory near Donetsk last week. (Song Sang-Ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Katherine Mitchell, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724055038/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-says-it-will-cut-off-all-roads-to-the-south?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, October 10th, 2024

China and North Korea Partner to Persecute Christians, experts say

Top News:
China and North Korea Partner to Persecute Christians, Experts Say (*Christian News*, 10/09/2024)
North Korea has expanded notorious political prison in northeast, imagery shows (*NK News*, 10/07/2024)
Cyber Warfare and Economic Survival: North Korea's Exploitation of Global IT Markets (*HRNK*, 10/09/2024)

In North Korea:
Explosions ring out from DMZ as North Korea clears land with dynamite (*NK News*, 10/10/024)
N. Korea's Kim yet to secure people's backing of his '2 hostile states' stance: ex-diplomat (*Yonhap*, 10/10/2024)
North Korean hackers plunder thousands of nuclear plant tech documents from South's company (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/10/2024)
North mum on constitutional amendments naming South "hostile state" over possible lack of public support (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/10/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korean support for own nuclear arsenal grows as confidence in U.S. wanes (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/10/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
In This Office, the Fading Dream of a Unified Korea Lives On (*The New York Times*, 10/09/2024)
North Korea already cut off inter-Korean roads in Aug. (*The Korea Herald*, 10/10/2024)
S. Korea condemns N. Korea's move to block border as 'anti-unification' act (*Yonhap*, 10/10/2024)

International:
Kremlin rejects S. Korean claim of N. Koreans fighting in Ukraine (*Yonhap*, 10/10/2024)
N. Korea appoints new ambassador to Switzerland (*Yonhap*, 10/10/2024)
Yoon, Ishiba pledge to continue improving ties in first bilateral summit (*Korea YoongAng Daily*, 10/10/2024)

Top News

- China has subjected hundreds of North Koreans to atrocities since last year by forcibly returning them to a country whose leaders hold that religion, especially Christianity, is the greatest threat to its power. "Any religious belief, and Christianity in particular, as well as South Korea, constitute the only challenges to the Kim regime's absolute monopoly on power," **Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea**, said at the hearing of the USCIRF on Sept. 26. (*Christian News*)
- New high-resolution Google Earth satellite imagery reveals that North Korea constructed a half dozen new buildings and renovated housing structures at Kwalliso No. 16 between 2022 and 2024, underscoring the DPRK's continuing efforts to expand and maintain concentration camps that it officially denies exist. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- North Korea has increasingly relied on sophisticated cyber operations to evade international sanctions and fund its nuclear and missile programs. As a result, cybercrime has become a crucial revenue source, with hackers reportedly stealing up to $2 billion, operating anonymously and effectively to support the regime's military ambitions. (Maria de Almeida, *HRNK*)

In North Korea:

- The sound of explosions rang out along the demilitarized zone on Thursday, as North Korea detonated dynamite to clear land a day after announcing plans to further fortify its southern border. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- North Korea may not have included leader Kim Jong-un's "two hostile states" stance in a revised constitution as the regime has been unable to fully get people to understand his anti-unification policy. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Hackers associated with North Korea pilfered approximately 720,000 files on nuclear power plant technology from a company that works closely with Korea Hydro & Nuclear Power. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea's rubber-stamp parliament hasn't officially announced the expected constitutional changes that would solidify its "two-state" system, possibly due to a lack of public support. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

In South Korea:

- Public distrust in the reliability of the U.S. nuclear umbrella has sharply increased, with a majority of South Koreans now supporting the development of their own nuclear weapons. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- South Korea has never formally accepted the division of the Korean Peninsula. To assert its claim, the South appoints its own governors for five provinces in the North, like Sohn Yang-Young, the governor of South Hamgyeong Province. (Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*)
- North Korea has already blocked the inter-Korean passages under leader Kim Jong-un's instructions, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff chief Adm. Kim Myung-soo said Thursday. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- The unification ministry on Thursday "strongly" condemned North Korea's move to cut off all roads and railways connected to South Korea as an act that dampens aspiration for unification by people in the two Koreas. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Russia on Thursday rejected a recent South Korean claim that North Korean soldiers were likely fighting alongside Russian forces in Ukraine. During a parliamentary audit session in Seoul, South Korean Defense Minister Kim Yong-hyun said it was "highly likely" that North Korea had deployed troops in support of Russia, because the two countries have a mutual treaty "akin to a military alliance." (Yoo Jee-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has appointed a former ambassador to its mission at the United Nations office in Geneva as its top envoy to Switzerland, the North's foreign ministry said Thursday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol and new Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba agreed to promote a seamless development of bilateral relations in their first summit on Thursday, held on the margins of the Asean-related meetings in Laos. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Prepared by Bryan Clark, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724055200/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-china-and-north-korea-partner-to-persecute-christians-experts-say?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, October 11th, 2024

"North Korea is 'Iran Hybrid Warfare' Weapon Supplier"..."U.S. Government must intervene"

Top News:
"North Korea is 'Iran Hybrid Warfare' Weapon Supplier"... "U.S. Government must intervene" (*The JoongAng*, 09/26/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
N. Korea claims U.S. exploits S. Korea's security uneasiness for new defense cost deal (*Yonhap*, 10/11/24)
N. Korean leader calls for fighting against corruption in message marking party founding anniv. (*Yonhap*, 10/11/24)

In South Korea:
DP leader urges N.K. to withdraw move to cut off roads, railways connected to S. Korea (*Yonhap*, 10/11/24)
S. Korea stages 1st live-fire drills of Taurus missile in 7 years (*Yonhap*, 10/11/24)
Teenage NK defector shares horrific story of life in reclusive regime (*Yonhap*, 10/11/24)
Yoon deepens ties with ASEAN, seeks support on N. Korean issues (*Yonhap*, 10/11/24)
20 drone crash, malfunction cases reported over 1 year at Drone Operations Command: lawmaker (*Yonhap*, 10/11/24)

Inter-Korean Relations:
N. Korea again sends trash balloons, claims Seoul sent drones over Pyongyang (*Yonhap*, 10/11/24)
North Korea claims South Korean drone scattered leaflets over Pyongyang (*NK News*, 10/11/24)
N. Korean man crosses into S. Korea in 3rd defection in 2 months (*Yonhap*, 10/11/24)

International:

Korea, Japan, China's trilateral cooperative mechanism restored at ASEAN Plus Three (*The Korea Times*, 10/10/24)
Reports of N.K. soldiers in Ukraine may show Russia's 'profound' desperation: U.S. official (*Yonhap*, 10/11/24)
S. Korean expert calls for stronger defense industrial cooperation with U.S., voices concern over export controls (*Yonhap*, 10/11/24)
S. Korea to hold high-level diplomatic dialogue with U.S., Japan next week: officials (*Yonhap*, 10/11/24)
U.S. takes Korean Peninsula security 'very seriously': Pentagon spokesperson (*Yonhap*, 10/11/24)
Yoon calls for international solidarity against N. Korea-Russia military cooperation (*Yonhap*, 10/11/24)

Top News

- Professor Bruce E. Betchol Jr. and **Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea,** spoke at the International Council on Korean Studies, discussing the cooperation of North Korea with various Iranian proxy partner and the necessity for the U.S. to intervene and for NGOs to gain the status necessary to get more involved. Scarlatoiu stated, "While some NGOs, including the **HRNK**, have managed to obtain consultative status with great difficulty, this is only an exceptional success story." He emphasized, "For North Korean human rights NGOs dealing with regimes responsible for crimes against humanity, consultative status should not be an exception but a principle." (Gim Hyeonggu, *The Joongang*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea said Friday a new defense cost-sharing deal between South Korea and the United States is a product of Washington's "sinister" scheme to use the South's security uneasiness for the implementation of its strategy for world supremacy. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea claimed on Friday that a South Korean drone scattered anti-regime leaflets over Pyongyang, threatening military retaliation if such "provocations" continue. (Ifang Bremer, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has called on officials to fight against corruption and eradicate abuse of power in a message seen aimed at tightening a grip on social discipline and enhancing internal solidarity. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- Opposition leader Lee Jae-myung on Friday urged North Korea to retract its recent move to cut off all roads and railways connected to South Korea, voicing concerns over the North's "explicit intent" to completely sever inter-Korean ties. (Yi Won-ju, *Yonhap*)
- The Air Force has conducted live-fire drills involving the long-range air-to-surface Taurus missile, officials said Friday, in the first such exercise in seven years amid North Korea's persistent nuclear and missile threats. (Kang Yoon-seung, *Yonhap*)

- A North Korean teenage defector on Thursday shared her horrific story of life in the reclusive regime during a forum hosted by South Korea's unification ministry. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol wrapped up a three-nation Southeast Asian trip Friday after a flurry of diplomacy to bolster relations with the strategic region and draw support on North Korean issues. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- A total of 20 cases of drone crashes and malfunction took place at a key military unit overseeing unmanned vehicle operations since its launch last year, a lawmaker said Friday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korea floated trash balloons toward South Korea on Friday, both in the early morning and late at night, the military said, as the reclusive regime claimed that the South had sent unmanned drones over Pyongyang three times since last week. (Kang Yoon-seung, *Yonhap*)
- A North Korean man has crossed the de facto western maritime border into South Korea aboard a wooden boat, a South Korean military official said Friday, in the third defection in two months. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- The trilateral cooperative mechanism among Korea, Japan, China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has gained renewed momentum for further growth, as all three East Asian countries have now established comprehensive strategic partnerships (CSP) with the ASEAN bloc. (Anna J. Park, *The Korea Times*)
- Reports of North Korean soldiers killed in a recent Ukrainian missile attack, if true, would show Russia's "profound" desperation to secure outside support for its war in Ukraine, a State Department spokesperson said Thursday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- A South Korean government researcher pointed to U.S. export controls as a "primary" hindrance to expanding bilateral defense industrial cooperation on Thursday, stressing the need for regulatory reforms to streamline technology sharing and ensure more "efficient" industrial collaboration. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea is in talks with the United States and Japan to hold a trilateral meeting among their vice foreign ministers next week, officials said Friday. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The United States takes security on the Korean Peninsula and its alliance with South Korea "very seriously, a Pentagon spokesperson said Thursday, after North Korea said it would cut off all roads and railways linked to South Korea and fortify defense along the inter-Korean border. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol condemned Friday the growing military cooperation between North Korea and Russia and called for the international community to unite against the North's nuclear development and provocations. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

"North Korea is 'Iran Hybrid Warfare' Weapon Supplier"..."U.S. Government must intervene"

Washington Special Correspondent, Gim Hyeonggu

https://www.joongang.co.kr/article/25280285

In recent years, violent incidents carried out by pro-Iran armed organizations in the Middle East have been supplied with weapons, specialized technology, and military training from North Korea, both directly and indirectly.

Bruce E. Betchol Jr., a professor at Angelo State University, stated at the annual conference of the International Council on Korean Studies (ICKS) held at the Hudson Institute think tank in Washington, D.C. on September 25th (local time), “In the Middle East, Iran’s hybrid warfare has demonstrated successful forms of invasion by countries and organizations within the region that are supported by the Iranian regime,” and added, “We must pay attention to the fact that these Iranian proxy partners have received weapons, training, technology, and advice from North Korea for a long time.” He referred to the multidimensional conflicts that Iran engages in while simultaneously supporting pro-Iran terrorist groups, such as in Syria, Hezbollah (a Lebanese armed group), the Houthi rebels in Yemen, and Hamas (a Palestinian armed group), as hybrid warfare.

Professor Bruce E. Bechtol Jr. presented his report titled "The Strategic Partnership between Iran and North Korea” at the conference, stating, “Iran is the most important financial backer of Hezbollah, and North Korea is one of Hezbollah’s major weapons suppliers.” He pointed out “North Korea has maintained a sustained military relationship with Iran for over 40 years.” This indicates that Hezbollah, supported by Iran, has procured weapons from North Korea, forming a triangular network where North Korea and Iran have also maintained their military ties for a long time. Professor Bechtol Jr., who serves as the President of the International Council on Korean Studies (ICKS), is a former Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) intelligence officer and a North Korea expert who has closely followed North Korea’s military activities. He has published works such as “North Korean Military Proliferation in the Middle East and Africa: Enabling Violence and Instability” and “North Korea and Regional Security in the Kim Jong-un Era.”

North Korea Constructs Tunnels Connecting Hezbollah Bases

According to Professor Betchol Jr.’s report, North Korea has supplied rocket systems, including 122mm and 107mm multiple rocket launchers, to Hezbollah since the Cold War era, and in the 1980s, Hezbollah leaders visited North Korea to learn special operations technology.

In 2006, it was uncovered that North Korea supported Hezbollah in the process of constructing a massive underground network in southern Lebanon. This underground network included weapon bunkers, communication facilities, and command and control networks intended for use in a war against Israel. Subsequently, Hezbollah signed a $13 million contract with North Korea’s Chosun Mining Development Trading Company and constructed a 45-kilometer tunnel system connecting key locations in Lebanon. The tunnel system was completed in 2021.

North Korea has maintained a friendly relationship with Hamas since the 1960s. In the Israel-Hamas war that broke out on October 7th of last year, there have been indications that Hamas used North Korean weapons, including 122mm multiple rocket launchers and the F-7 anti-tank rocket launcher.

Professor Bechtol Jr. stated, “Since the early 1970s, North Korea has begun providing weapons and military training not only to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) but also to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and others.” He analyzed that especially after the Cold War, North Korea focused on supporting Hamas more than other pro-Iran groups.

Consider North Korea as an ‘existential threat’ and take action to deter it

Professor Betchol Jr. stated that “North Korea has provided significant military support to pro-Iran armed groups, which has greatly strengthened the operation of North Korea’s military-industrial complex operations.” He emphasized that “the U.S. government and Israel must regard North Korea's military proliferation as a real threat to national security and take active measures to counter it.”

At the conference, it was also asserted that the next U.S. administration, which will be established after the November presidential election, must actively implement engagement policies toward North Korea to improve human rights for North Korean citizens, recognizing the deep interconnection between North Korean human rights and security issues.

The next U.S. government must implement proactive policies toward North Korea

Olivia Enos, a Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute, stated, "Whether it is Kamala Harris (Vice President) or Donald Trump (former President), the soon-to-be-established new U.S. administration will face the task of formulating North Korea policy." She emphasized, "Considering the multifaceted threats posed by the North Korean regime to U.S. national interests, the next U.S. administration must thoroughly examine measures to deal with the North Korean regime." Enos noted, "During President Joe Biden's term, concern for North Korean security and human rights has significantly weakened," adding that "as a result, the North Korean regime has been able to provide material support to Russia in its war against Ukraine, actions that are against U.S. national interests.”

Senior Fellow Enos criticized the U.S. government for not addressing North Korea's security and human rights issues together, highlighting the deep connection between the two. He emphasized the ongoing need to focus on the suffering North Korean people and proposed that the best way to do this is for the U.S. to classify the human rights violations of Kim Jong-un's regime as "acts of brutality" and to adopt a multifaceted approach for improving human rights.

‘Consultative status’ for North Korean human rights NGOs must increase

It was also mentioned that opportunities for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) focused on improving human rights in North Korea to receive 'consultative status' from the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) should increase. The UN Economic and Social Council grants consultative status to qualified NGOs in order to collect opinions from civil society and utilize them for UN activities. NGOs with consultative status can attend all meetings of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary committees and gain rights such as proposing agenda items for the

UN General Assembly, applying for the right to speak, and distributing materials. Currently, there are 6,626 NGOs worldwide that hold consultative status.

Greg Scarlatoiu, the President and CEO of the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, stated, "While some NGOs, including the **HRNK**, have managed to obtain consultative status with great difficulty, this is only an exceptional success story." He emphasized, "For North Korean human rights NGOs dealing with regimes responsible for crimes against humanity, consultative status should not be an exception but a principle."

Translated by Hannah Starnes, HRNK Research Intern; Edited by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Ryan Rohrbach, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724055601/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-is-iran-hybrid-warfare-weapon-supplierus-government-must-intervene?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, October 12th, 2024

Biden proposes holding trilateral summit this year

In South Korea:
Yoon blasts North Korea-Russia military cooperation at East Asia Summit (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/11/24)

Inter-Korean Relations:
DP blasts military for not confirming N.K.'s claim Seoul sent drones over Pyongyang (*Yonhap*, 10/12/24)
N. Korea sends 20 more trash balloons toward S. Korea (*Yonhap*, 10/12/24)
N. Korean media report claim that Seoul sent drones over Pyongyang (*Yonhap*, 10/12/24)
North Korea accuses South of flying drones over Pyongyang (CNN, 10/11/24)
North Korea accuses South Korea of flying drones to its capital and threatens to attack next time (*AP News*, 10/11/24)

International:
Biden proposes holding trilateral summit this year (*Yonhap*, 10/12/24)
Blinken stresses need for 'unified' action against N. Korea's 'destabilizing' activities (*Yonhap*, 10/12/24)
North Korean forces are backing Russia inside Ukraine, officials say (*The Washington Post*, 10/11/24)
Russian ambassador to N. Korea hosts reception to mark diplomatic ties (*Yonhap*, 10/12/24)

In South Korea:

- President Yoon Suk Yeol said that Russia and North Korea's illegal military cooperation is further prolonging the war in Ukraine, posing a direct challenge to UN Security Council resolutions on Friday in Laos. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- The main opposition Democratic Party criticized the military for saying it cannot confirm North Korea's claim that South Korea had sent unmanned drones over Pyongyang. (Yi Won-ju, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has floated more trash balloons toward South Korea after the regime claimed the South had sent unmanned drones over Pyongyang three times since last week. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's news media for the domestic audience reported the regime's claim that the South sent unmanned drones carrying anti-North propaganda leaflets over Pyongyang three times this month. (Shim Sun-ah, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea accused South Korea of flying propaganda-filled drones over Pyongyang and threatened "retaliation." (Gawon Bae, Pauline Lockwood, CNN)
- North Korea has accused rival South Korea of flying drones to its capital to drop anti-North Korean propaganda leaflets and threatened to respond with force if such flights occur again. South Korea issued a vague denial of the allegation. (Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)

International:

- U.S. President Joe Biden has proposed holding a trilateral summit with the leaders of South Korea and Japan by the end of this year. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken called Friday for "unified" action against North Korea's "destabilizing" activities during an annual regional summit involving the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Laos. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean soldiers are supporting Russian troops on the ground, and some may have already been killed and injured, South Korean and Ukrainian officials said this week, raising questions about whether the military cooperation between Pyongyang and Moscow has advanced to a new stage. (Michelle Ye Hee Lee, Kostiantyn Khudov, Isabelle Khurshudyan, *The Washington Post*)
- The Russian ambassador to North Korea has hosted a reception to reaffirm bilateral ties ahead of the 76th anniversary of diplomatic relations. The event, hosted by Russian Ambassador Alexandr Matsegora, was held in Pyongyang on Friday, with the attendance of Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui, ahead of the anniversary, which falls on Saturday. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Sarah Han, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724055807/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-biden-proposes-holding-trilateral-summit-this-year?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, October 13th, 2024

Some North Korean trash balloons equipped with GPS transmitters

Inter-Korean Relations:
N. Korean leader's sister warns of 'horrible disaster' if S. Korean drones found again (*Yonhap*, 10/13/24)
S. Korea warns N. Korea will see end of regime if it harms its people (*Yonhap*, 10/13/24)
Some North Korean trash balloons equipped with GPS transmitters: JCS (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/13/24)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- The sister of Kim Jong-un warned Sunday that South Korea will face a "horrible disaster" if South Korean drones are flown again over the North's capital. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea warned North Korea on Sunday that it will see "the end of its regime" if it causes any harm to its people, after the North threatened a "horrible disaster" over the alleged flight of drones over its capital. (Choi Kyong-ae, *Yonhap*)
- Some of the balloons floated by North Korea to dump trash across South Korea have been equipped with GPS transmitters, South Korea's military said Sunday. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Prepared by Samantha Garcia, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724060102/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-some-north-korean-trash-balloons-equipped-with-gps-transmitters?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Monday, October 14th, 2024

N. Korea slams U.S. envoy's remarks critical of N. Korean human rights situation

In South Korea:
Rival parties lock horns over N. Korean provocations (*The Korea Herald*, 10/14/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
N. Korea appears to be preparing for explosions on roads connected to S. Korea: JCS (*Yonhap*, 10/14/2024)
North Korea has accused Seoul of flying drones over its capital – what is going on? (*The Guardian*, 10/14/2024)
N. Korean leader's sister accuses S. Korean military of flying drones over Pyongyang (*Yonhap*, 10/14/2024)
N. Korea says it ordered front-line artillery units to fully prepare to open fire (*Yonhap*, 10/14/2024)

International:
Jihyun Park: A woman's journey from North Korea to British politics (*NK News*, 10/10/2024)
N. Korea slams U.S. envoy's remarks critical of N. Korean human rights situation (*Yonhap*, 10/14/2024)
President Zelensky claims North Korea sending troops to help Russia in Ukraine war (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/14/2024)

In South Korea:

- The tension between the two largest political parties in South Korea escalated Monday, as the main opposition Democratic Party criticized the government's handling of security, while the ruling People Power Party emphasized military readiness over diplomacy. (Jung Min-kyung, *The Korea Herald*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korea appears to be preparing to detonate explosives on roads connected to South Korea, raising tensions. The South Korean military is on high alert, warning of retaliation if provoked. (Lee Minji, Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has accused South Korea of sending drones over its capital, Pyongyang, to drop leaflets critical of leader Kim Jong-un. We look at the reasons behind the North's reaction, from readying artillery units to fire across the border and preparing to blow up roads linking the two countries. (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)
- Kim Yo-jong, the influential sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, accused the South Korean military of sending unmanned drones carrying leaflets over Pyongyang. She used harsh language to criticize both South Korea and the United States for the drone flights. (Shim Sun-ah, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's military has ordered eight artillery brigades along the border with South Korea to be fully armed in a wartime mode, following claims that South Korean drones flew over Pyongyang. South Korea denied the claim and warned of severe consequences. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Jihyun Park escaped from North Korea, not once but twice. Now a politician and activist in the U.K., Park joins the podcast to share her story of how she escaped and why she decided to settle in Britain rather than South Korea. (*NK News*)
- North Korea on Monday denounced the U.S. human rights envoy for stressing that an inflow of outside information to North Korea is a key element of Washington's policy toward the North, claiming the U.S. aims to bring down the North's system. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky claimed on Sunday that North Korea is sending not only weapons, but also troops to support Russia in a show of deepening military ties between the two countries. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Prepared by Smaranda Gheorghe, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724060331/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-slams-us-envoys-remarks-critical-of-n-korean-human-rights-situation?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, October 15th, 2024

S. Korea elected for the 6th time as a UN Human Rights Council member, 'Actively participating in efforts for human rights in N.K.'

Top News:
South Korea elected for the 6th time as a UN Human Rights Council member... 'Actively participating in efforts to promote human rights in North Korea.' (VOA, 10/10/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un weighs military options at security council meeting (*NK News*, 10/15/2024)
North Korea blew up overland connections to South, says Joint Chiefs of Staff (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/15/2024)

In South Korea:
DP expresses understanding of military's noncommittal position on N. Korea's drone claims (*Yonhap*, 10/15/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
N.K. leader holds security meeting to discuss S. Korea's alleged drone flights over Pyongyang (*Yonhap*, 10/15/2024)

N. Korea's explosion of inter-Korean roads epitomizes leader Kim's animosity against S. Korea (*Yonhap*, 10/15/2024)
North Korea blows up inter-Korean roads, leading South to fire warning shots (*NK News*, 10/15/2024)
North Korea blows up northern side of inter-Korean roads (*Radio Free Asia*, 10/15/2024)
North Korea blows up roads linking it with South, prompting warning shots at border (*The Guardian*, 10/15/2024)
S. Korea condemns N. Korea's detonation of inter-Korean roads as 'very abnormal' act (*Yonhap*, 10/15/2024)

International:
Kremlin says its mutual defense agreement with North Korea is 'unambiguous' (*Reuters*, 10/15/2024)
North Korean vessel loiters outside Russian port, raising arms trade concerns (*NK News*, 10/15/2024)
Putin pushes for ratification of military pact he made with Kim Jong Un (*NK News*, 10/15/2024)
Pyongyang slams U.N. special rapporteur's report on N. Korea's human rights (*Yonhap*, 10/15/2024)
Russian court rejects detention appeal of South Korean accused of espionage, RIA reports (*Reuters*, 10/15/2024)
South Korea expresses concern as Russia moves to ratify defense pact with North (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/15/2024)
US 'concerned' by reports of North Korean soldiers fighting for Russia (*Reuters*, 10/15/2024)

Top News:

- South Korea will serve as a member of the UN Human Rights Council for a three-year term starting next year. The South Korean government has revealed its ambition to actively participate in discussions about major international human rights issues, including those related to North Korea. (An So-young, VOA)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un reviewed military action plans at a "national defense and security council" meeting on Monday, according to state media, following days of threats and escalating rhetoric over an alleged South Korean drone incursion. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea blew up roads connected to South Korea according to Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff. In its message to reporters, the JCS said that the North "detonated roads connecting the Gyeongui and Donghae rail lines north of the military demarcation line around noon" and that the North Korean military had brought in "heavy equipment to carry out additional work." (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

In South Korea:

- The main opposition Democratic Party on Tuesday expressed understanding of the military's decision to neither confirm nor deny North Korea's claims the South had sent drones over Pyongyang, saying the issue should be dealt with prudently. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- Kim Jong-un has held a meeting with top security officials to discuss what Pyongyang claims was South Korea's infiltration of drones. Kim received reports about North Korea's plan to deal with the "enemy's serious provocation," including the military's counteraction plan and the situation related to the North's intelligence operations. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea appears to have blown up the northern side of its roads connected to South Korea as a symbolic measure to erase the legacy of inter-Korean cooperation under its leader Kim Jong-un's "two hostile states" stance. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea blew up sections of two key inter-Korean roads on Tuesday, leading the South Korean military to retaliate by firing shots south of the border, according to Seoul. (Ifang Bremer, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- North Korea blew up its side of roads connected to South Korea on Tuesday, the South Korean military said, after Pyongyang vowed to cut cross-border transport links amid disputes over drones that the North says have flown over its capital. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)
- The South Korean unification ministry, which overseas inter-Korean relations, described the North's decision to blow up roads on its side of the countries' heavily armed border as "abnormal" and a violation of bilateral agreements designed to lower tensions. (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)
- South Korea's unification ministry on Tuesday "strongly" condemned North Korea's blowing up of parts of inter-Korean roads as a clear violation of an inter-Korean agreement and a "very abnormal" act. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Russia said on Tuesday that a treaty it signed with North Korea earlier this year provides for "strategic cooperation" in all areas, but declined to be drawn on how a mutual defense clause in the agreement could be put into practice. (*Reuters*)
- A North Korean vessel known for skirting international sanctions has been loitering in waters outside of Vladivostok for over two months, with experts raising concerns that its voyages may be linked to the delivery of military cargo. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Vladimir Putin submitted his new military pact with North Korea to the Russian parliament for ratification on Monday, pushing for formal acceptance of the mutual defense pact he made with DPRK leader Kim Jong Un in June. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- North Korea on Tuesday denounced Elizabeth Salmon, the U.N. special rapporteur for North Korean human rights, for submitting a report on North Korea's human rights abuses to the U.N. General Assembly, calling her a "puppet and top-class servant" of the United States. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- A Russian court on Tuesday rejected an appeal by a South Korean citizen held on charges of espionage against the extension of his pre-trial detention, ruling to keep him in custody until at least Nov. 15. (*Reuters*)
- South Korea expressed concerns Tuesday after Russia began the ratification process for a mutual defense treaty signed with North Korea in June that commits both countries to assist each other in repelling external aggression. (Seo Ji-Eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- Ukrainian President Zelenskiy accused North Korea of transferring personnel to Russia's armed forces, saying his intelligence agencies briefed him on "the involvement of North Korea in the war". White House National Security Council spokesperson Sean Savett said the involvement of N.K. troops in Ukraine, if true, would mark a significant increase in the North Korea-Russia defense relationship. (*Reuters*)

South Korea elected for the 6th time as a UN Human Rights Council member... 'Actively participating in efforts to promote human rights in North Korea.'

https://www.voakorea.com/a/7816695.html

An So-young, *VOA Korea*

South Korea will serve as a member of the UN Human Rights Council for a three-year term starting next year. The South Korean government has revealed its ambition to actively participate in discussions about major international human rights issues, including those related to North Korea. This is An So-young reporting.

The UN General Assembly elected South Korea as a member state for the term from 2025 to 2027 in the UN Human Rights Council member state election held at the UN Headquarters in New York on the 9th.

[Transcription: UN General Assembly Chairman] "Number of votes obtained by each member state, Thailand 177, Cyprus 167, Qatar 167, Republic of Korea 161, Marshall Island 124."

The Chairman of the UN General Assembly announced that among the six countries that applied for the five vacant member state positions of the Asia-Pacific region on the Human Rights Council—Thailand, Saudi Arabia, the Marshall Islands, South Korea, Cyprus, and Qatar—South Korea received 161 votes from the 190 participating countries.

Thailand received the most votes with 177 votes, while Cyprus and Qatar each received 167 votes, and the Marshall Islands received 124 votes.

These five countries, excluding Saudi Arabia, which received the fewest votes, have been elected to the member state for a three-year term.

The UN Human Rights Council consists of a total of 47 member states, with 13 countries each from the Asia-Pacific and Africa, 6 countries from Eastern Europe, 8 countries from South America, and 7 countries from Western Europe and others.

The UN Human Rights Council is an agency that discusses issues concerning the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the international community, addresses matters of human rights violations, and implements necessary recommendations.

South Korea's election as a member state is the sixth since the establishment of the UN Human Rights Council in 2006.

South Korea has served as a member state a total of five times, including during the periods of 2006 to 2008, 2009 to 2011, 2013 to 2015, 2016 to 2018, and 2020 to 2022.

In 2022, there was an attempt to run for the position of a member state, but it was unsuccessful. "Active Participation in North Korean Human Rights Enhancement Efforts."

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Korea released a press release on that day, stating, 'Our government will actively participate in discussions on major international human rights issues, including the human rights situation in North Korea, as a member state of the Human Rights Council for the next three years, and will strengthen its contributions and efforts to realize universal values in the international community as a global pivotal state.

Greg Scarlatoiu, the President and CEO of The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, a non-governmental organization in Washington D.C., welcomed the election of South Korea to the UN Human Rights Council as an encouraging event in a call with VOA on the 9th.

[Transcript: President and CEO Scarlatoiu] "The role of South Korea at the UN has been enhanced and South Korea is increasingly playing a very positive and constructive role in human rights, international security, humanitarian issues and many other important global issues."

President and CEO Scarlatoiu stated that South Korea's role in the UN has been strengthened, and that in various major international issues, including human rights, international security, and humanitarian issues, South Korea is playing an increasingly positive and constructive role.

At the same time, it was stated, 'Korea, as a prosperous and genuine democratic country, must demonstrate its goodwill to promote international human rights, including those related to North Korea.' Meanwhile, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Korea will simultaneously serve as a member state of three major UN bodies in 2025: the UN Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, and the Human Rights Council.

This is An So-young reporting. VOA News.

Translated by Hannah Starnes, HRNK Research Intern; Edited by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724060740/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-s-korea-elected-for-the-6th-time-as-a-un-human-rights-council-member-actively-participating-in-efforts-for-human-rights-in-nk?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, October 16th, 2024

North Korea says 1.4 million youth enlist over drone outrage; S. Korea province bans anti-North balloon launches in 11 'danger zones'

In North Korea:
N. Korea's state media keeps mum about its explosion of inter-Korean roads (*Yonhap*, 10/16/2024)
North Korea says 1.4 million youth enlist in army over South Korean drone outrage (*UPI*, 10/16/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korea 'closely' monitoring possibility of N. Korea sending troops for Ukraine war (Yonhap, 10/16/2024)
South Korean province bans anti-North balloon launches in 11 'danger zones' (*NK News*, 10/16/2024)

International:
North Korea's new drones use a 'reverse-engineered copy' of Hellfire missiles from the MQ-9 Reaper, US Army general says (*Business Insider*, 10/16/2024)
North Korean soldiers are training to fight for Russia, Ukraine says (*NBC News*, 10/16/2024)
North Korean Troops Deserting Ukraine Frontline Days After Arrival: Report (*Newsweek*, 10/16/2024)
Russia forming North Korean battalion amid soldier shortage: report (*Radio Free Asia*, 10/16/2024)
Russia pledges support to North Korea in case of conflict on the peninsula (*NK News*, 10/16/2024)
S. Korea, U.S., Japan condemn N. Korea for 'deliberate acts of creating tensions' (*Yonhap*, 10/16/2024)
S. Korea, U.S., Japan launch multilateral mechanism to monitor N. Korean sanctions after Russia's U.N. panel veto (*Yonhap*, 10/16/2024)
Trump suggests $10 billion price tag for US troops in South Korea (*Radio Free Asia*, 10/16/2024)
U.S. urges N. Korea to stop actions that raise conflict risk after blowing up of cross-border roads (*Yonhap*, 10/16/2024)
Unification Minister Kim to visit U.S. this week for N. Korean human rights talks (*Yonhap*, 10/16/2024)
Zelenskiy says N.Korea is de facto taking part in war on Russia's side (*Reuters*, 10/16/2024)

In North Korea:

- More than 1.4 million young people have volunteered to join or rejoin the North Korean army in response to alleged drone incursions by South Korea, state-run media claimed Wednesday. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- North Korea's state media remained silent about its explosion of inter-Korean roads connected to South Korea the previous day, a move seen as highlighting its commitment to severing ties with South Korea. In August, North Korea cut off the Gyeongui and Donghae railways. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's Gyeonggi Province has designated 11 areas across three cities and counties as "danger zones," prohibiting the launch of balloons carrying anti-North Korea leaflets. The move seeks to mitigate the probability of North Korea targeting those designated areas with artillery units in response to such balloon launches. (Ifang Bremer, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- The defense ministry said Wednesday it is "closely" monitoring for signs of North Korea possibly sending troops to support Russia in its war against Ukraine, following media reports of Russia forming a battalion of North Koreans. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Russia is forming a special battalion consisting of up to 3,000 North Koreans to help push Ukraine's forces out of Kursk amid a manpower shortage on the front lines due to heavy casualties. The North Koreans will form part of the "Special Buryat Battalion," organized within the 11th separate airborne assault brigade of the Russian Armed Forces. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)
- Russia will come to North Korea's aid should conflict break out on the Korean Peninsula, citing the two countries' new military pact. But one expert questioned the Kremlin's commitment to Pyongyang amid escalating tensions. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Senior diplomats from South Korea, the United States and Japan strongly denounced North Korea for deliberately escalating tensions on the Korean Peninsula, vowing to step up three-way coordination in response to its provocations. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Some 18 North Korean soldiers are believed to have deserted the Russian frontline, with Kremlin fighters reportedly searching for them. The troops were deployed in Russia's Kursk and Bryansk oblasts, about four miles from the border with Ukraine, when they deserted, the public broadcasting company of Ukraine, Suspilne. (Jordan King, *Newsweek*)
- South Korea, the United States and Japan will establish a new joint mechanism with partner countries to monitor U.N. sanctions on North Korea after Russia's veto ended the mandate of the U.N. monitoring panel. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The United States called on North Korea Tuesday to stop actions that would increase the risk of conflict, after Pyongyang blew up roads linked to South Korea in a rancorous removal of land routes once seen as a symbol of inter-Korean cooperation. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The US military is closely watching a new North Korean drone that uses a "reverse-engineered copy" of the Hellfire missile for the MQ-9 Reaper and RQ-4 Global Hawk, a US Army general said on Tuesday. (Matthew Loh, *Business Insider*)
- U.S. Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump has reignited debate over defense cost-sharing with South Korea, saying that if he were in the White House, Seoul would be paying US$10 billion a year to station U.S. Forces Korea, or USFK, in the country. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)
- Ukrainian intelligence believes that North Korea has expanded its support for Russia's war in Ukraine from providing weapons to sending thousands of its own soldiers to fight for the Kremlin. (Anastasiia Parafeniuk, Mithil Aggarwal, *NBC News*)
- Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Wednesday that North Korea was a de facto participant on Russia's side in its war against Ukraine. In a speech to parliament, the

Ukrainian leader said his intelligence services had confirmed North Korea's supply to Russia of both weapons and people. (*Reuters*)

- Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho will visit the United States this week to hold discussions with officials from Washington and Tokyo regarding the human rights situation in North Korea. (Kim Han-joo,*Yonhap*)

Prepared by Hannah Starnes, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724061012/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-says-14-million-youth-enlist-over-drone-outrage-s-korea-province-bans-anti-north-balloon-launches-in-11-danger-zones?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, October 17th, 2024

N.K. constitution 'clearly' defines S. Korea as 'hostile' state

In North Korea:
N. Korea stops using 'juche' calendar in effort to reinforce Kim's leadership (*Yonhap*, 10/17/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korean military not investigating alleged drone flights over Pyongyang (*Yonhap*, 10/17/2024)
South Korea halts investigations into defectors' money transfers to North Korea (*NK News*, 10/17/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
N.K. constitution 'clearly' defines S. Korea as 'hostile' state (*Yonhap*, 10/17/2024)
Ruling party slams N. Korea for blowing up roads, railways connected to S. Korea (*Yonhap*, 10/17/2024)

International:
New multinational body launched to monitor North Korea sanctions after UN panel dismantled (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/16/2024)
Ship linked to Moscow-Pyongyang arms trade appears on Russian TV at DPRK port (*NK News*, 10/17/2024)
U.S. voices 'great concerns' after Russia kicks off ratification procedure for key treaty with N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 10/17/2024)
Zelenskyy says N. Korea is preparing 10,000 troops to help Russia (*Yonhap*, 10/17/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has ceased using its "juche," or self-reliance, calendar - a system of year numbering symbolizing its late founder Kim Il-sung - in what appears to be the latest effort to reinforce Kim Jong-un's position as the nation's sole leader. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's military said Thursday it is not investigating the alleged flight of South Korean drones over North Korea's capital earlier this month, describing it as a matter to be clarified by the North. (Chae Yun-Hwan, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean police have stopped investigating North Korean escapees who send money back to their families in the DPRK, a practice which had led to serious unrest among defectors last year. Despite the announcement, several defectors still face prosecution for transferring small sums of money to the North. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korea said Thursday its constitution clearly defines South Korea as a "hostile state," highly suggesting that Pyongyang has amended its constitution in line with leader Kim Jong-un's order to codify the South as an enemy, not a partner for reconciliation and unification. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- The ruling People Power Party slammed North Korea on Thursday for blowing up parts of its roads and railways connected to South Korea, saying such actions underscore the need for a firm defense posture. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)

International:

- A group of 11 countries officially launched a new intergovernmental body to monitor the enforcement of Pyongyang-related sanctions in Seoul on Wednesday, following the dismantlement of the UN Panel of Experts on North Korea in April due to Russia's veto. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea Joongang Daily*)
- Russian state television may have unwittingly revealed evidence of continued military trade between North Korea and Russia amid reports that the DPRK is not only supplying weapons to aid Moscow's war effort in Ukraine, but also troops. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- A U.S. State Department spokesperson expressed "great concern" Wednesday over a deepening military partnership between North Korea and Russia, after Moscow set in motion a ratification process for a "comprehensive strategic partnership" treaty with North Korea. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Thursday that North Korea is preparing to send around 10,000 soldiers to Russia to support its war against Ukraine, calling the development "a big problem." (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Valerie Johnson, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724061251/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-nk-constitution-clearly-defines-s-korea-as-hostile-state?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, October 18th, 2024

N. Korea sends around 10,000 soldiers to support Russia in Ukraine war; S.K. to begin annual Hoguk defense exercise next week

In South Korea:
ROK holds live-fire drill with Chunmoo MLRS designed to counter DPRK artillery (*NK News*, 10/18/2024)
S. Korea to begin annual Hoguk defense exercise next week (*Yonhap*, 10/18/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Kim Jong-un drills front-line troops, branding S. Korea as 'foreign, hostile' (*The Korea Herald*, 10/18/2024)
NK leader's sister says photo comes from foreign media, not S. Korean military (*Yonhap*, 10/18/2024)
North Korea's Kim Jong-un points to map of Seoul as he threatens to use 'physical force' (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/18/2024)
Seoul official calls Korean Peninsula unification 'moral" obligation (*Yonhap*, 10/18/2024)
South Koreans are ‘legit enemy’ and ‘not kin,’ Kim Jong Un tells troops (*NK News*, 10/18/2024)

International:
N. Korea decides to send around 10,000 soldiers to support Russia in Ukraine war: Seoul (*Yonhap*, 10/18/2024)
N. Korea participates in Ukraine war, decides to dispatch 12,000 soldiers: spy agency (*Yonhap*, 10/18/2024)
N Korea to send troops to fight with Russia: Seoul (*BBC News*, 10/18/2024)
N.K. troop deployment to Russia grave development in int'l security landscape, Seoul-Moscow relations (*Yonhap*, 10/18/2024)
North Korea-China trade hits yearly high in September on strong imports (*NK News*, 10/18/2024)
North Korea has deployed troops to assist Russia in war against Ukraine: Seoul (*NK News*, 10/18/2024)
North Korea sends troops to support Russia in Ukraine war: NIS (*The Korea Herald*, 10/18/2024)
North Korean troops have arrived in Russia to fight Ukraine, says Seoul (*The Guardian*, 10/18/2024)
Russian military jet flies to Pyongyang amid reports of DPRK troops in Ukraine (*NK News*, 10/18/2024)

Seoul envoy calls for stronger defense industry cooperation, cautions against protectionism (*Yonhap*, 10/18/2024)
South Korean intelligence says North has sent troops to aid Russia's war in Ukraine (*AP News*, 10/18/2024)
Yoon holds emergency security meeting amid N. Korea's alleged troop deployment to Russia (*Yonhap*, 10/18/2024)

In South Korea:

- South Korea conducted a live-fire exercise with a Chunmoo multiple launch rocket system, designed to counter North Korea's long-range artillery, on Thursday evening, a move which one expert says is likely a warning signal to Pyongyang amid rising security tensions of the peninsula. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- South Korea will kick off an annual large-scale military exercise next week amid heightened cross-border tensions from recent North Korean military activities. The Hoguk exercise will begin Sunday, for a nearly three-week run, in the wake of North Korea's explosions of inter-Korean roads earlier this week and continued launches of balloons carrying trash toward the South. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un doubled down on the legitimacy of using offensive forces against South Korea in the event of a contingency, drilling into front-line troops the notion of South Korea as both a "foreign" and "hostile" country. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un on Friday dismissed South Korea's claim that North Korea's state media may have used a South Korean photo showing North Korea's demolition of parts of inter-Korean roads. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un warned of "unhesitatingly" using physical force if the South violates the North's sovereignty during his visit to the headquarters of the 2nd Corps of the Korean People's Army, according to the regime's state-run Korean Central News Agency on Friday. (Cho Jung-Woo, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea's point man on inter-Korean affairs described the unification of the Korean Peninsula as a "moral" obligation on Thursday as North Korea has shunned the idea of unification and defined the South as a "hostile" state in its constitution. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un told his troops that South Koreans are "not fellow countrymen" but a "legitimate" target that they shouldn't hesitate to attack, according to state media on Friday. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

International:

- South Korea's spy agency on Friday confirmed that North Korea has decided to send around 10,000 troops to support Russia in its war against Ukraine and has already begun deployment. (Chang Dong-woo, *Yonhap*)

- South Korea's spy agency said Friday it believes North Korea has decided to send large-scale troops to support Russia in its war against Ukraine and has already begun deployment. The National Intelligence Service said it has learned that the North has recently decided to send four brigades of 12,000 soldiers, including special forces, to the war in Ukraine. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has started sending troops to fight with Russia in Ukraine, South Korea's spy agency has said as Seoul warned of a "grave security threat". The allegation comes a day after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said he believed 10,000 North Korean soldiers could join the war. (Kelly Ng, *BBC News*)
- North Korea's large-scale provision of troops to Russia in its war against Ukraine is seen as a grave development that could further destabilize the global security landscape marred by conflicts, as well as a blow to the fragile diplomatic ties between Seoul and Moscow. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's trade with China hit a record high for this year in September, driven by an uptick in imports, although trade levels remained lower than in the same month last year and prior to the pandemic. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- North Korea has deployed troops to assist Russian forces in Ukraine, the ROK presidential office confirmed on Friday, with Seoul's spy agency revealing that Russian naval vessels were used to transport DPRK special forces to the frontline early this month. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- North Korea has dispatched special forces to support Russia in its war against Ukraine, with the first batch already having arrived in Russia and a second group of North Korean troops expected to follow soon, South Korea's intelligence agency claimed on Friday. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- In a statement on its website, the NIS said that Russian navy ships transferred 1,500 North Korean special operation forces to the port city of Vladivostok, "The North Korean soldiers … are expected to be deployed to the frontlines as soon as they complete their adaptation training," the agency said, adding that more North Korean troops are expected to be sent to Russia soon. (Pjotr Sauer, *The Guardian*)
- A Russian military jet flew directly from Moscow to Pyongyang on Thursday amid reports that North Korea is sending troops to support Russia in Ukraine. The same plane last traveled to the DPRK's capital last month from Russia's Far East. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Seoul's top envoy to Washington cautioned against economic "protectionism" as he highlighted the need to address barriers that preclude full defense industrial cooperation between South Korea and the United States. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's spy agency said Friday that North Korea has dispatched troops to support Russia's war against Ukraine. If confirmed, the move would bring a third country into the war and intensify a standoff between North Korea and the West. (Hyung-Jin Kim, Kim Tong-Hyung, *AP News*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol convened an emergency security meeting involving senior officials from the National Security Council, the Ministry of National Defense and the NIS to discuss the latest developments regarding North Korean troops' participation in Russia's conflict with Ukraine. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Gabrielle Drinkwine, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724070458/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-sends-around-10000-soldiers-to-support-russia-in-ukraine-war-sk-to-begin-annual-hoguk-defense-exercise-next-week?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Saturday, October 19th, 2024

Video published by Ukraine purports to show North Korean soldiers in Russia

In North Korea:
North Korea says it recovered crashed South Korean military drone, KCNA says (*Reuters*, 10/19/2024)

International:
North Korean troops seen being equipped in Russia ahead of likely deployment to Ukraine (*CNN*, 10/19/2024)
Video published by Ukraine purports to show North Korean soldiers in Russia (*AP News*, 10/19/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea said it had discovered the remains of a crashed South Korean military drone, suggesting it was on a propaganda mission in the latest confrontation between the two involving cross-border flying objects. (Heekyong Yang, Josh Smith, Ju-min Park, Hyunjoo Jin, *Reuters*)

International:

- In a video shared with CNN by Ukrainian government organization, the Ukrainian Center for Strategic Communication and Information Security, a long line of soldiers can be seen queuing up to receive their uniforms. The soldiers are thought to be speaking in Korean although the low quality audio prevented their discussions from being fully understood. (Isaac Yee, Victoria Butenko, Niamh Kennedy, CNN)
- A video showing North Korean recruits receiving Russian military gear is meant to intimidate Ukrainian forces and signals a new phase in the war, with North Korea entering the conflict, according to Ukrainian officials. (Samya Kullab, *AP News*)

Prepared by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724070745/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-video-published-by-ukraine-purports-to-show-north-korean-soldiers-in-russia?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, October 20th, 2024

North Korean troops seen being equipped in Russia ahead of likely deployment to Ukraine

In North Korea:
N. Korea accuses U.N. chief of 'double standards' over inter-Korean road explosion (*Yonhap*, 10/20/2024)
N. Korea warns countries joining U.S.-led sanctions monitoring team will pay 'dear price' (*Yonhap*, 10/20/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korea faces dilemma of providing lethal weapons to Ukraine (*The Korea Times*, 10/20/2024)
S. Korean satellite captures image of N. Korean troop movement to Russia: source (*Yonhap*, 10/20/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
N. Korea sends about 20 trash balloons toward S. Korea: JCS (*Yonhap*, 10/20/2024)
North Korea claims discovering remains of drone sent from South Korea in Pyongyang (*Yonhap*, 10/19/2024)
Ruling party condemns N. Korea's decision to send troops to Russia (*Yonhap*, 10/20/2024)

International:
Evidence shows North Korea deploying troops to support Russia in Ukraine war (*The Korea Times*, 10/20/2024)
North Korean troops seen being equipped in Russia ahead of likely deployment to Ukraine (*CNN*, 10/20/2024)
Russia prepares Korean-language questionnaire for N. Korean soldiers: CNN (*Yonhap*, 10/20/2024)
South Korea, NATO consider responses to North's soldiers in Russia (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/20/2024)
Ukraine says North Korean troop involvement is 'huge' escalation risk (*Reuters*, 10/19/2024)
Xi expresses willingness to promote regional, global peace in message to N.K. leader (*Yonhap*, 10/20/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea accused U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres of "double standards," saying he urged Pyongyang to exercise restraint following its destruction of inter-Korean roads while remaining silent about South Korea's alleged drone infiltration into the North. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's top diplomat has criticized a new multilateral sanctions monitoring team led by the United States as "unlawful and illegitimate" and warned the participating countries will "pay a dear price." (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- North Korea's troop deployment backing Russia heightens security threats in Northeast Asia. South Korea is facing a dilemma over whether to provide lethal weapons to Ukraine, following confirmation that North Korea has deployed troops to support Russia. (Anna J. Park, *The Korea Times*)
- One of the three pictures that South Korea's intelligence agency disclosed as evidence of North Korea's troop deployment to Russia was captured by a satellite that the South has been operating. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korea has floated about 20 balloons carrying trash toward South Korea since Saturday night, and some 10 objects from the balloons were found in the border county of Cheorwon. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea claimed Saturday it has discovered remains of at least one drone sent from South Korea, describing it as the same type displayed on the South's Armed Forces Day in Seoul earlier this month. South Korean Defense Minister Kim Yong-hyun said that he could not confirm the North's allegations. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The ruling People Power Party on Sunday strongly denounced North Korea's decision to send troops to Russia to support its war in Ukraine and vowed to push for a parliamentary resolution opposing the move. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Video footage and documents revealed recent claims that North Korea has been deploying its troops to assist Russia in the ongoing war against Ukraine. This evidence follows confirmation from South Korea's spy agency on Friday that North Korea has decided to send around 10,000 troops. (Kim Hyun-bin, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korean soldiers have been filmed receiving uniforms and equipment at a training ground in Russia's far east, appearing to confirm reports from South Korea's National Intelligence Service that 1,500 soldiers have been shipped over for military training to be deployed in Ukraine. (Isaac Yee, Victoria Butenko, Niamh Kennedy, CNN)
- Russia appears to have prepared a Korean-language questionnaire to facilitate the distribution of military equipment to North Korean soldiers deployed in its territory, CNN reported. The questionnaire, provided by the Ukrainian Center for Strategic Communication and Information Security, is seen as further evidence that North Korean troops may be joining Russian forces in the conflict in Ukraine. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

- The deployment of North Koreans to assist Russia at the frontlines of its war in Ukraine has sent NATO scrambling to formulate a response as Kyiv called the presence of Pyongyang's soldiers a “huge escalation risk” over the weekend. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The involvement of North Korean troops in the Russian invasion of Ukraine would be a "huge" escalation risk, Ukraine's foreign minister told a joint press conference alongside his French counterpart in Kyiv on Saturday. (*Reuters*)
- Chinese President Xi Jinping has sent a message to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, expressing a willingness to move relations between the two countries further forward and to promote regional and global peace, Pyongyang's state media reported Sunday. (*Yonhap*)

Prepared by Natalie Razera, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724070845/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korean-troops-seen-being-equipped-in-russia-ahead-of-likely-deployment-to-ukraine?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Monday, October 21st, 2024

U.S. Department of State: 'North Korean human rights situation is deplorable...will increase the flow of information.'

Top News:
U.S. Department of State: 'North Korean human rights situation is deplorable...will increase the flow of information.' (VOA, 10/15/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

International:
As North Korea sends troops to Ukraine war, Seoul reaches out to NATO (*Nikkei Asia*, 10/21/2024)
Lloyd Austin visits Ukraine as Zelenskyy warns of 'clear' North Korea threat (*ABC News*, 10/21/2024)
New video appears to show North Korean soldiers receiving uniforms in Russia (*NK News*, 10/21/2024)
North Korea warned its overseas companies to check for fake dollar bills (RFA, 10/21/2024)
Russia to Send North Korean Deserters Into Ukraine 'Meat Assault': Report (*Newsweek*, 10/21/2024)
Seoul wants N Korean troops to leave Russia immediately (BBC, 10/21/2024)
Seoul weighing ‘various’ responses to North Korea sending troops to Ukraine (*NK News*, 10/21/2024)
South Korea calls for immediate withdrawal of North Korean troops allegedly in Russia (*AP News*, 10/21/2024)
South Korea summons Russian envoy to protest North Korea troop dispatch (*Reuters*, 10/21/2024)
What we know about North Korean troops joining Russia’s war in Ukraine (*Reuters*, 10/21/2024)

Zelensky calls for 'strong response' from allies to North Korean involvement in Ukraine war (*UPI*, 10/21/2024)

Top News:

- The U.S. government dismissed North Korea's claim that U.S. hostility impedes North Korean human rights progress, emphasizing that North Korea's poor human rights record is inseparably linked to global peace and security. North Korea continues to argue that international sanctions and pressure are the main obstacles to its development, a stance criticized by experts as misleading and contradictory. (An Junho, VOA)

International:

- South Korean President Yoon Seok-yeol said Monday that Seoul will step up information-sharing with NATO in response to North Korea sending soldiers to Ukraine to fight alongside Russian forces. (Junnosuke Kobara, *Nikkei Asia*)
- Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin arrived in Kyiv, Ukraine, on Monday morning for his third visit to the country since Russia's full-scale invasion began in 2022. (David Brennan, *ABC News*)
- Experts say footage released by Ukraine shows soldiers speaking in northern dialect and was likely filmed in Far East. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- North Korea warned its overseas enterprises to prevent U.S. dollar counterfeiting, as the funds are used for "loyalty payments" to Pyongyang, according to a document obtained by *Radio Free Asia*. (Mok Yongjae, RFA)
- North Korean soldiers who had been enlisted to fight for Vladimir Putin, but deserted when they were on the front line may be deployed in assault operations against Ukrainian troops. (Brendan Cole, *Newsweek*)
- South Korea has summoned the Russian ambassador, seeking the "immediate withdrawal" of North Korean troops which it says are being trained to fight in Ukraine. (Kelly Ng, BBC)
- Defense ministry declines to state whether ROK will provide lethal aid to Kyiv amid questions about extent of deployment. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- South Korea demanded the immediate withdrawal of North Korean troops allegedly in Russia and summoned the Russian ambassador to protest growing military ties between Pyongyang and Moscow. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)
- South Korea's first vice foreign minister Kim Hong-kyun called in Russian ambassador Georgy Zinoviev and urged the immediate withdrawal of North Korean soldiers from Russia, the ministry said in a statement.(Hyunsu Yim, Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy accused North Korea on Thursday of deploying officers alongside Russia and preparing to send 10,000 soldiers to help Moscow's war effort. (Josh Smith, Ju-min Park, *Reuters*)
- "We have clear evidence that people are being supplied to Russia from North Korea, and these are not just workers for industries, but also military personnel," Zelensky said in a video address on Sunday evening. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)

U.S. Department of State: 'North Korean human rights situation is deplorable...will increase the flow of information.'

An Junho, VOA
10/15/2024

The U.S. government dismissed North Korea's criticism that the U.S. hostile policy is an obstacle to the promotion of North Korean human rights. It was also emphasized that North Korean human rights are inseparably linked to global peace and security.

This is An Junho reporting.

On the 14th, the U.S. Department of State stated that 'North Korea is one of the most oppressive authoritarian countries in the world' and declared that 'the human rights situation in North Korea is deplorable.'

In response to VOA's request for comment regarding North Korea's recent criticism of the United States in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) national report submitted to the UN Human Rights Council, the U.S. Department of State spokesperson said, 'The United States is doing its utmost to place human rights at the center of its foreign policy.'

[U.S. Department of State spokesperson]: "The United States is committed to placing human rights at the center of our foreign policy. The DPRK is among the most repressive authoritarian states in the world. Its human rights situation is deplorable."

The spokesperson went on to emphasize that, "North Korea's human rights record is inseparably linked to international peace and security."

Furthermore, the spokesperson stated, "For decades, the United States has supported efforts to promote and improve the human rights and dignity of the North Korean people, including the most vulnerable groups, and to hold accountable those most responsible for North Korea's horrific human rights record."

[U.S. Department of State spokesperson]: "The DPRK human rights record is inextricably linked to international peace and security. For decades the United States has championed efforts to promote and improve respect for the human rights and dignity of North Koreans, including members of the most vulnerable populations, and to promote accountability for those most responsible for the DPRK's egregious human rights record."

The spokesperson continued, "We will continue to work with the international community to raise awareness of North Korean human rights issues, document human rights violations and abuses, respond to North Korea's transnational repression, increase the flow of independent information in and out of North Korea, and urge accountability for human rights violations and abuses in North Korea."

The spokesperson went on to state, "The United States reiterates its willingness to resume dialogue with North Korea without preconditions on all issues, including human rights."

[U.S. Department of State spokesperson]: "We continue to work with the international community to raise awareness of DPRK human rights issues; document violations and abuses; counter DPRK transnational repression; increase the flow of independent information into, through, and out of the DPRK; and promote accountability for the DPRK's human rights violations and abuses. The United States reiterates its willingness to resume dialogue with the DPRK, without preconditions, on any issue, including human rights."

In the national report submitted to the UN Human Rights Council for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on the 9th, North Korea claimed that it had achieved 'notable successes in efforts to create conditions where residents can fully enjoy their rights in all areas, including politics, economy, and culture.'

The UPR is a system in which the human rights situations and implementation of recommendations of the 193 UN member states are reviewed every four or four and a half years on a rotating basis.

North Korea underwent its third UPR in 2019 and is scheduled for its fourth UPR this coming November.

Ahead of its fourth UPR, North Korea submitted a national report detailing the results of its implementation of recommendations and its future plans, claiming that the hostile policies of 'hostile forces' such as the United States, South Korea, and Japan are challenges to the improvement of human rights in North Korea.

In the report, North Korea claimed that 'the continued actions of isolation, oppression, military threats, blockades, and pressure carried out by hostile forces are the most serious challenges and greatest obstacles to the sovereignty and development interests of North Korea, as well as to the people's right to a peaceful life.'

It further claimed that, "the United States has persistently pursued a hostile policy toward North Korea and is making desperate attempts to overthrow the socialist system," adding that, "other hostile forces such as Japan and South Korea are also participating in these efforts." It also argued that 'as a result of the conspiracies of the United States, the European Union (EU), Japan, South Korea, and other hostile forces, the anti-North Korea 'human rights resolutions' forcibly adopted at the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council every year since 2003 are the most hostile and politicized means to damage our country's image and overthrow socialism,' adding that 'this creates serious obstacles to North Korea's efforts and commitment to ensuring the enjoyment of human rights by its people and to fostering international cooperation.'

North Korean human rights experts criticized these claims by North Korea as absurd.

Greg Scarlatoiu, President and CEO of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), a Washington-based NGO, said in a phone interview with VOA on the 14th, 'The Kim family regime has the worst human rights record in the world, yet they claim to be a paradise of human rights and justice.'

He also pointed out, "North Korea claims that all the research and investigations conducted by NGOs, civil society organizations, or democratic governments are merely part of a U.S. conspiracy," adding, "This is an absurd claim, as there is no such thing as human rights protection in North Korea."

[Recording: President and CEO Scarlatoiu]: "This is a very common pattern as far as the North Korean regime is concerned. While the Kim family regime has one of the worst human rights records in the world they claim to be a paradise of human rights and justice. They claim that all of this research and investigation by non governmental organizations, civil society organizations, democratic governments, it's nothing but a conspiracy by the United States. A US conspiracy, this is nonsense. There is no such thing as human rights compliance in North Korea."

President and CEO Scarlatoiu also commented on the forced repatriation of hundreds of North Korean defectors by the Chinese government in the border region shortly after the closing ceremony of the Hangzhou Asian Games on October 9 last year, saying, "We have thoroughly documented this issue (forced repatriation, etc.) for decades," and added, "When defectors are

arrested and forcibly repatriated, they endure harsh interrogations, torture, beatings, and imprisonment."

He continued, "The barbaric practices, such as forced abortions and infanticide inflicted on women who became pregnant by Chinese men, have been thoroughly documented."

Regarding the fourth UPR scheduled for November, he pointed out, "Before North Korea makes general claims that the human rights situation has improved, it needs to revisit the recommendations made in the 2019 UPR."

During the third UPR in 2019, North Korea accepted the Irish government's recommendation to allow humanitarian access to detention facilities, and it is necessary to check whether this has been properly implemented.

In its UPR response at the time, North Korea rejected 63 out of 262 recommendations made by the international community, and stated that it would accept and implement 132 out of the 199 recommendations it agreed to, but so far, no clear signs of improvement have been reported.

This is reporter An Junho.

Translated by Hannah Starnes, HRNK Research Intern; Edited by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724071143/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-us-department-of-state-north-korean-human-rights-situation-is-deplorablewill-increase-the-flow-of-information?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, October 22nd, 2024

North Korea denies it has deployed troops to support Russia's war in Ukraine

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un calls out problems rebuilding flood-hit villages near weapons plants (*NK News*, 10/22/2024)
Inter-Korean Relations:
76 North Korean escapees arrive in South Korea in third quarter (*NK News*, 10/22/2024)

International:
Kim Yo Jong threatens 'fatal' retaliation against Seoul, while slamming Ukraine (*NK News*, 10/22/2024)
North Korea denies it has deployed troops to support Russia's war in Ukraine (*NK News*, 10/22/2024)

North Korea denies sending troops to Ukraine amid international condemnation (*UPI*, 10/22/2024)
Russia's friendship with North Korea may have backfired (*Business Insider*, 10/22/2024)
Seoul could send weapons to Ukraine to counter North Korea's troop deployments (*RFA*, 10/22/2024)
Seoul warns it could arm Ukraine to counter North Korean troop deployment (*NK News*, 10/22/2024)
South Korea may consider supplying weapons to Ukraine over North Korea-Russia ties (*Reuters*, 10/22/2024)
South Korea mulls aiding Ukraine amid reports North Korea to assist Russia (*The Guardian*, 10/22/2024)
South Korea threatens to send arms, personnel to Ukraine (VOA, 10/22/2024)
South Korea warns it can send arms to Ukraine after reports of North's troops in Russia (*AP News*, 10/22/2024)
Untested North Korean Pilots Could Fly Russian Warplanes in Ukraine: Report (Newsweek, 10/22/2024)
US consults allies about North Korea troops in Ukraine (*Reuters*, 10/21/2024)

In North Korea:

- Kim Jong Un visited the site of this summer's devastating floods in the northern Jagang Province for the first time on Monday, where he called out problems with constructing new homes and extended his completion deadline. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- Numbers remain far below pre-COVID levels but include rare direct defections over inter-Korean border. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

International:

- The North Korean leader's influential sister threatened "terrible and fatal" retaliation against Seoul on Tuesday, following South Korea and Ukraine's recent allegations that Pyongyang has dispatched troops to support Russia's invasion. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- DPRK representative tells UN claims are 'groundless' as Seoul calls deployment an 'attack' on UN sanctions regime. ((Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- A North Korean representative to the United Nations denied reports that Pyongyang had dispatched thousands of troops to aid Russia in its war against Ukraine, calling the claims "groundless" amid a growing international outcry. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- In response to Russia's strengthened relationship with North Korea, South Korea is threatening to arm Ukraine in its battle against the Russian invasion. (Tom Porter, *Business Insider*)
- South Korea vowed 'phased measures' to counter Russian-North Korean military cooperation. (Taejun Kang, *RFA*)
- Remarks by top official come amid reports that ROK is considering sending team to Ukraine to monitor DPRK soldiers. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

- South Korea may consider directly supplying weapons to Ukraine as part of measures to counter military ties between North Korea and Russia, officials said on Tuesday, after accusing Pyongyang of sending troops to fight for Russia in Ukraine. (Hyunsu Yim, *Reuters*)
- Seoul signals its most proactive position towards arming Ukraine to date. (Pjotr Sauer, *The Guardian*)
- In a statement, South Korea's National Security Council called for the "immediate withdrawal" of North Korean troops from Russia and pledged unspecified "phased countermeasures." (William Gallo, VOA)
- Possible steps include diplomatic, economic and military options, and South Korea could consider sending both defensive and offensive weapons to Ukraine, a senior South Korean presidential official told reporters on condition of anonymity in a background briefing. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)
- A South Korean official reported that North Korea sent fighter pilots to Vladivostok last month, with its ground troops deploying on October 8, according to TV Chosun. (Ryan Chan, *Newsweek*)
- "We are consulting with our allies and partners on the implications of such a dramatic move," deputy U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Robert Wood told the 15-member United Nations Security Council. (Michelle Nichols, *Reuters*)

Prepared by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724071232/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-denies-it-has-deployed-troops-to-support-russias-war-in-ukraine?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, October 23rd, 2024

HRNK Announces Appointment of Greg Scarlatoiu as President and CEO; North Korea's support puts Putin in its debt

Top News:
HRNK Announces Appointment of Greg Scarlatoiu as President and CEO (*HRNK*, 10/23/2024)

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un makes first public visit to ICBM base, calls for modernization (*NK News*, 10/23/2024)
Kim Jong Un visits missile bases, calls for nuclear deterrence against U.S. threat (*UPI*, 10/23/2024)
N. Korean leader urges bolstering war deterrence, citing U.S. nuclear threats (*Yonhap*, 10/23/2024)
North Korea's Kim makes first public visit to ICBM base amid Ukraine deployment, U.S. election (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/23/2024)
Skadoosh! North Korean school uses 'Kung Fu Panda' to teach kids English (*NK News*, 10/23/2024)

International:
NIS says some 3,000 North Korean soldiers deployed for Russia (*The Korea Herald*, 10/23/2024)
N.K. leader's sister accuses S. Korea, Ukraine of provocation, likens them to 'bad dogs bred by the U.S.' (*Yonhap*, 10/22/2024)
N. Korea so far sent 3,000 soldiers to Russia; total 10,000 to be dispatched by Dec. (*Yonhap*, 10/23/2024)
N. Korea's support puts Putin in its debt (*The Korea Herald*, 10/23/2024)
North Korea has sent 7K containers of weapons to Russia in last 2 months (NK *News*, 10/23/2024)
North Korea preparing to send 12K troops to fight against Ukraine, Zelensky says (NK *News*, 10/23/2024)
Russian government jet linked to Kremlin lands in North Korea (NK *News*, 10/23/2024)
Russia pays North Korean soldiers about $2,000 a month (RFA, 10/23/2024)
U.S. dispels suspicion of little confidence in S. Korean intel over N.K. troop dispatch to Russia (*Yonhap*, 10/23/2024)

Top News:

- The board of directors of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) today announced the appointment of **Greg Scarlatoiu as the first President and CEO** of the organization. The move was made possible by a revision in the organization's bylaws, which was unanimously approved by the board. (*HRNK*)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un publicly visited an intercontinental ballistic missile base for the first time and called for modernization to improve quick launch capabilities, according to state media on Wednesday, signaling that the DPRK has deployed its newest long-range weapons targeting the U.S. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspected strategic missile bases and called for bolstering nuclear deterrence against the "ever-increasing threat" posed by the United States, state-run media reported Wednesday. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has once again called for enhancing the country's war deterrence, including the readiness of its nuclear capabilities, in response to what he described as growing nuclear threats from the United States, state media said Wednesday. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un made his first public visit to "strategic missile bases" and inspected long-range missiles capable of reaching the United States, the North's state media reported Wednesday, signaling defiance just two weeks before the U.S. presidential election. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A North Korean elementary school has used the Hollywood blockbuster animation "Kung Fu Panda" to teach English to young students despite the Kim regime's escalating crackdown on the consumption of foreign media. (Seung-Yeon Chung, *NK News*)

International:

- The South Korean spy agency believes up to 10,000 members of North Korean forces could be deployed in Russia's war on Ukraine by December, according to vice chairs of the National Assembly intelligence committee on Wednesday. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un slammed South Korea and Ukraine on Tuesday for what she claimed was a military provocation against Pyongyang, likening the two countries to "bad dogs bred by the U.S." (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- Around 3,000 North Korean soldiers were believed to have been sent to Russia so far to support its ongoing war with Ukraine, with a total of 10,000 expected to be deployed by December. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's dispatch of personnel to support Russia's invasion of Ukraine -- even if their military involvement is limited or indirect -- could put Russian President Vladimir Putin in Pyongyang's debt. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea has shipped an additional 7,000 containers of suspected weapons to Russia over the last two months, according to the latest South Korean estimate, bringing the total number of containers sent to support Moscow's invasion of Ukraine to 20,000. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korea is preparing some 12,000 soldiers to fight for Russia on the front lines against Ukraine, according to President Volodymyr Zelensky, with some units reportedly expected to arrive as early as Wednesday. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- A Russian government jet landed in North Korea on Wednesday, aviation data shows, the latest evidence of continuing cooperation between the two countries amid reports that Pyongyang is sending troops to support Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Russia will pay North Korean troops about US$2,000 per month each as the United States announced there was evidence that the troops were in Russia. South Korea's National Intelligence Service said that more than 3,000 North Korean troops had been sent to Russia, with the total expected to reach 10,000 by December. (Taejun Kang, RFA)
- A State Department spokesperson on Tuesday rejected the notion of the United States having a lack of confidence in South Korea's intelligence confirming North Korea's troop dispatch to support Russia's war against Ukraine, as a cautious Washington has yet to confirm it. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Kate Refolo, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724071517/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-hrnk-announces-appointment-of-greg-scarlatoiu-as-president-and-ceo-north-koreas-support-puts-putin-in-its-debt?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, October 24th, 2024

PRESS RELEASE - HRNK Announces Appointment of Greg Scarlatoiu as President and CEO; US confirms NK sent 3K troops to Russia

Top News:
PRESS RELEASE - HRNK Announces Appointment of Greg Scarlatoiu as President and CEO (*HRNK*, 10/23/2024)

In South Korea:
North Korea uses balloons to scatter anti-Yoon propaganda leaflets over Seoul (*NK News*, 10/24/2024)
South Korea warns it may send Ukraine weapons after North Korea sent troops to Russia (*NPR*, 10/24/2024)

In North Korea:
N. Korea launches around 20 leaflet-carrying balloons toward S. Korea (*Yonhap*, 10/24/2024)

International:
At least 3,000 N. Korean troops sent to eastern Russia this month: White House official (*Yonhap*, 10/24/2024)
Egypt commends military education exchanges with Korea at national Armed Forces Day celebration (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/24/2024)
More Western tech found in North Korean missile used in strike on Ukraine (*NK News*, 10/24/2024)
North Korea sending young conscripts to Ukraine as cannon fodder, says South (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/24/2024)
Russia's parliament ratifies bilateral treaty with N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 10/24/2024)
Seoul's security stakes high in U.S. race as fate of alliance hangs in balance (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/23/2024)
South Korea, U.S. begin combined large-scale air exercise (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/24/2024)
Ukraine urges North Korean soldiers to surrender, offers food, shelter (*RFA*, 10/24/2024)
US says North Korea has sent 3K troops to Russia, confirming allies' claims (*NK News*, 10/24/2024)
U.S. Says North Korean Troops Are in Russia to Aid Fight Against Ukraine (*New York Times*, 10/24/2024)
Yoon says S. Korea could consider sending arms to Ukraine depending on N.K.-Russia military ties (*Yonhap*, 10/24/2024)

Top News:

- The board of directors of the **Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)** today announced the appointment of **Greg Scarlatoiu** as the first **President and CEO** of the organization. The move was made possible by a revision in the organization's bylaws, which was unanimously approved by the board. (*HRNK*)

In South Korea:

- North Korea used balloons to scatter "anti- South Korea leaflets" across Seoul on Thursday, authorities say, marking the first time the DPRK is known to have sent leaflet propaganda over the border in years. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- South Korea's president vowed on Thursday to respond to North Korea's deployment of troops to Russia, including by potentially supplying offensive weapons to Ukraine. (Anthony Kuhn, NPR)

In North Korea:

- North Korea is building unidentified structures on an eastern inter-Korean road that it blew up last week, a source said Thursday, amid heightened cross-border tensions over the North's border activities. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea launched about 20 balloons carrying propaganda leaflets criticizing President Yoon Suk Yeol toward South Korea early Thursday, the South's military said, in the resumption of its balloon campaign after a five-day hiatus. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

International:

- North Korea sent at least 3,000 troops to eastern Russia earlier this month, a White House official confirmed Wednesday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The Defense Attaché Office of the Embassy of Egypt in Seoul hosted the 51st anniversary reception of Egyptian Armed Forces Day on Tuesday, commemorating the Egyptian Army's achievements and promising to continue its efforts to protect and preserve national assets domestically and overseas. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea sourced multiple Western components for a ballistic missile that Russia used in a strike against Ukraine in September, according to new analysis by Kyiv-based investigators, further confirming Pyongyang's success in evading sanctions to acquire parts for its weapons programs. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Most of the North Korean troops deployed to the Russia-Ukraine war are inexperienced conscripts in their teens and early twenties, according to South Korean military authorities Thursday. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The lower house of Russia's parliament on Thursday ratified the bilateral treaty with North Korea that calls for mutual commitment to providing military assistance to each other in the event of an armed attack, Russian media reported. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The South Korean government and people have been closely following the U.S. presidential election and its potential consequences for heightened geopolitical tensions, especially as North Korea increasingly flexes its nuclear capabilities and draws closer to Russia. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea and the United States kicked off a combined large-scale air exercise earlier this week, the South's Air Force said Thursday, amid joint efforts to bolster readiness against North Korean threats. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- Ukraine urged North Korean soldiers arriving in Russia to surrender, offering them food and shelter, as the United States and NATO confirmed for the first time they have evidence of North Koreans deployed to Russia. (Taejun Kang, RFA)
- North Korea dispatched thousands of troops to Russia earlier this month, the U.S. announced on Wednesday, confirming the deployment for the first time amid concerns that the soldiers will support Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III called the situation "very, very serious," though he said that what the soldiers were doing in Russia was "left to be seen." (Eric Schmidt et al., *New York Times*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol said Thursday that South Korea could consider providing arms to Ukraine, depending on the extent of military cooperation between Russia and North Korea, vowing not to "sit idle" in response to Pyongyang's troop dispatch to Russia. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by James Campbell, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724071632/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-press-release-hrnk-announces-appointment-of-greg-scarlatoiu-as-president-and-ceo-us-confirms-nk-sent-3k-troops-to-russia?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, October 25th, 2024

North Korea says any deployment to aid Russia would be lawful; Pyongyang erects blockades along inter-Korean railways

In North Korea:
N. Korea's parliament adopts new law on national anthem (*Yonhap*, 10/25/2024)
North Korea adopts new law on anthem as unification symbol purge continues (*NK News*, 10/25/2024)
North Korean hackers create fake version of NFT tank game to steal crypto (*NK News*, 10/25/2024)
What to Know About North Korea's Military Capabilities (*The New York Times*, 10/24/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
North Korea building concrete wall on eastern inter-Korean border, photos show (*NK News*, 10/25/2024)
Pyongyang erects blockades along inter-Korean railways (*The Korea Herald*, 10/25/2024)

International:
N. Korea condemns G7 meeting of defense ministers (*Yonhap*, 10/25/2024)
N. Korea says troop dispatch to Russia, if true, falls in line with int'l law (*Yonhap*, 10/25/2024)

North Korea denounces UN chief's call for 'restraint' amid inter-Korean tensions (*NK News*, 10/25/2024)
North Korean troops already in combat zones bordering Ukraine, Kyiv says (*NK News*, 10/25/2024)
North Korea says any deployment to aid Russia would be lawful (*Reuters*, 10/25/2024)
Putin Appears to Say That North Korean Troops Are in Russia (*The New York Times*, 10/24/2024)
Putin doesn't deny North Korean troop presence, but says NATO escalated first (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/25/2024)
Putin says Russia-N. Korea military cooperation is 'our business' (*Yonhap*, 10/25/2024)
Russian soldiers heard condemning North Korean recruits in intercepted audio (CNN, 10/25/2024)
Russia says N. Korean leader Kim's visit to Russia possible next year (*Yonhap*, 10/25/2024)
UN aid groups receive OK to send health care, farming equipment to North Korea (*NK News*, 10/25/2024)
U.N. voices opposition to 'further militarization' of Ukraine conflict amid concerns over N.K. troop dispatch (*Yonhap*, 10/25/2024)
Zelenskyy says Ukraine expects N. Korean troops to be deployed in battlefield in few days (*Yonhap*, 10/25/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea's parliament has convened a meeting to adopt a new law on its national anthem in what observers believe was aimed to uphold leader Kim Jong-un's "two hostile states" stance. (Kim Hanjoo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's rubber stamp legislative body adopted a new law on the country's national anthem likely as part of efforts to update its legal framework to match new policy on abandoning unification. (Jeongmin Kim, Seung-Yeon Chung, *NK News*)
- North Korean cybercriminals created a fake version of a real online game to steal cryptocurrency and user data, exploiting previously unknown vulnerabilities in the Google Chrome web browser, according to a Russian cybersecurity firm. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- The North's nuclear forces have been the focus of global concern. But its conventional military is vast and empowered — even if it is hobbled by shortages, corruption and isolation. (Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korea has erected a concrete wall along the easternmost part of the inter-Korean border in recent months, in what could be a preview of plans to further fortify the DMZ in line with efforts to completely sever all connections to the South. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- In a latest development in North Korea's isolationist policy, new blockades were being built along inter-Korean railways running along the east and west sides of the Korean Peninsula to fortify the border areas. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)

International:

- North Korea on Friday denounced the latest meeting of defense ministers of the Group of Seven, claiming what it called the "war contractor group" took issue with North Korea's policy of nuclear forces. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's foreign ministry said any reported dispatch of North Korean troops to Russia, if true, would align with international law. Kim Jong-gyu made the remark after one of North Korea's United Nations representatives dismissed Seoul's claims of its troop dispatch to Russia as a "groundless rumor." (Kang Yoon-seung, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea condemned the U.N. secretary-general for calling for “restraint after Pyongyang blew up inter-Korean roads last week, accusing him of "double standards" for not criticizing Seoul's alleged drone intrusion. (Seung-Yeon Chung, *NK News*)
- North Korean troops dispatched to support Russia’s war efforts have already arrived in combat zones, including the Kursk region bordering Ukraine, Kyiv announced on Thursday. The DIU said on social media that the first units reached the war theater after training at military sites in eastern Russia. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Korea said on Friday any move to send its troops to assist Russia in its war in Ukraine would be in line with international law, although it stopped short of confirming that such a deployment had taken place. (*Reuters*)
- President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia appeared to acknowledge on Thursday that North Korean troops had been deployed to Russia, commenting for the first time on the assessment of Western officials that the reclusive Asian country had joined Russia’s war effort against Ukraine. “Images — that is something serious, if there are images they are a reflection of something,” he said, responding to a question about satellite images appearing to show North Korean troops in Russia. (Valerie Hopkins, *The New York Times*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin did not deny evidence recently presented by the United States that North Korea had sent troops to Russia but also accused NATO of escalating the war in Ukraine first. The remarks were made at a press conference on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Kazan, western Russia. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin said Thursday his country's military cooperation with North Korea is "our business," according to media reports, as he addressed a question about Pyongyang's troop dispatch to support Russia's war in Ukraine. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Russian soldiers have been heard raising concerns, including racist remarks, about how North Korean soldiers will be commanded and provided with ammunition and military kit, leaked intercepts obtained by the Defense Intelligence of Ukraine and released on Friday show. (Victoria Butenk, Maria Kostenko, Lauren Kent, *CNN*)
- Russia said Friday that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un visiting Moscow next year is a possibility, noting that high-level exchanges are always taking place with Pyongyang as its "close neighbor." (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- UNICEF and the Food and Agriculture Organization have received new sanctions exemptions to send health care and agricultural equipment to North Korea, U.N. records show. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- The United Nations Secretariat expressed its opposition Thursday to the "further militarization" of the ongoing war in Ukraine amid growing concerns that North Korean troops could be deployed to support Russian forces in the armed conflict. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

- Zelenskyy called for "a principled and strong response" from global leaders against Russia's efforts to continue the war with Ukraine amidst recent intelligence indicating Russia's intent to deploy North Korean soldiers into combat zones within a few days. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724072037/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-says-any-deployment-to-aid-russia-would-be-lawful-pyongyang-erects-blockades-along-inter-korean-railways?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, October 26th, 2024

Russia and North Korea don‘t deny reports of Pyongyang’s involvement in Ukraine war

Inter-Korean Relations:
North Korea Construction at the East and West Border Crossings (*38 North*, 10/25/2024)

International:
N. Korea slams Seoul-Washington joint air exercise (*Yonhap*, 10/26/2024)
North Korean troops are at Russian military training site, videos show (*The Washington Post*, 10/26/2024)
Russia and North Korea don‘t deny reports of Pyongyang’s involvement in Ukraine war (*Radio Free Asia*, 10/25/2024)
S. Korea, U.S, Japan hope for China's 'constructive' role over N.K.-Russia military cooperation: Seoul official (*Yonhap*, 10/26/2024)
Top S. Korean, U.S., Japanese security officials voice 'grave concern' over N.K. troop dispatch to Russia: White House (*Yonhap*, 10/26/2024)
Ukraine war briefing: Russia plans to send North Korean troops into battle as early as Sunday, Zelenskiyy says (*The Guardian*, 10/25/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- Just over a week since North Korea demolished the two main road and rail links connecting it to South Korea, commercial satellite imagery indicates work has begun on a new border fortification or obstacle where the road and railways once sat. (Martyn Williams, Peter Makowsky, Iliana Ragnone, *38 North*)

International:

- North Korea lambasted South Korea and the United States for staging a joint air exercise, accusing Washington of driving the Korean Peninsula into an "uncontrollable" situation. The Freedom Flag exercise kicked off this week to run through next Friday, with the air forces of South Korea and the U.S., as well as Australia, participating. (Kim Na-young, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean troops appear to be on-site alongside Russian soldiers at a military complex in Russia's far east, potentially preparing for deployment in the war against Ukraine, according to a Washington Post analysis of videos that have recently surfaced on social media. The videos show dozens of what appear to be North Korean men at Sergeevka military training ground near Vladivostok, a major eastern port city close to the border with North Korea. (Michelle Ye Hee Lee, Jonathan Baran, *The Washington Post*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin declined to deny or confirm that North Korea had sent troops to help his army, adding that Russia and North Korea would themselves decide how to implement their pact to aid each other if attacked. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)
- South Korea, the United States and Japan hope that China will play a "constructive" role to help address concerns over a deepening military alignment between North Korea and Russia. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The national security advisors of South Korea, the United States and Japan expressed "grave concern" Friday over North Korea's troop dispatch to Russia possibly for use in the war against Ukraine, and called for the two countries to cease such military cooperation. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Ukraine president urged world leaders to pile 'tangible pressure' on Pyongyang as South Korea urges Russia to stop its 'illegal cooperation' with North Korea. An explainer on what we know on day 976. (Guardian staff and agencies, *The Guardian*)

Prepared by Gloria Guo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724072151/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-russia-and-north-korea-dont-deny-reports-of-pyongyangs-involvement-in-ukraine-war?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, October 27th, 2024

State Department Launches North Korean Defector Resettlement Support Network, Friends for Future

Top News:
State Department Launches North Korean Defector Resettlement Support Network, Friends for Future (VOA, 10/23/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

International:
North Korea's military personnel in Russia expected to hit 5,000 (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/27/2024)
S. Korean delegation to brief NATO this week on N. Korean troops in Russia (*Yonhap*, 10/27/2024)
Signs point to N. Korean troops in Russia-Ukraine combat zone (*The Korea Herald*, 10/27/2024)

Top News:

- The U.S. government has announced a new project to support the resettlement of North Korean defectors and the advancement of North Korean human rights via the Diplomacy Lab, a partnership between the government and public institutions. (Ahn So-young, VOA)

International:

- North Korean military personnel have been gathering in Russia's Kursk region, a contested area that borders Ukraine, with up to 5,000 troops expected to assemble by Monday, according to a news report. (Seo Ji-Eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A delegation of South Korean intelligence and government officials will visit Brussels this week to brief the North Atlantic Treaty Organization on North Korea's deployment of troops to Russia, officials said Sunday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- Growing indications suggest that North Korean troops are on the brink of deployment to support Russia's war efforts in Ukraine, as North Korean soldiers have reportedly arrived in Russia's Kursk region, where Russian and Ukrainian forces have been battling for control of key strategic border location. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)

State Department Launches North Korean Defector Resettlement Support Network, Friends for Future

Ahn So-young, *VOA News*
October 23, 2024

The U.S. government has announced a new project to support the resettlement of North Korean defectors. It is strengthening the support network for North Korean defectors and, for the first time, implementing a program related to advancing North Korean human rights via the Diplomacy Lab, a partnership between the government and public institutions. This is Ahn So-young reporting.

On the 21st, the U.S. State Department reaffirmed its commitment to assisting the successful resettlement of North Korean defectors.

On this day, in a press release titled 'Engagement, Education, and Empowerment for North Korean Survivors,' issued under spokesperson Matthew Miller, the State Department stated:

[Press Release] "The State Department has engaged with educational institutions, civil society, and the private sector to share resources and best practices to support North Koreans in building new lives. Today, we are pleased to announce a resource hub, which includes support for education and English language training and the establishment of a network to connect stakeholders working on DPRK human rights issues."

Marking the 10th anniversary of the publication of the United Nations Commission of Inquiry (COI) report on North Korean human rights, it recalled that on the 18th, a trilateral meeting to promote North Korean human rights was held in Washington, D.C., with the participation of U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell, South Korean Unification Minister Kim Young-ho, and Japan's Ambassador to the U.S. Shigeo Yamada. It emphasized that "the U.S. is adopting a survivor-centered approach to advancing the human rights of North Korean citizens."

"The long-term goal is the integration of North Korean defectors into American society."

Furthermore, it announced the launch of Friends for Future, a resource-sharing network for North Korean defectors within the United States.

[Press Release] “The network aims to advance their dignity and long-term integration into U.S. society. This U.S.-based network consists of community-based organizations, student volunteers, educational institutions, and other professionals from different cities, each offering services and resources essential for the North Koreans. Many organizations in the network have experience supporting immigrant, refugee, Asian American, and other communities and are now expanding their outreach to North Korean escapees.”

The State Department explained that Friends for the Future aims to enhance the dignity of North Korean defectors and, in the long term, integrate them into American society.

It further explained that this U.S.-based network is composed of community-based organizations, student volunteers, educational institutions, and other professionals in various cities.

The State Department also announced that, for the first time, the Diplomacy Lab - a public-private project launched in 2013 to study foreign policy challenges - will undertake three projects aimed at advancing North Korean human rights and strengthening the security of the United States and its allies.

[Press Release] “For the first time, Diplomacy Lab will offer three specific projects aimed at advancing the human rights of North Koreans and enhancing the security of the United States and its allies. These projects, available for over 60 U.S. universities participating in Diplomacy Lab during the Spring 2025 semester, include:Analyzing technology solutions to increase North Koreans’ access to independent information; fostering global business due diligence by identifying forced labor by the DPRK regime and supply chain risks; and exploring potential avenues for accountability and transitional justice through survivor-centered documentation.”

It added that the related projects are scheduled to be conducted during the spring 2025 semester at over 60 U.S. universities participating in the Diplomacy Lab.

The State Department explained that students participating in the Diplomacy Lab will have the opportunity to explore related projects of the State Department, receive guidance from faculty experts in their fields, and directly engage in policy decision-making.

Greg Scarlatoiu, President and CEO of the Washington-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, said in a phone call with VOA on the 22nd that the State Department's announcement of a new program to support the resettlement of North Korean defectors in the U.S. is "very important" in terms of providing a "tailored approach."

[Recording: President and CEO Greg Scarlatoiu] "One of the biggest challenges dealing with the resettlement of North Korean refugees, former North Koreans in the United States, has been that the numbers have been low. It is very difficult to have a program customized for former North Koreans if you don't have higher numbers. Other refugees have resettled here in much, much higher numbers. That's why this program is so important, because it adopts a targeted approach. This program is meant to help North Korean refugees, in particular former North Korean refugees, in particular in a variety of areas that are truly areas of need."

Scarlatoiu pointed out that one of the reasons it is difficult for North Korean defectors to settle in the United States is that their numbers are much smaller compared to refugee populations from other countries.

He further noted that when the refugee population is not large, it becomes difficult to run tailored programs for them. However, he remarked that the project announced by the State Department is meaningful, as it is designed to provide support in various areas that North Korean defectors actually need.

Specifically mentioning the Diplomacy Lab, he emphasized that "promoting North Korean human rights issues on campus is very important," and added that "the State Department's decision to expose young Americans to this in today's era is encouraging."

This is Ahn So-young reporting, *VOA News*.

Translated by Hannah Starnes, HRNK Research Intern; Edited by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Jenna Pae, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724072403/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-state-department-launches-north-korean-defector-resettlement-support-network-friends-for-future?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Monday, October 28th, 2024

North Korean troops in Russia bring a "World-Island" conflict a step closer

Top News:
North Korean troops in Russia bring a 'World-Island' conflict a step closer (*The Washington Post*, 10/28/2024)

In South Korea:
3 arrested on Jeju as anti-state spy ring investigation deepens (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/28/2024)

Abductee families' group to send leaflets to Pyongyang this week (*Yonhap*, 10/28/2024)
South Korean military warns of countermeasures against North Korean drone threats (*The Korean Herald*, 10/28/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
N. Korea claims S. Korean drone took off from western border island in Oct. for incursion into Pyongyang (*Yonhap*, 10/28/2024)
North claims analysis of drone proves departure from South's Baengyeong Island (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/28/2024)

International:
Nato says North Korean troops deployed to Russia's Kursk region (BBC, 10/28/2024)
Russia sending 'mercenaries' from N. Korea to frontline in trucks with civilian license plates (Yonhap, 10/28/2024)
S. Korea to hold int'l forum on N. Korea's human rights in Geneva this week (*Yonhap*, 10/28/2024)
S. Korea to hold talks with NATO allies amid NK troops in Russia (*The Korea Herald*, 10/28/2024)
Ukraine says 'matter of days' before North Korean troops reach front line (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/28/2024)
Zelenskyy says N. Korean troops in Russia may join battlefield 'in a matter of days' (*Yonhap*, 10/28/2024)

Top News:

- With the dispatch of thousands of North Korean special forces toward the front lines in Russia's war against Ukraine — a development first reported by South Korean and Ukrainian intelligence sources, now confirmed by U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin — the emerging contours of global struggle in the post-Cold War era are coming into sharper focus. (Nicholas Eberstadt, *The Washington Post* - Dr. Eberstadt is a founding member of HRNK's Board of Directors)

In South Korea:

- Jeju police said they arrested three people on suspicion of violating the National Security Act on Monday as they deepened their investigation into alleged spy rings on the island and across the country. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A group representing the families of those abducted by North Korea said Monday it would fly leaflets into North Korea this week, aiming to raise awareness about the abductee issue. (Park Sang-soo, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's military on Monday warned of "corresponding measures" in response to North Korea threatening to fly an uncrewed aerial vehicle over Seoul. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korea said Monday that its analysis of the flight log of a drone that crashed in Pyongyang earlier this month showed it took off from a South Korean border island in the

Yellow Sea, insisting that the South Korean military is behind what it claimed were South Korea's drone incursions. (Kim Soo-yeon, Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

- North Korea on Monday intensified its accusations that South Korea is behind a drone infiltration to drop anti-regime propaganda leaflets on Pyongyang, with "the final results of investigation" claiming that a South Korean drone took off from Baengnyeong Island earlier this month and flew toward the capital. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- North Korean troops have been deployed to Russia and are operating in the Kursk border region where Ukrainian troops have a foothold, Nato has said for the first time. (Matt Murphy, *BBC*)
- Russia is using civilian-plated trucks to transport "mercenaries" from North Korea to a frontline area, Ukraine's military intelligence service has said, amid concerns over North Korean troops possibly joining combat in Russia's war on Ukraine. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- The unification ministry said Monday it will hold a two-day forum on North Korea's human rights situation in Switzerland this week ahead of the United Nations' review of the North's human rights record next month. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea is set to convene its first 2+2 foreign and defense ministerial meeting with the United States in more than three years, paired with inaugural 2+2 talks with Canada, at a critical juncture marked by concerns of possible North Korean troop deployment to the Ukraine-Russia combat zone. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korean troops were spotted en route to Ukraine's front lines to fight along with Russia using "civilian vehicles," Ukrainian authorities reported Sunday. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said his country could soon be forced to fight North Korean troops as they could join the battlefield against Ukraine "in a matter of days." (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Bryan Clark, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724072608/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korean-troops-in-russia-bring-a-world-island-conflict-a-step-closer?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, October 29th, 2024

N.K. beefing up security for Kim Jong-un due to assassination fears; North's foreign minister leaves for Russia amid troop dispatch

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un appears to fear possible assassination, South Korean spy agency says (*NK News*, 10/29/2024)
NIS says Kim Jong-un's daughter Ju-ae's clearly in line to rule (*The Korea Herald*, 10/29/2024)
N. Korea beefing up security for Kim Jong-un due to assassination possibility (*Yonhap*, 10/29/2024)

In South Korea:
Defense stocks on rally as North Korea enters Russia's war (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/292/2024)
South Korea says Russia-North Korea military cooperation 'poses significant security threat' (VOA, 10/29/2024)

International:
Ex-North Korean Soldiers' Bold Offer: Disrupt North Korean "Volunteers" Fighting for Russia (*The National Interest*, 10/29/2024)
Footage of North's troops in Russia spark concerns about malnourishment (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/29/2024)
N. Korean advance unit possibly moving to war front line in Russia (*Yonhap*, 10/29/2024)
N. Korean artillery shells supplied to Russia appear to be 'poor' in quality (*Yonhap*, 10/29/2024)
No new limits on Ukraine's use of US arms if North Korea joins Russia's fight, Pentagon says (*Reuters*, 10/28/2024)
North Korea has sent up to $5.5B in weapons to Russia since last year (*NK News*, 10/29/2024)
North Korean foreign minister arrives in Russia (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/29/2024)
North Korean soldiers learning Russian commands and may be sent to Ukraine front lines, South Korean lawmakers say (CNN, 10/29/2024)
North Korean troops have deployed to Russia's Kursk region, NATO says (*The Washington Post*, 10/28/2024)
North Korean troops in Russia may have reached front line (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/29/2024)
North Korean troops 'secretly taken to Kursk front line in civilian lorries' (*The Telegraph*, 10/29/2024)
North Korea's foreign minister leaves for Russia amid troop dispatch (*Reuters*, 10/28/2024)
North Korea's top diplomat visits Russia amid criticism of DPRK troop deployment (*NK News*, 10/29/2024)
Ukraine Braces for Russians to Assault With North Korean Troops (*The New York Times*, 10/28/2024)
Ukraine envoy to travel to S. Korea as Yoon, Zelenskyy vow strategic cooperation (*The Korea Herald*, 10/29/2024)
Ukraine says over 3,000 'mercenaries' from N. Korea training in Russia's Kursk region (*Yonhap*, 10/29/2024)
Ukraine, S.Korea to enhance cooperation to counter N.Korea, Zelenskiy says (*Reuters*, 10/29/2024)
U.S. says N. Korea has sent about 10,000 troops to eastern Russia (*Yonhap*, 10/29/2024)
US urges China to use influence amid 'destabilizing' action by North Korea, Russia (*Radio Free Asia*, 10/29/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un appears to harbor concerns about the possibility of being assassinated, according to South Korea's intelligence service, citing signs that the authoritarian ruler has ramped up security measures at his public appearances this year. (Joon Ha Park, Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- The NIS said Tuesday that N. Korean leader Kim's daughter, Kim Ju-ae, appears to be on a rising path to power. The NIS said Kim's pre-teen daughter was increasingly visible at Workers' Party of Korea events. She was frequently spotted next to her father, with official media carrying photographs of just the two of them. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- The NIS told South Korean lawmakers that the North has raised the level of security around Kim due to possible attempts on his life by operating communications jamming vehicles and making efforts to introduce drone detection equipment, as it noted that Kim's public activities this year are up about 60 percent from last year. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- As tensions rise between the two Koreas following the North's dispatch of troops to Russia, defense stocks in the South are on a rally. Foreign investors have been fueling the uptrend by picking up shares of South Korean arms dealers, including the country's four major suppliers. (Shin Ha-Nee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said Tuesday that military cooperation between North Korea and Russia "poses a significant security threat to the international community." (Carla Babb, VOA)

International:

- In a unique development, around 200 North Korean defectors in South Korea, all former soldiers, have volunteered to aid Ukraine by psychologically targeting North Korean "volunteer" soldiers who are reportedly supporting Russia on the frontlines. (Peter Suciu, *The National Interest*)
- Videos of North Korean soldiers in Russia for training that have leaked online in recent days have reopened concerns in South Korea over the extent of malnourishment inside the regime due to food shortages. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- An advance team of North Korean troops, including a ranking Army general, is believed to be making its way to the front lines of the war in Russia near Ukraine according to NIS intelligence. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean artillery shells provided to Russia in support of Moscow's war in Ukraine appear to be "poor" in quality, failing to hit targets and exploding at the wrong time, a report citing a Ukrainian military official showed Tuesday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. will not impose new limits on Ukraine's use of American weapons if North Korea joins Russia's war, the Pentagon said on Monday, as NATO said North Korean military units had been deployed to the Kursk region in Russia. (*Reuters*)
- North Korea has supplied as much as $5.5 billion worth of weapons to Russia since last year, according to a new report, underscoring how arms shipments and troop deployments in

support of Moscow's war in Ukraine generate revenue for the Kim regime. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)

- North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui arrived in the eastern port city of Vladivostok on Tuesday, according to Russian state media, amid mounting evidence that North Korean troops are readying to join the war against Ukraine. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean soldiers may be being readied for a move to the front lines of Russia's war against Ukraine after being taught basic Russian commands, South Korean lawmakers told reporters on Tuesday, citing the country's intelligence officials. (Jessie Yeung, Gawon Bae, CNN)
- NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte said Monday that North Korean soldiers have been deployed to Kursk, the Russian border region where Ukrainian forces seized territory in a surprise attack over the summer, in what could be a "dangerous expansion" of the war in Ukraine. (Ellen Francis, Dan Lamothe, *The Washington Post*)
- The NIS said that the "mobilization of troops between North Korea and Russia is in progress," adding that it is "leaving open the possibility of some personnel, including high-ranking military generals, moving to the front line," in a meeting on Tuesday with lawmakers. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean soldiers are being covertly transported to the front line in Russia's southern Kursk region using civilian lorries, according to Ukrainian intelligence. (James Kilner, *The Telegraph*)
- North Korea's foreign minister, Choe Son Hui, is on her way to Moscow, state media KCNA and Russian officials said on Tuesday, for her second trip to Russia in six weeks amid rising concerns about Pyongyang's involvement in Moscow's war in Ukraine. (*Reuters*)
- North Korea's top diplomat is visiting Russia this week, underscoring the two countries' push for a united front against international criticism of the DPRK's alleged troop deployment in support of Moscow's invasion. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- Several thousand North Korean soldiers have arrived in Russia's western Kursk region, where they are expected to support Moscow's efforts to dislodge invading Ukrainian forces. (Constant Méheut, *The New York Times*)
- Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will appoint a special envoy to South Korea following talks held with President Yoon Suk Yeol over the phone pledging strategic cooperation in a bid to counter North Korean troops in Russia. (Son Ji-hyoung, *The Korea Herald*)
- More than 3,000 "mercenaries" from North Korea have begun training on the ground in a front-line area in the Russia-Ukraine war, reported by the National Resistance Center following the U.S.'s report of 10,000 North Korean troops being sent to train in eastern Russia. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Tuesday he had agreed with South Korea's president to step up contacts between their nations at all levels to develop countermeasures and strategies to respond to North Korea's involvement in Ukraine war. (*Reuters*)
- North Korea has sent around 10,000 troops to eastern Russia, which will likely augment Russian forces near Ukraine "over the next several weeks," a U.S. National Security Council official said Monday, as President Joe Biden called the deployment "very dangerous." (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

- The United States has voiced concern to China over "destabilizing" actions by North Korea and Russia, said the U.S. State Department's spokesperson, as it confirmed the deployment of around 10,000 North Korean troops to Russia. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724072805/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-nk-beefing-up-security-for-kim-jong-un-due-to-assassination-fears-norths-foreign-minister-leaves-for-russia-amid-troop-dispatch?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, October 30th, 2024

North Korean Troops Deploy to Russia's Kursk Region, NATO Confirms

Top News:
North Korea's Lawfare Strategy (*HRNK Insider*, 10/30/2024)

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un sensitive to criticism of regime's human rights abuses: Ex-diplomats (*NK News*, 10/30/2024)
N. Korea's 8,400-strong hacking group escalates attacks on S. Korea (*Yonhap*, 10/30/2024)
North Korea joins forces with underground hackers to spread ransomware: Report (*NK News Pro*, 10/30/2024)
North Korea likely to launch ICBM as early as November, say South Korean lawmakers (*The Independent*, 10/30/2024)
North Korea plagued by one of world's highest tuberculosis rates: WHO data (*NK News*, 10/30/2024)
South Korean lawmakers say North may test ICBM around the time of US presidential election (*Reuters*, 10/30/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korea considers sending team to Ukraine to monitor North Korean troops (*Reuters*, 10/30/2024)

International:
How Russia is transporting North Korean troops to the front lines of Ukraine war (*NK News*, 10/29/2024)
N. Korean advance unit possibly deployed to Russia's front lines: military (*Yonhap*, 10/30/2024)
N. Korea, Russia hold joint IT exhibition in Pyongyang for 1st time in 18 yrs (*Yonhap*, 10/30/2024)

North Korean Troops Deploy to Russia's Kursk Region, NATO Confirms (*Foreign Policy*, 10/30/2024)
North Korean troops sent to Russia may be pleased to be there, even as they face ferocious fighting (*Associated Press*, 10/30/2024)
North Korea's troop deployment to Ukraine could test Beijing-Pyongyang ties (VOA, 10/30/2024)
Russia and Ukraine exchange drone strikes as North Korea's top diplomat visits Moscow (*Associated Press*, 10/30/2024)
Small number of North Korean troops are already inside Ukraine, officials say (CNN, 10/30/2024)
Ukraine-Russia war live: Some North Koreans 'already in Ukraine' as Kyiv drafts 160,000 troops (*The Independent*, 10/30/2024)
U.S. calls Russia's training of N.K. troops UNSC resolution breach, stresses ability to impose sanctions (*Yonhap*, 10/30/2024)

Top News:

- Under threat from the "Hallyu" South Korean Wave, the Kim family regime resorts to unprecedented coercion and punishment to repel information entering North Korea from the outside world. In the last four years, the Kim regime has compelled the DPRK Supreme People's Assembly to pass laws designed to restrict North Korean citizens from learning of the outside world. (Robert Collins, *HRNK Insider*)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is sensitive to international criticism of his regime's human rights record, ordering measures to deflect attention from abuses but also enacting some limited reforms, according to two former DPRK diplomats. (Ifang Bremer, Seung-Yeon Chung, *NK News*)
- North Korea's state-sponsored cyberunit, comprising some 8,400 hackers, has mounted over 10,000 attacks against South Korea this year. The number of hacking attempts has been on a steady rise from around 9,000 cases in 2022 and 13,000 in 2023. (Woo Jae-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- A North Korean threat actor known for carrying out cyberespionage and extortion campaigns may have joined forces with an underground cybercrime collective for the first time to deploy ransomware, according to a U.S. cybersecurity firm. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Korea might proceed with an intercontinental ballistic missile launch as early as November. During a briefing, MP Lee Seong-kweun disclosed that a mobile launcher has been positioned at a possible test site, with timing speculated to coincide with the US presidential election on 5 November. (Namita Singh, *The Independent*)
- North Korea is still plagued by one of the highest rates of tuberculosis in the world. According to the WHO's 2024 Global Tuberculosis Report, North Korea had an estimated 135,000 cases of tuberculosis in 2023, a thousand more than the year before. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- North Korea has moved into place a launcher ready for an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), and may decide to set it off around the time of the U.S. presidential election, South Korean lawmakers said, citing military intelligence. (Jack Kim, *Reuters*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea is considering sending a team of military monitors to Ukraine to observe and analyse the expected deployment of North Korean troops by Russia on the frontlines of the conflict there, a presidential official said on Wednesday. (Hyunsu Yim, Jack Kim, *Reuters*)

International:

- Reports that North Korean troops have already arrived in combat zones bordering Ukraine have raised alarm about their rapid deployment in support of Russia's invasion. South Korea, the U.S. and others have assessed that Russia transported North Korean personnel to training centers. (Ifang Bremer, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- An advance team of North Korean troops may have been deployed to the front lines of Russia's war against Ukraine, South Korea's military intel agency said Wednesday. The Defense Intelligence Agency reported the information to lawmakers during a regular parliamentary audit. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- A joint exhibition aimed at promoting information technology exchanges between North Korea and Russia has opened in Pyongyang, the North's state media said Wednesday, marking their first such event in 18 years. The 2024 DPRK-Russia IT products exhibition opened on Tuesday. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- NATO confirmed on Monday that North Korean troops have deployed to Russia's Kursk region. This marks a "significant escalation" in the war, NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte said, adding that the deployment is a sign of Russian President Vladimir Putin's "growing desperation." (Alexandra Sharp, *Foreign Policy*)
- The thousands of young soldiers North Korea has sent to Russia, are mostly elite special forces, but that hasn't stopped speculation they'll be slaughtered because they have no combat experience, no familiarity with the terrain and will likely be dropped onto the most ferocious battlefields. (Hyung-Jin Kim, *Associated Press*)
- As Ukraine braces to face North Korean troops who are believed to be in the Russian border region of Kursk, analysts say China should be concerned about stronger pressure and responses from NATO, which sees Beijing as an enabler of Pyongyang and a supporter of Russia's war against Ukraine. (Christy Lee, VOA)
- Russia and Ukraine exchanged scores of drone strikes Wednesday as North Korea's top diplomat arrived in Russia for talks after his country reportedly deployed thousands of soldiers to help Moscow's war efforts. Ukraine's air force said that Russia launched 62 drones and one missile overnight. (Illia Novikov, *Associated Press*)
- A small number of North Korean troops are already inside Ukraine, according to two western intelligence officials, and officials expect that number to grow as the North Koreans complete training in eastern Russia and move toward the front lines of the war. (Natasha Bertrand, CNN)
- North Korean troops are reportedly already inside Ukraine. "It seems that a good many of them are already in action," a Western intelligence official said, adding that the number of North Korean soldiers inside Ukraine is expected to grow as they complete training in eastern Russia. (Arpan Rai, Rachel Hagan, Tara Cobham, *The Independent*)

- The United States on Tuesday reiterated that Russia's training of North Korean troops is a "direct" violation of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions, after Washington confirmed Pyongyang has sent around 10,000 North Korean troops to train in eastern Russia. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Katherine Mitchell, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724072904/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korean-troops-deploy-to-russias-kursk-region-nato-confirms?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Thursday, October 31st, 2024

Greg Scarlatoiu interviews with Colombia's Testigo Directo TV's Rodrigo Rodriquez-Morales

Top News:
Greg Scarlatoiu interviews with Colombia's Testigo Directo TV's Rodrigo Rodriquez-Morales, addressing the dispatch of North Korean soldiers to the Ukrainian front (Testigo Directo TV, 10/27/2024)

In North Korea:
NK fires ICBM shortly after S. Korea, US warn against troop dispatch to Russia (The Korea Times, 10/31/2024)
N.K. leader says ICBM launch demonstrates 'counteraction will' against rivals (Yonhap, 10/31/2024)
N. Korea launches new solid-fuel ICBM ahead of U.S. election (Yonhap, 10/31/2024)
North Korea launches ICBM that sets flight time record (Korea JoongAng Daily, 10/31/2024)
North Korea leader says longest ICBM test 'appropriate military action' against enemies (Reuters, 10/31/2024)
Quick Take: Large Trenches Across Former Border Links (38 North, 10/30/2024)

In South Korea:
Dozens of North Korean defectors caught by secret police 'vanish', says rights group (Reuters, 10/31/2024)
N. Korea's state security ministry key 'perpetrator' of enforced disappearances: report (Yonhap, 10/31/2024)
N. Korean troops in Russia will end up as 'cannon fodder': S. Korean envoy (Yonhap, 10/31/2024)
S. Korea's military condemns N.K.'s ICBM launch as 'illegal, reckless' provocation (Yonhap, 10/31/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Efforts to disperse anti-North Korea leaflets stopped by police and local residents in Paju (Korea JoongAng Daily, 10/31/2024)
Seoul imposes new sanctions on North Korea over latest ICBM launch (NK News, 10/31/2024)

International:
Chinese police ranked 2nd in N. Korean enforced disappearances: report (The Korea Herald, 10/31/2024)
Great powers clash at UN Security Council over North Korean troops in Russia (NK News, 10/31/2024)
Kremlin, asked if Russia is helping North Korea with missile technology, declines comment (Reuters, 10/31/2024)
S. Korean, U.S. defense chiefs condemn N.K. troop dispatch to Russia in 'strongest' terms 'with one voice' (Yonhap, 10/31/2024)
UK urged to break with France, North Korea and Russia on UN nuclear war resolution (The Guardian, 10/31/2024)
U.S. envoy warns N. Korean soldiers will come back in 'body bags' if they enter Ukraine to help Russia (Yonhap, 10/31/2024)
US, ROK omit goal of North Korean denuclearization from major defense statement (NK News, 10/31/2024)
U.S. 'strongly' condemns N. Korea's ICBM test, vows to ensure security of S. Korea, Japan: White House (Yonhap, 10/31/2024)
Waves of Russia's war ripple toward South with North's troop dispatch (Korea JoongAng Daily, 10/31/2024)

Top News:

- **President and CEO of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)**, **Greg Scarlatoiu**, interviewed by Rodrigo Rodrigues-Morales, from Columbian network Testigo Directo, speaks on the state of North Korean soldiers being deployed into the Ukraine War and the scale of what this means for North Korea's push towards a better relationship with Russia. Scarlatoiu remarks, "The growing scale and escalation that is happening right now, I would say, is quite unprecedented. And we are seeing the largest exports of ammunition and weaponry for profit in the history of the DPRK." (*Testigo Directo*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea fired an intercontinental ballistic missile toward the East Sea, Thursday, just hours after the defense ministers of both South Korea and the United States condemned Pyongyang's recent troop deployment to Russia. (Lee Hyo-jin, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korea fired what appeared to be a new type of solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile toward the East Sea on Thursday, South Korea's military said, in an apparent move aimed at flaunting its nuclear capabilities ahead of the U.S. presidential election next week. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un confirmed the launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile on Thursday, describing it as demonstrating the country's "counteraction will" against its enemies. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea launched an intercontinental ballistic missile Thursday at a lofted trajectory, setting the record for its longest ICBM flight at 86 minutes. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea said it tested an intercontinental ballistic missile on Thursday, upgrading what it called the "world's most powerful strategic weapon", as Seoul warned Pyongyang could get missile technology from Russia for helping with the war in Ukraine. (Jack Kim, Kaori Kaneko, *Reuters*)
- Commercial satellite imagery shows that two large, well-defined trenches now slice through the land that once carried roads and railways that linked North and South Korea. The work began almost immediately after North Korean troops demolished the border links on October 15. As of October 30, construction continues. (Martyn Williams, Peter Makowsky and Iliana Ragnone, *38 North*)

In South Korea:

- More than 100 North Koreans have gone missing after being caught by secret police while trying to defect from the isolated country or even for trying to call relatives in South Korea, a Seoul-based human rights group said on Thursday. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- South Korean authorities in a village near the border with North Korea thwarted a plan on Thursday by a group of families of those believed to have been abducted by the North to send aloft balloons with leaflets criticising it, the group said. (Hyunsu Yim, *Reuters*)
- North Korea's state security ministry is a key perpetrator of North Korea's enforced disappearances, with nearly 40 percent of such disappearances occurring due to activities related to North Koreans' escapes from the repressive regime, a report showed Thursday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's top envoy to the United Nations has criticized North Korea's dispatch of its troops to Russia, saying they will be used as mere "cannon fodder," while their wages will end up in the pockets of the North's leader Kim Jong-un. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's military on Thursday denounced North Korea's latest launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile as an "illicit and reckless" provocation and warned the North will be held "wholly" accountable for all measures to follow. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- An attempt by families of North Korean abductees to disperse anti-North leaflets across the inter-Korean border was thwarted by police and residents in Paju, northern Gyeonggi, on Thursday. (Lee Soo-jung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea imposed new export sanctions on North Korea to prevent it from obtaining key materials for solid anti-propellant missile production on Thursday, in retaliation against Pyongyang's launch of a long-range ballistic missile earlier in the day. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)

International:

- Chinese police rank as the second-largest force after North Korea's secret police in arresting and facilitating the enforced disappearances of North Koreans, according to a report released by a human rights organization Thursday. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea and Russia defended their right to military cooperation during a U.N. Security Council meeting on Wednesday, after the U.S. and its allies called the session to denounce Pyongyang's alleged deployment of troops to fight against Ukraine. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- The Kremlin on Thursday declined to comment when asked if Russia was helping North Korea to develop its missile and other military technology following a test launch by Pyongyang of an intercontinental ballistic missile. (*Reuters*)
- The defense chiefs of South Korea and the United States condemned North Korea's troop deployment to Russia in the "strongest" terms with "one voice" as they held the allies' annual defense talks at the Pentagon on Wednesday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Non-proliferation groups are urging the UK government to make a late about-turn on plans to vote alongside France, Russia and North Korea against a UN resolution to study the effects of nuclear war. (Julian Borger, *The Guardian*)
- North Koreans soldiers will end up in "body bags" if they enter Ukraine and fight alongside Russia, a U.S. envoy to the United Nations has warned, urging Pyongyang to rethink joining the war against Kyiv. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. and South Korea called for "delaying" North Korea's nuclear development but made no mention of seeking Pyongyang's denuclearization in a joint statement on Wednesday, a move that experts said marks a significant shift in the allies' policy messaging. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- The United States "strongly" condemns North Korea's test of an intercontinental ballistic missile this week, a White House official said Wednesday, calling it a "flagrant" breach of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The waves of Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine, now nearing its third year, are rippling toward South Korea. South Korean intelligence reported on Wednesday of a “possibility” that an advance party of North Korean troops is engaged on the front lines in Russia’s Kursk region, an area that borders Ukraine and has seen ongoing military operations. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Prepared by Rachel Baek, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724073202/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-greg-scarlatoiu-interviews-with-colombias-testigo-directo-tvs-rodrigo-rodriquez-morales?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

11. NOVEMBER

Friday, November 1st, 2024

Open Letter to the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy

Top News:
North Korea Launches Spy Satellite Into Orbit on Third Attempt, Country's Space Agency Claims (*KNewz*, 11/21/2023)
North Korea: 'Rulers fear Christians' (*Evangelicals Now*, 10/29/2024)
Open Letter to the President of Ukraine Mr. Volodymyr Zelenskyy (*Small Wars Journal*, 10/25/2024)

In North Korea:
Pyongyang to bolster readiness against nuclear retaliation: Choe (*Yonhap*, 11/01/2024)

In South Korea:
Hwasong-19 ICBM is N. Korea's largest long-range missile yet: S. Korean military (*Yonhap*, 11/01/2024)
S. Korea not considering troop dispatch to Ukraine: nat'l security adviser (*Yonhap*, 11/01/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
S. Korea imposes sanctions on 11 N. Korean individuals, 4 entities over ICBM launch (*Yonhap*, 11/01/2024)
Son of S. Korean missionary detained in N. Korea appeals for int'l support (*Yonhap*, 11/01/2024)

International:
Allies say 1953 mutual defense treaty extends to cyber, space threats (*The Korea Herald*, 11/01/2024)
Blinken expects North Korea troops to enter fight against Ukraine in coming days (*Reuters*, 11/01/2024)
Calls are growing for Korea to aid Ukraine. Experts say it should wait. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/01/2024)
'It's a slaughter': Video claiming to show North Korean soldier captured in Kursk emerges (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/01/2024)
Kim Jong Un has sent North Korean troops to Russia. What's in it for him? (*The Washington Post*, 11/01/2024)
N. Korea, Russia's FMs to hold meeting on Friday: report (*Yonhap*, 11/01/2024)
North Korea's Choe accuses US and South Korea of plotting a nuclear strike against her country (*Reuters*, 11/01/2024)
North Korea vows to stand alongside Russia until it defeats Ukraine (*The Telegraph*, 11/01/2024)
Quick Take: China Marks Up New Customs Area (*38 North*, 11/01/2024)
ROK, US hold first-ever live-fire drone drill after North Korea's ICBM test (*NK News*, 11/01/2024)

Some 8,000 N. Korean troops in Russia's Kursk region, expected to enter combat in 'coming days': Blinken (*Yonhap*, 11/01/2024)
Ukraine war briefing: western allies' response to North Korean deployment is 'zero', Zelenskyy says (*The Guardian*, 10/31/2024)

Top News:

- Satellite images obtained by the **Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)** suggest that the Punggye-ri nuclear test site in North Korea is being rebuilt using "slave labor" from Hwasong, the largest prison camp in the country. (Samyarup Chowdhury, *KNewz*)
- 'Any religious belief, and Christianity in particular, as well as South Korea, constitute the only challenges to Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un's absolute monopoly on power,' **Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the non-governmental Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)**, said at a hearing of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF). 'Christianity offers an alternative way of life that delegitimises tyranny and transcends oppression.' (Iain Taylor, *Evangelicals Now*)
- My name is Hyun-Seung Lee, and I am a former soldier who escaped from North Korea in 2014. It is with a heavy heart that I write this letter, knowing that my fellow North Koreans are now on Ukrainian soil, forced into a war that has nothing to do with them. I never imagined that these young men—often between the ages of 17 and 27—would be sent thousands of miles away to fight and potentially die for a regime that treats them as expendable pawns. (Hyun-Seung Lee, *Small Wars Journal*)

In North Korea:

- North Korean Foreign Minister Choi Son-hui said Friday the current situation on the Korean Peninsula requires Pyongyang to make efforts to bolster its readiness against nuclear retaliation, noting that the reclusive regime will not change its nuclear policy. (Kang Yoon-seung, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- North Korea's new intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launched this week is its largest long-range missile yet, a South Korean military official said Friday, in the latest sign of progress in the recalcitrant regime's missile development efforts. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- National Security Adviser Shin Won-sik said Friday that South Korea is "not considering the dispatch of troops to Ukraine at all," amid reports of North Korea's imminent participation in the war to support Russia. (Kang Yoon-seung, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- South Korea on Friday announced fresh sanctions targeting 11 North Korean individuals and four entities in response to the North's latest launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) earlier this week. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The son of a South Korean Christian missionary who has remained detained in North Korea for 10 years has appealed for international support to address issues involving detainees

while meeting with key human rights figures in Europe, the unification ministry said Friday. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)

International:

- South Korea and the United States have, for the first time, explicitly confirmed that cyber and space threats to either country could trigger mutual defense actions under their bilateral treaty signed in 1953, which forms the basis of their military alliance. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- The United States expects North Korean troops in Russia's Kursk region to enter the fight against Ukraine in the coming days, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Thursday as he pressed China to use its influence to rein in Pyongyang. (Michael Martina, Humeyra Pamuk, *Reuters*)
- Debates are intensifying over South Korea's potential support for Ukraine with weaponry as its government weighs the diplomatic and security risks the decision could pose for the country. President Yoon Suk Yeol suggested a possible "phased" approach, indicating that the county could "flexibly review" lethal aid "depending on North Korea's military activities" at a news conference following a summit with Polish President Andrzej Duda in Seoul on Oct. 24. (Cho Jung-woo, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A video claiming to show a North Korean soldier that survived a battle with Ukrainian forces in Kursk has emerged on Telegram. Pro-Ukrainian Telegram channel ExileNova released a 127-second video titled "Warning from Kursk" on Friday. The channel stated that the sole surviving North Korean soldier expressed dissatisfaction with Russian President Vladimir Putin and urged his fellow countrymen to stay home. (Kim Min-young, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Thousands of North Korean soldiers in Russia are believed to be there to aid Moscow's war against Ukraine, a massive and unprecedented mobilization of troops by Pyongyang for a faraway war that complements the munitions already provided to Moscow by the regime. (Michelle Ye Hee Lee, *The Washington Post*)
- As many as 8,000 North Korean troops have been deployed to Russia's western front-line Kursk region and are expected to enter into combat "in the coming days," U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Thursday, warning that they would become "legitimate" military targets. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui, in a Moscow meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, accused the United States and South Korea of plotting a nuclear strike against her country. (*Reuters*)
- North Korea will stand with Russia until it achieves victory in its "holy war" against Ukraine, Pyongyang's foreign minister has said. (James Kilner, *The Telegraph*)
- Commercial satellite imagery indicates China continues to take steps towards completion of a new, modern customs post on its border with North Korea across the New Yalu River Bridge. Work at the facility near Dandong has been ongoing despite no observable preparation on the North Korean side that might signal an imminent opening of the new border crossing. (Martyn Williams, Iliana Ragnone, *38 North*)
- South Korea and the U.S. carried out a joint live-fire drone exercise for the first time ever as part of efforts to enhance aerial deterrence with new capabilities, just a day after North

Korea tested its largest-ever solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

- North Korea's foreign minister will hold talks with her Russian counterpart in Moscow on Friday, a Russian news agency reported, amid concerns that the North's troops deployed to Russia may soon join combat in its war against Ukraine. (Kang Yoon-seung, *Yonhap*)
- Ukraine's western allies have not adequately responded to the involvement of North Korean troops in Russia's war with Kyiv, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in an interview released on Thursday. (*The Guardian*)

Prepared by Rachel Baek, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724073604/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-open-letter-to-the-president-of-ukraine-volodymyr-zelenskyy?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, November 2nd, 2024

China Partners with North Korea to Persecute Christians; Christians Suffer as China and North Korea Unite in Crackdown

Top News:
China Partners with North Korea to Persecute Christians (*Back To Jerusalem*, 10/13/2024)
Christians Suffer as China and North Korea Unite in Crackdown (*Charisma*, 10/11/2024)

In North Korea:
2.5 magnitude natural earthquake hits near Kilju in N. Korea's northeast: weather agency (*Yonhap*, 11/02/2024)
Kim Jong-un's powerful sister condemns U.N.'s criticism of N. Korean ICBM launch (*Yonhap*, 11/02/2024)

In South Korea:
Hotel chef Kim Jae-ho cooks North Korean food to honor his grandmother (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/02/2024)

International:
Kim Jong Un is China's ally - but has become the 'comrade from hell' (*BBC*, 11/01/2024)
N. Korean FM: strategic value of ties with Russia gains greater importance in severe int'l landscape (*Yonhap*, 11/02/2024)
N. Korea, Russia blame U.S. and its allies for tensions amid N.K. troop dispatch (*Yonhap*, 11/02/2024)

Ukraine's Zelenskyy urges allies to act before North Korean troops reach the front (*AP News*, 11/02/2024)
U.N. Security Council to convene meeting on N. Korea's latest ICBM launch next week (*Yonhap*, 11/02/2024)

Top News:

- China has subjected hundreds of North Koreans to atrocities since last year by forcibly returning them to a country whose leaders hold religion, especially Christianity, as the greatest threat to its power. **Greg Scarlatoiu**, executive director of the non-governmental Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, said, "Christianity offers an alternative way of life that delegitimizes tyranny and transcends oppression." (Morning Star News, *Charisma*)
- **Greg Scarlatoiu**, executive director of the non-governmental **Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)**, spoke at a hearing of the U.S. Commission on Religious Freedom on Sept. 26 and the update that he gave about Christians in China and North Korea was shocking. According to his testimony, the two Communist nations of China and North Korea work together to repatriate North Korean refugees, which, for many, is almost a guaranteed death sentence. (Eugene Bach, *Back to Jerusalem*)

In North Korea:

- A 2.5 magnitude earthquake struck near North Korea's northeastern county of Kilju, where a nuclear test site is located, determining that it was a natural quake. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Kim Yo-jong, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, on Saturday condemned the United Nations for criticizing the country's recent test-firing of an intercontinental ballistic missile, reaffirming Pyongyang's stance to retain nuclear weapons development. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- North Korea's new intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launched this week is its largest long-range missile yet, a South Korean military official said Friday, in the latest sign of progress in the recalcitrant regime's missile development efforts. (Lee Jian, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- Fears over the budding alliance between Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un have peaked in recent weeks, with reports of North Korea deploying thousands of troops to support Russia's invasion of Ukraine. (Laura Bicker, BBC)
- North Korea's foreign minister, currently visiting Russia for talks, said the strategic value of her country's relations with Russia holds greater importance in the severe international political landscape. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)

- North Korea and Russia have accused the United States and its allies for being the "root cause" of escalating tensions on the Korean Peninsula and beyond, reaffirming their commitment to implementing the new bilateral treaty. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged its allies to stop "watching" and take steps before North Koreans troops deployed in Russia reach the battlefield. (*AP News*)
- The U.N. Security Council will convene a meeting on North Korea's recent launch of a new intercontinental ballistic missile next week. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Sarah Han, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724073714/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-china-partners-with-north-korea-to-persecute-christians-christians-suffer-as-china-and-north-korea-unite-in-crackdown?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, November 3rd, 2024

Over 7,000 N. Korean troops deployed near border with Ukraine, armed with rifles, mortars

In North Korea:
N. Korean white paper says South's president has raised risk of nuclear war (*Reuters*, 11/02/2024)
North and Russia blame U.S. for tension on Korean Peninsula at bilateral talks (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/03/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korean, Canadian defense ministers condemn North's troop dispatch to Russia (*Yonhap*, 11/02/2024)

International:
Over 7,000 N. Korean troops deployed near border with Ukraine, armed with rifles, mortars (*Yonhap*, 11/03/2024)
South, U.S., Japan stage joint air drills in response to North's IBCM launch (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/03/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea says president Yoon exposing South Korea to danger of nuclear war. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- North Korea and Russia blamed the United States and its allies for the worsening the situation on the Korean Peninsula and other regions after strategic talks between the two

countries' top envoys, with Moscow expressing its full support for Pyongyang's stance against Washington. (Lee Jian, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

In South Korea:

- Defense ministers of South Korea and Canada condemned North Korea's troop deployment to Russia and discussed ways to enhance defense cooperation during a bilateral meeting. (Shim Sun-ah, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Kyiv's defense intelligence agency has said Russia appears to have deployed more than 7,000 North Korean soldiers, armed with AK-12 rifles, mortar rounds and other assault weapons, to areas near the border with Ukraine. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea, the United States and Japan staged joint air drills involving a B-1B bomber south of the Korean Peninsula on Sunday in response to North Korea's recent launch of a new intercontinental ballistic missile. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Prepared by Samantha Garcia, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724074002/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-over-7000-n-korean-troops-deployed-near-border-with-ukraine-armed-with-rifles-mortars?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Monday, November 4th, 2024

Historical Factors That Have Led to Rampant Corruption in North Korea; North Korea Special Forces in Russia's War: A Game-Changer?

Top News:
Historical Factors That Have Led to the Rampant Corruption in North Korea (*HRNK*, 11/04/2024)
North Korean Special Forces in Russia's War on Ukraine: A Game-Changer? (*The National Interest*, 11/03/2024)
A Psychological Operations Strategy For The Korean Peninsula From Lessons Learned In Ukraine (*National Security Journal*, 11/04/2024)

In North Korea:
North Korea starts costly task of removing Juche year from monuments nationwide (*NK News*, 11/04/2024)

In South Korea:
Experts discuss how to financially prepare for unified Korea (*The Korea Times*, 11/04/2024)
Ruling party leader condemns North Korea troop dispatch as crime against humanity (*The Korea Herald*, 11/04/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
N. Korea presumed to change name of think tank dealing with affairs with S. Korea (*Yonhap*, 11/04/2024)
N. Korea raises earthen mounds to block severed inter-Korean roads (*Yonhap*, 11/04/2024)
North Korea appears to rebrand unification institute to focus on 'enemy' ROK (*NK News*, 11/04/2024)
North Korea builds anti-tank trenches over demolished inter-Korean roads (*NK News*, 11/04/2024)
Yoon says N. Korea's troop deployment to Russia 'dangerous and unprecedented' (*Yonhap*, 11/04/2024)

International:
Ahead of election, America's N. Korea policy direction comes into focus (*Yonhap*, 11/04/2024)
EU foreign policy chief urges support for Ukraine in 'all aspects' amid N.K. troop concerns (*Yonhap*, 11/04/2024)
North Korea, Russia denounce US 'aggression' after Pyongyang's missile test (*NK News*, 11/04/2024)
Putin hosts North Korean foreign minister on Russia's 'unity day' (*Reuters*, 11/04/2024)
Putin meets N. Korean FM Choe (*Yonhap*, 11/05/2024)
South Korea and Central Asia set stage for first summit (*The Korea Herald*, 11/04/2024)
South Korea and EU worry about Russia's technology transfer in return for North Korea troops (*AP News*, 11/04/2024)
Ukraine, Germany discuss need for 'decisive response' to N. Korean involvement in war (*Reuters*, 11/04/2024)
Ukraine says its troops clashed with North Korean soldiers in Russia's Kursk (*NK News*, 11/04/2024)
US accuses Russia, China of shielding North Korea at UN (*Reuters*, 11/04/2024)
US, ROK, Japan conduct air drill with B-1B bomber over North Korea's ICBM test (*NK News*, 11/04/2024)

Top News:

- Evaluating the accurate status of corruption in North Korea is challenging. Over the decades, the measurement of corruption has evolved. However, there remains little consensus about the magnitude of a country's corruption due to the highly heterogeneous and multidimensional nature of these estimates. Furthermore, objectively assessing the true extent of North Korea's corruption is difficult due to the lack of available information for the international audience and the secretive nature of the country. Consequently, it seems inevitable to rely heavily on testimonies and experiences of North Korean defectors, even though perception-based measures may not accurately reflect the level of corruption. (Katie-Jiwoo Choi, HRNK)

- It has now been confirmed by a plethora of sources that North Korean combat troops are going to be fighting in the war Russia is waging against Ukraine. The nature of the mission these troops will carry out and the effects that it will have, not only on the war but on North Korea-Russia relations is incredibly important. (Bruce E. Bechtol, *The National Interest*)
- In the shadow of Putin's war in Ukraine, a new paradigm for psychological operations is emerging – one that could reshape the security landscape on the Korean peninsula. As North Korea's provocations escalate and its nuclear ambitions grow unchecked, it's time for the ROK-U.S. alliance's military forces to adopt a proactive PSYOP strategy specifically targeting the North Korean People's Army. This is military to military competition for ideas. (David Maxwell, HRNK Board Member, *National Security Journal*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has started the costly task of removing references to the country's "Juche" year naming system from thousands of plaques and monuments nationwide, according to NK Pro analysis of recent state media. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- Scholars and experts in inter-Korea relations and finance assessed the economic situation of the two Koreas and discussed how to prepare for a unified Korea in light of the rapidly evolving international landscape, during a seminar, Friday. (Jhoo Dong-chan, *The Korea Times*)
- At a meeting of the party's leadership, Han Dong-hoon, the leader of the People Power Party, said North Korean leader Kim Jong-un sending troops to Russia was a "serious challenge to international peace" and a "crime against humanity." (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korea appears to have changed the name of a think tank designed to analyze affairs with South Korea, Seoul's unification ministry said Monday, as its leader Kim Jong-un has bolstered animosity toward the South. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has raised 11-meter-high earthen mounds to completely block inter-Korean roads that it blew up last month, South Korea's military said Monday, in yet another show of Pyongyang's efforts to sever ties with the South. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has revealed the existence of a new anti-South Korea institute focused on "enemy state studies," in what appears to be a rebranding of an organization that used to focus on inter-Korean unification. (Seung-Yeon Chung, *NK News*)
- North Korea has built anti-tank trenches at two locations where it blew up inter-Korean roads last month, according to Seoul, in an apparent attempt to further demonstrate its resolve to cut off all links to the South. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol said Monday that North Korea's deployment of troops to Russia in support for its war in Ukraine is a "dangerous and unprecedented act," which should be dealt with through a united international response. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Two days ahead of the U.S. presidential election, the direction of America's policy on North Korea remains a consequential question for South Korea as Pyongyang continues a provocative streak with its menacing rhetoric, weapons tests, disturbing balloon launches and military cooperation with Russia. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The European Union's foreign policy chief has highlighted the need for supporting Ukraine in "all aspects," including military aid, amid concerns over North Korea's troop dispatch to Russia. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The top diplomats of North Korea and Russia blamed the U.S. and its allies for destabilizing the Korean Peninsula following a meeting in Moscow, while reaffirming their intent to strengthen bilateral military cooperation despite growing international concern over Pyongyang's deployment of troops to support Moscow's war efforts. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin met North Korea's foreign minister in the Kremlin on Monday at a time of mounting concern in the West that North Korean soldiers are about to enter the Ukraine war on Moscow's side. (Mark Trevelyan, Alexander Marrow, *Reuters*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin has met North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui at the Kremlin in Moscow, TASS reported, amid growing concerns over Pyongyang's troop deployment to Russia to support its war in Ukraine. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and five Central Asian countries -- all former Soviet republics -- are gearing up for their first-ever summit, aiming to forge a synergistic partnership that leverages shared strengths and foster regional peace amid escalating tensions fueled by illicit military cooperation between Russia and North Korea. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea and the European Union on Monday strongly condemned North Korea's reported dispatch of troops to aid Russia's war against Ukraine and expressed concerns that Russia could reward North Korea with transfers of sensitive technology to enhance its nuclear and missile programs. (Hyung-jin Kim, Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)
- Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said on Monday he had discussed with his German counterpart Annalena Baerbock the "need for decisive action" in response to North Korean involvement in the war with Russia. (*Reuters*)
- Ukrainian forces have clashed with North Korean troops in the Kursk region of Russia, Kyiv announced on Monday, marking the first time it has confirmed a military encounter with DPRK soldiers supporting Moscow's war effort. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- The United States on Monday called out Russia and China at the United Nations Security Council for "shamelessly protecting" and emboldening North Korea to further violate U.N. sanctions as Pyongyang pledged to accelerate building up its "nuclear force." (Michelle Nichols, *Reuters*)
- The U.S., South Korea and Japan conducted a joint aerial drill featuring a U.S. B-1B strategic bomber over the weekend, in a show of force responding to North Korea's launch of a new intercontinental ballistic missile. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724074734/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-historical-factors-that-have-led-to-rampant-corruption-in-north-korea-north-korea-special-forces-in-russias-war-a-game-changer?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, November 5th, 2024

35 Years since the Fall of the Berlin Wall: Korean Unification, Problems and Prospects - An Invitation

Top News:
35 Years since the Fall of the Berlin Wall: Korean Unification, Problems and Prospects - An Invitation (HRNK, 11/04/2024)

In North Korea:
N. Korean leader urges completion of flood rehabilitation before Dec. party meeting (*Yonhap*, 11/05/2024)

In South Korea:
S. Korea to hold live-fire missile drills in response to N. Korean missile launches (*Yonhap*, 11/05/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
AI-created video featuring 3 S. Korean missionaries detained in N. Korea to air in Nov. (*Yonhap*, 11/05/2024)

International:
As many as 10,000 N. Korean troops are in Kursk, could join combat in 'coming days': State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 11/5/2024)
N. Korea fires multiple short-range ballistic missiles just ahead of U.S. election (*Yonhap*, 11/05/2024)
N.K. leader's sister says S. Korea-U.S.-Japan air drills justify North's bolstering of nuclear forces (*Yonhap*, 11/5/2024)
North Korea tells UN it is speeding up nuclear weapons programme (*The Guardian*, 11/04/2024)
North Korean troops in Russia are shelled by Ukrainian forces, a Kyiv official says (*The Korea Times*, 11/05/2024)
Russia says N. Korea's missile tests were 'legitimate' defensive measures: TASS (*Yonhap*, 11/05/2024)
US, ROK sign defense deal aimed at Trump-proofing alliance, day before election (*NK News*, 11/05/2024)

Top News:

Wednesday, November 13, 2024

03:00 p.m. - 05:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET)

DACOR Bacon House

1801 F St. NW, Washington, DC 20006

The **Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (*HRNK*)** and **The Republic of Korea Ministry of Unification (*MoU*)** cordially invites you to an event entitled "35 Years since the Fall of the Berlin Wall: Korean Unification, Problems and Prospects." Please RSVP using the link below.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSclkZYMpMTh_sc5Qv0S2JvqeWj5R22tG3rhLjwbq55n10kctg/viewform

AGENDA

15:00	**Opening Remarks**
Speakers	Greg Scarlatoiu, President and CEO, Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)
15:00 – 16:00	**Panel I: The Fall of the Berlin Wall, Information, and Transformation**
Moderator	**Greg Scarlatoiu**, HRNK President and CEO "Life in Ceausescu's Romania, the Ceausescu-Kim Il-sung Friendship, Information, and Transformation"
Panelists	**Roberta Cohen**, HRNK Co-Chair Emeritus, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights "From Andrei Sakharov to Information Campaigns to North Korea: Lessons of the Past, a Vision for the Future"
	Robert King, HRNK Board Member, former U.S. Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights "Cold War Information Campaigns: Precedent and Applicability to North Korea"
16:00 – 17:00	**Panel II: Is the German Precedent Still Applicable to Korean Unification?**
Moderator	**Greg Scarlatoiu**, HRNK President and CEO "Kim Jong-un's Ideological Changes: A Strategic Mistake?"
Panelists	**Dr. Hope M. Harrison**, The Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University "The German Reunification Precedent: 34 Years Later, Still Applicable to North Korea?"
	David Maxwell, HRNK Board Member, Vice President, Center for Asia Pacific Strategy "A Unified Republic of Korea: Problems and Prospects"

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has inspected flood-hit areas and called for expediting rehabilitation to ensure its completion before a plenary meeting of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea in December. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea plans to hold live-fire missile drills, involving Hyunmoo-II surface-to-surface missiles and the Cheongung surface-to-air missile defense system, this week in response to North Korea's recent ballistic missile launches. (Chae Yun-Hwan, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- An artificial intelligence-created video featuring three South Korean Christian missionaries who have been detained in North Korea for 10 years will air this month as part of a campaign to address issues related to detainees. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)

International:

- As many as 10,000 North Korean troops are in Russia's western front-line Kursk region and could engage in combat in the "coming days, amid growing concerns that their involvement could expand Moscow's war in Ukraine. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea fired multiple short-range ballistic missiles into the East Sea on Tuesday, South Korea's military said, in the latest saber-rattling just hours ahead of the U.S. presidential election. The Joint Chiefs of Staff said it detected the launches at about 7:30 a.m. from the Sariwon area in the western province of North Hwanghae, and they flew about 400 kilometers before splashing into the sea. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un lambasted the recent joint air drills staged by South Korea, the United States and Japan, claiming they validate her country's policy of bolstering its nuclear forces. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's UN envoy has said Pyongyang will accelerate a buildup of its nuclear weapons programme just days after it test-fired an intercontinental ballistic missile for the first time this year at a moment of rising tensions with the west. (Andrew Roth, *The Guardian*)
- North Korean troops recently deployed to help Russia in its war with Ukraine have come under Ukrainian fire. It is the first time a Ukrainian official has said that Pyongyang's units were struck, following a deployment that has given the war a new complexion as it approaches its 1,000-day milestone. (*The Korea Times*)
- Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko said Tuesday that North Korea's missile tests were "legitimate" defensive measures in response to what he described as the United States' "provocations." (Kim Eun-Jung, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. and South Korea formally signed their new defense cost-sharing deal on Monday, a move that appears at Trump-proofing the alliance built to deter North Korea as American voters head to the polls. (Jeongmin Kim, Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

Prepared by Valerie Johnson, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724074956/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-35-years-since-the-fall-of-the-berlin-wall-korean-unification-problems-and-prospects-an-invitation?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, November 6th, 2024

N. Korea may seek diplomatic ties with U.S. if Trump reelected: ex-Pyongyang diplomat

In North Korea:
N. Korea may seek diplomatic ties with U.S. if Trump reelected: ex-Pyongyang diplomat (*Yonhap*, 11/06/2024)
N.K. leader may seek another summit with Trump, but chances for deal seen as slimmer (*Yonhap*, 11/06/2024)
North Korea to face scrutiny at UN human rights review (*The Korea Times*, 11/06/2024)

In South Korea:
Leaflet launches put border residents, anti-North activists at odds (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/06/2024)
ROK conducts missile interception drill to bolster defenses against North Korea (*NK News*, 11/06/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
South Korea vows not to repatriate North Koreans against will (*The Korea Times*,11/06/2024)
People Power Party expresses hope for deeper Korea-US alliance (*The Korea Herald*,11/06/2024)
Seoul's defense ministry hit by DDoS cyberattack, possibly by North Korea (*NK News*,11/06/2024)
N. Korea's involvement in Ukraine war heightens security risks beyond battlefield to Korean Peninsula (*Yonhap*,11/06/2024)

International:
Presidential office says N. Korean troops in Russia have not yet engaged in full-fledged combat against Ukraine (*Yonhap*, 11/06/2024)
Presidential office vows to work with new U.S. administration for perfect security posture (*Yonhap*, 11/06/2024)
Top diplomats of G7 countries decry N. Korea's recent ICBM launch in 'strongest terms' (*Yonhap*, 11/06/2024)
Yoon, NATO chief discuss joint responses against N. Korea's troop deployment to Russia (*Yonhap*, 11/06/2024)
Ukraine's Zelenskyy confirms first combat engagement with N. Korean troops (*Yonhap*, 11/06/2024)

In North Korea:

- A former North Korean diplomat who defected to South Korea said Wednesday Pyongyang may seek to establish diplomatic ties with Washington and seek partial sanctions removal if former U.S. President Donald Trump is reelected to the White House. (Chang Dong-woo, *Yonhap*)

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un may seek another summit over its nuclear program with U.S. President-elect Donald Trump following his second-term win, but the chances for a meaningful deal appear to be lower, given the North's enhanced nuclear capabilities, analysts said. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's human rights record will come under intense scrutiny, Thursday, as the United Nations Human Rights Council holds the fourth Universal Periodic Review Working Group from Nov. 4 to 15, according to the foreign ministry and human rights activists, Wednesday. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)

In South Korea:

- Conflict is growing between residents near the inter-Korean border and activist groups attempting to send anti-regime leaflets to the North in what is framed as a battle between the right to live in peace and freedom of expression. (Lee Soo-Jung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea's military conducted a live-fire guided missile interception drill to strengthen defenses against North Korean missiles on Monday, days after Pyongyang test-launched its largest-ever solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile. (Joon Ha Park,Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- South Korea has vowed not to repatriate people to North Korea against their will as it did in 2019 with two North Korean fishermen, according to the National Human Rights Commission of Korea on Wednesday. (Jung Min-ho, *The Korea Times*)
- South Korea's ruling People Power Party on Wednesday expressed hope that US President Donald Trump's second term would serve as an opportunity to forge a "deeper" alliance between Seoul and Washington. (Jung Min-kyung, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea's defense ministry says its website was hit by a distributed denial-of-service cyberattack this week, an incident one expert described as a possible North Korean "demonstration-style" campaign to make its presence felt on the international stage. (Joon Ha Park,Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- The front-line deployment of North Korean troops in support of Russia's war effort in Ukraine would pose significant risks that extend beyond the battlefield to impact the security environment on the Korean Peninsula, also marking a significant development since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, analysts said. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- The presidential office said Wednesday that North Korean troops in Russia's western front have not yet engaged in full-fledged combat with Ukrainian forces. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- The presidential office said Wednesday that South Korea will work with the new U.S. administration to establish a perfect security posture and expand the scope and level of the bilateral alliance. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- The top diplomats of the Group of Seven (G7) countries condemned North Korea's recent intercontinental ballistic missile launch in the "strongest terms" on Tuesday, reiterating their call for the "complete" denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

- President Yoon Suk Yeol and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Secretary General Mark Rutte held a phone conversation Wednesday to discuss coordinated responses to North Korea's troop deployment to Russia in support of its war in Ukraine. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has confirmed the Ukrainian military's first combat engagement with North Korean troops, saying it opened a new chapter of instability in the world. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Hannah Starnes, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724075152/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-may-seek-diplomatic-ties-with-us-if-trump-reelected-ex-pyongyang-diplomat?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, November 7th, 2024

'Blood money': Defectors liken N. Korean soldiers in Russia to wartime slaves

In North Korea:
'Blood money': Defectors liken N. Korean soldiers in Russia to wartime slaves (*The Korea Times*, 11/07/2024)

In South Korea:
Gov't braces for economic fallout from Trump policies as biz sector expresses cautious optimism (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/07/2024)
Uncertainty looms for South Korea, U.S. under second Trump presidency (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/07/2024)
Yoon, Trump discuss alliance, economic cooperation, North Korea in first phone call (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/07/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
(US election) Unification ministry pledges efforts to improve N.K. human rights under 2nd Trump term (*Yonhap*, 11/07/2024)

International:
NATO chief welcomes Trump victory, but raises alarm over North Korea-Russia ties (AP News, 11/07/2024)
North Korea's involvement in Ukraine draws China into a delicate balancing act (The Guardian, 11/06/2024)
Russian military jet visits North Korea amid troop deployment to Kursk (*NK News*, 11/07/2024)

Russia ratifies North Korea pact after US says up to 10,000 North Korean troops deployed to Kursk (AP News, 11/06/2024)
Trump may resume direct diplomacy with North Korea: experts (The Korea Times, 11/07/2024)

In North Korea:

- There are doubts posed by the North Korean defectors residing in South Korea about the preparedness of North Korean Soldiers. Kim Jong-Un's motives are in question and the health and skill of these soldiers are challenged (Kang Hyun-Kyung, *The Korea Times*).

In South Korea:

- The South Korean government is cautious of the impacts policies promoted by President Trump and are working diligently to mitigate risks/damages. The government is hopeful of continuing cooperation and prosperity (Jin Eun-Soo, *Korea JoongAng Daily*).
- Acknowledging the new risks for South Korea with this second Trump Presidency, there are wants to ensure its security interests (in regards to North Korea) as well as the level of cooperation with the U.S. (Michael Lee, Lim Jeong Won, Seo Ji-Eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*).
- President Yoon Suk Yeol, during a press conference, stated that he and President-elect Trump spoke of a continued solidarity and partnership. Expecting a shift in U.S. trade policies, Yoon made it a point to state efforts in regards to protecting the South Korean economy (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*).

Inter-Korean Relations:

- The unification ministry pledged to maintain cooperation with the United States regarding the human rights issues in North Korea. This was done to address the concerns that human rights may take a back seat during Trump's second term (Park Boram, *Yonhap*).

International:

- NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte has acknowledged the role North Korea is playing in Ukraine, via their deployment to Russia. He quotes that "Russia is delivering the latest technology into North Korea in return for North Korean help." This is a potential threat (*AP News*).
- Within China's silence on North Korean involvement in Ukraine, analysts sense unease and place Beijing in an uncomfortable spot. Considering the potential of a "new cold war," China has to balance both allies and economic ties to the U.S. and Europe (Amy Hawkins, Helen Davidson, *The Guardian*).
- A Russian air force jet stopped in North Korea's capital and is said to have been part of the North Korean troop deployment and shuttling senior military officials. More government jets will be landing soon due to their annual intergovernmental commission (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*).
- The Russian parliament ratified a treaty of partnership via military assistance. This "comprehensive strategic partnership treaty," leaves an obligation for Russia and North Korea to provide military assistance using "all means" if either is attacked (*AP News*).

- Due to the return of the former U.S. President Trump, there are speculations regarding potential diplomacy with North Korea in his second term. The analysis included in this article varies from the Hanoi Summit, the future of a South Korea-U.S. alliance, and the risks associated with engaging with North Korea (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*).

Prepared by Jocelyn Bruce, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724075521/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-blood-money-defectors-liken-n-korean-soldiers-in-russia-to-wartime-slaves?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, November 8th, 2024

North Korea puts doctors and nurses to work on hospital construction

In North Korea:
North Korea puts doctors and nurses to work on hospital construction (*Radio Free Asia*, 11/05/2024)

In South Korea:
Army stages defense drills against drone terror threats targeting Seoul (*Yonhap*, 11/07/2024)
S. Korea conducts defense drills on western border islands (*Yonhap*, 11/08/2024)
South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's Biggest Problem Isn't the North (*Newsweek*, 11/08/2024)
Unification advisory body, Yonhap News Agency to host global forum on unification next week (*Yonhap*, 11/08/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
S. Korea holds live-fire ballistic missile drills after N. Korean missile launches (*Yonhap*, 11/08/2024)

International:
Putin notes possibility of joint military exercises between N. Korea, Russia: TASS (Yonhap, 11/08/2024)
Putin Suggests Russia Could Hold Military Exercises with N. Korea (*KBS World*, 11/08/2024)
S. Korea, Brunei call for halt to Russia-N.K. military cooperation in defense talks (*Yonhap*, 11/07/2024)

In North Korea:

- The construction of a new hospital in North Korea is struggling to meet deadlines, so authorities are mobilizing doctors and nurses to lend their hands as well as free

labor/donations from the military and residents. (Ahn Chang Gyu, Claire S. Lee, *Radio Free Asia*)

In South Korea:

- The Army stated that it conducted drills to defend against a drone terror attack targeting Seoul amid efforts to enhance capabilities against potential North Korean drone infiltrations. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- For a three-day exercise that began on Wednesday, the Marine Corps, the Navy, the Army and the Air force were mobilized . These defense drills were conducted as part of preparedness efforts against North Korean provocations. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- In section headed "Threats from North Korea to South Korea," President Yoon stated that South Korea was prepared for any threats from North Korea due to its alliance with the U.S. (Matthew Tostevin, *Newsweek*)
- The Peaceful Unification Advisory Council and *Yonhap News Agency* will co-host a global forum next week to explore ways to muster international solidarity in South Korea's vision of liberal democracy-based unification. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- South Korea fired a ballistic missile into the Yellow Sea this week in a show of force after North Korea's recent series of missile launches, demonstrating its resolve to respond to provocations and its precision capabilities. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Considering the treaty signed for mutual military assistance, the partnership between North Korea and Russia has risen to new heights. Joint military drills would define a deeper partnership. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin suggested that Russia could hold military drills with North Korea. The strategic partnership treaty was brought up once again, and outlined Moscow's cooperation with North Korea. (*KBS World*)
- South Korea and Brunei called for the "immediate" halt to military cooperation between Russia and North Korea during a bilateral defense policy dialogue, noting North Korea's violations of the U.N. Security Council resolutions. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Jocelyn Bruce, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724075747/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-puts-doctors-and-nurses-to-work-on-hospital-construction?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Saturday, November 9th, 2024

Taken but not Forgotten: International Cooperation on the Abduction Issue - An Invitation

Top News:
Taken but not Forgotten: International Cooperation on the Abduction Issue - An Invitation (*HRNK*, 11/09/2024)
North Korea finds many critics, and a few friends, at UN human rights review (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/08/2024)

In North Korea:
N. Korea jams GPS signals, affecting ships, civilian aircraft: JCS (*Yonhap*, 11/09/2024)
Sohae Satellite Launching Station: No Observable Indications of Launch Preparations (*38 North*, 11/08/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Presidential office says hacking attacks increased following N. Korea's troop deployment to Russia (*Yonhap*, 11/08/2024)

International:
North Korea defends crackdown on foreign media, admits to public executions (*NK News*, 11/08/2024)
North Korean deployment is 'dangerous expansion' of support for Russia's Ukraine war, NATO says (*Reuters*, 11/08/2024)
North Korean troops suffered combat losses in Kursk, Zelensky says (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/08/2024)
Over 3,700 N. Koreans visited Russia in Q3 for 'studies': RFA (*Yonhap*, 11/09/2024)
S. Korea, Japan agree to closely cooperate to halt N.K.-Russia military cooperation (*Yonhap*, 11/08/2024)
What Donald Trump's return means for North Korea and Kim Jong Un (*NK News*, 11/08/2024)

Top News:

Taken but not Forgotten: International Cooperation on the Abduction Issue

Virtual Event

Hosted by:
Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)

November 15, 2024
9 AM ET – 10:30 AM ET (Washington, D.C.)
3 PM – 4:30 PM CET (Brussels)
11 PM - 12:30 AM JST (Tokyo)
11 PM ~ 12:30 AM KST (Seoul)

HRNK will share the Zoom link with guests who have confirmed their participation.

Please RSVP by clicking on this link or the button below.

Background:

The abduction of Japanese and other foreign citizens by North Korea remains a grave and unresolved issue, impacting the lives of abductees and their families for decades. Since the 1970s and 1980s, North Korea has abducted foreign nationals to use them for espionage training and other purposes. Despite international efforts, including bilateral negotiations and UN resolutions, the fate of many abductees remains unknown.

The U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) is organizing a virtual event to provide an update on the North Korean abduction issue and to suggest innovative effective approaches under the Trump-47 administration.

Keynote remarks (recorded)

- Her Excellency Yamatani Eriko, Member of the House of Councillors, Japanese Diet and former Minister in charge of the Abduction Issue

[Part 1] Tackling the North Korean Abduction of Japanese Nationals: The Potential for Increased Cooperation under the Trump-47 Administration

- Nishioka Tsutomu, Professor at Reitaku University and Chairman of the National Association to Rescue the Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea (NARKN)

"The North Korean Abduction of Foreign Nationals: Is There Room for a Zone of Possible Agreement with North Korea and Subsequent Solution?"

- Susan Komori, Deputy Chief Editor of JAPAN Forward and advisor to the National Association to Rescue the Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea (NARKN)

"The Role of Civil Society in Seeking a Resolution to the North Korean Abduction Conundrum"

- **Moderator:** Greg Scarlatoiu, President and CEO of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea

[Part 2] International Efforts to Address the Abduction Issue and Pathways for a Resolution

- Melanie Kirkpatrick, senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and author of *Escape from North Korea: The Untold Story of Asia's Underground Railroad*

"North Korean Abductions, a Crime Against Humanity: An Overview of International Efforts since the February 2014 UN COI Report and the Road Ahead"

- James Sneddon, brother of Mr. David Sneddon

"Twenty Years since the Disappearance of David Sneddon, Can Trump-47 Seek Truth and Resolution for the Sneddon Family?

- Greg Scarlatoiu

"The Tragic Case of Romanian Abductee Doina Bumbea and the Role and Responsibility of International Civil Society in Resolving the Abduction Issue"

- **Moderator:** Susan Komori

[Part 3] Q&A session

- **Moderator:** Rick Herssevoort, HRNK International Outreach Associate
- North Korea's human rights record was once again in the global spotlight as the United Nations conducted the fourth Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the country's human rights practices in Geneva. The South Korean delegation, led by Ambassador Yun Seong-deok, condemned North Korea's recent military deployment of troops to Ukraine, describing it as a "human rights violation." (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea staged GPS jamming attacks for the second consecutive day Saturday, affecting several ships and dozens of civilian aircraft. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- Commercial satellite imagery shows that work at North Korea's Sohae Satellite Launching Station is progressing. South Korean intelligence reported on October 29 that North Korea appears to be ready to conduct another satellite launch attempt. (Iliana Ragnone, Jack Liu, Martyn Williams, Peter Makowsky, *38 North*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- The National Security Council (NSC) said the cyber attacks, mostly DDoS, by "pro-Russian hacktivist groups" against South Korea have increased following North Korea's troop deployment to Russia. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

International:

- North Korea defended its controversial law dictating harsh penalties for consuming foreign media on Thursday, while admitting that it carries out public executions and imprisons perpetrators of "anti-state" crimes. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- In a joint statement, the military alliance's 32 member countries warned that "the deepening military cooperation" between Russia and North Korea "deeply impacts Euro-Atlantic security, with implications also for the Indo-Pacific". (*Reuters*)
- Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky disclosed Thursday that North Korean troops in Russia's Kursk region have been deployed in combat and suffered "losses." He warned that additional North Korean troops could be sent to support Russia unless there is an international response to the deployment. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- More than 3,700 North Koreans visited Russia during the third quarter this year for "study" purposes, marking the highest quarterly figure since 2010. RFA speculated that the visitors may be workers dispatched to Russia to earn and send back foreign currency. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- The vice defense chiefs of South Korea and Japan on Friday expressed grave concerns over military cooperation by Pyongyang and Moscow, and agreed to closely work together to curb their cooperation. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The *NK News* team joins the podcast for a special roundtable episode to discuss why Trump's return could bring a sea change to DPRK policy, and the possibility of a resumption of personal diplomacy between Kim and Trump. (*NK News*)

Prepared by Smaranda Gheorghe, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724075929/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-taken-but-not-forgotten-international-cooperation-on-the-abduction-issue-an-invitation?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, November 10th, 2024

N. Korea blamed for 331 GPS disruptions this month: science ministry

In North Korea:
N. Korea blamed for 331 GPS disruptions this month: science ministry
(*Yonhap*, 11/10/2024)

International:
Why North Korean Soldiers Are Prepared to Die in Russia (*The Wall Street Journal*, 11/10/2024)

Ukraine-Russia war – live: Moscow suffering highest casualties of war as Kyiv launches major drone attack (*The Independent*, 11/10/2024)
Putin signs treaty with North Korea, strengthening military ties amid Ukraine conflict (*Times of India*, 11/10/2024)
Ukraine commander says challenges increase in war with Russia (*Reuters*, 11/09/2024)
Putin signs into law mutual defence treaty with North Korea (*Reuters*, 11/09/2024)
Map Shows Russian Jet Sending North Korean Troops to Ukraine War Front Line (*Newsweek*, 11/09/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea was identified as the source of 331 cases of GPS disruptions reported this month, the science ministry said Sunday, noting that no major issues or damage occurred. (Woo Jae-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Ryu Seong-hyeon doesn't need to imagine what the thousands of North Korean soldiers deployed to the Russian front lines might now be thinking. Not long ago, he was one of them. (Dasl Yoon, *The Wall Street Journal*)
- Russia is losing the highest number of soldiers a day since Vladimir Putin ordered the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the UK army chief has claimed. (Arpan Rai and Tom Watling, *The Independent*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed a law ratifying a strategic partnership treaty with North Korea, which includes a mutual defence agreement. (*Times of India*)
- Ukraine's top military commander, Oleksandr Syrskyi, said on Saturday that Ukraine faced increasing difficulties in its fight against Moscow's invasion as Russian forces advance and North Korean troops prepare to join the Kremlin's campaign. *(Reuters)*
- Russian President Vladimir Putin signed into law a treaty on the country's strategic partnership with North Korea which includes a mutual defence provision, according to a decree published on Saturday. (*Reuters*)
- A Russian air force jet was tracked making a brief stop in North Korea this week, likely tied to the recent deployments of North Korean troops to Russia, according to specialist outlet NK News. (Micah McCartney, *Newsweek*)

Prepared by Jennifer Leon, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724150756/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-blamed-for-331-gps-disruptions-this-month-science-ministry?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Monday, November 11th, 2024

North Korean elite Storm Corps reduced to cannon fodder at Russian 'meat grinder' front line: sources

Top News:
North Korea moves troops to Russia: Is it emerging from international isolation? (*Folia*, 11/07/2024)
North Korean elite Storm Corps reduced to cannon fodder at Russian 'meat grinder' front line: sources (*New York Post*, 11/09/2024)

In North Korea:
North Korea launches new construction website, rare addition to online presence (*NK News*, 11/11/2024)

International:
A former North Korean special-forces soldier said Kim Jong Un's elite 'Storm Corps' in Russia likely isn't his A-team (*Business Insider*, 11/10/2024)
Can Trump Drive a Wedge Between Russia and North Korea? (*Foreign Policy*, 11/11/2024)
Large group of Russian and North Korean forces prepared to retake Russia's Kursk region from Ukraine (CNN, 11/11/2024)
Russia prepares counteroffensive with 50,000 troops, potentially including North Koreans, sources say (*ABC News*, 11/11/2024)
Ukraine says it intercepts radio communications from North Korean soldiers in Russia (*UPI*, 11/11/2024)
Will Trump Rekindle a Bromance With Kim Jong-un? South Koreans Worry. (*The New York Times*, 11/11/2024)

Top News:

- "North Korea and Russia continue to present a united front against South Korea and the United States." **HRNK's Research Associate, Diletta De Luca**, provides insights to *Folia* on the relationship between North Korea and Russia. (Jip Koene, *Folia*)
- Kim deployed roughly 12,000 elite North Korean soldiers to the Russia-Ukraine battlefield – known as the meat grinder for its huge number of casualties, particularly on the Russian side – last month, and sources say he's been paid $2,000 a month per soldier. (Dana Kennedy, *New York Post*)

In North Korea:

- 'Korean Architecture' promotes DPRK buildings and may be part of efforts to raise cash through overseas projects. (Seung-Yeon Chung, *NK News*)

International:

- North Korea's troops in Russia are largely thought to be from Pyongyang's elite "Storm Corps." But as more videos appear to show them, doubts are rising about their status as special forces. One ex-member of the branch said he thought North Korea did send special forces, but not its best. (Matthew Loh, *Business Insider*)
- Moscow, Pyongyang, Beijing, and Tehran have formed an alliance of convenience. Ending the Ukraine war could disrupt it. (Matthew Kroenig, *Foreign Policy*)
- A Ukrainian commander told CNN Sunday that North Korean troops were taking part in direct combat operations in Kursk, as well as defensive operations in the neighboring Belgorod region of Russia and in Russian-occupied Ukrainian territories. (Alex Marquardt, Maria Kostenko, Mitchell McCluskey, CNN)
- Pentagon spokesperson Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder said last week there are 10,000 North Korean soldiers deployed to Kursk. (David Brennan, *ABC News*)
- Ukraine's military intelligence has intercepted what it claims are radio communications between North Korean soldiers in Russia, amid media reports of a massive troop buildup ahead of an attack in the Kursk region. The Defense Intelligence of Ukraine shared brief audio clips Sunday of soldiers speaking Korean. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- Donald J. Trump's second term brings uncertainty to the Korean Peninsula as nuclear tensions run high. North Korea's leader may see a chance to re-engage. (Choe Sang-hun, *The New York Times*)

Prepared by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724150929/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korean-elite-storm-corps-reduced-to-cannon-fodder-at-russian-meat-grinder-front-line-sources?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, November 12th, 2024

North Korea Ratified Mutual Defense Treaty with Russia

In North Korea:
N. Korea jams GPS signals for 5th straight day (*Yonhap*, 11/12/2024)
N. Korea's Hwasong-19 ICBM launch did not involve new engine test (*Yonhap*, 11/12/2024)

Inter Korean Relations:
Head of N.K. defectors' group referred to prosecution over leaflet campaign (*Yonhap*, 11/12/2024)
North Korea building 3-mile wall across ruins of lost medieval city in DMZ (*NK News*, 11/12/2024)
ROK police refer activist to prosecutors for launching balloons into North Korea (*NK News*, 11/12/2024)

International:
Awareness of human rights growing inside N. Korea thanks to int'l attention (*Yonhap*, 11/12/2024)
Kim Jong Un ratifies mutual defense treaty with Russia, two days after Putin (*NK News*, 11/12/2024)
Kim Jong-un sees UN criticism of Pyongyang's human rights situation as threat to regime (*The Korea Times*, 11/12/2024)
NATO chief warns of threat from Russian ties with China, Iran, North Korea (*Reuters*, 11/12/2024)
N. Korea's Kim finalizes defense pact with Russia (*Yonhap*, 11/12/2024)
North Korean delegation joins COP29 climate talks in Azerbaijan (*NK News*, 11/12/2024)
North Korea ratifies landmark defense pact with Russia (*UPI*, 11/12/2024)
North Korea's troop dispatch to Ukraine is Kim Jong Un's riskiest decision yet (*NK News*, 11/12/2024)
Ukraine 'holds back' 50,000-strong force including North Koreans (*Radio Free Asia*, 11/11/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea jammed GPS signals for a fifth consecutive day on Tuesday, South Korea's military said, with the series of jamming believed to be linked to the North's own training against drones. Following multiple jamming attacks North Korea, the North resumed the jamming recently, according to the South's Joint Chiefs of Staff. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea does not appear to have carried out a new engine test before launching the Hwasong-19 intercontinental ballistic missile last month, a South Korean lawmaker said. The assessment came amid suspicions that Russia may have provided technical assistance to North Korea for the missile launch. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- The head of a North Korean defectors' group was referred to the prosecution on charges of sending heavier-than-permitted balloons to the North as part of a leaflet propaganda campaign, police said. (Kim Hyun-soo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea is building a wall over the unexcavated ruins of a lost medieval city inside the demilitarized zone as part of leader Kim Jong Un's goal to more "permanently" cut all links to South Korea. (Colin Zwriko, *NK News*)
- Local South Korean authorities escalated their crackdown on anti-regime leafleting into North Korea, referring a prominent defector-activist to prosecutors for allegedly violating the country's Aviation Safety Act. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

International:

- At the 2024 Global Dialogue on Korean Peninsula Unification, Ri Il-gyu, a former counselor for political affairs at the North Korean Embassy in Cuba who defected to South Korea last year, made the point that International attention to North Korea's human rights abuses has had a perceptible effect in raising awareness among the country's general public. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- Kim Jong Un formally ratified North Korea's mutual defense pact with Russia, days after Moscow did the same, in a move that could pave the way for the DPRK to more openly deploy troops for the Ukraine war. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

- According to documents obtained by the Ministry of Unification, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un was broadly involved in directing the country's response to international criticism of its human rights situation, viewing it as a threat to his regime. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)
- Russia's growing economic and military cooperation with China, North Korea and Iran is threatening Europe, the Indo-Pacific and North America, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte said. (John Irish, *Reuters*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has signed off the defense pact "comprehensive strategic partnership" with Russia, the North's state media reported, as Pyongyang sent its troops to Russia in support of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has sent a delegation to the 29th Conference of the Parties climate summit that kicked off in Azerbaijan, highlighting its openness to global engagement on environmental issues even as it restricts broader diplomacy to its closest partners. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Korea ratified its "comprehensive strategic partnership" defense treaty with Russia, state media reported, formally deepening military cooperation that has seen Pyongyang send thousands of troops to help Moscow in its war against Ukraine. The treaty was originally signed in June during a state visit to Pyongyang by Vladimir Putin. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- North Korea's dispatch of troops to support Russia in its war against Ukraine represents Kim Jong Un's riskiest decision since he rose to power 13 years ago. The deployment inserts the DPRK into a dangerous and unpredictable situation, sharply increasing the risk of black-swan events that could have major consequences for both Kim and his nation. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- Ukrainian forces are holding off nearly 50,000 troops, including 11,000 North Koreans, in Russia's Kursk region, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, confirming U.S. media reports that Russia had amassed a large force including the North Koreans to push Ukrainian invaders off Russian soil. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)

Prepared by Gloria Guo, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724151119/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-ratified-mutual-defense-treaty-with-russia?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, November 13th, 2024

2024 Global Strategy Special Committee Washington Conference: "Hallyu (Korean Wave) is the Fast Track to Unification"

Top News:
2024 Global Strategy Special Committee Washington Conference: "Hallyu (Korean Wave) is the Fast Track to Unification" (*Manna* 24, 10/30/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

International:
Fighting a 'Holy War': North Korea's Role in Putin's Crusade Against Ukraine (*The National Interest*, 11/12/2024)
Former U.S. nuke envoy expects it won't take 'long' for N.K issue to move toward top agenda for 2nd Trump gov't (*Yonhap*, 11/13/2024)
French team behind VLC player says it sent 'Game of Thrones' to North Korea (*NK News*, 11/13/2024)
N. Korea stays silent on Trump's win for 1 week (*Yonhap*, 11/13/2024)
North Korea ratifies major defense treaty with Russia (*AP News*, 11/12/2024)
North Korea ratifies military alliance with Russia as combat against Ukraine set to begin (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/12/2024)
South Korea and U.S. confirm North's troops engaged in combat in Russia's Kursk region (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/13/2024)
Trump taps Kim Jong-un defender Pete Hegseth as Pentagon chief (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/13/2024)
Unification council official says N. Korea would not open dialogue with U.S. while being paid by Russia (*Yonhap*, 11/13/2024)
U.S. confirms N. Korean troops have begun engaging in combat operations in Russia's Kursk region (*Yonhap* 11/13/2024)
US confirms North Korean troops joining Russia in combat against Ukraine (*RFA*, 11/12/2024)
US, ROK and Japan hold large-scale military drills for second time this year (*NK News*, 11/13/2024)

Top News:

- During the 2024 Global Strategy Special Committee Washington Conference from October 29th-31st, Tae Yong-ho, Secretary General of the Peaceful Unification Advisory Council, delivered a keynote speech on the topic of "Change in North Korea and the 8.15 Unification Doctrine." He emphasized the need to strengthen solidarity with the international community, defining the people of both the South and North as the principal agents of unification, based on the 8.15 Unification Initiative. Additionally, there were congratulatory speeches from **Greg Scarlatoiu, President and CEO of The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea**, among other notable guests. (Park Nogyeong, *Manna 24*)

International:

- Amidst Russia's conflict with Ukraine, North Korea's support underscores an emerging, loose alliance with China, Iran, and Russia that challenges global stability. North Korea's supply of arms and troops, despite economic limitations, bolsters Russian efforts. (Martin Kragh, *The National Interest*)

- A former U.S. deputy secretary of state expected Tuesday that it won't take "long" for North Korea's security quandary to begin moving toward the top of the policy agenda for the incoming Trump administration as the recalcitrant regime could otherwise explore ways to draw attention. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Two French software developers behind the widely used VLC media player say they launched balloons carrying movies and TV series toward North Korea last week, despite local authorities' efforts to crack down on such activity amid heightened inter-Korean tensions. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- North Korea has remained mum about former U.S. President Donald Trump's reelection for a week, despite the significance the outcome might hold for the North's leader Kim Jong-un and his regime. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea ratified a major defense treaty with Russia stipulating mutual military aid, the North's state media reported Tuesday, as the U.S., South Korea and Ukraine say North Korea has sent thousands of troops to Russia to support its war against Ukraine. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)
- North Korea ratified a recent treaty with Russia that elevates their bilateral relationship to a military alliance, its state media reported Tuesday, as North Korean troops deployed in Russia appear ready to engage in combat in the Ukrainian-occupied Kursk region. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The South Korean National Intelligence Service (NIS) confirmed Wednesday evening that North Korean troops deployed to Russia are "already participating in combat." (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- As South Korea keenly watches the next U.S. administration take shape, President-elect Donald Trump tapped Pete Hegseth, a Fox News host and veteran, as secretary of defense for an upcoming second term on Tuesday. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The secretary general of South Korea's presidential advisory body on unification said Tuesday that North Korea would not engage in dialogue with the United States as long as it is being paid by Russia for its troop deployment and other forms of military cooperation. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States confirmed Tuesday that North Korean troops, who have been deployed to Russia's western front-line Kursk region, have begun engaging in combat operations against Ukrainian forces. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States and South Korea confirmed that North Korean troops have been in combat against Ukrainian forces in Russia's Kursk region, as China declined to comment on military cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang saying it was their affair. (Taejun Kang, RFA)
- The U.S., South Korea and Japan kicked off their second large-scale military exercise of the year on Wednesday, with an American aircraft carrier joining the drills to deter and respond to North Korean threats. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

2024 Global Strategy Special Committee Washington Conference: "Hallyu (Korean Wave) is the Fast Track to Unification"

Park Nogyeong, *Manna* 24
October 30, 2024

The 2024 Global Strategy Special Committee Washington Conference is being held from October 29 to 31st at the Westin Tysons Corner in Virginia. Tae Yong-ho, Secretary General of the Peaceful Unification Advisory Council, delivered a keynote speech on the topic of "Change in North Korea and the 8.15 Unification Doctrine." He emphasized the need to strengthen solidarity with the international community, defining the people of both the South and North as the principal agents of unification, based on the 8.15 Unification Initiative.

Secretary General Tae stated, "The principal agents of unification have shifted from the governments of South and North Korea to the people, and this is the core of the new unification policy." He also explained that "the support and solidarity of the international community are essential." He added that North Korea's nuclear capabilities are increasing its influence in international politics, which acts as a constraint in the process of promoting unification.

Furthermore, he pointed out the ripple effects on the Korean Peninsula, using the recent conflict between Israel and Hamas as an example, and emphasized the need to cooperate with the United States and NATO.

The conference was attended by 101 global strategy special committee members from 33 countries around the world, along with representatives from the Washington Council and various local Korean organizations. The attendees recognized the importance of unification education amidst concerns that unification could become permanently distant, as North Korea officially withdrew its commitment to unification. They particularly expressed regret over the disappearance of the subject of unification and the impossibility of unification dialogue due to North Korea's renouncement of unification and its assertion of the two-state theory. The two-state theory reveals an intention to eliminate the cause for UN intervention should the demarcation line be provoked and the area made the UN's jurisdiction. Secretary General Tae stated that North Korea remains silent on the 8.15 Unification Doctrine and that the situation is complicated due to the two-state theory.

During the Q&A session following the lecture, it was revealed that North Korea had dispatched troops to Russia to participate in the Ukraine war. This comes amid strengthened military cooperation between North Korea and Russia, with North Korea reportedly supplying over 13,000 weapons to Russia. Experts have analyzed that the deployment of North Korean troops may signal difficulties in Russia's military operations, and it could provide a golden opportunity for North Korean soldiers to defect.

North Korea partially embraces a market economy, but controls the influx of outside cultures. However, the market economy, stemming from Jang-ma-dang (marketplaces), is expanding on a daily basis. Daily necessities and Korean cultural content (dramas, films, etc.) have spread widely in North Korea via the North Korean-Chinese border. Conference attendees focused on the widespread phenomenon of young North Koreans watching South Korean dramas and films and

idolizing South Korea. Despite the North Korean regime's efforts to suppress and penalize these actions, the phenomenon has already reached an extent that cannot be stopped. This mirrors similar effects to drugs, This has an effect similar to drug addiction, foreshadowing that cultural power may be greater than economic power.

Secretary General Tae quoted an assessment from German media stating, "Unification has now begun in South Korea." Reflecting on German reunification, he added that unification began the moment the words “Let's not unify by asserting two states,” were uttered. He evaluated this statement as a remark made out of desperation when cornered.

President Yoon Suk-yeol stated that 2024 will mark the beginning of a new era for unification. Secretary General Tae also stated that Korea will certainly be unified within the next 10 to 20 years, emphasizing that 50% of North Korea's current population is under the age of 35, and part of a generation that is exposed to Korean dramas and films, idolizing South Korea. He expressed confidence that unification would be achieved as long as these individuals became the nation's leadership.

Oh Byeong-moon, Chairman of the Global Strategy Special Committee delivered the opening remarks, followed by welcoming speeches from Kang Il-han, the Americas Chair of The Peaceful Unification Advisory Council, and Linda Han, Chairperson of the Washington D.C. Association of Koreans. Additionally, there were congratulatory speeches from Ambassador Cho Hyun-dong of the Republic of Korea to the U.S., **Greg Scarlatoiu, President and CEO of The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea**, Susan Lee, Maryland Secretary of State, Pak Chung-ki, Chief Administrative Law Judge of Maryland, and former member of the Virginia House of Delegates, Mark Lee Keam. After the presentation of appointment letters, a welcome dinner was held, followed by performances by Byeon Jae-eun, Director of the JUB Cultural Center, and Soprano Kwon Kee-sun.

This is reporter Park Nogyeong.

Translated by Hannah Starnes, HRNK Research Intern; edited by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Kate Refolo, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724151336/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-2024-global-strategy-special-committee-washington-conference-hallyu-korean-wave-is-the-fast-track-to-unification?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, November 14th, 2024

NATO and the EU press China to help stop North Korea's support for the war on Ukraine

Inter-Korean Relations:
Parliament passes bill to compensate damage caused by N. Korean trash balloons (*Yonhap*, 11/14/2024)

International:
Biden to voice 'deep concern' over N.K. troop dispatch to Russia in summit with Xi this week: senior U.S. official (*Yonhap*, 11/14/2024)
'Don't die for Putin': Rights groups to send message to NK soldiers (*The Korea Times*, 11/14/2024)
Iranian hackers draw from North Korean playbook in sign of collusion: Report (*NK News*, 11/14/2024)
Kim Jong Un lays low after Trump win, sign of possible policy review (*NK News*, 11/14/2024)
NATO and the EU press China to help stop North Korea's support for the war on Ukraine (*AP News*, 11/14/2024)
North Korea has just moved the world a step closer to global war (*The Telegraph*, 11/14/2024)
S. Korea to take 'effective, phased' measures as N. Korean troops enter combat in Russia's Kursk (*Yonhap*, 11/14/2024)
US concerned by Russia-North Korea ties and technology exchanges (*Reuters*, 11/14/2024)
US, South Korea confirm North Korean troops have entered combat against Ukraine (*NK News*, 11/14/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- The National Assembly of South Korea passed a revised bill "the Framework Act on Civil Defense" that provides state compensation for people who suffer damage from North Korea's trash-filled balloons. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)

International:

- U.S. President Joe Biden is expected to express "deep concern" over North Korea's troop deployment to Russia during a summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping set to take place on the margins of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit in Peru this week, a senior U.S. administration official said. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Human rights groups in South Korea will issue a joint open letter urging North Korean troops deployed in Russia not to sacrifice their lives for Moscow's war efforts against Ukraine, said an activist familiar with the matter. (Jung Min-ho, *The Korea Times*)
- An Iranian threat group appears to have borrowed from the playbook of North Korean cybercriminals for a campaign targeting the aerospace industry, a development that researchers say may point to collusion between the state-backed actors. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has not appeared in public since Donald Trump's victory in the U.S. presidential election over one week ago, a sign he is taking time to review policy

options following the comeback of his counterpart for two high-profile summits. (Colin Zwriko, *NK News*)

- NATO and the European Union are ramping up efforts to persuade China to help get North Korea to stop sending troops and other support to Russia to back its war on Ukraine. (Lorne Cook, *AP News*)
- North Korea's deployment of troops to aid Russia in Ukraine and their defense pact could modernize Pyongyang's military and shift South Korea's stance, reinforcing an emerging global divide between NATO and allies in the Indo-Pacific against a Russia-China-North Korea bloc. (John Hemmings, *The Telegraph*)
- South Korea's government said "effective and phased" measures will be taken over North Korea's dispatch of troops to fight for Russia against Ukraine, after the nation's spy agency confirmed that the North's soldiers have entered combat in Russia's Kursk. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- The United States is concerned by Russia's growing relationship with North Korea and by what technology the two countries may be exchanging, the top U.S. arms control official said. (Luiza Ilie, *Reuters*)
- The U.S. and South Korea confirmed that North Korean forces have entered combat against Ukraine in Russia's Kursk region, leading a chorus of voices expressing concern over growing military ties between Pyongyang and Moscow. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)

Prepared by Gloria Guo, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724151443/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-nato-and-the-eu-press-china-to-help-stop-north-koreas-support-for-the-war-on-ukraine?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Saturday, November 16th, 2024

Biden praises cooperation at meeting with South Korean, Japanese leaders amid North Korea worries

North Korea:

Kim Jong-un oversees 'suicide attack drone' tests, calls for mass production (*The Korea Herald*, 11/15/2024)
Kim Jong Un orders mass production of suicide attack drones (UPI, 11/15/2024)
N. Korea's Kim orders mass production of suicide attack drones: KCNA (*Yonhap*, 11/15/2024)
N. Korean leader 'sensitive' to int'l human rights pressure: ex-N. Korean diplomat (*Yonhap*, 11/15/2024)
North Korea tests exploding drones as Kim calls for mass production (*AP News*, 11/14/2024)

North Korea to mass produce self-detonating explosive drones, state media reports (CNN, 11/15/2024)
North Korean elites will ensure their sons aren't dispatched to Russia: Defector (*NK News*, 11/15/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Half of South Koreans think Trump return will negatively impact North Korea ties (*NK News*, 11/15/2024)
North Korea Deploys a New Weapon Against the South: Unbearable Noise (*The New York Times*, 11/16/2024)

International:
Biden to meet South Korean and Japanese leaders amid growing worries about North Korea (*The Washington Post*, 11/15/2024)
Biden praises cooperation at meeting with South Korean, Japanese leaders amid North Korea worries (*AP News*, 11/15/2024)
Ex-Trump envoy on N. Korea says Kim Jong-un won't negotiate denuclearization (*Yonhap*, 11/15/2024)
Families of North Korean soldiers in Russia face fear, anxiety (VOA, 11/15/2024)
In their final talks, Biden is expected to press China's Xi on North Korea's ties with Russia (*AP News*, 11/16/2024)
Japan's minister visits Ukraine to stress mutual concern over North Korean troops (*AP News*, 11/16/2024)
Kim Jong-un's Lesson From Ukraine War: Make More Drones (*The New York Times*, 11/15/2024)
Language barriers and inexperience may hamper North Korean troops on Russia's battlefield (*NBC News*, 11/16/2024)
'Monstrous' North Korean artillery spotted in Russia, likely for use in Ukraine (*NK News*, 11/15/2024)
North Korean defector frets over fate of soldiers thrown into Ukraine war (*Nikkei Asia*, 11/16/2024)
North Koreans in Russia in place but not in combat: Ukraine official (*Radio Free Asia*, 11/15/2024)
State Dept. says N. Korean involvement in war against Ukraine causes 'great concern,' 'consternation' (*Yonhap*, 11/15/2024)
South Korea's Yoon tells China's Xi cooperation needed on Russia, North Korea (*Reuters*, 11/15/2024)
US, Japan, South Korea coordinate response to North Korean threats (VOA, 11/15/2024)
U.S. may have difficulty in proposing talks to N.K. amid enhanced threats: Seoul official (*Yonhap*, 11/15/2024)
Will Trump revive his bromance with Kim Jong-un? (*The Korea Times*, 11/15/2024)
Yoon, Biden, Ishiba to discuss 'coordinated' response to N.K. troop dispatch to Russia: Sullivan (*Yonhap*, 11/15/2024)

North Korea:

- Kim Jong-un oversaw performance tests of newly developed "suicide attack drones of various types" at a test site on Thursday, where he underscored the urgency of establishing a

serial production system “as early as possible” to commence full-scale mass production. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)

- Kim Jong-un visited an unmanned aerial vehicle facility and ordered the "full-scale mass production" of new suicide attack drones, state media reported Friday, amid growing military cooperation between Pyongyang and Moscow. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- Kim Jong-un is very "sensitive" to international pressure over his country's human rights situation because he knows suppressing the issue is crucial to retaining his hereditary power. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea tested exploding drones designed to crash into targets and leader Kim Jong Un called for accelerating mass production of the weapons, state media said Friday. The drones flew various routes and accurately struck targets, KCNA said. Its images showed what appeared to be a BMW sedan being destroyed and old models of tanks being blown up. (Kim Tong-Hyung, *AP News*)
- Kim Jong Un has ordered his country to quickly start mass producing self-detonating explosive drones, calling their development an “essential requirement,” after overseeing a test of the deadly aerial weapon, state media reported Friday. (Helen Regan, Gawon Bae, CNN)
- North Korean forces deployed to Russia’s Kursk have not yet been involved in Moscow’s attempts to dislodge Ukrainian troops from the region, said a senior official at Ukraine’s national security agency, contradicting reports from the United States and South Korea. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)
- U.S. President Joe Biden will meet with leaders of South Korea and Japan Friday to come up with a "coordinated" response to the deployment of thousands of North Korean troops to help Moscow’s war against Ukraine and on Pyongyang’s nuclear threat more broadly, on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum in Lima, Peru. (Patsy Widakuswara, VOA)
- Kim Jong-un has overseen the performance test of suicide attack drones, and stressed the need for prompt full-scale mass production, the North's state media reported Friday. The tests involved the drones precisely hitting the targets after flying along various preset tactical routes. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean elites will use their power to ensure the military does not deploy their sons to Russia, according to a former DPRK diplomat, arguing that the troop dispatch to fight Ukraine is unlikely to spark a backlash against the regime. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- Poll also finds two-thirds support nuclear armament, amid doubts about president-elect’s commitment to Seoul’s defense. Half of South Koreans believe Donald Trump's return to the White House will negatively impact ROK national security and relations with North Korea. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- Relations between the neighbors have sunk to the lowest level in years. Now, Pyongyang is blaring eerie sounds across the border that villagers say is making their lives hell. (Choe Sang-hun, *The New York Times*)

International:

- President Joe Biden on Friday praised the cooperation between South Korea, Japan and the U.S. at countering North Korea's "dangerous and destabilizing cooperation with Russia." (Aamer Madhani, Rebecca Santana, *AP News*)
- Former U.S. envoy on North Korea policy, Joseph Yum, dismissed any chances of Kim Jong-un negotiating denuclearization with the U.S., as he has more powerful weapons and support from Russia. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- "North Korean mothers who sent their children to Russia must feel unimaginable pain," said Kim Jeong-ah, a North Korean defector and former first lieutenant in the North Korean People's Army who spoke to VOA *Korean* by phone Wednesday. (Young Gyo Kim, Sangjin Cho, VOA)
- President Joe Biden is expected to use his final meeting with China's leader, Xi Jinping, to urge him to dissuade North Korea from further deepening its support for Russia's war on Ukraine. (Aamer Madhani, *AP News*)
- Japan's foreign minister arrived in Kyiv on Saturday to discuss North Korea's deepening military alliance with Russia, including the deployment of thousands of troops to support Moscow's war in Ukraine. (Samya Kullab, *AP News*)
- Analysts say the low-cost weapons are attractive to Kim Jong-un, who is intent on modernizing North Korea's military. (Choe Sang-hun, *The New York Times*)
- The troops could boost Russia's depleted forces, but North Korea's vast army has not seen major combat since the Korean War, and most do not speak Russian. (Stella Kim, Mithil Aggarwal, *NBC News*)
- A North Korean self-propelled gun has been spotted moving through central Russia, sparking concerns that Pyongyang is providing its most notorious long-range weapon to supplement troop deployments to fight against Ukraine. (Anton Sokolin, Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- Kim Kang-woo works to draw global attention to rights abuses by regime. (Steven Borowiec, *Nikkei Asia*)
- A U.S. State Department spokesperson said Thursday that North Korea's involvement in Russia's war against Ukraine causes "great concern" and "consternation" for the Indo-Pacific as he underscored cooperation with South Korea, Japan and other countries in addressing the issue. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol told Chinese President Xi Jinping that their two countries should cooperate for peace in the face of North Korea and Russia's military cooperation. (Joyce Lee, *Reuters*)
- The U.S. may have difficulty in proposing dialogue to North Korea, given the North's advanced nuclear capabilities and security concerns raised by its troop deployment to Russia. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- As U.S. President-elect Donald Trump prepares for his second term, uncertainties loom over the Korean Peninsula, already fraught with North Korea's nuclear threats. South Koreans are increasingly anxious about the potential return of Trump's unpredictable diplomatic approach. (Kim Hyun-bin, *The Korea Times*)
- The upcoming trilateral summit between South Korea, the United States and Japan in Peru will be a chance for the three countries to discuss a "coordinated" response to North Korea's troop dispatch to support Russia's war in Ukraine. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Natalie Razera, HRNK Research Intern and Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724151717/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-biden-praises-cooperation-at-meeting-with-south-korean-japanese-leaders-amid-north-korea-worries?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, November 17th, 2024

Japanese abducted by N.Korea call for quick return of others at annual rally; N. Korea's GPS jamming continues for 10th day

North Korea:
N. Korea's GPS jamming expands to wider regions along inter-Korean border: official (*Yonhap*, 11/16/2024)
N. Korea's GPS jamming continues for 10th day (*Yonhap*, 11/17/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
N.K. leader's sister says S. Korea will have to pay 'dear price' for leaflets (*Yonhap*, 11/16/2024)

International:
Biden Discusses With Allies 'Dangerous' Cooperation Between Russia and North Korea (*The New York Times*, 11/15/2024)
Japanese abducted by N.Korea call for quick return of others at annual rally (*NHK World*, 11/17/2024)
North Korea May End Up Sending Putin 100,000 Troops for His War (*Bloomberg*, 11/17/2024)
North Korean State Media Issues Japan Warning: 'Impossible To Sit Idly By' (*Newsweek*, 11/17/2024)
U.S. to deter nuclear threats from N. Korea, China, Russia 'simultaneously': Pentagon report (*Yonhap*, 11/16/2024)
Ukraine war briefing: Biden urges Xi to dissuade North Korea from deepening Russian support (*The Guardian*, 11/17/2024)
Washington-Pyongyang talks difficult without Seoul's involvement: minister (*Yonhap*, 11/17/2024)

North Korea:

- North Korea appears to be jamming GPS signals in wider regions along its border with South Korea, a military official said Saturday, with the series of jamming believed to be linked to the North's own training against drones. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's GPS jamming continued for a 10th day, targeting areas near Gangwon Province and spreading from northwestern islands to parts of Gyeonggi and Gangwon. The weaker, shorter-duration signals are believed to be part of a military exercise to counter potential drone threats. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korea has reacted angrily to South Korean activists sending balloons across the border carrying anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets and South Korean consumer goods. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)

International:

- President Biden said stronger ties with South Korea and Japan are working, but did not address whether President-elect Donald J. Trump would continue his approach when he takes office in January. (Michael D. Shear, *The New York Times*)
- Former abductees who returned to Japan from North Korea 22 years ago have called for the quick return of those still held there. (*NHK World*)
- Move not imminent, troops could rotate in batches, people say; Ukraine's allies worried about deepening Putin-Kim accord. (Alberto Nardelli, Michael Nienaber, *Bloomberg*)
- North Korea's KCNA state news agency said in a commentary published on Sunday that the "regional situation has become more dangerous than ever due to the U.S.-Japan-ROK war of aggression exercises aimed at our sacred nation." (Ellie Cook, *Newsweek*)
- An updated U.S. nuclear employment strategy calls for the United States to be able to deter threats from North Korea, China and Russia "simultaneously" during peacetime, a crisis and in conflict, a Pentagon report showed Friday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- In their final meeting, the US president pressed China's leader to prevent North Korea from further escalation in Ukraine. (Christine Kearney, *The Guardian*)
- Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho emphasized that any dialogue between North Korea and the U.S. would be challenging without South Korea's involvement, highlighting the strong cooperation between Seoul and Washington. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724151814/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-japanese-abducted-by-nkorea-call-for-quick-return-of-others-at-annual-rally-n-koreas-gps-jamming-continues-for-10th-day?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Monday, November 18th, 2024

Kim blasts US support for Ukraine at major army conference; N.K. sends trash-carrying balloons to South for 1st time in 3 weeks

North Korea:

Kim Jong Un blasts US support for Ukraine at major army conference (*NK News*, 11/18/2024)
N. Korea's Kim calls for bolstering nuclear forces 'without limitation,' completing war preparations (*Yonhap*, 11/18/2024)

South Korea:
Seoul offers to play key role in possible talks between Washington, Pyongyang (*The Korea Times*, 11/18/2024)
S. Korea reviews measures to reclaim loans to N. Korea over destruction of land routes (*Yonhap*, 11/18/2024)
South Korea 'strongly confident' US alliance will thrive under Trump (*Reuters*, 11/18/2024)
South Korea to launch 3rd spy satellite from Vandenberg base by year-end (*The Korea Herald*, 11/18/2024)
Yoon says S. Korea's relations with U.S., China not about choosing sides (*Yonhap*, 11/18/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
N. Korea sends trash-carrying balloons to S. Korea for 1st time in 3 weeks (*Yonhap*, 11/18/2024)
North Korea slams ROK balloon launches, scattering propaganda over Seoul (*NK News*, 11/18/2024)
S. Korea says N. Korea is 'crossing line' with trash balloon campaign (*Yonhap*, 11/18/2024)
South considers demanding payment from North over damaged inter-Korean roads, railways (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/18/2024)

International:
Biden lets Ukraine use long-range US missiles to hit Russia, North Korea troops (*Radio Free Asia*, 11/18/2024)
China's stance on North Korea, Russia appears to shift as South, U.S. and Japan up pressure (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/18/2024)
Leaders of US, ROK and Japan condemn North Korea's troop dispatch to Russia (*NK News*, 11/18/2024)
Military coup unlikely in protest of 3rd hereditary power transfer in N. Korea: ex-diplomat (*Yonhap*, 11/18/2024)
North Korean Troops Likely Won't Get to Keep Their $2K Pay From Russia (*Business Insider*, 11/18/2024)
Poland restores diplomatic presence in North Korea, four years after suspension (*NK News*, 11/18/2024)
Ukraine Issues Update on Size of North Korean Force in Russia (*Newsweek*, 11/18/2024)
U.N. committee voices concerns over negative impact of N.K.'s abandonment of reunification policy (*Yonhap*, 11/18/2024)
U.S. approves Ukraine's long-range strikes in Russia in response to North Korean troop deployment: Reports (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/18/2024)
What we know about North Korean troops in Ukraine (*BBC*, 11/18/2024)

North Korea:

- North Korean leader says US poses worldwide threat but stops short of mentioning troop deployments to Russia. Kim Jong Un told thousands of army battalion commanders to boost war-fighting preparations at a major conference in Pyongyang last week, according to state media, as North Korean troops continue to support Russian forces against Ukraine. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has called for bolstering the country's nuclear forces "without limitation" and completing war preparations, accusing South Korea, the United States and Japan of threatening regional peace through military cooperation. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)

South Korea:

- South Korea believes the chances of Pyongyang and Washington resuming dialogue without Seoul's involvement under a second Trump administration are low, given the strengthened South Korea-U.S. alliance and the significant changes in the geopolitical landscape since Donald Trump's first presidency, the government said, Monday. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)
- The unification ministry said Monday it is reviewing measures to reclaim loans granted to North Korea for building inter-Korean roads and train tracks after the North blew them up in October. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul said on Monday he is "strongly confident" the South Korea-U.S. alliance will continue to thrive under the incoming U.S. administration of President-elect Donald Trump. (David Brunnstrom, *Reuters*)
- The South Korean military is close to launching a third spy satellite, to be a key asset in monitoring North Korea. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol said South Korea's relations with the United States and China are not about choosing sides, pledging to working closely with both great powers amid Donald Trump's imminent return to the White House, according to interviews published Monday. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korea again sent balloons carrying trash toward South Korea on Monday, the military here said, resuming its balloon campaign after about a three-week hiatus. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- Kim Yo Jong accused South Korean activists of scattering more anti-regime leaflets in North Korea on Sunday, warning that ROK "scum" would "pay a dear price" hours before the DPRK appeared to send its own propaganda leaflets over the border. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- South Korea's military on Monday condemned North Korea for "crossing the line" with its continued sending of trash-carrying balloons to the South and warned that all responsibility lies within the North. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The South Korean government said Monday that it is reviewing measures to recover loans to the North used for building inter-Korean roads and railways, which were partly demolished in October. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- The United States authorized the first use of U.S.-supplied long-range missiles by Ukraine for strikes into Russia, media reported, in a response to Russia's decision to bring North Korean troops into its war on Ukraine. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)
- China faced pressure to respond to North Korea's dispatch of troops to Russia during the recently concluded Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit held in Lima, Peru, from Friday to Sunday. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The leaders of the U.S., South Korea and Japan condemned North Korea's deployment of troops to support Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Friday, while laying the groundwork to continue trilateral efforts to deter DPRK threats under a new secretariat even after U.S. President-elect Donald Trump takes charge. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un is attempting to extend his hereditary power into a fourth generation, but a military coup over the matter is unlikely, a former North Korean diplomat said Monday. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- Russia is pouring cash into the deployment of up to 100,000 North Korean soldiers to help its war efforts — but the soldiers themselves are unlikely to receive any of it, according to North Korea experts. (Mia Jankowicz, *Business Insider*)
- Poland has resumed diplomatic activities in North Korea after nearly four years of suspension due to the pandemic, while continuing efforts to reopen its embassy in Pyongyang fully. (Alannah Hill, *NK News*)
- Tens of thousands of North Korean soldiers could gain valuable battlefield experience in the coming year as they deploy to the front lines of Russia's war against Ukraine, according to Kyiv's top diplomat in Seoul. (John Feng, *Newsweek*)
- A United Nations committee has voiced concern over the potential negative impact on North Korea's human rights situation following the North's decision to abandon its policy of seeking reunification with South Korea, a draft report showed Monday. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The decision by U.S. President Joe Biden to authorize Ukraine's use of U.S.-supplied long-range missiles against targets in Russia for the first time was in response to North Korea's deployment of troops to the battlefield, reports said Sunday. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- After the US and Ukraine revealed North Korean troops have already engaged in combat with Ukrainian soldiers, their role in the fight is being re-evaluated. (Kelly Ng, BBC)

Prepared by Katie Jiwoo Choi, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724151912/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-kim-blasts-us-support-for-ukraine-at-major-army-conference-nk-sends-trash-carrying-balloons-to-south-for-1st-time-in-3-weeks?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Tuesday, November 19th, 2024

Abductee family group vows to go ahead with sending leaflets to N.K.; Kim meets Russian trade official, vows to expand economic ties

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un meets Russian trade official, vows to expand economic ties (*NK News*, 11/19/2024)
North's Kim meets with Russian natural resources minister amid deepening Pyongyang-Moscow ties (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/19/2024)
North Korea's trade with China hits yearly high in October on surge in imports (*NK News*, 11/19/2024)
N. Korea's Kim urges extensive promotion of relations with Russia (*Yonhap*, 11/19/2024)
N. Korea warns of 'retaliatory response' over S. Korea-U.S.-Japan's summit agreement (*Yonhap*, 11/19/2024)

In South Korea:
Abductee family group vows to go ahead with sending leaflets to N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 11/19/2024)
Anti-North Korea groups to conduct first leaflet launch from sea in 16 years (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/19/2024)
South Korea given prior notice by U.S. on decision to let Ukraine use long-range missiles against Russia: Presidential office (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/19/2024)
South Korean Coast Guard thwarts planned maritime launch of anti-North leaflets (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/19/2024)

International:
Effort to stop N.K. military support for Russia needs to go in parallel with denuclearization push (*Yonhap*, 11/19/2024)
Rights activists tell NK soldiers fighting Ukraine to 'stand on the side of justice' (*The Korea Times*, 11/19/2024)
The American Nuclear Arsenal Guarantees Peace (*The National Interest*, 11/19/2024)
U.S., Russia exchange barbs over Biden's reported decision to allow Ukraine to hit Russian territory (*Yonhap*, 11/19/2024)
Zelenskyy says North Korea may send 100k troops to Ukraine, as war reaches 1,000 days (*The Guardian*, 11/19/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and a top Russian trade official met in Pyongyang on Monday and vowed to expand economic ties, according to state media, while a Russian military delegation arrived in the DPRK the same day. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un held a rare meeting with Alexandr Kozlov, Russia's minister of natural resources and ecology, in Pyongyang on Monday, with the senior Russian official arriving in the capital city to lead and participate in the 11th annual bilateral talks on economy, science and technology. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- North Korea's trade with China hit a new high for the year in October on the back of growing imports, although declining exports kept the total volume from outpacing last year's highs. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has met with Russia's visiting natural resources minister and called for "more extensive and diversified" promotion of cooperative relations between their countries. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea warned that trilateral security cooperation among South Korea, the United States and Japan would prompt more "retaliatory responses," days after the leaders of the three nations decided to establish a secretariat to bolster three-way cooperation. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- A group representing families of those abducted by North Korea said Tuesday it would go ahead with sending propaganda leaflets to the North. (Kim Hyun-soo, *Yonhap*)
- Groups of North Korean defectors and relatives of South Koreans abducted to the North were poised to send anti-Pyongyang leaflets from the waters off Gangwon. The groups planned to depart from Geojin Port in Goseong County, Gangwon, on Tuesday afternoon and launch balloons carrying some 50,000 anti-Pyongyang leaflets toward the North.. (Lee Soo-jung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The U.S. government informed the South Korean government in advance of its decision to allow Ukraine to use U.S.-supplied long-range missiles for strikes inside Russia. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The Korea Coast Guard on Tuesday afternoon shut down an attempt by groups of North Korean defectors and relatives of South Koreans abducted to the North to launch anti-Pyongyang leaflets using fishing vessels from the waters off Gangwon. (Lee Soo-jung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- Any attempt to end North Korea's military support for Russia's war in Ukraine needs to proceed in parallel with a push to denuclearize the North, stressing Pyongyang's backing for Moscow is reshaping security dynamics in the Indo-Pacific and Europe. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Human rights activists released an open letter, Tuesday, calling for North Korean troops in Russia to stop helping the Kremlin's "unjustifiable" war efforts against Ukraine amid reports that some of them have already been killed. (Jung Min-ho, *The Korea Times*)
- After giving the disarmament community three decades to convince Russia, then China, and now North Korea that America would lead them to the promised land of a world free of nuclear weapons, their failure is evident in the complete modernization of the Russian nuclear arsenal and the more recent dramatic increase in both the Chinese and North Korean nuclear arsenals. (Curtis McGiffin, Adam Lowther, *The National Interest*)
- The United States and Russia traded barbs Monday over President Joe Biden's reported decision to allow Ukraine to use U.S.-provided longer-range missiles to strike targets inside

Russia, amid concerns about an escalation of Moscow's protracted war in Ukraine. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

- Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said his country could face 100,000 North Korean troops, as he urged European nations to intensify their military aid in a speech marking 1,000 days since Russia launched its full-scale invasion. (Jennifer Rankin, *The Guardian*)

Prepared by Sarah Han, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724152019/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-abductee-family-group-vows-to-go-ahead-with-sending-leaflets-to-nk-kim-meets-russian-trade-official-vows-to-expand-economic-ties?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, November 20th, 2024

HRNK Celebrates the Life and Legacy of Founding Board Member and Former Co-Chair Richard Vincent Allen

Top News:
HRNK Celebrates the Life and Legacy of Founding Board Member and Former Co-Chair Richard Vincent Allen (*HRNK*, 11/19/2024)
North Korean human rights expected to be a priority for U.S. Secretary of State nominee Rubio (*Radio Free Asia*, 11/15/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

North Korea:
N. Korea's Kim inspects regional factory construction site, urges successful completion (*Yonhap*, 11/20/2024)
North Korea ramps up textile imports in October, likely for illicit sales scheme (*NK News*, 11/20/2024)

International:
N. Korea, Russia discuss issues of mutual cooperation at committee meeting on economy (*Yonhap*, 11/20/2024)
N.K. troops assigned to Russia's airborne brigade, marine corps; some entered combat: NIS (*Yonhap*, 11/20/2024)
North Korea Hasn't Perfected ICBM Warheads, US Admiral Says (*Bloomberg*, 11/20/2024)
North Korea Sent a Mystery Man to Lead Its Troops Fighting Ukraine (*The Wall Street Journal*, 11/20/2024)

North Korea sent more artillery systems in new arms shipment to Russia, South Korea says (*The Independent*, 11/20/2024)
North Korea, Russia reach deals on expanding ties in tourism, education and more (*NK News*, 11/20/2024)
North Korea sent more conventional weapons to Russia, South Korea says (*Associated Press*, 11/20/2024)
North Korea troops have joined Ukraine war battles as part of Russian units, Seoul says (*Reuters*, 11/20/2024)
Putin gifts zoo animals, including lion and bears, to North Korean zoo (*Reuters*, 11/20/2024)
Ukraine's Zelensky says North Korea may send up to 100,000 troops to Russia (*UPI*, 11/20/2024)
UN working group criticizes China for last year's repatriations of North Korean defectors (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/20/2024)
U.S. has not yet seen N. Korea's atmospheric reentry missile capability: Indo-Pacific Command chief (*Yonhap*, 11/20/2024)

Top News:

- HRNK is deeply saddened by the passing of our founding Board member and former Co-Chair Richard Vincent Allen on Saturday, November 16, age 88. **Greg Scarlatoiu**, President and CEO of HRNK said: "The Honorable Richard V. Allen was a true visionary and icon of U.S. foreign policy. I used to hear his name a lot while listening to Voice of America and Radio Free Europe, growing up on the other side of the Iron Curtain. It was amazing and humbling to know that he later became a great friend and mentor, who believed in me and played a critical role in my professional and personal development. We have lost a great American hero and one of the defining thought leaders of American foreign policy, HRNK and our mission. We will continue to honor his legacy and vision. We will continue our good fight to bring freedom, democracy, and human rights to the people of North Korea." (Alexander Kim, *HRNK*)
- In the U.S. Congress, Senator Marco Rubio, has been officially nominated as Secretary of State for Donald Trump's second administration. **Greg Scarlatoiu**, President and CEO of The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), stated in an interview with RFA on the 14th, "Senator Marco Rubio has long been a strong advocate for North Korean human rights issues." (Han Deokin, No Jeongmin, Kim Sangil, *Radio Free Asia*)

North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has inspected industrial factories under construction and urged their successful completion in 20 regions. Kim gave a "field guidance" at regional industrial factories under construction in Songchon County, South Phyongan Province. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea ramped up imports of fabric from China last month, official data shows, pointing to a likely lucrative effort to process textiles into other products for illicit export abroad. Different types of fabrics led the DPRK's imports in October at $20.74 million. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)

International:

- North Korea has held the 11th meeting of the intergovernmental committee on economic cooperation with Russia and discussed issues on mutual cooperation. Yun Jong-ho, the external economic relations minister of North Korea, and Russia's Natural Resources Minister Alexander Kozlov attended. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean troops deployed to Russia were assessed to have been assigned to Moscow's airborne brigade and marine corps on the ground, with some of the North's soldiers having already entered combat, South Korea's spy agency told lawmakers Wednesday. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- Years of high-profile intercontinental ballistic missile tests by North Korea have fallen short of demonstrating that Pyongyang can successfully launch and deliver a nuclear warhead against the US mainland, the head of American forces in the Indo-Pacific said. (Anthony Capaccio, *Bloomberg*)
- Col. Gen. Kim Yong Bok was rarely seen—or even mentioned—in public. Now his is a very public figure. He is the top North Korean military official in Russia, where North Korean soldiers have been deployed to aid Moscow's efforts to dislodge Ukrainian troops. (Dasl Yoon, *The Wall Street Journal*)
- North Korea sent more artillery systems to Russia in a recent shipment of conventional arms, South Korea's spy agency told lawmakers on Wednesday. Pyongyang exported 170mm self-propelled guns and 240mm multiple rocket launch systems to aid the Russian war effort in Ukraine. (Arpan Rai, *The Independent*)
- North Korea and Russia have revealed plans to increase charter flights to promote tourism and open a joint Russian-language education center in Pyongyang, following an annual meeting of their bilateral economic commission this week. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- North Korea recently supplied additional artillery systems to Russia. This came after U.S. President Joe Biden let Ukraine strike targets inside Russia with supplied longer-range missiles. U.S. officials said Biden's decision was triggered almost entirely by North Korea's entry into the war. (Hyung-Jin Kim, Kim Tong-Hyung, *Associated Press*)
- Around 10,900 North Korean troops have been deployed to Kursk as part of Russia's airborne unit and marines, with some already participating in battles in the Ukraine war. North Korea has also shipped arms for the war in Ukraine, including self-propelled howitzers and multiple rocket launchers. (Joyce Lee, Jack Kim, *Reuters*)
- Russia transferred more than 70 animals, including an African lion and two brown bears, to a zoo in the North Korean capital Pyongyang from Moscow's zoo, the Russian government said on Wednesday. The animals were "a gift from Vladimir Putin to the Korean people", the government said. (Lucy Papachristou, *Reuters*)
- North Korea could deploy up to 100,000 troops to aid Moscow in its war against Kyiv, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky warned, amid reports that the North was also sending additional long-range artillery systems to Russia. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- A United Nations working group has concluded that China's repatriation of North Korean defectors last year constitutes an "arbitrary deprivation of liberty". The group adopted the opinions in response to a petition filed on behalf of Kim Cheol-ok, a North Korean national, the document showed. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- The commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said Tuesday that the United States has "not yet" seen North Korea's atmospheric reentry capability, a key technology required for the regime to advance its intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) program. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

North Korean Human Rights Expected to Be a Priority for U.S. Secretary of State Nominee Rubio

Han Deokin, No Jeongmin, Kim Sangil, *Radio Free Asia*
November 15, 2024

In the U.S. Congress, Senator Marco Rubio, who has consistently been involved in North Korea-related issues, has been officially nominated as Secretary of State for Donald Trump's second administration, which takes office on January 20 of next year.

Senator Rubio is particularly known for leading the introduction of the North Korean Human Rights Act reauthorization bill in the U.S. Senate. There is interest in whether he will also raise his voice on North Korean human rights as part of the next administration's North Korea policy.

Reported by Han Deok-in.

Nominee Rubio maintains a hardline stance on North Korea but holds an open position on humanitarian aid

Senator Marco Rubio (Republican-Florida), was officially nominated by U.S. President-elect Donald Trump as the next Secretary of State on the 13th.

Nominee Rubio, who was sworn in as a U.S. Senator from Florida on January 3, 2011, has been serving as a senator for approximately 13 years and 10 months as of November this year.

"Since the 112th Congress in 2011, Senator Rubio has been actively involved in key foreign policy issues, including North Korea policy, through his service on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Intelligence Committee. In the current 118th Congress, he is also recognized for his significant involvement in national security and intelligence matters as the Vice Chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee."

Some have described Nominee Rubio's political stance as 'neoconservative' (NEOCON), referring to the new conservatism in American politics. However, according to U.S. political media outlets such

as ‘The Hill’ and ‘Politico’, his nomination as Secretary of State is considered a relatively less controversial decision compared to other appointments in Congress.

Additionally, Nominee Rubio, who has shown a hardline stance on China and Iran, recently expressed the opinion that the Ukraine-Russia war should be resolved through negotiations, prompting analysis that there are many points of alignment with President-elect Trump’s position.

If Secretary of State Nominee Rubio is confirmed, there is cautious speculation that human rights issues could be included in North Korea negotiations, which have so far focused only on denuclearization.

During the first Trump administration, the U.S.-North Korea summit focused solely on denuclearization, with criticism that human rights issues were pushed to a lower priority on the agenda.

Nominee Rubio has brought renewed attention to North Korean human rights issues, having played a pivotal role in the U.S. Senate by working in tandem with the House of Representatives to champion the 'North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act’. In the current legislative session, Rubio continued to lead these efforts as the primary sponsor of the act in the Senate.

Furthermore, Nominee Rubio, together with Senator Tim Kaine (Democrat-Virginia), introduced the 'Divided Families National Registry Act' in the Senate this past March, aimed at supporting Korean Americans who were separated from their families in North Korea following the Korean War.

In a statement, he emphasized that 'efforts to support Korean American families who have been separated from their loved ones for decades due to the Korean War and Kim Jong Un's oppressive regime must be a part of any potential dialogue with North Korea.' He further expressed hope that the legislation would 'help advance these efforts,' underscoring his commitment to facilitating reunions for families divided between the U.S. and North Korea.

Nominee Rubio has also maintained an open stance on humanitarian aid to North Korea.

In 2019, during the first Trump administration, Senator Rubio expressed his support for the South Korean government’s plan to provide food aid to North Korea when asked about it by Radio Free Asia (RFA). However, he stressed that his support was contingent on ensuring transparency in the distribution of food to North Korean citizens through proper institutional measures.

Senator Rubio (May 2019):

"I’ve never opposed food aid to anyone. What I believe is important is ensuring that the aid is fully delivered to the people and not diverted by the regime for other purposes."

Meanwhile, Nominee Rubio has expressed skepticism about the 'top-down' approach to North Korea engagement—where decisions are driven by top leadership—a strategy employed during the first Trump administration.

In September 2019, as then-President Trump considered a potential visit to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) ahead of a U.S.-South Korea summit, Rubio told Radio Free Asia (RFA), 'I hope he’s right, but I’m concerned it could backfire.' He further noted, 'We are still far from achieving a middle-ground agreement with North Korea,' cautioning that expecting concrete results in the near future would be unrealistic.

Senator Rubio (September 2019):

"No, I don’t think you can negotiate a step-by-step deal with North Korea, because they will likely use it to buy time and secure just enough sanctions relief to ensure their survival, while ultimately failing to honor any of their commitments. I also think expecting any sort of deal from this visit is overly optimistic."

Nominee Rubio, Leader of the North Korean Human Rights Act, Likely to Address North Korean Human Rights Issues

Regarding Secretary of State Nominee Rubio, **Greg Scarlatoiu, President and CEO of The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)**, stated in an interview with RFA on the 14th, "Senator Marco Rubio has long been a strong advocate for North Korean human rights issues."

Scarlatoiu stated, "North Korean human rights issues must be addressed on an equal level with political, security, and military matters." He added, "His nomination is highly encouraging, and I look forward to working with Secretary of State Nominee Rubio to promote a human rights-centered approach to North Korea-related issues moving forward.”

Li Jeong-ho, director of the Korea Prosperity Development Center and a former senior official in North Korea's Workers' Party Room 39, also suggested that human rights issues could be raised with North Korea through Secretary of State Nominee Rubio.

[Li Jeong-ho] "Since Secretary of State Nominee Rubio is of Cuban descent, I believe he will not overlook human rights issues. If we continue to raise this issue, even if President Trump himself is not directly involved, his staff may bring up human rights concerns."

Li Jeong-ho further explained, "Given that Rubio is of Cuban descent, I believe he was selected because he is viewed as someone capable of taking a strong stance against countries like China and Russia, which promote socialism."

In an interview with CNN on November 6, 2024, following the confirmation of former President Trump's election, Nominee Rubio stated, "The United States is entering an era of practical foreign policy."

He specifically highlighted the growing alliance between Russia, North Korea, Iran, and China as a new threat, stressing that the United States must approach its foreign strategy with careful consideration and wisdom.

In a press release on the 13th, Rubio, officially nominated as Secretary of State, described leading the U.S. State Department as a significant responsibility. He pledged to tirelessly implement the Trump administration's foreign policy as Secretary of State.

He added, "Under President-elect Trump's leadership, we will achieve peace through strength and, above all, prioritize the interests of the United States and its citizens," suggesting that the "peace through strength" approach could also be reflected in U.S. policy toward North Korea.

With Senator Rubio, who has long shown concern for North Korean human rights issues, nominated as Secretary of State, there is growing attention on whether the Trump administration's North Korea policy in its second term will expand to address not only denuclearization but also human rights issues in North Korea.

Meanwhile, Robert King, former U.S. Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights, praised in an op-ed published by the Korea Economic Institute (KEI) on the 14th, stating that this year the United Nations has consistently focused on North Korea's human rights violations, and it is encouraging that the international community is strongly pressuring the Kim Jong Un regime over these human rights abuses.

Former Special Envoy King emphasized, "While the ongoing pressure from the United Nations has yet to produce visible changes in North Korea's human rights situation, the international community must continue its efforts to improve human rights in North Korea."

This is reporter Han Deokin.

Translated by Hannah Starnes, HRNK Research Intern; Edited by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Katherine Mitchell, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724152202/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-hrnk-celebrates-the-life-and-legacy-of-founding-board-member-and-former-co-chair-richard-vincent-allen?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, November 21st, 2024

North Korea hackers behind 2019 $42 mln Ethereum heist, police say; Putin gives a lion, two yaks and five cockatoos to Kim Jong-un

In North Korea:
N. Korea, Russia sign protocol on expanding economic cooperation (*Yonhap*, 11/21/2024)
No sign of N. Korea's preparation to launch spy satellite: unification ministry (*Yonhap*, 11/21/2024)
Putin gives a lion, two yaks and five cockatoos to Kim Jong-un (*The Telegraph*, 11/21/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
North Korea hackers behind 2019 $42 mln Ethereum heist, South Korea police say (*Reuters*, 11/21/2024)
North Korea hackers stole tens of millions from ROK crypto exchange, police find (*NK News*, 11/21/2024)
North Korea's anti-South broadcasts harm mental, physical health of border residents, surveys suggest (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/21/2024)
S. Korea confirms N. Korea stole 58 bln won worth of cryptocurrency in 2019 (*Yonhap*, 11/21/2024)

International:
Nuclear watchdog voices 'deep regret' over North Korea's new enrichment facility (*NK News*, 11/21/2024)
S. Korea issues travel ban alert for entire Kursk region in Russia amid intensifying clashes (*Yonhap*, 11/21/2024)
U.N. committee adopts resolution on N. Korean human rights for 20th straight year (*Yonhap*, 11/21/2024)
U.S. House passes N. Korean human rights reauthorization act (*Yonhap*, 11/21/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea and Russia have signed a protocol on expanding cooperation following their committee meeting on economy, science and technology in Pyongyang, the North's state media reported Thursday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The unification ministry said Thursday that there is no sign of North Korea preparing to launch a spy satellite following its failed attempt in May. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Vladimir Putin has given 70 wild animals to Kim Jong-un as a symbol of friendship, just as 12,000 North Korean conscripts are preparing to fight Ukrainian troops in southern Russia. (James Kilner, *The Telegraph*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- South Korean police said an investigation confirmed that hackers linked to North Korea's military intelligence agency were responsible for an Ethereum cryptocurrency heist in 2019, worth 58 billion won ($41.5 million) at the time. (*Reuters*)
- North Korean cybercriminals snatched tens of millions in cryptocurrency from a South Korean exchange in a 2019 heist, ROK police announced on Thursday, confirming for the first time that Pyongyang was behind the attack. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Noise from North Korean loudspeakers potentially harms the health of South Koreans living in border adjacent regions, according to recent mental health survey results released Thursday. (Lee Soo-Jung, *Korea JoongAng Daily)*
- South Korea confirmed Thursday that North Korean hackers were behind the theft of 58 billion won (US$41.5 million) worth of cryptocurrency in 2019. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)

International:

- North Korea continues to develop its nuclear program by commissioning a light-water reactor and enriching nuclear fuel at an undeclared facility, according to the chief of International Atomic Energy Agency, expressing deep regret over Pyongyang's "clear violation" of U.N. Security Council resolutions. (Alannah Hill, *NK News*)
- South Korea is banning travel to the entire Kursk region in Russia amid intensifying clashes between Ukrainian forces and Russian-North Korean troops there, the foreign ministry said Thursday. (Chang Dong-woo, *Yonhap*)
- A U.N. General Assembly committee on Wednesday passed a resolution on North Korean human rights for the 20th consecutive year, calling for the U.N. system as a whole to continue to address the North's "grave" situation "in a coordinated and unified manner." (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. House of Representatives passed a bipartisan bill Wednesday to reauthorize and update the 2004 North Korean Human Rights Act aimed at promoting rights and freedom in the reclusive state. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap)*

Prepared by Samatha Garcia, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724152329/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-hackers-behin

d-2019-42-mln-ethereum-heist-police-say-putin-gives-a-lion-two-yaks-and-five-cockatoos-to-kim-jong-un?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Friday, November 22nd, 2024

FBI seizes websites that North Koreans allegedly used to impersonate American companies

In North Korea:
N.K. leader says past negotiations with U.S. only confirmed hostile policy against Pyongyang (*Yonhap*, 11/22/24)
N. Korea denounces new U.N. human rights resolution as 'political provocation' (*Yonhap*, 11/22/24)
N. Korea's arms exhibition showcases latest weaponry from drones to ICBMs (*Yonhap*, 11/22/24)
North Korea's Kim accuses US of stoking tension, warns of nuclear war (*Reuters*, 11/22/24)

International:
FBI seizes websites that North Koreans allegedly used to impersonate American companies (CNN, 11/21/24)
JCS to launch new multidomain unit for future warfare readiness (*Yonhap*, 11/22/24)
Russia provided N. Korea with anti-air missiles in exchange for troop deployment: S. Korea's top security adviser (*Yonhap*, 11/22/24)
S. Korea, U.S., Japan unveil secretariat establishment, decry N.K.-Russia decision to expand Ukraine war (*Yonhap*, 11/16/24)
Senior N.K. general wounded in Ukraine strike in Russia: WSJ (*Yonhap*, 11/22/24)
Top air force commanders of S. Korea, U.S., Japan discuss cooperation (*Yonhap*, 11/22/24)
U.S. to deter nuclear threats from N. Korea, China, Russia 'simultaneously' (*Yonhap*, 11/16/24)
Yoon asks China's Xi to play 'constructive' role in N. Korea's provocation, military cooperation with Russia (*Yonhap*, 11/16/24)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has said that his past diplomacy with the United States only confirmed Washington's unwavering hostile policy toward Pyongyang and vowed to enhance the buildup of its nuclear arsenal, the North's state media said Friday. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea on Friday denounced a resolution recently adopted by a United Nations committee regarding the country's human rights violations as a "politically motivated provocation." (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- A North Korean weaponry exhibition featured the country's latest arms, ranging from suicide bombing drones to solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missiles, North Korean reports and photos showed Friday. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has accused the United States of ramping up tension and provocations, saying the Korean peninsula has never faced a greater risk of nuclear war, state media KCNA said on Friday. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)

International:

- The FBI has seized multiple websites that North Korean operatives used to impersonate legitimate US and Indian businesses in a likely effort to raise money for the nuclear armed-North Korean regime, according to statements on the websites and security researchers who investigated the activity. (Sean Lyngaas, CNN)
- The Joint Chiefs of Staff is set to launch a new unit tasked with bolstering readiness in the domains of space, cyber and electronic warfare, officials said Friday, amid South Korea's push to better prepare for future warfare. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- Russia has provided North Korea with anti-air missiles and air defense equipment in exchange for its troop deployment in support of Moscow's war in Ukraine, South Korea's top security adviser said Friday. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The leaders of South Korea, the United States and Japan announced the establishment of a secretariat for trilateral cooperation and condemned North Korea and Russia's decision to "dangerously expand" Moscow's war in Ukraine as they met on the margins of a multilateral summit in Peru. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- A senior North Korean general was wounded in a Ukrainian strike in Russia's western Kursk region, the Wall Street Journal has reported, citing Western officials. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The top air force commanders of South Korea, the United States and Japan have held talks to discuss ways to strengthen their cooperation, such as expanding joint air drills, officials said, the latest in their trilateral security cooperation amid North Korea's nuclear and missile threats. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- An updated U.S. nuclear employment strategy calls for the United States to be able to deter threats from North Korea, China and Russia "simultaneously" during peacetime, a crisis and in conflict, a Pentagon report showed Friday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol asked Chinese President Xi Jinping on Friday to play a "constructive" role in North Korea's provocations and Pyongyang's deepening military cooperation with Russia in support of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Ryan Rohrbach, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724152605/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-fbi-seizes-websites-that-north-koreans-allegedly-used-to-impersonate-american-companies?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, November 23rd, 2024

Ukraine is being hit with a surge of attacks using North Korean missiles. Western components help make it possible

Inter-Korean Relations:
S. Korea commemorates sacrifices of 2 Marines in 2010 N. Korean artillery attack (Yonhap, 11/23/24)

International:
Former Pentagon official expects Trump to seek reengagement with Kim Jong-un (Yonhap, 11/22/24)
N. Korea condemns U.S. military drills, warns potential escalation could trigger real war (*Yonhap*, 11/23/24)
North Korean IT workers create China-linked fake websites to evade sanctions (*NK News*, 11/22/24)
Russian general says North Korean troops are fighting on frontlines in Ukraine (*NK News*, 11/22/24)
Satellite imagery indicates North Korea oil imports from Russia top U.N. limits, report says (*Reuters*, 11/22/24)
Trump picks ex-N. Korea policy official as his principal deputy national security adviser (*Yonhap*, 11/23/24)
U.S. assesses N. Korea is prepared for 7th nuke test, awaits 'only a political decision': official (*Yonhap*, 11/23/24)
U.S. official singles outs deepening N.K.-Russia ties as what she would have 'go differently' (*Yonhap*, 11/23/24)
Ukraine is being hit with a surge of attacks using North Korean missiles. Western components help make it possible (CNN, 11/23/24)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- South Korea's Marine Corps chief vowed Saturday to never forget the sacrifices of two Marines killed in a 2010 North Korean artillery attack on a western border island. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)

International:

- U.S. President-elect Donald Trump may seek to reengage with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un "at some point," though the contours of their meeting will be different due to Pyongyang's progress in its weapons programs and Russia's backing for the regime. (Song Sang-ho, Cho Joon-hyung, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea on Saturday strongly condemned the United States for conducting joint military drills and deploying military assets to the Korean Peninsula, warning that such actions could escalate into an actual war at any time. (Kim Han-joo, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean IT workers have been impersonating software and technology firms with a series of fraudulent websites linked to China-based front companies, facilitating sanctions evasion. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- A Russian general leading a Chechen special forces unit says North Koreans are fighting on the frontlines against Ukraine, a "significant" statement according to one expert who noted it

marks the first confirmation from an insider that DPRK soldiers have joined Russian forces. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)

- North Korea has likely received more than 1 million barrels of oil from Russia over an eight-month period this year in breach of U.N. sanctions. (Hyunsu Yim, *Reuters*)
- U.S. President-elect Donald Trump named Alex Wong, who was engaged in working-level nuclear talks with North Korea during his first term, as his principal deputy national security adviser amid expectations he could seek to reengage with Pyongyang after returning to office. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States believes that North Korea is prepared for a possible seventh nuclear test while awaiting 'only a political decision" to go ahead. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- A White House official in charge of East Asia policy on Friday picked a growing military partnership between Russia and North Korea as a security policy challenge that she would have "go differently," as she took stock of the Biden administration's Indo-Pacific policy records. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Ukraine has been hit by a surge in Russian ballistic missile attacks, about a third of which used North Korean weapons that can only fly because they run on Western circuitry, obtained despite sanctions. (Daria Tarasova-Markina, Lauren Kent, Nick Paton Walsh, Victoria Butenko, CNN)

Prepared by Ryan Rohrbach, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724152827/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-ukraine-is-being-hit-with-a-surge-of-attacks-using-north-korean-missiles-western-components-help-make-it-possible?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, November 24th, 2024

Ukrainian media reports 500 N. Korean soldiers killed in Kyiv's missile strike on Kursk

In South Korea:
Top security adviser sees high possibility of N. Korea's launch of spy satellite before year-end (*Yonhap*, 11/24/2024)

International:
Trump expressed desire to meet Yoon before inauguration, says Seoul's national security adviser (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/24/2024)
Ukrainian media reports 500 N. Korean soldiers killed in Kyiv's missile strike on Kursk (*Yonhap*, 11/24/2024)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's top security adviser said Sunday he saw a high possibility that North Korea is likely to launch another spy satellite before the end of this year, though signs of an imminent launch have yet to be detected. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

International:

- South Korean National Security Adviser Shin Won-sik said Sunday that U.S. President-elect Donald Trump has expressed his desire to meet with President Yoon Suk Yeol before taking office next January. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A Ukrainian media outlet has reported that about 500 North Korean soldiers were killed in a missile strike by Kyiv in Russia's western Kursk region. (Kim Na-young, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Bryan Clark, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724152948/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-ukrainian-media-reports-500-n-korean-soldiers-killed-in-kyivs-missile-strike-on-kursk?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Monday, November 25th, 2024

HRNK Message on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

Top News:
HRNK Message on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (HRNK, 11/25/2024)

In North Korea:
Breaking News: North Korea Unveils New Cheonma-2 Tank (*National Interest*, 11/25/24)
North Korea expands plant making missile used by Russia in Ukraine, researchers say (*Reuters*, 11/25/24)

In South Korea:
Seoul confirms casualties among North Korean troops in Russia (RFA, 11/25/24)

International:
N. Korea, Russia sign agreement to enhance sports exchanges (*Yonhap*, 11/25/24)
N.K. troops disguised as 'indigenous' people in Far East for combat against Ukraine (*Yonhap*, 11/15/24)

North Korean troopers killed, wounded in Ukraine war (*The Korea Herald*, 11/25/24)
Putin Would Rather North Koreans Die in Ukraine Than Russian Women (*National Interest*, 11/24/24)
Trump names key official in past diplomacy with North Korea as security adviser (*NK News*, 11/25/24)
Ukrainian military denies report that North Korean troops have entered Kharkiv (*NK News*, 11/25/24)

Top News:

COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA — PRESS RELEASE
HRNK Message on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

WASHINGTON, D.C. – November 25, 2024

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

This year, November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, will mark the launch of a 16-day campaign concluding on December 10, International Human Rights Day. HRNK wishes to highlight the plight of North Korean women, who have taken the brunt of repression under the Kim Jong-un regime. It is women who have assumed primary responsibility for the survival of their families during and after the devastating famine of the mid-1990s. It is women who are arrested, interrogated, tortured, punished and imprisoned for alleged wrongdoing at North Korea's informal markets. It is primarily North Korean women who are arrested and forcibly repatriated by China, as alleged "illegal economic migrants," in direct violation of China's obligations under the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. It is a tragic paradox that China, host to the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women and the subsequent adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action aiming to end violence against women, is aiding and abetting the Kim family regime, an entity which commits egregious acts of violence against women, including imprisonment at political and reeducation labor camps, forced abortions, infanticide, and other forms of extreme cruelty. Restoring the rights, freedom, and dignity of North Korean women is not a mere international organization procedural matter or academic exercise. It is an urgent matter that the international community must address without further delay.

Greg Scarlatoiu

President and CEO
* * *
HRNK was founded in 2001 as a nonprofit research organization dedicated to documenting human rights conditions in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), as North Korea is formally known. Visit www.hrnk.org to learn more.

In North Korea:

- North Korea unveiled its new Cheonma-2 (M2024) main battle tank (MBT) at the National Defense Development-2024 expo in Pyongyang, showcasing its growing ambitions in military technology. (Peter Suciu, *National Interest*)
- North Korea is expanding a key weapons manufacturing complex that assembles a type of short-range missile used by Russia in Ukraine, researchers at a U.S.-based think tank have concluded, based on satellite images. (Idrees Ali, Phil Stewart, Josh Smith, *Reuters*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's National Intelligence Service, or NIS, said on Monday it had "specific intelligence" that North Korean forces in Russia had suffered casualties but it did not comment on a media report that 500 North Koreans had been killed in a Ukrainian attack with British missiles. (Taejun Kang, *RFA*)

International:

- North Korea and Russia have signed a protocol on enhancing sports exchanges for next year, the North's state media said Monday, as the two nations have been bolstering cooperation in various fields. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- A group of North Korean soldiers disguised as "indigenous people" of Russia's Far East have engaged in combat with Ukrainian troops in Russia's western border region of Kursk, according to a Ukraine news report. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The National Intelligence Service on Monday confirmed for the first time North Korean troops fighting Ukraine have been killed and wounded, without providing how many. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- Empowering women and democratization go hand and hand, and both are dire threats to Putin. Russia's president chose to risk the humiliation of scavenging for North Korean troops instead of manning his exhausted army with Russian women. (Mariya Y. Omelicheva, *National Interest*)
- U.S. President-elect Donald Trump has named a former official who played a key role in his two summits with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to advise him on national security, the latest sign that Trump could seek to revive diplomatic outreach to Pyongyang. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- The Ukrainian military has denied that North Korean troops are in Kharkiv, contesting a report that Ukraine has spotted them in the region bordering Russia. Other officials confirm DPRK advisers are in Mariupol and its soldiers in Kursk, amid attention on scope of deployment. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)

Prepared by Natalie Razera, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724153137/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-hrnk-message-on-the-international-day-for-the-elimination-of-violence-against-women?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Tuesday, November 26th, 2024

N. Korea sent 100 ballistic missiles, military specialists to Russia

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un bemoans poor construction standards, demands focus on profits (NK News, 11/26/2024)
N. Koreans made 'loyalty oath' on Kim Jong-un's birthday, not Jan. 1 this year: Seoul (Yonhap, 11/26/2024)
N.K. leader calls for regions' efforts for independent development (Yonhap, 11/26/2024)
NK tightens control to quell unrest over troop dispatch to Russia (The Korea Times, 11/26, 2024)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N. Korea cuts power lines supplying electricity to shuttered Kaesong complex (Yonhap, 11/26/2024)
N.K. leader's sister again denounces 'political agitation' leaflets from South (Yonhap, 11/26/2024)

International:
French naval vessel, patrol aircraft monitor North Korea sanctions around Japan (NK News, 11/26/2024)
N. Korea sent 100 ballistic missiles, military specialists to Russia: Kyiv (Yonhap, 11/26/2024)
North Korea, Russia agree to host joint 'Summer Games' from next year (NK News, 11/25/2024)
Russia warns South Korea that providing weapons to Ukraine will 'fully destroy relations' (Korea JoongAng Daily, 11/25/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un bemoaned the country's poor building standards and accused project managers of breaking construction laws, calling for an increased focus on the profitability of factories. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Koreans were ordered to make a "loyalty oath" on Jan. 8, leader Kim Jong-un's birthday, not on the first day of this year, as the North seeks to bolster the personality cult for Kim. The unification ministry said North Korea held such a ritual on Jan. 8, Kim Jong-un's birthday, not on Jan. 1 this year, a move seen as being aimed at reinforcing the idolization of Kim as the sole leader. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has visited an offshore fishing farm under construction in the eastern port city of Sinpho, calling for regions to use their own natural and economic resources in a bid to develop themselves independently. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea is intensifying internal control over its military and citizens in what seems to be an effort to suppress any dissent regarding the regime's troop deployment to support Russia's war against Ukraine. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *The Korea Times*)

Inter-Korean Relationship:

- North Korea has cut power lines installed by South Korea to supply electricity to a now-shuttered joint industrial park in the North Korean border city of Kaesong, South Korea's military said, the latest in Pyongyang's move to sever inter-Korean ties. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un denounced "political agitation" leaflets, accusing South Korea of sending them across the border. "Various kinds of political agitation leaflets and dirty things sent by the ROK scum were dropped again in different areas near the southern border of the DPRK" on Tuesday, the North's Korean Central News Agency quoted Kim Yo-jong as saying in a statement. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)

International:

- A French naval vessel recently carried out surveillance against illegal North Korean ship-to-ship transfers around Japan, reflecting Paris' commitment to monitoring sanctions violations after dispatching a patrol aircraft for the same purpose last month. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- Russia and North Korea will host a biennial summer multisport event aimed at boosting humanitarian ties, Russia's sports minister announced following a trip to Pyongyang, while his DPRK counterpart implied that the country will revive an international marathon suspended during the pandemic next year. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- North Korea has supplied more than 100 KN-23 and KN-24 ballistic missiles, and dispatched military specialists to Russia in support of its war with Ukraine. The alleged provision is another sign of North Korea and Russia's deepening military cooperation that has also involved the deployment of more than 10,000 North Korean troops to Russia. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- Russia warned on Sunday that it would respond strongly if South Korea supplies lethal weapons to Ukraine, saying that such a move would "fully destroy relations between our countries." (Lim Jeong-Won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Prepared by Valerie Johnson, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724153406/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-sent-100-ballistic-missiles-military-specialists-to-russia?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Wednesday, November 27th, 2024

Why Is North Korea Sending Soldiers Into Ukraine?–Greg Scarlatoiu

Top News:
Why Is North Korea Sending Soldiers Into Ukraine?–Greg Scarlatoiu (EPOCH TV, 11/19/2024)
Taiwan: Ukraine's Survival Is Our Survival (Gatestone Institute, 11/26/2024)

In North Korea:
CCTV cameras spotted in N.K. classrooms, potentially signaling increased scrutiny (Yonhap, 11/27/2024)
North Korea expands weapons plant that makes missiles used by Russia, researchers say (CNN, 11/27/2024)
Top North Korean officials get bodyguards in likely security and status upgrade (NK News, 11/27/2024)

In South Korea:
ROK border province indefinitely extends ban on anti-North Korea leafleting (NK News, 11/27/2024)

International:
G7 slams North Korea's troop deployment to Russia as threat to Europe and Asia (NK News, 11/27/2024)
Top diplomats of S. Korea, G7 members voice concerns over N.K. troop deployment to Russia (Yonhap, 11/27/2024)
Trump team considers 'direct talks' with N. Korea's Kim: report (Yonhap, 11/27/2024)
US official confirms North Korean casualties in Russia's Kursk (Radio Free Asia, 11/27/2024)
Yoon discusses countermeasures against North Korea-Russia military ties with Ukraine delegation (Korea Times, 11/27/2024)
Yoon meets with Ukrainian special envoy as Seoul ponders lethal aid (Korea JoongAng Daily, 11/27/2024)

Top News:

- **Greg Scarlatoiu** is the new president of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea and a longtime expert on the Korean peninsula. In this episode, he breaks down why North Korea has sent troops to fight in Ukraine, North Korea's long history of involvement in foreign conflicts, what the current situation in this communist nation looks like, and what America's long-term North Korea strategy should be. (*EPOCH TV*)
- "The United States has an obligation to defend Ukraine — and it is definitely in its interest to do so. Russian President Vladimir Putin, after all, will not stop there, just as he did not stop after breaking apart Georgia in 2008 or after seizing Crimea in 2014. "If Ukraine falls, Poland, the Baltic republics and other NATO member states will face existential threats," **Greg Scarlatoiu**, president of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, told this publication. Then, the U.S. and its NATO partners will be even more stretched — and less able to defend Taiwan — than they are now." (Gordon G. Chang, *Gatestone Institute*)

In North Korea:

- Closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras have been spotted in classrooms of a newly completed high school in Pyongyang, footage from state media showed Wednesday, signaling a potential increase in scrutiny of young generations against exposure to outside influence. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea is expanding a weapons plant that manufactures missiles used by Russia against Ukraine, according to new research from a US-based think tank. The facility produces both KN-23 missiles (Hwasong-11A) and KN-24 missiles (Hwasong-11B), according to researchers at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies. (Lauren Kent, CNN)
- Top North Korean officials appeared to arrive at a major event flanked by their own bodyguards for the first time last week, according to NK Pro analysis of state media, likely following an increase in protection and perks for Kim Jong Un's most trusted advisers. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's Gyeonggi Province has indefinitely extended a ban against launching balloons carrying anti-regime leaflets into North Korea, after previously designating 11 border areas as "danger zones" where such activity is prohibited. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

International:

- Foreign ministers from the Group of Seven industrialized nations strongly condemned North Korea's deployment of troops to support Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Tuesday, as some 10,000 DPRK soldiers reportedly fight on battlefields in Kursk. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- The top diplomats of South Korea, Canada, France and Italy have voiced concerns over the threat posed by North Korea's troop deployment to fight for Russia in its war with Ukraine, pledging to work together for a concerted response, Seoul's foreign ministry said Wednesday. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- President-elect Donald Trump's team is considering "pursuing direct talks" with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in hopes of reducing the risks of armed conflict, Reuters has reported. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- A U.S. official confirmed to RFA Korean service that North Korean troops deployed in Russia have suffered casualties, the first U.S. confirmation after media reported that 500 North Koreans had been killed in a Ukrainian attack with British missiles last week. (Taejun Kang, Lee Sangmin, *Radio Free Asia*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol held closed-door talks with a Ukrainian delegation in Seoul, Wednesday, and discussed support measures for the country amid its war with Russia, according to the presidential office. (Kwak Yeon-soo, *Korea Times*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol met with a Ukrainian delegation led by Defense Minister Rustem Umerov in Seoul on Wednesday, with the two sides agreeing to share information on North Korea's deployment of troops to Russia and other forms of Pyongyang-Moscow military cooperation. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Prepared by Hannah Starnes, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250724153811/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-sent-100-ballistic-missiles-military-specialists-to-russia-12241118?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Thursday, November 28th, 2024

N. Korean repatriates with Christian exposure sent to prison camp; N. Korea launches trash balloons toward Seoul after 10-day hiatus

In North Korea:
N. Korean repatriates with Christian exposure sent to prison camp (Yonhap, 11/28/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
N. Korea launches trash balloons toward S. Korea after 10-day pause (Yonhap, 11/28/2024)
Why a reported rise in North Korean wages won't do much to improve welfare (NK News, 11/28/2024)

International:
Deployed N.K. troops assigned to platoon-level units of Russian forces (Yonhap, 11/28/2024)
N.K. envoy sidesteps question on troop deployment to Russia at UNSC meeting (Yonhap, 11/28/2024)
North Korea doesn't deny reports of troop deployment to Russia (Radio Free Asia, 11/27/2024
North Korean diplomat dodges question at UN about troop deployment to Russia (NK News, 11/28/2024)
Trump wants to meet with North Korea's Kim, who says that won't happen (UPI, 11/27/2024)
Ukrainian delegation in Seoul did not request South Korean weapons (The Korea Herald, 11/28/2024)
US court rules against sanctions on crypto mixer tied to North Korean cybercrime (NK News, 11/27/2024)
Why the North Korea-Russia Alliance Is a Grave Threat (The National Interest, 11/28/2024)
Yoon meets Ukraine defense chief to discuss countering North Korea-Russia ties (NK News, 11/28/2024)

In North Korea:

- Some North Korean defectors who were repatriated from China last year were sent to prison camps in North Korea for being exposed to Christianity, which the regime regards as a threat to its leadership, a report showed Thursday. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)

- A sharp decline in the value of the North Korean won, along with a rapid increase in fuel prices, has increased speculation about what's driving changes in the DPRK economy, from souring relations with China to the state's campaigns against forex traders. (Peter Ward, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korea sent what appear to be balloons carrying trash toward South Korea on Thursday, military authorities said, resuming its balloon campaign after a 10-day hiatus. The Joint Chiefs of Staff said these trash bundles are expected to move toward the Seoul metropolitan area and surrounding Gyeonggi Province. (Park Sang-soo, *Yonhap*)

International:

- North Korean soldiers deployed to Russia have been assigned to the Russian military at the platoon level, with a high possibility of the troops being used as "cannon fodder" in dangerous areas, South Korea's defense chief said Thursday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's chief envoy to the United Nations has sidestepped a question confirming the country's troop deployment to Russia during a U.N. meeting, instead reiterating that his country will continue to develop relations with Russia. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's U.N. envoy declined to deny or confirm that his country had sent troops to Russia to help with its war against Ukraine, adding that the North will "fulfill obligations" under a North Korea-Russia treaty. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korea evaded a question about whether it has deployed troops to Russia during a U.N. Security Council on Wednesday, arguing that the two countries are fortifying ties in line with their recently ratified mutual defense pact. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- President-elect Donald Trump wants to meet with North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un to ease tensions in Korea, but Kim has cast doubt on such a meeting occurring. Trump and Kim have exchanged friendly letters, but Kim ignored President Joe Biden throughout his term in office and recently deployed some 11,000 troops to Russia to assist with that nation's war against Ukraine. (Mike Heuer, *UPI*)
- The delegation from Ukraine did not request that South Korea provide defensive weapons during a series of high-level meetings held Wednesday in Seoul. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- A U.S. court has ruled that a key component of sanctions against a cryptocurrency mixer linked to North Korean money laundering is unlawful, a move privacy advocates have welcomed as a victory over government overreach targeting open-source tools. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- The deployment of North Korean troops to support Russia in the war with Ukraine, once speculative, is now confirmed. Russia has stopped short of outright denial that North Korean soldiers are already on Russian soil, positioned to aid the Kremlin's efforts on the Ukrainian front. (Byong-Chul Lee, *The National Interest*)
- South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol met a visiting Ukrainian delegation on Wednesday and discussed joint efforts to counter North Korean military support for Russia's invasion, amid attention on whether Seoul will send weapons and a monitoring team to Ukraine. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724153911/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-n-korean-repatriates-with-christian-exposure-sent-to-prison-camp-n-korea-launches-trash-balloons-toward-seoul-after-10-day-hiatus?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, November 29th, 2024

HRNK's contributions to the European Parliament Joint Motion for a Resolution regarding Ukraine and Russian-North Korean cooperation

Top News:
European Parliament Joint Motion for a Resolution on reinforcing EU's unwavering support to Ukraine against Russia's war of aggression and the increasing military cooperation between North Korea and Russia (European Parliament, 11/28/2024)

In North Korea:
How North Korean diplomats illicitly acquired US helicopters for the Kim regime (NK News, 11/29/2024)
North Korea appears to start work on long-stalled Russia border bridge project (NK News, 11/29/2024)
North Korea claims Kim Jong Un saved life of man injured in workplace accident (NK News, 11/29/2024)

In South Korea:
Korea completes development of long-range surface-to-air missile (Korea JoongAng Daily, 11/29/2024)
North Korea launches more trash and propaganda leaflets into South by balloon (NK News, 11/29/2024)
Starbucks, 'symbol of capitalism,' serves up lattes with a view of North Korea (NK News, 11/29/2024)
Starbucks opens a cafe with a view of North Korea (CNN, 11/29/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
NK hangs Yoon photo, military motto in exhibit about 'the enemy (The Korea Herald, 11/29/2024)
Seoul to counter North Korean threats with new missile system (Radio Free Asia, 11/29/2024)

International:

Chinese firms use North Korean prison labor to make wigs for global sale (NK News, 11/29/2024)
Defense chiefs of Russia, N. Korea meet amid escalating Ukraine war (The Korea Herald, 11/29/2024)
Notorious Italian cigarette duo back in North Korea to hawk sanctioned wares (NK News, 11/29/2024)
Russia and North's defense ministers meet in Pyongyang for military talks (Korea JoongAng Daily, 11/29/2024)
Russia's defense chief arrives in North Korea for talks on military cooperation (NK News, 11/29/2024)
Russia's defense minister arrives in N. Korea for talks with military officials (Yonhap, 11/29/2024)
Russia's ties with N. Korea 'expanding,' including on military (Yonhap, 11/29/2024)

Top News:

- *European Parliament Joint Motion for a Resolution on reinforcing EU's unwavering support to Ukraine against Russia's war of aggression and the increasing military cooperation between North Korea and Russia*

  Without false modesty, **HRNK** will take some credit for providing information and analysis necessary for the resolution, with special thanks to our colleague **Rick Herssevoort** for his European Parliament outreach efforts. (*HRNK*)

In North Korea:

- The North Korean Embassy in Berlin has been the site of sanctions evasion controversy in recent years, hosting a hostel found to have breached sanctions by paying rent of 38,000 euros a month to the DPRK government. (Daniel Salisbury, *NK News*)
- North Korea appears to have started construction on a road bridge to Russia after years of consultations, according to *NK Pro* analysis of satellite imagery, in another sign of efforts to follow through with economic agreements the two sides made in June. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean state television claimed that Kim Jong Un personally ordered measures to save the life of a man who was severely injured in a workplace accident, seeking to portray the leader as a loving father figure even as he allegedly deploys thousands of soldiers to serve as "cannon fodder" in Russia's war against Ukraine. (Seung-Yeon Chung, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- Korea has completed the development of a long-range surface-to-air missile, a domestically produced system designed to intercept enemy missiles at high altitudes. The L-SAM is expected to enhance the country's air defense capabilities against North Korea's nuclear and missile threats. (Seo Ji-Eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea launched some 40 balloons filled with trash across the border from Thursday night, according to the South Korean military, days after the leader's sister denounced another round of alleged anti-regime leafleting. (Alannah Hill, *NK News*)

- South Koreans can now order mocha frappuccinos within sight of North Korean soldiers, following a border city's unconventional bid to turn Cold War-era tensions into cold brew-driven tourism. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- The American chain, Starbucks, has their latest outpost in South Korea located on an observation tower at the border with North Korea, allowing patrons to sip on their brews while looking out at the hermit kingdom from across the Jo River that separates the two sides. (Chris Lay, Yoonjung Seo, CNN)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korea's indoctrination center in Pyongyang now displays a photo of South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol alongside the South Korean military's motto for countering provocations from Pyongyang -- "immediately, strongly and to the end" -- according to an image published by North Korean state media. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea has completed the development of a homegrown Long-range Surface-to-Air Missile, or L-SAM, system, a move hailed by its president as a "significant breakthrough" in the country's missile defense system to counter North Korean nuclear and missile threats. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)

International:

- Chinese firms are using North Korean prison labor to produce wigs and fake eyelashes for export, according to a new report, disguising the finished goods as "Made in China" to facilitate their sale around the world. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- Russian Defense Minister Andrei Belousov met with his North Korean counterpart, No Kwang-chol, in Pyongyang on Friday amid the intensifying war in Ukraine, where North Korea has dispatched soldiers and provided weapons to bolster Russia's efforts. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- Two Italian brothers known for their provocative battles against Big Tobacco and international law enforcement traveled to Pyongyang this month to pitch cigarette production line machinery to North Korean buyers, an NK Pro investigation has found, potentially in violation of U.N. and EU sanctions. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Russian Defense Minister Andrei Belousov emphasized growing military cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang during his visit to Pyongyang on Friday, according to Russian state news agencies, amid deepening ties between the two countries. (Seo Ji-Eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Russia's defense chief arrived in North Korea on Friday for talks with the country's top military and political brass, as DPRK troops fight for Moscow in its conflict with Ukraine. Andrei Belousov was welcomed by a DPRK honorary guard and his counterpart No Kwang Chol at Sunan International Airport upon his arrival, according to the Russian defense ministry. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Russian Defense Minister Andrey Belousov arrived in North Korea on Friday for talks with senior military officials and politicians, Russia's TASS news agency said. Belousov is scheduled to hold a number of bilateral meetings during his official visit to Pyongyang. The visit comes as Russia and North Korea have been deepening military ties, with more than

10,000 North Korean troops being sent to fight alongside Russia in the war against Ukraine. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)

- "Today, friendly ties between Russia and North Korea are expanding across all areas, including military collaboration," Russia's TASS news agency quoted Defense Minister Belousov as saying in a meeting with North Korean Defense Minister No Kwang-chol in Pyongyang. The Russian news agency reported the Russian defense chief arrived in North Korea earlier in the day for a number of "high-level" talks with senior military officials and politicians. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724154205/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-hrnks-contributions-to-the-european-parliament-joint-motion-for-a-resolution-regarding-ukraine-and-russian-north-korean-cooperation?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Saturday, November 30th, 2024

North Korea's Kim: Russia has right to exercise self defence against Ukraine

Inter-Korean Relations:
Tracking a Year of Dangerous Tit for Tat on the Korean Border (The Wall Street Journal, 11/30/2024)

International:
Japanese researchers unwittingly collaborated with North Korean peers (Nikkei Asia, 11/30/2024)
Kim Jong Un slams US support of Ukraine in talks with Russian defense chief (NK News, 11/30/2024)
North Korea's Kim: Russia has right to exercise self defence against Ukraine (Reuters, 11/30/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- With relations between the two countries plumbing new lows, a show of force on both sides is raising the risk of deadly miscalculation. (Timothy W. Martin, Dasl Yoon, Carl Churchill, Taylor Umlauf, *The Wall Street Journal*)

International:

- Co-authored papers highlight difficulty enforcing sanctions in academia. (Shoji Yano, *Nikkei Asia*)

- Kim Jong-un praises Russia for counterattack on Ukraine while Andrei Belousov invites DPRK troops to join parade in Moscow (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Kim Jong-un pledged to expand ties with Russia in all areas including military affairs under the comprehensive strategic partnership he signed with Russian President Vladimir Putin in June. (Jack Kim, *Reuters*)

Prepared by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724154357/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-koreas-kim-russia-has-right-to-exercise-self-defence-against-ukraine?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

12. DECEMBER

Sunday, December 1st, 2024

Kim Jong Un meets Russian Defense Minister Belousov, backs attacks in Ukraine

Inter-Korean Relations:
North Korea bans 2 South Korean dishes (RFA, 11/29/2024)

International:
Kim Jong Un meets Russian Defense Minister Belousov, backs attacks in Ukraine (UPI, 11/29/2024)
North Korea Has Given Its City-Smashing Rocket Launchers To Russia (Forbes, 12/01/2024)
Russia invites North Korean troops to Victory Day celebration after Moscow's defense chief meets Kim (Korea JoongAng Daily, 12/01/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- Authorities shut down shops selling budae-jjigae and tteokbokki, leaving residents scratching their heads. (Moon Sung Whui, RFA)

International:

- According to the *Rodong Sinmun*, Kim and Belousov exchanged "broad and satisfactory views" on the deepening of the comprehensive strategic partnership between Russia and North Korea. (David Caprara, *UPI*)
- According to Lt. Andriy Kovalenko, the head of Ukraine's Center for Countering Disinformation, the regime in Pyongyang has donated to Russia 100 artillery systems including M1989 self-propelled howitzers and M1991 rocket launchers. (David Axe, *Forbes*)
- Russia invited North Korean troops to its Victory Day celebrations amid speculation that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un may visit Moscow next year after a visit to Pyongyang by Russia's Defense Minister. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Prepared by Diana Darae Woo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724154726/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-kim-jong-un-meets-russian-defense-minister-belousov-backs-attacks-in-ukraine?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Monday, December 2nd, 2024

A North Korean Voice That Kim Jong-un Would Like to Silence; N.K. sends powerful rocket system to Russia for the 1st time, Kyiv says

In North Korea:
Forced labor drives North Korea's wig exports (The Korea Times, 12/1/2024)

In South Korea:
A North Korean Voice That Kim Jong-un Would Like to Silence (The New York Times, 12/2/2024)
Korean Navy commissions Aegis destroyer with advanced missile interception capabilities (Korea JoongAng Daily, 12/2/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
N. Korea demolishing S. Korean-built golf course clubhouse at Mount Kumgang resort (Yonhap, 12/2/2024)

International:
North Korea sends powerful rocket system to Russia for first time, Kyiv says (NK News, 12/2/2024)
Russia's defense chief departs Pyongyang after two-day visit (Yonhap, 12/1/2024)
US announces more sanctions on North Korean and Russian nationals, companies (NK News, 12/2/2024)
Zelenskyy says N.K. troops deployed to western Russia killed, injured (Yonhap, 12/2/2024)

In North Korea:

- Approximately 70 percent of North Korean wigs, destined for exports to generate much-needed cash, are produced through forced labor by women in correctional facilities, according to a recent report released by the Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights. (Kim Hyun-bin, *The Korea Times*)

In South Korea:

- Mr. Kim broadcasts into North Korea twice a day, bringing its people news and information they are cut off from because of Pyongyang's strict censorship laws. (Choe Sang-hun, *The New York Times*)
- A commissioning ceremony for the 8,200-ton King Jeongjo the Great destroyer, measuring 170 meters in length and 21 meters in width, is held at a naval base in the southeastern port city of Busan on Monday. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korea has been demolishing a golf course clubhouse built by a South Korean firm at the Mount Kumgang resort, leaving only a few facilities intact in the area, South Korea's unification ministry said Monday. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)

International:

- North Korea has sent dozens of powerful rocket artillery systems to Russia for the first time, according to a Ukrainian official, a development that one expert said could provide a significant advantage to Russia on the battlefield. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Russia's Defense Minister Andrei Belousov has left Pyongyang after a two-day visit during which he met with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, the North's state media reported Sunday. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. Department of State has announced new sanctions on North Korean and Russian nationals, a Russian firm and a Chinese company, in an apparent attempt to counter increasing military cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said North Korean soldiers deployed to western Russia have been killed or injured during combat against Ukrainian forces, adding to global criticism they will be used as "cannon fodder" for Moscow, a Japanese report showed. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Jujin Yang, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724154957/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-a-north-korean-voice-that-kim-jong-un-would-like-to-silence-nk-sends-powerful-rocket-system-to-russia-for-the-1st-time-kyiv-says?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, December 3rd, 2024

What would unification mean for the North Korean people?

Top News:
What would unification mean for the North Korean people? (UPI, 12/2/2024)

In North Korea:
N. Korea to convene key party meeting in late Dec. weeks ahead of Trump's inauguration (Yonhap, 12/3/2024)
Video shows North Korean worker fall several stories from transmission tower (NK News, 12/3/2024)

In South Korea:

Defense minister reportedly advised Yoon to declare martial law (Korea JoongAng Daily, 12/3/2024)
'I'm scared to speak': President's martial law declaration shocks Korea (Korea JoongAng Daily, 12/3/2024)
Ruling party slams main opposition's delay in anti-spy law revision (Korea Herald, 12/3/2024)
South Korea troops try to storm parliament after martial law declared (Reuters, 12/3/2024)
South Korean parliament votes to defy president by lifting his declaration of martial law (AP, 12/3/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Seoul urges N. Korea to 'unconditionally' release detained S. Koreans (Yonhap, 12/3/2024)
S. Korean-built transmission towers collapsing after N. Korea cuts power lines for Kaesong complex (Yonhap, 12/3/2024)

International:
2,000 N. Korean soldiers join Russian troops in Ukraine: report (Yonhap, 12/3/2024)
60 North Korean ballistic missiles used against Ukraine: Kyiv intel (Korea JoongAng Daily, 12/3/2024)
N. Korea's weather agency officials visit Russia (Yonhap, 12/3/2024)
Pentagon says it cannot confirm North Korean troops in active combat in Ukraine (NK News, 12/3/2024)
U.S. calls N.K. troops in combat against Ukraine 'legitimate ' targets after casualty report (Yonhap, 12/3/2024)

Top News:

- The desire for unification among North Korean people could be driven by several factors, rooted in both the tangible benefits they hope to gain and a sense of shared heritage with the Korean people in the South. Here's how these motivations and visions for life post-unification could be framed to address their aspirations and expectations: (David Maxwell, UPI)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has decided to convene a plenary meeting of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea late this month, state media reported Tuesday, amid anticipation as to what message the North will send toward U.S. President-elect Donald Trump. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- A North Korean worker fell from a eight of several stories while dismantling power lines near the border on Saturday, a video released by Seoul shows, as other footage captured the collapse of transmission towers that used to transmit electricity from the South. (Ifrang Bremer, Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- Defense Minister Kim Yong-hyun advised President Yoon Suk Yeol to declare martial law, local media outlets reported Tuesday. Yoon declared emergency martial law late Tuesday night. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Korea fell into an immediate shock after President Yoon Suk Yeol declared emergency martial law against "antistate forces," with citizens panicking over the unprecedented political move. (Yoon So-yeon, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The ruling People Power Party on Tuesday denounced the main opposition's delay in passing the revision to the country's espionage law, which aims to broaden the scope of activities that are punishable. (Jung Min-kyung, *Korea Herald*)
- Troops were seen trying to enter the South Korean parliament on Wednesday after President Yoon Suk Yeol declared martial law in a surprise late-night TV address that slammed domestic political opponents and sent shockwaves through the country. (Jack Kim, *Reuters*)
- South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol declared martial law late Tuesday, and hours later, parliament voted to lift the declaration, with the National Assembly Speaker Woo Won Shik declaring that lawmakers "will protect democracy with the people." Woo called for police and military personnel to withdraw from the Assembly's grounds. (Kim Tong-hyung, AP)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- The unification ministry on Tuesday called on North Korea to "immediately and unconditionally" release Choi Chun-gil, a South Korean missionary detained in North Korea and five other nationals on the occasion of marking 10 years since his arrest. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The unification ministry on Tuesday unveiled footage showing transmission towers collapsing after North Korea cut power lines installed by South Korea to supply electricity to a now-shuttered joint industrial park in the North's border city of Kaesong. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Two thousand North Korean soldiers deployed to the war in Ukraine have joined Russian units to engage in combat, a Ukrainian media outlet reported Tuesday, citing an intelligence official. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- Russia has likely used at least 60 ballistic missiles provided by North Korea in its war against Ukraine, Ukrainian intelligence revealed, amid growing concerns over the further cementing of a military alliance between Moscow and Pyongyang. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A delegation of North Korean weather agency officials has left for Russia, the North's state media reported Tuesday, as Pyongyang and Moscow have been expanding cooperation in various fields. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. Department of Defense says it has yet to confirm North Korean troops' involvement in active combat in the Ukraine war, seemingly contradicting other statements from

Washington and claims from the Ukrainian president earlier this week. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

- A U.S. State Department spokesperson reiterated Monday that North Korean troops in combat against Ukrainian forces are "legitimate" targets, amid news reports about troop casualties on the battlefield. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Jujin Yang, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724155718/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-what-would-unification-mean-for-the-north-korean-people?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, December 4th, 2024

Chinese national arrested in US on charges of trafficking arms to North Korea

In North Korea:
MDL transmission towers collapse after North cuts wires (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/3/2024)
North Korea yet to react to South Korean president's short-lived martial law (*NK News*, 12/4/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korean leader declares martial law, citing 'pro-North Korea elements' (*NK News*, 12/4/2024)
South Korea's military to acquire 100 low-cost cardboard drones as it seeks to strengthen its capabilities (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/3/2024)
South Korean military vows focus on public safety and North Korea defense after lifting of martial law (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/4/2024)
ROK officials for North Korea policy resign en masse after martial law debacle (*NK News*, 12/4/2024)
Unification ministry says to focus on stable management of situation with N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 12/4/2024)

International:
Chinese national arrested in US on charges of trafficking arms to North Korea (*NK News*, 12/4/2024)
Martial law chaos tests US-ROK alliance, and joint efforts to deter North Korea (*NK News*, 12/4/2024)
Russia supporting N. Korea nuclear program in exchange for troops: NATO chief (*The Korea Times*, 12/4/2024)
U.S. will continue to look to S. Korea to set example as 'powerful' democracy story: Blinken (*Yonhap*, 12/4/2024)

In North Korea:

- Seoul's Ministry of Unification released a video on Tuesday showing the collapse of several transmission towers after North Korean authorities removed the attached wires. According to the released video, towers 36 and 37 in the North Korean section became unbalanced and fell over after the wires were cut. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea has yet to publicly react or mobilize for any "unusual" response after South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol's short-lived imposition of martial law from late Tuesday, according to the ROK military, amid concerns that Pyongyang could leverage the political crisis south of the border to its advantage. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol declared martial law on Tuesday, citing the need to counter "pro-North, anti-state elements" that he accused of undermining the country's foundations through legislative overreach and budget cuts. (Chad O'Carroll, Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- South Korea's military is introducing cardboard drones, a low-cost yet advanced technology anticipated as a potential game-changer in modern warfare, in response to similar drones recently spotted at a North Korean weapons exhibition. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Chairman Adm. Kim Myung-soo on Wednesday emphasized the military's responsibility to prioritize public safety following the lifting of President Yoon Suk Yeol's six-hour emergency martial law earlier that day. Kim reportedly held a phone call with South Korea-U.S. Combined Forces Command Commander Gen. Paul LaCamera the same day, emphasizing that South Korea's military is maintaining a high level of readiness to counter potential provocations from North Korea. (Cho Jung-woo, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The entirety of the South Korean president's Cabinet, including key officials handling North Korean policy, resigned en masse on Wednesday, amid public outcry over Yoon Suk-yeol's brief imposition of martial law. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- The unification ministry said Wednesday it will focus on stably managing the situation with North Korea while adhering to its principle-based policy toward Pyongyang, following the short-lived declaration of martial law. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)

International:

- A Chinese national illegally residing in the U.S. has been arrested for allegedly exporting ammunition and other military items to North Korea, the U.S. Department of Justice announced Tuesday. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol's declaration of martial law on Tuesday has thrown the country into a state of political bedlam, and while it may have only lasted a few hours, it poses a serious test to the U.S.-ROK alliance at the center of efforts to deter North Korean threats. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

- NATO chief Mark Rutte said Wednesday that Russia was giving support to North Korea's missile and nuclear programs in exchange for Pyongyang sending troops to fight in the war with Ukraine. (AFP)
- The United States will continue to look to South Korea to set an example as one of the world's "most powerful" stories about democratic resilience, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Wednesday after President Yoon Suk Yeol's short-lived emergency martial law declaration. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by James Campbell, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724155927/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-what-would-unification-mean-for-the-north-korean-people-12241186?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, December 5th, 2024

N. Korea's state media remains silent about martial law turmoil in S. Korea; N. Korea-Russia defense treaty goes into effect Dec. 4

In North Korea:
N. Korea's state media remains silent about martial law turmoil in S. Korea (*Yonhap*, 12/05/2024)

In South Korea:
ROK army allegedly put on alert for North Korea threat before martial law order (*NK News*, 12/05/2024)
South Korean defense chief steps down after president's martial law debacle (*NK News*, 12/05/2024)
South Korea's Yoon faces impeachment vote, investigation for treason (*Reuters*, 12/05/2024)

International:
India restores embassy operations in North Korea for first time since 2021 (*NK News*, 12/05/2024)
N. Korea-Russia defense treaty goes into effect Dec. 4: state media (*Yonhap*, 12/05/2024)
North Koreans in China shocked by South Korean martial law reversal (*RFA*, 12/04/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea's state media on Thursday kept mum about President Yoon Suk Yeol's short-lived imposition of emergency martial law and its political repercussions. As of 9 a.m., none of the North's state media, including the Rodong Sinmun, the North's main newspaper, and the Korean Central News Agency, had published any reports related to the martial law turmoil. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- The South Korean military put special forces units on alert for a "serious situation regarding North Korea" hours before the president declared martial law this week, according to an opposition lawmaker, suggesting the administration played up nonexistent DPRK threats to ensure soldiers' compliance with the unprecedented measure. (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol has accepted the resignation of his defense minister amid the continuing fallout from his short-lived imposition of martial law, an apparent attempt to deflect blame that also pushes out a top official who spearheaded Seoul's hardline security policy toward North Korea. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- South Korean opposition lawmakers said on Thursday they would vote this weekend to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol for his botched attempt to impose martial law, and police said they were investigating claims of treason against him and top ministers. (Joyce Lee, Hyunjoo Jin, *Reuters*)

International:

- India has resumed embassy operations in North Korea for the first time since its diplomats exited during the pandemic, becoming the latest country to reestablish an on-the-ground presence as Pyongyang gradually eases its yearslong diplomatic isolation. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- A new defense treaty signed by the leaders of North Korea and Russia in June came into force this week as the two nations have exchanged the treaty ratification instruments, state media reported Thursday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean officials working in China said they were shocked to learn that South Korea's president declared martial law -- but even more shocked to learn that the National Assembly quickly overturned the order, saying such defiance would be "unthinkable" in North Korea. (Son Hyemin, *RFA*)

Prepared by Kate Refolo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250724160159/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-n-koreas-state-media-remains-silent-about-martial-law-turmoil-in-s-korea-n-korea-russia-defense-treaty-goes-into-effect-dec-4?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, December 6th, 2024

North Korean parliament to meet in January, two days after Trump's inauguration

In North Korea:

North Korea resumes upgrades to missile factories amid reported Russian interest (*NK News*, 12/06/2024)
North Korean parliament to meet in January, two days after Trump's inauguration (*NK News*, 12/06/2024)

In South Korea:
After meeting with Yoon, PPP head Han still convinced president should be suspended (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/06/2024)
South Korea's Yoon under pressure to resign as threat of impeachment looms (*Reuters*, 12/06/2024)
South Korea's opposition leader warns of another martial law attempt (*Reuters*, 12/06/2024)

International:
ROK martial law 'chaos' validates North Korea's security concerns, Russia says (*NK News*, 12/06/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has resumed construction on two key missile factories producing weapons tied to military cooperation with Russia after the work appeared to face extended delays. Imagery shows new efforts to complete large new manufacturing facilities at the Huichon Youth Electrical Complex, a factory producing anti-aircraft missile systems, and the Sinuiju Measuring Instrument Factory, suspected of making anti-tank guided missiles. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea's rubber-stamp parliament will hold a major legislative meeting to revise the constitution just two days after Donald Trump's inauguration, state media reported on Friday. (Seung-Yeon Chung, *NK News*)
- South Korea's main opposition leader Lee Jae-myung warned that President Yoon Suk Yeol might make another attempt to declare martial law before parliament votes on impeaching him on Saturday.(Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)

In South Korea:

- Conservative People Power Party leader Han Dong-hoon said he "had not heard any remarks to reverse a judgment of suspending Yoon Suk Yeol from presidential duty" after a private meeting with Yoon on Friday afternoon. (Lee Soo-jung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea's ruling party leader said President Yoon Suk Yeol needed to be removed from power for trying to impose martial law, increasing the pressure on him to quit even though members of his People Power Party late on Friday reaffirmed its formal opposition to his impeachment. (Ju-min Park and Hyunsu Yim, *Reuters*)

International:

- The "chaos" in South Korea after President Yoon Suk-yeol's brief declaration of martial law this week shows that North Korea's security concerns about threats from the South are legitimate, according to Russia's foreign ministry. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

Prepared by Jenna Pae, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250725170357/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korean-parliament-to-meet-in-january-two-days-after-trumps-inauguration?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, December 8th, 2024

PPP neutralizes vote to impeach S. Korea's President; U.S. official stresses good communications with Korea in marital law aftermath

In South Korea:
Assembly speaker calls PM, ruling party's joint exercise of presidential power 'unconstitutional' (*Yonhap*, 12/08/2024)
CIO asks prosecution, police to refer martial law case (*Yonhap*, 12/08/2024)
DP leader accuses ruling party, PM of 'destroying constitutional order' (*Yonhap*, 12/08/2024)
Ex-defense minister grilled over possible treason in martial law chaos (*Yonhap*, 12/08/2024)
Han says PM will handle state affairs amid criticism over his potential role after scrapped impeachment of Yoon (*Yonhap*, 12/08/2024)
Interior Minister Lee Sang-min steps down amid martial law turmoil (*Yonhap*, 12/08/2024)
Main opposition calls for immediate arrest, probe of Yoon over martial law chaos (*Yonhap*, 12/08/2024)
Military drafted martial law plans in Nov. at instruction of counterintelligence chief: lawmaker (*Yonhap*, 12/08/2024)
Police raid official residence, office of arrested ex-defense minister (*Yonhap*, 12/08/2024)
PPP Neutralizes Vote to Impeach South Korea's President (*The Diplomat*, 12/08/2024)
Yoon names new NIS first deputy director after martial law incident (*Yonhap*, 12/08/2024)
Yoon Suk-yeol survives impeachment vote after martial law fiasco (*NK News*, 12/07/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Leadership crisis in Seoul raises North Korea contingency risk, experts warn (NK News, 12/08/2024)
Resilient Democracy: How South Korea's Institutions Rejected Authoritarian Overreach (The Diplomat, 12/07/2024)

International:
FM Cho discusses alliance with top U.S. envoy in 2nd meeting since martial law (*Yonhap*, 12/08/2024)

U.S. calls for 'proper' functioning of democratic processes in S. Korea after scrapped impeachment motion (*Yonhap*, 12/08/2024)
U.S. official stresses 'good communications' with Korea in martial law aftermath (*Yonhap*, 12/08/2024)

In South Korea:

- National Assembly Speaker Woo Won-shik said Sunday it would be a "blatant violation of the Constitution" should the prime minister and ruling party jointly exercise presidential power. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The anti-corruption investigation office has requested the prosecution and police to refer their ongoing probe cases on last week's botched martial law declaration, officials said Sunday. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Opposition party leader Lee Jae-myung on Sunday accused the ruling party and Prime Minister Han Duck-soo of "destroying the constitutional order" after the two announced they will work together to manage state affairs following a scrapped impeachment vote on President Yoon Suk Yeol. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Prosecutors questioned former Defense Minister Kim Yong-hyun on Sunday as part of an investigation into alleged treason following President Yoon Suk Yeol's short-lived martial law imposition last week. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Ruling party leader Han Dong-hoon on Sunday said Prime Minister Han Duck-soo will manage state affairs following the scrapped impeachment of President Yoon Suk Yeol, amid growing criticism over the announcement that the party and the government would jointly manage state affairs. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Interior Minister Lee Sang-min stepped down from his post Sunday amid political turmoil sparked by President Yoon Suk Yeol's botched martial law declaration last week. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The main opposition Democratic Party (DP) on Sunday called for the immediate arrest and investigation of President Yoon Suk Yeol over his botched martial law declaration. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)
- The military's counterintelligence unit had already drafted plans to implement martial law in November at the instruction of the unit's chief, an opposition lawmaker said Sunday. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Police raided the official residence and office of former Defense Minister Kim Yong-hyun on Sunday, officials said, amid a widening probe over treason charges in connection with President Yoon Suk Yeol's short-lived declaration of martial law last week. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- On December 7, South Korea's ruling People Power Party (PPP) succeeded in preventing South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol from being impeached over his short-lived declaration of martial law. (Mitch Shin, *The Diplomat*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol has appointed a senior official of the National Intelligence Service (NIS) as its first deputy director, the intelligence agency said Sunday. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol survived an impeachment vote at the National Assembly after a plenary session failed to reach quorum late Saturday. The opposition was

less than ten votes short of relieving Yoon of his executive duties after he declared martial law earlier this week to root out alleged pro-North Korean forces in the country. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- Prosecutors are investigating President Yoon Suk-yeol for possible treason after the prime minister and ruling party leader suggested Yoon is no longer involved in day-to-day governance of the country. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Political turmoil erupted in South Korea after the announcement imposing martial law by President Yoon Suk-yeol on December 3, citing alleged anti-state activities and sympathy toward North Korea by the country's main opposition party. The move sparked widespread uproar and backlash from lawmakers and citizens alike, as fear of South Korea's authoritarian past and the hostilities of the previous martial law period of 1979-1981 reverberated in people's hearts. (Rachit Goel, *The Diplomat*)

International:

- Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul met with U.S. Ambassador Philip Goldberg late Sunday to discuss efforts to strengthen and maintain the bilateral alliance in the aftermath of last week's martial law debacle, Cho's office said. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The United States on Saturday called for the "full and proper" functioning of South Korea's democratic institutions and processes after a motion to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol was scrapped due to a lack of quorum. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- A senior U.S. defense official said Sunday top Pentagon officials have been in "good communications" with their South Korean counterparts following President Yoon Suk Yeol's botched martial law attempt, while highlighting trilateral cooperation with Japan as a "top-tier" policy priority. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Tessa Aguilar, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250725170811/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korean-parliament-to-meet-in-january-two-days-after-trumps-inauguration-12241218?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Monday, December 9th, 2024

Top nuclear envoys of S. Korea, U.S., Japan vow coordination against N.K. threats amid martial law turmoil

In North Korea:

With Assad's ouster North Korea loses a key player in the Middle East (*NK News*, 12/09/2024)

In South Korea:
Ex-defense minister verbally abused JCS chief for refusing order to strike North ahead of martial law decree, DP lawmaker says (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/09/2024)
South Korea, U.S. closely watching North Korea amid political turmoil in Seoul (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/09/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Ex-defense minister ordered drone infiltration to Pyongyang in Oct.: lawmaker (Yonhap, 12/09/2024)
Leadership crisis in Seoul raises North Korea contingency risk ,experts warn (NK News, 12/08/2024

International:
Top nuclear envoys of S. Korea, U.S., Japan vow coordination against N.K. threats amid martial law turmoil (Yonhap, 12/06/2024)
U.S. has not seen possibility of N.K. provocations in martial law aftermath: Austin (Yonhap, 12/06/2024)

In North Korea:

- The fall of Damascus over the weekend brought a dramatic end to the Bashar Assad regime's 24 year rule over Syria- and now deprives North Korea of one of its most important partners in the Middle East. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- Former Defense Minister Kim Yong-hyun verbally abused Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Chairman Kim Myung-soo ahead of last week's martial law decree, Democratic Party (DP) Rep. Lee Ki-heon alleged on Monday.(Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The South Korean and U.S. militaries have been closely monitoring the security situation on the Korean Peninsula amid North Korea's continued silence over President Yoon Suk Yeol's short-lived martial law last week. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- Prosecutors are investigating President Yoon Suk-yeol for possible treason after the prime minister and ruling party leader suggested Yoon is no longer involved in day-to-day governance of the country (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- The South Korean military flew drones over Pyongyang in October at the order of then Defense Minister Kim Yong-hyun, who is currently under investigation for his involvement in the martial law declaration, a lawmaker said Monday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- The top nuclear envoys of South Korea, the United States and Japan vowed close coordination Monday to manage "future situations stably" in the event of any possible provocations by North Korea, Seoul's foreign ministry said. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- The United States has not seen any possibility yet of North Korea seeking to undertake provocations in the aftermath of President Yoon Suk Yeol's botched martial law attempt, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Monday, reaffirming the alliance between Seoul and Washington remains "ironclad." (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Samantha Garcia, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250725171107/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-top-nuclear-envoys-of-s-korea-us-japan-vow-coordination-against-nk-threats-amid-martial-law-turmoil?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, December 10th, 2024

North Korea halts anti-Yoon propaganda, Austin reaffirms 'ironclad' commitment to S. Korea, Japan

In North Korea:
N. Korean media remain tight-lipped on martial law turmoil in South for week (*Yonhap*, 12/10/2024)
North Korean cybercriminals swipe $66M in crypto using fake recruiter scams (*NK News*, 12/10/2024)
North Korea halts anti-Yoon propaganda in wake of martial law crisis (*NK News*, 12/10/2024)

In South Korea:
(2nd LD) Army special warfare commander says Yoon ordered him to drag out lawmakers (*Yonhap*, 12/10/2024)
DP railroads reduced 2025 budget, Yoon treason investigation bills (*Korea Joongang Daily*, 12/10/2024)
Police summon prime minister and other Cabinet members for questioning (*Korea Joongang Daily*, 12/10/2024)
Seoul's ex-defense chief ordered North Korea drone incursion, lawmaker claims (*NK News*, 12/10/2024)
Signs surface that martial law planned well in advance (*The Korea Herald*, 12/10/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
North Korean forward An Byong-jun calls it quits after five years in the South Korean league (Korea Joongang Daily, 12/10/2024)

International:

Australia-based S. Korean reunites with separated relatives in N. Korea in Oct.: Seoul (Yonhap, 12/10/2024)

(LEAD) Austin reaffirms 'ironclad' commitment to S. Korea, Japan, says U.S. 'clear-eyed' about N.K., China threats (Yonhap, 12/10/2024)

North Korea Trading Soldiers for Russian Fighter Jets, US Says (Newsweek, 12/09/2024)

Top nuclear envoys of S. Korea, Japan agree on close cooperation on N.K. threats at 'sensitive time' (Yonhap, 12/10/2024)

U.S. officials uneasy about PPP's proposed governance arrangement (Korea Joongang Daily, 12/10/2024)

US strengthens surveillance of North Korea amid martial law fallout in South (NK News, 12/09/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea has not reported on last week's martial law declaration in South Korea or its fallout in the following week through Tuesday, including the opposition's push to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean cybercriminals used "sophisticated" social engineering techniques to steal some $66 million in two cryptocurrency heists earlier this year, according to recently released reports (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- North Korean state media has skipped weekly coverage of protests in South Korea against President Yoon Suk-yeol for the first time in 23 weeks, despite a massive rally over the weekend demanding his impeachment for imposing martial law, according to NK News analysis (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- The chief of the Army Special Warfare Command said Tuesday he was ordered by President Yoon Suk Yeol to drag out lawmakers from the National Assembly building during martial law operations last week (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- The liberal Democratic Party (DP) railroaded a reduced version of the government's 2025 budget plan as well as a bill establishing a permanent special counsel probe into treason allegations against President Yoon Suk Yeol through the National Assembly on Tuesday (Michael Lee, *Korea Joongang Daily*)
- Police on Tuesday said they have officially requested Cabinet members, including Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, and the National Intelligence Service (NIS) chief who attended a meeting to discuss the declaration of martial law with the president to show up for questioning (Cho Jung-Woo, *Korea Joongang Daily*)
- South Korea's former defense minister ordered the drone incursion that dropped leaflets over the North Korean capital in October as part of President Yoon Suk-yeol's plans to declare martial law, an opposition lawmaker claimed this week (Joon Ha Park, *NK News*)
- Senior officers of the military were ordered to be on standby for a North Korea-related situation in the days leading up to President Yoon Suk Yeol's declaration of martial law, in another sign that the events that unfolded on Dec. 3 were plotted in advance (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- Suwon FC forward An Byong-jun, the only North Korean footballer active in South Korea's K League 1, announced his retirement Monday (Paik Ji-hwan, *Korea Joongang Daily*)

International:

- A South Korean national residing in Australia traveled to North Korea and met with two nephews in October in the first privately arranged separated families reunion in five years, the South Korean unification ministry said Tuesday (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin reaffirmed America's "ironclad" deterrence commitment to South Korea and Japan on Tuesday, stressing that Washington remains "clear-eyed" about security challenges from North Korea, China and Russia (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Russia will provide North Korea with fighter jets in exchange for the thousands of troops Pyongyang has reportedly sent to support Moscow's war against Ukraine, the head of the United States' Pacific forces said (Micah McCartney, *Newsweek*)
- The top nuclear envoys of South Korea and Japan agreed Tuesday to work closely together to counter North Korea's possible provocations during a "sensitive time," Seoul's foreign ministry said Tuesday, amid the chaos resulting from the failed martial law (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. Department of State reaffirmed Monday that Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol remains the official counterpart to U.S. President Joe Biden, signaling reservations over Korea's proposed governance arrangement involving the prime minister and the president's party leader (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea Joongang Daily*)
- The U.S. has strengthened its surveillance of North Korea amid the ongoing political turmoil in South Korea due to ROK President Yoon Suk-yeol's brief imposition of martial law last week (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

Prepared by William Lee, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250725171342/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-halts-anti-yoon-propaganda-austin-reaffirms-ironclad-commitment-to-s-korea-japan?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Wednesday, December 11th, 2024

N. Korea reports S. Korea's martial law turmoil for 1st time, Biden approves national security memo on China, North Korea

In North Korea:

N. Korea reports S. Korea's martial law turmoil for 1st time (*Yonhap*, 12/11/2024)

N Korea mocks 'dictator' Yoon's 'insane' martial law try in South (*BBC*, 12/11/2024)
North Korea slams Yoon as 'fascist dictator' in 1st report on martial law crisis (*NK News*, 12/11/2024)
North Korea to resume train service with Russia next week after 5-year hiatus (*NK News*, 12/11/2024)
North Korean civil defense units ordered to start drone training – without drones (*RFA*, 12/10/2024)
Russian Embassy in N. Korea hosts reception on ratification of mutual defense treaty (*Yonhap*, 12/11/2024)

In South Korea:
Ex-intel commander appears key to alleged martial law plan (*The Korea Herald*, 12/11/2024)
Polls show that nearly 80% of respondents favor presidential impeachment (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/11/2024)
South Korea police search President Yoon's office over martial law case (*AP News*, 12/11/2024)
Who is Kim Yong-hyun, ousted South Korean defense minister who attempted suicide? (*Reuters*, 12/11/2024)
Yoon's office refuses to cooperate with raid, blocks entry (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/11/2024)

International:
Biden approves national security memo on China, Iran, North Korea and Russia ahead of Trump's return (AP News, 12/11/2024)
Top nuclear envoys of S. Korea, Japan agree on close cooperation on N.K. threats at 'sensitive time' (Yonhap, 12/10/2024)
U.S. Embassy denies Korean lawmaker's claim that ambassador criticized Yoon administration (Korea JoongAng Daily, 12/10/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea's state media on Wednesday reported on the martial law turmoil in South Korea for the first time, including the opposition's push to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol, while blaming Yoon for causing nationwide chaos. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has responded to South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's failed attempt to impose martial law, likening it to a military coup and accusing him of trying to run a "fascist dictatorship". (Jean Mackenzie and Koh Ewe, *BBC*)
- North Korean state media has denounced South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol as a "fascist dictator" over his declaration of martial law one week ago, in its first report on the crisis in the ROK. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea is set to fully resume its passenger rail service with Russia after a five-year hiatus next week, Russia's railways operator has announced, following several trial runs since last summer. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- For the first time, North Korea is adding drone training to its annual civil defense military drills, but the lack of available drones means that the training will amount to reading about drones, not actually flying them, military sources in the country told Radio Free Asia. (Moon Sung Whui, Korean, *RFA*)

- The Russian Embassy in North Korea has hosted a reception to celebrate the ratification of a mutual defense treaty between the two nations, the North's state media reported Wednesday. (Woo Jae-yeon, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- Three-star Army general Yeo In-hyung, former chief of the Defense Counterintelligence Command, is facing growing scrutiny over allegations he played a key role in facilitating the recent martial law declaration. Yeo has denied the accusations, claiming the DCC was unaware of the plans. (Hwang Joo-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- A recent public opinion poll showed that nearly 80 percent of respondents favored impeaching President Yoon Suk Yeol after the president's short-lived martial law on Dec. 3. (Kim Min-Young, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea's previous defense minister was stopped from attempting suicide while in detention over last week's martial law declaration, officials said Wednesday, as President Yoon Suk Yeol's office resisted a police attempt to search the compound. (Kim Tong-hyung and Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)
- Kim Yong-hyun, a former defence minister and close confidant to South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, became the first official to be arrested late on Tuesday over Yoon's martial law declaration. Kim attempted to take his own life while in detention, officials said on Wednesday. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- A team of detectives from the National Office of Investigation (NOI) that is charged with investigating President Yoon Suk Yeol's short-lived imposition of martial law attempted to raid the presidential office on Wednesday but failed to enter the compound due to resistance from the office. (Lim Jeong-won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- President Joe Biden has approved a new national security memorandum ahead of Donald Trump's return to the White House that could serve as a road map for the incoming administration as it looks to counter growing cooperation among China, Iran, North Korea and Russia, the White House said Wednesday. (Aamer Madhani, *AP News*)
- The top nuclear envoys of South Korea and Japan agreed Tuesday to work closely together to counter North Korea's possible provocations during a "sensitive time," Seoul's foreign ministry said Tuesday, amid the chaos resulting from the failed martial law. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. Embassy in Seoul issued a strongly worded statement on Wednesday evening that denied a lawmaker's recent claim that Ambassador Philip Goldberg had criticized his South Korean counterparts in communications with Washington. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Prepared by Jiwoo Katie Choi, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250725171738/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-reports-s-koreas-martial-law-turmoil-for-1st-time-biden-approves-national-security-memo-on-china-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, December 12th, 2024

N. Korea reports martial law turmoil in S. Korea for 2nd day

In North Korea:
N. Korea reports martial law turmoil in S. Korea for 2nd day (*Yonhap*, 12/12/2024)
N. Korea reports S. Korean unrest to bolster internal solidarity: Seoul (*The Korea Herald*, 12/12/2024)

In South Korea:
Army chief suspended after being named suspect (*The Korea Herald*, 12/12/2024)
Concerns emerge over war readiness as multiple generals suspended in martial law aftermath (*Yonhap*, 12/12/2024)
Main opposition files new motion to impeach Yoon over martial law declaration (*Yonhap*, 12/12/2024)
Police chief reportedly says Yoon called 6 times to order lawmakers' arrests (*Yonhap*, 12/12/2024)
Police retrieve ex-defense minister's phone during raid on defense ministry (*Yonhap*, 12/12/2024)
Top general stresses firm readiness, political neutrality amid martial law turmoil (*Yonhap*, 12/12/2024)
Yoon defends martial law decree as act of governance, rejects insurrection charges (*Yonhap*, 12/12/2024)

International:
Beijing objects to Yoon's talks of 'Chinese spies' (The Korea Herald, 12/12/2024)
S. Korea, U.S. reaffirm 'steadfast' alliance amid martial law turmoil (Yonhap, 12/12/2024)
Speaker seeks US support for Korea amid growing uncertainties (The Korea Herald, 12/12/2024)
Trump calls N.K. role in Russia's war 'complicating' factor, says he gets along 'very well' with Kim (Yonhap, 12/12/2024)
Trump's Kari Lake 'pick' sparks fears at Voice of America (CNN, 12/12/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea's state media reported on the martial law turmoil in South Korea for a second consecutive day Thursday, saying political chaos is escalating amid calls to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's continued media coverage of South Korea's political turmoil likely reflects a calculated effort to bolster domestic support of the Kim Jong-un regime by exposing its

citizens to such reports, the Unification Ministry in Seoul said Thursday. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)

In South Korea:

- Four-star Army Gen. Park An-su, who was appointed to lead the martial law command during the Dec. 3 martial law declaration, has been suspended from his position as Army Chief of Staff, the Defense Ministry announced Thursday. (Hwang Joo-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- Concerns are emerging about the military's emergency readiness against North Korean threats, as multiple generals and commanders have been removed or suspended from their duties for potential involvement in last week's short-lived imposition of martial law. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The main opposition Democratic Party (DP) introduced a new impeachment motion against President Yoon Suk Yeol on Thursday over his failed bid to impose martial law, days after Yoon avoided impeachment because most ruling party lawmakers boycotted a vote. (Chang Dong-woo, *Yonhap*)
- The chief of the National Police Agency (NPA) has reportedly said President Yoon Suk Yeol called him by phone six times to order the arrest of lawmakers during martial law operations last week, Yonhap News Agency learned Thursday. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- Police retrieved a secure mobile phone used by former Defense Minister Kim Yong-hyun during a raid on the defense ministry headquarters Thursday, officials said. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's top general on Thursday ordered the military to maintain a firm readiness posture, while adhering to political neutrality, in the aftermath of last week's botched martial law imposition. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- President Yoon Suk Yeol on Thursday defended his botched martial law declaration as an act of governance and denied insurrection charges facing him, while vowing to fight until the last moment against whether it is impeachment or a martial law probe. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

International:

- China's Foreign Ministry on Thursday criticized President Yoon Suk Yeol's public address, in which he defended his martial law decree and denounced main opposition party policies by citing allegations of Chinese nationals spying in South Korea and expressing concerns over China's growing green industry. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- Acting Defense Minister Kim Seon-ho and Gen. Paul LaCamera, commander of the South Korea-U.S. Combined Forces Command (CFC), reaffirmed Thursday the two nations' "steadfast" alliance and vowed to bolster their combined defense posture, Seoul's defense ministry said. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- National Assembly Speaker Woo Won-shik met with Philip Goldberg, the United States ambassador to South Korea, to discuss the stability of the alliance following President Yoon Suk Yeol's Dec. 3 martial law declaration. (Hwang Joo-young, *The Korea Herald*)

- U.S. President-elect Donald Trump has said that Pyongyang's involvement in Russia's war in Ukraine is a "very complicating" factor, while boasting about his personal ties with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Presidents don't ordinarily pick the director of Voice of America, an international news broadcaster funded by the US government. But President-elect Donald Trump says he wants his ally Kari Lake to take over VOA. (Brian Stetler, CNN)

Prepared by Ryan Rohrbach, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250725171925/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-reports-martial-law-turmoil-in-s-korea-for-2nd-day?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, December 13th, 2024

HRNK Celebrates the Life and Legacy of Founding Board Member Morton Issac Abramowitz

Top News:
HRNK Celebrates the Life and Legacy of Founding Board Member, Morton Issac Abramowitz (*HRNK*, 12/12/2024)

In North Korea:
North Korean Il-76 cargo planes make rare flights to northeast coast (*NK News*, 12/13/2024)
Sinpho South Shipyard: The Sinpo-C SSB Repositioned in Drydock During Extended Stay (*38 North*, 12/12/2024)
Using Forecasting Methodologies to Look to the Future of the North Korean Nuclear Program (*38 North*, 12/12/2024)

In South Korea:
Impeachment vote to take place Saturday at 4 p.m. to 'prevent potential clashes' (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/13/2024)
'Incomprehensible': NEC responds to Yoon's statements on possible election fraud (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/13/2024)

International:
$5m reward for tips on N. Koreans in US extortion scheme (The Korea Herald, 12/13/2024)
N Korea made millions from remote work scheme, US says (BBC, 12/12/2024)
North Korean troops performing well on battlefield, say Russian bloggers (Telegraph, 12/13/2024)
Pro-Russia Telegram hypes alleged North Korean military operation in Kursk (NK News, 12/13/2024)

Trump calls N.K. role in Russia's war 'complicating' factor, says he gets along 'very well' with Kim (Yonhap, 12/13/2024)
US claims North Korea put workers in US companies to extort money for weapons (Reuters, 12/13/2024)
US indicts 14 North Korean IT workers for raising funds for weapons programs (NK News, 12/13/2024)
U.S. leaves N. Korea on state sponsors of terrorism list in 2023 report (Yonhap, 12/13/2024)
US offers $5 million bounty for information on North Korean IT firms (Radio Free Asia, 12/13/2024)
U.S. sets up reward of up to US5 million for info on N.K. IT firms, workers, money laundering (Yonhap, 12/13/2024)
What Does Assad's Fall Mean For North Korea? (The National Interest, 12/12/2024)

Top News:

COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA — PRESS RELEASE
December 12, 2024
HRNK Celebrates the Life and Legacy of Founding Board Member Morton Isaac Abramowitz

WASHINGTON, D.C. – December 12, 2024

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

HRNK is deeply saddened by the passing of our founding Board member Morton Isaac Abramowitz on Friday, November 29, age 91.

Together with other distinguished founders, The Honorable Morton Abramowitz established the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) in 2001. HRNKBoard and staff members remember his wise, balanced, and tactful approach to both North Korean human rights and security issues. His dedication to our work and mission was deeply rooted in his own background, as the son of Jewish immigrants from Lithuania and a long and distinguished diplomatic career that placed doing away with war, famine, and human rights violations up front and center.

A veteran of the U.S. Army, The Honorable Morton Abramowitz served as U.S. Ambassador to Thailand and Turkey, U.S. Representative to the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction Negotiations in Vienna, and as Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research. After retirement as Career Ambassador, he served as president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, director of the National Endowment for Democracy, senior fellow of The Century Foundation, and founded the International Crisis Group.

According to HRNK Board member and former Ambassador to China Winston Lord, "Mort was unique. His distinguished diplomatic and non-governmental career was marked by passion and concrete accomplishments, carried out with candor, toughness, and sardonic humor. He was outspoken to those above him and nurturing for those below him. Mort, and his formidable wife,

Sheppie, who also died recently, were a dynamic team for good causes. The nation will miss their service. I will miss close friends."

HRNK Co-Chair Emeritus Roberta Cohen stated: "Ambassador Mort Abramowitz brought a broadminded, pragmatic and refreshingly non-ideological approach to the work on North Korea. Having visited the DPRK, which he described as 'the most depressing place' he'd ever seen, he strongly supported the work of HRNK whose research, advocacy and bipartisanship he considered the keys to its success. As a former co-chair, I benefited from his frank and straightforward views, his wisdom, his irreverent humor, and his unwavering commitment to peace on the Korean peninsula and an end to acute starvation and human rights abuse. His public intellectual engagement and vision will be remembered by many. I in particular will miss our regular lunch conversations at the Hay Adams, where he shared his experiences and often made them relevant to the betterment of the people of North Korea."

According to former HRNK Board member and Executive Director Chuck Downs, "Ambassador Abramowitz was one of the strongest and most influential members of the Board in its earliest years. His extensive contacts in international human rights activism were essential to HRNK's development and success."

In North Korea:

- North Korea's Ilyushin Il-76 cargo planes have made multiple trips to the northeast coast in the last month, according to *NK Pro* analysis of satellite imagery, a rare occurrence pointing to urgent shipments, possibly of military-related items. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Recent commercial satellite imagery of North Korea's Sinpho South Shipyard reveals that the newest ballistic missile class submarine, the Sinpo-C, has been repositioned to the front of the drydock—immediately adjacent to the inflow gate—and covered by a protective structure. While the exact reason for this movement is unclear, the activity suggests the vessel will continue to remain in the drydock for an extended fitting-out period. (Peter Makowsky, Jack Liu, Ilana Ragnone, *38 North*)
- As a predictive technique, forecasting has been embraced by sectors ranging from financial institutions to the US intelligence community, and it may be a useful addition to the analytical toolbox of North Korea watchers. It can help to address uncertainties regarding future developments by breaking them apart and interrogating underlying assumptions. (Hailey Wingo, Grant Christopher, Sarah Laderman, *38 North*)

In South Korea:

- The National Assembly announced Friday that it will vote on the second impeachment motion against President Yoon Suk Yeol at 4 p.m. on Saturday, one hour earlier than originally planned. The adjustment was made to "prevent potential clashes during nighttime rallies near the National Assembly," officials said. (Seo Ji-Eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- The National Election Commission issued a detailed rebuttal of President Yoon Suk Yeol's public statement suggesting the possibility of election fraud, saying that Yoon's viewpoint is "utterly incomprehensible." (Kim Min-young, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- The US government on Thursday offered rewards of up to $5 million for information related to North Korean IT workers and companies engaged in illegal activities including money laundering and "certain cyber activity that supports the DPRK's weapons of mass destruction." (Yoon Min-sik, *The Korea Herald*)
- A federal court in St Louis has indicted 14 North Koreans for allegedly being part of a long-running conspiracy aimed at extorting funds from US companies and funneling money to Pyongyang's weapons programs. (João de Silva, BBC)
- North Korean troops have captured a village from Ukrainian forces in Russia's Kursk region, Russian military bloggers have reported. They said "North Korean special forces" had endured a "baptism of fire" in the battle for Plekhovo, which had been fought over for several weeks. (James Kilner, *Telegraph*)
- Pro-Russia Telegram channels were awash with reports on Friday that North Korean forces have recaptured a Ukrainian-held village in Kursk, breaking their silence on DPRK troop deployments in a possible sign of a shift in the Kremlin's media strategy. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- U.S. President-elect Donald Trump has said that Pyongyang's involvement in Russia's war in Ukraine is a "very complicating" factor, while boasting about his personal ties with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States on Thursday offered a $5 million reward for information about an alleged scheme in which North Korean technology workers got jobs at unsuspecting U.S. companies then stole their trade secrets for ransom, with the proceeds used to fund Pyongyang's weapons programs. (*Reuters*)
- A U.S. court has indicted 14 North Korean remote IT workers for generating illicit revenue under fraudulent identities, with Washington announcing a $5 million reward for information on their network and the mechanisms financing Pyongyang's nuclear development. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- The United States has kept North Korea on its list of state sponsors of terrorism, an annual State Department report showed Thursday, noting the reclusive regime repeatedly supported acts of international terrorism. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States announced rewards of up to US$5 million for information on two North Korean information technology firms, saying they orchestrated a scheme to put North Korean workers in U.S. companies to extort money to fund the development of weapons. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)
- The United States offered Thursday to provide a reward of up to $5 million for information on two North Korean information technology firms, accusing them of exploiting workers to generate revenue to support the reclusive regime in Pyongyang. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Since the fall of the Assad regime, the Israeli Air Force has launched attacks on numerous strategic military facilities. What we are not seeing in the press, for the most part, is the

North Korea connection. In fact, the Damascus regime would not have both the weapons nor the platforms without one of their key suppliers: Pyongyang. (Bruce E. Bechtol, *The National Interest*)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250725172240/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-hrnk-celebrates-the-life-and-legacy-of-founding-board-member-morton-issac-abramowitz?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Saturday, December 14th, 2024

South Korea's Parliament votes to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol over his martial law order

In North Korea:
North Koreans buying high-value goods due to hyperinflation (*Radio Free Asia*, 12/14/2024)

In South Korea:
Chimes of freedom ring as protest turns into party on passage of impeachment (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/14/2024)
South Korea's parliament votes to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol over his martial law order (AP News, 12/14/2024)
South Korea's Yoon defiant after impeachment over martial law bid (Reuters, 12/14/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
President Yoon Suk-yeol impeached, throwing inter-Korean relations into question (NK News, 12/14/2024)

International:
Zelenskiy says Russia is deploying more North Korean troops to repel Kursk incursion (Reuters, 12/14/2024)

In North Korea:

- Hyperinflation and rumors of currency reform in North Korea are prompting wealthier people to buy up expensive goods that hold value such as electronics and auto parts, residents in the country told Radio Free Asia. (Ahn Chang Gyu, Moon Sung Whui, *Radio Free Asia*)

In South Korea:

- A deafening roar of cheers sent tremors through the pavement in front of the National Assembly in Yeouido, western Seoul, on Saturday as the motion to impeach South Korea's 13th President, Yoon Suk Yeol, passed in parliament. (Lee Ji-an, Cho Yong-jun, Shin Min-hee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea's parliament on Saturday impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol over his stunning and short-lived martial law decree, a move that ended days of political paralysis but set up an intense debate over Yoon's fate, as jubilant crowds roared to celebrate another defiant moment in the country's resilient democracy. (Hyun-jin Kim, Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)
- South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol vowed on Saturday to fight for his political future after he was impeached in a second vote by the opposition-led parliament over his short-lived attempt to impose martial law, a move that had shocked the nation. (Joyce Lee, Hyonhee Shin, Ju-min Park, *Reuters*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- South Korea's parliament voted to impeach President Yoon Suk-yeol on Saturday after he briefly declared martial law last week to counter what he called "anti-state" and "pro-North" forces. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

International:

- Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Saturday that Moscow had started involving "a noticeable number" of North Korean troops in its efforts to drive Ukrainian troops out of Russia's Kursk region. (*Reuters*)

Prepared by Rachel Baek, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250725172403/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-south-koreas-parliament-votes-to-impeach-president-yoon-suk-yeol-over-his-martial-law-order?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Sunday, December 15th, 2024

N. Korea remains silent about Yoon's impeachment North Korean Forces May Have Launched Mass Infantry Assaults In Kursk

In North Korea:
N. Korea remains silent about Yoon's impeachment (*Yonhap*, 12/15/2024)

International:
North Korean Forces May Have Launched Mass Infantry Assaults In Kursk (Forbes, 12/14/2024)
North Korean troops open fire on Russian unit, Ukraine's military intelligence claims (The Kyiv Independent, 12/14/2024)
Russia has begun using North Korean troops in significant numbers in Ukraine, Zelensky says (The Independent, 12/15/2024)
They escaped North Korea, now the world is noticing (The Korea Times, 12/15/2024)
Trump picks ex-Ambassador to Germany Grenell as envoy for 'special missions' on N. Korea, other issues (Yonhap, 12/15/2024)
Ukraine-Russia war latest: Russian soldiers killed by North Korean troops in friendly fire, Kyiv says (The Independent, 12/15/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea's state media on Sunday kept mum about President Yoon Suk Yeol's impeachment, marking a contrast from its swift reporting of the 2016 impeachment of then President Park Geun-hye. As of 9 a.m., none of the North's state media, including the Rodong Sinmun, the North's main newspaper, and the Korean Central News Agency, had published any reports on Yoon's impeachment. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- According to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, North Korean infantry have begun conducting mass assaults along the 250-square-mile salient Ukrainian troops carved out of Russia's Kursk Oblast back in August. (David Axe, *Forbes*)
- North Korean troops fighting alongside Russian forces in Kursk Oblast killed eight members of a Russian unit in a "friendly fire" attack, Ukraine's military intelligence agency (HUR) claimed on Dec. 14. (Abbey Fenbert, *The Kyiv Independent*)
- Russia has deployed North Korean soldiers in significant numbers for the first time to support its offensive in Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky said. The Ukrainian president said North Korean troops are reportedly being used in assaults on Ukrainian forces defending an enclave in Russia's Kursk region. (Namita Singh, *The Independent*)
- For years, Freedom Speakers International (FSI) has worked to empower North Korean refugees by recognizing their talents and contributions. This past week, FSI returned to India to receive a Global Peace Award at a ceremony hosted by Dr. Raju's organization on the United Nations's Human Rights Day on Dec. 10. (Casey Lartigue Jr., *The Korea Times*)
- U.S. President-elect Donald Trump on Saturday named former Ambassador to Germany Richard Grenell as his presidential envoy for special missions that he said covers "some of the hottest spots" around the world, including North Korea. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Russian soldiers have been killed by North Korean troops in friendly fire while fighting in Kursk, Ukraine's military intelligence agency said. The attack was the result of the language barrier between Russian and North Korean troops, which continues to be a "difficult

obstacle" on the battlefield, according to the HUR. (Tara Cobham, Alexander Butler, *The Independent*)

Prepared by Katherine Mitchell, HRNK Research Intern

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Monday, December 16th, 2024

North Korea says 'lies' by South's Yoon about a 'threat' led to impeachment

In North Korea
N. Korea reports S. Korea's Yoon impeachment 2 days after parliamentary vote (*Yonhap*, 12/16/2024)
North Korea says 'lies' by South's Yoon about a 'threat' led to impeachment (*Radio Free Asia*, 12/16/2024)

In South Korea:
Military suffers unprecedented leadership void (The Korea Herald, 12/16/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Unification minister urges 'prudent' stance for anti-Pyongyang leafleting (Yonhap, 12/16/2024)

International:
200 Russian, N. Korean troops allegedly killed in combat against Ukraine: Kyiv (Yonhap, 12/16/2024)
Nigeria reopens embassy in North Korea after nearly four-year pandemic closure (NK News, 12/16/2024)
Russia evacuates North Korean diplomats from Syria following Assad's ouster (NK News, 12/16/2024)
S. Korea, 9 other countries, EU decry N.K.-Russia cooperation (Yonhap, 12/16/2024)
Trump names foreign policy hawk as 'special missions' envoy covering North Korea (NK News, 12/16/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea's state media on Monday reported on President Yoon Suk Yeol's impeachment, two days after South Korea's National Assembly voted to impeach Yoon over his botched imposition of martial law earlier this month. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

- North Korea's state media said South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol told lies about a threat to his country to justify his "foolish" declaration of martial law, which it said had backfired and resulted in his impeachment. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea's military leadership crisis is deepening as key unit commanders come under scrutiny in the investigation into President Yoon Suk Yeol's Dec. 3 martial law declaration. Three three-star generals under investigation have been dismissed from their posts while the Army Chief of Staff has been suspended from duty. (Hwang Joo-young, *The Korea Herald*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho called for a "prudent" approach to sending anti-Pyongyang leaflets across the border, in an apparent shift from an earlier stance on the campaign led by South Korean activists that Pyongyang has bristled at. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Some 200 Russian and North Korean soldiers were estimated to have been killed while fighting in combined units against Ukrainian forces without specifying the number of casualties for each side. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- Nigeria has reopened its embassy in Pyongyang after closing the mission ine arl 2021 due to the pandemic, making it only the second African country with an active foothold in North Korea. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Russia evacuated North Korean diplomats from Syria on Sunday amid fallout from the fall of the Assad regime, throwing the DPRK's future operations in the Middle Eastern country into question. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- The top diplomats of South Korea, the United States and eight other countries, and a European Union representative condemned growing military cooperation between Russia and North Korea "in the strongest possible terms," while reiterating their "unwavering" support for Ukraine. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. President-elect Donald Trump has selected a controversial foreign policy hawk to serve as his "special missions" envoy responsible in part for diplomacy with North Korea, a new role that may signal less focus on Pyongyang than in his first term. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

Prepared by Valerie Johnson, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250725172756/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-says-lies-by-souths-yoon-about-a-threat-led-to-impeachment?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Tuesday, December 17th, 2024

S. Korea begins production of spy drones for N.K. surveillance; U.S. confirms N. Korean fatalities in combat against Ukraine

Top News:
South Korean democracy versus North Korean dictatorship: Strength in impeachment (UPI, 12/14/24)

In North Korea:
Nigeria says to reopen embassy in N. Korea following years of COVID-19 closure (Yonhap, 12/17/24)

In South Korea:
S. Korea begins production of spy drones for N.K. surveillance (Yonhap, 12/17/24)
S. Korea holds regular defense drills around Dokdo: source (Yonhap, 12/17/24)
Top military officer inspects partially restored guard post inside DMZ (Yonhap, 12/17/24)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Abductee family group vows to go ahead with leaflet campaigns against N. Korea (Yonhap, 12/17/24)
S. Korea sanctions top N.K. military officers, missile developer involved in Russia's war against Ukraine (Yonhap, 12/17/24)

International:
NIS sees N. Korean troops' casualties in combat against Ukraine as likely true (Yonhap, 12/17/24)
Russians 'burning faces' of dead North Koreans to keep them secret: Zelenskyy (Radio Free Asia, 12/17/24)
S. Korea, U.S., Japan hold forum on countering N. Korea's illicit maritime activities (Yonhap, 12/17/24)
U.S. confirms N. Korean fatalities in combat against Ukraine (Yonhap, 12/17/24)
U.S. sanctions N.K. generals accompanying N.K. troops dispatched to Russia (Yonhap, 12/17/24)
Zelenskyy shares video of Russian soldier allegedly setting fire to killed N.K. soldier (Yonhap, 12/17/24)

Top News:

- This article details the importance of South Korean democracy through its imperfections. Through examining the values, governance, and resilience of North and South Korea, a challenging perspective is brought to the forefront. (David Maxwell, UPI)

In North Korea:

- Nigeria was set to reopen its embassy in North Korea following years of closure over the COVID-19 pandemic…a move seen as making it the first African country to resume diplomatic activities in the North. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea has kicked off the production of the medium-altitude unmanned aerial vehicle (MUAV), the arms procurement agency said Tuesday, in a move to help enhance the military's surveillance capabilities over North Korea. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea conducted biannual defense drills near its easternmost islets of Dokdo earlier this week, a military source said, in what marked the sixth such exercise held under the current administration. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's top military officer on Tuesday visited a partially restored guard post inside the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating the two Koreas to inspect troop readiness against North Korean threats, his office said. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- A group representing the families of those abducted by North Korea said Tuesday it would fly leaflets into North Korea "shortly" despite the unification minister's calls for a "prudent" approach to the leaflet campaign. (Kim Hyun-soo, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea said it will impose sanctions on three top North Korean military officers and one missile developer believed to have been deployed to Russia in support of its war against Ukraine. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- South Korea's spy agency said Tuesday it is verifying intelligence about North Korean troops' fatalities during combat alongside Russian forces against Ukraine, saying it is taking into account the possibility that it could be true. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Russian forces are burning the faces of North Korean soldiers killed in assaults on Ukrainian positions to conceal their identities and keep secret their deployment to help Russia in its war. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)
- South Korea, the United States and Japan held a joint symposium on countering North Korea's illicit maritime activities in Singapore…to promote international cooperation against Pyongyang's sanctions evasion activities. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States has seen North Korean troops killed in action during combat alongside Russian forces against Ukraine, warning that should they cross the border into Ukraine, it would mark "yet another escalation." (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The United States sanctioned two North Korean generals known to be accompanying North Korean troops dispatched to support Russia, as well as other people and entities linked to Pyongyang's military programs and other activities. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has shared a video he claimed to be a Russian soldier setting fire to the body of a North Korean soldier killed in combat against Ukraine…aimed to hide presence of North Korean troops. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Jocelyn Bruce, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250725172910/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-s-korea-begins-production-of-spy-drones-for-nk-surveillance-us-confirms-n-korean-fatalities-in-combat-against-ukraine?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Wednesday, December 18th, 2024

Hundreds of N. Korean troops killed, wounded in battle with Ukrainian forces: reports

In North Korea:
N. Korean leader visits mausoleum to pay tribute to late father on 13th death anniv. (Yonhap, 12/18/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korea to hold military drill on countering small North Korean drones (NK News, 12/18/2024)
S. Korea to brace for possible resumption of U.S.-N.K. dialogue under Trump: FM Cho (Yonhap, 12/18/2024)

International:
Hundreds of N. Korean troops killed, wounded in battle with Ukrainian forces: reports (Yonhap, 12/18/2024)
U.N. General Assembly adopts resolution on N. Korean human rights for 20th straight year (Yonhap, 12/18/2024)
U.N. Security Council to hold briefing on N.K.-Russia military cooperation (Yonhap, 12/18/2024)
U.S. expert hopes Han to be 'source of stability,' foresees S. Korea's disadvantage in Trump engagement (Yonhap, 12/18/2024)
U.S. sanctions 2 individuals, 1 entity involved in money laundering network to support N. Korea (Yonhap, 12/18/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has visited a mausoleum for his late father to mark the 13th anniversary of his death, the North's state media reported Wednesday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- The South Korean military will conduct joint air defense drills on countering North Korean small drone threats this week amid growing concerns about the DPRK's development of suicide drones and operational experience gained from joining combat against Ukraine. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- South Korea will make sure it has plans in place to engage with the incoming U.S. administration under President-elect Donald Trump, should stalled nuclear talks with North Korea resume, Seoul's top diplomat said Wednesday. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- Hundreds of North Korean troops fighting alongside Russian soldiers against Ukrainian forces in the Kursk region have been killed or wounded, according to news reports that cited a U.S. military official. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The U.N. General Assembly on Tuesday passed a resolution on North Korean human rights for the 20th consecutive year, calling for improvement in the reclusive state's human rights record. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The U.N. Security Council (UNSC) is set to hold a briefing later this week to discuss North Korea's deepening military cooperation with Russia, amid growing concerns over North Korean troops' engagement in combat alongside Russian forces against Ukraine. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- A prominent U.S. expert has expressed his hope for Acting President Han Duck-soo to be a "source of stability" amid South Korea's political turmoil, but warned that absent a fully elected president, Seoul could face a disadvantage in engaging with the administration of incoming U.S. President Donald Trump. (Song Sang-ho, Kim Dong-hyun, *Yonhap*)
- The United States on Tuesday sanctioned two individuals and one entity involved in a network that launders illicit funds generated by North Korean IT workers and cybercrime to support Pyongyang, the Treasury Department said. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Hannah Starnes, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250725173024/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-hundreds-of-n-korean-troops-killed-wounded-in-battle-with-ukrainian-forces-reports?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, December 19th, 2024

U.S. assesses Russia may be close to accepting N. Korea's nuclear weapons program, Washington envoy

Top News:

Moving Forward on North Korea: The Case for Bold Transitional Justice Initiatives in South Korea (*USIP*, 12/18/24)

In North Korea:
N. Korea defends military alignment with Russia as 'normal' cooperative ties (Yonhap, 12/19/24)

In South Korea:
Han, Japan's Ishiba agree to continue trilateral cooperation with U.S. against N. Korea-Russia ties (Yonhap, 12/19/24)
S. Korea voices regret over Russia blaming Seoul for destabilizing Korean Peninsula (Yonhap, 12/19/24)

International:
At least 100 N. Korean troops killed in Ukraine war: spy agency (Yonhap, 12/19/24)
Russians see North Koreans as a 'burden' over ignorance of drones: South says (Radio Free Asia, 12/19/24)
Ukraine drones kill 50 North Koreans in battle in Kursk region (Radio Free Asia, 12/19/24)
U.S. assesses Russia may be close to accepting N. Korea's nuclear weapons program: Washington envoy (Yonhap, 12/19/24)

Top News:

- In a five step process to advance transitional justice, this discussion paper argues that South Korea needs to prepare for a possible peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula with the aid of international actors. (Michael Maya, *USIP*)

In North Korea:

- North Korea denounced the United States, South Korea and etc. for condemning military cooperation between the North and Russia, claiming distortion and slander of its cooperative ties with Moscow. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- Acting President Han held phone talks with Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru and agreed to continue trilateral security cooperation with the United States due to North Korea and Russia's ties. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea expressed regret that Russia has accused Seoul of "destabilizing" the Korean Peninsula by using North Korea's provocations as a pretext for the martial law declaration. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- At least 100 North Korean troops dispatched to Russia for combat in Ukraine were killed and the number of injured North Korean troops was estimated to reach some 1,000. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)

- North Korean soldiers in Russia's Kursk region are "consumed" in attacks due to lack of experience of drone warfare. Russian forces stated that the North Koreans were a "burden" due to their "ignorance." (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)
- Around 50 North Korean soldiers were killed in a battle against Ukrainian army drones in the Kursk region this week, video of the battle shared on social media revealed. (Park Jaewoo, *Radio Free Asia*)
- The United States believes Russia may be close to accepting North Korea's nuclear weapons program in a reversal of its commitment to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Jocelyn Bruce, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250725173224/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-us-assesses-russia-may-be-close-to-accepting-n-koreas-nuclear-weapons-program-washington-envoy?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Saturday, December 21st, 2024

S. Korea successfully launches 3rd spy satellite into orbit

In North Korea:
North Korea's Kim Jong Un calls for stronger rural economies, state media says (*Reuters*, 12/20/24)

In South Korea:
S. Korea successfully launches 3rd spy satellite into orbit (*Yonhap*, 12/21/24)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Unification minister vows efforts for return of S. Koreans detained in N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 12/21/24)

International:
N. Korea slams S. Korea-U.S.-Japan talks on Indo-Pacific as 'insult' to peace (*Yonhap*, 12/21/24)
Trilateral cooperation to continue despite shift from multilateralism under Trump 2.0, say experts (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/21/24)
Trump wants NATO members to increase defense spending to 5 percent of GDP: FT (*Yonhap*, 12/21/24)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called to step up development of the country's industrial production in regions outside Pyongyang to strengthen rural economies, state media KCNA said on Saturday. (Joyce Lee, *Reuters*)

In South Korea:

- South Korea successfully placed into orbit its third homegrown spy satellite launched from a U.S. space center Saturday, the defense ministry said, as the country seeks to bolster its independent surveillance capabilities on North Korea. A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket carrying the satellite normally lifted off at 8:34 p.m. (Korean time) from the Vandenberg Space Force Base in California as planned and sent the reconnaissance satellite into orbit at 9:24 p.m., according to the ministry. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho vowed Saturday to make efforts to ensure the return of South Koreans detained in North Korea amid uncertainty over their fate after years of detention. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

International:

- North Korea on Saturday lambasted a recent trilateral meeting between South Korea, the United States and Japan that discussed peace in the Indo-Pacific region, deriding the talks as an "insult" to peace. The Rodong Sinmun, the North's main newspaper, criticized the trilateral Indo-Pacific Dialogue that took place in Tokyo on Dec. 11, accusing Washington of being a "gangster-like" country destroying peace and its Asian allies of being accomplices. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- United Nations insiders and observers believe U.S. President-elect Donald Trump's return to the White House would likely result in a further shift in U.S. foreign policy from multilateralism to smaller focus groups, such Korea and Japan. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Incoming U.S. President Donald Trump's team has told European officials that he will demand North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member states raise their defense spending to 5 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), the Financial Times reported Friday, citing people familiar with the matter. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Gabrielle Drinkwine, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250725173409/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-s-korea-successfully-launches-3rd-spy-satellite-into-orbit?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Sunday, December 22nd, 2024

South Korea successfully launches third military satellite to monitor threats from North

In North Korea:
North Korea's Kim praises completion of reconstructed homes damaged in July floods (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/22/24)

In South Korea:
Officials summoned for questioning as martial law probe continues over weekend (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/22/24)
South Korea successfully launches third military satellite to monitor threats from North (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/22/24)

International:
Vice FM to visit U.S., Japan this week for talks on trilateral cooperation (*Yonhap*, 12/22/24)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un attended a ceremony marking the completion of rebuilt houses damaged during the country's July floods, the state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported on Sunday. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

In South Korea:

- Investigations into officials related to President Yoon Suk Yeol's short-lived declaration of martial law continued over the weekend after the joint investigation headquarters summoned the impeached president for questioning on Wednesday. National Intelligence Service Director Cho Tae-yong was reported on Sunday to have been privately investigated by prosecutions recently, regarding his attendance at the Dec. 3 Cabinet meeting before the martial law declaration. Although not a Cabinet member, Cho attended the meeting under a statute allowing high-ranking officials to participate with approval from the chair. His presence is widely believed to be connected to the president's justification of martial law as necessary to "protect the Republic of Korea from the threats of North Korean communist forces." (Cho Jung-woo, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea successfully launched its third homegrown military reconnaissance satellite on Saturday, advancing its ability to swiftly and accurately identify nuclear and missile provocations from North Korea. These satellites aim to complement each other to maximize their effectiveness and reinforce the country's independent satellite network for the Kill Chain concept, which involves preemptive strikes to neutralize North Korean threats. Previously, South Korea has largely relied on satellite imagery provided by the United States. (Seo Ji-Eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- A senior diplomat will visit the United States and Japan this week to discuss cooperation between the three countries and North Korea-related issues, Seoul's Foreign Ministry said Sunday. The trip comes after President Yoon Suk Yeol's impeachment on Dec. 14 over his short-lived imposition of martial law, which has raised concerns over Seoul's policy coordination with Washington and Tokyo, especially with the incoming U.S. administration of Donald Trump, set to take office next month. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Gabrielle Drinkwine, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250725173520/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-south-korea-successfully-launches-third-military-satellite-to-monitor-threats-from-north?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Monday, December 23rd, 2024

More than 1,000 North Korean military casualties in Ukraine war, says South Korea

In North Korea:
Kim Jong Un makes frank speech about nation's poverty at small factory opening (*NK News*, 12/23/24)
North Korea could test hypersonic missile around year-end plenum: Seoul (*NK News*, 12/23/24)
S. Korean military spots supply removal at now-demolished Kaesong liaison office (*Yonhap*, 12/23/24)

In South Korea:
Police find mentions of provoking North at NLL in Noh Sang-won's pocketbook (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/23/24)

International:
More than 1,000 North Korean military casualties in Ukraine war, says South Korea (*Guardian*, 12/23/24)
N. Korea preparing for additional troop deployment, suicide drone supply to Russia: Seoul (*Yonhap*, 12/23/24)
North Korea joined Russian military drills as observer for first time: Moscow (*NK News*, 12/23/24)
Trump taps China hawk who has deemphasized North Korea for key defense post (*NK News*, 12/23/24)

Ukrainian military unveils false IDs used by N.K. troops deployed to Russia: report (*Yonhap*, 12/23/24)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un opened up about the country's overwhelming "poverty" and failing economy in a speech on Friday, while declaring that his new rural development project has taken a first step toward righting his past neglect of the majority of the population. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea could conduct a "sudden missile launch" toward the end of the year with an eye on Donald Trump's return to power, according to South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, while also potentially supplying Russia with suicide drones for use against Ukraine. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- New activities seemingly involving the removal of items have been detected at the now-shuttered joint industrial park in the North Korean border city of Kaesong, the South Korean military said Monday. (Woo Jae-yeon, *Yonhap*)

In South Korea:

- Police said Monday that they have found a note that mentions "inducing North Korea's provocation at the Northern Limit Line" inside a pocketbook of a former military commander who was accused of helping plot President Yoon Suk Yeol's martial law on Dec. 3. (Lee Soo-jung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

International:

- More than 1,000 North Korean soldiers have been killed or wounded since they were sent to fight alongside Russian troops in Ukraine, according to South Korean military officials. (Betsy Reed, *Guardian*)
- North Korea appears to be preparing to deploy additional troops and military equipment to Russia, possibly including suicide drones, in support of Moscow's war against Ukraine, the South's military said Monday. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea joined Russia's largest military drills in decades as an observer for the first time earlier this year, according to Moscow's top military commander, the latest sign of their burgeoning cooperation as DPRK forces support the invasion of Ukraine. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- U.S. President-elect Donald Trump has nominated China hawk Elbridge Colby as the next undersecretary of defense for policy, a move that may signal plans to deemphasize North Korea issues and place greater onus on Seoul to counter Pyongyahng. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- Ukraine's military unveiled what it claimed were false identification documents carried by North Korean troops killed in the war with Russia, a report showed, amid Kyiv's claim that Russia is trying to conceal the presence of North Korean soldiers. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Jujin Yang, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250725173637/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-more-than-1000-north-korean-military-casualties-in-ukraine-war-says-south-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Tuesday, December 24th, 2024

North Korean hackers behind $307 million DMM Bitcoin heist, FBI says; N.K. soldiers given fake Russian military IDs, Ukraine says

In North Korea:
Military dominates Kim Jong Un's attention in his busiest year in nearly decade (*NK News*, 12/24/2024)
North Korean hackers behind $307 million DMM Bitcoin heist, FBI says (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/24/2024)
North Korean hackers stole $308M from Japanese crypto exchange, US and Japan say (*NK News*, 12/24/2024)

In South Korea:
Yoon unlikely to appear for questioning over martial law on Christmas, lawyer says (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/24/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
N. Korea presumed to disband all organizations dealing with inter-Korean issues (*Yonhap*, 12/24/2024)

International:
Allies agree to get diplomatic, security agenda back on track (*The Korea Herald*, 12/24/2024)
Kremlin aide says N.K. military may take part in Victory Day parade next year (*Yonhap*, 12/24/2024)
North Korean soldiers given fake Russian military IDs, Ukraine says (CNN, 12/23/2024)
U.S. intelligence agencies believe troop dispatch to Russia was N. Korea's idea (*Yonhap*, 12/24/2024)
What we know about North Korean troops fighting Russia's war (BBC, 12/24/2024)
Why Are North Korean Troops in Ukraine Taking Heavy Casualties? (*The New York Times*, 12/23/2024)
Why North Korean troops are suffering heavy losses in combat with Ukraine (*NK News*, 12/24/2024)
Zelenskyy says more than 3,000 N. Korean troops killed, wounded in Russian frontline (*Yonhap*, 12/24/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un had his busiest year of public appearances in nearly a decade in 2024, ramping up military-related activities amid growing cooperation with Russia after taking a lower profile throughout the pandemic. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- A notorious North Korean hacking group was revealed to be behind $307 million in Bitcoin being stolen from Japan-based exchange DMM Bitcoin in May. The FBI said Monday that the hacker group was identified as TraderTraitor, a hacking group allegedly run by the North Korean government, after a joint investigation with Japan's National Police Agency. (Sarah Chea, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean cybercriminals stole $308 million in virtual funds earlier this year after infiltrating a Japanese cryptocurrency exchange's systems through an elaborate social engineering campaign, according to U.S. and Japanese authorities. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- President Yoon Suk Yeol is unlikely to appear on Christmas Day for questioning by the investigative team in charge of the probe into his short-lived declaration of martial law, his lawyer said Tuesday. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- North Korea is presumed to have disbanded all of its roughly 10 official organizations responsible for addressing inter-Korean issues, following leader Kim Jong-un's order last year to codify South Korea as its primary foe. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)

International:

- South Korea and the United States have agreed to bring their diplomatic and security agenda back on course after disruptions caused by President Yoon Suk Yeol's Dec. 3 martial law declaration, the Foreign Ministry in Seoul said Tuesday. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- A Kremlin aide has said the North Korean military may take part in a parade designed to mark the 80th anniversary of a special day next year that commemorates the Soviet Union's triumph over Nazi Germany in World War II, a Russian news agency reported Monday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean soldiers fighting for Russia were given fake military documents with Russian names and birthplaces, the Ukrainian military said, amid claims from Kyiv that Russia is trying to conceal the presence of foreign fighters on the battlefield. (Victoria Butenko, CNN)
- U.S. intelligence agencies believe that North Korea's troop deployment to Russia was Pyongyang's idea, The New York Times reported Monday, although some Western officials thought Moscow had turned to the reclusive regime in a desperate need for military manpower amid its war in Ukraine. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- As the war in Ukraine creeps towards its third year, the North Korean troops may be "the best capable" among the troops available to Russia, says Chun In-bum, a retired South Korean army lieutenant-general. North Korean soldiers who had defected over the last decade or so told the BBC that it would be a mistake to underestimate Pyongyang's troops. (Kelly Ng, BBC)

- The troops that North Korea deployed are from its "Storm" Corps, special forces that are among the military's best trained and most heavily indoctrinated. But they were badly prepared for drone attacks and the unfamiliar terrain far from their isolated homeland, according to South Korea's National Intelligence Service. (Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*)
- Reports from Ukraine indicate that casualties are rapidly mounting among the North Korean troops deployed to support Russia's invasion, with the latest estimate finding that DPRK soldiers' poor preparedness for modern warfare has already resulted in thousands of dead or wounded. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- More than 3,000 North Korean troops have been killed or wounded in Russia's western frontline region of Kursk, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said, raising concern about the potential deployment of additional North Korean troops and equipment to Russia. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250725173753/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korean-hackers-behind-307-million-dmm-bitcoin-heist-fbi-says-nk-soldiers-given-fake-russian-military-ids-ukraine-says?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Thursday, December 26th, 2024

North Korea blasts sirens and drumming sounds across the border on Christmas; Russian POW in Ukraine call their N.K. allies 'reckless"

In North Korea:
North Korea blasts sirens and drumming sounds across border on Christmas (*NK News*, 12/25/2024)

Inter-Korean Relations:
Seoul sanctions North Korean IT workers for raising illicit funds for nukes (*NK News*, 12/26/2024)
S. Korea sanctions 15 N. Korean IT workers, 1 entity over illicit funding for nuclear, missile programs (*Yonhap*, 12/26/2024)

International:
Canadian navy ship keeps tabs on North Korean sanctions evasion at sea (*NK News*, 12/26/2024)
Canadian NGOs receive green light to deliver aid to North Korea (*NK News*, 12/25/2024)
Foreign policy 'risks' of potential Lee Jae-myung presidency spark new debate (*The Korea Herald*, 12/26/2924)

Hard-line US policy on North Korea likely, as hawkish senators lead committees (*The Korea Herald*, 12/26/2024)
Russian POWs in Ukraine call their North Korean allies 'reckless' (*Radio Free Asia*, 12/23/2024)
What a Russian aviation aficionado learned by jetting across North Korea (*NK News*, 12/25/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea blasted a cacophony of sirens and drumming sounds toward South Korean border areas on Christmas day, while ROK loudspeakers and radio programs broadcast news toward the North about DPRK soldiers dying for Russia. (Chad O'Carroll, Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

Inter-Korean Relations:

- South Korea has sanctioned 15 North Korean IT workers and a company for allegedly helping finance Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program through illicit remote work schemes. These measures, taking effect December 30th, 2024, will target individuals affiliated with 'regime-controlled entities'. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)
- South Korea said Thursday it will impose independent sanctions on 15 North Korean IT workers and one entity over their roles in the illicit cyber activities to fund the country's nuclear and missile development. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

International:

- A Canadian naval vessel recently completed an operation to monitor North Korea's illicit maritime activities near Japan, as the U.S. and its allies look for new ways to track sanctions violations in lieu of U.N. investigations. (Alannah Hill, *NK News*)
- The U.N. has granted sanctions exemptions for two Canadian nongovernmental organizations to deliver soymilk production tools and supplies for a children's hospital to North Korea. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- In a meeting with Japanese Amb. Koichi Mizushima on Thursday, People Power Party Floor Leader Rep. Kweon Seong-dong addressed "concerns" about the close coordination among South Korea, the US and Japan under President Yoon Suk Yeol becoming compromised by the changing political power dynamics here. (Kim Arin, *The Korea Herald*)
- Hawkish Republican senators advocating stronger extended deterrence on the Korean Peninsula are poised to lead key Senate committees on foreign affairs and security next year, suggesting potential hard-line stances in future US policy maneuvers regarding North Korea's nuclear issues, according to reports. (Hwang Joo-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- Russian prisoners of war captured by Ukrainian forces complained about the lack of discipline and professionalism of North Korean troops dispatched to fight in the conflict, video footage of their interrogation shows. (Eugene Whong, *Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korea is far from a typical tourist destination, often drawing travelers mesmerized by its isolation. But for one recent visitor, it was not the DPRK's seclusion or communist aesthetics that attracted his attention, but its unique status as a home for rare retro planes. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250725174205/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-blasts-sirens-and-drumming-sounds-across-border-on-chrsitmas-russian-pow-in-ukraine-call-their-nk-allies-reckless?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

Friday, December 27th, 2024

U.S. Congress failed to reauthorize the North Korean Human Rights Act: "interest is going down"

Top News:
U.S. Congress failed to reauthorize the North Korean Human Rights Act: "interest is going down" (VOA, 12/21/2024)
*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.
US Congress fails to extend North Korean Human Rights Act (VOA, 12/26/2024)
In South Korea:
Employment rate of N.K. defectors in S. Korea hits record high of 60.5 pct: report (Yonhap, 12/27/2024)
Nat'l Assembly votes to impeach acting President Han (Yonhap, 12/27/2024)
North Korean defectors report highest-ever life satisfaction in 2024: Survey (NK News, 12/27/2024)
South Korea drops North Korean city names from signs on border highway (NK News, 12/27/2024)
South Korean Lawmakers Impeach Acting President as Crisis Deepens (New York Times, 12/27/2024)
Suspected North Korean drone base and factory face construction slowdown (NK News, 12/27/2024)
Who is Han Duck-soo, South Korea's impeached acting president? (Reuters, 12/27/2024)

International:
'I thought it was fake news': secrecy around North Koreans fighting in Kursk (Guardian, 12/27/2024)
NIS confirms capture of North Korean soldier by Ukraine in Kursk (Korea JoongAng Daily, 12/27/2024)
N.K. soldier captured by Ukraine dies from worsening wounds: S. Korea's spy agency (Yonhap, 12/27/2024)
North Korean soldier's drone-hunting tactics revealed in Kursk notebook (Korea JoongAng Daily, 12/27/2024)
Putin hopes for continued cooperation with N. Korea in his New Year's message to Kim (Yonhap, 12/27/2024)
Russia warns the United States against possible nuclear testing under Trump (Reuters, 12/27/2024)

Trump's N. Korea policy may shake up security landscape on Korean Peninsula: think tank (Yonhap, 12/27/2024)
Ukraine has captured first North Korean soldier in Kursk, Seoul confirms (NK News, 12/27/2024)

Top News:

- The longest absence of the North Korean Human Rights Act is continuing because of the failure of reauthorization in Congress. Concerns about the declining interest in North Korea's human rights issues are growing. **Greg Scarlatoiu, the President and CEO of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea**, also said in the interview with VOA on December 19th, "Congressional interest is going down, unfortunately...It's not that Congress are not supportive. Again, it's a matter of prioritizing other issues over North Korean human rights... The US Congress, the legislative branch of the US government, has been the most active branch on North Korean human rights issues. If Congress is no longer active or proactive, the issue loses momentum, and eventually, non-governmental organizations are affected. We will have to make sure that CSOs such as HRNK remind the new Congress of the importance of the Act... And this is a major issue that has a direct impact on the national security of our allies and that of the United States." (Lee Jo-en, VOA)
- The U.S. Congress once again failed to pass a bipartisan bill to reauthorize the North Korean Human Rights Act, or NKHRA, painting a bleak picture for the future of the measure originally adopted by Congress and signed by President George W. Bush in 2004 to ensure the U.S. continues to promote basic freedoms of speech, press and religion in North Korea. **Greg Scarlatoiu, president of the Washington-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea**, told VOA Korean in a Zoom interview Tuesday that the two-year absence of the NKHRA is "a matter of prioritizing other crises." Scarlatoiu emphasized that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's monolithic power and pursuit of nuclear weapons have come at the cost of North Korean people's human rights. (Young Gyo Kim, Joeun Lee, VOA)

In South Korea:

- The employment rate of North Korean defectors in South Korea reached a new high of 60.5 percent earlier this year, a report showed Wednesday, in a sign of improving living conditions for those who fled from the North. (Lee Minji, *Yonhap*)
- The National Assembly voted Friday to impeach acting President Han Duck-soo less than two weeks after he took over for President Yoon Suk Yeol who was impeached for his botched imposition of martial law. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean escapees living in South Korea reported their highest-ever life satisfaction rate in 2024, according to an annual government survey released Friday, even as the rising unemployment rate among female defectors underlined persistent economic challenges. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- South Korean authorities have removed the names of North Korean cities from several highway signs on the so-called Freedom Road leading to the demilitarized zone, likely reflecting the poor state of inter-Korean ties. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- South Korea's leadership crisis deepened on Friday after lawmakers voted to oust a second head of state, the acting president, in less than two weeks. The move prolonged the political

vacuum that has gripped South Korea since President Yoon Suk Yeol shocked the country this month by briefly putting it under military rule for the first time in decades. (Jin Yu Young, Choe Sang-Hun, *New York Times*)

- North Korea has made slow progress in recent months on building its first military drone airbase and remodeling a nearby factory, possibly for suicide drone production, pointing to a lack of urgency or resources shortages. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, who was impeached on Friday as South Korea's acting president, is a career technocrat whose wide-ranging experience and reputation for rationality failed to shield him from growing political turmoil. (Joyce Lee, *Reuters*)

International:

- At dusk one afternoon last week, two dozen wounded North Korean soldiers were brought to one of the main hospitals in the Russian city of Kursk. They were ushered into a specially designated floor, guarded by police, with access limited to translators and medical personnel. (Pjotr Sauer, *Guardian*)
- The National Intelligence Service confirmed the capture of a North Korean soldier by Ukraine on Friday. "Through real-time information sharing with allied intelligence agencies, it has been confirmed that a wounded North Korean soldier has been captured alive," the South Korean spy agency reported. "We plan to closely monitor the following situation." (Kim Min-Young, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- An injured North Korean solider died Friday from worsening wounds, a day after being captured by Ukraine, South Korea's spy agency confirmed, citing intelligence from a "friendly country." (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- The Ukrainian military revealed a notebook reportedly owned by a North Korean soldier killed in Kursk, sharing the soldier's drone-hunting tactics on its Facebook account on Thursday. According to the Ukrainian military, the notebook contained illustrations and notes on tactics for shooting down drones and evading artillery fire. (Kim Min-Young, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin has sent a New Year's message to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, expressing hopes that the two nations will continue to cooperate in the next year, Pyongyang's state media reported Friday. (Kim Soo-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Russia's point man for arms control cautioned Donald Trump's incoming administration on Friday against resuming nuclear testing, saying Moscow would keep its own options open amid what he said was Washington's "extremely hostile" stance. (Guy Faulconbridge, *Reuters*)
- U.S. President-elect Donald Trump's policy toward North Korea could shake up the security landscape on the Korean Peninsula, leaving South Korea with the daunting challenge of formulating a strategy to coordinate with Washington, a state think tank said Friday. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Ukrainian forces have captured their first North Korean prisoner of war in Russia's Kursk region, South Korea's intelligence agency confirmed on Friday. "Ukraine has confirmed the capture of a wounded North Korean soldier," a National Intelligence Service spokesperson reported. "This was verified through real-time intelligence sharing with allied intelligence agencies." (Anton Sokolin, NK News)

U.S. Congress failed to reauthorize the North Korean Human Rights Act: "interest is going down"

Lee Jo-en, VOA
December 21, 2024

The longest absence of the North Korean Human Rights Act is continuing because of the failure of reauthorization in Congress. Concerns about the declining interest in North Korea's human rights issues are growing. This is Lee Jo-en in reporting.

The 118th congress concluded its official session at midnight on December 20th, 2024, without passing the reauthorization of the North Korean Human Rights Act.

While the 'Reauthorization' bill was passed through the House of Representatives in November 2024, it couldn't go further in the Senate.

The bill wasn't even brought up for a debate item or a vote item in the Senate, which is the next step after passing the House of Representatives.

"The Automatic Process of Disuse as the Session Ends"

As a result, the bill is going to take the automatic process of disuse and must restart the same procedure when the next session begins in 2025.

This longest 'absence' of the North Korean Human Rights Act, now exceeding two years, has been an unprecedented situation since it first came out.

It was originally established as a temporary law in 2004 and reauthorized three times in 2008, 2012 and 2018. However, it hasn't yet been renewed after expiring on September 30th, 2022.

Although the act was reauthorized in 2018 when it was past the expiration date, it is the first time for it to be delayed for more than two years.

VOA has reached out to the key figures who took a lead on this bill, including Senator Rubio, Representative Young Kim, Democratic Senator Kane, Representative Ami Bera and the US Department of State, and is awaiting their responses.
The reauthorization bill proposes the extension of the original Act until 2028.

This Act has been evaluated as a 'landmark' human rights initiative, supporting various governmental and non-governmental programs to improve human rights in North Korea and protect North Korean defectors.

This reauthorization bill has especially received attention by including contents urging the reunion of Korean American families separated by the Korean War and imposing sanctions on those who are responsible for the repatriation of the defectors against their will.

They pointed out that one of the main reasons for this unprecedented delay was the political deadlock in Congress.
With the 118th Congress nearly divided evenly between Democrats and Republicans, they were struggling to pass legislations and that even affects this bipartisan type of bill.

"It's highly unusual."

Robert King, the formal North Korea Human Rights envoy said in the interview with VOA on December 19th, "it's highly unusual" that it has been delayed for more than 2 years.
He also said, "It is not a problem with the legislation. The only problem is Congress is dysfunctional. Congress can't get its act together. There's so much nastiness and contention that they're not able to work together on things that everybody agrees on…"

But he made it clear that even though the Act has been delayed, all the financial support of the relevant programs will continue, so this state may not affect the activities of the government and non-government organizations.

He said, "In the past, when there have been these lapses between reauthorization, programs have continued. The Special Envoy has continued to function. It just raises questions about the commitment of the Congress and indirectly the commitment of the American people to human rights in North Korea."

"The issue loses momentum"

Greg Scarlatoiu, the President and CEO of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, also said in the interview with VOA on December 19th, "Congressional interest is going down, unfortunately...It's not that Congress are not supportive. Again, it's a matter of prioritizing other issues over North Korean human rights… The US Congress, the legislative branch of the US government, has been the most active branch on North Korean human rights issues. If Congress is no longer active or proactive, the issue loses momentum, and eventually, non-governmental organizations are affected. We will have to make sure that CSOs such as HRNK remind the new Congress of the importance of the Act… And this is a major issue that has a direct impact on the national security of our allies and that of the United States."
This is Lee Jo-en in reporting.

Prepared by Jiwoo-Katie Choi, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250725174603/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-us-congress-failed-to-reauthorize-the-north-korean-human-rights-act-interest-is-going-down?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Saturday, December 28th, 2024

Ex-defense minister indicted on insurrection charges in martial law probe

In South Korea:
Ex-defense minister indicted on insurrection charges in martial law probe (*Yonhap*, 12/27/2024)
S Korean president accused of ordering use of guns to stop martial law vote (BBC, 12/28/2024)

International:
Injured North Korean soldier captured by Ukraine has died, says South Korea (*The Guardian*, 12/28/2024)
North Korean soldier captured in Ukraine dies, reports say (BBC, 12/28/2024)
Ukraine war briefing: 'Human wave' of North Korean troops being sent to their deaths, says US (*The Guardian*, 12/28/2024)

In South Korea:

- Prosecutors indicted former Defense Minister Kim Yong-hyun under detention on charges of insurrection over his alleged role in the short-lived imposition of President Yoon Suk Yeol's botched declaration of martial law on Dec. 3. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- Prosecutors allege that South Korea's suspended president told the military to use guns while attempting to remove lawmakers from parliament while they were voting down his martial law decree.The orders are said to have been given to a general charged with blockading the National Assembly during Yoon's short-lived declaration of martial law - which was voted down by MPs after 190 were able to enter the building. (Ruther Comerford, BBC)

International:

- South Korea's intelligence agency has reported that a North Korean soldier believed to have been the first to be captured while supporting Russia's war in Ukraine has died after being taken alive by Ukrainian forces. (Justin McCurry, Pjotr Sauer and agencies, *The Guardian*)
- An injured North Korean soldier captured by Ukrainian forces has died, Yonhap News Agency has reported, citing a statement from South Korea's spy agency. The soldier is believed to be the first North Korean prisoner of war captured since Pyongyang deployed forces to support Russia's war in Ukraine. (Koh Ewe, BBC)
- Kyiv reports heavy casualties among Pyongyang's soldiers in Russia while Washington accuses generals of seeing the troops as 'expendable'. What we know on day 1,039. (Guardian staff and agencies, *The Guardian*)

Prepared by Gloria Guo, HRNK Research Intern

Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250725174839/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-ex-defense-minister-indicted-on-insurrection-charges-in-martial-law-probe?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Sunday, December 29th, 2024

North Korea declares 'toughest' anti-U.S. counteraction strategy at party meeting

In North Korea:
N. Korea appoints Pak Thae-song as new premier at year-end party meeting (*Yonhap*, 12/29/2024)
N. Korea declares 'toughest' anti-U.S. counteraction strategy at party meeting (*Yonhap*, 12/29/2024)
N. Korea takes cautious approach toward U.S. ahead of Trump's inauguration (*Yonhap*, 12/29/2024)
North Korea launches 'toughest' U.S. strategy in key party meeting (*Reuters*, 12/29/2024)

In North Korea:

- North Korea appointed party secretary Pak Thae-song as the new premier to replace Kim Tok-hun in a major personnel reshuffle during a year-end plenary party meeting, state media reported Sunday. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has declared its "toughest" counteraction strategy toward the United States during a key party meeting, asserting that the military cooperation among South Korea, the U.S. and Japan has expanded into an aggressive nuclear military bloc. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un held a key policy-setting meeting of the country's ruling party last week ahead of the new year. The meeting decided that North Korea would launch the "toughest" strategy to counteract the United States for its security and national interests, the report said, without elaborating. (Hyunsu Yim, *Reuters*)
- This year's year-end party meeting in North Korea reaffirmed the country's hard-line policy toward the United States but included little substance, such as a nuclear threat, apparently opting to remain low-key ahead of Donald Trump's upcoming inauguration as president. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)

Prepared by Saege Anzueto, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250725175105/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-declares-toughest-anti-us-counteraction-strategy-at-party-meeting?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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Monday, December 30th, 2024

How Jimmy Carter helped prevent a devastating war with North Korea; North Korea Gets Tough on US in Warning to Trump

In North Korea:
N. Korea's Kim visits new fish farm, urges regional economic development: KCNA (*Yonhap*, 12/30/2024)
N. Korea's new premier begins duties following last week's appointment (*Yonhap*, 12/30/2024)
North Korea building new 3,000-ton frigate possibly with guided missiles, footage suggests (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/30/2024)
North Korea building new warship likely to be country's largest, photos show (*NK News*, 12/30/2024)
North Korea on pace to restore 6.5K square miles of forest, reach 10-year goal (*NK News*, 12/30/2024)
What life was like for North Koreans in 2024, from high prices to crackdowns (*NK News*, 12/30/2024)

In South Korea:
South Korean families pray for relatives who vanished into North Korean prisons a decade ago (*The Independent*, 12/30/2024)

International:
How Jimmy Carter helped prevent a devastating war with North Korea (*NK News*, 12/30/2024)
North Korea adopts 'most hardline' stance against US ahead of Trump presidency (*NK News*, 12/29/2024)
North Korea Gets Tough on US in Warning to Trump (*Newsweek*, 12/30/2024)
North Korean killed in Russia wrote of 'sacred duty' to fight for Kim Jong Un (*ABC News*, 12/29/2024)
North Korean passenger jet flies to Shanghai for the first time in five years (*NK News*, 12/30/2024)
North Koreans kill themselves to avoid capture by Ukraine: US official (*Radio Free Asia*, 12/29/2024)
North Korea's Kim vows the toughest anti-US policy before Trump takes office (*The Independent*, 12/29/2024)
What to make of Kim Jong Un's plenum call for 'most hardline' posture toward US (*NK News*, 12/30/2024)

In North Korea:

- Kim Jong-un has visited a newly completed fish farm in the east coastal city of Sinpho and called for regional development to achieve regional economic self-reliance, state media reported Monday. Offshore farming "will renew the structure of our fishing industry," the North Korean leader stated. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- Pak Thae-song, North Korea's new premier appointed at last week's year-end party meeting, has begun his official duties, including sending a condolence letter over the death of former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)

- North Korea released footage of a new 3,000-ton frigate under construction for the first time, through its state media, with Kim Jong-un reportedly having visited the construction site days before. Experts say it is likely Pyongyang's first guided missile frigate with a vertical launching system. (Lim Jeong-Won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea has revealed the first high-quality photos of a new warship currently under construction, indicating that it will likely be the navy's largest and feature a missile launcher system. Korean Central Television aired four photos on Sunday of leader Kim Jong Un inspecting the warship. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea is on course to restore nearly 6,500 square miles of forest area under a 10-year reforestation campaign launched in 2015, according to new analysis of satellite imagery, though experts warn the gains may be temporary without measures to address underlying fuel shortages. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)
- Available evidence suggests that currency fluctuations have increased the economic strain on North Korean households in 2024, even as the state has ramped up ideological crackdowns, though it seems the country no longer appears to be teetering on the edge of famine. (Ifang Bremer, *NK News*)

In South Korea:

- In the past year, Choi Jin-young has done everything he can to bring attention to his father, a missionary who's serving a life sentence in North Korea. But as he marks 10 years since his father's arrest this week, Choi doesn't know where his father is, or even if he's still alive. (Hyung-Jin Kim, *The Independent*)

International:

- Jimmy Carter helped save the Korean Peninsula from a devastating conflict 30 years ago. Carter, who died on Sunday at the age of 100, became the first former U.S. head of state to travel to North Korea for talks with leader Kim Il Sung, to stop its then-emerging nuclear program in the mid-1990s. (James Fretwell, *NK News*)
- North Korea has adopted what it called its "most hardline" policy strategy against the U.S. at its year-end party plenum, claiming Washington and its allies were forcing its hand after encircling the regime with nuclear weapons. (Anton Sokolin, NK News)
- North Korea has said it has adopted the "toughest" policy toward the United States for its national interests and security, state media reported on Sunday, less than a month before Donald Trump officially becomes United States president. (Ryan Chan, *Newsweek*)
- Ukrainian special forces have released several excerpts from a diary purportedly found on a North Korean soldier killed during front-line fighting in Russia's western Kursk region, with entries shedding light on the ideology and tactics of the recent arrivals from Pyongyang. (David Brennan, *ABC News*)
- A North Korean passenger plane flew to Shanghai for the first time in five years on Sunday, aviation data shows. The Tu-204-300 operated by DPRK flag carrier Air Koryo touched down at Shanghai Pudong International Airport at around 10:10 p.m. (Anton Sokolin, *NK News*)
- Some North Korean soldiers are taking their own lives rather than surrender to Ukrainian forces in fighting in Russia's Kursk region, said a senior U.S. official, while Ukraine reported

instances of the North Korean military "executing" its own troops to prevent their capture. (Taejun Kang, *Radio Free Asia*)

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said he will implement the "toughest" anti-U.S. policy, less than a month before Donald Trump takes office as U.S. president. Trump's return to the White House raises prospects for high-profile diplomacy with North Korea. (Hyung-Jin Kim, *The Independent*)
- Kim Jong Un may have endorsed the "most hardline anti-U.S." policy at the latest party meeting, but his neglect of major policy announcements suggests he's still waiting for the dust to settle as Trump's return, political chaos in South Korea and the war in Ukraine amplify geopolitical uncertainty. (Shreyas Reddy, *NK News*)

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Original newsletter archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250725175337/https://mailchi.mp/hrnk.org/hrnk-news-items-how-jimmy-carter-helped-prevent-a-devastating-war-with-north-korea-north-korea-gets-tough-on-us-in-warning-to-trump?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

RESEARCH NOTES

STATEMENT ON ACCURACY

This compilation of daily news digests is designed to faithfully reproduce the content of the original email newsletters. We have sparingly made minor corrections for accuracy and clarity, leaving in place most of the original editorial choices. The original versions remain accessible through the urls listed under each daily digest.

ONLINE ACCESS AND URL ARCHIVAL

We have utilized the Wayback Machine (http://web.archive.org/), the web page archival service of the Internet Archive, to ensure long-term preservation and accessibility to the original newsletters as well as to most of the news linked within them. Through the Wayback Machine, users of this report can view the original newsletters, verify information, and conduct further research.

ADDITIONAL OUTSIDE RESOURCES

For researchers interested in other publications that offer annual summaries of events in North Korea, the *Asian Survey* journal may be of interest to them. This report was prepared independently from the *Asian Survey*.

GUIDE TO MORE HRNK RESOURCES

HRNK's flagship long-form reports form the foundation of its research and advocacy. They cover political prison camps, satellite imagery analysis, forced labor, broader human rights abuses, the structure of North Korea's state and society, and the implications for the international community. These publications, widely cited by policymakers, scholars, and international bodies, are available on HRNK's website under the Documentation section: https://www.hrnk.org/documentation/.

HRNK's full collection of reports is also freely available at the Internet Archive's Open Library:
https://openlibrary.org/publishers/Committee_for_Human_Rights_in_North_Korea,
and indexed in Wikidata: https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q136028079.

For shorter, accessible commentary, HRNK publishes HRNK Insider:
https://www.hrnkinsider.org/, a blog featuring reflections on policy debates, updates on human rights issues, and submissions to bodies such as the United Nations and the U.S. Congress.

HRNK also runs *North Korea's Hidden Gulags*: https://www.nkhiddengulag.org/, a platform developed for its Young Professionals Writing Program. It features essays by interns that combine academic research with humanitarian perspectives on North Korea's prison camp system and related abuses.

In addition, U.S Congressional testimony by HRNK experts is available in Wikisource: https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Category:Works_by_the_Committee_for_Human_Rights_in_North_Korea and indexed in Wikidata: https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q136168156.

Together, these resources provide both in-depth research and accessible insights, reflecting HRNK's commitment to engaging a wide audience on North Korean human rights.

THE COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN
RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA