2021 Year in Review

# NORTH KOREA AND THE WORLD

## A YEAR IN HEADLINES

**EDITED BY**
ALBERT BUIXADÉ FARRÉ
MARINA DECORDRE

HRNK
THE COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA

**Committee for Human Rights in North Korea**

## 2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

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**Edited by**
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**Marina DeCordre**

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NORTH KOREA AND THE WORLD:
A Year in Headlines

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**2021 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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*Board of Directors as of December, 2021
(https://web.archive.org/web/20211209062548/https://www.hrnk.org/about/board-of-directors.php)

# 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 Marina DeCordre, covering the calendar year 2021.

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 2021. Marina DeCordre and Albert Buixadé Farré contributed towards compiling the daily news digests and Marina DeCordre crafted its summary sections, helping to shape 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 four-page chronological account, organized by topic, providing a more detailed overview of the events of 2021.
- Part III: The complete collection of daily news digests, spanning over one thousand 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 Economy Watch
- The New York Times
- PIIE: Peterson Institute for International Economics
- UPI: United Press International
- The Washington Post
- HRNK Insider
- Nikkei Asia
- The Diplomat

# PART I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2021, North Korea faced worsening hardship as COVID-19 border closures, severe weather, and chronic agricultural weakness produced acute food shortages. Imports of food, fertilizer, and fuel were sharply limited, and the United Nations reported that more than 40 percent of the population was undernourished. Flooding from the previous year had reduced harvests, and Kim Jong-un acknowledged a "tense food situation" at a June party meeting. His slimmer appearance fueled speculation, and by midyear reports of malnutrition were widespread. By year's end, Kim declared 2022 the "Year of Rural Development," emphasizing self-reliance and rural industry.

Despite domestic strains, Pyongyang pressed ahead with military development. Ballistic missile testing resumed in March, the first under the Biden administration, followed by a new long-range cruise missile in September and a submarine-launched ballistic missile in October. Rail-mobile launchers and short-range systems were also tested, consistent with Kim's January pledge to expand nuclear capabilities. No nuclear detonations were reported in 2021.

Politically, the Biden administration concluded its policy review, pledging a "calibrated, practical approach" and seeking dialogue. North Korea dismissed overtures, insisting on sanctions relief first. Inter-Korean ties followed a familiar pattern of fleeting progress and quick setbacks: Kim called for improved relations in January, hotlines were restored in July but cut again after U.S.–South Korean exercises in August, and though they reopened briefly in October, Pyongyang rejected Seoul's proposal for a formal end-of-war declaration as "premature." Kim Yo-jong alternated between condemnations and hints of conditional openness, reinforcing the regime's tactical stance.

Internationally, Russia and China pressed at the UN for sanctions relief, including a joint draft resolution in October, but the United States and allies blocked these efforts. Chinese aid shipments reportedly resumed in modest amounts, while Pyongyang emphasized solidarity with Beijing and Moscow. The UN Human Rights Council and General Assembly extended mandates on North Korea's rights record, while NGOs explored new resettlement pathways for defectors, such as a Canadian private sponsorship program announced in October.

Overall, 2021 in North Korea was marked by deepening food insecurity, continued military advances, and stalled diplomacy. The regime tightened internal control, rejected engagement without sanctions relief, and leaned on limited support from China and Russia. The year highlighted Pyongyang's strategy of balancing severe domestic crises with demonstrations of military strength, while refusing meaningful engagement. The result was a worsening food situation and entrenched stalemate in international diplomacy..

# PART II. CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

## A. IN NORTH KOREA

### HUMAN RIGHTS

- **January 4, 2021, Vaccine Application**: North Korea submitted an application to secure coronavirus vaccines through a global program that assisted low-income countries.
- **April 18, 2021, U.S. Hearing on Rights**: During an online hearing of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission in the U.S. Congress on South Korea's anti-leaflet law and North Korea's human rights record, witness Gordon Chang stated in a media interview, "Korea's democracy was being attacked by its own president."
- **October 27, 2021, Refugee Sponsorship in Canada**: A Toronto-based human rights organization announced a private sponsorship program to resettle North Korean refugees in Canada, making it the third country after South Korea and the United States to accept them.
- **November 5, 2021, UN Report on Undernourishment**: A United Nations report found that more than four in ten North Koreans were suffering from undernourishment, as the country continued to face chronic food shortages.

### MILITARY ACTIVITY

- **March 25, 2021, Ballistic Missile Launch**: North Korea launched two ballistic missiles into the Sea of Japan, the first missile test of the Biden administration.
- **April 11, 2021, Submarine Readiness**: South Korean and U.S. intelligence authorities assessed that North Korea was prepared to roll out a new 3,000-ton submarine. The assessment followed reports from a U.S. think tank that the North had repositioned a submersible missile test barge, possibly signaling an upcoming submarine-launched ballistic missile test.
- **September 11, 2021, Long-Range Cruise Missile Test**: North Korea tested a new long-range cruise missile. State media claimed it traveled 1,500 kilometers and described it as a "strategic weapon" with potential nuclear capability.

### ECONOMICS

- **June 15, 2021, Food Shortages Acknowledged**: At a Central Committee Plenary Session, Kim Jong-un publicly acknowledged a "tense food situation" caused by floods and the pandemic, and ordered stronger efforts in agriculture and rural management.

- **November 6, 2021, Crackdown on Foreign Culture**: North Korea launched a major crackdown to root out foreign culture, primarily from South Korea, as well as "capitalist tendencies," including corruption.
- **December 27, 2021, Year of Rural Development**: Kim Jong-un declared 2022 the "Year of Rural Development," focusing on farming and regional industry, and reiterated the need for self-reliance amid sanctions and prolonged border closures.

## B. IN SOUTH KOREA

- **April 9, 2021, By-Election Defeat**: The ruling Democratic Minjoo Party suffered a resounding defeat in South Korean by-elections, following sexual misconduct scandals involving two of its prominent figures.
- **July 13, 2021, Response to UN Criticism**: The South Korean government gave an icy reception to a group of UN special rapporteurs who criticized its ban on sending anti-Pyongyang leaflets across the border.
- **September 21, 2021, COVID-19 Surge**: South Korea's daily coronavirus cases remained in the 2,000s for a fourth consecutive day, reaching the second-highest level since the start of the pandemic, driven by a spike in infections in the greater Seoul area.

## C. INTER-KOREAN RELATIONS

- **January 8, 2021, Call for Improved Ties**: North Korean leader Kim Jong-un vowed to work on inter-Korean relations to expand diplomatic engagement and hosted a rare party congress.
- **October 4, 2021, Hotline Reopened**: North Korea announced it would reactivate all communication lines with South Korea after urging Seoul to make "positive" efforts to restore ties. The decision came days after Kim Jong-un expressed an intention during a policy speech to reopen the hotlines in early October.
- **December 13, 2021, End-of-War Declaration Discussed**: South Korea, North Korea, China, and the United States agreed "in principle" to declare a formal end to the Korean War, nearly 70 years after the conflict ended in an armistice, according to South Korean President Moon Jae-in.[2]

[2] Although on December 13, 2021, South Korea, North Korea, the U.S., and China reportedly agreed "in principle" to a formal end-of-war declaration, progress stalled. By year's end, Seoul and Washington had drafted a joint declaration, but Pyongyang declined substantive participation. The agreement remained largely symbolic, lacking concrete commitments or sequencing mechanisms, and subsequent years saw continued military escalation and diplomatic impasse.

# D. INTERNATIONAL

## UN SECURITY COUNCIL & SANCTIONS

- **March 30, 2021, UNSC Meeting on Missile Launches**: Following North Korea's short-range ballistic missile tests, the UN Security Council held a closed-door meeting at the request of the United States and Japan. Although no official statement was issued, Russia and China pushed back against stronger action.
- **October 19, 2021, UNSC Consultations on SLBM**: The Security Council held emergency consultations after North Korea's submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) test. Western members condemned the launch as a violation of UN resolutions, while China and Russia called for "restraint on all sides."
- **October 25, 2021, Draft Resolution for Sanctions Relief**: Russia and China circulated a draft resolution calling for partial sanctions relief and removal of the cap on fuel imports. The United States, United Kingdom, and France opposed the measure, and the draft was not adopted.

## UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- **March 23, 2021, UNHRC Resolution**: The UN Human Rights Council adopted a consensus resolution to extend accountability efforts for human rights violations in North Korea.
- **July 11, 2021, HRNK Panel on UN Role**: The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea held an online panel titled "Human Rights in the Democratic Republic of Korea: The Role of the United Nations." Panelists urged the UN to take more active measures to improve the human rights situation of North Koreans.
- **December 16, 2021, Joint Ambassador Statement**: The ambassadors of the United States, Estonia, France, Ireland, Japan, Norway, and the United Kingdom issued a joint statement on the human rights situation in North Korea.

## CHINA

- **July 1, 2021, Congratulatory Message to Xi**: North Korean leader Kim Jong-un sent greetings to Chinese leader Xi Jinping for the 100th anniversary of the founding of China's Communist Party, vowing to stand together with Beijing amid a "complicated international situation."
- **August 19, 2021, Trade Increase**: North Korea's imports from China rose to nearly $17 million in July, with exports more than doubling from the previous month, according to newly released Chinese customs data.
- **October 2, 2021, Support for China**: Kim Jong-un pledged support for China's fight against "hostile forces' frantic anti-China confrontational moves" in a message to Xi

Jinping marking the 72nd anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

## RUSSIA

- **April 12, 2021, Message to Putin**: Kim Jong-un sent a congratulatory message to Vladimir Putin on the 60th anniversary of Yuri Gagarin's space flight.
- **July 22, 2021, Draft Resolution and Gratitude**: Russia and China proposed a draft UN resolution to lift some sanctions and ease pressure on North Korea's economy. The United States and its allies opposed the measure. North Korea's Foreign Ministry expressed gratitude to Moscow for opposing what it called the "U.S. hostile policy."

## UNITED STATES

- **January 5, 2021, Party Congress and U.S. Declared Enemy**: At the 8th Workers' Party Congress in Pyongyang, Kim Jong-un declared the United States North Korea's "biggest enemy" and vowed to expand nuclear weapons.
- **January 8, 2021, Bureau for Cyber Threats**: U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo approved the creation of a bureau to counter cybersecurity threats from North Korea and other countries.
- **April 11, 2021, Provocations Toward Biden**: Kim Jong-un and his family greeted the Biden administration with the standard playbook of military provocations and verbal threats, while President Biden and his advisers reviewed U.S. strategy toward Pyongyang and pointed toward a "new approach."
- **May 13, 2021, U.S. Policy on Nuclear Weapons and Rights**: A senior U.S. official stated that the United States would continue to address the North Korean nuclear issue while also pressing for improved human rights conditions, including freedom of religion.

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# I. PART III. DAILY PRESS

## 1. JANUARY

### Friday, January 1, 2021

### Ships openly admit to buying illegal fishing permits from N. Korea; UNC says 86 messages delivered to N. Korea through Panmunjom

**In North Korea:**
Experts doubt that North Korea's grueling 80-day work marathon did much good (*NK News*, 12/31/2020)
Kim's AK-47: Meet North Korea's Killer Type 88 Rifle (*The National Interest*, 12/31/2020)
N. Korea touts achievements of 80-day campaign ahead of party congress (*Yonhap*, 01/01/2021)
N. Korea's Kim marks new year with letter, visit to rulers' tomb (*Reuters*, 12/31/2020)
N.K. leader sends handwritten New Year greetings to people (*Yonhap*, 01/01/2021)
No social distancing? North Koreans ring in the New Year with Pyongyang concert (*NK News*, 12/31/2020)
North Korea Has Massive (Junk) Submarine Fleet (*The National Interest*, 12/31/2020)
North Korea ushers in New Year with public performance, fireworks (*Korea Times*, 01/01/2021)
North Korean Forestlands Have Rebounded in Recent Years (*38 North*, 12/31/2020)
North Korea's Kim thanks people in rare New Year's cards (*AP News*, 01/01/2021)
Suspected Ganggye Chemical Factory leak pollutes nearby Changja River (*Daily NK*, 01/01/2021)
Why Kim Jong Un ditched the classic New Years speech and penned a tender letter (*NK News*, 01/01/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship**:
UNC says 86 messages delivered to N. Korea through Panmunjom communication line (*Yonhap*, 01/01/2021)

**International**:
Inside North Korea's Strategy to Defeat a U.S. Invasion (*The National Interest*, 12/31/2020)
Locals Suffer as North Korea Ramps up Security on Chinese Border Ahead of Party Congress (RFA, 12/31/2020)
Ships openly admit to buying illegal fishing permits from North Korea (*NK News*, 01/01/2021)
The U.S. Navy Sent 4 Killer Battleships to Fight North Korea (*The National Interest*, 12/31/2020)
U.S., South Korea turning attention to joint exercises, reports say (*UPI*, 12/31/2020)

**In North Korea**:

- After everyday North Koreans worked nearly three months straight in a government-mandated labor marathon, DPRK state media celebrated the grind by calling it a “shining victory.” (Won-Gi Jung, NK News)
- North Korea is known to be good at copying and changing other weapons. Here is what it did to the famous AK. (Kyle Mizokami, *The National Interest*)
- North Korea has successfully completed its "80-day campaign" that was launched by leader Kim Jong-un, state media reported Friday, touting, in particular, the country's efforts to build an "iron wall" against the global coronavirus pandemic. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un marked the new year with a letter to the country’s citizens and a visit the tomb of his father and grandfather, state media reported, but gave no immediate sign he would give a speech as he has in past years. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un extended New Year's greetings in a short letter to the people Friday, apparently skipping his trademark address on the first day of the year ahead of a rare party congress expected to take place soon. (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)
- While countries around the world canceled their New Years celebrations because of COVID-19, thousands of North Koreans donned face masks and braved the cold for a midnight New Year’s Eve concert and fireworks show in downtown Pyongyang. (Colin Zwirko, NK News)
- North Korea has a lot of submarines. More importantly, it is also working on nuclear-missile submarines as well. (Kyle Mizokami, *The National Interest*)
- North Korea, plagued by the COVID-19 pandemic, damage from typhoons and floods, as well as international sanctions throughout last year, began the New Year with a large-scale, crowded congratulatory event, Friday, despite its tough coronavirus restrictions. (Kang Seung-woo, *Korea Times*)
- Since Kim Jong Un came to power, he has reinvigorated reforestation efforts. While examining the change of land use/cover for twenty years using remote sensing data, this study found that the forest area in North Korea has been rebounding since 2015. Commercial satellite imagery has confirmed that reforestation of barren hillside slopes is evident in some areas, especially around Pyongyang and in South Pyongan Province. However, there are also signs of continued deforestation in areas around remote villages, calling into question the sustainability of reforestation efforts without addressing the use of wood as low-cost household fuel. (Bruce Songhak Chung, 38 North)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un thanked the public for their trust and support “in the difficult times” and wished them happiness and good health in his first New Year’s Day cards sent to his people. (Hyung-Jin Kim, AP News)
- A source recently told *Daily* NK that toxic substances leaked from Ganggye Chemical Factory (Factory 361) in Ganggye, Chagang Province, have likely polluted the Changja River, which flows from Yongnim through Manpo to Wiwon. North Korean authorities have reportedly launched an investigation into the matter. (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)
- The first day of the year in North Korea usually starts with Kim Jong Un delivering his iconic new year’s address on state television. But in 2021, Kim strayed from the usual path and replaced the remarks with a short hand-written letter addressed to his people, humbly vowing to “always remain faithful” to them. (Jeongmin Kim, NK News)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The United Nations Command (UNC) said Friday it has delivered a total of 86 messages to North Korea through a direct telephone line at the truce village of Panmunjom last year. (*Yonhap*)

**International**:

- North Korea has organized tens of thousands of special forces soldiers trained to infiltrate behind allied lines. This means the U.S. Army and South Korean soldiers will likely have to fight in two directions. (Robert Beckhusen, *The National Interest*)
- Authorities in North Korea are further tightening security on the Sino-Korean border ahead of a ruling party gathering in January, the latest of a series of increasingly harsh border strictures made in 2020 which the government claims are to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, sources in the country told RFA. (Myungchul Lee, Leejin Jun, Eugene Whong, RFA)
- Under rare and mysterious circumstances, a ship flying the South Korean flag was spotted trying to enter North Korean waters in late 2020, according to exclusive government photos and documents obtained by *NK Pro*. The vessel, along with several other Chinese-flagged ships, openly admitted to being involved in potential sanctions-violating activities. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- The Iowas will not, of course, participate in any future conflict on the Korean Peninsula. However, in the event of conflict USN surface ships will undoubtedly contribute significantly to the conflict by means of land attack cruise missiles. (Robert Farley, *The National Interest*)
- The United States and South Korea discussed plans for potential military exercises, but the two sides are concerned about the impact of drills on North Korea, according to reports. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)

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Prepared by Timothy Goo, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:

https://web.archive.org/web/20250923022500/https://mailchi.mp/66b3ea905162/hrnk-news-itemsships-openly-admit-to-buying-illegal-fishing-permits-from-n-koreaunc-says-86-messages-delivered-to-n-korea-through-panmunjom

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## Monday, January 2, 2021

# "The Biden administration mustn't surrender to North Korea"; North Korea may offer olive branch to US

**Top News:**

**"The Biden administration mustn't surrender to North Korea" (RFA, 12/29/2020)

**American congress members, human rights groups, and other continue to send letters supporting and opposing the law preventing the spread of propaganda flyers to North Korea (VOA, 1/2/2021)

**In North Korea**:
2021 Won't Be Any Better for North Korea (*The National Interest*, 1/1/2021)
Kim Jong Un thanks North Koreans for their support 'in difficult times' in his first New Year's cards to the public (*The Hill*, 1/1/2021)
North Korea's Kim Jong Un cites "difficult times" in first New Year's Day cards sent to his people (CBS, 1/1/2021)

**International:**
North Korea may offer olive branch to US (*The Korea Times*, 1/2/2021)

**Top News:**

- On the 28th, Abraham Cooper, vice president of the Jewish human rights organization, the Simon Wiesenthal Center, and Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), recommended that there should be no "submission" in the incoming Biden administration's North Korea policy options. (Ji Jung-Eun, RFA)
- Letters are being sent to U.S. congressmen, experts, and others in efforts to either inform them about the unfairness of the South Korean law banning the spread of propaganda flyers or to explain the validity behind it. Former North Korean defector Representative Tae Young-Ho of the South Korean National Assembly and a group of South Korean voters in the U.S. are coming forward against the law. (Kim Young-Gyo, VOA)

**In North Korea:**

- If you aren't a billionaire on par with Jeff Bezos or Bill Gates, the year 2020 was probably one of the worst on record. But for North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, 2020 was a living hell. True, he remains untouchable politically, didn't contract the coronavirus himself (as far as we know), and exported enough coal despite UN sanctions to survive the poorest economic year since the 1990s. But as Pyongyang prepares for its first Workers' Party Congress in five years, Kim's prospects for 2021 don't look any rosier than they did at the beginning of 2020. (Daniel R. DePetris, *The National Interest*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un sent his first New Year's Day cards to citizens Friday, thanking them for their support "in the difficult times." (Celine Castronuovo, *The Hill*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un thanked the public for their trust and support "in the difficult times" and wished them happiness and good health in his first New Year's Day cards sent to his people. Kim usually gives a televised speech on Jan. 1, but he is widely expected to skip it this year since he will address the country's first ruling party congress in five years sometime in early January. (CBS)

International:

- North Korea wants to forge a good relationship with the United States, according to a Wall Street Journal report, Thursday (local time), raising speculation that Pyongyang may return to nuclear talks with Washington. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*

RFA Source

**“The Biden administration mustn’t surrender to North Korea”**
Washington-Ji Jung-Eun jij@rfa.org
2020-12-29

Anchor: Some U.S. experts point to North Korea as a major foreign policy issue for the next Biden administration, stressing that it should not surrender to North Korea. This is Ji Jung-Eun reporting.

On the 28th, Abraham Cooper, vice president of the Jewish human rights organization, the Simon Wiesenthal Center, and Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), recommended that there should be no "submission" in the incoming Biden administration's North Korea policy options.

They told Newsweek, a U.S. weekly magazine, "If the U.S. makes a peace pact with North Korea, which has nuclear weapons, and normalizes relations with them, it will set a precedent for other dictators."

This also says that if other dictators treat their people cruelly and develop weapons of mass destruction, it will set the precedent that the U.S. and the world will overlook it.

Cooper and Executive Director Scarlatoiu also stressed the importance of the Biden administration’s sanctions against North Korea.

They said that the international system established after World War II has prevented international disasters since then despite various flaws. "If international sanctions fail, North Korea could deny human rights issues, leading to unconditional surrender to the regime that threatens world peace and therefore resulting in disaster,” they predicted.

In addition, they also stressed that peace cannot be achieved on the Korean Peninsula without the voice and truth of North Koreans who are victims of crimes against humanity.

They added that other civil society groups that have been tracking the Kim Jong Un regime's crimes against humanity and their human rights abuses are also important for peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Meanwhile, the Washington Post (WP), a leading U.S. daily, said that compared to past U.S. Presidents, the foreign policy options facing the Biden administration are the most complex and difficult, mentioning North Korea policy as an example.

In particular, they pointed out that Biden’s diplomatic and security staff will need to prepare an answer to the question "North Korea has no interest in denuclearization, but how can the U.S. achieve that goal? Or should the U.S. pursue a lower level than complete denuclearization?"

In addition, though they did not specifically mention North Korea, they also demanded an alternative to the question "How do you intend to inform opposing countries that attacks from outside, such as cyberattacks, will no longer be tolerated?"

They also added that questions like "How is the U.S. going to integrate their long-term strategic interests and the issues of human rights advocacy together?", "What is the best way to hold allies and adversaries accountable for human rights violations?", and so forth are the main questions the staff will need to answer.

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Translated by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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VOA Source

**American congress members, human rights groups, and other continue to send letters supporting and opposing the law preventing the spread of propaganda flyers to North Korea**
Reporter Kim Young-Gyo
2021.1.2 2:00 AM

Letters are being sent to U.S. congressmen, experts, and others in efforts to either inform them about the unfairness of the South Korean law banning the spread of propaganda flyers or to explain the validity behind it. Former North Korean defector Representative Tae Young-Ho of the South Korean National Assembly and a group of South Korean voters in the U.S. are coming forward against the law. This is Kim Young-Gyo reporting.

Representative Tae Young-Ho of the Korean National Assembly, a former North Korean official in the U.K., reportedly sent a letter in English to U.S. congressmen, Representative Andy Kim, and Korean-American representative-elects Young Kim and Marilyn Strickland on the 29th to inform them of the injustice behind South Korea's law illegalizing the spread of propaganda flyers.

In the letter, Rep. Tae Young-Ho said there are three problems with the new law: "First, the brutal isolation of North Koreans imposed by the dictatorship in the North can become intensified. Second, this law suppresses freedom of expression, a basic right guaranteed by the South Korean constitution. And third, it can strengthen the Kim Jong-un regime's position to make anti-democratic demands."

Representative Tae Young-Ho claimed at an earlier foreign press conference that the South Korean government chose to hold its citizens responsible for sending leaflets to North Korea instead of holding North Korea responsible for the bombing of the inter-Korean joint liaison office this past June.

[Recording: Rep. Tae Young-Ho] "In the end, it is being criticized as the 'Kim Yo-jong Order Act,' and the 'Please Kim Jong-un Law.' In the end, all the channels of information that flow into North Korea and the room for interpretation to block off goods from the source have become very wide and ambiguous."

In addition to the American, Japanese, German, French, and British foreign embassies in South Korea, Rep. Tae Young-Ho's letter has been sent to human rights groups such as the Human Rights Watch and the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) in Washington. Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the HRNK, told VOA that although he has not yet received a letter from Rep. Tae Young-Ho, it is a good opportunity to prove the importance of human rights.

[Recording: Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu] "I think this is an opportunity to prove that human rights matters. And know that there is desperation on the part of the South Korean government, and organizations working for the South Korean government here in Washington DC, to prevent the hearing of the Lantos Commission, the hearing that Congressman Smith has been speaking about. I think that the most important thing is to make sure that this hearing happens."

Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu told the South Korean government and organizations working for the South Korean government in Washington are becoming desperate to prevent the U.S. Congress's bipartisan organization, the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, from holding hearings on the law preventing the spread of propaganda flyers to North Korea, and that opening this hearing is the most important thing.

On the other hand, the Korean American Public Action Committee (KAPAC), a Korean-American voter organization in the United States, is sending letters to congressmen and others with the aim of immediately informing them of the law preventing the spread of propaganda flyers to North Korea.

This organization claims that the propaganda leaflets create problems that cause other provocations from North Korea, possibly endangering U.S. troops and their families, residents in the metropolitan area in addition to South Koreans that live near the border, which is beyond the scope of freedom of expression.

In addition, they explained that the law is an inevitable measure for peace in the special reality of the divided Korean Peninsula.

The organization's letters are being sent to the State Department and major think tanks specializing on the Korean Peninsula as well as to members of the Congress.

This is Kim Young-Gyo reporting from VOA News.

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Translated by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Kathryn Wernke, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250727153842/https://mailchi.mp/cf8f57f5a019/hrnk-news-itemsthe-biden-administration-mustnt-surrender-to-north-korea-north-korea-may-offer-olive-branch-to-us?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, January 3, 2021**

## All eyes on party meeting as North's Kim pens New Year's letter; S. Koreans put alliance with US before inter-Korean relations

**In North Korea:**
All eyes on party meeting as North's Kim pens New Year's letter (*Korea Herald*, 01/03/2021)
Kim ditches trademark New Year's address in favor of handwritten letter (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/03/2021)
Kim Jong Un sends brief handwritten letter to people (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 01/02/2021)
Pyongyang's annus horribilis (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/03/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Defense chief inspects defense posture in new year (*Yonhap*, 01/02/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
S. Koreans put alliance with US before inter-Korean relations (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 01/02/2021)

**International**:
Pompeo touts success on North Korea, but a senior Russian official is skeptical (*NK News*, 01/03/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Speculation is mounting over North Korea's key party congress opening early this week, following leader Kim Jong-un writing the public a rare New Year's letter carried by state media on Friday. (Choi Si-young, *Korea Herald*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un marked the New Year with a brief letter to his people, apparently skipping his trademark address as a major political event in Pyongyang nears. (Lee Sung-eun, You Jee-hye, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un sent a brief six-paragraph handwritten letter (picture) to its people on Friday instead of his usual New Year's Day speech on television, for the first time he took power in 2011. Experts say it is a demonstration that the North Korean regime does not have tangible results to show this year amid the COVID-19 pandemic and economic difficulties. Chairman Kim is expected to send a detailed message about

its nuclear program to South Korea and the U.S. at the 8th Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea set to be convened around Jan. 4. (Oh-Hyuk Kwon, *Dong-A Ilbo*)

- The year 2021 is crucial for North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. It marks the 10th year since his father and predecessor Kim Jong-il died — or a decade since Kim Jong-un rose to power. Pyongyang has a long history of celebrating anniversaries boisterously when the final numbers end in five or zero. The first major event of the New Year will be the eighth Congress of the ruling Workers' Party set for early January. (Lee Young-jong, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**In South Korea:**

- Defense Minister Suh Wook inspected the defense posture in the new year on Saturday aboard South Korea's first Aegis-equipped destroyer, Sejong the Great, which was in operation in the East Sea. The minister visited the combat command center of the warship to inspect its capacity to detect and track missiles from North Korea, according to the Ministry of National Defense. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship**:

- South Korean citizens pointed out the strengthening of the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance as the no. 1 issue for the government to deal with, according to a public poll commissioned by the Dong-A Ilbo and executed by Research & Research at the start of the year 2021. Asked what the most urgent diplomatic issue is under the Moon administration, 50.2 percent of respondents mentioned a stronger alliance with the U.S. while 17.5 percent chose the restoration of the inter-Korean relations. (*Dong-A Ilbo*)

**International**:

- Outgoing U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo touted North Korea policy achievements over a series of Tweets on Saturday, but a senior Russian foreign ministry official later voiced public skepticism. Over a series of 13 North Korea-related tweets posted on Saturday morning U.S. time, Pompeo trumpeted a series of achievements he claimed Washington scored through its "Maximum Pressure" policy, implemented shortly after Donald Trump's inauguration in 2017. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)

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Prepared by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250727154543/https://mailchi.mp/822ea642a50a/hrnk-news-items-all-eyes-on-party-meeting-as-norths-kim-pens-new-years-letter-s-koreans-put-alliance-with-us-before-inter-korean-relations?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Wednesday, January 4, 2021

# North Korea Requests Covid-19 Vaccines From Global Group; Minister says he hopes for positive message from N. Korea

**In North Korea**:

N. Korea likely to open rare party congress this week (*Yonhap*, 01/04/2021)
N.K. paper calls for ramped-up antivirus campaign ahead of party congress (*Yonhap*, 01/04/2021)
Ordinary people's distrust of financial institutions remains strong (*Daily NK*, 01/04/2021)

**In South Korea**:
FM Kang calls for early high-level exchanges with incoming Biden gov't to cement alliance (*Yonhap*, 01/04/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Minister says he hopes for positive message from N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 01/04/2021)
South Korea expects 'positive' message from North any day now (*NK News*, 01/04/2021)
South Korea holds out hope for a major shout-out at North Korea's Party Congress (*NK News*, 01/04/2021)
Would North Korea's Air Force Commit Suicide Attacking the ROK? (*The National Interest*, 01/03/2021)

**International**:
North Korea asks for COVID-19 vaccines from international alliance: report (*The Hill*, 01/04/2021)
North Korea Requests Covid-19 Vaccines From Global Group (*The Wall Street Journal*, 01/04/2021)
North Korea could deploy more illegal workers abroad using new Russian e-visas (*NK News*, 01/04/2021)
Observing the "Immovable Object": An interview with A.B. Abrams on North Korea (*Daily NK*, 01/04/2021)

**In North Korea:**
- North Korea is expected to open a rare party congress this week, with its opening possibly taking place as early as Monday, observers said, amid expectations that the North is to unveil its economic scheme and policy directions on the United States and South Korea. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Monday urged a stepped-up nationwide antivirus campaign ahead of a highly anticipated party congress expected to take place this week. (*Yonhap*)
- Banks are some of the least trusted institutions in North Korea. Faith in them completely eroded after the currency reform of 2009. Because of this, wealthy individuals, or donju, try to keep their assets in foreign currencies such as dollars or yuan rather than North Korean won. This practice has naturally carried over to ordinary North Koreans as well. Some North Koreans even sarcastically say North Korean currency "is as worthless as grass." (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**
- Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha called Monday for early high-level exchanges with the incoming U.S. administration of Joe Biden to cement the bilateral alliance, and for

continued global cooperation in fostering lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Unification Minister Lee In-young said Monday he hopes to receive a positive message from North Korea on inter-Korean relations as Pyongyang is expected to hold a rare party congress this week. (*Yonhap*)
- Amid a months-long diplomatic dry spell, South Korea is expecting a "positive message of dialogue and cooperation" from North Korea in the near future, Seoul's unification minister said on Monday. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- Kim Jong Un has almost always delivered a New Years speech and included a message to South Korea. But this year, Jan. 1 came and went without any sign of the North Korean leader's famous annual address. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- South Korea's K30 Biho Self-Propelled Anti-Aircraft Gun (SPAAG) rose to international prominence when it beat out Russia's Pantsir system for a massive Indian contract. While this contract is being disputed with the Indian government, it is worth looking at the Biho as it was considered to be one of the best anti-air systems in the world prior to the Indian contract. (Charlie Gao, *The National Interest*)

**International**:

- North Korean officials have submitted an application to receive the coronavirus vaccine from an organization aiding vaccine distribution in low-income nations, the Wall Street Journal reported, citing a person familiar with the matter. (Zack Budryk, *The Hill*)
- North Korea has submitted an application to receive Covid-19 virus vaccines from the main global alliance helping lower-income countries with inoculations, according to a person familiar with the matter. (Timothy W. Martin, *The Wall Street Journal*)
- For years, thousands of North Koreans worked abroad in countries like Russia and China, funneling large chunks of their earnings back to the DPRK government. Now, more than a year after the U.N. banned overseas North Korean workers in an effort to squeeze the country's nuclear programs, experts are raising concerns about a new Russian e-visa that could be used to circumvent sanctions. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- Daily NK contributor Gabriela Bernal recently posed a number of questions to A.B. Abrams, the author of a new book about North Korea called "Immovable Object: North Korea's 70 Years at War with American Power." (Gabriela Bernal, *Daily NK*)

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Prepared by Hayley Noah, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250727154959/https://mailchi.mp/49dbba61d4c9/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-korea-requests-covid-19-vaccines-from-global-group-minister-says-he-hopes-for-positive-message-from-n-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

## Thursday, January 5, 2021

# N.K. requests vaccine from global group despite zero COVID claims; Packed parking lot suggests N. Korean Party Congress is underway

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea remains silent on rare party congress (*Yonhap*, 01/05/2021)
N. Korea requests vaccine from global group despite zero COVID claims (*Korea Herald*, 01/05/2021)
N. Korea shows no sign of 'major provocation' for now: USFK chief (*Yonhap*, 01/05/2021)
NK mum on party congress slated for early Jan (*Korea Herald*, 01/05/2021)
North Korea among nations to apply for COVID-19 vaccine (*UPI*, 01/04/2021)
North Korea begins efforts to get Covid-19 vaccines (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/05/2021)
North Korea tests 12,489 people for COVID-19, still claims zero confirmed cases(*NK News*, 01/04/2021)
Once lush with products, North Korean supermarkets are now barren and deceptive (*NK News*, 01/05/2021)
Packed parking lot suggests North Korean Party Congress is underway: Satellite (*NK News*, 01/05/2021)
Pyongyang Celebrates 2021, but a Parade Is Still to Come (*38 North*, 01/04/2021)
Social distancing measures delay New Year gifts in Gomdok (*Daily NK*, 01/05/2021)
Wealthy Pyongyangites eat trendy "stamina foods" to stave off COVID-19 (*Daily NK*, 01/05/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Ex-North Korea abductee dies from COVID-19 complications (*UPI*, 01/05/2021)
North Korean defector calls on Moon Jae-in to abolish anti-leaflet law (*UPI*, 01/05/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
South Korea Should Stop Acting as North Korea's Doormat (*The National Interest*, 01/04/2021)

**International**:
No Signs of N. Korean Tests Ahead of Biden Inauguration, US General Says(VOA, 01/05/2021)
North Korea provocations cannot be ruled out, U.S. forces chief says(UPI, 01/04/2021)
Top US commander wants Biden to shoot for more North Korea diplomacy in 2021 (*NK News*, 01/04/2021)
U.N. panel approved 30 cases of sanctions exemptions to aid programs in N.K. last year (*Yonhap*, 01/05/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea has not reported yet on whether it has launched a highly anticipated party congress set to be held early this month amid expectations that Pyongyang will unveil its policy line on the United States and South Korea at the upcoming event. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has sent an application to secure a coronavirus vaccine supply from a global group that helps low-income countries with inoculations, the Wall Street Journal said Monday, citing sources familiar with the matter, adding it has reached out to several European embassies asking about vaccines. (Choi Si-young, *Korea Herald*)
- North Korea is not showing any signs of preparation to stage a major provocation at least for now, the chief of U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) said Monday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea remains silent about its much anticipated eighth party congress which it said would be held in early January. (Kim So-hyun, *Korea Herald*)
- North Korea was among a group of developing countries that requested shipments of COVID-19 vaccines, despite declaring itself free of the virus, the Wall Street Journal reported Monday. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- North Korea has filed an application to get Covid-19 vaccines from a global organization helping poor countries inoculate, according to a Wall Street Journal report on Monday. (Shim Kyu-Seok, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea claims it tested nearly 12,500 people for COVID-19 and still has not had a single confirmed case, according to new numbers reported to the World Health Organization (WHO). (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Supermarket shelves in Pyongyang are sparse and prices are sharply on the rise, sources told NK News — another sign of North Korea's struggles as it maintains a strict COVID-19 border lockdown. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- Satellite imagery suggests that North Korea kicked off its rare and highly anticipated Eighth Party Congress in downtown Pyongyang on Tuesday, according to NK Pro analysis. The political event is the highest form of political gathering under the ruling Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) and is only the second Party Congress to be held in the last 40 years. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- While there was no New Year's address by Kim Jong Un again this year, both commercial satellite imagery and North Korean media show that thousands of Pyongyang residents filled Kim Il Sung Square on New Year's Eve for a concert to ring in 2021. This is the second year in a row that Kim has skipped his annual New Year's speech—similar to the US State of the Union address—raising questions about whether this tradition may be coming to an end. Meanwhile, on the other side of the Taedong River, preparations have been stepped up for what is expected to be at least one or more parades in the coming days as part of the Eighth Party Congress proceedings. (Martyn Williams, *38 North*)
- To mark the New Year, North Korean authorities sent supplies to residents of Gomdok, South Hamgyong Province, where Gomdok Mining Cooperative Enterprise is located. Social distancing measures, however, are reportedly delaying distribution of the goods. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)
- In Pyongyang, eating "stamina foods" such as terrapin or duck was the trendy thing to do to mark the New Year. In fact, the number of *donju* (North Korea's wealthy entrepreneurial class) or cadres enjoying such dishes is reportedly on the rise as

authorities stress the importance of preventing infectious diseases like COVID-19. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- A South Korean fisherman who escaped North Korea after being kidnapped to the regime has died from COVID-19 complications, according to activists in Seoul and family members. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- A former North Korean diplomat in Seoul urged President Moon Jae-in to scrap a controversial law banning the launch of anti-Pyongyang leaflets at the border. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Although Kim's behavior reflects much of the same calculated unreasonableness of his father and grandfather, the younger Kim has implemented more economic reform and engaged in much more international diplomacy than they did. The ROK should test his continuing commitment to both, but only to a point. (Doug Bandow, *The National Interest*)

**International**:

- North Korea does not appear to be preparing a major provocation at the onset of the administration of President-elect Joe Biden, according to the top U.S. general in South Korea, amid concerns Pyongyang could soon conduct a missile or other weapons test. (William Gallo, VOA)
- North Korea's provocations are reduced, but uncertainty remains as the regime stays shut and withholds more information about COVID-19 in the country. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- A few months ago, North Korea wheeled out its largest-ever ballistic missile during a televised military parade meant to incite fear in state "enemies." The stream of military equipment that rolled through Kim Il Sung Square made headlines around the world, but a top U.S. military official says that tensions are still much lower than they were at the beginning of President Donald Trump's time in the White House. (David Volodzko, *NK News*)
- A U.N. Security Council panel approved sanctions exemptions on a total of 30 cases last year to aid agencies providing humanitarian assistance to North Korea, a recent report showed. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Timothy Goo, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250727155351/https://mailchi.mp/9ad5f607ce4e/hrnk-news-item snk-requests-vaccine-from-global-group-despite-zero-covid-claims-packed-parking-lot-suggests-n-korean-party-congress-is-underway?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Friday, January 6, 2021

## North Koreans using text slang like 'bye-bye' face gulag in bizarre new crackdown; Kim Jong-un admits N Korea economic plan failed

**Top News:**
North Koreans using text slang like 'bye-bye' face gulag in bizarre new crackdown (*Mirror*, 12/6/21)

**In North Korea:**
8th Korean Worker's Party Congress and the economy: Day 1 (*North Korea Economy Watch*, 12/6/21)
Kim concedes economic shortfalls as congress opens (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/6/21)
Kim Jong-un admits N Korea economic plan failed (*BBC*, 12/6/21)
Kim Jong Un admits economic failures in speech at party congress (*UPI*, 12/6/21)
Kim Jong-un concedes economic shortfalls as congress opens (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/6/21)
North Korea forms new research center focused on "hypersonic missiles" (*Daily NK*, 12/6/21)
N. Korea kicks off rare party congress with leader's opening address (*Yonhap*, 12/6/21)
N. Korea's Kim yet to make final decision on denuclearization: Pompeo (*Yonhap*, 12/6/21)
North Korea shines the spotlight on China during first day of Party Congress (*NK News*, 12/6/21)
North Korean ships remain idle, with only one possible shipment in late December (*NK Pro*, 12/6/21)
North Korea's USD-KRW exchange rate again falls to the KRW 6,000 (*Daily NK*, 12/6/21)
Only COVID-19 ended his search for his daughter: North Korea abductee dies at 78 (*NK News*, 12/6/21)
What's behind N. Korea's biggest political event (*AP*, 12/6/21)

**International:**
Pompeo admits Kim Jong-un never really made up his mind (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/6/21)
U.S. flies spy plane over peninsula amid N.K. party congress: aviation tracker (*Yonhap*, 12/6/21)
U.S. should not lose sight of progress made with N. Korea: DeTrani (*Yonhap*, 12/6/21)

**Top News:**

- North Koreans are facing the gulag for using slang words like 'bye-bye' and 'ty' after Kim Jong-un unleashed a bizarre new crackdown on 'perverted' language. The secretive state adopted the new measures in December, fearing that its teenage citizens were growing too comfortable with words popular in democratic South Korea. Greg Scarlatoiu, director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, said the Kim regime clearly felt threatened by South Korea's growing soft power. Stating, "This new law is part of efforts by the North Korean regime to block information from the outside world and South Korea in particular." (Michael Havis, William Walker, *Mirror*)

**In North Korea:**

- The speech contained relatively few specific and details, and we can probably expect more to come tomorrow. It seems to me that much of this, too, is a repetition of the

theme we've seen throughout the past year: blaming officials through the chain of command for economic failures. The measure of sending out inspection teams is also consistent with the trend of striving to strengthen government oversight of the economy and, not least, uncover previously hidden financial assets. (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, *North Korea Economy Watch*)

- Kim Jong-un admitted his regime fell "extremely" short of meeting its economic goals over the last five years at the opening of a rare ruling party congress Tuesday. (Shim Kyu-Seok, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un has admitted his five-year economic plan for the isolated country failed to meet its targets in "almost every sector". (Laura Bicker, BBC)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un kicked off a rare congress of the ruling Worker's Party with a speech that admitted failure to reach the country's five-year economic goals, state media reported Wednesday. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- North Korea convened the eighth Congress of its ruling Workers' Party on Tuesday with an address by Kim Jong-un, the leader admitting the regime fell "extremely" short in meeting its economic goals over the last five years. (Shim Kyu-Seok, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- As part of the country's efforts to develop cutting-edge weapons, North Korea has recently opened a new research center under the Academy of National Defense Science to study hypersonic missiles, Daily NK has learned. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea has opened its first party congress in nearly five years, state media said Wednesday, amid expectations it will unveil its policy directions on economic development and foreign affairs for the next few years. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has yet to make a decision on whether he will actually follow through on his commitment to denuclearize, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Kim Jong Un's rare Party Congress opening speech lacked any explicit direction on foreign relations, but state media still highlighted one country in particular on Tuesday: China. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean ships appear to be loitering and languishing at home ports amid the ongoing COVID-19-related shipping freeze, but at least one vessel was seen traversing the ocean after departing a Chinese port in late December. (Min Chao Choy, *NK Pro*)
- After increasing slightly in early to mid-December, the USD-KRW exchange rate has fallen again to the KRW 6,000 range, Daily NK has learned. (Jang Seul Ji, *Daily NK*)
- Yun Jong-su, a South Korean fisherman who was abducted by North Korea in the 1970s and dramatically escaped decades later, died of COVID-19 at a hospital in South Korea at 8:12 a.m. on Monday, *NK News* has confirmed. He was 78 years old. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korea has opened the first full congress of its ruling party in five years, with leader Kim Jong Un admitting his previous economic development plans have failed. The congress could be crucial, coming as it does amid what some experts see as the most fraught moment of Kim's nine-year rule. (Hyun Jin-Kim, AP)

**International:**

- U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo acknowledged in an interview Tuesday that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has "yet to make a decision" on whether to follow through on his commitment to denuclearize. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A U.S. reconnaissance plane flew over South Korea on Wednesday, an aviation tracker said, on an apparent mission to monitor North Korea as Pyongyang kicked off its rare party congress. (*Yonhap*)
- The incoming U.S. administration of Joe Biden should recognize the progress made with North Korea so far and reengage the North in denuclearization talks to build on such progress, a former U.S. nuclear negotiator said Tuesday. (Byuk Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Tristin Schultz, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250727155757/https://mailchi.mp/f8ef1f3c6bbb/north-koreans-using-text-slang-like-bye-bye-face-gulag-in-bizarre-new-crackdownkim-jong-un-admits-n-korea-economic-plan-failed?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Saturday, January 7, 2021

# Anti-leaflet Law Potentially Conflicts with U.S. North Korean Human Rights Act

**Top News:**

**Anti-leaflet law Potentially Conflicts with U.S. North Korean Human Rights Act (RFA, 12/31/20)
Kim Jong-un bans slang: North Korean teens face gulag for using 'perverted' text speak under bizarre new law which allows authorites to check phones (*Daily Mail*, 1/6/21)
** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**
In Rare Display Of Contrition, North Korean Leader Admits Failures (NPR, 1/6/21)
Kim says last five years 'worst of the worst' for North Korea (*Al Jazeera*, 1/6/21)
Kim Jong-un says North Korea's economic plan failed (*BBC News*, 1/7/21)
North Korea's Kim vows to boost military capabilities at rare party congress (*Reuters*, 1/7/21)
Kim vows to bolster North Korea's military at party meeting (AP *News*, 1/7/21)
North Korea Admits Failure, Mulls Future (VOA *News*, 1/6/21)
North Korea appears intent on receiving "international support" for a COVID-19 vaccine (*Daily NK*, 1/7/21)
North Korea appears to be jamming Unification Media Group radio broadcasts (*Daily NK*, 1/7/21)
FACTBOX-North Korea's economy struggles as sanctions, COVID-19 weigh (*Reuters*, 1/7/21)

North Korea's Kim Jong Un acknowledges 'painful lessons' as economy suffers(*Washington Post*, 1/6/21)
North Korea: Kim Jong-un says economic plan a near-total failure at rare political meeting (*The Guardian*, 1/6/21)
North Korea vows military buildup 2 weeks before Biden takes office (*Nikkei Asia*, 1/7/21)
(2nd LD) N.K. leader vows to boost defense capabilities at party congress (*Yonhap*, 1/7/21)
North Korea's Kim vows to boost nuclear-armed country's 'defense capabilities'(*The Japan Times*, 1/7/21)
N.K. leader vows to promote peace by strengthening defense (*Yonhap*, 1/7/21)
North Korea's 'no-mask' Party Congress raises questions about statistics (UPI, 1/7/21)
N. Korea's state broadcaster airs special program on rare party congress (*Yonhap*, 1/7/21)
On second day of congress, Kim talks defense (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 1/7/21)
Party Congress photos: Scenes from one of North Korea's rarest political events (*NK News*, 1/7/21)
Prisoners at the end of their terms in Chagang Province sent to farms in other provinces to work (*Daily NK*, 1/7/21)
What Is the Truth About COVID-19 in North Korea? (*The Diplomat*, 1/6/21)

**Top News:**

- On the 29th, the South Korean government announced the anti-leaflet law which stipulates that anyone who commits an act that violates the Inter-Korean Relations Act by launching leaflets and other items along the Military Demarcation Line will be subject to a maximum of three years in prison or about $27,000 in fines. (Ji Jung-eun, RFA)
- Greg Scarlatoiu, director of the Washington DC-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, said the Kim regime clearly felt threatened by South Korea's growing soft power. The phenomenon has been called 'Hallyu', or the Korean wave, and has seen South Korean music and drama carried across the globe. 'This new law is part of efforts by the North Korean regime to block information from the outside world and South Korea in particular,' he said. (Michael Havis, *Daily Mail*)

**In North Korea:**

- Mistakes were made. That's according to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, who in an address to a ruling party meeting made a frank admission — that the country's policies in the past five years had ended in abject failure. (Anthony Kuhn, NPR)
- North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un admitted the country's economic development plan had fallen short in "almost all areas" as he opened a rare congress of the ruling Workers' Party, state media reported on Wednesday. (*Al Jazeera*)
- North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un has admitted his five-year economic plan for the isolated country failed to meet its targets in "almost every sector." (*BBC News*)
- North Korea leader Kim Jong Un vowed to strengthen the country's military defenses in a speech at a major ruling party meeting that provides insights into his priorities amid growing economic challenges and a U.S. presidential transition. (Hyung-Jin Kim, AP)
- North Korea has opened a major, multi-day political gathering in the capital, Pyongyang, with leader Kim Jong Un using the forum to acknowledge recent economic failures. (William Gallo, *VOA News*)

- In North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's first order to the Ministry of Public Health this year, he called on the ministry to "put everything into the war against the virus," a source in the country told Daily NK yesterday. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean authorities appear to be jamming radio broadcasts produced by a South Korean non-profit human rights organization as part of efforts to prevent North Koreans from listening to foreign radio programs. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- Already suffering under stringent U.S. and U.N. sanctions, North Korea's economy faced a double whammy of severe floods and the coronavirus pandemic this year, which prompted Pyongyang to shut its border with China and ditch outside aid. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un opened a rare ruling party Congress this week with a frank admission that his country's economy had "immensely underachieved" in the past five years and said he had learned "painful lessons" from the experience, state media reported Wednesday. (Simon Denyer, Min Joo Kim, *The Washington Post*)
- North Korea's ruler, Kim Jong-un, has admitted that his economic policies have largely failed, and vowed to avoid a repeat of the "painful lessons" of the past at a rare meeting of the country's ruling party. (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has vowed to strengthen his country's military power, putting U.S. President-elect Joe Biden on notice two weeks before his inauguration. (Kim Jaewon, *Nikkei Asia*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un told the second day of a rare ruling party congress that he wants to bolster the nuclear-armed country's "defense capabilities," state-run media said Thursday, just two weeks before U.S. President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration. (Jesse Johnson, *The Japan Times*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has vowed to strengthen his country's military capabilities to protect its people at a rare party congress, state media said Thursday, amid an impasse in its nuclear negotiations with the United States. (Choi Soo-Hyang, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has vowed to strengthen the country's national defense to protect a "peaceful environment" for the people, state media reported Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea could be misreporting the number of COVID-19 tests being conducted nationwide to the World Health Organization, according to a South Korean media report. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- North Korea's state broadcaster aired a special program on Thursday featuring a rare party congress under way in Pyongyang in an apparent bid to boost the mood for the country's largest political event that will determine its policy direction for major issues. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un on Wednesday pledged to upgrade the regime's defense capabilities to preserve a "peaceful environment," state media reported, hinting at continued development of the country's missile arsenal. (Shim Kyu-Seok, Korea JoongAng Daily)
- Kim Jong Un rolled onto the scene at North Korea's April 25 House of Culture and emerged from an imported, black luxury car clutching what appears to be a thick, leather-bound book. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

- North Korea has been sending prisoners released from correctional labor camps in Chagang Province after June of last year to agricultural villages outside the province, a practice the authorities plan to extend into the future, Daily NK has learned. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea, one of the most isolated countries in the world, continues to insist that it has successfully grappled with the COVID-19 pandemic, with no coronavirus cases confirmed since the beginning of the pandemic. (Mitch Shin, *The Diplomat*)

I**n South Korea:**

- Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha has called for steadfast international support for South Korea's efforts to foster lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula, her office said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- President Moon Jae-in stressed the importance of national unity in 2021, saying the COVID-19 crisis has reminded the people that they are "connected" to one another. (*Yonhap*)

**International**:

- In recollecting his four years as the first Korea-born ambassador of Australia to Korea, James Choi's mind inevitably turns to the young people of Korea — whose shoes he was once in. (Yoo Jee Hye, Esther Chung, Korea JoongAng Daily)
- U.S. President-elect Joe Biden is building out his foreign policy team, nominating several to key positions that will deal with North Korea issues in the coming months or years. (David Volodzko, *NK News*)
- A U.S. Navy spy plane flew over South Korea a day after North Korea's Eighth Party Congress, according to an online aviation tracker. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

Source:
https://www.rfa.org/korean/in_focus/human_rights_defector/leafletban-12312020142428.html

Anti-leaflet law Potentially Conflicts with U.S. North Korean Human Rights Act
Washington Ji Jung-en jij@rfa.org
2020-12-31

Anchor: It has been argued that there is conflict between the content of South Korea's "anti-leaflet law" and the U.S. North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act. It is assessed that the United States will point out issues related to the anti-leaflet law in accordance with international law, and not the contents of their U.S. national law. This is Ji Jung-eun reporting.

On the 29th, the South Korean government announced the anti-leaflet law which stipulates that anyone who commits an act that violates the Inter-Korean Relations Act by launching leaflets and other items along the Military Demarcation Line will be subject to a maximum of three years in prison or about $27,000 in fines.

"Leaflets and other items" referred to in the bill include auxiliary memory units, and auxiliary memory units refer to USB sticks, portable data storage devices, DVDs, etc.

According to the U.S. North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act of 2017, the U.S. government identifies USBs, portable data storage devices, SD cards, and other electronic devices as ways to facilitate the flow of information into North Korea. It also approved the provision of a fund of 3 million U.S. dollars for the flow of information until 2022.

U.S. attorney Joshua Stanton told Radio Free Asia (RFA) on the 30th that in regard to the South Korean government's ability to obstruct the U.S. government's work to fund the flow of information, these two laws are in direct conflict.

He emphasized that it is highly probable that a substantial number of organizations supported by the U.S. State Department are Koreans, Korean organizations.

For example, if the Korean organizations that receive financial support from the U.S. government conduct activities along the Military Demarcation Line that bring USBs and other portable data storage devices into North Korea, this could be a case of conflict between the two laws.

Professor Jo Jung-hyun of the law school at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies disclosed to RFA on the 31st that there is a possibility that the content of these two laws may conflict with each other.

However, he explained that it would be difficult to raise objections in South Korea based on the reason that it conflicts with U.S. domestic law.

Thus, problems may arise if an organization supported by the United States is punished by South Korean law, but it is difficult for the United States and South Korea to raise legal issues with each other based on their respective national laws.

However, Professor Jo disclosed that if the United States is a party to the international treaties on civil and political rights and the anti-leaflet violates the freedom of expression, then it could raise problems in South Korea, who is another party to such international treaties.

Professor Jo explained that Article 6 (1) of the South Korean constitution rules that "Generally approved international laws have the same effect as domestic laws", and that the anti-leaflet law could be assessed under international law.

Attorney Amanda Morwedt Oh of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) told RFA today that rather than the contents of these two bills being at odds, it is the intentions of these two bills regarding the flow of information into North Korea that are at odds.

She pointed out in particular, "the anti-leaflet law goes against the efforts of the U.S. Congress on North Korean human rights issues," and that the anti-leaflet law could raise the question of whether South Korea and the United States share common values.

Attorney Oh also added that the anti-leaflet law makes it more difficult to implement the U.S.

North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act.

Meanwhile, certain South Korean media reported on the 29th that Congressman Chris Smith, co-chair of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission in the U.S. Congress, would hold a hearing on the anti-leaflet law, and reported that the Blue House plans to establish a task force (TF) to advise the U.S. State Department to prevent or delay holding hearings.

The U.S. State Department answered RFA's inquiries related these reports on the 29th, "We don't comment on the details of our private diplomatic conversations."

As such, they reaffirmed their position saying, "we are continuing our activities for the free flow of information into North Korea."

On the other hand, as of the afternoon of the 31st, the South Korean Embassy in the United States did not respond to RFA's request for comment on the claims that the contents of the anti-leaflet law and the North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act.

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Translated by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250727160210/https://mailchi.mp/98575085ea0c/hrnk-news-items-anti-leaflet-law-potentially-conflicts-with-us-north-korean-human-rights-act?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Friday, January 8, 2021

# The North Korean Dictator's Birthday Seen from the Free World; NK's Kim hints at improving inter-Korean ties and foreign policy

**Top News:**
The North Korean Dictator's Birthday Seen from the Free World (*HRNK Insider*, 01/08/2021)
Kim Jong Un Bans Use Of 'Perverted' Slang Words, North Korean Teens Could Face Gulag If Caught (*India Times*, 01/06/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Analysis: North Korea's market reforms seen at risk as leader Kim tightens grip (*Reuters*, 01/08/2021)
Border guard falls through ice while attempting to cross river with lover (*Daily* NK, 01/08/2021)
Day two of North Korea's Eighth Party Congress focuses on economy (UPI, 01/07/2021)
Is North Korea Jamming Radio Signals? (*The National Interest*, 01/07/2021)

Kim reveals plan to strengthen North's ties with outside world (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/08/2021)
Kim vows to improve ties with outside world at party meeting (*AP News*, 01/08/2021)
Large-scale North Korean troop rehearsals suggest military parade soon (*NK News*, 01/08/2021)
N.K. paper emphasizes antivirus efforts as party congress is under way (*Yonhap*, 01/08/2021)
N.K. state media make no mention of leader Kim's presumed birthday (*Yonhap*, 01/08/2021)
North Korean border guards shoot individual crossing over Sino-North Korean border (*Daily NK*, 01/08/2021)
North Korea's Kim vows to comprehensively expand diplomacy at party congress (*Reuters*, 01/07/2021)
Printing of North Korean 2021 calendars delayed due to lack of imported ink (*Daily NK*, 01/08/2021)
State security agency arrests key figures involved in North Korea's nuclear and missile development (*Daily NK*, 01/08/2021)

**In South Korea:**
South Korea indicts North Korean who wants to return on charges of breaking security law (*Reuters*, 01/08/2021)
South Korea's human rights watchdog under fire for North Korea statement (*UPI*, 01/07/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**
Kim Jong-un examines S. Korea policy at party congress (*The Korea Herald*, 01/08/2021)
N.K. leader reviews inter-Korean ties, vows to 'comprehensively' expand external relations (*Yonhap*, 01/08/2021)
North Korea's Kim hints at improving inter-Korean ties and foreign policy (*The Japan Times*, 01/08/2021)
South Korea's Moon vows push for 'denuclearization of Korean Peninsula' (*UPI*, 01/07/2021)

**International**:
Analyst: North Korea not ruling out diplomacy with Biden administration (*UPI*, 01/08/2021)
Pompeo approves new cyber-security bureau, citing threats from N. Korea, others (*Yonhap*, 01/08/2021)
US government could net $2.37 million in unclaimed, frozen North Korean funds (*NK News*, 01/08/2021)
US sets up new cybersecurity bureau to combat threat from North Korea and others (*NK News*, 01/08/2021)
US to create bureau against cyberattacks from China, N. Korea (*The Korea Herald*, 01/08/2021)

**Top News:**

- Today is January 8, the day when Kim Jong-un, the North Korean dictator currently in his mid-30s, was born. For my fellow countrymen in North Korea, this day is supposed to be one of the "most auspicious days of the nation" that should matter more than any

other day, including their parents', siblings', and even their own birthdays. (Kim Myong, *HRNK Insider*)

- It's not anything out of the ordinary to hear of a stringent law being enforced by the North Korean leader and the latest in the row is the use of slang language and certain expressions. (KC Archana, *India Times*)

**In North Korea:**

- Some economic reforms that emerged after North Korea's Kim Jong Un took power are under threat as his government responds to a series of crises by reasserting state controls, casting doubt on one of the young leader's signature issues. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- In Musan County, North Hamgyong Province, a border guard recently stepped onto a frozen river to defect when the ice collapsed. He sank into the water and disappeared without a trace. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea's Eighth Party Congress resumed for a second day under Kim Jong Un, but the leader of the Korean Workers' Party made no mention of U.S. policy. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- According to a new report, radio broadcasts from a South Korean nonprofit human rights organization appear to have been jammed by authorities in the North Korean regime. (Stephen Silver, *The National Interest*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has declared an all-out plan to expand and develop the country's relations with the outside world, while reviewing the regime's ties with the South, the reclusive country's state-run media reported Friday. (Ser Myo-ja, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un stressed the need to drastically improve his nation's ties with the outside world as he addressed a major political conference for the third day. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)
- North Korean troops began large-scale formation training at a military parade practice area this week, according to NK Pro analysis of recent satellite imagery, in the latest sign that authorities plan to put on a military parade in downtown Pyongyang in the coming days or weeks. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Friday urged the people to keep their guard up against the coronavirus pandemic as a rare party congress is under way in Pyongyang with thousands of delegates gathering to join the largest political event. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean state media made no mention of its leader Kim Jong-un's presumed 37th birthday on Friday amid its detailed report on an ongoing rare party congress. (*Yonhap*)
- There was a shooting incident in the Sino-North Korean border region of Yanggang Province, the same place where an armed soldier recently defected across the border. Shockingly, military authorities have not even dealt with the dead body. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un explored ways to renew inter-Korean ties and vowed to expand diplomatic relations, state media said on Friday, as he hosted a rare party congress less than two weeks before U.S. President-elect Joe Biden takes office. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- North Korea reportedly ran into difficulties printing up its 2021 calendars due to a lack of materials imported from China. (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)

- A source told Daily NK yesterday that a Ministry of State Security special inspection team arrested about 20 key figures involved in the development of North Korea's nuclear weapons and missiles on Tuesday, the day North Korea convened the Eighth Party Congress. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korean prosecutors have indicted a North Korean defector who wants to return home on charges of violating a national security law, her lawyer told Reuters. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- South Korea's National Human Rights Commission made an inaccurate claim about Seoul's North Korean Human Rights Act in a recent report that recommended the repeal of the law. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un on Thursday examined his South Korea policy and decided to expand his foreign policy, on the third day of his second party congress since coming to power in 2012. Kim did not elaborate, according to the North's state media. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has reviewed inter-Korean relations and pledged to "comprehensively" expand external ties during a rare party congress, state media reported Friday. (Choi Soo-hyang, Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- Kim Jong Un teased the possibility of improved relations with South Korea and vowed to expand "external relations" Thursday in his first remarks on the regime's foreign policy since the election of U.S. President-elect Joe Biden, state-run media said Friday. (Jesse Johnson, *The Japan Times*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in pledged to make progress on North Korea "until the end," signaling his commitment to engagement after Pyongyang's demolition of an inter-Korean liaison office. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)

**International:**

- Kim Jong Un addressed inter-Korean relations and outside ties on the third day of North Korea's Eighth Party Congress on Friday, but provided few details on his policies. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has approved the establishment of a department bureau to counter cyber-security threats from North Korea and other countries, the State Department said Thursday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- In a New Year's Eve filing, U.S. prosecutors filed a declaration intended to lead to a default judgment, which could net the U.S. government at least $2.37 million in frozen bank wires related to North Korean money laundering and the sanctioned North Korean Foreign Trade Bank (FTB). (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- In the wake of growing cyber attacks from North Korea and other adversaries, the U.S. State Department said it would strengthen America's defenses by setting up a Bureau of Cyberspace Security and Emerging Technologies (CSET). According to a press release published on Thursday, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo approved the creation of the bureau to reorganize and resource America's "security diplomacy" across cyberspace and emerging technologies. (David Volodzko, *NK News*)
- The US State Department said Thursday that it is creating the Bureau of Cyberspace Security and Emerging Technologies (CSET) to respond to security threats posed by

adversaries including China, North Korea, Russia and Iran. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Kathryn Wernke, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250727160855/https://mailchi.mp/5e22860a11d7/hrnk-news-itemsthe-north-korean-dictators-birthday-seen-from-the-free-worldnks-kim-hints-at-improving-inter-korean-ties-and-foreign-policy?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, January 9, 2021**

## Did North Korea Just Signal It Wants to Talk?; Is North Korea on the Brink of Starvation?

**In North Korea:**

Did North Korea Just Signal It Wants to Talk? (*National Interest*, 01/08/2021)
Is North Korea on the Brink of Starvation? (*National Interest*, 01/09/2021)
Kim calls U.S. 'principal enemy,' vows to continue nuclear development (*Yonhap*, 01/09/2021)
Kim Jong Un says North Korea is developing tactical nukes, new warheads and a nuclear-powered submarine (CNN, 01/09/2021)
Kim Jong-un Vows to Boost North Korea's Nuclear Capability as Leverage With Biden (*New York Times*, 01/08/2021)
N. Korea's Kim calls U.S. 'our biggest enemy,' says its hostile policies never change(*Washington Post*, 01/08/2021)
N. Korea threatens to build more nukes, cites US hostility (*AP News*, 01/09/2021)
North Koreans Cynical About 'Self-Reliance' Messaging During Party Congress(RFA, 01/08/2021)
North Korea's Kim Jong Un Says U.S. Is 'Biggest Enemy' (*Wall Street Journal*, 01/08/2021)
North Korea's promised military upgrades are a tall order — and an empty threat (*NK News*, 01/09/2021)

**In South Korea:**

Navy officer found dead in Yellow Sea after going missing while on duty (*Yonhap*, 01/09/2021)
S. Korea reaffirms commitment to implementing inter-Korean agreements (*Yonhap*, 01/09/2021)
South Korea in dilemma over joint military drill (*Korea Times*, 01/09/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

N. Korea leaves room for inter-Korean ties but challenges lay ahead with 'conditions'(*Yonhap*, 01/09/2021)

**International:**

Kim's remarks warrant concerns, but also hope for dialogue: U.S. experts (*Yonhap*, 01/09/2021)

N. Korea's short-range missiles seek to disable missile defense: CRS report(*Yonhap*, 01/09/2021)

YouTube deletes North Korea-promoting channel (*UPI*, 01/08/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Taking the language at face-value, the Kim regime appears to be preparing itself for a more conciliatory policy toward Seoul. From where Pyongyang stands right now, such a change in direction would make a good deal of sense. (Daniel R. DePetris, *National Interest*)
- During the last famine, no one outside North Korea knew what was going on until after the dying and suffering was out of control. Let's not leave it till we get to that stage again. (Hazel Smith, *National Interest*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has called the United States the "foremost principal enemy" of his country, threatening to continue advancing its nuclear capabilities, state media said Saturday. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said his country is developing new weaponry including a nuclear-powered submarine, tactical nuclear weapons and advanced warheads designed to penetrate missile defense systems. (Joshua Berlinger, Yoonjung Seo, CNN)
- North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un, vowed to advance his country's nuclear capabilities, declaring that it will build land- and submarine-launched solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missiles, as well as making its nuclear missiles smaller, lighter and more precise, the North's state media reported on Saturday. (Choe Sang-Hun, *New York Times*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called the United States "our biggest enemy," and said Washington's hostile policy toward his country won't change despite whoever is in the White House, state media reported on Saturday. (Simon Denyer, *Washington Post*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un threatened to expand his nuclear arsenal as he disclosed a list of high-tech weapons systems under development, saying the fate of relations with the United States depends on whether it abandons its hostile policy, state media reported Saturday. (Hyung-Jin Kim, *AP News*)
- As North Korea's ruling Korean Workers' Party held its congress this week, residents of the impoverished country reacted cynically, saying that nothing that could be decided during the rare political meeting could improve their lives, sources in the country told RFA. (Jieun Kim, RFA)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said the country's approach to the U.S. wouldn't change no matter who the president is, promising to advance its nuclear weapon program. (Timothy W. Martin, Andrew Jeong, *Wall Street Journal*)
- North Korea vowed to ramp up its long-range nuclear strike capabilities and other key military technology on Saturday in what experts say is both a threatening message to the United States and a subtle call for dialogue. But experts also believe that some of

North Korea's military goals are both unrealistic and an empty threat — especially since Pyongyang appears to be leaving the door open for dialogue. (Won-Gi Jung, NK News)

**In South Korea:**

- A Navy officer was found dead Saturday after going missing while on duty aboard a patrol boat off the western border island of Baengnyeong, military authorities said. (Yonhap)
- The unification ministry on Saturday said it has a firm determination to implement inter-Korean agreements, shortly after North Korean leader Kim Jong-un accused the South of going against it at a rare party congress. (Yonhap)
- With the need to achieve both an advancement in inter-Korean ties and recovery of wartime operational control (OPCON) of its military forces, the government here is in a quandary over how to program its springtime combined exercise with the United States. (Kang Seung-woo, Korea Times)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's remarks on South Korea during a key party meeting appear to have passed the ball into Seoul's court by attaching challenging conditions that portend cloudy prospects for any change in the currently chilled cross-border relations, experts said Saturday. (Yi Wonju, Yonhap)

**International:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's harsh remarks toward the United States during a key party meeting may indicate his intention to never give up nuclear ambitions, but they could also be seen as aimed at pressuring Washington to offer more concessions in future denuclearization talks, experts said Friday. (Byun Duk-kun, Yonhap)
- North Korea's short-range missiles pose a great threat to the United States and its Asian allies, including South Korea, as they may be used to disable the countries' missile defense system, a U.S. congressional report suggested. (Byun Duk-kun, Yonhap)
- A North Korean YouTube channel featuring a young woman guiding viewers around Pyongyang has been removed for the second time in the last two months, citing sanctions. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

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Prepared by Jungeun Lee, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250923031852/https://mailchi.mp/fc9dc02836ec/hrnk-news-itemsdid-north-korea-just-signal-it-wants-to-talkis-north-korea-on-the-brink-of-starvation

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**Sunday, January 10, 2021**

## Kim Jong Un's big plan to grow North Korea's economy faces harsh reality; Kim vows to expand North Korea's nuclear arsenal

**In North Korea:**

Armored vehicles and troops spotted going towards Pyongyang's Kim Il Sung Square (*NK News*, 01/10/2021)
Expert roundup: What North Korea's Eighth Party Congress says about the future(*NK News*, 01/10/2021)
Kim Jong Un's big plan to grow North Korea's economy faces harsh reality (*Reuters*, 01/10/2021)
Kim vows to expand North Korea's nuclear arsenal (*BBC*, 01/09/2021)
N.K. highlights importance of defense capabilities in revised party rules (*Yonhap*, 01/10/2021)
N. Korea's military parade may be postponed due to heavy snow (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 01/09/2021)
N. Korea's ruling party decides to hold congress every 5 years (*Nikkei*, 01/10/2021)
North Korea ruling party says key congress to be held every five years (*Japan Times*, 01/10/2021)
North Korea's ruling party decides to hold congress every 5 years (*Kyodo News*, 01/09/2021)
North Korea to hold a Party Congress every five years (*NK News*, 01/09/2021)
Party Congress: Kim Jong Un's weapons wishlist suggests testing campaign ahead(*NK Pro*, 01/10/2021)
The wrong direction (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/10/2021)
What to make of North Korea's massive Eighth Party Congress reveal (*NK Pro*, 01/09/2021)
Workers' Party Congress adopts defense rules (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/10/2021)

**In South Korea:**

What even Muppets know (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/10/2021)

**International:**

Kim says North Korean efforts will focus on bringing US 'to their knees' (*The Hill*, 01/09/2021)
No breakthrough ahead for nuclear talks (*Korea Times*, 01/10/2021)
North Korea's Kim calls US 'biggest enemy' before Biden inauguration (*Nikkei*, 01/09/2021)
'Pyongyang developing nuclear-powered submarine poses threat to US territories'(*Korea Times*, 01/10/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Armored vehicles and troops were spotted moving towards Pyongyang's Kim Il Sung square on Sunday night, an informed source told NK News, raising the possibility that North Korea's Eighth Party Congress is coming to an end and closing out with a nighttime military spectacle. Military troops and approximately 10 heavy-scale armored vehicles were seen moving towards Pyongyang's iconic city square on Sunday evening, according to one source. The source also said that the square has been illuminated to a level not seen since North Korea's Oct. 10 military parade last year. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- After wrapping up day four of its politically-important Party Congress, North Korean state media released key details about where the country is headed on Saturday, laying out ambitious goals for its nuclear weapons program as well as its economy. State media also put out strong words on the United States and South Korea, accusing Seoul of dithering from important inter-Korean conversations and Washington of holding a foreign policy that "never changes," no matter who's president. Now, DPRK analysts

weigh in on key revelations from the Eighth Party Congress, which comes at an incredibly trying time for North Korea. Kim Jong Un appears to be trying to regain control over a spiraling situation, experts say, and is using textbook rhetoric to emphasize its military power to the rest of the world. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)

- Kim Jong Un's ambitious new plan for the next five years is aimed at developing North Korea's shattered economy, but the proposals may falter in the face of major crises that have already stalled the young leader's current projects. In remarks released this weekend, Kim blamed international sanctions as well as unanticipated crises including the coronavirus pandemic and natural disasters, for preventing the government from improving people's lives, while criticising officials for mistakes that needed to be fixed. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has said the US is his country's "biggest enemy" and that he does not expect Washington to change its policy toward Pyongyang - whoever is president. Addressing a rare congress of his ruling Workers' Party, Mr Kim also pledged to expand North Korea's nuclear weapons arsenal and military potential. He said that plans for a nuclear submarine were almost complete. (*BBC*)
- North Korea has clarified the importance of powerful defense capabilities in containing military threats in its revised rules for the ruling Workers' Party. (Choi Soo-hyang, Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- While North Korea is holding the eighth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea, the South Korean and U.S. intelligent authorities are paying close attention to developments regarding its military parade to be held soon at the end of the Congress. (Kyu-Jin Shin, *Dong-A Ilbo*)
- North Korea's ruling party will hold its congress every five years from now onward, the official Korean Central News Agency reported Sunday. Until now, Workers' Party of Korea congresses have taken place at random intervals but North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has recently expressed his willingness to convene it on a regular schedule. (*Nikkei*)
- North Korea's ruling party has announced that it will hold its congress every five years, the state-run Korean Central News Agency said Saturday, as leader Kim Jong Un seeks to regularize important regime meetings. Prior to the amendment to the party's rules, the congress — where Kim has announced key regime decisions and plans, including at the current one — had been sporadically held, with the last one in 2016 marking the first in 36 years. (Jesse Johnson, *Japan Times*)
- North Korea's ruling party will hold its congress every five years from now onward, the official Korean Central News Agency reported Sunday. Until now, Workers' Party of Korea congresses have taken place at random intervals but North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has recently expressed his willingness to convene it on a regular schedule. (*Kyodo News*)
- North Korea's ruling party boasted about increased cash reserves and the strength of its socialist system on the fifth day of its Eighth Party Congress, with top officials ultimately deciding to hold the massive and historically rare political event every five years from now on. State media reported on Sunday that the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) also discussed changes to financial management and how major decisions are

made on Jan. 9. The current Party Congress, which started last week on Tuesday, is only the third one to take place in the last 41 years. (Colin Zwirko, Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)

- On Saturday, North Korean state media unveiled a comprehensive report on the accomplishments and plans of the Workers' Party of Korea Seventh Central Committee. That plan is wide-ranging and multifarious. On matters pertaining to North Korea's state nuclear forces and military modernization, the report is among the most detailed ever in the country's recent history and certainly since 2017. (Ankit Panda, *NK Pro*)
- North Korea has amended its Workers' Party rules and proclaimed it will continue reinforcing its military power. In the 8th Congress of the Workers' Party, the first in five years, the country expanded the concept of its strengthening of war deterrence to defend itself and linked it to its ultimate goal of reunification of the two Koreas. The announcement explicitly shows what goals the state will try to achieve in the future. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**In South Korea:**

Though North Korea's Eighth Party Congress has yet to formally wrap up, state media released a comprehensive report on the Workers' Party of Korea

- 7th Central Committee's future plans. This gives North Korea watchers a significant glimpse into the DPRK's new military, foreign policy and economy-related goals. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK Pro*)
- North Korea officially tweaked the rules of its ruling Workers' Party to refer to powerful defense capabilities for its security, codifying a declaration by its leader Kim Jong-un a day earlier vowing to expand his nuclear arsenal. (Shim Kyu-seok, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A piece of news stood out amid the gloom on the global front from the worldwide resurgence of Covid-19. The pioneering American children's show "Sesame Street" has introduced twin Rohingya Muppets — going by the names Noor and Aziz Yasmin — to educate Rohinya refugee children and help them overcome trauma in the world's largest refugee camp in Bangladesh. The Unification Ministry refused to comply with the UN Special Rapporteur on North Korean Human Rights's recommendation to rethink the leaflet ban by claiming that the government is merely restricting "minority expression" for the safety of the majority. That shows no respect for human rights. The government and lawmakers should learn some basic lessons about humanity from the Muppets. (Yoo Jee-hye, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- North Korean Leader Kim Jong Un said that the nation's activities should focus on bringing its "arch-enemy" the United States, "to their knees." The country's state media (KCNA) reported Saturday that Kim made the remarks while he addressed the 8th Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea. The leader reportedly spoke for nine hours. (Jordan Williams, *The Hill*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's long-awaited Workers' Party Congress message clarifying his "steadfast will" to develop his regime's nuclear program is throwing cold water on any gleam of hope for progress in the U.S.-North denuclearization talks — even after the leadership change in Washington — and possible developments in inter-Korean relations. (Kang Seung-woo, *Korea Times*)
- Describing the United States as North Korea's "biggest enemy," leader Kim Jong Un said he does not expect Washington to change its policy toward Pyongyang whoever is

president, state-run media reported Saturday. At the first congress of the ruling Workers' Party in nearly five years, which started Tuesday ahead of U.S. President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration on Jan. 20., Kim also pledged to further strengthen the country's nuclear arsenal. (*Nikkei*)

- Among the messages from North Korea to the outside world during the 8th ruling Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) Congress which kicked off last Tuesday, defense watchers paid attention to remarks by the country's leader Kim Jong-un on his regime's nuclear war deterrent and self-reliant defense capabilities. (Jung Da-min, *Korea Times*)

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Prepared by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250727162133/https://mailchi.mp/72cdbc7b9846/hrnk-news-items-kim-jong-uns-big-plan-to-grow-north-koreas-economy-faces-harsh-reality-kim-vows-to-expand-north-koreas-nuclear-arsenal?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, January 11, 2021**

## Kim Jong Un gains new title at party congress, calls U.S. 'principal enemy'

**In North Korea:**

(LEAD) Demotion of N.K. leader's sister at party congress raises questions over her status (*Yonhap*, 1/11/21)
Entire management at Chagang Province labor camp replaced due to human rights abuses (*Daily* NK, 1/11/21)
Ex-N.Korea diplomat says South's propaganda leaflet ban 'great mistake' (*Reuters*, 1/11/21)
Kim Jong Un gains new title at party congress, calls U.S. 'principal enemy' (UPI, 1/11/21)
Mixed signals for North Korean leader's sister as Kim seeks to cement power(*Reuters*, 1/11/21)
(2nd LD) Moon says all S. Koreans will be given free COVID-19 vaccines (*Yonhap*, 1/11/21)
(4th LD) N. Korea crowns leader Kim Jong-un as party's general secretary (*Yonhap*, 1/11/21)
N. Korea's Kim adds title: General secretary of ruling party (*AP News*, 1/11/21)
North Korean leader seeks to build party-centered regime (*The Korea Times*, 1/11/21)
North Korea tests 13,259 people for COVID-19, still claims zero confirmed cases(*NK News*, 1/11/21)
Party congress participants told to take off masks during main event (*Daily* NK, 1/11/21)
Signs detected of N. Korea staging military parade in Pyongyang late Sunday: JCS(*Yonhap*, 1/11/21)

**In South Korea:**

Echoes of Shincheonji as BTJ visitors refuse, evade testing (Korea JoongAng Daily, 1/11/21)

In-depth analysis needed to decide development of nuke-powered submarine: Seoul ministry (*Yonhap*, 1/11/21)
Moon reaffirms willingness to talk with NK 'anytime, anywhere' (*The Korea Herald*, 1/11/21)
South Korea's Moon says will make 'last-ditch' effort for North Korea breakthrough(Reuters, 1/11/21)
S. Korea reaches air traffic deal with China and Japan (*Yonhap*, 1/11/21)

**International:**
China's Xi congratulates N. Korea leader Kim on becoming party general secretary - state media (*Reuters*, 1/11/21)

**In North Korea:**

- The demotion of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's powerful sister at an ongoing party congress is raising questions over whether it signals any change in her status in the top echelons of power. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean authorities reportedly replaced the entire administrative staff of Correctional Labor Camp No. 6 in Songgan County, Chagang Province, late last year, including the head of the camp. According to a source, the move aimed to sooth public sentiment angered by continued human rights abuses at the camp. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- South Korea's recent ban on the launch of propaganda leaflets into the North was a "great mistake" that only hampers change in the isolated country, said Tae Yong-ho, the first North Korean defector to be elected as a South Korean lawmaker. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un was elected general secretary of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea, state media reported Monday, receiving a title that had been held by his deceased father, Kim Jong Il, and grandfather, Kim Il Sung. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- The name of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's sister was missing from a new list of the ruling Workers' Party's politburo, according to state media on Monday, raising questions about her status after several years of increasing influence. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- President Moon Jae-in said Monday that the government will provide all South Korean people with free-of-charge COVID-19 vaccines in phases starting next month. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has endorsed leader Kim Jong-un as the general secretary of the ruling Workers' Party at its ongoing congress, state media said Monday, in an apparent move to tighten his grip on power. (Choi Soo-hyang, Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un was given the title of general secretary of the ruling Workers' Party formerly held by his late father and grandfather, state media reported Monday, in a move apparently aimed at bolstering his authority amid growing economic challenges. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)
- The election of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un as general secretary of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea means that he will lead with a party-centered state system that Pyongyang believes will be helpful in cementing his authority, according to experts, Monday. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)

- North Korea claims it tested nearly 13,300 people for COVID-19 and still has had "zero" confirmed cases, according to new numbers recorded to the World Health Organization (WHO). (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- The third day of the Eighth Party Congress commenced without participants wearing masks. Daily NK has learned, however, that even as the roughly 7,000 participants (according to the North Korean media) take part in indoor events with little in the way of social distancing, North Korean authorities are strictly checking whether they are wearing masks. (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)
- South Korea's military said Monday that it has detected signs indicating that North Korea carried out a military parade in time for a ruling party congress in Pyongyang late Sunday. (*Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- Health authorities Monday urged recent visitors to a Protestant missionary school in Sangju, North Gyeongsang, to get tested for the coronavirus as soon as possible, warning that a growing cluster there could end up like the Shincheonji outbreak. (Lee Sung-Eun, Heo Jeong-Won, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The defense ministry said Monday that it has yet to decide whether to push for the development of a nuclear-powered submarine, amid security concerns sparked by North Korea's pursuit of the underwater naval platform. (*Yonhap*)
- President Moon Jae-in reaffirmed his willingness to talk with North Korea in his New Year's address Monday, saying South Korea is ready to talk "anytime, anywhere and even in a non-face-to-face way." (Lee Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in said on Monday he remains committed to engaging with North Korea, and that cooperation on issues such as anti-epidemic work could help lead to a breakthrough in stalled talks in the last years of his term. (Sangmi Cha, *Reuters*)
- South Korea, China and Japan have agreed to accept a United Nations aviation agency's proposal for an agreement critical for the safety of flights near Korea's southern resort island of Jeju, the transport ministry said Monday. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- China President Xi Jinping has congratulated North Korea leader Kim Jong Un on being elected as general secretary of the ruling Workers' Party, Chinese state media said on Monday. (*Reuters*)

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Prepared by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250727162500/https://mailchi.mp/4531aa3a748b/hrnk-news-item skim-jong-un-gains-new-title-at-party-congress-calls-us-principal-enemy?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Tuesday, January 12, 2021

# Biden Aide Says Must be Cautious about Anti-leaflet Law; CIO - 1700 Active and Reserve Officers Under Scrutiny

**Top News:**
**Biden Aide Also Says "Must be Cautious about the Anti-leaflet Law" (*News1*, 01/09/2021)
**CIO: 1700 Active and Reserve Officers Under Scrutiny (*Daum*, 11/30/2020)

** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

I**n North Korea:**
Don't turn the clock back: North Korea should not build up nuclear arms (*Korea Times*, 01/11/2021)
Full recap: North Korea reshuffles key leadership roles at Eighth Party Congress (*NK Pro*, 01/12/2021)
'General Secretary' Kim Jong Un tightens grip on party in year 10 (*Nikkei*, 01/12/2021)
Is North Korea's Kim Jong-un shielding his powerful sister from media attention?(*South China Morning Post*, 01/11/2021)
Kim Jong Un absent as officials talk military, science plans at Party Congress (*NK News*, 01/11/2021)
Kim Jong Un elected as general secretary of Workers' Party (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 01/12/2021)
Kim Jong Un Gets a Promotion, Gives His Sister a Demotion (*Wall Street Journal*, 01/11/2021)
Kim Jong Un hints at an even stronger crusade against political 'abuse of power'(*NK News*, 01/12/2021)
Kim Jong-un is elevated to general secretary (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/11/2021)
Kim Jong-un Says Cross-Border Diplomacy Back to Square One (*Chosun Ilbo*, 01/11/2021)
Kim Jong-un's congress speech: strengthening state control over the economy(*North Korean Economy Watch*, 01/12/2021)
Kim Jong-un Vows to Develop More Nukes (*Chosun Ilbo*, 01/11/2021)
Kim Yo Jong demoted: Why the North Korean leader's sister is down, but not out(*NK News*, 01/11/2021)
Kim Yo Jong, sister of leader, missing from North Korea Politburo list (*UPI*, 01/11/2021)
Kim Yo Jong: What We Know About Kim Jong Un's Sister and Her Role in North Korea (*Wall Street Journal*, 01/11/20210
N. Korea invites guests to celebrations of party congress, possibly including military parade (*Yonhap*, 01/12/2021)
N. Korean officials seen wearing masks at party congress after days of no-mask sessions (*Yonhap*, 01/12/2021)
N. Korean officials work on resolution to implement leader's guidance (*Yonhap*, 01/12/2021)
N. Korea seeks development of ultra-supersonic weapons (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 01/11/2021)
N. Korea's intractable threats (*Korea Times*, 01/11/2021)
N.Korea Stages Nighttime Military Parade in Subzero Weather (*Chosun Ilbo*, 01/12/2021)
NK's congress nears end with signs of military parade (*Korea Herald*, 01/12/2021)
North Korea confirms development of hypersonic missiles (*Daily NK*, 01/12/2021)
North Korea delegates at Party Congress resume wearing masks (*UPI*, 01/12/2021)
North Korean Leader Tells Party Congress US Remains 'Biggest Enemy' (*RFA*, 01/12/2021)

North Korea prepares to send loggers to Russia in February (*Daily NK*, 01/12/2021)
North Korea's emphasis to its people at the start of the year: manure (*Daily NK*, 01/12/2021)
North Korea's Kim Jong Un crowned as party general secretary (*Nikkei*, 01/11/2021)
Party congress splits up into work groups with masks (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/12/2021)
Pyongyang implies possible preemptive or retaliatory nuclear strikes (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 01/11/2021)
So far, North Korea's new economic plan is full of bad signs (*NK Pro*, 01/11/2021)
Trail running in North Korea could take off after Covid-19, even for foreigners, as country prepares for adventure tourism (*South China Morning Post*, 01/12/2021)
Why North Korea Is Going Full-Steam Ahead on Its Nuclear Weapons Program(*National Interest*, 01/11/2021)
Will Kim Jong Un turn the clock back? (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 01/12/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**
South Korea hopes to video chat North Korea with a $361,600 special room (*NK News*, 01/12/2021)

**International**:
Chinese President Xi Jinping congratulates Kim Jong Un on his big promotion (*NK News*, 01/11/2021)
How North Korea and Japan Could Open Dialogue (*National Interest*, 01/11/2021)
Japan says 'no' to nuclear North Korea after Kim speech (*UPI*, 01/12/2021)
Moon administration tells Biden to consider Singapore model (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/12/2021)
New CIA nominee favors back-channel talks with North Korea and Iran nuclear deal(*NK News*, 01/11/2021)
N. Korea, China have no respect for human rights: Pompeo (*Yonhap*, 01/12/2021)
North Korea set for collision course with US as Kim Jong-un solidifies one-man rule(*Guardian*, 01/12/2021)
Seoul presses Biden camp on Singapore agreement: report (*Korea Herald*, 01/12/2021)
Xi congratulates N.K. leader on election as 'general secretary,' calls for stronger ties(*Yonhap*, 01/12/2021)
'Your move, Mr President': North Korea sets the stage for Biden (*BBC*, 01/11/2021)

**Top News:**

- Frank Jannuzi, President of the Mansfield Foundation and an aide to the U.S. president-elect, expressed concern for South Korea's anti-leaflet law: the revision to the Development of Inter-Korean Relations Act. (Park Jaewoo, *News1*)
- Upon launch of the Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials (CIO), it appears that 1700 general officers will be subject to investigation in the military alone. Within the military, there are both concerns about the inspection of "military discipline" and expectations that it may now be able to root out the chronic issue of chronic crimes that have been hushed up until now. (Yang Nak-gyu, *Daum*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, who was endorsed as general secretary of the reclusive nation's ruling Workers' Party, Sunday, vowed to carry out foreign policies in accordance with measures taken by the United States and South Korea. Kim called on the U.S. to withdraw its hostile policy toward the North and for the South to comply with the 2018 inter-Korean agreement, during the party's eighth congress in Pyongyang. (*Korea Times*)
- Earlier this week, North Korean state media reported that Kim Jong Un rose to even higher ranks and was promoted to general secretary of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea (WPK). North Korea also revealed reforms to its party structure meant to better watch party discipline and prevent corruption. (Martin Weiser, *NK Pro*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has entered his 10th year in power by reviving a title once used by his predecessors, in a visible attempt to further cement unitary control. (Yosuke Onchi, *Nikkei*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un on Sunday solidified his power with a new title of general secretary of the ruling Workers' Party, in an election that prompted questions about the future of his high-profile sister and saw the promotion of a long-time official in his 60s. (Park Chan-kyong, *South China Morning Post*)
- North Korean delegates gathered for the seventh day of its rare Party Congress on Monday to iron out details about the country's future plans for agriculture, military, science, education and other facets of society. (Kelly Kasulis, Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has been elected as General Secretary of the Workers' Party, a post scrapped after the death of his father Kim Jong Il in 2011. The post was also held by his late grandfather Kim Il Song and his late father Kim Jong Il. The election appears to be an attempt to strengthen Chairman Kim's one-man dictatorship by officially putting him in the ranks of his father and grandfather, marking his 10 years in power. (Oh-Hyuk Kwon, *Dong-A Ilbo*)
- Kim Jong Un has given himself a lofty new title and removed his ascendant sister from North Korea's inner circle of powerful elites. (Timothy W. Martin, Andrew Jeong, *Wall Street Journal*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un railed against corruption in the country's ruling party at a large political meeting last weekend, state media reported on Monday, in a speech that experts say could foreshadow future efforts to maintain top-down order in a political system where bribery is rampant. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un was elevated to the position of general secretary of the ruling Workers' Party. Kim, who came to power in 2011, was elected general secretary of the party "in reflection of the unanimous will and desire" of all delegates, party members, people and military, in the sixth session of the ongoing Eighth Party Congress. (Shim Kyu-seok, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un last week poured cold water on the South Korean government's hopes of rapprochement, saying cross-border relations have gone back to square one. (Lee Yong-soo, *Chosun Ilbo*)
- Unfortunately, North Korean state media has not been as forthcoming with coverage of the congress contents as they were on the first day. They did, however, release a summary of Kim Jong-un's nine-hour long report to the congress. Presumably, Kim's report contained much greater levels of detail than the (still very long) report summary

put out by KCNA on January 9th. (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, *North Korean Economy Watch*)

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un on Friday threatened to develop "more advanced nuclear weapons and missiles" including tactical nuclear weapons which are "smaller and lighter" than standard ones, state media reported Saturday. (Lee Yong-soo, *Chosun Ilbo*)
- The new roster of top officials in the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) leadership is surprising in many ways — especially when considering the ejection of Kim Jong Un's sister, Kim Yo Jong, from the country's top elite. Formerly an alternate member of the Politburo, she has not been reelected to the Politburo and was ranked number 20 on the Central Committee. (Fyodor Tertitskiy, *NK News*)
- Kim Yo Jong was excluded from a North Korean list for the ruling Workers' Party Politburo on Monday, prompting speculation in the South the her brother, Kim Jong Un, could be preparing an alternative role for her in the regime. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- Kim Yo Jong, 32 years old, is a senior North Korean official helping oversee the country's policies toward the U.S. and South Korea, according to Seoul's intelligence agency. She is often at her brother's side during key events in the one-party state. Among her various titles, Ms. Kim is the nominal head of the North's propaganda and agitation department. She rose to prominence in just the past several years, attending all three face-to-face meetings between President Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, as the latter's confidante and adviser. She was an alternate member of North Korea's Politburo until January 2021, though North Korea experts say the apparent demotion still leaves her political clout unchanged. (Andrew Jeong, *Wall Street Journal*)
- Officials and others long involved in government affairs have been invited as special guests to "celebrations" arranged to mark the ongoing party congress, Pyongyang's media reported Tuesday, raising the possibility that North Korea might be preparing a military parade. (Yonhap)
- North Korean officials participating in the ongoing party congress were seen wearing face masks in their latest meetings for the first time since its opening last week, raising questions over its standards on antivirus guidelines. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean officials have held consultative meetings and reviewed a draft resolution on the policy goals rolled out by leader Kim Jong-un in the years to come during a rare party congress. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has made official Pyongyang's bid to develop ultra-supersonic weapons at the eighth congress of the ruling Workers' Party. The move apparently indicates the North has made public its bid to secure a "game changer" that could effectively dismantle air defense systems of South Korea and the U.S., including the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defense system. The North has also disclosed its plan to develop tactical nuclear weapons for striking the South, intensifying its threat on Seoul. (Kyu-Jin Shin, *Dong-A Ilbo*)
- In a report to the Eighth Congress of the Workers Party last week, Chairman Kim Jong-un declared that North Korea has completed a reliable strategic nuclear arsenal that includes a tactical nuclear weapon, in addition to an intercontinental ballistic missile, but it will continue to advance the capability of its weapons by new technology. (Tong Kim, *Korea Times*)

- North Korea staged a military parade in the middle of a freezing cold night during a weeklong Workers Party congress. (*Chosun Ilbo*)
- North Korea's rare party congress appears to be nearing its end, with officials reviewing a draft resolution on the policy goals laid out by the country's leader, Kim Jong-un, and with key officials receiving invitations to "celebrations" of the congress, which could mean a military parade. (Ahn Sung-Mi, *Korea Herald*)
- In his report to the Eighth Party Congress held from Jan. 5 to 7, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said North Korea is "conducting research into perfecting the guidance technology for multi-warhead rockets at the final stage." (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea's Eighth Party Congress continued with breakout sessions among delegates who for the first time were seen wearing face masks indoors. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- Leader Kim Jong Un branded the United States North Korea's "biggest enemy" to be met with increased military capabilities in remarks at a ruling party congress that experts said reveal that he faces the same limited pathways out of his country's poverty and isolation that his father did twenty years ago. (Seung Wook Hong, Albert Hong, Erin Ji, Hee Jung Yang, Jeongeun Ji, Leejin Jun, Eugene Whong, RFA)
- Starting from February, North Korea plans to send loggers to Russia and is quietly recruiting candidates. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)
- To herald the new year, the North Korean authorities gave people their first assignment: the "manure battle." A source told Daily NK that this year the workload has increased from that of last year. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un was crowned general secretary of the Workers' Party, tightening his grip on the ruling party 10 days before the inauguration of Joe Biden as U.S. president. (Kim Jaewon, *Nikkei*)
- Delegates attending the Eighth Workers' Party Congress in Pyongyang split up for meetings on specific topics. Strangely enough, photographs published in state media showed all participants at these various meetings wearing face masks — in contrast to their maskless attendance at main sessions of the congress presided over by leader Kim Jong-un. (Shim Kyu-seok, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said at the 8th Congress of the North Korean Workers' Party on Friday, "We seek to strengthen military power constantly based on the country's status as a nuclear state until aggressive hostile threats end." He did not exclude a possibility of a preemptive or retaliatory nuclear strike while remarking that it would not abuse its nuclear weaponry. His message made it clear that Pyongyang has no intention of giving up on nuclear weapons, which runs completely counter to three years' line for denuclearization negotiations. (*Dong-A Ilbo*)
- Kim Jong Un is emerging out of the Eighth Party Congress with a report that hints at little change from where the country was a year ago. Nevertheless, the information unveiled by the Rodong Sinmun gives us some indication of where economic policy and planning is headed — and the signs are far from encouraging for anyone that's hoping for a North Korea that will promote growth, development and greater economic freedom for its people. (Peter Ward, *NK Pro*)
- North Korea hosted a small trail running race in 2015 – open to foreign runners – and as the country seeks to promote inbound adventure and sports tourism, more such races are expected to follow. (Pavel Toropov, *South China Morning Post*)

- North Korea recently convened the Eighth Congress of its ruling Workers Party. These are, of course, highly scripted affairs, but for outsiders, they offer one of the few windows into North Korean policy-making which we have. The speeches and reports released provide at least a general sense of where the North Korean elite sees the country's economic development and foreign relations especially. Much of this year's focus on has been the proposed major expansion of North Korea's nuclear capabilities. (Robert E. Kelly, *National Interest*)
- Kim Jong Un was elevated from chairman to general secretary on Sunday during the 8th Congress of the North Korean Workers' Party. The title, which was held by his late father Kim Jong Il, was not given to anyone in a symbolic gesture to honor the contributions made by his father. A congress statement Kim "has gloriously realized the historic mission to complete the country's nuclear build-up plan." It is reported that a military parade was held on Monday midnight to celebrate the "joyful occasion." (*Dong-A Ilbo*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- South Korea plans to pour hundreds of thousands of dollars into a new video conference facility specifically designed for inter-Korean video talks in the next few months. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**International:**

- Just hours after North Korea announced Kim Jong Un's rise to general secretary of the country's ruling party, Chinese President Xi Jinping reportedly sent a congratulatory message to the DPRK leader. (Kelly Kasulis, *NK News*)
- Half a century ago North Korea engineered an exodus of sorts from Japan. With the support of Tokyo, more than 93,000 people made the journey to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Alas, almost all quickly regretted their decision. The issue could provide a spark for better relations. (Doug Bandow, *National Interest*)
- Japan said it would "never accept" North Korea as a nuclear weapons state, after a statement from Kim Jong Un during the regime's Eighth Party Congress. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- South Korea proposed to the incoming Joe Biden administration a reopening of dialogue with North Korea in the spirit of the 2018 Singapore summit. (Kang Tae-hwa, Shim Kyu-seok, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Days after Kim Jong Un said the United States is North Korea's "biggest enemy," President-elect Joe Biden announced a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) pick who experts say is likely to pursue back-channel talks with North Korea. (David Volodzko, *NK News*)
- Countries like North Korea and China have no respect for human rights and oppose other universal values such as democracy, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Monday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- A rare meeting of North Korea's ruling party has ended with a symbolically important new title for the country's leader, Kim Jong-un, speculation about the future of his influential sister, and a shot across the bow of the incoming US president. Less than two weeks before Joe Biden's inauguration, much of what Kim told the first congress of the ruling Workers' party for five years had a familiar ring to it. (Justin McCurry, *Guardian*)
- A local news report said Tuesday that the South Korean government is pressing the incoming Joe Biden administration in the US to recognize the Singapore joint statement

signed by US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un to pave the way for the possible resumption of the Washington-Pyongyang dialogue. (Lee Ji-yoon, *Korea Herald*)

- Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a message congratulating North Korean leader Kim Jong-un on his election as general secretary of the ruling party and called for strong relations between the two countries. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un celebrated his birthday with a long wish-list of new weapons. It included more accurate long-range missiles, super large warheads, spy satellites and a nuclear-powered submarine. The military plans announced during one of the biggest political events in North Korea in the last five years may sound threatening - and it is indeed a threat. But it's also a challenge. The timing of this message is key as it comes as US President-elect Joe Biden prepares to take office. (Laura Bicker, BBC)

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*News1* Source

**Biden Aide Also Says "Must be Cautious about the Anti-leaflet Law"**

Support for President's North Korea Strategy "President Moon is a Patient Peacekeeper"
Biden Will Reveal Engagement Policy regarding North Korea

[Seoul *News1*] Reporter Park Jaewoo 2021-01-09 11:30

Frank Jannuzi, President of the Mansfield Foundation and an aide to the U.S. president-elect, expressed concern for South Korea's anti-leaflet law: the revision to the Development of Inter-Korean Relations Act.

Although the U.S. Congress and the State Department under the Trump administration have expressed concern, this is the first time a Biden aide has taken a position on the anti-leaflet law.

From 1997-2012, President Jannuzi worked for the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and as Biden's aide when he was chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he is distinguished as one of Biden's closest aides. He visited Korea and met with Unification Minister Lee In-young and other ruling party officials before the U.S. presidential election in November of last year.

President Jannuzi disclosed in a written interview with *News1* today that, "Because I am an ardent supporter of the freedom of expression, legislation that restricts basic human rights activities raises my eyebrows."

He also emphasized, "We must be careful when it comes to the application of the anti-leaflet law so that basic rights to freedom of expression are not violated."

The anti-leaflet law prohibits disseminating anti-North Korea leaflets in border areas along the Military Demarcation Law. On the initiative of the ruling Democratic Party of Korea, the bill was passed in the National Assembly on the 14th of last month and promulgated on the 29th during a Cabinet meeting. This amendment will go into effect at the end of March this year.

However, President Jannuzi stated that a peaceful approach is the only solution for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and expressed support for the Moon Jae-in administration's North Korea policy. He stated, "nobody wants a war on the Korean peninsula, the conflict would destroy our lives, and the cost will be great."

In regard to the Biden administration's North Korea policy, he stated, "Biden has always argued for "including" North Korea, and assessed that, "Biden knows that peace on the Korean peninsula will not be easy, but essentially, he is an optimist." He also predicted, "I am confident that President-elect Biden will foster a spirit of peace and reconciliation on the Korean peninsula and will do his best for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

In regard to the Moon Jae-in administration's North Korea policy, he stated, "President Moon is a patient peacekeeper," and, "He gave North Korea the confidence the path to peace is a path that the two Koreas can walk together."

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Translated by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

*Daum* Source

**CIO: 1700 Active and Reserve Officers Under Scrutiny**
Yang Nak-gyu 2020. 11. 30. 11:27

[Military Reporter Yang Nak-gyu for Asia Economy] Upon launch of the Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials (CIO), it appears that 1700 general officers will be subject to investigation in the military alone. Within the military, there are both concerns about the inspection of "military discipline" and expectations that it may now be able to root out the chronic issue of chronic crimes that have been hushed up until now.

On the 30th, military officials stated that the target of the CIO's investigations are general officers. It is anticipated to include about 400 active-duty personnel and 1300 retired reservists. Because the maximum statute of limitations for crimes committed in the workplace 15 years, reservists employed by defense companies are also included. In preparation for the establishment of the CIO, the Ministry of National Defense dispatched two JAG (Justice Advocate General) officers and one jurist for six months from February to July. Considering that the Seoul Central District Prosecutors' Office dispatched four military prosecutors to the Investigation Department of the Defense Acquisition Program Administration, if the CIO requests the participation of military prosecutors, the Ministry of Defense may also dispatch additional officers.

The reason why some predict that this investigation will become the current government's attempt to control military discipline is because the CIO has immense power. According to Article 8 (4) of the CIO Act, the CIO prosecutor exercises the authorities of both prosecutor and military inspector. Subject to investigation include abuse of authority, dereliction of duty, leaking official secrets, and writing false official documents. CIO prosecutors can investigate the Ministry of National Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff, the headquarters of each military, and the military command and subordinate units at any time for criminal investigations.

Some expect this is an opportunity to root out corruption that has been perpetuated within the military. In the army for example, there was a record high of 89 internal public interest disclosures reported last year. This means that the number of cases has more than tripled from 26 in 2016. This is why observers say that if the CIO acts, it could help prevent corruption in the workplace.

This could investigate leaks of confidential information within the military and also reveal the connections between general officers and defense companies. In September, it was discovered that confidential information was leaked at the Agency for Defense Development (ADD). According to the ADD's own investigation, 46 out of 1,078 retirees were found to have leaked confidential information over the past four years and four months (January 2016 to April 2020). Including the 23 others who were under police investigation for the same charges, that is a total of 70 people. In particular, as the number of people subject to employment restrictions increased last year, some ADD employees reportedly resigned and many of them got jobs at defense companies. According to the employment review status of the government's Public Service Ethics Committee, 88 discharged soldiers (colonels dae-ryeong and above) applied for job screening at defense companies in the last five years (2014-2019). All but 17 were successful in getting the job.

There are also some voices of concern about the side effects of the investigation. In order to combat corruption in defense acquisition programs, the military and prosecutors have conducted joint investigations since 2014. Investigators said they have uncovered various corrupt projects worth nearly 1 trillion won and brought a total of 63 people, including 10 former and current military generals, to trial. However, the former Navy Chief of Staff who was arrested and charged for defense corruption and the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who sentenced in his first trial on charges of defense corruption and held in court custody, were acquitted one after another.

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Translated by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:

https://web.archive.org/web/20250727162756/https://mailchi.mp/862315a9d2a0/hrnk-news-items-biden-aide-says-must-be-cautious-about-anti-leaflet-law-cio-1700-active-and-reserve-officers-under-scrutiny?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, January 13, 2021**

## North Korea's Kim Talks Of New Weapons, But Leaves Door Open For Biden; SK testing missile as Pyongyang commits to nuclear program

**In North Korea:**
Demoted? Pushed aside? Fate of Kim Jong Un's sister unclear (AP, 1/13/21)
5 Key Takeaways from North Korea's Party Congress (*The Diplomat*, 1/13/21)
Kim Jong Un calls for nuclear strength, economic development (UPI, 1/13/21)
North's congress ends with threats, bluster (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 1/13/21)
North Korea continues to erect disease control stations at local markets (*Daily* NK, 1/13/21)
North Korea ends party meeting with calls for nuclear might (AP, 1/13/21)
N. Korean leader pledges to strengthen 'nuclear war deterrent' as party congress closes (*Yonhap*, 1/13/21)
North Korea's Kim Talks Of New Weapons, But Leaves Door Open For Biden (NPR, 1/13/21)
North Korea's Kim Yo Jong calls South Korean government a 'truly weird group' as key political meeting ends (CNN, 1/13/21)
N.K. leader's sister slams S. Korea over closely tracking military parade (*Yonhap*, 1/13/21)
N. Korea leaves 'many possibilities open' despite strong words at party congress (*Yonhap*, 1/13/21)
NK's nuclear aims a warning to Biden's US: experts (*The Korea Herald*, 1/13/21)
N. Korea to convene Supreme People's Assembly meeting this weekend (*Yonhap*, 1/13/21)
Yangang Province factories ordered to submit economic plans for Q1 2021 (*Daily* NK, 1/13/21)

**In South Korea:**
Report: South Korea testing new missile as Pyongyang commits to nuclear program (UPI, 1/13/21)
S. Korea plans underwater test of indigenous SLBM (*Yonhap*, 1/13/21)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Possibility of 2021 Moon-Kim summit drawing attention (*The Korea Times*, 1/13/21)

International:
Trump's meeting with Kim 'squandered' best chance to denuclearize N. Korea: Tillerson (*Yonhap*, 1/13/21)

US Ambassador to South Korea announces the end of his controversial tenure (*NK News*, 1/13/21)

**In North Korea:**

- Some say Kim Jong Un may have demoted his sister over general policy failures. Others, however, believe he could be worried about her rapid rise and increasingly high profile as he tries to bolster his domestic authority in the face of growing economic challenges. (Hyung Jin Kim, AP)
- North Korea is currently holding its Eighth Workers' Party Congress, setting forth key policy directions for this year and the near future. The event is significant as it's the first such congress held since 2016. Although still ongoing, leader Kim Jong Un's remarks over the past few days have offered several key insights on what direction North Korea may choose to take in 2021. (Gabriela Bernal, *The Diplomat*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un wrapped up a multi-day congress of the ruling Workers' Party with calls for economic development and a powerful nuclear weapons program in a closing address, state media reported on Wednesday. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- North Korea wrapped up a week-long Eighth Workers' Party Congress Tuesday with an address from leader Kim Jong-un proclaiming a redoubling of work on the regime's nuclear program. (Shim Kyu-Seok, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- With North Korea emphasizing "super-class" quarantine measures against COVID-19, the country's authorities are erecting quarantine stations at the entrance of local markets. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed all-out efforts to bolster his country's nuclear deterrent during a major ruling party meeting where he earlier laid out plans to work toward salvaging the broken economy. (Hyung Jin Kim, AP)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is calling for beefing up his country's nuclear and military capabilities, but appears to be leaving open the possibility for negotiation with the U.S., just days before President-elect Joe Biden takes office. (Anthony Kuhn, NPR)
- Kim Yo Jong, the younger sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and one of the country's most important political figures, has criticized South Korea's "idiot" authorities after they called attention to an apparent military parade held in the capital Pyongyang over the weekend. (Joshua Berlinger, Yoonjung Seo, Paula Hancocks, CNN)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un called for strengthening the country's nuclear capabilities as its ruling party's rare congress wrapped up, state media said Wednesday. (Choi Soo Hyang, *Yonhap*)
- The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un harshly criticized South Korea's military for closely tracking its military parade believed to have taken place in Pyongyang to celebrate a rare party congress. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea directed strong and unfriendly words toward South Korea and the United States during a recently concluded party congress but it still appears to be leaving "many possibilities open" for future policy directions, a top official said Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea wrapped up a rare eight-day party congress Tuesday, with its leader Kim Jong-un calling for stronger nuclear deterrence and maximum military power to round

off one of the biggest political events in Pyongyang in the last five years. (Ahn Sung Mi, *The Korea Herald*)

- North Korea plans to convene a parliamentary session in Pyongyang over the weekend in an apparent bid to follow up on decisions made during a recent ruling party congress, state media said Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean authorities reportedly issued a directive late last year that ordered factories, enterprises and collective farms to make all necessary preparations for carrying out their production plans for the first quarter of 2021. (Kim Yoo Jin, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea is developing a new submarine-launched ballistic missile and has tested the weapon at the Agency for Defense Development's Anheung test site, according to a local press report. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- South Korea is expected to carry out underwater tests of a home-grown submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) this year, having concluded ground tests, a source said Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The possibility of another summit between President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un this year is gaining attention thanks to moves by the Democratic Party of Korea. (Do Je-Hae, *The Korea Times*)

**International:**

- U.S. President Donald Trump wasted the best chance to denuclearize North Korea by agreeing to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, former U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said. (Byun-Duk Kun, *Yonhap*)
- On Wednesday, Harris announced his departure on Twitter, confirming a previous April 2020 report from Reuters. A U.S. Embassy spokesperson confirmed to *NK News* that his final day in the role will be Jan. 20, with Rob Rapson serving as Charge d'Affaires ad interim until a new ambassador arrives. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)

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Prepared by Tristin Schultz, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250923032541/https://mailchi.mp/3921d0c40b0f/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-koreas-kim-talks-of-new-weapons-but-leaves-door-open-for-bidensk-testing-missile-as-pyongyang-commits-to-nuclear-program?

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**Thursday, January 14, 2021**

## U.S. ambassador to S. Korea confirms departure, defends alliance; South Korea Working on $360,000 Video Room for North Korea Talks

**In North Korea:**

At least 30 suspected COVID-19 cases emerge after New Year's performance (*Daily NK*, 01/14/2021)
Kim Jong-un Uses Party Congress to Double Down on Nuclear Program (*New York Times*, 01/13/2021)
Musan County residents asked to provide their best winter clothes to soldiers (*Daily NK*, 01/14/2021)
N.K. holds performance to celebrate party congress, no mention of military parade (*Yonhap*, 01/14/2021)
North Korea rehearses military parade on Wednesday after Kim Yo Jong's warning(*NK News*, 01/13/2021)
North Korean parade likely kicks off in Pyongyang, formation aircraft spotted (*NK News*, 01/14/2021)
North Korea's Kim wraps up rare party congress with mass art performance(*Reuters*, 01/13/2021)
Pacemakers and prosthetics: Russia exports only medical ware to DPRK in November (*NK News*, 01/14/2021)
Supreme People's Assembly, explained: Why North Korea is on the political move (*NK News*, 01/14/2021)
Time to shift focus on arms control with North Korea: experts (*Korea Times*, 01/14/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Seoul to fund survey on separated families (*Korea Herald*, 01/14/2021)
S. Korea to boost capabilities to counter N.K. missile threats: defense ministry(*Yonhap*, 01/14/2021)
S. Korea to spend 800 mln won to conduct surveys on separated families (*Yonhap*, 01/14/2021)
South's missiles are keeping up with North's (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/14/2021)

Inter-Korean Relationship:
N.K. signals room for improvement in inter-Korean relations at party congress: ministry (*Yonhap*, 01/14/2021)
South Korea Working on $360,000 Video Room for North Korea Talks (*National Interest*, 01/13/2021)

**International:**
Concerns arising over Biden's national security team (*Korea Times*, 01/14/2021)
Fighting for the Hook: A Forgotten Battle of the Korean War (*National Interest*, 01/14/2021)
Incoming Biden administration understands 'urgency' of NK nuke issues: Seoul official (*Yonhap*, 01/14/2021)
Suga hopes Olympics can build bridge to Pyongyang (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/14/2021)
U.S. ambassador to S. Korea confirms departure, defends alliance (*UPI*, 01/13/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea held a New Year's performance with crowds of people gathered together despite the country's "emergency anti-epidemic" efforts against COVID-19. Since the

performance, however, suspected cases of COVID-19 have reportedly emerged, including deaths. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)

- As North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un, convened a party congress over the past eight days, outside analysts wondered if his failure to improve the economic lives of his people would affect the dictator's nuclear ambitions. (Choe Sang-Hun, *New York Times*)
- North Korean military authorities are reportedly forcing ordinary people in North Hamgyong Province's Musan County to give clothing to soldiers because they are unable to properly provide them with winter outfits. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has attended a mass art performance held to celebrate the recently concluded party congress, state media said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea kicked off its post-Party Congress celebratory events on Wednesday with a concert attended by leader Kim Jong Un, but a planned military parade promised by Kim's sister still has not been held, according to state media. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- A much-anticipated parade event appears to have finally begun in Pyongyang, an informed source told NK News, with military aircraft flying in formation above Pyongyang's Kim Il Sung square on Thursday evening. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un wrapped up a rare congress at a mass indoor art performance on Wednesday, state media said, but made no mention of a reported military parade. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- North Korea is facing its toughest trade shutdown in years, but an unusual string of medical devices — namely, pacemakers and prosthetics — still managed to cross the border in November, according to new Russian Federal Customs Service (FCS) data. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- North Korea just wrapped up an eight-day-long political event where thousands of delegates gathered in crimson halls to discuss the country's future. But leader Kim Jong Un probably won't have long to rest: Pyongyang will hold another important event called the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA) in just a few days. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's pledge to boost his country's nuclear arsenal during its latest party congress is leaving little room for compromise on Pyongyang's complete denuclearization. (Kang Seung-woo, *Korea Times*)

**In South Korea:**

- The Ministry of Unification on Thursday said it will spend 800 million won ($727,000) to carry out a survey of families separated by the 1950-53 Korean War, to check their status and to prepare for possible future family reunions. (Ahn Sung-mi, *Korea Herald*)
- South Korea will further boost its military capabilities to counter North Korea's short-range missile threats, the defense ministry said Wednesday, after Pyongyang vowed to bolster its nuclear arsenal amid a deadlock in negotiations with the United States. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)
- The government decided Thursday to spend 800 million won (US$728,000) to conduct surveys on families separated by the 1950-53 Korean War in a bid to check the state of surviving families and hear their needs. (*Yonhap*)
- An arms race in missiles is heating up on the Korean Peninsula with South Korea developing its own submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) to match North Korea's. (Shim Kyu-seok, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- North Korea appears to have left some room for improvement in inter-Korean relations despite its harsh words against Seoul during a recently concluded party congress, the unification ministry said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- The government of South Korea is planning a modern-day version of that communications tool, a "special room" that will be used for video-chatting for high-level discussions with North Korea. It will feature such technologies as "'high-quality, full HD' cameras, four ninety-eight-inch LED displays, booths for simultaneous interpretations as well as a system that allows Seoul to 'use a separate network to communicate with a remote area.'" (Stephen Silver, *National Interest*)

**International:**

- As President-elect Joe Biden puts together his national security team, diplomatic experts here are expressing concerns that his policy toward North Korea may follow in the footsteps of the Barack Obama administration's "failed" diplomatic efforts. (Kang Seung-woo, *Korea Times*)
- United Nations forces fought a series of bloody battles with Chinese and Korean Communists for a piece of strategic real estate known as "the Hook." (Warfare History Network, *National Interest*)
- The incoming U.S. administration of Joe Biden is fully aware of the "urgency" of North Korea's nuclear issues, and South Korea is ready to closely work with Washington to draw up the "most effective" countermeasures as soon as the new government takes office, a Seoul official said Thursday. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga Wednesday said he would seek dialogue with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un "without preconditions" by taking advantage of the Summer Olympics in Tokyo this year. (Shim Kyu-seok, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Harry Harris said he is leaving his post next week, more than two years after arriving in the country to serve as the Trump administration's top diplomatic envoy. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

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Prepared by Timothy Goo, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250727163256/https://mailchi.mp/ad98ec5e37fb/hrnk-news-itemsus-ambassador-to-s-korea-confirms-departure-defends-alliancesouth-korea-working-on-360000-video-room-for-north-korea-talks?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, January 15, 2021**

## A Message to the Incoming Biden Administration – Pay Attention to North Korea

**Top News:**

**A Message to the Incoming Biden Administration – Pay Attention to North Korea(*HRNK Insider*, 01/14/2021)**

**In North Korea:**

Amid Coronavirus, North Korea Parades New Submarine-Launched Missile In Latest Show Of Strength (*India Times*, 01/15/2021)
Gomdok Mine is in the midst of a "90-day battle" (*Daily NK*, 01/15/2021)
HRW: North Korea used COVID-19 restrictions to step up control (*UPI*, 01/14/2021)
Kim Jong Un Offers a Rare Sneak Peek at North Korea's Weapons Program (*The Wall Street Journal*, 01/15/2021)
Kim Jong-un puts on show of force after Workers party congress – in pictures (*The Guardian*, 01/14/2021)
Kim Jong-un vows to boost North Korea's nuclear arsenal (*Euronews*, 01/15/2021)
Kim Jong Un's New Weapons at North Korea Parade Could Be Warning to Biden(*Newsweek*, 01/15/2021)
N. Korea displays new submarine-launched ballistic missile during parade (*Yonhap*, 01/15/2021)
N Korea holds huge military parade as Kim vows nuclear might (*AP News*, 01/14/2021)
N. Korea holds military parade, showcases new SLBM (*Yonhap*, 01/15/2021)
N. Korea seen staging military parade: source (*Yonhap*, 01/14/2021)
North Korea bolsters arsenal with 'world's strongest weapon' (*Nikkei Asia*, 01/15/2021)
North Korea Could Soon Get 4G Cell Service: Report (*National Interest*, 01/14/2021)
North Korea displays ballistic missiles at parade (*The Hill*, 01/14/2021)
North Korea holds huge military parade ahead of Biden inauguration (*Euronews*, 01/15/2021)
North Korea Holds Nighttime Military Parade After Party Congress (*The Diplomat*, 01/15/2021)
North Korea parades 'world's most powerful weapon' (*The Times*, 01/15/2021)
North Korea shows off new submarine-launched missiles after rare party congress(*Reuters*, 01/14/2021)
North Korea Shows Off New Submarine-Launched Missile at Military Parade (VOA, 01/15/2021)
North Korea staged nighttime military parade, reports say (UPI, 01/14/2021)
North Korea stages military parade after rare party congress: Yonhap (*Reuters*, 01/14/2021)
North Korea to hold marathon 'virtually' (*The Korea Times*, 01/15/2021)
North Korea Unveils New Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile (*The New York Times*, 01/15/2021
North Korea unveils new submarine-launched missile (*BBC*, 01/15/2021)
North Korea unveils new submarine-launched missile at parade (*The Japan Times*, 01/15/2021)
North Korea unveils new submarine-launched missiles in huge military parade(*Independent*, 01/15/2021)
North Korea unveils submarine-launched ballistic missile at military parade (CNN, 01/14/2021)
North Korea unveils 'world's most powerful weapon' (01/14/2021, UPI)
North Korea unveils 'world's strongest weapon' at military parade (*The Telegraph*, 01/15/2021)
North Korea's Missiles and Nuclear Weapons: Everything You Need to Know (*The Wall Street Journal*, 01/15/2021)
Military parade pressures Biden to take North Korea seriously (*The Korea Times*, 01/15/2021)
Parsing what was noteworthy from Kim Jong Un's closing address (*Daily NK*, 01/15/2021)
Profile: North Korean leader Kim Jong-un (*BBC*, 01/15/2021)
Recap: Top moments at North Korea's Eighth Party Congress (*NK News*, 01/15/2021)

Travel to North Korea possible during Pyongyang Marathon, tour operator says (*UPI*, 01/15/2021)
'World's strongest weapon': North Korea touts new missile at military parade (*NK News*, 01/14/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Seoul's top nuke envoy holds phone talks with Biegun after N.K. party congress(*Yonhap*, 01/15/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
During a Second Korean War, the DMZ Would Become a Sea of Fire (*National Interest*, 01/14/2021)

**International:**
Biden's 'Asia tsar' appointee adds to a wave of focus on North Korea and China (*NK News*, 01/14/2021)
[Contribution] The boys and the frogs: How can Biden stop NK from being 'stoned'(*Korea Herald*, 01/14/2021)
Indonesian company fined $1 million for selling cigarette papers to North Korea (*NK News*, 01/15/2021)
Like his predecessors, Biden faces a formidable task with North Korea (*The Hill*, 01/15/2021)
North Korea Could Spell Trouble for Biden (*Heritage*, 01/15/2021)
North Korea No Longer Poses a Threat, So Says Trump Administration (*National Interest*, 01/14/2021)
Statues in Africa traced back to North Korean artists making money for regime (*NK News*, 01/15/2021)
The U.S. Army Has Plans to Deal with North Korean Nukes (*National Interest*, 01/15/2021)
What Biden Should Know About North Korea's New Nuclear Plans (*Carnegie*, 01/15/2021)

**Top News:**

- As the Biden administration gets underway amidst ongoing political strife in the U.S., signs of a progressively destabilizing North Korea might not get the level of recognition required to ensure coordinated plans are in place to deal with regional instability. (George Hutchinson, *HRNK Insider*)

**In North Korea:**

- While rest of the world continues to focus on vaccination drives to fight coronavirus, North Korea continues to add to their military arsenal, as witnessed in their latest show of strength. (Basit Aijaz, *India Times*)
- Gomdok Mine, which experienced significant damage from typhoons last year, recently began a "90-day battle" to boost production, Daily NK has learned. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea has used measures against COVID-19 that led to greater repression, Human Rights Watch said in a new report. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)

- North Korea has long kept its adversaries on their toes with taunting rhetoric and surprise weapons tests. (Timothy W. Martin, *The Wall Street Journal*)
- Pyongyang hosted a military parade to celebrate the Workers' party's 8th Congress where Kim Jong-un took the new title of 'general secretary'. (*The Guardian*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has vowed to boost the country's nuclear arsenal. It came as the nation showed off developmental ballistic missiles at a military display on Thursday. (*Euronews*)
- North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un unveiled new weapons at Thursday's military parade in Pyongyang, in what could be a warning to President-Elect Joe Biden that his forces stand ready if bilateral ties continue to deteriorate into a fresh crisis on the Korean peninsula. (David Brennan, *Newsweek*)
- North Korea showcased yet another new submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) in just three months during a recent military parade, experts said Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea rolled out developmental ballistic missiles designed to be launched from submarines and other military hardware in a parade that punctuated leader Kim Jong Un's defiant calls to expand his nuclear weapons program. (Kim Tong-Hyung, AP News)
- North Korea staged a military parade Thursday evening in central Pyongyang, showing off its state-of-the-art weapons, including a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM), state media reported Friday. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea appeared to have staged a military parade on Thursday, a South Korean government source said, after Pyongyang wrapped up a rare party congress with calls to bolster its nuclear arsenal. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea on Thursday displayed what it called "the world's strongest weapon" at a grand military parade in Pyongyang to mark the close of the isolated nation's Eighth Party Congress. (Gabriela Bernal, *Nikkei Asia*)
- But now, after more than twelve years, there are indications that North Korea might finally be upgrading—to 4G. (Stephen Silver, *National Interest*)
- North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un during a parade Thursday displayed several new submarine-launched ballistic missiles to close out a week of political meetings, Reuters reports. (Cameron Jenkins, *The Hill*)
- North Korea rolled out developmental ballistic missiles designed to be launched from submarines and other military hardware in a massive nighttime parade (*Euronews*)
- North Korea held a military parade to commemorate the ruling Workers' Party's Eighth Congress, with leader Kim Jong Un in attendance, on the evening of January 14. This is the first time that North Korea has held a military parade to commemorate a Party Congress. (Mitch Shin, *The Diplomat*)
- North Korea paraded a ballistic missile designed to be launched from a submarine, in an implicit threat to the United States and a new assertion of military power and determination days before the swearing in of Joe Biden. (Richard Lloyd Parry, *The Times*)
- North Korea displayed what appeared to be a new submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) at a parade on Thursday night, state media reported, capping more than a week of political meetings with a show of military might. (Josh Smith, Sangmi Cha, *Reuters*)
- North Korea has unveiled what it says is a new submarine-launched ballistic missile, the latest apparent development in its fast-advancing weapons program. (William Gallo, VOA)

- North Korea appeared to have staged a Thursday evening military parade after the regime's Eighth Party Congress, during which Kim Jong Un was endorsed as the Workers' Party's general secretary. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- The parade, which was not shown live on the isolated nation's state media, began between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. (0900-1000 GMT) and was still going on as of 8 p.m., Yonhap cited an unnamed South Korean government source as saying. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- North Korea will hold its annual international marathon event this year — virtually — according to the official website of the competition and Koryo Tours, the official event partner of the marathon, Friday. (Kim Rahn, Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- A month before the U.S. presidential election, North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un, held a military parade that featured what appeared to be the country's largest-ever intercontinental ballistic missile. (Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*)
- North Korea has unveiled a new type of submarine-launched ballistic missile, described by state media as "the world's most powerful weapon". (BBC)
- North Korea showed off a new submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) during a military parade, state media said Friday, revealing yet another weapon experts say is likely to put Japan in its crosshairs and lay the foundation for a longer-range solid-fueled rocket. (Jesse Johnson, *The Japan Times*)
- North Korea unveiled a new submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) in a military parade in Pyongyang that marked the end of a rare party congress. (Mayank Aggarwal, *Independent*)
- North Korea has celebrated the end of a rare political meeting by unveiling what appears to be a missile designed to be fired from a submarine. (Joshua Berlinger, CNN)
- North Korea held a military parade in Pyongyang and unveiled a new submarine-launched ballistic missile it called the "world's most powerful weapon," state media reported on Friday, days ahead of the inauguration of U.S. President-elect Joe Biden. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- Wearing a giant furry hat, black leather jacket and a beaming smile, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un introduced "the world's strongest weapon" – a new submarine-launched ballistic missile – at a nighttime parade on Thursday in Pyongyang. (Nicola Smith, *The Telegraph*)
- North Korea sees its nuclear program as essential to regime survival, serving to deter a U.S.-led invasion. Decades of denuclearization talks, economic sanctions and diplomacy have done little to slow Pyongyang's advance to becoming a self-declared nuclear state. (Timothy W. Martin, *The Wall Street Journal*)
- North Korea used a Thursday evening military parade marking its latest party congress as a fully calibrated warning to the incoming Joe Biden administration in an attempt to keep its focus on its nuclear program and extract concessions from the United States, according to diplomatic experts. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- The Eighth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea ended on Jan. 12. It continued for eight days after starting on Jan. 5. The motto of the Congress, which spent a fairly long time evaluating past years and preparing for the country's next five-year plan, was "Congress for Work, Struggle and Progress." (Ahn Jong Sik, *Daily NK*)

- When Kim Jong-un took control of North Korea at just 27, the world knew very little about him - but a state-sanctioned personality cult was about to swing into action. (*BBC*)
- Last week, crowds of uniformly-dressed North Korean delegates gathered in the crimson halls of Pyongyang's April 25 House of Culture to kick off the Eighth Party Congress on Jan. 5. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea could be reopening its borders temporarily to foreign visitors during the Pyongyang Marathon, while offering runners the option of a "virtual" race. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- North Korea rolled out a submarine-launched ballistic missile that it dubbed "the world's strongest weapon" at a military parade on Thursday with leader Kim Jon Un reportedly watching heavy-armored vehicles rally by and aircraft fly overhead. (Colin Zwirko, Kelly Kasulis, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- Noh Kyu-duk, South Korea's chief nuclear negotiator, spoke by phone with U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun on Friday and discussed North Korea issues following a key party congress in the communist state, the foreign ministry said. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- In any cross-border attack, the longer it takes for the KPA to win, the more likely it is the United States and South Korea will prevail. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest)*

**International:**

- A day after the White House declassified a document outlining President Trump's goals in the Indo-Pacific, President-elect Joe Biden named his top adviser for the region in an all-new role that signals unprecedented focus on countries like North Korea and China. (David Volodzko, *NK News*)
- It is time to pursue a drastic change of thought, action and strategy to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue and turn North Korea into a pro-US ally. (*Korea Herald*)
- An Indonesian paper manufacturer was fined more than $1 million for violating sanctions by selling cigarette papers to North Korea in exchange for U.S. dollar wire payments. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- The North Koreans, a South Korean colleague once remarked to me, consider opaqueness a national security asset. Certainly, the recently concluded five-year Congress of the North Korean Workers' Party had its share of conflicting signals and provided a feast for analysts to chew over. (Christopher R. Hill, *The Hill*)
- North Korea has been relatively quiet until recently, but that looks like it is changing. Keeping the Hermit Kingdom from becoming President-elect Joe Biden's first crisis could well require learning some lessons from what the outgoing administration of President Trump got right. (James Jay Carafano, *Heritage*)
- Approximately one week before the administration dissolves, the White House declassified the 2018 U.S. Strategy Framework for the Indo-Pacific region—a ten-page document that served as the intellectual spine to the Trump administration's overall policy in Asia. (Daniel R. DePetris, *National Interest*)
- A new report suggests that two North Korean artists are using a front company to make the DPRK dollars. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)

- Special emphasis is placed on reconnaissance and intelligence collection to identify WMD sites. The manual distinguishes between seizing WMDs, which means using force to capture them from the enemy, and securing sites so that no one manages to walk off with a nuke or a nerve-gas bomb in the confusion. (Michael Peck, *National Interest*)
- Despite North Korea's low profile throughout the coronavirus pandemic so far, the country's nuclear and missile programs have hummed along. Now, as U.S. President-elect Joe Biden prepares to enter the White House, North Korea may accelerate its plans. (Ankit Panda, *Carnegie Endowment*)

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Prepared by Sophia Hapin, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250727163649/https://mailchi.mp/798de31712c1/hrnk-news-items-a-message-to-the-incoming-biden-administration-pay-attention-to-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, January 16, 2021**

## When dealing with North Korea, human rights must take priority; North Korea could become one of Biden's biggest challenges

**Top News:**
When dealing with North Korea, human rights must take priority (*The Christian Post*, 01/15/2021)

**In North Korea:**
It's not about nukes. The real news is North Korea's dangerous economic reforms. (*NK News*, 01/15/2021)
Key Results of The Eighth Party Congress in North Korea (Part 1 of 2) (*38 North*, 01/15/2021)
Military parade in Pyongyang features new SLBMs (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/15/2021)
North Korean Leader's Sister Retains Power Despite Formal 'Demotion' (*Radio Free Asia*, 01/15/2021)
North Korea Plans to Further Develop its Nuclear Strike Capabilities Despite Economic Constraints (*38 North*, 01/15/2021)
North Korea's Newest Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile, Same as the Old One? (*38 North*, 01/15/2021)

**International:**
North Korea could become one of Biden's biggest challenges — and not just because of its nukes (*The Washington Post*, 01/15/2021)
S. Korea's military strength 6th in world, N. Korea at 28th: report (*Yonhap*, 01/16/2021)

**Top News:**

- The North Korean capital of Pyongyang greeted the new year with singing, dancing, and fireworks as the national anthem played at midnight on December 31st. Beyond the staged Pyongyang crowd and across the rest of the darkened country, the reaction to another year under the Kim regime may have received a less warm welcome —especially in the numerous political prison camps thought to detain an estimated 120,000 people, according to the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea. (Arielle Del Turco, *The Christian Post*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea pursued economic reform for the last 10 years, but decisions at the Party Congress will undo that progress. (Andrei Lankov, *NK News*)
- The Eighth Congress of the Korean Workers' Party (KWP, or simply the party) was held in the DPRK from January 5 to January 12, 2021. Such events are rare occasions during which the work of the past is officially analyzed, and strategic goals are set for the immediate and mid-term future. The last such Congress occurred in 2016, after a hiatus of 36 years since the Sixth Party Congress of 1980. (Ruediger Frank, *38 North*)
- North Korea unveiled a new submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) in a massive nighttime military parade to commemorate its recent Eighth Workers' Party Congress, state media reported Friday. (Shim Kyu-seok, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's sister Kim Yo Jong has been assigned a new title and removed from the country's highest decision-making body, but after she called out South Korea in an insult-laden tirade this week, experts said her relative power remains intact in the dynastic regime. (Eugene Whong, *Radio Free Asia*)
- At the recent Eighth Party Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK), North Korean leadership announced plans and programs to expand its nuclear deterrent—specifically, the development of miniaturized nuclear warheads, tactical nuclear weapons, multiple independently-targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs), solid-fuel ballistic missiles of varying ranges, nuclear propulsion systems for submarines, and hypersonic boost-glide vehicles. (Olli Heinonen, *38 North*)
- Last week, North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un presented a detailed report to the Eighth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea highlighting the nation's successes in building a nuclear force while also laying out the party's plans for the next five years. Kim pledged to "further strengthen the nuclear war deterrent" by developing and fielding several new systems, including "ultra-modern tactical nuclear weapons," "hypersonic gliding flight warheads," "multi-warhead" missiles, reconnaissance satellites, a nuclear-powered submarine, and solid-fuel, land- and submarine-launched, and intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). (Michael Elleman, *38 North*)

**International:**

- President Biden and his team will have a plethora of urgent issues to address upon taking office, above all the pandemic, economic recovery and race relations. Yet chances are good that, just as in past presidential transitions, North Korea will find a way to put itself on the front burner. In the past, the Kim regime drew attention to itself with provocations involving missiles and nuclear tests, and that could be the case in 2021 as well. Yet Biden and his team should be on their guard against another form of North

Korea crisis — one involving a catastrophic mix of covid-19, nuclear weapons and a collapsing economy. (Victor Cha, *The Washington Post*)
- South Korea ranked 6th in the world in terms of military strength this year, an annual military power index showed, while North Korea ranked 28th in the world with 0.4684 this year, down from last year's 25th, according to the index. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Hayley Noah, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250727164029/https://mailchi.mp/06d43f680046/hrnk-news-itemswhen-dealing-with-north-korea-human-rights-must-take-prioritynorth-korea-could-become-one-of-bidens-biggest-challenges?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, January 17, 2021**

## State-Sponsored Human Trafficking and How to Fight It; UK: "Discussing the Anti-leaflet Law with South Korea

**Top News:**
VIRTUAL EVENT: State-Sponsored Human Trafficking and How to Fight It (*Youtube*, 01/15/2021)
**UK: "Discussing the Anti-leaflet Law with South Korea… Supporting Freedom of Expression" (RFA, 01/12/2021)
**UK Foreign Ministry "Discussion about Anti-leaflet Law with South Korea… Close Interest" (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 01/13/2021)

** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

In North Korea:
How Big of a Threat are North Korea's 200,000 Special Forces? (*National Interest*, 01/17/2021)
N. Korea set for Supreme People's Assembly session following party congress(*Yonhap*, 01/17/2021)
North Korean parliament to convene to approve Kim's agenda (AP *News*, 01/17/2021)
Recap: What North Korea rolled out at its Eighth Party Congress military parade (NK *News*, 01/16/2021)

**International:**
Experts split over NK's nuclear missile threat (*The Korea Herald*, 01/17/2021)

**Top News:**

- Human trafficking in all forms is abhorrent, but when governments enslave and sell their own people, it takes on an even more pernicious edge. 2020 marked the first year that the State Department designated state sponsors of human trafficking, with ten nations, including North Korea, earning the dubious distinction. Greg Scarlatoiu, the Executive Director of HRNK, explains that North Korea's entire extractive industry and other areas of economy are tainted by forced labor. Oversee North Korean workers, especially in China and Russia, are working under terrible conditions and their salaries are confiscated up to 90 percent. He concluded that collaboration between the US government and recipient countries of North Korean workers is important. (*Youtube*)
- The British Foreign Ministry has stated on the 11th that it has discussed South Korea's discussed so-called anti-leaflet law with the South Korean government and disclosed that it supports the freedom of expression. British lawmakers are also reportedly planning to discuss the bill in the future. Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, told RFA on the 12th that the British Foreign Ministry's spokesperson's response shows that Britain is emphasizing the influx of information into North Korea, saying that "it's a message of support for freedom of expression and the UK had stood firmly by the human rights of the people of North Korea." (Ji Jung-eun, *RFA*)
- The British Foreign Ministry said that it held discussions with the South Korean government about what is called the Anti-Leaflet Law. International humanitarian groups sent a joint letter to Foreign Minister Dominic Raab on the 20th of last month regarding the anti-leaflet law. This was signed by Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK); Ben Rogers, co-chairman of the UK Conservative Party's human rights commission; and South Korean National Assemblymen Thae Yong-ho and Ji Sung-ho of the United Front Party. (*Dong-A Ilbo*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean special forces have evolved from a nuisance force designed to stage attacks in the enemy's rear into something far more dangerous. Their ability to distribute nuclear, chemical, biological, or radiological weapons could, if successful, kill thousands of civilians. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- North Korea is to kick off a parliamentary session in Pyongyang on Sunday in an apparent legislative step to follow up on the country's ruling party congress that recently ended. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's rubber-stamp parliament was scheduled to convene Sunday to pass decisions made by a major ruling party meeting where leader Kim Jong Un vowed maximum efforts to expand his nuclear weapons program in face of what he described as U.S. hostility. (Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)
- While the Oct. 2020 parade set a new precedent for flashy new armament, Thursday's military parade not only lacked significant new introductions of conventional weaponry, but the armament on display was in fact identical to the last event — down to individual vehicles and infantry units. (Joost Oliemans, *NK News*)

**International:**

- North Korea experts are divided over the seriousness of the threat posed by the missiles revealed Thursday at North Korea's latest military parade attended by leader Kim Jong-un. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)

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RFA Source

**UK: "Discussing the Anti-leaflet Law with South Korea… Supporting Freedom of Expression"**

Washington Ji Jung-eun jij@rfa.org
2021-01-12

Anchor: The British Foreign Ministry has stated that it has discussed South Korea's discussed so-called anti-leaflet law with the South Korean government and disclosed that it supports the freedom of expression. British lawmakers are also reportedly planning to discuss the bill in the future. This is Ji Jung-eun reporting.

Nigel Adams, the British Minister of State for Asia, stated in a letter sent to David Alton, a member of the House of Lords, on the 11th, "We have discussed the scope of the law with the South Korean government and will continue to take a close interest in how it is implemented."

Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu of the U.S.-based Commission for Human Rights in North Korea told Radio Free Asia on the 12th that Lord Alton and others sent a joint letter to British Foreign Minister Dominic Raab on the 20th of last month in regard to the anti-leaflet law and Minister Adams sent a similar response.

According to Lord Alton's website, the joint letter was signed by a number of human rights activists including Lord Alton, Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu, South Korean National Assemblymen Thae Yong-ho and Ji Sung-ho of the United Future Party, and co-chairman Ben Rogers of the UK Conservative Party's human rights commission.

The letter was sent before the announcement of the anti-leaflet law and calls for the British government to raise questions about the bill with South Korea.

In the letter, Minister Adams stated, "We know about this bill that bans certain activities along the inter-Korean border that has been signed by the current president of South Korea, Moon Jae- in, and are also aware of the concerns of many people, including Lord Alton."
He revealed that, "Britain will work with South Korea, its regional partners and non-profit organizations to find the best way to help North Koreans enjoy human rights and will work for a peaceful resolution to this issue on the Korean Peninsula."

Minister Adams also emphasized, “We are committed to improving human rights in North Korea, and improved freedom of expression, freedom of religion or belief and increased access to information by North Korean citizens are fundamental to these efforts.

Additionally, he stated that, “Giving North Koreans greater exposure to the outside world is the primary goal of Britain’s activities in North Korea,” and added, “South Korea is an important partner in these activities, and we will communicate and cooperate closely with the South Korean government on the common goals of Korea and Britain.”

A spokesperson for the British Foreign Ministry responded to a request for comment regarding the anti-leaflet law from RFA on the 12th stating, “The United Kingdom supports efforts to improve human rights conditions in North Korea, including freedom of expression and access to information.”

The spokesperson continued, “The UK supports efforts to improve human rights in North Korea, including freedom of expression and access to information. We work closely with regional partners on promoting human rights and wider security issues on the Korean Peninsula.”

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, told RFA on the 12th that the British Foreign Ministry’s spokesperson’s response shows that Britain is emphasizing the influx of information into North Korea.

Director Scarlatoiu: Basically it’s a message of support for freedom of expression, and the European Union and the United Kingdom have stood firmly by the human rights of the people of North Korea, in particular, the freedom of information and the freedom of access to information.

Meanwhile, Lord Alton who also signed the letter told RFA on the 12th when asked about future activities related to the bill, “The All-Party Parliamentary Group on North Korea… we are planning other events in January and February to discuss the issues contained in the bill.”

Ben Rogers, co-chairman of the UK Conservative Party’s human rights commission, who also signed the letter told RFA today, “British Parliament and human rights groups will monitor the situation closely and consider what can be done in the future.”

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Translated by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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*Dong-A Ilbo* Source

**UK Foreign Ministry “Discussion about Anti-leaflet Law with South Korea… Close Interest”**

Newsis 2021-01-13

"Will work with South Korea and others to find the best way to help human rights for North Koreans"

The British Foreign Ministry said that it held discussions with the South Korean government about what is called the Anti-Leaflet Law (Amendment to the Development of Inter-Korean Relations Act).

According to Radio Free Asia on the 12th, Nigel Adams, the British Minister of State for Asia, sent a letter to British Lord David Alton on the 11th that stated the following.
Minister Adams explained in the letter, "We have discussed the scope of the law with the South Korean government and will continue to take a close interest in how it is implemented."

Minister Adams also stated, "Britain will work with South Korea, its regional partners and non-profit organizations to find the best way to help North Koreans enjoy human rights and will work for a peaceful resolution to this issue on the Korean Peninsula."

He also added, "We are committed to improving human rights in North Korea, and improved freedom of expression, freedom of religion or belief and increased access to information by North Korean citizens are fundamental to these efforts."

He said, "Giving North Koreans greater exposure to the outside world is the primary goal of Britain's activities in North Korea," and added, "South Korea is an important partner in these activities, and we will communicate and cooperate closely with the South Korean government on the common goals of Korea and Britain."

According to the report, this letter was in response to Lord Alton's joint letter to Foreign Minister Dominic Raab on the 20th of last month regarding the anti-leaflet law.

In addition to Lord Alton, the joint letter was also signed by Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK); Ben Rogers, co-chairman of the UK Conservative Party's human rights commission; and South Korean National Assemblymen Thae Yong-ho and Ji Sung-ho of the United Front Party.

A spokesperson from the British Foreign Ministry responded today to a request for comment regarding the anti-leaflet law from RFA stating, "The United Kingdom supports efforts to improve human rights conditions in North Korea, including freedom of expression and access to information." In addition, they said, "We work closely with regional partners on promoting human rights and wider security issues on the Korean Peninsula."

Meanwhile, Lord Alton is reportedly planning an event to discuss the anti-leaflet law in a bipartisan meeting of lawmakers on the North Korean issue either this month or next month.

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Translated by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Jungeun Lee, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250727164612/https://mailchi.mp/6162ab5a2c77/hrnk-news-items-state-sponsored-human-trafficking-and-how-to-fight-ituk-discussing-the-anti-leaflet-law-with-south-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, January 18, 2021**

# Why U.S. Commitment to Korea Matters; U.S. State Department Ambassador-at-Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons

**Top News:**
Why U.S. Commitment to Korea Matters (*Korea Defense Veterans Association*, 01/16/2021)
**U.S. State Department Ambassador-at-Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons "North Korean Government is involved in human trafficking" (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 01/15/2021)
**British Foreign Ministry "Will Continue to Take Close Interest in Anti-Leaflet Law"(*Christian Today*, 01/13/2021)
**OHCHR "Will Correspond with China for Detained North Korean Escapees" (*RFA*, 01/15/2021)

** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**
Ahead of Biden Taking Office, North Korea Doubles Down on Its Nuclear Weapons(*National Interest*, 01/18/2021)
Almost half of Kim Jong-un's cabinet is replaced (*Korea Joongang Daily*, 01/18/2021)
Cigarette paper sales to North Korea go up in smoke with $2.5 million in fines (*NK News*, 01/18/2021)
Moon calls on Biden to move forward from Singapore agreement with North Korea(*Korea Times*, 01/18/2021)
Moon urges Biden to learn from Trump's N. Korea diplomacy (*AP News*, 01/18/2021)
New year, same claims: North Korea says it has zero cases of COVID-19 (*NK News*, 01/18/2021)
N. Korea convenes parliamentary meeting after party congress (*Yonhap*, 01/18/2021)
N. Korea's parliament rubber stamps new development plans (*AP News*, 01/18/2021)

North Korea begins crafting a scapegoat as top leaders vow to fix economic woes(*NK News*, 01/17/2021)
North Korean authorities in Onsong County order people to "eradicate street cats"(*Daily NK*, 01/18/2021)
North Korean Military Thinking is Stuck in the Korean War (*National Interest*, 01/18/2021)
North Korea replaces economy-related Cabinet members (*Korea Times*, 01/18/2021)
North Korea's missile and nuclear programme (BBC, 01/18/2021)
North Korea witnesses disturbing fluctuations in commodity prices, exchange rates(*Daily NK*, 01/18/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Biden is about to be president, and Moon wants him to undo Trump's mistakes (*NK News*, 01/18/2021)
Biden should build on Singapore summit, says president (*Korea Joongang Daily*, 01/18/2021)
Moon says S. Korea-U.S. exercise could be discussed with N. Korea if necessary(*Yonhap*, 01/18/2021)

**International:**
Biden Can Make Progress Where Trump Failed on North Korea (*National Interest*, 01/18/2021)
Joe Biden Has a Nuclear Choice to Make on North Korea (*National Interest*, 01/18/2021**)**

**Top News:**

- As the U.S. ushers in a new administration, there will undoubtedly be many policy changes. A commitment to the Korean Peninsula is critical to achieve U.S. security goals. An obvious component of U.S. commitment is the U.S.-ROK military alliance, but human rights also has a significant role to play. New policies on North Korea should be ready to consider the importance of both security and human rights issues, all under the broader umbrella of U.S. commitment to the security of the Republic of Korea. (Hayley Noah, *Korea Defense Veterans Association*)
- A senior U.S. State Department official disclosed that the North Korean government is involved in human trafficking, according to VOA on the 14th. Subjecting residents to forced labor domestically and abroad is considered human trafficking. Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, stated, "This is a regime that focuses all available resources on its top strategic objective which is its own survival… In order to survive, this regime exploits and oppresses its own people at home and abroad." (*Dong-A Ilbo*)
- RFA reported on the 12th that Nigel Adams, the British Foreign Ministry, held discussions with the South Korean government regarding South Korea's "Law Banning the Launch of Anti-North Korea Leaflets" and that Britain supports the freedom of expression. In RFA's interview that day with Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), he stated that Lord Alton and others sent a joint letter to British Foreign Minister Dominic Raab on the 20th of last month in regard to the anti-leaflet law and Minister Adams sent a similar response. (Kang Eileen, *Christian Today*)

- The UN OHCHR disclosed on the 15th that they are corresponding with China to protect a group of North Korean escapees detained there. Attorney Amanda Morwedt Oh with the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea told RFA that the testimonies of North Korean defectors and the 2014 UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in North Korea (COI)'s report clearly demonstrate that North Korean defectors who have been repatriated are subject to persecution. (Ji Jung-eun, RFA)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's hard-line statements about his country's relationship with the United States and planned weapons program advances reflect Pyongyang's long-term policy of building up its offensive capabilities as a means of protecting its interests and as a bargaining chip in negotiations with Washington. (Stratfor Worldview, *National Interest*)
- North Korea overhauled its cabinet in response to the economic failures of the past five years during a session of its rubber-stamp legislature, state media reported Monday. (Shim Kyu-seok, *Korea Joongang Daily*
- Just three days after an Indonesian company was fined $1 million for selling cigarette paper to North Korea, the same company was fined another $1.5 million in a double-whammy of penalties for sanctions violations. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- President Moon Jae-in underlined an agreement reached between the U.S. and North Korea in Singapore in 2018 as a starting point for diplomacy under the incoming Joe Biden administration during a New Year press conference, Monday. (Do Je-hae, *Korea Times*)
- South Korea's president on Monday urged the incoming Biden administration to build upon the achievements and learn from the failures of President Donald Trump's diplomatic engagement with North Korea. (Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)
- North Korea continues to claim that it has zero confirmed cases of COVID-19 as of Jan. 10, according to new numbers reported to the World Health Organization (WHO). (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- North Korea convened a parliamentary session in Pyongyang over the weekend to discuss personnel, budget and other issues in a follow up on decisions made during a recent ruling party congress, state media said Monday. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's rubber-stamp parliament has passed decisions made by a major ruling party meeting where leader Kim Jong Un vowed to bolster his nuclear deterrent and established plans to salvage the country's battered economy. (Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)
- North Korean officials vowed to address the country's economic failures by asserting more control over its markets and placing greater responsibility on the nation's Cabinet in a sweeping move that has sparked concern among some analysts. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- As North Korea's excessive measures in response to COVID-19 continue into the new year, authorities in Onsong County have recently issued an extraordinary order to "eradicate street cats," according to a source. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- When North Korean and American last met in open battle, it was seventy years ago and the Communists only faced poorly trained American and South Korean conscripts

armed with World War II weapons. Today they would face professional American soldiers and well-trained South Korea conscripts. (Michael Peck, *National Interest*)

- North Korea carried out a massive cabinet reshuffle in posts related to economic affairs during a meeting of the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA), the North's rubber-stamp legislature, Sunday, showing its commitment to, and the urgency for, quick economic recovery, experts said. (Jung Da-min, *Korea Times*)
- North Korea has made rapid progress in its weapons programme, which it claims is necessary to defend itself against a possible US invasion. Pyongyang started 2021 off with a bang, unveiling what state media has described as "the world's most powerful weapon". (BBC)
- With the start of the new year, market prices in North Korea appear to be unstable. The USD-KPW exchange rate has plummeted once again, and the price of a kilogram of rice has fallen below the KPW 4,000 range. Meanwhile, the price of corn is – oddly – rising. (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un may have unveiled his new weapons wishlist earlier this month, but South Korean President Moon Jae-in is still urging Washington to pick up where Trump left off in terms of diplomacy and denuclearization. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- President Moon Jae-in said he looks forward to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un making a visit to the South in the future, reaffirming his belief that Kim still has the "will for peace, dialogue and denuclearization" in his New Year's press conference Monday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea Joongang Daily*)
- President Moon Jae-in said Monday that South and North Korea can discuss issues regarding joint military exercises between Seoul and Washington if necessary through a joint military committee as agreed upon during a 2018 inter-Korean summit. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- While Trump's immediate goal of CVID may have failed, the incoming Biden administration has a chance to capitalize on an environment in which the North Koreans have tested neither nuclear weapons nor long-range ballistic missiles since prior to the first summit with Trump. (Matt Abbott, *National Interest*)
- The incoming Biden administration needs to come to terms with that fact and start thinking about ways to apply some measure of arms control on North Korea's growing nuclear arsenal before Kim starts crossing the few technical thresholds that he has not crossed yet. (Eric Gomez, *National Interest*)

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Prepared by Jungeun Lee, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250727164920/https://mailchi.mp/f3ad58b2e571/hrnk-news-itemswhy-us-commitment-to-korea-mattersus-state-department-ambassador-at-large-to-monitor-and-combat-trafficking-in-persons?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

**Sunday, January 19, 2021**

# Trade between China and North Korea plummeted by 81% in 2020; North Korea approves smaller increase in 2021 budget, reports say

**In North Korea:**
Exclusive: Daily NK obtains materials explaining specifics of new "anti-reactionary thought" law (*Daily NK*, 01/19/2021)
If Kim Jong Un destroyed North Korea's economy to keep Covid-19 out, will sanctions stop him from pursuing nuclear weapons? (CNN, 01/18/2021)
N.K. leader urges devotion from newly elected members of Cabinet, ruling party (*Yonhap*, 01/19/2021)
N. Koreans doubt Kim's plans for 'self-sufficient' economy: RFA (*The Korea Herald*, 01/19/2021)
North Korea approves smaller increase in 2021 budget, reports say (*UPI*, 01/19/2021)
North Korea on brink of famine as secretive state further cuts itself off from the world (*The Telegraph*, 01/19/2021)
'The people are God': See North Korea's new propaganda slogans and posters (*NK News*, 01/19/2021)
Some businesspeople in North Korea are selling their market stalls (*Daily NK*, 01/19/2021)
Three months on, North Korea still hasn't opened its prized Pyongyang hospital (*NK News*, 01/18/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Controversy over anti-North Korean leaflets (*The Korea Times*, 01/19/2021)
FM Kang vows strong ties with Biden admin for denuclearization and peace (*The Korea Herald*, 01/19/2021)
Moon's changing stance on Japan linked to North Korea engagement: experts (*The Korea Times*, 01/19/2021)
President Moon Is Still Hopeful for North Korea Talks (*The Diplomat*, 01/19/2021)
S. Korea ready to talk any issues with N. Korea to ease tensions: defense ministry (*Yonhap*, 01/19/2021)
S. Korea says it keeps family of killed fisheries official informed about probe progress (*Yonhap*, 01/19/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**
Cabinet passes revision bill on inter-Korean exchanges aimed at facilitating cooperation (*Yonhap*, 01/19/2021)

**International:**

Biden's team may roll back rapprochement with Pyongyang (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/19/2021)
'Hope alone is not a course of action': US official gives parting words on DPRK (*NK News*, 01/19/2021)
N.Korea's trade with China plunges 80% as COVID-19 lockdown bites (*Reuters*, 01/19/2021)
North Korea's Kim could be planning missile launch to welcome Biden administration (*The Washington Post*, 01/18/2021)
Outgoing U.S. envoy warns about Pyongyang (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/19/2021)
Trade between China and North Korea plummeted by 81% in 2020 (*NK News*, 01/19/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Daily NK recently obtained explanatory material for the law against "reactionary thought," which was adopted in December during a meeting of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly. (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)
- The young leader's ambitious plans for modernizing his nuclear arsenal will prove expensive, at a time when money is already tight. North Korea voluntarily severed the last of its scant ties with the outside world in 2020 to prevent an influx of Covid-19. That included cutting off almost all trade with Beijing, an economic lifeline the impoverished country needs to keep its people from going hungry. (Joshua Berlinger, CNN)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un urged the newly appointed members of the Cabinet and the ruling party to devote themselves to the country and serve the people like "God," as he held a photo session with them, state media said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Koreans are growing skeptical of the so-called "self-sufficient" economy that their leader Kim Jong-un champions, Radio Free Asia said Monday, citing anonymous sources there. North Koreans complained that they had yet to get their usual New Year's gifts, calendars, and that put things in perspective. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea's budget increased at a lower rate for 2021 than last year at a session of the Supreme People's Assembly on Sunday, according to Seoul's unification ministry. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- No one knows if the family of four who died in November in the square outside Musan train station were victims of the cold or of starvation but the bodies were reportedly removed by North Korean security officials. (Julian Ryall, *The Telegraph*)
- Three new propaganda posters promoting the top-line slogans and ideals for 2021 were released on Tuesday, according to the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). Some were already displayed at a mass rally in downtown Pyongyang last Friday during celebrations marking the end of the country's Eighth Party Congress, and posters will likely soon be displayed on streets and in public buildings and factories nationwide. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Some businesspeople in North Hamgyong Province who had barely made a living through trading have suffered such severe economic setbacks that they have already or are planning to sell their market stalls. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea's Eighth Party Congress came and went without any grand opening of the Pyongyang General Hospital, the country's premier construction project that already passed its original deadline in October. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- Controversy seems to be growing over the amendment to the Development of Inter-Korean Relations Act aimed at imposing a ban on floating anti-North Korea leaflets across the border since its unilateral passage by the National Assembly last December. (Kim Joon-hyung, *The Korea Times*)
- Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha on Tuesday vowed to strengthen the alliance with US under the incoming Joe Biden administration to achieve denuclearization and peace on the Korean Peninsula. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- President Moon Jae-in's apparent shift in tone on Japan over the two countries' multiple disputes on historical issues is seen as part of his peace initiative of engaging North Korea, diplomatic experts said Tuesday. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- The presidential Blue House hosted a New Year's press conference on January 18, utilizing a hybrid in-person and online format to hold the conference safely in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. (Mitch Shin, *The Diplomat*)
- South Korea is ready to discuss any issues with North Korea via military channels to ease cross-border tensions, the defense ministry said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- The government has provided as much information about its ongoing probe as possible to the family of a South Korean fisheries official killed by North Korea's military in the sea last year, a report to a U.N. body showed Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- The government on Tuesday approved a proposal for the revision of its inter-Korean exchange act that will allow cross-border projects to receive financial support in case of their suspension, the unification ministry said. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- U.S. President-elect Joe Biden's appointment of seasoned Obama-era officials to his foreign policy team — many who have been critical of President Donald Trump's outreach to Pyongyang — is raising questions over how far the new administration will roll back Trump's North Korea policy. (Shim Kyu-seok, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- America's ambassador to South Korea is urging North Korea and the United States to continue talks, but said that leader Kim Jong Un missed his "opportunity" to make progress with President Donald Trump in recent years. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korea's trade with China plunged more than 80% last year, Chinese customs data has shown, as the isolated country's strict coronavirus lockdown encumbers an economy already burdened by international sanctions. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- North Korea appears to be taking steps toward a new test of a powerful submarine-launched missile, U.S. weapons experts said, as it steadily dials up the pressure on President-elect Joe Biden. (Simon Denyer, Joby Warrick, *The Washington Post*)
- Harry Harris, the outgoing U.S. ambassador to South Korea, said in a virtual forum Tuesday that "hope alone" will not resolve the North Korea denuclearization problem, while underscoring the importance of joint military exercises between Seoul and Washington. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- According to newly-released official trade data, that answer is now here: Total Chinese-DPRK trade fell by 80.7% year-over-year, according to Dec. 2020 data from the Chinese General Administration of Customs (GAC). Of that, total exports of Chinese

goods to North Korea fell by 80.9%, while total imports of North Korean goods into China fell by 77.7%. (Min Chao Choy, NK *News*)

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Prepared by Kathryn Wernke, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250727165340/https://mailchi.mp/51da5d70adbc/hrnk-news-itemstrade-between-china-and-north-korea-plummeted-by-81-in-2020north-korea-approves-smaller-increase-in-2021-budget-reports-say?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, January 20, 2021**

## Restrictions on movement in North Korea are causing "severe side effects"; North Korean defectors arriving in the South drop by 78%

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea tightens antivirus campaign as party congress, military parade end (*Yonhap*, 1/20/21)
North Korea cracks down on foreign media, speaking styles (*Reuters*, 1/20/21)
North Korea's Arsenal: With Guns like These, Who Needs Enemies? (*National Interest*, 1/20/21)
North Korean defectors arriving in the South drop by 78% in 2020 — a record low (*NK News*, 1/20/21)
Number of N.K. defectors plunges in 2020 amid North's border closure (*Yonhap*, 1/20/21)
Onsong County family in trouble for holding wedding party amid COVID-19 (*Daily NK*, 1/20/21)
Restrictions on movement in North Korea are causing "severe side effects" (*Daily NK*, 1/20/21)
Soldiers, civilians stage joint rallies in N. Korea in support of party decisions (*Yonhap*, 1/20/21)

**In South Korea:**
Defense Ministry promotes talks with North Korea (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 1/20/21)
Moon reshuffles to concentrate on North, security (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 1/20/21)
Moon's security adviser tapped as top diplomat amid stalled peace talks (*The Korea Herald*, 1/20/21)
New foreign minister named ahead of Biden inauguration (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 1/20/21)
Seoul to procure enough COVID-19 vaccines for North, South Korea (UPI, 1/20/21)
South Korea to replace Kang Kyung-wha, the nation's first woman foreign minister (*NK News*, 1/20/21)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**
The Second Korean War Will Be a Global Catastrophe (*National Interest*, 1/20/21)

**International:**
Analysts weigh in on Moon-Biden partnership (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 1/20/21)
Back to the drawing board on North Korea, says Blinken (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 1/20/21)
Biden's secretary of state nominee vows to 'increase pressure' on North Korea (*NK News*, 1/20/21)
Blinken indicates changing course in North Korea policy (*The Korea Times*, 1/20/21)
Blinken says U.S. is 'better positioned' to deal with N. Korea when working with allies (*Yonhap*, 1/20/21)
Understanding N. Korean capabilities important part of intelligence: DNI nominee (*Yonhap*, 1/20/21)
U.S. expert voices skepticism over N.K. push for nuke sub (*Yonhap*, 1/20/21)
U.S. will review entire N. Korea policy, consider humanitarian aid: Blinken (*Yonhap*, 1/20/21)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea is stepping up antivirus efforts and tightening border control to ward off the new coronavirus, state media reported Wednesday, as major political events attended by thousands of delegates wrapped up last week in the capital city. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea is imposing stiff fines or prison for anyone caught enjoying South Korean entertainment or copying the way South Koreans speak as leader Kim Jong Un steps up a war on outside influences and calls for better homegrown entertainment. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- Infantry weapons have long been a pillar of the North Korean People's Army, or KPA for short. The KPA that invaded South Korea was largely an infantry army, and despite significant mechanization in the 1970s, the foundation of the army has been its infantry forces. Today, the bulk of the KPA's 1.1 million army is infantry, with approximately 200,000 light infantry and special forces. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- In total, 229 North Koreans settled in the South last year, a 78% decrease from the 1,047 defectors who settled in the country in 2019. South Korea has been publishing official data on new defector arrivals for roughly two decades. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- The number of North Koreans defecting to South Korea dropped sharply last year apparently due to the North's border closure to prevent an outbreak of the coronavirus, government data showed Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- A source in North Hamgyong Province told Daily NK on Monday that an Onsong County family that had invited a lot of guests to a wedding ceremony now faces punishment, along with the people who attended the ceremony. (Kim Yoo Jin, *Daily NK*)
- Food shortages have become a widespread phenomenon, and there was even an incident near the China-North Korea border where a villager was reportedly shot dead while searching for food. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- Soldiers and civilians staged joint rallies across North Korea, calling for nationwide cooperation to carry out new policies and decisions made during a recent rare party congress, state media reported Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's Defense Ministry on Tuesday said it was ready to hold military talks with North Korea on "any matter" for the sake of reducing tensions on the peninsula. (Shim Kyu Seok, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- President Moon Jae-in on Wednesday replaced key members of his cabinet and aides at the Blue House, naming Chung Eui-yong, a former presidential chief for national security affairs, as the new foreign minister. (Ser Myo Ja, Kang Tae Hwa, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- President Moon Jae-in's longtime aide who has served as his top security adviser since the presidential campaign, Chung Eui-yong, 74, has been nominated to serve as foreign minister. (Lee Ji Yoon, *The Korea Herald*)
- President Moon Jae-in on Wednesday replaced three ministers, naming Chung Eui-yong, a former presidential aide for national security affairs, as the new foreign minister. (Ser Myo Ja, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea is preparing to secure more COVID-19 vaccines via technology transfer from U.S. manufacturers Novavax Inc. and Moderna, allowing the country to produce local doses and enough potential vaccines for North and South Korea. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- After witnessing the revival of inter-Korean diplomacy, South Korean foreign minister Kang Kyung-wha will step down from her position and pass the torch to a former security official, the presidential Blue House announced on Wednesday. (Won Gi Jung, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- It is also hard to understand how the Korean troops would be able to play a leading role while everyone knows here that should a war start, Korea will not have military operational control. If that possibly means Korean soldiers will mostly engage in ground warfare while the U.S. military provides naval and aerial support as some experts allege, the plan needs to be reconsidered. (Michael Peck, *National Interest*)

**International:**

- Analysts stress that building chemistry with the new U.S. government will be especially important for South Korea, and point out some key discrepancies in the viewpoints of the Biden and Moon administrations on diplomatic and security issues, especially regarding North Korea. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- President-elect Joe Biden's nominee for secretary of state, Antony J. Blinken, said Tuesday a wholesale review of U.S. policy toward North Korea was in order, signaling the new administration's intent to dial up pressure on the regime over its nuclear weapons. (Shim Kyu Seok, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- With President Donald Trump facing his final day in office, the Joe Biden administration is already making it clear that it's ready to review and redo his controversial North Korea policy. Speaking at his confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Tuesday, secretary of state nominee Antony Blinken said that North Korea has been a "hard problem that has plagued administration after administration" and that it "has not gotten better." (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- U.S. State Secretary nominee Antony Blinken hinted Tuesday that the Joe Biden administration may entirely rethink its policies toward North Korea, claiming that under

Donald trump the situation with Pyongyang has deteriorated considerably. (Kang Seung Woo, *The Korea Times*)

- Secretary of State-designate Antony Blinken on Tuesday vowed efforts to improve U.S. relations with allies, saying the country is "far better positioned" to deal with threats from North Korea and other adversaries when it works with friendly nations. (Byun Duk Kun, *Yonhap*)
- Understanding North Korea's capabilities and true intentions is a critical role of U.S. intelligence, the nominee for U.S. director of national intelligence said Tuesday. (Byun Duk Kun, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea appears to be "many, many years" away from developing a nuclear-powered submarine loaded with a ballistic missile, a U.S. rocket expert said Wednesday, after leader Kim Jong-un unveiled the ambitious goal last week. (Song Sang Ho, *Yonhap*)
- The new U.S. administration of Joe Biden plans to review the country's entire approach and policy toward North Korea, Biden's secretary of state nominee said Tuesday. (Byun Duk Kun, *Yonhap*)

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Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250923025833/https://mailchi.mp/479f08b0ab35/hrnk-news-itemsrestrictions-on-movement-in-north-korea-are-causing-severe-side-effectsnorth-korean-defectors-arriving-in-the-south-drop-by-78

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**Tuesday, January 21, 2021**

## Biden's swearing-in raises hope, uncertainty for alliance with S. Korea; Foreign Ministry's top priority is talks with Pyongyang

**In North Korea:**
A hospital fire broke out in Hyesan on January 7 (Daily NK, 1/21/21)
Chinese ships in North Korea drop by 30% after years of rampant, illegal fishing (NK News, 1/21/21)
COVID-19 crushed North Korea's illegal poaching endeavors in Russia (NK News, 1/21/21)
North Korea allows some people with relatives overseas to write letters asking for help (Daily NK, 1/21/21)
Tainted with stigma, a North Korean defector school has nowhere to go (NK News, 1/21/21)

**In South Korea:**
(LEAD) Foreign ministry hails Biden's pledge to strengthen alliances (The Korea Herald, 1/21/21)
Hunt is on for vaccination centers nationwide (Korea JoongAng Daily, 1/21/21)
Moon congratulates Biden, says 'America is back' (Korea JoongAng Daily, 1/21/21)
Moon reaffirms commitment to engagement with North Korea (The Korea Herald, 1/21/21)

Moon's main task | Opinion (Korea JoongAng Daily, 1/21/21)
Overlooked and undermined | Opinion (Korea JoongAng Daily, 1/21/21)
With Trump gone, Moon hopes to fix the diplomatic deadlock with North Korea (NK News,1/21/21)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**
(News Focus) Biden's swearing-in raises hope, uncertainty for alliance with S. Korea(Yonhap, 1/21/21)
Defense ministry vows push for regular inter-Korean military talks, swifter OPCON transfer (Yonhap, 1/21/21)
Foreign Ministry's top priority is talks with Pyongyang (Korea JoongAng Daily, 1/21/21)
(2nd LD) Moon vows close cooperation with Biden for Korea peace process(Yonhap, 1/21/21)
Two Koreas look toward new relationship with Biden (The Korea Herald, 1/21/21)
Unification minister vows to restart Korea peace process in cooperation with Biden administration (Yonhap, 1/21/21)

**International:**
(News Focus) Biden's speech signals better ties with Seoul, less drama with Pyongyang (Yonhap, 1/21/21
(2nd LD) Biden takes office with pledge to repair alliance, U.S. leadership (Yonhap, 1/21/21)
'We must end this uncivil war,' Biden says, taking over a U.S. in crisis (Reuters, 1/21/21)

**In North Korea:**

- A source in Yanggang Province told Daily NK yesterday that a fire broke out at People's Hospital No. 2 in Songbong District, Hyesan, on Jan. 7. Nobody was hurt or wounded, but "almost all the medical equipment was burnt up," according to the source. (Lee Chae Un, Daily NK)
- Nearly four years ago, U.N. sanctions banned North Korea from selling its seafood abroad or peddling fishing permits that grant access to its domestic waters — both profitable enterprises that could, in theory, fund the country's nuclear program. But Chinese vessels have continued to buy these permits, plucking squid to the point of seriously depleting North Korea's marine stock. (Min Chao Choy, NK News)
- Chinese industrial fishing in North Korean waters has driven down the DPRK's fish stocks to dangerously low levels. In response to that competition, North Korean fishermen often traverse to neighboring Russian waters and illegally poach there — but now, a new report suggests that this activity has mostly stopped in the COVID-19 era. (Min Chao Choy, NK News)
- As North Koreans continue to suffer from growing economic difficulties due to COVID-19, North Korean authorities have informed people they may ask for help from relatives living overseas, Daily NK has learned. (Jong So Yong, Daily NK)
- Squeezed between a lineup of touristy pork cutlet restaurants and trendy coffee shops, Seoul's only government-recognized school for North Korean defectors stands out as an outlier filled with outliers. (Won-Gi Jung, NK News)

**In South Korea:**

- The foreign ministry on Thursday welcomed new U.S. President Joe Biden's pledge to strengthen alliances, saying it will work with Washington to that end and seek an early summit between the two countries. (Yonhap)
- The Korean government will open 250 Covid-19 vaccination sites this year as the first batch of doses are expected to arrive in coming weeks, the Ministry of Interior and Safety said Thursday. (Lee Sung-Eun, Korea JoongAng Daily)
- President Moon Jae-in sent a congratulatory message to newly inaugurated U.S. President Joe Biden, stressing Korea's commitment to "unwavering coordination" with the United States, said the Blue House Thursday. (Sarah Kim, Korea JoonAng Daily)
- President Moon Jae-in reaffirmed his commitment to reviving the stalled nuclear talks with North Korea at a meeting Thursday, where he was briefed by his security aides on major initiatives this year to improve inter-Korean relations and South Korea's ties with the outside world. (Choi Si-young, The Korea Herald)
- Joe Biden was sworn in as the 46th president of the United States in Washington Wednesday. We hope the new U.S. president successfully unifies a sharply divided country as seen in fanatical Trump supporters' insurrection on the Capitol and rebuilds America's global leadership. (Korea JoongAng Daily)
- Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha was expected to serve through the five years of the Moon Jae-in administration, but she didn't last. (Yoo Jee-Hye, Korea JoongAng Daily)
- Ever since former U.S. President Donald Trump walked out on North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at the Hanoi Summit nearly two years ago, negotiations with Pyongyang have largely fallen into a diplomatic deadlock. (Jeongmin Kim, NK News)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- With an eventful chapter of unorthodox American diplomacy over, the launch of the Joe Biden administration is raising both hope and uncertainty for its alliance with South Korea, as the two countries face an unpredictable North Korea, a muscle-flexing China and an array of challenges from within their partnership. (Song Sang-ho, Yonhap)
- The defense ministry vowed Thursday to hold military talks with North Korea on a regular basis this year to promote peace on the Korean Peninsula, while beefing up defense capabilities to counter its evolving nuclear and missiles threats. (Oh Seok-min, Yonhap)
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs underscored that reviving North Korea-U.S. dialogue is a top priority in its policy report on major diplomatic tasks for 2021 released Thursday. (Sarah Kim, Korea JoongAng Daily)
- President Moon Jae-in pledged Thursday to maintain close partnerships with the new U.S. administration, chairing a rare plenary session of the National Security Council (NSC) hours after Joe Biden's inauguration. (Yonhap)
- Gone are the days when the leaders of the US and North Korea exchanged "love letters" -- or threats of "fire and fury." (Ahn Sung-mi, The Korea Herald)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young said Thursday he will seek to advance the Korean Peninsula peace process and come up with realistic solutions for North Korean denuclearization in cooperation with the new U.S. administration. (Yi Wonju, Yonhap)

**International:**

- North Korea is and will continue to be a major challenge for the new U.S. administration, but not as great a challenge as other domestic issues such as the pandemic, at least for now, as evidenced by President Joe Biden's inaugural address on Wednesday. (Byun Duk-kun, Yonhap)
- Joe Biden became the 46th president of the United States on Wednesday, promising to repair the country's global leadership, as well as its relationship with allies. (Byun Duk-kun, Yonhap)
- Joe Biden was sworn in as president of the United States on Wednesday, offering a message of unity and restoration to a deeply divided country reeling from a battered economy and a raging coronavirus pandemic that has killed more than 400,000 Americans. (Trevor Hunnicutt, Patricia Zengerle, Jarrett Renshaw, Reuters)

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Prepared by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250727165911/https://mailchi.mp/32404a9e2216/hrnk-news-items-bidens-swearing-in-raises-hope-uncertainty-for-alliance-with-s-koreaforeign-ministrys-top-priority-is-talks-with-pyongyang?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, January 22, 2021**

## China wants DPRK to be a threat; NK Defectors Call on Biden to Focus on Human Rights; Defections From NK Plummet Due To Pandemic

**Top News:**
China wants the DPRK to be a threat. @GregScarlatoiu, @GordonGChang (*The John Batchelor Show*, 01/20/2021)
North Korean Defectors Call on Biden to Focus on Human Rights (VOA, 01/21/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Defections From North Korea Plummet Due To Pandemic (*Forbes*, 01/22/2021)
Health tips for PC use on state TV (*North Korea Tech*, 01/21/2021)
Nearly half of N. Koreans undernourished, worst in Asia-Pacific: UN report (*Korea Herald*, 01/22/2021)
N. Korea ranks worst in undernourishment in Asia-Pacific region (*Yonhap*, 01/22/2021)
N. Korea's Budget Revenue, Expenditure Growth Plunge This Year (KBS, 01/22/2021)
'No likelihood of North Korea collapse with Kim in complete control' (*Korea Times*, 01/22/2021)
North Korea bans foreign children in restaurants and shops to combat COVID-19(*NK News*, 01/22/2021)
North Korea begins human testing of its own COVID-19 vaccine (*Daily NK*, 01/22/2021)

North Korea has criticised Australia's human rights record during a United Nations review (SBS, 01/21/2021)
North Korea says it's 'gravely concerned' about Australian human rights abuses (*NK News*, 01/22/2021)
North Koreans suffer from high-ranking hunger, but nearly a third are overweight (*NK News*, 01/22/2021)
The ins and outs of North Korea's smartphone security authentications bypass program, Bidulgi (*Daily* NK, 01/22/2021)
The Sepho Tableland: Changing Food Production in Marginal Areas (*38 North*, 01/21/2021)

**In South Korea:**

Moon Jae-in congratulates Biden, seeks close cooperation on North Korea (UPI, 01/21/2021)
Pres. Moon nominates Chung Eui-yong as foreign minister (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 01/21/2021)
South Korea desperately needs to upgrade its defense tech, experts say (*NK News*, 01/22/2021)
Unification ministry announces guidelines on leafleting ban to clarify 'scope of application' (*Yonhap*, 01/22/2021)
Why Seoul's foreign minister nominee won't be able to score Moon more summits(*NK Pro*, 01/22/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

Moon Jae-in Should Refocus South Korean Foreign Policy Away From North Korea(*National Interest*, 01/22/2021)
South Korea remains on guard for provocations from North (UPI, 01/21/2021)
'The big hunt': When North Korean agents almost killed South Korea's president (*NK News*, 01/21/2021)

**International:**

After Trump setbacks, Kim Jong Un starts over with Biden (*AP News*, 01/22/2021)
Aligned with reality (*Korea Herald*, 01/22/2021)
Asian allies embrace Biden as China bids Trump 'good riddance' (*Nikkei*, 01/21/2021)
A UN treaty banned nukes, but the biggest nuclear powers didn't sign it (*NK News*, 01/22/2021)
China, Russia finally agree with UN on conversion rate for North Korean fuel cap (*NK Pro*, 01/22/2021)
Consistency key to denuclearizing N. Korea: U.S. experts (*Yonhap*, 01/22/2021)
Gov't could discuss S. Korea-U.S. military drills issue with N. Korea (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 01/22/2021)
Okinawans and former North Korea abductees urge Biden to take initiative (*Japan Times*, 01/22/2021)
Seoul should refrain from 'prioritizing' U.S.-N.K. summit with Biden: U.S. expert(*Yonhap*, 01/22/2021)
Singapore deal Moon wants Biden to inherit was flawed: US experts (*Korea Herald*, 01/22/2021)
Tour operator scraps Pyongyang Marathon itineraries amid China outbreak (UPI, 01/21/2021)
U.N. Report: More than 45% of North Koreans undernourished (UPI, 01/21/2021)

**Top News:**

- Greg Scarlatoiu: Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea; and Gordon Chang, @GordonGChang, Daily Beast, in re: North Korea, ballistic missiles.

It's a post-Communist, post-industrial dynastic [tyranny]. Nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, at the expense of human rights and security of its own people, where people starve and freeze. China supports DPRK and has for decades. NK SLBMs replicate China's, showing a close military alliance. China wants DPRK to be a threat. (*The John Batchelor Show*)

- As President Joe Biden was sworn into office Wednesday, North Korean defectors living throughout the United States expressed hope that his administration would place North Koreans' human rights above Pyongyang's nuclear weapons and deal forcefully with leader Kim Jong Un. "If [the Biden administration] focuses more attention on North Korean human rights, it can lead to a result that grants legitimacy to the people, the residents of North Korea," said Jake Kim, a 38-year-old North Korean defector who arrived in the U.S. in 2015 and is studying political science at Utah Valley University, a public institution in the city of Orem. "But when you ignore human rights and focus on nuclear weapons and Kim Jong Un, it can end up legitimizing Kim Jong Un's regime," he told VOA Korean Service. Kim added, "I think the issue of North Korea's nuclear weapons will be resolved when human rights issue is resolved first." (Hyun Suk Kim, Yanghee Jang, VOA)

**In North Korea:**

- On Wednesday, South Korea's Unification Ministry announced that the number of North Korean defectors arriving in the south has collapsed, primarily due to Pyongyang tightening its border security amid the Covid-19 pandemic. North Korea still has not confirmed a single case of Covid-19, a claim experts consider spurious, and shoot-to-kill orders have reportedly been issued in all border areas to prevent any possible transmission. Attempts to directly cross the heavily fortified Demilitarized Zone are rare and most defectors first go to China before making an attempt to enter South Korea via a third country, a journey that often takes years. Last year, Seoul also introduced restrictions on travel from third countries due to Covid-19 which also impacted defections. (Niall McCarthy, *Forbes*)
- North Korean workplaces aren't renowned for being particularly high-tech, but a new program on state television hints at increasing PC use and associated health problems. The program called "콤퓨터사용과 건강관리," or "Computer Use and Health," sets the scene by saying computer use is expanding but can bring unwanted health problems including eye strain, back and muscle pain and insomnia. (Williams Martin, North Korea Tech)
- Nearly five out of ten North Koreans were undernourished from 2017 to 2019, the highest in the Asia-Pacific region, the UN said in an inter-agency report. East Timor and Afghanistan followed. In the same period, seven out of ten North Korean children aged two or below did not have minimum acceptable diet. (Choi Si-young, *Korea Herald*)
- North Korea was ranked the worst in terms of prevalence of undernourishment among its population in the Asia-Pacific region, a report showed Friday. According to the report jointly compiled by the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Food Programme and other global agencies, more than 45 percent of the North's population was suffering from undernourishment from 2017-2019. (*Yonhap*)
- A government think tank in Seoul has reported that the growth of North Korea's budget revenue and expenditures is estimated to be the lowest in nearly two decades. Choi

Ji-young, a researcher at the Korea Institute for National Unification(KINU), said on Friday that budget revenue in the North will grow zero-point-nine percent and expenditures one-point-one percent compared to last year. (KBS)

- Former U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Harry Harris said North Korea is not likely to collapse in the next several years, noting Kim Jong-un is in "complete control" over the repressive state. "I think they're doing okay. There's challenges up there but I don't see a likelihood (of collapse) in the next several years," he told The Korea Times on his last day at the office, Jan 20. "I believe that we should not count on the collapse of North Korea." (Yi Whan-woo, *Korea Times*)
- North Korea has banned the children of foreign diplomats and humanitarian workers from visiting restaurants and shops. The ruling is the latest in a series of increasingly severe restrictions on the shrinking ex-pat community in Pyongyang, apparently implemented to prevent the spread of COVID-19. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- North Korea has begun human testing of a COVID-19 vaccine the country is developing and the country's vaccine developers are using manufacturing know-how stolen through "hacking activities" conducted late last year. (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea, a largely isolated totalitarian dictatorship, has called on Australia to end "deep-rooted racism" and cease inhumane treatment in detention centres during a United Nations human rights review. (Maani Truu, SBS)
- After dozens of countries railed against Australia's treatment of refugees and indigenous people at a United Nations meeting this month, North Korea is also jumping in to say that it's "gravely concerned" about human rights in Australia — despite its own long-documented record of abuses. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- Suffering from both widespread hunger and poverty, nearly half of North Koreans are undernourished — the highest rate out of all Asia-Pacific countries measured — while nearly a third of adults are considered overweight, according to a new U.N. report. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- Daily NK recently obtained a copy of "Bidulgi 1.01," a program that can bypass the smartphone security authentications that were recently put into place by North Korean authorities on the country's smartphones.M un Chong Hyun, the head of the ESTsecurity Security Response Center (ESRC), provided Daily NK with the program, explaining that it and another program, "Chammae," convert non-North Korean files on mobile phones. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- Satellite imagery allows us to assess the buildup of livestock facilities throughout the Sepho Tableland, but it is difficult to determine what that means in terms of actual output. It is clear that the efforts to transform this region have been underway since 2012, which accelerated in 2015 and 2016, and have made gradual progress since then. However, while the infrastructure is largely in place, this does not mean it will generate immediate results. (Peter Makowsky, Jenny Town, Michelle Y. Kae, Samantha J. Pitz, *38 North*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korean President Moon Jae-in sent a congratulatory message on Thursday to newly inaugurated U.S. President Joe Biden and vowed to work closely with his administration on a range of issues including the peace process on the Korean Peninsula. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)

- While Antony Blinken, President-elect Joe Biden's nominee for secretary of state, said he would review policies towards North Korea, South Korean President Moon Jae-in nominated former national security adviser Chung Eui-yong as foreign minister who will be tasked with convincing the incoming U.S. administration to build on the accomplishments made by its predecessor and North Korea. (*Dong-A Ilbo*)
- South Korea vowed to develop a "powerful" ballistic missile and is going full speed ahead with a plan to improve military and defense tech in what some experts are calling a growing "arms race" between Seoul and Pyongyang. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- The unification ministry on Friday unveiled guidelines on a recently legislated ban on sending anti-Pyongyang leaflets into North Korea in an effort to ensure better interpretation of the law. The amendment to the Development of Inter-Korean Relations Act, which passed the National Assembly and the Cabinet last month, has raised concerns among critics that it could hurt freedom of expression and undercut efforts to send outside information into the reclusive North. (*Yonhap*)
- With only one year left in office, South Korean President Moon Jae-in hopes that his new foreign minister nominee will be able to save his inter-Korean legacy and reignite talks between Washington, Pyongyang and Seoul. But even with the new nominee's many merits, high-level summits probably won't return anytime soon. (James Fretwell, *NK Pro*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- South Korean President Moon Jae-in still has the opportunity to use the remaining time in his five-year term and supermajority in the National Assembly to pivot away from a focus on unilateral reconciliation with North Korea to stabilizing South Korea's position in East Asia. (Axel P. Catellier, *National Interest*)
- South Korea's military remains on guard against North Korea provocations after the inauguration of U.S. President Joe Biden, but officials also say Seoul would be ready to respond to a missile attack. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- Late in the evening on Jan. 21, 1968, the inhabitants of downtown Seoul were woken by the sound of intense gunfire from the Blue House, South Korea's presidential residence. The "January 21 Incident," also known as the "Blue House Raid," refers to when North Korean special forces attempted to assassinate President Park Chung-hee with the hope this would spark revolution in the South. (Andrei Lankov, *NK News*)

**International:**

- He helplessly watched his country's already battered economy decay further amid pandemic border closures while brooding over the collapse of made-for-TV summits with former President Donald Trump that failed to lift crippling sanctions from his country. Now he must start all over again with President Joe Biden, who has previously called Kim a "thug" and accused Trump of chasing spectacles instead of meaningful reductions of Kim's nuclear arsenal. (Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)
- Concerns are being raised about the possibility of Seoul falling out of step with new US President Joe Biden's administration in dealing with the nuclear-armed North Korean regime. South Korean President Moon Jae-in recently made clear his intention to continue to push his peace agenda for the peninsula, which is criticized for having ignored or belittled growing nuclear threats from Pyongyang. (*Korea Herald*)

- Asian allies and strategic partners such as Japan, South Korea and India offered warm salutations to Joe Biden after his inauguration as the 46th U.S. president. China, meanwhile, was much more circumspect even as it struck an optimistic tone toward the new administration after four-years of Donald Trump's onslaught against Beijing. (*Nikkei*)
- The world's first international treaty to ban nuclear weapons came into effect on Friday, but experts say that the lack of endorsement from major nuclear powers like the U.S. and China means that North Korea will remain a grave security issue. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- For years, countries exporting fuel to North Korea have been required to report their numbers to the U.N. — an effort to ensure that they don't go over a sanctions-violating cap and potentially supply the country's nuclear program. But that task has been easier said than done: Until now, both China and Russia disagreed with some U.N. member states over the conversion rate measuring those fuel volumes. (Min Chao Choy, *NK Pro*)
- Having a consistent policy on North Korea may be the key to denuclearizing the North, U.S. experts said Thursday. They argued the North may have had little or no incentive to actually give up its nuclear weapons since it had been rewarded without doing so. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- The South Korean Ministry of National Defense confirmed Thursday that it is open to discuss South Korea-U.S. military exercises with Pyongyang. It also said it would proceed with the implementation of the September 19 military agreement by demolishing all GPs in the DMZ and allowing free movement at the Joint Security Area and finish the second stage of the transfer of the wartime operational control by the end of 2021 with the incoming Biden administration. Washington has been reluctant to conduct an evaluation of the full operation capacity (FOC) of the ROK/US Combined Forces Command, a requirement of the second stage. (Kyu-Jin Shin, *Dong-A Ilbo*)
- Anti-U.S. base groups in Okinawa, Japanese nationals previously abducted by North Korea and the relatives of abductees on Thursday urged the new U.S. administration under President Joe Biden to take the initiative in resolving their respective issues. (*Japan Times*)
- South Korea should refrain from "prioritizing" a summit between U.S. President Joe Biden and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un when it starts working with the new administration on the stalled nuclear issue, a U.S. expert said Friday. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean experts said Thursday it would be a mistake for US President Joe Biden to build on the 2018 Singapore agreement to address North Korea's denuclearization. South Korean President Moon Jae-in has suggested Washington start re-engaging with Pyongyang based on the deal. (Choi Si-young, *Korea Herald*)
- A China-based tour operator has preliminarily canceled all tours to North Korea after offering 12 itineraries on its website earlier this month. Koryo Tours said all tours to North Korea are suspended as the "borders to the country are all closed." (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- More than 45% of North Koreans are undernourished, the highest proportion in the Asia-Pacific region, according to a United Nations report released this week. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)

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Prepared by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250727170225/https://mailchi.mp/2e89302be14f/hrnk-news-items-china-wants-dprk-to-be-a-threatnk-defectors-call-on-biden-to-focus-on-human-rights-defections-from-nk-plummet-due-to-pandemic?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, January 23, 2021**

## Dispute rages over ban on propaganda leafleting; Kim Yo Jong Stays in the Picture

**Top News:**
Dispute rages over ban on propaganda leafleting (*The Korea Herald*, 1/23/2021)

**In North Korea:**
How Smartphone Security Works in North Korea (*The National Interest*, 1/23/2021)
Kim Yo Jong Stays in the Picture (*38 North*, 1/22/2021)
North Korea Directs Companies to Eliminate 'Import Disease' and Pursue Self-Reliance (*Radio Free Asia*, 1/22/2021)
North Korean Trade Officials Scramble to Import Chinese Construction Materials (*Radio Free Asia*, 1/22/20201)
Post-Party Congress Clean-up in Pyongyang (*38 North*, 1/22/2021)
SPA Session: Lowest Official Growth Rate in Decades (*38 North*, 1/22/2021)
**International:**
Kim Jong Un likes to provoke new U.S. presidents. Biden's team should be prepared. (*The Washington Post*, 1/22/2021)
N. Korea has consistent direction, changing tactics to develop nukes: U.S. official (*Yonhap*, 1/23/2021)
N. Korean nuclear activities pose serious threat to peace: Psaki (*Yonhap*, 1/23/2021)
North Korea dangerous but not unpredictable, says US intelligence official (*NK News*, 1/22/2021)
North Korea is a serious threat to US and the world, Biden press secretary says (*NK News*, 1/22/2021)
North Korea sees talks as way to advance nuclear program, says U.S. intel official (*Reuters*, 1/22/2021)
S. Korean, U.S. security chiefs discuss Korea peace, global issues: Cheong Wa Dae (*Yonhap*, 1/23/2021)
White House to Adopt New Strategy to Deal with N. Korea (*KBS World Radio*, 1/23/2021)

**Top News:**

- Suzanne Scholte, co-vice chair of the US Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, said, "Of course, no one wants the border residents to feel insecure but there are plenty of other places to launch balloons safely where no residents are around." (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)

**In North Korea:**

- A new report looks at the software that is used in North Korea to bypass the security authentications that have been put in place by the regime. (Stephen Silver, *The National Interest*)
- Despite her auspicious family ties and her perch at the top of North Korea's political heap, the career of Kim Yo Jong, the North Korean leader's younger sister, will proceed along the same path as other DPRK elites. Whatever substantive positions and/or political offices she holds will be affected and shaped by the current prevailing political and policy environments. (Michael Madden, *38 North*)
- North Korea has instructed state-run factories and organizations to be more self-sufficient and shake off what it calls the "import disease" that has made production during the COVID-19 pandemic nearly impossible, local government officials told RFA. (Myungchul Lee, Jieun Kim, Leejin Jun, Eugene Whong, *Radio Free Asia*)
- Trading companies in North Korea are attempting to restart trade with China to secure construction materials as Pyongyang prepares to invest heavily in its tourism industry, sources in China told RFA. (Jieun Kim, Leejin Jun, Eugene Whong, *Radio Free Asia*)
- Recent commercial satellite imagery of Pyongyang shows Kim Il Sung Square has quickly returned to normal just days after a major military parade. (Martyn Williams, *38 North*)
- The annual session of the North Korean parliament, the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA), was held on January 17, 2021. The SPA's role is to implement the strategic decisions made by the Korean Workers' Party (KWP); the session was thus directly connected to the decisions made at the Eighth Party Congress, which had taken place just days before. As usual, the key documents were the report on the economy by a representative of the Cabinet, and the report on the state budget. (Ruediger Frank, *38 North*)

**International:**

- Reports that North Korea might be preparing a provocative test of a submarine-launched ballistic missile surely will not have surprised the seasoned foreign policy hands beginning to populate the Biden administration. The regime of Kim Jong Un, like that of his father, has a history of greeting new U.S. presidents with tests of nuclear warheads or long-range missiles. In the case of the Obama administration, the result was a deep freeze in relations; President Donald Trump's response was threats of war, followed by failed summit meetings. (*The Washington Post*)
- South Korea and the United States must focus on North Korea's consistent pursuit of nuclear weapons, rather than its tactics of diplomacy to either buy time for its weapons development or lessen international pressure, a U.S. intelligence official said Friday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's nuclear weapons and proliferation activities pose a "serious" threat to peace and the new U.S. administration will come up with a strategy to keep the country and its allies safe, a White House spokesperson said Friday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

- North Korea is not the unpredictable mystery many consider it to be — but it is more dangerous than some assume, especially some in South Korea, U.S. intelligence official Sydney Seiler said Friday. (David Volodzko, *NK News*)
- North Korea is a clear danger and the Biden administration plans to work with regional allies to deter it, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said in a press briefing on Friday. (David Volodzko, *NK News*)
- The top U.S. intelligence officer for North Korea warned on Friday the country sees diplomacy only as a means to advance its nuclear weapons development, even as the new Biden administration says it will look for ways to bring Pyongyang back to talks. (David Brunnstrom, *Reuters*)
- The top national security officials of South Korea and the United States agreed on the need for close bilateral cooperation in advancing the Korea peace process and the handling of global issues during their phone call Saturday, Cheong Wa Dae said. (*Yonhap*)
- A White House spokesperson said Friday that North Korea's nuclear weapons program poses a serious threat and Washington is devising a new strategy to deal with it. Seoul is concerned of losing any remaining momentum for rapprochement with Pyongyang and seeking to find a breakthrough to the nuclear impasse. (Kim Bum-soo, *KBS World Radio*)

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Prepared by Hayley Noah, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250727170618/https://mailchi.mp/d7a12e8f9d3d/hrnk-top-newsdispute-rages-over-ban-on-propaganda-leafletingkim-yo-jong-stays-in-the-picture?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Friday, January 24, 2021

# The urgent need to appoint a special envoy for human rights in North Korea; U.S. to adopt 'new strategy' on North Korea

**Top News:**
** [What We Want from President Biden] "The urgent need to appoint a special envoy for human rights in North Korea... We must deal with human rights in negotiations with North Korea" (VOA, 01/22/2021)

**In North Korea:**
North Korean Bunkers Will Complicate Any U.S. Military Operation (*National Interest*, 01/23/2021)
Yes, North Korea Could Drag America and China Into a Shooting War (*National Interest*, 01/23/2021)

**International:**
Biden's security team raises hopes for rapid North Korea policy review (*Korea Times*, 01/24/2021)
North Korea, Blinken and aid (North Korean Economy Watch, 01/24/2021)
U.S. to adopt 'new strategy' on North Korea: White House (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/24/2021)

**Top News:**

- U.S. human rights experts have urged that the newly inaugurated President Joe Biden should appoint a special envoy for human rights in North Korea at once. They also emphasized that the Biden administration must include human rights issues in negotiations with North Korea. (Kim Young-kyo, VOA)

**In North Korea:**

- Pyongyang's eventual defeat in any wartime scenario is a given, but its underground headquarters, fortifications and troop depots have the potential to not only enhance the Korean People's Army's ability to mount a surprise attack, but also to prolong the war, confounding the high-tech armed forces of its adversaries. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- Nuclear-armed adversaries, fighting in densely populated urban terrain, could cause humanitarian disaster on a scale that the world has never seen. But the scenario might grow even worse. The last time that the United States fought North Korea, the People's Republic of China intervened with destructive effect. The war lasted for three years, with heavy casualties on both sides. While both China and the United States have worked hard to prevent a recurrence of this catastrophe, the two great powers remain at odds over the fate of North Korea, a disagreement that might yet lead to war. (Robert Farley, *National Interest*)

**International:**

- With the new U.S. administration busy finalizing the roster of its national security team, questions are arising in South Korea over when President Joe Biden will unveil his policy toward North Korea. (Kang Seung-woo, *Korea Times*)
- During his confirmation hearing earlier this week, incoming secretary of state, Anthony Blinken, mentioned that humanitarian aid could be part of negotiations with North Korea on the nuclear issue. (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, *North Korean Economy Watch*)
- The Joe Biden administration plans to adopt a "new strategy" on North Korea, and will conduct a policy review closely consulting with U.S. allies such as South Korea and Japan, said the White House. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

VOA Article

**[What We Want from President Biden] "The urgent need to appoint a special envoy for human rights in North Korea... We must deal with human rights in negotiations with North Korea"**

Reporter Kim Young-kyo
2021.1.22 5:00AM

U.S. human rights experts have urged that the newly inaugurated President Joe Biden should appoint a special envoy for human rights in North Korea at once. They also emphasized that the Biden administration must include human rights issues in negotiations with North Korea. This is Kim Young-kyo reporting.

Robert King, former Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Issues, stated in a phone interview with VOA on the 21st that it is important that President Joe Biden appoint a new special envoy for North Korean human rights as soon as possible.

Former Special Envoy King who was Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Issues from 2009 to 2017 during the Obama administration explained that whatever is decided during the negotiations with North Korea, there should be someone in charge of North Korean human rights issues in order to ensure that they are considered.

[Recording: King, former Special Envoy] “It means that you need to have someone who's focused on that problem, to make sure that whatever is decided that human rights implications are considered and are part of the process. And it takes someone who has that responsibility to speak up and to be the voice on those issues.”

There must be someone who has that responsibility to speak up and to be the voice on those issues.

Former Special Envoy King also stated that the person who is appointed as special envoy must be someone who is committed on the issue of human rights, understands human rights, and will be an advocate for human rights, but also can work with other people in the Department of State.

[Recording: King, former Special Envoy] “One is you need someone who's committed on the issue of human rights, who understands human rights, who recognizes the value of human rights, and will be an advocate for it. But the second thing you need is somebody who can work with other people in the Department of State, you have people who have all kinds of different ideas. And one of the things that's important is your influence is in part determined by your ability to agree and get along with other people as well. So it sort of involves both substantive commitment, but it also involves the ability to work with people and be able to press an issue, and do it in creative ways.”

In other words, that person should be someone who is substantively committed to human rights issues, but can also use creative ways to inform others of the importance of human rights issues in North Korea.

Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights in the Department of State, also said that appointing a special envoy for human rights in North Korea will be most important for the Biden administration in order to improve North Korean human rights issues.

[Recording: Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State] “The most important step the Biden administration could take to promote human rights in North Korea is by reappointing a special envoy for the North Korean human rights issues. The position has been left vacant for the past four years. And this is a very important position to integrate human rights concerns into a broader political framework.”

The position of special envoy for North Korean human rights issues which has been vacant for the past four years is a very important position to integrate human rights concerns into a broader political framework.

Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Cohen explained that the special envoy would belong to the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs with the State Department, and that person would have to negotiate with other State Department officials and contemplate the most appropriate way to address human rights issues in North Korea.

Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Cohen also pointed out that when we think of North Korea, we only think of nuclear weapons, but as a result of the nature of the regime, nuclear weapons and human rights issues are inextricably intertwined.

[Recording: Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State] “Too often we just think of one aspect of nuclear but there's also the nature of the regime, and they are very inextricably intertwined… so it's not simply if you make an agreement just on a particular nuclear program. There really will be some other issues will become involved.”

This means that when negotiating with North Korea, we should not reach an agreement only on nuclear weapons but also discuss other issues, including human rights, during negotiations.

Director John Sifton from the international human rights organization Human Rights Watch stated that if the Biden administration enters negotiations with North Korea, it is important that it takes a holistic approach.

[Recording: Sifton, Director] “Every negotiation should go forward on a holistic manner, not just addressing weapons proliferation. If you focus on weapons proliferation, you're not going to get a durable agreement.”

In other words, if we enter negotiations focusing only on nuclear weapons proliferation, it will not lead to a durable agreement.”

Director Sifton emphasized that to accomplish this, it is important to work with the other international organizations such as the United Nations.

He explained that since various UN organizations are already involved with North Korea, they must be used to collectively persuade North Korea to cooperate with the United Nations.

Director Joanne Lin of Amnesty International’s USA Department stated that through its UN

ambassador, the Biden administration should work with the multilateral organization of the United Nations to deal with North Korean human rights issues.

[Recording: Lin, Director] "And we are also urging the incoming administration, including the nominee for the US ambassador to the UN to work through the United Nations regional fora and like-minded allies to address human rights violations in North Korea.

By doing so, like-minded allies can together address the conditions of North Korea's human rights violations.

[Recording: Lin, Director] "And this includes pushing for a UN Security Council meeting on human rights in North Korea, as well as urging China and Japan to be more assertive and challenging the North Korean government's human rights record."

Director Lin stated that this includes pressuring the UN Security Council to deal with North Korean human rights issues as well as urging China and Japan to be more assertive and challenging the North Korean government's human rights record.

This was Kim Young-kyo with VOA News

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VOA Article Translated by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Timothy Goo, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250727171103/https://mailchi.mp/5eace0005ac0/hrnk-news-itemsthe-urgent-need-to-appoint-a-special-envoy-for-human-rights-in-north-koreaus-to-adopt-new-strategy-on-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Saturday, January 25, 2021

# HRNK News Items: North Korean defectors "What we want from the new president"; Senior North Korean Diplomat Defects to South

**Top News:**
** North Korean defectors "What we want from the new president" (VOA, 01/21/2021)
**In North Korea:**
Another North Korean Diplomat Defects to South Korea (*The Wall Street Journal*, 01/25/2021)
High-level North Korean diplomat defects to South Korea (*The Washington Times*, 01/25/2021)
High-ranking, highly connected envoy defected in 2019 (*Korea JoongAng*, 01/25/2021)

Illegal fishing in N.Korea, Russia waters declines (*NHK News*, 01/25/2021)
'NK diplomat is living in South' (*Korea Herald*, 01/25/2021)
N.K. propaganda outlet mentions Biden's election for first time (*Yonhap*, 01/25/2021)
N. Korean diplomat defects to S. Korea: source (*Yonhap*, 01/25/2021)
N. Korean Diplomat in Kuwait Possibly Entered S. Korea (*KBS World Radio*, 01/25/2021)
North Hamgyong Province official sacked after corruption comes to light (*Daily NK*, 01/25/2021)
North Korea's acting ambassador to Kuwait defects to the South (*The Washington Post*, 01/25/2021)
North Korea's acting ambassador to Kuwait defects to South Korea in latest high-profile escape (*The Telegraph*, 01/25/2021)
North Korea's acting envoy to Kuwait has defected to South Korea: lawmaker(*Reuters*, 01/25/2021)
North Korea claims no COVID-19 cases nearly one year after shutting its borders(*NK News*, 01/25/2021)
North Korea's COVID-19 quarantine efforts appear to be full of holes (*Daily NK*, 01/25/2021)
North Korea diplomat 'defects to South Korea': Reports (*BBC*, 01/24/2021)
North Korea's propaganda outlet reports on Biden election (*The Korea Times*, 01/25/2021)
North Korean diplomat defected to South Korea in 2019: media (*Kyodo News*, 01/25/2021)
North Korean diplomat in Kuwait defected to South Korea, government sources say(*NK News*, 01/25/2021)
Senior North Korean diplomat defects to South (*The Times*, 01/25/2021)
Senior North Korean diplomat defects to South: Reports (*Al Jazeera*, 01/25/2021)
The Truth About North Korea's Ultra-Lockdown Against Covid-19 (*Wired*, 01/24/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Minister hopes for 'wise' and 'flexible' solution to joint military drill issue (*Yonhap*, 01/25/2021)
Seoul sticks to 'Peace Process' despite Washington's hint for new strategy for Pyongyang (*Dong-a Ilbo*, 01/25/2021)
Seoul wants to reunite families separated by the Korean War for Lunar New Year (*NK News*, 01/25/2021)
South Korea expects flexible solutions to joint military exercise (*The Korea Times*, 01/25/2021)
South Korea's Moon moves US alliance up on agenda, with eyes north (*Nikkei Asia*, 01/24/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Minister says next few months important in creating atmosphere for resumption of talks with N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 01/25/2021)
Unification Minister calls for flexible solution to the joint military exercises (*Korea Herald*, 01/25/2021)

**International:**
Biden administration taps diplomat who helped with historic North Korea summit(*NK News*, 01/25/2021)
Build a stronger alliance (*Korea JoongAng*, 01/24/2021)
Mapping out new strategy (*The Korea Times*, 01/25/2021)

Strategic engagement with N. Korea (*The Korea Times*, 01/25/2021)
US hits North Korean official and Chinese firms with non-proliferation measures (*NK News*, 01/25/2021)

**Top News:**

- VOA directly interviewed North Korean defectors living in the U.S. about their hopes for the newly inaugurated President Joe Biden. North Korean defectors in South Korea hope that President Biden would pay more attention to freedom and human rights in North Korea and that he would push ahead with stronger and consistent policies toward North Korea. (VOA)

**In North Korea:**

- A former North Korean ambassador has been quietly living in South Korea for more than a year, two aides to a Seoul lawmaker said, adding to the ranks of Pyongyang's senior diplomats who are known to have defected in recent years. (Andrew Jeong, *The Wall Street Journal*)
- A high-level North Korean diplomat who had been serving as a key representative for Pyongyang in the Middle East has defected to South Korea, according to sources in Seoul. (Guy Taylor, *The Washington Times*)
- North Korea's former acting ambassador to Kuwait has been living in South Korea since defecting in 2019, according to multiple sources on Monday. (Park Hyun-Ju, Shim Kyu-Seok, *Korea JoongAng*)
- An international survey shows illegal fishing activity in North Korean and Russian waters in the Sea of Japan marked significant year-on-year declines in the second half of 2020. (NHK)
- North Korea's former acting ambassador to Kuwait has been living with his family in South Korea for at least a year, a local newspaper reported Monday. (Choi Si-young, *Korea Herald*)
- A North Korean propaganda media outlet has mentioned Joe Biden's election as U.S. president for the first time over the weekend, though official state media have stayed mum on his administration. (*Yonhap*)
- A North Korean diplomat has defected to South Korea while serving as the acting chief of mission at the country's embassy in Kuwait, a source said Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- A former North Korean diplomat in Kuwait is reportedly staying in South Korea after entering the country in 2019. (*KBS World Radio*)
- A cadre in North Hamgyong Province was reportedly sacked when a Central Committee inspection in mid-December revealed that he had used his money and power to get his child into the province's Middle School No. 1, a feeder school for the nation's elite universities. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea's top diplomat in Kuwait secretly defected with his family to South Korea, where they have been living since 2019, two people in the defector community familiar with the case said Monday. (Min Joo Kim, *The Washington Post*)
- North Korea's acting ambassador to Kuwait has defected to South Korea, the latest in a recent string of high-profile escapes from the isolated country, a South Korean lawmaker said on Monday. (*The Telegraph*)

- North Korea's acting ambassador to Kuwait has defected to South Korea, the latest in a recent string of high-profile escapes from the isolated country, a South Korean lawmaker said on Monday. (Hyonshee Shin, *Reuters*)
- Nearly one year after North Korea closed its borders to protect itself from COVID-19, the country once again claims to have zero confirmed cases of the virus as of Jan. 14. (Kelly Kasulis, *NK News*)
- Daily NK has learned that North Korean authorities are neither isolating suspected cases of COVID-19 nor properly treating them in some regions of the country. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- A high-ranking North Korean diplomat has defected to South Korea, media reports say. (*BBC*)
- North Korea's propaganda outlet DPRK Today indirectly reported on the election of U.S. President Joe Biden, Saturday, the first time for a North Korean outlet to refer to Biden since his election in early November, three days after his inauguration at the White House. (Jung Da-min, *The Korea Times*)
- A North Korean diplomat defected to South Korea in 2019 while serving as the acting head of the North's embassy in Kuwait, South Korean media reported Monday. (*Kyodo News*)
- A high-level North Korean diplomat in Kuwait defected to South Korea, multiple sources confirmed to *NK News*. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- A senior North Korean diplomat and member of one of the country's most powerful families has defected to South Korea in the latest sign of discontent among the ruling elite. (Richard Lloyd Parry, *The Times*)
- A senior North Korean diplomat who was acting ambassador to Kuwait defected to the South with his family in 2019, it emerged in reports on Monday. (*Al Jazeera*)
- Kim Jong-un acted quickly. On January 22, 2020, North Korea closed its borders with China and Russia to stop a new, mysterious virus from spreading into the country. (Matt Burgess, *Wired*)

**In South Korea:**

- Unification Minister Lee In-young expressed hope Monday for a "wise" and "flexible" solution on whether to hold joint military drills with the United States so that the issue will not cause serious tensions on the Korean Peninsula. (Koh Byung-joon, Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- As top security leaders of South Korea and the United States talked over the phone on Saturday followed by the next day's phone call between the two nations' national defense ministers, the two allies reaffirmed their steadfast alliance relationship and close collaboration. (*Dong-A Ilbo*)
- South Korea hopes to hold video meetings for families separated by the Korean War around the upcoming Lunar New Year holiday, the country's unification minister said on Monday. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young hoped Monday that South Korea and the United States will find a flexible way to conduct their envisaged combined military exercises to ensure North Korea does not react with tension-stoking provocations. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)

- Hours after U.S. President Joe Biden's inauguration, South Korean President Moon Jae-in made a clear statement of Seoul's diplomatic priorities at a meeting of the country's National Security Council. (Yosuke Onchi, *Nikkei Asia*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Unification Minister Lee In-young said Monday that the next few months will be an important period for South Korea in helping create an atmosphere for the United States and North Korea to return to the table for denuclearization negotiations. (*Yonhap*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young on Monday stressed the need to find a flexible solution to the upcoming joint military exercise between Washington and Seoul, to prevent any further flare-up of cross-border tensions. (Ahn Sung-mi, *Korea Herald)*

**International:**

- A top U.S. negotiator who helped broker major diplomatic events with North Korea will help the State Department transition under President Joe Biden, NK News has confirmed. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- U.S. President Joe Biden has made it official. At a press briefing on Friday, White House press secretary Jen Psaki said, "Our president's view is, of course — that is without question — that North Korea's nuclear ballistic missile and other proliferation-related activities constitute a serious threat to the international peace and security of the world." (*Korea JoongAng*)
- The United States has vowed to map out a "new strategy" for the denuclearization of North Korea in consultation with its allies. (*The Korea Times*)
- The Biden administration is making it clear that it will review its policy toward North Korea in consultation with allies including South Korea and Japan to develop a new strategy to deter Pyongyang's nuclear program, according to White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki last Friday. (Tong Kim, *The Korea Times*)
- The United States banned its government from doing business with a North Korean official and two Chinese companies for fear that they could be helping the DPRK's nuclear program. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)

VOA

**North Korean defectors "What we want from the new president"**

VOA directly interviewed North Korean defectors living in the U.S. about their hopes for the newly inaugurated President Joe Biden. North Korean defectors in South Korea hope that President Biden would pay more attention to freedom and human rights in North Korea and that he would push ahead with stronger and consistent policies toward North Korea. Also, many other defectors asked for help with settling in the United States.

Grace Jo
North Korean defector / Georgia resident

I have some expectations for this president. With the last administration, rather than anticipation, I had concerns about what would happen, so it was an uncertain period. This time, I hope that the administration will speak out more on behalf of the North Korean defector

organizations about North Korean human rights, and that they would create a plan that could give some hope of freedom to the North Korean citizens.
As a college student and as someone that experienced life in North Korea and escaped as a survivor, I hope more people from North Korea and young people can come to America and find freedom. I also hope that starting with this year, America would listen to the voices of those that are knocking on America's door and help them achieve freedom so that there will be more college students that can experience freedom like me.

Justin Seo
North Korean defector / Virginia resident

I think racial discrimination has been getting worse, especially as of late, so I hope that President Joe Biden would pay more attention to that. I also hope that he will pay more attention to the economy and the inflation of goods.
As for issues with North Korea, I hope he will be stricter. Honestly, I was a little disappointed with Trump because he once called Kim Jong-un "a real leader" and said other things as well. But since President Biden has been in politics for a while, I hope he will be more clear, strict, and serious instead of calling a murderer "a real leader." I especially hope he will help North Korean defectors that are in China as well.

Jake Kim
North Korean defector / Utah resident

Though I am a foreigner, because I am living in America, I hope that the president would unify society instead of dividing it. Also, for North Korean policies, I actually think that human rights issues are more important than the issues with nuclear weapons. The last administration essentially ignored the human rights issues and just focused on the problems with the nuclear weapons. By only discussing nuclear weapons when meeting Kim Jong-un, this just granted justification for Kim's dictatorship. If America were to focus on human rights in North Korea, we could expect something that grants justification to the North Korean people. But since they ignored the human rights issues and focused only on nuclear weapons, it only granted justification for Kim Jong-un's dictatorship. So, with North Korean policies, I hope that America will focus more on human rights issues in North Korea. I also think that the North Korean human rights issues must first be resolved in order for the issues with the nuclear weapons to be resolved as well.

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Translated by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Sophia Hapin, HRNK Research Intern

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**Sunday, January 26, 2021**

## Several defection attempts and smuggling operations during the party congress period

**In North Korea:**
Lawmakers say North Korean diplomat defected to South Korea (*The Washington Post*, 01/26/2021)
N.K. paper calls for drawing up 'realistic' economic plans (*Yonhap*, 01/26/2021)
N.K. state media slams Japan's defense chief for remarks over military parade (*Yonhap*, 01/26/2021)
North Korea aid workers faced their 'biggest hurdles' under Trump (*NK News*, 01/26/2021)
North Korea hackers use social media to target security researchers (*Financial Times*, 01/26/2021)
North Korea hopes to begin COVID-19 inoculations by the end of February at the earliest (*Daily NK*, 01/26/2021)
North Korea suffered the worst natural disasters in all of Asia, new report says (*NK News*, 01/26/2021)
Seoul believes Kim Yo-jong's influence remains unchanged (*KBS World Radio*, 01/25/2021)
Several defection attempts and smuggling operations occurred during the party congress period (*Daily NK*, 01/26/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Ex-unification minister urges prompt decision on joint military drills (*The Korea Herald*, 01/26/2021)
Military to improve security system along eastern border after defection case(*Yonhap*, 01/26/2021)
Unification minister stresses flexibility on sanctions against N. Korea (*The Dong-A Ilbo*, 01/26/2021)

**International:**
Biden gov't 'doubtful' about North's denuclearization: Former White House adviser(*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/26/2021)
Biden's negotiators face choice between incremental N.K. nuke dismantlement or 'big deal': CRS report (*Yonhap*, 01/26/2021)
Commentary: How will President Biden deal with the North Korea challenge? (CNA, 01/26/2021)
NK raps Australia on human rights, seen as supporting China (*The Korea Herald*, 01/26/2021)
Trump's gone, but tensions still loom in US-South Korea alliance (VOA, 01/26/2021)
What kind of North Korea will Biden face? (*CFR*, 01/25/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- A North Korean diplomat who served as the country's acting ambassador to Kuwait has defected to South Korea, according to South Korean lawmakers who were briefed by Seoul's spy agency. (Kim Tong-Hyung, *The Washington Post*)
- North Korea's official newspaper called Tuesday for putting together thorough and workable plans to carry out a five-year economic development goal unveiled during a recent party meeting, urging its people to break away from the practice of setting far-fetched objectives. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's state news agency on Tuesday strongly slammed Japan's defense chief for his recent remarks over a military parade held in Pyongyang, saying Tokyo is just making a fuss and inciting hostility toward its country. (*Yonhap*)
- U.S. President Donald Trump may have left the White House declaring victory on North Korea, but some humanitarian workers remember his administration as a web of red tape that stifled their ability to help average people living in an impoverished state. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Google has warned it has uncovered an "ongoing" state-backed hacking campaign run by North Korea targeting cyber security researchers. According to analysts, North Korea's cyber army comprises thousands of expert hackers whose targets range from smaller-scale fraud and theft of cryptocurrencies to stealing nuclear secrets and weapons technology. (Hannah Murphy, *Financial Times*)
- North Korean authorities have reportedly informed international organizations of when they intend to begin COVID-19 inoculations. The country's authorities are reportedly considering which vaccines they hope to use as well. (Jang Seulgi, *Daily NK*)
- The Asian Disaster Reduction Center stated that 4 out of 10 North Koreans were affected by natural disasters in 2019 — the worst ratio in all of Asia — while 395 per every 1,000 people suffered from the 2019 drought. In total, this means that 10.1 million North Koreans were affected that year. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Seoul's Unification Ministry believes that while the official status of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's sister Kim Yo-jong appears to have been demoted, her political influence remains unchanged. (*KBS World Radio*)
- Several defection attempts and smuggling operations occurred near the Sino-North Korean border in North Pyongan Province during the Eighth Party Congress. "Two defection attempts along with three smuggling operations occurred" in the area during the Eighth Party Congress, a source in the province told Daily NK last Thursday. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- A former unification minister called for a prompt decision from the Moon Jae-in government on whether to hold joint military drills with the US this spring, saying the resolution of this issue would be an important turning point in inter-Korean relations. (Lee Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)
- The military will take additional steps to improve the security system along the eastern section of the inter-Korean border this year following a recent unhindered border crossing case by a North Korean, officials said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)

- South Korean Unification Minister Lee In-young said on Monday that he hopes to find a "wise" and "flexible" solution to prevent ROK-US joint military exercise from causing serious military tensions with North Korea, commenting on North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's demand to suspend the joint drills. (Oh-Hyuk Kwon, *The Dong-A Ilbo*)

**International:**

- The Joe Biden team is "deeply doubtful that North Korea has any interest in denuclearization," said Evan Medeiros, a former senior Asia director at the National Security Council during the Barack Obama administration. (Park Hyun-young, Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- U.S. negotiators under the new Joe Biden administration could face a choice between the pursuit of an incremental dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear program and a big deal calling for its complete denuclearization, a congressional report has said. Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- After a most unusual four years under the Trump administration, President Biden needs to recalibrate how he deals with North Korea and it has to tap on Asian allies. To raise the chances of progress in denuclearising North Korea, Biden should seek better coordination with US allies South Korea and Japan than Trump had in any future diplomatic process. (Naoko Aoki, CNA)
- North Korea condemned Australia at a UN meeting for committing human rights violations, UN Watch said Tuesday. Pyongyang, which rarely speaks about the human rights issues of other countries, is seen as siding with China, its biggest ally, against Australia. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- After U.S. President Joe Biden took office last week, perhaps no world leader breathed a bigger public sigh of relief than South Korean President Moon Jae-in. "America is back," Moon declared in a congratulatory message marking Biden's inauguration. The statement didn't directly mention outgoing President Donald Trump, but the intent was clear. (William Gallo, VOA)
- North Korea will likely continue to develop its nuclear program, but Kim Jong-un could return to negotiations if the United States makes concessions. He declared that North Korea will respond to "force with toughness" and to "good faith in kind," and stated that the United States would have to withdraw its "hostile policy" to improve relations with North Korea. (Scott A. Snyder, CFR)

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Prepared by Rick Herssevoort, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250727172146/https://mailchi.mp/6543bf2bcb1f/hrnk-news-items-several-defection-attempts-and-smuggling-operations-during-the-party-congress-period?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Monday, January 27, 2021

# Why the United States Needs a Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights; Moon talks to Xi, asks for help with North Korea

**Top News:**
Why the United States Needs a Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights (*38 North*, 01/26/2021)

**In North Korea:**
All this talk of quarantine hotels reminds me of my time in North Korea (*The Telegraph*, 01/27/2021)
Assassins review – the 'prank show' killing of North Korea's pretender (*The Guardian*, 01/27/2021)
Construction Delayed on Showcase Hospital Project in North Korean Capital (*RFA*, 01/26/2021)
Google accuses North Korean hackers of targeting cybersecurity pros with malware(*NK News*, 01/26/2021)
Google: Hackers backed by North Korea tried to steal cyber research (*The Hill*, 01/27/2021)
Google says North Korea-backed hackers sought cyber research (*AP*, 01/27/2021)
Google says North Korean state hackers are targeting security researchers on social media (*CNBC*, 01/27/2021)
[Graphic News] Number of NK defectors plunges in 2020 amid border closure (*The Korea Herald*, 01/27/2021)
In crisis, North Korea is turning further inward (*The World*, 01/26/2021)
N.K. paper calls for heightened alert against pandemic as global cases exceed 100 mln (*Yonhap*, 01/27/2021)
N.K. paper stresses importance of admitting flaws along path to economic progress(*Yonhap*, 01/27/2021)
N. Korea touts nicotine replacement supplements (*The Korea Herald*, 01/27/2021)
North Korea defection exposes pressure on Kim's foreign networks (*Financial Times*, 01/26/2021)
North Korea gifts watches to Eighth Party Congress participants (*Daily NK*, 01/27/2021)
North Korea Hacked Foreign Pharmaceutical Companies To Develop Own Vaccine(*Euro Weekly News*, 01/27/2021)
North Korea hackers use social media to target security researchers (*Financial Times*, 01/27/2021)
North Korea 'is testing its own coronavirus vaccine using data it hacked from foreign scientists' despite claiming to have no infections (*Daily Mail*, 01/27/2021)
North Korea's new economic plan looks a lot like the old one (*The Japan Times*, 01/27/2021)
North Korea Targets—and Dupes—a Slew of Cybersecurity Pros (*WIRED*, 01/26/2021)
North Korean hackers used fake website to hack hackers, Google reveals (*Daily Mail*, 01/27/2021)
Ten rounds of ammunition go missing at border patrol unit in Onsong County (*Daily NK*, 01/27/2021)
Third High-Profile North Korean Diplomat Defected to South Korea in 2019 (*RFA*, 01/25/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Deputy nuke envoys of S. Korea, Russia discuss North Korea issues by phone(*Yonhap*, 01/27/2021)
Moon talks to Xi, asks for help with North Korea (*Korea JoongAng*, 01/27/2021)
One-track mind | Opinion (*Korea JoongAng*, 01/26/2021)
South Korea faces roadblocks to brokering US-North Korea dialogue (*Nikkei Asia*, 01/27/2021)
South Korea, U.S. agree on urgency of North Korea nuclear issue (*Kyodo News*, 01/27/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
South Korea willing to share COVID-19 vaccines with North, PM says (*UPI*, 01/27/2021)

**International:**
Antony Blinken, critic of Trump's North Korea policy, becomes secretary of state (*NK News*, 01/26/2021)
China and North Korea are cozying up, but their connection looks conniving (*NK News*, 01/26/2021)
China may be warming up to North Korea, but it still supports inter-Korean talks (*NK News*, 01/26/2021)
Emerging Sino-Pak-North Korea-Turkey nexus for nuclear proliferation (*The Times of India*, 01/27/2021)
Ex-CIA and N. Korea expert named deputy assistant secretary for East Asia(*Yonhap*, 01/27/2021)
FM, Blinken agree in phone talks that N.K. nuke issue urgent matter for Biden administration (*Yonhap*, 01/27/2021)
Former US diplomat: Don't 'disown everything that Trump did' on North Korea (*NK News*, 01/27/2021)
Kang and Blinken agree nuclear issue is high priority (*Korea JoongAng*, 01/27/2021)
State Department pick suggests further departure from Trump's North Korea policy(*NK News*, 01/27/2021)
Washington could revive four-party, six-party talks with NK under Blinken (*The Korea Herald*, 01/27/2021)
Xi expresses support for Korean denuclearization in phone talks with Moon: Cheong Wa Dae (*Yonhap*, 01/27/2021)

**Top News:**
- As the Biden administration turns its attention to North Korea, it should signal its support for human rights by reappointing a special envoy for the position on North Korea left vacant for the past four years. (HRNK Co-chair emeritus Roberta Cohen, *38 North*)

**In North Korea:**
- A conversation with a doctor friend quarantining in an Australian hotel for two weeks before starting her year-long medical residency set me thinking about my time in North Korea (Mark Stratton, *The Telegraph*)

- It is a documentary about the extraordinary 2017 assassination of Kim Jong-nam, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's half-brother, who had been living in exile in China and was not merely a persistent critic of the regime but seen as a possible alternative ruler. (Peter Bradshaw, *The Guardian*)
- A North Korean state-sponsored project to build a state-of-the-art hospital in the capital Pyongyang has been severely delayed due to a year-long suspension of trade with China over coronavirus concerns, government officials told RFA. (Eugene Whong, RFA)
- Google is accusing North Korean hackers of sending malicious files to cybersecurity researchers in a months-long attack that built trust through a blog and friendly Twitter conversations. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- Google's threat analysis team earlier this week said that it had identified a hacking effort suspected to be centered in North Korea that targeted U.S.-based cybersecurity experts. (John Bowden, *The Hill*)
- Google says it believes hackers backed by the North Korean government have been posing as computer security bloggers and using fake accounts on social media while attempting to steal information from researchers in the field. (Kim Tong-Hyung, AP)
- Google believes that hackers in North Korea are pretending to be cybersecurity bloggers and targeting researchers in the field on social media platforms like Twitter and LinkedIn. (Sam Shead, CNBC)
- The number of North Koreans defecting to South Korea dropped sharply last year apparently due to the North's border closure to prevent an outbreak of the coronavirus, government data showed. (Nam Kyung-don, *The Korea Herald*)
- At the moment, demand for corn is shooting up, a consequence of severe economic pain. Poor and isolated in the best of times, North Korea is now even more cut off from the world. To defend against COVID-19, the regime has almost totally sealed its border with China — a lifeline for goods and food. (Patrick Winn, *The World*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Wednesday urged the people to keep their guard up against the coronavirus pandemic as the number of global COVID-19 cases has exceeded 100 million. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Wednesday stressed the importance of admitting flaws and fixing them at the right time as the country steps up efforts to carry out key policy goals unveiled in a rare party meeting earlier this month. (*Yonhap*)
- For many smokers, quitting smoking might be on top of their list of new year's resolutions, and it appears that North Korea is also no exception. (Kim Hae-yeon, *The Korea Herald*)
- The defection of a high-level North Korean diplomat represents an embarrassment for Kim Jong Un and exposed the mounting pressure on Pyongyang's foreign diplomats to generate revenue for the regime, experts said. (Edward White, Song Jung-a, *Financial Times*)
- North Korean authorities reportedly gave participants in the Eighth Party Congress watches as presents. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea has begun human testing of a COVID-19 vaccine. The country is developing its own vaccine, scientists are using manufacturing know-how stolen through "hacking

activities" conducted late last year, according to sources. (Tony Winterburn, *Euro Weekly News*)

- Google has warned it has uncovered an "ongoing" state-backed hacking campaign run by North Korea targeting cyber security researchers. (Hannah Murphy, *Financial Times*)
- North Korea has begun developing its own coronavirus vaccine using data that it hacked from foreign scientists, it is claimed. (Tim Stickings, *Daily Mail*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un presented a new five-year economic plan and conceded that the country's economy is struggling at a Workers' Party Congress earlier this month. (Jonathan Corrado, *The Japan Times*)
- The attackers primarily attempted to spread their malware by sharing Microsoft Visual Studio projects with targets. (Lily Hay Newman, WIRED)
- A team of North Korean computer hackers used a fake website to hack other hackers, Google has revealed. (Ryan Fahey, *Daily Mail*)
- The North Korean border patrol declared an "emergency situation" after 10 rounds of ammunition went missing during the middle of last month from a border patrol unit in Onsong County, North Hamgyong Province. (Kim Yoo Jin, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea's acting ambassador to Kuwait secretly defected to South Korea in 2019, the third in a series of high-profile diplomat defections since 2016, South Korean media reported Monday. (Eugene Whong, RFA)

**In South Korea:**

- The deputy nuke envoys of South Korea and Russia held phone talks to discuss the latest developments on North Korea, including the recent key party congress, Seoul's foreign ministry said Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- Chinese President Xi Jinping replied positively to President Moon Jae-in's request for Beijing to play a constructive role in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue through dialogue, the Blue House said. (Ser Myo-Ja, Shin Kyung-Jin, *Korea JoongAng*)
- "It was so easy to cross this demarcation line, but it took 11 years for me to come to this historic place," North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said when he sat down with President Moon Jae-in at the Truce Village of Panmunjom on April 27, 2018. (Yeh Young-june, *Korea JoongAng*)
- South Korea's top official handling North Korea affairs sees the next few months as a "crucial time" to push for dialogue between Washington and Pyongyang. (Steven Boroweic, *Nikkei Asia*)
- South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung Wha and new U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken agreed Wednesday that North Korea's nuclear issue is an urgent matter that needs to be dealt with by the administration of President Joe Biden, the South Korean Foreign Ministry said. (*Kyodo News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korea is willing to share COVID-19 vaccines with North Korea as part of an effort to resume relations with its nuclear-armed neighbor, Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun said Wednesday. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)

**International:**

- The United States swore in Antony Blinken, a longtime foreign policy aide to Joe Biden and a vocal critic of Donald Trump's North Korea policy, to the role of secretary of state on Tuesday. (Kelly Kasulis, *NK News*)

- The new year has so far rung in even friendlier ties between Chinese President Xi Jinping and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, both of whom appear to be looking beyond the challenges that strained their relationship in 2020. (John Petrushka, NK *News*)
- After making several friendly gestures towards North Korea in recent months, Chinese President Xi Jinping made it clear that he supports inter-Korean dialogue and "political resolution" in a phone call with South Korean President Moon Jae-in on Tuesday. (Kelly Kasulis, NK *News*)
- A series of developments have attracted the attention of the International Community to an emerging and worrisome phenomenon of Sino-Pak-North Korea-Turkey nexus for nuclear proliferation. (SD Pradhan, *The Times of India*)
- Jung Pak, a former Central Intelligence Agency official and North Korea expert, said Tuesday she has been named new deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs. (*Yonhap*)
- Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha and new U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken agreed Wednesday that the North Korean nuclear issue is an urgent matter that the two countries should work closely to resolve. (Kim Seung-yeon, Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- A former top U.S. diplomat is urging President Joe Biden to examine Donald Trump's successes on North Korea but also learn from past U.S. mistakes. (David Volodzko, NK *News*)
- Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha and new U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken agreed that the North Korean nuclear issue should be treated as an urgent manner under the Joe Biden administration in their first phone call Wednesday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng*)
- Jung H. Pak, a well-known North Korea specialist and former Central Intelligence Agency official, has been tapped to work as a top foreign policy aide for President Joe Biden's administration. (Won-Gi Jung, NK *News*)
- Washington could seek the now-defunct four-party or six-party talks with Pyongyang to resolve the nuclear issue with Anthony Blinken, a strong advocate of multilateral diplomacy, at the reins of the US State department, experts said on Wednesday. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- Chinese President Xi Jinping has expressed his active support for Seoul's initiative to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula, calling the efforts in line with the common interests of both countries, according to Cheong Wa Dae on Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Sophia Hapin, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250727172544/https://mailchi.mp/98431f18dade/hrnk-news-items-why-the-united-states-needs-a-special-envoy-for-north-korean-human-rightsmoon-talks-to-xi-asks-for-help-with-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Tuesday, January 28, 2021

# Biden stresses need for complete denuclearization of Peninsula; NK moves toward mass production of miniature reconnaissance drones

**In North Korea:**
Assassins, review: did Kim Jong-un have his brother murdered in screwball style? (*The Telegraph*, 1/28/2021)
Chongjin boy dragged away during roundup of homeless children (*Daily NK*, 1/28/2021)
Kim Jong Un's wife has been missing from the public eye for more than a year (*NK News*, 1/28/2021)
N.K. calls on beefed-up efforts for 'self-reliance' to achieve five-year economic plan (*Yonhap*, 1/28/2021)
North Korea 'developing Covid vaccine using data hacked from foreign scientists' (*Mirror*, 1/27/2021)
North Korea moves toward mass production of miniature reconnaissance drones (*Daily NK*, 1/28/2021)
North Korea's Artillery Guns are Nearly as Threatening as Its Nuclear Weapons (*The National Interest*, 1/27/2021)
North Korea's market exchange rate for foreigners suddenly drops by more than 9% (*NK News*, 1/28/2021)
Over 60 pct of N. Koreans face food insecurity amid global pandemic: U.S. report (*Yonhap*, 1/28/2021)
Why North Korea Decided to Not Fight the U.S. Navy at Sea (*The National Interest*, 1/28/2021)

**In South Korea:**
FM nominee: Boosting alliance with U.S. 'primary task' for S. Korea diplomacy (*Yonhap*, 1/28/2021)
South confident of missile defense against North (*The Korea Herald*, 1/28/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
N.K. organization sends congratulatory message to S. Korean counterpart (*Yonhap*, 1/28/2021)

**International:**
Amid COVID-19 trade lockdown, North Korea opens borders for sugar and big tires (*NK News*, 1/28/2021)
Biden stresses need for complete denuclearization of Korean Peninsula: White House (*Yonhap*, 1/28/2021)
Biden's UN pick wants China and Russia to choke North Korean nuclear program (*NK News*, 1/27/2021)
China says it's 'doing its best' to give COVID-19 aid to citizens in North Korea (*NK News*, 1/28/2021)

Civic groups demand suspension of military drills with U.S. for confidence building with N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 1/28/2021)
Defections of high-level North Korean officials are telltale symptoms of internal difficulties (*The Korea Times*, 1/28/2021)
Google: Hackers backed by North Korea tried to steal cyber research (*The Hill*, 1/27/2021)
High-profile N. Korean defector leaves for U.S. for congressional hearing on anti-leaflet law (*Yonhap*, 1/28/2021)
North Korea continues to export coal and dispatch laborers overseas (*Daily NK*, 1/28/2021)
North Korea, U.S. should aim for initial nuclear freeze: South Korean PM (*Reuters*, 1/28/2021)
Reading Between North Korean Lines with Dr. Go Myong-hyun: North Korea Experts on Biden's Foreign Policy Team (*Arirang*, 1/28/2021)
S. Korea to hold springtime combined exercises with U.S as planned: defense chief (*Yonhap*, 1/28/2021)
The Tactical Implications of North Korea's Military Modernization (*The Diplomat*, 1/27/2021)
U.S. will work with China, Russia to denuclearize N. Korea: UN envoy (*Yonhap*, 1/28/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- The night before she caused the death of Kim Jong-un's older half-brother, Siti Aisyah celebrated her 25th birthday at the Hard Rock Café in Kuala Lumpur. In the absorbing true-crime documentary Assassins, she's seen on a Facebook video, smiling and blowing out a candle, looking for all the world like her friend's description – a "happy-go-lucky" young woman from a tiny village in Indonesia, out for a good time. It's a hard image to square with the charge of premeditated killing that Malaysian authorities would soon stamp upon her. (Tim Robey, *The Telegraph*)
- A young boy in Chongjin, North Hamgyong Province, was recently dragged away by members of a task force charged with cracking down on kkotjebi (homeless children in North Korea who beg for food around public markets) before just barely returning home around two weeks later. (Kim Yoo Jin, *Daily NK*)
- The wife of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has been missing from the public eye for more than a year now, leading some analysts to wonder what happened to the country's breakout first lady. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korea's official newspaper Thursday urged stepped-up efforts to realize a self-reliant economy and carry out key policy goals unveiled in a rare party meeting earlier this month. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea is developing a coronavirus vaccine using data hacked from foreign scientists, according to reports. (Jonathan Coles, *Mirror*)
- North Korean authorities are reportedly pushing the mass production of miniature drones to closely reconnoiter major South Korean military facilities. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- The presence of huge guns along the border underscores that a conflict between North and South Korea would involve a terrible cost in civilian lives. However, the threat posed by the Koksan needs to be kept in chilling perspective: the huge guns could inflict terrible suffering if turned on civilian targets, though not on the scale that Pyongyang boasts, due to limitations on range, logistics and the need to survive counterattack. (Sebastien Roblin, *The National Interest*)

- North Korea's market exchange rate for foreigners suddenly dropped on Wednesday, according to NK Pro's Exchange Rate Index, hinting that the country's borders will remain closed for the foreseeable future. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- More than 60 percent of North Korea's population is facing food insecurity as the global coronavirus pandemic has undercut food supplies in the impoverished country, a U.S. Department of Agriculture report showed Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's coastal fleet played an important role in the early days of the Korean War in projecting force against it southern neighbor. The vigorous counterattack mounted by ROK and UN naval forces likewise was vital in curtailing that threat—and laid the groundwork for the landing at Inchon that ejected Pyongyang's troops from South Korea, and ultimately threatened the North in turn with invasion. (Sebastien Roblin, *The National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- Boosting the alliance with the United States is a primary task for South Korean diplomacy, the nominee for foreign minister said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea stands fully capable of countering the latest short-range missiles that North Korea has test-fired, South Korean Minister of National Defense Suh Wook said Wednesday. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- A pro-unification organization in North Korea sent a message of greetings to its South Korean counterpart earlier this week after a year without contact amid frozen inter-Korean relations, officials said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- As North Korea enters its sixth month of trade lockdowns, border restrictions appear to have opened by just a crack in order to import millions of pounds of sugar and thousands of tires from its largest trade partner, China. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- U.S. President Joe Biden on Wednesday highlighted the need to completely denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. (*Yonhap*)
- In the first few days of the Biden-Harris administration, a top U.S. diplomat has called for greater sanctions enforcement against North Korea in order to stymie inflows of cash that could support the country's nuclear program. (David Volodzko, *NK News*)
- The Chinese Embassy in North Korea says it's distributing COVID-19 aid to Chinese citizens living in the DPRK. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Nearly 400 local and foreign civic groups on Thursday urged South Korea and the United States to suspend joint military drills as a "major confidence-building measure" toward North Korea. (*Yonhap*)
- The arrival in South Korea of a former acting ambassador at the North Korean Embassy in Kuwait just over a year ago has renewed attention to a series of defections to the South by high-level diplomats under Kim Jong-un's rule. (Do Je-hae, *The Korea Times*)
- Google's threat analysis team earlier this week said that it had identified a hacking effort suspected to be centered in North Korea that targeted U.S.-based cybersecurity experts. (John Bowden, *The Hill*)
- A vocal North Korean defector activist has left for the United States for a congressional hearing on a controversial bill South Korea recently passed to ban the sending of anti-North Korea leaflets, his lawyer said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)

- North Korean authorities are engrossed in various plans to make money, some of which violate international sanctions on the country, Daily NK has learned. (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea and the United States should seek an initial denuclearisation deal that includes a halt to the North's nuclear activity and a cut in its programme in exchange for some sanctions relief, South Korea's prime minister said on Thursday. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- One week into the Biden administration, we're beginning to see his foreign policy team take clearer shape at least one that will deal with the Asia Pacific region and most likely North Korea, as well. (*Arirang*)
- South Korea will stage annual springtime military exercises with the United States as planned, Defense Minister Suh Wook said, amid concerns the drills could give North Korea a pretext for provocations in the early months of U.S. President Joe Biden's administration. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)
- Displays of new North Korean military equipment are likely meant to implement deterrence via posturing, with no real impact on the regional balance of power. (Liang Tuang Nah, *The Diplomat*)
- The United States will work with its Japanese and South Korean allies, but also with China and Russia to denuclearize North Korea, the appointee for U.S. ambassador to the United Nations said Wednesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Hayley Noah, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250727172952/https://mailchi.mp/8c73de4e86e3/hrnk-news-itembsbiden-stresses-need-for-complete-denuclearization-of-peninsulank-moves-toward-mass-production-of-miniature-reconnaissance-drones?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Wednesday, January 29, 2021

# International pressure intensifying on anti-North Korea leaflet-sending ban; Struggle to bring back a Thai abductee

**Top News:**
International pressure intensifying on anti-North Korea leaflet-sending ban (*The Korea Times*, 1/292021)
Struggle to Bring Back a Thai Abductee (*NHK*, 1/28/2021)

**In North Korea:**
After shedding tears over the economy, Kim Jong Un upgraded his beachside manor (*NK News*, 1/29/2021)
Former soldier commits suicide after failing physical for overseas work (*Daily NK*, 1/29/2021)

Kim Jong Un's true intentions were revealed through the anti-reactionary thought law (*Daily NK*, 1/29/2021)
N. Korea may resort to unofficial markets amid virus-hit economy: expert (*Yonhap*, 1/29/2021)
N.K. envoy says strengthening of defense capabilities aimed at opening peace era(*Yonhap*, 1/29/2021)
North Korea conducts lectures warning people of broadcasts from the US, South Korea and Japan (*Daily NK*, 1/29/2021)
North Korea Keeps Kim Dynasty Statues Lit During Energy Shortage (*Radio Free Asia*, 1/28/2021)
North Korea Reportedly Close to Mass Manufacturing of Drones (*The National Interest*, 1/28/2021)
North Korean magazine depicts an upbeat 2020 unlike elsewhere (*The Asahi Shimbun*, 1/28/2021)
North Korea's Special Forces Make up a Sixth of Its Army - and That's Concerning(*The National Interest*, 1/28/2021)
One year of COVID-19: When will North Korea reopen its borders? (*NK News*, 1/29/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Controversy erupts over Seoul's possible push to build nuke plant in N. Korea(*Yonhap*, 1/29/2021)
North Korean defector-author Jang Jin-sung accused of rape and sexual assault(*NK News*, 1/29/2021)
South Korea rebukes opposition over report on plans to build nuclear plant in North Korea (*Reuters*, 1/29/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
South Korea keen on providing vaccine aid to North Korea (*The Korea Times*, 1/29/2021)
Will Korea Golf Association hold tournament in North Korea? (*The Korea Times*, 1/29/2021)

**International:**
Biden bolsters North Korea team with Korean American ex-CIA agent (*Nikkei Asia*, 1/28/2021)
COVID-19 outbreak in Chinese borderlands poses a threat to North Koreans (*NK News*, 1/29/2021)
Deterring North Korea (*War on the Rocks*, 1/29/2021)
MEP Mandl Discusses EU Role in the Korean Peninsula Crisis During Keynote Address (*One Earth Future*, 1/26/2021)
North Korean defector Jihyun Park to stand in Bury local elections (*BBC News*, 1/28/2019)
Pro-unification group urges U.S. Congress not to hold hearing on anti-leaflet law(*Yonhap*, 1/29/2021)
U.S. committed to keeping readiness of USFK through exercises: Pentagon official(*Yonhap*, 1/29/2021)
What Does South Korean President Moon Want From the Biden Administration? (*38 North*, 1/28/2021)

Would China Double Down on Fighting a Second Korean War? (*The National Interest*, 1/28/2021)

**In Top News:**

- The international community's move against South Korea's ban on sending anti-Kim Jong-un regime propaganda leaflets to North Korea is intensifying. Criticism has continued to grow internationally that the law undermines freedom of speech, with members of the U.K. Parliament and the U.S. Congress raising the issue and planning to hold a debate and hearing session, respectively. Greg Scarlatoui, Executive Director of The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, told RFA that "the European Union and the United Kingdom have stood firmly by the human rights of the people of North Korea, in particular the freedom of information and the freedom of access to information." (Jung Da-min, *The Korea Times*)
- The Japanese government has long been demanding the return of the abductees taken to North Korea in the 70s and 80s. This video report focuses on a Thai woman, Anocha Panchoi, and the struggle of Anocha's family to bring her back home. (NHK)

**In North Korea:**

- Days after he publicly shed tears over the economic hardships that North Koreans face, DPRK leader Kim Jong Un appeared to retreat to his Wonsan mansion, where an apparent three-lane water slide was installed on his private beach last October. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- A former construction officer with the First Brigade recently burnt himself to death in Pyongyang after failing a physical to be sent overseas as a laborer. North Korea is recruiting about 10,000 people to send to Russia to work as loggers and other laborers from February. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- Kim Jong Un presented his “people-first policy” as the fundamental principles of socialism at the Eighth Party Congress which was held for eight days in North Korea since Jan. 5. He also emphasized that people should be regarded with the utmost importance. However, these kind of concepts are nothing more than slogans that are used to control the public and evoke a sense of loyalty. Kim Jong Un’s true intentions were revealed when he enacted the anti-reactionary thought law last year. (Mun Sun Bo, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea's fiscal status has rapidly worsened due to the shutdown of borders over coronavirus concerns, leaving the communist country with no choice but to consider resorting to unofficial markets, according to a researcher. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's top diplomat to Geneva has argued that Pyongyang's push toward strengthening its military capabilities was aimed at opening an era of peace, according to the North's foreign ministry Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea is reportedly conducting lectures in certain regions that designate South Korea, the United States and Japan as hostile nations and warn that listening to or watching broadcasts from those nations will be harshly punished. The lectures appear aimed at teaching residents about the law against “reactionary thought” enacted last December and at bolstering internal unity. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)

- As the North Korean people shiver in darkness during a severe energy shortage this winter, many are angry that authorities are keeping statues of the country's dynastic leaders illuminated through the night, sources living near the border with China told RFA. (Eugene Wong, *Radio Free Asia*)
- At the recent Eighth Party Congress, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un is said to have called for the development of a fleet of reconnaissance drones. Now, a new report says development of such drones are underway. (Stephen Silver, *The National Interest*)
- North Korea had a great 2020 thanks to Kim Jong Un's leadership, despite international sanctions over its nuclear development program, devastating floods and the specter of the novel coronavirus pandemic. That's what a lavish photographic magazine looking back on the year would have readers believe. The 130-plus full-color pages of "Great love for people in 2020," portray a nation rising to meet a myriad of challenges over the past year. (Takeshi Kamiya, *The Asahi Shimbun*)
- One of the most vital parts of North Korea's war machine is one that relies the most on so-called "soldier power" skills. North Korea has likely the largest special-forces organization in the world, numbering two hundred thousand men—and women—trained in unconventional warfare. Pyongyang's commandos are trained to operate throughout the Korean Peninsula, and possibly beyond, to present an asymmetric threat to its enemies. (Kyle Mizokami, *The National Interest*)
- Even though Pyongyang still claims it has not had a single case of COVID-19, it has only increased pandemic restrictions over time. And while vaccines are beginning to circulate worldwide, there's no sign that North Korea will relax these harsh rules any time soon, according to those with experience of working inside the country. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- A political controversy appears to be brewing over the Seoul government's possible attempt years ago to help North Korea build a nuclear power plant, after a local broadcaster on Thursday disclosed the existence of relevant government documents. (*Yonhap*)
- A female North Korean defector filed a criminal rape and sexual assault complaint against prominent defector-author Jang Jin-sung, who wrote a 2014 memoir about his work as a propaganda writer for the DPRK government. In the criminal complaint filed to the Seoul Metropolitan Police Agency on Friday, North Korean defector Seung Sul-hyang accused Jang of raping her four times throughout 2016 and blackmailing her using a nonconsensual photo of her naked body, her lawyers announced at a press conference. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- South Korea's presidential office on Friday issued a rebuke to an opposition leader who accused it of "abetting the enemy" after a news report that Seoul had planned to build a nuclear plant in North Korea. Local broadcaster SBS unveiled a prosecution indictment listing more than a dozen documents from the energy ministry that suggested a previously unknown project to set up a nuclear plant in North Korea. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The South Korean government is enthusiastic about providing coronavirus vaccines to North Korea as part of its efforts to get stalled inter-Korean relations back on track. Since the Hanoi summit between the United States and North Korea failed to produce a nuclear deal in February 2019, inter-Korean ties have consequently been deadlocked. In order to break the impasse, the Moon Jae-in administration has floated a variety of ideas to bring the Kim Jong-un regime back to the dialogue table, with vaccine aid emerging as a fresh option. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- Korea Golf Association President Lee Jung-myung has announced that he will seek to host an international tournament at a golf course on Mount Geumgang in North Korea, during a recent general assembly of the association. "The realization of the tournament at the Ananti Golf Course in Mount Geumgang will make a great contribution to creating an atmosphere of reconciliation between the two Koreas," Lee said during the assembly at which his inauguration ceremony was also held. "We are coordinating with the relevant ministries and will do our best to make it happen." (Do Je-hae, *The Korea Times*)

**International:**

- The Biden administration has beefed up its North Korea team with the appointment this week of Jung Pak, a Korean American scholar and former Central Intelligence Agency agent, as deputy assistant secretary for East Asian & Pacific Affairs at the State Department. (Gabriela Bernal, *Nikkei Asia*)
- Chinese authorities are battling a resurgent outbreak of COVID-19 in a province near North Korea, which experts say could threaten the DPRK's population if the virus spreads across the border. The Jilin province area had reported no new cases of the novel coronavirus for months, but that changed on January 17, when the provincial health authority announced that confirmed cases increased by 10 to 167 total. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- North Korea is now a nuclear state presenting significant challenges to U.S. interests and security, as well as to the international nonproliferation regime. But all is not lost. Now that the weapons exist, it is most important to ensure that they are never used. In order to do this, the U.S. should consider embracing and enhancing deterrence while simultaneously approaching denuclearization in a firm but more patient approach. (Daniel Post, *War on the Rocks*)
- On 26 January 2021, Open Nuclear Network (ONN) held the first two sessions of its two-day annual Engagement Network Retreat. The event was opened by a keynote address from Member of the European Parliament and Chair of the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with the Korean Peninsula (DKOR) Lukas Mandl. According to Mandl, the EU's current *critical engagement* approach to the DPRK, which combines sanctions, humanitarian aid and dialogue, needs to be revised. In recent years the main emphasis in the approach has been on sanctions, which, in his view, "has led to a diminished role for the EU." (*One Earth Future*)
- Jihyun Park, a woman who fled North Korea has been selected to stand as a candidate when the next local elections are held. The prospective Conservative candidate, who settled in Bury in 2008, campaigns for the rights of North Koreans. Ms. Park is believed to be the first person of North Korean descent to stand for election in the UK. (*BBC News*)

- A pro-unification organization on Friday urged the U.S. Congress not to hold a hearing on a South Korean law banning the sending of anti-North Korean leaflets, calling such a move a "clear infringement" on their country's sovereignty and interference in domestic affairs. (*Yonhap*)
- U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin remains committed to maintaining the readiness of American troops in South Korea through military exercises, a Pentagon official said Thursday. Pentagon press secretary John Kirby also highlighted the importance of troop readiness amid North Korea's continued pursuit of new advanced weapons, such as the submarine-launched ballistic missile. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Moon seems determined to revive the 2018 summitry process in the last year of his term. To do so, however, Moon realizes he must first persuade Biden and his administration to prioritize North Korea on the US foreign policy agenda. He is well aware this will be a daunting task given that the US is preoccupied with massive challenges at home. (Minseon Ku, *38 North*)
- It is unlikely that the Chinese could win the war for North Korea, but they might well be able to prevent the DPRK from losing. But there is little question that China does not want to yoke its growing military machine to the whims of Pyongyang. (Robert Farley, The National Interest)

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Prepared by Rick Herssevoort, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250727173343/https://mailchi.mp/59a437d97f19/hrnk-news-items international-pressure-intensifying-on-anti-north-korea-leaflet-sending-banstruggle-to-bring-back-a-thai-abductee?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Thursday, January 30, 2021

# North Korea once again claims zero confirmed cases of COVID-19; North Korea speaks up to defend China amid genocide allegations

**In North Korea:**
North Korea once again claims zero confirmed cases of COVID-19 (*NK News*, 1/30/2021)
North Korea speaks up to defend China amid genocide allegations (*NK News*, 1/29/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Indictment files reveal plan to build nuclear power plant in North (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 1/29/2021)

**International:**

Pentagon: U.S. committed to troop readiness, exercises on Korean Peninsula (UPI, 1/29/2021)
South Korea, US set to move closer under Joe Biden, but China has concerns(*South China Morning Post*, 1/30/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Roughly one year after North Korea closed its borders to protect itself from the global COVID-19 pandemic, the country once again claims to have zero confirmed cases of the virus as of Jan. 21. (Kelly Kasulis, *NK News*)
- After China denied U.S. allegations that it's committing "crimes against humanity" this week, North Korea chimed in to say that western nations are meddling in Beijing's internal affairs in Xinjiang and Hong Kong. (David Volodzko, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The Moon Jae-in administration had prepared an audacious plan to build a nuclear power plant in North Korea in 2018, an evidence list submitted by prosecutors to a court in Daejeon revealed. (Ser Myo-ja, Lee Chul-jae, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin is committed to keeping U.S. forces on the Korean Peninsula in a "readiness posture" against threats from North Korea through continued joint training exercises with South Korean forces, Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said at a press briefing. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- Annual joint military exercises to resume and Biden vows to drop US threat to withdraw troops from Korean peninsula over cost-sharing, but Seoul must balance security commitments against its economic reliance on China, which is wary of US' regional presence, observers say (Laura Zhou, Rachel Zhang, *South China Morning Post*)

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Prepared by Jungeun Lee, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250727173405/https://mailchi.mp/3b0efb429676/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-korea-once-again-claims-zero-confirmed-cases-of-covid-19north-korea-speaks-up-to-defend-china-amid-genocide-allegations?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Friday, January 31, 2021

# Gyeonggi governor asks U.S., UN for understanding; Experts: "The US government has room for more North Korean refugees"

**Top News:**
Experts: "The US government has room for more North Korean refugees" (VOA, 1/29/2021)

**In North Korea:**

North Korea mystery: Kim Jong-un's wife still missing after more than a year (*Express*, 1/31/2021)
The Pyongyang General Hospital delay (*North Korea Economy Watch*, 1/31/2021)

**In South Korea:**
South Korea says North Korea nuclear plant documents were 'just an idea' (*Reuters*, 1/31/2021)
Opposition party demands probe into Seoul's alleged push to build nuke plant in N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 1/31/2021)
Political row intensifies over suspicions of N. Korea nuclear plant plan (*The Korea Times*, 1/31/2021)

**International:**
From North Korea to Bury: the Tory candidate who escaped torture and sex traffickers (*The Telegraph*, 1/30/2021)
Gov. Lee sends letter to U.S. Congress, U.N. to call for support for anti-leafleting law (*Yonhap*, 1/31/2021)
Gyeonggi governor asks U.S., UN for understanding (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 1/31/2021)
Hearing on Seoul's leaflet ban to open soon: US congressman (*The Korea Herald*, 1/31/2021)
In photos: The life of a North Korean defector (*Independent*, 1/30/2021)
Pressure vs. Dialogue: What North Korea Policy Will Biden Pick? (*The National Interest*, 1/30/2021)
To Succeed on North Korea, Convince Kim He is Safer Without Nukes (*The National Interest*, 1/30/2021)

**Top News:**

- "In order for North Koreans in the United States, just like Cubans in the United States, in order to have a voice, they need two things, numbers and money, numbers and economic success. I think that having more success stories within the North Korean community here will be very important. They do have, I would say, God given right to live out their American dream. And the first step to achieving that American dream is to resettle here in the United States." (Kim Young-gyo, VOA)

**In North Korea:**

- The 32-year-old wife of North Korea's supreme leader was last seen in public in January 2020. The wife and mother of Kim Jong-un's children, called Ri Sol-ju, may have decided to avoid public engagements over the fear of the coronavirus contagion. North Korean experts reporting in NK News think Ri mysteriously vanished because of the pandemic. (Brian McGleenon, *Express*)
- As previously reported by 38 North, neither the Pyongyang General Hospital nor the Wonsan-Kalma resort were completed on schedule. A recent report by Radio Free Asia, based on sources within North Korea, confirms that a lack of goods that need to be imported from China is what's holding construction back (among other things). At the same time, it isn't necessarily a lack of funds that's being cited, but rather, the inability of imports to get through due to the border lockdown. (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, *North Korea Economy Watch*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's energy ministry said on Sunday that documents about a potential plan to build a nuclear power plant in North Korea were meant to suggest an "idea" but this has never been pursued as an official project. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- The main opposition party called Sunday for a probe into snowballing allegations that the government of President Moon Jae-in attempted to help build a nuclear power plant in North Korea, despite its repeated denial. (*Yonhap*)
- Controversy is escalating over whether the government clandestinely attempted to help North Korea build a nuclear power plant in 2018 during a short-lived reconciliatory mood between the two Koreas. (Yi Whan-woo, *The Korea Times*)

**International:**

- It is a familiar refrain in British politics that more elected representatives should come from different backgrounds, with more diverse life experiences. (Tony Diver, *The Telegraph*)
- Gyeonggi Province Gov. Lee Jae-myung has sent a letter to the United Nations and the U.S. Congress to call for support for a law that South Korea enacted to ban the sending of anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets into North Korea, officials said Sunday. (*Yonhap*)
- Gyeonggi Gov. Lee Jae-myung is asking the U.S. Congress and United Nations to understand Korea's need to outlaw sending of propaganda leaflets to North Korea. (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- US Rep. Chris Smith, who until recently co-chaired the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, said the commission will open a hearing in early March at the latest to discuss South Korea's ban on the cross-border launching of anti-North Korea propaganda leaflets. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- At dawn on 1 January 2009, a North Korean Lieutenant Colonel, Han Hong Geun (now aged 63), left the Bachelor Officer Quarters in Pyongyang, capital of DPRK, to escape. (Jeon Heon-Kyun, *Independent*)
- At the present time, U.S. policy on North Korea is in a bit of a holding pattern. The North Korea policy review the White House announced last week is working its way through the national security bureaucracy, which means the first quarter of the year will largely operate on a plane of wait-and-see. (Daniel R. DePetris, *The National Interest*)
- How to negotiate with North Korea over nuclear weapons? To be successful, the upcoming administration policy review requires more than a touch of realism about Washington's diplomacy. (Doug Bandow, The National Interest)

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Prepared by Hayley Noah, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250727173815/https://mailchi.mp/4702047ea0d0/hrnk-news-itemsgyeonggi-governor-asks-us-un-for-understandingexperts-the-us-government-has-room-for-more-north-korean-refugees?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

# 2. FEBRUARY

### Saturday, February 1, 2021

## North Korean human rights issues were pushed aside in 2020; ROK Gov't releases document at center of NK nuclear power plant uproar

**In North Korea:**
Ex-N.K. diplomat says Pyongyang cannot seek denuclearization (*Yonhap*, 02/01/2021)
Kim Jong Un cannot denuclearize, former North Korean diplomat says (CNN, 01/31/2021)
North Korea did not release a new smartphone last year (*Daily NK*, 02/01/2021)
North Korea likely continued smuggling coal in January despite border lockdown(*NK Pro*, 02/01/2021)
North Korean defector diplomat pleas for family's safety in first TV interview (*NK News*, 02/01/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Cheong Wa Dae denounces 'ideological offensive' over ministry documents (*Korea Herald*, 02/01/2021)
Clear up suspicions (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/01/2021)
Contradictory moves (*Korea Herald*, 02/01/2021)
Energy ministry unveils document to calm dispute over N. Korea reactor plan(*Yonhap*, 02/01/2021)
Gov't release document at center of North Korean nuclear power plant uproar(*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/01/2021)
Moon denies allegations of plans to build reactor for North (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/01/2021)
Nuke plant for North is Moon's newest hot potato (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/01/2021)
PPP wants probe of nuke plant for North allegation (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 01/31/2021)
'Reactor plan' for North (*Korea Times*, 02/01/2021)
Ruling bloc goes all out to fire back over nuclear plant row (*Korea Times*, 02/01/2021)
Unification minister denies allegation Seoul pushed to build nuke plant in N. Korea(*Yonhap*, 02/01/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Defense ministry refuses to confirm envisioned proposal for inter-Korean talks(*Yonhap*, 02/01/2021)

**International:**
America's North Korea Strategy Has Failed. What Will Biden Do? (*National Interest*, 01/31/2021)

Blinken weighs possible sanctions North Korea as Russia, Iran loom (*Reuters*, 02/01/2021)
How Biden can offer Kim Jong-un a package for North Korean denuclearisation he can't refuse (*South China Morning Post*, 02/01/2021)
North Korean human rights issues were pushed to the side in 2020: UN report (*NK News*, 02/01/2021)
The US and South Korea must cooperate on policy toward North Korea (*Daily NK*, 02/01/2021)
USD-KPW exchange rate begins climbing amid hopes for restart in trade (*Daily NK*, 02/01/2021)
US to spend $4 million on projects targeting North Korean weapons trade (*NK Pro*, 02/01/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- A former acting North Korean ambassador to Kuwait has said that Pyongyang won't give up its nuclear weapons because the arsenal is the key to the survival of leader Kim Jong-un's regime. (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's former acting ambassador to Kuwait believes Kim Jong Un will not give up his nuclear arsenal, but may be willing to negotiate an arms reduction for relief from the international sanctions crippling Pyongyang's economy. (Yoonjung Seo, Paula Hancocks, CNN)
- North Korea released no new smartphone models last year, despite having released two to three new models each year in the past. According to a source, the country faced difficulties releasing new models due to the COVID-19 pandemic. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- As North Korea's lockdown continued with no signs of letting up, the country's fleet showed only modest movements in January, with two voyages indicating potential coal smuggling trips on Automatic Identification System (AIS) data. (Min Chao Choy, NK Pro)
- In his first televised interview since his defection became public last week, former North Korean diplomat Ryu Hyeon-woo defended his decision to escape with his family and pleaded for the safety of remaining family members in the DPRK. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- Cheong Wa Dae condemned what it called an outdated ideological offensive surrounding documents the Energy Ministry deleted, which allegedly indicated plans to help North Korea build a nuclear power plant at the time of the 2018 inter-Korean summit. (Lee Ji-Yoon, *Korea Herald*)
- The files hurriedly deleted by Energy Ministry officials ahead of a probe by the Board of Audit and Inspection (BAI) into possible wrongdoings related to the early shutdown of the Wolseong-1 reactor turned out to be more controversial than expected. They included a study on a nuclear reactor project in North Korea and surveillance on civic groups opposing the Moon Jae-in administration's nuclear phase-out policy. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- President Moon Jae-in's administration has come under suspicion of having pushed for a plan to build a nuclear power plant for North Korea in 2018, when Moon held a string of summits with the North's leader Kim Jong-un. (*Korea Herald*)

- South Korea's energy ministry on Monday made public an internal document about the possibility of building a nuclear power plant in North Korea, to calm what it called an "unnecessary" political dispute sparked by a report on the paper's existence. (*Yonhap*)
- The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy released a document at the center of a controversy about South Korea possibly offering a nuclear power plant to North Korea. But it did not say who wrote it — or at what level of government it came from. The document, entitled "Plan to push forward a nuclear plant's construction in North Korea," was made public at 7:15 p.m. Monday. (Lee Ho-jeong, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- President Moon Jae-in on Monday delivered a riposte to allegations he offered to build North Korea a nuclear power plant in years past, warning the opposition not to resort to politics of a bygone era to foment divisions during a time of crisis. In an apparent reference to the opposition's attacks, Moon in a Blue House meeting urged politicians to refrain from "regressing politics" with tactics like "relics of an old era" that should be discarded. (Shim Kyu-seok, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Within a week of President Moon Jae-in's first summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in 2018, the government drafted plans to offer energy assistance to the North including the possibility of building it a nuclear plant. But those documents were deleted from the Energy Ministry's computer on the eve of a special probe in 2019, a government source told the JoongAng Ilbo on Sunday. (Ser Myo-ja, Yoo Jee-hye, Korea *JoongAng Daily*)
- The main opposition People Power Party (PPP) Sunday urged a special probe into allegations that the South Korean government drafted a secret plan in 2018 to build a nuclear power plant in North Korea. Controversy has arisen with reports that documents detailing a plan to build a nuclear power plant in North Korea were included in 530 files Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy officials deleted as the Moon Jae-in administration pushed the phasing-out of nuclear power in the South. (Kang Tae-hwa, Ser Myo-ja, Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Allegations are growing that the Moon Jae-in administration secretly attempted to help North Korea start building a nuclear power plant in 2018. They are spelled out in an indictment of Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy officials who are accused of destroying computer files related to the controversial closure of the Wolsong-1 nuclear reactor in 2019. (*Korea Times*)
- The ruling bloc is going all out to defend itself against escalating suspicions that the Moon Jae-in administration attempted to initiate the construction of a nuclear power plant in North Korea in 2018. (Do Je-hae, *Korea Times*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young on Monday dismissed allegations that the South Korean government attempted to help build a nuclear power plant in North Korea, saying that such claims might be politically motivated. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The defense ministry refused Monday to confirm if it has proposed a military meeting with North Korea, which it pledged to push for to ease cross-border tensions. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- U.S. policy on North Korea has also been ill-served by the extraordinarily naïve and empirically ignorant idea that, if only sanctions can be made to "work" or if North Korea

can be "squeezed" a bit more, the population will rise up and change government policy. (Hazel Smith, *National Interest*)

- The Biden administration would consider new sanctions against North Korea as well as other possible actions against Russia, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a television interview on Monday as it continued its foreign policy review. (Susan Heavey, Doina Chiacu, *Reuters*)
- The Biden administration has a genuine opportunity to achieve a landmark foreign policy agreement and establish permanent peace and stability on the Korean peninsula – by negotiating for complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear programme, within the framework of six-party talks with South Korea, China, Russia and Japan. (Chan Young Bang, *South China Morning Post*)
- Political motivations pushed North Korean human rights violations to the side in 2020, the January report by the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) stated. According to the report, "other political priorities with respect to the Korean Peninsula" have resulted in a "decreased emphasis" on human rights in North Korea. While there were partially successful lawsuits in South Korea and the United States against the North Korean government in 2020, the country's lack of cooperation made securing information and evidence challenging, the report added. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- It is becoming more and more clear who the Biden administration is choosing to fill its diplomatic posts. The diplomatic lineup includes hardliners who have dealt with North Korean policy in the past and are intimately familiar with the nature of the North Korean regime. This will likely create friction with South Korea's appeasement policy toward North Korea. (Mun Sun Bo, *Daily NK*)
- After plummeting to new lows right after the Eighth Party Congress, the USD-KPW exchange rate has begun climbing as hopes grow that trade will soon resume. In fact, small-scale smuggling has started in certain regions, and there is talk that the border lockdown will be lifted in the first half of the year. (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)
- Only a few weeks after Kim Jong Un revealed the long list of weapons he plans to develop, the U.S. announced it will fund organizations working to counter North Korea's weapons proliferation and sanctions evasion a total of $4 million. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK Pro*)

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Prepared by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250728193727/https://mailchi.mp/5cdcf546db19/hrnk-news-items-north-korean-human-rights-issues-were-pushed-aside-in-2020-rok-govt-releases-document-at-center-of-nk-nuclear-power-plant-uproar?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Sunday, February 2, 2021

## UN report says torture, forced labour rife in North Korea prisons; High-level defector says North won't give up nukes

**In North Korea:**
High-level defector says North won't give up nukes (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 2/2/21)
KBS seeks to open Pyongyang Bureau: report (*Korea Times*, 2/2/21)
Kim recently took his father's title, but that's only going to weaken his rule (*NK News*, 2/2/21)
N. Korea beefs up missile units, special forces over past years: defense ministry (*Yonhap*, 2/2/21)
North Korea installs automated entry systems at military-related buildings in Pyongyang (*Daily NK*, 2/2/21)
North Korea moves to complete new oil terminal despite UN cap on fuel imports (*NK Pro*, 2/2/21)
North Korea's Tank Corps are Still Living in the Last Century (*National Interest*, 2/2/21)
North Korea tries to sell state-run insurance scheme to people in some regions (*Daily NK*, 2/2/21)
One year of COVID-19: The humanitarian impact of North Korea's border lockdown (*NK News*, 2/2/21)
UN report says torture, forced labour rife in North Korea prisons (*Al Jazeera*, 2/2/21)

**In South Korea:**
Documents show South Korea explored building power plants in the DPRK (*NK News*, 2/2/21)
North Korea not 'enemy' of South, defense white paper says (*UPI*, 22/21)
Nuke plant for North denied by Moon's summit planners (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 2/2/21)
Pause in joint field drills hurts Seoul's defense against North (*The Korea Herald*, 2/2/21)
Seoul again refrains from declaring North 'the enemy' (*The Korea Herald*, 2/2/21)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Nuclear plant row may increase US concerns over inter-Korean projects (*Korea Times*, 2/2/21)

**International:**
Blinken says U.S. looking for ways to move N. Korea denuclearization forward (*Yonhap*, 2/2/21)
Joe Biden's North Korea pretend policy will fail (*Korea Times*, 2/2/21)
US may take two-track approach to North Korea issue (*Korea Times*, 2/2/21)
US weighs sanctions, incentives under NK policy review (*The Korea Herald*, 2/2/21)
Will California Feel the Fire from a North Korean Nuclear Blast? (*National Interest*, 2/2/21)
What South Korea and China Do Together on North Korea Depends on Biden (*National Interest*, 2/2/21)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea will not give up its nuclear weapons but international sanctions may force it to negotiate, said Pyongyang's former envoy to Kuwait, who defected to Seoul secretly 16 months ago. (Shim Kyu Seok, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- National public broadcaster KBS aims to open a bureau in Pyongyang by 2025, according to an opposition party lawmaker who cited a recent internal document about raising TV license fee from the current 2,500 won to 3,840 won. (Park Ji Won, *Korea Times*)
- By stealing his father's "eternal" position as General Secretary of North Korea's ruling party, it seems Kim Jong Un is indirectly admitting he has little respect for what Kim Jong Il achieved during his rule. The North Korean leader's move has little practical purpose — in fact, it will only serve to undermine the legitimacy of the ruling regime.(Andrei Lankov, *NK News*)
- North Korea has expanded ballistic missile units and strengthened special forces with modernized equipment and exercises of attacking strategic targets, such as South Korea's presidential office, the defense ministry said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean authorities have recently installed automated entry systems at the entrance of the Ministry of Defense (formerly the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces), as well as at the entrances of command headquarters and military-related universities in Pyongyang, a source told Daily NK. The move, part of efforts to modernize the North Korean military, was reportedly aimed at strengthening security. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- Despite tight caps on fuel imports imposed by the United Nations, North Korea is close to completing a new oil terminal at Nampho, its biggest port. The three-tank addition, located just west of Nampho's primary fuel terminal, began in 2019 but only started construction in earnest in 2020. As of Oct. 20, the presence of ships anchoring off the west terminal indicates it is already operational (Joseph Byrne, *NK Pro*)
- North Korea appears to be aware of the deficiencies of its tank force. Tanks seen in this spring's competition appeared outfitted with externally mounted twin machine-gun mounts, twin antitank guided-missile mounts, and surface-to-air missiles in a desperate attempt to keep them relevant on the battlefield. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- In a phone conversation with Daily NK on Wednesday, a source in North Korea said the authorities recently ordered *inminban* in some regions to have their members read "new explanatory materials for insurance" that included sections on "home and family property insurance." According to the source, the government stressed that "all families must participate 100% in the insurance program." (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- The community of international humanitarian workers in North Korea was already on the decline before COVID-19 hit, due to a chronic shortage of funding and growing sanctions. But when Pyongyang closed its border a year ago, it also imposed new restrictions on domestic movement that effectively suspended the efforts of remaining humanitarian workers. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- A new report by the United Nations human rights office has said torture and forced labour are rife in North Korea's prisons, amounting to possible crimes against humanity. (*Al Jazeera*)

**In South Korea:**

- Less than three years ago, South Korea's Ministry of Trade, Industry and Economy assessed the possibility of building a nuclear power plant in the DPRK, previously unknown documents published by the ministry on Monday revealed. (Won Gi Jung, *NK News*)

- South Korea's biennial defense white paper omitted references to North Korea as an "enemy" state for the second time in two years, while referring to Japan as a "neighboring country" but no longer a "close neighbor and partner." (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- Foreign Minister-nominee Chung Eui-yong said Tuesday that President Moon Jae-in offered a blueprint of energy assistance to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un during their first summit in 2018, but not a nuclear power plant. (Sel Myo Ja, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A prolonged pause in South Korea-US joint military exercises involving full-scale field training will diminish Seoul's capability to mount a defense against North Korea, military experts said ahead of planned March drills. They are expected to be conducted indoors through computer-based war games. (Choi Si Young, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea's Ministry of National Defense did not single out North Korea as "the enemy" in this year's white paper, revealed Tuesday. That is the second time since 2019, when it removed the designation amid a flurry of diplomatic activity to build an inter-Korean detente. (Choi Si Young, *The Korea Herald*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Allegations that the government planned to assist North Korea build a nuclear power plant are expected to raise concerns with the new U.S. administration over inter-Korean projects sought by South Korea, according to diplomatic observers, Tuesday, although they said they do not buy into the claims. (Kang Seung Woo, *Korea Times*)

**International:**

- The United States is looking for optimal ways to advance the denuclearization process in North Korea and also deal with "growing problems" from the North's nuclear weapons, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said. (Byun Duk Kun, *Yonhap*)
- For roughly 30 years, the United States has maintained a policy that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) — known in most circles as North Korea — should never be able to research, create, deploy, or proliferate nuclear weapons. Clearly, by any reasonable measure, that policy has failed miserably, and now, North Korea is on the cusp of — or already has — the capability to strike the U.S. homeland with a nuclear weapon. (Harris J. Kazianis, *Korea Times*)
- The new Joe Biden administration may use a two-track approach to deal with the nuclear standoff with North Korea, offering either incentives or sanctions depending on which stance the North takes, diplomatic analysts said. (Do Je Hae, *Korea Times*)
- The United States is reviewing its North Korea policy to use the most effective tools to advance the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in his first media interview since taking office last week. (Kim So Hyun, *The Korea Herald*)
- The recent revelation that North Korea has intercontinental ballistic missiles put America on notice: within a few short years, or even months, the entire continental United States will be within range of Pyongyang's nuclear weapons. While practical counterforce targets—such as bomber and missile bases—exist, there is also an argument to be made that Kim Jong-un would target major American cities to inflict maximum damage. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)

- President Xi reportedly stated that the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is a mutual interest for both Beijing and Seoul, there is reasonable concern that his perception of denuclearization mirrors that of_North Korea's national initiative: a peninsula void of U.S. military and security presence. (Jason Bartlett, *National Interest*)

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Prepared by Tristin Schultz, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250728194136/https://mailchi.mp/a2e5378fa767/hrnk-news-items-un-report-says-torture-forced-labour-rife-in-north-korea-prisonshigh-level-defector-says-north-wont-give-up-nukes?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, February 3, 2021**

## Experts on the Number of North Korean refugees in the USA: There Is Room for Improvement

**Top News:**
Experts on the Number of North Korean refugees in the USA: There Is Room for Improvement (VOA News, 2/3/21)
** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.
**In North Korea:**
New missiles and boost for special forces signal North Korea's military focus (NK News, 2/3/21)
N. Korea accelerates efforts to improve irrigation system ahead of farming season(Yonhap, 2/3/21)
North Korea creates new biotech information center in State Academy of Sciences(Daily NK, 2/3/21)
North Korea in Jan. 2020: A month in review and what's ahead (NK News, 2/3/21)
North Korean students begin taking their end-of-term exams (Daily NK, 2/3/21)
No way out: Photos reveal harsh conditions on North Korea's border with China (NK News, 2/3/21)
**In South Korea:**
Govt. to improve living infrastructure for foreigners, N. Korean defectors (The Korea Herald, 2/3/21)
'No margin for error' in vaccinations, says Moon (Korea JoongAng Daily, 2/3/21)
Opposition advises lawmakers to focus on 'sexual assaults' (The Korea Herald, 2/3/21)
Opposition wants North nuke plant plan investigated (Korea JoongAng Daily, 2/3/21)
South Korea to review stance on joint military exercises with U.S. (UPI, 2/3/21)
South Korea urges U.S. flexibility on sanctions to restart North Korea talks (Reuters, 2/3/21)

Unification minister says S. Korea 'sufficiently' communicating with U.S. on anti-leaflet law (Yonhap, 2/3/21)

**International:**

Donations to N. Korea drop sharply amid pandemic: U.N. data (Yonhap, 2/3/21)

Sydney man accused of trying to broker North Korea missile sales spoke of connection to Kim Jong-un, court told (The Guardian, 2/3/21)

UN puts faith in Seoul's leaflet ban (The Korea Herald, 2/3/21)

U.S. missile defense aims to deter 'limited' nuclear attack from N. Korea: Hicks(Yonhap, 2/3/21)

**Top News:**

- U.S. human rights experts have stated that the U.S. government must accept more refugees from North Korea. This means that there's room for the U.S. government to act to increase the settlement of North Korean refugees in the United States. This is delivered to you by Reporter Kim Young-gyo. (VOA News)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea continues to focus its limited resources on military capabilities that aim to provide advantages in asymmetric warfare, a report released by the South Korean defense ministry on Tuesday shows. (Won-Gi Jung, NK News)
- North Korea is accelerating efforts to improve its irrigation system and recover from last year's flood damage ahead of the spring farming season, state media said Wednesday. (Yonhap)
- North Korea created a new biotech information center within the State Academy of Sciences right after the end of the Eighth Party Congress, Daily NK has learned. (Jeong Tae Joo, Daily NK)
- Every month NK Pro conducts an in-depth analytic review of news on the Korean Peninsula. This Month in Review covers the period of Jan. 1 to Jan. 13, 2020. (NK Pro, NK News)
- Students across North Korea began taking their final exams for the winter semester on Feb. 1, Daily NK has learned. (Ha Yoon Ah, Daily NK)
- With North Korea's extended COVID-19 border shutdown making it almost impossible for people to enter or leave the country, it's become difficult to know what life is really like in many parts of the DPRK. (NK News)

**In South Korea:**

- The government will put efforts into improving the basic living infrastructure for foreigners and North Korean defectors, the Ministry of the Interior and Safety said Wednesday. (Kan Hyeong-woo, The Korea Herald)
- President Moon Jae-in warned that there is "no margin for error" as he watched a Covid-19 vaccine drill Wednesday. (Sarah Kim, Korea JoongAng Daily)
- The main opposition party instructed its lawmakers to focus on the topic of sexual assaults among others when they shoot questions at the government during a series of interpellation sessions beginning Thursday. (Kim So-hyun, The Korea Herald)
- The main opposition party on Wednesday demanded a better explanation from the administration about a plan to build a nuclear plant for North Korea, rejecting the energy ministry's claim that a junior official came up with it on his own. (Ser Myo-Ja, Kim Nam-Jun, Korea JoongAng Daily)

- South Korea will "determine its stance" on upcoming joint military exercises with the United States to avoid a "serious problem" with North Korea, Unification Minister Lee In-young said Wednesday. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- The United States should flexibly enforce sanctions aimed at curbing Pyongyang's nuclear programmes to revive denuclearisation talks, South Korea's point man on North Korea said on Wednesday. (Hyonhee Shin, Reuters)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young said Wednesday that South Korea has been sufficiently communicating with the United States about a recently legislated ban on the sending of anti-Pyongyang leaflets into North Korea. (Yonhap)

**International:**

- Only about US$1.3 million has been pledged as humanitarian assistance to North Korea so far this year, an over 80 percent plunge from the same period last year amid the coronavirus pandemic, U.N. data showed Wednesday. (Yonhap)
- A Sydney man spoke of his connection to Kim Jong-un as he allegedly worked on behalf of North Korea to export missiles in breach of UN sanctions, a New South Wales supreme court jury has been told. (The Guardian)
- The UN secretary-general's office said Monday that it believes South Korea will respect human rights when it implements the ban on the cross-border launching of anti-North Korea propaganda leaflets. (Choi Si-young, The Korea Herald)
- The United States' missile defense system provides deterrence against "limited" nuclear attacks from countries such as North Korea, Deputy Defense Secretary nominee Kathleen Hicks said Tuesday. (Byun Duk-Kun, Yonhap)

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VOA video

**Experts on the Number of North Korean refugees in the USA: There Is Room for Improvement**

Reporter Kim Young-gyo
2021.1.29

U.S. human rights experts have stated that the U.S. government must accept more refugees from North Korea. This means that there's room for the U.S. government to act to increase the settlement of North Korean refugees in the United States. This is delivered to you by Reporter Kim Young-gyo.

Robert King, former special envoy for North Korean Human Rights Issues in the U.S. Department of State, pointed out in his article recently published by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a non-governmental organization, that there have not been many North Korean escapees who entered the United States, and that number is further decreasing.

According to the U.S. Department of State's Refugee Admission Statistics, a total of 220 North Korean escapees have resettled in the U.S. as refugees since May 2006.

The year 2008 saw the highest number of 38 people resettled, but the number has dropped sharply in recent years. In particular, only one person was admitted in 2017, and two people entered the country last year.

Former Special Envoy King stated in a call with VOA on the 29th that it should be noted that as the total number of North Korean escapees have decreased, the number of North Korean defectors who have entered the U.S. has decreased over the past few years.

[Recording: King, former Special Envoy] “The one thing to keep in mind is that the numbers have declined in the last couple of years, as numbers overall have gone down… I think the real problem is the number of North Koreans who are able to leave and try to find a place to live elsewhere in South Korea or the United States or Europe. The numbers are declining from the north.”

This means that the very number of North Korean defectors who attempt to leave North Korea and to live in other places, such as South Korea, the United States, or Europe, has decreased.

The crackdown to tighten borders between North Korea and China played a major role in this, but former Special Envoy King assessed that the border crackdowns last year was affected by concerns over infections from the new coronavirus infections.

Former Special Envoy King stated that of the reasons why North Koreans choose to live in South Korea rather than the United States after escaping North Korea is largely due to language and family issues.

[Recording: King, former Special Envoy] “The first problem they run into is the language is different. They don't teach a lot of English language in North Korea and most of the people, who leave North Korea, don't speak English… The second thing is that many of the defectors who leave the North are joining family, and this family element is something that we sometimes don't think about it but it's an important element.”

This is to say that because the majority of people who leave North Korea cannot speak English, they chose to live in South Korea where they share the same language.

Additionally, many North Korean escapees want to reunite with family members who left North Korea first, so the fact that a large number of families stay in South Korea is an important factor in choosing where to resettle.

John Sifton, the Asia Advocacy Director of Human Rights Watch, an international human rights organization Human, stated that North Korean escapees have the choice of [resettling in] South Korea, but the United States should accept more North Korean refugees.

[Recording: Sifton, Director] “Human Rights Watch believes that a generous refugee resettlement for all refugees, whether they're from North Korea, or China or Syria, or Ethiopia,

is good for the United States, because, I think, one of the strongest aspects of the United States as a nation is its diversity and rescue. Having a generous refugee admission policy is part of that."

That is to say, it is beneficial for the United States to make it easier for all refugees, including those from North Korea, China, Syria, and Ethiopia to settle in the United States, and some of the greatest strengths of the United States as a nation is its diversity and rescue.

Director Sifton also stated that the settlement of North Korean refugees in the United States will also help the U.S. government to better understand North Korea's human rights situation.

[Recording: Sifton, Director] "And it would also help impact, I think, it would also help improve the U.S. government's understanding of human rights issues in North Korea and help press the United States to promote the human rights issues more in their negotiations and not just focus on weapons and weapons proliferation issues."

That is to say, this will help press the United States to promote the improvement human rights in North Korea during negotiations with North Korea, rather than focus only on nuclear weapons or the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), stated that in order North Koreans in the United States to have a voice, their numbers [population] and economic success are important.

[Recording: Scarlatoiu, Executive Director] "In order for North Koreans in the United States, just like Cubans in the United States, in order to have a voice, they need two things, numbers and money, numbers and economic success."

Director Scarlatoiu stated it is important that there are many success stories in the North Korean refugee community in the United States.

[Recording: Scarlatoiu, Executive Director] "I think that having more success stories within the North Korean community here will be very important. They do have, I would say, God given right to live out their American dream. And the first step to achieving that American dream is to resettle here in the United States."

That is to say, North Koreans also have a natural right to pursue the 'American dream', and the first step toward achieving that dream is to settle in the United States.

Suzanne Scholte, Chairman of the North Korea Freedom Coalition, stated that there are more things to be done to help resettle North Korean refugees in the United States.

[Recording: Scholte, Chairman] "When you think about the fact that the North Korea Human Rights Act has passed unanimously, you know, whenever it's been up for every year, it's been up for renewal every four years, it passes unanimously. So there's a congress has been united

Democrats and Republicans just saying, yeah, we need to do more. This is why we need to do more to help resettle refugees."

The U.S. Congress' unanimous passage of the North Korean Human Rights Act in 2004 indicates that both the Republican and Democratic parties showed bipartisan agreement that the United States need to take more action on the issue of North Korean human rights.

Director Scarlatoiu called for the U.S. government to engage NGOs with a presence in areas where there are North Korean refugees.

[Recording: Scarlatoiu, Executive Director] "One thing that I would do as the US government would be to engage NGOs with a presence in areas where there are North Korean refugees. Engage NGOs to distribute information about America to these refugees.

That is to say, by engaging with these civic groups and providing more information about the United States to North Korean refugees, we can give them the option of settling in the United States.

Chairman Scholte emphasized that it is important that the United States work with China, where many North Korean refugees reside.

[Recording: Scholte, Chairman] "We should be doing what we can to work with, you know, work to get the refugees in China out as soon as possible. And I say that, especially the ones that are in detentions right now. But we could, we should be doing more to help on that. And that's something that we can engage."

That is to say, we must work to help North Korean escapees in China who are in danger of forced repatriation and those who are in Chinese detention facilities to get out of China as soon as possible.

Director Sifton from Human Rights Watch stated that getting the U.S. Congress to decide on increasing funds is also a way to help North Korean defectors.

This is Kim Young-gyo with VOA News.

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Translated by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250728194836/https://mailchi.mp/6215d43534e9/hrnk-news-itemsexperts-on-the-number-of-north-korean-refugees-in-the-usa-there-is-room-for-improvement?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, February 4, 2021**

## Sydney man accused of trying to broker North Korea missile sales spoke of connection to Kim Jong-un, court told

**Top News:**
Sydney man accused of trying to broker North Korea missile sales spoke of connection to Kim Jong-un, court told (*The Guardian*, 2/3/21)
**In North Korea:**
COVID-19 vaccine expected to be sent to North Korea this month (*NK News*, 2/4/21)
Hyesan, Samjiyon under lockdown following smuggling incidents (*Daily NK*, 2/4/21)
North Korea appears to have received supplies of oil from China (*Daily NK*, 2/4/21)
N. Korea forecast to receive about 2 mln doses of AstraZeneca vaccines in H1: report (*Yonhap*, 2/4/21)
North Korea's new insurance scheme doesn't cover people exposed to radioactive material (*Daily NK*, 2/4/21)
N. Korea to convene congress of largest youth association to support party decisions (*Yonhap*, 2/4/21)
North Korea to receive nearly 2 million AstraZeneca vaccine doses in H1 - interim report (*Reuters*, 2/4/21)
N. Korea to start vaccinations with COVAX aid (*The Korea Herald*, 2/4/21)
Youth League plans 'ideological offensive' to keep young North Koreans in line (*NK News*, 2/4/21)
**In South Korea:**
Brother of official killed by Pyongyang asks unification ministry to deliver letter to N.K. leader (*Yonhap*, 2/4/21)
Fear grows over variant infections, cases stay above 400 (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 2/4/21)
Moon gets phone time with Joe Biden at last (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 2/4/21)
S. Korea, U.S. discussing how to hold combined exercise amid pandemic: defense ministry (*Yonhap*, 2/4/21)
**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Biden and Moon promise to work closely on North Korean denuclearization (*NK News*, 2/4/21)
Inter-Korean cooperation fund cannot be used to help virus-hit people: unification ministry (*Yonhap*, 2/4/21)
Moon, Biden agree to work on joint North Korea strategy (*AP News*, 2/4/21)
Moon, Biden signal fresh restart of peace process on Korean Peninsula (*The Korea Herald*, 2/4/21)
(5th LD) Moon, Biden to map out 'comprehensive' N. Korea strategy together(*Yonhap*, 2/4/21)
Unification minister says it's time to look at outcome of sanctions on NK (*The Korea Herald*, 2/4/21)

**International:**
Biden administration to hold North accountable, emphasize human rights (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 2/4/21

**Top News:**

- A Sydney man spoke of his connection to Kim Jong-un as he allegedly worked on behalf of North Korea to export missiles in breach of UN sanctions, a New South Wales supreme court jury has been told. (*The Guardian*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea is expected to receive nearly 2 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine, a global initiative providing vaccines to underdeveloped countries announced on Thursday. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- North Korean authorities have reportedly placed the cities of Hyesan and Samjiyon in Yanggang Province under yet another lockdown. The measure is a response to a pair of border residents getting caught smuggling Chinese products into North Korea. With this, locals have suddenly been "imprisoned" once again. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- Oil prices in North Korea plummeted late last month after climbing at the start of the year. North Korea has reportedly been receiving supplies of oil from China as the two nations show signs of growing closer. (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea is forecast to receive about 2 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines under an international vaccine procurement program. (*Yonhap*)
- Amid North Korean government efforts to have people sign up for a new insurance scheme, Daily NK has learned that people who die from exposure to radioactive material are not eligible for insurance payouts. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea will convene a congress of the country's largest youth association for the first time in four years, state media reported Thursday, in an apparent move to enlist support for new policies and decisions adopted at last month's Workers' Party congress. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea will be provided with 1.99 million doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine by June this year to inoculate nearly 1 million people, COVAX said Wednesday. COVAX is an international group that helps less wealthy countries with vaccination efforts. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- Young North Koreans and officials are set to descend on the capital this April to reset and rename the country's youth league, state media announced on Thursday, at the group's first major event in five years. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea is expected to receive nearly two million doses of the AstraZeneca-Oxford COVID-19 vaccine by the first half of this year, said agencies leading the COVAX vaccine-sharing programme. (*Reuters*)

**In South Korea:**

- The brother of a South Korean fisheries official killed by North Korea's military near the western sea border last year met with Unification Minister Lee In-young on Thursday and asked the government to deliver his letter to the North's leader. (*Yonhap*)
- Domestic transmissions of overseas coronavirus variants could lead to a fourth wave of infections in the springtime, health authorities warned Thursday, as Korea's daily

Covid-19 cases remained over 400 for a second consecutive day. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- President Moon Jae-in spoke with U.S. President Joe Biden for the first time Thursday morning and agreed to strengthen the bilateral alliance. (Ser Myo-Ja, Yoo Jee-Hye, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea and the United States are in talks over how to hold their annual springtime combined exercise in consideration of the coronavirus situation, the defense ministry said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- U.S. and South Korean president Joe Biden and Moon Jae-in promised to work closely to achieve North Korean denuclearization and peace on the peninsula, according to statements from the White House and the Blue House. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- The unification ministry said Thursday it is not appropriate to use the inter-Korean cooperation fund to help people suffering from the coronavirus given the nature of the money set aside for cross-border exchanges. (*Yonhap*)
- The South Korean and U.S. presidents agreed on the need for a comprehensive strategy on North Korea as they push to work together to achieve denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula, officials said. (Hyung-Jin Kim, *AP News*)
- President Moon Jae-in and his US counterpart, Joe Biden, held their first phone call Thursday, signaling a fresh restart of the South Korea-US alliance, the most critical strategic partnership in bringing peace to the Korean Peninsula. (Lee Ji-Yoon, *The Korea Herald*)
- The leaders of South Korea and the United States agreed Thursday to draw up a joint "comprehensive" strategy on North Korea during their phone talks, Cheong Wa Dae announced. (*Yonhap*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young said he is against additional sanctions on North Korea, which US Secretary of State has mentioned as one of the options the US may consider as it reviews its North Korea policy. (Kim So-hyun, *The Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- The Joe Biden administration is expected to hold accountable those responsible for human rights abuses or violations in North Korea, said a U.S. State Department spokesperson. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

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Prepared by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250728195107/https://mailchi.mp/d3a7aeb025f4/hrnk-news-items sydney-man-accused-of-trying-to-broker-north-korea-missile-sales-spoke-of-connection-to-kim-jong-un-court-told?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Wednesday, February 5, 2021

# Human Rights and NK: Honoring the Anniversary of the UN Commission of Inquiry Report; U.S. DOS review appointment of Special Envoy

Human Rights and North Korea: Honoring the Anniversary of the UN Commission of Inquiry Report (*The Korea Society*, 2/4/21)
**U.S. State Department says they will review the appointment of the Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights (VOA, 2/5/21)
**"Progress in U.S.-North Korean denuclearization negotiations is impossible without solving North Korean human rights issues" (RFA, 2/4/21)
**In North Korea:**
Cybercriminals used NK News content in malware campaign (*NK Pro*, 2/5/21)
Kim Jong Un is directly handling results of new COVID-19 hacking organization's work (*Daily NK*, 2/5/21)
Kim Jong Un said he would give up nukes, South Korean official says (*UPI*, 2/5/21)
Kim Jong Un still willing to denuclearize: South Korean foreign minister nominee (*NK News*, 2/5/21)
N. Korea fears internal unrest more than foreign attacks: U.S. intelligence official (*Yonhap*, 2/5/21)
N.K. paper stresses central leadership to achieve new economic objectives (*Yonhap*, 2/5/21)
N. Korea replaces heads of key farmer and labor groups amid economic drive (*Yonhap*, 2/5/21)
North Hamgyong Province lifts social distancing measures only to reinstate them nine days later (*Daily NK*, 2/5/21)
North Korea's economy is suffering from self-imposed lockdown (*NK Pro*, 2/5/21)
North Korea targeted cybersecurity researchers with hacking, espionage (*UPI*, 2/5/21)
Sohae Satellite Launching Station: Snow Removal Underway (*38 North*, 2/5/21)
Vice minister of foreign affairs punished for disregarding government's disease control measures (*Daily NK*, 2/5/21)
**In South Korea:**
Prosecution requests arrest warrant for former energy minister (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 2/5/21)
**International:**
Congress Should Drop its Investigation of South Korea's Leaflet Ban (*National Interest*, 2/5/21)
Former U.S. nuke negotiator urges Washington, Seoul to review various ways for N.K. denuclearization (*Yonhap*, 2/5/21)
S. Korean Australian faces charges of breaching UN sanctions on Pyongyang (*The Korea Times*, 2/5/21)
U.N. grants sanctions waiver to S. Korean group for improving drinking water in N.K. (*Yonhap*, 2/5/21)
U.S. will closely consult with S. Korea on N. Korea: Sullivan (*Yonhap*, 2/5/21)

**Top News:**

- The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) executive director Greg Scarlatoiu and Bush Institute senior fellow Victor Cha joined senior director Stephen Noerper for a discussion of human rights in North Korea and its placement on the Biden administration's new policy agenda. The event marks the anniversary of the historic UN Commission of Inquiry report release. (Greg Scarlatoiu, Victor Cha, *The Korea Society*)
- The revival of the U.S. State Department's Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea, which has been vacant, has become a reality since the launch of the Biden administration. The State Department says it is considering filling the post for the first time in four years. This is Baek Sung-won reporting. (Bae Sung Won, VOA)
- Victor Cha, head of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), pointed out that the U.S.'s policy towards North Korean human rights has not been discussed properly because it was pushed aside for the sake of discussing nuclear weapons. He also said that it is impossible to make progress in denuclearization negotiations without resolving North Korea's human rights issues. (Kim So Young, RFA)

**In North Korea:**

- Hackers used an NK News story to lure victims into opening a malicious Microsoft Word document that aims to grant attackers remote access to the computer, researchers warned on Thursday. Cybersecurity firm ESTsecurity attributed the malware campaign to Konni, a hacking group believed to operate on behalf of the DPRK that is also known as Kimsuki and Thallium. (Nile Weisensee, *NK Pro*)
- Amid the news that North Korean authorities recently created a new hacking organization dedicated to stealing information related to COVID-19, Daily NK has learned that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is directly handling the results of the organization's work. (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)
- South Korea's foreign minister nominee said he had heard directly from North Korea's Kim Jong Un of his willingness to denuclearize, and that Kim has kept his "promise" since 2018. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un "still has the intention to denuclearize," South Korea's foreign minister nominee Chung Eui-yong said at his confirmation hearing on Friday."He is honoring the moratorium [on nuclear and long-range missile testing]," Chung said at the National Assembly in Seoul. He added that North Korea's continued display of new weapons may be a strategy to sustain leverage in negotiations, appearing to imply that Kim Jong Un does not intend to close the door on diplomatic progress. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korea is more concerned about possible calls for regime change from within than attacks from the outside, a U.S. intelligence official said Thursday, as a reason why the North may not give up its nuclear weapons in the near future. (Byun Duk Kun, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Friday called on officials to strictly follow central leadership to realize a self-reliant economy and carry out key policy goals unveiled in a rare party meeting last month. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has replaced heads of key groups of farmers and laborers, state media said Friday, in an apparent move to rev up its recently unveiled economic development drive. (*Yonhap*)

- In North Hamgyong Province, North Korean authorities ordered the lifting of social distancing measures on Jan. 20 only to reinstate them nine days later on Jan. 29, Daily NK has learned. (Kim Yoo Jin, *Daily NK*)
- The standard of living is dropping in North Korea and prices are rising as the country's economy languishes due to a lack of imports, according to a report from the Korea International Trade Association (KITA). The main reason for the drop is North Korea's self-imposed trade restrictions aimed at preventing the spread of COVID-19 in the country, the January report stated. (Min Chao Choy, Won Gi Jung, *NK Pro*)
- North Korean hackers have staged an audacious attack targeting cybersecurity researchers, many of whom work to counter hackers from places like North Korea, Russia, China and Iran. (Paulo Shakarian, Arizona State University, *UPI*)
- Discussion of a "military reconnaissance satellite" in the summary of Kim Jong Un's report to the Eighth Party Congress highlighted the continued importance of North Korea's Sohae Satellite Launching Station. While recent commercial satellite imagery indicates no obvious signs of a potential launch or engine test in the near future, with active snow removal underway, the complex is being well maintained at a ready state. (Peter Makowski, *38 North*)
- Pak Myong Ho, a North Korean vice minister of foreign affairs, was recently punished by a stern warning for disregarding the government's disease control measures amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Daily NK has learned. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- The Daejeon District Prosecutors' Office said it requested the Daejeon District Court on Thursday to issue an arrest warrant for former Minister of Trade, Industry and Energy Paik Un-gyu on charges of abuse of power and obstructing business of the state-run Korea Hydro and Nuclear Power. (Ser Myo Ja, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- Successive U.S. presidents and Congresses claimed the Republic of Korea to be a close ally. Candidate Joe Biden made improving alliances a key plank in his campaign. Yet Washington has never treated the ROK as a full partner. That remains the case today. (Doug Bandow, *National Interest*)
- A former U.S. nuclear negotiator on Friday called on Washington and Seoul to review various approaches to denuclearization and stressed their need to maintain close bilateral ties, the unification ministry said Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- A South Korean-born Australian man is facing charges of breaching U.N. sanctions against North Korea's weapons of mass destruction program, Australian media outlets have reported this week. (Yi Whan Woo, *The Korea Times*)
- The United Nations has granted a sanctions waiver for a South Korean organization working on a project to provide safe drinking water to North Korea, a U.N. website showed Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- The United States will closely consult with its Asian allies such as South Korea in dealing with North Korea, U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said Thursday. (Byun Duk Kun, *Yonhap*)

VOA Source

**U.S. State Department says they will review the appointment of the Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights**

Reporter Baek Sung-Won
2021.2.5, 7:10 AM
The revival of the U.S. State Department's Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea, which has been vacant, has become a reality since the launch of the Biden administration. The State Department says it is considering filling the post for the first time in four years. This is Baek Sung-won reporting.

For the first time, the U.S. State Department has hinted at the possibility of re-appointing the Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea, which has been vacant throughout the Donald Trump administration.

[State Department spokesman] “As part of our policy review process, the Secretary, along with the interagency, will be looking at retaining/filling special envoy positions to best align resources with Biden-Harris Administration foreign policy priorities. This will include the Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Issues position.”

It is the first time in four years that the State Department has directly mentioned the position of the Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea and brought up the possibility of reappointment.

Whenever Special Envoy Robert King was asked about the re-appointment of the Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea since he stepped down in January 2017, he has consistently said, "I am deeply concerned about the human rights situation in North Korea," but "There is nothing to announce about the administration."
U.S. lawmakers and human rights experts have repeatedly urged the appointment of a Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea, which has been vacant since the Trump administration took office.

On the 4th, in a webcast called “North Korea and Human Rights” hosted by the Korea Society, Greg Scarlatoiu, the executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), said HRNK had sent a letter to the transition committee before President Joe Biden took office. In a phone call with VOA on the same day, he said that he welcomes the State Department’s restoring the position.

[Recording: Greg Scarlatoiu HRNK] “We are dealing with extraordinarily important issues—a regime that is committing crimes against humanity and other very serious and egregious human rights violations. Restoring the position of special envoy will reinforce US government commitment to addressing human rights in North Korea, an issue that's vital to the Korean peninsula and also to the security of the American people.”

Meanwhile, a spokesperson of the State Department has repeatedly clarified the Biden administration's principles of human rights importance by reporting on the review of the re-appointment of the Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea.

[State Department spokesman] “The United States is committed to placing human rights at the center of our foreign policy. We stand united with like-minded partners in calling out human rights abuses. As part of its North Korea review, the Biden-Harris administration will carefully consider the country’s egregious human rights record and how to promote respect for human rights in the closed country.”

The State Department also said on the previous day that it would hold North Korea responsible for its terrible human rights abuses.

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Translated by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

RFA Source

**“Progress in U.S.-North Korean denuclearization negotiations is impossible without solving North Korean human rights issues”**

Washington - Kim So-young kimso@rfa.org
2021-02-04

Anchor: It has been argued once again that the U.S. administration of Joe Biden will find it essential to resolve North Korea's human rights issues in order to make substantial progress in the nuclear negotiations between the U.S. and North Korea. This is Kim So-young reporting.

The Korea Society, a private organization in New York, held an online video conference on North Korean human rights on the 4th to commemorate the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in DPRK report released in February 2014.

Victor Cha, head of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), pointed out that the U.S.’s policy towards North Korean human rights has not been discussed properly because it was pushed aside for the sake of discussing nuclear weapons. He also said that it is impossible to make progress in denuclearization negotiations without resolving North Korea's human rights issues.

Victor Cha: By emphasizing North Korea's human rights in the U.S.-North Korea dialogue, we can show how committed the U.S. is to actual negotiations with North Korea. Negotiations require a verification process, economic support, changes in political relations between the U.S. and North Korea, and other elements, but none of these issues can progress without raising the issue of human rights in North Korea.
Cha also said the reappointment of the State Department's Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea is essential.

He says the Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea plays a pivotal role in leading discussions on North Korean human rights issues in the Biden administration and in delivering a message on behalf of the United Nations and the international community.
Cha said the Biden administration will focus on responding to COVID-19, or the Coronavirus, in America, and that it will prioritize China, Myanmar, or other countries in Asia, so it would be difficult to expect immediate attention or action on North Korea's policy, especially with human rights issues.

Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), said HRNK sent a letter to the transition team before Biden took office calling for the appointment of a special envoy for North Korean human rights.
In the letter, he mentioned important issues related to North Korean human rights, including the forced repatriation of North Korean escapees by Chinese authorities and the expansion of asylum in the U.S. for North Korean escapees.

Stressing the historical meaning and importance of the U.N. Human Rights Commission on North Korea's human rights report, Executive Director Scarlatoiu said that we must hold those responsible accountable for their actions through further investigations into human rights abuses in North Korea and, if necessary, by sending individuals and organizations to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Executive Director Scarlatoiu also added that since we are in a situation where it is difficult to visit North Korea in real life, observation of internment camps in North Korea using satellite images and the testimonies of North Korean defectors must continue.

He also expressed concern over the suspension of the investigation at Hanawon, a North Korean defector support organization in South Korea, since last year.

Executive Director Scarlatoiu explains that because the vivid experiences and sightings of North Koreans who recently escaped from the North are important data to understand the human rights situation in North Korea, NGOs need to be able to access this information.

Executive Director Scarlatoiu also said that if a comprehensive and inclusive approach to human rights in North Korea is taken, it could give hope for change in improving human rights in North Korea.

Executive Director Scarlatoiu: It is important to remember the need for a comprehensive approach to human rights issues in North Korea. Documentation of information, delivery of external information to North Korea, humanitarian activities to North Korea, and rescuing North Korean defectors are all important. Not individually, but all of them are interconnected.

Meanwhile, seven years ago, a report by the UN Commission on Human Rights in North Korea revealed that North Korea is committing crimes against humanity and that widespread and systematic human rights violations continue as part of its national policy.

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Translated by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Tristin Schultz, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250728195325/https://mailchi.mp/229200c20bf6/hrnk-news-itemshuman-rights-and-nk-honoring-the-anniversary-of-the-un-commission-of-inquiry-report-us-dos-review-appointment-of-special-envoy?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Thursday, February 6, 2021

# HRNK Discloses Letter to President Biden; Only a quarter of N. Koreans presumed to have access to electricity

**Top News:**
** U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea Discloses Letter to President Biden, "Coupling Human Rights and Security" (VOA, 02/06/2021)

** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**
North Korea goes missing from Biden's big foreign policy speech (*Nikkei Asia*, 02/06/2021)
Only a quarter of N. Koreans presumed to have access to electricity: CIA(*Yonhap*, 02/06/2021)

**International:**
U.S. committed to 'mutually acceptable' SMA deal with S. Korea: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 02/06/2021)
U.S., South Korea nearing end of burden sharing negotiations, reports say(UPI, 02/05/2021)

**Top News:**

- The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), a U.S non-governmental organization, released to VOA a letter sent to President Joe Biden with a proposal for North Korea's human rights policy. It proposed measures such as the appointment of a special envoy for North Korean human rights, protection of North Korean refugees, sending information to North Korea, and linking humanitarian assistance to progress on human rights, as critical ways to uphold human rights in North Korea. The letter argues this is critical to the security of the United States and our key allies South Korea and

Japan. Since its inception in 2001 and as the leading US-based non-governmental organization in the field of North Korean human rights, HRNK under the leadership of Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu has actively promoted the improvement of North Korean rights such as exposing the reality of North Korean political prison camps. Members of the HRNK board include Robert King, Robert Joseph, Winston Lord, David Maxwell, Nicholas Eberstadt, and Suzanne Scholte. (Sungwon Baik, VOA)

**In North Korea:**

- Conspicuously absent from U.S. President Joe Biden's maiden address on foreign policy Thursday was an Asian nuclear power that has confounded administrations for decades: North Korea. (Ken Moriyasu, *Nikkei Asia*)
- Only 26 percent of the population in North Korea were presumed to have access to electricity in 2019, a recent estimation by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) showed Saturday. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- The United States is committed to quickly reaching a defense cost-sharing agreement with South Korea that will be acceptable to both and help strengthen their alliance, an official from the U.S. Department of State said Friday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea said negotiations with the United States on the Special Measures Agreement is likely to conclude soon, a day after U.S. President Joe Biden ordered the suspension of any troop withdrawal until the completion of a military review. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)

VOA Article

**U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea Discloses Letter to President Biden, "Coupling Human Rights and Security"**

Reporter Sungwon Baik
2021.2.6

The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), a U.S non-governmental organization, released to VOA a letter sent to President Joe Biden with a proposal for North Korea's human rights policy. It proposed measures such as the appointment of a special envoy for North Korean human rights, protection of North Korean refugees, sending information to North Korea, and linking humanitarian assistance to progress on human rights, as critical ways to uphold human rights in North Korea. The letter argues this is critical to the security of the United States and our key allies South Korea and Japan. This is VOA's Sungwon Baik reporting.

The fact that the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) sent a letter to the Biden administration was revealed on the 4th when Greg Scarlatoiu, this organization's executive director, spoke at a seminar. He explained that, before Biden took office, HRNK had sent a letter to the transition team calling for the appointment of a special envoy for North Korean human rights.

In fact, the State Department told VOA on the 4th that it would look at the issue of appointing a

special envoy for North Korean human rights.

The letter HRNK exclusively released to VOA after the Korea Society's "Human Rights and North Korea" live webcast today identifies President Joe Biden as the primary recipient and also cc'd Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan, and Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield.

The letter states its purpose, "We write to you [President Biden] to strongly recommend that your administration retake the higher ground that our country once held on action meant to bring human rights, freedom, and justice to the people of North Korea."

▸ Download Letter from the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)

The appointment of a special envoy for human rights in North Korea was the first recommendation that is very important in reviving U.S. North Korean human rights policy.

It stated that since January 2017, the United States government has not had a U.S. Special Envoy for North Korean human rights issues and reminded that this position was established under the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004. It explained that the Office of the Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea was created by the North Korea Human Rights Act of 2004 (reenacted in 2008, 2012, and 2017), which called for a Special Envoy to "coordinate and promote efforts to improve respect for the fundamental human rights of the people of North Korea."

Additionally, it disclosed its view that the extent and gravity of the human rights violations and crimes against humanity perpetrated by the North Korean regime fully justify the appointment of a Special Envoy, a full-time ambassadorial position. It urged the Biden administration to appoint a Special Envoy without further delay, as this critical action is long overdue.

The second recommendation is about the protection of North Korean refugees.

Noting that the number of North Korean refugees who have received permission to enter the United States to obtain permanent residence since the enactment of the 2004 North Korea Human Rights Act stands at 229, an average 14 per year, it raises concerns that here is still an ongoing slow-motion North Korean refugee crisis.

HRNK revealed that it has thoroughly documented the plight of thousands of North Koreans, most of them women, arrested and forcibly repatriated by the People's Republic of China to North Korea in direct violation of China's obligations under the 1951 UN Convention Concerning the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Additional Protocol.

In addition, it revealed that refugees forcibly repatriated to North Korea face a credible fear of persecution, harsh interrogation, torture, interment in prison camps, and death. It stressed that these North Korean refugees deserve the protection of the people and government of the United States.

Pleading the Biden administration to enhance measures to grant them safe passage, protection, and a new home in the United States, it also urges the administration to persuade China to stop the refoulement of North Koreans.

The third recommendation to the Biden administration is that because the ones who can bring positive, peaceful change to North Korea are the people of North Korea themselves, the best the outside world can do to empower them is to send in information that is otherwise forbidden by the North Korean regime.

It urges the Biden administration to enhance support for the creation of new and relevant content and for the transmission of information to the North Korean people, especially via radio, the internet and other media, ending their forced isolation.

Finally, it emphasized that humanitarian and development assistance to the government of North Korea must be predicated on steps taken to protect the rights of its people, including the right to be free from arbitrary imprisonment and torture, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom of movement, freedom of assembly, and freedom of conscience.

It also revealed that humanitarian assistance must be adequately monitored, in order to ensure it reaches the most vulnerable people that need it most, especially women, children, and people in detention.

Since its inception in 2001 and as the leading US-based non-governmental organization in the field of North Korean human rights, HRNK under the leadership of Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu has actively promoted the improvement of North Korean rights such as exposing the reality of North Korean political prison camps.

Current members of the board include Robert King, former Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Issues; and other former senior officials such as Robert Joseph, former Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security; Winston Lord, former Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs; as well as political, security, and human rights specialists and experts such as David Maxwell, senior fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies (FDD); Nicholas Eberstadt, senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI); and Suzanne Scholte, chairman of the North Korea Freedom Coalition.

This is Sungwon Baik reporting for VOA News.

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VOA Article Translated by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Timothy Goo, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:

https://web.archive.org/web/20250728195550/https://mailchi.mp/55ef7db7d0fd/hrnk-news-items-hrnk-discloses-letter-to-president-bidenonly-a-quarter-of-n-koreans-presumed-to-have-access-to-electricity?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, February 7, 2021**

# Seoul appoints first female unification ministry spokesperson; NK to convene party meeting this week

**In North Korea:**
NK to convene party meeting this week (*Korea Herald*, 02/07/2021)
N. Korea to hold party plenary meeting this week for plans in 2021(*Yonhap*, 02/07/2021)
North Korea apparently starts removing snow at key missile facility (*Kyodo News*, 02/06/2021)
North Korean Military Doctrine Hasn't Changed Much Since the 1950s (*National Interest*, 02/07/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Seoul appoints first female unification ministry spokesperson (*Korea Herald*, 02/07/2021)

**International:**
A North Korea Surprise Attack Could Devastate America's Asian Allies (*National Interest*, 02/07/2021)
From North Korean defector to UK election candidate: Park fights for 'voiceless' (*Korea Times*, 02/07/2021)
Snatched from a beach to train North Korea's spies (*BBC*, 02/06/2021)
US Congress members submit bill on family reunions for Korean Americans (*Korea Times*, 02/07/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea is set to convene a meeting of top ruling party officials to finalize policy plans for this year set forth at last month's Workers' Party congress, state media said Sunday. (Ahn Sung-mi, *Korea Herald*)
- North Korea is scheduled to hold a plenary meeting of its party this week to finalize plans for "strategic tasks" for this year, state media said Sunday. (*Yonhap*)
- New satellite images showed that North Korea has started removing snow at a facility previously used to test intercontinental ballistic missile engines, a U.S. organization monitoring the nuclear-armed nation said Friday. (*Kyodo News*)
- Normal military doctrine says that an attacker should outnumber the defender by at least three to one at the point of attack. But since when is North Korea normal? The Korean People's Army (KPA) believes that it only needs to amass a two to one edge on the battlefield to defeat U.S. and South Korean troops. What's more, North Korea seems

to believe that it can win using the same tactics that Chinese troops successfully employed in the Korean War. (Michael Peck, *National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- The Unification Ministry on Sunday tapped Lee Jong-joo, director-general of humanitarian cooperation bureau, as the ministry's first female spokesperson. (Ahn Sung-mi, *Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- "Even without using nuclear weapons, North Korea has the capacity to unleash a devastating level of violence against a significant portion of the ROK population through some mix of conventional artillery and possibly chemical munitions," according to a January 2019 report from RAND, a California think tank with close ties to the U.S. military. (David Axe, *National Interest*)
- Jihyun Park shares the civic concerns of any other would-be town councillor in Britain, from local education to potholes in the roads. But she is unique in one regard: no other candidate has fled North Korea. (*Korea Times*)
- The country's future leader Kim Jong-il, then head of its intelligence services, wanted to expand his spy programme. Kidnapped foreigners weren't just useful as teachers. They could be spies themselves, or Pyongyang could steal their identities for false passports. They could marry other foreigners (something forbidden to North Koreans), and their children, too, could serve the regime. The beaches of Japan were full of ordinary people, ripe for abduction, who would stand no chance against highly-trained agents. (Rebecca Seales, Hideharu Tamura, BBC)
- Twenty-one members of the U.S. Congress have proposed a bill to call for a family reunion event for Korean Americans who have separated relatives in North Korea, according to the congressional website and a Washington-based V.O.A. report. (Jung Da-min, *Korea Times*)

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Prepared by Timothy Goo, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250728200329/https://mailchi.mp/679b787b07f8/hrnk-news-itemsseoul-appoints-first-female-unification-ministry-spokespersonnk-to-convene-party-meeting-this-week?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Saturday, February 8, 2021

# UN approves first humanitarian sanctions exemption for North Korea in 2021; North Korea commands army to achieve state economic goals

**In North Korea:**
DPRK hackers used unknown Internet Explorer bug in attack on security analysts(*NK News*, 02/08/2021)
Fertilizer factory shutdown and goods shortages (*North Korean Economy Watch*, 02/08/2021)
Four people in a wooden boat disappear from waters off Ryongyon County (*Daily NK*, 02/08/2021)
I escaped from North Korea thanks to the foreign media | Opinion (*The Korea Times*, 02/06/2021)
Key North Korea factory shuts down from COVID-19 parts shortage (*Nikkei Asia*, 02/08/2021)
N.K. paper calls for military role in advancing economy on army founding anniversary (*Yonhap*, 02/08/2021)
North Korea commands army to achieve state economic goals (*UPI*, 02/08/2021)
North Korea conducts lectures on "squashing anti-socialist" acts (*Daily NK*, 02/08/2021)
North Korea nuclear power plant plans rock politics in the South (*Nikkei Asia*, 02/08/2021)
North Korea sends mixed signals over marking new nuclear missile holiday (*NK News*, 02/08/2021)
North Korea threatens to 'thoroughly punish' any country that provokes it (*NK News*, 02/08/2021)
Only a quarter of N. Koreans presumed to have access to electricity: CIA (*Yonhap*, 02/08/2021)
Two minor natural quakes hit N. Korea's eastern region: KMA (*Yonhap*, 02/08/2021)

**In South Korea**:
A dangerous start | Opinion (*Korea JoonAng Daily*, 02/08/2021)
Chung says North willing to denuclearize, Pentagon disagrees (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/07/2021)
FM Kang leaves office after years of daunting diplomatic tasks (*Yonhap*, 02/08/2021)
New and Improved: South Korean K1A2 Main Battle Tanks are Leveling Up (*The National Interest*, 02/07/2021)
North Korea's human rights most divisive issue for South Korea, US (*The Korea Times*, 02/08/2021)
Moon appoints new foreign minister (*The Korea Herald*, 02/08/2021)
Moon-Biden summit going virtual? (*The Korea Herald*, 02/08/2021)
South Korea's view on North Korea nuclear issue may cause friction with US (*The Korea Times*, 02/08/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Don't neglect defectors | Opinion (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/07/2021)

**International**:
Assassins: How CCTV gave Kim Jong-nam murder documentary added intrigue(BBC, 02/07/2021)
Biden Needs a New Goal for North Korea (*The Diplomat*, 02/06/2021)
Biden's NK policy review | Opinion (*The Korea Times*, 02/08/2021)
China to tap senior Communist Party official as new envoy to North Korea (*Kyodo News*, 02/08/2021)
Korean-Australian faces court for alleged North Korea arms deals (*NK News*, 02/08/2021)
UN approves first humanitarian sanctions exemption for North Korea in 2021 (*NK News*, 02/08/2021)
US needs Korea policy reset (*The Korea Times*, 02/08/2021)
Why Korean War 2.0 Would Be a Disaster for America and China (*The National Interest*, 02/07/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Hackers previously linked to North Korea by researchers at Google used an unknown vulnerability in Internet Explorer to target cybersecurity experts, according to a South Korean firm. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- KITA has a new briefing paper out about some developments relating to North Korea's domestic economy and external trade. (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, *North Korean Economy Watch*)
- The provincial party committee of South Hwanghae Province and security forces are reportedly seething after it was belatedly learned that four people and a wooden boat disappeared in the waters off Ryongyon County. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)
- If not for her father's decisions, she would not be here today talking to you, she would still be a prisoner of North Korea. (Ju Chan-yang, *The Korea Times*)
- One of North Korea's largest fertilizer plants has halted operations due to a lack of replacement parts, a trade group based in South Korea says, the latest sign of damage to the rogue state's economy from its border closure with China. (Yosuke Onchi, *Nikkei Asia*)
- North Korea's official paper said Monday the country's military should play a leading role in major construction and other economic development projects as the country marked the 73rd anniversary of the army's founding. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea is ordering its military to play a greater role in economic construction after Kim Jong Un revealed a new five-year plan in January during the Eighth Party Congress. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- A source has told Daily NK that North Korean authorities are conducting public lectures on "squashing anti-socialist and non-socialist acts" as a follow-up measure to the Eighth Party Congress. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- Political turmoil has erupted in South Korea after a local broadcaster in late January disclosed the existence of government documents about a potential plan to help North Korea build a nuclear power plant. (Sotaro Suzuki, *Nikkei Asia*)

- North Korea may have designated a new holiday to celebrate the anniversary of the country's largest-ever nuclear missile test, changes to some of this year's official calendars from the DPRK suggest. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea said it will preemptively mobilize its forces and "thoroughly punish" countries for provocations, state media stated on Monday, the DPRK's military foundation day. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Only 26 percent of the population in North Korea were presumed to have access to electricity in 2019, a recent estimation by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) showed Saturday. (*Yonhap*)
- Two minor natural earthquakes struck North Korea's eastern region early Monday, South Korea's state weather agency said. (*Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- After a Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee meeting Monday in the National Assembly, the ruling Democratic Party (DP) unilaterally endorsed the nomination of Chung Eui-yong, former National Security Advisor to President Moon Jae-in, as Foreign Minister. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Chung Eui-yong, the South Korean foreign minister nominee, said that he believes North Korea is willing to denuclearize in his parliamentary confirmation hearing Friday, while the Pentagon says it has assessed otherwise. (Park Hyun-Young, Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha left office Monday after nearly four years at the helm of South Korea's diplomacy grappling with a host of daunting challenges ranging from North Korea's nuclear quandary to historical spats with Japan and an escalating Sino-U.S rivalry. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- These tanks highlight the great strides made by South Korea to build up its arms industry. (Peter Suciu, *The National Interest*)
- During last week's phone conversation between President Moon Jae-in and President Joe Biden, the two agreed to "comprehensively" work together on North Korea. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- President Moon Jae-in appointed Chung Eui-yong as his new foreign minister on Monday, Cheong Wa Dae announced. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- After an official phone call last week, Cheong Wa Dae is pushing for an early summit between President Moon Jae-in and his US counterpart, Joe Biden, in an attempt to breathe life back into the Korean Peninsula peace negotiations, with a virtual meeting emerging as one possibility to advance the date. (Lee Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)
- Differing views between South Korea and the United States on North Korea's nuclear ambitions may cause discord, affecting the allies' cooperation on resolving the problem, according to diplomatic observers, Monday. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- To prepare for peaceful reunification of the peninsula, we desperately need a tailored set of policies for North Korean elite defectors. (Thae Yong-ho, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- When four years ago film-maker Ryan White heard about the airport assassination of Kim Jong-nam he knew the story was extraordinary but he had no intention of turning it into a film. (Vincent Dowd, *BBC*)

- Former North Korean diplomat Ryu Hyun-woo gave his first interview on January 31 since defecting to South Korea more than a year ago, and he spoke what should be obvious: North Korea will not denuclearize – at least, not any time soon. (Bonnie Kristian, *The Diplomat*)
- In just three weeks since its inauguration, the Biden administration has revealed its direction of charting American foreign policy to "engage and lead" the world again, with an emphasis on diplomacy, democracy and human rights. (Tong Kim, *The Korea Times*)
- China is expected to appoint Wang Yajun, a senior official of the ruling Communist Party, as the nation's new ambassador to North Korea, succeeding incumbent Li Jinjun, a diplomatic source said Monday. (*Kyodo News*)
- After an unusually long investigation following his arrest more than three years ago for alleged weapons deals with North Korea, a former South Korean national had his first day in an Australian court on Wednesday. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- A South Korea organization aiming to provide clean drinking water was granted the first sanctions exemption by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) sanctions committee for the DPRK this year. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- This letter is the fifth in a "Letters to President Biden" series, aimed at conveying policy recommendations via open letters from politicians, scholars and experts to the new U.S. president following his Jan. 20 inauguration. (Sandip Kumar Mishra, *The Korea Times*)
- Still, as we consider the potential for future conflict between China and the United States, we should try to wring what lessons we can from the first Sino-American war. (Robert Farley, *The National Interest*)

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Prepared by Sophia Hapin, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250728200749/https://mailchi.mp/b8443e41ee1c/hrnk-news-item sun-approves-first-humanitarian-sanctions-exemption-for-north-korea-in-2021north-korea-com mands-army-to-achieve-state-economic-goals?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Sunday, February 9, 2021

# Congressman Smith "U.S. Congressmen Should Speak Freely about the Anti-Leaflet Law"

**Top News:**

** Congressman Smith "U.S. Congressmen Should Speak Freely about the Anti-Leaflet Law" (RFA, 02/02/2021)

** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**
Central Committee conducts inspection of political and security officers in two military units (*Daily* NK, 02/09/2021)
Kim Jong Un slams 'passive and self-protecting' economic agencies (*UPI*, 02/09/2021)
N. Korea continues wintertime drills, no unusual moves ahead of late leader's birthday (*Yonhap*, 02/09/2021)
N.K. leader holds plenary Central Committee meeting of Workers' Party (*Yonhap*, 02/09/2021)
N.K. leader raps economic agencies for 'passive, self-protecting tendencies' (*Yonhap*, 02/09/2021)
NK leader blasts self-protectionism in assembly (*The Korea Herald*, 02/09/2021)
North Korea cyberattacks gained $300m in cryptocurrency: UN panel (*Nikkei Asia*, 02/09/2021)
North Korea developed nuclear, missile programs in 2020: U.N. report (*Reuters*, 02/09/2021)
'North Korea low on daily necessities after shutting down borders' (*The Korea Times*, 02/09/2021)
North Korea Uses Military Holiday to Shake Down Citizens for Supplies (*RFA*, 02/08/2021)
North Korea will boost trade after months of COVID-19 lockdown: Russian official(*NK News*, 02/09/2021)
North Korean hackers stole more than $300 million to pay for nuclear weapons, says confidential UN report (CNN, 02/09/2021)
North Korea's Kim calls for thorough implementation of five-year economic plan(*Reuters*, 02/09/2021)
UN experts: North Korea using cyber attacks to update nukes (*AP News*, 02/09/2021)

**In South Korea**:
Korean students increasingly approve of North-South reunification (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/09/2021)
New FM bets on firm relations with Washington for Pyongyang's denuclearization(*The Korea Herald*, 02/09/2021)
New foreign minister beats drum of peace with North (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/09/2021)
Over 60 pct of S. Korean youth say unification with N.K. necessary: survey (*Yonhap*, 02/09/2021)
Seoul's new foreign minister makes first speech on 'difficult' North Korea issue (*NK News*, 02/09/2021)
South Korea's new top diplomat says confident about U.S. coordination over North Korea (*Reuters*, 02/09/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Ministry hopes for early resumption of Kaesong complex as it marks anniversary of shutdown (*Yonhap*, 02/09/2021)

**International**:
China appoints new ambassador to North Korea (*UPI*, 02/09/2021)
S. Korea's top nuke envoy asks for Russia to play role in advancing peninsula peace efforts (*Yonhap*, 02/09/2021)
Seoul's calls for concessions to N. Korea may create tension with US: CRS (*Yonhap*, 02/09/2021)

**Top News:**

- In a statement sent to Radio Free Asia, Representative Chris Smith reiterated his previous position that "the ban on distributing leaflets to North Korea is against the right to the peaceful exercise of the freedom of expression." Governor Lee Jae-myung and other U.S.-based Korean-American groups sent a letter to Rep. Smith in support of the anti-leaflet law, but he reiterated his position to discuss the problems of the bill in the U.S. Congress. He argued in the letter that "some members of the U.S. Congress are raising questions about the bill, which is likely to obstruct the exercise of legitimate and essential sovereignty to protect the lives, safety, and property of the Korean people," but Rep. Smith countered that the United States could, of course, raise the issue as a party to international law. HRNK's human rights attorney Amanda Mortwedt Oh told RFA that "Governor Lee Jae-myung's claim that the U.S. Congress' concern on behalf of the South Korean people violates South Korea's sovereignty is similar to the argument North Korea makes whenever human rights issues are mentioned or criticized." (Ji Jeong-eun, RFA)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean authorities announced the "elimination of corruption" during the Eighth Party Congress and the inspection appears to be part of efforts to transform the military into the "Party's Army" and the "Supreme Leader's Advance Guard." The Central Committee is conducting an inspection focused on security and political officers in two military units, including the Third (Nampo) and Eighth (Yomju County, South Pyongan Province) corps. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un "sharply criticized" the country's economic agencies for failing to aggressively set goals for the year during a meeting of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea, state media reported on Tuesday. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- North Korea has been conducting regular wintertime military drills without showing any unusual moves ahead of the birthday of late leader Kim Jong-il, the South Korean military said Tuesday. North Korea celebrated the 73rd anniversary Monday of the foundation of its army and has another key national holiday coming up, which is the Feb. 16 birthday of its late leader, the father of current leader Kim Jong-un. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un attended the second plenary meeting of the party's 8th Central Committee to push ahead with "strategic tasks" set forth during the eighth party congress. During the plenary meeting, Kim criticized "passive and self-protecting tendencies revealed by the state economic guidance organs" in setting this year's goals, and stressed the "principled matters for overcoming the tendencies and organizing the economic work in an innovative and meticulous way." (*Yonhap*)
- The North unveiled a new five-year economic development plan at the eighth congress of the party last month, with a focus on self-reliance in the face of the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic and global sanctions on its regime. (*Yonhap*)

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un chastised self-protectionism and the passiveness of state agencies during a full session of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party on Monday, Pyongyang's state media said Tuesday. Calling for strong investment in the metalworking and chemicals industry, which he said were the "centric ring of the people's economy," Kim demanded expansion of steel materials and chemical fertilizer production, and set this year's targets for railroad transport, construction materials, light industries and commerce. (Kim So-hyun, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea has been launching dozens of cyberattacks on cryptocurrency exchanges and companies in the defense sector to obtain foreign currencies and military information, according to a draft report by a UN expert panel. The draft, obtained by Nikkei, shows that North Korea stole an estimated total of $316 million in 2019 and 2020 through cyberattacks on cryptocurrency exchanges -- a clear sign the country continues to try and sidestep international sanctions even during the coronavirus pandemic. (Kaori Yoshida and Hiona Shiraiwa, *Nikkei Asia*)
- North Korea maintained and developed its nuclear and ballistic missile programs throughout 2020 in violation of international sanctions, helping fund them with some $300 million stolen through cyber hacks, according to a confidential United Nations report. The report by independent sanctions monitors said Pyongyang "produced fissile material, maintained nuclear facilities and upgraded its ballistic missile infrastructure" while continuing to seek material and technology for those programs from abroad. (Michelle Nichols, *Reuters*)
- North Korea seems to be struggling with acquiring daily necessities due to its shutdown of borders with adjacent countries to guard against the spread of COVID-19, according to the diplomatic community there. Russian Ambassador Aleksandr Matsegora said that the prolonged border shutdown is leading to shortages of sugar and flour, among other basic items. (Do Je-hae, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korea has forced citizens to donate aid to the military ahead of Army Day Monday, sparking resentment among people who can barely support themselves in an economy ravaged by the coronavirus pandemic. (Eugene Whong, RFA)
- More than a year after North Korea shut its borders to protect against COVID-19, a top Russian diplomat gave a glimpse into the country's state of affairs, describing medicine shortages, public transit restrictions and new virus disinfection centers that could help resume trade. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea's army of hackers stole hundreds of millions of dollars throughout much of 2020 to fund the country's nuclear and ballistic missile programs in violation of international law, according to a confidential United Nations report. The document accused the regime of leader Kim Jong Un of conducting "operations against financial institutions and virtual currency exchange houses" to pay for weapons and keep North Korea's struggling economy afloat. (Richard Roth and Joshua Berlinger, CNN)
- North Korea has modernized its nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles by flaunting United Nations sanctions, using cyberattacks to help finance its programs and continuing to seek material and technology overseas for its arsenal, U.N. experts said. The panel said its investigations found that North Korean-linked cyber actors continued to conduct operations in 2020 against financial institutions and virtual currency

exchange houses to generate money to support its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs. (Edith M. Lederer, *AP News*)

**In South Korea:**

- New Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong on Tuesday voiced confidence in working together with the US on North Korea's nuclear issue, highlighting that the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is a shared goal between the two allies. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- In a survey conducted by the education and unification ministries on 68,750 students enrolled in elementary, middle and high schools nationwide from Nov. 2-30 of last year, 62.4 percent said that the two Koreas need to reunify. (*Yonhap*)
- On his first day in office, South Korea's new foreign minister spoke of a "difficult" diplomacy situation with North Korea but assured the public that both Seoul and Washington could "easily" work together to move things forward. Chung Eui-yong, who officially replaced foreign minister Kang Kyung-wha on Monday evening, gave a speech at a government building on his inaugural day and vowed to continue President Moon Jae-in's "peace process" with North Korea. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- South Korea's new foreign minister said on Tuesday he was confident about coordinating North Korea policy with the United States despite earlier signs of differences. Chung Eui-yong expressed confidence in coordinating with the new U.S. administration of President Joe Biden, saying an early denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula is a shared goal. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The unification ministry on Tuesday expressed hope for the early reopening of a now-shuttered industrial complex in North Korea's border town of Kaesong as it marks the fifth anniversary of its closure amid chilled inter-Korean relations. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- China has appointed a new ambassador to North Korea a year after the coronavirus pandemic began and Pyongyang closed its 880-mile border with its most important partner. Wang Yajun, the deputy head of the International Liaison Department of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, will head the Chinese mission in Pyongyang. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- South Korea's chief nuclear envoy, Noh Kyu-duk, asked Tuesday for Russia to play a role in advancing Seoul's renewed drive to lay the groundwork for a lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula, the foreign ministry said. Noh made the call during his meeting with Russian Ambassador to South Korea Andrey Kulik, as Seoul seeks to enlist international cooperation in resuming dialogue with North Korea and restart nuclear diplomacy with it. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's push for concessions to North Korea may continue to create tension in U.S.-South Korea relations, a U.S. congressional report said. The updated Congressional Research Service (CRS) report on South Korea noted policy coordination between Seoul and Washington had been "inconsistent" under former U.S. President Donald Trump. President Joe Biden, on the other hand, is "reinvigorating the alliance, suggesting he

would abandon President Trump's repeated use of punitive tariffs against allies like Seoul and his demand for a five-fold increase in South Korea's payments for the costs of hosting U.S. troops," said the report, updated last Tuesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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RFA Article

**Congressman Smith "U.S. Congressmen Should Speak Freely about the Anti-Leaflet Law**

Washington – Ji Jeong-eun jij@rfa.org

2021-02-02

Anchor: Chris Smith, Co-chair of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission (a bipartisan body of the U.S. House of Representatives), stated that U.S. lawmakers should be free to discuss South Korea's so-called "anti-leaflet law" and demonstrated strong resolve to hold hearings related to the issue. This is reported by Ji Jeong-eun.

In a statement sent to Radio Free Asia (RFA) on February 1st, Representative Smith (R-NJ) reiterated his previous position that "the ban on distributing leaflets to North Korea is against the right to the peaceful exercise of the freedom of expression."

He then pointed out, "The leaflet ban contradicts the right to peaceful exercise of freedom of expression and the right to 'seek, receive and impart information of all kinds, regardless of frontiers,' as enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, or ICCPR."

Representative Smith also stated, "In addition to articulating a universally-binding principle, as the United States is a State Party to the ICCPR, members of Congress should speak out freely where they perceive a violation."

He added, "And, I would add, Koreans and others should speak out freely where they see infringements on free speech rights in the United States as well."

Rep. Smith's statement is in response to Governor of South Korea's Gyeonggi Province, Lee Jae-myung's letter on the 29th of last month which expressed the need for a ban on leaflets to North Korea.

Governor Lee Jae-myung and other U.S.-based Korean-American groups sent a letter to Rep. Smith in support of the anti-leaflet law, but he reiterated his position to discuss the problems of the bill in the U.S. Congress.

In particular, Governor Lee Jae-myung argued in the letter to Rep. Smith that "some members of the U.S. Congress are raising questions about the bill, which is likely to obstruct the exercise of legitimate and essential sovereignty to protect the lives, safety, and property of the Korean people," but Rep. Smith countered that the United States could, of course, raise the issue as a

party to international law.

Regarding the current controversy surrounding the hearing, attorney Amanda Mortwedt Oh from the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) told RFA on the 2nd that "Governor Lee Jae-myung's claim that the U.S. Congress' concern on behalf of the South Korean people violates South Korea's sovereignty is similar to the argument North Korea makes whenever human rights issues are mentioned or criticized."

She then emphasized, "the fundamental problem is the way Kim Jong-un's regime treats the North Korean people, but it is followed by the problem of how the Moon Jae-in administration in South Korea is trying to appease North Korea, even at the expense of the South Korean people and its own international legal obligations."

Attorney Oh also added, "Rather than allowing the issue of the Kim regime's human rights abuses to divide South Korea and the United States, it is better that the two countries work together to strengthen common values."

Earlier in December of last year, in response to growing criticism from the U.S. and other members of the international community regarding the anti-leaflet law, South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said it would provide a proper explanation of the purpose of the legislation.

Choi Young-sam, South Korean Foreign Ministry spokesperson: "As we stated last week, we (our government) have been contacting and communicating with the U.S. government, the Congress and related civic groups."

Meanwhile, former South Korean Governor of Gyeonggi Province Kim Moon-soo said on the 2nd that the anti-leaflet law violates the Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and international conventions on civil and political rights; and that he will send a letter to both chambers of the U.S. Congress as well as the U.N. pointing out the problems of the law.

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RFA Article Translated by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Rick Herssevoort, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250728201033/https://mailchi.mp/944666dd5dde/hrnk-news-itemscongressman-smith-us-congressmen-should-speak-freely-about-the-anti-leaflet-law?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, February 10, 2021**

# Biden calls Kim a thug; may be harbinger of a wholesome policy

**Top News:**
Biden calls Kim a thug; may be harbinger of a wholesome policy. @GregScarlatoiu, @committeehrnk (*The John Batchelor Show*, 02/08/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Covid helped isolate North Korea in a way sanctions never could. So what happens now? (*NBC News*, 02/10/2021)
Insight into Kim Jae Ryong and Oh Il Jong's new appointments, and Kim Yo Jong's current status (*Daily NK*, 02/10/2021)
Kim Jong Un's Congress Report: More Economic and Social Controls on the Horizon (*38 North*, 02/09/2021)
Kim Jong Un wants to boost the economy through science, tech and state control(*NK News*, 02/09/2021)
Leaked Report Finds Cybercrime Spree Funded North Korea Nuclear Program, Missiles (VOA, 02/09/2021)
N. Korea launches rare committee to tackle economic challenges (*Yonhap*, 02/10/2021)
North Korea imported up to eight times its legal fuel limit in 2020: UN report (*NK News*, 02/10/2021)
North Korea stole $300 million in crypto to fund nukes: UN experts (*The Korea Times*, 02/10/2021)
North Korean authorities are encouraging defectors in China to return home (*Daily NK*, 02/09/2021)
North Korean authorities lockdown cities in Chagang Province over COVID-19 fears(*Daily NK*, 02/09/2021)
North Korean Hackers Accused Of 'Biggest Cryptocurrency Theft Of 2020'—Their Heists Are Now Worth $1.75 Billion (*Forbes*, 02/09/2021)
North Korean hackers stole $316 million in less than two years, UN report says (*NK News*, 02/10/2021)
North Korean worker in China found to be engaging in prostitution (*Daily NK*, 02/10/2021)
Top-ranking cadres receive special watches, TVs following Eighth Party Congress(*Daily NK*, 02/10/2021)
Why Kim Jong-un Thinks the U.S. Military Base in South Korea is a Juicy Target(*National Interest*, 02/09/2021)

**In South Korea:**

New FM confident about coordinating with U.S. over N.K. nuke issues (*Yonhap*, 02/09/2021)
Report: Seoul official denies Vladivostok meeting covered power plant (*UPI*, 02/09/2021)
S. Korean top nuke envoy holds phone talks with senior U.S. diplomat on N.K. policy (*Yonhap*, 02/10/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Buying the same horse twice | Opinion (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/09/2021)
N.K. leader specified policy direction for inter-Korean, external matters (*Yonhap*, 02/10/2021)
North Korea's Kim lays out paths to take with South Korea, external affairs (*Reuters*, 02/09/2021)
Three years later, South Korea's Olympic governor still bets on sports diplomacy (*NK News*, 02/10/2021)
What will Pyongyang expect from return of Chung-Suh team? (*The Korea Times*, 02/09/2021)

**International**:
Americans, stop the moral grandstanding on North Korea and get down to business(*NK News*, 02/09/2021)
Australian man pleads guilty after trying to sell missiles for North Korea (*NK News*, 02/10/2021)
Australian man pleads guilty to breaching U.N. sanctions on North Korea (*Reuters*, 02/10/2021)
Biden seeks Tokyo-Seoul thaw to help end North Korea deadlock (*Nikkei Asia*, 02/10/2021)
Life 'not easy' for foreign diplomats in North Korea, Russian envoy says (*UPI*, 02/09/2021)
Sydney man admits arranging deals to help North Korea export arms (*The Guardian*, 02/09/2021)
U.N. experts point finger at North Korea for $281 million cyber theft, KuCoin likely victim (*Reuters*, 02/09/2021)
UN Finds Torture, Forced Labor Still Rampant in North Korean Prisons (*UN Human Rights Watch*, 02/09/2021)
U.S. denies delay in approaching North Korea may invite provocations (*The Japan Times*, 02/10/2021)
US fears 'moving too soon' on North Korea, State Department official says (*NK News*, 02/10/2021)
U.S. will move on N. Korea after bringing allies to same page: Price (*Yonhap*, 02/10/2021)

**Top News:**

- Greg Scarlatoiu, @GregScarlatoiu, @committeehrnk; Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea; and Gordon Chang, @GordonGChang, Daily Beast, in re:..Thousands of Americans died to protect South Korea, which has become a miracle...Biden's foreign policy will have two pillars: values, and multilateralism. Moon Jae-in will have to understand that we care about human rights in North Korea. Moon has banned launching balloons into the north; is weak on human rights. (*The John Batchelor Show*)

**In North Korea:**

- The coronavirus pandemic has created a de facto sanctions regime in North Korea that former Trump national security adviser John Bolton, a foreign policy hard-liner, could only have dreamed of. (Victor Cha, *NBC News*)
- Daily NK has learned that Kim Jae Ryong was named the head of the Organization and Guidance Department for his superior personnel management skills and Oh Il Jong was named the head of the Military Government Guidance Department because he comes from a symbolically important family of anti-Japanese guerillas. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- Kim Jong Un's report to the Korean Workers' Party Congress in early January set out a clear overall direction for the North Korean economy. (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, *38 North*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un demanded developments to scientific research, agriculture, fishing and telecommunications in a general overhaul of the country's economic management, state media reported on Wednesday. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- A confidential United Nations report says North Korea has used cyberattacks to steal hundreds of millions of dollars to fund its nuclear program and ballistic missile capabilities, in violation of international law. (Henry Ridgwell, *VOA*)
- North Korea has recently launched a temporary committee to rev up its economic development drive, state media said Wednesday, as the communist country pushes ahead to achieve goals set forth at last month's rare party congress amid crippling sanctions and antivirus efforts. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea illegally imported up to eight times more refined petroleum than allowed in 2020, but coal exports slowed down soon after the country tightened its COVID-19 lockdown measures in late July, according to a new U.N. report. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- North Korea has stolen more than $300 million worth of cryptocurrencies through cyberattacks in recent months to support its banned nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, a confidential UN report said. (*The Korea Times*)
- With the number of North Korean defectors entering South Korea falling drastically due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, North Korea's Ministry of State Security is encouraging defectors in China to return through a mixture of inducements and threats, according to a source. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- With North Korea placing the border cities of Hyesan and Samjiyon in Yanggang Province under lockdown due to a smuggling incident late last month, Daily NK has learned authorities recently placed Chasong and Manpo in Chagang Province under lockdown as well. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- A North Korean hacker crew called Lazarus Group has been accused of carrying out a heist on cryptocurrency exchange KuCoin, dubbed the biggest cryptocurrency theft of last year at $275 million worth of virtual money. (Thomas Brewster, *Forbes*)
- North Korean hackers stole at least $316.4 million over the past two years, according to a new U.N. report, suggesting an increasing reliance on cyberattacks to make money for the DPRK government. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- Since last year, North Korean workers in China have been limited to only commuting between their workplaces and dormitories in order to avoid COVID-19. In the midst of this, news of a female worker found engaging in prostitution has sent the authorities into a state of panic. (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)

- With general participants in the Eighth Party Congress reportedly receiving little in the way of gifts, Daily NK has learned that top-ranking cadres were given watches engraved with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's name, as well as televisions. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- Pyongyang's war-planners apparently intend directly to target Camp Humphreys in the event of war, retired U.S. Army colonel David Maxwell, a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, told Army Times. (David Axe, *National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- New Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong expressed confidence on Tuesday about working with the new administration of U.S. President Joe Biden on the North Korean nuclear issue, saying achieving peace in the region is their shared goal. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean government officials confirmed a meeting took place in Vladivostok between representatives of Seoul and Pyongyang, but denied a gas-fired power plant was discussed during the confidential gathering in 2019. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- South Korea's top nuclear envoy, Noh Kyu-duk, and a senior U.S. diplomat agreed to have close consultations on Washington's review of North Korea policy during their phone talks Wednesday, the foreign ministry said. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- After a meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in Pyongyang in March 2018, Chung Eui-yong, national security advisor to President Moon Jae-in, announced that Kim "has made clear his intention for denuclearization and agreed to hold an inter-Korean summit." (Yeh Young-june, *Korea JoongAng Daily)*
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un specified the direction for polices related to inter-Korean relations as he held a Workers' Party meeting to discuss follow-up measures on plans set forth at last month's party congress, state media said Wednesday. (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ordered the paths for his ruling Workers' Party to take with South Korea and external affairs, state media KCNA said on Wednesday. (Sangmi Cha, *Reuters*)
- This week marks three years since fireworks exploded over Pyeongchang Olympic Stadium in an opening ceremony that touted North and South Korean athletes marching together under one unified flag. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- President Moon Jae-in has rehired Chung Eui-yong, his first national security adviser from May 2017 to July 2020, as minister of foreign affairs with the hope of resuscitating inter-Korean and U.S.-North Korea talks to bring new momentum for his peace process before the twilight of his presidency sets in later this year. (Do Je-hae, *The Korea Times*)

**International**:

- If the U.S. is to make any progress on the North Korea issue going forward, both "engagers" and "containers" are going to have to stop their moral grandstanding and ask themselves some difficult questions. (Rob York, *NK News*)
- An Australian national pleaded guilty to violating sanctions-related laws by trying to sell missiles, military equipment and coal on behalf of North Korea in late 2017. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)

- An Australian man pleaded guilty on Wednesday to attempting to broker weapons and commodities deals with North Korea, contravening United Nations sanctions. (*Reuters*)
- U.S. President Joe Biden is calling on Japan and South Korea to put their differences aside to form a trilateral front to end the deadlock with North Korea. (Gabriella Bernal, *Nikkei Asia*)
- The Russian ambassador to North Korea said a complete ban on imports, including essential supplies, has been in effect since September, leaving foreign embassy staff exchanging items like clothing in their communities. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- A Sydney civil engineer has admitted brokering deals to help North Korea export arms in breach of global sanctions. (*The Guardian*)
- A preliminary United Nations inquiry into the theft of $281 million worth of assets from a cryptocurrency exchange last September "strongly suggests" links to North Korea (Michelle Nichols, Raphael Satter, *Reuters*)
- Last week, the United Nations published a new report concluding that the North Korean government continues to commit rights violations that may amount to crimes against humanity. (Lina Yoon, *UN Human Rights Watch*)
- State Department spokesman Ned Price on Tuesday played down concerns that not engaging North Korea swiftly could lead Pyongyang to take provocative actions to draw the attention of the new administration of U.S. President Joe Biden. (*The Japan Times*)
- Roughly three weeks after U.S. President Joe Biden settled into the White House, a State Department official said that there's a risk in "moving too soon" on North Korea and that Washington must sync up with Seoul and Tokyo before moving forward. (David Volodzko, *NK News*)
- The United States will engage North Korea after its ongoing policy review is completed and U.S. allies are brought up to speed, in terms of their approach and objective, a State Department official said Tuesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Sophia Hapin, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250728201349/https://mailchi.mp/2e7fe4128e08/hrnk-news-items-biden-calls-kim-a-thug-may-be-harbinger-of-a-wholesome-policy-gregscarlatoiu-committeehrnk?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Thursday, February 11, 2021

# Human rights community welcomes State Department's mention of NK human rights; America returns to the UN Human Rights Council

**Top News:**
**The Washington human rights community welcomes the State Department's mention of North Korean human rights, says it ought to be the core of North Korean policies (VOA, 2/9/2021)
**America returns to the U.N. Human Rights Council... "Will raise our voice on changing North Korean human rights issues" (RFA, 2/8/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Kim Jong Un addressed inter-Korean, foreign relations, state media says (UPI, 2/10/2021)
Kim Jong Un admits North Korea is facing its 'worst ever' difficulties in rare admission of failure amid pandemic, US sanctions and spate of natural disasters (*Daily Mail*, 2/11/2021)
Kim Jong Un demands more legal control over North Korea's struggling economy (*NK News*, 2/10/2021)
N.K. leader calls for stronger legal control to achieve economic development plan (*Yonhap*, 2/11/2021)
North Korea Market Price Update: February 7, 2021 (*Daily NK*, 2/11/2021)
North Korean Dignitaries Got TVs, Watches After Eighth Party Congress, Report Says (*The National Interest*, 2/10/2021)
North Korea's Kim calls for increased party role in economic plans: KCNA (*Reuters*, 2/10/2021)
N Korea's Kim orders legal supervision over economic plan (AP, 2/11/2021)
Report: North Korea ready to stage artillery exercises on Lunar New Year (UPI, 2/11/2021)
Report: Scarcity haunting diplomats remaining in Pyongyang (UPI, 2/10/2021)
Strengthening Party Leadership in North Korea (*The Diplomat*, 2/11/2021)

**In South Korea:**
N.K. defectors at risk of worsened loneliness this holiday (*Yonhap*, 2/11/2021)
South Korea, Conventional Capabilities, and the Future of the Korean Peninsula (*War on the Rocks*, 2/11/2021)
Survey: More South Korean students see unification with North as unnecessary (UPI, 2/11/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
The start of the honeymoon phase of the Sino-Korean relationship and America's response (*Daily NK*, 2/11/2021)

**International**:
Filmmaker says he's still sitting on evidence of North Korean weapons deals (*NK Pro*, 2/11/2021)
North Korea engaged in fights against YouTube sanctions (*The Korea Times*, 2/11/2021)
North Korea vessels illegally exported coal and imported 'humanitarian aid' (*NK News*, 2/11/2021)
UN experts: North Korea using cyber attacks to update nukes (*AP*, 2/10/2021)
US and South Korea nearing agreement on cost sharing for American troops (*CNN*, 2/10/2021)
US tycoon wants to pour money into North Korea, but says he has no path forward (*NK News*, 2/11/2021)

**Top News:**

- [Recording: Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)] "If you read what President Biden published before the elections: He stated that this would be a value based foreign policy, this would be a foreign policy grounded in multilateralism. So, of course, I'm pleased to see that human rights is central to the Biden administration's Korea policy. Again, it comes as no surprise." (Baek Sung-Won, VOA)
- Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), told Radio Free Asia on the 8th that the decision would prevent countries that don't share the same values on human rights issues, such as China and Russia, from expanding their influence. Executive Director Scarlatoiu said the U.S. re-joining the U.N. Human Rights Council will help strengthen cooperation with the U.N. Special Rapporteur on North Korea Human Rights and gain joint support from U.N. member states. (Kim So-Young, RFA)

**In North Korea:**

- Kim Jong Un ordered his subordinates in charge of South Korea and other "external affairs" to "thoroughly implement" projects, a month after the North Korean leader said the future of inter-Korean ties depends on Seoul. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- Kim Jong Un admitted North Korea is facing its 'worst ever' difficulties in a rare admission of failure during a Workers' Party meeting on Wednesday. (Chris Jewers, *Daily Mail*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ordered the country's top officials to strengthen legal control and surveillance over how they implement the DPRK's new five-year economic plan. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un called for stronger legal control to achieve his new national economic plan as he held a Workers' Party meeting to discuss follow-up measures on plans set forth at last month's party congress, state media reported Thursday. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- Market price updates in North Korea for Pyongyang, Sinuiju, and Hyesan. (*Daily NK*)
- In January, the North Korean regime hosted the Eighth Party Congress, the first such event it held in five years. At the event is believed to have attracted about 7,000 people, both inviting more people and lasting for a longer duration than has been typical of such conferences in the past. (Stephen Silver, *The National Interest*)

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called on his ruling Workers' Party to take a more direct role in his new five-year economic plan and blamed the party for past failures in implementing reform, state media reported on Thursday. (Sangmi Cha, *Reuters*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has ordered tougher legal supervision to support his development plans and eradicate various economy-related unlawful acts, state media said Thursday, as he works to salvage an economy battered by the pandemic and other challenges. (Hyung-jin Kim, AP)
- North Korea could be preparing to stage a large-scale artillery exercise and the activity could take place during the Lunar New Year holiday, which begins Friday. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- An official with the Embassy of Czech Republic said power shortages in North Korea is a serious problem and confirmed previous reports of food shortages in Pyongyang, according to a recent press report. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- The 8th Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea held early last month was notable for a return to the socialist system of the Kim Il-sung administration. However, Kim Jong-un seems to be more of a pragmatist than his grandfather, who touted the ideal of "Paradise on Earth." In his nine-hour address, Kim Jong-un acknowledged the failure of his government's economic policy. (Atsuhito Isozaki, *The Diplomat*)

**In South Korea:**

- For many North Korean defectors in South Korea, Lunar New Year has been an occasion to get together near the border and perform joint ancestral rites while looking into the north. (*Yonhap*)
- In August 2020, South Korea's defense minister revealed that his country had "succeeded in developing a ballistic missile with sufficient range and the world's largest warhead weight to protect peace on the Korean Peninsula." The new "Frankenmissile" is part of Seoul's conventional counterforce and countervalue strategy, which is meant to hold North Korea's nuclear weapons infrastructure, as well as its leadership, at risk independently from the United States. (Ian Bowers, Henrik Hiim, *War on the Rocks*)
- More than half of South Korean students in a recent government survey said unification with North Korea is necessary, but the results also showed a growing number who believe it is not. (Kim Kwang-ho, *UPI*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Kim Jong Un's remarks at the Eighth Party Congress referring to the US as North Korea's "biggest enemy" can be seen as both a declaration of war and a watershed moment marking the start of a dividing line. In my last column, I evaluated Kim's remarks as a response to China and bait for South Korea. It was a sign that Kim wants to establish a trilateral front with a clear anti-US stance in Northeast Asia composed of South Korea, North Korea and China. (Jong Kyo Jin, *Daily NK*)

**International**:

- United Nations sanctions investigators working on North Korea have been unable to review evidence from the 2020 documentary "The Mole," which depicted North Korean operatives attempting to sell weapons and drug ingredients to undercover actors. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK Pro*)
- North Korea is fighting international sanctions imposed on the country due to its nuclear and missile tests. This fight against punitive actions has reached YouTube,

where its channels have been deleted over claims they violate the platform's terms of service, with the country continuously attempting to revive its propaganda channels. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)

- North Korean vessels illegally exported coal overseas and returned with "humanitarian aid cargo" on at least 11 occasions in 2020, according to an unpublished United Nations Panel of Experts report seen by NK News, once again underscoring the lack of sanctions enforcement or surveillance in Chinese port areas. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- North Korea has modernized its nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles by flaunting United Nations sanctions, using cyberattacks to help finance its programs and continuing to seek material and technology overseas for its arsenal including in Iran, U.N. experts said. (Edith M. Lederer, AP)
- Washington and Seoul are narrowing in on a new cost-sharing agreement for US forces in South Korea and could be just weeks away from striking a deal, according to five sources familiar with the discussions. (Kylie Atwood, Nicole Gaouette, Oren Liebermann, CNN)
- American investor Jim Rogers says that he wants to invest in tourism to North Korea, but that sanctions against the country continue to stand in his way. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)

VOA Source

**The Washington human rights community welcomes the State Department's mention of North Korean human rights, says it ought to be the core of North Korean policies**

Reporter Baek Sung-Won
2021.2.9, 6:00 AM

Washington D.C. welcomed the discontinuation of the administration's long silence on North Korean human rights, which is something the Biden administration has been emphasizing from its inception. It is highly expected that North Korean human rights issues, which has been neglected since the U.S.-North Korea summit, will be pushed forward as a key task for its policies toward North Korea. This is Baek Sung-Won reporting.

Human rights experts in the U.S. positively assessed the State Department's warning to hold North Korea responsible for human rights abuses and its suggestion to reappoint the Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea, which has been vacant for four years, as an "important policy indicator of the Biden administration."

It is expected to be a welcome change that the State Department, which has only emphasized military and security matters, is actively raising pressure on North Korea's human rights violations as it conducts a review of North Korean policy.

Former State Department Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea Robert King told VOA, "The statement from the Biden administration is consistent with President Biden's past record of staunchly supporting human rights in North Korea and elsewhere," He said, "This

reflects a significant departure from what we heard--or did not hear--from the Trump administration since shortly before the Singapore summit."

[Robert King, former State Department Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea] “The statement from the Biden administration is consistent with President Biden's past record of staunchly supporting human rights in North Korea and elsewhere. This reflects a significant departure from what we heard--or did not hear--from the Trump administration since shortly before the Singapore summit. This represents an important return to United States policies of supporting human rights.”

Earlier on the 3rd, the State Department said, "The Biden-Harris administration will carefully consider North Korea's brutal human rights record and will also look for ways to accelerate the promotion of human rights in a closed country (North Korea) as part of its policy review.” They also revealed, “We will hold the perpetrators responsible for the human rights violations they conducted.”

The next day, the administration clarified their position on the North Korean regime, opposing it and confirming that they will look into filling the Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea and other special envoy positions, which have been vacant throughout the Donald Trump administration.

Suzanne Scholte, chairman of the Free North Korea Radio, has accepted this as a "very encouraging sign," expressing expectations for the recent appointments to high-ranking positions in the State Department.

Specifically, she said, "He is also appointing people who understand North Korea well and care deeply about the human rights conditions there like Tony Blinken and Jung Pak."

[Suzanne Scholte, chairman of the Free North Korea Radio] “It is a very encouraging sign and he is also appointing people who understand North Korea well and care deeply about the human rights conditions there like Tony Blinken and Jung Pak.”

"I think it is a very auspicious sign that human rights will be a priority for the Biden administration and he is putting together the right team for the job," Scholte said. "They say personnel is policy so that is a wonderful sign."

[Suzanne Scholte, chairman of the Free North Korea Radio] “So I think it is a very auspicious sign that human rights will be a priority for the Biden administration and he is putting together the right team for the job. They say personnel is policy so that is a wonderful sign.”

Experts say that unlike the previous Trump administration, which rarely dealt with North Korea's human rights issues in order to avoid provoking North Korea, raising human rights together with other democratic values will answer human rights concerns over the U.S.-North Korea approach.

"The Biden Administration's commitment to put human rights at the center of the US foreign policy towards North Korea is an exciting and positive development, especially after four years of DPRK summits and meetings with the Trump team during which human rights were never mentioned at all," Phil Robertson said, Asia's deputy director at the Human Rights Watch (HRW), an international human rights organization.

[Phil Robertson, Asia's deputy director at the Human Rights Watch (HRW)] "The Biden Administration's commitment to put human rights at the center of the US foreign policy towards North Korea is an exciting and positive development, especially after four years of DPRK summits and meetings with the Trump team during which human rights were never mentioned at all."

"The Biden team is right to focus on exposing and pressuring for the end of North Korea's political prisons and labor camps because the fear of those detention facilities is what keeps many North Koreans from daring to exercise their rights," he said.

[Phil Robertson, Asia's deputy director at the Human Rights Watch (HRW)] "The Biden team is right to focus on exposing and pressuring for the end of North Korea's political prisons and labor camps because the fear of those detention facilities is what keeps many North Koreans from daring to exercise their rights. Targeting forced labor practices in the DPRK is also critical because so much of the economy is dependent on such exploitation, in which the government and state-owned companies exact the benefits of people's labor for free."

"Targeting forced labor practices in the DPRK is also critical because so much of the economy is dependent on such exploitation, in which the government and state-owned companies exact the benefits of people's labor for free," he said.

A spokesperson from the State Department told VOA on the 3rd, "We are deeply concerned about North Korea's network of concentration camps and labor and systematic forced labor." They also revealed, "We continue to work with partners who have the same ideas to promote North Korea's human rights and labor rights."

Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), said, "If you read what President Biden published before the elections: He stated that this would be a value-based foreign policy, this would be a foreign policy grounded in multilateralism."

[Recording: Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)] "If you read what President Biden published before the elections: He stated that this would be a value based foreign policy, this would be a foreign policy grounded in multilateralism. So, of course, I'm pleased to see that human rights is central to the Biden administration's Korea policy. Again, it comes as no surprise."

Executive Director Scarlatoiu noted, above all, that the State Department has included in its policy the question of responsibility for human rights abuses. "This cannot be a unidimensional

approach—accountability is important, humanitarian assistance is important, human rights documentation is important, refugee assistance is important, but by saying that accountability is a priority, basically the administration stating that this will be indeed a human rights-reliant approach toward North Korea, which is really encouraging."

[Recording: Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)] "I'm glad to see that accountability is also part of the story. This cannot be a unidimensional approach—accountability is important, humanitarian assistance is important, human rights documentation is important, refugee assistance is important, but by saying that accountability is a priority, basically the administration is stating that this will be indeed a human rights-reliant approach to North Korea, which is really encouraging."

Among the North Korean human rights strategies the State Department listed last week, the change that is being accepted as the most visible and practical is the possibility of the revival of the Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea, which has remained empty since January 2017.

"As part of the policy review process, the Secretary of State will work with relevant departments on the issue of maintaining and filling special envoy positions to best align resources with the Biden-Harris administration's foreign policy priorities," a spokesman of the State Department said.

"I expect that the President will nominate a Special Envoy for North Korea human rights as senior positions are filled at the Department of State," King said. "The appointment of an individual to this position will reaffirm the United States' commitment to human rights in North Korea, and will permit the U.S. to act on these matters with greater coherence."

[Robert King, former U.S. Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea] "I expect that the President will nominate a Special Envoy for North Korean human rights as senior positions are filled at the Department of State. The appointment of an individual to this position will reaffirm the United States' commitment to human rights in North Korea and will permit the U.S. to act on these matters with greater coherence."

Executive Director Scarlatoiu reiterated, "Definitely it's a key indicator—you need a full time ambassador, a full time position, who will be an advocate inside and outside the US government, the way Ambassador Robert King used to do it. You have to rally NGOs in the United States and South Korea, and also be an advocate for the issue within the US government."

[Recording: Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)] "Definitely it's a key indicator—you need a full-time ambassador, a full-time position, who will be an advocate inside and outside the US government, the way Ambassador Robert King used to do it. You have to rally NGOs in the United States and South Korea, and also be an advocate for the issue within the US government. You really need a US

government official who is an advocate of this issue, and continues to bring it to the attention of the decision factors within the State Department and other US government agencies."

Scholte regarded the possibility of reappointing the Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea very highly, but also predicted that it may take some time, considering how it previously took nine months for both President George W. Bush and President Barack Obama to appoint a special envoy.

[Suzanne Scholte, chairman of the Free North Korea Radio] "I think it is very likely that an appointment will be made but it may take a little time - remember it took both Bush and Obama 9 months to make that appointment."

The Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea was established in 2004 under the North Korean Human Rights Act, and President Biden supported the passage of this act as a senator at the time. Congress, in addition to North Korean human rights activists in the U.S., has been pressuring the government, saying that not appointing a Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea violates the North Korean Human Rights Act.

This was Baek Sung-Won reporting for VOA News.

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Translated by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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RFA Source

**America returns to the U.N. Human Rights Council... "Will raise our voice on changing North Korean human rights issues"**

Washington-Kim So-Young kimso@rfa.org
2021.2.8

Anchor: The U.S. administration under Joe Biden intends to return to the U.N. Human Rights Council (UNHCR) after three years. North Korean human rights experts have unanimously welcomed the initiative. This is Kim So-young reporting.

"The Biden administration has reaffirmed its commitment to a foreign policy centered on democracy, human rights, and equality," U.S. Secretary of State Tony Blinken said in a statement on the 8th. "The effective use of multilateralism is an important element of this vision, and President Biden ordered an instant and active reentry to the U.N. Human Rights Council," he continued.

"The withdrawal of the U.S. in 2018 did nothing to encourage meaningful change, but rather created a vacuum in U.S. leadership in favor of authoritarian countries," Blinken said.

In June 2018, during the former Donald Trump administration, the U.S. decided to withdraw from the U.N. Human Rights Council because the Council turned a blind eye to the reforms the U.S. demanded while also showing prejudice and antipathy toward Israel, a close U.S. ally.

Earlier on the 8th, Mark Cassayre, the Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Mission in Geneva, announced the U.S.'s return to the U.N. Human Rights Council at an organizational meeting before the 46th U.N. Human Rights Council meeting.

Deputy Chief Cassayre: Although there are flaws in the Human Rights Council, we know that this organization has the potential to become an important consultative body for those who fight against tyranny and injustice around the world. We will sit at the table and try to meet our potential.

The United States will be present at Council meetings as an observer that doesn't have voting rights until the end of the year.

It is likely that the U.S. will win one of the three member state positions currently held by Austria, Denmark, and Italy through year-end elections.

The U.N. General Assembly votes at a 47-member meeting in October every year to make up for vacancies in the three-year term allocated by region, and the terms of the above-mentioned three countries expire this year.

Robert King, the former U.S. State Department's Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea, said in a phone interview with Radio Free Asia on the 8th that he welcomes the U.S.'s act to rejoin the U.N. Human Rights Council and expects the U.S. to raise its voice on improving North Korean human rights at the international level.

Former Special Envoy King: The return of the United States is very welcome news. The U.N. Human Rights Council is a place where countries around the world gather to participate in human rights issues, so it is important for the United States to take part and speak out. The Board of Members is taking the lead in criticizing North Korea's human rights and pressuring North Korea to improve its human rights.

King predicted that the U.S. would easily be elected to be a member of the board in 2022 in the election held in October this year. He also explained that if a Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea is appointed in the future, they would be able to participate more actively in discussions on the U.N. Human Rights Council's resolutions or reports on North Korean human rights on behalf of the U.S.

Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), told Radio Free Asia on the 8th that the decision would prevent countries that don't share the same values on human rights issues, such as China and Russia, from expanding their influence.

Executive Director Scarlatoiu said the U.S. re-joining the U.N. Human Rights Council will help strengthen cooperation with the U.N. Special Rapporteur on North Korea Human Rights and gain joint support from U.N. member states.

Meanwhile, until the afternoon of February 8th, the State Department did not answer questions from Radio Free Asia (RFA) on how the U.S.'s return to the U.N. Human Rights Council could affect human rights pressure on North Korea.

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Translated by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Hayley Noah, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250923133324/https://mailchi.mp/a42a1d390aee/hrnk-news-item shuman-rights-community-welcomes-state-departments-mention-of-nk-human-rights-america-r eturns-to-the-un-human-rights-council?

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**Friday, February 12, 2021**

## N. Korean Foreign Minister Ri named politburo member; Blinken, South Korea foreign minister discuss North Korea, Myanmar

**In North Korea:**
Kim Jong-un at Lunar New Year's concert (*Yonhap*, 02/12/2021)
Kim Jong Un fires economic leader a month after appointing him (*NK News*, 02/12/2021)
Kim lays blame at officials for N. Korea's economic failures (*AP News*, 02/12/2021)
N. Korea's trade with China down 80 pct last year amid global pandemic (*Yonhap*, 02/12/2021)
N. Korean Foreign Minister Ri named politburo member (*Yonhap*, 02/12/2021)
N. Korea sets 2021 program of 5-year economic plan (*NHK News*, 02/12/2021)
New Life for the Third Network (*38 North*, 02/11/2021)
North Korea's Kim fires new economy minister, blasts cabinet for unambitious plans (*Reuters*, 02/11/2021)
North Korea closes most border bridges in North Hamgyong Province (*Daily NK*, 02/12/2021)
North Korea Cracks Down on Illegal Gold Mining After Three Die in Mine Collapse (*RFA*, 02/11/2021)
North Korea foreign minister elected as politburo member of ruling party (*Kyodo News*, 02/12/2021)
North Korean businesses thrived in Africa despite the pressure of UN sanctions (*NK Pro*, 02/12/2021)
Photos: North Koreans dance, dine and dress up on Lunar New Year (*NK News*, 02/12/2021)

**In South Korea:**

Defense minister rekindles debate over volunteer military (*The Korea Herald*, 02/11/2021)

**International**:
Blinken, South Korea foreign minister discuss North Korea, Myanmar (*Reuters*, 02/12/2021)
FM Chung, Blinken stress close cooperation for complete denuclearization of Korean Peninsula (*Yonhap*, 02/12/2021)
Korean Lesson Number One for Joe Biden: 'Maximum Pressure' Is Over (*The National Interest*, 02/11/2021)
New to the gig: Top US and South Korean officials discuss North Korea's nukes (*NK News*, 02/12/2021)
North Koreans in U.S., Britain express hope after leaving 'repressive state' (UPI, 02/11/2021)
Why the Navy Can Wound, But Not Kill, North Korea (*The National Interest*, 02/12/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un reportedly demoted a key economic director just a month after appointing him and lashed out at party officials for a litany of misdeeds, including setting economic goals that were either too big or too small and causing electricity shortages around the country. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korea's trade with China shrank about 80 percent on-year in 2020 as Pyongyang maintained tough border controls against the global coronavirus pandemic, China's customs data has shown. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean Foreign Minster Ri Son-gwon has been elected a member of the powerful politburo of the ruling Workers' Party, state media reported Friday. Ri was by-elected as a politburo member during a four-day plenary meeting of the party's eighth Central Committee that wrapped up on Thursday, according to the Korean Central News Agency. (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has decided on this year's program under a new five-year economic plan. Friday's edition of the ruling Workers' Party newspaper, Rodong Sinmun, reported that the party held a plenary meeting of the Central Committee from Monday through Thursday to set the party's key policies. (*NHK News*)
- When hundreds of houses and apartments were completed last year, North Korean media showed residents entering their new homes, welcomed with a pile of household goods. On the wall of each home was something else provided by the state: a dedicated receiver for the country's secretive third radio network that relays daily news, instruction, and propaganda. (Martyn Williams, *38 North*)
- As part of efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19, North Korean authorities have closed almost all bridges on the Sino-North Korean border in North Hamgyong Province "for the time being," Daily NK has learned. The only bridge that remains open is one in Saebyul County. (Kim Yoo Jin, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea has begun a crackdown on illegal gold mining after three people died last month when an abandoned mine collapsed, sources in the country told RFA. Sneaking into spent mines to find leftover ore is dangerous and illegal, but with the North Korean

economy struggling under the weight of coronavirus-related border closures, more and more are willing to take the risk. (Eugene Whong, *RFA*)
- North Koreans illegally worked on construction projects in Senegal and the Democratic Republic of the Congo between 2017 and 2019 — despite an international ban on DPRK citizens laboring abroad, according to an unpublished U.N. Panel of Experts report seen by NK News. (Min Chao Choy, *NK Pro*)

**In South Korea:**

- Mandatory military service is a rite of passage for every able-bodied man in South Korea, which technically remains at war with North Korea since the 1953 Korean War armistice. A military made up of volunteers seeking lifetime jobs as career soldiers was hard to imagine, but that has come to change. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)

**International**:

- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has held his first phone call with South Korea's new foreign minister, Chung Eui-yong, both governments said, reaffirming a commitment to ridding the Korean peninsula of nuclear weapons, amid stalled talks between Washington and North Korea. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- New Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken stressed close bilateral cooperation for the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula during their first phone talks Friday, the foreign ministry said. They also shared the view of the importance of their countries' trilateral cooperation with Japan in the conversation that took place three days after Chung, a former top security adviser to President Moon Jae-in, took office. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. policymakers should abandon any illusion that they can coerce Pyongyang into denuclearization, let alone democratization, as some human-rights activists hope. (Doug Bandow, *The National Interest*)
- More North Koreans who fled their country are settling in the West, where they say an opportunity to speak their minds is molding future plans. Their attitudes about the "refreshing" democratic norms of their adopted homelands contrast sharply with the prevailing mood in the United States and Britain, where political polarization has led to distrust and anger. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- Naval forces can only perform their blocking function at sea. They have little way to obstruct overland transit across North Korea's northern border unless Washington wants to risk tangling with Chinese or Russian forces, and escalating a local conflagration to great-power war. (James Holmes, *The National Interest*)

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Prepared by Rick Herssevoort, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250926164119/https://mailchi.mp/b04a8bddb06a/hrnk-news-items-korean-foreign-minister-ri-named-politburo-memberblinken-south-korea-foreign-minister-discuss-north-korea-myanmar

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## Saturday, February 13, 2021

# N. Korea ranks lowest in world democracy index last year: poll; Defectors pray for North Korean reunions on Lunar New Year

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea ranks lowest in world democracy index last year: poll (*Yonhap*, 02/13/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Defectors, separated families pray for North Korean reunions on Lunar New Year (UPI, 02/12/2021)
One in 4 N.K. defectors receiving medical aid treated for mental health issues: lawmaker (*Yonhap*, 02/12/2021)

**International**:
Biden's NK human rights agenda could cause clash with Seoul (*The Korea Herald*, 02/13/2021)
Could a North Korean Victory Have Triggered War With the Soviet Union? (*The National Interest*, 02/12/2021)
Fewer S. Korea-US combined drills staged in 2020 amid pandemic: data (*Yonhap*, 02/13/2021)
'My mother begged me not to go': the Japanese women who married Koreans – and never saw their family again *(The Guardian*, 02/13/2021)
N. Korean nuclear issue a top priority for Biden administration: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 02/13/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea ranked the lowest in a world democracy index last year for the 16th consecutive year, a recent report showed. (*Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- Dozens of North Korean defectors and members of separated families made Lunar New Year offerings and prayed for reunification at a park near the DMZ on Friday in an annual event that was subdued this year amid the COVID-19 pandemic and frosty relations between North and South. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- One in four North Korean defectors benefiting from medical aid received treatment for mental health issues in 2019, a lawmaker said Friday, calling for better support for their resettlement. (*Yonhap*)

**International**:

- With US President Joe Biden vowing to stand up for human rights and democracy around the world, North Korea's human rights violations could emerge high on the agenda for Washington in its policy toward the reclusive regime. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea could have won. If it had, would the Soviet Union have been emboldened to push for West Berlin? (Michael Peck, *The National Interest*)
- South Korea and the United States conducted fewer joint military exercises last year compared with a year earlier amid the coronavirus pandemic, defense ministry data showed Saturday. (*Yonhap*)
- Mitsuko left Japan in 1960 for a new life in North Korea. Once there, she realized she – and hundreds of others like her – could never go back (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)
- The North Korean nuclear issue remains a top priority for the U.S. government despite the recent lack of direct engagement with the country, a State Department official said Friday. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Jungeun Lee, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250926164111/https://mailchi.mp/8fdfa00d643d/hrnk-news-item sn-korea-ranks-lowest-in-world-democracy-index-last-year-polldefectors-pray-for-north-korean-reunions-on-lunar-new-year

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**Sunday, February 14, 2021**

## Four years after the murder of North Korea's Kim Jong-nam; Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act FAQs

**Top News:**
Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act FAQs (*Department of Homeland Security*, 2/11/2021)
**Four years after the murder of North Korea's Kim Jong-nam: the redesignation of North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism and damaged external relations (VOA, 2/12/2021)

**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 lashes out about economic policy (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 2/14/2021)

**International**:

Fresh North Korea nuclear crisis 'biggest risk to world' in 2021, experts warn (*Daily Star*, 2/14/2021)
North Korea looms as next big test for China-US relations (*South China Morning Post*, 2/14/2021)
North Korean Chemical Weapons Could Devastate U.S. Troops in a War (*The National Interest*, 2/14/2021)
South Korea, US will start military drills (*The Korea Herald*, 2/14/2021)
State Dept. says North's denuclearization still matters (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 2/14/2021)
Take Them Out: Could America Really Stop a North Korean Nuclear Attack? (*The National Interest*, 2/14/2021)

**Top News:**

- On August 2, 2017, the President signed into law the "Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act" (Public Law 115-44) (CAATSA), which imposes sanctions on Iran, Russia, and North Korea. Various publications from the Department of State and the Treasury Department have provided program specific documents related to CAATSA. This Department of Homeland Security (DHS) publication focuses on CAATSA Title III Section 321(b), which affects the entry of merchandise produced by North Korean nationals or citizens. [Non-governmental tools include HRNK Congressional testimony] (*Department of Homeland Security*)
- [Recording: Executive Director Scarlatoiu] "This assassination will have an impact. This confirms what many know already that Kim Jung-un sits at the top of a system that implements a deliberate policy of human rights denial." Executive Director Scarlatoiu said, "Kim Jung-un sits at the top of a system that implements a deliberate policy of human rights denial." "Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il, and Kim Jong-un committed crimes against their citizens and abused their human rights in the process of achieving their strategic goals," he also said. (Jo Eun-Jeong, VOA)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un lashed out at a party meeting about the country's economic policies and sacked a key economic director within a month of his appointment, North Korea's state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said Friday. (Jeong Yong-soo, Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**International**:

- North Korea poses a new "catastrophic threat" to the world this year, experts have warned. Foreign policy wonks claim a fresh emergency caused by the rogue state is of major concern in 2021. (James Caven, *Daily Star*)
- China and the US might play the North Korea card against each other, but Pyongyang might also use the same tactic to advance its nuclear weapons programme, observers say. (Laura Zhou, Eduardo Baptista, *South China Morning Post*)

- The most effective means overall of mitigating Pyongyang's chemical threat may be to bargain the weapons away ahead of time. If the North could be persuaded to give up most or all of its chemical weapons, it would lessen the threat to civilians and soldiers in wartime, both on the Korean peninsula and abroad. (Kyle Mizokami, *The National Interest*)
- South Korea and the US will begin their biannual joint military exercises in the second week of March, carrying out computer simulations of war against North Korea for nine days, sources said Sunday. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- State Department spokesman Ned Price said in a press briefing Friday, "I hope you don't confuse a lack of direct engagement with North Korea as an indication that the challenge of North Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs [...is] not a priority. It [...] very much is." (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- America may have a high-tech military, but North Korean missiles on trucks would be hard to find. Plus, North Korea now also has nuclear missile submarines. (Michael Peck, *The National Interest*)

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VOA Source

**Four years after the murder of North Korea's Kim Jong-nam: the redesignation of North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism and damaged external relations**

Reporter Jo Eun-Jeong
2021.2.12 1:00 PM

A documentary film about the 2017 assassination of Kim Jong-nam in Malaysia was recently released in the United States and the United Kingdom. Since the movie was released, the media has been re-examining the assassination of Kim Jong-nam that happened four years ago. In the wake of the incident, North Korea was put on the U.S. list of "terrorist states" again and has yet to restore diplomatic relations with Malaysia. This is Jo Eun-Jung reporting.

"Assassins" is a documentary film about the assassination of Kim Jong-nam, the half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, and was released in the UK in late January following the U.S. release in December.

British News Agency *Reuters* said the film sheds light on the "bold airport murder" and *BBC* evaluated it as a "strange incident."

The 104-minute film, produced by director Ryan White, deals with the death of Kim Jong-nam in which Doan Thi Huong, a Vietnamese woman, and Siti Aisha, and Indonesian woman, applied VX nerve agent to Kim Jong-nam's face at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Malaysia on February 13, 2017.

At the time of the incident, the U.S., South Korea, and other countries strongly criticized North Korea for being behind the assassination of Kim Jong-nam.

Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), told VOA on the 12th that the incident shows the international community who North Korea's supreme leader exactly is as well as the lines he crosses.

[Recording: Executive Director Scarlatoiu] “This assassination will have an impact. This confirms what many know already that Kim Jung-un sits at the top of a system that implements a deliberate policy of human rights denial.”

Executive Director Scarlatoiu said, "Kim Jung-un sits at the top of a system that implements a deliberate policy of human rights denial."

"Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il, and Kim Jong-un committed crimes against their citizens and abused their human rights in the process of achieving their strategic goals," he also said.

**Redesignation as State Sponsor of Terrorism: The deterioration of the North Korea-Malaysia relationship**

The international community expressed their shock and dismay at Kim Jong-nam’s murder with VX chemical agent while directly mentioning his name during the UN Security Council debate and other international meetings.

In particular, the U.S. also re-designated North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism following this event, for the first time in nine years.

Former President Donald Trump announced the re-designation of North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism, saying the North Korean regime has repeatedly supported international terrorism, including assassinations abroad.

[Recording: Former President Trump] “North Korea has repeatedly supported acts of international terrorism, including assassinations on foreign soil.”

The U.S. also announced additional sanctions against North Korea in March 2018, saying the North Korean authorities were believed to have used chemical weapons in violation of international law or to have used lethal chemical weapons against its citizens.

The incident also severely damaged relations between North Korea and Malaysia, which were traditionally allies.

Malaysia expelled the North Korean ambassador after the assassination of Kim Jong-nam and decided to renounce the visa waiver agreement with North Korea. It also closed its embassy in Pyongyang.

In October 2019, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad and First Vice Chairman of the North Korean State Council Choe Ryong-hae met to discuss normalizing their bilateral relations, but no progress has been made.

Scott Snyder, senior fellow for U.S.-Korea Policy at the Council on Foreign Relations, told VOA on the 12th, “Kuala Lumpur was a significant support base diplomatically for some of North Korea’s commercial efforts in Southeast Asia. It also had political significance...”

[Recording: Snyder] “Kuala Lumpur was a significant support base diplomatically for some of N Korea’s commercial efforts in Southeast Asia. It also had political significance, for instance, as a place where the U.S. and North Korea had met previously during the Agreed Framework days, illustrating that there is trust within North Korea in Kuala Lumpur as an outpost for North Korean diplomacy.”

Subsequent negotiations based on the 1990’s Geneva Agreement were held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, which shows how much North Korea trusted Malaysia as a diplomatic base.

However, Snyder pointed out that all of this relationship was lost after the assassination of Kim Jong-nam.

**Kim Jong-il’s “hidden son,” Kim Jong-nam**

Attention is also focusing on what kind of person Kim Jong-nam was, as the eldest son of the Chairman of the National Defense Commission Kim Jong-il, and the half-brother of the Chairman of the State Affairs Commission Kim Jong-un, is, who was assassinated four years ago.

Jeong Seong-hwa is a researcher at the Wilson Center and also a senior researcher at the Sejong Institute in South Korea, who studies the power elite in North Korea.

[Recording: Researcher Jeong Seong-hwa] “Even though Kim Jong-nam was Kim Jong-il's first son, his mother Sung Hye-rim was not around and continued to live in Moscow, failing to become Kim Jong-nam's most important supporter... So Kim Jong-nam grew up to be Kim Jong-il's hidden son and faced a situation where he could not return after continuously wandering abroad."

Jeong analyzed that the North Korean regime launched an assassination for fear of Kim Jong-nam's asylum in a third country.

[Recording: Researcher Jeong Seong-hwa] "Not long before the assassination, a group of North Korean defectors in the U.K. reportedly suggested Kim Jong-nam to head the government in exile, and although Kim Jong-nam did not accept it, it must have been very inconvenient for North Korea to talk about Kim Jong-nam. So, Kim Jong-un asked Kim Jong-nam to return to Korea, but since he rejected the request, North Korea judged that Kim Jong-nam might be defecting.”

Siti and Huong, who had direct contact with Kim Jong-nam, were released in 2019, and four out of the five North Korean suspects left Malaysia shortly after the incident. Ri Jeong-cheol, the only North Korean that was arrested, was deported to North Korea after being released for "insufficient evidence."

As a result, the assassination of Kim Jong Nam legally remains an unsolved case.

This was Jo Eun-Jeong reporting for VOA News.

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Translated by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Hayley Noah, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250926164408/https://mailchi.mp/cecd326506b9/hrnk-news-itemsfour-years-after-the-murder-of-north-koreas-kim-jong-namcountering-americas-adversaries-through-sanctions-act-faqs

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## Monday, February 15, 2021

# Freedom and Alliance in Jeopardy in South Korea: An Insider's Testimony

**Top News:**
Freedom and Alliance in Jeopardy in South Korea: An Insider's Testimony (*Small Wars Journal*, 2/14/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Data on COVID-19 tests in North Korea suggests rate is worryingly low: Expert (*NK News*, 2/15/2021)
Despite tough facade, North Korea's battle with COVID-19 continues (*Daily NK*, 2/15/2021)
Group of North Koreans caught trying to defect North Korea by boat (*Daily NK*, 2/15/2021)
Kim Yo Jong found her own voice, but she's far from taking North Korea's throne (*NK News*, 2/15/2021)
N. Korea holds cyber conference on water management to ward off flooding (*Yonhap*, 2/15/2021)
North Korea to dispatch up to 10,000 workers to Russia from March (*Daily NK*, 2/15/2021)
North Koreans survive on private business — and Kim will fail to stop them (*NK News*, 2/15/2021)
North Korea: Where is Kim Jong Un's wife, Ri Sol-ju? (DW, 2/15/2021)

**In South Korea**:
At a Crossroads (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 2/15/2021)
Defense ministry says details of S. Korea-U.S. combined exercise yet to be finalized (*Yonhap*, 2/15/2021)
Gone but not forgotten: Korea's long-term missing children (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 2/15/2021)
Linchpin and Cornerstone (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 2/15/2021)
S. Korea closely monitoring N.K. moves ahead of late leader's birthday: JCS (*Yonhap*, 2/15/2021)
Top nuke envoys of S. Korea, Japan hold phone talks on peninsula peace, denuclearization (*Yonhap*, 2/15/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Inter-Korean reunification activist Paek Ki-wan dies at 88 (*Yonhap*, 2/15/2021)

**International**:
Canada launches 58-nation initiative to stop arbitrary detentions (*Reuters*, 2/15/2021)
North Korea delegation attended Catholic event in Rome, Seoul diplomat says (*UPI*, 2/15/2021)
The futile pursuit of North Korea's 'golden concession' (*Nikkei Asia*, 2/15/2021)
UNC considering resuming tours to Panmunjom amid eased social distancing scheme (*Yonhap*, 2/15/2021)
UN panel calls out North Korea for cyberattacks on defense industries (*NK News*, 2/15/2021)
U.S. military surveillance concentrates on Korean Peninsula (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 2/15/2021)

**Top News:**

- Inho Lee testifies that many people in Korea now live in fear that the days of freedom in Korea are numbered as Moon Jae-in conducts systematic attacks on the liberal democratic governance, threatening the continued existence of the Republic of Korea as an independent nation. He argues that the international community must take notice of Korea's sudden degeneration into a populist totalitarian society before it is too late. (Inho Lee, *Small Wars Journal*)

**In North Korea:**

- Reports by the World Health Organization suggest that as little as one sample per 1000 people in North Korea may have been screened for the virus so far (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- North Korea started off the year on a strong note by holding a large military parade as well as reaffirming the country's commitment to self-reliance. But behind the tough façade, the country is still trying to contain the spread of COVID-19 within its borders. The pandemic has not gone away for the rest of the world, and North Korea is no exception. (Gabriela Bernal, *Daily NK*)
- At the beginning of January, several North Koreans were caught while attempting to defect from North Korea by boat from Chongjin Port, North Hamgyong Province. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)

- Kim Jong Un's sister is not his "number two," but she does have a unique role in messaging Seoul and Washington (Markus Garlauskas, *NK News*)
- North Korea held a video conference to discuss better methods of flood control and water management in an effort to prevent the recurrence of heavy damage to the country's farming areas wrought by heavy rains last summer, state media reported Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean authorities plan to dispatch up to 10,000 workers to Russia starting in early March. (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)
- Last month, North Korea made a dramatic U-turn from its reformist economic policies of 2012 to 2017 and reverted back to de facto Leninism -in other words, emphasizing central planning and the command economy while prohibiting entrepreneurial activity. (Andrei Lankov, *NK News*)
- Senior members of the North Korean regime have a habit of dropping out of sight for weeks or even months. Kim Jong Un's wife hasn't been seen in public for over a year, and Pyongyang watchers are wondering where she is. (*DW*)

**In South Korea**:

- When the moment of truth arrives, Korea would have to make a choice based on its confidence of achieving prosperity through free democracy and markets (Kwon Man-hak, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea and the United States have yet to work out the schedule and other details of a planned joint springtime exercise, the defense ministry said Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- The number of missing children's cases reported to the police was 19,146 in 2020, of which 105 remain missing as of Dec. 31. As of the end of last year, nine children remain missing from the 21,551 cases reported in 2019, six from 21,980 in 2018 and three from 19,956 in 2017. (Jeon Tae-Gyu, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Japan and South Korea have accomplished economic growth and walked the same path over the last 70 years against North Korea military threats based on their alliance with the United States, however this relationship must be renewed. (Kwon Tae-Hwon, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea is closely monitoring North Korea's military moves ahead of the birthday of late leader Kim Jong-il, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's chief nuclear envoy, Noh Kyu-duk, spoke by phone with his Japanese counterpart on Monday to discuss cooperation for complete denuclearization and lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula, the foreign ministry said. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship**:

- Paek Ki-wan, who devoted his life to the reunification of the two Koreas, died Monday, hospital officials said. He was 88. (*Yonhap*)

**International**:

- Canada on Monday launched a 58-nation initiative to stop countries from detaining foreign citizens for diplomatic leverage, a practice that Ottawa and Washington say China and others, including North Korea, are using. (David Ljunggren, *Reuters*)
- North Korean diplomats met with the former South Korean ambassador to the Holy See in Rome in 2019, at a time when Pope Francis had indicated interest in visiting North Korea, according to reports. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- The dawn of a new U.S. administration begins a ritual known as the North Korea policy review wherein U.S. policy toward the Hermit Kingdom is decided. This process is underway in the Biden Administration, and they must avoid the pursuit of what I call the "golden concession." (Anthony Holmes, *Nikkei Asia*)
- The United Nations Command (UNC) said Monday that it has been exploring ways to resume tours to the inter-Korean border village of Panmunjom, as South Korea eased antivirus social distancing rules. (*Yonhap*)
- UN panel drafts report that describes malicious emails to panel members and extended attacks against defense sector (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- U.S. military surveillance assets were dispatched near the Korean Peninsula last week, heightening speculation that the United States is on guard for a surprise ballistic missile launch by North Korea. (Lee Cheol-Jae, Park Yong-Han, Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

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Prepared by Carter Thompson, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250926164633/https://mailchi.mp/6ef38f96e348/hrnk-news-items-freedom-and-alliance-in-jeopardy-in-south-korea-an-insiders-testimony

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## Tuesday, February 16, 2021

# N. Korea attempted to steal COVID-19 vaccine, treatment technology; Nuke envoys of S. Korea, Japan hold talks on peninsula peace

**In North Korea:**
Kim Jong Un's missing wife likely alive and well, Seoul intelligence agency says (*NK News*, 2/16/21)
'Kim Jong-un wants Pope to visit North Korea' (*The Korea Times*, 2/16/21)
Locals arrested in Hyesan for violating lockdown orders (*Daily NK*, 2/16/21)
N. Korea appears to mark late leader's birthday without massive celebrations, provocations (*Yonhap*, 2/16/21)
N. Korea attempted to steal COVID-19 vaccine, treatment technology: NIS (*Yonhap*, 2/16/21)

North Korea launched over 1M cyberattacks daily, Seoul's spy agency says (UPI, 2/16/21)
N.K. leader visits mausoleum to mark late father's birthday (*Yonhap*, 2/16/21)
North Korea may give priority to the country's "core class" for COVID-19 vaccine (*Daily NK*, 2/16/21)
North Korean authorities issue new policy for electricity generation (*Daily NK*, 2/16/21)
N. Korean man captured after crossing inter-Korean border: JCS (*Yonhap*, 2/16/21)
N. Korea's trade outside China plunged by one-third last year (*The Korea Herald*, 2/16/21)
Over three hours, North Korean sidesteps landmines, scales barbed wire to cross the DMZ (*National Post*, 2/16/21)
'Provision of Russian vaccines to North Korea viable option for better inter-Korean ties' (*The Korea Times*, 2/16/21)

**In South Korea**:
From North to South: The new life of a Korean defector (*BBC*, 2/16/21)
Top nuke envoys of S. Korea, Japan hold phone talks on peninsula peace, denuclearization (*The Korea Times*, 2/16/21)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's wife, Ri Sol Ju, is "staying well with her children" despite the fact that she has been missing from state media for more than a year now, according to South Korean lawmakers. (Jeongmin Kim, Won Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- Former Korean Ambassador to the Vatican Lee Baek-man has claimed that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un wanted a papal visit to his country following President Moon Jae-in's meeting with Pope Francis in October 2018. (Do Je Hae, *The Korea Times*)
- With North Korean authorities putting the cities of Hyesan and Samjiyon in Yanggang Province under lockdown late last month, local residents are reportedly receiving punishment for leaving their homes. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea appears to be celebrating the birthday of late leader Kim Jong-il in a low-key manner on Tuesday amid speculation that Pyongyang might carry out a major provocation in time for one of its biggest national holidays. (Koh Byung Joon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has attempted to hack into South Korean drug manufacturers' computer systems to obtain information related to coronavirus vaccines and treatment, the state intelligence agency told lawmakers Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea launched cyberattacks against manufacturers and tried to steal COVID-19 vaccine technology amid orders to shoot people and animals attempting to cross the border. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un visited the mausoleum of his late father in Pyongyang on Tuesday to mark his father's birthday, state media reported. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean authorities are scheduled to receive enough COVID-19 vaccine for 990,000 people from the COVAX Facility. Meanwhile, the authorities are reportedly thinking over who will receive the vaccinations first. (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)
- A source based in the North Hamgyong Province told Daily NK on Feb. 5 that "a local who worked as the captain of a fishing boat was arrested in the middle of the sea by

patrol ships while trying to go to South Korea with his family and crew." (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)

- A North Korean man was caught after crossing into South Korea via the eastern border, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Wednesday, amid a possibility that he could have sought to defect to the South. (Oh Seok Min, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's trade with countries other than its largest trading partner China plunged last year due to the regime's border closure to stave off a COVID-19 outbreak has dealt a heavy blow to its economy already struggling with international sanctions. (Ahn Sung Mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea's military said on Tuesday it had captured a North Korean man who crossed the heavily fortified border between the two countries and was investigating whether he tried to defect. (Hyonhee Shin, *National Post*)
- Gangwon Province Governor Choi Moon-soon's proposal of manufacturing Russian COVID-19 vaccines in South Korea and providing them to North Korea is a feasible way to help normalize inter-Korean ties, according to Pyongyang watchers, Tuesday. (Kang Seung Woo, *The Korea Times*)

**In South Korea**:

- Fleeing from North Korea can be a traumatic ordeal. Defectors face three months in an institution, an investigation, and difficulty finding work once re-settled in the South. (Sophia Williams, *BBC*)
- South Korea's chief nuclear envoy, Noh Kyu-duk, spoke by phone with his Japanese counterpart on Monday to discuss cooperation for complete denuclearization and lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula, the foreign ministry said. (Kim Jae Heun, *The Korea Times*)

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Prepared by Tristin Schultz, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250926165409/https://mailchi.mp/c8cd624029c1/hrnk-news-itemsn-korea-attempted-to-steal-covid-19-vaccine-treatment-technology-nuke-envoys-of-s-korea-japan-hold-talks-on-peninsula-peace

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**[Wednesday, February 17, 2021 – Newsletter inexistent]**

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## Thursday, February 18, 2021

# Education, Information, and Liberation for North Koreans; Kim Jong-un using 'president' as official English title

**Top News:**
Education, Information, and Liberation for North Koreans (*HRNK Insider*, 2/18/21)

**In North Korea:**
Kim Jong-un using 'president' as official English title (*The Korea Times*, 2/18/21)
N. Korea faces food shortage of over 1.2 mln tons this year: unification minister (*Yonhap*, 2/18/21)
North Korean football player loses his $4.9 million contract with Qatari team (*NK News*, 2/18/21)
North Korean home prices in Pyongyang reflect high demand, report says (*UPI*, 2/18/21)
Reports: North Korea ignored China, Russia COVID-19 vaccine offers (*UPI*, 2/18/21)
North Korea is boldly flouting sanctions with ships full of illegal fuel (*NK News*, 2/18/21)
(LEAD) N.K. leader's wife absent from public view possibly due to childbirth: report (*Yonhap*, 2/18/21)
North Korea provides gifts to children for Kim Jong Il's birthday (*Daily NK*, 2/18/21)
Questions arise over N.K. man's alleged hourslong swim in winter sea for defection (*Yonhap*, 2/18/21)
Resumption of Kaesong complex must include foreign companies to avoid risk of abrupt suspension: ex-minister (*Yonhap*, 2/18/21)
Some students cheat on final exams amid lockdowns in Yanggang and Chagang provinces (*Daily NK*, 2/18/21)

**In South Korea:**
BAI to announce nuclear phaseout probe results next month (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 2/18/21)
Defense chief apologizes over border security breach (*The Korea Herald*, 2/18/21)
(LEAD) FM says S. Korea, Japan can seek U.S.' help if it's needed to resolve their rows (*Yonhap*, 2/18/21)
(LEAD) Independence fighter grandson ends archive donation talks with Harvard over professor's comfort women claim (*Yonhap*, 2/18/21)
Seoul-Tokyo relations may be key in peninsular peace progress (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 2/18/21)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Reviving multilateral negotiations emerge as alternative to breaking deadlock on North Korea (*The Korea Times*, 2/18/21)

**International:**
U.N. begins to refer to N.K. leader as 'president,' not 'chairman' (*Yonhap*, 2/18/21)

US charges North Korean computer programmers in global hacks (*AP News*, 2/18/21)
US charges North Korean hackers in $1.3 billion theft scheme (*The Korea Times*, 2/18/21)
U.S. Justice Department indicts 3 North Korean hackers (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 2/18/21)
(LEAD) U.S. review of N. Korea policy will address cyber threats: Price (*Yonhap*, 2/18/21)
Venezuela contradicts its own president and denies North Korean military deal (*NK News*, 2/18/21)

**Top News:**

- North Korean teachers have always had control over the ideology of the children. They teach history, and the idolization of Kim Il-sung for the ultimate purpose of cementing the Kim family regime's grip on power. Korean War orphans sent to Eastern Europe had a different educational experience. Eastern European teachers educated them, taking on subjects such as art and music. The role of literature was particularly significant. Of course, the repression of intellectuals in Eastern European countries that received those North Korean children was harsh. But, particularly after the death of Stalin in 1953, Eastern European countries experienced a slight relaxation of draconian restrictions. That all ended with the Hungarian anti-communist revolution of 1956. (Jihyun Park, *HRNK Insider*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un is now using "president" as his official title in English, instead of "chairman" as he has used in the past, according to the North's state media. (Do Je-hae, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korea faces a food shortage of 1.2 million to 1.3 million tons this year due to damage from last year's heavy downpours, the unification minister said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean football player Han Kwang Song was once one of the highest-paid athletes in his country, with a five-year contract offering roughly $4.9 million for playing for a Qatari team. But sanctions have apparently put a hold on his career: A new draft U.N. report suggests that Han lost his gig in Doha and left the country. (Won Gi-Jung, *NK News*)
- North Korea snubbed offers of COVID-19 vaccines developed in China and Russia, according to Seoul's spy agency. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- North Korean home prices are rising in the capital, Pyongyang, despite lack of protection for private property, according to a South Korean news network. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- North Korea acquired new ships and used increasingly sophisticated tactics to illegally smuggle fuel into the country last year, according to a new and unpublished U.N. report seen by NK Pro. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- The wife of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un appears to have been absent from public view for more than a year due to childbirth, a think tank linked to Seoul's spy agency said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- Daily NK has confirmed that North Korean authorities provided children with gifts for Kim Jong Il's birthday (Feb. 16), one of North Korea's biggest holidays, despite the nation's economic woes amid the COVID-19 crisis. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)

- Questions have arisen over how a North Korean man was able to have crossed the inter-Korean sea border to defect by swimming for six hours in winter, and calls have grown for authorities to explain the case. (*Yonhap*)
- A former South Korean unification minister called for the inclusion of foreign companies when pushing to reopen the now-shuttered industrial complex in North Korea's border town of Kaesong, saying it will help prevent the risk of the two Koreas abruptly pulling out of the project. (*Yonhap*)
- With North Korean schools unprecedentedly holding their year-end exams in February due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the adoption of at-home testing in some border regions under lockdown in Yanggang and Chagang provinces has reportedly led to incidents of cheating. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- The country's main audit agency is expected to announce whether the Moon Jae-in administration ignored legitimate policymaking processes while creating its nuclear phaseout blueprint next month. (Yoon Sung-Min, Ser Myo-Ja, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea's Defense Minister Suh Wook on Wednesday apologized for the latest lapse in border security after a North Korean man swam across the eastern maritime border unnoticed. (Choi Si-Young, *The Korea Herald*)
- Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong said Thursday that South Korea and Japan can seek help from their shared ally, the United States, if it is needed to address their protracted historical rows. (*Yonhap*)
- A grandson of a renowned Korean independence fighter said Thursday that he had sent a letter to Harvard University's president to end any discussions about donating his historical archives due to a professor's article depicting Japan's wartime sexual slavery as voluntary prostitution. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Resolving South Korea's relations with Japan to strengthen the Korea-U.S. alliance is emerging as the key variable in reviving the Moon Jae-in administration's Korean Peninsula peace process initiative, according to diplomatic sources Thursday. (Jung Jin-Woo, Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- During the previous U.S. administration under Donald Trump, talks on North Korea's denuclearization revolved primarily around the U.S. and North Korea. President Moon Jae-in has also put priority on mediating U.S.-North Korea talks, but the two summits between Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un did not lead to fundamental progress on denuclearization. The lack of results during the Trump administration on North Korea and the urgency from Seoul to quickly resume peace diplomacy have resulted in renewed attention to the type of multilateral negotiating framework that was seen during in the late 1990s, such as the four-party talks with representatives from the two Koreas, the U.S. and China. Six rounds of negotiations were held in 1997 and 1998. (Do Je-hae, *The Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- The United Nations has started referring to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un as "president" instead of his previous title "chairman," a change apparently made at the request of Pyongyang, a unification ministry official said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)

- The Justice Department has charged three North Korean computer programmers in a broad range of global hacks, including a destructive attack targeting an American movie studio, and in the attempted theft and extortion of more than $1.3 billion from banks and companies, federal prosecutors said Wednesday. (Eric Tucker, AP News)
- The US Justice Department charged three North Korean military intelligence officials Wednesday in a campaign of cyberattacks to steal $1.3 billion in crypto and traditional currencies from banks and other targets. (*The Korea Herald*)
- The U.S. Justice Department on Wednesday unsealed charges against three North Korean hackers accused of conspiring to steal and extort more than $1.3 billion in cash and cryptocurrency from businesses, banks, and individuals around the world. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The ongoing review of U.S. policy toward North Korea will also take into account cyber threats posed by the country, a spokesperson for the U.S. State Department said Wednesday. (Byun Duk-Kun, *Yonhap*)
- Venezuela denied its own president's claims that it signed a military and technology deal with North Korea last year, according to a new and unpublished U.N. Panel of Experts report seen by NK News. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

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Prepared by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250930044708/https://mailchi.mp/558a6aeb06bc/hrnk-news-itemseducation-information-and-liberation-for-north-koreanskim-jong-un-using-president-as-official-english-title

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**Friday, February 19, 2021**

# In North Korea, Regime Uses Coronavirus Prevention Pretext to Intensify Control

**Top News:**
**In North Korea, Regime Uses Coronavirus Prevention Pretext to Intensify Control (VOA *News*, 2/19/21)
**This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**
After months of delays, Kim Jong Un's premier hospital could soon open up (*NK News*, 2/19/21)
Anti-Leaflet Law in South Korea & Freedom of Expression in North Korea (*HRNK Insider*, 2/19/21)
North Korea's Air Force Won't Have Any Easy Time Attacking South Korea (*The National*

*Interest*, 2/19/21)
North Korea appoints foreign trade specialist as ambassador to China (*NK News*, 2/19/21)
N. Korea appoints former trade minister as ambassador to China (*Yonhap*, 2/19/21)
North Korea's efforts to improve telecommunications environment face many hurdles (*Daily NK*, 2/19/21)
North Korea faces 1.3 million-ton food shortage, Seoul says (*UPI*, 2/19/21)
North Korea orders expansion of political prison camp system (*Daily NK*, 2/19/21)
Some North Koreans feel as if they've been abandoned by their government (*Daily NK*, 2/19/21)
Two North Koreans attempting to flee across border arrested in Yanggang Province (*Daily NK*, 2/19/21)

**In South Korea:**
After years of tension, Seoul and Tokyo hold talks on North Korean nukes (*NK News*, 2/19/21)
(LEAD) Diplomats of S. Korea, U.S., Japan agree to closely cooperate on peninsula denuclearization, peace (*Yonhap*, 2/19/21)
(LEAD) S. Korea exploring ways to help ease food shortage in N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 2/19/21)

**International:**
Singapore dumped 4,632 boxes of red wine destined for North Korea (*NK News*, 2/19/21)
US Bitcoin service to pay $507,375 after North Koreans used its platform (*NK News*, 2/19/21)

**Top News:**

- [Recording: Executive Director Scarlatoiu] "The North Korean regime is losing the battle. Especially under this COVID lockdown and the draconian restrictions that they have put in place, the information campaign coming in from the outside world is even more effective. They know they're losing this battle, thus the desperation, thus the new legislation." (Jo Eun-Jung, *VOA News*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea may be preparing to open Kim Jong Un's premier Pyongyang hospital project months after it missed its deadline and was indefinitely delayed, according to NK Pro analysis of satellite imagery. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- I am honored to have been given an opportunity to serve my country, the Republic of Korea, as a member of the National Assembly. However, just four years ago, I was North Korea's former deputy ambassador to the United Kingdom. But in 2016, I defected to South Korea with my family in search of freedom, leaving behind all privileges rendered to me. But the turning point in my life did not just happen overnight. My perspectives on the world have been shaped by the time I had spent traveling between Pyongyang and various European capitals every three to four years as a North Korean diplomat. Years of living abroad have completely transformed my belief in the North Korean system and eventually influenced my decision to defect to the South, one of the most flourishing democracies in the world. (Tae Yong-ho, HRNK Insider)
- Here's What You Need to Remember: The Biho II has yet to be produced in any form. While such a highly modular system might look good on paper and in presentations to

military officials, whether the system actually works has yet to be proven. (Charlie Gao, *The National Interest*)

- North Korea appointed experienced trade specialist Ri Ryong Nam to be its next ambassador to China, the DPRK foreign ministry announced on Friday. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- North Korea has appointed a former trade minister as the new ambassador to China, the country's foreign ministry said Friday, in what appears to be aimed at strengthening economic ties with its closest ally. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has made it clear it wishes to improve the nation's telecommunication environment. But due to the poor condition of the country's infrastructure, major developments like next-generation internet are still a long way off, and the country will likely settle for improvements to existing facilities. According to a source, those improvements could be as basic as automating operator-connected phones. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea is facing a food shortage of more than 1 million tons, and aid should be provided in a timely manner, the South's unification ministry said. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- The North Korean authorities have reportedly ordered the expansion of political prison camps in the country. A source told Daily NK that North Korea, having declared war on the so-called "anti-socialist and non-socialist phenomenon" during the recent Eighth Party Congress, intends to overhaul its incarceration facilities ahead of a major crackdown. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- As North Korean authorities are expected to strengthen COVID-19 prevention measures at the Second Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee (from Feb. 8 to 11) of the Workers' Party, multiple sources have attested that locals are recently taking a strong interest in the direction of future policies. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- Recently, two North Koreans who were attempting to defect were arrested by the Ministry of State Security branch in Yanggang Province. A source reported that the authorities regard these North Korean citizens as spies, and are torturing them severely. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- After being sidelined from North Korea issues for the last few years, a top foreign affairs official from Tokyo jumped on a call with Seoul and Washington on Friday morning to talk "close cooperation" over "North Korea-related challenges." (Jeongmin Kim, *Daily NK*)
- Diplomats of South Korea, the United States and Japan agreed to closely cooperate to achieve complete denuclearization and lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula in video talks Friday, the foreign ministry said. (Song Sang-ho, Byun-Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea is exploring various ways to provide food and fertilizer to North Korea in humanitarian assistance as Pyongyang is believed to be faced with worsening food shortages, the unification ministry said Friday. (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Singapore dumped thousands of cases of dry red wine destined for North Korea in a sanction-related bust meant to stop smugglers from bringing luxury items into the DPRK. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)

- An American Bitcoin payment service will pay half a million dollars for violating U.S. sanctions by allowing North Koreans to use its platform to make transactions. (David Volodzko, NK *News*)

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VOA Source

**In North Korea, Regime Uses Coronavirus Prevention Pretext to Intensify Control**

Reporter Jo Eun-Jung
2021.2.17 3:00 AM

North Korea has legislated severe punishment for “anti-socialist activities” such as watching South Korean videos. Amid analysis that North Korea is strengthening internal control under the pretext of blocking the coronavirus, some say it is a reflection of the external information’s high-impact ripple effect. This is Jo Eun-Jung reporting.

At a plenary session of the Supreme People's Assembly in December last year, North Korea adopted the "Conservative Idea Culture Exclusion Act," which includes strong punishment for North Koreans who come in contact with external cultures.

According to the Republic of Korea National Intelligence Service, distributors of South Korean videos will be sentenced to death and viewers will be sentenced to up to 15 years in prison.

**“The Age of Corona”: Increased control, a consistent trend**

Scott Snyder, director of the program on U.S.-Korea policy at the Council on Foreign Relations, told VOA on the 16th that the change falls in line with North Korea's policy direction in the "age of Corona."

"I think the leadership is using [corona] as a tool to try to reassert control in the economy and also to assert control over the thought of its citizens,” he said.

[Recording: Director Snyder] “If you look at the 80-day mobilization period and the preparation for the party Congress, the idea of quarantining just kind of took over, it became a slogan. It became politicized. I think the leadership is using this as a tool to try to reassert control in the economy and also to assert control over the thought of its citizens.”

Director Snyder says an analysis of Corona-related information by North Korean state media showed that North Korean authorities initially dealt with it as a matter of public health.

Director Snyder says the North Korean leadership is believed to be using Corona as a slogan and a political tool to regain control of the economy and the peoples’ thoughts since the beginning of the 80-day battle and of the preparation period for the party convention.

In November of last year, North Korea held an expanded meeting of the politburo in the Central Committee of the Workers' Party to emphasize the strengthening of its ideological projects, which led to the eighth Labor Party Congress in January and the Labor Party plenary session in February.

Kim Jong-un, chairman of the State Affairs Commission, addressed external culture as a "malicious tumor" at the Central Committee meeting, and revealed he will organize a joint command that starts in the center and reaches each state, city, and district. This is a report from the Chosun Central Broadcast on the 12th.

[Recording: Chosun Central Broadcast] “He has emphasized that our revolution calls for a stronger than ever before struggle against anti-socialist and non-socialist phenomena; he has declared his revolutionary will and determination to operate on the malignant tumors that threaten our ideas and institutions and undermine complete unity.”

Director Park Ji-hyun, a North Korean defector human rights activist in the United Kingdom, says the North Korean authorities have recently controlled market activities and cracked down on money-lenders in particular in addition to enforcing censorship of thought.

[Recording: Director Park Ji-hyun] "There are money-lenders. For them, it's all about giving loyalty money to the government. If they don't, they've been arrested by law enforcement agencies in the past. For example, a businessman in Pyongyang donated $650,000 to the North Korean government."

**Reinforcing censorship of thought: “Desperate measures following information warfare failures”**

Some analysts say that North Korea's recent reinforcement of the censorship of thought is a reflection of its high ripple effect on external information.

Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the U.S. Commission of Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), says, "The North Korean government has introduced new technologies and adopted additional judicial punishment against the influx of external information.” He also said, “The North Korean regime is losing the battle [against the information flow from the outside world].”

[Recording: Executive Director Scarlatoiu] “The North Korean regime is losing the battle. Especially under this COVID lockdown and the draconian restrictions that they have put in place, the information campaign coming in from the outside world is even more effective. They know they’re losing this battle, thus the desperation, thus the new legislation.”

“Under this COVID lockdown and the draconian restrictions that they have put in place, the information campaign coming in from the outside world is even more effective," Scarlatoiu said. "[North Korea knows] they’re losing this battle, thus the desperation, thus the new legislation."

Executive Director Scarlatoiu says the informational inflow activity of international civil society groups and governments are breaking through North Korea's "firewall" and empowering its people. He also pointed out that the North Korean government is most afraid of external information.

**“Preparing legal grounds for punishment,” “Can’t control the residents”**

Lee Hyun-seung, who defected with his father, a high-ranking official at the North Korean Labor Party's 39th office, says there have been moves in the past to reject the culture of South Korea and the United States. However, he said that the reason why the government took judicial action this time seems to be because it has become difficult to control the influx of external information.

[Recording: Lee Hyun-seung] "North Koreans absorb information inflows into North Korea like much-needed rainfall. In North Korea, if you hear it through leaflets and radio broadcasts after just listening to propaganda, it's completely new. After hearing such news and looking at the information, I started to doubt the North Korean regime. When they wake up after listening to that information, they don't believe in what the regime claims to be 'our style socialism' or 'paradise on earth.'"

Kim Ma-tae, who defected from North Korea in 2014 and settled in the U.S., said the North Korean authorities' crackdown on external intelligence will have no effect.

[Recording: Kim Ma-tae] "I don't think that the more the North Korean regime continues like that, the more it will be completely blocked. Control is temporary. People are curious. On one side, they keep trying to absorb South Korean culture, and they will become enthusiasts of that culture, even if it’s in secret.”

Representative Park Ji-hyun also said that North Koreans' perception of the regime changed as they went through the March of Suffering [the great famine of the 19902], and that ideological control would not work.

[Recording: Representative Park Ji-hyun] “It's 2021. People have changed a lot during this time. Until the '90s, we really thought the government was taking care of us, so we believed them and looked up to them. People were starving to death in their homes, and they felt that the government could never save them. I don't think it's as effective as before. If you control people, their dissatisfaction will only get grow and it will eventually backfire."

This was Jo Eun-Jeong reporting for VOA News.

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Translated and prepared by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250930044748/https://mailchi.mp/18dc447afc51/hrnk-news-item sin-north-korea-regime-uses-coronavirus-prevention-pretext-to-intensify-control

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**Saturday, February 20, 2021**

# Int'l human rights group voices concerns over Seoul's ban on leaflets; Border lockdown strains NK economy to breaking point

**In North Korea:**
Border lockdown strains North Korean economy to breaking point (*Nikkei*, 02/19/2021)
N.K. paper stresses 'economic principles' and 'scientific analysis' in economic policy (*Yonhap*, 02/20/2021)
North Korea names Ri Ryong Nam new ambassador to China (UPI, 02/19/2021)
North Korea's Yongbyon Nuclear Center: Working Through Winter (*38 North*, 02/19/2021)
Ouch: North Korea's Telecom System Called "Worthless" (*National Interest*, 02/19/2021)

**South Korea:**
New South Korean bill calls for more public info on North Korean cyberattacks (*NK News*, 02/19/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Gov't plans to establish offices in N. Korea for inter-Korean exchanges (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 02/20/2021)

**International:**
France rejoins Japan in North Korea surveillance in East China Sea (*Kyodo News*, 02/19/2021)
Int'l human rights group voices concerns over Seoul's ban on sending of anti-N.K. leaflets (*Yonhap*, 02/20/2021)
Joint efforts of S. Korea, Japan critical to denuclearization of N. Korea: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 02/20/2021)
Nigerian Instagram Star Aided North Korea Cyber Crime, U.S. Says (*Bloomberg*, 02/20/2021)
The Libyan Model: How NATO's war with Libya in 2011 has influenced North Korea ever since (*Daily NK*, 02/19/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- The shutdown of the border between China and North Korea is testing the limits of Pyongyang's commitment to "self-reliance" as shortages of food, electricity and vital goods contribute to an increasingly severe economic crisis. (Yosuke Onchi, *Nikkei*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Saturday stressed the importance of "economic principles" and "scientific analysis" as the country is striving to achieve a recently unveiled five-year economic development scheme. (*Yonhap*)

- North Korea has appointed a new ambassador to China for the first time in a decade, less than a month after reports suggested China appointed a new envoy to Pyongyang. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- Commercial satellite imagery of North Korea's Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center from January and February 2021 indicates that while the reactors remain inactive, the Uranium Enrichment Plant (UEP) has continued operations. Other low-level activities that began last fall, such as facility construction and refurbishment and floodwater control management efforts, have resumed after what appears to have been a short pause due to freezing temperatures. (Peter Makowsky, Frank Pabian, Jack Liu, *38 North*)
- It's well-known that the telecommunications infrastructure in North Korea is less than robust. The country's wireless networks run on 3G, which is two generations behind where the West is, and it's not exactly simple to make landline calls, either. A recent report, interviewing people who have made many calls to, and in North Korea quoted them as saying it's very difficult to call anyone's phone number directly. (Stephen Silver, *National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korean lawmakers proposed a new bill that would force the country's National Intelligence Service (NIS) to share more information related to North Korean cyberattacks with government agencies. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The revision of the Inter-Korean Exchange and Cooperation Act submitted to the [South Korean] National Assembly includes a provision that allows corporations and organizations to establish offices in North Korea for their cross-border business. In its review of the revision, the Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee of the National Assembly recommended that it should be considered whether it is appropriate to make it into a law when inter-Korean relations have turned sour in the past years as can be seen from instances, such as suspension of Mt. Kumgang tours in 2008, shutting down of the Kaesong Industrial Complex in 2016, and wrecking of a joint liaison office in 2020 by North Korea. (*Dong-A Ilbo*)

**International:**

- A French Navy vessel will conduct surveillance activities in the East China Sea until early March as part of international efforts to block North Korea from engaging in ship-to-ship transfers of goods at sea in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions, according to the Japanese Defense Ministry. (*Kyodo News*)
- An international human rights group has raised concerns over South Korea's recently legislated ban on anti-North Korea leaflets, taking issue with its lack of clarity and possibly broad scope of prohibition. (*Yonhap*)
- Any U.S. effort to denuclearize North Korea will not be as effective without the support and close cooperation of both South Korea and Japan, a U.S. State Department official

said Friday, highlighting the importance of the two U.S. allies working together. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- A Nigerian social-media celebrity helped North Korean hackers launder money stolen from a Maltese bank, U.S. officials said. (William Clowes, *Bloomberg*)
- February 2021 marks ten years since the beginning of NATO military operations against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, a campaign which would have far reaching consequences not only in Africa and the Arab world but also far beyond. For North Korea in particular, Libya's fate would be widely cited as a key demonstration of the rationale behind policy decisions pertaining to its military modernisation and its pursuit of a ballistic missile and nuclear deterrent. (A.B. Abrams, *Daily NK*)

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Prepared by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250930044810/https://mailchi.mp/f53445d7af35/hrnk-news-items-intl-human-rights-group-voices-concerns-over-seouls-ban-on-leaflets-border-lockdown-strains-nk-economy-to-breaking-point

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**Sunday, February 21, 2021**

## NK economy ravaged by sanctions, pandemic isolation; NK uranium plant operates through winter; SK dilemma over human rights issues

**In North Korea:**
N.K. uranium plant indicates ongoing operations throughout winter: U.S. monitor (*Yonhap*, 02/21/2021)
North Korea's economy is ravaged by sanctions and pandemic isolation. Kim is lashing out. (*Washington Post*, 02/21/2021)
Yongbyon activity continued through winter, 38 North finds (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/21/2021)

**South Korea:**
Defectors to sue unification minister for alleged defamation (*Yonhap*, 02/21/2021)
South Korea trapped in dilemma over human rights issues (*Korea Times*, 02/21/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
N.K. man caught on coastal CCTV cameras at least four times: sources (*Yonhap*, 02/21/2021)

**International:**
Allies should collaborate to tackle NK riddle (*Korea Times*, 02/21/2021)
A quiet North Korea (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/21/2021)

Effective tools for Biden on North Korea (*Korea Times*, 02/21/2021)
How Trump offered Kim a ride on Air Force One (BBC, 02/20/2021)
North Korea's nukes aren't going anywhere, and the US needs to get over it (*Business Insider*, 02/20/2021)
Rebuild the trilateral cooperation (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/21/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea's main nuclear complex showed continued activity at its uranium enrichment facility throughout the winter. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's last economic plan failed "tremendously," he complained. And his inner circle lacked an "innovative viewpoint and clear tactics" in drawing up a new one, Kim told the ruling Workers' Party last month, yelling and finger-pointing at frightened-looking delegates. (Simon Denyer, *Washington Post*)
- North Korea continued to operate its uranium enrichment plant at the Yongbyon nuclear complex through the winter, according a U.S. research group monitoring the secretive regime. (Shim Kyu-seok, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**In South Korea:**

- Four North Korean defectors plan to sue Unification Minister Lee In-young for defamation over his recent remarks casting doubt over what defectors say about the North's human rights situation. (*Yonhap*)
- The Moon Jae-in administration has been in hot water over its ignoring of North Korean human rights abuses in order not to "provoke" Pyongyang and "promote" inter-Korean reconciliation. This was highlighted by its decision not to co-sponsor a United Nations resolution condemning the human rights situation in the North for the second straight year in 2020 despite Moon's past career as a human rights lawyer — a situation that may sound paradoxical to the international community. (Kang Seung-woo, *Korea Times*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- A North Korean man was caught on military surveillance cameras set up along the east coast at least four times after he swam ashore in the South, but border guards did nothing to stop him, an investigation has found. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- The notion of strengthening the historic Republic of Korea-U.S. alliance while dealing effectively with North Korea presents President Biden and President Moon Jae-in with a riddle on top of a riddle. The initial riddle is to resolve the seeming contradiction in terms. It would seem impossible for the alliance to gain strength when South Korea's leadership is so eager to reconcile differences with North Korea. Then within that puzzle is the challenge of persuading North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un to show signs of doing away with his nuclear program if the historic bond between South Korea and the U.S. is really tightening. (Donald Kirk, *Korea Times*)

- A month after the inauguration of Joe Biden in January, there's no news between the North and the U.S. Some predicted possible provocations in time for Kim Jong-il's birthday on February 16, but there was no special event or a message to the U.S. As North Korea remains quiet, the U.S. hasn't made a move. In the four-and-half-hour Senate confirmation hearing for Secretary of State Antony Blinken, the North Korean issue was not mentioned much. He briefly said that U.S. policy on North Korea would be reviewed with allies. State Department spokesperson Ned Price recently said that the lack of contact with North Korea was not because it's not urgent but because the U.S. was in close consultation with allies and partners. (Kim Pil-kyu, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The Biden administration clarified that the U.S. will "review" its North Korea policy and suggest a "new strategy." This comes from the recognition that the North Korea nuclear problem has become worse across administrations. In this regard, Secretary of State Tony Blinken emphasized two points: the first one was to look for "the most effective tools to advance the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula," and the second was to "deal with the growing problem, posed by North Korea's arsenal." (Cheong Wook-sik, *Korea Times*)
- President Trump's meetings with Kim Jong-un were among the most eye-catching moments of his presidency. In the third and final episode of a new BBC series Trump Takes On the World, directed by Tim Stirzaker, we discover new details about how these summits came about, and speak to those who were in the room when the two men met. What they saw stunned even the most seasoned diplomats - not least when Trump offered the North Korean dictator a lift home on Air Force One. (BBC)
- Observers should not mistake the absence of direct engagement between Washington and Pyongyang for disinterest in the fate of US-North Korea relations, State Department representative Ned Price said in a recent press briefing. Price stressed that the administration's "strategic goals" with the Kim Jong Un regime will be "focus[ed] on reducing the threat to the United States and to our allies as well as to improving the lives of the North and South Korean people. And, again, the central premise is that we remain committed to denuclearization of North Korea." (Bonnie Kristian, *Business Insider*)
- During the 2021 Virtual Munich Security Conference last Friday, U.S. President Joe Biden underscored the importance of democratic values. "Our partnerships have endured and grown through the years because they are rooted in the richness of our shared democratic values." He said. "They're not transactional. They're not extractive." Biden also highlighted the need to "prepare together for a long-term strategic competition with China." Biden's remarks are a manifestation of Washington's determination to pressure China based on multilateral cooperation with U.S. allies on global issues. U.S. Secretary of State Tony Blinken jumped on the bandwagon by agreeing to strongly oppose any attempts by China to upset the status quo by force in a Quad meeting with foreign ministers of Japan, India and Australia last week. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)

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Prepared by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:

https://web.archive.org/web/20250930045403/https://mailchi.mp/d18faf57ea10/hrnk-news-items-nk-economy-ravaged-by-sanctions-pandemic-isolation-nk-uranium-plant-operates-through-winter-sk-dilemma-over-human-rights-issues

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**Monday, February 22, 2021**

## NK ships return to sea after a quiet COVID-19 winter; North Korean defectors sue unification minister for defamation

**In North Korea:**
Are North Korean Infantry Armed Well Enough to Stop America? (*National Interest*, 02/21/2021)
Deterring North Korea's Dynamic Nuclear Strategy (*War on the Rocks*, 02/22/2021)
Kim Jong Un won't change until he has the power to nuke any American city (*NK News*, 02/22/2021)
NK defectors accuse unification minister of defamation (*The Korea Herald*, 02/21/2021)
N.K. paper stresses 'respect for economic officials' to achieve new objectives (*Yonhap*, 02/22/2021)
North Korea's electricity situation worsens compared to last year (*Daily NK*, 02/22/2021)
North Korea Would Love to Take Down An F-35 (Could It?) (*National Interest*, 02/21/2021)
North Korean border guards continue to shoot people who cross into buffer zone (*Daily NK*, 02/22/2021)
North Korean defectors sue South Korean unification minister for defamation (*NK News*, 02/22/2021)
North Korean defectors sue unification minister for defamation (*The Korea Times*, 02/22/2021)
North Korean ships return to sea after a quiet COVID-19 winter (*NK News*, 02/22/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Unification ministry says defectors' testimonies 'valuable records' on N.K. human rights situation (*Yonhap*, 02/22/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Unification minister calls for early resumption of inter-Korean dictionary project (*Yonhap*, 02/22/2021)

**International:**
Be bold on North Korea (*The Korea Times*, 02/22/2021)
Michael Elleman, a 'top expert' on North Korean weapons, dies at 62 (*NK News*, 02/22/2021)
Trump offered Kim Jong Un a ride home on Air Force One after their second summit, new series reveals (*Business Insider*, 02/21/2021)
Trump offered North Korea's Kim a ride home on Air Force One: report (*The Hill*, 02/21/2021)
Trump Reportedly Made A Bonkers Air Force One Offer To Kim Jong Un (HuffPost, 02/22/2021)
US hits North Korean hackers back with new details on cryptocurrency theft (*NK News*, 02/22/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea's light infantry and special forces are taking on increasing importance as the country's aging mechanized units, starved for technology and fuel, are likely becoming less relevant to the country's war plans. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- Until American policymakers understand how Kim plans to use his nuclear weapons, they cannot develop a plan to stop him. (Manseok Lee, *War on the Rocks*)
- Earlier this month, a key former special envoy on North Korea wrote an overly optimistic opinion piece with a title that's worth a good eyebrow raise: "Denuclearization of North Korea is possible." (Andrei Lankov, *NK News*)
- Four North Korean defectors in South Korea are filing a criminal defamation complaint against Unification Minister Lee In-young over remarks he made earlier this month questioning the reliability of defectors' statements about human rights issues in the North. (Ko Jun-Tae, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Monday stressed the importance of respecting government officials in the economic sector as the country strives to achieve a recently unveiled five-year economic development scheme. (*Yonhap*)
- With the North Korean authorities giving priority to the arms industry for electricity—supplying power for more than 18 hours each day—Daily NK has learned that ordinary households are frequently receiving only two hours of electricity a day. (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)
- The ROKAF, South Korea's Air Force received their first F-35A fighter jets in April 2019. The ROKAF hopes to eventually buy forty F-35As and should have ten F-35As by the end of the year. (Charlie Gao, *National Interest*)
- Border guard troops reportedly shot to death a local resident near the Sino-North Korean border in Sinuiju, North Pyongan Province, earlier this month after he inadvertently entered the "buffer zone" while chasing his goat. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- A group of North Korean defectors filed a criminal defamation complaint against South Korea's minister of unification on Monday after he said that North Korean human rights abuses should be better verified (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- Four North Korean defectors are suing Unification Minister Lee In-young for defamation over his recent remarks which they claim treated defectors as "liars." (Jung Da-Min, *The Korea Times*)
- At least 10 North Korea-linked ships were active in the first half of February, marking a significant resurgence in the country's shipping activity as several vessels returned to routes that went untouched for months. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- The unification ministry said Monday that testimonies of North Korean defectors are "valuable records" that shed light on the human rights situation in their reclusive home country. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Unification Minister Lee In-young called Monday for efforts to restart a long-suspended project to compile a unified Korean-language dictionary with North Korea, saying it will be a "firm step" toward unification. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- But your understandable focus on domestic issues has distracted you when it comes to foreign policy issues, including the growing challenge from China, and trying to renew a nuclear deal with Iran. (John Burton, *The Korea Times*)
- Michael S. Elleman, a world-renowned missile expert who spent much of his life trying to stop advances to North Korea's nuclear program, died of cancer at George Washington University Hospital on Saturday, February 20. He was 62 years old. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- Former President Donald Trump offered North Korean leader Kim Jong Un a ride home on Air Force One after the two met for a second time at a summit in Hanoi, Vietnam, in 2019, a new BBC documentary has revealed. (Sophia Ankel, *Business Insider*)
- Former President Trump made an unprecedented offer to North Korea's Kim Jong Un after the pair met in 2019 for their second summit in Hanoi, Vietnam: a ride home on Air Force One, which Kim declined, according to a top former U.S. official. (John Bowden, *The Hill*)
- Then-President Donald Trump reportedly made an unusual offer to North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un during their 2019 summit in Hanoi. (Ed Mazza, *HuffPost*)
- In an attempt to disrupt North Korea's streak of successful cryptocurrency thefts, the U.S. government released a slew of technical details about a sophisticated malware family attributed to the DPRK. (Nils Weisensee, *NK News*)

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Prepared by Sophia Hapin, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250930142111/https://mailchi.mp/d07788d18d6b/hrnk-news-item snk-ships-return-to-sea-after-a-quiet-covid-19-winternorth-korean-defectors-sue-unification-minister-for-defamation

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## Tuesday, February 23, 2021

# American human rights groups says Anti-Leafleting Law violates international law, submits legal opinion to Ministry of Unification

**Top News:**
** People's Power Party Organizes "What is Wrong with the Anti-Leafleting Law?" Seminar (CBS, 2/23/2021)

** American human rights groups says Anti-Leafleting Law violates international law, submits legal opinion to Ministry of Unification (*Yonhap*, 2/23/2021)
** [Deep-Dive] Humanitarian aid to North Korea on the cutting board… "Aid Projects Suffer from Many Flaws, Fundamental Reform Needed" (VOA, 2/17/2021)
** International human rights organizations submit statements of opinion on the law preventing the spread of propaganda leaflets to the Ministry of Unification (RFA, 2/19/2021)
** Statements of opinion about the law banning the distribution of propaganda leaflets to North Korea submitted to the Ministry of Unification (*Newstown*, 2/20/2021)

** These articles have been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**
N.K. steelmaking workers urge nationwide efforts to ramp up production (*Yonhap*, 2/23/2021)
North Korea lifts lockdowns in Chagang Province's Chasong and Manpo (*Daily* NK, 2/23/2021)
North Korea marks Kim Jong Il's birthday with quarantine promotion lectures (*Daily* NK, 2/23/2021)
North Korean women get 240 days of childbirth leave: report (*The Korea Times*, 2/23/2021)
North Korea Orders State Firms to Raise Rabbits For Public Meat Stocks At Their Expense (RFA, 2/22/2021)
Report: North Korea's trade with China declined 80% in 2020 (UPI, 2/22/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Cameras caught visitor from North, soldiers took longer (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 2/23/2021)
Defector's entry exposes diminishing military readiness at border (*The Korea Herald*, 2/23/2021)
It took six hours and two military alerts for South Korea to catch a defector (NK *News*, 2/23/2021)
N.K. man caught on CCTV cameras 10 times, but military failed to notice 8 of them: JCS (*Yonhap*, 2/23/2021)
North Korea man wandered for hours in DMZ amid South's security blunders (*BBC News*, 2/23/2021)
North Korean defector Ji Seong-ho honored with human rights award (UPI, 2/22/2021)
Seminar on law on anti-Pyongang leaflets (*Yonhap*, 2/23/2021)
South Korea pushes for talks two years after Trump walked out on Kim Jong Un (NK *News*, 2/23/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
North, South Korea condemn Japan's claims over Dokdo (UPI, 2/22/2021)
Unification minister renews calls for inter-Korean response system against infectious diseases (*Yonhap*, 2/23/2021)
Vice FM urges N. Korea to return to nuke dialogue at U.N. disarmament conference (*Yonhap*, 2/23/2021)

**International:**

A Principled US Diplomatic Strategy Toward North Korea (*38 North*, 2/22/2021)
Coronavirus Strands North Korean Workers in China, Kills Job Offers (*RFA*, 2/22/2021)
Delegations traveling to and from North Korea flatlined in 2020, new tool shows (*NK News*, 2/23/2021)
North Korea and Thailand are cozying up after sanctions choked their friendship (*NK News*, 2/23/2021)
Thanks to North Korea and China, Japan's Navy Has a Reason to Grow (*The National Interest*, 2/23/2021)
US remains focused on NK denuclearization: Blinken (*The Korea Herald*, 2/23/2021)
WFP could cease operations in N. Korea this year due to pandemic (*Yonhap*, 2/23/2021)
What if the Korean War Had Gone Nuclear? (*The National Interest*, 2/23/2021)
Will China, other countries show interest in Gaeseong Industrial Complex? (*The Korea Times*, 2/23/2021)

**Top News:**

- A North Korean human rights group in the U.S. revealed on the 23rd that they submitted a written legal opinion saying that the Anti-Leafleting Law violates the Constitution of the Republic of Korea and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), made remarks at a forum hosted by Cho Tae-Yong, an assemblyman of the People's Power, at the National Assembly on the same day. (Jeon Myung-Hoon, *Yonhap*)
- As the new U.S. administration has revealed its support for humanitarian aid to North Korea, calls for public verification of the transparency of humanitarian aid, which had been previously been discussed discreetly, are gaining momentum in Washington. Critics say that well-intentioned aid projects to North Korea, instead of benefiting the vulnerable, create space for the regime's funds for weapons development and strengthen its control over the distribution system, hindering the market economy. (Paik Sung-won, VOA)
- International human rights groups revealed that they have submitted a statement of opinion to the South Korean Ministry of Unification pointing out the problems with South Korea's law preventing the spread of propaganda leaflets to North Korea. On the 18th, the Human Rights Watch (HRW), an international human rights organization, disclosed on its website that it had submitted a statement of opinion on the Korean government's guidelines for interpreting the law to the Ministry of Unification. Earlier, the U.S.'s Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)'s pro bono counsel and human rights lawyer Amanda Mortwedt Oh also said they submitted their statements of opinion to the Ministry of Unification on the 14th. (Ji Jeongeun, RFA)
- Radio Free Asia reported on the 20th that international human rights groups have submitted a statement of opinion to the Ministry of Unification pointing out the problems with the law preventing the spread of propaganda leaflets to North Korea. Human Rights Watch's Lina Yoon, the senior researcher on the Korean Peninsula, who wrote the statement submitted by Human Rights Watch, told Radio Free Asia on the 19th that she was concerned about the revision of the law. The U.S.'s Committee for Human

Rights in North Korea (HRNK)'s pro bono counsel and human rights lawyer Amanda Mortwedt Oh also said they submitted their statements of opinion to the Ministry of Unification on the 14th. The statement of opinion pointed out that the law preventing the spread of propaganda to North Korea infringes on the people's freedom of speech and that it violates the South Korean Constitution and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which has to do with the people's civil and political rights. (Choi Sung-Min, *Newstown*)

**In North Korea:**

- Workers at a major steel plant in North Korea held a rally to firm up their commitment to meet their production target and call for nationwide efforts to achieve the first-year goal of the country's five-year economic development scheme. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean authorities lifted the lockdown on the towns of Chasong and Manpo, Chagang Province last Wednesday. The lockdown on the towns was lifted from midnight Tuesday. North Korean authorities had put the two areas under lockdown on Feb. 3 following incidents of defections and smuggling. They had initially announced the lockdown would last until March 7, but lifted it after just two weeks. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean authorities reportedly marked the birthday of late leader Kim Jong Il with public lectures to bolster quarantine efforts against COVID-19. Cautioning people against letting their guard down even a bit, the lectures appear to be part of North Korea's typical propaganda efforts to warn against "unusual phenomenon" on and around major national holidays. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- Working women in North Korea can get 240 days of maternity leave before and after giving birth, according to the Tongil Voice, a pro-North Korea propaganda outlet, Tuesday. The roughly eight-month-long leave is a part of the North's childbirth encouragement policies introduced in recent years as the country faces a low birthrate, estimated at less than two. (Jung Da-min, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korea's annual directive to state-run factories and companies to raise rabbits, pigs, and goats to improve citizens' diets has sparked resentment among managers and workers who now have to contribute cash and labor while struggling under harsh economic conditions. (Eugene Whong, RFA)
- Two-way trade between North Korea and its biggest partner, China, fell 80.7% in 2020 amid the coronavirus pandemic, according to estimates from Seoul's Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

**In South Korea:**

- A North Korean man who swam across the eastern maritime border into the South on Feb. 16 was captured on coastal military surveillance cameras 10 times after he swam ashore, but soldiers failed to respond even after the cameras set off alarms, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said in a press briefing Tuesday. (Han Yeong-hye & Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A North Korean man was caught on military surveillance cameras along the east coast 10 times after he swam ashore in the South last week, but soldiers failed to notice eight of

them even after alarm bells rang, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Tuesday. The announcement was a key point of the results of the JCS' weeklong probe into the Feb. 16 incident. The North Korean man was ultimately captured more than six hours later inside a restricted area north of the Civilian Control Line in the eastern border town of Goseong. He has expressed his desire to defect. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)

- A North Korean defector who lost an arm and a leg while foraging for food was conferred a human rights award in the South. Ji Seong-ho was honored for his work on advancing North Korean human rights with the Han Won-chae Human Rights Award. The prize is named after a North Korean defector who was forcibly repatriated after he attempted to flee the regime with his wife and three children. Han, born in 1943, died by torture in 2000. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, speaks online at a seminar at the National Assembly in Seoul on Feb. 23, 2021. The seminar on problems involving the South Korean law banning the flying of anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets into North Korea was arranged by Rep. Cho Tae-yong of the main opposition People Power Party. (*Yonhap*)
- Nearly two years after nuclear negotiations with North Korea fell apart, a top South Korean official urged Pyongyang to return to talks at a high-level U.N. event on Tuesday. Speaking virtually at the United Nations Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, First Vice Foreign Minister Choi Jong-Kun called on other countries to give their "unwavering support" in pursuing peace with the North. "We ask the DPRK to respond to our call for the resumption of dialogue," he said. "In the course, we count on the unwavering support of the international community." (Kelly Kasulis, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- A North Korean university condemned Japan for claiming disputed islets in the East Sea, or Sea of Japan, is part of Japanese territory, the same day Japanese politicians observed "Takeshima Day." Kim Il Sung Broadcasting University stated on its online site Japan's "ambition to rob" the Dokdo Islets reflects its policy of "modern-day revisionism." (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young renewed calls Tuesday for building a joint response system with North Korea against infectious diseases to better cope with growing threats from global pandemics. Lee made the remarks during a seminar on inter-Korean cooperation in public health, noting that creating a joint system does not necessarily mean providing unilateral help to Pyongyang but is also a way of protecting "oneself and one's family." (*Yonhap*)
- First Vice Foreign Minister Choi Jong-kun urged North Korea on Tuesday to return to denuclearization talks, saying that the peace process on the Korean Peninsula is the path that must be taken, the foreign ministry said. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- The new Biden administration should guard against getting bogged down in an escalatory ladder with North Korea by initiating an early strategic opening with Pyongyang to test whether a serious diplomatic process can be sustained. The

unachievable objective of complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization should be dropped in favor of a more realistic step-by-step approach based on an equal commitment to denuclearization and peace. This approach should be backstopped by reinvigorated ties with South Korea and Japan, working with China while maintaining realistic expectations for its support, a streamlined and modernized sanctions regime, and bolstered deterrence of North Korea. Exchanges all the way up the diplomatic ladder from negotiators to leaders will be the only way to make progress. (*38 North*)

- North Korean overseas workers stranded in China by a border closure imposed to fight coronavirus are facing a dire situation as the pandemic has caused their job prospects to dry up. One of North Korea's chief foreign currency-earning methods is to dispatch workers overseas, then collect the lion's share of their salaries. (Eugene Whong, *RFA*)
- International delegations sent to and dispatched from North Korea almost completely flatlined in 2020, with just one group visiting the DPRK during the entire year, according to data from the newly launched NK Pro Delegation Tracker tool. The sharp drop — which was caused by the COVID-19-related travel restrictions North Korea imposed in Jan. 2020 — made last year the least active one yet for DPRK-related delegations since 1997 when NK Pro records began. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- Three years after Thailand claimed it completely halted trade with North Korea, officials from both countries met in Bangkok to discuss how they can "strengthen" relations, the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated on Monday. Thani Thongphakdi — Thailand's permanent secretary for foreign affairs — met with North Korean Ambassador Kim Je Bong on Feb. 16 and also vaguely exchanged views on the "COVID-19 situation," according to the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (MFA) Twitter page. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force increasingly resembles the former Imperial Japanese Navy, but in a smaller size. The other consideration is that even as North Korean missiles are seen as the primary threat, Japan has other priorities that include patrolling the East China Sea due to increased Chinese aggression, and new Aegis-equipped destroyers could be a practical addition to the fleet due to their maneuverability and defenses. (Peter Suciu, *The National Interest*)
- US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Monday reaffirmed the US position that the country would continue to focus on North Korea's denuclearization and closely cooperate with its allies and partners. He briefly mentioned North Korea during a speech at the United Nations-sponsored Conference on Disarmament, where he also said the US would demand greater transparency from China on its weapons development program. (Kim So-hyun, *The Korea Herald*)
- The World Food Programme (WFP) could suspend its operations in North Korea this year as restrictions on imports remain in place due to the coronavirus pandemic, a report on its website showed Tuesday. According to the report, the U.N. aid agency has continued to be faced with difficulties in deploying its staff in the North, with its physical monitoring activities being curtailed for a prolonged period of time. (*Yonhap*)
- Nuclear escalation on the Korean Peninsula would have gone terribly for everyone involved. The United States would have caused dreadful pain to uncertain strategic advantage, potentially pushing the Communist powers to escalate. The physical and human terrain of Korea would have endured awful suffering. And perhaps most

importantly, the world would have lost the nascent nuclear taboo, a sense among policymakers that atomic weapons differed in some meaningful sense from other kinds of explosives, and that their practical use portended something momentous. (Robert Farley, *The National Interest*)

- Some experts call for companies from China, Russia and other countries to do business in North Korea's Gaeseong Industrial Complex, to prevent the symbol of inter-Korean economic cooperation from being shut down whenever inter-Korean relations go sour. (Do Je-hae, *The Korea Times*)

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*CBS No Cut News*

**People's Power Party Organizes "What is Wrong with the Anti-Leafleting Law?" Seminar**

Representative Cho Tae-Yong of the People's Power holds a seminar at the National Assembly on the morning of the 23rd and listens to the introductory remarks by Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), at a seminar called "What is Wrong with the Anti-Leafleting Law?" Seminar participants connected with Scarlatoiu online.

Translated by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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*Yonhap*

**American human rights groups says Anti-Leafleting Law violates international law, submits legal opinion to Ministry of Unification**

A North Korean human rights group in the U.S. revealed on the 23rd that they submitted a written legal opinion saying that the Anti-Leafleting Law violates the Constitution of the Republic of Korea and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), made remarks at a forum hosted by Cho Tae-Yong, an assemblyman of the People's Power, at the National Assembly on the same day.

"On February 14, in response to a call by the ROK Ministry of Unification, my organization submitted a legal opinion on the 'Anti-Leafleting Law,'" Executive General Scarlatoiu said. "The memo finds that South Korea's Amendment to the Development of Inter-Korean Relations Act (the "Amendment") violates ROK domestic and international legal obligations, namely the Constitution of the Republic of Korea and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

Executive Director Scarlatoiu said, "The Amendment infringes on international human rights, including the freedoms of expression, thought, conscience, religion, assembly, and association," and argued for its abolition, saying, "The Amendment is flawed in its statutory construction,

poses jurisdictional considerations, infringes on fundamental rights, and is excessively punitive."

"If entered into force on March 30, 2021, this Amendment will also create second-order effects on the already vulnerable and oppressed North Korean people," he said. "The Amendment runs counter to the idea that the U.S.-South Korea alliance is grounded in shared values, straining a staunch alliance, partnership, and friendship that has been so resilient for almost seven decades," he added.

Joo Ho-Young, the floor leader of the People's Party who attended the debate, said, "A hearing is being pushed forward in the U.S. Congress to reveal the injustice of the law," adding, "There is no way it cannot be considered an international disgrace."

Translated by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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VOA

**[Deep-Dive] Humanitarian aid to North Korea on the cutting board... "Aid Projects Suffer from Many Flaws, Fundamental Reform Needed"**

As the new U.S. administration has revealed its support for humanitarian aid to North Korea, calls for public verification of the transparency of humanitarian aid, which had been previously been discussed discreetly, are gaining momentum in Washington. Critics say that well-intentioned aid projects to North Korea, instead of benefiting the vulnerable, create space for the regime's funds for weapons development and strengthen its control over the distribution system, hindering the market economy. This is Paik Sung-won reporting.

Humanitarian aid to North Korea has been recognized by the U.S. government and human rights activists as a so-called "weak link" and a sensitive issue that requires careful consideration.

This is because although the lack of transparency and abuse of aid to North Korea are issues that have been raised constantly, measures and remarks against them must face the controversy and criticism that they constrain life-saving humanitarian activities for political reasons.

But there has long been a consensus among human rights experts in Washington that humanitarian aid cannot be an exception to human rights principles and that support for the vulnerable should not continue unless human rights are guaranteed. Contrary to international organizations' claims of transparency in humanitarian aid projects to North Korea, concerns have been raised that food and other aid to North Korea will be used immediately as a means of maintaining the regime under the strict control of the North Korean authorities.

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) stated in a phone call with VOA, "Problems arise when the North Korean regime oversees the distribution of humanitarian aid."

[Recording: Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of HRNK] “When it comes to humanitarian assistance, of course, we want this assistance to reach the most vulnerable. The people who need it most. It becomes a problem when the regime is put in charge of distributing humanitarian assistance. Because basically we've been having serious issues with transparency, monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian programs, that's when it becomes a problem.”

He explained that there are “serious issues with transparency, monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian programs, that's when it becomes a problem.”

The perception that the obscured management and distribution of humanitarian aid to North Korea should no longer be placed in blind spots has increased, especially after testimonies by former high-ranking North Korean officials who understood the flow of slush funds and military and economic budgets. The key point of these testimonies is that the distribution of aid packages is determined unconditionally according to the regime’s priorities, and for decades, there has been no change in the practice of deceiving or ostracizing external surveillance networks.

Loopholes in humanitarian aid and proposals for improvement measures are being communicated, both officially and informally, to the White House and the State Department through former North Korean officials and experts on the Korean Peninsula in Washington.

Lee Jung-ho, a former senior member of the Workers’ Party's Office 39, said in a phone call with VOA, "While on business trips to the provinces, I have seen several situations in which aid funds are diverted."

[Recording: Mr. Lee Jung-ho] I have seen several instances where food that came to North Korea as humanitarian assistance was siphoned. The North Korean authorities do an astounding job of supplying the residents with donated food when they are monitored by an international watchdog, and once the watchdog leaves, they use military vehicles to immediately take away the food and transport it back. Then the residents curse them behind their backs that they give food and then take it away. Another time, I saw dozens of military vehicles at Wonsan Port remove their license plates to disguise themselves as ordinary vehicles and carry humanitarian assistance from the ship directly to the army. At that time, I didn't understand why the military vehicles had had their license plates removed. But now that I look back, it seems that the international community is not allowed to provide food to the North Korean military.

Mr. Lee served as the head of the Daeheung Group, a trading and shipping company that is North Korea’s leading foreign currency-earning organization, as director of the Bureau of Trade Management, as chairman of the Geumgang Economic Development Company, and ran the Dalian branch of Daeheung. He said: “The military-first politics of the Kim Jong-il era, which puts the military ahead of the party, continues to date in a form that values the military more than the working class even when allocating humanitarian aid.”

[Recording: Mr. Lee Jung-ho] When outside support came in, the North Korean regime distributed and supplied the military first. The rice, medicine, and medical supplies in particular are mostly taken by the military, so the general population often doesn't even see them.

On the other hand, officials of international organizations who visit or reside in North Korea for humanitarian aid consultations have said they had little difficulty distributing and monitoring aid and were able to communicate freely with local residents.

Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), said previously in an interview with VOA while on a visit to North Korea in July 2018 that, "We have improved on-site access to monitor distribution and it is much easier to get relevant data than before." He further added: "This has made it easier to see how aid from the UN is being used and what further support is needed."

Earlier in October 2017, Thomas Fisler, former head of the Pyongyang office for the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, told VOA, "There was no problem visiting the provinces, and I could visit them several times a month if necessary."

But Mr. Lee Jung-ho cautions that the explanations of foreign aid agencies are very superficial and misleading regarding the reality of North Korea.

[Recording: Mr. Lee Jung-ho] "Since North Korea does not have freedom of movement and because both guides and drivers are North Korean, it is impossible for monitoring personnel to freely visit and monitor the distribution of aid. In the end, monitoring personnel will go to see a setup staged by the North Korean regime. The areas they visit are pre-planned for a show. And since there are no overnight accommodations in the area, monitoring personnel can't stay for days or monitor 24/7. And it's rare for international monitors to visit for a second time."

Mr. Lee said, ""If a North Korean guide makes it difficult to visit the site under the pretext of power outages, poor road conditions, and complicated approval procedures, that's it [they don't go further]." He added: "that is why most North Koreans say they have never received aid."

In fact, former UK Ambassador to North Korea John Everard told VOA in December 2018, "Some of the aid is clearly diverted, and this is well documented by groups tracking the issue."

In particular, rather than using international organization channels, most attempts to investigate direct distribution according to international standards at the individual national level have failed.

Australia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in an email to VOA in December 2017 that it had stopped providing humanitarian aid to North Korea; this is because they tried to monitor distribution on their own without the United Nations, but North Korea did not respond. They explained, "Because North Korea has repeatedly rejected requests for independent distribution and evaluation of humanitarian projects backed by the Australian Government, Australia has not

provided humanitarian assistance to the North after funding the World Food Programme and the WFP's 2016 nutrition support project."

At the time, a spokesman for the WFP's Asia regional office, Silke Ber, told VOA that the distribution monitoring activities planned by governments in donor countries are often not carried out as scheduled. However, he said that this does not affect WFP's distribution monitoring activities.

Meanwhile, Susan Mikhail, Senior Programme Manager and Advisor at the Swedish International Development Cooperating Agency under the Swedish Foreign Ministry, said she usually conducts field inspections once or twice a year, but also said there was not enough monitoring of the distribution.

It is because of these limitations that human rights experts who are concerned about the dire food situation in North Korea are aggressively raising the issue of humanitarian aid to North Korea, which is aimed at guaranteeing the right of North Koreans to food. Critics point out that fundamental reform is needed to correct decades of bad habits, as the current means of meeting the needs of oppressive regimes, rather than those of vulnerable classes, condones and encourages North Korea's suppression of human rights.

A letter sent to President Joe Biden last month by the U.S.-based non-governmental organization, the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) recommended that North Korean human rights policy specifically appeal for the eradication of such side effects.

The letter stated: "We also insist that humanitarian assistance must be adequately monitored, in order to ensure it reaches the most vulnerable people that need it most, especially women, children, and people in detention." In addition, it states the necessity to link humanitarian assistance to progress on human rights and emphasized that "Humanitarian and development assistance to the government of North Korea must be predicated on steps taken to protect the rights of its people, including the right to be free from arbitrary imprisonment and torture, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom of movement, freedom of assembly, and freedom of conscience."

In VOA's call with Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of HRNK and the organization representative who sent the letter, he stated that, "the basic principle of humanitarian assistance should be a human rights up-front approach" and "humanitarian assistance should go to those who need it most based on needs assessments, on-site investigation, monitoring, and program evaluation."

[Recording: Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of HRNK] "So, the basic principle here should be a human rights up-front approach. Basically ensure that humanitarian assistance goes to those who need it most. How? Well, through running needs assessments, field assessments, monitoring and evaluation of programs. This will be extraordinarily important."

As the Biden administration, which is reviewing its overall policy toward North Korea, ranked North Korean human rights issues as a priority and revealed its support for humanitarian aid efforts, human rights experts particularly welcome the focus on North Korean human rights which have been buried since the Singapore summit. They also suggest that aid to North Korea should be delivered in a completely different way than before.

A spokesperson for the State Department told VOA on the 4th, “Even if we oppose regimes like North Korea, we support efforts to ease the suffering of North Koreans,” and, “We are trying to take action in a way that does not harm North Koreans, and we continue to support international efforts to provide important humanitarian aid if North Korea is willing to accept it.”

In regard to the issue, Suzanne Scholte, chair of the North Korean Freedom Coalition, stated, “I have long advocated that we provide substantial assistance to North Korea but only if it is closely monitored. Otherwise, it will be used as a weapon against the people of North Korea.”

[Suzanne Scholte, chair of the North Korean Freedom Coalition] “I have long advocated that we provide substantial assistance to North Korea but only if it is closely monitored. Otherwise it will be used as a weapon against the people of North Korea. Remember that there was enough humanitarian aid delivered to North Korea during the famine; no one needed to starve, but people starved.”]

She then stated, “Remember that there was enough humanitarian aid delivered to North Korea during the famine that no one needed to starve but people starved.”

This criticism aligns with the testimonies of North Korean defectors who confirmed that international assistance, which lasted from the mid-1990s to the year 2000, was distributed first to the military.

Mr. Lee Jung-ho’s son, Lee Hyun-seung told VOA in November of last year that prior to the 2000s, military units had eaten two meals a day due to food shortages. But from 2002 to 2005, when he served in the military, they ate regular meals because they received rice from South Korea.

[Recording: Mr. Lee Hyun-seung] Once I came to South Korea, they said that all the inter-Korean exchanges and food aid went to the North Korean people. That food did not go to the North Korean people. It was used up by the North Korean military. I too carried bags of rice that were labelled as donations from South Korea, the Republic of Korea, and all the soldiers ate it. Since the start of the inter-Korean summit in the early 2000s, large amounts of food were received, and most of the food was provided by South Korea. Almost all of North Korea’s military units are provided with rice donated by South Korea.”

The U.S. government, which has stopped providing aid to North Korea since 2011, suggests that the donor country should look at how desperately a country is in need of aid, compare it to the

situations of other countries in need, and consider whether the aid can be delivered to its people as intended.

The U.S. Department of State's Agency for International Development has suspended aid to North Korea through the WFP, citing the North's refusal to allow a nutrition survey that was agreed upon to be conducted across North Korea in 2009. At the time, an official from USAID said that they suspended food aid because North Korean authorities did not allow the deployment of the agreed-upon number of Korean-speaking WFP workers.

Director Scarlatoiu stated, “It will be very important to find ways to merge human rights and humanitarian concerns under a human rights up-front approach,” and emphasized, “We know that there are a lot of people who need help in North Korea. But we need to know who they are, where they are, and what kind of nutritional deficiencies they face. The only way to do this is through transparency and needs assessments.”

[Recording: Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of HRNK] “It will be very important to find ways to merge human rights and humanitarian concerns under a human rights up-front approach. We know that there are a lot of people who need help in North Korea. But who are they? Where? What age group? What gender? What kind of nutritional deficiencies are we talking about? The only way to do this is through transparency and needs assessments.”

In particular, experts say that humanitarian aid to North Korea has increased significantly since the Great Famine of 1995 and continues today, and they point out that North Korea's food and health crisis persists every year despite the international community's considerable support because of the regime's misguided policies and priorities.

The State Department has repeatedly stated that the longstanding humanitarian crisis faced by the North Korean people is caused solely by the North Korean regime. It also pointed out that if the North Korean regime redirected the funds and resources dedicated to its nuclear and other weapons programs toward its people, it could surely provide at least as much as the UN has been providing through aid.

Mr. Lee Jung-ho said, “he sympathizes with the intent of humanitarian aid to North Korea, but the aid must also be sent with a message to take good care of its people at the same time.”

[Recording: Mr. Lee Jung-ho] “The North Korean leader should be ashamed of having received decades of outside support. Now, we must tell the North Korean people and the elites: People should not live as slaves to anyone but rather, accept a market economy in which everyone can live well. When the international community provides humanitarian assistance to North Korea, it must urge the North Korean leader to spend the huge amount of money dedicated to nuclear development on its people instead and urge him to give them freedom and not oppress human rights. Without such a message, giving whatever assistance the North Korean regime asks for and asking them to receive external support even when they say they don’t need it is incomprehensible.”

Earlier last year, the North Korean regime rejected 50,000 tons of rice that the South Korean government had agreed to provide through the World Food Programme (WFP).

Mr. Lee pointed out, “The indiscriminate humanitarian assistance to North Korea not only helps Kim Jong Un take as much money intended to be invested in the economy and use as much as he needs to strengthen defense capabilities, including weapons development, but it also allows him to revive the suspended food rationing system and strengthen the regime's control. As such, it will have serious side effects that will suppress the rise of the market economy in North Korea, such as the jangmadang.

This is Paik Sung-won reporting for VOA News.

Translated by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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RFA

**International human rights organizations submit statements of opinion on the law preventing the spread of propaganda leaflets to the Ministry of Unification**

Anchor: International human rights groups revealed that they have submitted a statement of opinion to the South Korean Ministry of Unification pointing out the problems with South Korea's law preventing the spread of propaganda leaflets to North Korea. This is Ji Jeongeun reporting.

On the 22nd of last month, South Korea's Ministry of Unification announced that it would collect opinions about the law by the 15th of this month due to some concerns that the ban on leaflets could limit the distribution of goods or information from third countries.

On the 18th, the Human Rights Watch (HRW), an international human rights organization, disclosed on its website that it had submitted a statement of opinion on the Korean government’s guidelines for interpreting the law to the Ministry of Unification.

Human Rights Watch’s Lina Yoon, Senior Korea Researcher, who wrote the statement, told Radio Free Asia on the 19th that she was concerned about the revision of the law.

Senior Researcher Lina Yoon: We are concerned about the lack of clarity that the guidelines have, the banned items are not clearly defined and have very overbroad descriptions. Also, the severity of the punishment is of concern.

In a statement submitted to the Ministry of Unification on the 15th, Senior Researcher Lina Yoon said that the scope of the law clearly states that it "does not apply to activities in third countries," which she “evaluates positively.” However, she also pointed out that the prohibited items are not clearly defined.

This means that the expressions "other property interests" and "etc." in the revised law are too vague and can be interpreted broadly.

Senior researcher Yoon went on to say that it is strict for the revised law to require up to three years in prison or up to 30 million won, or a fine of up to $27,000, and that, "It does not specify the reason for such a relatively strict punishment instead of other civil or administrative sanctions."

"The agreement in the Panmunjom Declaration prohibits the broadcasting of loudspeakers and the spread of flyers on the military demarcation line," she said. She emphasized that, "The law preventing the spread of propaganda leaflets to North Korea stipulates restrictions that go far beyond the agreed line."

Senior researcher Yoon told Radio Free Asia (RFA) on the 19th that she is raising this issue beyond the Korean government to the international community.

Senior Researcher Lina Yoon: We have raised our concerns with the UN, the US government, and others as well, and we've asked them for support to raise this issue with the South Korean government and press for South Korea to have a holistic approach towards their dealing with North Korea, having to include human rights in their discussions.

Earlier, the U.S.'s Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK)'s pro bono counsel and human rights lawyer Amanda Mortwedt Oh also said they submitted their statements of opinion to the Ministry of Unification on the 14th.

The statement of opinion pointed out that the law preventing the spread of propaganda to North Korea infringes on the people's freedom of speech and that it violates the South Korean Constitution and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which has to do with people's civil and political rights.

In Article 24 paragraph 1 of the revised law, loudspeaker broadcasting and visual media postings limit the location to the "military demarcation line," but actions that have to do with distribution, such as the distribution of leaflets, are not restricted, emphasizing that the specific regional scope is ambiguous.

They also said that the prohibited items are also vague and that the items may include books, religious books, and humanitarian aid items, which could cause humanitarian and religious groups to be punished.

The statement also pointed out that the punishment of the law is excessive. The level of punishment of the law restricting the distribution of propaganda to North Korea follows the "Inter-Korean Exchange and Cooperation Act," which punishes transactions made for commercial purposes with North Korea. This means that such punishment is excessive for acts of freedom of expression and others.

The law also claims that the distribution of leaflets harms people's lives and bodies and poses serious risks, but the statement points out that the said risk is not due to the North's provocative statements and hostile attitude towards the distribution.

The statement presumed that if related actions are punished based on whether they cause harm to the people's bodies and lives, they will eventually be punished according to North Korea's unpredictable response, not according to the actions of individuals.

Earlier on Dec. 29 of last year, South Korean President Moon Jae-In promulgated the revised law preventing the spread of propaganda leaflets, which will be implemented this upcoming March.

Translated by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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*Newstown*

**Statements of opinion about the law banning the distribution of propaganda leaflets to North Korea submitted to the Ministry of Unification**

Radio Free Asia reported on the 20th that international human rights groups have submitted a statement of opinion to the Ministry of Unification pointing out the problems with the law preventing the spread of propaganda leaflets to North Korea.

On the 22nd of last month, South Korea's Ministry of Unification announced that it would collect opinions about the law by the 15th of this month due to some concerns that the ban on leaflets could limit the distribution of goods or information from third countries.

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This means that the expressions "other property interests" and "etc." in the revised law are too vague and can be interpreted broadly.

Senior researcher Yoon went on to say that it is strict for the revised law to require up to three years in prison or up to 30 million won, or a fine of up to $27,000, and that, "It does not specify the reason for such a relatively strict punishment instead of other civil or administrative sanctions."

"The agreement in the Panmunjom Declaration prohibits the broadcasting of loudspeakers and the spread of flyers on the military demarcation line," she said. She emphasized that, "The law preventing the spread of propaganda leaflets to North Korea stipulates restrictions that go far beyond the agreed line."

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In Article 24 paragraph 1 of the revised law, loudspeaker broadcasting and visual media postings limit the location to the "military demarcation line," but actions that have to do with distribution, such as the distribution of leaflets, are not restricted, emphasizing that the specific regional scope is ambiguous.

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Translated by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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Translated by Grace Shin & Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Interns

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Prepared by Rick Herssevoort, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250930142040/https://mailchi.mp/e959a01d5cfc/hrnk-news-itemsamerican-human-rights-groups-says-anti-leafleting-law-violates-international-law-submits-legal-opinion-to-ministry-of-unification

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**Wednesday, February 24, 2021**

## What is Wrong with the Anti-Leafleting Law?; NK defector caught on DMZ footage 10 times before surrender

**Top News:**
What is Wrong with the Anti-Leafleting Law? (HRNK *Insider*, 02/22/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Kim Jong Un's right-hand man may be leading a new North Korean security council (*NK News*, 02/24/2021)
More than half of North Korea is hungry, and a UN food program may soon drop out (*NK News*, 02/24/2021)
N.K. failed to meet previous five-year economic goals due to investment in ineffective industries: expert (*Yonhap*, 02/24/2021)
N.K. paper warns against relying on outside help to achieve five-year economic plan (*Yonhap*, 02/24/2021)
N. Korea ranks lowest in world democracy index: poll (*The Korea Herald*, 02/24/2021)
N. Korea to convene labor union congress to lend support to party decisions (*Yonhap*, 02/24/2021)
North Korea's COVID-19 data has disappeared, but that's just part of the problem (*NK News*, 02/24/2021)
North Korea recently hacked Pfizer to steal vaccine development-related secrets (*Daily NK*, 02/24/2021)
North Korea to begin new school year on Mar. 1 with home-based classes (*Daily NK*,02/24/2021)
Why North Korea replaced its ambassador to China after 11 years (*The Korea Herald*, 02/24/2021)

**In South Korea:**

Outrage in South Korea after North Korean able to wander around for hours in high-security border area (*The Independent*, 02/24/2021)
North Korea man wandered for hours in DMZ amid South's security blunders (*BBC*, 02/23/2021)
North Korean defector caught on DMZ footage 10 times before surrender (*UPI*, 02/23/2021)
North Korean defector spends hours undetected in secure zone (*The Times*, 02/24/2021)
North Korean defector spends six hours walking around heavily guarded border unnoticed (*The Guardian*, 02/23/2021)

**International:**

Analysts: Biden administration should engage with North Korea soon (*UPI*, 02/24/2021)
Continuity and change in North Korea-China relations (*North Korean Economy Watch*, 02/23/2021)
Czech Republic puts break on operations in North amid economic hardship (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/24/2021)
Empowering Congress on the Korean Peninsula (*38 North*, 02/23/2021)
Ex-US marine recounts the day he 'staged' a North Korean Embassy raid in 2019 (*NK News*, 02/24/2021)
Japan's back in the North Korea game, but it faces nearly impossible challenges (*NK News*, 02/23/2021)
Korean War: How U.S. Battleships Smashed North Korea (*National Interest*, 02/23/2021)
North Korea is a bigger missile threat than Russia, China or Iran: US official (*NK News*, 02/24/2021)
Report: U.N. food aid to North Korea stalling under restrictions (*UPI*, 02/23/2021)
Unlock critical, urgent aspects of North Korea's nuclear program (*The Korea Times*, 02/24/2021)
U.S. general says missile defense is focused on threats from North (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 02/24/2021)
(LEAD) U.S. missile defense 'clearly focused' on N. Korea: Gen. Hyten (*Yonhap*, 02/24/2021)
Why Biden Must Prioritize North Korea Policy in His First 100 Days (*National Interest*, 02/23/2021)

**Top News:**

- Without human rights, there can be no reconciliation, no peace, no prosperity for Koreans living in the north, and no unification. Positive change can be enacted only by the people of North Korea. In order to empower them, the best South Korea and the outside world can do is to increase the volume and quality of information as well as the range of vehicles available to deliver that information. This Amendment should be repealed before it goes into force on March 30, 2021. (Greg Scarlatoiu, *HRNK Insider*)

**In North Korea:**

- The man known as "Kim Jong Un's shadow" may now be heading a rumored "national security council" under the North Korean ruling party's Central Committee. (Martin Weiser, *NK News*)

- A key U.N. program providing food and farming support to a hunger-stricken North Korea may soon halt all operations in the country after facing roadblocks over COVID-19. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korea failed to meet its previous five-year economic goals due to its dependence on heavy industries amid crippling sanctions, a researcher at a state-run think tank said Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Wednesday called for greater efforts to realize a self-reliant economy without outside help amid struggles to accomplish key goals unveiled in a rare party meeting last month. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea ranked the lowest in a world democracy index last year for the 16th consecutive year, a recent report showed. (Nam Kyung-don, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea will convene a congress of the country's largest labor union in May for the first time in about five years to lend support to the decisions and plans unveiled by last month's congress of the ruling Workers' Party, state media said Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- For months, North Korea shared its COVID-19 data with the World Health Organization (WHO), all while barring international travelers from entering the country and monitoring the situation for themselves. But in recent weeks, specific North Korean testing and quarantine numbers have vanished from WHO reports, leading some experts to wonder what's going on in an increasingly-isolated and poverty-stricken country. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- A newly-formed hacking unit inside the Reconnaissance General Bureau (RGB) recently hacked Pfizer to steal vaccine development-related secrets, a high-level North Korean source told Daily NK on Monday. (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean teachers will again conduct home-based classes for their students when the school year begins on Mar. 1, Daily NK has learned. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea recently appointed a former trade minister as its new ambassador to China, entrusting him with the crucial mission of reviving trade with the country's closest ally amid deepening COVID-19 woes. (Lee Ji-Yoon, *The Korea Herald*)

**In South Korea:**

- The incident of a North Korean man, who reportedly defected to South Korea after crossing the heavily guarded border and roamed around unchecked for hours, has sparked outrage in Seoul. (Mayank Aggarwal, *The Independent*)
- South Korean troops failed to notice a North Korean man who crossed the heavily fortified border this month even though he appeared on TV cameras eight times and triggered alarms. (BBC)
- A North Korean man who surrendered to South Korea's military after defecting across the DMZ was caught on surveillance footage earlier Feb. 16 than previously reported. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- The South Korean armed forces have been accused of "farcical incompetence", after a North Korean defector crossed the sea border between the two countries and spent hours wandering undetected in what is supposed to be a secure area. (Richard Lloyd Parry, *The Times*)

- South Korea's military is facing criticism over security lapses along the country's heavily armed border with North Korea after a man was able to cross into the South despite being spotted multiple times by surveillance cameras. (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)

**International:**

- Despite a host of pressing domestic issues, the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden should take the initiative in restarting diplomacy with North Korea as soon as possible, analysts said during a webinar on Wednesday. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- The recent appointment of Ri Ryong Nam as North Korea's ambassador to China hints at ambitions for greater economic exchange with China, as reported here. As Ri has a strong background in institutions in North Korea related to foreign trade, not least as the country's trade minister and, later, vice premier in the country's cabinet. (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, *North Korean Economy Watch*)
- The Czech Republic announced Tuesday it was temporarily suspending work at its embassy in Pyongyang due to logistical difficulties caused by North Korea's border shutdown. (Shim Kyu-Seok, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- While staff came from different offices, political parties, and viewpoints, this report highlights areas of convergence. Drawing on these meetings, the following main points and options emerged from our discussions. (Clint Work, *38 North*)
- A former U.S. marine who faces possible extradition to Spain said that he "staged" a 2019 raid at the North Korean Embassy in Madrid after its staff asked for help defecting, according to a new document filed in a California court on Monday. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Less than two years ago, the world witnessed North Korean leader Kim Jong Un casually standing in a circle and chatting with the presidents of both South Korea and the United States in the heavily-fortified Demilitarized Zone. But one player was conspicuously missing at that "historic" meeting, along with all the summits with North Korea in recent years — Japan. (James Fretwell, *NK News*)
- The Iowas certainly delivered a great deal of ordnance to target on the Korean Peninsula over the course of the war. However, the overall impact of their presence is difficult to assess. (Robert Farley, *National Interest*)
- Months after North Korea rolled out its largest-ever intercontinental ballistic missile for the world to see, a top U.S. military officer said that he's treating North Korea as a greater missile threat than other American adversaries. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Food aid for North Korean children and pregnant women is being delayed due to an ongoing border closure, according to a South Korean press report. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- This is the 12th in a "Letter to President Biden" series aimed at conveying policy recommendations through open letters from politicians, scholars and experts to the new U.S. president following his Jan. 20 inauguration. (Stephen Costello, *The Korea Times*)
- The missile defense capabilities of the United States are "clearly focused" on deterring very real nuclear threats from North Korea right now, said the U.S. military's No. 2 general. (Shim Kyu-Seok, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- The United States' missile defense capability is "clearly" focused on North Korea and must continue to advance to meet evolving threats from the country, the vice chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff said Tuesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- In order to prevent a return to 2017-level tensions—when, according to Bob Woodward's interviews with Trump, both countries came very close to war—President Joe Biden needs to move quickly. (Gabriela Bernal, *National Interest*)

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Prepared by Sophia Hapin, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250930045809/https://mailchi.mp/8b6e980dc965/hrnk-news-itemswhat-is-wrong-with-the-anti-leafleting-law-nk-defector-caught-on-dmz-footage-10-times-before-surrender

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## Thursday, February 25, 2021

# North Korean information flow is important… Anti-leaflet law should be abolished

**Top News:**
** North Korean information flow is important... Anti-leaflet law should be abolished (*RFA*, 2/23/2021)

** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**
CMC Meeting Held (*NK Leadership Watch*, 2/25/2021)
[EXCLUSIVE] There was another ranking North Korean defector from Kuwait before Ryu: source (*The Korea Times*, 2/25/2021)
KPA Promotions List Issued (*NK Leadership Watch*, 2/25/2021)
N.K. leader presides over key party meeting to discuss discipline among military officials (*Yonhap*, 2/25/2021)
North Korea: Forced to work in a coal mine for 28 years (*BBC News*, 2/25/2021)
North Korea's Kim calls for tougher discipline in his military: KCNA (*Reuters*, 2/24/2021)
North Korea enslaved South Korean prisoners of war in coal mines (*BBC News*, 2/25/2021)
North Korea enslaving political prisoners to fund weapons programme: South Korea rights group (*Reuters*, 2/25/2021)
Recent North Korean soil survey finds that acidification is still a serious problem (*Daily NK*, 2/25/2021)
Teenage boy caught watching pornography exiled to countryside with family (*Daily NK*, 2/25/2021)

**In South Korea:**
New culture minister discusses everything from kimchi to North (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 2/25/2021)
Upcoming military exercise with U.S. should be postponed or halted: expert (*Yonhap*, 2/25/2021)
Video shows North Korean defector who swam to South Korea, evaded border guards (*Reuters*, 2/25/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Koreas appear out of running for 2032 Olympics following IOC decision (*Yonhap*, 2/25/2021)
Unification minister renews calls for individual tourism to N.K. (*Yonhap*, 2/25/2021)

**International:**
Madrid embassy raid suspect says it was all a ruse (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 2/25/2021)
North Korea must 'show some good faith' for sanctions to be lifted: US official (*NK News*, 2/24/2021)
S. Korean top nuke envoy holds virtual talks on N. Korea with senior U.S. diplomat (*Yonhap*, 2/25/2021)
Sanctions relief unlikely without show of 'good faith' by N. Korea: U.S. lawmaker (*Yonhap*, 2/25/2021)
Trump's approach to South Korea hurt alliance, analysts say (*UPI*, 2/25/2021)
U.S. experts stress need to address human rights issues in normalization talks with N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 2/25/2021)
US ballistic missile test sends a hostile message to North Korea, experts say (*NK News*, 2/25/2021)
US wants to rejoin UN human rights group and investigate North Korea (*NK News*, 2/24/2021)
'US needs to use China in North Korean nuclear issue' (*The Korea Times*, 2/25/2021)

**Top News:**

- Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu of the Committee on Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) said in an online debate hosted by National Assemblyman Cho Tae-Yong of the People's Power that the role of information sent to North Korea is very important and that the anti-leaflet law should be abolished before it takes effect in March. He pointed out that the anti-leaflet law unnecessarily targets North Korean escapee groups who work to send information, goods, and money to their families in the North, saying that if the law is enforced, it will cause secondary damage to the already poor and oppressed North Koreans. (Seo Jae-Deok, RFA)

**In North Korea:**

- The first meeting of the 8th Workers' Party of Korea Central Military Commission was held on an enlarged basis on 24 February at the WPK Central Committee Office Building. Attending the meeting were CMC Vice Chairman and WPK Secretary Ri Pyong Chol, members of the CMC, corps and service branch commanding officers, executive

members of the Korean People's Army WPK Committee, members of the KPA high command and WPK Central Committee Department Deputy (Vice) Directors. (*NK Leadership Watch*)

- A North Korean official ranking higher than the country's former Acting Ambassador to Kuwait Ryu Hyun-woo, whose defection to South Korea was recently made public, also fled from the same Gulf state in 2017 and defected to the South. (Yi Whan-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- Kim Jong Un in his capacity as Chairman of the Workers' Party of Korea Central Military Commission promoted 32 senior Korean People's Army senior officers on 24 February. (*NK Leadership Watch*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un presided over a Central Military Commission meeting and called for stricter control over military officials. At the expanded military commission meeting of the ruling Workers' Party on Wednesday, Kim stressed the importance of establishing "revolutionary moral discipline" particularly among the younger generation. (*Yonhap*)
- Generations of South Korean prisoners of war are being used as slave labor in North Korean coal mines to generate money for the regime and its weapons program, according to a report released by a human rights organization. (Laura Bicker, *BBC News*)
- North Korea has been enslaving political prisoners, including children, in coal production to boost exports and earn foreign currency as part of a system directly linked to its nuclear and missile programs, the Seoul-based Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights said on Thursday. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- North Korea reportedly suffers from serious soil acidification. The country's authorities are pushing the production of organic fertilizer that can neutralize soil acidity, but according to a source, it cannot be put to good use as the amount of acidic land is so great. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- A teenage boy who was caught watching pornography at his home in Sinuiju earlier this month has been exiled to the countryside along with his parents. The teenager was watching a pornographic video late at night when his parents were not at home. He was caught during a surprise inspection by a task force created to monitor "deviant" behavior. (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- Although the newly appointed minister of Culture Sports and Tourism did not specifically mention the joint bid by the two Koreas to co-host the 2032 Summer Olympics, which was scrapped before it took off, Hwang stressed the importance of establishing a "separate track" with North Korea when it comes to engaging in talks regarding joint cultural and sports events. (Yim Seung-Hye, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea should put off or suspend its combined springtime military exercise with the United States as part of efforts to improve inter-Korean relations, a researcher at a state-run think tank said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- A new video obtained by a South Korean broadcaster offers a glimpse of a daring defection by a North Korean man who last week swam, crawled through a tunnel, and wandered around the heavily guarded border zone for hours before being noticed. The man, who has not been identified by South Korean authorities, crossed the

Demilitarized Zone from North Korea on Feb. 16, according to the South's military. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- A potential joint bid by South Korea and North Korea to co-host the 2032 Summer Olympics has apparently collapsed before it took off in earnest, following a decision by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to pick an Australian city as its preferred candidate. (Yoo Jee-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young said Thursday the government will push to resume long-suspended tours to North Korea on an individual basis as soon as the pandemic eases, saying it is "the best way to break the boundaries" between South and North Koreans. "There are still many South Koreans who wish to visit Mount Kumgang though it has been over 10 years since its suspension," he said, pointing out that such exchanges can help restore "national homogeneity." (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- The only suspect apprehended for a brazen raid on the North Korean embassy in Madrid in 2019 claimed the incident was staged in collaboration with a diplomat inside the mission trying to defect. In a letter written to a U.S. federal judge, lawyers representing Christopher Ahn said he and several other assailants, belonging to a group called Free Joseon, undertook the raid on Feb. 22, 2019 at the behest of at least one North Korean diplomat who had contacted the group beforehand. (Shim Kyu-Seok, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The United States probably won't lift sanctions against North Korea unless Pyongyang makes the first move and shows "some good faith," a prominent U.S. lawmaker said on Wednesday. Speaking at a Feb. 24 webinar hosted by the Institute for Corean-American Studies, Democratic Rep. Thomas Suozzi reportedly said that the Biden-Harris administration also needs to be "more strategic" when dealing with the DPRK. (Kelly Kasulis, *NK News*)
- South Korea's top nuclear envoy held video talks with a senior U.S. diplomat Thursday about North Korea's denuclearization and related issues, the foreign ministry said. The talks between Noh Kyu-duk and Sung Kim, acting U.S. assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, came as the new U.S. administration of President Joe Biden has been conducting a review of policy on North Korea. (*Yonhap*)
- The Trump administration's policies toward the two Koreas damaged the alliance with Seoul, according to U.S. and South Korean analysts. The administration of South Korean President Moon Jae-in also falls short on North Korea human rights, and Seoul remains a passive observer amid new U.S. efforts, the South's lawmakers and analysts said during the International Forum on One Korea's Congressional Roundtable and Forum on Wednesday. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- Leading experts on North Korea underscored the need Thursday to address Pyongyang's human rights issues should Washington engage in talks on the normalization of relations between the two countries. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Months after North Korea showed off its largest-ever intercontinental ballistic missile, the U.S. Air Force announced on Wednesday that it successfully tested one of its own —

a move that some experts say will come off as a threat to Pyongyang. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

- Walking back on the United States' controversial exit from the U.N. Human Rights Council in 2018, Secretary of State Antony Blinken called for support "fighting against injustice and tyranny" in places like North Korea. Speaking before the United Nations, Blinken advocated for investigations into North Korean and Syrian human rights abuses, renewing former White House rhetoric that largely disappeared when President Donald Trump leaned into top-level summits with Kim Jong Un in 2018 and 2019. (Kelly Kasulis, *NK News*)
- Former U.S. government officials who dealt with the North Korean nuclear issue for previous presidents have advised the new Biden administration to take advantage of China, the North's key ally and economic patron, in resolving the decades-long problem. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)

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RFA

**"North Korean information flow is important... Anti-leaflet law should be abolished"**

**Anchor:** There have been continuous calls for the South Korean government's anti-leaflet law to be abolished, saying the influx of information for North Koreans is very important.

This is Seo Jae-Deok reporting from Seoul.

Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the U.S.'s Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), said on the 23rd that the international community, including South Korea, should take action against North Korea, which is blocking the inflow of external information in response to the expansion of the quantity, quality, and method of delivery of information.

Executive Director Scarlatoiu said in an online debate hosted by National Assemblyman Cho Tae-Yong of the People's Power that the role of information sent to North Korea is very important and that the anti-leaflet law should be abolished before it takes effect in March.

**Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu of the U.S.'s Committee for Human Rights in North Korea:** The Amendment infringes on international human rights, including the freedoms of expression, thought, conscience, religion, assembly, and association. The Amendment is flawed in its statutory construction, poses jurisdictional considerations, infringes on fundamental rights, and is excessively punitive.

He pointed out that the anti-leaflet law unnecessarily targets North Korean escapee groups who work to send information, goods, and money to their families in the North, saying that if the law is enforced, it will cause secondary damage to the already poor and oppressed North Koreans.

He also stressed that the law runs counter to the fundamental ideology that the Korea-U.S. alliance shares common values, and that without human rights, there can be no reconciliation, peace, and prosperity of North Koreans.

Earlier on the 14th, the U.S.'s Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) submitted a statement to the South Korean Ministry of Unification stating that the anti-leaflet law infringes on freedom of expression and violates the Constitution of the Republic of Korea and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which deals with civil and political rights.

Professor Jhe Seong-Ho of Chung-Ang University, who served as the Human Rights Ambassador to the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, also pointed out that the ban on propaganda infringes on the freedom of expression, the right to pursue happiness, and the realization of human dignity in the Korean Constitution.

**Professor Jhe Seong-Ho of Chung-Ang University:** My opinion is that the "law of suppression of freedom of expression" or the "law to abandon the influx of freedom and openness" is a strong law that goes against the spirit of the Constitution of the Republic of Korea and that it is nothing more than a law to protect the North Korean regime and to check on Kim Jong-un's mood.

Professor Jhe also said the law requires the approval of the Ministry of Unification under the Inter-Korean Exchange and Cooperation Act to send leaflets to North Korea, which constitutes a "pre-censorship" of free expression.

Joo Ho-Young, floor leader of South Korea's main opposition party, People's Power, said in a congratulatory speech that the international community, including the United States, is expressing their concern about the South Korean government's ban on propaganda leaflets, and that this is an international disgrace.

**People's Power Floor Leader Joo Ho-Young:** I will do my best to open the way for true inter-Korean peace and co-prosperity by properly informing the world about the reality of the disastrous human rights abuses North Koreans are facing.

South Korea President Moon Jae-In promulgated an amendment of the Development of Inter-Korean Relations Act, or the so-called anti-leaflet law, last year on Dec. 29.

The law, which will take effect three months after the promulgation, stipulates that violations of the Inter-Korean Agreement, such as the distribution of leaflets at the military demarcation line, will result in up to three years in prison or a fine of up to 30 million won, which is up to 27,000 U.S. dollars.

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Translated by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Rick Herssevoort, HRNK Research Intern

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**Friday, February 26, 2021**

# Anti-leafleting law must be repealed or the Constitutional Court must rule it as unconstitutional

**Top News:**
**Anti-leafleting law must be repealed or the Constitutional Court must rule it as unconstitutional (*Christianity Daily*, 2/24/2021)
Human Rights are Critical to North Korean Policy Agenda (*KEI*, 2/23/2021)

**This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**
Covid forces Russian diplomats to leave North Korea by hand-pushed railcar (*NBC News*, 2/26/2021)
N.K. Cabinet reviews ways to grant businesses more autonomy at plenary session (*Yonhap*, 2/26/2021)
North Korea hacked Pfizer because it wants to sell bootleg COVID vaccines on the international black market, sources say (*Business Insider*, 2/24/2021)
North Korea: Russian diplomats leave by hand-pushed trolley (*BBC*, 2/26/2021)
North Korean hackers breached sensitive defense network at Russian firm (*NK News*, 2/26/2021)
North Korean Laws Since 2016: What They Imply for the Country's Future (*38North*, 2/25/2021)
North Korea's borders are closed, but Russia said some of its citizens found a way out by hand-pushed railcar (*NY Times*, 2/26/2021)
North Korea's economy is in a state of catastrophe, but the issue is decades-old (*NK News*, 2/26/2021)
North Korea's leadership not first in line to get AstraZeneca vaccinations (*Daily NK*, 2/26/2021)
North Korea's Network Of Prison Camps Funds Weapons Programs, Rights Group Says (*NPR*, 2/26/2021)
Onsong tobacco farm decides to hand over some farmland to farmers (*Daily NK*, 2/26/2021)
Photos: A rare look at North Korean life in the COVID-19 era (*NK News*, 2/25/2021)
Russian diplomats and their families leave North Korea by hand-pushed rail trolley due to Covid-19 restrictions (*CNN*, 2/26/2021)
Russian diplomats exit North Korea by hand-pushed trolley (*Fox News*, 2/26/2021)
Russian diplomats exit North Korea on trolleys built for evacuating foreigners (*NK News*, 2/25/2021)
Russian Diplomats Forced to Push Train Trolley Across North Korean Border to Get Home

(*Slate*, 2/26/2021)
Russian diplomats leave North Korea on hand-powered rail trolley (*The Guardian*, 2/26/2021)

**In South Korea:**
S. Korea yet to finalize position on U.N. resolution on N.K. human rights: ministry (*Yonhap*, 2/25/2021)
Seoul sounds alarm on humanitarian crisis in North Korea (*Financial Times*, 2/26/2021)
South Korea wavers on North Korea human rights abuses (UPI, 2/25/2021)
Unification minister urges review of negative impact of sanctions on ordinary N. Koreans (*Yonhap*, 2/26/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
N.K. firm files lawsuit to collect payment from S. Korean company (*Yonhap*, 2/25/2021)

**International:**
The clock is ticking on North Korea. Biden should make the first move. (*Washington Post*, 2/25/2021)
Two years later, Trump and Kim's failed Hanoi summit casts a dark shadow (NK *News*, 2/26/2021)
U.S. court orders N. Korea to pay US$2.3 bln over 1968 capture of USS Pueblo (*Yonhap*, 2/26/2021)

**Top News:**

- The seminar "What is Wrong with the Anti-Leafleting Law? Focusing on the controversy over its constitutionality and searching for alternatives", which was hosted by the National Assemblyman Cho Tae-Yong and supervised by the International Committee of the People's Power, was virtually held on the 23rd. The revised act on the development of inter-Korean relations, called the anti-leafleting law, will take effect about a month later on March 30. (Kim Jin-Young, *Christianity Daily*)
- Earlier this month, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights released another report detailing the dire human rights situation in North Korea. In a statement released with the report, High Commissioner Michele Bachelet strongly criticized North Korea for its human rights abuses and urged the international community to take action to put a halt to these abuses. While experts, including HRNK Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu, provide insight as to why achieving this goal is so difficult, there is consensus that these issues must be urgently addressed. (Terrence Matsuo, *KEI*).

**In North Korea:**

- Eight Russian diplomats and their families became unlikely social media sensations Friday after crossing the border home from North Korea by hand-pushed railcar. (Matthew Bodner, *NBC News*)
- North Korea convened an extended plenary session of its Cabinet to discuss ways to give businesses greater independence as part of efforts to achieve the economic goals set forth at last month's rare party congress, state media said Friday. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)

- North Korean hackers attempted to breach the servers of the US-based vaccine manufacturer Pfizer, and its German partner BioNTech, in hopes of gathering scientific data that could be used to manufacture bootleg copies of a COVID-19 vaccine to sell on international black markets, according to intelligence officials in Europe. (Mitch Prothero, *Business Insider*)
- A group of Russian diplomats and their families made an unusual exit out of North Korea on a hand-pushed rail trolley due to strict Covid measures. (BBC)
- In a successful attack that shows how quickly North Korean hackers are able to evolve, the DPRK-linked Lazarus Group stole sensitive information from a Russian defense firm, cybersecurity firm Kaspersky said on Thursday. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- The Kim Jong Un regime, like his father's, has repeatedly emphasized building a socialist rule-of-law state. In accordance with this objective, North Korea has devoted great attention to making and amending laws. There were 205 known North Korean laws when Kim Jong Un assumed power in December 2011; this number had increased to 236 by December 2015, and 106 laws are known to have been revised during this period. (Dae Un Hong, *38North*)
- North Korea sealed its borders more than a year ago, grounding flights and shutting its borders with neighboring China and Russia because of the pandemic. This week, a few Russians found a way out. (Mike Ives, *NY Times*)
- New data shows that the DPRK's economic stagnation started much earlier than researchers previously thought. (Peter Ward, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and the rest of the country's leadership will not receive doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine North Korea is set to receive from the COVAX Facility in the first part of this year, Daily NK has learned. (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea is using forced labor from its network of prison camps to mine coal and other minerals to boost exports and earn foreign currency, using the cash to support its nuclear weapons programs, according to a South Korean human rights group. (Jaclyn Diaz, NPR)
- While discussing ways to produce tangible results this year at the 4.25 Tobacco Farm (Onsong, North Hamgyong Province), which had suffered unprecedented financial difficulties due to the COVID-19 crisis, a work unit at a farm was reportedly given land and ordered to try farming different crops instead. (Kim Yoo Jin, *Daily NK*)
- While DPRK state media provides a polished view of life inside the country, these photos — taken from border areas in South Korea — offer a glimpse into the unfiltered, unedited life of some of the country's most far-flung and rural regions. (*NK News*)
- Eight employees of Russia's Embassy in Pyongyang and their families spent more than 34 hours trying to leave North Korea this week, a grueling trip that ended with at least one diplomat pushing his luggage and young children on a railway trolley into Russian territory. (Paula Hancock, CNN)
- The Russian Foreign Ministry posted images on its Twitter account that showed diplomats from the country and family leaving North Korea on a hand-pushed trolley due to Pyongyang's COVID-19 travel restrictions. (Edmund DeMarche, *Fox News*)
- Eight Russian diplomats left for the North Korean border on Tuesday, multiple sources told NK News, further depleting an already skeletal presence of forieng residents who

face strict COVID-19- related restrictions that affect their ability to acquire basic goods, get medical treatment or travel outside of Pyongyang. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)

- A group of Russian diplomats and their families were forced to take extreme measures to get out of North Korea, topping a 32-hour train and bus journey off Thursday by pushing a self-propelled train trolley the last half-mile to the Russian border. (Elliot Hannon, *Slate*)
- In normal times, most diplomats can expect to end a foreign posting with an official – if not always fond – farewell from their hosts and a comfortable journey back to their native country. But for one group of Russian envoys and their families, the coronavirus pandemic meant there was only one way home – under their own steam on a hand-pushed rail trolley. (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea has yet to finalize its position on this year's U.N. resolution condemning North Korea's human rights abuses, but it will continue communication with the United States and others on the matter, the foreign ministry said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea has warned of a worsening humanitarian crisis and food shortages unfolding in North Korea as leader Kim Jong Un grapples with the fallout from the coronavirus pandemic. (Edward White, *Financial Times*)
- South Korea said it has not reached a final decision on a domestic North Korea human rights resolution, a day after U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken called out human rights violations of the Kim Jong Un regime. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young called Friday for efforts to ensure that international sanctions on Pyongyang do not result in unintended negative effects on the lives of ordinary North Korean people. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- A North Korean firm filed a lawsuit against a South Korean company in 2019 to claim payment related to a business deal, sources here said Thursday, a rare legal battle between businesses from the two Koreas. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- President Biden is searching for a new North Korea strategy — but the clock is ticking. As the new administration in Washington finds its footing, patience in Pyongyang and Seoul is wearing thin. The Biden team must realize that a reprise of President Barack Obama's wait-and-see approach will not work — and neither will a repeat of President Donald Trump's dramatic, personality-driven schemes. Biden should avoid strategic patience and reengage diplomatically, but this time with realistic goals. (Josh Rogin, *Washington Post*)
- The U.S. and North Korea missed the chance to strike a deal, experts say — and that opportunity may never come back. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- A federal district court has ordered North Korea to pay over US$2 billion in damages to the crew and family of a U.S. naval ship captured in 1968, court documents released this week showed. (*Yonhap*)

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*Christianity Daily*

**“Anti-leafleting law must be repealed or the Constitutional Court must rule it as unconstitutional”**

Christian Daily Reporter Kim Jin-Young
Feb. 24, 2021 06:47 AM PST

The seminar “What is Wrong with the Anti-Leafleting Law? Focusing on the controversy over its constitutionality and searching for alternatives,” which was hosted by National Assemblyman Cho Tae-Yong and supervised by the International Committee of the People’s Power, was virtually held on the 23rd. The revised act on the development of inter-Korean relations, called the anti-leafleting law, will take effect about a month later on March 30.

At the seminar, Joo Ho-Young, the floor leader of the People's Power, and Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), delivered congratulatory speeches, while Assemblyman Ji Sung-Ho of the People's Power reported on his activities. Professor Jhe Seong-Ho (Chung-Ang University Graduate School of Law) and Chairman Kim Tae-Hoon (Chairman of Lawyers for Human Rights and Unification of Korea) gave the presentation and Dr. Shin Hee-Seok (Research fellow at the Transitional Justice Working Group) and Representative Lee Min-Bok (Campaign for Helping North Korea in Direct Way) participated as debaters.

In his congratulatory speech, Joo Ho-Young, floor leader of the People’s Power, said, "The anti-leafleting law stipulates that spreading leaflets along the military demarcation line and other actions that violate the Inter-Korean agreement are punishable by up to three years in prison or up to 30 million won in fines.” He also said, “Experts have pointed out that it is not only a law that goes against the right to pursue happiness, freedom of action, and principle of clarity guaranteed by our Constitution, but that it also is an excessive and hasty legislation that does not fit the legislative system.”

"[This law] comes at a time when North Korean human rights defenders face unprecedented pressure in the Republic of Korea" Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu said. "For 73 years, three generations of the Kim family regime have exercised draconian control of the North Korean population through overwhelming coercion, surveillance and punishment. Information control has been at the center of the regime’s totalitarian grip on power,” he stated.

“And yet, for more than two decades, information from the outside world has been slowly, but surely piercing through North Korea’s information firewall. The number of North Koreans who watch American and South Korean movies and come in contact with Hallyu, K-pop, and South Korean TV dramas has been on the rise. And yet the number of vehicles available to deliver such content has been limited: radio broadcasting, micro-SD cards, USBs and other portable media devices sold at North Korea’s black markets, rice bottles and leaflet balloons,” he continued.”

"Removing any one of these vehicles will significantly impact the volume of information that enters North Korea," he said. "Do the leaflets, movies, K-drama, bibles, and cash sent via leaflet balloons have an impact? Absolutely. Eighty percent of the 1.2 million-strong North Korean military is forward-deployed, south of the Pyongyang-Wonsan line. Large parts of the area between that line and the DMZ are within reach. And even if only officers and NCOs were to read the leaflets, the impact would be significant."

"That is one possible reason why the North Korean regime and its propaganda so adamantly demanded that the balloon launches be banned," he asserted. "For the past few years, it has employed new content, new technologies as well as judicial and extra-judicial punishment to counter information from the outside world. Most recently, it has enacted draconian laws to punish those who circulate and access such information."

"The outside world, including South Korea, should answer by increasing, not decreasing the amount of information or the number of information delivery vehicles involved," Executive Director Scarlatoiu said. "Such information must highlight the sharp disconnect between the North Korean regime's propaganda and the real lives of North Koreans. Such information must empower the people of North Korea and enable them to pierce through the veil of DPRK regime indoctrination and control…"

In particular, he said, "On February 14, in response to a call by the ROK Ministry of Unification, my organization submitted a legal opinion on the 'Anti-Leafleting Law,'" adding, "The memo finds that South Korea's Amendment to the Development of Inter-Korean Relations Act (the "Amendment") violates ROK domestic and international legal obligation."

"The Amendment infringes on international human rights, including the freedoms of expression, thought, conscience, religion, assembly, and association," he said. "The Amendment is flawed in its statutory construction, poses jurisdictional considerations, infringes on fundamental rights, and is excessively punitive."

"Ultimately, the Amendment unnecessarily targets North Korean escapee groups working to send information, goods, and remittances to their fellow people and families in the North," he said. "If entered into force on March 30, 2021, this Amendment will also create second-order effects on the already vulnerable and oppressed North Korean people. The Amendment is a matter of grave concern for international human rights organizations."

"Without human rights, there can be no reconciliation, no peace, no prosperity for Koreans living in the north, and no unification," he said in conclusion. "In order to empower them, the best South Korea and the outside world can do is to increase the volume and quality of information as well as the range of vehicles available to deliver that information. This Amendment should be repealed before it goes into force on March 30, 2021."

Assemblyman Cho Tae-Yong, who hosted the seminar, said in his opening speech, "The international community, including the United States, Britain, Canada, the EU, and not to mention the United Nations, is concerned that the law infringes upon freedom of expression

and is raising their concerns that the law runs counter to the improvement of human rights in North Korea." He also said, "Sending leaflets is not a heinous crime, so imprisonment for [up to] three years is an apparent excess of legislation, and is an anti-human rights measure that criminalizes humanitarian activities of North Korean human rights groups."

Additionally, Professor Jhe Seong-Ho, who gave a presentation titled "The unconstitutionality of the anti-leafleting law," pointed out that as a result of its unconstitutionality, the law violated Article 4 of the Constitution on the principle of free democratic unification; it violated fundamental rights, such as freedom of expression; it institutionalized unconstitutional "pre-censorship" under the cloak of the development of inter-Korean relations; it violated the principles of criminal justice and clarity under the Constitution; it violated overpayment rules; and it subordinated constitutional norms (the guarantee of basic rights) to inter-Korean agreements.

Professor Jhe criticized the law saying, "The Moon Jae-In administration is evaluating the anti-leafleting law as an act that protects the safety of the residents near the border, 'promotes inter-Korean relations,' and 'promotes peace on the Korean peninsula.' But its essence is actually a 'law of suppression of freedom of expression,' which is contrary to the spirit of the Constitution of South Korea. It has a stronger personality that is closer to a 'law to abandon the influx of freedom and openness,' while also acting as law that serves as 'protection for the North Korean regime' and a way of 'checking on the North Korean leader's mood.'"

Next, Chairman Kim Tae-hoon, who presented under the title "What's Wrong with the Anti-Leafleting Law?" said, "The anti-leafleting law infringes on the essential, basic Constitutional and international human rights of the people of South and North Korea, who make up the Korean Peninsula, including the freedom of expression and the right to know. It is an anti-humanitarian, evil law that blocks North Koreans' access to external information and curses 25 million fellow Koreans to live like slaves in the world's worst tyrannical system."

He also said, "[The anti-leafleting law] will be an indelible stain in the history of the Republic of Korea that drops the national prestige of the Republic of Korea into the abyss of dictatorship and underdeveloped human rights, so it needs to be scrapped as soon as possible or the Constitutional Court must rule it unconstitutional."

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Translated by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Carter Thompson, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250930162007/https://mailchi.mp/1aeefe77563e/hrnk-news-items-anti-leafleting-law-must-be-repealed-or-the-constitutional-court-must-rule-it-as-unconstitutional

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## Saturday, February 27, 2021

# My mother was tortured by North Korean authorities; North Korea has at least eight ICBMs, think tank says

**In North Korea:**
My mother was tortured by North Korean authorities (*The Korea Times*, 2/27/2021)
North Korea has at least eight ICBMs, think tank says (UPI, 2/26/2021)
North Korea's informal loan networks can lead to gang violence, research says (*UPI*, 2/26/2021)
North Korea's mistranslated 'shoot-to-kill' border protection order (*East Asia Forum*, 2/27/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
1996: The Year A North Korean Secret Mission Nearly Started a War (*The National Interest*, 2/27/2021)

**International:**
N. Korea's continued development of weapons poses threat to U.S. and allies: Kirby (*Yonhap*, 2/27/2021)
North Korean defector runs in UK election to defend 'voiceless' (*The Korea Herald*, 2/27/2021)
North Korea's economic crisis: Last chance for denuclearization? (*Brookings Institute*, 2/26/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Lee Yul-seong is a North Korean refugee who graduated from high school in South Korea earlier this month. He delivered the speech at the first Freedom Speakers International/Teach North Korean Refugees English speech contest. His speech was about his mother tortured by the North Korea State Security Department because they found out that his mother had met a Christian missionary in China. (Lee Yul-seong, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korea could have at least eight intercontinental ballistic missiles in its arsenal, but the status of some of its weapons is unclear, according to a British think tank IISS. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- An informal network that offers mortgage loans operates in North Korea, and conflict between lenders and borrowers leads to the deployment of gang members, according to new South Korean research. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- According to RFA sources, border troops had received orders by 5pm on 25 August about the implementation of buffer zones. An important part of these measures was, the drastic warning that anybody trespassing within one kilometer of the border would be 'shot dead'. This narrative of a 'kill zone' was not questioned by other media. Other

available information reveals a more nuanced picture, although the threshold for use of lethal force at the border was indeed lowered. (Martin Weiser, *East Asia Forum*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- September 14, 1996, a North Korean spy submarine ran aground on a rocky reef. The 325-ton boat came to a rest just twenty meters off of An-in Beach because its screw jammed with seaweed. The North Korean spies killed four civilians, eight soldiers, a policeman and a reservist attempting to escape. In return, of the twenty-six men aboard the submarine, only two remained alive. (Sebastien Roblin, *The National Interest*)

**International:**

- Diplomacy will be at the center of engagement with North Korea but the North's continued development of weapons of mass destruction does pose a threat to the United States and its allies, a spokesman for the U.S. Defense Department said Friday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Human rights activist Park Ji-hyun is believed to be the first defector from the North to run for office outside of the Korean Peninsula. Park is standing as a candidate for the Conservative Party, which she joined in 2016. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea is in trouble, and its economic crisis represents a major vulnerability for Pyongyang. The goal of denuclearization may be achievable if the United States, its allies, and partners recognize that Kim Jong Un and his regime are standing on shaky ground, and that now is the time to convince Kim that the trembling he feels is a sign that the regime's days could be numbered. (Evans J.R. Revere, *Brookings Institution*)

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Prepared by Jungeun Lee, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250930162648/https://mailchi.mp/31a45f8ca4db/hrnk-news-itemsmy-mother-was-tortured-by-north-korean-authoritiesnorth-korea-has-at-least-eight-icbms-think-tank-says

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## Sunday, February 28, 2021

# South Africa's Apartheid & N Korea's Songbun- Parallels in Crimes Against Humanity; NK severe virus measures hinder humanitarian aid

**Top News:**
South Africa's Apartheid & North Korea's Songbun: Parallels in Crimes Against Humanity (*The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea Youtube*, 02/26/2021)

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea's severe virus measures hinder humanitarian aid: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 02/28/2021)
N.K. workers stage pep rallies for new 5-year economic development plan (*Yonhap*, 02/28/2021)

**International:**
US court orders N. Korea to pay $2.3 bn over kidnapping of USS Pueblo (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 02/27/2021)

**Top News:**

- HRNK launches its latest report, "South Africa's Apartheid and North Korea's Songbun: Parallels in Crimes against Humanity" by Robert Collins. This report underlines similarities between two systematically, deliberately, and thoroughly discriminatory repressive systems. The event is moderated by HRNK Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu. (*The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea Youtube*)

**In North Korea:**

- The U.S. State Department assessed that North Korea's stringent measures against COVID-19 have significantly impeded efforts of outside organizations to deliver humanitarian aid to the impoverished nation. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has staged worker pep rallies en masse across the country to boost morale in achieving a new five-year state economic development put forward by leader Kim Jong-un last month. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- The U.S. federal district court for Washington, D.C. ruled that North Korea should pay 2.3 billion dollars to around 170 crew and family of USS Pueblo, the U.S. Navy's spy ship, which was captured by the North in 1968. It is the largest amount of compensation ordered against the country. Before the recent ruling, the case of an American college

student named Otto Frederick Warmbier who was imprisoned in North Korea and died soon after his release in 2017 had the highest records of 51.13 million dollars. (Eun-Taek Lee, *Dong-A Ilbo*)

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Prepared by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250930164117/https://mailchi.mp/3fdfa4f0d52e/hrnk-news-items-south-africas-apartheid-n-koreas-songbun-parallels-in-crimes-against-humanitynk-severe-virus-measures-hinder-humanitarian-aid

# 3. MARCH

## Monday, March 1, 2021

## Fixing Distorted History, a Prerequisite to Democratizing North Korea; IAEA chief expresses concerns over North's nuclear activities

**Top News:**
Fixing Distorted History, a Prerequisite to Democratizing North Korea (*HRNK Insider*, 3/1/21)

**In North Korea:**
China delivers oil to North Korea, stabilizing fuel prices (*North Korea Economic Watch*, 3/2/21)
Local district offices take on more surveillance and monitoring duties amidst COVID-19 pandemic (*Daily NK*, 3/2/21)
Mine collapse kills 14 at Gomdok Mine (*Daily NK*, 3/2/21)
NK blasts Harvard professor for labeling sex slaves 'prostitutes' (*The Korea Herald*, 3/2/21)
N.K. media criticizes Ramseyer as 'disgusting money grubber' and 'pseudo scholar' (*Yonhap*, 3/2/21)
North Korean Quarantine Police Shake Down Residents for Bribes and Food (*Radio Free Asia*, 3/1/21)
N. Korea's paper stresses tree planting on arbor day (*Yonhap*, 3/2/21)
North Korea is a 'serious threat' to peace and security: US Ambassador to the UN (*NK News*, 3/2/21)
Onsong tobacco farm decides to hand over some farmland to farmers (*Daily NK*, 3/2/21)

**In South Korea:**
Military to overhaul Army division following NK man's border crossing (*Yonhap*, 3/2/21)
Moon calls for improved ties with Japan and 'trilateral partnership' (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 3/1/21)
Moon's continued two-track approach unlikely to help improve ties with Japan (*The Korea Times*, 3/1/21)
President Moon says S. Korea ready with talk to Japan anytime (*Arirang News*, 3/1/21)
Seoul to spend $8 million on high-tech system that analyzes North Korea data (*NK News*, 3/2/21)
South Korea, China vow to build military hotlines to 'ease tension' on peninsula (*NK News*, 3/2/21)
South Korean leader says Seoul 'always ready to sit down' with Tokyo (*Japan Times*, 3/1/21)
South Korea's Moon says Olympics may be chance for North Korea, U.S. talks (*Reuters*, 2/28/21)

**International:**
China Could Pose the Threat That North Korea Never Sees Coming (*National Interest*, 3/2/21)
How Biden Can Get Korean Policy Right (*National Interest*, 3/2/21)
IAEA chief expresses concerns over North's nuclear activities (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 3/2/21)
IAEA chief: N.K. shows signs of operating steam plant at plutonium reprocessing facility (*Yonhap*, 3/2/21)
Path for Korea-US-Japan cooperation (*The Korea Times*, 3/1/21)
Signs of activities detected at NK's nuclear site: IAEA (*The Korea Herald*, 3/2/21)
Top security advisors of Seoul, Washington share views on COVID-19, North Korea (*The Korea Herald*, 3/2/21)

**Top News:**

- The denial of historical facts by the North Korean authorities is absolutely necessary to maintain their regime. During their seven decade-long reign, the Kim family has committed countless unforgivable crimes against the nation and humanity. They needed to alter or distort the facts to hide their crimes, and they needed to cheat their people to continue ruling over them. If the North Koreans knew the truth of history, the Pillars of Belief in the Kim family and the Myth of the Great Leader would collapse in a matter of seconds like a wall washed away by a deluge, and this would undoubtedly lead to the collapse of the North Korean regime. (Kim Myong, *HRNK Insider*)

**In North Korea:**

- Oil prices in North Korea plummeted late last month after climbing at the start of the year. North Korea has reportedly been receiving supplies of oil from China as the two nations show signs of growing closer. (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, *North Korea Economic Watch*)
- On Jan. 23, a Daily NK source in North Hamgyong Province reported that the *inminban* posted eight COVID-19 quarantine measures via local district offices. In essence, these measures require that the movement of all animals, as well as people, be reported, no matter how small. (Rob Lauler, *Daily NK*)
- A source in South Hamgyong Province told Daily NK on Feb. 24 that "14 workers lost their lives on Jan. 26 when a mine accidentally collapsed on them as they were attempting to connect mines together at the Gomdok Mine, which has been overwhelmed by the [demands of the] 90-day battle." (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea's propaganda outlet on Tuesday slammed the Harvard Law School professor who claimed that "comfort women" were voluntary prostitutes. Comfort women is a euphemism for women from Korea and other countries who were forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese military before and during World War II. (Choi Si Young, *The Korea Herald*)
- A North Korean propaganda outlet Tuesday strongly criticized a U.S. professor over his controversial claim that victims of Japan's wartime sexual slavery are voluntary prostitutes, calling him a "disgusting money grubber" and "pseudo scholar." (Koh Byung Joon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean quarantine enforcers are using their authority during coronavirus prevention inspections to extract bribes and food out of citizens struggling to survive under an economy devastated by the pandemic, sources in the country told RFA. (Jieun Kim, *RFA*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Tuesday stressed the importance of planting trees to make the country less vulnerable to natural disasters as Pyongyang marked its arbor day. (*Yonhap*)

- The United States' new ambassador to the United Nations (U.N.) warned the world that North Korea is a "serious threat" to global peace and security on Monday, setting the tone for where she stands on DPRK issues in her new role. (Jeongmin Kim, NK News)
- While discussing ways to produce tangible results this year at the 4.25 Tobacco Farm (Onsong, North Hamgyong Province), which had suffered unprecedented financial difficulties due to the COVID-19 crisis, a work unit at a farm was reportedly given land and ordered to try farming different crops instead. (Kim Yoo Jin, Daily NK)

**In South Korea:**

- The military will overhaul an infantry division in charge of guarding the heavily fortified border separating South and North Korea, the defense ministry said Tuesday, following a series of security failures in the eastern region. (Choi Soo Hyang, Yonhap)
- Korea is always ready for talks with Japan, President Moon Jae-in said in his March 1 address Monday, noting that improved bilateral cooperation would be helpful in a trilateral partnership with the United States. (Sarah Kim, Korea JoongAng Daily)
- President Moon Jae-in renewed his call for Korea and Japan to move together toward future-oriented bilateral relations, Monday, while also urging Tokyo to contemplate its imperialist past. However, diplomatic observers note that Moon's two-track strategy is a rerun of Seoul's existing "unsuccessful" approach to Tokyo, and do not expect it to help normalize ties strained by historical issues. (Kang Seung Woo, The Korea Times)
- More than a century after the March 1st Movement, South Korean President Moon Jae-in stood at the site, in the rain, and extended an olive branch to Japan saying the Tokyo Olympics could provide a chance to reopen talks between North Korea and the U.S., North Korea and Japan, and the two Koreas. (Arirang News)
- South Korea is planning to spend roughly $8 million on a high-tech system that analyzes North Korea-related information using artificial intelligence and big data, according to the country's Ministry of Unification. (Jeongmin Kim, Kelly Kasulis, NK News)
- Officials from South Korea and China held a remote meeting on March 2 and signed a revised memorandum that promised to increase the number of military hotlines from three to five. In general, military units use these hotlines to safely communicate or to share intelligence during emergencies. (Jeongmin Kim, NK News)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in said South Korea is "always ready to sit down and have talks" with Japan over issues related to wartime history, in a speech on Monday commemorating the launch of the 1919 popular uprising against Japan's 1910-1945 colonial rule. (Japan Times)
- South Korea's President Moon Jae-in said on Monday that the Tokyo Olympics could provide a chance to reopen talks between North Korea and the United States, North Korea and Japan, and the two Koreas. (Hyonhee Shin, Reuters)

**International:**

- Amid the near-constant threat of a crisis breaking out on the Korean Peninsula, one major power is often left out of the discussion: China. The People's Republic of China shares an 880 mile long border with its notoriously unpredictable neighbor, has a large army and values stable borders at any cost. In the event it deems military action necessary, what are Beijing's options for dealing with North Korea and what kind of force could it bring to bear? (Kyle Mizokami, National Interest)
- The United States-Republic of Korea (U.S.-ROK) alliance is evidence of decades of successful policy, yet its agenda is not fit for the current era. Deterring North Korea will remain a focus of the alliance, but prioritizing denuclearization must no longer monopolize the alliance's political capital nor paralyze its global potential. (Joshua Nezam, National Interest)

- The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief expressed Monday "serious concern" over North Korea's continued signs of activity at a thermal plants at its Yongbyon nuclear complex and its Kangson uranium facility. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea has been showing signs of operating a thermal plant used to provide heat to a nuclear fuel rod reprocessing facility, the chief of the U.N. nuclear watchdog said, an indication that Pyongyang could try to harvest plutonium for nuclear weapons. (Song Sang Ho, *Yonhap*)
- In the long term, denuclearization of the peninsula, bringing peace and stability to Northeast Asia, and solving the issues of North Korea-Japan normalization are necessary. Cooperating with Japan is especially important. Also, for the Biden administration that emphasizes democracy and human rights, South Korea and Japan are the only countries in the region that share those values, thus, stressing Korea-U.S.-Japan cooperation can seem reasonable. (Yang Moo Jin, *The Korea Times*)
- Signs of activity have recently been detected at some North Korean nuclear facilities, the UN nuclear watchdog chief said Monday, expressing "serious concern" at the reclusive regime's continued activities. (Ahn Sung Mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- President Moon Jae-in's top security advisor Suh Hoon and his US counterpart, Jake Sullivan held their second phone call Tuesday to share views on the current Korean Peninsula situation and Washington's ongoing review of its North Korea policy, Cheong Wa Dae said. (Li Ji Yoon, *The Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Tristin Schultz, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250730153038/https://mailchi.mp/50d968305f0d/hrnk-news-itemsfixing-distorted-history-a-prerequisite-to-democratizing-north-koreaiaea-chief-expresses-concerns-over-norths-nuclear-activities?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Tuesday March 2, 2021

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- More than a century after the March 1st Movement, South Korean President Moon Jae-in stood at the site, in the rain, and extended an olive branch to Japan saying the Tokyo Olympics could provide a chance to reopen talks between North Korea and the U.S., North Korea and Japan, and the two Koreas. (*Arirang News*)

- South Korea is planning to spend roughly $8 million on a high-tech system that analyzes North Korea-related information using artificial intelligence and big data, according to the country's Ministry of Unification. (Jeongmin Kim, Kelly Kasulis, *NK News*)
- Officials from South Korea and China held a remote meeting on March 2 and signed a revised memorandum that promised to increase the number of military hotlines from three to five. In general, military units use these hotlines to safely communicate or to share intelligence during emergencies. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in said South Korea is "always ready to sit down and have talks" with Japan over issues related to wartime history, in a speech on Monday commemorating the launch of the 1919 popular uprising against Japan's 1910-1945 colonial rule. (*Japan Times*)
- South Korea's President Moon Jae-in said on Monday that the Tokyo Olympics could provide a chance to reopen talks between North Korea and the United States, North Korea and Japan, and the two Koreas. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)

**International:**

- Amid the near-constant threat of a crisis breaking out on the Korean Peninsula, one major power is often left out of the discussion: China. The People's Republic of China shares an 880 mile long border with its notoriously unpredictable neighbor, has a large army and values stable borders at any cost. In the event it deems military action necessary, what are Beijing's options for dealing with North Korea and what kind of force could it bring to bear? (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- The United States-Republic of Korea (U.S.-ROK) alliance is evidence of decades of successful policy, yet its agenda is not fit for the current era. Deterring North Korea will remain a focus of the alliance, but prioritizing denuclearization must no longer monopolize the alliance's political capital nor paralyze its global potential. (Joshua Nezam, *National Interest*)
- The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief expressed Monday "serious concern" over North Korea's continued signs of activity at a thermal plants at its Yongbyon nuclear complex and its Kangson uranium facility. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea has been showing signs of operating a thermal plant used to provide heat to a nuclear fuel rod reprocessing facility, the chief of the U.N. nuclear watchdog said, an indication that Pyongyang could try to harvest plutonium for nuclear weapons. (Song Sang Ho, *Yonhap*)
- In the long term, denuclearization of the peninsula, bringing peace and stability to Northeast Asia, and solving the issues of North Korea-Japan normalization are necessary. Cooperating with Japan is especially important. Also, for the Biden administration that emphasizes democracy and human rights, South Korea and Japan are the only countries in the region that share those values, thus, stressing Korea-U.S.-Japan cooperation can seem reasonable. (Yang Moo Jin, *The Korea Times*)
- Signs of activity have recently been detected at some North Korean nuclear facilities, the UN nuclear watchdog chief said Monday, expressing "serious concern" at the reclusive regime's continued activities. (Ahn Sung Mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- President Moon Jae-in's top security advisor Suh Hoon and his US counterpart, Jake Sullivan held their second phone call Tuesday to share views on the current Korean Peninsula situation and Washington's ongoing review of its North Korea policy, Cheong Wa Dae said. (Li Ji Yoon, *The Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Tristin Schultz, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250730153038/https://mailchi.mp/50d968305f0d/hrnk-news-itemsfixing-distorted-history-a-prerequisite-to-democratizing-north-koreaiaea-chief-expresses-concerns-over-norths-nuclear-activities?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Wednesday March 3, 2021

# HRNK Letter to His Excellency Tomás Ojea Quintana

**Top News:**
HRNK Letter to His Excellency Tomás Ojea Quintana: Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)(*HRNK Insider*, 1/10/21)

**In North Korea:**
From newspapers to cookie packages, North Korea's use of the phrase "powerful nation" is falling (*Daily NK*, 3/3/21)
North conceals nuclear weapons facility with new building: Report (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 3/3/21)
North Korean AN-2 crashes near Taechon Air Base, leaving 5 dead (*Daily NK*, 3/3/21)
North Korea blasts Harvard professor for denying Japanese wartime sexual slavery(*NK News*, 3/3/21)
N. Korea lost forest area size of 330,000 soccer fields in two decades (*Yonhap*, 3/3/21)
North Korea replaces iconic newspaper stands with interactive touchscreen (*NK News*, 3/3/21)
N. Korea to be supplied with 1.7 mln doses of coronavirus vaccines through COVAX(*Yonhap*, 3/3/21)
North Korea to get 1.7 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine through May 2021 (*NK News*, 3/3/21)
Pro-N.K. paper slams Harvard professor's 'comfort women' claim (*Yonhap*, 3/3/21)
Satellite images show N. Korea built structure to conceal nuclear weapons site: CNN (*Yonhap*, 3/3/21)

**In South Korea:**
(2nd LD) FM Chung meets victim of Japan's wartime sexual slavery (*Yonhap*, 3/3/21)
Military begins administering COVID-19 vaccine to its members (*Yonhap*, 3/3/21)
(5th LD) New infections rebound to over 400 as vaccinations gather pace (*Yonhap*, 3/3/21)
Sanctions not sole reason for humanitarian crisis in N. Korea: unification ministry(*Yonhap*, 3/3/21)
Seoul's North Korea human rights law at standstill for 5 years (*The Korea Herald*, 3/3/21)
Two people die after getting AstraZeneca jabs (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 3/3/21)

**International:**

Panel investigates North Korean weapon used in Mogadishu attack on UN compound (*NK News*, 3/3/21)
US lawmakers aim for quicker and easier humanitarian assistance for North Korea(*NK News*, 3/3/21)
U.S. lawmakers seek to facilitate reunion of Korean-Americans with N. Korean family members (*Yonhap*, 3/3/21)
(LEAD) U.S. must use maximum pressure to convince N. Korea it is safer without nukes: McMaster (*Yonhap*, 3/3/21)

**Top News:**

- The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) is the leading US-based bipartisan, non-governmental organization in the field of North Korean human rights research and advocacy. Since our inception in 2001, HRNK has published 47 reports, investigating the DPRK's vast system of imprisonment, including political prison camps as well as vulnerable groups, especially women, children, and people in detention. HRNK has held UN consultative status since April 2018. Ever since, we have been proactively representing civil society in the UN process. By participating in the Universal Periodic Review, by organizing online and inperson international conferences and seminars and meetings with Permanent Missions, UN agencies and offices in Geneva, New York City, and Seoul, HRNK has been disseminating the findings and recommendations put forth in our reports. (Greg Scarlatoiu, *HRNK*)

**In North Korea:**

- The slogan "powerful nation" (gangsongguka-ho, with the "ho" being an airplane suffix) has been removed from sugar cookies given to children for Kim Jong Il's birthday on Feb. 16, Daily NK has learned. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea appears to have taken steps to conceal a facility the U.S. believes is used to store nuclear weapons at its Yongdoktong site in North Pyongan Province, CNN reported Tuesday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Four soon-to-be-graduated students at the Chaehyun Military Academy in North Pyongan Province's Taechon County died in a crash involving a worn-out aircraft during the Eighth Party Congress in January, Daily NK has learned. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea slammed a prominent Harvard University professor on Tuesday after he wrote that Korean women in Japanese military brothels were voluntary prostitutes and not sexual slaves. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- North Korea lost forest area the size of 330,000 soccer pitches in nearly two decades, data showed Wednesday, further accelerating the country's deforestation problem. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's ubiquitous standing newspaper displays, one of the most popular ways for locals to read the party-run Rodong Sinmun, have started to go digital: At the newly-renovated Kaeson metro station in Pyongyang, authorities have replaced the displays with an interactive touchscreen, a video posted on Chinese social media shows. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea is expected to be supplied with around 1.7 million doses of vaccines against COVID-19 by May through a global vaccine distribution program. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea is expected to receive 1.7 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine between February and May 2021, a U.N. affiliated vaccine alliance stated on Tuesday, a roughly 15% decrease from the previous estimate of committed aid. (Won Gi-Jung, *NK News*)

- A pro-North Korea paper in Japan on Wednesday slammed a U.S. professor over his controversial claim that victims of Japan's wartime sexual slavery were voluntary prostitutes, calling it an "utterly absurd" argument. (*Yonhap*)
- Recent satellite images show that North Korea may haven taken steps to hide a facility that the U.S. believes is used to store nuclear weapons, CNN reported Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong met with a victim of Japan's wartime sexual slavery Wednesday, as Seoul seeks to defuse persistent historical tensions with Tokyo amid Washington's calls for tighter trilateral cooperation with its key Asian allies. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The defense ministry on Wednesday began administering coronavirus vaccines to military personnel, with doctors and other health care workers becoming the first recipient group, officials said. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's daily new coronavirus cases bounced back to over 400 on Wednesday as the country's vaccination campaign picked up steam amid sporadic cluster infections. (*Yonhap*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young did not mean that global sanctions are the sole reason for causing a humanitarian crisis in North Korea when he recently stressed the need to review their efficacy, his spokesperson said Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's North Korea Human Rights Act remains of little real consequence five years after its enactment, with the ruling liberal bloc showing no particular urgency in dealing with human rights violations in the North amid stalled peace talks. (Lee Ji-Yoon, *The Korea Herald*)
- Two people died after getting AstraZeneca vaccines, the first such deaths in Korea. (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- The U.N. Panel of Experts on North Korea is investigating how a mortar made in the DPRK came to be used by the Somali insurgent group Al-Shabaab in a 2020 attack in Mogadishu. According to an unreleased panel report seen by NK Pro, the experts are joining the U.N. Panel of Experts on Somalia in trying to retrace how the weapon ended up being used against the U.N. compound with the goal of preventing future arms deals. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- Two U.S. lawmakers reintroduced a bill to make "livesaving humanitarian assistance" to North Koreans quicker and easier, according to their joint press release on Tuesday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- A group of U.S. lawmakers has submitted a bill urging the U.S. government to work toward family reunions of Korean-Americans with their loved ones in North Korea. (Byun Duk-Kun, *Yonhap*)
- The United States and its allies must maintain maximum pressure on North Korea to make the country realize that it is safer without nuclear weapons than it is with them, a former U.S. national security adviser said Tuesday. (Byun Duk-Kun, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250730154559/https://mailchi.mp/05f5c29092b1/hrnk-news-item shrnk-letter-to-his-excellency-toms-ojea-quintana?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday March 4, 2021**

# North Korea's Songbun System, Parallels with South African Nationalist Party's Apartheid… Crimes against Humanity Start with Songbun

**Top News:**
**North Korea's Songbun System, Parallels with South African Nationalist Party's Apartheid… Crimes against Humanity Start with Songbun (*VOA News*, 2/25/21)
** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.
**In North Korea:**
Achieving North Korean Denuclearization With More Draconian Sanctions: We Don't Have the Cards (*38 North*, 3/3/21)
After someone snuck in from China, North Korea locks down Hyesan for a month(*Daily NK*, 3/4/21)
Can North Korea's Missiles Overcome These 5 Japanese Weapons? (*The National Interest*, 3/3/21)
K2 Black Panther: Feast Your Eyes on North Korea's Tank Nightmare (*The National Interest*, 3/3/21)
N.K. adopts social insurance, disinfection laws at Supreme People's Assembly meeting (*Yonhap*, 3/4/21)
North Korea expected to resume trade at China border, research says (*UPI*, 3/3/21)
North Korean fleets spur into action after a winter of COVID-19 trade lockdowns (*NK News*, 3/4/21)
North Korea's Kim stresses roles of city, county leaders: KCNA (*Reuters*, 3/4/21)
N.K's largest youth group vows support for state-led fight against anti-socialist practices (*Yonhap*, 3/4/21
(LEAD) N.K. leader stresses local party officials' role for balanced national development (*Yonhap*, 3/4/21)
North Korea may have mentioned 'opinion-driven' Twitter in newspaper (*UPI*, 3/3/21)
North Korean Military Exploits Pandemic to Cash-in on Face Masks (*Radio Free Asia*, 3/3/21)
North Korea sees growing education inequality amid the COVID-19 crisis (*Daily NK*, 3/4/21)
North Korea's Yongbyon Nuclear Center: Signs of Activity at the Radiochemical Laboratory Facilities (*38 North*, 3/3/21)
Photos show North Korea may be trying to extract plutonium (*AP News*, 3/4/21)
Report: Signs of activity at North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear facility (*UPI*, 3/3/21)

**In South Korea:**
Army dismisses commander for delayed response to defector (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 3/4/21)

South Korea fires army general after yet another 'disappointing' defection (*NK News*, 3/4/21)
(LEAD) Two-star Army general relieved of command over N.K. man's border crossing (*Yonhap*, 3/4/21)

**International:**
Analysis: Biden faces calls to jumpstart North Korea talks with more pragmatic goals(*Reuters*, 3/4/21)
Biden says will empower diplomats to reduce threat from N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 3/4/21)
Blinken lays out 'most urgent' priorities for U.S., leaves out N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 3/4/21)
N. Korea poses 'most immediate threat' to U.S.: Indo-Pacific commander (*Yonhap*, 3/4/21)
S. Korea, Japan are key U.S. partners in dealing with N. Korea: White House spokeswoman (*Yonhap*, 3/4/21)
(LEAD) S. Korea, U.S. closely monitoring N.K. nuclear facilities: defense ministry(*Yonhap*, 3/4/21)
U.S. must use every tool to prevent N. Korea from advancing nuclear capability: Sherman (*Yonhap*, 3/4/21)

**Top News:**

- [Senior Advisor Collins] "Certainly the United Nations has ruled that apartheid should be regarded as crimes against humanity… The social structure is based on the songbun system and so the violation of human rights starts there." (Kim Young-kyo, *VOA News*)

**In North Korea:**

- I never miss a chance to listen to my old friend and colleague, Evans Revere, when it comes to North Korea. In his recent piece, he asserts that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is in severe economic straits. If the Biden administration is to have any hope of achieving the goal of North Korean denuclearization, it has to move now to impose sanctions far more severe than any that have been tried before. (Joseph Dethomas, *38 North*)
- North Korea completely locked down Hyesan, a city in Yanggang Province, from 6 PM yesterday, Daily NK has learned. A source in the province told Daily NK that the lockdown was implemented soon after it was discovered someone had snuck into the city from China. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- A country oriented towards pacifism and having disavowed war as an instrument of national policy, Japan is about as dissimilar from North Korea as one can get. Unfortunately for Tokyo, the two are separated by as little as 336 miles of water, and Pyongyang frequently threatens to attack its former colonial master. Now, as North Korea ruthlessly forges ahead with nuclear weapons and ballistic-missile technology, the threat to Japan has crystallized: the country once again faces the prospect of nuclear attack. (Kyle Mizokami, *The National Interest*)
- According to the Guinness World Records organization, the indigenously-developed K2 Black Panther tank is the most expensive tank in the world at $8.5 million dollars. This is for a good reason though: the K2 has a number of features that make it incredibly capable--and quite deadly on the battlefield. (Caleb Larson, *The National Interest*)
- North Korea adopted laws on social insurance and disinfection at a meeting of the Supreme People's Assembly, state media said Thursday, amid a nationwide campaign against the coronavirus. (*Yonhap*)

- North Korea could be resuming low volumes of trade with the outside world as early as April, and Kim Jong Un's Five-Year Plan for the economy could be driving the change. (Eizabeth Shim, UPI)
- At least 15 North Korean-linked ships were active in the second half of February, furthering signs that the country's maritime trade is picking up pace after a winter of COVID-19-related lockdowns. (Min Chao Choy, NK News)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un stressed the significance of the role that city and county chief secretaries have in improving the lives of the people and carrying out his five-year economic policies, state news media KCNA said on Thursday. (Sangmi Cha, Reuters)
- North Korea's largest youth group held a meeting and discussed ways to help the state-led campaign to eradicate anti-socialist practices in their country, state media reported on Thursday. (Yonhap)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un stressed the role of local party officials in archiving national development as he attended a workshop of chief secretaries of city and county committees of the ruling Workers' Party, state media reported Thursday. (Koh Byung-joon, Yonhap)
- U.S. social media platform Twitter may have been mentioned in North Korean state media, possibly for the first time, in an article that described in detail the role of the network in delivering "opinions and news." (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- North Korean companies affiliated with the country's military are exploiting nationwide coronavirus emergency protocols to cash in on face mask production, sources in the country told RFA. (Hyemin Son, Radio Free Asia)
- The gap in education quality between urban and rural areas in North Korea is growing because of COVID-19 quarantine efforts, Daily NK has learned. It has reportedly become difficult for students in rural areas to participate in remote learning, and even young students are being pulled into jobs to help support their families. (Jang Seul Gi, Daily NK)
- On March 1, 2021, the IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi stated in his introductory statement to the Board of Governors that, since his last report to the Board on September 3, 2020, "some nuclear facilities in the DPRK continued to operate while others remained shut down." Regarding North Korea's Yongbyon Nuclear Center, he went on to state there were "recent indications of operation of the steam plant" that serves the Radiochemical Laboratory. Recent commercial satellite imagery indicates the coal-fired steam plant is, indeed, in operation again after a nearly two-year hiatus. Smoke was observed emanating from the plant's smokestack at various times from late-February and early March, suggesting that preparations for spent fuel reprocessing could be underway to extract plutonium needed for North Korea's nuclear weapons. However, this could also mean simply the facility is being prepped to handle radioactive waste. (Peter Makowsky, Frank Pabian, 38 North)
- North Korea may be trying to extract plutonium to make more nuclear weapons at its main atomic complex, recent satellite photos indicated, weeks after leader Kim Jong Un vowed to expand his nuclear arsenal. (Hyung-Jin Kim, AP News)
- Commercial satellite imagery shows that a coal-fired steam plant is in operation at North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear facility in possible preparation to extract plutonium for weapons, according to an analysis by U.S. website 38 North. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)

**In South Korea:**

- Amid continuing fallout over a North Korean man's swimming defection across the eastern maritime border and into a restricted area, military authorities on Thursday announced the

dismissal of the commander in charge of the coastal area where the defection occurred. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- Making further fallout from yet another "embarrassing" defection, the South Korean military fired a two-star army official from his post on Thursday after a North Korean man was caught on camera swimming across the border and entering the country through a previously-unaccounted-for storm drain. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- The defense ministry said Thursday it has stripped a two-star Army general of his command to hold him accountable for a security failure in connection with a recent border crossing by a North Korean man. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)

**International:**

- With U.S. policy toward North Korea in limbo as the new administration in Washington conducts a months-long policy review, former officials and experts are sparring over whether to shift focus from seeking the North's full denuclearisation. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- The United States will empower its diplomats to reduce threats posed by North Korea, President Joe Biden said in his interim national security strategic guidance published Wednesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken laid out eight priorities for American diplomacy on Wednesday but again skirted the issue of how to deal with nuclear-armed North Korea. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea will continue to be the "most immediate threat" to the United States until it agrees to full denuclearization, the commander of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said Wednesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and Japan are key partners of the United States in dealing with threats posed by North Korea, a White House spokesperson said Wednesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the United States are closely following movements at North Korea's nuclear facilities, the defense ministry said Thursday, amid a report of new structures at one of the sites. (*Yonhap*)
- The United States has to use every tool available, including pressure, to prevent North Korea from advancing its nuclear capability, a top State Department appointee said Wednesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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VOA

**"North Korea's Songbun System, Parallels with South African Nationalist Party's Apartheid… Crimes against Humanity Start with Songbun"**

Reporter Kim Young-kyo
2021.2.25

A Washington-based non-governmental organization revealed in a report that North Korea's unique social class system known as "songbun" is parallel to South Africa's previous racist policies. They point out that rampant human rights abuses in North Korea begin with the songbun system. This is brought to you by reporter Kim Young-kyo.

On the 25th, the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), a Washington-based non-governmental organization, published its report that underlines similarities between North Korea's songbun system and South Africa's past racist policies of apartheid.

In this report titled "South Africa's Apartheid & North Korea's Songbun: Parallels in Crimes Against Humanity", the organization disclosed that there are resounding similarities with North Korean songbun and South African apartheid in terms of oppression by one group over another and systematic discrimination impacting access to food and medicine, among other things.

The report states that apartheid in South Africa, based on the Population Registration Act which was enacted in 1950 and abolished in 1991, in South Africa was a system that categorized every person as "white, black, or coloured."

The report explains that while apartheid focused primarily on racial discrimination with some political factors, songbun focuses primarily on political factors, such as family background and individual political actions.

It also observes that crimes against humanity associated with apartheid and the songbun social classification system served the political objectives, policies and practices of South Africa's National Party and North Korea's Korean Workers' Party.

It explains that to that effect, these policies and practices grounded in both concepts suppress and deny opportunity, rights and privileges to systematically targeted segments of the population.

During VOA's phone call with the author of the report, HRNK Senior Advisor Robert Collins, on the 25th, he stated that, "these two systems severely limit the ability of specific groups within their countries, not only to be able to prosper but just to live properly."

[Recording: Senior Advisor Collins] "Two systems severely limit the ability of specific groups within their countries, not only to be able to prosper but just to live properly."

He then stated that just as the United Nations ruled that apartheid should be regarded as crimes against humanity, there should be a similar ruling on North Korea's songbun system.

[Recording: Senior Advisor Collins] "Certainly the United Nations has ruled that apartheid should be regarded as crimes against humanity… The social structure is based on the songbun system and so the violation of human rights starts there."

That is to say, North Korea's social structure is based on the songbun system, and the North Korean regime's violation of human rights starts there.

The report states that we need to see if the 2002 Rome Statute's (of the International Criminal Court) inclusion of apartheid as a crime against humanity allows for a broader application.

It states that it is necessary to examine whether songbun could be considered as evidence that North Korea's Kim Jong-un should be held accountable for the crime of apartheid as a crime against humanity.

The report states that the classification process of the songbun system begins at birth for every North Korean citizen, and they are aware of their social status under songbun and why they are treated accordingly.

The report also explains songbun impacts the quality of life of every North Korean who is not part of the elite classes; economic opportunity, quality of healthcare, education opportunities, and housing are all impacted as well.

This was Kim Young-kyo with VOA News.

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Translated by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250730154729/https://mailchi.mp/a98fcbc9ea4b/hrnk-news-items-north-koreas-songbun-system-parallels-with-south-african-nationalist-partys-apartheid-crimes-against-humanity-start-with-songbun?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Friday March 5, 2021

# The UN Must Hold the North Korean Regime Accountable for Crimes Against Humanity; N. Korea is exploiting cyberspace to evade sanction

**Top News:**
** "The UN Must Hold the North Korean Regime Accountable for Crimes Against Humanity" (*Christian Daily Source*, 03/03/2021)
** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**
Cyberattack links North Korean hackers to ransomware used for extortions (*NK News*, 03/05/2021)
DPRK Cabinet Zooms Plenary Meeting (*North Korea Leadership Watch*, 03/05/2021)
Kim Jong Un urges officials to stop 'bluffing' and boost crop output (*NK News*, 03/04/2021)
Kim Tok Hun Visits Various Production Units (*North Korea Leadership Watch*, 03/05/2021)
N. Korea again ranks lowest in terms of economic freedom: think tank (*Yonhap*, 03/05/2021)
'N. Korea is exploiting cyberspace to evade sanction' (Korea Herald, 03/05/2021)
N.K. leader sets agriculture as 'primary economic task' for local party officials (*Yonhap*,

03/05/2021)
North Korean corn prices skyrocket to levels unseen since currency reform in 2009 (*Daily NK*, 03/05/2021)
Sakju County, North Pyongan Province, locked down for one month (*Daily NK*, 03/05/2021)
Summary of domestic news in North Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 03/05/2021)
The SPA Standing Committee holds plenum (*North Korea Leadership Watch*, 03/05/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Summary of inter-Korean news this week (*Yonhap*, 03/05/2021)

**International:**
F-80 Shooting Star: America's First Fighter Jet (*National Interest*, 03/04/2021)
Key developments on North Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 03/05/2021)
Pentagon chief says the US is 'fully ready' to respond to North Korea threats (*NK News*, 03/04/2021)
Remembering Michael Elleman (*38 North*, 03/04/2021)
Report: North Korean delegation seeking imports visited Chinese city(UPI, 03/04/2021)
Reports: U.S., South Korea to commence scaled-down military exercises (UPI, 03/04/2021)
'Robust' N. Korea sanctions needed to prevent nuclear proliferation: defense nominee (*Yonhap*, 03/05/2021)
Summary of external news of North Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 03/05/2021)
U.S. defense chief shortlists N. Korea as 'nation-state threat' (*Yonhap*, 03/05/2021)

**Top News:**

- Voice of America (VOA) reported on the 2nd that although it has been seven years since Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (COI) published its final report, but international human rights groups have emphasized that there has been no significant progress in improving human rights in North Korea. (Kim Jin-young, *Christian Daily Source*)

**In North Korea:**

- A newly discovered connection between North Korea-linked malware and a recent type of ransomware suggests that the DPRK is attempting to scale its cybercrime operations, security firm Sygnia wrote in a report on Friday. (Nils Weisensee, *NK News*)
- The DPRK Cabinet held a plenary meeting via teleconference on 25 February (Thursday). DPRK Premier Kim Tok Hun (Kim Tok-hun) presided over the meeting along with DPRK Vice Premier and State Planning Commission Chairman Pak Jong Gun (Pak Cho'ng-gun) and DPRK Vice Premier Jon Hyon Chol (Chon Hyo'n-ch'o'l). Dialing on in to the Cabinet plenum were various Cabinet Ministers, functionaries of provincial and county people's committees and managers and leading officials of economic production units. (*North Korea Leadership Watch*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un scolded city and county officials for allegedly abusing power and accused them of being dishonest about the state of the country's agriculture, state media reported on Friday. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- DPRK Premier Kim Tok Hun (Kim Tok-hun) visited and inspected industrial and agricultural sites in the P'yo'ngan provinces. (*North Korea Leadership Watch*)

- North Korea is the world's least free country in terms of economic freedom for its people and businesses, an annual report from a U.S. think tank showed Thursday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea is exploiting cyberspace to circumvent UN sanctions, Gen. Paul Nakasone, commander of the US Cyber Command, said at a conference it hosted Thursday. (Choi Si-young, *Korea Herald*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un set increasing agricultural production as a "primary economic task" as he held the second day of a workshop with regional Workers' Party secretaries, state media reported Friday. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean corn, which traded at KPW 2,000 per kilogram until early February, rose sharply in price just before the Lunar New Year holidays, Daily NK has learned. (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)
- Sakju County, in North Korea's North Pyongan Province, was locked down on Feb. 2, Daily NK has learned. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- The following is a summary of domestic news in North Korea this week. (*Yonhap*)
- The Supreme People's Assembly Standing Committee (f.k.a the SPA Presidium) held its 13th plenum on 4 March (Wednesday) at Mansudae Assembly Hall. Attending the meeting were SPA President Choe Ryong Hae (Ch'oe Ryong-hae), SPA Vice Presidents Thae Hyong Chol (T'ae Hyo'ng-ch'o'l) and Pak Yong Il (Pak Yo'ng-il), SPA Secretary-General Ko Kil Son (Ko Kil-son), other SPA Standing Committee members and officials of the DPRK Cabinet. (*North Korea Leadership Watch*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The following is a summary of inter-Korean news this week. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- The Shooting Stars had arrived a few months earlier, in response to North Korea's overwhelming invasion of its southern neighbor using Soviet-supplied tanks, artillery and aircraft. After a rough early period, a UN counterattack had turned the tables: these F-80s from the Fifty-First Fighter Wing were flying out of U.S.-occupied Pyongyang, striking the remaining North Korean forces near the border with China. (Sebastien Roblin, *National Interest*)
- The following are key developments regarding North Korea this week. (*Yonhap*)
- The United States Pentagon chief vowed on Thursday to "remain fully ready" to respond to any threats from North Korea, naming the country in an informal shortlist of problem regions that Washington will keep an eye on. (Kelly Kasulis, *NK News*)
- Like many of our colleagues, we were shocked and deeply saddened when we heard about the passing of our good friend and colleague, Michael Elleman, on February 20, 2021. With so much hardship and loss over the past year, this news has hit hard for those of us at 38 North. Our collaboration with Mike started in 2014, when he participated in our working group to assess North Korea's nuclear and missile capabilities and how they might progress over the next five years. It turned out to be great timing because shortly after that, North Korea started ramping up its missile testing, which over the next few years felt like a weekly affair (especially Friday nights). At the height of North Korea's missile tests, Mike spent many odd hours working with 38 North staff to assess the key takeaways of each launch, no matter how small the development or how much disregard the North Koreans showed for our schedules here in Washington. (Jenny Town, *38 North*)
- A North Korean economic delegation visited a Chinese city to discuss "construction materials" in what could be the first people-to-people exchange between the two countries since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)

- The United States and South Korea are to hold joint military exercises Monday, but the training could be reduced in scale due to the coronavirus pandemic. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- The United States and others must continue to enforce sanctions on North Korea to prevent the North from proliferating its nuclear capability, the nominee for U.S. under secretary of defense for policy said Thursday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- The following is a summary of external news of North Korea this week. (*Yonhap*)
- U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin on Thursday included North Korea in only a handful of countries that pose threats to the United States and its allies. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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Christian Daily Source Article

**"The UN Must Hold the North Korean Regime Accountable for Crimes Against Humanity"**
Christian Daily Reporter Kim Jin-young
2021.03.03

Voice of America (VOA) reported on the 2nd that although it has been seven years since Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (COI) published its final report, but international human rights groups have emphasized that there has been no significant progress in improving human rights in North Korea.

According to the report, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner (OHCHR) released a written statement they received from human rights groups on the human rights situation in North Korea on its website on the 27th of last month.

Eight human rights groups and Park Ji-hyun, a North Korean escapee working as a North Korean human rights activist in the UK, submitted each of their statements in January at the request of Tomás Ojea Quintana, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), ahead of the 46th UN Human Rights Council session.

VOA reported that since the UN COI's final report was released seven years ago, these statements have been written to answer two questions: what progress and limitations do you see on human rights in North Korea and what measures are needed to improve human rights in the future?

Human Rights Watch, an international human rights group, pointed out that the North Korean government continues to deny the conditions of human rights abuses disclosed in the COI report as well as the existence of political prison camps known as "kwanliso".

Because North Korea has also rejected UN resolutions regarding human rights conditions in North Korea and has stated they will not cooperate with the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Human Rights Watch urged the UN and the international community to support its efforts to hold North Korea accountable for its human rights abuses.

VOA reported that Washington-based NGO, the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), stated that the prioritization of political, security, and military issues is a long-standing obstacle to efforts dealing with human rights abuses and accountability in North Korea.

According to the report, HRNK stressed that the UN Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly must firmly acknowledge the North Korean regime's crimes against humanity and the need to seek accountability, including referral to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Stating that the UN Security Council's failure to address North Korean human rights as an official agenda item for the past three years indicates that the UN and the international community seems to be retreating on North Korean human rights, and they urged the UN Security Council to once again discuss North Korean human rights as an official agenda item.

Park Ji-hyun, Chairman of Stepping Stones, a North Korean human rights, said during a phone call with VOA on the 1st that seven years have passed since the final COI report was released, but there has been no progress in holding North Korea accountable.

Chairman Park stressed that the UN should press the North Korean regime to accept UN Special Rapporteur's (on the situation of human rights in the DPRK) visits and disclose the status of political prison camps as well as the lives of its residents.

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Christian Daily Source Article Translated by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Timothy Goo, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250730155207/https://mailchi.mp/a9557e17d7d9/hrnk-news-itemsthe-un-must-hold-the-north-korean-regime-accountable-for-crimes-against-humanity-n-korea-is-exploiting-cyberspace-to-evade-sanction?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Saturday March 6, 2021

# South Korean man arrested after claiming to be 'North Korean spy'; North Korea cancels Pyongyang Marathon due to coronavirus

**In North Korea:**
Kim Jong Un takes hands-on approach to improving economy (*UPI*, 03/05/2021)
North Korea cancels Pyongyang Marathon due to coronavirus (*Yonhap*, 03/06/2021)

**In South Korea:**
South Korean man arrested after claiming to be 'North Korean spy' (UPI, 03/05/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

South Korea's Air Force is the Stuff of Kim Jung-Un's Nightmares (*National Interest*, 03/05/2021)

**International:**
Chinese Police Arrest North Korean Trade Workers for Illegal Gambling (*RFA*, 03/05/2021)
Remains Identified as Army Chaplain, Medal of Honor Recipient Who Died as POW in North Korea (*Military*, 03/05/2021)

**In North Korea:**
- Kim Jong Un made a rare appearance at a new workshop for city and county-level officials in North Korea, a multi-day event that could be designed to implement policy guidelines established during the Eighth Party Congress in January. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- North Korea has canceled the annual Pyongyang Marathon due to the coronavirus pandemic, a tour agency has said. (*Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**
- A South Korean man who made a prank call to local police has been arrested after falsely claiming he was a North Korean spy "heading home." (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
- After a large army, the second most important arm of the Republic of Korea Armed Forces has historically been the country's air force. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)

**International:**
- Police in a Chinese city on the border with North Korea have arrested 10 North Korean trade workers for gambling in illegal mahjong dens, sources in China told RFA. (Jieun Kim, Leejin Jun, Eugene Whong, *RFA*)
- The remains of Father Emil Kapaun, a Kansas native and Catholic priest who died while a prisoner of war, have been identified by military officials. (Jason Tidd, *Military*)

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Prepared by Timothy Goo, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250730155419/https://mailchi.mp/500d857223ea/hrnk-news-itemssouth-korean-man-arrested-after-claiming-to-be-north-korean-spy-north-korea-cancels-pyongyang-marathon-due-to-coronavirus?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Sunday March 7, 2021

# KJU urges officials to bring about change N Koreans can appreciate; S Korea, US scale back drills over virus, N Korea diplomacy

**In North Korea:**
How North Korea Inadvertently Gave Us the M-16 Rifle (*National Interest*, 03/07/2021)
Kim Jong Un urges officials to bring about change North Koreans can appreciate(*NK News*, 03/06/2021)

N.K. leader calls on local party officials to bring 'clear changes' for the people(*Yonhap*, 03/07/2021)
The Case for North Korea Sanctions (*National Interest*, 03/07/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Red Cross offers to take care of cemetery for N.K. soldiers (*Yonhap*, 03/07/2021)
Seoul's leniency on Pyongyang worries some in international community (*Korea Times*, 03/07/2021)

**International:**
Pentagon nominee Colin Kahl urges to continue sanctions against N. Korea (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 03/06/2021)
Populist Trump strengthens Kim Jong Un's influence, writes former UNSG Ban(*Dong-A Ilbo*, 03/06/2021)
S Korea, US scale back drills over virus, N Korea diplomacy (*AP News*, 03/07/2021)

**In North Korea:**
- The M16 rifle is one of the most iconic weapons of the post-World War II era. American fighting men have carried the M16 in one form or another into combat for more than fifty years, from Vietnam to the present day. The story of the original M16, whose descendants the M16A4 and M4 carbine today fight in Syria and Iraq against the Islamic State, goes all the way back to the 1950s and the institutional soul-searching that came after another war—Korea. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un urged city and county officials to bring about changes and achievements that can "be appreciated" by the people. In his closing remarks for the country's first-ever "short course" for regional party committee chief secretaries, Kim on March 6 stated that the officials should follow the ruling party's guiding principles and "vigorously mobilize" the masses for "revolutionary work," according to the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). He added that city and council officials should encourage the masses to take the initiative in the "struggle for local development." (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un urged local party officials to achieve "clear changes and successes" that can be welcomed by the people, as he concluded a workshop with regional Workers' Party secretaries. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- Sanctions are often criticized for failing to achieve identifiable goals—especially regime change—and for punishing the population rather than the target country's elites. This essay is the second in a series defending sanctions on North Korea against these critiques. (Robert E. Kelly, *National Interest*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
- South Korea's Red Cross is willing to take care of a cemetery for North Korean soldiers killed in the Korean War, its secretary general said Sunday, as the graveyard remains largely abandoned amid an administrative row. (*Yonhap*)
- Concern is rising over the growing discord between South Korea and some in the international community over sanctions on North Korea, following Unification Minister Lee In-young's interview with an overseas media outlet, in which he questioned whether

sanctions by the United States and the United Nations (U.N.) on the North were effective. (Kang Seung-woo, *Korea Times*)

**International:**

- In a written answer submitted to the Armed Services Committee ahead of his Senate Confirmation Hearing, Colin Kahl (picture), U.S. President Joe Biden's nominee for undersecretary of defense for policy, said Washington must continue to pursue robust sanctions enforcement to mitigate the nuclear proliferation threat posed by North Korea. (Jae-Dong Yu, *Dong-A Ilbo*)
- Former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's critical view of former U.S. President Donald Trump's foreign affairs and security policy will be made public in a memoir scheduled out in June. He pointed out in his forthcoming book that Trump only allowed North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to get the upper hand during denuclearization negotiations. (Jae-Dong Yu, *Dong-A Ilbo*)
- The South Korean and U.S. militaries are scaling back their annual exercises this month due to the COVID-19 pandemic and to support diplomacy focusing on North Korea's nuclear program, officials said Sunday. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)

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Prepared by Timothy Goo, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250730155815/https://mailchi.mp/b7828acc450c/hrnk-news-item skju-urges-officials-to-bring-about-change-n-koreans-can-appreciate-s-korea-us-scale-back-drill s-over-virus-n-korea-diplomacy?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Monday March 8, 2021

# Warmbier Family Still Working To Make North Korea Pay For Son's Death; S. Korea, U.S. kick off scaled-back combined exercise

**Top News:**

Warmbier Family Still Working To Make North Korea Pay For Son's Death (*WVXU*, 03/08/2021)

**In North Korea:**

How North Korea Inadvertently Gave Us the M-16 Rifle (*National Interest*, 03/07/2021)
Hyesan lockdown downgraded following strong complaints from locals (*Daily NK*, 03/08/2021)
North Korea's Ancient Cold War Tanks Belong in a Museum (*National Interest*, 03/07/2021)
North Korea's Golden Military Rule: Don't Fight the U.S. Navy (*National Interest*, 03/08/2021)
North Korea's Kim Jong-un a Trillionaire? His Nation Is Loaded in Resources(*National Interest*, 03/07/2021)
N.K. state media highlight women's role on world women's day (*Yonhap*, 03/08/2021)

Sanctions may be pushing North Korea to cut down trees for construction (*NK News*, 03/08/2021)
Type 88: North Korea's Very Own AK-47 Rifle Is Everywhere (*National Interest*, 03/07/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Defense cost-sharing deal signals tighter, more stable S. Korea-U.S. alliance(*Yonhap*, 03/08/2021)
Factbox: U.S. and South Korea's security arrangement, cost of troops (*Reuters*, 03/07/2021)
Korea, US reach accord on troop cost sharing (*The Korea Times*, 03/08/2021)
S. Korea, U.S. kick off scaled-back combined exercise (*Yonhap*, 03/08/2021)
Seoul sees hope in Biden's North Korea approach (*The Hill*, 03/08/2021)
Seoul, Washington to conduct scaled-down simulation-only military exercise this week (*The Korea Herald*, 03/08/2021)
South Korea to boost funding for U.S. troops under new accord: State Department(*Reuters*, 03/08/2021)
South Korea, US agree on new cost-sharing deal for troops (*Al Jazeera*, 03/08/2021)
South Korea, US to hold scaled back military exercises (*Al Jazeera*, 03/07/2021)
The US and South Korea must stop threatening Kim Jong Un with war drills (*NK News*, 03/07/2021)
Time to rebuild (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/08/2021)
US and South Korea agree on 'meaningful increase' of Seoul's defense share (*NK New*, 03/08/2021)
US and South Korea agree on new cost-sharing deal for troops (*AP News*, 03/08/2021)
US and South Korea reach agreement on cost sharing for American troops (CNN, 03/08/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
S. Korea calls on N.K. to take 'wise, flexible' approach toward military exercise with U.S. (*Yonhap*, 03/08/2021)
Seoul asks Pyongyang to act wisely as US-ROK joint drill begins (*NK News*, 03/08/2021)

**International:**
Early Signals to North Korea Seen as Key to Keeping Door Open to Diplomacy(VOA, 03/07/2021)

**Top News:**

- Businessman Fred Warmbier and his wife Cindy are determined to collect what a U.S. District Court said they should - $501 million - for the torture and death of their son Otto in 2017 after he allegedly stole a propaganda poster in North Korea. North Korea has refused to pay, so the Warmbiers are hitting the regime where it hurts, according to Greg Scarlatoiu, the Washington-based executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK). "There are two vulnerabilities," he says. "One is the pocketbook. The other one is legitimacy." (Ann Thompson, WVXU)

**In North Korea:**

- The story of the original M16, whose descendants the M16A4 and M4 carbine today fight in Syria and Iraq against the Islamic State, goes all the way back to the 1950s and the institutional soul-searching that came after another war—Korea. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- Following strong complaints from locals, Hyesan's sudden lockdown order, which was handed down on Mar. 3, was downgraded on Mar. 4, Daily NK has learned. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- While the T-34/85 medium tank might be have been instrumental in the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany's Wehrmacht in World War Two, the vintage war machine is probably still in service in North Korea. (TNI Staff, *National Interest*)
- The battle of Chumonchin Chan is today considered one of the six surface warfare engagements fought by the U.S. Navy since World War II, but the small size of the North Korean vessels has likely contributed to the engagement's obscurity. (Sebastien Robin, *National Interest*)
- North Korea has been reported to have high concentrations of rare earth elements, and its neighbor to the south may be wanting to help to exploit these resources. (Ethen Kim Lieser, *National Interest*)
- North Korea's state media on Monday stressed women's roles in achieving economic development and national prosperity as the country marks the 111th International Women's Day. (*Yonhap*)
- Experts warned that North Korea may have cut down drastically more trees driven by a lack of conventional building materials due to sanctions. (Won Gi-Jung, *NK News*)
- The latest North Korean assault rifle is the Type 88. The Type 88 is a copy of the AK-74 assault rifle, whose primary advantage over the AK-47 was the adoption of the smaller, lighter 5.45-millimeter round. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- This week's conclusion of defense cost-sharing talks between South Korea and the United States put their alliance back on a firmer and more stable footing after an embarrassing stretch of friction caused by former President Donald Trump's criticism of allies as free riders, analysts said Monday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap)*
- The 70-year security alliance between the United States and South Korea is under fresh focus as the allies reached an agreement on Sunday under which Seoul will pay higher costs for hosting American troops as deterrence against North Korea. (Hyonhee Shin, Joyce Lee, *Reuters*)
- South Korea and the US have reached an agreement on how much Seoul should shoulder for hosting US troops here, both countries announced Monday, ending years of standoff over the thorny issue. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Times*)
- South Korea and the United States on Monday kicked off a springtime combined military exercise in a scaled-back manner amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)
- President Biden has been in office for six weeks. But Seoul already is celebrating the new U.S. president. Not only have the dynamics of the U.S.-Republic of Korea alliance dramatically improved, but the Moon Jae-in government believes Washington will come up with a realistic North Korea policy it can live with. (Ramon Pacheco Pardo, Jihwan Hwang, *The Hill*)
- South Korea and the United States will stage their annual springtime military exercise this week, but it will be reduced in scope due to the coronavirus pandemic. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)

- South Korea will increase its contribution to the cost of U.S. forces stationed in the country under an agreement reached with the United States, the State Department said on Sunday, easing an irritant in ties between the two allies. (Andrea Shalal, Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- South Korea and the United States have agreed on a new arrangement for sharing the cost of the US troops stationed on the Korean peninsula, easing an irritant in ties between the two allies as they kicked off their annual joint military exercises. (*Al Jazeera*)
- South Korea and the United States will begin their annual military exercises on Monday, the South Korean army has announced, adding that the joint drill will be smaller than usual because of the coronavirus pandemic. (*Al Jazeera*)
- After a year-long standstill, the dialogue between the governments of North Korea and South Korea is on the verge of resumption. A joint South Korea-United States military exercise — which is set to begin in South Korea in the second week of March — is a serious impediment to this development. (Cheehyung Harrison Kim, *NK News*)
- South Korea and the United States have reached an agreement on defense cost-sharing after the negotiations went adrift for more than one year after Donald Trump's administration demanded a fivefold increase in the amount of money South Korea has to pay. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The United States and South Korea agreed on a "meaningful increase" of Seoul's contribution to the cost of American military support on the Korean Peninsula, the U.S. Department of State told NK News on Monday. (Won Gi-Jung, *NK News*)
- The United States and South Korea have reached agreement in principle on a new arrangement for sharing the cost of the American troop presence, which is intended as a bulwark against the threat of North Korean aggression, both countries announced. (Robert Burns, Matthew Lee, *AP News*)
- Washington and Seoul have agreed to a cost-sharing agreement for US forces based in South Korea, a US State Department spokesperson confirmed to CNN on Sunday. (Nicole Gaouette, Paul LeBlanc, *CNN*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The unification ministry urged North Korea to take a "wise and flexible" approach toward a springtime combined military exercise that South Korea and the United States kicked off in a scaled-back manner Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's unification ministry called on the North to show a "wise and flexible" attitude toward a joint military drill with the U.S., saying Washington and Seoul have scaled the exercise down to a "minimum" level. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**International:**

- Experts are urging the Biden administration to send an early signal to North Korea, conveying its interest in keeping diplomacy open even as Washington conducts policy reviews on how to deal with the regime so that it can gauge Pyongyang's response for possible talks. (Christy Lee, *VOA*)

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Prepared by Sophia Hapin, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250730155946/https://mailchi.mp/556c3fa44621/hrnk-news-item swarmbier-family-still-working-to-make-north-korea-pay-for-sons-deaths-korea-us-kick-off-scaled-back-combined-exercise?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Tuesday March 9, 2021

# North Korea to reopen its borders for the coronavirus vaccine; North Korea's skyrocketing corn prices

**In North Korea:**
Alleged human trafficker arrested a year after her arrest warrant issued (*Daily* NK, 03/09/2021)
Daily videos show candid North Korean street life during pandemic (*NK News*, 03/09/2021)
International Women's Day Causes North Korean Women to Question Society (*RFA*, 03/09/2021)
Mea culpas come thick and fast in North Korea (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/09/2021)
N.K. economic officials blame themselves for lack of progress in development plans (*Yonhap*, 03/09/2021)
North Korea features YouTube child star in latest videos (UPI, 03/09/2021)
North Korean ships resume coal smuggling as ice and restrictions thaw (*NK News*, 03/09/2021)
North Korea's skyrocketing corn prices (*38 North*, 03/09/2021)
North Korea to reopen its borders for the coronavirus vaccine (*The World*, 03/09/2021)
Samjiyon again put under lockdown over COVID-19 fears (*Daily* NK, 03/09/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Bithumb bans trading from countries with no anti-money laundering measures (*The Korea Herald*, 03/09/2021)
S. Korea considers joining Quad Plus to steer U.S. toward talks with N. Korea: policy adviser (*Yonhap*, 03/09/2021)
S. Korea to begin memorial wall construction in Washington to honor Korean War veterans (*The Korea Herald*, 03/09/2021)
Sending leaflets to North Korea from third countries not banned, Seoul says (*NK News*, 03/09/2021)
Why South Korea should stand up for Mongolians in China (*East Asia Forum*, 03/09/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Ministry finalizes guidelines on leafleting ban to clarify scope of application (*Yonhap*, 03/09/2021)

**International:**
NKorea man fails in bid to halt US extradition from Malaysia (*AP News*, 03/09/2021)
North Korean in Malaysia loses final appeal against US extradition (*France 24*, 03/09/2021)
Rep. Boebert files resolution calling for North Korea to return seized spy ship USS Pueblo (*Colorado Politics*, 03/09/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Daily NK has learned that a female resident of Hoeryong, North Hamgyong Province, who had been wanted on charges of trafficking more than 30 young women to China, was recently arrested. (Vilde Olaussen, *Daily NK*)
- Chinese observer shares detailed footage of Hyesan city in the DPRK border area on social media (Colin Zwirko, Min Chao Choy, Nils Weisensee, *NK News*)
- Yearly celebrations of International Women's Day in North Korea are awakening women to the concept of women's rights, some to the point where they question the legitimacy of North Korean society itself. (*RFA*)
- North Korean officials blamed themselves for poor economic development in pieces carried in state media Tuesday, following leader Kim Jong-un's rare admittance of failures in his country's economic plans at the beginning of the year. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Tuesday carried contribution pieces by officials in the Cabinet and economic sectors holding themselves accountable for the lack of progress in economic development. (*Yonhap*)
- A North Korean YouTube channel with more than 18,000 subscribers is promoting the regime's policies with videos featuring a child, part of an ongoing social media campaign to show "daily life" in the country. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- As iced-over waters melt into spring, North Korean coal smuggling appears to have resumed: At least four cargo ships loaded up with coal at Nampho port in February 2021, an NK Pro analysis of satellite imagery showed. The resurgence of activity came after no ships were caught visiting the coal yard in available satellite imagery since at least the beginning of the year. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- Given the self-imposed border lockdown North Korea is under at the moment, the recent rise in food prices should come as no surprise. The precise factors are difficult to pin down, but whatever they are, there is some serious cause for concern. (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, *38 North*)
- The pandemic appears to have further cut off North Korea from the rest of the world. But now, the country is set to receive nearly 2 million doses of the coronavirus vaccine through the COVAX program. (Jason Strother, *The World*)
- The city of Samjiyon, in Yanggang Province, has again been put under lockdown over COVID-19 fears, Daily NK has learned. (*Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- Bithumb, a South Korean cryptocurrency exchange operator, said Tuesday that it has put restrictions on crypto trading accounts held by users staying in regions that have not adopted anti-money laundering measures. (Kim Young-won, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea may be considering joining a U.S.-led regional forum that it had previously shunned, in an effort to influence U.S. policy toward North Korea, a member of South Korea's presidential policy advisory group said. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea plans to hold a ceremony to break ground for the construction of a memorial wall in Washington later this year to honor US veterans who fought in the 1950-53 Korean War, the veterans affairs ministry here said Tuesday. (*The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea's so-called "anti-leaflet law" will not punish those who send leaflets to North Korea from a third country like China, Seoul's unification ministry announced on Tuesday. The unification ministry's guidelines state that the law only bans launches of balloons, bottles, and other vehicles to get leaflets from South Korea to North Korea. The law states

that “the movement of leaflets and other items through third countries” will be punished, prompting speculation that launches from nearby countries like China would also be banned by the law. (Won-Gi Jung, NK News)

- Every country in the world claims to defend human rights. One test of their sincerity is whether they will stand up for the rights of people in other countries. South Korea is uniquely positioned to take up the cause of China’s Mongolian minority in its efforts to preserve the Mongolian language in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. It would not only be an opportunity for South Korea to make its democratic voice heard, but also to safeguard ethnic Koreans in China and bolster its diplomatic engagements in the region. ( Alexandra Langford, Mark Tokola, *East Asia Forum*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The unification ministry on Tuesday announced finalized guidelines on a legislated ban on sending anti-Pyongyang leaflets into North Korea in an effort to ensure better interpretation of the law. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Malaysia’s top court ruled on Tuesday that a North Korean man can be extradited to the United States to face money laundering charges, rejecting his assertion that the U.S. charge was politically motivated. (*AP News*)
- A North Korean man is set to be extradited from Malaysia to face money laundering charges in the United States after losing a final legal challenge on Tuesday. Mun Chol Myong, who has lived in the Southeast Asian country for a decade with his family, was arrested in 2019 following the extradition request from Washington. He denies FBI claims that he led a criminal group that violated sanctions by supplying prohibited items to North Korea and laundered funds through front companies. Mun challenged the move to extradite him, with his lawyers arguing he was an innocent man caught in the middle of diplomatic tensions between Washington and Pyongyang. But the country's top court rejected his final appeal, saying all requirements under the extradition agreement between the United States and Malaysia had been met. (*France 24*)
- U.S. Rep. Lauren Boebert introduced a House resolution Monday calling for the return of the USS Pueblo, a spy ship held captive by North Korea since the country seized the vessel more than 50 years ago. Boebert's request comes just over a week since a federal court awarded $2.3 billion to more than 100 crew members and families of the U.S. Navy vessel, Stars and Stripes reported. (Ernest Luning, *Colorado Politics*)

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Prepared by Damian Reddy, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250730160127/https://mailchi.mp/68ede4fd257e/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-to-reopen-its-borders-for-the-coronavirus-vaccinenorth-koreas-skyrocketing-corn-prices?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Wednesday March 10, 2021

# International Women's Day, "NK's 'gender equality' propaganda is full ofcontradictions"; Pyongyang Prepares for Another Parade

**Top News:**
** International Women's Day, "North Korea's 'gender equality' propaganda is full of contradictions" (VOA, 03/09/2021)
** U.S. Human Rights Group, "Peace on the Korean Peninsula, Possible Only Through the Involvement of North Korean Women" (RFA, 03/08/2021)

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Is North Korea Loaded with Lots of Gold? (*The National Interest*, 03/09/2021)
March 2021: North Korea's skyrocketing corn prices (*North Korean Economy Watch*, 03/09/2021)
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NKorea man fails in bid to halt US extradition from Malaysia (*AP News*, 03/10/2021)
North Korea and Stealth Drones: A Match Made in Military Heaven? (*The National Interest*, 03/09/2021)
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South Korea Has a Plan to Influence Biden on North Korea: Join the Quad? (*The National Interest*, 03/09/2021)
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Yongbyon deal still an option in nuclear talks with North Korea: Seoul official (*NK News*, 03/10/2021)

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Why the agreement on shared military spending is good for South Korea and the US(*NK News*, 03/09/2021)

**Top News:**

- The United Nations has called on North Korea to increase the number of women in high-ranking positions and ensure gender equality on the occasion of International Women's Day. North Korean authorities have widely promoted the guarantee of women's rights through state-run media, but critics say it is contradictory because, in reality, they barely protect anything. (Kim Young-kwon, VOA)

- In commemoration of International Women's Day, a U.S. human rights group emphasized that inter-Korean reconciliation and reunification of the Korean peninsula is possible only through the inclusion of the voices of North Korean women victimized by the North Korean regime. (Ji Erin, *RFA*)

**In North Korea:**

- Today, the bulk of the KPA's 1.1 million army is infantry, with approximately 200,000 light infantry and special forces. (Kyle Mizokami, *The National Interest*)
- Although North Korean corn prices had risen by over 60% ahead of Lunar New Year and Kim Jong Il's birthday, they seems to be stabilizing somewhat. However, as prices remain in the range of KPW 3,000 in some regions, North Koreans are reportedly voicing their dissatisfaction. (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)
- Last November, it was reported that North Korea's government had arrested six people in connection with an unusual plot: to smuggle gold from North Korea over the border into China. (Stephen Silver, *The National Interest*)
- Given the self-imposed border lockdown North Korea is under at the moment, the recent rise in food prices should come as no surprise. The precise factors are difficult to pin down, but whatever they are, there is some serious cause for concern. (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, *North Korean Economy Watch*)
- North Korea's most prestigious Kim Il-sung University has registered over 130 academic papers in international journals in the past year, a propaganda outlet reported Wednesday, as it seeks to transform into a research-centric institute. (*Yonhap*)
- Malaysia's top court ruled that a North Korean man can be extradited to the United States to face money laundering charges, rejecting his assertion that the U.S. charge was politically motivated. (*AP News*)
- It was during the Eighth Congress of the Korean Workers' Party this past January when North Korea decided to focus more heavily on future military modernization plans, which include the development of new advanced stealth drones for the Korean People's Army (KPA). (Ethen Kim Lieser, *The National Interest*)
- For both practical and doctrinal reasons, North Korea will almost certainly use chemical weapons in wartime, from riot control to lethal nerve gases. (Kyle Mizokami, *The National Interest)*
- North Korea will receive nearly two-million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine through the World Health Organization's COVAX program. Despite the country's limited resources, some medical professionals are confident that the North's doctors can successfully carry-out a vaccination campaign. (Jason Strother, VOA)
- A North Korean businessman in Malaysia on Tuesday lost his third and final attempt in the courts against being extradited to the United States to face money laundering charges, which stem from alleged violations of Washington's sanctions on Pyongyang. (Hadi Azmi, *RFA*)
- Senior North Korean officials in charge of the economy are engaging in self-criticism in a new section of a state newspaper that reflects the official view of Kim Jong Un. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- North Koreans appeared to be practicing for an upcoming nighttime torch march through Pyongyang's central Kim Il Sung Square, though there was no evidence for the preparation of another military parade, according to NK Pro analysis of satellite imagery taken this week. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Recent commercial satellite imagery of Pyongyang indicates rehearsals are underway at Kim Il Sung Square for what appears to be another upcoming parade. (Martyn Williams, *38 North*)

- In South Korea's far northeast is Goseong County. Prior to the Korean War, it belonged to North Korea. The county was cut in half following the war and remains so to this day. (Chad O'Carroll, NK News)
- A North Korean port that serves as a hub for the regime's coal exports is showing signs of activity for the first time since August, according to a recent press report. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- North Korean authorities have recently punished construction workers and managers who had been tasked with the construction of the Sunchon Phosphatic Fertilizer Plant, Daily NK has learned. (Jang Seul Gi, Daily NK)

**In South Korea:**

- With South Korea and the US clinching a new accord on how to share the cost of maintaining the US troops stationed on the Korean Peninsula, the deal has drawn attention to how this arrangement was first forged and how it has transformed over the decades. (Ahn Sung-mi, The Korea Herald)
- Korean diplomacy faces a test again. If the government fails to coordinate North Korea policy with Washington, its diplomatic and security scorecard will be poor. (Wi Sung-lac, Korea JoongAng Daily)
- South Korea and the United States are on the same page on North Korea denuclearization, Seoul and Washington's senior officials dealing with the issue said Wednesday at a virtual forum co-hosted by the Korea Press Foundation and the East-West Center in the US. (Choi Si-young, The Korea Herald)
- South Korea and the United States are supposed to stage combined outdoor military drills throughout the year, not during specific periods of time, Seoul's defense ministry said Tuesday. (Yonhap)
- South Korea has agreed to pay 13.9 percent more in its contribution to host American troops here for 2021, the Foreign Ministry announced Wednesday. (Ahn Sung-mi, The Korea Herald)
- South Korea has agreed to a 13.9% increase in its contribution to the cost of hosting some 28,500 U.S. troops for 2021, the biggest annual rise in nearly two decades after U.S. calls for greater funding. (Hyonhee Shin, Reuters)
- It appears that South Korea now may be considering joining the Quad Plus, a regional network of countries that it previously shunned, in order to possibly influence U.S. policy on North Korea. (Ethen Kim Lieser, The National Interest)
- South Korea agreed to an "exceptional" increase of its financial contribution to the U.S. military presence in the country and will pay 13.9% more this year than in 2020, the foreign ministry in Seoul announced on Wednesday. (Won-Gi Jung, NK News)
- South Korea's top diplomat on Wednesday said that North Korea demolishing its nuclear facilities at Yongbyon for some sanctions relief could still be a "valid" starting point in resuming denuclearization talks between the DPRK and the U.S. (Jeongmin Kim, NK News)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- In 2010, North Korea sank a South Korean warship, killing more than forty sailors. Although Pyongyang's involvement was suspected from the outset, an international commission set up to investigate the attack later conclude North Korea was indeed responsible. (Kyle Mizokami, The National Interest)

**International:**

- After a securing the beachhead MV-22s could lead the way, leapfrogging from one landing zone to another, the enemy not knowing if it intends to land five or five hundred miles away. (Kyle Mizokami, The National Interest)

- Seoul and Washington have seen improved communications and a stronger commitment to their bilateral alliance under the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden, high-ranking diplomats from both countries said on Wednesday. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- South Korea and the United States on Monday kicked off their springtime combined military exercise in a scaled-back manner, the Joint Chiefs of Staff said. (*The Korea Herald*)
- The Biden administration's review of its policy towards North Korea is expected to be completed "within the next month or so," a senior official of the administration told Reuters on Tuesday while declining to say what direction it might take. (David Brunnstrom, Michael Martina, *Reuters*)
- Two tankers involved in an alleged illegal ship-to-ship oil transfer were spotted while on patrol for an embargo enforcement mission against North Korea, the French Navy has said. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea poses a serious and most imminent threat to the United States and its allies in the Indo-Pacific region such as South Korea, the commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said Tuesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the United States' recent agreement on a new defense cost-sharing deal reflects the two countries' commitment to strengthening their alliance and a desire to focus on issues like North Korea, a U.S. diplomat said Wednesday. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)
- In December 2018, a South Korean destroyer allegedly locked its targeting radar on a Japanese surveillance aircraft. Although details of that incident remain bitterly contested, the controversy captures well the suspicions and ill-will that have engulfed Japanese-South Korean relations. (Shane Smith, Brad Glosserman, *War on the Rocks*)
- US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin will meet their South Korean counterparts on March 17 and 18 to discuss security policies and global initiatives, in the first senior-level talks to be held in person between the two countries since US President Joe Biden took office, Seoul's Foreign and Defense ministries said Wednesday. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- The United Nations special rapporteur on North Korea's human rights has recommended South Korea include human rights issues in its future bilateral negotiations with North Korea. (*KBS World Radio*)
- A secret deal to smuggle parts of Russian fighter jets to Pyongyang in 2016 was brokered by a North Korean trade representative with possible ties to the DPRK Embassy in Moscow, an unpublished draft of a U.N. report indicates. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- The U.S. and South Korea have reached an agreement on the 11th Special Measures Agreement (SMA), according to Seoul's foreign ministry on March 8. This is great news for the alliance because it strengthens the defense, stability and economy of not only South Korea, but also the U.S. (Chun Im-bum, *NK News*)

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VOA

**International Women's Day, "North Korea's 'gender equality' propaganda is full of contradictions"**

Reporter Kim Young-kwon
March 9, 2021

The United Nations has called on North Korea to increase the number of women in high-ranking positions and ensure gender equality on the occasion of International Women's Day. North Korean

authorities have widely promoted the guarantee of women's rights through state-run media, but critics say it is contradictory because, in reality, they barely protect anything. This is Kim Young-kwon reporting.

In a statement the UNHCHR Office in Seoul released on Twitter on the 8th to mark International Women's Day, they urged North Korean authorities to eliminate all forms of gender-based discrimination and to promote human rights.

This means that they should try to ensure gender equality, increase the proportion of high-ranking women, and eliminate any discriminatory stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes towards women and girls in the legal system and its actual application.

The statement also urged North Korean authorities to reduce the inequality and discrimination women and girls face in domestic violence, employment, and access to education, and allow for their safe migration and movement on a humanitarian level.

North Korea also said on the 8th through the “Rodong Sinmun” and other state-run media that women have the same rights as men. They also stressed that "a wide range of women should actively enter society and devote themselves to building a rich country."

However, when it comes to the actual status of North Korean women, experts pointed out that such propaganda from the North Korean regime is very different and contradictory from reality.

This is Kim Jeong-ae, a North Korean defector and secretary-general at the PEN Center for North Korean Writers in Exile, speaking.

[Recording: Secretary-General Kim Jung-ae] "North Korea is basically a wasteland of human rights. For women especially, things like social advancement are restricted. Even when it comes to joining the party, men and women are not the same. The idea of having a male-dominated society still exists so women aren’t allowed much social advancement."

In a report submitted to the U.N. Human Rights Council earlier this month, Thomas Ojea Quintana, the UN Special Rapporteur on North Korean human rights, also pointed out that North Korea replaced its cabinet on January 18, but there are no women in the new cabinet.

[Special Rapporteur Quintana’s Report] “On 18 January, new Cabinet members were appointed and there are no women in the current cabinet.”

Very few women were captured in the group photos of the 8th Party Congress and the Supreme People's Assembly event held by North Korea in January, and no women were seen in the group photos of the 1st city and county secretaries lecture that ended on the 4th.

North Korean media cited Kim Jong-un's remarks to stress the women's revolution, but the Rodong Sinmun pointed out in another article, "It is morally very important to make women look elegant and tidy, such as dress, hair, and makeup," stressing that women should obey the nation's demands rather than their individuality and taste.

In a final report in 2014, the UN Commission of Inquiry expressed concern, saying, "North Korea still practices widespread discrimination against women in all areas of society," and that, "There is still deep-rooted patriarchy and violence against women."

In a statement the U.S.'s Committee for Human Rights in North Korea released on occasion of International Women's Day on the 8th, they pointed out that women were directly hit by the increased political oppression and market control the North Korean regime has been enacting for over a year under the pretext of coronavirus prevention.

They also revealed, "Any process of inter-Korean reconciliation, rapprochement, peace building, and eventual unification of the Korean peninsula will be possible only through the involvement and participation of North Korean women victimized by the North Korean regime for over seven decades."

[The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea Statement] "Any process of inter-Korean reconciliation, rapprochement, peace building, and eventual unification of the Korean peninsula will be possible only through the involvement and participation of North Korean women victimized by the North Korean regime for over seven decades."

Park Ji-hyun, a North Korean human rights activist and former North Korean defector who recently ran in local U.K. elections, said women in North Korea exercise their rights the least, stressing that the international community should awaken them through the influx of information.

[Recording: Park Ji-hyun] "I think if they emphasize economic and cultural change instead of political change, I think women would change more. I hope we can look into thinking about sending cultural propaganda and information that talk about women's lives, such as movies and dramas, to North Korea so these materials can open their eyes."

In its final report, the UN COI strongly recommended that North Korean authorities "guarantee equal opportunities for men and women" and "root out laws, regulations, and practices that discriminate against women."

This was Kim Young-kwon from VOA News.

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Translated by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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RFA

**U.S. Human Rights Group, "Peace on the Korean Peninsula, Possible Only Through the Involvement of North Korean Women"**

Ji Erin
March 8, 2021

Anchor: In commemoration of International Women's Day, a U.S. human rights group emphasized that inter-Korean reconciliation and reunification of the Korean peninsula is possible only through the inclusion of the voices of North Korean women victimized by the North Korean regime. This is Ji Erin reporting.

On the 8th, the U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea said that it remembers the brave women of North Korea in its statement on International Women's Day.

March 8 was officially designated as International Women's Day by the United Nations in 1975 to improve the social status of and human rights for women.

In particular, the statement emphasized, "Any process of inter-Korean reconciliation, rapprochement, peace building, and eventual unification of the Korean peninsula will be possible only through the involvement and participation of North Korean women victimized by the North Korean regime for over seven decades."

The statement sheds light on the pain and oppression that North Korean women have suffered over the past decades.

In specific, the statement points out that North Korean women are the ones who have assumed the great responsibility of sustaining their families during and after the famine of the 1990s, and They represent the majority of those who are arrested and punished for alleged wrongdoing at North Korea's informal markets.

It also points out that women represent more than eighty percent of North Koreans who, in direct violation of the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Additional Protocol, are arrested and forcibly repatriated by China to North Korea.

Furthermore, it is women who have taken the brunt of the intensified political repression and crackdown on markets the North Korean regime has been conducting for more than a year, under the pretext of COVID-19 prevention.

As such, the organization's executive director Greg Scarlatoiu told Radio Free Asia (RFA) today that International Women's Day is known as "World Women's Day" (국제부녀절) – not only is it called something different, it has a different meaning as well.

Executive Director Scarlatoiu: In North Korea, [the meaning of] International Women's Day is different. It's not about a struggle for human rights, nor a struggle for women's rights. March 8th is simply another chance, another opportunity to praise the regime and idolize North Korea's supreme leader.

Meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken spoke at an event on International Women's Day and emphasized, "The United States is dedicated to ensuring that gender equality and women's empowerment are central tenets of our foreign policy and national security."

Michelle Bachelet, United National High Commissioner for Human Rights, said in a statement commemorating International Women's Day, "it should be quite obvious that we will not be able to

face today's challenges if we continue to exclude large portions of the population from leadership and decision-making."

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Translated by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Sophia Hapin, HRNK Research Intern

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## Thursday March 11, 2021

# Quintana says UN Security Council should refer North Korean human rights to ICC, America is concerned about the worsening situation

**Top News:**
** Quintana says U.N. Security Council should refer North Korean human rights to ICC, America is concerned about the worsening situation (VOA, 03/11/2021)
ID: SR on Human Rights in DPRK - 29th Meeting, 46th Regular Session Human Rights Council (*UN Web TV*, 03/10/2021)
Deaths by Starvation Reported in Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Special Rapporteur Tells Human Rights Council (*UN Human Rights Council*, 03/10/2021)
COVID contributed to 'starvation', executions in DPR Korea, Rights Council hears(*UN News*, 03/10/2021)
Is there Hope for Human Rights Reform in North Korea with Joe Biden as President? (*HRNK YPWP*, 03/10/2021)
Blinken feels 'strongly' about re-appointing a North Korea human rights envoy (*NK News*, 03/11/2021)

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**In North Korea:**
Chongjin eases COVID-19 rules in local markets, yet locals are still unhappy (*Daily NK*, 03/11/2021)
From McDonald's to Walmart: How North Korea can reinvent its economy (*NK Pro*, 03/10/2021)

N.K. newspaper calls for nationwide efforts to boost crop output (*Yonhap*, 03/11/2021)
N.K. paper stresses close relations with Cuba amid impasse in nuclear talks(*Yonhap*, 03/11/2021)
N. Korean threat persists amid continued pursuit of weapons: USFK commander(*Yonhap*, 03/11/2021)
North Korea hands out "home and family property insurance cards" (*Daily NK*, 03/11/2021)
North Korea pushes contactless payments, claims growth in online shopping (*NK News*, 03/11/2021)
North Korea Will Soon Begin Coronavirus Vaccinations (*The National Interest*, 03/10/2021)
North Korea's Kim Il Sung University Claims Academic Achievements (*The National Interest*, 03/10/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Bodacious bikini babes: South Korean propaganda leaflets in the 1980s (*NK News*, 03/11/2021)
COVID-19 gives excuse to Seoul for scaled-down combined drill (*The Korea Times*, 03/11/2021)
Moon's push for peace talks gains momentum (*The Korea Herald*, 03/11/2021)
Seoul to launch English website to promote 'balanced discourse' on North Korea(*NK News*, 03/11/2021)
Unification minister makes rare visit to wartime command bunker amid military exercise with U.S. (*Yonhap*, 03/11/2021)

**International:**
A Tough Nut to Crack: North Korea's Air Defenses Are No Pushover (*The National Interest*, 03/10/2021)
Coming Soon: Joe Biden's North Korea Policy (*The National Interest*, 03/10/2021)
Ministry vows to keep close communication with int'l community on anti-Pyongyang leaflet ban (*Yonhap*, 03/11/2021)
North Korea and America Went to War Over Vietnam (*The National Interest*, 03/11/2021)
North Korean man faces extradition to U.S. after Malaysian court ruling (*UPI*, 03/10/2021)
See the Picture: Admiral Says North Korea Poses 'Serious' and 'Immediate' Danger(*The National Interest*, 03/10/2021)
U.N.: Member states can do more on North Korea human rights (*UPI*, 03/10/2021)
U.S. commander: North Korea posing 'persistent challenges' with weapons (*UPI*, 03/11/2021)
US Holds Scaled-Down Military Drills with South Korea (*VOA*, 03/11/2021)
UN official urges Seoul to address NK rights violations (*The Korea Herald*, 03/11/2021)
World powers ignoring North Korea crimes against humanity amid nuclear programme focus: U.N. expert (*Reuters*, 03/10/2021)

**Top News:**

- The UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in North Koreau urged the UN Security Council to refer the serious human rights situation in North Korea to the International Criminal Court. The United States revealed that it is deeply concerned about the worsening human rights situation in North Korea. Several non-governmental organizations also attended the mutual dialogue to express their position on the human rights situation in

North Korea. Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the Washington D.C.-based civil society organization Committee for Human Rights in North Korean (HRNK), said measures for the post-coronavirus situation must be prepared.

- Tomas Ojea Quintana, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, said that increased food insecurity had been caused by COVID-19 prevention measures and combined with a lack of humanitarian operations, restrictions on trade with China, sanctions and natural disasters, this could lead to a serious food crisis. Deaths by starvation had been reported. Accountability of those most responsible for human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that may amount to crimes against humanity was imperative. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was not present in the room to speak as the country concerned. (*UN Human Rights Council*)
- Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Tomas Ojea Quintana, highlighted "deaths by starvation" linked to a "drastic" decline in trade and commerce, as well as an increase in the number of children and elderly people forced to beg. Severe containment measures had also led to "a number of concerning consequences" that further isolate the country's people from the outside world, Mr. Quintana said in a report to the Human Rights Council. (*UN News*)
- There is no doubt that President Joe Biden has inherited some of the most difficult policy issues in recent history. Although he may be focused on issues like coronavirus relief, racial injustice, climate change, and immigration reform, America's relationship with North Korea is an area that urgently needs attention. President Biden is likely to take a more traditional role than President Trump regarding foreign relations, but how will he address the human rights abuses committed by the regime? (Jane Kuper, *HRNK YPWP*)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken feels "strongly" about the need to re-appoint a special envoy for North Korea human rights, he said at a House Foreign Relations Committee hearing on Wednesday. "This is an issue I feel strongly about, and I agree with you," said Blinken in a response to Rep. Young Kim, a Republican representative from California who called on the Secretary of State to fill the position "as quickly as possible." The position has been vacant for the past four years: Ambassador Robert King worked in the role between 2009 and 2017 under then-president Barack Obama. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea has reportedly imposed new rules to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Chongjin's markets, causing complaints among the residents of the city. Market vendors have been practicing social distancing by following directives to work on alternate days. However, this has caused more economic distress for people who live in such difficult conditions that they cannot survive if they miss work for even a day. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)
- Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the ensuing famine in North Korea, Pyongyang has begrudgingly ceded some control of the economy to private traders in the country's black markets. Now, Kim Jong Un appears to be attempting to reassert his control over the North Korean economy. It's unclear what exactly this will entail, however. (Peter Ward, *NK Pro*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Thursday urged nationwide efforts to increase grain output, calling it "a crucial matter" in the country's push to achieve key goals unveiled in a rare party meeting early this year. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's main newspaper on Thursday stressed close relations with Cuba in time for the 35th anniversary of a former Cuban leader's visit to Pyongyang. The Rodong Sinmun, the official newspaper of the ruling Workers' Party, said in an editorial that the two countries are "firmly united by a sense of comradery in the common battle for socialism." (*Yonhap*)

- North Korea continues to pose a serious threat to the United States and its ally South Korea as Pyongyang pursues a nuclear arsenal and other weapons of mass destruction, the commander of U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) has said. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean authorities have been providing “home and family property insurance cards” to North Koreans and collecting insurance premiums from them since last February. The move comes after the authorities distributed "explanatory materials" and conducted “trainings” regarding a new insurance system back in January. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea has ramped up attempts to increase the use of contactless electronic payments and e-commerce in the country, according to an NK News analysis of state media coverage over the past quarter. In addition to reports praising the convenience of ordering online, state media emphasized the increased hygiene of the new payment methods during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea sealed its border with China, shortly after the coronavirus first began to spread in China. However, the country will open the border to let in the COVAX Facility personnel. (Stephen Silver, *The National Interest*)
- North Korea may not be known as an academic powerhouse, but there appears to be a propaganda effort underway to create that reputation for one of its universities. (Stephen Silver, *The National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- While COVID-19 has brought suffering to the whole world, North Korea seems to have become a beneficiary of the pandemic as the combined military drill between South Korea and the United States has been downsized due to the deadly disease. On Monday, Seoul and Washington kicked off their joint military training, but the nine-day exercise is proceeding as a computer-simulated command post exercise (CPX) only with no outdoor drills after the allies decided to scale it back, citing the coronavirus. Last year they canceled both spring and summer drills. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- President Moon Jae-in’s push to revive denuclearization talks is expected to gain fresh momentum as he plans to hold in-person talks with senior US officials next week to discuss pending issues, including Washington’s ongoing policy review on North Korea. (Lee Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea’s unification ministry is planning to invest nearly $500,000 to develop an English-language website focusing on North Korea and inter-Korean relations, according to a notice published last week. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young recently made a rare visit to a hidden bunker serving as a wartime command center amid an ongoing springtime combined military exercise with the United States, a source said Thursday. Lee visited the "B-1 bunker" in Seoul on Wednesday with Defense Minister Suh Wook to encourage soldiers. The bunker, under the control of the Army's Capital Defense Command, serves as a command center for South Korean forces in the event of an armed conflict with North Korea. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- While North Korean technology is relatively primitive, the nation’s air defenses are coordinated and far harder to crack than one might think. If any administration chooses to intervene in North Korea, the White House may discover that Pyongyang is a more formidable adversary than many might expect. (*The National Interest*)
- President Joe Biden administration’s review of its policy toward North Korea is expected to be finished “within the next month or so,” a senior White House official was quoted. The new administration’s review comes after former President Donald Trump’s unprecedented engagement with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un over the previous four years. However,

the “friendlier” tone in the relationship between the two countries failed to persuade the isolated East Asian nation to give up its nuclear weapons ambitions. (Ethen Kim Lieser, *The National Interest*)

- The unification ministry said it will continue to maintain close communication with the international community on a recently legislated ban on sending anti-Pyongyang leaflets into North Korea after a U.N special rapporteur voiced concerns over South Korea's decision. Earlier, Special Rapporteur Tomas Ojea Quintana submitted a report to the U.N. Human Rights Council (UNHRC), expressing concern that the ban "limits many activities of escapees and civil society organizations" and that such limits "may not comply with" international human rights law. (*Yonhap*)
- Pyongyang still sees in Vietnam a model for its own aspirations to reunify the Korean peninsula. However, relations between the former allies have remained cool, particularly since Pyongyang failed to pay for a Vietnamese rice shipment in 1996. (Sebastien Roblin, *The National Interest*)
- A Malaysian court has agreed to the extradition of a North Korean man, Mun Chol Myong, to the United States, after the business executive was charged with money laundering in 2019. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- The United Nations could be asking South Korea and other U.N. member states to do more to improve the human rights situation in North Korea -- a sensitive topic for Seoul as it seeks to bring Pyongyang back to talks. U.N. Special Rapporteur for North Korean Human Rights Tomás Ojea Quintana noted in a new report to the U.N. Human Rights Council that the U.N. Security Council lacked action on North Korea rights abuses. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- The United States' top military commander on the Korean Peninsula said there is no evidence North Korea has stopped nuclear weapons development, less than a month after Seoul confirmed Pyongyang has increased investments in missile research and development facilities. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- The United Nations investigator of human rights violations in North Korea on Wednesday called on South Korea to address the North’s rights violations in nuclear talks and to seek economic and humanitarian exchanges in a human rights-based framework. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- World powers bear responsibility for ignoring crimes against humanity that may still be perpetrated by authorities in North Korea amid a focus on its nuclear programme, a U.N. human rights investigator said on Wednesday. Tomas Ojea-Quintana urged the U.N. Security Council to refer grave violations in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) to the International Criminal Court for prosecution. (Stephanie Nebehay, *Reuters*)

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VOA

**Quintana says U.N. Security Council should refer North Korean human rights to ICC, America is concerned about the worsening situation**

Reporter Oh Taek-sung
2021.3.11 4:00 A.M.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in North Koreau urged the UN Security Council to refer the serious human rights situation in North Korea to the International Criminal Court. The

United States revealed that it is deeply concerned about the worsening human rights situation in North Korea. This is Oh Taek-sung reporting.

North Korea's human rights talks took place at the United Nations Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, where the 46th regular session of the United Nations Human Rights Council was held on the 10th, featuring Tomas Ojea Quintana, the UN's Special Rapporteur on North Korean Human Rights, representatives from each country, and non-governmental organizations.

At the meeting, which was held both on site and via video conference, Special Rapporteur Quintana stressed the seriousness of human rights abuses in North Korea once again.

[Recording: Special Rapporteur Quintana] "The crimes listed by the commission included extermination, murder, enslavement, torture, imprisonment, rape, forced abortions and other forms of sexual violence, persecution on political, religious, racial and gender grounds."

In North Korea, extinction and murder, enslavement, torture, imprisonment, sexual assault, forced abortion, other forms of sexual violence, and persecution based on religion, race, and gender are taking place.

Special Rapporteur Quintana says North Korea is currently denying human rights abuses, and stressed that a UN response is needed.

In particular, he urged the UN Security Council to refer the North Korean situation to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

[Recording: Special Rapporteur Quintana] "The human rights situation in the DPRK demands once and for all the stronger actions by the United Nations in this vein. The time has come for the Security Council to decide on the referral of the situation of the DPRK to the International Criminal Court."

Special Rapporteur Quintana repeatedly pointed out the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the human rights situation in North Korea.

As North Korea continues to block the border due to the coronavirus, transactions with China, their biggest trading partner, have drastically decreased, resulting in shrinking market activities, worsening food conditions, and other side effects, which is causing great damage to North Koreans.

As a report submitted on the 1st pointed out, he said he is most concerned about the situation in incarceration facilities and other areas during the pandemic, and advised that international conferences should be organized so that the international community can turn their attention to this matter.

Special Rapporteur Quintana also pointed out that North Korea's extreme response to the coronavirus is adversely affecting humanitarian aid.

[Recording: Special Rapporteur Quintana] "While the sanctions committee has expedited exemptions for humanitarian assistance, humanitarian goods bound for the DPR Korea have remained at the border with China for months due to import restrictions."

The U.N. Security Council's Sanctions Committee on North Korea is promoting a waiver of sanctions on Indian aid to North Korea, but the quarantine measures are keeping the aid at the border.

The international community, including the United States, the EU, and the United Kingdom, expressed concern about the human rights situation in North Korea, which was revealed by Special Rapporteur Quintana.

The U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Mission to the United Nations and Other International Organizations, Mark Cassayre said the United States is deeply concerned about the worsening human rights situation in North Korea at the online meeting.

[Recording: Ambassador Cassayre] "The United States is also deeply concerned with the deteriorating human rights situation in North Korea. Since the DPRK closed its borders due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the rigid controls inflicted on the North Korean people have become more restrictive and punishments for non-compliance more severe."

After the closure of North Korea's border, the regime's control over its residents has become stricter and the punishment for non-compliance has become more severe.

Special Rapporteur Quintana mentioned in a report that the North Korean regime ordered those that cross the border to be killed to prevent the spread of infections and revealed that the United States condemns this.

The EU says it is shocked by the serious human rights violations that are rampant in North Korea and supports the UN Security Council referral to the International Criminal Court.

The EU also said they should actively cooperate with Special Rapporteur Quintana in fulfilling his duties.

COVAX, an international project aimed to fairly distribute the coronavirus vaccine, recently announced that it would distribute about 1.7 million doses of the vaccine to North Korea, raising calls for North Korea to take advantage of it as an opportunity for international involvement.

Norway's Permanent Representative to the UN and Other International Organizations in Geneva, Tine Mørch Smith, says North Korea should allow unrestricted access to major support from medical staff and humanitarian organizations involved in the coronavirus vaccination.

[Recording: Ambassador Smith] "We urge the government of the DPRK to facilitate unimpeded access to medical staff involved in Covid-19 vaccinations and humanitarian agencies providing critical assistance."

In addition, Japan urged the resolution of the issue of Japanese abductees to North Korea at the meeting, and South Korea said there was no need to delay video interviews regarding the reunion of separated families and that it should be carried out.

Some countries, including Russia, China, Iran, and others say North Korea's human rights issues should not be subject to a double standard.

Several non-governmental organizations also attended the mutual dialogue to express their position on the human rights situation in North Korea.

Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the Washington D.C.-based civil society organization Committee for Human Rights in North Korean (HRNK), says measures for the post-coronavirus situation must be prepared.

[Recording: Executive Director Scarlatoiu] "I wish to propose a post-Covid reset that could involve a comprehensive approach to the DPRK, comprising humanitarian assistance linked to human rights based on a human rights up front approach, humanitarian assistance targeting the most vulnerable women, children, people in detention, an approach combined with adequate accountability measures. "

It suggests a reset for after the coronavirus, which includes a comprehensive approach to North Korea, including a human-rights-first approach, the continuous delivery of support, the delivery of support to the most vulnerable groups including women, children, and those in detention, the seeking of appropriate responsibility, a determined approach, and more.

Amnesty International, based in London, UK, says North Korea's isolation intensified last year, including banning residents from going abroad and supplies from entering the country to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), an international civil society organization based in London, UK, says international attention is urgently needed for the human rights situation in North Korea involving fundamental rights, freedom, religion, and the right to faith.

The Jubilee Campaign says it agrees with the concern and recommendation Special Rapporteur Quintana made for a review of the anti-leaflet law South Korea recently enacted.

Meanwhile, North Korea did not participate in this multilateral dialogue.

On the 23rd, the last day of the board meeting, the UN Human Rights Council is expected to adopt a resolution condemning North Korea's human rights violations and calling for accountability.

This was Oh Taek-sung reporting for VOA News.

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Translated by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Rick Herssevoort, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250730161340/https://mailchi.mp/6bd5157957b9/hrnk-news-item squintana-says-un-security-council-should-refer-north-korean-human-rights-to-icc-america-is-concerned-about-the-worsening-situation?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, March 12, 2021**

# North Korean Women: An Allegory of Resilience Under The World's Most Repressive Regime

**Top News:**
North Korean Women: An Allegory of Resilience Under The World's Most Repressive Regime (*HRNK YPWP*, 3/12/2021)
**[One year of the Corona Pandemic] "North Korean regime contains country… Strengthened control worsens lives and human rights of residents" (VOA, 3/12/2021)
HC report on DPRK, SG update on UN in Myanmar & Item: 4 General Debate - 32nd Meeting, 46th Regular Session Human Rights Council (*UN Web TV*, 3/12/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Did North Korea Almost Invade South Korea in 1983? (*National Interest*, 3/12/2021)
Drawing the fine line between art and propaganda in North Korea (*NK News*, 3/12/2021)
Four publicly executed in Pyongyang on charges of distributing "illegal video materials" (*Daily NK*, 3/12/2021)
Getting information about North Korea's gulag is harder than ever (*The Economist*, 3/12/2021)
Here we go again: Kim Jong Un is pinning false hope on tech to fix his economy (*NK News*, 3/12/2021)
Is nuclear peace with North Korea possible? (*The Korea Herald*, 3/12/2021)
N.K.'s official paper calls for tighter antivirus efforts in time for spring season (*Yonhap*, 3/12/2021)
N Korean defectors struggle to send money home amid pandemic (AP, 3/12/2021)
North Korea calls attention to 'comradely friendship' with Cuba on Castro anniversary (UPI, 3/11/2021)
North Korea got darker during Covid-19 crisis, says rights defender (*La Prensa*, 3/12/2021)
North Korea remains quiet five days into US-ROK joint military drill (*NK News*, 3/12.2021)
North Korean shipping rises in early March, hinting at loosened quarantine rules (*NK News*, 3/12/2021)
North Korean Youth Find Ways to Dodge Military Service (*RFA*, 3/11/2021)
Sluggish progress on key construction despite rare visits by DPRK leader (*NK News*, 3/12/2021)
Summary of domestic news in North Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 3/12/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Moon must stop daydreaming about North Korea (*The Japan Times*, 3/11/2021)

The F-35 Could Do Some Real Damage to North Korea (*National Interest*, 3/11/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
South Korea to host North Korea for World Cup qualifiers (*France*24, 3/12/2021)
Summary of inter-Korean news this week (*Yonhap*, 3/12/2021)

**International:**
A North Korean Nuclear Strike: The End of the World As We Know It? (*National Interest*, 3/11/2021)
China, Iran, North Korea seek support at U.N. to push back against unilateral force, sanctions (*Reuters*, 3/11/2021)
Debating North Korea policy (*The Korea Times*, 3/12/2021)
Diplomacy and pressure should go 'hand in hand' in US policy toward NK (*The Korea Herald*, 3/12/2021)
Former U.S. nuke negotiator urges Seoul, Washington to refrain from large-scale military exercises (*Yonhap*, 3/12/2021)
Key developments on North Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 3/12/2021)
Mun Chol Myong: The First-Ever North Korean Criminal Facing Extradition to the US(*The Diplomat*, 3/10/2021)
No plan to deploy new anti-missile assets in S. Korea: USFK (*Yonhap*, 3/12/2021)
Nuclear peace with North Korea is possible (*The Japan Times*, 3/12/2021)
Summary of external news of North Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 3/12/2021)
US Forces Korea commander was underwhelmed by North Korea's most recent missile display (*Stars and Stripes*, 3/11/2021)
U.S., Japan need fresh approach to alliance (*UPI*, 3/12/2021)

**Top News:**

- In the face of continuous hardships, persecution, and state-sponsored violence, North Korean women have displayed unwavering fortitude and strength. Through creativity, perseverance, and resilience, they have overcome the hardships of the 1990s and trailblazed a way of survival when the Kim regime could not. The international community must stand up for their rights to honor and support the bravery and sacrifices of North Korea's most resilient demographic: women. (Tristin Shultz, HRNK YPWP)
- Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of a private organization in Washington called the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), told VOA on the 11th, "The North Korean regime is dealing with the coronavirus like it is a political and ideological issue, not a public health issue." (Cho Eun-jung, VOA)
- Report of the High Commissioner on the implementation of the recommendations made by the group of independent experts on accountability for human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (UN Web TV)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea may very well have intended to invade the South. It is unlikely that the United States or South Korea would have been caught off-guard had an attack actually occurred. (Edward Chang, *National Interest*)

- While it's easy to think of art made in North Korea as purely propagandistic, experts said recent national exhibitions in Pyongyang revealed the artists' individuality and attempts to push the limit of what is acceptable in the DPRK. "Some pieces really reflect the really wonderful inner expression of the artists," said B. G. Muhn, a Georgetown University art professor and author of several books on North Korean art. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Four North Koreans were publicly executed in Pyongyang recently on charges of distributing "illegal video materials," Daily NK has learned. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- One family was sent to a prison camp after a relative was accused of, and then executed for, opposing the regime. Another family was detained after one of them was caught searching for relatives of a man who had escaped to South Korea. One unfortunate fled to China, only to be arrested and sent home, whereupon he was promptly dispatched to a camp. (*The Economist*)
- Kim Jong Un is once again relying on science and technology to solve his economic problems. But history has shown that, despite numerous attempts by communist leaders, misguided scientific development will do more harm than good. (Andrei Lankov, *NK News*)
- North Korea's recent public displays of new intercontinental and submarine-launched ballistic missiles have raised fresh concerns about the risks the regime in Pyongyang poses to the US mainland. As President Joe Biden's administration reviews US policy toward the DPRK over the past four years and draws what lessons it can from Donald Trump's nuclear summitry with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, it should consider a new arms-control approach. (Bennett Ramberg, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea's official paper urged the people not to let their guard down against the new coronavirus, saying laxity is the "greatest enemy" in their ongoing efforts to ward off the highly contagious disease. (*Yonhap*)
- For the first time in years, Choi Bok-hwa didn't get her annual birthday call from her mother in North Korea. Each January, Choi's mother had climbed a mountain and used a broker's smuggled Chinese cellphone to call South Korea to wish her happy birthday and arrange a badly needed money transfer. (Hyung-Jin Kim, AP)
- North Korea highlighted its friendship with Cuba in state media, calling bilateral ties "strategic and comradely" after the United States said previous policies on Cuba are under review. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- Spanish researcher Lina Yoon, who has been secretly documenting human rights violations in North Korea for around five years, has expressed concern over how the regime took advantage of the coronavirus pandemic to strengthen further its grip over the country. (Andres Sanchez, *La Prensa*)
- Five days after the U.S. and South Korea started their joint military drill, North Korea showed no signs of the threats and protests previously seen against the exercise. In past years, the DPRK had often denounced the springtime drill as a rehearsal for an invasion. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- North Korean shipping seems to be back to rates seen before the country's tough second lockdown, with thirteen DPRK-flagged vessels actively transmitting data from March 3-12, according to Automatic Identification System (AIS) records. The continued rise in ship traffic indicated that North Korea's maritime quarantine restrictions were loosened in February. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- More and more North Korean youth are dodging mandatory military service, because ruling party membership and all its perks are no longer as automatic for those who finish lengthy stints in the armed forces, sources in the country told RFA. (Jieun Kim, RFA)

- Looking back on Kim Jong Un's least-active year of field inspections yet, the Kwangchon Chicken Farm stood out for being one of only three economic development initiatives that the North Korean leader publicly visited in 2020. This week, comments by one of Kim's top deputies revealed that the farm was still not finished, meaning all three of these top-priority projects remained delayed or incomplete. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- The following is a summary of domestic news in North Korea this week. (*Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- The Biden administration's Indo-Pacific policy is taking shape. White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki announced that U.S. President Joe Biden will meet virtually on March 12 with his counterparts in the Quad — Japan, India and Australia — and that it would be the first time that the Quad is meeting "at the leader level." (Kuni Miyake, *The Japan Times*)
- The ROKAF might opt to fly the F-35A in formations with fourth-generation aircraft to provide better situational awareness and communications capability, enhancing the ability of the entire formation to fly and fight. Usage in such a role would mitigate one of the biggest criticisms of the F-35, the limited onboard weapon capacity. (Charlie Gao, *National Interest*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korea will host North Korea for a series of World Cup and Asian Cup qualifiers later this year, the Asian Football Confederation said on Friday. (*France24*)
- The following is a summary of inter-Korean news this week. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Once the nuclear threshold is crossed, the only possible response would be nuclear. (*National Interest*)
- China, Russia, North Korea, Iran and others are seeking support for a coalition to defend the United Nations Charter by pushing back against the use or threat of force and unilateral sanctions, according to a letter seen by Reuters on Thursday. (Michelle Nichols, *Reuters*)
- Korea watchers are anxiously awaiting both the Biden administration finishing its North Korea policy review and Pyongyang conducting its next provocation. Impatience with the former and fear of the latter have led experts to advocate for measures buying Pyongyang's continued inertia against committing further violations of U.N. resolutions. (Bruce Klingner, *The Korea Times*)
- As the Biden administration is conducting its policy review on Pyongyang with a chance of doubling down pressure on the reclusive regime, a former Trump official on North Korea stressed that the pressure in itself is not "sustainable," but has to be paired with diplomacy to achieve any kind of progress. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- A former U.S. nuclear negotiator on Friday called on South Korea and the United States to refrain from large-scale combined exercises and urged North Korea to avoid nuclear tests to achieve progress in denuclearization talks. (*Yonhap*)
- The following are key developments regarding North Korea this week. (*Yonhap*)
- For the first time in history, a North Korean businessman is set to be extradited to the United States to face several charges of money laundering and supplying prohibited luxury goods to North Korea (Jason Bartlett, *The Diplomat*)
- The U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) said Friday its commander's recent remark on a plan to build new missile defense capabilities on the Korean Peninsula does not involve the introduction of new equipment or units. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's recent public displays of new intercontinental and submarine-launched ballistic missiles have raised fresh concerns about the risks the regime in Pyongyang poses to the U.S. mainland. As President Joe Biden's administration reviews U.S. policy toward the DPRK over the past four years and draws what lessons it can from Donald Trump's nuclear

summitry with North Korean leader Kim Jong un, it should consider a new arms-control approach. (Bennett Ramberg, *The Japan Times*)
- The following is a summary of external news of North Korea this week. (*Yonhap*)
- The top U.S. general on the Korean Peninsula has poured cold water on the North's claim of possessing the "world's most powerful weapon." (Seth Robson, *Stars and Stripes*)
- The US and Japan need a fresh approach to their alliance to counter the threats presented by North Korea and China. (Ra Mason, UPI)

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VOA

**[One year of the Corona Pandemic] "North Korean regime contains country... Strengthened control worsens lives and human rights of residents"**

Reporter Cho Eunjung
2021.3.12 3:30 A.M.

It has been a year since the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the coronavirus to be a pandemic. During this period, North Korea has thoroughly blocked its borders, taking a toll on society and on the economy as a whole, and has strengthened its control over its people. Reporter Cho Eun-jung will examine the issue.

One year ago, on March 11 last year, World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus declared the novel coronavirus a pandemic, the highest level of infectious disease.

[Recording: Director-General Ghebreyesus] "We're deeply concerned both by the alarming levels of spread and severity and by the alarming levels of inaction. We have therefore made the assessment that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic."

Along with the declaration he made at the time, Director-General Ghebreyesus expressed his deep concern for the alarming rate at which Corona was spreading and its severity.

The WHO's pandemic declaration came more than 70 days after China belatedly reported to the WHO that an unidentified pneumonia outbreak occurred in Wuhan on December 31, 2019.

On January 31, 2020, North Korea was the first country in the world to block their borders as part of its response to Corona prior to the WHO's declaration of pandemics.

[Recording: Chosun Central TV] "The best choice is to preemptively block and contain all the places where the virus can invade, including the ground, sea, and the air."

**"North Korean-Chinese trade at an all-time low"**

As North Korea closed its borders, trade with China, its largest trading partner, fell to an unprecedented level.

According to data from the China Coast Guard, North Korea imported about $49.15 million worth of goods from China last year and exported about $48 million worth of goods. Compared to last year, mass imports to China decreased by 80% and mass exports to China decreased by more than 70%.

On the 11th to VOA, William Brown, a professor at Georgetown University in the U.S. and an expert on North Korean economics, analyzed that the cut in imports of Chinese consumer goods would have had a big impact on the lives of the North Korean people.

[Recording: Professor Brown] “The impact of the sanctions before the virus was mostly hitting the state industry, big state enterprises. But in the last year, it’s also had a big impact on local markets, because they would trade a lot of Chinese products in the markets.”

Before the Corona outbreak, state-run industries and large state-run companies were mainly hit by sanctions against North Korea, and after the border blockade, markets were also affected by the suspension of border trade.

Professor Brown says the border blockade has created a "phenomenally troublesome" situation for the North Korean economy, saying factories cannot import machinery parts and lack everything including electricity and water.

Last year, authorities also said they "raised money here and there” to protect the value of the North Korean won and “the residents were angry."

**“Exchange rates and price instability deepens”**

In the aftermath of the border blockade, North Korea's exchange rate and price instability have also intensified.

South Korea's National Intelligence Service said in a parliamentary report late last year that the prices of sugar and condiments in North Korea soared.

In addition, the strange phenomenon of the value of the North Korean won increasing has occurred. If the economy worsens, the dollar should rise and the won should fall, but the opposite happened. This seems to be due to the authorities' intervention in preventing the use of foreign currency.

The Russian Embassy in Pyongyang said on Facebook in October, "Pyongyang retail stores do not accept dollars or narae cards (prepaid electronic foreign currency cards) and demand payments in won."

**“Crackdown on money stocks” ... “Strengthening control on thought”**

North Korean defectors say that North Korean authorities began cracking down on money stocks last year amid the blockage in foreign trade.

Park Ji-hyun, a former North Korean defector and a human rights activist in the U.K., quoted a North Korean insider, telling VOA that the North Korean authorities began cracking down on money stocks after the speed transfer "80-day battle" began in October last year.

[Recording: Park Ji-hyun] "With the start of the 80-day battle, the government tracked down the property of private business owners in Pyongyang. They’ve also issued a full purge policy for loan sharks, people who lend money."

Park claimed that the crackdown forced one private business owner in Pyongyang to give $650,000 to the authorities.

Lee Hyun-seung, who defected with his father, a high-ranking official at the North Korean Labor Party's 39th office, says North Korean authorities often confiscate personal funds to cover foreign currency.

[Recording: Lee Hyun-seung] "The North Korean regime is targeting individuals to cover foreign currency. They target market loan sharks and people who make some money, and confiscate their assets. Everything aside from one’s income is recognized as unearned income so the North Korean regime has the authority to confiscate it at any time."

North Korea tightened its control over thought last year.

North Korea adopted the “Peninsula Culture Exclusion Act,” which strongly punishes residents who encounter external cultures, at a plenary session of the Supreme People's Assembly in December. The act states that those who distribute South Korean videos will be sentenced to death and viewers will receive up to 15 years in prison.

**“Corona used as political control measures” ... “Human rights situation worsens”**

In a report submitted to the UN Human Rights Council on the 1st, Tomas Ojea Quintana, the UN’s Special Rapporteur on North Korean Human Rights, said the North Korean authorities' extreme corona response made the human rights situation worse for North Koreans.

He pointed out food shortages caused by the border blockade, the worsening environment of North Korean imprisonment facilities, and a sharp drop in the number of North Korean defectors.

Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of a private organization in Washington called the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), told VOA on the 11th, “The North Korean regime is dealing with the coronavirus like it is a political and ideological issue, not a public health issue.”

[Recording: Executive Director Scarlatoiu] “The N Korean regime refuses that international cooperation, has put in place draconian measures, has been trying hard to crack down on the gray and black markets of N Korea, has been trying very hard to crack down on information entering N Korea from the outside world…”

North Korea has refused to cooperate with the international community in responding to Corona, has introduced very strict control measures, and is cracking down on market activities and the inflow of information.

**“The suspension of humanitarian assistance” … “Most relief agents have departed”**

Nearly all presiding diplomats and relief workers in Pyongyang have fled as the border was sealed off and activities in North Korea were severely restricted.

The North Korean regime brought in some relief supplies in the early days of the coronavirus outbreak, but Chairman Kim Jong-un personally expressed his intention to refuse outside aid after flooding and typhoon damage occurred in the summer.

Daniel Jasper, the Asia Public Education and Advocacy Coordinator at the American Friends Service Committee, told VOA on the 11th that all U.S. aid organizations have stopped providing aid to North Korea.

[Recording: Coordinator Jasper] “It’s paused our programs for the last year. We have not been able to send aid, nor have we been able to visit the country... We’re waiting until the borders reopen for us to get our shipments together and send them.”

Jasper says they have not been able to visit North Korea or send aid over the past year, and that he is waiting for the border to reopen so they can gather supplies and send it over.

With UN organizations tied up at ports around the Chinese border, the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) recently revealed in its "Strategic Plan" document, "If food imports to North Korea are not possible, activities are likely to be suspended in 2021."

This was Cho Eunjung from VOA News.

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Translated by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Carter Thompson, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250730161516/https://mailchi.mp/10cb13972ac5/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-korean-women-an-allegory-of-resilience-under-the-worlds-most-repressive-regime?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, March 13, 2021**

# K-Pop Embrace of Nazi Symbolism Defames Our Collective Past; Ax-Wielding North Korean Soldiers Nearly Triggered World War III

**Top News:**
K-Pop Embrace of Nazi Symbolism Defames Our Collective Past (*Daily Beast*, 3/12/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Ax-Wielding North Korean Soldiers Nearly Triggered World War III (*The National Interest*, 03/13/2021)
North Korea's Yongbyon Nuclear Center: Additional Activity at the Radiochemical Laboratory and Uranium Enrichment Plant (*38 North*, 03/12/2021)
North Korea Tried to Help Syria Become a Nuclear Powerhouse (*The National Interest*, 03/12/2021)
North Korea working hard to restore diplomacy, ex-diplomat says (UPI, 03/12/2021)

**International:**
Biden, Quad leaders affirm commitment to denuclearization of N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 03/13/2021)
Blinken's trip to Asia will provide 'key ingredient' for U.S. policy toward N. Korea: Price (*Yonhap*, 03/13/2021)
North Korea sanctions slow, but don't stop nuclear development, analyst says (UPI, 03/12/2021)
'Quad' leaders commit to North Korea denuclearization, but not peninsula peace(*NK News*, 03/12/2021)

Reports: 43 member states co-sponsor North Korea human rights draft resolution(*UPI*, 03/12/2021)
U.S. expects to complete N. Korea policy review in "weeks": Sung Kim (*Yonhap*, 03/13/2021)
US officials' trip to Seoul and Tokyo will inform North Korea policy review (*NK News*, 03/12/2021)

**Top News:**

- K-pop singer Sowon of GFriend posted on Instagram a photo of her hugging a Nazi soldier's mannequin. Greg Scarlatoiu, the executive director of HRNK, and Rabbi Abraham Cooper stated, "the swastika is not a joke, a marketing tool, or a fashion accessory. It is a symbol of pure and unadulterated evil still motivating hate crimes against Jews and people of color. K-pop can play an unprecedented role in warning young people to learn from the crimes of the past or help set the stage for future trampling of human rights by inuring its fans to the reality of evil." (Greg Scarlatoiu, Rabbi Cooper, *Daily Beast*)

**In North Korea:**

- On August 1976, a United Nations Command work party entered the JSA in the Demilitarized Zone to trim the branches of a poplar tree that was obscuring the view of UNC observers. Then, two U.S. Army officers, Capt. Arthur Bonifas and 1st Lt. Mark Barrett was killed by ax-wielding North Korean soldiers. (Michael Peck, *The National Interest*)
- Commercial satellite imagery indicates continued signs of operation at the thermal plant that supplies steam to the Radiochemical Laboratory, where plutonium is recovered from spent reactor fuel. (Jack Liu, Olli Heinonen, Peter Makowsky, Frank Pabian, *38 North*)
- As soon as Jerusalem was fairly certain that Syria was on the verge of activating a nuclear reactor with help from North Korea, they bombed this nuclear site in September 2007. (Marcel Serr**,** *The National Interest*)
- Ryu Hyeon-woo, Pyongyang's former acting ambassador to Kuwait, said in a recent interview with South Korean newspaper Donga Ilbo that North Korea has not given up on restoring diplomacy with Washington. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

**International:**

- U.S. President Joe Biden and his counterparts from Australia, India and Japan on Friday reaffirmed their commitment to the full denuclearization of North Korea. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's trip to Japan and South Korea will give him a chance to coordinate U.S. policy and its approach toward North Korea, a State Department official said Friday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Sanctions had a definite impact on Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program, but it has not stopped the Kim Jong Un regime from continued development, former IAEA deputy director general Olli Heinonen said, according to Voice of America's Korean service on Friday. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- An informal strategic forum between the U.S., Japan, India and Australia committed to pursuing North Korean denuclearization and resolving the Japanese abductee issue on Friday, but didn't mention pursuing peace on the Korean Peninsula. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- Dozens of United Nations member states are co-sponsoring a draft resolution at the U.N. Human Rights Council, condemning North Korean human rights abuses, but South Korea is not one of them. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

- The United States is expected to complete its ongoing review of its North Korea policy in a few "weeks," a senior U.S. State Department official said Friday, ahead of Secretary Antony Blinken's upcoming trip to South Korea and Japan to discuss the issue. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- The White House's new plan on North Korea is still a work in progress and will be informed by top officials' upcoming trips to Seoul and Tokyo, a U.S. State Department spokesperson said on Friday. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)

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Prepared by Jungeun Lee, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250730161721/https://mailchi.mp/fa55c6aab2fb/hrnk-news-items k-pop-embrace-of-nazi-symbolism-defames-our-collective-past-ax-wielding-north-korean-soldier s-nearly-triggered-world-war-iii?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Sunday, March 14, 2021

# North Korea executes lockdown violators fleeing starvation: UN; Fears mount over North Korean 'great leap backwards'

**Top News:**
North Korea executes lockdown violators fleeing starvation: UN (*Nikkei Asia*, 03/13/2021)
** More NGOs urge the UN to improve North Korean human rights... "The international response yields a positive influence..." (VOA, 03/12/2021)
"North Korea: Atrocity Crimes and Future Accountability" with The Honorable Morse Tan (*HRNK*, 03/10/2021)
** North Korea Says "Our Women Enjoy State Benefits"... International Community Responds "Not True" (*Ilyo Seoul*, 03/09/2021)
** WHO "North Korea has no COVID-19 patients"... Test Numbers Not Released for at least 2 Months (RFA, 03/08/2021)
** North Korea Says "Our Women Enjoy State Benefits": Propaganda "Not True"(*Newsis*, 03/09/2021)

** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**
Fears mount over North Korean 'great leap backwards' (*The Financial Times*, 03/14/2021)

**International:**

[ANALYSIS] Why is Pyongyang unresponsive to Biden administration? (*The Korea Times*, 03/14/2021)
Biden administration started outreach to North Korea last month, but country is unresponsive (CNN, 03/14/2021)
Blinken to embark on Asia trip to discuss N. Korea, China issues amid U.S. policy review (*Yonhap*, 03/14/2021)
China, North Korea loom as Blinken, Austin head to Asia (*AP News*, 03/14/2021)
Exclusive: North Korea unresponsive to behind-the-scenes Biden administration outreach - U.S. official (*Reuters*, 03/14/2021)
How to get Biden moving (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/14/2021)
Inside the U.S. Military's Real Master Plan to Crush North Korea (*The National Interest*, 03/14/2021)
North Korea 'not responding' to US contact efforts (*BBC News*, 03/14/2021)
North Korea ignored backdoor US diplomatic outreach since mid-February (*NK News*, 03/13/2021)
North Korean Defectors Want America to Fight Kim to the Last American (*The National Interest*, 03/13/2021)
US to end North Korea review in weeks: official (*The Korea Herald*, 03/14/2021)

**Top News:**

- According to Tomas Ojea-Quintana, the United Nations' Special Rapporteur for human rights in North Korea, the North Korean government's strict COVID-19 restriction measures have led to widespread food insecurity. He also added that a new detention facility for those violating COVID-19 quarantine measures had reportedly been built in North Hwanghae province with several cases being reported of severe punishment against those breaking anti-epidemic prevention measures. Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), pointed out that ICC referral is an option, but a problematic one. (Gabriela Bernal, *Nikkei Asia*)
- An increasing number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are calling for the improvement of North Korea's human rights through direct remarks or recommendation submissions to the United Nations. Analysts say that such activities by (NGOs) also have a positive impact on the North Korean policies of the UN and the governments of each country. According to Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, "the role of NGOs is very important when it comes to North Korea because it has been NGOs, CSOs, civil society organizations that have been investigating and reporting on the North Korean human rights situation for more than 20 years now." (Kim Young-kwon, VOA)
- On International Women's Day, North Korea boasted that their women enjoy state benefits. However, the international community has responded that this is not true. Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, told Radio Free Asia, "International Women's Day is known as 'World Women's Day' in North Korea and it holds a different meaning. It's not about a struggle for human rights, nor a struggle for women's rights. March 8th is simply another chance, another opportunity to praise the regime and idolize North Korea's supreme leader." (Jung Jae-ho, *Ilyo Seoul*)
- For over two months, North Korea has not disclosed any specific information about COVID-19, or coronavirus, in the country. Experts have pointed out the need to for

transparent sharing of information from North Korea in order to respond appropriately to COVID-19. Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, told RFA that at this moment in time when international cooperation and support are important, it's a problem that North Korea is not sharing any information and continues to remain isolated. (Ji Jung-eun, RFA)

- The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Seoul released a statement to commemorate International Women's Day on the 8th in which it stated, "[the] DPRK must make sustained efforts to promote women's rights, increase women representation in leadership positions, address all forms of gender-based discrimination and ensure equitable and inclusive society," and urged the DPRK to, "combat trafficking of women and girls, allow safe and humane migration/movement, and increase the minimum age of marriage for women to 18 years." According to Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, International Women's Day holds a different meaning in North Korea. It's not about a struggle for human rights, nor a struggle for women's rights. March 8th is simply another chance, another opportunity to praise the regime and idolize North Korea's supreme leader." (Park Daero, *Newsis*)

**In North Korea:**

- Foreign government officials, international aid workers, human rights activists and diplomats are urging the North Korean leader to partially reopen his country to foreign assistance. There are mounting fears over food security and economic collapse, while there is no clear plan to vaccinate a population of 25 million people. (Edward White, Kang Buseong, *The Financial Times*)

**International:**

- North Korea watchers said it is not yet the right time for North Korea to accept Washington's calls for talks, while President Joe Biden's administration has yet to draw up its North Korea policy. (Jung Da-min, *The Korea Times*)
- Both U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin will visit South Korea beginning Wednesday for talks with their counterparts there that will also include a Two-Plus-Two meeting. The State Department has said the secretaries will discuss a wide range of regional and global issues while visiting the two key U.S. allies in Asia, including how to deal with North Korea. The U.S. is currently undergoing a comprehensive review of its North Korea policy that it says will create a new and different approach toward the North from those in the past. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin are heading to Japan and South Korea for four days of talks starting Monday as the new administration tries to shore up partnerships with the two key regional allies. Blinken and Austin also plan virtual meetings with journalists, civil-society members and others. (Matthew Lee, *AP News*)
- North Korea has not responded to behind-the-scenes diplomatic outreach since mid-February by President Joe Biden's administration, including to Pyongyang's mission to the United Nations, a senior Biden administration official told on Saturday. The official said it appeared there had been no active dialogue between the United States and North Korea for more than a year, including at the end of Trump's administration, "despite multiple attempts during that time by the United States to engage." (Phil Stewart, *Reuters*)
- North Korea's unpredictable leader Kim Jong-un has many ways of making war upon his neighbors. He can unleash commandos, or cyberweapons, or threaten to utilize weapons of mass destruction unless the world complies with his wishes. A war with Pyongyang would likely involve nukes and millions dead. Nevertheless, America hopes to use special forces and precision weaponry to reduce the number of dead. (Michael Peck, *The National Interest*)

- Pyongyang's silence comes as the Biden administration continues to work on its North Korea policy review, which will determine how Washington approaches denuclearization and peace on the peninsula after four years of former President Donald Trump's unconventional, summit-driven approach. So far, North Korea's lack of response to Washington's backdoor diplomatic efforts has some analysts concerned. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- Although North Korean defectors typically do not provide good policy advice regarding the DPRK, they are a useful reminder of the moral stakes in defusing the Korean confrontation. (Doug Bandow, *The National Interest*)
- The US will wrap up its policy review on North Korea in the coming weeks, a senior US diplomat for East Asian affairs said Friday, ahead of senior-level talks to take place in Seoul this week between the Secretary of State and Defense Secretary and their South Korean counterparts. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)

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VOA

**More NGOs urge the UN to improve North Korean human rights... "The international response yields a positive influence..."**

Reporter Kim Young-kwon

2021.3.12 1:00 A.M.

An increasing number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are calling for the improvement of North Korea's human rights through direct remarks or recommendation submissions to the United Nations. Analysts say that such activities by (NGOs) also have a positive impact on the North Korean policies of the UN and the governments of each country. Kim Young-kwon reporting.

Seven NGOs as well as U.N. officials and member states exercised their say in the North Korean human rights dialogue held by the UN Human Rights Council on the 10th.

Amnesty International, the faith-based Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), the legal NGO Jubilee Campaign, UN Watch, a monitoring group, the People for Successful COrean REunification (PSCORE), the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), and the Center for Global NonKilling (CGNK) as the representative of the European Union have shared their views on North Korean human rights.

This is Arnold Fang, a researcher on East Asia at Amnesty International, speaking.

[Recording: Researcher Fang] "While the internet held the rest of the world together, DPRK remained closed to communications with the outside world, with severe restrictions on people trying to access the internet and foreign media,"

Researcher Fang criticized the North Korean regime for continuing to block communication with the outside world and strictly regulating residents' access to the Internet and foreign media while the world is communicating through the Internet.

Organizations have suggested improvements in several different areas, pointing out various and specific human rights issues while criticizing the North Korean regime's excessive response to corona and their suppression of the freedom of faith and while urging South Korea to reconsider its anti-leaflet law.

It was impossible to see this many NGOs participate in the interactive conversation by making suggestions and revealing their opinions even just a few years ago.

At the 2014 and 2015 UN Human Rights Councils Interactive Dialogues on North Korea, three to four NGOs from different countries would step forward. In previous years, a similar number or even fewer would take action.

However, at least five or six organizations have continuously come out to exercise their voice, with seven in 2018, eight in 2019, six in 2020, and seven this year.

They are all groups holding consultative status, voted on by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). NGOs with consultative status presenting their views at various UN conferences are having an impact on UN activities.

Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, told the VOA on the 11th, "The role of NGOs is very important when it comes to North Korea."

[Recording: Executive Director Scarlatoiu] “The role of NGOs is very important when it comes to North Korea because it has been NGOs, CSOs, civil society organizations that have been investigating and reporting on the North Korean human rights situation for more than 20 years now.”

Non-governmental organizations have been investigating and reporting on the human rights situation in North Korea for more than 20 years, so their role is very important. The UN Human Rights Council on North Korea, which prepared an outline of the North Korean human rights movement, shows that it could not have been created without NGOs.

Nam Ba-da, the secretary general of the People for Successful COrean REunification (PSCORE), the first North Korean human rights organization to receive consultative status with the UN, told the VOA on Wednesday that the influence of North Korean human rights groups cannot be overlooked.

[Recording: Director Nam Ba-da] "For international human rights organizations, this session can’t help but be one of several sessions. If there is a more important topic, the topic of human rights in North Korea may actually be pushed back a little. But North Korean human rights have always been the first priority for us."

Non-governmental organizations are given three chances to verbally speak at various meetings of the UN Human Rights Council, so international human rights organizations have irregular participation due to various issues that exist besides North Korea.

Director Nam, however, said PSCORE and the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea have both consistency and expertise because they only deal with North Korean human rights, and that the increase in international human rights groups' comments on North Korea from five to six years

ago reflects the seriousness of North Korea's human rights issue.

This group, in particular, received attention after a UN Special Rapporteur accepted the issue of human rights violations of North Korean workers dispatched abroad, which was raised by the UN in the past, resulting in the UN Security Council's sanctions on North Korea. This particular development emphasized the importance of the role of non-governmental organizations.

Director Nam said that due to these activities and influences, 47 young people from 13 countries around the world visited Korea and interned at the organization last year despite the corona pandemic.

He stressed that North Koreans also need to understand the definition and role of non-governmental organizations right away.

[Recording: Director Nam Ba-da] “In North Korea, the Socialist Women’s Union of Korea or the General Federation of Trade Unions of Korea are organized by the state, and non-governmental organizations, like us, are not organized by the state, but by individual people, because they are people who want to do something."

The UN and the international community are also emphasizing the role of these non-governmental organizations to promote cooperation.

Recently, in particular, more and more non-governmental organizations have comprehensive relationships with governments, such as one that complements the government rather than confronting it or checking and monitoring government functions. In other words, instead of being portrayed as non-governmental organizations (NGO), they are now being called civil society organizations (CSO).

Executive Director Scarlatoiu says the growing number of North Korean-related non-governmental organizations at the UN Human Rights Council is encouraging.

[Recording: Executive Director Scarlatoiu] “I think this is very encouraging and would like to credit the special rapporteur Quintana for his willingness and readiness to work with the CSOs.”

Scarlatoiu said he positively assessed the willingness and preparation for cooperation Tomas Ojea Quintana, the UN’s Special Rapporteur on North Korean Human Rights, exhibited as he recently reflected this in a report he submitted to the UN Human Rights Council, which contained the answers and recommendations the NGOs, or CSOs, made.

In fact, Quintana reflected the recommendations nine NGOs made when asked about identifying the responsibilities and measures to respect human rights in December of last year in the official report.

This was Kim Young-kwon reporting for VOA News.

Translated by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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Ilyo Seoul

**North Korea Says "Our Women Enjoy State Benefits"... International Community Responds "Not True"**

Reporter Jung Jae-ho 2021-03-09

[Ilyo Seoul | Reporter Jung Jae-ho] On International Women's Day (March 8) North Korea boasted that their women enjoy state benefits. However, the international community has responded that this is not true.

Paek Myong Ae, department director of the C.C., Socialist Women's Union of Korea, told North Korea's KCNA on the 9th, "Our women do not know well about how much and what kinds of social benefits they are granted by the state."

Director Paek stated, "The state saw to it that national institutions, industrial establishments and social and cooperative organizations took enough labor protection measures for the women workers. In particular, it is specified by law that the women are not allowed to do physically difficult or harmful labor and women with nursing babies or pregnant women are not made to do any night work."

Paek also stated, "The state provides on a preferential basis all conditions such as nursery, kindergarten and service establishments for the women workers so that they can take active part in social labor. Expectant and nursing mothers are offered regular and supplementary holidays along with a maternity leave."

Director Paek added, "The state also preferentially treats those women with many children and takes special protection measures for them," and, "Recently, a medical treatment ticket has been issued for the women with more than three children and, accordingly, their husbands and children of school ages get privilege for receiving treatment at any hospitals."

KCNA released an article today titled "DPRK Women Contributing to National Prosperity" in which it stated, "Many women have been active as deputies to power bodies at all levels and senior officials of party and government organs and social organizations and have grown to be professors, doctors, People's Athletes and People's Artistes, displaying their dignity as the masters of the country."

The article emphasized, "They have covered the road of patriotic devotion, giving priority to the state affairs before the housework. Among them are women who were awarded the title of Labor Hero for having given birth to lots of children and having voluntarily taken warm care of orphans and who have devoted their all to assisting the army, the greatest patriotic work."

In response, the international community has responded with criticism that this is not true.

The UN Human Rights Office in Seoul released a statement to commemorate International Women's Day on the 8th in which it stated, "[the] DPRK must make sustained efforts to promote women's rights, increase women representation in leadership positions, address all forms of gender-based discrimination and ensure equitable and inclusive society," and urged the DPRK to, "combat

trafficking of women and girls, allow safe and humane migration/movement, and increase the minimum age of marriage for women to 18 years."

The office also specified the need to "provide protection, support and access to justice for the victims/survivors of all forms of sexual and gender-based violence including domestic violence as well as to promote the role of the father in the family and provide paternity leave for fathers," and the need to, "eliminate discriminatory stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes towards women and girls and to reduce inequalities and discrimination in access to health, food, employment, and education for women and girls."

Imesh Pokharel, interim head of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Seoul, stated, "In North Korea, women's participation in society, violence against women, and prejudice against women; these are issues that have always faced strong opposition," and pointed out, "Currently, there is not one woman in the Cabinet of North Korea. This in itself demonstrates that North Korea has little interest in improving women's rights."

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, told Radio Free Asia (RFA), a U.S.-based media outlet specializing in North Korea issues, on the 9th, "International Women's Day is known as 'World Women's Day' (국제부녀절) in North Korea and it holds a different meaning. It's not about a struggle for human rights, nor a struggle for women's rights. March 8th is simply another chance, another opportunity to praise the regime and idolize North Korea's supreme leader."

Translated by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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RFA

**WHO "North Korea has no COVID-19 patients"... Test Numbers Not Released for at least 2 Months**
Washington – Ji Jung-eun 2021-03-08

Anchor: For over two months, North Korea has not disclosed any specific information about COVID-19, or coronavirus, in the country. Experts have pointed out the need to for transparent sharing of information from North Korea in order to respond appropriately to COVID-19. This is Ji Jung-eun reporting.

On the 5th, the World Health Organization stated in its "Covid-19 Weekly Situation Report: Week 8)" from the Regional Office for South-East Asia that North Korea has not reported cases of COVID-19 as of February 25.

The office also reported that, as stated in previous reports, surveillance is ongoing, samples are being tested for COVID-19 in 15 laboratories including 13 sub-national laboratories.

In most the weekly South-East Asia reports released by the World Health Organization since September of last year, although the number of tests has been released, no specific information related to North Korea has been found this year.

In particular, after December 31st of last year, for more than two months, the number of those tested for COVID-19 has not been known, and since December 3rd of last year, the number of those quarantined has not been disclosed for more than three months.

According to data from the World Health Organization, North Korea collected 26,244 samples from 13,259 people by December 31st of last year.

And by December 3rd of last year, a total of 33,223 people in North Korea were reportedly released after quarantine.

Edwin Salvador, WHO representative to Pyongyang, told Radio Free Asia (RFA) on the 16th of last month when asked why North Korea has not publicized the number of COVID-19 tests since the end of last year, "All the information in the World Health Organization weekly report is based on information received from North Korean authorities."

Salvador stated, "[This information] includes the numbers of COVID-19 test numbers so far, and the format of information provided by authorities has changed this year, different from how it was in 2020."

In regard to this issue, experts stressed the importance of transparency in information sharing in order to have an appropriate COVID-19 response.

Professor Courtland Robinson at the U.S. Johns Hopkins School of Public Health told RFA on the 8th, "What is concerning about the North Korean regime's COVID-19 response approach is North Korea's policy overall," and pointed out that, "[North Korea's policy] has almost no transparency or accountability."

He explained, "There is virtually no monitoring by international organizations to assist the North Korean people voice their concerns about their situations or livelihoods, nor to hold North Korean authorities accountable."

Harry Kazianis, Senior Director at the Center for the National Interest (US), told RFA today, "So that the North Korean regime could avoid disclosing the scale and scope of the problem and avoid asking for international aid, North Korea has become a COVID-19 black hole, a dark zone," and said, "North Korea should release basic information [about COVID-19]."

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, told RFA today that at this moment in time when international cooperation and support are important, it's a problem that North Korea is not sharing any information and continues to remain isolated.

Meanwhile, the North Korean authorities continues to insist there are no cases of COVID-19 in North Korea, but there are several reports of suspected coronavirus cases in North Korea, such as more than 40 potential coronavirus patients were forcibly quarantined in Hyesan, Yanggang Province late last year.

Translated by Jeune Kim, Research Intern

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Newsis

**North Korea Says "Our Women Enjoy State Benefits": Propaganda "Not True"**
2021/03/09

North Korea says it "provides all conditions for women workers"

Seoul UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights "There are no women in government"

[Seoul=Newsis] Reporter Park Daero = On International Women's Day (March 8) North Korea boasted that their women enjoy state benefits, but the United States and others have refuted that this is not true.

Paek Myong Ae, department director of the C.C., Socialist Women's Union of Korea, told North Korea's KCNA on the 9th, "Our women do not know well about how much and what kinds of social benefits they are granted by the state."

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The article emphasized, "They have covered the road of patriotic devotion, giving priority to the state affairs before the housework. Among them are women who were awarded the title of Labor Hero for having given birth to lots of children and having voluntarily taken warm care of orphans and who have devoted their all to assisting the army, the greatest patriotic work."

The international community has raised doubts about these statements.

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Seoul released a statement to commemorate International Women's Day on the 8th in which it stated, "[the] DPRK

must make sustained efforts to promote women's rights, increase women representation in leadership positions, address all forms of gender-based discrimination and ensure equitable and inclusive society," and urged the DPRK to, "combat trafficking of women and girls, allow safe and humane migration/movement, and increase the minimum age of marriage for women to 18 years."

The office also specified the need to "provide protection, support and access to justice for the victims/survivors of all forms of sexual and gender-based violence including domestic violence as well as to promote the role of the father in the family and provide paternity leave for fathers," and the need to, "eliminate discriminatory stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes towards women and girls and to reduce inequalities and discrimination in access to health, food, employment, and education for women and girls."

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Translated by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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Translated by Grace Shin and Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Interns

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Prepared by Rick Herssevoort, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250730162258/https://mailchi.mp/c6518ab0f57c/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-korea-executes-lockdown-violators-fleeing-starvation-unfears-mount-over-north-korean-great-leap-backwards?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, March 15, 2021**

# North Korea further tightens control over the Sino-North Korean border; Lawmakers call for implementation of N.K. human rights law

**In North Korea:**
North Korea further tightens control over the Sino-North Korean border (*Daily* NK, 3/15/21)
North Korea's truck manufacturing industry faces severe lack of new tires (*Daily* NK, 3/15/21)
North's ambassadors stuck overseas, have to share residence (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 3/15/21)
This One Picture Shows Why North Korea's Army Is a Mess (*National Interest*, 3/15/21)
Warship catches ship-to-ship transfer on mission to stop North Korean smuggling (NK *Pro*, 3/15/21)
Why North Korea has 'no reason' to reply to Biden's backchannel messages (NK *News*, 3/15/21)

**In South Korea:**
KF-X: The Stealth Fighter That Should Make North Korea Very Scared (*National Interest*, 3/15/21)
Opposition party lawmakers call for implementation of N.K. human rights law (*Yonhap*. 3/15/21)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
S. Korea hopes for N. Korea to take part in World Cup qualifiers despite global pandemic (*Yonhap*. 3/15/21)

**International:**
Biden's North Korea outreach failed. Now, prospects for talks are even bleaker. (NK *Pro*, 3/15/21)
U.S. consulted with S. Korea in advance on behind-the-scenes outreach to N.K (*Yonhap*. 3/15/21)
U.S. discussed North Korea with South before contact attempts, Seoul says (UPI, 3/15/21)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean authorities are again tightening control over the Sino-North Korean border following the emergence of smuggling in some regions amid rumors that cross-border trade will resume. The authorities have reportedly moved to implement a variety of measures to prevent smuggling and defections across the border. (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean authorities continue to highlight the achievement of the country's economic goals, but the lack of raw materials is causing serious disruptions to production in the country's industries. North Korea's vehicle manufacturing industry in particular is facing a severe lack of new rubber tires. (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea's newly appointed ambassador to Beijing was released from self-isolation over the weekend, but its former ambassador is unable to return to the North due to the reclusive regime's border closure due to fears of Covid-19 transmission, leading to the unusual situation. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A closer look at North Korea's current ground forces paints the picture of a bloated army, crippled by technical backwardness and severe logistical deficits. (Mark Episkopos, *National Interest*)

- A French frigate warship deployed to catch illicit North Korean ship-to-ship transfers discovered two unflagged merchant ships late last month in the East China Sea, the French Armed Forces (FAF) confirmed to NK Pro on Friday. Photos released by France Pacific Command (ALPACI) on social media showed two oil tankers lashed together with hoses at night in a "suspected ship transfer," according to ALPACI. (Min Chao Choy, *NK Pro*)
- U.S. President Joe Biden is only three months into his presidency, but his administration has wasted no time in trying to contact North Korea: Over the weekend, *NK News* confirmed that the Biden administration repeatedly tried to get in touch with North Korea through backchannel methods, but has been ignored since at least mid-February. (Won Gi Jung, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- Despite South Korea's reputation as a technological powerhouse within Asia, the country has not fielded any stealth fighters — until now. South Korea's own and only aerospace manufacturer, KAI, is currently working on prototyping the KF-X airplane, or Korea Fighter eXperimental, a jet that though not as stealthy as some advanced 5th generation fighters like the F-35 and F-22, would nonetheless be much stealthier than any of it 4th generation predecessors. (Caleb Larson, *National Interest*)
- Lawmakers from the main opposition People Power Party (PPP) made a protest visit to the unification ministry on Monday to call for greater efforts to achieve tangible improvement in North Korea's human rights situation. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korea on Monday expressed hope for North Korea to take part in an inter-Korean World Cup qualifier scheduled for June as it is preparing to host the soccer match amid the global coronavirus pandemic. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Over the weekend, senior officials from the Biden administration said that North Korea did not reply to its various attempts to start up backchannel dialogue since mid-February. Coming ahead of U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin's visit to Tokyo and Seoul — and amid the White House's ongoing DPRK policy review — officials likely publicized this behind-the-scenes dynamic in order to put pressure on North Korea to respond. Officials may have also leaked the information to placate concerns that North Korea isn't a priority for the Biden administration. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- The United States consulted with South Korea in advance before attempting to reach out to North Korea recently, the unification ministry said Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- Ministry spokeswoman Lee Jong-joo said Monday at a regular press briefing that the two countries have been "closely communicating" and "cooperating" throughout the North Korea policy review process of U.S. President Joe Biden's administration, South Korean television network KBS reported. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)

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Prepared by Tristin Schultz, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250730161916/https://mailchi.mp/f8e62e963b9a/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-korea-further-tightens-control-over-the-sino-north-korean-border-lawmakers-call-for-implementation-of-nk-human-rights-law?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Tuesday, March 16, 2021

# Human Rights Council Concludes its General Debate on Human Rights Situations that Require the Council's Attention

**Top News:**
Human Rights Council Concludes its General Debate on Human Rights Situations that Require the Council's Attention (*OHCRH*, 03/16/2021)
Former Moon advisor says US should focus on NK nuclear issue, not human rights when it comes to NK (*Hankyoreh*, 03/10/2021)

**In North Korea:**
North Korea blasts BTS and BLACKPINK's music labels in state propaganda (*NK News*, 03/16/2021)
North Korean family values change rapidly amid COVID-19 pandemic (*DailyNK*, 03/16/2021)
North Korea further tightens control over the Sino-North Korean border (*DailyNK*, 03/15/2021)
North Korea Gives Control of State-Run Companies to Local Government Officials (*RFA*, 03/15/2021)
North Korea orders foreigners in Pyongyang to stay indoors amid dust storm fears (*NK News*, 03/16/2021)
North Korea strongly criticizes combined exercise (*The Korea Times*, 03/16/2021)
Wholesaler in Pyongsong Market arrested for rejecting state-mandated quality control measures (*DailyNK*, 03/16/2021)
Why North Korea Loves the Ancient MiG-19 Fighter (*National Interest*, 03/16/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Defense ministry calls for N. Korea's 'flexible' stance, full implementation of military pact (*Yonhap*, 03/16/2021)
(LEAD) Defense minister expresses regret over N. Korea's criticism of military exercises (*Yonhap*, 03/16/2021)
Opposition party lawmakers call for implementation of N.K. human rights law(*Yonhap*, 03/15/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
N.K. leader's sister slams S. Korea for military drills with U.S., threatens to scrap military pact (*Yonhap*, 03/16/2021)

**International:**
Blinken says U.S. is looking at pressure measures, diplomatic paths, in N.K. policy review (*Yonhap*, 03/16/2021)

Enforcing Sanctions on North Korea Presents an Opportunity for Cooperation at Sea (*War on the Rocks*, 03/16/2021)
Family urge Biden administration to solve North Korea abduction issue (*Japan Times*, 03/16/2021)
How the U.S. and North Korea Could Sleepwalk Into a Nuclear War (*National Interest*, 03/16/2021)
Is a U.S.-North Korea Showdown Just Beginning? (*National Interest*, 03/16/2021)
Kim Yo-jong tells Biden not to cause 'a stink' (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/16/2021)
North's ambassadors stuck overseas, have to share residence (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/15/2021)
North Korea breaks silence to warn US against 'causing a stink' (CNN, 03/16/2021)
North Korea's Message to Biden: 'Refrain From Causing a Stink' (*The New York Times*, 03/16/2021)
North Korea-Russia trade drops to zero in January amid mysterious data decline(*NK News*, 03/16/2021)
North Korea tells new US administration to cease war games if wants to 'sleep in peace' (*News24*, 03/16/2021)
North Korea unresponsive to US calls for dialogue: White House (*The Korea Times*, 03/16/2021)
North Korean vessels active in China, marine traffic data show (UPI, 03/16/2021)
North Korea warns Biden against "causing a stink" as U.S. and Japan show a united front (*CBS News*, 03/16/2021)
They left behind children to find freedom. The choice haunts North Korean refugee women (*Los Angeles Times*, 03/16/2021)
U.S. and allies will continue to expand engagement with N. Korea: White House(*Yonhap*, 03/16/2021)
US official visits Tokyo, vows to pursue North Korea denuclearization (*NK News*, 03/16/2021)

**Top News:**

- On March 15, 2021, the Human Rights Council concluded its general debate on human rights situations that require the Council's attention. Speakers discussed human rights violations taking place, including in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. HRNK was one of the civil society organizations that took the floor with a video message proposing a post-COVID reset that could involve a comprehensive approach to the DPRK comprising humanitarian assistance linked to human rights based on a human rights upfront approach, humanitarian assistance targeting the most vulnerable women, children, and people in detention. (OHCHR)
- "If the human rights issue is put at the forefront, there's a big risk that negotiations with North Korea will break down. We need to focus on resolving the nuclear issue," said Moon Chung-in, chairman of the Sejong Institute, in an interview Monday with the Hankyoreh. Moon's remarks were aimed at US President Joe Biden, who is currently reviewing US policy toward North Korea. Moon advised the US to focus on resolving the nuclear issue, rather than the human rights issue. "If the US emphasizes human rights, North Korea will reject dialogue, regarding that emphasis as a hostile act aimed at regime change," he said. (Lee Je-hun, *Hankyoreh*)

**In North Korea:**

- Experts say North Korea is fighting back against influence from forbidden foreign media. (Jeonmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korean attitudes toward traditional family values appear to be changing rapidly with the prolonging of COVID-19 quarantine measures. According to one of Daily NK's sources, more people choose cohabitation over marriage, and divorces are also on the rise. (Mun Dong Hui, *DailyNK*)
- North Korean authorities are again tightening control over the Sino-North Korean border following the emergence of smuggling in some regions amid rumors that cross-border trade will resume. The authorities have reportedly moved to implement a variety of measures to prevent smuggling and defections across the border. (Jang Seul Gi, *DailyNK*)
- North Korea has ordered local officials to take a more active role in managing state-run companies, but company managers complain that the increased oversight will make production goals harder to reach. (RFA)
- Expats in Pyongyang received warning call late on Monday evening and were told to remain indoors throughout Tuesday due to an anticipated dust storm. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- Pyongyang watchers gave mixed responses to North Korea's denunciation of an ongoing combined military exercise between South Korea and the United States, Tuesday, with some saying it had toned down its usual rhetoric against the annual drill to keep possible dialogue with the U.S. alive, while others claimed it indicated a return to confrontational inter-Korean relations. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- A wholesaler of counterfeit leather goods in North Korea's Pyongsong Market was recently arrested for opposing government efforts after the Eighth Party Congress to ensure that all goods produced in the country meet state-set quality standards. (Jeong Tae Joo, *DailyNK*)
- North Korea is one of the only countries that still maintains a fleet of J-6/MiG-19 planes. Although it was speedy for its era, it couldn't hold its own anymore. (Caleb Larson, *National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- The defense ministry urged North Korea on Tuesday to have a "flexible" stance and implement an inter-Korean military agreement after Pyongyang threatened to scrap the pact in anger over Seoul's combined exercise with the United States. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean Defense Minister Suh Wook said Tuesday North Korea's criticism of Seoul's military exercise with the United States was "regrettable." Suh made the remark at a parliamentary hearing hours after Kim Yo-jong, the sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, threatened to scrap an inter-Korean military agreement over the combined exercise by the allies. "I find criticism of a defensive and annual exercise regrettable," Suh said. (*Yonhap*)
- Lawmakers from the main opposition People Power Party (PPP) made a protest visit to the unification ministry on Monday to call for greater efforts to achieve tangible improvement in North Korea's human rights situation. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un threatened Tuesday to scrap a military peace agreement with South Korea and break up a Workers' Party organ tasked with inter-Korean dialogue as she lambasted the South for conducting military exercises with the United States. (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)

**International:**

- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Tuesday that Washington is looking at various ways to address the North Korean nuclear issue, including "pressure measures" and "diplomatic paths," during its ongoing policy review. During a press conference with Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and their Japanese counterparts, Toshimitsu Motegi and Nobuo Kishi, in Tokyo, Blinken also pointed out the U.S.' commitment to dealing with human rights abuses in the North. (*Yonhap*)
- Since January 2018, a game of cops and robbers has played out in the 1,000-nautical-mile stretch of ocean between Taiwan and the 38th parallel. The "robbers" are dozens of Chinese, Taiwanese, Liberian, Sri Lankan, and unflagged tankers engaged in the illicit transfer of sanctioned goods to North Korea and incentivized by a low-risk, high-reward payoff structure. The "cops" are a multinational coalition known as the Enforcement Coordination Cell, consisting of the United States and its Five Eyes partners (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom) alongside South Korea, Japan, and France. The coalition enforces the maritime component of United Nations Security Council resolutions — 2357 and 2397 — designed to deter and punish North Korean ballistic missile and nuclear tests by limiting its import and export of petroleum, coal, iron, lead, and seafood products. (Artem Sherbinin, *War on the Rocks*)
- Family members of Japanese nationals abducted by North Korea in the 1970s and 1980s on Monday requested that U.S. President Joe Biden's administration focus on resolving the long-standing abduction issue. (*Japan Times*)
- January 13th, 2018 started out like any other Saturday in Hawaii before it took a dramatic turn. At 8:07 AM, the Hawaii emergency management agency broadcast an official message to more than one million people: "Ballistic missile threat inbound to Hawaii seek immediate shelter. This is not a drill." It was a false alarm, as it turned out—caused by human error. But residents wouldn't know that for another thirty-eight minutes. Given the geopolitical tensions between North Korea and the United States at the time, the threat seemed plausible. (*National Interest*)
- The Biden administration has been undertaking a formal policy review in regards to North Korea, one that is not yet complete but expected to wrap up in the coming weeks. (*National Interest*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's powerful younger sister warned that Pyongyang could scrap the inter-Korean military agreement as she lambasted annual joint military drills between Seoul and Washington. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The former and current North Korean ambassadors to China will have to share the official ambassador's residence in Beijing, according to diplomatic sources Monday, due to the North's border restrictions. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Kim Yo Jong, the sister of North Korea's leader, warned the Biden administration against "causing a stink at its first step" on Monday, hours after the White House said it had not received a response to its outreach to Pyongyang. (Jennifer Hansler, Nicole Gaouette, Kylie Atwood, CNN)
- North Korea issued its first warning shot against the Biden administration on Tuesday, denouncing Washington for going forward with joint military exercises with South Korea and raising "a stink" on the Korean Peninsula. (Choe Sung-Hun, *The New York Times*)
- North Korea's largest trade partner, China, has not published any 2021 trade data on North Korea so far. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- The sister of North Korean leader, Kim Yo Jung, criticised ongoing military drills in South Korea and warned the ne US administration that the smell of cordite wafting over the border would not help bring peace. (*News24*)

- North Korea continues to remain unresponsive to U.S. calls for dialogue, a White House spokesperson said Monday. Jen Psaki also said the U.S. will continue its diplomatic efforts to denuclearize North Korea while working closely with U.S. allies in the region. (*The Korea Times*)
- North Korean shipping activity could be rising in March, and some vessels that turned off their trackers have switched them back on, according to a recent press report. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- The U.S. and Japan presented a united front on Tuesday against an increasingly bold China and as North Korea cast a new warning at the Biden administration. Kim Yo Jong, the sister and senior aid of North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un, warned the U.S. against "causing a stink," as President Biden's defense chief and Secretary of State met their counterparts in Tokyo. (Lucy Craft, *CBS News*)
- Yoon Seol Mi stepped off the plane in northeastern China clad in borrowed Nikes, ripped jeans and a cloud of Chanel perfume. The trappings of capitalism, she hoped, would mask her origins: a North Korean woman traveling back to a remote Chinese village to reclaim the daughter she bore when she was a refugee and sold as a bride. Yoon was nearing the end of an odyssey marked by danger and loss and endless doubt of where to call home while her daughter was raised in another's house. (Victoria Kim, *Los Angeles Times*)
- The United States, together with its allies, will continue to expand its engagement with North Korea, a White House spokesperson said Monday. Jen Psaki said the issue will also be a topic of discussions between top U.S. officials currently on a trip to Japan and South Korea. (*Yonhap*)
- Experts say U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's choice in words will matter for any future nuclear negotiations. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)

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Prepared by Damian Reddy, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250730162631/https://mailchi.mp/a770f82ffa89/hrnk-news-items human-rights-council-concludes-its-general-debate-on-human-rights-situations-that-require-the -councils-attention?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Wednesday, March 17, 2021

# Pentagon chief arrives in S. Korea for talks on alliance, N. Korea

**In North Korea:**
'BTS, BLACKPINK treated like slaves,' North Korean website says (*The Korea Times*, 3/17/21)
Energy plant powering North Korea's capital city in a state of 'dire disrepair' (*NK News*, 3/17/21)
Lockdown in Sakju downgraded after incident involving death of prematurely born baby (*Daily NK*, 3/17/21)
North Korea blasts K-pop industry as 'slave-like exploitation' amid crackdown on foreign media (*CNN News*, 3/17/21)

(LEAD) N. Korea has achieved 'alarming success' in nuclear, missile development: U.S. commander (*Yonhap*, 3/17/21)
North Korea holds lecture in border region highlighting need to eliminate anti-socialist acts (*Daily* NK, 3/17/21)
N.K. propaganda outlet carries poster depicting S. Korea-U.S. alliance crushed(*Yonhap*, 3/17/21)
Pro-N.K. paper stresses Cabinet's role as control tower for economic policy(*Yonhap*, 3/17/21)

**In South Korea:**
(LEAD) Pentagon chief arrives in S. Korea for talks on alliance, N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 3/17/21)
S. Korean, U.S. defense chiefs to hold talks on N. Korea, OPCON transition (*Yonhap*, 3/17/21)
Top US officials weigh North Korea options in talks in Seoul (AP *News*, 3/17/21)
US official lands in Seoul, says alliance must be 'ready to fight' if needed (NK *News*, 3/17/21)
U.S. secretaries of state, defense fly into Seoul (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 3/17/21)
US top diplomat, defense chief visit Seoul amid fresh warnings from Pyongyang(*The Korea Herald*, 3/17/21)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
(4th LD) Austin stresses alliance with S. Korea against 'unprecedented challenges' from N.K., China (*Yonhap*, 3/17/21)
Blinken blasts 'aggressive' China; Austin reaffirms U.S. deterrence on Korean peninsula (*Reuters*, 3/17/21)
Discussion of nuclearizing S. Korea may help denuclearize N. Korea: U.S. lawmaker(*Yonhap*, 3/17/21)
Siding with North Korea (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 3/17/21)

**International:**
Biden administration using 'toned-down' approach toward N. Korea to prevent escalation: report (*Yonhap*, 3/17/21)
Top Biden Admin Officials Leave Japan for S. Korea on Last Leg of Asian Mission(VOA *News*, 3/17/21)
U.S. general says North Korea might flight test new ICBM design 'in the near future'(*Reuters*, 3/17/21)
US has assessed North Korea could be preparing to carry out first weapons test since Biden took office (CNN *News*, 3/17/21)
US warns North Korea could be planning ICBM test 'in near future' in test for Biden(*The Guardian*, 3/17/21)

**In North Korea:**
- A North Korean news website reported earlier this month that K-pop idols in South Korea were being treated like "slaves" by large companies and living a "miserable life," raising questions about why the isolated state made such claims. (Ko Dong-hwan, *The Korea Times*)

- A massive North Korean energy plant that services the country's entire capital region is in a state of "dire despair," while other energy sites have been lagging behind in the construction phase for several decades now, according to a new report. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- The lockdown recently ordered for Sakju County, South Hamgyong Province, has been downgraded following a tragic incident involving the death of a prematurely born baby. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- K-pop is one of South Korea's most popular cultural exports with a growing reach around the world -- but it seems that not everyone is a fan. (Joshua Berlinger, Yonojung Seo, *CNN News*)
- North Korea has achieved alarming success in its pursuit of nuclear and long-range missile capabilities and continues to expand its arsenal, which includes three ballistic missiles that can reach the U.S. homeland, a U.S. commander said Tuesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean authorities recently held a lecture for people in the Sino-North Korean border region that officially announced the creation of an agency that will monitor and control "non-socialist and anti-socialist behavior" while calling on everyone to participate in an operation to "sweep away" such elements. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- A North Korean media outlet on Wednesday unveiled a propaganda poster depicting a club hammer smashing the alliance between South Korea and the United States, as the top U.S. diplomat and the defense chief visited here for discussions on the North and other alliance issues. (*Yonhap*)
- A pro-North Korea newspaper on Wednesday stressed the importance of the Cabinet's role as a control tower for economic policy as Pyongyang is pushing to implement various development goals put forth during January's party congress. (*Yonhap*)
- U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin arrived in South Korea on Wednesday to discuss a range of bilateral and global issues, such as North Korea and the wartime operational control transfer, officials said. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean Defense Minister Suh Wook and U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin were to hold their first face-to-face talks Wednesday, with North Korea and the wartime operational control transfer likely to be among key agenda items. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)
- Fresh off a stop in Tokyo, President Joe Biden's top diplomat and defense chief traveled to South Korea on Wednesday, a day after North Korea made sure it had their attention by warning the United States to "refrain from causing a stink" amid deadlocked nuclear negotiations. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)
- Top officials from the U.S. and South Korea vowed to continue working towards "denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" on Wednesday during their first in-person meeting in Seoul, according to Seoul's Ministry of National Defense (MND). (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin touched down in Seoul Wednesday, kicking off the first such joint visit to the country in 11 years to coordinate North Korea policy and work on alliance issues. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin arrived in Seoul Wednesday, a day after North Korea issued a fresh warning over a joint military drill currently conducted by the two allies. (Lee Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)

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**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said Wednesday the alliance with South Korea has "never been more important" given "unprecedented challenges" from North Korea and China, as he reaffirmed Washington's security commitment to the South. (Oh Seok-min, Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Wednesday China was acting aggressively and repressively, and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin reaffirmed U.S. security assurances to achieve a complete denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula. (Humeyra Pamuk, Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- Serious discussions on the nuclearization of South Korea and Japan may put pressure on China to finally step in and help denuclearize North Korea, a Republican member of the U.S. House of Representatives said Tuesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's younger sister Kim Yo-jong, vice department director of the ruling Workers' Party Central Committee, denounced South Korea and the United States on Tuesday and demanded a full scrapping of South Korea-U.S. joint military exercises. She even mentioned the possibility of breaking an inter-Korean military agreement signed in Pyongyang. If South Korea and the United States continue their annual drills, "the warm spring day three years ago will not return," she warned. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- The Biden administration is using "toned-down" rhetoric against North Korea to help prevent any unnecessary escalation of tensions before its ongoing review of how to deal with the North concludes, a news report suggested Tuesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin are heading to South Korea Wednesday after warning China the Biden Administration will respond to Beijing's use of coercion and aggression in the region. (Jason Strother, *VOA News*)
- North Korea might begin flight testing an improved design for its inter-continental ballistic missiles "in the near future," the head of the U.S. military's Northern Command said on Tuesday, a move that would sharply increase tensions between Pyongyang and Washington. (Phil Stewart, Idrees Ali, *Reuters*)

- US intelligence has assessed that North Korea could be preparing to carry out their first weapons test since President Joe Biden came into office, according to several US officials speaking to CNN on condition of anonymity. (Barbara Starr, CNN *News*)
- North Korea could be planning to flight test an upgraded inter-continental ballistic missile [ICBM] "in the near future," a senior US military official has warned, in what would be the regime's first serious policy challenge for Joe Biden. (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)

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Prepared by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250730163158/https://mailchi.mp/ccdff0bf0323/hrnk-news-items-pentagon-chief-arrives-in-s-korea-for-talks-on-alliance-n-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Thursday, March 18, 2021

# U.S. calls on China to play 'critical' role in nuke talks

**Top News:**
[VOA Morning News] March 16, 2021 (VOA *News*, 3/16/21)
[VOA Morning News] March 17, 2021 (VOA *News*, 3/17/21)

**In North Korea:**
North Korea accuses South's corporations of exploiting BTS, Blackpink (*UPI*, 3/18/21)
North Korea calls K-pop a 'slave-like industry' riddled with 'exploitation' and 'unfair contracts' (*The Telegraph*, 3/19/21)
North Korea, China reviving economic cooperation (*The Korea Times*, 3/18/21)
North Korea says U.S. attempt to initiate contact is 'cheap trick': KCNA (*Reuters*, 3/18/21)
(3rd LD) N. Korea says will ignore contact from U.S. unless Washington withdraws hostile policies (*Yonhap*, 3/18/21)
N. Korean threats topic of U.S.-China talks in Alaska: White House (*Yonhap*, 3/18/21)
North Korea Tries Familiar Gambit as US Delegation Arrives in Region (*Radio Free Asia*, 3/18/21)
North tells Biden his 'cheap trick' didn't work (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 3/18/21)
No UN or NGO workers left in North Korea after more expats depart Pyongyang (*NK News*, 3/18/21)
Pyongyang wants Washington's 'concession' before denuclearization talks (*The Korea Times*, 3/18/21)
South Pyongan Province witnesses widespread deaths of working cows over past month (*Daily NK*, 3/18/21)
Three teenage workers die in industrial accident at the Sungri Motor Complex (*Daily NK*, 3/18/21)

**In South Korea:**
[News Focus] 1 in 3 N. Korean refugees wants to be self-employed (*The Korea Herald*, 3/18/21)
Korea, US sign deal on troop costs after marathon talks (*The Korea Herald*, 3/18/21)
Military closely following activities at N.K. missile facilities: defense ministry (*Yonhap*, 3/18/21)
South Korea president welcomes 'return of diplomacy' in first meeting with top US diplomat (CNN, 3/18/21)
(LEAD) S. Korea, U.S. wrap up springtime combined exercise amid COVID-19, N.K. protest (*Yonhap*, 3/18/21)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Human rights at 'forefront' of U.S. diplomacy: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 3/18/21)
Korea, US set NK nuclear, missile issue as priority for alliance (*The Korea Herald*, 3/18/21)
U.S. calls on China to play 'critical' role in nuke talks (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 3/18/21)
US, South Korea vow to prioritize North Korea nuclear threat after key meeting (*NK News*, 3/18/21)

**International:**
Blinken says U.S. weighs pressure, diplomacy on North Korea over denuclearisation and rights abuses (*Reuters*, 3/18/21)
Blinken praises U.S., Korea alliance, offers condolences to Atlanta shooting victims(*UPI*, 3/18/21)
Blinken urges China to convince North Korea to denuclearize (*AP News*, 3/18/21)
China must persuade North Korea to give up nuclear weapons, says Blinken (*The Guardian*, 3/18/21)
Korean Americans urge Biden to officially end the 70-year Korean War (*NK News*, 3/18/21)
(LEAD) Pentagon chief says wartime operational control transition will take more time (*Yonhap*, 3/18/21)

**Top News:**
- "During the time that I was special envoy from 2009 to 2017, the South Korean government was a sponsor of the resolution every time. And it's as fortunate that they've made the decision not to do that." (Robert King, *VOA News*)
- "The thing that's unfortunate is that, obviously, the Moon administration thinks that by not sponsoring the resolution, it will improve the chances of some kind of reconciliation with North Korea. Unfortunately, that has not proven to be the case. North Korea, if anything, has become more obnoxious towards South Korea in the last couple years." (Robert King, *VOA News*)

**In North Korea:**
- North Korea likened globally popular K-pop groups to "slaves," as the regime continues to crack down on banned media and "corrupting influences." (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- South Korean K-pop has been accused of engaging in "slave-like exploitation" in a article published by a North Korean propaganda website. (Verity Bowman, *The Telegraph*)

- Prospects of revived economic cooperation between North Korea and China have increased following North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's announcement of a five-year plan for economic development during the eighth congress of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea in January. (Do Je-hae, *The Korea Herald*)
- A top North Korean diplomat acknowledged on Thursday that the United States had recently tried to initiate contact, but blasted the attempts as a "cheap trick" that would never be answered until Washington dropped hostile policies. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- North Korea said Thursday that it will continue to ignore any contact from the United States unless Washington withdraws its hostile policies toward Pyongyang. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- The United States will discuss ways to mitigate possible military threats from North Korea when its top foreign and national security officials meet their Chinese counterparts this week, White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Wednesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's first statement to the Biden Administration, a string of crude-yet-colorful threats from leader Kim Jong Un's powerful sister, were shrugged off by the top U.S. diplomat as he arrived in Asia, but analysts said they could point to new missile tests or other attention-getting moves by Pyongyang. (Soyoung Kim, Jeongeun ji, Albert Hong, *Radio Free Asia*)
- Pyongyang confirmed Thursday that it rebuffed U.S. diplomatic outreach last month, calling it a "cheap trick," and will disregard future attempts unless there is a change in attitude by Washington. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A group of diplomats, aid workers and other expats left Pyongyang on Thursday, informed sources told NK News, which means that no U.N. foreign staff or international NGO staff are left in the country. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- North Korea has issued a series of statements pledging to ignore any contact from Washington, and Pyongyang watchers say the North is attempting to put itself in an advantageous position to draw a "concession" in future denuclearization talks. (Jung Da-min, *The Korea Herald*)
- There has been an increase in the deaths of working cows in North Korea, which has led to a prevalence of cattle theft from farms to replace the deceased animals, Daily NK has learned. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- Amid North Korean government efforts to increase production throughout the country, several workers in their teens recently died in an industrial accident at the Sungri Motor Complex, Daily NK has learned. (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- Unlike most people born in South Korea, defectors from North Korea expressed a strong preference for self-employment in a 2019 survey. (Kim Yon-se, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea and the US on Thursday signed an agreement that settled a protracted dispute over sharing the burden of supporting 28,500 US troops here, on the last day of the first in-person talks of their foreign and defense ministers in Seoul. The US state and defense secretaries flew here a day earlier. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- The military is closely monitoring movements at North Korea's missile facilities but no unusual signs have been detected as of now, the defense ministry said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's President Moon Jae-in welcomed the "return of diplomacy and alliance" with the United States and reiterated the goal of denuclearizing North Korea, during his first meeting with senior Biden administration officials on Thursday. (Jessie Yeung, Yoonjung Seo, CNN)

- South Korea and the United States on Thursday wrapped up their nine-day springtime combined military exercise staged in a scaled-back manner due to the coronavirus pandemic and peace efforts with North Korea, officials said. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Human rights are at the forefront of U.S. diplomacy even when it comes to efforts to denuclearize North Korea, a State Department spokesperson said Wednesday, one day after Secretary Antony Blinken accused Pyongyang of violating the rights of its own people. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the US on Thursday stressed that North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile issues are a "priority" for the alliance, while Washington renewed pressure on Beijing to use its influence to convince Pyongyang to denuclearize. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- China has a "critical role" to play in persuading North Korea to denuclearize, stressed U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, while simultaneously calling out Beijing for actions that threaten regional stability during a joint press conference with the Pentagon chief and their South Korean counterparts in Seoul Thursday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Top officials from the U.S. and South Korea vowed to prioritize North Korean nuclear and ballistic missile issues on Thursday. (Jeongmin Kim, Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)

**International:**

- Both pressure and diplomatic options are on the table for dealing with North Korea, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Thursday, hours after a senior North Korean diplomat rejected any talks until Washington changed its policies. (Humeyra Pamuk, Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the alliance with South Korea is strong and ready to face challenges amid the latest warnings from North Korea, during his first official visit to the country where he also offered condolences for the victims of the Atlanta shooting late Tuesday. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- America's top diplomat on Thursday pressed China to use its "tremendous influence" to convince North Korea to abandon its nuclear program, hours after the North said it will ignore U.S. offers to resume negotiations. (Hyung-jin Kim, Kimg Tong-hyung, *AP News*)
- China must use its "tremendous influence" to persuade North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons, the US secretary of state, Antony Blinken, has said, hours after the regime said it would ignore requests by a "hostile" US to resume negotiations. (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)
- Dozens of Korean American penned an open letter urging U.S. President Joe Biden to officially end the 70-year-long Korean War on Thursday. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said Thursday that the envisioned transition of the wartime operational control (OPCON) will take more time, though the two sides will continue to work toward the goal. (Oh Seok-min, Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250730163414/https://mailchi.mp/65bf2caa475e/hrnk-news-items-us-calls-on-china-to-play-critical-role-in-nuke-talks?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Friday, March 19, 2021

# Silence on Human Rights Only Allows NK to Escalate Offensive Stance; NK Human Rights Should Be Raised with Humanitarian Assistance”

**Top News:**
**South Korea’s North Korea Policy Facing Fierce Criticism… “Silence on Human Rights Only Allows North Korea to Escalate Offensive Stance” (VOA, 3/16/21)
**Quintana “North Korean Human Rights Issues Should Be Raised Simultaneously with Humanitarian Assistance” (*RFA*, 3/15/21)
What are the implications of China's lawsuit against Adrian Zenz? (*JeromeCohen*, 3/18/21)

**** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**
Amid rumors of government intervention, commodity prices fall significantly in Chongjin’s Sunam Market (*Daily* NK, 3/19/21)
North Korea says it will sever diplomatic relations with Malaysia for extraditing citizen to U.S. (*Yonhap*, 3/19/21)
North Korea strengthens monitoring of border to prepare for lifting of border blockade (*Daily* NK, 3/19/21)

**In South Korea:**
Persuading U.S. to ease sanctions 'top priority' for implementing inter-Korean summit agreements (*Yonhap*, 3/19/21)

**International:**
After N. Korea cuts ties, Malaysia orders its diplomats out (AP, 3/19/21)
Asia trip by Blinken, Austin successful, will help advance N. Korea policy: Knapper (*Yonhap*, 3/19/21)
For the First Time, a North Korean Is Set to Be Extradited to the U.S. (*The New York Times*, 3/19/21)
Malaysia expels North Korean diplomats, formally closes its embassy in Pyongyang (*NK News*, 3/19/21)
Malaysia gives North Korea 48 hours to close embassy (UPI, 3/19/21)
N. Korean WMD pose threat to neighbors, violate UNSC resolutions: U.S. official (*Yonhap*, 3/19/21)

Washington stresses Seoul's 'input' in NK policy review (*The Korea Herald*, 3/19/21)

**Top News:**

- The South Korean government's passive attitude toward North Korea's human rights issues has been under fire in Washington every day. The Moon Jae-in administration is not raising their voice regarding North Korea's human rights violation for the sake of inter-Korean dialogue and easing tensions, but critics say that this submissive attitude in fact allows North Korea to escalate their demands and offensive stance. (Baik Sungwon, VOA)
- Tomas Ojea Quintana, UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in North Korea, strongly emphasized that the issue of North Korean human rights issues in North Korea should be raised simultaneously with humanitarian cooperation with North Korea. This was a response to South Korea's stance of emphasizing humanitarian cooperation while avoiding any mention of the situation of human rights abuses in North Korea. (Yang Heejung, RFA)
- [On a lawsuit against U.S.-based academic Adrian Zenz for his work on exposing human rights abuses in Xinjiang] "I assume this is a civil lawsuit for defamation. It is probably an effort to reinforce propaganda throughout the country to convince the Chinese people that foreign stories about Xinjiang are demonstrably false.' - Jerome A. Cohen, (Jerome A.Cohen, *JeromeCohen*)

**In North Korea:**

- The source, who is based in North Hamgyong Province, told Daily NK that rice at the Sunam Market in Chongjin was selling for KPW 4,500 a kilogram until falling to KPW 4,050 as of Mar. 18, while corn had fallen from KPW 2,800 to KPW 2,300. A source told Daily NK that there are an increasing number of business people at markets who are trying to quickly sell off their goods because of rumors that the authorities are intervening with price controls. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- Mun Chol-myong, a North Korean businessmen living in Malaysia, was accused of supplying prohibited luxury items from Singapore to Pyongyang and laundering funds through shell companies in violation of U.N. sanctions. Last week, Malaysia's top court ruled that he can be extradited to Washington, rejecting his appeal challenging the extradition request from the U.S. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- A source in North Hamgyong Province told Daily NK on Wednesday that the government believes that the COVID-19 pandemic is "gradually heading towards its end" and issued the order to security agency branches in the border region to deal with any situation that arises when the border opens. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- More than 40 percent of South Koreans think that persuading the United States to ease sanctions against North Korea is a "top priority" to implement inter-Korean agreements aimed at expanding cross-border exchanges and cooperation, a poll showed Friday. According to the poll of 1,000 adults conducted by the presidential National Unification Advisory Council, 43.6 percent said that the persuasion process is necessary more than anything else to implement the 2018 summit agreements "in a stable manner." (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Malaysia's announcement came hours after North Korea said it was terminating diplomatic ties with Malaysia because it committed a "super-large hostile act ... in subservience to the U.S. pressure." North Korea called the money laundering charges an "absurd fabrication and

(a) sheer plot" orchestrated by the United States and warned Washington will "pay a due price." (Hyung Jin Kim, Eileen Ng, AP)

- Marc Knapper, deputy assistant secretary of state for Korea and Japan, said the U.S. remains realistic but will strive for success in ridding North Korea of its nuclear ambitions. "One of our goals is to try and increase the chance of success," the U.S. diplomat said in a virtual press conference organized by the Foreign Press Center in Washington, citing "these very close, ongoing consultations with our allies" as a way to increase the chance of success. (Byun Duk Kun, *Yonhap*)
- Mr. Mun would be the first North Korean extradited to the United States to face a criminal trial. His extradition is part of Washington's efforts to crack down on what it has described as widespread sanctions-evading activities by North Korean businessmen and diplomats. Over the years, the United Nations Security Council has imposed a series of increasingly stringent sanctions on North Korea, seeking to strangle the country's access to foreign currency, which it has used to help finance its nuclear and ballistic-missile programs. (Choe Sang Hoon, *The New York Times*)
- Malaysia ordered North Korea's diplomats to leave the country within 48 hours and formally announced the closure of its embassy in Pyongyang, its foreign ministry revealed on Friday, responding to the DPRK's severing of diplomatic ties just hours earlier. The rapid decay of bilateral relations follows Malaysia's decision to extradite North Korean national Mun Chol Myong to the United States on March 17, after his appeal against extradition was rejected earlier in the month. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- Malaysia said Friday that North Korea violated international norms after North Korea said earlier in the day it would "completely sever ties" with the Southeast Asian nation because of the extradition of a North Korean national to the United States. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- Jalina Porter, deputy spokeswoman for the department, reiterated that the ongoing review of U.S. policy toward North Korea will evaluate all available options. "North Korea's WMD programs, as reflected in multiple UN Security Council resolutions, are unlawful and constitute a threat to international peace and security," she told a daily press briefing. (*Yonhap*, 3/19/21)
- A senior US diplomat on Friday stressed South Korea's "input" in Washington's ongoing policy review on North Korea, reiterating the importance of close consultations and coordination between the allies in dealing with the reclusive regime. (Ahn Sung Mi, *The Korea Herald*)

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VOA

**South Korea's North Korea Policy Facing Fierce Criticism... "Silence on Human Rights Only Allows North Korea to Escalate Offensive Stance"**

Reporter Baik Sungwon
2021.3.16 9:00AM

The South Korean government's passive attitude toward North Korea's human rights issues has been under fire in Washington every day. The Moon Jae-in administration is not raising their voice regarding North Korea's human rights violation for the sake of inter-Korean dialogue and easing tensions, but critics say that this submissive attitude in fact allows North Korea to escalate their demands and offensive stance. This is Baik Sungwon reporting.

The logic of refraining from criticizing North Korea's human rights situation in order to bring them to the negotiating table is no longer convincing in Washington.

Former U.S. officials who have dealt with the North Korean problem for a long time note that lessening the pressure on human rights has never gained the cooperation of North Korea in other areas; rather, it incited more demands and provocations from North Korea.

After the start of South Korea's Moon Jae-in administration in particular, although it focused on inter-Korean dialogue and economic cooperation and did not actively participate in international efforts to improve human rights in North Korea, inter-Korean relations have been at its worst.

Evans Revere, former acting assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, pointed out that, "Seoul's attempts to appease the Pyongyang regime have not made North Korea any better disposed to deal constructively with the ROK." He explained, "Pyongyang is taking Seoul's 'goodwill' for granted and continuing to treat the South with contempt."

[Evans Revere, former acting assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs] "Seoul's attempts to appease the Pyongyang regime have not made North Korea any better disposed to deal constructively with the ROK. Indeed, Pyongyang is taking Seoul's 'goodwill' for granted and continuing to treat the South with contempt."

Some also say that the South Korean government's attempt to appease the North by banning leaflets and by declining to co-sponsor North Korean human rights resolutions at the United Nations undermines the values of free democracy as well as their advantageous negotiating power with North Korea.

Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, criticized, "What South Korea's action does is to convey to North Korea that human rights have low priority with South Korea and can be bartered away for other objectives."

[Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State] "What South Korea's action does is to convey to North Korea that human rights have low priority with South Korea and can be bartered away for other objectives.

Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Cohen also noted, "But human rights is South Korea's strength, not a point of exchange in a market. The Moon Administration is giving away important leverage South Korea has over North Korea."

[Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State] "But human rights is South Korea's strength, not a point of exchange in a market. The Moon Administration is giving away important leverage South Korea has over North Korea whose main insecurity derives from its extreme poverty, food insecurity and denial of human rights in comparison with South Korea's prosperity and democratic form of government."

She said this is because "North Korea whose main insecurity derives from its extreme poverty, food insecurity and denial of human rights in comparison with South Korea's prosperity and democratic form of government."

In reality, while the South Korean government was silent on the North Korean regime's human rights abuses, North Korea, of course, did not respond to offers for dialogue, as well as continues provocations such as openly denouncing the Moon Jae-in administration, conducting a series of missile tests, blowing up the inter-Korea liaison office in Kaesong, killing a South Korean fisheries official, and refusing to accept the South Korean Ministry of Unification's offer to provide aid to North Korea.

Robert King, former Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights at the U.S. Department of State, said, "The thing that's unfortunate is that obviously the Moon administration thinks that by not sponsoring the resolution, it will improve the chances of some kind of reconciliation with North Korea. Unfortunately, that has not proven to be the case. North Korea has, if anything, become more obnoxious towards South Korea in the last couple of years."

[Recording: Robert King, former Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights] "The thing that's unfortunate is that obviously the Moon administration thinks that by not sponsoring the resolution, it will improve the chances of some kind of reconciliation with North Korea. Unfortunately, that has not proven to be the case. North Korea has, if anything, become more obnoxious towards South Korea in the last couple of years."

Former envoy King also said, "It's just unfortunate that South Korea is not willing to stand on the principles of human rights which they have done at least some of the times in the past."

[Recording: Robert King, former Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights] "It's just unfortunate that South Korea is not willing to stand on the principles of human rights which they have done at least some of the times in the past."

Washington's Korea experts have also pointed out that has never responded positively to the 'goodwill' of South Korea and the United States and that what did change North Korea's behavior was when the human rights issue was brought to the forefront and pressure was raised as much as possible.

Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu of U.S. human rights group, the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), stated, "It was the UN COI report that persuaded the DPRK regime to dispatch its Foreign Minister to the UN General Assembly for the first time in 15 years."

[Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director] "It was the UN COI report that persuaded the DPRK regime to dispatch its Foreign Minister to the UN General Assembly for the first time in 15 years. Although the answer has continued to be denial that human rights violations are being perpetrated, focusing attention on DPRK human rights does draw the regime out of its isolation."

In truth, when the COI report was released in March 2014 and pressure on human rights from the United States and others intensified, Ri Su-yong, who was Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time, attended the UN General Assembly in September that year for the first time in 15 years as North Korea's leading representative to defend against international pressure.

The next month, Jang Il-hoon, North Korea's deputy ambassador the UN at the time, volunteered to interview with VOA and fiercely complained about the United Nations' move to bring the North

Korean leadership to the International Criminal Court, but in an unusual move, also said that based on the international community's position due diligence on human rights conditions in North Korea is a topic that could be discussed.

Robert Manning, senior fellow at the Atlantic Council, stated, "I don't think the Moon administration will accomplish much by refraining to clearly condemn Kim's policies."

[Robert Manning, senior fellow at the Atlantic Council] "I don't think the Moon administration will accomplish much by refraining to clearly condemn Kim's policies."

Manning, a former senior official at the U.S. Department and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, pointed out that, "President Moon has bent over backwards to take steps to incentivize the North to renew inter-Korean dialogue and reconciliation, and he has gotten no response at all from Kim Jong Un." He then emphasized, "Whatever Seoul's reasons, it will not change Kim's behavior."

[Robert Manning, senior fellow at the Atlantic Council] "President Moon has bent over backwards to take steps to incentivize the North to renew inter-Korean dialogue and reconciliation, and he has gotten no response at all from Kim Jong Un. Whatever Seoul's reasons, it will not change Kim's behavior."

He added, "It appears Kim is waiting out the remaining year and perhaps looking ahead to the next ROK President. Or he may simply not be that interested in further North-South Dialogue focusing on engaging the US, though even that is uncertain."

[Robert Manning, senior fellow at the Atlantic Council] "It appears Kim is waiting out the remaining year and perhaps looking ahead to the next ROK President. Or he may simply not be that interested in further North-South Dialogue focusing on engaging the US, though even that is uncertain."

Bruce Klinger, senior research fellow at the Heritage Foundation stated, "The Moon Jae-in, Roh Moo-hyun, and Kim Dae-jung administrations refrained from criticizing Pyongyang' atrocious human rights record out of fear that doing so would lead the regime to cease inter-Korean dialogue. Despite this capitulation, North Korea did not improve its treatment of its citizens nor did it comply with UN resolutions or curtail its threatening behavior toward the South."

[Bruce Klinger, senior research fellow at the Heritage Foundation] "The Moon Jae-in, Roh Moo-hyun, and Kim Dae-jung administrations refrained from criticizing Pyongyang' atrocious human rights record out of fear that doing so would lead the regime to cease inter-Korean dialogue. Despite this capitulation, North Korea did not improve its treatment of its citizens nor did it comply with UN resolutions or curtail its threatening behavior toward the South. Despite the Moon administration's silence on North Korean human rights violations and its imposition of a gag order on freedom of speech in South Korea, Pyongyang continues to reject all entreaties for inter-Korean dialogue."

He then pointed out, "Despite the Moon administration's silence on North Korean human rights violations and its imposition of a gag order on freedom of speech in South Korea, Pyongyang continues to reject all entreaties for inter-Korean dialogue."

On the other hand, Choi Jong-moon, South Korea's Second Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated during a keynote speech at the U.N. Human Rights Council on the 24th of last month, "We have been working to substantially improve the human rights of North Koreans."

However, Tomas Ojea Quintana, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in North Korea, directed his statements to the South Korean government on the 10th while speaking at the Human Rights Council, saying, "Human rights issues should be included in bilateral negotiations with North Korea," and, "frameworks based on human rights should be incorporated into economic and humanitarian cooperation with North Korea."

He also called for the implementation of the North Korean Human Rights Act, which has been drifting for the past 5 years, such as the establishment of a North Korean human rights foundation and also for making communication between North and South Koreans possible by lowering restrictions on the freedom of communication.

This is Baik Sungwon with VOA News.

Translated by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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RFA

**Quintana "North Korean Human Rights Issues Should Be Raised Simultaneously with Humanitarian Assistance"**

Washington-Yang Heejung yangh@rfa.org

2021-03-15

Anchor: Tomas Ojea Quintana, UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in North Korea, strongly emphasized that the issue of North Korean human rights issues in North Korea should be raised simultaneously with humanitarian cooperation with North Korea. This was a response to South Korea's stance of emphasizing humanitarian cooperation while avoiding any mention of the situation of human rights abuses in North Korea. This is Yang Heejung reporting.

After a discussion on the 10th at the 46th Session of the UN Human Rights Council held in Geneva, Switzerland, Special Rapporteur Quintana told Radio Free Asia (RFA) on the 15th that he had official talks with representatives of the United States, Japan and the European Union, including the South Korean ambassador to Geneva.

Quintana, Special Rapporteur: They are connected. Both should be raised, in my opinion, simultaneously. I always try to stress in my meetings with the government of RoK that as a HR rapporteur, I do believe that HR could be raised not in a confrontational approach and that there are also ways to try to build an engagement with the government of North Korea to make the government of North Korea understand that the international community is ready to support all initiative to improve human rights.

This is Special Rapporteur Quintana's response to RFA's request for comment today regarding South Korea's position; this is the 3rd year that South Korea has not co-sponsored a joint UN draft resolution on the human rights situation in North Korea.

When opposition lawmakers visited the South Korean Ministry of Unification (MoU) today in protest of the nonparticipation in the joint draft resolution, Minister of Unification Lee In-young explained, "Improving inter-Korean relations through peace and humanitarian cooperation is a more natural, more realistic way to improve North Korean human rights."

Special Rapporteur Quintana emphasized that he has always made it clear that human rights should not be set aside for the sake of engagement.

He also emphasized that the resolution on North Korean human rights submitted by the European Union to the Human Rights Council on the 11th must be adopted as a resolution during this session.

Quintana, Special Rapporteur: North Korean authorities have denied human rights abuses in the country and continue to reject the human rights council's statements on the dire human rights situation in North Korea. As a result, it is very important for countries to show a uniform position on North Korean human rights.

In regard to this, former special envoy for North Korean human rights issues Robert King emphasized that other governments, including South Korea, should provide humanitarian aid on the premise that aid will be distributed to vulnerable groups in North Korea and other places where it is needed, and they must support the UN Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly's resolution on human rights in North Korea that call for greater progress on North Korean human rights.

He then pointed out that South Korea's MoU should not cut funding for research and investigation activities by North Korean human rights groups in South Korea. He explained that such activities by civil society organizations are urgently needed to establish a desirable policy toward North Korea.

Meanwhile, Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, a leading U.S. North Korean human rights group, told RFA today that he disagrees with the Minister of Unification's point of view that puts more weight on peace and humanitarian cooperation, and not on human rights in North Korea.

Scarlatoiu, Executive Director: Peace on the Korean peninsula is not between South Korean president Moon Jae-in and North Korean General Secretary of the Korean Workers' Party Kim Jong-un, nor between the South Korean government and North Korea's Korean Workers' Party; it must be peace between the people of North and South Korea. There can be no peace and reconciliation, reunification of the Korean peninsula that completely excludes the gross human rights violations against the people of North Korea.

Director Scarlatoiu then pointed out that although Kang Kyung-wha, former Foreign Minister, said that the issue of North Korean human rights should be dealt with through multilateral and not bilateral discussions, the South Korean government again did not participate in the joint draft resolution on North Korean human rights at the United Nations Human Rights Council, a venue for multilateral human rights talks.

He emphasized that this kind of approach towards North Korean human rights from South Korea, in particular, could cause friction with the Joe Biden administration which focuses on values such as human rights.

On the other hand, an EU spokesperson who led the drafting of the resolution told RFA today that they do not comment on consultations on the content of the resolution, which are ongoing, and that they are confident that the Human Rights Council will once again underline its concern at violations of human rights in the DPRK.

Translated by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Tristin Schultz, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250730163536/https://mailchi.mp/0f16f25eaca2/hrnk-news-items-silence-on-human-rights-only-allows-nk-to-escalate-offensive-stancenk-human-rights-should-be-raised-with-humanitarian-assistance?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, March 20, 2021**

# NK facing famine as epidemic of livestock deaths force farmers to steal; SK to revise rules on mandatory Covid testing of foreigners

**Top News:**
North Korea facing famine as 'epidemic' of livestock deaths forces farmers to steal(*Mirror*, 03/19/2021)
South Korea to revise rules on mandatory Covid-19 testing of foreigners (CNN, 03/19/2021)

**International:**
After N. Korea cuts ties, Malaysia orders its diplomats out (*AP News*, 03/20/2021)
Blinken says U.S., China had 'candid' talks on N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 03/20/2021)
North Korea imports only $32,000 worth of Chinese goods amid deep trade slump(*NK News*, 03/19/2021)
Sanctions relief not an option to bring N. Korea back to dialogue: Harris (*Yonhap*, 03/20/2021)
Still Deadly: Don't Forget North Korea Used Sea Mines To Fight the Navy (*National Interest*, 03/20/2021)
UN says no international staff left in North Korea (*AP News*, 03/20/2021)

U.S. Extradites North Korean From Malaysia (*Wall Street Journal*, 03/19/2021)

**Top News:**

- There are fears North Korea is on the brink of a devastating new famine amid an 'epidemic' of cow deaths. With food imports from neighbouring China at a standstill and corn prices surging, North Korea has been hit by a livestock crisis that would impact the food chain. Greg Scarlatoiu, director of the Washington DC-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, said the Kim regime was making scapegoats of farmers. “The regime often focuses on identifying and punishing scapegoats, instead of focusing on the systemic reasons behind its failures." (Michael Havis, *Mirror*)
- Officials in the South Korean capital Seoul have reversed course on controversial plans to require all foreign workers to undergo Covid-19 testing after facing a torrent of criticism from diplomatic missions and international businesses. The ruling, which came into force Wednesday, required all foreign workers in the capital to undergo coronavirus screenings, or face fines of up to 2 million Korean won ($1,775). In a news release from the city government Friday, Seoul City officials said they would now only recommend foreign workers employed at high-risk businesses with dense and unventilated working environments undergo testing by March 31. The city also recommended South Korean nationals working at the same businesses get tested, the release added. (Paula Hancocks, Gawon Bae, CNN)

**International:**

- Malaysia on Friday ordered all North Korean diplomats to leave the country within 48 hours, an escalation of a diplomatic spat over Malaysia’s move to extradite a North Korean suspect to the United States on money laundering charges. (Hyung-jin Kim, Eileen Ng, *AP News*)
- The United States and China had a candid conversation on a range of issues, including North Korea, during a ministerial meeting in Alaska, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Friday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Chinese trade with North Korea continued to stall at minuscule levels in January and February, after the country’s economy suffered serious blows amid the COVID-19 pandemic last year. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- Sanctions relief cannot and must not be part of a plan to bring North Korea back to the negotiating table, former U.S. ambassador to South Korea Harry Harris said Friday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Mines are cheap, easy to deploy, and a pain to clear. That is why weaker powers, such as North Korea, have relied on them to slow an enemy's naval advance. (Sebastien Roblin, *National Interest*)
- A U.N. spokesman said the world body in North Korea has been left with no international staff, who are now working remotely. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)
- The U.S. extradited a North Korean accused of money laundering from Malaysia, Pyongyang said Friday, as the regime said it would cut ties with Kuala Lumpur over the decision. (Andrew Jeong, Chester Tay, Wall Street Journal)

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Prepared by Timothy Goo, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250730163859/https://mailchi.mp/9e0fed16b062/hrnk-news-itemsnk-facing-famine-as-epidemic-of-livestock-deaths-force-farmers-to-steal-sk-to-revise-rules-on-mandatory-covid-testing-of-foreigners?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, March 21, 2021**

# North Korean Human Rights as a Variable in US-Korea Relations; N. Korean diplomats leaving Malaysia after ties are severed

**Top News:**
*** North Korean Human Rights as a Variable in US-Korea Relations... Concern about Friction in the Alliance (VOA, 03/17/2021)

*** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**
Shocker: North Korea Has Built Underground Air Fields (*National Interest*, 03/21/2021)

**In South Korea:**
North Korean defectors talk about escape, new life in South in English (*Korea Times*, 03/21/2021)

**International:**
Diplomatic spat between NK and Malaysia deepens (*Korea Herald*, 03/21/2021)
N.K. diplomats withdraw from embassy in Malaysia after ties are severed: reports (*Yonhap*, 03/21/2021)
N. Korean diplomats leaving Malaysia after ties are severed (*AP News*, 03/21/2021)
North Korean man extradited to US in sanctions case (*AP News*, 03/21/2021)
North Koreans leave embassy in Malaysia after severing diplomatic ties (*NK News*, 03/21/2021)
North's diplomats expelled from Malaysia (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/21/2021)
Uncertain future ahead for US-North Korea dialogue (*Korea Times*, 03/21/2021)

**Top News:**

- While U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken who visited South Korea strongly emphasizes the North Korean human rights issue, there is growing concern in Washington that the two countries' perceptions of human rights in North Korea could become a stumbling block between the allies. Some anticipate the Biden administration's understanding that nuclear and human rights issues are tied to the nature of the North Korean regime may be out of step with the Moon Jae-in administration that is passive about North Korean human rights. Roberta Cohen, Co-chair Emeritus of HRNK and former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, said, "For the Biden Administration, the danger of North Korea is not just its nuclear weapons but the nature of the regime that has those weapons. The two issues

must be pursued in tandem." Robert King, HRNK Board member and former special envoy for North Korean human rights issues at the Department of State, stated, "It is unfortunate that on the issue of North Korea, which is an important issue both for the United States and for South Korea, that we're headed in slightly different directions on that. It doesn't mean that we're totally at odds." HRNK Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu pointed out, "There are two pillars of the Biden Administration's foreign policy: shared values and multilateralism. By not co-sponsoring UN Human Rights Council resolutions on DPRK human rights and other similar measures, the Moon government is not doing itself any favors in terms of confirming that the ROK is still in sync with the United States." (Baik Sungwon, VOA)

**In North Korea:**

- These hidden, hardened air bases could help Pyongyang launch attacks and keep some of its planes safe while it fights a war. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- North Korean defectors resettled in the South shared various experiences about their escapes and adaptation to life outside of North Korea at the 13th English speaking contest organized by Freedom Speakers International (FSI), Saturday. (Lee Hyo-jin, *Korea Times*)

**International:**

- A diplomatic spat between North Korea and Malaysia is escalating over the Southeast Asian country's decision to extradite a North Korean person to the United States to face money laundering charges. (Kim So-hyun, *Korea Herald*)
- Diplomats withdrew from the North Korean embassy in Malaysia on Sunday, two days after Pyongyang said it would cut ties with the Southeast Asian country over its citizen's extradition to the United States, reports said. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean diplomats vacated their embassy in Malaysia and were expelled Sunday, after the two nations cut diplomatic relations in a spat over the extradition of a North Korean criminal suspect to the United States. (Eileen Ng, *AP News*)
- A North Korean citizen was taken into U.S. custody on Saturday after being extradited from Malaysia to face money laundering charges, making him the first North Korean extradited to the U.S. to face trial. (Michael Balsamo, *AP News*)
- North Korean staff left the country's embassy in Malaysia on Sunday, two days after Pyongyang cut diplomatic ties with Kuala Lumpur for extraditing a DPRK national to the U.S. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korean diplomats left Malaysia Sunday, two days after Pyongyang decided to sever diplomatic ties with the Southeast Asian country over the extradition of a North Korean citizen to the United States on money laundering charges. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Despite the highly hyped visit of U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin to South Korea last week, there were no major new initiatives for how to deal with North Korea, probably because the Joe Biden administration hasn't finished the review of its policy toward the country. (Kang Seung-woo, Korea Times)

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VOA Article

**North Korean Human Rights as a Variable in US-Korea Relations… Concern about Friction in the Alliance**

Reporter Baik Sungwon
2021.3.17 7:20PM

While U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken who visited South Korea strongly emphasizes the North Korean human rights issue, there is growing concern in Washington that the two countries' perceptions of human rights in North Korea could become a stumbling block between the allies. Some anticipate the Biden administration's understanding that nuclear and human rights issues are tied to the nature of the North Korean regime may be out of step with the Moon Jae-in administration that is passive about North Korean human rights. This is Baik Sungwon reporting.

It has not been two months since the launch of the Biden administration, but there is already quite a gap with the South Korean administration on the issue of North Korean human rights.

Having predicted the reinstatement of a U.S. State Department Special Envoy on North Korean Human Rights Issues early on and following the announcement of the principle of differentiating the North Korean regime and its people, this is because high-ranking officials are making clear their commitment to improving human rights in North Korea.

Christopher Hill, former Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, stated during a call with VOA, "I know for a fact that the Biden administration will attach high importance to human rights, not just in North Korea, but everywhere, and I'm sure they will look forward to discussions with the South Koreans on that issue."

[Recording: Christopher Hill, former Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs] "I know for a fact that the Biden administration will attach high importance to human rights, not just in North Korea, but everywhere, and I'm sure they will look forward to discussions with the South Koreans on that issue."

Nevertheless, he was cautious and stated that before the two countries have more talks in the future, it is difficult to understand how the human rights issue will affect the relationship between the two countries.

However, former U.S. officials who experienced the behind-the-scenes heated debate and conflict over the North Korean human rights issue that occurred between the United States and the South Korean Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun administrations in the past, predict that disagreements between the two countries on 'human rights and democratic values' may be a stumbling block for the alliance.

This prediction stems from the evaluation that the Biden administration's approach is to link the nature of the North Korean nuclear threat to the nature of a regime that does not hesitate to obliterate human rights.

Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, said, "For the Biden Administration, the danger of North Korea is not just its nuclear weapons but the nature of the regime that has those weapons. The two issues must be pursued in tandem."

[Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State] "For the Biden Administration, the danger of North Korea is not just its nuclear weapons but the nature of the regime that has those weapons. The two issues must be pursued in tandem."

Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Cohen recalled South Korea's recent refusal to co-sponsor a joint draft resolution on North Korean human rights at the UN Human Rights Council sand added, "It shows that the United States will have a lot of work to do to build back the US-South Korea alliance when it comes to the defense and promotion of human rights."

[Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State] "It shows that the United States will have a lot of work to do to build back the US-South Korea alliance when it comes to the defense and promotion of human rights."

Secretary of State Antony Blinken who visited South Korea stated previously on the 17th at a meeting with South Korean Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong that "the authoritarian regime in North Korea continues to commit systemic and widespread abuses against its own people." This is a completely different message from that of the Moon Jae-in administration which has refrained from criticizing human rights for the sake of relations with the North Korean regime.

Secretary Blinken said, "We want to achieve our shared vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific, anchored by respect for human rights, for democracy, for the rule of law," making it clear that he looks forward to doing this together with South Korea.

In a statement released on that day by the U.S. Department of State that explains the purpose of the U.S. Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense's visit to South Korea, it emphasizes, "North Korea poses a serious threat to international peace and security and the global nonproliferation regime. The United States remains committed to strengthening deterrence against and the denuclearization of North Korea, as well as the protection and promotion of human rights in North Korea."

In regard to this matter, Sue Mi Terry, senior fellow at the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) and former director/officer for Korea affairs at the White House and the National Security Council, pointed out, "Human rights is a potential area where Seoul and Washington are going to continually differ."

[Recording: Sue Mi Terry, CSIS Senior Fellow] "I think this is a potential area where Seoul and Washington are going to continually differ on, when there is going to be just a difference there."

On that day, Minister Chung Eui-yong also said, "I also look forward to building the momentum towards the firm establishment and substantive progress on the Korean Peninsula peace process with the outcomes of today's meeting," stressing a completely different area than Secretary Blinken who emphasized the North Korean regime's human rights abuses.

Robert King, former special envoy for North Korean human rights issues at the Department of State, stated, "It is unfortunate that on the issue of North Korea, which is an important issue both for the United States and for South Korea, that we're headed in slightly different directions on that. It doesn't mean that we're totally at odds."

[Recording: Robert King, former special envoy for North Korean human rights issues] "It is unfortunate that on the issue of North Korea, which is an important issue both for the United States and for South Korea, that we're headed in slightly different directions on that. It doesn't mean that we're totally at odds."

He explained, “I think it's important to keep in mind that the United States and South Korea have a very strong and very important relationship. I mean this is a relationship that includes important strategic joint approaches on many of the important strategic issues. There are extremely strong economic ties between the United States and South Korea.”

[Recording: Robert King, former special envoy for North Korean human rights issues] “I think it's important to keep in mind that the United States and South Korea have a very strong and very important relationship. I mean this is a relationship that includes important strategic joint approaches on many of the important strategic issues. There are extremely strong economic ties between the United States and South Korea.”

Former Special Envoy King also said, “But it means that there is more friction and more problems because of the differences on particularly the human rights issues.”

[Recording: Robert King, former special envoy for North Korean human rights issues] “But it means that there is more friction and more problems because of the differences on particularly the human rights issues.”

Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), a U.S.-based human rights group, pointed out, “There are two pillars of the Biden Administration's foreign policy: shared values and multilateralism. By not co-sponsoring UN Human Rights Council resolutions on DPRK human rights and other similar measures, the Moon government is not doing itself any favors in terms of confirming that the ROK is still in sync with the United States.”

[Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director] “There are two pillars of the Biden Administration's foreign policy: shared values and multilateralism. By not co-sponsoring UN Human Rights Council resolutions on DPRK human rights and other similar measures, the Moon government is not doing itself any favors in terms of confirming that the ROK is still in sync with the United States.”

He also made the criticism, “Through its neglect and even hostility toward addressing North Korean human rights, through its failure to address North Korean human rights at UN fora, the Moon government is undermining both shared values and multilateralism.”

[Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director] “Through its neglect and even hostility toward addressing North Korean human rights, through its failure to address North Korean human rights at UN fora, the Moon government is undermining both shared values and multilateralism.”

In particular, the fact that the United States co-sponsored the joint draft resolution on North Korean human rights at the UN Human Rights Council further highlights South Korea's absence as “offbeat”.

In June 2018, under the Donald Trump administration, the United States withdrew from the Human Rights Council and did not co-sponsor the human rights resolution, but the Biden administration announced its return to the Human Rights Council last month and then urged support for the resolution on North Korean human rights.

Evans Revere, former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, pointed out, “The Biden administration has made clear that human rights will again be a core element of foreign policy for the United States.” He then added, “While how the new administration

will handle the North Korea issue is still unclear, there is certainly potential for friction between the United States and the ROK if Washington opts to deal firmly with North Korea on its horrific human right record while Seoul remains silent."

[Evans Revere, former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State] "The Biden administration has made clear that human rights will again be a core element of foreign policy for the United States. While how the new administration will handle the North Korea issue is still unclear, there is certainly potential for friction between the United States and the ROK if Washington opts to deal firmly with North Korea on its horrific human right record while Seoul remains silent."

Robert Manning, senior fellow at the Atlantic Council and former senior strategist at the U.S. Department of State and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, stated, "There are concerns in the US Congress and human rights community about South Korea's low profile on North Korean human rights, and it might get raised in Congress."

[Robert Manning, Atlantic Council senior fellow] There are concerns in the US Congress and human rights community about South Korea's low profile on North Korean human rights, and it might get raised in Congress."

Manning also said, "But the US-South Korean alliance faces big strategic challenges in Northeast Asia. That and the strong economic relationship will remain at the center of US-South Korean relations. However, things might get a bit awkward when Biden appoints a North Korea Human Rights envoy, much of whose job would be to work with Seoul on those issues."

[Robert Manning, Atlantic Council senior fellow] But the US-South Korean alliance faces big strategic challenges in Northeast Asia. That and the strong economic relationship will remain at the center of US-South Korean relations. However, things might get a bit awkward when Biden appoints a North Korea Human Rights envoy, much of whose job would be to work with Seoul on those issues."

Meanwhile, when VOA asked the U.S. State Department what message they would like to send to the people of North Korea celebrating World Women's Day (International Women's Day), they responded, "The United States is committed to placing human rights at the center of our foreign policy. We stand united with like-minded partners in calling out human rights abuses."

[State Department spokesperson] "The United States is committed to placing human rights at the center of our foreign policy. We stand united with like-minded partners in calling out human rights abuses. As part of its North Korea review, the Biden-Harris administration is carefully considering the country's egregious human rights record and how to promote respect for human rights in the closed country."

The spokesperson also stated, "As part of its North Korea review, the Biden-Harris administration is carefully considering the country's egregious human rights record and how to promote respect for human rights in the closed country."

This was Baik Sungwon with VOA News.

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VOA Article Translated by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Timothy Goo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250730182855/https://mailchi.mp/2c93ae3b95ac/hrnk-news-items-north-korean-human-rights-as-a-variable-in-us-korea-relationsn-korean-diplomats-leaving-malaysia-after-ties-are-severed?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, March 22, 2021**

# ‘Denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula’: Pyongyang’s trick language for keeping its nuke

**Top News:**
‘Denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula’: Pyongyang’s trick language for keeping its nukes (*AEI*, 03/19/2021)

**In North Korea:**
5 Takeaways From Investigating Covert Oil Deliveries to North Korea (*The New York Times*, 03/22/2021)
Father and daughter arrested while trying to defect across border (*Daily NK*, 03/22/2021)
How Has Iran Become a Military Powerhouse? Ask North Korea. (*The National Interest*, 03/22/2021)
How We Tracked Secret Oil Deliveries to North Korea (*The New York Times*, 03/22/2021)
North Korea slams ‘Western countries’ in apparent reference to Atlanta shootings(*NK News*, 03/22/2021)
North Korean taken into US custody in sanctions case (*The Hill*, 03/21/2021)
Two border guards fled to China in January to find food (*Daily NK*, 03/22/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Moon's plan to revive peace initiative through Tokyo Games faces hitch (*The Korea Times*, 03/22/2021)
S. Korea to seek other ways to engage with N.K. as overseas spectators banned from Tokyo Olympics: ministry (*Yonhap*, 03/22/2021)
South Korea vows to address red tape slowing down North Korea aid (*NK News*, 03/22/2021)
Unification minister renews support for private sector efforts to resume aid to N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 03/22/2021)

**International:**

China's Xi tells N. Korea's Kim that he upholds political settlement of Korean Peninsula issue (*Yonhap*, 03/22/2021)
Chinese president promises to work with North Korea to 'preserve peace' (*NK News*, 03/22/2021)
Expelled North Korean Diplomats Leave Malaysia (RFA, 03/21/2021)
North Korea-China trade further plummets in the second year of COVID-19 (*NK News*, 03/22/2021)
North Korea closes embassy in Malaysia as ties severed (*Nikkei Asia*, 03/21/2021)

**Top News:**

- Sometimes words matter greatly in foreign affairs. A key instance of the crucial importance of seemingly innocuous semantic distinctions is on display right now in the never-ending North Korean nuclear crisis. American policymakers sometimes say Washington's objective is "the denuclearization of North Korea." Other times, they say the US goal is "the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula." The Biden team has used both phrases to describe the US position. It has probably used the former term more often, but it uses the latter all the time. (Nicholas Eberstadt, *AEI*)

**In North Korea:**

- The New York Times Visual Investigations team and Times reporters across Asia spent six months tracking several of the tankers involved in some of these covert oil transfers, unraveling a murky corporate network that connects to a Singapore-headquartered major oil trader called the Winson Group. (Stella Cooper, Christoph Koettl, and Muyi Xiao, *The New York Times*)
- A male resident of Hoeryong, North Hamgyong Province, who had been suffering from financial hardships due to the COVID-19 outbreak, was caught attempting to defect with his daughter, Daily NK has learned. (Kim Yoo Jin, *Daily NK*)
- The U.S. State Department is stepping up its efforts to tighten the sanctions regime arrayed against Iran, drawing renewed attention to the thriving arms trade between Pyongyang and Tehran. (Mark Episkopos, *The National Interest)*
- Last May, under layers of dense clouds, two tankers idled side by side in waters near Taiwan, one passing oil to the other. Weeks later, one of them docked in Nampo, the main port of North Korea. That ship, the Diamond 8, has repeatedly supplied oil to that country, violating United Nations sanctions aimed at limiting North Korea's imports of refined petroleum, according to U.N. reports. (Muyi Xiao, *The New York Times*)
- North Korea took aim at "Western countries" for harping on its egregious human rights record, alluding to recent racially-charged crimes in the United States and defending itself as a "socialist paradise." (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- A North Korean man was taken into U.S. custody on Saturday after being extradited from Malaysia, The Associated Press reported, becoming the first North Korean to be extradited to the U.S. to face trial. (Mychael Schnell, *The Hill*)
- Two armed members of the North Korean border patrol who fled to China due to hunger were caught in January, Daily NK has belatedly learned. Defections among border guards have been a frequent occurrence due to the COVID-19 border blockade. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- President Moon Jae-in's bid to take the Tokyo Olympic Games as an opportunity to revive the peace initiative toward North Korea is facing uncertainties, as the sporting event appears to be losing steam on Japan's decision to bar overseas spectators. (Nam Hyun-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- The unification ministry said Monday it will look for opportunities to move forward the Korea peace process amid dimmed prospects for engaging with North Korea through the Tokyo Olympics following Japan's decision to ban foreign spectators. (*Yonhap*)
- Just days after North Korea threatened to dissolve organizations dedicated to inter-Korean talks, South Korea's unification minister vowed to address hurdles that slow down organizations from providing humanitarian assistance to the DPRK. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young on Monday renewed his support for private sector efforts to resume humanitarian assistance to North Korea despite strained cross-border ties and Pyongyang's tight border controls due to the global pandemic. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Chinese President Xi Jinping said Monday, in a verbal message to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, that Beijing will uphold a political settlement of the Korean Peninsula issue, according to Chinese state media Xinhua. (*Yonhap*)
- Chinese President Xi Jinping told North Korean leader Kim Jong Un that he's willing to work with him to preserve peace on the Korean Peninsula, Chinese state media reported on Monday. (Kelly Kasulis, *NK News*)
- North Korean embassy officials and their families left Malaysia on Sunday after Pyongyang severed decades-old diplomatic ties following the extradition of a North Korean national to the United States to face criminal trial. (*RFA*)
- Official North Korea-China trade continued to plummet to new lows in January and February, according to recent data from China's General Administration of Customs (GAC). (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- North Korea closed its embassy in Kuala Lumpur and its diplomats left Malaysia on Sunday after Pyongyang announced it was cutting diplomatic ties with the Southeast Asian country over the extradition of one of its citizens to the United States. (*Nikkei Asia*)

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Prepared by Sophia Hapin, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250730183252/https://mailchi.mp/170481f0ad3d/hrnk-news-itemsdenuclearizing-the-korean-peninsula-pyongyangs-trick-language-for-keeping-its-nukes?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, March 23, 2021**

# U.S. Flags Human Rights Concerns in S. Korea

**Top News:**
U.S. Flags Human Rights Concerns in S.Korea (*The Chosun Ilbo*, 3/22/2021)

**In North Korea:**
China, North Korea Statement of Cooperation Poses New Threat to U.S. (*US News*, 3/22/2021)
Forestry office manager in Chagang Province executed for corruption (*Daily NK*, 3/23/2021)
How We Tracked Secret Oil Deliveries to North Korea (*The New York Times*, 3/22/2021)
Junk: Why North Korea Should Sell Its Old Air Force for Scrap (*The National Interest*, 3/22/2021)
Kim calls for communication, unity with China against 'hostile forces' all-round challenges' (*Yonhap*, 3/23/2021)
Kim and Xi exchange messages, call for cooperation against 'hostile forces' (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 3/23/2021)
NK's Kim calls for unified front with China against 'hostile forces' (*The Korea Herald*, 3/23/2021)
N. Korea's Kim, China's Xi vow to further develop ties (*Yonhap*, 3/22/2021)
North Korea forcibly collects money from ordinary people to purchase agricultural equipment, including tractors (*Daily NK*, 3/23/2021)
North Korea reports zero confirmed COVID-19 cases, but key data is still missing(*NK News*, 3/22/2021)
North Korea seeks to strengthen its ties to China, even as it ignores US (*South China Morning Post*, 3/23/2021)
North Korea's Kim stressed to China's Xi the need to strengthen unity and cooperation: KCNA (*Reuters*, 3/22/2021)
North Korea's Military Carries Out Unusual Activities Near Border (*The Wall Street Journal*, 3/23/2021)
North Korea's 'only openly gay defector' finds love (BBC, 3/20/2021)
Rare North Korean flight from Pyongyang spotted amid COVID-19 halt to air travel(*NK News*, 3/23/2021)
Xi, Kim share messages reaffirming China-N. Korea alliance (*Associated Press*, 3/23/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Moon's desperate North Korea outreach is costing him credibility in Washington (*NK News*, 3/23/2021)
F-35 Stealth Fighter: The Weapon South Korea Truly Needs (And Kim Fears) (*The National Interest*, 3/22/2021)
North Korea's multiple rocket launchers not a violation, Seoul says (UPI, 3/23/2021)
S. Korea not to co-sponsor this year's U.N. resolution on N.K. human rights (*Yonhap*, 3/23/2021)
S. Korea, U.S. closely watching N. Korea amid signs rocket launchers being deployed to border islet (*Yonhap*, 3/23/2021)
Seoul needs to budge on big issues if it wants Tokyo's help on North Korea (*NK News*, 3/22/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

S. Korea ready to provide N. Korea with 'sizable' amount of food, fertilizer aid: unification minister (*Yonhap*, 3/23/2021)
Tokyo Olympics offers opportunity to advance inter-Korea ties, Seoul says (UPI, 3/22/2021)
Unification ministry reviewing ways to send food, fertilizer assistance to N. Korea(*Yonhap*, 3/23/2021)

**International:**
After Landmark Extradition, North Korean in US Court on Money Laundering Charges (RFA, 3/22/2021)
Alleged North Korean Operative Makes First U.S. Court Appearance (*The Wall Street Journal*, 3/22/2021)
EU hits North Korea with human rights-related sanctions for the first time (*NK News*, 3/22/2021)
First North Korean extradited to U.S. stands trial (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 3/23/2021)
For the first time ever, a North Korean man is brought to the US to stand trial (*NK News*, 3/22/2021)
Is US pressure on China, North Korea leading to new Cold War? (*The Korea Times*, 3/23/2021)
North Korean appears in U.S. court on sanctions-evasion money-laundering charges (*Reuters*, 3/22/2021)
Report: North Korea-owned hostel in Berlin remains closed (UPI, 3/22/2021)
S. Korea's nuclear armament will only justify N. Korea's nuclear ambition: Vicent Brooks (*Yonhap*, 3/23/2021)
'Seoul's nuclear pursuit would harden NK's atomic ambitions' (*The Korea Herald*, 3/23/2021)
Sino-U.S. tensions, tighter China-N.K. ties feared to weaken denuke efforts (*Yonhap*,3/23/2021)
Top White House adviser says diplomacy is key to North Korea denuclearization (*NK News*, 3/22/2021)
U.S. court action begins for N. Korean extradited by Malaysia: Justice Department(*Yonhap*, 3/23/2021)
U.S. remains committed to denuclearizing N. Korea, engaging allies and partners: Sullivan (*Yonhap*, 3/23/2021)

**Top News:**

- Roberta Cohen, a former State Department official, said in an interview with Voice of America that the Moon administration sees human rights issues as an "obstacle" to its overtures to North Korea. She added that peace cannot be achieved if such issues are swept under the rug and criticized the South Korean government for lacking confidence to condemn North Korea's human rights abuses alongside its partners in the UN. (Kim Jin-myung and Lee Yong-soo, *The Chosun Ilbo*)

**In North Korea:**

- An exchange between Xi Jingping and Kim Jong Un implies North Korea may restart nuclear weapons or ICBM tests if Biden does not heed an implicit warning. (Paul Shinkman, *US News*)
- The manager of a Chosan County Forestry Office in Chagang Province, North Korea, was reportedly publicly executed over allegations of smuggling a significant number of trees to China over the past five years to fill his own pockets. The manager was reportedly punished

severely for failing to comply with the orders of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)

- For a Visual Investigations project that looked at violations of United Nations sanctions, more than a dozen journalists examined a maze of connections. But we started with one ship. (Muyi Xiao, *The New York Times*)
- North Korea is pursuing a military modernization doctrine that largely does not require an air force to threaten North Korea's East Asian neighbors and guarantee its second-strike capability. (Mark Episkopos, *The National Interest*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un called for stronger strategic communication and unity with China to address "hostile forces" in a message to Chinese President Xi Jinping, state media said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- Chinese President Xi Jinping in a verbal message to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un expressed willingness to "make new positive contributions" toward peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, the two countries' state media reported Tuesday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and Chinese President Xi Jinping exchanged messages Monday in which Kim stressed unity and stronger cooperation against hostile forces, in what is seen as a move to bolster their traditional alliance in the face of intensifying tension between China and the US, as well as stalled nuclear talks between Pyongyang and Washington. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and Chinese President Xi Jinping exchanged verbal messages on Monday in which they pledged to further develop bilateral ties, according to Chinese state media Xinhua. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea is in the midst of providing support to rural areas as the country heads into its busy farming season. North Korean authorities, however, are forcibly collecting money from ordinary people for the purchase of various agricultural equipment, including tractors, Daily NK has learned. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea claims to have zero confirmed cases of COVID-19 as of March 11, according to a new report from the World Health Organization (WHO). (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- While Washington under the new US administration struggles to communicate with Pyongyang, an isolated North Korea has pledged to strengthen its ties with neighbouring China into a relationship "envied by the world". (Eduardo Baptista, *South China Morning Post*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un stressed to China's President Xi Jinping the need to strengthen unity and cooperation between the two countries, North Korean state media KCNA reported on Tuesday. (*Reuters*)
- North Korea's military displayed unusual activities close to the South Korean border, Seoul defense officials said, while leader Kim Jong Un and Chinese leader Xi Jinping exchanged messages vowing unity amid rising U.S.-China tensions. (Andrew Jeong, *The Wall Street Journal*)
- Jang Yeong-jin's remarkable story as North Korea's only openly gay defector was covered by the international media after he published his autobiography. Now, almost a quarter of a century after fleeing the country, he tells the BBC that he plans to marry his American boyfriend. (Julie Yoonnyung Lee, *BBC*)
- A rare Air Koryo flight was detected crossing from North Korea's capital city to its east coast on Tuesday, according to data from the ADS-B flight radar. The plane is the first flight detected in North Korean airspace in 2021 and one of only a handful of flights detected since the country shut down most air travel in Jan. 2020. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)

- The leaders of China and North Korea are reaffirming their traditional alliance following contentious talks between top diplomats from Washington and Beijing and diplomatic isolation and economic problems in the North that have left it ever-more dependent on the Chinese. (Kim Tong-Hyung, *Associated Press*)

**In South Korea:**

- President Moon must admit that his efforts to bring the Biden administration on board with his vision for inter-Korean rapprochement are falling short. (Jumin Lee, *NK News*)
- Earlier this month, Korea Aerospace Industries (KAI) announced plans to unveil a prototype of South Korea's first indigenous fighter jet in April. KAI is set to roll out the first of its next-generation combat aircraft, which is better known as the Korean Fighter eXperimental (KF-X). (Peter Suciu, *The National Interest*)
- North Korea's decision to deploy multiple rocket launchers is not a violation of an inter-Korean military agreement, Seoul said, as Pyongyang strengthened defenses and proposed closer ties with Beijing. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- South Korea decided not to co-sponsor a U.N. Human Rights Council resolution on North Korea's rights violations for the third consecutive year, though it will join the document's adoption by consensus, a Seoul official said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea is closely monitoring North Korea's military moves in close coordination with the United States, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Tuesday, amid signs that Pyongyang is deploying multiple rocket launchers on a western border island. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in has less than one year to finish up his North Korea agenda before the next presidential elections start. Most urgently, he has a very tight window to revive U.S.-North Korea talks before he hands the fate of nearly all of his diplomatic efforts to a new successor. (Yeo Hyun-jun, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korea is ready to provide a "sizable" amount of food and fertilizer assistance to North Korea, Unification Minister Lee In-young said Tuesday, stressing that humanitarian exchanges will help move the stalled peace process forward and advance the human rights situation in Pyongyang. (Koh Byung-joon and Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea said the upcoming Tokyo Olympics could be an opportunity to advance relations with North Korea on the same day that Chinese state media said Kim Jong Un and Xi Jinping vowed to develop bilateral ties. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- The unification ministry is conducting an internal review of ways to provide food and fertilizer to North Korea as humanitarian assistance, an official said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- The first North Korean national to be extradited to the United States–a possible financial crime information windfall for the U.S–appeared in court to face money-laundering charges on Monday in Washington, where an FBI official said “we hope he will be the first of many. (Paul Eckert, RFA)
- An alleged North Korean intelligence operative appeared in federal court in Washington on Monday to face charges of laundering funds to evade U.S. and United Nations sanctions, in the first such prosecution of its kind as relations between the Biden administration and North Korea have had a rocky start. (Aruna Viswanatha, *The Wall Street Journal*)
- A top European Union body has slapped North Korea with sanctions for allegedly torturing and killing people and as well as conducting “widespread” forced labor. The move marks the

first time the EU has explicitly named DPRK officials for human rights-related crimes. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

- Court proceedings began Monday for Mun Chol-myong, a 55-year-old businessman accused of money laundering who became the first North Korean national to be extradited to the United States. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A North Korean man accused of money laundering to supply illegal luxury goods to his country was extradited to the U.S. after nearly two years of legal proceedings, the U.S. Department of Justice said on Monday. (Kelly Kasulis, *NK News*)
- The U.S.' moves to rally its allies against North Korea and China are raising the specter of a new Cold War, according to diplomatic observers, with the totalitarian states, along with Russia, teaming up to address the "hostile policy," Tuesday. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- A North Korean businessman accused by the United States of laundering money to circumvent U.S. and U.N. sanctions intended to curb his country's nuclear weapons program appeared in a U.S. court on Monday after extradition from Malaysia. (*Reuters*)
- A North Korean-owned hostel in Berlin permanently closed in 2020, according to a Japanese press report. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- Arming South Korea with its own nuclear weapons against threats from North Korea would only help justify the North's ongoing pursuit of nuclear weapons, and thus making it impossible to denuclearize the North, a former commander of U.S. Forces Korea said Monday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean nuclear armament will make it harder for North Korea to dismantle its nuclear weapons program, a former commander of the US military in South Korea said at a webinar hosted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies on Monday. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- A rancorous Sino-U.S. rivalry that appears to be bringing North Korea and China even closer is casting a pall over cooperation between the major powers in charting a course for Pyongyang's denuclearization, analysts said Tuesday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- A top White House adviser spoke on the Biden administration's recent backchannel outreach to North Korea on Monday, saying that diplomacy is a part of the United States' broader goal to denuclearize North Korea. (Kelly Kasulis, *NK News*)
- Court proceedings began here Monday for a North Korean national suspected of money laundering, the U.S. Department of Justice said. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- The United States will continue to work closely with its allies and partners, including China and Russia, to denuclearize North Korea, U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said Monday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Carter Thompson, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250923194123/https://mailchi.mp/1c3590c004e1/hrnk-news-items-us-flags-human-rights-concerns-in-s-korea?e=8a9aae5198

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## Wednesday, March 24, 2021

# NK conducts first weapons test of Biden's presidency; UN urges NK to reopen borders for aid and humanitarian workers

**In North Korea:**
Are North Korean EMP Weapons a Real Threat or Huge Joke? (*The National Interest*, 03/24/2021)
Is North Korea returning to brinkmanship? (*The Korea Times*, 03/24/2021)
Kim's Lost Fortune: North Korea Has $10 Trillion Resources It Can't Tap (*The National Interest*, 03/24/2021)
Labels matter (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/24/2021)
N.K. leader calls for stronger relations in verbal messages to Cuba, Vietnam, Laos(*Yonhap*, 03/24/2021)
N. Korea fired two cruise missiles off west coast Sunday: JCS (*Yonhap*, 03/24/2021)
N. Korea kicks off project to build 10,000 modern apartments in Pyongyang this year (*Yonhap*, 03/24/2021)
N. Korea resumes building up tensions as it awaits US move (*The Korea Herald*, 03/24/2021)
North Korea bought smuggled oil and flouted rules meant to stop its nuke program(*NK News*, 03/24/2021)
North Korea Conducts 1st Missile Test Under Biden Administration (*The New York Times*, 03/24/2021)
North Korea Conducts First Launch of 2021 (VOA, 03/23/2021)
North Korea conducts first weapons test of Biden presidency (*CBS News*, 03/24/2021)
North Korea conducts first weapons test of Biden's presidency (CNN, 03/23/2021)
North Korea fired at least one missile over the weekend, U.S. officials say (NBC, 03/23/2021)
North Korea fired cruise missiles last weekend, U.S. plays down concern (*Kyodo News*, 03/24/2021)
North Korea fired two cruise missiles off west coast on Sunday: Yonhap (*Reuters*, 03/23/2021)
North Korea fired two missiles in first test under Biden (*The Business Times*, 03/24/2021)
North Korea Fires Cruise Missiles in First Such Test Since July (*Bloomberg*, 03/23/2021)
North Korea Fires First Missiles During Biden Presidency (*The Wall Street Journal*, 03/23/2021)
North Korea fires off first missile test since Biden took office (*CNBC*, 03/23/2021)
North Korea fires short-range missiles in challenge to Biden administration (*The Washington Post*, 03/23/2021)
North Korea Fires Short-Range Missiles in First Challenge to Biden Administration(*The Diplomat*, 03/24/2021)
North Korea fires two short-range missiles, U.S. still open to dialogue (*Reuters*, 03/23/2021)
North Korea kicks off plan to build 10,000 'modern flats' in Pyongyang this year (*NK News*, 03/23/2021)
North Korea's Kim breaks ground for huge apartment development despite other stalled projects (*Reuters*, 03/23/2021)
North Korea slams EU sanctions as 'psychotic' (*Euronews*, 03/24/2021)
North Korea test-fired two missiles in the early hours of Sunday morning (*NK News*, 03/23/2021)

North Korea tested missiles over the weekend: US, South Korea (*Al Jazeera*, 03/23/2021)
North Korean missile launches confirmed after 3 days (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/24/2021)
North Korean missile test: The start of a fresh cycle of provocations? (*The Japan Times*, 03/24/2021)
Meet North Korea's Submarine-Launched Pukguksong-4 Nuclear Missile (*The National Interest*, 03/24/2021)
Mum's the word (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/24/2021)
Pyongyang denounces EU sanctions as 'political provocation' (*Yonhap*, 03/24/2021)
Report: Missiles fired by North Korea may have been displayed at parade (*UPI*, 03/24/2021)
The North Korean-Syrian Partnership: Bright Prospects Ahead (*38 North*, 03/23/2021)
Two Storm Corps soldiers suffer major injuries after stepping on landmine (*Daily NK*, 03/24/20210

**In South Korea:**
Seoul declines to back UN resolution on NK rights (*The Korea Herald*, 03/24/2021)
Why Moon Jae-in can't be pressured into tackling North Korean human rights (*NK News*, 03/24/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Unification minister promises support for aid groups to resume assistance to N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 03/24/2021)

**International:**
Biden administration will host Japan and South Korea for North Korea discussions(*Axios*, 03/24/2021)
Biden Dismisses First North Korea Missile Test He Faces: 'Business as Usual'(*Newsweek*, 03/24/2021)
Biden laughs off question about North Korean missile test (CNN, 03/24/2021)
Biden on North Korea missile launches: 'Nothing much has changed' (*Reuters*, 03/24/2021)
Biden says 'nothing much changed' despite N. Korean missile launches (*Yonhap*, 03/24/2021)
From prison camp to ballot box: North Korean defector seeks British election win(*Reuters*, 03/24/2021)
Human Rights Will Continue to Polarize Washington and Seoul on North Korea (*The National Interest*, 03/24/2021)
North Korea missiles: Biden says launch 'not provocation' (*BBC*, 03/24/2021)
North Korean Diplomats Recalled from Malaysia May Face Punishment Over U.S. Extradition (RFA, 03/23/2021)
North Korean man extradited to US was involved in far more than luxury liquor (*NK News*, 03/24/2021)
Overseas traders express disappointment at North Korea's failure to "protect" Mun Chol Myong (*Daily NK*, 03/24/2021)
Pro-N.K. paper says verbal message between leader Kim, China's Xi signals stronger relations (*Yonhap*, 03/24/2021)

'Robust' U.S. military presence will support denuclearization of N. Korea: Aquilino(*Yonhap*, 03/24/2021)
The U.S. must approach North Korea as it is (*The Japan Times*, 03/24/2021)
U.N. adopts resolution on N.K. human rights for 19th consecutive year (*Yonhap*, 03/24/2021)
UN Human Rights Council condemns abuses in North, again (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/24/2021)
UN urges North Korea to reopen borders for aid and humanitarian workers (*NK News*, 03/24/2021)
U.S. focused on denuclearization of N. Korea: Pentagon spokesman (*Yonhap*, 03/24/2021)
US plays down first North Korean rocket test under Biden presidency (*Financial Times*, 03/23/2021)
U.S. plays down North Korean launches, says still open to dialogue: officials(*Reuters*, 03/23/2021)
White House: North Korea conducted short-range missile test (*Associated Press*, 03/23/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- EMPs sound scary but there is a lot of debate about whether they really could take out a whole electric grid. Also, any nuclear attack of any kind would mean America would respond and destroy the attacker completely with its own nukes. (*The National Interest*)
- North Korea's launch of short-range missiles over the weekend is set to pressure the new U.S. administration to come up with a policy review favorable to the totalitarian state, according to diplomatic observers. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- Even if North Korea could get at its resources, it could not sell most of them due to international sanctions. If those got removed and the right know-how and equipment was made available, then North Korea and its investors could be rich. (Anthony Fensom, *The National Interest*)
- "Denuclearization of the Joseon Peninsula means denuclearization of the entire peninsula. In other words, both South and North Korea must realize denuclearization together." When I heard that, I had a feeling that the moment of truth would come earlier than expected. (Yeh Young-june, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un sent verbal messages to the leaders of Cuba, Vietnam and Laos and called for stronger relations, state media reported Wednesday, in a move apparently intended to strengthen ties with socialist countries amid stalled nuclear talks with the United States. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea fired two cruise missiles off the west coast Sunday, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Wednesday, Pyongyang's first missile test in about a year seen as aimed at testing the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden without being too provocative. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un attended a ceremony to break ground for building 10,000 homes in the capital and urged officials to push ahead with the project despite challenges that are "harsher than ever before," state media reported Wednesday. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's missile launches Sunday marks its return to a fresh cycle of provocations to earn sanctions relief from the new US administration, experts said. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea bypassed a U.N. fuel cap meant to hinder its nuclear program by buying cheap Taiwanese oil from a sophisticated smuggling network for years, according to a new report. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)

- North Korea test-fired two short-range cruise missiles over the weekend, South Korean defense officials confirmed Wednesday. The test was the first under the Biden administration, and added to a series of recent provocations and statements seen as warnings to Washington. (Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*)
- North Korea conducted a short-range projectile launch several days ago, according to U.S. officials, in what appears to be Pyongyang's first missile-related activity this year. (William Gallo, VOA)
- While the officials did not elaborate on the types of tests, citing classification issues, they said it was "normal" activity for North Korea and the actions were not covered under United Nations Security Council resolutions that put limits on the country's nuclear program. (Sara Cook, Olivia Gazis, Caroline Linton, *CBS News*)
- North Korea has carried out its first weapons test since President Joe Biden took office, according to three US officials, launching two projectiles last weekend in a move senior administration officials downplayed as falling "on the low end of the spectrum" of provocative actions the regime could carry out. (Zachary Cohen, Oren Liebermann, Barbara Starr, Kevin Liptak, CNN)
- North Korea fired at least one missile over the weekend, two U.S. officials told NBC News Tuesday. It marks the first report of such activity since Joe Biden was sworn in as president. (Andrea Mitchell, Dan De Luce, Abigail Williams, Dareh Gregorian, NBC)
- North Korea fired what appeared to be two cruise missiles off the west coast last weekend, the South Korean military said Wednesday, the first known weapons test by the secretive country since U.S. President Joe Biden took office in January. (*Kyodo News*)
- North Korea fired two cruise missiles off its west coast on Sunday in its first publicly known weapons test since U.S. President Joe Biden took office, South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported on Wednesday. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- North Korea fired two missiles just days after a visit to the region by the top US defence and diplomatic officials, the White House and Seoul said, in Pyongyang's first launch since Joe Biden's inauguration. (*The Business Times*)
- North Korea fired off a pair of cruise missiles on the heels of an Asian trip by top U.S. officials, putting a fresh spotlight on Biden administration deliberations over how to resolve a key security dilemma. (Josh Wingrove, Jeong-Ho Lee, *Bloomberg*)
- North Korea launched several short-range missiles over the weekend, U.S. officials said, in a show of defiance against President Biden and his administration that was widely anticipated after joint U.S.-South Korea military exercises. (Vivian Salama, Nancy Youssef, Andrew Jeong, *The Wall Street Journal*)
- North Korea last weekend conducted a missile test for the first time during President Joe Biden's administration. Senior administration officials said Tuesday evening that they were monitoring the situation, but stressed that the actions represented a low-level provocation. (Amanda Macias, CNBC)
- North Korea fired off multiple short-range missiles this past weekend after denouncing Washington for going forward with joint military exercises with South Korea, according to people familiar with the situation. (John Hudson, Ellen Nakashima, *The Washington Post*)
- North Korea fired two cruise short-range missiles into the Yellow Sea on March 21 from Onchon, according to South Korean and U.S. officials. North Korea's last missile launch was 11 months ago from Muncheon in North Korea. (Mitch Shin, *The Diplomat*)
- North Korea fired two short-range missiles at the weekend, U.S. and South Korean officials said, but Washington played down the first such tests under President Joe Biden and said it was still open to dialogue with Pyongyang. (Phil Stewart, Idrees Ali, Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un reportedly kicked off a new urban construction project in Pyongyang on Tuesday, demanding that construction workers complete 10,000 “modern flats” this year. (Colin Zwirko, NK News)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un broke ground for 10,000 new apartments in the capital city of Pyongyang, state media reported on Wednesday, despite economic crises that have left other signature construction projects stalled. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- North Korea slammed EU sanctions imposed against its senior officials earlier this week as a “despicable political provocation” and the result of “a psychotic way of thinking” (*Euronews*)
- North Korea test-fired two short-range cruise missiles over the weekend, South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff confirmed on Wednesday, marking the country’s first publicly-dated projectile test since U.S. President Joe Biden took office. (Chad O’Carroll, NK News)
- North Korea fired two missiles off its west coast over the weekend in its first publicly known weapons test since Joe Biden took office as president in January, officials in the United States said on Tuesday, as the administration said it remained open to talks with Pyongyang. (*Al Jazeera*)
- North Korea fired two short-range cruise missiles off its west coast Sunday, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) finally confirmed Wednesday, the first known weapons tests since the start of the Joe Biden administration. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The revelation Wednesday of North Korea’s test of two short-range missiles over the weekend could be the start of a fresh cycle of provocations, potentially putting Washington in a tough spot as it prepares to brief allies in Tokyo and Seoul on a soon-to-conclude review of U.S. policy toward Pyongyang. (Jesse Johnson, *The Japan Times*)
- With the major headlines trained on the DPRK’s new so-called ‘monster’ ICBM and mysterious main battle tank (MBT), one of the parade’s more strategically significant weapons has largely slipped through the cracks. Here is what we know about the Pukguksong-4 SLBM, and the key role that it’s poised to play in North Korea’s emerging nuclear doctrine. (Mark Episkopos, *The National Interest*)
- North Korea test-fired two short-range cruise missiles on Sunday. That was confirmed by a U.S. media outlet three days later. According to the report, North Korea is believed to have fired the two missiles shortly after the U.S. Secretary of State and Defense Secretary’s visit to South Korea to discuss the new U.S. administration’s North Korea policies with their South Korean counterparts — and after the end of the annual Korea-U.S. joint command post training last week. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea on Tuesday denounced the European Union's recent sanctions against its top officials over human rights abuses as a "political provocation" aimed at infringing upon its sovereignty. (*Yonhap*)
- Two cruise missiles that North Korea fired from its western coast Sunday may have been unveiled during a parade in October commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Korean Workers' Party, according to a South Korean press report. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- Under Kim Jong Un’s leadership, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) has consistently defended Assad from international criticism, provided military assistance to the Syrian Arab Army and supplied Syria with missile and chemical weapons technology. These displays of solidarity ensure that the Syria-North Korea partnership will continue to strengthen as the Syrian civil war transitions into its reconstruction phase. (Samuel Ramani, *38 North*)
- Two Storm Corps soldiers deployed on the Sino-North Korean border in North Hamgyong Province were severely injured recently after stepping on a landmine, Daily NK has learned. (Kim Yoo Jin, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- The United Nations Human Rights Council adopted a resolution on Tuesday condemning human rights violations in North Korea once again. South Korea decided not to co-sponsor it for the third year in a row. (Ahn Sung-Mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- For years now, South Korea has delayed or avoided talking about human rights with North Korea for fear that it would interfere with peace talks. But at this point in President Moon Jae-in's outreach — which has not seen any inter-Korean diplomatic talks since at least mid-2020 — it's clear that peace talks have failed to achieve the Panmunjom Declaration's very goals. (Dylan Stent, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Unification Minister Lee In-young on Wednesday met with the head of a local aid organization and promised active support for their efforts to send humanitarian assistance to North Korea. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- The White House will host security officials from Japan and South Korea in Washington, D.C., next week for "intensive consultations" on North Korea, senior Biden administration officials told reporters on Tuesday. (Sarah Mucha, *Axios*)
- President Joe Biden's administration has downplayed reports of a new North Korean missile test, the first of its kind with the new U.S. leader in office, as the weapons did not appear to breach international restrictions imposed on the nuclear-armed nation. (Tom O'Connor, *Newsweek*)
- North Korea has carried out its first weapons test since President Joe Biden took office, according to three US officials, launching two projectiles in a move senior administration officials downplayed as "on the low end of the spectrum" of provocative actions the regime could carry out. CNN's Selina Wang reports. (*CNN*)
- President Joe Biden said on Tuesday that North Korea's move to test-fire two short-range missiles over the weekend shows that little has changed about the government in Pyongyang. (*Reuters*)
- U.S. President Joe Biden said Tuesday that "nothing much has changed" despite North Korea's launch of short-range missiles, as senior U.S. officials said the firings were not in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Sixteen years after she was left to die unremembered outside a labour camp in North Korea, Jihyun Park will enter the British political history books if she wins office in local elections this May. (Natalie Thomas, Andy Bruce, Phil Noble, *Reuters*)
- Although both Biden and Moon advocate for inter-Korean peace, their definition of peace and how to achieve it couldn't be more different. (Jason Bartlett, Olivia Grotenhuis, *The National Interest*)
- US President Joe Biden has said he does not consider North Korea's launch of short-range missiles - the first since he took office - a provocation. (Laura Bicker, *BBC*)
- North Korean diplomats from Pyongyang's embassy who were recently expelled from Malaysia in a rupture of diplomatic relations could face punishment over the first-ever extradition of a North Korean national to the United States, sources in China told RFA. (Hyemin Son, *RFA*)
- The first North Korean citizen to be extradited to the United States is accused of laundering hundreds of thousands of dollars per week, according to recently unsealed documents from a federal district court. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- In the wake of Malaysia's extradition to the United States of a North Korean trader suspected of illegal money laundering, relations between Pyongyang and Kuala Lumpur have hit rock

bottom. As a result, North Korea has announced that they are severing diplomatic ties between the two countries. Additionally, North Korean authorities reportedly ordered that monitoring be stepped up on workers living overseas. (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)

- A pro-North Korea newspaper stressed Wednesday that the recent exchange of verbal messages between North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and Chinese President Xi Jinping signals an important step toward bolstering bilateral cooperation. (*Yonhap*)
- A strong and robust U.S. military presence in and around the Korean Peninsula is needed to help support the efforts to denuclearize North Korea, the nominee for commander of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said Tuesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- As U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin recently traveled to Tokyo and Seoul to meet their Japanese and South Korean colleagues, how to manage China was the prime topic of discussion. But hovering in the background as always was North Korea and its nuclear program, a generations-long problem that has eluded multiple U.S. administrations going back to the George H.W. Bush era. (Dan Depetris, *The Japan Times*)
- The United Nations Human Rights Council has adopted a resolution condemning North Korea's human rights violations for the 19th consecutive year, officials said Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- The United Nations Human Rights Council adopted a resolution condemning human rights abuses in North Korea for the 19th consecutive year Tuesday, while stressing the need for "timely assistance" to the vulnerable amid the Covid-19 pandemic. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The United Nations on Tuesday called on North Korea to loosen its COVID-19 border restrictions to allow humanitarian workers and aid deliveries into the country. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- It is North Korea that threatens security and stability on the Korean Peninsula, U.S. Defense Department spokesman John Kirby said Tuesday, adding that it is North Korea the U.S. is focused on when it talks about denuclearization of the peninsula. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea fired two missiles on Sunday, in the first known military provocation from Kim Jong Un's nuclear-armed regime since Joe Biden took office. (Demetri Sevastopulo, Edward White, *Financial Times*)
- Senior Biden administration officials on Tuesday played down North Korean short-range missile launches last weekend and said U.S. President Joe Biden is still open to a dialogue with North Korea. (*Reuters*)
- North Korea fired short-range missiles this past weekend, just days after the sister of Kim Jong Un threatened the United States and South Korea for holding joint military exercises. (Aamer Madhani, Matthew Lee, *Associated Press*)

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Prepared by Sophia Hapin, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:

https://web.archive.org/web/20250730184107/https://mailchi.mp/b65b0a2767d4/hrnk-news-itemsnk-conducts-first-weapons-test-of-bidens-presidencyun-urges-nk-to-reopen-borders-for-aid-and-humanitarian-workers?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, March 25, 2021**

# Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Human Rights Will Continue to Polarize Washington and Seoul

**Top News:**
Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (*UNHRC*, 03/25/2021)
Human Rights Will Continue to Polarize Washington and Seoul on North Korea(*National Interest*, 03/24/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Elderly man dies during government attempt to evict people from a building in Pyongyang (*Daily NK*, 03/25/2021)
How dangerous is North Korea's military arsenal right now? (CNN, 03/25/2021)
In 1987 Two North Korean Agents Blew up a South Korean Passenger Plane(*National Interest*, 03/25/2021)
North Korea and Syria: A Dangerous Alliance the World Should Fear? (*National Interest*, 03/25/2021)
NK to step up pressure until US responds (*Korea Herald*, 03/25/2021)
N. Korea fires 2 short-range ballistic missiles into East Sea (*Yonhap*, 03/25/2021)
N. Korea fires unidentified projectile into East Sea (*Yonhap*, 03/25/2021)
North Korea's cruise missile launch is serious — not just 'business as usual' (*NK News*, 03/25/2021)
North Korea missile launch tests Biden, alarms Japan ahead of Olympics (*Reuters*, 03/25/2021)
North Korean security agency turns brokers against families of defectors (*Daily NK*, 03/25/2021)
North Korea's tests and summits over recent years (*Reuters*, 03/25/2021)
N. Korea wants to change, U.S. must find right mix of steps (*Yonhap*, 03/25/2021)
Pyongyang fires two missiles, probably ballistic (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/25/2021)
Six North Korean Soldiers Cross River Border to Escape to China (RFA, 03/24/2021)
Stocks snap losing streak despite North's launch (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/25/2021)
Two years past deadline, major North Korean beach resort inches towards opening(*NK News*, 03/25/2021)
Why Did North Korea Sever Diplomatic Ties With Malaysia? (*The Diplomat*, 03/25/2021)

**In South Korea:**
S. Korea deeply concerned about N. Korea's projectile launch (*Yonhap*, 03/25/2021)
South Korea holds emergency National Security Council meeting on North Korea's projectile launch (*Korea Times*, 03/25/2021)

S. Korean nuclear envoy discusses N.K. missile launches with U.S. official (*Korea Herald*, 03/25/2021)
S. Korea to hold emergency NSC meeting on N. Korea's projectile launch (*Yonhap*, 20/25/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Court awards damages from North, Kim Jong-un (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/25/2021)

**International:**
Asking China to Solve the North Korea Problem Is Completely Foolish (*National Interest*, 03/25/2021)
Immigration, North Korea, and guns – Biden's news conference is a minefield (*Washington Post*, 03/25/2021)
Japan protests 'East Sea' reference after North Korea missile launch (*UPI*, 03/25/2021)
Japan says North Korea may have fired ballistic missile (*Korea Times*, 03/25/2021)
N. Korea's missile launch may be timed to precede Biden's first press briefing(*Yonhap*, 03/25/2021)
North Korea wants Biden's attention. The best way to get it: ballistic missiles (*NK News*, 03/25/2021)
Overseas traders express disappointment at North Korea's failure to "protect" Mun Chol Myong (*Daily NK*, 03/25/2021)
Russian FM calls for efforts to keep peace on peninsula after NK missile launches (*Korea Herald*, 03/25/2021)
Russian foreign minister calls for an end to 'arms race' on the Korean Peninsula (*NK News*, 03/25/2021)
UN human rights resolution on North Korea tests Moon's diplomacy (*Korea Times*, 03/25/2021)
US, South Korea and Japan 'concerned' over North Korean ballistic missile launch(*NK News*, 03/25/2021)
U.S. wants to see stability of Korean Peninsula (*Yonhap*, 03/25/2021)
What N Korean missile tests mean for US relations (*AP News*, 03/25/2021)

**Top News:**

- In a resolution (A/HRC/46/L.7) on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, adopted without a vote, the Council decides to continue to strengthen, for a period of two years, the capacity of the Office of the High Commissioner, including its field-based structure in Seoul, to allow the implementation of relevant recommendations made by the group of independent experts on accountability in its report, aimed at strengthening current monitoring and documentation efforts, establishing a central information and evidence repository and having experts in legal accountability assess all information and testimonies, with a view to developing possible strategies to be used in any future accountability process. The Council decides to extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 37/28, for a period of one year. (UNHRC)
- While the Biden administration's first Indo-Pacific tour and successful military cost-sharing agreement with Seoul may have assuaged immediate concerns for heightened tensions

between Washington and Seoul, President Joe Biden and South Korea's President Moon Jae-in are set to clash on how best to tackle the North Korea issue. In particular, Biden's review of U.S. policy on North Korea is set to include human rights—an issue that Moon believes will stymie efforts to engage with Pyongyang. Although both Biden and Moon advocate for inter-Korean peace, their definition of peace and how to achieve it couldn't be more different. (Jason Bartlett, Olivia Grotenhuis, *National Interest*)

**In North Korea:**

- Following North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's call for the construction of 10,000 residential homes in Pyongyang "at all costs" earlier this year, an elderly man reportedly died after being assaulted by soldiers attempting to forcibly evict people from a building in Bipa-dong, Moranbong District. The area was recently selected as the site for an apartment construction project. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- Two ballistic missiles fired by North Korea fell harmlessly into the sea on Thursday, but experts say the launch is further proof Kim Jong Un's growing military arsenal poses a significant threat to South Korea, Japan -- and even the US mainland. (Brad Lendon, CNN)
- Near midnight on November 28, 1987, a young woman and an older man board a 707 airliner on the tarmac of Baghdad International Airport. South Korea Flight 858 is bound for Seoul with layovers on Abu Dhabi and Bangkok. The couple seats itself on seats 7B and 7C, pausing to stuff a bag in the overhead compartment. (Sebastien Roblin, *National Interest*)
- According to a new report by 38 North, Syria"wishes to preserve its historic relationship with North Korea," while the North Koreans have both been supplying Bashar al-Assad's regime with weapons technology that was used in the Syrian civil war, and defending it from criticism. North Korea was said to have sent arms to Syria as the Assad regime fought rebels, and even reportedly sent combat units to Syria. (Stephen Silver, *National Interest*)
- The latest missile launches by North Korea are part of the regime's accelerating cycle of provocations against the US as it seeks sanctions relief, experts said. The North fired what appeared to be ballistic missiles into the East Sea on Thursday morning, a violation of the UN Security Council resolutions. It was the North's second missile test since US President Joe Biden took office in January. On Sunday it fired two short-range cruise missiles into the West Sea. (Choi Si-young, *Korea Herald*)
- North Korea fired what appeared to be two short-range ballistic missiles into the East Sea on Thursday, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said, an apparent move pressing the United States as Washington prepares to announce a new policy on the North. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has fired at least one unidentified projectile into the East Sea, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Thursday. Other details, including how many and what type of projectile was launched, were not immediately available. (*Yonhap*)
- Over the weekend, North Korea launched two missiles from its west coast into the Yellow Sea, marking the first such tests to take place after President Joe Biden took the White House and the first to be reported since July. (Ankit Panda, *NK News*)
- North Korea launched two suspected ballistic missiles into the sea near Japan on Thursday, underscoring steady progess in its weapons programme and ramping up pressure on the new U.S. administration as it reviews North Korea policy. (Josh Smith, Antoni Slodkowski, *Reuters*)
- A remittance broker was recently found to have been cooperating with the Ministry of State Security (MSS) to report on the families of defectors, Daily NK has learned. In a phone call with Daily NK on Monday, a source in North Hamgyong Province said that "the MSS arrested a person surnamed Choi in Hoeryong on Mar. 11," adding that "the person was suddenly

arrested because the MSS found out he had received money from his daughter who has settled in South Korea." (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)

- North Korea launched two ballistic missiles into the sea near Japan on Thursday ramping up tension ahead of the Tokyo Olympics and putting pressure on the new Biden administration in Washington. (*Reuters*)
- Despite its harsh rhetoric and threats to further advance its weapons of mass destruction, North Korea wants to change and the United States must find what it is that the North truly wants and how to best approach the challenge, a former U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) commander said Wednesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea fired two short-range missiles from South Hamkyong Province into the East Sea Thursday morning, just hours after the Pentagon warned Pyongyang against any provocations that could destabilize the peninsula. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A group of six North Korean soldiers guarding the Yalu River border with China abandoned their posts and escaped across the river early this month. The six soldiers were stationed near at the border in the country's northern Ryanggang province, near the city of Hyesan. Sources stated that their increased work schedule and meager supply since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic in early 2020 left them hungry and overworked, but authorities have yet to identify the motive for their escape. (*RFA*)
- Korean stocks snapped their four-day losing streak Thursday as investors bought undervalued shares on expectations of a rebound amid eased virus concerns. The Korean won rose against the dollar. (Song Kyoung-Son, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Nearly two years after its original opening deadline, a major North Korean beach resort is showing signs of progress — all while the country juggles other topline construction projects and grapples with an economy squeezed by COVID-19. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- In a peculiar twist last week, North Korea – formally the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) – announced that it was severing its diplomatic relations with Malaysia, after Malaysia's highest court approved the extradition of a North Korean businessman, Mun Chol Myong, to the U.S. to face charges of money laundering. Mun is wanted for laundering funds in violation of United Nations and U.S. sanctions. The Malaysian government in turn expelled North Korean diplomats and severed diplomatic relations in accordance with Article 9 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961. (Adam Leong Kok Wey, *The Diplomat*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's top national security officials expressed "deep concern" about North Korea's latest projectile launch Thursday, especially as it came amid the Joe Biden administration's review of Washington's policy on Pyongyang, according to Cheong Wa Dae. (Lee Chi-dong, *Yonhap*)
- Cheong Wa Dae said Thursday that it has convened an urgent National Security Council (NSC) meeting on North Korea's latest projectile launch. (*Korea Times*)
- South Korea's chief nuclear envoy discussed North Korea's latest missile launches with a senior U.S. official and plans to do the same with his Japanese counterpart, a foreign ministry official said Thursday. (*Korea Herald*)
- Cheong Wa Dae said Thursday that it has convened an emergency National Security Council (NSC) meeting on North Korea's launch of two projectiles into the East Sea. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The son of a South Korean man abducted by North Korean soldiers during the Korean War won a civil suit against the North Korean state and leader Kim Jong-un in a South Korean court Thursday. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- There is nothing wrong with diplomats believing in miracles so long as they do not base policy on the expectation that unpleasant reality will be magically transformed. Unfortunately, Blinken, an experienced diplomat who should know better, appears to have fallen into that trap. (Doug Bandow, *National Interest*)
- Unpredictable events — such as North Korea firing two ballistic missiles in the hours before the news conference — widen an already broad range of potential questions. (Olivier Knox, *Washington Post*)
- Japan requested the United States change the "inappropriate" labeling of a body of water after North Korea fired two ballistic missiles into the sea. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- North Korea may have launched a ballistic missile, Japan's defence ministry said on Thursday, while South Korea's military reported an "unidentified projectile" was fired off the peninsula's east coast into the sea. (*Korea Times*)
- North Korea's provocative launch of what appeared to be two short-range ballistic missiles may be timed to precede U.S. President Joe Biden's upcoming press conference, South Korean lawmakers said Thursday, quoting the national spy agency. (*Yonhap*)
- When North Korea launched two short-range ballistic missiles into the sky on Thursday morning, it sent an underlying message to U.S. President Joe Biden: 'Underestimate us at your peril.' The launch, which is the first-known ballistic missile test during Biden's presidency, took place just a few days after the DPRK fired short-range cruise missiles on Sunday — an incident that the president himself described as mere "business as usual". (James Fretwell, *NK News*)
- In the wake of Malaysia's extradition to the United States of a North Korean trader suspected of illegal money laundering, relations between Pyongyang and Kuala Lumpur have hit rock bottom. As a result, North Korea has announced that they are severing diplomatic ties between the two countries. Additionally, North Korean authorities reportedly ordered that monitoring be stepped up on workers living overseas. (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)
- Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov called for efforts to maintain peace on the Korean Peninsula and warned against "all kinds of military activities" Thursday, hours after North Korea fired off what appeared to be ballistic missiles into the East Sea. (*Korea Herald*)
- Sergey Lavrov met with South Korean counterpart Chung Eui-yong hours after North Korea tested ballistic missiles (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- The United Nations Human Rights Council has adopted a resolution for the 19th-consecutive year condemning North Korea's human rights violations. This year's resolution carries extra significance with the U.S. joining as a co-sponsor. (Nam Hyun-woo, *Korea Times*)
- U.S. and Japanese officials spoke with South Korea and vowed to cooperate on North Korea-related issues (Kelly Kasulis, *NK News*)
- The United States opposes North Korea taking any actions that could raise tension on the Korean Peninsula, the spokesman for the U.S. Department of Defense said Wednesday, amid reports that the North may be preparing to stage military provocations. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Two months after President Joe Biden took office, North Korea is again turning to weapons test to wrest outside concessions. But the tests so far have been relatively small compared to past launches. That indicates Washington has a window of engagement before North Korea pursues bigger provocations. (Hyung-jim Kim, *AP News*)

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250730184107/https://mailchi.mp/b65b0a2767d4/hrnk-news-itemsnk-conducts-first-weapons-test-of-bidens-presidencyun-urges-nk-to-reopen-borders-for-aid-and-humanitarian-workers?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, March 26, 2021**

## N. Korea says it test-fired new tactical guided missiles; Biden says North Korea is top foreign policy issue facing U.S.

**In North Korea:**
Analyst: Soviet disinformation campaign helped create North Korea (*UPI*, 3/25/2021)
Ballistic Missile Launch Near Japan Pushes Tensions With North Korea (*NPR*, 3/25/2021)
EXPLAINER: North Korean missiles getting more agile, evasive (*AP News*, 3/26/2021)
How to Read the Nuances of North Korea's Latest Missile Flex (*The National Interest*, 3/25/2021)
Hwasong: North Korea's Three Most Powerful Nuclear Missiles (*The National Interest*, 3/25/2021)
Joint task force cracks down on users of illegal cell phones in Hyesan (*Daily NK*, 3/26/2021)
Kim Jong Un and North Korea make a splash for Biden with ballistic missiles (*NBC News*, 3/26/2021)
Kim Jong Un wants to gift fancy new 'terrace' flats to teachers and scientists (*NK News*, 3/25/2021)
N.K. leader inspects construction site without attending missile test-firing (*Yonhap*, 2/26/2021)
N Korea confirms missile tests as Biden warns of response (*AP News*, 3/26/2021)
N. Korea holds general assembly of Olympic Committee (*Yonhap*, 3/26/2021)
N. Korea says it test-fired new tactical guided missiles (*Yonhap*, 3/26/2021)
New KN-23 ballistic missile to boost N. Korea's tactical nuclear capabilities: experts(*Yonhap*, 3/26/2021)
North Korea's short-range missiles believed to be KN-23 rockets, report says (*UPI*, 3/26/2021)
North Korea claims 'new tactical guided' missiles launched (*BBC News*, 3/26/2021)
North Korea claims it tested a new guided missile (*The Guardian*, 3/25/2021)
North Korea fires two ballistic missiles into Sea of Japan (*BBC News*, 3/25/2021)
North Korea Gives Biden a Missile Test—a Familiar Hello (*The Wall Street Journal*, 3/25/2021)
North Korea has added a new guided missile to its growing arsenal, state media claims (*CNN*, 3/26/2021)
North Korea may return to fire-and-fury mode (*The Korea Times*, 3/25/2021)
North Korean authorities lift Sakju County lockdown following complaints (*Daily NK*,3/26/2021)
North Korean border guards in Chagang Province seen wearing gas masks (*Daily NK*, 3/26/2021)

North Korean Survey Reveals More than 100 Deaths, 13,000 'Suspected' COVID-19 Cases in One Province (RFA, 3/25/2021)
North Korea says it launched new tactical guided missiles in recent test (CNBC, 3/25/2021)
North Korea says it tested a 'newly developed' missile to strengthen military (NK News, 3/25/2021)
North Korea's Arsenal Has Grown Rapidly. Here's What's in It. (The New York Times, 3/26/2021)
Tokyo 2021? North Korean Olympic Committee holds mystery meeting in Pyongyang (NK News, 3/26/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Moon: N.K. missile provocation 'undesirable' amid efforts to revive nuclear dialogue(Yonhap, 3/26/2021)
N. Korea's missile launch may be timed to precede Biden's first press briefing: NIS(Yonhap, 3/26/2021)
Ruling party voices 'deep regret' over N. Korea's missile provocations (Yonhap, 3/26/2021)
South Korea boasts 'world-class' missiles after North Korean test-fire (NK News, 3/26/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
N. Korea rejects S. Korea's offer of joint Easter prayer: sources (Yonhap, 3/26/2021)

**International:**
Biden, Trump in stark contrast on North Korea (The Korea Times, 3/26/2021)
Biden on North Korea missile test: 'If they choose to escalate, we will respond' (NK News, 3/25/2021)
Biden Presser: North Korea Is America's Top Foreign Policy Issue (The National Interest, 3/25/2021)
Biden says North Korea is top foreign policy issue facing U.S. (Politico, 3/25/2021)
Biden says U.S. will act accordingly if N. Korea escalates, but diplomacy still possible (Yonhap, 3/26/2021)
Biden warns North Korea of 'responses' if they continue to test ballistic missiles(CNN, 3/25/2021)
Biden's Great North Korea Mistake: Pushing China to 'Solve the Problem' (The National Interest, 3/25/2021)
EXPLAINER: What N Korean missile tests mean for US relations (AP News, 3/25/2021)
Making Peace With Iran and North Korea Could Be Good for U.S. Workers (Foreign Policy, 3/25/2021)
Missile test propels North Korea to top of Biden's foreign agenda (Reuters, 3/26/2021)
N. Korea slams recently adopted U.N. resolution on human rights as 'fake document' (Yonhap, 3/26/2021)
North Korea defector to run for office in UK first (Deutsche Welle, 3/26/2021)
North Korea launch of "new-type" missiles draws warning from Biden as he faces a "daunting challenge" (CBS News, 3/26/2021)
North Korea likely to escape punishment for rocket launches (The Korea Times, 3/26/2021)

North Korea test-fires ballistic missiles in message to US (*AP News*, 3/25/2021)
Opinion: Biden faces the world's most dangerous problems in North Korea and Taiwan (*The Washington Post*, 3/26/2021)
U.S. Allies React to Second North Korean Missile Launch (*The National Interest*, 3/25/2021)
U.S. condemns N. Korea's missile launch as 'destabilizing' (*Yonhap*, 3/26/2021)
U.S. will 'respond accordingly' to North's escalation of tensions: Biden (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 3/26/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea's founding leader may never have secured power were it not for a Soviet propaganda campaign and crackdown that helped him trounce rivals after World War II, a historian who specializes in North Korean history says. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- In resuming its ballistic testing activity after a yearlong pause, North Korea has demonstrated a potentially nuclear-capable weapon that shows how it continues to expand its military capabilities amid a stalemate in diplomacy with the United States. (Kim Tong-hyun, Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)
- North Korean missile tests have a familiar, almost cyclical, pattern to them. If Pyongyang launches a projectile toward the East Sea, then Washington, Seoul, and Tokyo immediately condemn the action as a violation of UN Security Council Resolutions and a dangerous provocation threatening regional peace. The pattern occurred yet again last night when the North sent two ballistic missiles into the air days after its previous test of short-range cruise missiles over the weekend. (Daniel DePetris, *The National Interest*)
- "The United States and its Asian allies regard North Korea as a grave security threat," opened a recent Council on Foreign Relations report on the DPRK's military capabilities. These concerns are not entirely misplaced; North Korea is believed to own a stockpile of around sixty nuclear weapons, including a powerful and steadily growing arsenal of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM's). (Mark Episkopos, *The National Interest*)
- A joint task force from the Central Committee's Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of State Security (MSS) was recently dispatched to Hyesan, Yanggang Province, to root out all users of illegal cell phones. There, they made mass arrests of North Koreans working as brokers on the border. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- In North Korea's capital city, being a top scientist, writer or teacher certainly appears to come with a major payoff: On Friday, North Korean state media reported that the country's leader, Kim Jong Un, wants to gift these "labor innovators" new modern "terrace" apartments before the end of the year. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un visited a construction site for riverside apartments in Pyongyang without attending a test-firing of newly developed ballistic missiles, according to state media Friday. Thursday's "field guidance" trip to the construction site appears to underscore Kim's emphasis on improving people's lives. On the same day, the North test-fired two new tactical guided missiles without Kim's attendance. (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)
- The North's official Korean Central News Agency said the two "new-type tactical guided projectiles" accurately hit the target off the eastern coast on Thursday. Photos on the website of the North's main Rodong Sinmun newspaper showed a missile lifting off from a transport erector launcher amid bright flames. KCNA quoted top official Ri Pyong Chol, who supervised the test, as saying that the new weapon's development "is of great significance in bolstering up the military power of the country and deterring all sorts of military threats existing on the Korean Peninsula." (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)

- North Korea held a general assembly meeting of its Olympic Committee to discuss plans for this year, state media said Friday, amid uncertainty over the North's participation in the upcoming Tokyo Summer Olympics. The meeting was held through video links on Thursday to discuss "practical issues linked to actively organize public sport events," according to the Korean Central News Agency. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea said Friday it test-fired new tactical guided missiles a day earlier, confirming the launch of ballistic missiles for the first time in about a year. On Thursday, South Korea's military said the North fired what appeared to be two short-range ballistic missiles into the East Sea, raising concerns that the missiles banned under the U.N. Security Council resolutions could sharply escalate tensions. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's new ballistic missile test-fired this week could further bolster the country's tactical nuclear arsenal and pose serious threats to South Korea and beyond by challenging its missile defense system, experts said Friday. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)
- The short-range rockets North Korea launched on Thursday are likely KN-23 missiles that are difficult to intercept in South Korea, the country most vulnerable to short-range missile attacks. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- North Korea's Friday statement, issued through state media outlet KCNA, says the two weapons struck a test target 600km (373 miles) off North Korea's east coast, disputing Japanese assessments that they flew just over 400km. It added that the new missile is able to carry a payload of 2.5 tons, which would make it capable of carrying a nuclear warhead. (Laura Bicker, *BBC News*)
- It's one of North Korea's time-tested tactics: welcome a new U.S. administration with a provocative weapons test. With Thursday's ballistic-missile launch, North Korea has now tried to use military fireworks to grab the attention of a new White House over four consecutive presidencies. The aggression hasn't proven very successful, as Pyongyang ended up more sanctions-strapped than it had before. (Timothy W. Martin, Andrew Jeong, *The Wall Street Journal*)
- North Korea is ratcheting up tension to test U.S. President Joe Biden's policy toward Pyongyang, firing two more projectiles assumed to be ballistic missiles into the East Sea. Diplomatic observers say the totalitarian state may opt for a more serious provocation such as an intercontinental ballistic missile or even a nuclear test unless the United States ditches its hostile policies. The new U.S. government is in the final stages of deciding on its new North Korea policy and plans to host national security advisers of South Korea and Japan next week to discuss it. (Nam Hyun-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- The lockdown imposed on Sakju County, North Pyongan Province, was lifted on Tuesday at 6 PM. After complaints by locals reached their peak following the deaths of several people from starvation, the authorities ended the lockdown earlier than they had initially announced. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- Soldiers in the border buffer zone in Chunggang-eup, Chagang Province, were recently seen wearing full gas masks instead of medical masks. According to a source in the area, North Korean authorities ordered soldiers stationed on the border to wear gas masks to prevent infection by COVID-19 variants. A source in Chagang Province told Daily NK that "soldiers started wearing gas masks on Mar. 15," adding that "[The military] gave the gas mask order because the COVID-19 variant is different from ordinary viruses in that it is a 'protein poison' [RNA virus], so regular masks won't filter it out." (Jang Seul Gi, *Daily NK*)
- A North Korean statistical survey of the nation has revealed more than 100 deaths and 13,000 "suspected" coronavirus cases in the northeastern province of North Hamgyong,

undercutting the government's claim that the country remains totally "virus-free," sources in the province told RFA. (Eugene Whong, RFA)

- On the heels of the North's ballistic missile test, the UN Security Council Sanctions Committee on North Korea will meet on Friday, a spokesperson confirmed to NBC News. The launch of two short-range ballistic missiles run in violation of UN Security Council resolution 1718. (Amanda Macias, CNBC)
- North Korea said it tested a newly developed tactical missile a day after it launched two projectiles into the East Sea and caused concern among officials in Seoul, Tokyo and Washington. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- The United States has tried both sanctions and dialogue to persuade North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons programs. Neither has worked. Instead, North Korea has rapidly expanded its nuclear program and modernized its missile fleet under Kim Jong-un, the country's young leader. The expansion of the arsenal is a growing threat to the United States and allies in the region. (Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*)
- According to North Korea's state-run Rodong Sinmun, the Olympic committee met on Thursday and stressed the need to win more medals over the next five years. Olympic Committee Chairman Kim Il Guk, also the DPRK's minister of sports, reportedly relayed that Kim Jong Un wants to make North Korea an "advanced country" in the world of athletics. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- President Moon Jae-in on Friday censured North Korea's recent ballistic missile launches, saying that military provocations by Pyongyang are "undesirable" amid efforts to revive stalled international negotiations on the North's nuclear program. Moon stressed South Korea remains firm in its security readiness to combat any and all types of provocations backed by "the country's military strength that is stronger than ever before and the firm South Korea-United States alliance." (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's provocative launch of what appeared to be two short-range ballistic missiles may be timed to precede U.S. President Joe Biden's upcoming press conference, South Korean lawmakers said Thursday, quoting the national spy agency. Multiple members of the National Assembly's Intelligence Committee told reporters that the National Intelligence Service (NIS) delivered such a view to key committee members by phone following the launch. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's ruling party on Friday expressed "deep regret" over North Korea's recent back-to-back launches of short-range missiles, calling on the country to come back to the negotiating table. "(We) express deep regret over the North Korean provocations that took place as the U.S. Biden administration is reviewing its North Korea policy," Rep. Kim Tae-nyeon, acting chairman of the Democratic Party (DP), said during a party meeting held in the southern port city of Busan. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in denounced North Korea's recent ballistic missile launch on Friday, calling it an "undesirable" move and reminding the public of Seoul's own "world-class" missile capabilities. Normally known as a hype-man for North Korea diplomacy, Moon took on a hardline tone during a speech on March 26, one day after North Korea test-fired two short-range ballistic missiles towards the East Sea in violation of U.N. Security Council Resolutions. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- A North Korean Christian organization has turned down a proposal by its South Korean counterpart to release a joint prayer on the occasion of Easter early next month, sources said Friday, amid no progress in Seoul's efforts to improve inter-Korean relations. The

North's Korean Christian Federation (KCF) stated that "a joint prayer between the two Koreas would be meaningless at this point," according to the sources. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- U.S. President Joe Biden's press conference, Thursday, showed his administration is taking a different course from the previous Trump administration in terms of American policy toward North Korea. Biden's remarks on North Korea issues indicated that the U.S. is returning to a rules-based international order in dealing with the country, while stressing global cooperation and coordination with allies. (Nam Hyun-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- U.S. President Joe Biden vowed to respond to any further North Korean "escalation" on Thursday, hours after Pyongyang test-fired its first ballistic missiles of the new White House administration. "We're consulting with our allies, our partners, and there will be responses. If they choose to escalate, we will respond accordingly," Biden said. "I'm also prepared for some form of diplomacy, but it has to be conditioned upon the end result of denuclearization." (Kelly Kasulis, *NK News*)
- Speaking at the first news conference of his presidency on Thursday afternoon, President Joe Biden was asked about North Korea and its recent missile launches, including the ballistic missiles that were fired in the last 24 hours. That followed North Korea's firing of cruise missiles a few days earlier, the week after two U.S. cabinet secretaries visited the region and discussed the North Korea issue with their counterparts in South Korea and Japan. (Stephen Silver, *The National Interest*)
- President Joe Biden said Thursday that North Korea is the top foreign policy issue facing the United States, echoing former President Barack Obama's warning to ex-President Donald Trump before he took office. Biden said that North Korea's tests violated U.N. Resolution 1718 and that the U.S. is talking with allies and partners. He warned that there will be "responses" if North Korea escalates, but signaled he was open to diplomacy. (Ben Leonard, *Politico*)
- Pyongyang fired two cruise missiles on Sunday, which Biden had shrugged off as "business as usual." "We've learned nothing much has changed," Biden said of the cruise missiles, which, according to U.S. officials, are not "covered" or prohibited by U.N. Security Council resolutions on North Korea. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Speaking at a press conference last week during his and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin's visit to South Korea, Secretary of State Antony Blinken urged renewed diplomacy and highlighted the role he hoped China could play. (Michael Rubin, *The National Interest*)
- Two months after President Joe Biden took office, North Korea is again turning to weapons tests to wrest outside concessions. But the tests so far have been relatively small compared to past launches. That indicates Washington has a window of engagement before North Korea pursues bigger provocations. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)
- Now that Biden is president, his administration can either accept that false trade-off or design new policies that pursue his domestic and diplomatic agendas in tandem. One of his biggest foreign-policy challenges is to reengage Iran and North Korea, two countries whose regimes have sought political and economic relations with the West for decades. (Christopher Lawrence, *Foreign Policy*)
- North Korea on Friday slammed a recently adopted U.N. resolution on its human rights violations, calling it a "fake document" with political motives. According to Pyongyang's foreign ministry, Han Tae-song, North Korea's ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, said in a statement at the session that the North rejects the resolution and denounces it as a "fake document that does not deserve even the slightest consideration." (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- A former teacher who fled North Korea and eventually found a life in the UK is set to run for office in upcoming local elections. Jihyun Park will enter the British political history books if

she wins a seat in local elections in early May. She is standing as a candidate for Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative Party in the northern English town of Bury. (*Deutsche Welle*)

- The international community expressed concerns over North Korea's Wednesday test-firing of two short-range ballistic missiles, in defiance of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. But Pyongyang is likely to avoid fresh punishment, based on recent history, in which the international community has been generous about short-range weapons. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- In North Korea and Taiwan, President Biden faces two of the world's most dangerous problems. His challenge is to convince potential adversaries that a politically divided United States is stronger than it looks. Biden sounded a firm note on both fronts Thursday during his first formal news conference. He warned North Korea that "there will be a response" if it continues its recent missile tests, but he also offered "some form of diplomacy" with "the end result of denuclearization" of North Korea. (David Ignatius, *The Washington Post*)
- Following North Korea's cruise missile launch earlier this week, the U.S. government, in particular, appeared to downplay the severity of what happened. President Joe Biden told reporters earlier this week that "according to the Defense Department, it's business as usual," and even laughed when he was asked if the launch would affect diplomacy. Then, later in the week, North Korea carried out another missile launch. (Stephen Silver, *The National Interest*)
- The United States on Thursday condemned North Korea's ballistic missile launches as "destabilizing" actions violating multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions. "The United States condemns the DPRK's destabilizing ballistic missile launches. These launches violate multiple UN Security Council resolutions and threaten the region and the broader international community," a department spokesperson told Yonhap News Agency in an email. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. President Joe Biden said Washington will "respond accordingly" if Pyongyang chooses to escalate tensions Thursday in his first press conference since taking office, while still leaving open the door to diplomacy. Biden confirmed that United Nations Security Council resolutions were violated after North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles into the East Sea Thursday morning and told reporters at the White House, "Let me say that, number one, UN Resolution 1718 was violated by those particular missiles that were tested." (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

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Prepared by Rick Herssevoort, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250730184758/https://mailchi.mp/1214a8df6db6/hrnk-news-itemsn-korea-says-it-test-fired-new-tactical-guided-missilesbiden-says-north-korea-is-top-foreign-policy-issue-facing-us?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Saturday, March 27, 2021

# N.K. accuses Biden of 'provocation' for criticizing missile launches, N. K. may be ready to roll out new ballistic missile submarine

**In North Korea:**
N.K. accuses Biden of 'provocation' for criticizing missile launches (*Yonhap*, 03/27/2021)
N. Korea may be ready to roll out new ballistic missile submarine: 38 North (*Yonhap*, 3/27/2021)
North Korea Doubles Down on Nuclear Weapons Plan After Biden's Salvo (*Wall Street Journal*, 03/27/2021)
North Korea says Biden administration took wrong first step over latest missile test(*Reuters*, 3/26/2021)
North Korea snaps back at Biden over criticism of launches (*AP News*, 03/27/2021)
Sinpho South Naval Shipyard: Drydock Movement Detected (*38 North*, 3/26/2021)
Why Pakistan and North Korea Still Love China's Old Type 59 Tank (*The National Interest*, 03/27/2021)

**In South Korea:**
How South Korea's 'Kill Chain' Could Strike North Korea First in a War (*The National Interest*, 03/26/2021)
S. Korea, U.S. express deep concerns about N.K. missile launches (*Yonhap*, 03/27/2021)

**International:**
Biden team holds fire after North Korean missile launches (*Politico*, 3/26/2021)
Consultation with allies important part of N. Korea policy review: White House (*Yonhap*, 03/27/2021)
Getting Back to Talks: Why the Biden Administration Should Reaffirm the Singapore Joint Statement (*38 North*, 03/26/2021)
Japan eyes extending its own sanctions on North Korea (*The Japan Times*, 3/27/2021)
Japan's Suga says he's open to meeting with Kim Yo Jong during Olympics (*UPI*, 03/26/2021)
Pressure and Principles: The EU's Human Rights Sanctions on North Korea (*38 North*, 03/26/2021)
Suing North Korea Presents Legal, Logistical Hurdles (VOA, 3/27/2021)
The North Korea Policy Review: Key Choices Facing the Biden Administration (*38 North*, 03/26/2021)
UN renews mandate of North Korea experts, asks missile probe (*AP News*, 03/27/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea on Saturday accused U.S. President Joe Biden of making a "provocation" for criticizing its recent missile launches, claiming the firings are an exercise of its self-defense right and warning the United States will face "something that is not good" if such "thoughtless remarks" continue. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- Satellite imagery of a North Korean shipyard has detected suspicious activity suggesting it may be ready to launch a new ballistic missile submarine in the near future, a U.S. expert website monitoring the communist country said. (*Yonhap*)

- North Korea repeated its intent to expand its nuclear weapons program, after President Biden this week said that the U.S. would respond accordingly if the regime escalated tensions. (Andrew Jeong, *Wall Street Journal*)
- North Korea said on Saturday that the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden had taken a wrong first step and revealed "deep-seated hostility" by criticising its self-defensive missile test. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- North Korea on Saturday snapped back at President Joe Biden's criticism of its ballistic missile tests, calling his comments a provocation and encroachment on the North's right to self-defense and vowing to continuously expand its "most thoroughgoing and overwhelming military power." (Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)
- Commercial satellite imagery of the Sinpho South Shipyard from March 24, 2021 indicates that the floating drydock, normally moored at a nearby pier, has recently been repositioned alongside the construction hall's submarine-launch quay. (Jack Liu, Peter Makowsky, *38 North*)
- Type 59s are very common in North Korean service, with plenty of variants developed there. It also was provided to both Iran and Iraq, Pakistan, and various other nations. Pakistan is the largest user of the Type 59 outside of China, fielding more than one thousand examples. (Charlie Gao, *The National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- Following years of escalation with its Northern counterpart, South Korea has developed a multi-layered doctrine to control for the imminent possibility of a nuclear conflict with Pyongyang. One of the core components of South Korea's strategy is the 'Kill Chain', a detection and preemption strategy. (Mark Episkopos, *The National Interest*)
- Senior defense officials of South Korea and the United States have expressed deep concerns over North Korea's recent missile launches and vowed to closely cooperate to counter threats from Pyongyang, Seoul's defense ministry said Saturday. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- As for the Pentagon, officials familiar with the discussions say military leaders have no immediate plans to respond or escalate — whether it's by stepping up joint military exercises with South Korea or by raising the U.S. alert status in the region. (Lara Seligman, Nahal Toosi, *Politico*)
- U.S. efforts to develop a new approach toward North Korea are in their final stages that include consultations with U.S. allies, a White House spokeswoman said Friday, calling consultations an important part of the process. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- It is imperative that the Biden administration engage with North Korea as early as possible to resume denuclearization talks, with the aim of freezing and eventually rolling back its extensive nuclear programs and capabilities. (Bong-geun Jun, *38 North*)
- Japan is considering extending its sanctions against North Korea, with the aim of keeping pressure on Pyongyang to denuclearize and resolve its abductions of Japanese nationals, a government source has said. (*The Japan Times*)
- Japan's prime minister did not rule out a meeting with North Korea's Kim Yo Jong if she chooses to attend the Tokyo Olympics, according to a Japanese press report. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- On Monday March 22, 2021, the European Union (EU) imposed its first-ever human rights sanctions on individuals and entities within the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) under the aegis of its Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime. (Ramon Pacheco Pardo, *38 North*)

- " 'What the heck did you do to my kid?' " echoed Judge Beryl Howell of the U.S. District Court in Washington in the first line of her December 2018 ruling against North Korea that awarded more than $500 million to Warmbier's parents in a wrongful-death suit. (Jiha Ham, Christy Lee, VOA)
- The Biden administration will soon complete its review of US policy toward the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). (Robert Einhorn, *38 North*)
- The U.N. Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution Friday to renew the mandate of U.N. experts monitoring sanctions against North Korea hours after members met to discuss Pyongyang's latest test firings of banned ballistic missiles. (Edith M. Lederer, *AP News*)

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Prepared by Jungeun Lee, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250730184958/https://mailchi.mp/13a9ba735e8d/hrnk-news-itemsnk-accuses-biden-of-provocation-for-criticizing-missile-launchesn-k-may-be-ready-to-roll-out-new-ballistic-missile-submarine?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, March 28, 2021**

## North Korea is installing concrete barriers and high-voltage wires along its border with China

**In North Korea:**
N.K. paper stresses local economy as 'cornerstone' of national development(*Yonhap*, 3/28/2021)
N. Korea to hold conference of 'cell secretaries' in early April: state media (*Yonhap*, 3/28/2021)
North calls Biden criticism of missile test a 'provocation' (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 3/28/2021)
North Korea conducted more missile tests. What happens next? (*The Washington Post*, 3/27/2021)
North Korea is installing concrete barriers and high-voltage wires along its border with China (*Daily NK*, 3/28/2021)

**International:**
Blockade or Bust: Can the Navy Really Defeat North Korea in a War? (*The National Interest*, 3/27/2021)
Joe Biden and North Korea: A Crisis Coming Soon? (*The National Interest*, 3/27/2021)
Otto Warmbier: How son's death after North Korean capture gave his parents' lives new meaning (*9News*, 3/28/2021)
The Real Reason North Korea Would Lose a War with America (*The National Interest*, 3/27/2021)
Will the US take a new approach to North Korea? (*Al Jazeera*, 3/27/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea's official newspaper on Sunday called for local economic development to achieve self-reliance in securing food and other key necessities, saying cities and counties are a "cornerstone" of the national economy. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea will hold a conference early next month of the secretaries of "party cells," the grassroots units of the ruling Workers Party, state media reported Sunday, as the country tries to achieve goals laid out in a party congress earlier this year. "The Secretariat of the Central Committee of the ruling party decided to convene the sixth conference of cell Secretaries to discuss and guide the affairs in prioritizing the position and role of the Party cells", the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said. (*Yonhap*)
- Pyongyang said through state media Saturday that U.S. President Joe Biden's criticism of its recent ballistic missile launches was a "provocation" and the wrong "first step," warning of possible future consequences depending on Washington's approach. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- On Thursday, North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles off its east coast, calling these a “new type of tactical guided missile.” This latest provocation, in violation of a U.N. Security Council resolution that bans Pyongyang from conducting ballistic missile tests, follows combative rhetoric and actions in recent weeks. (Patricia M. Kim, *The Washington Post*)
- North Korean authorities are installing concrete barriers and high-voltage wires along the border with China. Movements to fortify the border are reportedly taking place because Kim Jong Un wrote a “handwritten directive” at the second plenary session of the Eighth Party Congress last month. The directive contained instructions to install concrete barriers and high-voltage lines along the entire border. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)

**International:**

- How can the U.S. Navy destroy North Korea should Washington give the word? It can’t. Or at least it stands little chance of doing so by its lonesome barring improbable circumstances. What the navy can do is contribute to a joint or multinational campaign that destroys the Northern regime or its armed forces. But even that would involve perils, hardships and steep costs. (James Holmes, *The National Interest*)
- At his Thursday press conference, President Joe Biden declared North Korea to be his number one priority. But he’s not acting that way. The president sounded like he might initiate a confrontation for confrontation’s sake. That would be an unnecessary and costly mistake. (Doug Bandow, *The National Interest*)
- North Korea hasn't changed its ways — it's not like the country has started behaving in the last year or two, we just stopped paying attention. That's why voices like Fred and Cindy Warmbier are so important. They're not your normal players in international politics, but that's what makes you sit up and listen when they speak. Otto's tragic death has given Fred and Cindy's lives new meaning. (Tom Steinfort, *9News*)
- Pyongyang’s massive conventional defense outlays continue to yield negligible military value. They have succeeded only in propping up a bloated and increasingly unviable military-industrial complex that cannot be meaningfully reformed without a comprehensive decommission and modernization effort. (Mark Episkopos, *The National Interest*)

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Prepared by Rick Herssevoort, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250730185311/https://mailchi.mp/c6c57d87c645/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-korea-is-installing-concrete-barriers-and-high-voltage-wires-along-its-border-with-china?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Monday, March 29, 2021

# N. Korea is installing concrete barriers and high-voltage wires along its border with China; N. Korea accuses UN of 'double standard'

**In North Korea:**
Jilted lover in Hoeryong murders woman and sets her body on fire (*Daily* NK, 03/29/2021)
Law banning leaflets into N. Korea to take effect this week (*Yonhap*, 03/29/2021)
Military closely monitoring N.K. amid report of activities at submarine shipyard (*Yonhap*, 03/29/2021)
N. Korea accuses U.N. of 'double standard' for criticizing recent missile test (*Yonhap*, 03/29/2021)
North Korea accuses U.N. of double standard over missile firings(*Politico*, 03/29/2021)
North Korea likely to increase provocation level (*Korea Times*, 03/29/2021)
North Korea Tried to Shoot Down the SR-71 Spy Plane (The World's Fastest Jet)(*National Interest*, 03/29/2021)
North Korean authorities encourage people to hand over "illegal propaganda material" (*Daily* NK, 03/29/2021)
Satellite imagery implies North may be gearing up for SLBM launch (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 03/29/2021)
The Fight Continues: Why the Korean War Has Continued for 70 Years (*National Interest*, 03/29/2021)

**Inter-Korean:**
Minister urges N. Korea to respond to calls for humanitarian cooperation (*Yonhap*, 03/29/2021)

**International**
North Korea is installing concrete barriers and high-voltage wires along its border with China (*Daily* NK, 03/29/2021)
S. Korea calls for Russia's support to bring peace to Korean Peninsula (*Yonhap*, 03/29/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- A gruesome incident in which a man murdered his lover and set her body on fire recently occurred in Hoeryong, North Hamgyong Province. (Kim Yoo Jin, *Daily NK*)
- A law banning the sending of anti-Pyongyang leaflets into North Korea will take effect this week, the unification ministry said Monday. (*Yonhap*)

- South Korea's military is keeping a close watch on North Korea, the defense ministry said Monday, amid a report that the North may be ready to roll out a new submarine capable of launching ballistic missiles. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea on Monday accused the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) of violating its sovereignty and applying a "double standard" as it is set to hold a meeting this week to discuss Pyongyang's recent missile launches. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea on Monday accused the United Nations of a “double standard” over its reaction to the North’s recent missile launches, warning it of a serious consequence. (*Politico*)
- North Korea's launching of two short-range ballistic missiles has increased tensions between the United States and North Korea, while the Joe Biden administration is in the final stages of reviewing the North Korea policy. (Jung Da-min, *Korea Times*)
- Of that 1981 mission, which Thomas called his most memorable, “this was just after President Reagan was elected, and North Korea was sending a message to the new, incoming administration that our flying reconnaissance near/over their territory was unacceptable. The Communists sent this message the next day specifically mentioning our flight.” (Peter Suciu, *National Interest*)
- North Korean authorities have used a recent lecture to coax people who distribute or possess “illegal propaganda material” to hand in these materials to government agencies, amid a continued crackdown on the “non-socialist and anti-socialist phenomenon,” Daily NK has learned. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- Satellite imagery from Wednesday captured unusual movement at a North Korean naval shipyard, raising suspicions of another missile launch following multiple tests earlier this month. (Kim Pil-gyu, Michael Lee, *Korea JongAng Daily*)
- Armistice negotiations took place sporadically at the villages of Kaesong and Panmunjom. Finally, on July 27, 1953, an armistice was signed. Subsequently, a demilitarized zone was established along the 38th parallel. Korea remains divided today. (Warfare History Network, *National Interest*)

**Inter-Korean:**

- Unification Minister Lee In-young said Monday that inter-Korean cooperation in the humanitarian area can be a good starting point for the resumption of talks between the two sides, urging North Korea to show a "flexible" response to offers for exchanges. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- A source in North Korea told Daily NK last Thursday that the authorities are installing concrete barriers and high-voltage wires along the North Korean border with China. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- South Korea on Monday called for Russia's active support and cooperation for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the defense ministry said Monday, days after the North fired two short-range ballistic missiles in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Seshni Moodley, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250730185542/https://mailchi.mp/6dd55eb7bcb6/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-is-installing-concrete-barriers-and-high-voltage-wires-along-its-border-with-chinan-korea-accuses-un-of-double-standard?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, March 30, 2021**

# 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: North Korea; As of today, those who send flyers to NK can face three years in prison

**Top News:**
2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Democratic People's Republic of Korea (*U.S. Department of State*, 3/30/21)

**In North Korea:**
Are fears of market crackdowns in North Korea exaggerated? (*North Korean Economy Watch*, 3/30/21)
Initial Analysis of North Korea's March 25 SRBM Launches (*38 North*, 3/30/21)
Kim Yo Jong berates South Korean president and calls missile test 'self defense' (*NK News*, 3/30/21)
N.K. leader's sister slams Moon as 'parrot' repeating Washington's 'gangster-like logic' (*Yonhap*, 3/30/21)
N. Korea calls South's leader 'a parrot raised by America' (*AP*, 3/30/21)
Ri Pyong Chol's Fancy Footwork (*38 North*, 3/30/21)
Woman dies during childbirth at doctorless hospital in Onsong County (*Daily NK*, 3/30/31)

**In South Korea:**
As of today, those who send flyers to North Korea can face three years in prison (*NK News*, 3/30/31)
S. Korea capable of intercepting N.K. short-range missiles: defense ministry (*Yonhap*, 3/30/21)

**International:**
Biden's not planning to meet Kim Jong-un (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 3/30/21)
Moon's peace initiative faces more deadlock (*The Korea Times*, 3/30/31)
US eyes additional UN action on N. Korea after missile tests (*AP*, 3/29/21)

**Top News:**

- On March 30, 2021, the U.S. Department of State released its annual *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* for 2020, including on North Korea's human rights practices. We are delighted to inform you that, despite working for over a year under the COVID-induced hardship and travel restrictions, HRNK has continued to stay active and relevant. The U.S. Department of State report quotes HRNK 27 times. (*U.S. Department of State*)

**In North Korea:**

- In a recent article at 38 *North*, North Korea economy scholars Eun-Ju Choi and Young Hui Kim argue that the rumors of the death of Kim Jong-un's reformist policies are highly exaggerated. However, Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein believes that this take may fail to recognize anecdotal evidence supporting the continuation of market crackdowns. Further, Choi and Kim's main argument seems to be that the fruits of the first few years of Kim Jong-un's policy experimentation still stand. That may well be true — to this date we have seen no wholesale repudiation of any of the policy changes enacted in the first few years of Kim's tenure. (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, *North Korea Economy Watch*)
- The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) claim that the missile carried a 2,500-kg warhead to a 600-km range was likely a deliberate overstatement, presumably for political purposes. Probably to signal the new Biden administration that it should not be taken for granted and will continue to develop its missile capabilities, as well as in response to the US-ROK joint exercises currently underway. (Vann H. Van Diepen, *38 North*)
- Last week, North Korea launched two short-range ballistic missiles and declared that it test-fired "newly developed" military technology. The incident was met with outrage in Seoul, Tokyo, Washington and beyond. Now, Kim Yo Jong — the sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un — called the test-firing a "legitimate sovereign right" and slammed Moon by saying he doesn't even have "elementary logic." (Won Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- The sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un on Tuesday criticized South Korean President Moon Jae-in for his speech on the North's recent missile launches, mocking him as a "parrot" that repeats the United States' "gangster-like logic." (Koh Byung Joon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea called South Korea's president "a parrot raised by America" Tuesday, resuming its trademark derisive rhetoric against its rivals amid renewed animosities on the Korean Peninsula. (Hyung Jin Kim, AP)
- The combination of Kim Jong Un's appearance the day of the missile launch tending to infrastructure concerns, and then Ri's statement pulling its punches, has the hallmarks of a concerted effort by the DPRK to wait and see what the new US administration will do next. (38 North)
- A source in the province told Daily NK last Wednesday that the woman, who lived in Gangan Village, had gone to a local hospital earlier this month after feeling birth pangs. The hospital was completely empty, and she died while giving birth all alone. "The woman's husband submitted a petition to the provincial party, but received no response," the source added. (Kim Yoo Jin, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- On Monday, Ministry of Unification spokesperson Lee Jong-joo said that the government is aware of "concerns" about the law and promised that the government will be "flexible and reasonable" when applying it. But laws are generally interpreted when court cases arise, and Lee, the attorney, said that the "anti-leaflet" law's crackdowns are reminiscent of the decades-old National Security Law, which technically bans all pro-North Korea speech and is still in effect today. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- "South Korea has the ability and the posture to fully intercept North Korea's short-range missiles, including ballistic ones, with the South Korea-U.S. missile defense system," ministry spokesman Boo Seung-chan said. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- When asked by a reporter if Biden's diplomacy toward the North includes meeting with Kim, Jen Psaki, the White House spokesperson, replied in a press briefing Monday, "I think his

approach would be quite different, and that is not his intention." (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- President Moon Jae-in's stalled Korean Peninsula peace process, seeking engagement between South and North Korea and the United States, appears to be doomed, according to diplomatic observers, as the two other partners have been dashing his last flickers of hope with their continuing tug-of-war over the North's denuclearization. (Kang Seung Woo, *The Korea Times*)
- President Joe Biden's national security adviser Jake Sullivan will be meeting in Washington soon with his counterparts from Japan and South Korea to discuss North Korea strategy as the administration finalizes a review of how to approach the country. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who recently returned from Tokyo and Seoul, said the three countries are united in dealing with the challenges posed by Pyongyang. (Mathew Lee, AP)

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Prepared by Tristin Schultz, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250730185801/https://mailchi.mp/da6fb797359d/hrnk-news-items2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices-north-koreaas-of-today-those-who-send-flyers-to-nk-can-face-three-years-in-prison?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, March 31, 2021**

## U.N. Security Council meets on N.K. missile launches, but no action

**In North Korea:**
Contractors have six months to assess New Yalu River Bridge: PRC border gov. (*NK News*, 3/31/21)
Eleven Sunam Market market vendors face punishment after selling smuggled goods (*Daily NK*, 3/31/21)
Latest NK missile nuclear-tipped, hard to intercept: report (*The Korea Herald*, 3/31/21)
More than 5,000 soldiers who completed military service deployed to coal mines, fishing villages (*Daily NK*, 3/31/21)
N. Korea's ballistic missile development aimed at 'regaining upper hand' over S. Korea: expert (*Yonhap*, 3/31/21)
N. Korea's paper urges better water management to prevent flooding (*Yonhap*, 3/31/21)
N.K. people's access to information should be expanded without hurting rights of other people: ministry (*Yonhap*, 3/31/21)
N. Korea's trade volume drops to practically zero amid coronavirus pandemic: official (*Yonhap*, 3/31/21)
Steam detected at N. Korea's plutonium reprocessing plant: U.S. think tank(*Yonhap*, 3/31/21)
Steam indicates activity at Yongbyon nuke center: think tank (*The Korea Herald*, 3/31/21)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Timeline: From Blinken's Seoul visit to North Korea's ballistic missile tests (*NK News*, 3/31/21)
Trilateral diplomacy begins this week (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 3/3/21)

**International:**
EU grants almost $590,000 to help North Koreans cope with climate disasters (*NK News*, 3/31/21)
Japan extends unilateral sanctions regime on North Korea for two more years (*NK News*, 3/31/21)
Japan says to work closely with U.S., S.Korea to deal with N.Korea (*Reuters*, 3/31/21)
U.N. Security Council meets on N.K. missile launches, but no action (*Yonhap*, 3/31/21)
U.S. says it will hold North 'accountable' for human rights abuses (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 3/3/21)
U.S. will hold N. Korea accountable for 'egregious' human rights violations: official(*Yonhap*, 3/31/21)

**In North Korea:**

- Chinese transport officials have budgeted six months for an inspection of the unfinished North Yalu River Bridge, an announcement calling for contractor bids showed in early March, a new indicator of progress on a long-delayed keynote China-North Korea construction project. (Chad O'Carroll, Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- Eleven market vendors in Chongjin, North Hamgyong Province, whose businesses had been suffering from logistics issues following the COVID-19 outbreak, were recently arrested by the Ministry of Social Security (MSS) for selling smuggled goods, Daily NK has learned. (Jang So Yong, *Daily NK*)
- The two ballistic missiles North Korea tested a week ago could carry a nuclear warhead and would be hard to intercept with South Korea's missile defense systems, a local security think tank said Tuesday in its latest report. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- More than 5,000 soldiers who had completed their military service or had received an early discharge have reportedly been deployed to so-called "rough and dangerous areas" such as coal mines, farms, and fishing villages. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea's recent development of solid-fuel ballistic missiles is aimed at "regaining an upper hand" over South Korea, a researcher at a state-run think tank said Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Wednesday urged stepped-up efforts for effective water management to prevent the recurrence of flooding that caused heavy damage to the country last summer. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean people's access to outside information should be expanded but not at the expense of the safety of people living in border regions in South Korea, the unification ministry said Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's trade with the outside world has dropped to practically zero due to the country's tightened border controls amid the global coronavirus pandemic, the unification ministry said Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- Recent satellite imagery showed steam from the plutonium reprocessing plant at North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear complex, a U.S. think tank said Wednesday, an indication of activity at the facility used to extract the key nuclear weapon ingredient. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)

- A US think tank suggested possible activity at North Korea's key nuclear facility in Yongbyon, pointing to a satellite image showing steam coming out of its radiochemistry lab and thermal plant. (Kim So-hyun, *The Korea Herald*)

**Inter-Korea Relationship:**

- March 2021 saw the first publicly-known test-fire of short-range ballistic and cruise missiles since U.S. President Joe Biden's inauguration. (*NK News*)
- President Moon Jae-in's national security adviser will travel to the United States this week to talk with his U.S. and Japanese counterparts about North Korea, the Blue House confirmed Wednesday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- Weeks after the last foreign humanitarian workers left North Korea, the European Union allocated 500,000 ($585,625) in aid to help the DPRK better cope with climate disasters. The money will be evenly split between projects run by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Irish humanitarian and agency Concern Worldwide, according to a statement by the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Korea dated March 29. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Tokyo will extend its unilateral North Korea sanctions regime by another two years, Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato said on Tuesday, following years of unresolved questions about abducted Japanese citizens and recent DPRK missile launches. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- Japan will coordinate closely with the United States and South Korea in dealing with North Korea, with the aim of resolving the issue of Japanese abducted by the North and denuclearising the Korean Peninsula, a top Japanese government spokesman said. (*Reuters*)
- The U.N. Security Council convened a closed-door session Tuesday to discuss North Korea's recent missile launches but took no immediate action, a report said. (*Yonhap*)
- The United States will hold North Korea accountable for its "egregious human rights violations," an issue that will be a key part of the Joe Biden administration's overarching policy toward Pyongyang, said a U.S. diplomat Tuesday as the State Department revealed its annual human rights country reports. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The United States will hold North Korea accountable for its "egregious" human rights violations, a State Department official said Tuesday, as it released an annual human rights report. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250730190050/https://mailchi.mp/debaf0b7f454/hrnk-news-item sun-security-council-meets-on-nk-missile-launches-but-no-action?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

# 4. APRIL

### Thursday, April 1, 2021

## "Mr. President, You Did Nothing"; International human rights groups “No improvement on the anti-leaflet law statements”

**Top News:**
***"Mr. President, You Did Nothing" (*Chosun Ilbo*, 4/1/21)
***International human rights groups “No improvement on the anti-leaflet law statements” (*Radio Free Asia*, 4/1/21)
UN Panel of Experts Report (*United Nations Security Council*, 3/4/21)

*** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.
**In North Korea:**
Cheonan sinking being reinvestigated per request of 'conspiracy theorist' (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 4/1/21)
Kim Jong Un is on a mission to build thousands of new apartments in Pyongyang(*NK News*, 4/1/21)
(LEAD) N. Korea likely to conduct more KN-23 variant missile tests to replace Scud missiles: think tank (*Yonhap*, 4/1/21)
North Korea neglects to recall Malaysia-based officials focused on smuggling (*Daily NK*, 4/1/21)
N. Korea steals over US$300 mln to support weapons development in 2020: UN panel (*Yonhap*, 4/1/21)
(LEAD) N. Korean airline publishes flight schedule to China, but no flight detected yet (*Yonhap*, 4/1/21)
(LEAD) N.K. leader visits construction site for riverside flats again in week (*Yonhap*, 4/1/21)
North's hackers stole $316 million, says UN report (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 4/1/21)
North Korea reports zero confirmed COVID-19 cases after testing 21,663 people(*NK News*, 4/1/21)
North Koreans find it harder than ever to find imported food products at local markets (*Daily NK*, 4/1/21)
North Korean hackers posed as a cybersecurity firm to launch new attacks (*Daily NK*, 4/1/21)
North Korea’s Air Koryo spent nearly $1 million on Russian plane parts in 2020 (*Daily NK*, 4/1/21)
North Korea's Yongbyon facility partly active after missile launches, analysts say(UPI, 3/31/21)
More news on trade potentially resuming between North Korea and China (*North Korean Economy Watch*, 4/1/21)
Ri Pyong Chol’s Fancy Footwork (*38 North*, 3/31/21)
**In South Korea:**
Defense chief calls for strong readiness after N.K. missile launches (*Yonhap*, 4/1/21)
Defense ministry voices confidence in probe results of deadly Cheonan ship sinking(*Yonhap*,

4/1/21)
Military begins annual mine removal operations (*Yonhap*, 4/1/21)
Military to resume search for remains from Korean War (*The Korea Herald*, 4/1/21)
North Korea's Yeonpyeong Island attack to be renamed 'battle,' Seoul says (*UPI*, 3/31/21)
Seoul sends bid for co-hosting 2032 Olympics with N.Korea despite frosty ties(*Reuters*, 4/1/21)
Seoul sends proposal to co-host 2032 Olympics with Pyongyang to IOC (*Yonhap*, 4/1/21)
S. Korea considering allowing civilian aid to N. Korea amid increasing signs of border easing: official (*Yonhap*, 4/1/21)
(LEAD) S. Korea's national security adviser arrives in U.S. for talks (*Yonhap*, 4/1/21)
S. Korea to resume war remains excavation project in DMZ next week (*Yonhap*, 4/1/21)

**International:**
U.N.: 'Highly likely' North Korea can mount nuclear warheads on missiles (*UPI*, 3/31/21)
Initial Analysis of North Korea's March 25 SRBM Launches (*38 North*, 3/31/21)
Now for the hard part: Biden in new chapter of North Korea saga (*The Korea Herald*, 4/1/21)

**Top News:**

- Dear Mr. President: In October of last year, I wrote an open letter to you published by Chosun Ilbo on October 21, 2020, appealing for urgent help to save the lives of North Korean women, men and children currently detained in China's detention centers. I was appealing to you to do something that every previous South Korean president including Dae Jung Kim has done since the North Korean refugee crisis began: save Koreans from certain torture, certain imprisonment and possible death. I pointed out that it was a "golden opportunity" for you to do this because Kim Jong un's fear of COVID had led the regime to close its border and refuse to accept North Koreans that China wants to forcefully repatriate back to face certain horror. It was a great opportunity for you to ask President Xi Jinping to show humanitarian compassion and allow them safe passage to the Republic of Korea, thus relieving the burden on China. But you did nothing. (Susan Scholte, *Chosun Ilbo*)
- In response to the recently revised law on the development of inter-Korean relations, or the anti-leaflet propaganda law, coming into effect on the 30th, international human rights groups that have submitted their written opinions to the Unification Ministry are still expressing their concerns. This is Reporter Ji Jeong-eun reporting. (Ji Jeong-eun, *Radio Free Asia*)
- In paragraph 2 of its resolution 2515 (2020), the Security Council requested the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1874 (2009) to provide the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) with a final report with its findings and recommendations. The Panel report covers the period from 4 August 2020 to 5 February 2021. The reporting period has coincided with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic (see annex 1 for response measures taken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea). (*United Nations Security Council*)

**In North Korea:**

- In a decision made public Wednesday, a presidential commission accepted a petition last December to reinvestigate the sinking of the Navy ship Cheonan, sparking outrage among surviving crew and families of the fallen. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- After vowing to gift hundreds of new apartment units to North Korea's finest teachers, writers and scientists by the end of the year, Kim Jong Un reportedly showed up at the complex's construction site for a second time to show he's serious about the project. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- North Korea is expected to conduct more test launches of its Iskander-variant ballistic missiles in an effort to replace old Scud missiles with advanced solid-fuel ones, an expert of the state-run defense think tank said Thursday. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)
- Pyongyang boldly declared that they would sever ties with Kuala Lumpur and shutter their embassy when Malaysia extradited a North Korean trader involved in illegal money laundering to the United States. However, the North Korean authorities reportedly neglected to recall North Korean workers involved in the smuggling of luxury goods and weapons through Kuala Lumpur. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea continued to blatantly violated U.N. Security Council resolutions last year, stealing more than US$300 million in virtual assets to support its illegal development of weapons of mass destruction, a U.N. report said Wednesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's national carrier was set to operate two flights between Pyongyang and Beijing this week, its website showed Thursday, drawing attention to whether the route will resume after more than a year of suspension amid coronavirus concerns. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un visited a construction site for riverside apartments in Pyongyang again in a week, state media reported Thursday, an apparent move to underscore his commitment to improving the livelihoods of people. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea stole over $316 million in virtual assets through illicit cyberattacks over the past two years to support its weapons of mass destruction program, according to a UN Security Council report released Wednesday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- At least half a million new COVID-19 cases are reported around the world each day, but North Korea still claims to have zero cases of the virus more than a year after it first enacted its strict, ongoing border lockdown. (Kelly Kasulis, *NK News*)
- North Koreans are finding it more difficult than ever to find imported food products in the country's markets, Daily NK has learned. Indeed, prices of some items are now seven times higher than they were before the blockade was put in place early last year. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- Less than three months after Google's Threat Analysis Group (TAG) disclosed a major social engineering attack against the cybersecurity industry, the company said the same North Korean hackers set up both fake accounts and a website to lure victims into a new trap. (Nils Weisensee, *NK News*)
- North Korea's state airline imported nearly $1 million worth of plane parts for its fleet of Russion Tupolev jets, despite the fact that planes have mostly been grounded during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear research center is showing signs of activity after the launch of two short-range ballistic missiles last week, according to U.S. analysts. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- Media outlets with sources inside North Korea, such as Daily NK, have reported for some weeks that trade might be restarting between China and North Korea. Daily NK reported in February that the USD-KRW rate began to climb after the 8th Party Congress amid rumors of the border opening again. Now, Nikkei Asia reports, based on

anonymous sources in the Chinese border region, that preparations are being made to restart trade. (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, *North Korean Economy Watch*)

- In continuing its signals that it is keeping the door open for reengagement at some point with the US, North Korea downplayed its launch on March 25 of two short-range ballistic missiles, and responded to US President Joseph Biden's remarks at his first press conference the next day with a relatively subdued statement. That approach appears intended to conform to the line advanced in Kim Jong Un's work report to the Eighth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) in January—shortly before Biden's inauguration—which depicted the June 2018 Singapore US-DPRK Joint Statement as the basis for a "new" US-DPRK relationship. (*38 North*)

**In South Korea:**

- Defense Minister Suh Wook on Thursday called for a strong defense posture following North Korea's launch of two short-range ballistic missiles into the East Sea last week. (*Yonhap*)
- The defense ministry said Thursday that it trusts the results of a civilian-military joint probe blaming North Korea for the 2010 sinking of a South Korean warship, after a presidential committee decided to revisit the case following a petition. (*Yonhap*)
- The military has launched an annual mission to remove land mines near the border with North Korea and elsewhere to promote local residents' safety and convenience, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's military and an international recovery team led by the UN Command will resume an annual search for the remains of Korean and UN soldiers missing from the 1950-53 Korean War, the Ministry of National Defense said Thursday. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- A 2010 North Korean artillery attack on a South Korean island that killed four people is to be officially renamed the Yeonpyeong Island Artillery Battle after pressure from the families of the deceased. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- South Korean capital Seoul said on Thursday it has sent a proposal for co-hosting the 2032 Olympics with the North's Pyongyang to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in a bid to keep its hopes alive despite Brisbane being the front-runner. (*Reuters*)
- Seoul's metropolitan government said Thursday it has notified the International Olympic Committee (IOC) of its bid to co-host the 2032 Summer Olympics with Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea. (*Yonhap*)
- The government is considering allowing local aid groups to resume assistance to North Korea as the country is showing increasing signs of easing its border restrictions with China, a unification ministry official said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's national security adviser, Suh Hoon, arrived in the United States on Wednesday for talks with his U.S. and Japanese counterparts on how to deal with North Korea. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea will begin this year's war remains excavation project at a former battlefield near the border with North Korea next week, the defense ministry said Thursday, with Pyongyang remaining unresponsive to calls for joint work as agreed. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- A report from a United Nations panel of experts found that North Koreahas continued to fund its weapons program through illicit means such as smuggling and cyberattacks and concluded that the secretive state can probably arm its ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- North Korea announced the launch of a "new-type" of missile on March 25 that appears to be a variant of the previous KN-23 short-range ballistic missile (SRBM).[1] North Korea almost certainly conducted the launches more for political than technical or operational reasons, probably to signal the new Biden administration that it should not be taken for granted and will continue to develop its missile capabilities, as well as in response to the US-ROK joint exercises currently underway. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) claim that the missile carried a 2,500-kg warhead to a 600-km range was likely a deliberate overstatement, presumably for political purposes. (Vann H. Van Diepen, *38 North*)
- I knew Pyongyang's quiet couldn't last. Through U.S. President Joe Biden's impressive flurry of Asian diplomacy — unprecedented Quad summit, 2+2 ministerial meetings, first with Japan, then South Korea, and meeting with Beijing on U.S. soil — North Korea didn't steal the show. (Robert A. Manning, *The Korea Herald*)

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Chosun Ilbo Article

**"Mr. President, You Did Nothing"**

Dear Mr. President:

In October of last year, I wrote an open letter to you published by Chosun Ilbo on October 21, 2020, appealing for urgent help to save the lives of North Korean women, men and children currently detained in China's detention centers. I was appealing to you to do something that every previous South Korean president including Dae Jung Kim has done since the North Korean refugee crisis began: save Koreans from certain torture, certain imprisonment and possible death. I pointed out that it was a "golden opportunity" for you to do this because Kim Jong un's fear of COVID had led the regime to close its border and refuse to accept North Koreans that China wants to forcefully repatriate back to face certain horror. It was a great opportunity for you to ask President Xi Jinping to show humanitarian compassion and allow them safe passage to the Republic of Korea, thus relieving the burden on China.

But you did nothing.

Then, that appeal was followed up by letter sent to you on November 2, 2020, signed by twenty former U.S. government officials representing every U.S. Presidency since Richard Nixon who wrote: We urge your administration to seize the moment to reach out to the People's Republic of China, as South Korean administrations have quietly and very successfully done in the past, to ask for humanitarian consideration for the North Korean women, men, and children

currently detained in the PRC and request they be allowed safe passage to the Republic of Korea or a third country."

Believing you would do the right thing, that November 2, 2020, letter was not released publicly.

But you did nothing.

Now, I learned today that two young beautiful Korean women held in Chinese detention centers since September 2020, have been released -- not to South Korean authorities, which they had requested, but to their abusers. The Chinese police gave them back into the hands of the Chinese men who had bought them, as they were victims of human trafficking. Thus, because of your inaction, they were released into the hands of those who had enslaved and abused them.

They just wanted to go to South Korea and no longer be slaves.

All you needed to do was to ask that these Korean women be released to South Korean authorities.

This happened because you did nothing.

You turned your back on these two women and hundreds of others, but will you continue to do this for those still being detained in China? Among the group still in detention are Christians and those trying to reunite with family in South Korea, two crimes punishable by death in North Korea. Thus, they face execution if Chinese authorities force them back to North Korea.

I understand that you are Catholic. If you will not consider these requests for help for these North Korean refugees currently detained, would you at least consider Proverbs 24:11-12-- "Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, 'But we knew nothing about this, 'does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay everyone according to what they have done?-- which clearly calls on you to rescue those being led away to death and cautions you as well that if you knew and did nothing, you will be repaid for what they have done.

As I wrote before, because your family was rescued (during the Korean War), you had the great opportunity to be able to choose your own path and thrive in the Republic of Korea to be elected to its most important political office, President. Now, you are the person with the most authority in the world to act to protect the lives of these refugees and make it possible for them to have the same opportunities.

There is still time. Please act. You know fully well that Hanawon has lots of room to accommodate these women, men, and children.

*Suzanne Scholte*

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RFA Article

**International human rights groups "No improvement on the anti-leaflet law statements"**

Washington-Ji Jeongeun jij@rfa.org
2021-03-29

Anchor: In response to the recently revised law on the development of inter-Korean relations, or the anti-leaflet propaganda law, coming into effect on the 30th, international human rights groups that have submitted their written opinions to the Unification Ministry are still expressing their concerns. This is Reporter Ji Jeongeun reporting.

The U.S.'s Human Rights Watch (HRW) and the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) revealed they submitted a written opinion to the South Korean Ministry of Unification last month that points out the problems with the anti-leaflet law.

Lina Yoon, a senior researcher at HRW, who wrote the statement, told Radio Free Asia (RFA) on the 29th that she received an e-mail from the Ministry of Unification on March 9th.

The Unification Policy Office of the Ministry of Unification said they carefully reviewed whether they should reflect the written opinions of the human rights groups, including HRW, but that the matters concerning the resumption of the revised law could not be reflected as implementation guidelines.

In regard to this, Senior Researcher Lina Yoon said that as much as the implementation guidelines should provide a specific interpretation of the law, "The Ministry of Unification should include a clear definition of the expression "flyers, etc." in relation to prohibited goods." She also said, "The implementation guidelines should also include when, why, and how the maximum criminal punishment for this is so strict (three years of imprisonment)."

Earlier, Senior Researcher Yoon submitted a statement to the Ministry of Unification last month, saying the revised law's punishment of up to three years in prison or fines of up to 30 million won ($27,000) is too strict.

Senior Researcher Yoon added, "Because the restrictions on freedom of expression should be stipulated as a law and be interpreted narrowly, the ambiguity (of the applicable law) violates international law."

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), told Radio Free Asia (RFA) that he received the same written response from the Ministry of Unification saying their concerns could not be reflected in the implementation guidelines. He also emphasized that before the implementation guidelines, raising questions about the applicable law should come first.

Executive Director Scarlatoiu: If we comment on the implementation guidelines, it means that we have already acquiesced to the legality of the amendment. We do not acquiesce to the legality of the amendment. Our legal opinion was that the amendment is not legal, the amendment contravenes the very Constitution of the Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea's international obligations.

Executive Director Scarlatoiu says the law itself has issues, it is glaringly unconstitutional, and there is no point in discussing interpretation guidelines.

South Korean Ministry of Unification spokesperson Lee Jong-joo emphasized in a press conference on the 29th, "We will apply the law in a flexible and reasonable manner" in reference to the anti-leaflet law, saying flexible application can ensure its constitutionality.

The organization's lawyer Amanda Mortwedt Oh, who wrote the statement, also pointed out to Radio Free Asia (RFA) that the spokesman's remarks about a "flexible and reasonable application," suggests that various interpretations of the law can be made when the said law should not have any room for interpretation.

She also said that since South Korean President Moon Jae-in has come into office, multiple nonprofit organizations and North Korea's human rights activists have become targets. She expressed her concern that the said law could be used as a tool of discrimination against them.

She also said that the Ministry of Unification's response failed to address the substantive issues pointed out by HRNK in a meaningful way, adding that the group hopes to continue discussions with the Ministry of Unification.

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RFA article translated by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250730191230/https://mailchi.mp/449c3b8f9be6/hrnk-news-itemsmr-president-you-did-nothinginternational-human-rights-groups-no-improvement-on-the-anti-leaflet-law-statements?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, April 2, 2021**

## North Korean Human Rights Violations on Trial; US State Department "NK human rights worsen due to COVID, will be held accountable"

**Top News:**
***North Korean Human Rights Violations on Trial… "Deplete the Regime's Final Resources and Break its Control" (VOA, 03/24/2021)
***U.S. State Department "North Korean human rights worsen due to concern over the spread of the coronavirus… They will be held accountable" (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 03/31/2021)

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**In North Korea:**
About half of foreign embassies closed in N. Korea amid COVID-19 restrictions: Russian Embassy (*Yonhap*, 04/01/2021)
After serious drops in trade, North Korean ship activity surges near China (*NK Pro*, 04/02/2021)
Kim Jong Un's Long Game Starts With Short-Range Missiles (*Wall Street Journal*, 04/02/2021)
N. Korea demands Japan's apology, compensation for wartime atrocities (*Yonhap*, 04/02/2021)
N. Korean authorities investigate famous commerce management center in Chagang Province (*Daily NK*, 04/02/2021)
North Korea can likely arm missiles with nuclear warheads: UN (*Nikkei Asia*, 04/01/2021)
North Korea Can Put Nuclear Warheads on Its Missiles: Report (*National Interest*, 04/01/2021)
North Korean Official Purged Over Flouting of Coronavirus Quarantine (*National Interest*, 04/01/2021)
North Koreans sharpen their cyberskills at online coding competitions (*NK Pro*, 04/02/2021)
North Korea's Air Koryo denies claims that it restarted flights to Beijing (*NK News*, 04/02/2021)
North Korea's Air Koryo posts flight schedule for Beijing route (*UPI*, 04/01/2021)
The per kilogram price of pork in North Korea has increased by 57% in the past six months (*Daily NK*, 04/02/2021)
**In South Korea:**
Gov't reverses decision on fresh probe into deadly Cheonan ship sinking (*Yonhap*, 04/02/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Could North and South Korea joint host the 2032 Olympics? (CNN, 04/01/2021)
Moon Jae-in Should Push Back on North Korea's Insulting Comments (*National Interest*, 04/01/2021)
**International:**
Aid groups fret over struggling North Korea programs and COVID-19 red tape (*NK News*, 04/02/2021)
China's Dangerous Double Game in North Korea (*Foreign Affairs*, 04/02/2021)
Denuclearization will be at center of new N. Korea policy: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 04/02/2021)
Dire situation in North Korea drives 'collective exit' of diplomats (*Guardian*, 04/01/2021)
Don't Tell China. Did North Korea Help Taiwan Build Submarines? (*National Interest*, 04/01/2021)
Fed up with COVID-19 rules, dozens of diplomatic staff exit North Korea (*NK News*, 04/01/2021)
North Korea-China Trade Starting this Month? One Report Says Yes. (*National Interest*, 04/01/2021)

North Korea sees mass exodus of foreigners due to Covid-19, Russian Embassy says (*CNN*, 04/02/2021)
Pompeo regrets Trump administration 'didn't make more progress' with North Korea(*Fox News*, 04/01/2021)
Russian diplomats complain of acute shortages in North Korea causing foreign exodus (*Reuters*, 04/01/2021)
Russia: North Korea 'exodus' will continue amid hardship (*AP News*, 04/01/2021)
Top Biden Aide to Meet Asia Allies in Maryland on North Korea (*Bloomberg*, 04/01/2021)
UN to censor North Korea sanctions report at South Korean government's request(*NK Pro*, 04/02/2021)
U.S. official: Washington to consult closely with allies on North Korea policy (*UPI*, 04/02/2021)
U.S. says any approach to North Korea will have to be in 'lockstep' with allies(*Reuters*, 04/01/2021)
U.S. says approach to North Korea will have to be in 'lockstep' with allies, including S. Korea (*Arirang*, 04/02/2021)
U.S. to brief Japan, South Korea on North Korea review (*Reuters*, 04/01/2021)
U.S. 'very much open' to feedback from allies on N. Korea policy (*Yonhap*, 04/02/2021)
White House meeting with Japan and South Korea to focus on North Korea policy(*CNN*, 04/01/2021)

**Top News:**

- As the United States places North Korean human rights at the center of its policy toward North Korea and the status of North Korean human rights is once again in the spotlight on the international stage, Washington responds by welcoming this development and there are growing calls for practical measures. There are specific suggestions such as if the North Korean regime's purse strings become dependent on the domestic market, it will loosen its iron fist. (Baik Sungwon, VOA)
- The "2020 North Korean Human Rights Report" released by the U.S. State Department on the 30th (local time) pointed out that the human rights situation in North Korea has worsened due to excessive control over the spread of the novel coronavirus infection. (News1, *Dong-A Ilbo*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea's highly restrictive coronavirus measures and lack of essential goods have caused many foreign embassies to close and international humanitarian workers to leave the country, the Russian Embassy in Pyongyang said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean ships roved through the Yellow Sea and East Sea throughout late March, signaling a continued pickup in activity after trade appeared to take a serious hit amid the COVID-19 pandemic last year. (Min Chao Choy, *NK Pro*)
- It was always more a question of when, not if, North Korea would return to weapons provocations. Now that it has, the Kim Jong Un regime is poised to unsheathe new weaponry that it has quietly developed in recent years. (Andrew Jeong, Timothy W. Martin, *Wall Street Journal*)
- A North Korean organization on Friday demanded Japan apologize and provide compensation for its colonial-era atrocities, and called on the withdrawal of hostile policies against Pyongyang. (*Yonhap*)

- North Korea's Organization and Guidance Department (OGD) recently inspected a commerce management center in Chonchon County, Chagang Province, Daily NK learned last Friday. Though now deceased, North Korean "female hero" Jong Chun Sil remains the "honorary director" of the center. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea has likely developed the ability to mount nuclear warheads onto its intercontinental ballistic missiles, a United Nations panel warned in a Wednesday report, as the country continues to advance its weapons program funded by cryptocurrency heists, smuggling operations and more. (Hiona Shiraiwa, Kaori Yoshia, *Nikkei Asia*)
- A panel associated with the United Nations Security Council has found that North Korea has maintained its nuclear weapons program and that it can probably put nuclear warheads on the ballistic missiles that it recently launched. Even more concerning, the panel found that North Korea likely upgraded its weapons capabilities in 2020, the economic devastation of the pandemic notwithstanding. (Stephen Silver, *National Interest*)
- North Korea, while claiming for the last year that it has had no coronavirus cases within its borders, has over the same time period taken often draconian measures to stop the spread of the virus. These have concluded closing schools, cracking down on border trade and allegedly installing high-voltage wires on its Chinese border. Now, a report claims that the North Korean regime has executed a local government official, due to his insufficient adherence to coronavirus protocols in the operation of a quarantine center in that providence. If true, this would be a part of a pattern of recent purges related to coronavirus, sources said. (Stephen Silver, *National Interest*)
- Dozens of North Korean software developers appear to be honing their skills on freely accessible coding platforms that may help the DPRK build its cyber force, an NK Pro investigation of profiles across several such websites showed. But cybersecurity experts said that the participation of North Korean programmers in these coding competitions may also reveal interests, techniques and programming habits that could be used to link future attacks to the DPRK. (Nils Weisensee, *NK Pro*)
- Contrary to recent media reports, North Korea's Air Koryo has not restarted flights to Beijing and is unsure when flights will resume, an official from the airline told NK News on Friday. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- North Korea's Air Koryo disclosed flight plans for a route between Pyongyang and Beijing, but it is unclear whether flights have resumed amid the global coronavirus pandemic. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- North Korean pork prices have reportedly soared in the past six months. Some are saying that the North Korean authorities may have reached their limit in effectively adjusting pork prices, something they have done ever since the outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF) in the country. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- Overturning an earlier decision, a presidential commission decided Friday not to reinvestigate the 2010 deadly sinking of a South Korean warship by North Korea amid outrage among surviving crew and bereaved family members. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Could there be the unlikeliest of joint hosts for the 2032 Olympics Games? Hosting duties for the Games could be shared between North and South Korea, after the South Korean capital sent proposals to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to co-host with North Korea's capital, Pyongyang. In a press release, the Seoul city government said the Games could serve as a "watershed moment" for peace in the Korean Peninsula. (Ben Morse, Jake Kwon, Akanksha Sharma, CNN)
- Despite Moon's best efforts, North Korea is likely to remain "the impossible state," as christened by Victor Cha of CSIS. President Moon shouldn't give up seeking to develop a better bilateral dialog, but he should stop turning his nation's other cheek. Finally pushing back against the DPRK could, paradoxically, prove to be the start of a more serious bilateral relationship. (Doug Bandow, *National Interest*)

**International:**

- A new U.N. report details the struggle that non-governmental organizations faced last year while trying to deliver humanitarian aid into North Korea, a country that has banned nearly all international travel for more than a year now in order to combat COVID-19. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- A new administration in Washington faces a familiar problem: North Korea is once again testing missiles, including ballistic missiles, in contravention of a UN Security Council resolution. Rather than retread dead-end paths, the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden has pledged to think anew on North Korea, and it has already distinguished itself from its predecessor by signaling that it will consult with U.S. allies and partners to formulate a strong response to Pyongyang that does not rule out diplomacy. (Oriana Skylar Mastro, *Foreign Affairs*)
- Denuclearization of North Korea will be at the center of any new U.S. policy toward the reclusive nation, a State Department spokesman said Thursday, adding the country's policy review will soon be concluded. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Russian diplomats fleeing North Korea have described acute shortages of medicines and other basic goods in the country, indicating a crisis fuelled by one of the world's strictest quarantine regimes amid the coronavirus pandemic. (Andrew Roth, *Guardian*)
- North Korea provided materials and data on three of North Korea's designs, the coastal Sang-O-class submarine and the midget Yugo-class and Yono-class submarines to their Taiwanese contact. North Korea even indicated that it was willing to license the production of these submarines to Taiwan. (Charlie Gao, *National Interest*)
- Fewer than 290 diplomatic mission staff remain in North Korea after waves of expats and aid workers left the country in recent months, according to the Russian Embassy in North Korea. The Russian Embassy posted the figure on its Facebook page on Thursday, stating that 38 people from diplomatic missions left the capital city of Pyongyang on March 18 and that their two-week quarantine in the Chinese city of Dandong ended on Thursday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- The coronavirus pandemic has meant that North Korea has become even more closed off from the rest of the world than it traditionally has been, with the Kim regime taking all sorts of measures to keep up what it claims is its record of having zero positive coronavirus cases. This has also included a huge crackdown on the various smuggling trades that have taken place over the border between North Korea and China. Now,

however, there are proposals that trade is set to resume, as soon as this month, between those two countries. (Stephen Silver, *National Interest*)

- Foreign diplomats and aid workers have fled North Korea en masse in recent months due to shortages of goods and "unprecedented" restrictions on daily life imposed to stop the spread of coronavirus, according to the Russian Embassy in Pyongyang. (Joshua Berlinger, CNN)
- Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said his "regret" from the Trump administration was not convincing North Korea to give up its nuclear program. (Morgan Phillips, *Fox News*)
- Russia's diplomatic mission to North Korea complained on Thursday of acute shortages of essential goods such as medicine, problems getting healthcare and pandemic restrictions that it said were unprecedented in their severity. (*Reuters*)
- Russia's embassy in North Korea says the country is suffering severe shortages of medicines and necessary goods amid the coronavirus pandemic. (*AP News*)
- White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan will lay out the emerging U.S. strategy toward North Korea in a meeting with his Japanese and South Korean counterparts on Friday at the U.S. Naval Academy, a senior administration official said. (Jenny Leonard, *Bloomberg*)
- The U.N. Panel of Experts has agreed to delete a photo from its report that identified an ROK-flagged oil tanker floating next to a U.N.-sanctioned tanker with known links to North Korea, an informed source told NK Pro. The photo is expected to be removed following a South Korean foreign ministry request. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK Pro*)
- A trilateral meeting among U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan and his counterparts from South Korea and Japan scheduled for Friday will play a key role in finalizing Washington's policy toward North Korea, a senior U.S. administration official said. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- Denuclearization will remain at the center of U.S. policy toward North Korea and any approach to Pyongyang will have to be done in "lockstep" with close allies, including Japan and South Korea, U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price said on Thursday. (David Brunnstrom, *Reuters*)
- As the Biden administration concludes a review of its policy towards North Korea the U.S. said that denuclearization will remain at the center of its policy. (*Arirang*)
- The United States will brief South Korea and Japan on Friday on President Joe Biden's long-awaited review of North Korea policy in talks on Friday that will also cover concerns about a shortage of semi-conductor chips, a senior administration official said on Thursday. (Steve Holland, David Brunnstrom, *Reuters*)
- The United States is open and prepared to take feedback from key allies on its new approach to dealing with a nuclear-armed North Korea, a senior U.S. administration official said Thursday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- National security adviser Jake Sullivan's meeting with top officials from Japan and South Korea on Friday will focus primarily on North Korea and maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, according to a senior administration official. (Kate Sullivan, Kylie Atwood, Kevin Liptak, CNN)

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VOA Source

**North Korean Human Rights Violations on Trial... "Deplete the Regime's Final Resources and Break its Control"**

Reporter Baik Sungwon
2021.3.24

As the United States places North Korean human rights at the center of its policy toward North Korea and the status of North Korean human rights is once again in the spotlight on the international stage, Washington responds by welcoming this development and there are growing calls for practical measures. There are specific suggestions such as if the North Korean regime's purse strings become dependent on the domestic market, it will loosen its iron fist. This is Baik Sungwon reporting.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited South Korea and strongly criticized North Korea's human rights situation, and Washington's human rights experts, saying the U.S. has come back to its rightful place, welcomed the U.S. return to the UN Human Rights Council after a three-year absence to criticize the North Korean regime's human rights abuses and call for accountability.

Robert King, former US Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights issues, said, "The UN Commission of Inquiry established that. The UN Security Council, the UN General Assembly, and the UN Human Rights Council have all expressed serious concern about the egregious violations. Unfortunately, the Trump Administration went silent on the North's rights violations. A return to plain speaking and respect for the truth is welcome."

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Previously at the 46th meeting of the UN Human Rights Council on the 23rd, the UN Human Rights Council came to a "consensus" without a vote on the resolution condemning human rights violations and crimes against humanity in North Korea and calling for accountability.

Former Special Envoy King welcomed in particular the position on North Korean human rights that has changed since the Singapore Summit when the U.S. administration did not raise the issue of North Korean human rights, stating, "It is refreshing to hear the Secretary of State reaffirm the well-established fact that North Korea is responsible for serious human rights violations."

[Robert King, former Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Issues] "It is refreshing to hear the Secretary of State reaffirm the well-established fact that North Korea is responsible for serious human rights violations."

He then assessed, “The Trump administration did not publicly raise North Korea's human rights abuses in conversations with our South Korean allies. The change in how human rights is now being treated is as different as going from night to daylight.”

[Robert King, former Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Issues] “The Trump administration did not publicly raise North Korea's human rights abuses in conversations with our South Korean allies. The change in how human rights is now being treated is as different as going from night to daylight.”

There are some who say that since North Korea is completely ignoring to human rights discussions and calls for improvement, a one-sided statement or resolution is nothing but investigation. However, most positively assess that the fact that the United States is reaffirming its human rights values and once again leading efforts for North Korean human rights at the UN has significant meaning for reversing the direction of international policy.

Roberta Cohen, former U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, stated, “Rhetoric can be very important… As with the rhetoric which is denouncing North Korea, I don’t consider that the kind of policy would be effective, but if it's rhetoric that explains what and why there's such a policy and the connections between human rights security, and what this is going to mean for the United States in its relationship to North Korea and what is this is going to mean for the alliance of South Korea, the United States and Japan…”

[Recording: Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State] “Rhetoric can be very important… As with the rhetoric which is denouncing North Korea, I don’t consider that the kind of policy would be effective, but if it's rhetoric that explains what and why there's such a policy and the connections between human rights security, and what this is going to mean for the United States in its relationship to North Korea and what is this is going to mean for the alliance of South Korea, the United States and Japan…”

Furthermore, as the United States breaks its three-year silence and puts forward the urgent task of improving North Korean human rights back on the agenda, experts call for concrete steps that will bring about real change to be taken at once.

Regarding specific measures the Biden administration should pursue to promote human rights in North Korea, Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu of U.S. human rights group, the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), proposed “Appoint a U.S. Special Envoy for North Korean human rights, protect North Korean refugees, send information to the people of North Korea, and link humanitarian assistance to progress on human rights.”

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This past January, the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea sent a letter to the Biden administration with this proposal.

Director Scarlatoiu stated that the United States government must come up with a more concrete plan to improve human rights in the future, stating for example, “Secretary Blinken could emphasize the importance of the inflow of information into North Korea.”

He then stated, “if the Moon Jae-in administration continues to ignore calls for the improvement of North Korean human rights, Secretary Blinken could specifically state that the voices of North Korean escapees, North Korean human rights defenders and North Korean human rights organizations must be heard and must not be muffled. He could also specifically emphasize the importance of leaflet balloon launches as a means to send information into North Korea.”

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Regarding the measures to improve North Korean human rights urged by U.S. government and that the Moon Jae-in administration should respond and implement, Executive Director Scarlatoiu proposed, “By resuming co-sponsorship of DPRK human rights resolutions at the UN Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly. By resuming financial support for North Korean human rights organizations and North Korean human rights defenders. By tasking the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Korea to examine the constitutionality of the Amendment to the Development of Inter-Korean Relations Act (the "Anti-Leaflet Law"), set to enter into force on March 30, 2021.”

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Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Cohen proposed that the appointment of a State Department Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Issues as the first practical measure to improve human rights in North Korea. Through the appointment of a special envoy, not only will it be possible to hold human rights discussions with North Korea, but also undertake international efforts, especially at the UN and devoting their time to develop a strategy and a program to enhance human rights in North Korea.

[Recording: Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State] “The whole purpose of the special envoy is to promote respect for human rights, find ways to promote respect for

human rights in North Korea, to hold discussions with North Korean officials, to undertake international efforts, especially at the UN. So, the appointment of this person who will be devoting his or her time to developing a strategy and a program, presumably to enhance human rights in North Korea…"

Attorney Joshua Stanton, a North Korea human rights and sanctions specialist, proposed more specifically that depleting the resources of the police state can be a practical measure to press for the improvement of human rights.

[Recording Joshua Stanton, Attorney] "They should defund the police state...The Ministry of State Security for example, relies on trading companies just like every other North Korean government agency to fund its operations to pay its officers and to buy cell phone trackers and barbed wire or whatever else device to keep the population in terror and submission. They buy all of that stuff with cash, with money, with predominantly dollars. They are certainly getting better at stealing Bitcoin, but for the most part they use trading companies that are operating out of Hong Kong and Singapore."

Attorney Joshua Stanton who participated in the drafting of the U.S. North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act of 2016 pointed out, "The Ministry of State Security for example, relies on trading companies just like every other North Korean government agency to fund its operations to pay its officers and to buy cell phone trackers and barbed wire or whatever else device to keep the population in terror and submission. They buy all of that stuff with cash, with money, with predominantly dollars. They are certainly getting better at stealing Bitcoin, but for the most part they use trading companies that are operating out of Hong Kong and Singapore."

Additionally, he stated, "And if we go after that money and defund the police state, then the officers will not have the equipment needed to keep the people in terror. They will become more dependent on the local economy. And if they become more dependent on the local economy, people will be able to buy indulgences from them, social discipline and terror will begin to break down."

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Attorney Stanton stated, "And suddenly, the government in Pyongyang will be in a position where it must instead of simply keeping the people in subjugation, begin to negotiate with the grievances of the people. That's how we will bring change to North Korea."

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Former Special Envoy King also stated, “It would be helpful to have the South Korean government engage with the United States on how we might work together on the human rights problems of North Korea,” and proposed that having South Korea reengage in North Korea human rights discussions at the UN Human Rights Council and General Assembly as a starting point.

[Robert King, former Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Issues] “It would be helpful to have the South Korean government engage with the United States on how we might work together on the human rights problems of North Korea. As a starting point, it would be helpful to have South Korea reengage on North Korean human rights problems being discussed in the UN Human Rights Council and the General Assembly. It would also be helpful to have quiet discussions with the United States so we can coordinate our efforts on these issues. Clearly South Korea is closest to this problem, and the U.S. would benefit from cooperation with South Korea.”

He added, “It would also be helpful to have quiet discussions with the United States so we can coordinate our efforts on these issues.”

Former Special Envoy King stated, “Clearly South Korea is closest to this problem, and the U.S. would benefit from cooperation with South Korea.”

However, experts are concerned that South Korea, which is not criticizing North Korea’s human rights situation and preventing the inflow of information into North Korea for the sake of improving relations with the Kim Jong-un regime, is at odds with the U.S. stance on North Korean human rights.

On the 23rd, the South Korean government did not participate in the UN resolution on North Korean human rights as a co-sponsor. This is the third time, having done the same in 2019 and 2020.

Attorney Stanton pointed out, “The Moon administration sees discussion of human rights in North Korea as a threat to its own interests and its own policies...creating the human rights problem in South Korea for emigres from North Korea. So emigres for North Korea now have to be afraid that their personal information will be leaked, that they will be approached by people who are sympathetic to the government in Pyongyang who reside in the South. They are getting harassing and threatening phone call.”

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He then criticized, “it’s scary that the South Korean government is silencing important messengers who are making known the true nature of the North Korean regime and how it abuses its people.”

Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Cohen emphasized, “The Moon administration, both at the United Nations and bilaterally, has basically decided that human rights is a tension in the relationship with the North. And so the Moon administration should remove this tension from relationships...but on the contrary, the absence of human rights has never produced a nuclear agreement.”

[Recording: Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State] “The Moon administration, both at the United Nations and bilaterally, has basically decided that human rights is a tension in the relationship with the North. And so the Moon administration should remove this tension from relationships...but on the contrary, the absence of human rights has never produced a nuclear agreement...The Moon administration is trying to please North Korea and seems to accept the view that human rights is an obstacle to peace...their position is wavering, and is also the result of North Korea's bullying, and North Korea's warnings to them. They don't look very self-respecting in doing this.”

Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Cohen then criticized, “The Moon administration is trying to please North Korea and seems to accept the view that human rights is an obstacle to peace...their position is wavering, and is also the result of North Korea's bullying, and North Korea's warnings to them. They don't look very self-respecting in doing this.”

This is Baik Sungwon with VOA News.

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Translated by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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Dong-A Ilbo Article

**U.S. State Department “North Korean human rights worsen due to concern over the spread of the coronavirus... They will be held accountable”**

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The "2020 North Korean Human Rights Report" released by the U.S. State Department on the 30th (local time) pointed out that the human rights situation in North Korea has worsened due to excessive control over the spread of the novel coronavirus infection.

First of all, foreigners residing in North Korea, in addition to North Koreans, have been greatly

restricted.

The State Department cited the reports of media and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that said the government's tightening restrictions on domestic movement has made it very difficult to move within North Korea since March of last year, and that NGOs, foreign diplomats, and employees of the U.N. were not allowed to leave Pyongyang. The State Department also pointed out, "This has seriously hindered the extremely limited surveillance capabilities of overseas observers monitoring human rights and humanitarian aid in North Korea."

The State Department also cited a report by the UN Special Rapporteur on North Korean Human Rights to point out that as diplomats and international organizations are unable to continue their activities in North Korea, the amount of direct information used by the international community has decreased and the number of North Korean defectors arriving in South Korea has decreased significantly. The State Department has been referring to the human rights conditions in North Korea, and testimony by North Korean defectors has been important in such human rights reports.

In addition, the influx of people going in and out of China has been drastically restricted, regardless of whether they have a permit or not due to increased border security.

However, it was pointed out that overseas labor continues in Russia and China. In addition, overseas labor was carried out in Angola, Cambodia, New Guinea, Iran, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Niger, Oman, Qatar, Congo, Senegal, South Sudan, Vietnam and other places, but was suspended in some countries last year.

The information monopoly and the government's monitoring of Internet use were also highlighted. The State Department quoted a report by the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), saying, "The number of legally registered mobile phones and illegal Chinese mobile phones has increased rapidly." HRNK also said, "Mobile network use is known to account for about 94% of the population, but [in North Korea,] mobile phone ownership accounts for only 18% of the population."

Elite elementary schools, selected research institutes, universities, factories, and a small number of individuals centered in Pyongyang, used the Internet under strict control and regulations. It was also reported that they used it within limited 3G mobile phone networks and Internet access.

However, HRNK also said the government installed surveillance programs on all smartphones and tablets that randomly record and take screenshots of all the web pages the users visit. All North Korean mobile phones have a software-based censorship program.

The State Department's human rights report, among other things, devoted the largest portion of its content to any information regarding the systematic human rights abuses by the government.

Citing the testimonies of North Korean defectors that said they didn't expect many prisoners to survive, the State Department pointed out a wide range of human rights abuses, including open executions and poor hygiene in political prison camps. They also cited a report by Human Rights Watch to point out the acts of abuse in pre-trial detention centers, saying, "Individuals detained before trial have endured brutal conditions, systematic torture and sexual violence, dangerous and unsanitary conditions, and forced labor on a daily basis."

They also mentioned the issue of abduction conducted by the North Korean government, including the abduction of Japanese nationals.

The State Department particularly deals with women's rights as a separate topic. Citing a report by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), they said, "There are numerous allegations of beatings, torture, and sexual violence against women who were forcibly repatriated while trying to flee abroad in search of jobs in neighboring China."

In addition to the actual state of sex crimes against women in the internment camps, the State Department said, "The detained women were not even given birth protection." They also said that women were forced to have abortions to cover up the human rights abuses and rape they suffered at the hands of state security officials.

The State Department added that it will announce a separate appendix by expanding the content related to women's rights in the middle of this year.

Moreover, they mentioned how the charges against those involved in Kim Jung-Un's half brother Kim Jung-Nam's assassination have been dropped or they have been released from prison, the fact that the North Korean agents returned home immediately, and the fact that the North Korean government has not explained the circumstances surrounding the death of Otto Warmbier.

In addition, they also pointed out 20 important human rights issues, including illegal or arbitrary killing by the government, forced disappearance, torture and inhumane punishment, interference with privacy, and forced labor.

The State Department has published a report on human rights conditions in each country every year since 1977. The report is known to be the basis for establishing foreign policy relating to human rights.

According to Radio Free Asia (RFA) and Voice of America (VOA), Lisa Peterson, the acting assistant secretary of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and labor, said in a press conference on the human rights report, "I am deeply concerned about North Korea's terrible human rights record, which is one of the worst in the world."

"The State Department is currently working with each government agency to review its policy on North Korea," Peterson said. "We will make sure the North Korean authorities are continuously responsible for the terrible human rights violations."

Meanwhile, the U.S. State Department's human rights report also contained critiques on the anti-leaflet law, which took effect on the 30th. They pointed out that the South Korean government is restricting the activities of some non-governmental organizations (North Korean defector organizations).

"Increasing the flow of free information to North Korea is the top USpriority," Peterson said. "The State Department is continuing to work with non-governmental organizations and other countries to promote access to information for North Koreans," she added.

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Translated by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250730191624/https://mailchi.mp/eefede7f0aca/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-korean-human-rights-violations-on-trialus-state-department-nk-human-rights-worsen-due-to-covid-will-be-held-accountable?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, April 3, 2021**

## U.S. and allies reaffirm commitment to denuclearization of N. Korea; S. Korean commission cancels probe into Cheonan warship sinking

**Top News:**
04/02/2021 News & Commentary – Korea (*Small Wars Journal*, 04/02/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Kim Jong Un's Risky Economic Gambit (*38 North*, 04/02/2021)
**In South Korea:**
South Korean commission cancels probe into Cheonan warship sinking (UPI, 04/02/2021)
**International:**
China preparing for resumption of North Korea trade, report says (UPI, 04/02/2021)
China, South Korea vow cooperation on North Korea after top diplomat meeting(*Reuters*, 04/02/2021)
S. Korea, Japan, U.S. agree on need to quickly resume dialogue with N. Korea(*Yonhap*, 04/03/2021)
South Korean foreign minister meets Chinese counterpart (*AP News*, 04/03/2021)

To Spark Talks With North Korea, Biden Should Make the First Move (*38 North*, 04/02/2021)
U.S. and allies reaffirm commitment to denuclearization of N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 04/03/2021)

**Top News:**

- David Maxwell, HRNK Board Member and Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, brings to attention a recent HRNK event called *How Silent Partners Aid Persecuted North Koreans*. In this event, Reverend Tim A. Peters and HRNK Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu discuss Pyongyang's systemic suppression of its Christian population and how silent external partners provide them assistance and hope. David Maxwell also comments on Reverend Tim A. Peters' article called *Reaching Underground Believers & Guiding Others in Flight: Silent Partners Assist North Koreans under Caesar's Sword*. "Below is a detailed article by Tim about the work being done in north Korea. This is outside testimony that supports many of the conclusions not only in the UN Commission of Inquiry from 2014 but also the recent State Department report on human rights in north Korea." Lastly, David Maxwell compliments HRNK Research Intern Sophia Hapin on writing an excellent essay in her latest YPWP article called *Prioritizing Humanitarian Aid in the Era of Denuclearization*. (David Maxwell, *Small Wars Journal*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's newly unveiled economic strategy aims to reconfigure the state's relationship with private entrepreneurs, increase self-sufficiency and consolidate control over the economy. Since the government has already permitted the private sector to play an important role, however, these three objectives may end up being at cross purposes. As a consequence, the more the government squeezes down, the less it will likely be able to extract. (Jonathan Corrado, *38 North*)

**In South Korea:**

- A South Korean presidential commission has reversed a decision to reopen investigations into the torpedoing of a South Korean warship, after pleas from families of the soldiers who died during the North Korean provocation. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

**International:**

- A customs office in the Chinese city of Dandong at the North Korean border has begun to accept export registrations ahead of a potential reopening of links between the two countries, according to a South Korean press report. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- China and South Korea vowed to work together to address problems on the Korean Peninsula during the first visit by a South Korean foreign minister to China in three years, the Yonhap news agency reported Saturday. (*Reuters*)
- South Korea, Japan and the United States have agreed on the need to peacefully resolve the North Korean nuclear issue as they reaffirmed their joint efforts to quickly resume denuclearization talks with Pyongyang, South Korea's national security adviser Suh Hoon said Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's foreign minister met his Chinese counterpart in the southern Chinese city of Xiamen on Saturday, as Seoul seeks to improve ties with its top trading partner even as U.S.-China relations remain strained. Ahead of the trip, South Korea's newly appointed Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong told reporters that he expected North Korea to be a key issue in talks with Wang Yi. (Zen Soo, Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)

- The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) reportedly fired two tactical cruise missiles into the contested waters of the West Sea (Yellow Sea) on March 21 in a tit-for-tat response to the just-completed US-South Korea joint military exercises. Pyongyang followed up four days later by test-launching two "new-type tactical guided" ballistic missiles eastward into the East Sea (Sea of Japan). The launches were a stark reminder of what is in store if US-DPRK nuclear diplomacy doesn't resume soon. The question is how to get to the negotiating table. (Leon V. Sigal, 38 North)
- The top security advisers of South Korea, Japan and the United States reaffirmed their countries' commitment to peace on the Korean Peninsula on Friday, pledging trilateral efforts toward denuclearization of North Korea. (Byun Duk-kun, Yonhap)

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Prepared by Timothy Goo, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250730192029/https://mailchi.mp/dcff4bf0debc/hrnk-news-itemsus-and-allies-reaffirm-commitment-to-denuclearization-of-n-koreas-korean-commission-cancels-probe-into-cheonan-warship-sinking?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, April 4, 2021**

## NK 'party cell' leaders visit mausoleum of late leaders ahead of conference; SK to conduct survey on Korean War-separated families

**In North Korea:**
Families of around 30 former military officers expelled from Pyongyang for "inappropriate speech and behavior" (*Daily NK*, 04/05/2021)
N.K. 'party cell' leaders visit mausoleum of late leaders ahead of conference(*Yonhap*, 04/05/2021)
N. Korea urges efforts to localize production to develop self-reliant chemical industry (*Yonhap*, 04/05/2021)
North Korea exalts late leader Kim Il Sung ahead of party meeting (UPI, 04/05/2021)
North Korea deploys construction troops to border to build barriers and high-voltage wires (*Daily NK*, 04/05/2021)
Pyongyang hunkers down to explore next move (*The Korea Times*, 04/04/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Impatient to resolve N. Korea issues, Seoul makes things go awry (*The Dong-A Ilbo*, 04/05/2021)
Looking beyond the North in South Korean foreign policy (*East Asia Forum*, 04/05/2021)
S. Korea to conduct survey on Korean War-separated families (*Yonhap*, 04/05/2021)

S. Korean government needs to make meaningful progress on resumption of N. Korea-US talks (*Hankyoreh*, 04/05/2021)
Seoul presses ahead with North Korean co-hosting concept for 2032 Olympics (*The Chronicle*, 04/05/2021)
South Korea to expand facilities for video reunions of separated families (*NK News*, 04/05/2021)

**International:**
Jordan outs oil smuggler in undercover North Korea film as 'infamous swindler' (*NK News*, 04/05/2021)
NK's denuclearization receives fresh attention at top security meetings (*The Korea Herald*, 04/04/2021)
North Korea, Supply Chain Resilience Top Agenda During NSA Talks (*The Diplomat*, 04/05/2021)
S. Korea, US agree 'in principle' on Moon-Biden summit in Washington (*Yonhap*, 04/05/2021)
S. Korea, US, Japan agree on need for "diplomatic solution" to resolve N. Korean nuclear issue (*Hankyoreh*, 04/05/2021)
Seoul, Washington hope to schedule summit talks sooner (*The Korea Herald*, 04/05/2021)
Seoul, Washington, Tokyo agree 'diplomatic solution' is needed for North nuclear issue (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/04/2021)
South Korea, China Foreign Ministers Discuss North Korea (*Bloomberg*, 04/04/2021)
The North Korean Refugee Who Crossed the Border for Fashion (VICE, 04/05/2021)
Wang Yi calls to resolve peninsula issue 'politically' in talks with Chung (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/04/2021)

**In North Korea:**
- North Korean authorities have reportedly expelled around 30 discharged North Korean military officers and their families to areas outside of the capital city. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- Leaders of grassroots units of North Korea's ruing Workers' Party paid tribute to the mausoleum of late leaders in Pyongyang, state media reported Monday, apparently before partaking in their first congress in over three years. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's official newspaper called Monday for the localized production of industrial catalysts, as the country steps up efforts to resuscitate its chemical industry that has remained listless after a boom in the 1980s. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea paid tribute to regime founder Kim Il Sung and his "noble life" the same day state media reported Workers' Party officials visited the mausoleum of late leaders. (UPI, Elizabeth Shim)
- North Korean authorities reportedly deployed a large detachment of construction troops to the border area in North Pyongan Province on Apr. 1 as part of their plan to install concrete barriers and high-voltage wires along the border. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)

- With its most recent missile launches further agitating the international community, North Korea is becoming even more reclusive, maintaining its border closure and severing diplomatic ties with Malaysia. (Nam Hyun-woo, *The Korea Times*)

**In South Korea:**

- High-ranking South Korean, U.S. and Japanese security officials had their first meetup on Friday since U.S. President Joe Biden took office. In a joint statement issued right after the talks, they shared common concerns about North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs while putting emphasis on the complete implementation of the United Nations Security Council's resolutions. (*The Dong-A Ilbo*)
- As President Joe Biden begins to recalibrate the United States' role and place in the world after Trump's tumultuous presidency, South Korean President Moon Jae-in enters his last year in power. How much influence Moon can have in shaping Biden's North Korea policy is unclear. (Chung Min Lee, *East Asia Forum*)
- The unification ministry said Monday that it will conduct a survey of families separated by the 1950-53 Korean War to figure out the exact number of survivors and demand for reunions with their relatives in North Korea. (*Yonhap*)
- This past weekend, two separate meetings were held between the national security chiefs of South Korea, the US and Japan and between the foreign ministers of South Korea and China. These two diplomatic happenings illustrate both the successes and the challenges of South Korea's "balanced diplomacy" amid the conflict between the US and China. (*Hankyoreh*)
- Seoul's metropolitan government has announced that it has notified the International Olympic Committee (IOC) of its intention to enter a joint bid for the 2032 summer Olympic and Paralympic Games with Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea. (*The Chronicle*)
- Despite little progress on inter-Korean relations, South Korea's Ministry of Unification said on Monday it would open at least six additional centers where separated families may be able to reunite with relatives in the North via video chat. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)

**International:**

- A Jordanian businessman who was taped trying to broker a multi-million dollar sale of Russian oil to North Korea with an undercover team of Danish filmmakers was described as an "infamous swindler" in a U.N. report published last week. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- As high-level talks by top security officials in the US and China ended with putting North Korea's denuclearization issue at the fore, all eyes are on what kind of changes it could bring on the Korean Peninsula under the Biden administration amid an intensifying US-China rivalry. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- On April 2 the heads of the National Security Council for Japan, South Korea, and the United States held trilateral talks in Maryland to review U.S. policy on North Korea. The meeting came a little over a week after North Korea test-launched two ballistic missiles into the Sea of Japan. (Thisanka Siripala, *The Diplomat*)
- Seoul and Washington reached an agreement "in principle" to hold a summit between South Korean President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Joe Biden in Washington, Seoul's national security adviser Suh Hoon said Monday. (*Yonhap*)

- The national security advisors of South Korea, the US and Japan met in the US Friday for focused discussions on North Korea policy. (Hwang Joon-bum, *Hankyoreh*)
- The first face-to-face meeting between President Moon Jae-in and US President Joe Biden may come sooner than expected, with the two governments seeking to advance the date as early as April, according to diplomatic sources Monday. (Lee Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)
- The top security advisers of Seoul, Washington and Tokyo agreed on the need to resolve the North Korea nuclear issue through diplomacy and to resume denuclearization talks at an early date, said Suh Hoon, director of the Blue House National Security Office (NSO) Friday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korean Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong met his Chinese counterpart on Saturday, and said both share the goal of "complete denuclearization" of the Korean Peninsula, according to the Associated Press. Soo Kim, political analyst at the RAND Corporation, discusses the implications of the talks for the Biden administration. (*Bloomberg*)
- She escaped North Korea at 20 years old. Not because of hunger or to follow family who have already left; she risked her life and crossed the border to South Korea so she could wear whatever she wanted. It's a privilege that most take for granted, but a dream for Yoon Mi-so. (Hyeong Yun, VICE)
- Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in talks with his South Korean counterpart Chung Eui-yong Saturday said the two countries will work together to seek a "political resolution" of the Korean Peninsula issue. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

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Prepared by Sophia Hapin, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250730192332/https://mailchi.mp/21fff0b610d7/hrnk-news-itemsnk-party-cell-leaders-visit-mausoleum-of-late-leaders-ahead-of-conferencesk-to-conduct-survey-on-korean-war-separated-families?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, April 5, 2021**

## NK 'party cell' leaders visit mausoleum of late leaders ahead of conference; SK to conduct survey on Korean War-separated families

**In North Korea:**
Families of around 30 former military officers expelled from Pyongyang for "inappropriate speech and behavior" (*Daily NK*, 04/05/2021)
N.K. 'party cell' leaders visit mausoleum of late leaders ahead of conference(*Yonhap*, 04/05/2021)

N. Korea urges efforts to localize production to develop self-reliant chemical industry (*Yonhap*, 04/05/2021)
North Korea exalts late leader Kim Il Sung ahead of party meeting (UPI, 04/05/2021)
North Korea deploys construction troops to border to build barriers and high-voltage wires (*Daily* NK, 04/05/2021)
Pyongyang hunkers down to explore next move (*The Korea Times*, 04/04/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Impatient to resolve N. Korea issues, Seoul makes things go awry (*The Dong-A Ilbo*, 04/05/2021)
Looking beyond the North in South Korean foreign policy (*East Asia Forum*, 04/05/2021)
S. Korea to conduct survey on Korean War-separated families (*Yonhap*, 04/05/2021)
S. Korean government needs to make meaningful progress on resumption of N. Korea-US talks (*Hankyoreh*, 04/05/2021)
Seoul presses ahead with North Korean co-hosting concept for 2032 Olympics (*The Chronicle*, 04/05/2021)
South Korea to expand facilities for video reunions of separated families (*NK News*, 04/05/2021)

**International:**
Jordan outs oil smuggler in undercover North Korea film as 'infamous swindler' (*NK News*, 04/05/2021)
NK's denuclearization receives fresh attention at top security meetings (*The Korea Herald*, 04/04/2021)
North Korea, Supply Chain Resilience Top Agenda During NSA Talks (*The Diplomat*, 04/05/2021)
S. Korea, US agree 'in principle' on Moon-Biden summit in Washington (*Yonhap*, 04/05/2021)
S. Korea, US, Japan agree on need for "diplomatic solution" to resolve N. Korean nuclear issue (*Hankyoreh*, 04/05/2021)
Seoul, Washington hope to schedule summit talks sooner (*The Korea Herald*, 04/05/2021)
Seoul, Washington, Tokyo agree 'diplomatic solution' is needed for North nuclear issue (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/04/2021)
South Korea, China Foreign Ministers Discuss North Korea (*Bloomberg*, 04/04/2021)
The North Korean Refugee Who Crossed the Border for Fashion (VICE, 04/05/2021)
Wang Yi calls to resolve peninsula issue 'politically' in talks with Chung (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/04/2021)

**In North Korea:**
- North Korean authorities have reportedly expelled around 30 discharged North Korean military officers and their families to areas outside of the capital city. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- Leaders of grassroots units of North Korea's ruing Workers' Party paid tribute to the mausoleum of late leaders in Pyongyang, state media reported Monday, apparently before partaking in their first congress in over three years. (*Yonhap*)

- North Korea's official newspaper called Monday for the localized production of industrial catalysts, as the country steps up efforts to resuscitate its chemical industry that has remained listless after a boom in the 1980s. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea paid tribute to regime founder Kim Il Sung and his "noble life" the same day state media reported Workers' Party officials visited the mausoleum of late leaders. (UPI, Elizabeth Shim)
- North Korean authorities reportedly deployed a large detachment of construction troops to the border area in North Pyongan Province on Apr. 1 as part of their plan to install concrete barriers and high-voltage wires along the border. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- With its most recent missile launches further agitating the international community, North Korea is becoming even more reclusive, maintaining its border closure and severing diplomatic ties with Malaysia. (Nam Hyun-woo, *The Korea Times*)

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- The first face-to-face meeting between President Moon Jae-in and US President Joe Biden may come sooner than expected, with the two governments seeking to advance the date as early as April, according to diplomatic sources Monday. (Lee Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)
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- Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in talks with his South Korean counterpart Chung Eui-yong Saturday said the two countries will work together to seek a "political resolution" of the Korean Peninsula issue. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

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Prepared by Sophia Hapin, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250731003540/https://mailchi.mp/21fff0b610d7/hrnk-news-itemsnk-party-cell-leaders-visit-mausoleum-of-late-leaders-ahead-of-conferencesk-to-conduct-survey-on-korean-war-separated-families?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Tuesday, April 6, 2021

# Detente May Be an Option With North Korea; Why is North Korea skipping the Tokyo Olympics?

**In North Korea:**
N.K. 'party cell' leaders visit historical sites in Pyongyang ahead of conference(*Yonhap*, 04/06/2021)
N. Korea decides not to participate in Tokyo Olympics over coronavirus concerns(*Yonhap*, 04/06/2021)
N. Korea slams U.N. report on child malnutrition as 'sheer lie' (*Yonhap*, 04/06/2021)
North Korea deploys construction troops to border to build barriers and high-voltage wires (*DailyNK*, 04/06/2021)
North Korea has become the first country to pull out of the Tokyo Olympics, citing Covid-19 fears (*Business Insider*, 04/06/2021)
North Korean missile experts suspected of supporting Iran's weapons programs (*NK News*, 04/06/2021)
North Korea threatens NGOs, media over claims of malnourished children (*NK News*, 04/06/2021)
North Korea's wealthy entrepreneurial class facing economic difficulties amid COVID-19 pandemic (*DailyNK*, 04/06/2021)
Some North Korean street vendors raise prices in response to economic uncertainties (*DailyNK*, 04/06/2021)
Still no COVID-19 cases, North Korea says after testing 22,389 people (*NK News*, 04/05/2021)
Why is North Korea skipping the Tokyo Olympics? (*AP News*, 04/06/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Moon's plan for inter-Korean talks at Tokyo Games thwarted (*Korea Times*, 04/06/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
N. Korean firm loses suit against S. Korean companies in disputes over export payment (*Korea Times*, 04/06/2021)
N. Korea's withdrawal from Tokyo Olympics dampens hope for renewing inter-Korean sports cooperation (*Yonhap*, 04/06/2021)
NK's withdrawal from Tokyo Olympics thwarts Seoul's hope of rapprochement(*Korea Herald*, 04/06/2021)
North loses in first inter-Korean business lawsuit (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/06/2021)

**International:**
Detente May Be an Option With North Korea (WSJ, 04/05/2021)
IOC hasn't heard from N. Korea on skipping Tokyo Olympics (*Korea Herald*, 04/06/2021)
Japan extends its own North Korean sanctions another 2 years (*AP News*, 04/06/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Leaders of grassroots units of North Korea's ruling Workers' Party visited several museums and historical sites in Pyongyang, state media reported Tuesday, in an apparent effort to tighten internal unity ahead of a conference. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea said Tuesday it will not participate in the upcoming Tokyo Summer Olympics to protect its athletes against the global coronavirus pandemic. The decision was made during a general assembly meeting of the North's Olympic Committee held in Pyongyang on March 25, according to Sports in the DPRK Korea, a website on sports affairs in North Korea. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea on Tuesday slammed a recent U.N. report on child malnutrition in the country as a "sheer lie," saying it will need to review whether humanitarian assistance can "truly help us." The director of the Research Institute for Nutrition Care of Children from the North's health ministry made the statement in response to the panel of experts report that close to 100,000 children in the North are suffering from malnutrition due to border restrictions over the coronavirus pandemic. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean authorities reportedly deployed a large detachment of construction troops to the border area in North Pyongan Province on Apr. 1 as part of their plan to install concrete barriers and high-voltage wires along the border. (Ha Yoon Ah, *DailyNK*)
- North Korea has announced its withdrawal from the Tokyo Olympics this year, saying it wants to protect its athletes from the "world public health crisis caused by Covid-19." (Alexandra Ma, *Business Insider*)
- A U.N. panel has identified at least 13 North Korean missile experts suspected of traveling to Iran to support the country's weapons program, according to a report published last week. The panel also said it received information from U.N. members that the two countries have exchanged critical parts for long-range missile programs as recently as 2020. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- A North Korean health ministry official warned that Pyongyang may take countermeasures with foreign aid organizations on Tuesday over what it deemed were "utterly baseless" claims that COVID-19-related restrictions are preventing treatment of malnourished children in the DPRK. The statement also warned South Korean media organizations and accused them of seeking to "incite north-south confrontation" by reporting on the NGO claims of malnutrition that were included in a U.N. Panel of Experts (PoE) report released last week. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Many North Koreans are experiencing financial difficulties because of COVID-19, and even the country's wealthy are suffering from the downturn in the economy, Daily NK has learned. "Even *donju* who live in apartments worth tens of thousands of dollars are firing their housekeepers or making drastic cuts to their pay," a source in South Pyongan Province told Daily NK last Wednesday, using a term to describe North Korea's wealthy entrepreneurial class. "Some *donju* used to boast that 'even if the Taedong River dries up, my pockets never will.' But even they have had to let their housekeepers go." (Mun Dong Hui, *DailyNK*)
- Faced with economic uncertainties due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some North Korean street food vendors are taking out certain ingredients and reducing the portion sizes of the food they are selling, Daily NK has learned. Lee Chae Un, *DailyNK*)

- North Korea has tested 44,504 samples since the beginning of the pandemic as of March 25, a new WHO report states. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- North Korea, citing the coronavirus, has become the world's first country to drop out of the Tokyo Olympics. It's true that the North is extremely sensitive about COVID-19, knowing that a widespread outbreak in a country with an already battered health system could be disaster. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)

**In South Korea:**

- President Moon Jae-in's plan to use the upcoming Tokyo Olympic Games as a vehicle for facilitating talks with North Korea appears to have run aground, as Pyongyang has declared that it will not send its athletes to the sporting event. (Nam Hyun-woo, *Korea Times*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- A North Korean firm on Tuesday lost a lawsuit claiming millions of dollars for metal it supplied to South Korean companies in 2010, in a rare legal battle between businesses from the two Koreas. (*Korea Times*)
- North Korea's recent decision to skip this year's Tokyo Summer Games will rob South Korea of a chance to revive inter-Korean sports cooperation at a time when Seoul is trying to salvage fading hopes of co-hosting the 2032 Olympics with Pyongyang. (Yoo Jee-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea on Tuesday announced it will not participate in the upcoming Tokyo Summer Olympics due to coronavirus concerns, thwarting Seoul's hopes to use the games as an opportunity for rapprochement with the reclusive regime. (Ahn Sung-mi, *Korea Herald*)
- A North Korean company has lost its lawsuit for allegedly undelivered payments for iron ore bought by a South Korean company and three other firms in the first such inter-Korean business dispute. The Myongji Company -- a business under the auspices of the North's National Economic Cooperation Federation, also known as Minkyongryon -- filed a lawsuit with the Seoul Central District Court in 2019 for payment from Hanchang, Hanil Chemical, Sungan F&C and Eastern Metal, alleging that they had not paid in full for 2,600 tons of iron, worth almost $6 million, purchased in February 2010. (Park Hyun-joo, Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- Pity the Biden staffers charged with developing a North Korea strategy. After 30 years of U.S. diplomacy and escalating sanctions, Pyongyang's nuclear arsenal continues to grow, North Korean missiles get better, and the day when the Kim dynasty can reliably strike targets on the American mainland with nuclear-armed ICBMs comes inexorably closer. (Walter Russel Mead, *WSJ*)
- The International Olympic Committee (IOC) said Tuesday it hasn't received an official word from North Korea regarding the latter's decision not to participate in this year's Tokyo Summer Games. "The IOC has not received any official application from the NOC of DPRK to be released from their obligation to take part in the Olympic Games according to the Olympic Charter," an IOC spokesperson said in a statement released to Yonhap News Agency. (*Korea Herald*)
- Japan extended its own sanctions against North Korea for another two years as Pyongyang continues to develop its nuclear weapons without any progress in resolving

the abductions of Japanese nationals. Japan bans all trade between the countries and prohibits North Korean-registered ships from entering its ports, except for humanitarian purposes. It also bans flights between the countries. Japan also abides by U.N. sanctions against North Korea's nuclear and missile programs. They include an arms trade ban, a freeze of North Korean assets, a ban on people exchanges and restrictions on education and training. (Mari Yamaguchi, AP News)

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Prepared by Damian Reddy, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250731003844/https://mailchi.mp/670e7705eb17/hrnk-news-itemsdetente-may-be-an-option-with-north-korea-why-is-north-korea-skipping-the-tokyo-olympics?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, April 7, 2021**

# Fire at Construction Site in North Korean Capital Kills 20

**In North Korea:**
Fire at Construction Site in North Korean Capital Kills 20 (*Radio Free Asia*, 04/06/2021)
How North Korea will take advantage of the new US-China Cold War (*NK News*, 04/06/2021)
Kim Jong-un calls on party's grassroots members to cut antisocialist practices(*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/07/2021)
Kim Jong Un tells party cell leaders to bond all levels of society like a family (*NK News*, 04/06/2021)
Kim says North Korea facing its 'worst-ever situation' (*The Associated Press*, 04/07/2021)
More movement in North further raises suspicions of SLBM test (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/07/2021)
N.K. urges 'cell secretaries' to root out anti-socialist practices (*Yonhap*, 04/07/2021)
NK Kim urges party cell leaders to be proactive and responsible (*The Korea Herald*, 04/07/2021)
N. Korea highlights role of WHO amid coronavirus pandemic (*Yonhap*, 04/07/2021)
N. Korea moves submersible missile test stand barge: U.S. think tank (*Yonhap*, 04/07/2021)
New "hypersonic missile technology" college created at North Korea's national defense university (*Daily NK*, 04/07/2021)
No Man's Land: Why the Korean DMZ Is Truly Hell on Earth (*The National Interest*, 04/07/2021)
North Korea dashes hopes for diplomatic gold at Tokyo Olympics (*Nikkei Asia*, 04/07/2021)
North Korea drops out of Tokyo Olympics citing COVID-19, dashing Seoul's hopes (*Reuters*, 04/06/2021)
North Korea: Has a severe pandemic led to a Tokyo Olympics no-show? (*BBC*, 04/06/2021)
North Korea pulls out of Tokyo Olympics, citing coronavirus fears (*The Guardian*, 04/06/2021)

North Korea pulls out of Tokyo Olympics over covid concerns (*The Washington Post*, 04/06/2021)
North Korea Withdraws from Tokyo Olympics, Citing Pandemic (VOA, 04/06/2021)
North Korean hackers suspected of creating accounts posing as NK News reporters(*NK News*, 04/07/2021)
North Korea's Kim urges 'grass-roots' party members to be more proactive -KCNA(*Reuters*, 04/06/2021)
Official trade activities between North Korea and China unlikely to resume in April(*Daily* NK, 04/07/2021)
Sinpho South Shipyard: Repositioning of the Submersible Test Barge (38*North*, 04/06/2021)
The Latest: N Korea says it still has no coronavirus cases (*The Associated Press*, 04/07/2021)
Tokyo Olympics: North Korea to skip Games over Covid-19 fears (*BBC*, 04/06/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
First lawsuit between North and South Korean firms ends in loss for plaintiffs (*NK News*, 04/07/2021)
North Korean entity defeated in South's court in first trade lawsuit (*UPI*, 04/06/2021)
Unification ministry vows efforts to resume inter-Korean talks despite N.K.'s decision to skip Tokyo Olympics (*Yonhap*, 04/07/2021)

**International:**
Are North Korea and China Pushing Japan Towards Nuclear Weapons? (*The National Interest*, 04/07/2021)
How Chinese netizens reacted to North Korea's contentious ballistic missile test (*NK News*, 4/6/2021)
Japan blindsided by North's Olympic opt-out (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/07/2021)
N. Korea's decision to skip Olympics consistent with its COVID-19 response: Price(*Yonhap*, 4/06/2021)
North Korea lashes out after child malnutrition allegations (*UPI*, 04/06/2021)
North Korea Lashes Out on UN Report About Child Malnutrition (*The National Interest*, 04/06/2021)
North Korea skipping Tokyo Olympics 'consistent' with its COVID-19 measures: US(*NK News*, 04/07/2021)

**In North Korea:**
- At least 20 North Korean construction workers died last month when an electrical fire tore through their lodging on their Pyongyang jobsite as they slept, RFA has learned. (Myungchul Lee, RFA)
- A new Cold War between the U.S. and China is emerging, and North Korea has every reason to welcome it: The DPRK survived by playing superpowers against one another during the last Cold War, and is set to take advantage of this one just as much. (Andrei Lankov, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un urged the ruling Workers' Party's grassroots units to help eliminate antisocialist practices at a major political conference, state media

reported Wednesday, while acknowledging that the country faces its “worst-ever situation” amid the global pandemic. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- DPRK leader Kim Jong Un reportedly opened the Sixth Conference of Cell Secretaries at the Pyongyang Indoor Stadium with a speech telling participants they should work on “understanding people’s minds, feelings and emotions” in order to communicate party decisions and ideology, and work to bond the highest and lowest levels of society “like members of a family” when they return home from the meetings. (Cloin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has acknowledged his country was facing the “worst-ever situation” as he addressed thousands of grassroots members of his ruling party during a major political conference in Pyongyang. (Kim Tong-Hyung, *The Associated Press*)
- Satellite imagery from Tuesday shows that North Korea has moved a submersible missile test stand barge at a naval shipyard on its east coast, a U.S. think tank said Wednesday. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea urged secretaries of "party cells," the grassroots units of the ruling Workers' Party, to help root out anti-socialist and non-socialist practices, state media reported Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un stressed the importance of “party cells” -- the grassroots units of the ruling Workers Party -- and urged them to work in a more proactive and responsible way toward the policy goals set forth at the earlier party congress, the North’s state media reported Wednesday. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea's Cabinet newspaper called Wednesday for strengthening the role of the World Health Organization, saying the country should work closely with the organization to improve the health of its people. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has moved a submersible missile test stand barge at a shipyard on its east coast, a U.S. think tank said Wednesday, noting the move could be part of preparations for a submarine launched ballistic missile (SLBM) test or for maintenance. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea recently established a new college focused on “hypersonic missile technology” at the Kim Jong Un National Defense University ahead of the start of the academic year on Apr. 1. The university acts as a training ground for North Korean defense-related science and technology specialists. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- The Korean DMZ is almost certainly the most heavily armed place on Earth. In the event the unthinkable happens, the presence of three large armies on the Korean Peninsula and their associated firepower would make the otherwise peaceful 2.5-mile-by-160-mile strip (which doubles as a wildlife refuge) one of the deadliest battlegrounds ever conceived. (Kyle Mizokami, *The National Interest*)
- North Korea has decided not to participate in the upcoming Tokyo Olympic Games starting in July, scuttling any hope that the occasion will lead to a diplomatic breakthrough with the rogue state, as the Pyeongchang games did three years ago. (Hiroshi Minegishi, *Nikkei Asia*)
- North Korea said on Tuesday it would not take part in the Tokyo Olympics due to coronavirus concerns, dashing South Korean hopes that the Games could be a catalyst to revive peace talks. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)

- There have been reports of draconian lockdown measures and dire shortages of goods, and people living on as little as one bowl of boiled corn a day. (BBC)
- North Korea's sports ministry said on Tuesday that it will not participate in the Tokyo Olympics this year to protect its athletes amid the coronavirus pandemic. (*The Guardian*)
- North Korea said Tuesday it will not send a team to the Tokyo Olympics, citing the need to protect its athletes from the coronavirus, as concerns about the viability and safety of the massive sporting event continue to grow. (Simon Denyer, *The Washington Post*)
- North Korea says it will not participate in the upcoming Tokyo Olympics due to concerns about the coronavirus pandemic. (William Gallo, VOA)
- In an apparent attempt to trick professionals focused on the Korean conflict, hackers linked to the DPRK are suspected of setting up social media accounts claiming to belong to NK News reporters and other organizations in the field. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has called on "grass-roots" members of the ruling Workers' Party to be more proactive and responsible in carrying out the country's new five-year economic plan, state media KCNA reported on Wednesday. (Sangmi Cha, *Reuters*)
- After North Koreans were spotted repairing trade facilities and installing disinfection devices at customs offices in Sinuiju and Nampo last month, there has been speculation that trade between China and North Korea is set to resume soon. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- Since its arrival at Sinpho South Shipyard in 2014, the submersible missile test stand barge, associated with the at-sea testing of the Pukguksong-1/KN-11, has not been observed outside of the secure boat basin for an event other than at-sea testing. A series of three commercial satellite images taken on April 6, 2021 show the repositioning of the submersible test barge (Peter Makowsky and Jack Liu, *38North*)
- North Korea continues to claim a perfect record in keeping out the coronavirus in its latest report to the World Health Organization. (*The Associated Press*)
- North Korea has announced it will not take part in the Tokyo Olympics this year, saying the decision is to protect its athletes from Covid-19. (BBC)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Seoul court rejects claim by North Korea's Myongji Corporation and others over $89,000 for zinc shipment. (Jeongmin Kim and Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- A North Korean state-owned enterprise has lost an unprecedented court battle in the South, after filing a lawsuit with a South Korean court in 2019 for overdue payments. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- The unification ministry vowed efforts to resume inter-Korean talks despite North Korea's decision not to participate in the Tokyo Olympics, a high-level official said Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- China has no interest in provoking Japan into building them, but intentions sometimes go awry. (Kyle Mizokami, *The National Interest*)
- It's becoming increasingly clear that North Korea has changed its focus from diplomacy with the U.S. and South Korea to military provocation: Last month, Pyongyang quietly launched short-range cruise missiles on March 21 and later upped the ante by launching

two short-range ballistic missiles in violation of several U.N. resolutions. (John Petrushka, NK News)

- Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga called North Korea's decision to skip the Tokyo Olympics a “unilateral announcement” Tuesday, but kept open the possibility that Pyongyang could still change its mind last minute. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea's decision to skip the Summer Olympics appears to be in line with its strong measures against the COVID-19 pandemic, a spokesman for the U.S. State Department said Tuesday. (Byun Duk-kun,*Yonhap*)
- North Korea said there is no child malnutrition in the country, and that the foreign press was using "absurd" and "fabricated data" to the make the claim. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- Food security is a big problem for many North Koreans, but Pyongyang is not eager to let the world know that is true. (Stephen Silver, *The National Interest*)
- Korea Sport and Olympics Committee says DPRK could reverse decision as late as June, but experts are doubtful (Jeongmin Kim, NK News)

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Prepared by Carter Thompson, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250731004240/https://mailchi.mp/df3dbdf1b392/hrnk-news-items-fire-at-construction-site-in-north-korean-capital-kills-20?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, April 8, 2021**

## US open to ‘some form of diplomacy’ with North Korea: White House spokesperson; Is Trade Between China and North Korea Back On?

**In North Korea:**
Fearing Vandalism, North Korea Surrounds Kim Il Sung Monument with Electric Fences (*RFA*, 04/07/2021)
Gaps between market prices in different North Korean regions are growing (*Daily NK*, 04/08/2021)
Is Trade Between China and North Korea Back On? (*The National Interest*, 04/07/2021)
Kim Jong Un blasts 'defects' at North Korea party cell meeting (*UPI*, 04/07/2021)
Missing the Olympics is a 'minor nuisance' for North Korea, with claims of medal success likely despite absence, expert says (*ABC News*, 04/08/2021)
N. Korea calls on 'cell secretaries' not to overlook misconduct of members (*Yonhap*, 04/08/2021)
N. Korea slams Japan for referring to East Sea as 'Sea of Japan' (*Yonhap*, 04/08/2021)

North Korean authorities attempt to crackdown on “grasshopper markets” in Chongjin (*Daily NK*, 04/08/2021)
North Korea still insists it has never had a single Covid infection (*The Independent*, 04/07/2021)
North Korea warns of political collapse if elites can’t find ideological ‘unity’ (*NK News*, 04/08/2021)
North Korea’s Yongbyon Nuclear Center: Reprocessing Status Remains Unclear (*38 North*, 04/07/2021)
The world may lose its chance to bombard North Korea with information warfare (*NK News*, 04/08/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
S. Korea to provide 2.3 bln won to repair bridge near DMZ (*Yonhap*, 04/08/2021)

**International:**
Military training important to protecting U.S. interest on Korean Peninsula: Pentagon(*Yonhap*, 04/08/2021)
S. Korean, EU defense chiefs affirm cooperation on NK (*The Korea Herald*, 04/08/2021)
U.S. prepared for diplomacy for denuclearization of N. Korea: White House spokeswoman (*Yonhap*, 04/08/2021)
US open to ‘some form of diplomacy’ with North Korea: White House spokesperson(*NK News*, 04/08/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea has set up high-voltage electric fences around an important national landmark in a city near the Chinese border, a precaution authorities say is to defend it from would-be vandals opposed to the regime. (Eugene Whong, RFA)
- Amid North Korea’s attempts to strengthen control over its markets following the closure of the country’s borders last year, the gap between market prices in different regions has been growing more pronounced recently. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- A recent report stated that trade between China and North Korea, which has been severely curtailed by the coronavirus pandemic, was on the verge of resuming. But now, another report says that trade activities between the neighboring countries are unlikely to resume this month. (Stephen Silver, *The National Interest*)
- Kim Jong Un chastised his subordinates in the Korean Workers' Party for not addressing "defects" in policies during a conference of party cell secretaries. Pyongyang's state-controlled news agency KCNA reported Wednesday that Kim reportedly said in his opening remarks there were "not only a few defects" in the party and its activities. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- North Korea's decision to withdraw from the upcoming Tokyo Olympics will not stop Kim Jong-un's regime from claiming and celebrating gold medals at home, according to a leading expert on the country. (Tracey Holmes, *ABC News*)
- North Korea urged the grassroots leaders of the ruling Workers' Party not to overlook "wrong deeds" of their members, state media said Thursday, as the country steps up

efforts to carry out economic development and other goals put forward earlier this year. (*Yonhap*)

- On Thursday, North Korea slammed Japan for using the term "Sea of Japan" to refer to the East Sea between the Korean Peninsula and Japan, accusing Tokyo of harboring a "wild ambition for invading Korea." (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean authorities are using Ministry of Social Security officers to seize goods from “grasshopper traders” in Chongjin, North Hamgyong Province. Despite frequent attempts to crackdown on their activities, the authorities have failed to completely eradicate street trade and appear to be attempting to eliminate these traders by seizing their goods. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea has said it still has no Covid-19 cases, a claim that has been repeatedly questioned by experts. Edwin Salvador, WHO’s representative to North Korea, told The Associated Press that the North has reported it tested 23,121 people from the beginning of the pandemic to 1 April and that all results were negative. Officials said that Pyongyang has stopped telling WHO the number of people it quarantines with suspected symptoms. (Akshita Jain, *The Independent*)
- North Korea’s elite warned that the country’s political system could collapse if lower-level leaders don’t improve their ideological unity, state media reported on Wednesday after officials gathered for the second day of a Pyongyang conference. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Commercial satellite imagery of the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center indicates that heightened activity at the Radiochemical Laboratory (RCL) since late February is continuing. (Frank Pabian, Olli Heinonen, Jack Liu, and Peter Makowsky, *38 North*)
- Contrary to popular belief, North Korea used to be a much more open society, with cheap DVD players full of South Korean dramas and foreign TV shows coming through the poorly-guarded border and then scattered about. Today’s North Korea doesn’t seem to be anything like that. In the late days of the country’s previous leader Kim, Jong Il, affluent families even had computers and privileged youngsters loved to flash their USB of foreign media as a well-recognized status symbol. Some North Koreans crossed the borders every night, bringing back new videos, DVD players and small radios used almost exclusively to listen to the foreign, Korean-language broadcasts. (Andrei Lankov, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korea decided Thursday to spend 2.3 billion won (US$2.1 million) of inter-Korean cooperation funds to repair a flood-damaged bridge near the border with North Korea, the unification ministry said. A civilian-government committee on inter-Korean exchanges approved the decision to use the funds to rebuild the "Bima Bridge," a sole path toward the Arrowhead Ridge on the border with North Korea in Cheorwon, some 90 kilometers northeast of Seoul. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Defense readiness is especially crucial on the Korean Peninsula, a Pentagon spokesman said Wednesday, highlighting the importance of military exercises there. John Kirby said the U.S. goal remains the denuclearization of North Korea. "Training is important on the peninsula. We have to make sure that the alliance is sound and solid and ready to,

obviously, defend our interests and the interests of our Korean allies on any given day," he said at a press briefing. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

- The South Korean and European Union defense chiefs agreed to cooperate on Seoul's initiative to engage North Korea in talks to dismantle its nuclear weapons program, at a face-to-face meeting in Seoul on Wednesday. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- The United States is prepared to engage in some form of diplomacy with North Korea if it will lead to denuclearization on the peninsula, White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Wednesday. She said the U.S. remains committed to denuclearization of North Korea. (*Yonhap*)
- Almost a week after a meeting between top national security officers from the United States, South Korea and Japan, Washington said it's willing to engage in diplomacy with North Korea for the sake of denuclearization. On Wednesday, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said Washington has a "clear objective" to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula and said that the U.S. is "continuing to enforce sanctions" and "consulting with allies and partners." (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)

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Prepared by Rick Herssevoort, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250731005041/https://mailchi.mp/cdcbd215584f/hrnk-news-itemsus-open-to-some-form-of-diplomacy-with-north-korea-white-house-spokespersonis-trade-between-china-and-north-korea-back-on?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, April 9, 2021**

# Key developments on North Korea this week; Kim compares North Korea's economic woes to 1990s famine

**In North Korea:**
Key developments on North Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 04/09/2021)
Kim compares North Korea's economic woes to 1990s famine (*Associated Press*, 04/09/2021)
Kim Jong Un must beware the tried, tested and failed ways of North Korea's past (*NK News*, 04/09/2021)
Kim Jong Un warns North Korea of hardship, referencing deadly 1990s famine (*NK News*, 04/08/2021)
Kim Jong-un warns of North Korea crisis similar to deadly 90s famine (*BBC*, 04/09/2021)
N.K. leader calls on ruling party to wage tougher 'Arduous March' amid prolonged sanctions (*Yonhap*, 04/09/2021)
North Korea-China trade may resume next week: report (*The Korea Herald*, 04/09/2021)

North Korea likely to stay more reclusive in face of UN sanctions (*The Korea Times*, 04/09/2021)
North Korea stole $1B during cyber heists over past decade, study says (*UPI*, 04/08/2021)
North Korea Tells Citizens to Prepare for a Famine Worse than the 1990s (*RFA*, 04/08/2021)
North Korea's Kim cites 1990s famine in urging work to alleviate economic crises (*Reuters*, 04/08/2021)
North Korea's "Most Advanced" Tank Is Based On 1960s Technology (*The National Interest*, 04/08/2021)
North Korean authorities execute chairman of "Distance Education Act" commission (*Daily NK*, 04/09/2021)
North Korean authorities transfer management of special road near Sinuiju to Ministry of State Security (*Daily NK*, 04/09/2021)
North Korean cybercriminals attacked South African logistics firm (*NK News*, 04/09/2021)
North Korean leader calls for sacrifice in another 'Arduous March' (*UPI*, 04/09/2021)
Summary of domestic news in North Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 04/09/2021)
The Pandemic and North Korea's Tourism Industry: Another Shock for the Regime (*38north*, 04/08/2021)
Yongbyon Nuclear Facility: What Is North Korea Doing? (*The National Interest*, 04/08/2021)

**In South Korea:**
South Korea's right-wing resurgence spells uncertainty for North Korea policy (*NK News*, 04/09/2021)
US and South Korea sign military cost-sharing deal after years of heated talks (*NK News*, 04/09/2021)
**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
South Korean attempts to engage with North Korea in doubt after hefty defeats for ruling party (*The Telegraph*, 04/08/2021)
Summary of inter-Korean news this week (*Yonhap*, 04/09/2021)
When it Comes to Seoul's New Missile Sensors, Pyongyang is Out of Luck (*The National Interest*, 04/08/2021)
**International:**
Prospects for interim agreement (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/08/2021)
Summary of external news of North Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 04/09/2021)
U.S. House caucus to hold hearing on S. Korean ban on anti-Pyongyang leafleting (*Yonhap*, 04/09/2021)
U.S. still in final stage of 'careful' N. Korea policy: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 04/09/2021)
White House says diplomacy with North is acceptable (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/08/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- The following are key developments regarding North Korea this week. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has called for waging another "arduous march" to fight severe economic difficulties, for the first time comparing them to a 1990s famine that killed hundreds of thousands. (Hyung-Jin Kim, *Associated Press*)

- Judging by his calls on thousands of low-level part elite to wage a “more difficult Arduous March” on Thursday, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un seems to know where the country’s shabby economy is headed. (Andrei Lankov, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un asked his ruling party to brace for hardship, evoking the name of an infamous 1990s famine that killed at least 225,000 people in the country, state media reported on Friday. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has told citizens to prepare for hard times ahead, following warnings from rights groups that the country faces dire food shortages and economic instability. (Laura Bicker, *BBC*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un called on the ruling Workers' Party to wage a tougher "Arduous March" to relieve its people of economic woes as he concluded a conference of the party's grassroots leaders, state media said Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- Trade between North Korea and China that has remained at a standstill for more than a year amid the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to resume possibly next week, a South Korean broadcaster reported Friday. (Lee Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has announced his impoverished state will embark on an "Arduous March" as he strives to navigate prolonged economic difficulties amid global sanctions. (Kwon Mee-yoo, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korea is connected to more than half of the world's top 10 financial hacking incidents and may have stolen about $1 billion since 2011, according to a new study. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- Authorities in North Korea are asking residents to prepare for economic difficulties as bad as the 1994-1998 famine which killed millions, RFA has learned, but experts say the situation is dire, but not that extreme. (Jieun Kim and Albert Hong, *RFA*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un urged ruling party officials to wage another “Arduous March” of work and sacrifice, state media reported on Friday, linking the current economic crises to a period in the 1990s of famine and disaster. (*Reuters*)
- The Chonma-ho is an attempt to narrow the United States’ and South Korea’s armor edge. This might be the DPRK’s most advanced tank—though it's based on tech from the 1960s. (Caleb Larson, *The National Interest*)
- Daily NK learned recently that following an Organization and Guidance Department (OGD) investigation into the Ministry of Higher Education’s “non-standing commission for the implementation of the Distance Education Act,” North Korean authorities executed the chairman of the commission and are currently conducting ideological examinations of other commission members. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean authorities reportedly renamed a road near the North Korea-China border and transferred its management from the Ministry of Social Security to the Ministry of State Security. They cited past negligence in management and the need for strengthened security for military facilities as reasons for the changes. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- Cybercriminals linked to North Korea used a previously unknown type of malware to take control of computers at a South African freight logistics company, cybersecurity firm ESET disclosed on Thursday. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- Citing "many obstacles and difficulties ahead of us," North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called on members of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea to prepare for another

"Arduous March" in order to overcome the deep economic woes the isolated country is facing, state-run media reported on Friday. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- The following is a summary of domestic news in North Korea this week. (*Yonhap*)
- Just when its numbers were booming, and it had become a solid source of foreign currency for the regime, the COVID-19 pandemic brought the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) growing tourism industry to a halt on January 21, 2020 as the country closed its borders to the world, causing a loss of roughly $175 million and forcing the regime to resort to illicit activities to make up for the losses. (Alberto Ballesteros, *38north*)
- This week an article in 38 North noted that satellite imagery shows "heightened activity at the Radiochemical Laboratory (RCL)" at North Korea's Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center, which has continued since February. However, it's unclear exactly what the activity indicates. (Stephen Silver, *The National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**
- The ruling Democratic Minjoo Party's resounding defeat in this week's South Korean by-elections was not unexpected: Two of the most prominent figures from the party were recently accused of sexual misconduct. (Jumin Less, *NK News*)
- After years of contentious military cost-sharing negotiations under former U.S. President Donald Trump, the United States and South Korea signed a deal on Thursday, marking what some say is a return to a stronger U.S.-ROK alliance. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
- South Korea's attempts to reach out to Pyongyang have been thrown into doubt after the ruling party suffered resounding defeats in two key mayoral elections on Wednesday. (Julian Ryall, *The Telegraph*)
- The following is a summary of inter-Korean news this week. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has no answer for the enhanced the Joint Tactical Ground Station (JTAGS) capabilities in South Korea. (Peter Suciu, *The National Interest*)

**International:**
- In their April 2 trilateral at the U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and his counterparts from Korea and Japan, Suh Hoon and Kitamura Shigeru, shared their assessments on the North Korea situation. The three top officials sounded a unified theme on the need for North Korea to comply with all UN Security Council resolutions and reaffirmed their own commitment to trilateral coordination. (Michael Green, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The following is a summary of external news of North Korea this week. (*Yonhap*)
- A bipartisan caucus of the U.S. House of Representatives said Thursday it will hold a public hearing next week on South Korea's recently legislated ban on the sending of anti-Pyongyang leaflets into North Korea. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- The United States is taking all necessary steps to carefully review its North Korea policy, a State Department spokesman said Thursday. Ned Price reiterated the review is in is final stages, but said such careful consideration requires time. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

- The United States is prepared to engage in “some form of diplomacy” with North Korea if it will lead to denuclearization, the White House said Wednesday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

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Prepared by Carter Thompson, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250731005423/https://mailchi.mp/47ba7586aae3/hrnk-news-items-key-developments-on-north-korea-this-weekkim-compares-north-koreas-economic-woes-to-1990s-famine?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, April 10, 2021**

## COVAX Vaccine Supply to N. Korea before May Unlikely; North Korea's Kim Alludes To 1990s Famine, Warns Of 'Difficulties Ahead Of Us'

**In North Korea:**
COVAX Vaccine Supply to N. Korea before May Unlikely (KBS *World*, 04/10/2021)
North Korea's Kim Alludes To 1990s Famine, Warns Of 'Difficulties Ahead Of Us' (*Wyoming Public Media*, 04/09/2021)
North Korea’s Kim Warns of ‘Arduous March’ as Economic Problems Bite (*Wall Street Journal*, 04/09/2021)
North Korean education official reportedly executed for ‘anti-party activities’ (*New York Post*, 04/09/2021)
**International:**
Bolton: North Korea Unlikely to Denuclearize Under Kim (VOA, 04/09/2021)
Lawmakers in Japan call for 'parliamentary diplomacy' with North Korea (UPI, 04/09/2021)
N. Korea's 'difficult' conditions come from own actions: White House spokeswoman(*Yonhap*, 04/10/2021)
No deliveries of Sputnik V vaccine to North Korea, borders closed, Russian embassy says (TASS, 04/09/2021)
U.S. focused on reducing threats from N. Korea: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 04/10/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- The supply of COVID-19 vaccines to North Korea through the COVAX Facility global procurement program is expected to be delayed. (*KBS World*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is calling for his country to prepare for another "arduous march" — using a phrase that has come to describe a disastrous famine in the

1990s that killed hundreds of thousands of people. (Scott Neuman, *Wyoming Public Media*)

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called on officials to brace for a prolonged campaign to tackle the country's worsening economic problems, comparing the crisis to the 1990s famine that claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. (Dasl Yoon, *Wall Street Journal*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has reportedly ordered the execution of a top higher education official for "anti-party activities" — after he complained about not receiving support and resources from the government. (Yaron Steinbuch, *New York Post*)

**International:**

- North Korea has not made a strategic decision to give up nuclear weapons and the prospects for efforts to achieve denuclearization through diplomacy remain dim, said John Bolton, former President Donald Trump's national security adviser. (Young Gyo Kim, VOA)
- Japanese lawmakers adopted a resolution that addresses the issue of abducted Japanese citizens in North Korea and calls for normalization of diplomatic ties with Pyongyang. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- North Korea's difficult conditions are caused by the actions of its own leadership, White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Friday, insisting no U.S. actions or sanctions are targeted at the North Korean people. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Pharmaceuticals from Russia, including Sputnik V, have not been delivered to North Korea because the republic's borders are closed, the Russian embassy in Pyongyang told TASS. (TASS)
- The main focus of U.S. policy toward North Korea will be to denuclearize the country and thus reduce threats posed to the United States and its allies, a State Department official said Friday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Jungeun Lee, HRNK Research Intern
Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
/web/20250731005705/https://mailchi.mp/107b4c1cabba/hrnk-news-itemscovax-vaccine-supply-to-n-korea-before-may-unlikelynorth-koreas-kim-alludes-to-1990s-famine-warns-of-difficulties-ahead-of-us?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, April 11, 2021**

## North Korea's SLBM threat looms large; N. Korea marks 9th anniversary of Kim Jong-un's leadership with call for loyalty

**In North Korea:**

N. Korea marks 9th anniversary of Kim Jong-un's leadership with call for loyalty(*Yonhap*, 04/11/2021)

N. Korea may be modifying submersible missile test barge: 38 North (*Yonhap*, 04/11/2021)

N. Korea preparing to launch ballistic missile submarine: report (*The Korea Herald*, 04/11/2021)
North Korea's SLBM threat looms large (*The Korea Times*, 04/11/2021)
S. Korea, U.S. authorities assess N.K. has completed building new 3,000-ton submarine: sources (*Yonhap*, 04/11/2021)
Sinpho South Shipyard: Probable Modifications to the Submersible Missile Test Barge (*38 North*, 04/10/2021)

**International:**
On North Korea, Biden should borrow from Trump's Singapore declaration (*The Hill*, 04/11/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea urged its people to stay faithful to leader Kim Jong-un as it marked the ninth anniversary of his assumption of top posts of its ruling party and the state Sunday amid economic woes from crippling sanctions. (*Yonhap*)
- New satellite images show that North Korea may be modifying its submersible missile test barge at a shipyard on its east coast, a U.S. expert website monitoring the communist country said Sunday. 38 North said commercial satellite imagery taken Saturday indicates that a missile canister for the submersible missile test barge has likely been removed. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has built a new submarine believed to be capable of carrying at least three ballistic missiles and is gauging the right time to unveil it, citing anonymous Seoul officials familiar with the matter. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- Speculation is mounting over North Korea's possible test launch of a ballistic missile from a newly manufactured submarine, according to local defense experts, as suspicious activity has been detected at a shipyard that has facilities for testing submarine-launched ballistic missiles. (Jung Da-min, *The Korea Times*)
- South Korean and U.S. intelligence authorities believe North Korea is ready to roll out a new 3,000-ton submarine, only waiting for the right timing. The assessment comes after a U.S. think tank said the North has moved a submersible missile test barge at its missile test site to a different position, possibly indicating an upcoming test of a submarine-launched ballistic missile. (*Yonhap*)
- Commercial satellite imagery of the Sinpho South Shipyard from April 10 reveals that the missile canister for the submersible missile test barge has likely been removed, possibly for maintenance or for replacement with a new canister or launch frame to accommodate larger submarine-launched ballistic missiles. (Peter Makowsky, Jenny Town, Jack Liu, *38 North*)

**International:**

- Kim Jong Un and his family have welcomed the Biden administration with North Korea's standard playbook of military provocations and verbal threats. President Biden and his advisers are reviewing U.S. strategy toward Pyongyang and pointing toward a "new approach." But his administration shouldn't start from scratch. North Korea poses a rare instance in which Biden's national security team can constructively pick up from a policy initiated by former President Trump, while recognizing its flaws. (Jay Solomon, *The Hill*)

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Prepared by Rick Herssevoort, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250731005945/https://mailchi.mp/fee099d61821/hrnk-news-items-north-koreas-slbm-threat-looms-largen-korea-marks-9th-anniversary-of-kim-jong-uns-leadership-with-call-for-loyalty?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, April 12, 2021**

## S. Korea, U.S. closely watching N. Korean moves on SLBMs, new submarine: JCS

**In North Korea:**
Kim Il Sung birthday crackers are being sold in local markets before start of official distribution (*Daily* NK, 4/12/21)
N. Korea urges 'cell secretaries' to spearhead efforts to strengthen Kim's leadership(*Yonhap*, 4/12/21)
N. Korea expected to mark birth anniv. of state founder on scale similar to previous years (*Yonhap*, 4/12/21)
N. Korea urges economic guidance organs to take full responsibility in implementing development plans (*Yonhap*, 4/12/21)
North Koreans are stranded in Nigeria or illegally working in local clinics (NK *News*, 4/12/21)
North Korean authorities transfer management of special road near Sinuiju to Ministry of State Security (*Daily* NK, 4/12/21)
North Korea to receive 1.7 million COVID-19 vaccine doses later than expected (NK *News*, 4/12/21)
North Korea traded just $124 worth of goods with Russia in February: New data (NK *News*, 4/12/21)
North Korea transfers control of important military shipbuilding factory to Munitions Industry Department (*Daily* NK, 4/12/21)
**In South Korea:**
Ex-minister decries U.S. congressional hearing on anti-N.K. leafleting ban (*Yonhap*, 4/12/21)
S. Korea, U.S. closely watching N. Korean moves on SLBMs, new submarine: JCS(*Yonhap*, 4/12/21)
South Korean PM arrives in Iran to help try to revive nuclear deal (*Reuters*, 4/12/21)

**International:**
China appoints new special representative for Korean Peninsula affairs (NK *News*, 4/12/21)

**In North Korea:**

- Multiple sources have informed Daily NK that Day of the Sun (North Korea's biggest holiday) crackers are being sold in local markets before the beginning of the official holiday distribution. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea urged grassroots leaders of the ruling Workers' Party to be at the forefront of efforts to strengthen the leadership of Kim Jong-un, state media said Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea is expected to hold smaller-scale celebrations for the birth anniversary of late founder Kim Il-sung this week just as it did in previous years, Seoul's unification ministry said Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea urged economic guidance organs to take full responsibility in implementing economic development plans as it held a Cabinet meeting to review the country's first-quarter production results, state media said Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- Whether they be football players in Europe, construction workers in Russia or healthcare staff in Nigeria, North Koreans working abroad all have something in common: They were supposed to go home by Dec. 2019. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- North Korean authorities reportedly renamed a road near the North Korea-China border and transferred its management from the Ministry of Social Security to the Ministry of State Security. They cited past negligence in management and the need for strengthened security for military facilities as reasons for the changes. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- A global vaccine alliance planned to deliver 1.7 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine to North Korea by May, but the delivery will now take longer than expected, NK News has confirmed. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- Official Russian trade with North Korea continued to sit at near-zero values in February, with just $124 worth of DPRK exports crossing into Russia in Feb. 2021, according to new data from Russia's Federal Customs Service. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- North Korean authorities have reportedly transferred a shipyard that used to be controlled by the navy to the Munitions Industry Department (MID), raising its status to a joint enterprise. The move appeared to be part of North Korea's efforts to accelerate the development and production of submarines and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs). (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- A former unification minister on Monday denounced a planned U.S. congressional hearing on South Korea's ban on the sending of anti-Pyongyang leaflets into North Korea as an interference in internal affairs. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea is closely monitoring North Korea's military moves in coordination with the United States, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Monday, amid signs of activity at the North's main shipyard used to develop submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs). (*Yonhap*)
- South Korean Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun arrived in Iran on Sunday to help try to restore a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers and free up $7 billion in Iranian funds trapped in South Korea, Seoul officials said. (Hyonhee Shin, Reuters)

**International:**

- China moved its former ambassador to the United Kingdoms to a new role meant to oversee Korean Peninsula affairs, the country's foreing ministry announced on Monday. (Won-Gi Jung, NK News)

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Prepared by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250731011124/https://mailchi.mp/5ac926fa2fb9/hrnk-news-items-s-korea-us-closely-watching-n-korean-moves-on-slbms-new-submarine-jcs?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, April 13, 2021**

## N. Korea could have up to 242 nuclear weapons by 2027: report; US hearing on North Korea's human rights expected to anger Pyongyang

**In North Korea:**
Evidence suggests North Korea will stand by decision not to participate in Tokyo Olympics (*Daily* NK, 4/13/21)
Kim Jong Un upgrades his private beachside manor and tends to leisure boats (*NK News*, 4/13/21)
NK could up the ante in time for founder's birthday (*The Korea Herald*, 4/13/21)
N.K. efforts to evade sanctions unsuccessful: expert (*Yonhap*, 4/13/21)
N. Korea begins construction on new political prisoner camp near uranium production facility (*Daily* NK, 4/13/21)
N. Korea could have up to 242 nuclear weapons by 2027: report (*Yonhap*, 4/13/21)
N. Korea holds celebrations for founder's birthday in show of confidence in coronavirus handling (*Yonhap*, 4/13/21)
North Korean diplomats regularly flew on Emirates to smuggle gold and cash (*NK News*, 4/13/21)
North Korea Mobilizes Women to Solve Construction Labor Shortage (RFA, 4/12/21)
North Korea SLBM-related activities draw reaction from South (UPI, 4/12/21)
N.K. paper calls for establishing company specialized in coastline protection facilities (*Yonhap*, 4/13/21)
World watches North as Day of the Sun approaches, U.S. Congress holds hearing(*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 4/13/21)
**International:**
Anticipating the Biden Administration's New North Korea Policy (*National Interest*, 4/12/21)
Daily NK and Transitional Justice Working Group sign agreement to enhance cooperation (*Daily* NK, 4/13/21)
Microsoft won a lawsuit against North Korean hackers, but the payoff is unclear (*NK News*,

4/13/21)
US hearing on North Korea's human rights expected to anger Pyongyang (*The Korea Herald*, 4/13/21)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean authorities recently announced that they would not participate in the Tokyo Olympic Games in July, citing the COVID-19 pandemic as their reason not to attend. Following the announcement, Daily NK learned that the authorities decided the matter under the authorization of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un himself. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- Two years after North Korea built a brand new mansion compound in a secluded spot along the country's east coast, leader Kim Jong Un appears to have upgraded another palace about 25 miles away from a military submarine development base. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Speculation is rising that Pyongyang could up the ante with further military provocations this week as it marks a major national holiday, following up on its recent missile launches, experts say. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- U.N. sanctions on North Korea are believed to be pressuring the country, even though Pyongyang has tried to evade them, a researcher at a state-run think tank said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- Amid confirmation that the North Korean authorities have tightened access to Pyongsan, North Hwanghae Province – the site of the Pyongsan Uranium Concentrate Plant – officials have begun construction on a new political prison camp in the area, Daily NK has learned. The authorities appear to have approved the camp's construction to mobilize manpower to mine and refine uranium. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea could have up to 242 nuclear weapons and dozens of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) by 2027, a research report said Tuesday, calling for South Korea and the United States to weigh "all options" to counter the evolving threats. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea appears to be showing "confidence" in handling the global coronavirus pandemic as it is holding various celebrations to mark this week's birth anniversary of its late state founder, a unification ministry official said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean diplomats in Iran moonlighting as gold and cash smugglers regularly used the Emirates airline to fly between Tehran and Dubai, a recently published United Nations report stated. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- Labor shortages in North Korea have forced authorities to start mobilizing women to complete leader Kim Jong Un's ambitious plan to build 10,000 houses in the capital Pyongyang by year's end, sources in the city told RFA. (Jeong Yon Park, Leejin Jun, Eugene Wong, RFA)
- North Korean activities at a shipyard could be raising concerns about a potential test of a submarine-launched ballistic missile in Seoul. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- North Korea's official newspaper called Tuesday for establishing a company specialized in building coastline protection facilities to cope better with typhoons and thereby help ensure economic development. (*Yonhap*)

- In what could be a pivotal week on the Korean Peninsula, there is interest whether North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un would opt for any provocation as the country marks the birthday of Kim Il Sung Thursday and Washington finalizes its Pyongyang policy review. (Yoo Jee-hye, Park Hyun-ju, Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- The heart of the administration's new Korea policy will likely focus on implementing the relevant UN Security Council resolutions to achieve North Korea's verifiable nuclear dismantlement. (David Maxwell, *National Interest*)
- Daily NK and the Transitional Justice Working Group (TJWG) have recently joined forces to investigate human rights violations and promote freedom of information in North Korea. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- Microsoft won a civil suit against two unidentified hackers working for the North Korea-linked Thallium Group, according to recently released documents filed in a U.S. district court. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- The Tom Lantos Congressional Human Rights Commission that advocates for freedom of expression will hold a hearing Thursday (U.S. time) on Seoul's ban on sending anti-Pyongyang leaflets across the border via balloons into North Korea. The hearing is anticipated to receive an angry response from the Kim Jong-un regime, especially as it will fall on the anniversary of North Korea founder Kim Il-sung's birth, a major holiday in the North. (Nam Hyun-woo, *The Korea Times*)

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Prepared by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250802200228/https://mailchi.mp/b98111dce03b/hrnk-news-itemsn-korea-could-have-up-to-242-nuclear-weapons-by-2027-reportus-hearing-on-north-koreas-human-rights-expected-to-anger-pyongyang?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, April 13, 2021**

## How the pandemic is hitting North Korea; N.K. propaganda outlet decries S. Korea's mayoral elections as 'backward' politics

**In North Korea:**

N.Korean Workers' Party releases new information about recently-established Ministry of Justice (*Daily* NK, 4/14/21)
Gold, silver and sapphire? North Korea markets sanctioned sculptures and jewelry (*NK News*, 4/14/21)
Pro-NK paper slams Japan's decision to release contaminated Fukushima water into sea (*The Korea Herald*, 4/14/21)
N.K. propaganda outlet decries S. Korea's mayoral elections as 'backward' politics (*Yonhap*, 4/14/21)

US fears North Korea can rattle power plants and hospitals through cyberattacks (*NK News*, 4/14/21)
North Korean ships visit Chinese coal and iron ports, possibly for illegal sales (*NK News*, 4/14/21)
Kim Jong Un's symbol erased from Pyongyang Station area, replaced by party logo (*NK News*, 4/14/21)
Pro-Pyongyang media denies economic hardship after 'Arduous March' speech (UPI, 4/14/21)
Could North Korea rain missiles on Suga and Biden's parade? (*Japan Times*, 4/14/21)
Spy Chiefs to warn of threats from SolarWinds to North Korea (*Bloomberg*, 4/14/21)
Coronavirus: How the pandemic is hitting North Korea hard (*DW*, 4/14/21)
North Korea could resume nuclear tests this year to pressure Biden, US intelligence report claims (*South China Morning Post*, 4/14/21)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
N.K. propaganda outlet decries S. Korea's mayoral elections as 'backward' politics (*Yonhap*, 4/14/21)
**International:**
North Korea: What we know about its missile and nuclear programme (*BBC*, 4/14/21)
China looks set to reopen border with North Korea (*South China Morning Post*, 4/14/21)
Coronavirus: How the pandemic is hitting North Korea hard (*DW*, 4/14/21)
North Korea could resume nuclear tests this year to pressure Biden, US intelligence report claims (*South China Morning Post*, 4/14/21)

**In North Korea:**

- The government created the new department in order to strengthen the party's authority. (*Daily NK*, 4/14/2021)
- A heavily-sanctioned North Korean art studio at the heart of several U.N. investigations is marketing artwork made out of precious metals. (*NK News*, 4/14/21)
- A pro-North Korea newspaper on Wednesday denounced Japan's decision to dump contaminated water from the wrecked Fukushima nuclear power plant into the ocean, calling it a "crime against humanity." (*The Korea Herald*, 4/14/21)
- A North Korean propaganda outlet on Wednesday criticized South Korea's recent mayoral elections as an example of "backward" politics. (*Yonhap*, 4/14/21)
- The United States is worried that North Korea can disrupt computer networks controlling infrastructure like power plants, healthcare facilities, water supplies and other key lifelines, according to a new report from several U.S. intelligence agencies. (*NK News*, 4/14/21)
- North Korean shipping operations have returned to pre-pandemic lows as of early April after months of cargo vessels idling at sea last year, according to NK Pro analysis of ship tracking data. (*NK News,* 4/14/21)
- North Koreans have long revered Kim Jong Un's official symbol — a gold star surrounded by rubies and diamonds displayed prominently across the nation. (*NK News*, 4/14/21)
- A pro-North Korean newspaper in Japan accused the international media of distorting a recent speech by Kim Jung Un that mentioned the ""Arduous March." (*UPI*, 4/14/21)

- One wildcard that could potentially prevent a smooth summit between the two leaders is a missile test or unveiling of a new weapon by the North as it marks a key anniversary and seeks to force itself back to the top of a meeting agenda widely expected to be dominated by China. (*Japan Times*, 4/14/21)
- S. intelligence chiefs will testify together publicly for the first time in more than two years as the Biden administration confronts early tests of its approach to evolving threats, from Russia's SolarWinds attack and Chinese espionage to the nuclear ambitions of North Korea and Iran. (*Bloomberg*, 4/14/21)
- Kim Jong-un views nuclear weapons as the ultimate deterrent against foreign intervention and believes that over time he will gain international acceptance and respect as a nuclear power. (*South China Morning Post*, 4/14/21)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- A North Korean propaganda outlet on Wednesday denounced South Korea's recent decision to deploy new attack helicopters and destroyers as part of preparations for a long-sought invasion of the North. (*Yonhap*, 4/14/21)

**International:**

- Pyongyang unveiled what state media has described as the world most powerful weapon. (BBC, 4/14/21)
- The city authorities in Dandong appear to be preparing to open a long-delayed bridge across the Yalu river that connects it with the city of Sinujiu. (*South China Morning Post*, 4/14/21)
- Kim Jong-un views nuclear weapons as the ultimate deterrent against foreign intervention and believes that over time he will gain international acceptance and respect as a nuclear power. (South China Morning Post,4/14/21)

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Prepared by Seshni Moodley , HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250802200952/https://mailchi.mp/79464f7f4c57/hrnk-news-items-how-the-pandemic-is-hitting-north-korea-nk-propaganda-outlet-decries-s-koreas-mayoral-elections-as-backward-politics?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, April 15, 2021**

## UN Special Rapporteur on NK Human Rights "We must explore possibilities to hold North Korea responsible for crimes against humanity"

**Top News:**

***UN Special Rapporteur on North Korean Human Rights "We must explore possibilities to hold North Korea responsible for crimes against humanity" (*Yonhap*, 4/13/21)

**In North Korea:**

North Korea isn't happy about South Korea's conservative resurgence (*NK News*, 4/15/21)

N. Korea marks late founder's birthday with celebrations, no signs of provocations yet (*Yonhap*, 4/15/21)

North Korea skips military parade on Kim Il Sung anniversary (UPI, 4/15/21)

N. Korea's new ambassador to China presents credentials to Xi (*Yonhap*, 4/15/21)

N Koreans mark founder's birthday amid economic difficulties (*AP News*, 4/15/21)

North Korean educational authorities rank average test scores of students nationwide (*Daily* NK, 4/15/21)

Pyongyang Development Projects off to a Strong Start (*38 North*, 4/15/21)

Russian ambassador: North Korea faces 'tough' times, but famine is 'unlikely' (*NK News*, 4/15/21)

State Security University students in Sino-N. Korean border region withdrawn (*Daily* NK, 4/15/21)

**In South Korea:**

South Korea to install AI system at border after security breach embarrassment (*Daily* NK, 4/15/21)

**International:**

Japan lost track of key North Korean liaison officer several years ago (*Kyodo News*, 4/14/21)

N. Korea may resume nuclear, ICBM testing: intelligence chief (*Yonhap*, 4/15/21)

S. Korea-U.S. alliance to remain unaffected by congressional hearing on leaflet ban: official (*Yonhap*, 4/15/21)

U.S. says North may resume ICBM testing, drive 'wedge' with allies (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 4/15/21)

**Top News:**

- On the 12th, Tomás Ojea Quintana, the UN's Special Rapporteur on North Korean Human Rights, said the UN and the international community should explore various possibilities to hold North Korea accountable for the crimes against humanity they committed, including murder, enslavement, torture, imprisonment, and sexual assault. (Jung Seong Ho, *Yonhap*)

**In North Korea:**

- Simply put, the possible victory of the conservatives in 2022 will mean that Pyongyang's chance of having profitable interactions with Seoul could be lost. There are also chances that the conservative administration will actively support many U.S. policies, which are definitely not for Pyongyang's liking. (Andrei Lankov, *NK News*)
- Thursday marks the 109th birth anniversary of Kim Il-sung, the late grandfather of current leader Kim Jong-un. The anniversary, referred to in the North as the Day of the Sun, is the country's biggest national holiday and has often been marked with massive military parades and other provocative acts. (*Yonhap*)
- Pyongyang's media did not report military demonstrations, and armed forces were not depicted marching in a parade on the anniversary. In 2017, another year of tensions with the United States and South Korea, North Korea displayed long-range missiles as soldiers marched across Kim Il Sung Square. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

- While presenting his credentials Wednesday, Ambassador Ri Ryong-nam conveyed leader Kim Jong-un's warm greetings to Xi and the Chinese leader also asked the envoy to send his greetings to Kim, according to the Rodong Sinmun, the official newspaper of the ruling Workers' Party. (*Yonhap*)
- Mask-wearing North Koreans danced in a plaza or climbed a Pyongyang hill on Thursday to mark the 109th birthday of the country's founder amid pandemic fears and economic woes. (AP News)
- After North Korean students took their end-of-term final exams in February, the Ministry of Higher Education reportedly ranked the average test scores of students from thirteen administrative regions, including the country's provinces, directly-administered city (Pyongyang), and special cities. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- Commercial satellite imagery indicates early progress on the construction of thousands of new apartments at two sites in Pyongyang. Demolition and ground clearance work began at both locations—one in central Pyongyang and one in the city's Sadong District—immediately after visits by Kim Jong Un in late March and early April. (Martyn Williams, *38 North*)
- One week after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un reportedly told officials to brace for hardship and referenced a deadly 1990s famine, a top Russian diplomat said that the country is experiencing a serious shortage of food and medicine but is not in a state of mass starvation. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- A source in North Hamgyong Province told Daily NK on Tuesday that the authorities issued a withdrawal order to soon-to-be-graduated students of SSU who had been sent to Musan, North Hamgyong Province. The students returned to campus after a five-month-long "practical training" on the border. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- Months after the South Korean military was put in the hot seat for failing to quickly apprehend a North Korean man crossing the border, the country's defense ministry said it will install an artificial intelligence-powered monitoring system along one of the world's most heavily-militarized borders. (Won Gi Jung, *NK News*)

**International:**

- A secret North Korean negotiator with Japan, who had been directly connected to the leadership in Pyongyang and who was behind major bilateral developments over the past two decades, lost contact with Tokyo several years ago, sources familiar with the matter said Wednesday. (*Kyodo News*)
- The top U.S. intelligence official on Wednesday maintained that North Korea may resume its nuclear and long-range missile testing as part of efforts to drive wedges between the United States and its allies. (Byun Duk Kun, *Yonhap*)
- The unification ministry official told reporters that the congressional hearing is "not directly related to the South Korea-U.S. alliance" as a bipartisan caucus of the U.S. House of Representatives is set to hold the hearing on Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea may resume its nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) tests as part of efforts to drive wedges between the United States and its allies, said the U.S. intelligence chief in a Senate hearing Wednesday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

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*Yonhap* Article

**UN Special Rapporteur on North Korean Human Rights "We must explore possibilities to hold North Korea responsible for crimes against humanity"**

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Reporter Jung Seong-ho

On the 12th, Tomás Ojea Quintana, the UN's Special Rapporteur on North Korean Human Rights, said the UN and the international community should explore various possibilities to hold North Korea accountable for the crimes against humanity they committed, including murder, enslavement, torture, imprisonment, and sexual assault.

Special Rapporteur Quintana said the following at a video seminar titled, "The UN's Role to Hold North Korea Responsible for Human Rights Violations," organized by the Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center (APARC, Director Shin Gi-Wook).

"As a criminal law lawyer who has dealt with many lawsuits in my country, I think the International Criminal Court (ICC) has jurisdiction to deal with crimes against humanity committed by North Korea," Special Rapporteur Quintana said.

He cited the issue of Japanese abductees as an example of a situation in the ICC's jurisdiction.

"There are more than 40,000 North Korean defectors in South Korea, and I think North Korea can be charged with persecution," Quintana said. "The South Korean Constitution says the Korean Peninsula is a part of South Korea, so these defectors in South Korea can also be considered deported."

"There are cases in which the U.N. Security Council forms and also the case of filing a lawsuit to demand compensation, which the parents of Otto Warmbier, an American college student who was detained in North Korea and died after being repatriated in a coma state, did with the U.S. court," he said.

Special Rapporteur Quintana said that if there was genocide in North Korea, there is a plan to present the issue to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) under the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. However, he said they are still debating whether genocide was committed in North Korea.

However, he also claimed, "The Security Council's sanctions are aimed at North Korea's denuclearization, but from my perspective, these sanctions have a harmful effect on ordinary North Koreans," and that, "The best sanctions are ones that are aimed at the target."

"There is no possibility of referring it to the International Criminal Court or establishing an ad hoc court," said Roberta Cohen, an honorary co-chair of the U.S.'s Committee for Human Rights

in North Korea (HRNK), who attended as a debater. “Nevertheless, progress is being made in the basic work for the ultimate criminal prosecution,” she said.

"The office of the U.N.’s Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Seoul is working on recording violations and creating a key information and evidence archive for the ultimate trial," Director Cohen said. "With help from the International Bar Association, I myself concluded a statement saying that North Korea's refusal to provide adequate food in short-term camps is a crime against humanity.”

Oh Joon, former South Korean Ambassador to the U.N., said that due to differences between permanent members of the U.N. Security Council it will be difficult to make a referral to the ICC. But he also said that some of the ideas Quintana, who bypasses the Security Council, had are impressive.

Former Ambassador Oh said that the search for such various measures will put more pressure on North Korea, adding, "The purpose of all naming and shaming activities is to put pressure on North Korea regarding their human rights violations."

Former Ambassador Oh said, "North Korea has become more sensitive to discussions within the United Nations," pointing out that although a referral to the ICC will not happen immediately, such a distant possibility of questioning responsibility could increase pressure on North Korea and possibly change their behavior.

*Translated by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Tristin Schultz, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250802200611/https://mailchi.mp/4e75ea3ced00/hrnk-news-itemsun-special-rapporteur-on-nk-human-rights-we-must-explore-possibilities-tohold-north-korea-responsible-for-crimes-against-humanity?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, April 17, 2021**

## Kim Jong Un’s $2 million aid donation raises cash transfer questions; US politicians hold hearing on South Korea’s leaflet ban

**In North Korea:**
Construction Resumes at Nampho Port (*38 North*, 04/16/2021)
Kim Jong Un attends concert with North Korea's first lady (*UPI*, 04/16/2021)

N.K. leader visits mausoleum to mark birth anniversary of late national founder (*Yonhap*, 04/16/2021)
North Korea announces start of "special security week" three days before Kim Il Sung's birthday (*Daily* NK, 04/16/2021)
North Korea Gives Extra Food to Veterans for Former Leader's Birthday (*Radio Free Asia*, 04/16/2021)
North Korea turns airport into COVID-19 disinfection center to boost trade (*NK News*, 04/16/2021)
North Korean hackers stole cryptocurrency while skimming credit cards: Report (*NK News*, 04/16/2021)
Satellite imagery indicates activity at NK's nuclear reprocessing facility: think tank (*Yonhap*, 04/16/2021)
Summary of domestic news in North Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 04/16/2021)
Working and living conditions at the Bukchang prison camp are extremely poor(*Daily* NK, 04/16/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Kim Hates This: The South Korean Air Force Could Crush North Korea (*National Interest*, 04/16/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Summary of inter-Korean news this week (*Yonhap*, 04/16/2021)

**International:**
Biden, Japan's Suga Commit to Work Together to Meet China Challenge(VOA, 04/16/2021)
Key developments on North Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 04/16/2021)
Kim Jong Un's $2 million aid donation raises cash transfer questions (*NK News*, 04/16/2021)
North Korea decries Japan's decision on Fukushima water release (UPI, 04/16/2021)
Suga says he is prepared to meet N. Korean leader Kim to address abduction issue (*Yonhap*, 04/17/2021)
Summary of external news of North Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 04/16/2021)
The Case for Maximizing Engagement With North Korea (*38 North*, 04/16/2021)
Unification ministry hopes Moon-Biden summit will help build consensus on denuclearization (*Yonhap*, 04/16/2021)
US and Japan vow to work on North Korea denuclearization at Washington summit(*NK News*, 04/16/2021)
US and South Korean president to discuss North Korea in Washington next month (*NK News*, 04/16/2021)
U.S., Japan committed to complete denuclearization of N. Korea: leaders (*Yonhap*, 04/17/2021)
US politicians hold hearing on South Korea's controversial leaflet ban (*NK News*, 04/16/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Commercial satellite imagery indicates that construction work on a new quay at the petroleum, oil and lubricant (POL) storage area in Nampho port has resumed after a winter break. Work on the container dock has also resumed, with a large probable storage building nearing completion. (Martyn Williams, Peter Makowsky, 38 North)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un attended a concert with first lady Ri Sol Ju on the 109th birth anniversary of his biological grandfather Kim Il Sung, as analysts raised concerns about military developments. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un visited a mausoleum of his late grandfather and national founder Kim Il-sung to mark his birth anniversary, state media reported Friday. (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)
- The North Korean authorities reportedly raised the level of security in the country by declaring the start of a "special security week" three days before Kim Il Sung's birthday on Apr. 15. The move could be interpreted as a sign that the authorities are cognizant of the defection of a North Korean man that escaped to South Korea by swimming for six hours in flippers and a diving suit on Feb. 16 (Kim Jong Il's birthday). (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea commemorated a major national holiday Thursday by providing extra corn to select groups of veterans, but the people are complaining that the government is trying to force their loyalty through strict control of the food supply, sources in the country told RFA. (Hyemin Son, Leejin Jun, Eugene Whong, *Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korea recently transformed an airport near the Chinese border into an apparent disinfection center for goods — possibly to restart high volumes of trade after a significant dropoff in the COVID-19 era, according to *NK Pro* analysis of Planet Labs satellite imagery. There's also evidence of other disinfection facilities undergoing construction at key ports and border crossings in the DPRK. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Hackers suspected of belonging to the North Korea-linked Lazarus Group used a new kind of malicious JavaScript to steal digital money from online retailers that accept cryptocurrencies for payment, security firm Group-IB warned in a report this week. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- North Korea may have resumed the operation of its reprocessing facilities at Yongbyon to produce nuclear materials, a U.S. think tank suggested Thursday, citing recent satellite imagery. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- The following is a summary of domestic news in North Korea this week. (*Yonhap*)
- Amid reports that the North Korean authorities have mobilized prisoners at the Bukchang concentration camp in South Pyongan Province for coal mining, Daily NK has learned that the living and working environment at the camp is extremely poor. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- The Republic of Korea Air Force (ROKAF) is the most powerful air force on the Korean Peninsula, with a capability far greater than its northern rival, providing air cover and support to ground forces defending south of the thirty-eighth parallel. Recently, the air force has taken on a new task as Seoul shapes a conventional force to deter North Korea's nuclear weapons. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The following is a summary of inter-Korean news this week. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- U.S. President Joe Biden says he and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga are committed to working together to counter challenges from China and North Korea, following Biden's first White House summit since taking office. (VOA)
- The following are key developments regarding North Korea this week. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's latest donation of $2 million worth of aid to Japanese affiliate group Chongryon has raised questions among analysts about how Pyongyang is able to transfer such large sums to Tokyo each year. (Chad O'Carroll, Kosuke Takahashi, *NK News*)
- North Korea denounced a Japanese decision to release treated radioactive water into the sea, calling the decision an "unacceptable crime." (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said Friday that he is ready to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un to resolve the issue of Japanese citizens abducted by the North decades ago. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- The following is a summary of external news of North Korea this week. (*Yonhap*)
- As the Biden administration's North Korea policy review nears completion, there is growing worry that it could dig in its heels on previous US efforts to change North Korea's behavior through isolation and pressure. Early signals indicate the Biden team is prioritizing pressure among many options. Several experts, however, believe this approach will continue to fail because it incorrectly assumes North Korea will yield to coercive tactics and that China will cooperate in this effort. (Frank Aum, Daniel Jasper, *38 North*)
- The unification ministry on Friday expressed hopes that an upcoming summit between South Korean President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Joe Biden will help improve inter-Korean relations and strengthen efforts for denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. (*Yonhap*)
- U.S. President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga vowed to work on the complete denuclearization of North Korea on Friday in their first face-to-face meeting since Biden took office. (Kelly Kasulis, *NK News)*
- U.S. President Joe Biden invited South Korean President Moon Jae-in to visit Washington next month to talk about North Korea and other alliance matters, the White House announced on Thursday. The trip, slated for sometime in the second half of May, will mark the two leaders' first face-to-face meeting since Biden took office. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- U.S. President Joe Biden said Friday he and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga reaffirmed their commitment to jointly face challenges in the Indo-Pacific region, including China and nuclear-armed North Korea. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. Congress members held a hearing on Thursday to discuss a controversial new South Korean law that can send activists to prison or fine them thousands of dollars for sending informational flyers to North Korea. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)

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Prepared by Timothy Goo, HRNK Research Intern

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**Sunday, April 18, 2021**

# Bodily autonomy of NK women violated; SK democracy attacked by own president; US congressmen call for amendment of anti-leaflet law

**Top News:**
***UNFPA "North Korean birth rate is at 1.9"... "Bodily autonomy of North Korean women is being violated" (VOA *News*, 04/15/2021)
***North Korean expert Gordon Chang: "Korea's democracy is being attacked by its own president" (*Chosun Ilbo*, 04/15/2021)

**In North Korea:**
How to Stop North Korea From Becoming a Nuclear Weapons Superpower (*National Interest*, 04/18/2021)
Kim Jong-un's claim of the "worst-ever situation" (*North Korean Economy Watch*, 04/18/2021)
N. Korea's imports from China surge in March: data (*Yonhap*, 04/18/2021)
N. Korea slams Japan despite Suga's willingness to meet leader Kim (*Yonhap*, 04/18/2021)
Ruling or fleeing North Korea's hell (*Korea Times*, 04/18/2021)
**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
N.K. propaganda outlet denounces S. Korea's weapons purchase plans (*Yonhap*, 04/18/2021)

**International:**
How Biden nominee Wendy Sherman can pull off a deal with North Korea where others failed (*NBC News*, 04/17/2021)
International human rights groups urge Biden to highlight rights issue in North Korea policy (*Korea Times*, 04/18/2021)
North Korea's New Arduous March: What Biden Should Do (And Not Do) (*National Interest*, 04/18/2021)
U.S. congressmen call for amendment of anti-leaflet law (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 04/17/2021)
U.S. lawmakers ask Korea to reconsider the anti-leaflet law (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/18/2021)

**Top News:**

- The U.N. assessed that low birth rates are occurring in North Korea. The birth rate is falling short of the level needed to maintain the population. (Cho Eunjung, *VOA News*)
- While the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, a bipartisan human rights organization in the U.S. Congress, held an online hearing on South Korea's anti-leaflet

law and North Korea's human rights issues, Gordon Chang, a witness at the hearing and a lawyer, said in a media interview, "Korea's democracy is being attacked by its own president." (Lee Ok-jin, *Chosun Ilbo*)

**In North Korea:**

- The Day of the Sun, North Korea's celebration of the birth of the country's founder, Great Leader Kim Il-sung, passed without international incident. However, the future might not be so pacific. The latest report from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) warned that North Korea will remain a potential nuclear threat, given the living Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un's active nuclear weapons program. ODNI warned that the North might resume testing of either long-range missiles or nuclear weapons this year, abandoning the moratorium imposed three years ago along with the first Kim-Trump summit. (Doug Bandow, *National Interest*)
- Perhaps I am late to the game already (the long weekend here in Israel is to blame for that), but it has been puzzling to see the media reporting on Kim Jong-un's claim that North Korea faces its "worst-ever" economic situation at the moment, under both international sanctions and a self-imposed border lockdown. (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, *North Korean Economy Watch*)
- North Korea's imports from China spiked to a six-month high last month, data showed Sunday, amid signs of Pyongyang easing prolonged border restrictions amid the pandemic. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's main newspaper on Sunday kept up criticism of Japan over its history of aggression toward the Korean Peninsula, after the Japanese prime minister expressed a willingness to meet with the North's leader to resolve bilateral issues. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea is a poor country, but people who live in the capital live pretty well — residents there are said to live in "Pyonghattan," a combination of Pyongyang and Manhattan. When Pyonghattans learn about the outside world, they begin to face a moral dilemma: should they continue to live as part of the elite in the country, or take a chance to live in freedom? (Lee Seo-hyun, *Korea Times*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- A North Korean propaganda outlet on Sunday denounced South Korea's weapons purchase plans as an attempt to accelerate preparations to invade the country. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Having finally been confirmed as the next U.S. deputy secretary of state this week, Wendy Sherman will now oversee Washington's foremost foreign policy challenges — including North Korea. But any success she might have there will hinge on abandoning her predecessors' failed pressure-based approach to force North Korea's unilateral denuclearization before any other diplomatic progress is made on the peninsula, which has become an increasingly unrealistic goal. Instead, she will have to advance diplomacy toward first achieving peace, then normalized relations and, ultimately, demilitarization and denuclearization. (Christine Ahn, *NBC News*)
- Almost a dozen international human rights organizations sent a joint letter to U.S. President Joe Biden, urging him to prioritize human rights in his North Korea policy and negotiations. According to the letter released Thursday, 11 non-governmental organizations and coalitions asked the Biden administration to incorporate human

rights issues into strategy discussions and future negotiations with North Korea and urged the South Korean government to do the same. (Kwon Mee-yoo, *Korea Times*)

- Kim's language conveys a tacit admission that North Korea's chronic policy of self-isolation has not served the country, or the regime, particularly well. Minimizing interaction with the outside world did not even shield North Korea from the ravages of the coronavirus pandemic. (Ted Galen Carpenter, *National Interest*)
- "The hearing was only a beginning, not the end," said U.S. Rep. Chris Smith, who hosted the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission of the U.S. Congress hearing on South Korea's law prohibiting the flying of anti-Pyongyang leaflets into North Korea. Speaking with reporters via teleconference after the hearing, The congressman said he will look into the follow-up measures of the South Korean government, suggesting that there could be another hearing depending on the South Korean government's action. (*Dong-A Ilbo*)
- A group of U.S. lawmakers urged the National Assembly to revisit a new law that prohibits sending leaflets into North Korea in a congressional hearing, arguing that it is undemocratic and violates the South Korean constitution. (Sarah Kim, Korea JoongAng Daily)

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VOA Source

**UNFPA "North Korean birth rate is at 1.9"... "Bodily autonomy of North Korean women is being violated"**

Reported Cho Eunjung
2021.4.15 2:00 AM

The U.N. assessed that low birth rates are occurring in North Korea. The birth rate is falling short of the level needed to maintain the population. This is Cho Eunjung reporting.

According to the 2021 State of World Population status report "My Body is My Own," released by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) on the 14th, North Korea's total fertility rate was 1.9 people.

This is less than the world average of 2.4, the Asia-Pacific average of 2.1, and the figure needed to maintain the population (2.1), ranking 119th out of 198 countries surveyed.

The total fertility rate is the average number of births a woman is expected to have in her lifetime, with the highest being Niger with 6.6 children and the lowest being South Korea with 1.1 children.

North Korea's average life expectancy at birth was 69 years for men, placing it at 122nd place in the world, and 76 years for women, 109th place in the world. Compared to South Korea, where

men are expected to live to 80 and women 86, North Korean male life expectancy were 11 years shorter and female life expectancy were 10 years shorter.

North Korea's total population was counted to be 25.9 million people. Among them, 9.6% of the population was those aged 65 or older, putting North Korea at an average of 78th in the world.

This year, the world's total population is 7.875 billion, up 80 million from last year.

Reproductive health indicators

According to the report, 89 mothers per 100,000 newborns in North Korea died in 2017, a figure far lower than the global average of 211.

It was revealed that the delivery rate by skilled medical staff in North Korea was 100%.

Also, the birth rate per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19 was the lowest in North Korea, along with South Korea and San Marino, at one child.

North Korea's contraceptive practice rate for women aged 15 to 49 was reported to be 74% and the modern practice rate is 71%. The world average is 63% and 57%, respectively.

Infringement of “Bodily Autonomy”... “Experts say damage to North Korean women is serious”

This year's report covered the topic of "bodily autonomy," or how someone can exercise their sexual right to decide, their right to sexual health, and how their right to use contraception can be exercised without violence or forced threats.

At a report release event held on the 14th, Mónica Ferro, director of the UNFPA Geneva office, revealed that half of women in 57 developing countries mentioned in the report have no "bodily autonomy."

[Recording: Director Ferro] “Our new State of World Population report shows, that in countries where we have data, nearly half of women lack the power to make their own decisions about whether to have sex with their partner, about whether to use contraception, about whether to see a doctor. Often these decisions are made or influenced by others, whether partners, families, societies or even the governments.”

Director Ferro said women don't have the authority to make decisions on sexual activity, contraceptives, and hospital visits, and that the decision is often made by men, families, society, or even the government.

The 57 developing countries mentioned in the report were mainly sub-Saharan countries. Only 55% of women aged 15 to 49 in these countries exercised bodily autonomy.

In this report by the UNFPA, North Korea was not included in the investigation due to lack of data on "bodily autonomy," but the international community has consistently raised the seriousness of sexual exploitation of North Korean women.

At the U.N. Human Rights Council's regular board meeting held last month, Tomas Ojea Quintana, the U.N.'s Special Rapporteur on North Korean Human Rights, said that crimes against humanity continue to be committed in North Korea, citing sexual assault, forced abortion, and sexual violence.

Park Ji-hyun, a North Korean defector who is campaigning for human rights in the U.K., told VOA on the 14th that North Korean society does not respect women and that women cannot speak out even if they are harmed.

[Recording: Park Ji-hyun] "In truth, North Korean women are not free in sex and tend to be forced to do everything. The old cultural idea of male superiority over women still remains intact in the country of North Korea so you can't find any respect for women at all. So, when women are sexually assaulted or raped in North Korea, there are no policies that can make it a social issue..."

The sexual exploitation North Korean female defectors experience while hiding in China is also known to be serious.

In the "2020 Trafficking in Persons Report" the U.S. State Department released last year, they explained that there is a North Korean-Chinese network that helps smuggle North Korean women in, and that the women are exposed to sexual abuse and are forced into prostitution through online or offline "entertainment" establishments.

The report also introduced a case in which a North Korean woman was forced into prostitution and had to work through a "forced marriage" with a Chinese man.

Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), a civil society organization in Washington, told VOA on the 14th that "people who have been trafficked have no bodily autonomy."

[Recording: Executive Director Scarlatoiu] "At least 80 percent of North Korean refugees in China are women. These are women who are being trafficked. So of course they have no access to contraception and in most cases lose the very fundamental human right to owning and controlling their own bodies. I'm not even sure the language of the report can apply to this very terrible state."

Executive Director Scarlatoiu says 80% of North Korean defectors in China are women, and they have been trafficked. "So, of course they have no access to contraception and in most cases lose the very fundamental human right to owning and controlling their own bodies," he pointed out.

He added that the terrible situation North Korean female defectors face in China is beyond the language the U.N. report uses.

Executive Director Scarlatoiu says the Chinese government should recognize North Korean defectors as political refugees to fundamentally solve the problem.

Park Ji-hyun expressed her regret over the omission of North Korean women from the UNFPA report on bodily autonomy.

[Recording: Park Ji-hyun] "I think the international community is lacking interest in North Korea. In Korea, 70-80% of 30,000 North Korean defectors are women. A lot of interviews with these people have been released, and there is a United Nations Human Rights Office in Seoul that often deals with North Korean women's issues. If they paid attention to North Korean women, wouldn't they be in this report?"

This was Cho Eun-jeong from VOA News.

*Translated by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern*

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[*Chosun Ilbo* Source]

**North Korean expert Gordon Chang: "Korea's democracy is being attacked by its own president"**

Reported Lee Ok-jin
Uploaded 2021.04.15 11:01 / Edited 2021.04.15 11:01

While the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, a bipartisan human rights organization in the U.S. Congress, held an online hearing on South Korea's anti-leaflet law and North Korea's human rights issues, Gordon Chang, a witness at the hearing and a lawyer, said in a media interview, "Korea's democracy is being attacked by its own president."

Lawyer Gordon Chang, an American expert on Northeast Asia, said in an interview with Voice of America (VOA) that was released on the morning of the event, "The importance of this hearing is that the U.S. is now beginning to pay attention to serious human rights issues in Korea. This is an issue of human rights and democracy, and [President] Moon Jae-in has been attacking South Korea's democratic institutions." He also said, "Decades of democratization are being reversed. At his [presidential] inauguration ceremony, Moon Jae-in promised he would advance Korea towards democracy, but what he has done is take South Korea in the direction of 'democracy' as defined by North Korea and move away from what everyone else thinks of democracy."

Another witness, Suzanne Sholte, chairman of the North Korea Freedom Coalition, said in an interview, “I decided to testify on the impact of what is happening in South Korea [at the hearing]. Delivering information to North Korea is all I do, and this very important thing is being stopped because of what happened in South Korea."

Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), said about the hearing, "This hearing is important because it shows that the U.S. is concerned about democracy, freedom, and human rights in South Korea." On the anti-leaflet law, Executive Director Scarlatoiu said, "With the voices of the defectors being muffled, the financial interdiction and pressure being applied to North Korean human rights groups is a matter of great importance," Scarlatoiu said. "This largely reflects the current state of democracy in South Korea."

It is unusual for the Korean government to be subject to human rights hearings in the U.S. Congress. In addition to Gordon Chang and Free North Korea Radio Chair Suzanne Scholte, Human Rights Watch Asia Advocacy Director John Sifton, Senior Research Fellow Jessica Lee of the U.S. Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, and former Korean Ambassador to Russia Lee In-ho will also attend as witnesses. Lawyer Jeon Soo-mi, who has argued that with the anti-leaflet law, there was no significant effect on improving human rights in North Korea, is also expected to attend as a witness.

*Translated by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern*

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Prepared by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250802201720/https://mailchi.mp/5cce3f7c78b7/hrnk-news-itemsbodily-autonomy-of-nk-women-violatedsk-democracy-attacked-by-own-presidentus-congressmen-call-for-amendment-of-anti-leaflet-law?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, April 19, 2021**

## Democracy setbacks; Witnesses for the NK Leaflet Hearing

**Top News:**
Democracy setbacks (*The Korea Herald*, 04/19/2021)
*** Witnesses for the North Korea Leaflet Hearing “Raising the issue of the status of South Korean democracy which enforced this legislation” (VOA, 04/15/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Ground zero (*The Korea Times*, 04/19/2021)

Husband and wife in Onsong County arrested for attempting to smuggle over ten tons of metal abroad (*Daily NK*, 04/19/2021)
NK imports from China spike in March (*The Korea Herald*, 04/19/2021)
N.Korea's coronavirus lockdown shows signs of easing as China trade soars(*Reuters*, 04/19/2021)
N. Korea likely to ramp up cyber attacks against S. Korea, U.S. this year amid prolonged sanctions: expert (*Yonhap*, 04/19/2021)
North Korea doesn't want its people to know that COVID-19 vaccines were invented(*NK News*, 04/19/2021)
North Korea imported more than $12M of goods from China, data show (*UPI*, 04/19/2021)
North Korean soldiers enforcing border blockade suffer from worsening food shortages (*Daily NK*, 04/19/2021)
The Incredible Rise of North Korea's Hacking Army (*The New Yorker*, 04/19/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Moon left mired in tricky issues prior to his visit to Washington (*The Dong-A Ilbo*)
More outrage as South Korea debates ban on sending digital info to North Korea(*NK News*, 04/19/2021)
South Korea to spend $37.6 million on drone destroyers (*NK News*, 04/19/2021)
Three puzzles in S. Korean diplomacy discourse (*The Hankyoreh*, 04/19/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
A Quiet Arms Race Is Rapidly Heating Up Between the Two Koreas (*The New York Times*, 04/19/2021)
S.Korea looks to ban internet file-sharing with N.Korea (*Reuters*, 04/19/2021)
S. Korea seeking to toughen regulations on internet-based exchanges with N. Korea(*Yonhap*, 04/19/2021)

**International:**
China's March exports to North Korea spike to six-month high (*Reuters*, 04/18/2021)
China-North Korea trade jumps after pandemic slump but sanctions curb business with Pyongyang (*South China Morning Post*, 04/19/2021)
China-North Korea trade rises for the first time in months (*NK News*, 04/19/2021)
How much impact will Moon-Biden summit have on US N. Korea policy? (*The Hankyoreh*, 04/19/2021)
Iran and North Korea: Missile Development Allies? (*National Interest*, 04/18/2021)
North Korea crisis: Expert warns US must 'catch up' with Kim to halt escalating tensions (*The Daily Express*, 04/19/2021)

**Top News:**

- Greg Scarlatoiu, the executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea in Washington said that the major significance of the hearing is that the US does care about the state of democracy and freedom and human rights in South Korea. The

commission has held hearings on human rights situations in autocratic states. It is a shame for South Korea that its democracy and freedom of speech were dealt with at the human rights hearing. The Moon regime invited the disgrace. (*The Korea Herald*)

- [Recording: Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director] "I run the US Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, HRNK and every time I see that the voices of North Korean escapees are muffled, every time I see that North Korean human rights organizations are defunded, muffled or pressed, this is my issue. It's a very big issue...It's a very big reflection on the current state of South Korean democracy. I have been a student of South Korea for almost 31 years now. I love that country. And that's why I need to speak up. I came from Romania, which was just barely emerging from the depths of communist dictatorship at the time, and South Korea gave me a great opportunity which I still appreciate...You know, here in the United States, we kind of deal with our own issues but we're getting there. And, you know, we have to talk to our friends in South Korea." (Sungwon Baik, VOA)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea is ground zero for international humanitarian efforts. For the first time since foreign aid workers were allowed into the country following the great famine of the 1990s, which Pyongyang described as the "Arduous March," no U.N. or NGO staff members reportedly remain in the country, due to local COVID-19 restrictrictions. (John Burton, *The Korea Times*)
- The North Korean authorities recently arrested a married couple in Onsong County, North Hamgyong Province, after they attempted to smuggle over ten tons of metal abroad in violation of the country's COVID-19 border blockade. (Kim Yoo Jin, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea's imports from China jumped in March amid growing speculation that Pyongyang may soon open its border and resume trade with its top ally, China. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- China's exports to North Korea in March rose to a six-month high, with outbound shipments to its neighbour that month nearly 400 times more than January-February combined, in a sign of easing border restrictions imposed due to COVID-19. (*Reuters*)
- North Korea is likely to continue increasing cyber attacks against financial institutions and think tanks in South Korea, the United States and other countries amid economic challenges, a researcher at a state-run think tank said Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has delivered bleak coverage of the global COVID-19 pandemic to its citizens, regularly showing footage of mass graves in foreign countries and despondent medical workers in places like the U.S. and the U.K. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- North Korea ramped up purchases of Chinese imports, including essential goods and chemical fertilizers, according to a South Korean press report. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- North Korean soldiers deployed to the Sino-North Korean border to enforce the COVID-19 "border blockade" are suffering from worsening food shortages with the arrival of the spring. Locals are reportedly expressing anxiety that hungry soldiers might attack ordinary people's homes to steal food. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- A tiny fraction of one per cent of North Koreans has access to the Internet. Yet, paradoxically, the North Korean government has produced some of the world's most proficient hackers. (Ed Caesar, *The New Yorker*)

**In South Korea:**

- The South Korean government grapples with the dual challenge of not only putting the U.S.-R.O.K. alliance first but also maintaining good economic terms with China, its largest trade partner, while resolving North Korea's nuclear issues at the negotiating table. (*The Dong-A Ilbo*)
- Evoking further outcry from free speech and human rights activists, South Korea's Ministry of Unification wants to amend a contentious new law so that it bans people from sending digital information to North Korea on top of informational flyers, bibles and USBs. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- South Korea will spend roughly $37.6 million on installing "drone cops" in places like airports and nuclear power plants to bust any drones illegally flying in the area, its science and technology ministry said on Sunday. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- The subjectivity of the observer is a big factor in the observation of objects and phenomena. That's inevitable. But policy solutions to current issues need to be backed by objective facts and by contemporary common sense. (Moon Chung-in, *The Hankyoreh*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Pride and jealousy have driven North and South Korea to engage in propaganda shouting matches and compete over who could build a taller flagpole on their border. Now that one-upmanship is intensifying a much more dangerous side of their rivalry: the arms race. (Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*)
- South Korea's government on Monday said it had proposed a law to require its citizens to get official permission before using the internet to exchange digital material such as movies, music, scanned books, or artwork with anyone in North Korea. (Sangmi Cha, *Reuters*)
- South Korea is seeking to require its citizens to win government approval in advance before exchanging digital files of films or books with North Koreans via the internet, the unification ministry said Monday. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- China's exports to North Korea in March rose to a six-month high, with outbound shipments to its neighbour that month nearly 400 times more than January-February combined, in a sign of easing border restrictions imposed due to COVID-19. (*Reuters*)
- Trade between China and North Korea grew to a six-month high in March, figures from Chinese customs show in the latest sign that the two neighbours are easing border restrictions amid tensions with the United States. (Laura Zhou, *South China Morning Post*)
- The value of official trade between North Korea and China rose for the first time in at least three months, according to new data from China's General Administration of Customs, reversing a trend of plummeting Chinese exports that dominated much of 2020. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- The announcement by the South Korean and US governments that the first in-person summit between their leaders will be taking place in the US during late May has attention focusing on the impact the meeting will have on the political situation surrounding the Korean Peninsula. (Gil Yun-hyung, *The Hankyoreh*)
- Iran and North Korea enjoy surprisingly close relations when it come to arms and weapons. Iran imports a lot of DPRK tech—long range artillery, tanks, the list goes on.

One of Iran's more recent arms import is the Simorgh missile. (Caleb Larson, *National Interest*)

- North Korea now has more nukes than ever and missiles which can reach the USA. Under the rule of Kim Jong-Un, the nation remains among the world's most repressive countries despite decades of sanctions and threats of force from across the globe. Last month, Kim called for another "arduous march" against severe economic difficulties as the nation struggles against economic sanctions imposed by the USA. (*The Daily Express*, Kaisha Langton)

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VOA Source

**Witnesses for the North Korea Leaflet Hearing "Raising the issue of the status of South Korean democracy which enforced this legislation"**

Reporter Sungwon Baik
2021.4.15 4:07AM

The U.S. Congressional hearing on the anti-leaflet law on the 15th is expected to raise serious concerns about the overall status of South Korea's democracy beyond the issue of leaflets on the North Korea. Some witnesses attending the hearing say they will announce that Korean democracy has regressed to the point of restricting free flow of information and freedom of expression. This is Sungwon Baik reporting.

The event is drawing much attention as it is the first hearing in Washington on the subject of human rights in South Korea, not North Korea.

U.S. officials in particular who have strongly criticized the current South Korean government's passive attitude toward human rights in North Korea have been selected as witnesses, and it is expected that the focus will be, not only on the issue of leaflets to North Korea, but also on the current state of South Korean democracy which enforced this legislation.

Scheduled for April 15 at 10AM, the 2-hour virtual hearing was titled "Civil and Political Rights in the Republic of Korea: Implications for Human Rights on the Peninsula", supporting the above-mentioned expectation.

In fact, some of the witnesses who are to attend the hearing have signaled their intent to publicly raise fundamental concerns about the situation of South Korean democracy, which have been consistently raised in the United States since the beginning of the Moon Jae-in administration, and to emphasize South Korea's shared values with its ally, the United States.

One U.S. witness, Suzanne Scholte, Chairman of the North Korea Freedom Coalition, stated in a phone call with VOA, "I've agreed to testify about the impact of what's going on with some of the things that are happening in South Korea. Obviously, it impacts my work because my work

is all about getting information into North Korea, and all the things that we're doing are really important and they're being stopped."

[Recording: Suzanne Scholte, Chairman of North Korea Freedom Coalition] "I've agreed to testify about the impact of what's going on with some of the things that are happening in South Korea. Obviously, it impacts my work because my work is all about getting information into North Korea, and all the things that we're doing are really important and they're being stopped."

She then stated, "I am happy to have the opportunity to testify about this issue."

Chairman Scholte who has brought international attention to North Korean human rights for the past 20 years previously told VOA in February, "This is the most opportune time for the Biden administration to reach out to those in authority to offer another way forward and imagine North Korea without the Kim regime."

Attorney Gordon Chang, another witness, stated that, "the significance is that the US is now starting to pay attention to some serious human rights, and other problems in South Korea," and. "This I think is going to be the focus of the hearings...This is an issue of human rights and an issue of democracy and Moon Jae-in has been attacking democratic institutions in South Korea. So, South Korea's democracy is under attack by its own president."

[Recording: Gordon Chang, attorney] "I think the significance is that the US is now starting to pay attention to some serious human rights, and other problems in South Korea. We're no longer ignoring them...This I think is going to be the focus of the hearings...This is an issue of human rights and an issue of democracy and Moon Jae-in has been attacking democratic institutions in South Korea. So, South Korea's democracy is under attack by its own president."

Attorney Gordon Chang stated that while he could not reveal the specific contents of what he was going to testify, he said that he plans to argue that "it was reversing decades of democratization." He will argue that "When Moon Jae-in was inaugurated, he said he was going to push South Korea further toward democracy, but what he has done is he has pushed South Korea towards North Korea's definition of democracy and away from what everybody else thinks about what the term means."

[Recording: Gordon Chang, Attorney] "It was reversing decades of democratization. When Moon Jae-in was inaugurated, he said he was going to push South Korea further toward democracy, but what he has done is he has pushed South Korea towards North Korea's definition of democracy and away from what everybody else thinks about what the term means."

In addition to Chairman Suzanne Scholte and attorney Gordon Chang, Human Rights Watch Asia Advocacy Director John Sifton, Quincy Institute Senior Research Fellow Jessica Lee, and former South Korean Ambassador to Russia Lee In-ho will also attend the hearing as witnesses, as well as Jeon Soo-mi, a lawyer who has claimed that leaflet launches to North Korea are useless.

Human rights experts in Washington say that it is unusual for Washington to hold a hearing to evaluate the status of democracy of an ally like South Korea, but since the roots of the alliance are not only in military and diplomacy but also in shared values, this event could be used as an opportunity to strengthen the alliance.

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), assessed that “These are all very good witnesses. They're great Americans to care about Korea as well. I think that the major significance of this hearing is that the United States does care about the state of democracy and freedom and human rights in South Korea.”

[Recording: Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director] “These are all very good witnesses. They're great Americans to care about Korea as well. I think that the major significance of this hearing is that the United States does care about the state of democracy and freedom and human rights in South Korea. Because we are allies, sometimes things go right, sometimes things go wrong. And we feel free to speak up. That's what this is about nothing else. So, this is no problem to South Korea. This is rather an attempt to help out our friends, partners and allies.”

He then explained, “Because we are allies, sometimes things go right, sometimes things go wrong. And we feel free to speak up. That's what this is about nothing else. So, this is no problem to South Korea. This is rather an attempt to help out our friends, partners and allies.”

Director Scarlatoiu stated in regard to the anti-leaflet law that has become the purpose for holding the hearing, “I run the US Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, HRNK and every time I see that the voices of North Korean escapees are muffled, every time I see that North Korean human rights organizations are defunded, muffled or pressed, this is my issue. It's a very big issue...It's a very big reflection on the current state of South Korean democracy.”

[Recording: Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director] “I run the US Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, HRNK and every time I see that the voices of North Korean escapees are muffled, every time I see that North Korean human rights organizations are defunded, muffled or pressed, this is my issue. It's a very big issue...It's a very big reflection on the current state of South Korean democracy. I have been a student of South Korea for almost 31 years now. I love that country. And that's why I need to speak up. I came from Romania, which was just barely emerging from the depths of communist dictatorship at the time, and South Korea gave me a great opportunity which I still appreciate...You know, here in the United States, we kind of deal with our own issues but we're getting there. And, you know, we have to talk to our friends in South Korea.”

He added, “I came from Romania, which was just barely emerging from the depths of communist dictatorship at the time, and South Korea gave me a great opportunity which I still appreciate...You know, here in the United States, we kind of deal with our own issues but we're getting there. And, you know, we have to talk to our friends in South Korea.”

Robert King, former Special Envoy for North Korean human rights issues at the U.S. State Department, stated, “I think it [the hearing] reflects the concerns about the legislation about its intent and about its likely effect. I would think that there is some concern from members of Congress about the legislation, it's gotten a lot of attention,” and anticipated that, “It provides a good opportunity to look into what's going on.”

[Recording: Robert King, former State Department Special Envoy for North Korean human rights issues] “I think it reflects the concerns about the legislation about its intent and about its likely effect. I would think that there is some concern from members of Congress about the legislation, it's gotten a lot of attention. It's been controversial. And I think there's members of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission who were interested in having some of these issues aired. It provides a good opportunity to look into what's going on.”

Former Special Envoy King stated, “I'm not sure it's [launching leaflets] the most effective way of doing it...Their claims that sending material into North Korea via balloon is dangerous and that kind of thing. There is no evidence that I have seen that suggests in fact that there is a danger of sending materials via balloon.”

[Recording: Robert King, former State Department Special Envoy for North Korean human rights issues] “I'm not sure it's the most effective way of doing it...Their claims that sending material into North Korea via balloon is dangerous and that kind of thing. There is no evidence that I have seen that suggests in fact that there is a danger of sending materials via balloon...There is information that comes into North Korea by that means, and unless there's better evidence than I've seen, the argument that it's unsafe doesn't seem to me to be terribly sound.”

He then added, “There is information that comes into North Korea by that means, and unless there's better evidence than I've seen, the argument that it's unsafe doesn't seem to me to be terribly sound.”

Earlier, the South Korean Ministry of Unification (MoU) explained that the purpose of the revision of this law was to bring human rights values such as promoting North Koreans’ right to information and values such as the protection of life and safety of residents near the border into harmony with each other.

South Korea's Development of Inter-Korean Relations Act stipulates punishment of up to three years in prison or a fine of up to 30 million won for loudspeaker broadcasting, visual media, flyers, etc. on the Military Demarcation Line.

In regard to how the South Korean MoU’s remarks seemed to belittle the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, the congressional body holding the hearing, human rights experts have criticized that it should not look down on such an important body that is recognized as a symbol of liberal democracy and human rights.

Earlier, South Korean MoU deputy spokesperson Cha Deok-chul said during a regular briefing on the 9th, “The U.S. Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission’s hearing is different from that of domestic hearings, such as not having voting authority, and it is more like a policy research group.”

Having previously worked as chief of staff to Congressman Tom Lantos and directed the establishment of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus (which later was renamed the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission), former State Department Special Envoy for North Korean human rights issues Robert King stated, “The membership of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Council is are all members of the US House of Representatives. These are all congressmen who sit on these panels, and although the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission does not have legislative authority, the members who sit on that panel and who attend and who have called this hearing are people who are on all of the various committees of the House of Representatives,” revealing that this hearing should not be taken lightly.

[Recording: Robert King, former State Department Special Envoy for North Korean human rights issues] “The membership of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Council is are all members of the US House of Representatives. These are all congressmen who sit on these panels, and although the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission does not have legislative authority, the members who sit on that panel and who attend and who have called this hearing are people who are on all of the various committees of the House of Representatives.”

He explained, “one of the things that they are doing is using this as a vehicle to call attention to the problem. And when members of Congress, whether they are sitting in a formal hearing, or whether they're having a Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission public hearing, they're talking about these issues, they're raising the problems, and they're educating their colleagues about what's going on. I would not underestimate the significance of this kind of hearing.”

[Recording: Robert King, former State Department Special Envoy for North Korean human rights issues] “Furthermore, one of the things that they are doing is using this as a vehicle to call attention to the problem. And when members of Congress, whether they are sitting in a formal hearing, or whether they're having a Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission public hearing, they're talking about these issues, they're raising the problems, and they're educating their colleagues about what's going on. I would not underestimate the significance of this kind of hearing.”

Director Scarlatoiu assessed that, “They [the MOU] are true friends of the US-South Korea alliance, that's number one. Number two, I think this is a bit of disrespectful comments they made. It's a very important and a very serious matter. So, it's disconcerting to hear this comment. The Lantos Commission has done so much great work dealing with human rights all over the world.”

[Recording: Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director] “They are true friends of the US-South Korea alliance, that's number one. Number two, I think this is a bit of disrespectful comments they made. It's a very important and a very serious matter. So, it's disconcerting to hear this

comment. The Lantos Commission has done so much great work dealing with human rights all over the world."

Emphasizing that former Congressman Tom Lantos, who passed in 2008, was the only ever Holocaust survivor to serve in the U.S. Congress, he stated, "He was the only Holocaust survivor to sit in the US Congress. So, every time we speak about the Tom Lantos Commission, I think we have to remember his legacy."

[Recording: Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director] "All of us have to remember the name of Tom Lantos. He was the only Holocaust survivor to sit in the US Congress. So, every time we speak about the Tom Lantos Commission, I think we have to remember his legacy. We have to remember who we are as democratic countries—respect human rights. We have to remember that we made a promise that the Holocaust will never happen again. Again, Tom Lantos was a survivor and there is a slow motion Holocaust happening in North Korea right now. So in my view, it is a very serious matter."

Attorney Gordon Chang stated, "If the unification ministry thinks that, then they don't have to say anything. Obviously, these guys are worried, and they're worried because they know that they are moving South Korea towards authoritarianism, and maybe even totalitarianism. So that's the reason why they're worried about any action on the part of any government around the world."

[Gordon Chang, attorney] "If the unification ministry thinks that, then they don't have to say anything. Obviously, these guys are worried, and they're worried because they know that they are moving South Korea towards authoritarianism, and maybe even totalitarianism. So that's the reason why they're worried about any action on the part of any government around the world."

Meanwhile, an individual in Washington involved with preparations for the hearing told VOA during a call on the 13th that "the hearings may have been prompted by concerns that South Korea's anti-leaflet law could undermine efforts to promote North Korean human rights, but organizers plan to further examine whether the democratic system in Korea which brought about this decision can coexist with the democratic values of the United States.

This was Sungwon Baik with VOA News

*Translated by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern*

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Prepared by Sophia Hapin, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250802202028/https://mailchi.mp/53b63499f3cc/hrnk-news-itemsdemocracy-setbackswitnesses-for-the-nk-leaflet-hearing?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, April 20, 2021**

# Foreign food and drinks reappear in Pyongyang after months of disrupted trade; The Leaflets Conundrum

**In North Korea:**
Another 'Arduous March' Would Be a Major Failure for Kim Jong-un (*The National Interest*, 4/19/2021)
Foreign food and drinks reappear in Pyongyang after months of disrupted trade (*NK News*, 4/20/2021)
Majority of new houses in Pyongyang to be given to party cadres (*Daily NK*, 4/20/2021)
N.K.'s largest youth group to hold first congress in 5 years next week (*Yonhap*, 4/20/2021)
N.K. leader congratulates Cuban president on election as new ruling party chief (*Yonhap*, 4/20/2021)
N. Korea hands down order regarding issuance of trade certificates (*Daily NK*, 4/20/2021)
North Korea claims zero confirmed cases of COVID-19 after testing 23,826 people (*NK News*, 4/20/2021)
North Korea Is More Isolated Than Ever Before (*The National Interest*, 4/20/2021)
North Korea Wants to Rebuild Its Economy but Will Keep Testing Weapons Anyway (*The National Interest*, 4/19/2021)
North Korean hackers use new method to dodge security programs (*NK News*, 4/20/2021)
Why Kim Announced Another Arduous March and Why He Will Fail (*The National Interest*, 4/19/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Chairman of commission steps down over Cheonan reinvestigation controversy (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 4/20/2021)
Gov't commission chief offers to resign over decision to reinvestigate Cheonan ship sinking (*Yonhap*, 4/20/2021)
S. Korea again faces debate over female military draft (*Yonhap*, 4/20/2021)
South Korea to launch mentorship programs for North Korean defectors (*UPI*, 4/19/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
The leaflets conundrum (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 4/20/2021)

**International:**
Biden-Suga summit leaves Moon with few options (*The Korea Herald*, 4/20/2021)
Economic superpowers promise to stop North Korea's nukes (*NK News*, 4/20/2021)

March, 2021: what to make of the rise in North Korea-China trade? (*North Korean Economy Watch*, 4/20/2021)
New policy approach for nuke-armed North Korea (*The Korea Times*, 4/20/2021)
The Benefits of Early Sanctions Relief in North Korea (*The National Interest*, 4/20/2021)
U.S.-North Korea Relations will Follow Same Pattern Despite Coronavirus (*The National Interest*, 4/19/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Kim Jong-un promised his people would never have to suffer a similar famine again, but if he thinks he could get away with one now then that means his grip on power is secure. (Robert Kelly, *The National Interest*)
- Several stores in North Korea's capital city restocked foreign food items and soft drinks after months of imported food shortages, informed sources told NK News on Tuesday. The return of these outside goods adds further weight to recent rumors that North Korea is gradually reopening its borders to trade after months of isolation spurred by COVID-19. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News)*
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un gave instructions this year for the construction of riverside terraced houses in Potonggang District and asked that the houses be distributed as gifts to meritorious citizens from every field, such as labor innovators, particularly meritorious citizens, scientists, educators, writers, and other important human assets. (Lee Sang Yong, *Daily NK)*
- North Korea's largest youth organization will hold its first congress in five years next week, state media said Tuesday, in an apparent effort to tighten ideological discipline amid concerns about younger generations' increasing exposure to outside influences. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un congratulated Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel on his election as the new powerful head of its ruling communist party and vowed to strengthen bilateral ties, state media said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean authorities recently handed down an order regarding the issuance of waku (trade certificates) to each trade agency, suggesting that Sino-North Korean trade will soon restart after Kim Il Sung's birthday on Apr. 15. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea recently claimed to have zero confirmed cases of COVID-19, despite testing nearly 24,000 people for a virus that has killed more than 3 million people around the world. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- Pyongyang is growing increasingly secluded. And lacking close ties with even its traditional partners in Moscow and Beijing, Pyongyang is also growing increasingly bellicose. (Thomas Byrne, *The National Interest*)
- Pyongyang will keep using pressure and military tests in an attempt to get Washington to the negotiating table over sanctions relief in exchange for little-to-nothing. (Malcolm Davis, *The National Interest*)
- Hackers linked to North Korea deployed a new means of extracting malware by hiding it inside a legitimate-looking command to convert a PNG image into a BMP image, according to a new report from security company Malwarebytes. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)

- The new Arduous March will attempt to break the free spirit of the North Korean people to ensure they follow socialist ideology, but this effort will fail. (Jihyun Park, *The National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- Lee In-lam, chairman of the Presidential Truth Commission on Deaths in the Military, announced his resignation on Tuesday over the commission's controversial decision to reopen a probe into the sinking of the Navy corvette Cheonan before it backpedaled over outrage from survivors and their families. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The chief of a presidential committee offered to resign on Tuesday, holding himself responsible for the committee's now-retracted decision to reinvestigate the deadly 2010 sinking of a South Korean warship by North Korea. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea has again been thrown into a debate over whether women should be drafted into the military alongside men, with political and social circles calling for its serious consideration amid chronically low birth rates. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- School-age North Korean defectors in the South are to receive mentoring and customized educational support to ease their transition into society, according to education agencies. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- North Korean defector Lee Min-bok from time to time, recently revealed frustration over the U.S. congressional hearing on the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission. Lee had high hopes, but he said the hearing didn't include in-depth discussions of South Korea's law banning the sending of propaganda leaflets to North Korea, which he expected. (Yeh Young-june, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- Last week's US-Japan summit has left few options for South Korean President Moon Jae-in. Moon may want to make a breakthrough in the stalled denuclearization talks through the upcoming summit with Biden, but the North Korea issue is not a top priority for the US president. Due to Korea's strategic ambiguity, the Korea-US alliance could be reduced to a regional alliance tackling North Korea only. (Lee Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)
- Top officials from seven of the world's most economically powerful countries vowed to work together on North Korea denuclearization in a joint statement issued on Tuesday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- According to Chinese customs data, Chinese exports to North Korea increased by 400 times in March, compared to the combined shipments in January and February of this year. (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, *North Korean Economy Watch*)
- The North Korean nuclear threat has been the most serious challenge to the South Korea-U.S. alliance for decades. At present, Washington and Seoul are not completely aligned on how best to deal with Pyongyang. (Kim Sang-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- Sanctions lose their potency when a country builds alternative means to source goods or when the civilian population suffers while there is no real change to sanctioned behavior. (Sang-Min Kim, *The National Interest*)
- As North Korea faces economic hardship and famine, the question is how Kim Jong-un might try to gain some much-needed sanctions relief. (Denny Roy, *The National Interest*)

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Prepared by Carter Thompson, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250802202759/https://mailchi.mp/664feb34704a/hrnk-news-itemsforeign-food-and-drinks-reappear-in-pyongyang-after-months-of-disrupted-tradethe-leaflets-conundrum?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, April 21, 2021**

# Moon Urges Biden to 'Become Historic President' and Engage North Korea; China Secretly Sends Food Aid to North Korea by Rail

**In North Korea:**
COVID-19 Exacerbates North Korea's Bad Choices (*The National Interest*, 04/20/2021)
Data reveals North Korean priorities as Pyongyang overcomes COVID-19 trade fears(*NK News*, 04/21/2021)
Kim Jong Un calls Cuba's new Communist Party leader 'comrade' (UPI, 04/20/2021)
N.K. leader stresses 'special' relations with Cuba in another congratulatory message to new ruling party chief (*Yonhap*, 04/21/2021)
N. Korea continues to work on submersible missile test barge at Nampo: report(*Yonhap*, 04/21/2021)
N. Korea releases details about development of "real-time license plate recognition technology" (*Daily* NK, 04/21/2021)
N. Korea tightens antivirus measures in border city along China (*Yonhap*, 04/21/2021)
North Korea: balancing the budget through cybercrime (*Late Night Live with Phil Adams*, 04/21/2021)
North Korea claims no virus case confirmed after thousands of tests: WHO (*Kyodo News*, 04/21/2021)
North Korean Escapees Discuss Human Rights at HKS Event (*The Harvard Crimson*, 04/21/2021)
Onsong County woman arrested for stealing grain (*Daily* NK, 04/21/2021)
Think the Coronavirus Is Curbing Kim's Atomic Appetite? Think Again. (*The National Interest*, 04/20/2021)

**In South Korea:**
In NYT interview, Moon urges Washington to resume dialogue with Pyongyang(*Yonhap*, 04/21/2021)
Moon still holds hope of Pyongyang joining Tokyo Olympics (*The Korea Herald*, 04/21/2021)
Moon Urges Biden to 'Become Historic President' and Engage North Korea (*KBS World*, 04/21/2021)

Navy reaffirms commitment to aircraft carrier project (*The Korea Herald*, 04/21/2021)
South Korea muscles in on global arms trade (*Al Jazeera*, 04/21/2021)
South Korean leader pushes Biden to restart nuclear talks with North, knocks Trump(*The Hill*, 04/21/2021)
South Korean president: Trump 'beat around the bush' on North Korea diplomacy(*Politico*, 04/21/2021)
Unification ministry mulling giving local governments early approval for inter-Korean projects (*Yonhap*, 04/21/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
FM calls N. Korea's cross-border firing a 'minor' violation of military peace deal(*Yonhap*, 04/21/2021)
South Korea demands North Korea pay for blown-up diplomatic building (*NK News*, 04/21/2021)

**International:**
After Trump 'Failed,' South Korean Leader Hopes Biden Can Salvage Nuclear Deal(*The New York Times*, 04/21/2021)
China, North Korea poised to resume freight rail links as trade revives (*Reuters*, 04/21/2021)
China, North Korea seek resumption of trade, Beijing's foreign ministry says (*UPI*, 04/20/2021)
China, North Korea 'worst for religious persecution' (*UCA News*, 04/21/2021)
China Secretly Sends Food Aid to North Korea by Rail (*RFA*, 04/20/2021)
Last-remaining int'l aid workers leave N. Korea: Russian official (*Yonhap*, 04/21/2021)
Libya's Health Ministry seeks North Korean help in managing hospitals in the south(*Libya Herald*, 04/21/2021)
N. Korean missiles and cyber capabilities pose threats to U.S.: generals (*Yonhap*, 04/20/2021)
Put alliance at center (*The Korea Herald*, 04/21/2021)
Top US Commanders Assess That N. Korea Poses Continuous Threat (*KBS World*, 04/21/2021)
What to Make of China's New Special Representative on Korean Peninsula Affairs(*38 North*, 04/20/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- At some point, the international community may need to induce Kim to face responsibility for his choices. Kim could fix his problems by freezing his nuclear weapon production as a first step toward his promised denuclearization. Such an action could gain him significant sanctions relief and shift the resources being wasted on nuclear weapons to taking care of the North Korean people. (Bruce W. Bennett, *The National Interest*)
- Amid swirling rumors that North Korea is about to accept more imported goods after months of abysmal trade, new Chinese data shows that the DPRK bought fertilizer, fuel and pesticides from Beijing last month. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- Kim Jong Un congratulated the new leader of Cuba's Communist Party, a day after President Miguel Díaz-Canel's appointment to the top post. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

- North Korea is continuing to work on a submersible missile test stand barge at its Nampo shipyard, a U.S. think tank said Tuesday, suggesting the work could be part of preparations for a ballistic missile test. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un stressed the country's "special" strategic relations with Cuba in another message congratulating President Miguel Diaz-Canel on his election as the new powerful head of its ruling communist party, according to state media Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean authorities claim to have used artificial intelligence (AI) to develop real-time license plate recognition technology. Given that the technology was developed to work within North Korea's low-level technological environment, the new system looks set to be applied across a wide-range of spheres. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea is stepping up measures to ward off the new coronavirus in a city along the border with China, state media said Wednesday, amid speculation the move could be a precursor to easing border restrictions. (*Yonhap*)
- Many states are hacking other countries for intelligence, intellectual property and political purposes. North Korea is the only one involved in raising funds for the state through cybercrime. (Phillip Adams, *Late Night Live with Phil Adams*)
- North Korea still claims no infection cases with the novel coronavirus have been confirmed at home although it has so far carried out tests on around 24,000 people, according to a recent report released by the World Health Organization. (*Kyodo News*)
- Seven escapees of North Korea participated in a panel discussion at the Kennedy School Tuesday to discuss human rights violations in North Korea and their efforts to bring more freedoms to the people there. (Isabel G. Skomro, *The Harvard Crimson*)
- As North Korean food shortages continue to worsen, the Ministry of Social Security reportedly arrested an accountant employed at a farm in Onsong County, North Hamgyong Province, for illegally accumulating wealth by stealing grain. (Kim Yoo Jin, *Daily NK*)
- More than one year into the coronavirus pandemic which has left no corner of the globe untouched, North Korea maintains that it has zero coronavirus cases. This assertion rests on grounds that are tenuous at best. (Soo Kim, *The National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korean President Moon Jae-in stressed the importance of the United States restarting dialogue with North Korea at an early date, speaking during an interview with The New York Times. (*Yonhap*)
- President Moon Jae-in is not ruling out the possibility of North Korea participating in the upcoming Tokyo Olympics, which he said could pave the way for the two Koreas to co-host the 2032 Olympics, according to a senior Cheong Wa Dae official on Wednesday. (Lee Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)
- President Moon Jae-in has urged U.S. President Joe Biden to engage North Korea to help resolve a protracted stalemate in negotiations over denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. (*KBS World*)
- An aircraft carrier will strengthen South Korea's naval power at a relatively affordable price, the Navy said Wednesday, amid controversy surrounding its 2 trillion-won ($1.8 billion) project to build the first aircraft carrier by 2033. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)

- South Korea celebrated its entry into the “elite group of fighter jet producers” this month, unveiling its domestically-developed KF-21 Boramae in a blaze of lights and pop music and a glowing endorsement from President Moon Jae-in. (Frank Smith, *Al Jazeera*)
- South Korea's president called for President Biden to restart negotiations with North Korea over its nuclear program in an interview published Wednesday, calling the matter an issue of survival for his country while criticizing former President Trump. (John Bowden, *The Hill*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in criticized former President Donald Trump’s diplomacy toward North Korea and failure to achieve denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula during his time in office. (Quint Forgey, *Politico*)
- The unification ministry is considering giving local governments the go-head for inter-Korean cooperation projects even before concrete deals are signed as part of efforts to further promote cross-border exchanges, officials said Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong on Wednesday described North Korea's firing of gunshots across the border last year as a "minor" violation of an inter-Korean military agreement meant to reduce tensions. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea’s foreign minister demanded that North Korea apologize and pay for the joint liaison office it blew up last summer, further casting doubt on Pyongyang’s strength as he condemned its “senseless” insults on Wednesday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**International:**

- President Moon Jae-in of South Korea has a message for the United States: President Biden needs to engage now with North Korea. (Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*)
- China is set to resume cargo train service with North Korea, people familiar with the matter said, following a 15-month border closure due to COVID-19, as trade with the impoverished and isolated country begins to rebound. (Yew Lun Tian, *Reuters*)
- China has offered to strengthen cooperation with North Korea as the two countries could be resuming trade of essential goods. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- Religious persecution in China and North Korea, restrictions on religious freedom in dozens of countries and the continuing threat of violence at the hands of religious fundamentalists belonging to a variety of faiths all have worsened since 2018, said Aid to the Church in Need, a papal foundation and Catholic charity. (Cindy Wooden, *UCA News*)
- A freight train loaded with Chinese corn has arrived in North Korea, the first international cargo train to cross the Sino-Korean border in more than a year amid warnings of dire shortages in the impoverished North, sources in China told RFA. (Jieun Kim, RFA)
- The last-remaining aid workers stationed in North Korea left the country in March, a Russian news service reported Wednesday, citing a Russian official, as Pyongyang has maintained tight border controls amid concerns over the coronavirus pandemic. (*Yonhap*)
- Libya’s Health Ministry is seeking North Korea’s help in managing some of its hospitals in the south of the country. (Sami Zaptia, *Libya Herald*)
- North Korea continues to pose threats to the United States both in real life and cyberspace, top U.S. military officials said Tuesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

- The first US-Japan summit of the Joe Biden administration, as expected, dealt with the need for a united front against China as its top priority. The leaders of both countries focused on putting pressure on China in many areas, including technology. They also reaffirmed their commitment to the complete denuclearization of North Korea. (*The Korea Herald*)
- In a statement submitted to the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee on Tuesday, Adm. Charles Richard, commander of the U.S. Strategic Command, said the North remains a security challenge with activities that threaten regional stability and defy international norms. (*KBS World*)
- The choice for this assignment shows Beijing's desire to entrust this delicate issue to a veteran diplomat with rich experience in Pyongyang. However, what's more interesting is the timing and message this appointment sends, suggesting China sees renewed diplomacy on the horizon. (Yun Sun, *38 North*)

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Prepared by Sophia Hapin, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250802202917/https://mailchi.mp/5a3ed6fa78c5/hrnk-news-itemsmoon-urges-biden-to-become-historic-president-and-engage-north-koreachina-secretly-sends-food-aid-to-north-korea-by-rail?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, April 22, 2021**

## N. Korea tightening up ties with communist nations; Bill on reuniting families separated by Korean War passes US Congress committee

**In North Korea:**
Money or War: Why North Korea Sent Missiles to Israel's Enemies (*The National Interest*, 04/22/2021)
N.K. leader sends third congratulatory message to Cuba's new president (*Yonhap*, 04/22/2021)
N. Korea seeking to defeat U.S. missile defenses: CRS report (*Yonhap*, 04/22/2021)
North Korea tightening up ties with communist nations (*The Korea Times*, 04/22/2021)
There are growing signs that official trade will soon begin between China and North Korea (*Daily* NK, 04/22/2021)
WHO aims to eliminate malaria in North Korea by 2025 (NK *News*, 04/22/2021)

**In South Korea:**
NK founder's controversial autobiography published in South Korea (*The Korea Herald*, 04/22/2021)

South Korean publisher releases memoirs of North's founder (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/22/2021)
Unification ministry to look into how N.K. founder's memoirs hit bookshelves in S. Korea (*Yonhap*, 04/22/2021)

**International:**
Bill on reuniting families separated by Korean War passes US Congress committee(*NK News*, 04/22/2021)
Detention facilities in Dandong are "full" of defectors (*Daily NK*, 04/22/2021)
I'm terrified Kim Jong-un will chop me up – but he can go to hell, says North Korean defector (*The Sun*, 04/21/2021)
Seoul: Peace declaration ending Korean War under U.S. review (*UPI*, 04/21/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- In 1999, North Korea tried to blackmail Israel: give us a billion dollars, it said, or we will sell ballistic missiles to your enemies. The Israelis turned them down. That's the claim made in a book by a senior North Korean diplomat who defected to South Korea in 2016. (Michael Peck, *The National Interest*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has sent his third congratulatory message to Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel this week alone, expressing hope that relations between the two countries will "grow stronger," according to state media Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea appears to be working to develop capabilities that can degrade or even defeat U.S. missile defense systems deployed in its region, a congressional report suggested. The Congressional Research Service (CRS) report also noted the North's efforts to develop weapons may be more than just a political statement. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea is making a series of outreaches to communist nations and other Kim regime-friendly countries to tighten up ties with them, showing a stark contrast to its strategy of severing its connections with Seoul and Washington. (Nam Hyun-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- After fifteen months of economic hardship due to the COVID-19 border blockade, there are growing signs that the North Korea-China border will reopen soon. In fact, Daily NK recently obtained an image of a North Korean ship collecting sand in the Yalu River. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- The World Health Organization (WHO) plans to eliminate malaria in North Korea and two dozen other countries by 2025, the organization announced on Wednesday. The initiative will use "substantial technical and on-the-ground support" to eradicate malaria in eight countries including the DPRK, as well as 17 countries selected from a previous malaria program, the WHO stated in a press release. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- A published autobiography on the late North Korean founder Kim Il-sung has ignited controversy in South Korea, as possession of the book, deemed an anti-national propaganda material, could violate security laws. (Ko Jun-tae, *The Korea Herald*)
- A South Korean publisher released North Korean founder Kim Il Sung's memoirs for the first time, without seeking government approval, sparking controversy domestically. The first volume of the memoir, "Reminiscences: With the Century," was first released by the North's ruling Workers' Party publisher in 1992 to mark the 80th birthday of Kim ll Sung, the grandfather of current leader Kim Jong-un. There are eight published volumes of

"With the Century," including two released after Kim Il Sung's death in 1994. (Jeong Yong-soo, Chung Yeong-gyo, and Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- The unification ministry will look into how memoirs of North Korea's national founder Kim Il-sung hit bookshelves in South Korea without government approval and take action if necessary, an official said Thursday. On Wednesday, a local publishing company said that it has begun selling the eight-volume memoirs, titled "With the Century," in South Korea for the first time since the books were published by the North Korean regime in the early 1990s. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- A bill requiring the U.S. State Department to report to Congress on reunions of families separated by the Korean War is now one step closer to becoming law after passing a House committee. On Wednesday, the U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs passed the Divided Families Reunification Act, reintroduced by New York Representative Grace Meng after it failed to pass a vote in the Senate at the end of the previous Congress. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- Detention facilities for North Korean defectors caught in China are reportedly at full capacity. According to a source, arrests of North Korean defectors have increased as more North Koreans cross the border due to economic difficulties at home. However, North Korean authorities have refused to abide by China's request to extradite the defectors to their home country in the name of COVID-19 prevention. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- Yeonmi Park, 27, a human rights activist, told The Sun Online she believes she has been on the dictator's "target list" for years and worries she'll be assassinated like Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi. Now living in Chicago, Yeonmi bravely speaks out against the murderous Kim dynasty - and likens the despot to Adolf Hitler or Joseph Stalin. (Mark Hodge, *The Sun*)
- South Korea's top diplomat said the United States is conducting a "serious review" of President Moon Jae-in's proposal of an end-of-war declaration with North Korea that could replace the 1953 Armistice with a peace treaty. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)

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Prepared by Rick Herssevoort, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250802203155/https://mailchi.mp/fd5f098cbb29/hrnk-news-itemsn-korea-tightening-up-ties-with-communist-nationsbill-on-reuniting-families-separated-by-korean-war-passes-us-congress-committee?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, April 23, 2021**

## North Korea: Perennial Arsenal of Terror; North Korea's solution to economic crisis?

**Top News:**
North Korea: Perennial Arsenal of Terror (*HRNK*, 04/22/2021)

**In North Korea:**
China, North Korea poised to resume freight rail links as trade revives (*Reuters*, 04/23/2021)
Defector group plans to send leaflets to N. Korea next week (*Yonhap*, 04/23/2021)
Money or War: Why North Korea Sent Missiles to Israel's Enemies (*National Interest*, 04/22/2021)
N.K.'s paper calls for post-war 'Chollima' spirit against challenges (*Yonhap*, 04/23/2021)
N. Korea recently established the "External Trade Information Technology Exchange Center" in Pyongyang (*Daily* NK, 04/23/2021)
N. Korean authorities try to persuade violators of COVID-19 guidelines to turn themselves in (*Daily* NK, 04/23/2021)
North Korea discourages computer game addiction, pushes tech in new short film(*NK News*, 04/23/2021)
North Korea Market Price Update: April 20, 2021 (*Daily* NK, 04/22/2021)
North Korea is Working to "Defeat" U.S. Missile Defense: Report (*National Interest*, 04/22/2021)
North Korean State Agencies "Officially" Resume Smuggling Goods from China(*RFA*, 04/22/2021)
North Korea's Coronavirus Economic Downturn Has Made It Weak (*National Interest*, 04/22/2021)
North Korea's Navy Could Swarm the South with Small Missile Boats (*National Interest*, 04/23/2021)
North Korea's solution to economic crisis? Judge officials by their performance (*NK News*, 04/23/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Defectors warned against sending leaflets into North Korea (UPI, 04/23/2021)
North Korea acted with restraint during guard post shooting, Seoul says (UPI, 04/23/2021)
After Trump 'Failed,' South Korean Leader Hopes Biden Can Salvage Nuclear Deal (*NY Times*, 04/23/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Publication of North Korea founder's memoir stirs controversy (*Korea Times*, 04/23/2021)
Two Koreas, one market: South Korean minister wants to merge economy with North (*NK News*, 04/22/2021)

**International:**
How the new military cost-sharing deal will affect the US and the Koreas (*NK News*, 04/23/2021)
Military fully ready to deter any aggression from North Korea: US commander (*Korea Times*, 04/23/2021)

Nuke Hunting: Can America Destroy North Korea's Ultimate Weapons? (*National Interest*, 04/23/2021)
Situation with North Korea is 'ripe' for diplomatic resolution: US commander (*NK News*, 04/23/2021)
Strategic command: U.S. 'ready for just about anything' from North Korea (*UPI*, 04/23/2021)
U.N. rapporteurs send letter to S. Korea voicing concerns over anti-Pyongyang leafleting ban (*Yonhap*, 04/22/2021)
U.S. fully ready to deter any aggression from N. Korea: U.S. commander (*Yonhap*, 04/23/2021)
Why Does New President Biden Follows Old Policy on North Korea? (*National Interest*, 04/22/2021)

**Top News:**

- Joshua Stanton is the author of HRNK's report "Arsenal of Terror" (2015). The report generated critical information and analysis credited for contributing to the relisting of North Korea as a state-sponsor of terrorism. In this report, Stanton addresses the threat to emigres inside South Korea, the ongoing need for legislation to clarify definitions and process, and the recent instances of terror by the North Korean regime (e.g. assassination of Kim Jong-nam at Kuala Lumpur international airport). (*HRNK*)

**In North Korea:**

- China is set to resume cargo train service with North Korea, people familiar with the matter said, following a 15-month border closure due to COVID-19, as trade with the impoverished and isolated country begins to rebound. The bridge linking the city of Dandong with Sinuiju, across the Yalu River in North Korea, will partially reopen to allow cargo train service "sometime before or after May 1". (Yew Tian, *Reuters*)
- A North Korean defector group said Friday it plans to send thousands of leaflets to North Korea next week despite a recently enacted ban on such leafleting. Park Sang-hak, a defector who heads Fighters for a Free North Korea, told Yonhap News Agency on Friday that his group plans to send leaflets across the border at an unannounced time and location from this Sunday to May 1. (*Yonhap*)
- Here's What You Need To Remember: "North Korea will sell, export, transfer and will engage in proliferation of WMDs whenever the price is right, the buyers are right, the timing is right and conditions are good." (Michael Peck, *National Interest*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Friday called on its people to rev up efforts to achieve the country's economic goals, urging them to learn from a 1950s campaign designed to promote rapid development after the Korean War. The move comes as leader Kim Jong-un earlier this month called on the ruling Workers' Party to wage a tougher "Arduous March" to relieve its people of economic woes, pointing to the harsh period in the 1990s, when the country suffered from extreme poverty and massive starvation. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea recently established the "External Trade Information Technology Exchange Center" under the Cabinet's Ministry of External Economic Relations, Daily NK has learned. The new organization is located in Pyongyang's Nungra Trade Company building. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean authorities are reportedly trying to persuade violators of COVID-19 guidelines into turning themselves in. This new strategy starkly contrasts with the fact

that the authorities were referring to violators of COVID-19 protocols as "human trash" and treating them as serious enemies of the state's battle against the pandemic as recently as last month. North Korean authorities appear to have started using conciliatory measures to control behavior on the part of their citizens after the effectiveness of punitive methods hit its limit. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)

- North Korea's main state-run television channel aired a new short film this week meant to discourage video game addiction and promote science and technology. The film is part of the first new set of live-action dramas broadcast in over two years. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Market prices in North Korea as of April 20, 2021 sees an increase from rice to diesel. (*Daily NK*)
- Pyongyang has steadily and surely over the years improved its nuclear missiles and what they are capable of. As tension continues to ramp up between the United States and North Korea, that country is "working to develop capabilities that can degrade or even defeat U.S. missile defense systems deployed in its region." (Stephen Silver, *National Interest*)
- State agencies in North Korea have recently resumed "officially" smuggling goods from China for the first time in more than a year, indicating that trade between the northeast Asian neighbors could start flowing again. Freight by rail and ship has not flowed freely from China since the start of the coronavirus pandemic in January 2020. Fearing that the virus could spread into North Korea, Beijing and Pyongyang agreed to close down the 880-mile Sino-Korean border in a move that proved disastrous to an economy already pinched by UN and U.S. trade sanctions. (RFA)
- There is no question in anyone's mind that North Korea's economy, not exactly thriving in the best of times, is meandering in the doldrums. North Korean leader Kim Jong-un wouldn't be invoking the "great arduous march" of the famine-stricken 1990s if he didn't believe the Workers Party and the bureaucrats that staff the Kim dynasty failed the North Korean people. In fact, Kim openly wept last October during a military parade, apologizing to North Koreans for not meeting the economic promises he laid out in previous guidance. He can thank the coronavirus for that unseemly turn of events; Pyongyang's trade with China, its only major economic partner, decreased by 80 percent last year after the Kim regime adopted the strictest coronavirus-related border closures in the world. (Daniel R. DePetris, *National Interest*)
- Here's What You Need to Remember: In particular, the U.S. Navy is worried about swarm attacks, given that Iran will also use flotillas of small, fast boats to take on American warships in the narrow waters of the Persian Gulf. The navy recently test-fired a modified U.S. Army Hellfire antitank missile, reconfigured as an antiship missile, from a Littoral Combat Ship. (Michael Peck, *National Interest*)
- North Korea is facing a serious economic crisis and has so far tackled the issue by making market reforms, leveraging technocrats and reshuffling leadership to rely more greatly on individual expertise. (Martin Weiser, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea issued a warning to North Korean defectors and activists after groups said they plan to launch thousands of leaflets and U.S. dollar bills at the border. Seoul's unification ministry said Friday it plans to carry out the purpose of the amendment to

the Development of Inter-Korean Relations Act in order to "protect the lives and safety of South Korean citizens in the border region." (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

- South Korea's foreign minister is coming under fire for downplaying a shooting incident at the Korean demilitarized zone during a press conference. Chung Eui-yong said Wednesday at the Korea Press Center that North Korea acted with restraint at the heavily guarded border after delivering gunshots. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- President Moon Jae-in of South Korea has a message for the United States: President Biden needs to engage now with North Korea. In an interview with The New York Times, Mr. Moon pushed the American leader to kick-start negotiations with the government of Kim Jong-un, the leader of North Korea, after two years in which diplomatic progress stalled, even reversed. Denuclearization, the South Korean president said, was a "matter of survival" for his country. Choe Sang-Hun, *NY Times*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Controversy is rising over the publication of the memoir of North Korea founder Kim Il-sung here, as it was ruled anti-state material by the Supreme Court back in 2011. While the eight-volume series "With the Century" hit bookshelves in South Korea in early April, the Ministry of Unification said it would look into how the books are being sold and whether this violates the National Security Law. Local publisher Minjok Sarangbang, operated by a private organization promoting inter-Korean exchanges, released the memoir in early April. The books are unabridged, according to the publisher. (Kwon Mee-yoo, *Korea Times*)
- North and South Korea should unify their economies while maintaining different political systems. South Korean unification minister, Lee-In Young said that their approach should be aimed at the "one people, two countries, two systems and one market" model. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**International:**

- The resolution of a military cost-sharing deal between the United States and South Korea has weighty implications for the durability and direction of the alliance, as well as the credibility of deterrence against North Korea. (Jonathan R. Corrado, *NK News*)
- The United States is ready and able to deter any aggression from North Korea, the chief of the U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) said Thursday, also highlighting the U.S. security commitment to South Korea. (*Korea Times*)
- Perhaps because of the Iraq experience, many of the guidelines seem to apply less to an active enemy nation with weapons of mass destruction, and more to a collapsing state whose WMD sites must be secured. Many of these operations would seem to involve U.S. capabilities and decisionmaking at levels far above the level of a combat brigade. (Michael Peck, *National Interest*)
- A top U.S. military commander told reporters in Washington, D.C. on Thursday that he considered diplomacy to be the best way to deal with the threat from North Korea. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- The United States is prepared to handle any military threat from North Korea, the leader of the U.S. Strategic Command said, adding the country remains dedicated to fulfilling its security promises to South Korea. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- U.N. special rapporteurs voiced concerns that South Korea's anti-leafleting law could restrict freedom of expression in a letter sent to the government calling for further

clarification. Tomas Ojea Quintana, special rapporteur on North Korea's human rights situation, along with three other rapporteurs, made the appeal in a "communications" letter dated Monday, urging the South Korean government to provide additional information about the compliance of the anti-leafleting ban with international human rights law. (*Yonhap*)

- The United States is ready and able to deter any aggression from North Korea, the chief of the U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) said Thursday, also highlighting the U.S. security commitment to South Korea. Adm. Charles Richard, however, said the best way to resolve issues with North Korea is with diplomacy. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- At the first in-person bilateral meeting of his administration, President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minster Yoshihide Suga reaffirmed their mutual commitment to pursuing a denuclearized North Korea. These statements come nearly a month after President Biden singled out North Korea as Washington's number one foreign policy challenge in response to Pyongyang's recent ballistic missile tests. However, while the goal of a denuclearized North Korea is nearly considered gospel within the American foreign policy establishment, it would be remiss to allow such a misguided policy to go un-scrutinized. Viewed clearly, the aggressive pursuit of a denuclearized North Korea is not only founded on faulty assumptions, but it threatens to provoke the very nightmare Washington wishes to avoid. (Will Goode, *National Interest*)

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Prepared by Damian Reddy, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250802203618/https://mailchi.mp/02685cc22aa5/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-perennial-arsenal-of-terrornorth-koreas-solution-to-economic-crisis?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, April 24, 2021**

## Activist to defy controversial law with 500,000 leaflets for North Korea; North Korean ships active in China

**In North Korea:**
Activist to defy controversial law with 500,000 leaflets for North Korea (*NK News*,04/23/2021)
North Korea Says it Won't Make Chinese Wigs and False Eyelashes Once Trade Resumes (RFA, 04/24/2021)
North Korean ships active in China, data show (UPI, 04/23/2021)

**In South Korea:**
South Korea's president said Trump 'beat around the bush' on North Korea's nukes and his efforts 'failed' (*Insider*, 04/23/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
The Challenges of South and North Korea Hosting the 2032 Olympics (*38th North*, 04/24/2021)

**International:**
Trump says Kim Jong Un 'never respected' Moon Jae-in, slams cost-sharing deal(*NK News*, 04/23/2021

**In North Korea:**

- A prominent defector-activist said on Friday that his group would launch 500,000 anti-DPRK leaflets into North Korea, despite a controversial South Korean law banning such activities that took effect in March. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Chinese wig and false eyelash companies that outsource manufacturing to North Korea will have to look elsewhere after authorities declared that the country's companies would not be accepting manufacturing orders because young student laborers had been deployed in other jobs. (*RFA*)
- North Korean shipping vessels are active between China and North Korea and are receiving safety inspections overseas, monitoring shows. Data from the Port State Control Committee of the Asia-Pacific showed the North Korean ship Ryon Hwa 3 was inspected at the Chinese port of Yantai on March 28. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korean President Moon Jae-in during a new interview with the *New York Times* said that former President Donald Trump "failed" on the issue of the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. "He beat around the bush and failed to pull it through," Moon said, referring to Trump's efforts to get North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons. (John Haltiwanger, *Insider*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Historically, the Olympics have played an important role in inter-Korean dialogue, and majorities of South Koreans, according to polling data, support joint bids. Nonetheless, South and North Korea are likely to be frustrated again in their efforts to field combined teams because of political opposition in the South, problematic inter-Korean relations and reservations about the costs South Korea would have to bear to subsidize North Korean participation. (Timothy S. Rich, Isabel Eliassen and Madelynn Einhorn, *38th North*)

**International:**

- Former U.S. President Donald Trump said on Friday that Kim Jong Un "never respected" South Korean President Moon Jae-in, in apparent response to a *New York Times* interview this week in which Moon criticized Trump for the failure of U.S.-DPRK diplomacy in 2019. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)

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Prepared by Damian Reddy, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
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vist-to-defy-controversial-law-with-500000-leaflets-for-north-koreanorth-korean-ships-active-in-china?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, April 25, 2021**

# North Korea could stockpile nearly 250 nuclear weapons by 2027; Bookstore chain pulls memoirs of N.K. founder over controversy

**In North Korea:**
North Korea could stockpile nearly 250 nuclear weapons by 2027 - report (*Express*, 04/24/2021)
**In South Korea:**
Bookstore chain pulls memoirs of N.K. founder over controversy (*Yonhap*, 04/25/2021)
**International:**
China, North Korea poised to resume freight rail links as trade revives (*Reuters*, 04/24/2021)
Get off the tightrope (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/25/2021)
Scholte's concern with punishment against activists distributing leaflets to N. Korea (*Dong A Ilbo*, 04/24/2021)
US to North Korea sanctions violators: Prepare to 'lose liberty and property' (*NK Pro*, 04/25/02021**)**

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea could amass almost 250 nuclear weapons and "tens of intercontinental ballistic missiles" by 2027, a new report has claimed. (Brian McGleenon, *Express*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's biggest bookstore chain has ceased sales of memoirs of North Korean founder Kim Il-sung following a legal and political controversy surrounding the eight-volume series. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- China is set to resume cargo train service with North Korea, people familiar with the matter said, following a 15-month border closure due to COVID-19, as trade with the impoverished and isolated country begins to rebound. (Yew Lun Tian, *Reuters*)
- President Moon Jae-in made a comment that could work unfavorably for Seoul at a time it needs its traditional alliance to hasten imports of Covid-19 vaccines. In an interview with the New York Times on April 21, he advised U.S. President Joe Biden to "build on what President Donald Trump has left" as "it would be a mistake to kill the 2018 Singapore agreement" between Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Around mid and late April every year, North Korean defector groups and human rights activists for North Korea in Seoul and Washington become busy as the North Korea Freedom Week begins with various seminars and campaigns on the topic of human rights in North Korea. (*Dong A Ilbo*)

- The U.S. Department of Justice sent a foreboding message to those who help North Korea evade U.S. and U.N. sanctions on Friday: "Anyone who supports the DPRK's sanctions-busting efforts stands to lose both their liberty and their property," Manhattan attorney Audrey Strauss said. (Colin Zwirko, NK Pro)

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Prepared by Jungeun Lee, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250808133438/https://mailchi.mp/b6243e5c59ab/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-korea-could-stockpile-nearly-250-nuclear-weapons-by-2027bookstore-chain-pulls-memoirs-of-nk-founder-over-controversy?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, April 26, 2021**

## Inter-Korean talks must resume at early date at all levels: unification ministry

**Top News:**
VOA with Bechtol and Fitzpatrick (*VOA News*, 4/24/21)

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea tightens antivirus efforts amid increasing activities in spring season(*Yonhap*, 4/26/21)
North Korean authorities initiate "cleanup operation" of street vendors (*Daily NK*, 4/26/21)
North Korea is currently recruiting laborers to send to construction sites abroad(*Daily NK*, 4/26/21)
Members of N.K.'s largest youth group visit mausoleum ahead of congress (*Yonhap*, 4/26/21)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Could the DPRK Have Won the Korean War? (*National Interest*, 4/26/21)
Inter-Korean talks must resume at early date at all levels: unification ministry(*Yonhap*, 4/26/21)
N. Korea technically equipped to hold video summit with S. Korea: official (*Yonhap*, 4/26/21)
No breakthrough for inter-Korean ties on 3rd anniversary of Panmunjeom declaration(*The Korea Times*, 4/26/21)
South Korea reminds North Korea that its door is 'always open for talks' (*NK News*, 4/26/21)
Three years after historic Panmunjom Declaration, two Koreas remain deadlocked(*The Korea Herald*, 4/26/21)
Unification minister calls for inter-Korean cooperation in forestry sector (*Yonhap*, 4/26/21)
Would a Nuclear Bomb Have Won the Korean War? (*National Interest*, 4/26/21)

**International:**
New US bill calls for social media companies to ban North Korean accounts (*NK News*, 4/26/21)
Pope expresses willingness to visit N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 4/26/21)
US adjusts internal disagreements on North Korea policy (*The Korea Times*, 4/26/21)

**Top News:**

- "North Korea is certainly putting a lot of emphasis on submarine-launched ballistic missiles. When this latest one was paraded in January, the North Korean state news agency called it the world's most powerful weapon. Now, even by North Korean standards, that's an exaggeration. You might call it the world's most expensive mobile missile launcher, but we can't dismiss their advances in missile technology. Especially because these new systems are solid fuel, which are more useful as military weapons." (Ambassador Mark Fitzpatrick, *VOA News*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea is stepping up efforts to stay alert against the protracted coronavirus pandemic amid increasing economic activities in the spring season, according to state media Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- According to a Daily NK source, the North Korean authorities have initiated a "cleanup operation" targeting people who conduct business on streets and are taking them to forced labor camps. (Lee Chae Un, *NK News*)
- North Korea is in the midst of recruiting laborers to send abroad as part of full-fledged efforts to earn foreign currency, Daily NK has learned. (Seulkee Jang, *NK News*)
- Members of North Korea's largest youth group visited a mausoleum of the country's former leaders ahead of their planned participation in this week's congress of the group, state media reported Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- The loss of life during the Korean War was dreadful, but it's difficult to imagine a world in which the Pyongyang regime could have replicated the achievements of the ROK. (Robert Farley, *National Interest*)

**Inter-Korea Relationship:**

- The unification ministry called Monday for the resumption of inter-Korean talks at "all levels" at an early date on the eve of the anniversary of a historic 2018 summit between President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea is equipped with the necessary technology to hold video talks with South Korea, a unification ministry official said Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea is equipped with the necessary technology to hold video talks with South Korea, a unification ministry official said Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- Three years have passed since the April 27 Panmunjeom inter-Korean Declaration was made at the first summit between President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, but inter-Korean relations have since made little progress, due to uncertainty over the domestic and international situations of both countries, North Korea watchers said Monday. (Jung Da-min, *The Korea Times*)
- South Korea's unification minister extended another olive branch to North Korea on Monday, urging that the two countries resume talks after more than a year-long deadlock in diplomatic relations. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Tuesday is the third anniversary of the historic inter-Korean summit between South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, where the two leaders vowed for peace and reunification on the Korean Peninsula. Despite the flurry of efforts toward reconciliation since, hopes for peace on the long-divided peninsula

remain tempered by a deadlock in nuclear diplomacy and Pyongyang's recent escalation of tension. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)

- Unification Minister Lee In-young on Monday stressed the importance of inter-Korean cooperation in the forest sector, saying it will eventually benefit the people of the two Koreas by reducing carbon emissions on the Korean Peninsula. (*Yonhap*)
- In 1950, as U.S. forces retreated from China's onslaught across the Yalu River, General Douglas MacArthur called for strategic air attacks against China. Many believed that this would necessarily include the atomic bomb, America's "asymmetric advantage" of the time. (Robert Farley, *National Interest*)

**International:**

- A new bill in the U.S. Congress is proposing that social media companies ban certain users from North Korea and other countries defined in U.S. law as being state sponsors of terrorism. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- Pope Francis has expressed his willingness again to visit North Korea as he sympathized with the Korean people long separated by the 1950-53 Korean War, a senior South Korean bishop said Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- The United States seems to be fine-tuning different opinions between moderates and hard-liners within the Biden administration on its policy review of North Korea, which is believed to be in its final stages, according to Pyongyang watchers, Sunday. (Jung Da-min, *The Korea Times*)

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Prepared by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250808133813/https://mailchi.mp/7d7b8af910be/hrnk-news-itemsinter-korean-talks-must-resume-at-early-date-at-all-levels-unification-ministry?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, April 27, 2021**

## NK Claims Zero COVID Cases & Bans Criticism of China; NK-China border set to reopen; Moon says it's time to talk with NK

**Top News:**
"We must not prevent the influx of information from North Korea" (*Radio Free Asia*,
**In North Korea:**
N. Korean schools partially start resuming in-person classes: state media (*Yonhap*, 04/27/2021)
North Korea again claims zero COVID-19 cases after testing roughly 24,500 people(*NK News*, 04/26/2021)
North Korea Bans Criticism of China and Prejudice Towards Ethnic Chinese Residents (*Radio Free Asia*, 04/26/2021)

North Korean bank's demands 'stopped' UN banking channel (*NK Pro*, 04/27/2021)
North Korean government urges North Koreans to deposit all foreign currency into banks (*Daily NK*, 04/27/2021)
North Korea shows sign of airstrike drill around replica South Korean Blue House(*NK Pro*, 04/27/2021)
North Korea's Oil Procurement Networks (*Diplomat*, 04/27/2021)
North Korea still lacks electricity, but energy aid could be the future: Report (*NK News*, 04/27/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Moon: It's time to talk with North Korea (*Korea Herald*, 04/27/2021)
Moon says time approaching for resuming dialogue with North Korea (*Yonhap*, 04/27/2021)
North Korea's 3,000-ton submarine being closely watched, Seoul says (*UPI*, 04/26/2021)
Three years after meeting Kim Jong Un, South Korean president calls for talks (*NK News*, 04/27/2021)
Unification minister urges N. Korea to implement peace agreements on summit anniversary (*Yonhap*, 04/27/2021)

**International:**
Falling in Love Again: U.S.-North Korean Relations and the Biden Administration(*National Interest*, 04/26/2021)
How Russia and the US could work together on North Korea denuclearization (*NK Pro*, 04/26/2021)
Moon needs to show Biden what is possible to denuclearize N. Korea: Andy Kim(*Yonhap*, 04/27/2021)
Pope Francis open to North Korea visit, report says (*UPI*, 04/26/2021)
Pope Francis still willing to go to North Korea (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/26/2021)
President Moon hopes Biden summit will spark momentum to revive N. Korea peace process (*Arirang*, 04/27/2021)
Pyongyang- Beijing border looks set to reopen (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 04/26/2021)
South Korea's Moon hopes Biden summit will kickstart North Korea dialogue (UPI, 04/27/2021)
Two tragedies caused by North Korea's "COVID-19 phobia" (*Daily NK*, 04/27/2021)
U.S. must be ready to make concessions to N. Korea to advance denuclearization: lawmaker (*Yonhap*, 04/26/2021)
Why North Korean arms control is likely to fail, just like denuclearization (*NK News*, 04/26/2021)

**Top News:**

- A North Korean human rights group's plan to carry out the distribution of leaflets to the North despite South Korea's so-called "anti-leaflet law" has been announced. North Korean human rights activists have agreed that the flow of information into the country should not be stopped at any cost. (Albert Hong, *Radio Free Asia*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea appears to have started resuming in-person classes in schools, according to state media Tuesday, after the country shifted classes online last year over coronavirus concerns. The North's official newspaper, the Rodong Sinmun, and the Korean Central TV Broadcasting Station reported that offline classes reopened in 87 "model schools" in North Pyongan Province. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea claims that it has zero confirmed cases of COVID-19 after cumulatively testing more than 24,500 people, according to a new report from the World Health Organization (WHO). (Kelly Kasulis, *NK News*)
- Authorities in North Korea have threatened to punish citizens caught criticizing China or acting in a discriminatory manner toward the country's ethnic Chinese residents. (Jeong Yon Park, Leejin Jun, Eugene Whong, *Radio Free Asia*)
- Longtime efforts to restore a stable banking channel for international humanitarian operations in North Korea have reached a screeching halt due to demands from the nominated Pyongyang banking partner, Russia's Bank Sputnik told NK Pro on Monday. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK Pro*)
- The North Korean authorities have been assessing the reserves of foreign currency held by North Koreans and are urging them to deposit any non-North Korean cash at banks. A Daily NK source said that, in the long-term, the authorities plan to ban the use of foreign currency in transactions between North Korean citizens. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- Activity picked up around a North Korean military training area modeled after South Korea's presidential Blue House in recent days as Pyongyang prepared for annual spring drills that may simulate infiltration missions into Seoul. (Colin Zwirko, *NK Pro*)
- Diplomat author Mercy Kuo regularly engages subject-matter experts, policy practitioners, and strategic thinkers across the globe for their diverse insights into U.S. Asia policy. This conversation with Lucas Kuo – senior analyst at C4ADS and co-author of "Black Gold: Exposing North Korea's Oil Procurement Networks," a collaborative publication between the Center for Advanced Defense Studies (C4ADS) in Washington, D.C. and Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) in London – is the 269th in "The Trans-Pacific View Insight Series." (Mercy A. Kuo, *Diplomat*)
- Space station photos of the Korean Peninsula at night show a stark contrast between the two neighboring countries: South Korean cities glowing in electric light and most of North Korea cloaked in darkness, with the exception of the capital city of Pyongyang. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korea Relationship:**

- President Moon Jae-in on Tuesday reaffirmed his will to restore the collapsed diplomacy with North Korea in marking the third anniversary of his historic summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. (Lee Ji-yoon, *Korea Herald*)
- President Moon Jae-in said Tuesday that the time is drawing near for the two Koreas to resume dialogue, stressing the significance of their historic summit deal three years earlier. (Lee Chi-dong, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's new submarines are being monitored in South Korea as recent evidence shows Pyongyang could be preparing to test a submarine-launched ballistic missile. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)

- Three years ago today, all eyes were on the Korean Peninsula as South Korean President Moon Jae-in met with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at the inter-Korean border village of Panmunjom. On Tuesday — the anniversary of this historic event — Moon emphasized that it's time to resume talks with Pyongyang. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young urged North Korea on Tuesday to implement inter-Korean summit agreements and come out for talks as he marked the third anniversary of a historic 2018 summit between President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. (Koh Byun-joon, Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)

**International:**

- We may never learn whether the "maximum pressure" campaign in 2017 made the easing of tensions in 2018 possible. An equally plausible story is that Kim grew more comfortable with North Korea's deterrent and was therefore more willing to reach out. Clearer answers emerge in response to the question of what to do now about a nuclear North Korea. The way forward is to reestablish high-level engagement with denuclearization as a long-term goal. (William L. d'Ambruoso, *National Interest*)
- U.S. President Joe Biden recently declared that, despite the raft of issues in Russia-U.S. relations, denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula remains an issue of mutual interest for both Moscow and Washington. (Anthony V. Rinna, *NK Pro*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in needs to show what exactly is still possible to denuclearize North Korea when he meets U.S. President Joe Biden next month, a U.S. lawmaker said Monday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Pope Francis indicated that he is willing to travel to North Korea when he is ready, citing a need for peace on the Korean Peninsula after decades of national division. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- Pope Francis reaffirmed his willingness to visit North Korea, said a senior South Korean bishop Monday, recognizing the tremendous pain of the Korean people who have been separated for 70 years. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- President Moon Jae-in is calling for fresh efforts to resume peace talks with North Korea three years since his summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. (*Arirang*)
- Amid reports that North Korea and China will resume trade at the end of April, evidence of opening the border between the two countries, including the removal of a train shield is emerging. (Oh-Hyuk Kwon, *Dong-A Ilbo*) '
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in said Tuesday he anticipates that his meeting next month with U.S. President Joe Biden will get a stalled peace process with North Korea back on track. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- Amid North Korea's hardline attempts to prevent COVID-19 from spreading in the country, Daily NK has learned that a Chinese national was recently shot to death by North Korea's border patrol and a group of Chinese fishermen died when North Korean authorities failed to rescue them while their ship sank. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- The United States must be ready to make concessions to North Korea that could include temporary sanctions relief if necessary to advance the North's denuclearization process, a U.S. lawmaker said Monday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- A new day has dawned for U.S. foreign policy — especially when it comes to policy that involves North Korea. As such, the fantasy of "complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization" (CVID) is at an end, to be replaced with more realistic goals that do

not require the extremes of face-to-face meetings with Kim Jong Un or threats of total destruction. (Rob York, *NK News*)

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RFA Source

**“We must not prevent the influx of information from North Korea”**

Washington-Hong Albert honga@rfa.org
2021-04-23

Anchor: A North Korean human rights group's plan to carry out the distribution of leaflets to the North despite South Korea's so-called "anti-leaflet law" has been announced. North Korean human rights activists have agreed that the flow of information into the country should not be stopped at any cost. This is Albert Hong reporting.

Park Sang-hak, chairman of the Fighters for a Free North Korea, a South Korean organization made up of North Korean defectors, announced on the 23rd that they would distribute leaflets to the North by the end of this month.

"We decided to distribute leaflets between the 25th of this month and the 1st of next month to mark the annual North Korean Freedom Week," Chairman Park said. "We will set the date and location of the release according to the direction of the wind without releasing the specifics of the date or time to the public.”

"The leaflets include criticism of the three generations of hereditary dictatorship and a demand to distribute a minimum amount of food to the North Korean people," he also said. "We will send 500,000 leaflets to the North, 5,000 one-dollar bills, and brochures.”

On the same day, South Korea's Ministry of Unification spokesperson said, "The anti-leaflet law is a law to protect the lives and safety of the people in the border area and will be implemented according to the purpose of the revision.” He also said, “We will work with the police and other related agencies to manage the distribution of flyers and other items," indicating a low flyer distribution policy.

On the 23rd, Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the U.S. Commitee for Human Rights in North Korea, told Radio Free Asia in a phone call, “The anti-leaflet bill violates the South Korean Constitution as well as the UN human rights treaties,” stressing that the inflow of information into North Korea should not be stopped under any circumstances.

Executive Director Scarlatoiu: It is still difficult to understand that something like this is happening in South Korea. Things like this only happen in countries that abuse human rights. North Korean human rights groups should continue to address this issue.”

On that day, Pastor Eric Foley, head of the Voice of the Martyrs (VOMK), a North Korean human rights group, told NK News, a U.S. media source focused on North Korea, "We need to pay attention to basic human rights set by the UN." He also pointed out, “The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that one can find, receive, and deliver information regardless of borders, and that such rights should not be infringed by democratic processes.”

Four UN special rapporteurs, including Special Rapporteur on North Korean Human Rights Tomas Ojea Quintana, sent a letter to the South Korean government on the 19th that stated the inaccurate and ambiguous use of terms within the anti-leaflet law could lead to violations of international law or excessive punishment. The letter also asked for clarification on the compliance with international human rights legislation and the extent of the activities subject to punishment.

Meanwhile, the flyer release event was reportedly sponsored by Suzanne Scholte, chairman of the Free North Korea Radio, a U.S. human rights group that hosts the "North Korea Freedom Week."

North Korea Freedom Week is an annual event organized by various North Korean human rights-related organizations. With this year marking its 18th anniversary, the goal of this event is to urge the improvement of North Korean human rights and put an end to the forced repatriation of North Korean escapees.

The event will be held under the theme of "Open! North Korea" from the 24th to the 30th U.S. time, and various lectures and forums will inform participants on the poor human rights situation in North Korea and urge for international attention.

In particular, this year, instead of a rallying in front of the Chinese embassy, which was always done on the last day of the event, the participants plan on rallying in front of the South Korean embassy in Washington to urge South Korean President Moon Jae-in to make an effort to ensure that North Korean defectors detained in China can safely return to the free world.

Translated by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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## Wednesday, April 28, 2021

# British Member of Parliament,"Human trafficking in female North Korean defectors is a serious violation of human rights"

**Top News:**
"We must not prevent the influx of information from North Korea" (*Radio Free Asia*, 04/23/2021)

**In North Korea:**

Police clash with protesters over deliveries to Thad base (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/28/2021)
N. Korea conducts successful tests of reconnaissance and offensive-use mini unmanned drones (*Daily* NK, 04/28/2021)
North Korea sunk Cheonan warship, Seoul says after suspended reinvestigation (*UPI*, 04/28/2021)
British member of Parliament,"Human trafficking in female North Korean defectors is a serious violation of human rights" (*RFA*, 04/28/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

Inter-Korean exchange, trade dropped sharply last year amid virus pandemic: ministry (*Yonhap*, 04/28/2021)
S. Korea to push forward U.S.-N. Korea talks, unveils midterm plan (*Yonhap*, 04/28/2021)
More verifiable data needed to consider publishing report on N.K. human rights situations: official (*Yonhap*, 04/28/2021)
South Korea boasts lowered North Korea tensions amid diplomatic 'standstill' (*NK News*, 04/28/2021)
South Korea wants to set up embassy-like 'mission' in North Korean capital (*NK News*, 04/28/2021)

**International:**

Canada extends surveillance operation for violations of sanctions against N. Korea(*Yonhap*, 04/28/2021)
South Africa (Voluntarily) Gave Up Its Nukes. Can North Korea Do the Same?(*The National interest*, 04/28/2021)

**Top news**

- Britain's Member of Parliament Lord David Alton,who has been working to improve human rights in North Korea, pointed out that the human trafficking of female North Korean defectors is a serious human rights violation.(*Kim So Young, RFA*)

**In North Korea:**

- Police and protesters scuffled outside a controversial antimissile base Wednesday for the second time in two months as the activists tried to hinder work to improve the facility.(*Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- Unmanned drones have been a significant focus of attention within North Korea's military because North Korean leader Kim Jong Un referred to their development as an "important task" for the country during the Eighth Party Congress in January.(*Daily NK*)
- Seoul's military said the 2010 sinking of the South Korean warship Cheonan was carried out by North Korea, a statement that supports the official findings presented during the presidency of Lee Myung-bak, a member of the opposition.(*Elizabeth Shim, UPI*)

**Inter-Korea Relationship:**

- Trade and exchanges between South and North Korea dropped sharply last year amid the coronavirus pandemic, the unification ministry said Wednesday.(*Yonhap*)
- South Korea will try to help move nuclear talks between the United States and North Korea forward and restore its own dialogue with Pyongyang, the government said Wednesday in a policy report on inter-Korean relations for this year.(*Yonhap*)
- South Korea will consider publishing a report on human rights situations in North Korea after securing more verifiable information and testimonies from North Korean defectors, a unification ministry official said Wednesday.(*Yonhap*)
- Seoul's unification ministry released an annual report on the state of inter-Korean relations.(*NK News*)
- Unification ministry vows to explore new tourism and trade projects with the DPRK in the near future.(*NK News*)

**International:**

- Canada has extended a maritime surveillance program designed to capture violations of U.N. sanctions on North Korea for another two years amid persistent reports about Pyongyang's sanctions evasion.(*Yonhap*)
- South Africa remains the only country in the world to have built and then unbuilt a nuclear weapons program.(*Robert Farley, The National interest*)

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RFA Source

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Washington-Hong Albert honga@rfa.org
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In particular, this year, instead of a rallying in front of the Chinese embassy, which was always done on the last day of the event, the participants plan on rallying in front of the South Korean embassy in Washington to urge South Korean President Moon Jae-in to make an effort to ensure that North Korean defectors detained in China can safely return to the free world.

Translated by Grace Shin , HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Seshni Moodley , HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250808134334/https://mailchi.mp/5e36aeac949d/hrnk-news-itemsbritish-member-of-parliamenthuman-trafficking-in-female-north-korean-defectors-is-a-serious-violation-of-human-rights?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, April 29, 2021**

## 13% of North Korean Women Aged 15-24 Sexually Assaulted; NK's largest youth group calls for eradication of anti-socialist practices

**Top News:**
UNFPA "13% of North Korean Women Aged 15-24 Sexually Assaulted" (RFA, 4/23/21)

**In North Korea:**
N.K.'s largest youth group calls for eradication of anti-socialist practices (*Yonhap*, 4/29/21)
N. Korean officials cover costs for retired military officers' holiday meals through "donations" from ordinary people (*Daily* NK, 4/29/21)
North Korea sees a surge in soldiers frustrated with government deserting their posts (*Daily* NK, 4/29/21)
North Korea tells its young leaders to 'ruthlessly crush' unruly teen behavior (NK *News*, 4/29/21)

**In South Korea:**
Military blames radar blind spot for inaccurate assessment of N.K. missiles (*Yonhap*, 4/29/21)
Unification minister calls first half 'most optimal' period for progress in stalled peace process (*Yonhap*, 4/29/21)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
'1st half of 2021 opportune time for inter-Korean, denuclearization talks': unification minister (*Korea Times*, 4/29/21)
S. Korea to give primary approval to self-funded aid projects when assistance to N. Korea resumes: official (*Yonhap*, 4/29/21)

**International:**
Biden calls North Korean nukes a 'serious threat' in first speech to Congress (*Yonhap*, 4/29/21)
Biden pledges to work with allies to address N.K. threats through diplomacy, deterrence (*Yonhap*, 4/29/21)
Biden vows to cooperate with allies to address North Korea (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 4/29/21)
State Dept.: Kim Jong Un should be held accountable for human rights abuses (UPI, 4/29/21)
U.N. committee requests N. Korea provide explanation on human rights violations (*Yonhap*, 4/29/21)

**Top News:**
- According to the report "My Body is My Body, My Life is My Life: Sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people in Asia and the Pacific" released recently (April 2021) by the UNFPA, approximately 13% (12.94%) of North Korean women aged 15 to 24 years have experienced sexual violence. (Ji Jung Eun, RFA)

**In North Korea:**
- North Korea's largest youth organization called on its members to help root out anti-socialist practices as it held the first congress in five years, state media reported Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean authorities reportedly hosted dinner parties for retired military officials and their spouses on Apr. 25, the date formerly celebrated as "Military Foundation Day." The event took place after the authorities supplied some retired military officials with one kilogram of pork per person in recognition of Kim Il Sung's birthday on Apr. 15. These "gifts" appear to show that the authorities are increasingly interested in winning the favor of retired KPA personnel. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily* NK)
- The North Korean military recently began putting a series of measures in place that have reduced the length of required service but have increased requirements for soldiers to gain entry into the Workers' Party of Korea. The new policies have resulted in a surge in incidences of soldiers deserting their posts. (Jeong Tae Joon, *Daily* NK)
- On Thursday, North Korean state media reported that the ruling party's Kimilsungist-Kimjongilist Youth League convened Tuesday in the capital for its first major meeting since 2016. At the meeting, Youth League Central Committee Chairman Pak Chol Min reportedly criticized the organization for failing to combat "antisocialist and non-socialist phenomena among teenagers." (Colin Zwirko, NK News)

**In South Korea:**
- The military initially failed to accurately determine how far North Korea flew ballistic missiles last month because of "blind spot" areas that radars in South Korea have due to the Earth's roundness, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)

- Unification Minister Lee In-young on Thursday said that South Korea will strive to bring the stalled peace process on the Korean Peninsula back on track, saying that the first half of this year will be the "most optimal" time to realize any possible progress. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korea Relationship:**

- Unification Minister Lee In-young said Thursday that the first half of the year would be the most opportune time to initiate progress in President Moon Jae-in's stalled Korean Peninsula peace process, saying the new American administration needs to engage North Korea as early as possible. (Kang Seung Woo, *Korea Times*)
- The government will approve self-funded shipments of humanitarian items to North Korea first if it resumes granting approval to aid projects for the impoverished nation, a senior official said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- U.S. President Joe Biden called North Korea's nuclear program a "serious threat" to global security on Wednesday, vowing to leverage both diplomacy and his relationship with American allies to solve the problem. (Won Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- U.S. President Joe Biden said Wednesday he will work with allies to address threats from North Korea and Iran through "diplomacy" and "stern deterrence." Calling the nuclear programs of Pyongyang and Tehran "a serious threat to America's security and world security." (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- On foreign policy, Biden stressed, "We have to show not just that we are back, but that we are here to stay. And that we aren't going at it alone — we're going to be leading with our allies." (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The United States condemns North Korea's "increasingly draconian measures" to strengthen control over its population during the COVID-19 pandemic and will work to "promote accountability" for the Kim JongUn regime, State Department spokesman Ned Price said. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- The U.N. Human Rights Committee (HRC) last week urged the North to provide information on whether it has made progress on several human rights issues, including torture and violence against women. (*Yonhap*)

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RFA Source

**UNFPA "13% of North Korean Women Aged 15-24 Sexually Assaulted"**

Washington- Ji Jung-eun jij@rfa.org
2021-04-23

Anchor: The United Nations Fund for Population Activities reported that 13% of North Korean women from the ages of 15 to 24 have experienced sexual violence. This is Ji Jung-eun reporting.

According to the report "My Body is My Body, My Life is My Life: Sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people in Asia and the Pacific" released recently (April 2021) by the UNFPA,

approximately 13% (12.94%) of North Korean women aged 15 to 24 years have experienced sexual violence.

The report disclosed that of the 32 countries included in the report, more than 10% of adolescent and young women have experienced sexual violence in these in a total of seven countries, including North Korea, China, and Bangladesh.

In specific, approximately 11.1% of women aged 15-19 years and 14.8% of women aged 20-24 years in North Korea have experienced sexual violence.

In regard to this, Lina Yoon, a senior researcher at the Asia division focused on the Korean peninsula at the human rights group Human Rights Watch (HRW) told Radio Free Asia (RFA) on the 23rd, "It's difficult to know the current situation right now, but even before Covid-19 (the coronavirus pandemic), North Korean women were routinely sexually assaulted by prison guards, police and military officials.

It is very common in North Korea for perpetrators to attempt unwanted physical contact regardless of whether or not they are in a public or private space.

Researcher Lina Yoon stated, "However, the majority of North Korean women do not report those crimes because they are afraid of social dishonor and retaliation and because there are little to no ways to receive legal compensation."

Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu of the U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea told RFA today that sexual violence against North Korean women is a problem on a national scale.

Director Scarlatoiu: "There are three aspects to the issue of sexual violence in North Korea. Legislation on sexual violence laws is needed to solve the sexual violence problem, but the current laws in North Korea are inadequate. Beyond legislating, it is also important to have the capacity to enforce the law on a national level, but North Korea does not have that either. North Korea also has no significant will to enforce the law."

Director Scarlatoiu explained that culturally, the standard of what is considered "sexual abuse" in North Korea is objectionable.

He added that, concerning North Korean women, the sexual violence, health conditions, and forced abortions that female defectors repatriated from China face are very concerning.

The recent UNFPA report identified North Korea as one of seven countries that allows for the legal marriage of girls under the age of 18.

The organization says that even though there is much political commitment from countries in Asia and the Pacific to prohibit marriage before the age of 18 years, there are still countries that have not done so.

The organization reported that currently in North Korea, the legal age of marriage for girls is 17 and for boys is 18.

However, it also reported that 0.2% of females and approximately no males aged 15-19 years were married or in union.

Additionally, according to estimates from the UN Population Division, the report revealed that in North Korea, there are 0.3 births per 1000 females aged 15-19 years, and the total number of annual births to girls 15-19 years was 276.

Furthermore, regarding domestic violence in North Korea, it was reported that 7.2% of females and 9% of males aged 15-19 years agreed that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife for at least one reason.

In regard to this, researcher Lina Yoon explained, "in North Korea, domestic violence is very common and usually goes unpunished," and, "this is because North Korean authorities regard domestic violence as a private matter that should not involve outsiders such as the state or individual."

The report also assessed that digital media are increasingly influencing the lives of young people.

The organization revealed that 24% of females and 25% of males aged 15-19 years in North Korea own a mobile phone.

And based on the survey, only 6% of females and 9% of males in this age group used the Internet at least once a week in the last month.

However, UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey who conducted the survey revealed that for North Korea, it surveyed the rates of intranet rather than internet usage.

The percentage of North Korean teenagers owning cell phones and using the Internet is the lowest among the 10 countries for which data was released.

This report was written with information gathered from the organizations such as the Demographic and Healthy Survey, UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, and the World Health Organization's Global Burden of Disease.

Translated by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Tristin Schultz, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250808134712/https://mailchi.mp/fcbe306715f1/hrnk-news-items13-of-north-korean-women-aged-15-24-sexually-assaultednks-largest-youth-group-calls-for-eradication-of-anti-socialist-practices?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, April 30, 2021**

# How Biden Can Reduce the North Korean Threat; Activist says he flew 500K leaflets across Koreas' border

**Top News:**
How Biden Can Reduce the North Korean Threat (National Review, 4/29/21)

**In North Korea:**
Half of the Sinpo Fishing Company's fishermen being moved to military fishing company (*Daily* NK, 4/30/21)
N.K.'s largest youth group drops late founder's name from title after 25 years(*Yonhap*, 4/30/21)
Woman in her 20s dies after beating from Yanggang Province detention center guard (*Daily* NK, 4/30/21)
**In South Korea:**
Activist says he flew 500K leaflets across Koreas' border (*AP News*, 4/30/21)
Defector group flouts ban, sends leaflets across North Korea border (UPI, 4/30/21)
Defector group sends propaganda leaflets into N. Korea in defiance of ban (*Yonhap*, 4/30/21)

**Top News:**

- The review of North Korea policy announced by the Biden administration shortly after the president took office is still apparently a work in progress – but Kim Jong-un wrapped up his own review of North Korea's Biden-administration policy in March. We know this because Pyongyang launched two short-range ballistic missiles that month, violating nearly a dozen U.N. Security Council resolutions specifically prohibiting such tests and daring Team Biden to do something about it. More challenges may soon be in store, given Pyongyang's interest in testing both the performance of its latest WMD and the mettle of the new U.S. administration. (Nicholas Eberstadt, *National Review*)

**In North Korea:**

- Around half of the fishermen working for the Sinpo Fishing Company are being transferred to a fishing company under the Ministry of Defense, Daily NK has learned. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea dropped the name of late national founder Kim Il-sung from the title of its largest youth organization and put the word "socialist" back into the title, according to state media Friday, a move aimed at tightening ideological discipline of younger generations. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- A prison officer at a detention facility in Yanggang Province recently caused the death of a female inmate in her twenties, Daily NK has learned. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- A South Korean activist said Friday he launched 500,000 propaganda leaflets by balloon into North Korea this week in defiance of a contentious new law that criminalizes such actions. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)
- An activist group defied a South Korean government ban and floated balloons carrying anti-Pyongyang information across the border into North Korea, it announced on Friday. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- A North Korean defector group claimed Friday it has sent anti-Pyongyang leaflets across the border in defiance of a ban enacted recently over concern such a leafleting campaign could provoke the North and endanger the safety of people in border regions. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250808135016/https://mailchi.mp/b29223d689c9/hrnk-news-itemshow-biden-can-reduce-the-north-korean-threatactivist-says-he-flew-500k-leaflets-across-koreas-border?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

# 5. MAY

### Saturday, May 1, 2021

## Biden administration sets new NK policy of 'practical' diplomacy; Activist says he launched fliers towards NK to defy new law

**In North Korea:**
Estimating North Korea's Nuclear Stockpiles: An Interview With Siegfried Hecker (*38 North*, 04/30/2021)
Key developments on North Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 04/30/2021)
Summary of domestic news in North Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 04/30/2021)
The Sunchon Phosphatic Fertilizer Plant Is One Year Old, but Is It Operating? (*38 North*, 04/30/2021)
Why did North Korea's 'ordinary girl' YouTuber disappear from the web? (*NK News*, 04/30/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Activist says he launched 500,000 fliers towards North Korea to defy new law (*NK News*, 04/30/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Summary of inter-Korean news this week (*Yonhap*, 04/30/2021)

**International:**
Biden administration completes North Korea review process, will pursue 'calibrated' diplomacy (CNN, 04/30/2021)
Biden administration sets new North Korea policy of 'practical' diplomacy(*Reuters*, 04/30/2021)
Biden to veer from Trump, Obama policies in taking on NKorea (*AP News*, 05/01/2021)
Moon to head to White House for summit on May 21 (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 04/30/2021)
New U.S. policy seeks 'practical' diplomacy with N.K. for complete denuclearization: Psaki (*Yonhap*, 05/01/2021)
Report: U.S. seeking improvements to THAAD systems, including Korea(*UPI*, 04/30/2021)
S. Korea vows to coordinate with U.S. for early resumption of nuke talks with N.K. (*Yonhap*, 05/01/2021)
Summary of external news of North Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 04/30/2021)
U.S. will not seek 'grand bargain' but goal remains denuclearization of N. Korea: Psaki (*Yonhap*, 05/01/2021)
White House completes North Korea policy review, emphasizes 'practical' approach(*NK News*, 04/30/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- 38 North recently interviewed Dr. Siegfried S. Hecker, renowned expert on North Korea's nuclear program and a senior fellow emeritus at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University, about the status of North Korea's plutonium and uranium enrichment production and implications for the North's nuclear arsenal. Below are excerpts from that interview. (*38 North*)
- The following are key developments regarding North Korea this week. (*Yonhap*)
- The following is a summary of domestic news in North Korea this week. (*Yonhap*)
- May 1 marks the one-year anniversary of the opening of the Sunchon Phosphatic Fertilizer Factory. The factory is an important piece in Kim Jong Un's push to build up North Korea's domestic chemical industry and fertilizer production, as part of larger efforts to increase agricultural production and save foreign currency. However, after 12 months, it remains unclear if the plant is fully operational. Commercial satellite imagery over the last year indicates a gradual increase of activity throughout the complex, but no major activity was observed, and no state industrial achievements for this site were reported. This suggests that production is likely still at an early stage. (Martyn Williams, Peter Makowsky, Olli Heinonen, *38 North*)
- A young North Korean woman claiming to be an "ordinary girl" once took to YouTube to defend her country and address any negative news coming from "western media." But the English-language vlogger has now disappeared from the web, putting an indefinite end to a state-backed North Korean media organization's innovative and short-lived experiment at enamoring the west. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- A North Korean defector claims that he launched thousands of propaganda fliers over the border in defiance of a controversial South Korean law that could potentially jail information dissemination activists for that very act. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The following is a summary of inter-Korean news this week. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- The Biden administration has completed its months-long North Korea policy review, White House press secretary Jen Psaki announced Friday, telling reporters that the United States "is open to and will explore diplomacy" in a practical way. (Betsy Klein, CNN)
- President Joe Biden has settled on a new approach to pressuring North Korea to give up nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles that will explore diplomacy but not seek a grand bargain with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, the White House said on Friday. (Nandita Bose, *Reuters*)
- The White House says President Joe Biden plans to veer from the approaches of his two most recent predecessors as he tries to stop North Korea's nuclear program, rejecting both Donald Trump's deeply personal effort to win over Kim Jong Un and Barack Obama's more hands-off approach. (Aamer Madhani, Matthew Lee, *AP News*)

- President Moon Jae-in will hold his first summit with U.S. President Joe Biden on May 21 at the White House, the two countries' presidential offices announced Friday. (Ser Myo-ja, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The United States will not seek a "grand bargain" in denuclearization negotiations with North Korea but will continue to engage with the country to completely denuclearize the Korean Peninsula, White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Friday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- The United States is moving to upgrade its missile defense systems stationed at overseas bases, including in South Korea, according to a Korean press report. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- South Korea's foreign ministry said Saturday it will continue to coordinate with the United States to help encourage Washington to resume long-stalled denuclearization talks with Pyongyang at an early date. (*Yonhap*)
- The following is a summary of external news of North Korea this week. (*Yonhap*)
- The United States will not seek a "grand bargain" in denuclearization negotiations with North Korea but will continue to engage with the country to completely denuclearize the Korean Peninsula, White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- The U.S. has completed its policy review on North Korea, the White House confirmed on Friday, reiterating a long-held American goal to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula, but with a "calibrated, practical approach." (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)

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Prepared by Timothy Goo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250808135411/https://mailchi.mp/b2d60170cd2d/hrnk-news-itemsbiden-administration-sets-new-nk-policy-of-practical-diplomacyactivist-says-he-launched-fliers-towards-nk-to-defy-new-law?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, May 2, 2021**

## N.K. leader's sister warns S. Korea of consequence for failing to stop propaganda leaflets; N.K. Warns Biden Against 'Hostile Policy'

**In North Korea:**
North Korea's New Tank: Here's What We Can Surmise So Far (*National Interest*, 05/01/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
N.K. leader's sister warns S. Korea of consequence for failing to stop propaganda leaflets
(*Yonhap*, 05/02/2021)

North Korea's Kim Yo Jong slams recent leaflet launches as 'serious provocation' (*NK News*, 05/01/2021)

**International:**
Harsh N.K. statements up pressure on U.S. ahead of disclosure of new policy on Pyongyang (*Yonhap*, 05/02/2021)
N. Korea says Biden 'made big blunder,' warns of 'worse crisis beyond control' (*Yonhap*, 05/02/2021)
N. Korea says Biden policy shows hostile U.S. intent, vows response(*Reuters*, 05/01/2021)
N Korea warns US of 'very grave situation' over Biden speech (*AP News*, 05/02/2021)
North Korea accuses Joe Biden of pursuing hostile policy over its nuclear programme (*BBC*, 05/01/2021)
North Korea accuses US of pursuing 'hostile policy' and warns of response (*The Guardian*, 05/01/2021)
North Korea blasts Biden's Congress speech, warns of 'grave situation' for US (*NK News*, 05/01/2021)
North Korea Slams Biden's New Approach to Diplomacy (VOA, 05/01/2021)
North Korea Warns Biden Against 'Hostile Policy' (*New York Times*, 05/01/2021)
North Korea warns of 'crisis beyond control' in heated statements aimed at US and South Korea (CNN, 05/01/2021)
Pyongyang slams Washington, Seoul after US completes NK policy review (*Korea Herald*, 05/02/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Clearly, North Korea would like observers to think that their new tank incorporates the latest in composite armor, though this is difficult to confirm. One of the conclusions that can be drawn about the tank's armor protection is the rear turret and rear hull's slat-style armor which is intended to minimize damage caused by high explosive anti-tank (HEAT) type munitions—effectual but not modern. (Caleb Larson, *National Interest*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un slammed South Korea for failing to stop anti-Pyongyang leaflets flown by a defector group last week, calling it an "intolerable provocation" and warning of "corresponding action." (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's influential sister blasted another round of alleged anti-DPRK propaganda leaflet launches on Sunday, directly blaming South Korean authorities and vowing to look into "corresponding action." (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)

**International:**

- A barrage of scathing statements that North Korea issued Sunday to slam the United States and South Korea appear to be aimed at upping the ante ahead of Washington's announcement of its new policy on Pyongyang and summit talks with between the South and the U.S., experts said. (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea said Sunday that U.S. President Joe Biden made a "big blunder" after he called Pyongyang's nuclear program a serious threat, warning the U.S. will face a "worse and worse crisis beyond control." (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)

- North Korea lashed out at the United States and its allies in South Korea on Sunday in a series of statements saying recent comments from Washington are proof of a hostile policy that requires a corresponding response from Pyongyang. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- North Korea on Sunday warned the United States will face "a very grave situation" because President Joe Biden "made a big blunder" in his recent speech by calling the North a security threat and revealing his intent to maintain a hostile policy against it. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)
- North Korea has hit out at the Biden administration as it prepares to unveil its strategy for dealing with Pyongyang and its nuclear programme. The foreign ministry said recent comments out of Washington showed President Joe Biden was intent on maintaining a "hostile policy". Earlier this week, Mr Biden called North Korea's nuclear programme a "serious threat" to global security. (BBC)
- North Korea has accused US president Joe Biden of pursuing a hostile policy against it and warned of a response that could leave the US "in a very grave situation". (*The Guardian*)
- North Korea's foreign ministry issued two statements on Sunday, slamming U.S. President Joe Biden's most recent speech to Congress and a State Department press statement condemning North Korean human rights abuses. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- North Korea has lashed out at President Joe Biden, warning the U.S. will face a "very grave situation," after the White House announced the broad outlines of its plan for diplomacy with Pyongyang. (William Gallo, VOA)
- North Korea said on Sunday that President Biden had made "a big blunder" by calling its nuclear arsenal a threat last week, and it warned that the United States would face "a very grave situation" if it maintained its "hostile policy" toward Pyongyang. (Choe Sang-Hun, *New York Times*)
- North Korea warned the United States it will face a "crisis beyond control in the near future" and accused South Korea of carrying out an "intolerable provocation" against Pyongyang in a series of statements released Sunday, comments that could set the stage for a showdown between the three countries. (Joshua Berlinger, CNN)
- North Korea lashed out at South Korea and the US, upping the ante as the Biden administration announced the completion of its monthslong policy review on how to deal with a nuclear-armed Pyongyang. (Ahn Sung-mi, *Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Timothy Goo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250808135646/https://mailchi.mp/2f5675576134/hrnk-news-itemsnk-leaders-sister-warns-s-korea-of-consequence-for-failing-to-stop-propaganda-leafletsnk-warns-biden-against-hostile-policy?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Monday, May 3, 2021

# US says its North Korea policy review is ‘not aimed at hostility’; N.K. paper calls for tightened efforts against 'devil's virus'

**In North Korea:**
Military closely monitoring N.K. activities, no unusual signs yet: JCS (*Yonhap*, 05/03/2021)
N.K. paper calls for tightened efforts against 'devil's virus' (*Yonhap*, 05/03/2021)
N.K. propaganda outlet criticizes S. Korea over national founder's memoirs (*Yonhap*, 05/03/2021)
N. Korean authorities check to ensure livestock farms are following veterinary quarantine measures (*Daily NK*, 05/03/2021)
N. Korean authorities in Sariwon arrest party secretary accused of inappropriate behavior towards women (*Daily NK*, 05/03/2021)
North Korea's Submarine Fleet Is Big (But Can It Kill?) (*The National Interest*, 05/03/2021)
North Korean ship traffic is resurging, but humanitarian aid still seems stuck (*NK Pro*, 05/03/2021)
No social distancing? North Korea holds massive parade despite COVID-19 pandemic (*NK News*, 05/03/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Police chief orders thorough probe into anti-N.K. leafleting by defector group(*Yonhap*, 05/03/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Unification minister vows continued efforts for 'meaningful' change in inter-Korean ties (*Yonhap*, 05/03/2021)

**International:**
Chung, Blinken agree on close cooperation for peninsula denuclearization, peace(*Yonhap*, 05/03/2021)
She escaped from North Korea twice, and now she's running for office in the U.K.(*CTV News*, 05/02/2021)
US says its North Korea policy review is ‘not aimed at hostility’ (*NK News*, 05/03/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- The military is closely monitoring North Korea but no unusual signs have been detected so far, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Monday, after Pyongyang warned of "crisis beyond control" and "corresponding action" in a series of statements slamming Seoul and Washington. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's official paper on Monday continued to urge stepped up efforts against the coronavirus pandemic, days after the United States accused Pyongyang of committing brutal human rights violations under the guise of antivirus efforts. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean authorities are reportedly conducting an audit to check and register whether livestock farms, livestock units, and households around the country are raising

animals and following the appropriate veterinary quarantine measures. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)

- A North Korean propaganda outlet on Monday criticized South Korea over a controversy surrounding the recently published memoirs of the North's national founder, saying that some "impure" forces are trying to hamper their sales in a "wicked way." (*Yonhap*)
- The authorities have sentenced a party secretary in his fifties with the surname Park to an eight-year sentence of reeducation through labor. Park is accused of "sexual abuse of authority." In one instance, he repeatedly sexually harassed a second-year university student surnamed Choi and also sexually assaulted her. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea's reliance on submarines exposes a harsh reality for the country: U.S. and South Korean naval and air forces are now so overwhelmingly superior that the only viable way for Pyongyang's navy to survive is to go underwater. (Kyle Mizokami, *The National Interest*)
- North Korean ships were unusually active in the month of April, amid a spate of media reports suggesting that foreign goods had reappeared on Pyongyang store shelves after months of imported food shortages. (Min Chao Choy, *NK Pro*)
- Thousands of North Koreans took part in a massive parade of dancers and torchlight bearers despite the COVID-19 pandemic, North Korean state media showed on Saturday. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's police chief has ordered a swift and thorough probe into a North Korean defector group's alleged sending of anti-Pyongyang leaflets into the North last week, police officials said Monday. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Unification Minister Lee In-young said Monday that tensions should not be heightened under any circumstances on the Korean Peninsula, vowing to make continued efforts to produce a "meaningful" change in stalled inter-Korean relations. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong and his U.S. counterpart, Antony Blinken, agreed Monday to continue close cooperation for complete denuclearization and lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula, the foreign ministry said. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- A woman who escaped North Korea twice and found peace in the north of England is looking to give back to her adopted community by running for office. Jihyun Park was born in North Korea, but now lives in Bury, England and says the difference in her life is enormous. "I was born in hell, now I live in heaven," she said. (Paul Workman, Alexandra Mae Jones, *CTV News*)
- A top U.S. security official defended Washington's new North Korea policy review on Sunday, arguing that it's not trying to take a "hostile" stance against the DPRK after Pyongyang condemned it over the weekend. "Our policy towards North Korea is not aimed at hostility. It's aimed at solutions," National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said in an interview with ABC News on Sunday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

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Prepared by Rick Herssevoort, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250808140001/https://mailchi.mp/901c0f05c135/hrnk-news-itemsus-says-its-north-korea-policy-review-is-not-aimed-at-hostilitynk-paper-calls-for-tightened-efforts-against-devils-virus?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, May 4, 2021**

# North Korea says it won't attend June World Cup qualifiers in South Korea; Blinken tries to engage Pyongyang from London

**In North Korea:**
Head of Mangyongdae Revolutionary School demoted for failing to prevent suspected COVID-19 outbreak (*Daily NK*, 05/04/2021)
Kim Jong-il painted like Christ: the curious case of the North Korean art show (*The Telegraph*, 05/04/2021)
N.K. the paper says coronavirus vaccines 'far from a panacea' amid delay in securing supplies (*Yonhap*, 05/04/2021)
North Hamgyong Province's justice department investigates security official for abuse of authority (*Daily NK*, 05/04/2021)
North Korea casts doubt on COVID-19 vaccines and warns of long pandemic (*NK News*, 05/04/2021)
North Korea condemns suspension of Kim Il Sung memoir as 'censorship' (UPI, 05/03/2021)
Satellite photos show N. Korean irrigation reservoirs have more water than last year(*Daily NK*, 05/04/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Moon withdraws complaint filed for insulting leaflets (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/03/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
N.K. propaganda outlets slam S. Korea's court ruling in favor of Japan against 'comfort women' (*Yonhap*, 05/04/2021)
N. Korea said to quit World Cup qualifiers to be hosted by S. Korea in June (*Yonhap*, 05/03/2021)
North Korea accuses South Korea of suppressing freedom of speech (*The Korea Herald*, 05/04/2021)
North Korea says it won't attend June World Cup qualifiers in South Korea (*NK News*, 05/04/2021)
S. Korea to wait for N. Korea's final decision on World Cup qualifiers: official(*Yonhap*, 05/04/2021)
South Korea: North Koreans pull out of World Cup qualifying (*AP News*, 05/04/2021)

**International:**

Analysis: Diplomatic dance or standoff? N.Korea and U.S. tread cautious line(*Reuters*, 05/04/2021)
Biden Wants a Pragmatic Approach Towards North Korea. Why Not Leave Korea Altogether? (*The National Interest*, 05/03/2021)
Blinken promotes joint efforts to denuclearize N. Korea at G-7 meeting (*Yonhap*, 05/04/2021)
Blinken tries to engage Pyongyang from London (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/04/2021)
Blinken urges N. Korea to engage, saying U.S. seeks practical progress (*Yonhap*, 05/04/2021)
Blinken urges North Korea to choose diplomacy at G7 summit in London (UPI, 05/04/2021)
China: US should push North Korea diplomacy, not pressure (*AP News*, 05/04/2021)
China's UN ambassador calls for 'timely adjustment' of sanctions on North Korea(*NK News*, 05/04/2021)
New N. Korea policy does not affect U.S. defense posture in S. Korea: Pentagon(*Yonhap*, 05/04/2021)
North Korea: Keeping Its Powder Dry (*38 North*, 05/03/2021)
Report: U.S. spy planes deployed near North Korea amid possible military activity(UPI, 05/04/2021)
U.S. policy on North aims for 'solutions,' not 'hostility' (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/03/2021)
US Calls on North Korea to 'Engage Diplomatically' (VOA, 05/03/2021)
US falls short of persuading North Korea to dialogue: experts (*The Korea Times*, 05/04/2021)
US secretary of state: It's 'up to North Korea' whether or not talks resume (*NK News*, 05/04/2021)
US's Blinken tells North Korea: Diplomatic ball is in your court (*Al Jazeera*, 05/04/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Approximately ten students from Mangyongdae Revolutionary School have reportedly died from suspected COVID-19 infections, Daily NK has learned. Mangyongdae Revolutionary School is an elite institution charged with educating the children of fallen revolutionaries and high-ranking government officials. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- Uli Sigg must know North Korea as well as anybody who wasn't born there. The Swiss entrepreneur, diplomat and art collector first visited Pyongyang for business in the 1980s, when he worked for a firm selling lifts. "At night, the city was pitch dark," he remembers in a catalogue essay for a unique new show, Border Crossings, that has just opened at Switzerland's Kunstmuseum Bern. (Alastair Smart, *The Telegraph*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Tuesday urged people to brace for a prolonged fight against the coronavirus pandemic, saying that vaccines are not a cure-all solution, amid the country's apparent failure to secure supplies. (*Yonhap*)
- North Hamgyong Province's justice department is reportedly investigating a member of the provincial Ministry of Social Security for attempting to use his position to wrongfully ensure his wife's participation in the upcoming Socialist Women's Union of Korea conference. (Kim Yoo Jin, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea is casting doubt on the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines as its economy continues to flail under the pandemic and as the country keeps up a ban on most international travel. On Tuesday, North Korean state media warned its people of potential side effects from COVID-19 vaccines developed abroad and urged the public to continue to abide by the state's protective measures for fear of "catastrophic

consequences." These measures include wearing masks, social distancing and regularly sanitizing hands in the workplace. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)

- North Korean state media claimed censorship in the South was preventing the publication of Kim Il Sung's memoir after special interest groups said sales of the book violate a local law. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- Recent satellite photos show that irrigation reservoirs in some of North Korea's most important agricultural regions have more water than last year. High-resolution SkySat satellite photos taken on Apr. 25 show that North Korean farmers are preparing for the spring planting season by creating seedbeds and, in some areas, the irrigation process has already begun. (Bruce Songhak Chung, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- President Moon Jae-in withdrew a criminal complaint he filed against a man who distributed leaflets calling him "the red dog of North Korea," according to the Blue House on Tuesday. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- North Korean propaganda outlets on Tuesday denounced a South Korean court's decision to dismiss a lawsuit by wartime sexual slavery victims against the Japanese government as "a disregard for conscience and justice" and an act of subservience to Japan. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has expressed its intention not to participate in Asian qualifiers for the 2022 Qatar World Cup, set to take place in South Korea in June, a football governing body here said Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- Fresh controversy is building in South Korea over the memoirs of North Korea's founder, Kim Il-sung, published almost 30 years ago. A local publishing firm republished the eight-volume memoirs, titled "With the Century," last month for the first time here. But sales were suspended almost immediately after civic groups filed a court injunction to stop them, citing the National Security Act. (Lee Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea recently notified the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) that it will not attend the upcoming World Cup qualifier match in Seoul next month, a South Korean unification ministry official said Tuesday. Initially, North and South Korean soccer players were slated for a match on June 7. The official said that the AFC hopes Pyongyang will reverse its decision. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- South Korea will wait for North Korea's final decision on whether to play a World Cup qualifier set to take place in the South next month, an official said Tuesday, after Asia's soccer governing body asked Pyongyang to reconsider its decision not to play the game. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korean officials say North Korea has told soccer's Asian governing body it will not participate in World Cup qualifiers next month because of coronavirus concerns. (*AP News*)

**International:**

- While North Korea's barrage of complaints about U.S. President Joe Biden's policies over the weekend might appear to be ratcheting up tensions, some signs suggest Pyongyang hasn't ruled out diplomacy with the new team in Washington. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)

- The Biden administration is right to seek engagement with the North, especially to at least limit the DPRK's nuclear ambitions. However, America's involvement is primarily a matter of choice. (Doug Bandow, *The National Interest*)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken called for coordinated efforts to denuclearize North Korea on Monday while the top diplomats from the Group of 7 (G7) countries were later scheduled to discuss the North Korea issue. In his bilateral meeting with South Korean Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong, the top U.S. diplomat highlighted the importance of regional cooperation in dealing with the North. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken urged North Korea to return to denuclearization negotiations Monday in London as Washington seeks to engage Pyongyang. "I hope that North Korea will take the opportunity to engage diplomatically and to see if there are ways to move forward toward the objective of complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula," Blinken said in a joint press conference with his British counterpart, Dominic Raab, on the sidelines of a G7 foreign ministerial meeting. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken urged North Korea on Monday to return to the negotiating table, saying his country seeks to make practical progress toward the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through diplomacy. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken called on North Korea to return to the negotiating table as he met with counterparts at a Group of Seven meeting for foreign ministers in London this week. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- China's U.N. ambassador expressed hope Monday that President Joe Biden's policy toward North Korea will give more importance to diplomacy and dialogue instead of "extreme pressure" to try to stop Pyongyang's nuclear program and denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. (Edith M. Lederer, *AP News*)
- China's ambassador to the United Nations, Zhang Jun, said that his country hopes the United States' recently-completed North Korea policy review focuses on dialogue instead of "extreme pressure," and that both parties would continue to refrain from mutual provocation. The remarks came during a U.N. Security Council press briefing on May 3, with Zhang adding that China needed to further study the details of the review and that "we do believe that diplomatic efforts represent the right direction." (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- The new U.S. policy toward North Korea does not affect the United States' alliance with South Korea or its defense commitment on the Korean Peninsula, a Pentagon spokesman said Monday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- There are signs that Washington and Pyongyang are in the early, cautious stages of a diplomatic dance. On April 30, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki revealed that the administration had completed its North Korea policy review. Pyongyang has so far remained silent on Psaki's statement. However, on May 2, though they had doubtless read Psaki's remarks, the North Koreans decided to hold off commenting on the review and instead issued a muted response critical of President Joseph Biden's brief mention of the North in his April 28 address to Congress. (*38 North*)
- U.S. Navy and Air Force spy planes flew near North Korea several times in recent days, as Pyongyang condemned Washington's North Korea policy and the latest satellite imagery showed activity at Nampo shipyard. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

- U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said that Washington's policy toward Pyongyang is not aimed at "hostility," stressing that the Joe Biden administration is prepared to engage in diplomacy with North Korea for the goal of complete denuclearization. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Despite a series of messages from senior U.S. officials highlighting diplomacy as the focal point of the new American government's policy toward North Korea, Washington is still short of cajoling Pyongyang into returning to negotiations, according to diplomatic observers, Tuesday. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken delivered the remarks at a joint press conference with his British counterpart in London on Monday, days after a North Korean foreign ministry official warned the U.S. of a "crisis beyond control" and slammed Washington's new "hostile" DPRK policy. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

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Prepared by Rick Herssevoort, HRNK Research Intern

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**Saturday, May 5, 2021**

## They Were Promised a Socialist Paradise, and Ended Up in 'Hell'; Nearly 1 in 5 NK children undernourished

**In North Korea:**
Inside the real North Korea: Wife of British diplomat reveals human side of life under Kim Jong-un (*The Telegraph*, 05/05/2021)
Kim Yo Jong Slams Seoul After Anti-North Korea Leaflets Launched (*The Diplomat*, 05/04/2021)
N. Korea continues to build up chemical, biological weapons: U.S. official (*Yonhap*, 05/05/2021)
N. Korea may give up nukes, but will test U.S. commitment to diplomacy: U.S. experts (*Yonhap*, 05/05/2021)
Nearly 1 in 5 N. Korean children undernourished: report (*Yonhap*, 05/05/2021)
New Nautilus report on North Korea's energy balance (*North Korean Economy Watch*, 05/04/2021)
North Korea's decision to skip World Cup qualifiers not final, reports say (UPI, 05/04/2021)
North Korea faces economic ruin amid food and medicine shortages (*The Guardian*, 05/04/2021)
North Korea says COVID-19 vaccines are 'no panacea,' warns of lengthy battle(*Reuters*, 05/05/2021)
North Korea 'will give up all its nukes for the right price', say US experts (*Daily Star*, 05/05/2021)

North Korean defector runs for election in Britain, seeks to make political history(*Fox News*, 05/04/2021)
One fifth of North Korean children malnourished (*AsiaNews*, 05/05/2021)
One in 5 North Korean kids suffer from stunted growth (*NK News*, 05/05/2021)
Poachers, guns and statues: North Korea's 'hub' of crime in South Africa (*NK News*, 05/05/2021)
They Were Promised a Socialist Paradise, and Ended Up in 'Hell' (*The New York Times*, 05/05/2021)
Three teenagers in N. Pyongan Province sent to reeducation camp for listening to S. Korean music (*Daily NK*, 05/05/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Activists Vow to Defy South Korean Ban on Sending Anti-North Leaflets Despite Legal Threat (*RFA*, 05/04/2021)
For a successful summit (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/05/2021)
North Korea founder's memoir triggers censorship debate in South (*Borneo Bulletin*, 05/04/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
South Korea Discovers It Can Out-Bully North Korea (*Forbes*, 05/05/2021)

**International:**
Biden's North Korea strategy: Hurry up and wait (*The Washington Post*, 05/05/2021)
Biden's tentative steps towards North Korea's Kim greeted with scepticism (*The Financial Times*, 05/04/2021)
[Editorial] Focus on the goal (*The Korea Herald*, 05/05/2021)
'I escaped the horrors of North Korea – now I want to solve Bury's fly-tipping crisis'(*Yahoo News UK*, 05/05/2021)
Japan, US, South Korea vow to seek total denuclearization of North Korea (*The Jakarta Post*, 05/05/2021)
Korean Art Goes on Show, With Protests from North and South (*The New York Times*, 05/05/2021)
The rollout of the Biden administration's North Korea policy review leaves unanswered questions (*Brookings Institution*, 05/04/2021)
US forces must 'be ready' for North Korean nuclear, chemical attacks: Official (*NK News*, 05/05/2021)
US, Japan, South Korea pledge cooperation toward denuclearisation of North Korea(WION, 05/05/2021)
U.S. says Japan and S.Korea agree on UN resolutions for Korean peninsula: readout(*Reuters*, 05/05/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Few people can claim to have heard the chilling sound of a North Korean ballistic missile flying overhead, but on September 15, 2017, Lindsey Miller, a musical director living in Pyongyang, recalls being jolted from her bed by a peculiar rumbling. (Nicola Smith, *The Telegraph*)

- Kim Yo Jong, sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, said Pyongyang would hold the South Korean government accountable for a North Korean defector group's propaganda flyers in a statement released on May 2 through the North Korean Central News Agency and Rodong Sinmun. (Mitch Shin, *The Diplomat*)
- North Korea continues to build up its chemical and biological weapons, in addition to its other weapons of mass destruction (WMD) such as nuclear weapons that pose a serious threat to U.S. forces and South Korean allies, a ranking U.S. official said Tuesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea may still be willing to give up its nuclear weapons for the right price but will likely wait to see how serious and committed the new U.S. administration is to diplomacy, U.S. experts said Tuesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Nearly 1 in 5 children under the age of 5 in North Korea suffer from stunted growth, and the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic is likely to exacerbate the trend for some years to come, an international report showed Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- The Nautilus Institute recently published a very interesting report on North Korea's energy balance sheet. Among other things, it contains estimate calculations of the energy intensity of various industrial sectors in the country. (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, *North Korean Economy Watch*)
- South Korea said it will "wait" for the results of negotiations regarding North Korea's participation in the World Cup qualifiers before confirming Pyongyang's decision to not send its soccer team to matches in the South. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- North Korea is facing one of the worst economic crises in its 73-year history, amid shortages of food and medicines and warnings of rising unemployment and homelessness. (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)
- North Korea's state media warned on Tuesday of the prospect of a lengthy battle against the coronavirus, saying vaccines developed by global drugmakers were proving to be "no universal panacea". (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- North Korea could be convinced to hand over its entire supply of nuclear weapons, but it won't come cheap, claim top military bigwigs. (Michael Moran, *Daily Star*)
- Sixteen years after she was left for dead outside a North Korean prison camp, Jihyun Park hopes to make political history this week when she runs for election in Britain. (Simon Owen, *Fox News*)
- Almost a fifth of North Korean children are malnourished, a condition that is likely to worsen due to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. This was revealed in a report made public today by the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization and the World Bank. (*AsiaNews*)
- More than 300,000 North Korean children under the age of five suffer from stunted growth due to chronic malnutrition, according to a new multiagency report released on Tuesday — a crisis that may be worsening due to the COVID-19 pandemic. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- In a quiet Pretoria neighborhood sits a charming residential house, guarded by stone statuary and topped with a bright teal roof. This is the DPRK Embassy to South Africa, North Korea's command center for much of its activity across the African continent. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)

- Mr. Lee's and his family were among 93,000 people who migrated from Japan to North Korea from 1959 to 1984 under a repatriation program sponsored by both governments and their Red Cross societies. When they arrived, they saw destitute villages and people living in poverty, but were forced to stay. Some ended up in prison camps. (Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*)
- Three teenagers from Kujang County in North Pyongan Province recently received sentences of reeducation through labor for "anti-socialist behavior," Daily NK has learned. Their families were also expelled from the county as a result. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- Activists in Seoul vowed on Tuesday to keep sending anti-North Korean leaflets by balloon into the North's territory, shrugging off a South Korean investigation into a balloon launch last week in defiance of a law banning the practice, which Pyongyang called an act of "dirty human scum." (Yong Jae Mok, Seung Wook Han, RFA)
- The Moon-Biden summit slated for May 21 in Washington will help determine the fate of Moon's North Korea policy. He must prove that a government launched with massive candlelight vigils is different from past administrations. (Wi Sung-lac, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A South Korean publisher's defiant move to release the memoirs of the North's founder Kim Il Sung has triggered a heated debate over Seoul's decades-old ban on Pyongyang's propaganda under national security laws. (*Borneo Bulletin*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- In the 11 years since North Korea torpedoed the South Korean warship Cheonan, killing 46 sailors, the South Korean government has strengthened its forces and worked out a new retaliatory policy. (David Axe, *Forbes*)

**International:**

- The Biden administration has just rolled out the results of its North Korea strategy review, which is meant to chart a path forward to solve one of the thorniest and most dangerous national security problems in the world. But now that the review is complete, the administration's plan is essentially to wait for North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to make the next positive move, which doesn't seem likely to happen anytime soon. (Josh Rogin, *The Washington Post*)
- In the wake of the White House's announcement that it had completed putting together its policy on North Korea, scepticism is rising over whether the president will step back from that antagonistic stance and engage with the nuclear-armed dictator. (Edward White, Katrina Manson, *The Financial Times*)
- Seoul and Washington must work closely not to be deceived by Pyongyang's provocation tactics. Under no circumstances should they take their eyes off the obvious goal of denuclearizing the North completely. (*The Korea Herald*)
- She escaped unimaginable human rights abuses and now, as a local election candidate in Bury, is believed to be the first North Korean to stand in a democratic vote anywhere outside the Korean peninsula. (James Morris, *Yahoo News UK*)
- The foreign ministers of Japan, the United States and South Korea on Wednesday affirmed close coordination to try to achieve the complete denuclearization of North Korea, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said. (*The Jakarta Post*)

- The painting — "The Missiles," by Pak Yong-chol — is one of the collector Uli Sigg's prized possessions, acquired through persistence, persuasion and contacts forged during his term as Switzerland's ambassador to North Korea in the 1990s. (Catherine Hickley, *The New York Times*)
- The Biden administration has begun to outline the results of its recently completed review of policy toward North Korea, but only in general terms apparently designed to preserve its negotiating options and avoid giving its critics an early target to shoot at. (Robert Einhorn, *Brookings Institution*)
- The U.S. military must be prepared as North Korea continues to pursue nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, a high-level Pentagon official told a House Armed Services subcommittee hearing. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- The United States, South Korea, and Japan pledged Wednesday to cooperate on North Korea as their top diplomats met in London, coming together despite renewed tensions between the Asian nations. (WION)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken agreed on Wednesday with his Japanese and South Korean counterparts on the need to fully implement UN resolutions to protect the stability of the Korean peninsula, a State Department spokesman said. (*Reuters*)

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250808140435/https://mailchi.mp/953030116da1/hrnk-news-itemsthey-were-promised-a-socialist-paradise-and-ended-up-in-hellnearly-1-in-5-nk-children-undernourished?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, May 6, 2021**

## North Korea's Kim Regime: A Contemporary Apartheid; Police conduct raid over anti-N.K. leafleting

**Top News:**
North Korea's Kim Regime: A Contemporary Apartheid (*HRNK YPWP*, 05/05/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Gavi expects delay in vaccine shipments to North Korea (*The Korea Herald*, 05/06/2021)
Is North Korea Preparing a Missile or Nuclear Weapons Test? (*National Interest*, 05/06/2021)
N.K. leader, his wife attend art performance by army families (*Yonhap*, 05/06/2021)
N.K. paper warns of virus infections via 'strange objects' in air (*Yonhap*, 05/06/2021)
North Korea claims 'strange objects in the air' trying to infect people with Covid(*Daily Star*, 05/06/2021)
North Korea getting ready for COVID-19 vaccines after reporting 'zero' cases (UPI, 05/05/2021)
North Korea's media calls for 'revolution' against 'non-socialist phenomena' (UPI, 05/05/2021)
North Korea stuck waiting for millions of COVID-19 vaccines (*NK News*, 05/06/2021)

North Korea to send more workers to Mongolia this month (*Daily NK*, 05/06/2021)
Strategic Value, but Limited Prospects: North Korea's Cement Industry (*38 North*, 05/05/2021)
Wife by his side, Kim Jong Un urges women to be 'eternal cooks' for revolution (*NK News*, 05/06/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Activist's office raided after alleged anti-North Korea leaflet launch (*NK News*, 05/06/2021)
Defector denounces raid for dispatching balloons to North (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/06/2021)
Opinions clashing in South Korea on how to handle 'pro-North' publications (*The Korea Times*, 05/06/2021)
Police conduct raid over anti-N.K. leafleting (*Yonhap*, 05/06/2021)
S.Korea police raid anti-North Korea activist office over propaganda leaflets(*Reuters*, 05/06/2021)
S. Korea 'positively' views outcome of U.S. policy review on N. Korea: NSC (*Yonhap*, 05/06/2021)
S. Korea raids activist's office over anti-North leaflets (*AP*, 05/06/2021)
Unification ministry views U.S. attempt to reach out to N.K. positively: official(*Yonhap*, 05/06/2021)

**International:**
G7 diplomats call on North Korea to denuclearize, return to diplomacy (*UPI*, 05/06/2021)
G7 foreign ministers urge N. Korea to return to dialogue (*Yonhap*, 05/06/2021)
Japan Backward in Coming Forward on U.S.-North Korea (*The Diplomat*, 05/06/2021)
Japan and South Korea agree to coordinate with US on North Korea (*Nikkei Asia*, 05/05/2021)
Japan, U.S. and South Korea push for total denuclearization of North Korea (*Japan Times*, 05/06/2021)
Just How New Is Joe Biden's 'New' North Korea Policy? (*National Interest*, 05/05/2021)
LA Times Today: North Korean refugees share their stories on YouTube (*LA Times*, 05/05/2021)
Tokyo misrepresents Washington's North Korea policy review to serve Japanese interests (*Hankyoreh*, 05/06/2021)
U.S. again reaches out to N. Korea but to no avail: WP column (*Yonhap*, 05/06/2021)
Washington shared its new North Korea policy review with Tokyo and Seoul (*NK News*, 05/06/2021)
Work Will Set You Free is a carefully orchestrated glimpse of North Korean life(*Creative Review*, 05/05/2021)

**Top News:**

- North Korea's government is actively practicing apartheid, a crime against humanity that is condemned by international law. The main question is whether it is possible to extend the meaning and legal definition of apartheid to be inclusive of a system that is perpetrating human rights violations, but not only in the strict sense of racial segregation as seen in South Africa. (Damian Reddy, HRNK YPWP)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea will receive COVID-19 vaccines as early as July with a shipment delay over global supply shortages, the Gavi alliance, which co-leads the COVAX vaccine sharing

program with the World Health Organization, said Wednesday. (Choi Si-Young, *The Korea Herald*)

- Last month, the Biden administration announced the conclusion of its months-long North Korea policy review. The announcement was about as bland and generic as it could get. The only detail those on the outside received was that the White House was going to take a Goldilocks approach to the North Korean nuclear problem: not too hot and not too cold. (Daniel R. DePetris, *National Interest*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and his wife, Ri Sol-ju, attended an art performance by the families of the army, state media reported Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Thursday urged people to stay alert against coronavirus infections through "strange objects" floating in the air, days after the regime issued a harshly worded statement against propaganda leaflets sent from South Korea. (*Yonhap*)
- The people of North Korea have been warned that "strange objects" floating in the air could infect them with the Covid virus. (Ian Molyneaux, *Daily Star*)
- North Korea is preparing to receive deliveries of COVID-19 vaccines from the World Health Organization's COVAX facility amid delays, according to the WHO. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- North Korean state media called for a "great revolution" in the nation's literary arts amid rising concerns about "antisocialist and non-socialist phenomena" in the country. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- Close to two million COVID-19 vaccines destined for North Korea have been delayed indefinitely, says an international organization leading vaccination efforts. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- North Korean authorities plan to send workers to Mongolia this month, Daily NK has learned. This comes after the country's leadership sent new batches of workers to Russia in March. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- The current border closure and lack of hard currency make it difficult for the country to import key materials for expanding the industry in a meaningful way, and cement production is unlikely to reach sufficient quality for export anytime soon. (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, *38 North*)
- The wife of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un made a rare appearance on state media Thursday, surfacing for the third time this year and attending an event that urged women to be loyal wives and daughters to North Korea's ruling party or armed forces. (Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- Police raided North Korean defector-activist Park Sang-hak's office on Thursday, the Seoul Metropolitan Police Agency confirmed to NK News. Park claimed to have launched 500,000 anti-DPRK leaflets towards North Korea sometime between April 25 and April 29. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Police on Thursday raided the office of Park Sang-hak, a North Korean defector who claimed his organization dispatched anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets from near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) into the North in defiance of a ban. (Kim Ji-Hye, Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- South Korea is in a debate over how to handle so-called "pro-North Korea materials," following the recent publication of North Korea founder Kim Il-sung's memoir here. (Nam Hyun-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- Police on Thursday raided the office of a vocal North Korean defector who claimed to have sent anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets into the North in defiance of a ban. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korean police raided on Thursday the office of an anti-North Korea activist group that said it had released balloons into the North last week carrying dollar bills and leaflets denouncing the government in Pyongyang. (Sangmi Cha, *Reuters*)
- South Korea's top security officials "positively" evaluated the outcome of the United States' monthslong policy review on North Korea recently completed by the Joe Biden administration, Cheong Wa Dae said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korean police on Thursday raided the office of an activist who said he had floated hundreds of thousands of propaganda leaflets toward North Korea by balloon in defiance of a new, contentious law that bans such activities. (Hyung Jin-Kim, AP)
- The unification ministry "views positively" U.S. efforts to reach out to North Korea, an official said Thursday, after a report that the administration of President Joe Biden tried unsuccessfully for a second time to open talks with Pyongyang. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Foreign ministers from the Group of Seven countries urged North Korea to completely denuclearize and return to negotiations following a meeting of the top diplomats held in London. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- The top diplomats of the Group of Seven (G7) countries on Wednesday urged North Korea to return to talks on ending its nuclear programs, while also urging Pyongyang to engage in inter-Korean dialogue. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- The reality is that the Suga administration has passed up whatever slim chance it had to resume dialogue between Japan and North Korea and is ultimately intent only on cooperation with the Biden administration. Japanese living in North Korea waiting impatiently to return look set to be abandoned again. (Isozaki Atsuhito, *The Diplomat*)
- Japan, the U.S. and South Korea will work closely together to bring North Korea back to denuclearization talks, despite frosty relations between Tokyo and Seoul, top diplomats from the three countries agreed Wednesday. (Rintaro Tobita, *Nikkei Asia*)
- The foreign ministers of Japan, the United States and South Korea on Wednesday affirmed close coordination in an effort to achieve the complete denuclearization of North Korea, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said. (*Japan Times*)
- ast week, it was announced that the Biden administration had completed a months-long review of its North Korea policy. The official revelation came from White House press secretary Jen Psaki during a press conference on board Air Force One. (Eli Fuhrman, *National Interest*)
- Since its founding in 1948, North Korea has remained a highly secretive communist state isolated from much of the world. But North Koreans who've escaped are now trying to change that by using social media—specifically YouTube—to tell their stories. (*LA Times*)
- Japanese officials have repeatedly misrepresented the outcome of the US Joe Biden administration's review of North Korea policy to serve Japanese interests. Considering that Japan played a considerable role in obstructing the Korean Peninsula peace process

in 2018 and 2019, South Korea and the US will need to engage in honest dialogue to prevent that from happening again. (Gil Yun-hyung, *Hankyoreh*)
- The United States has again reached out to North Korea for dialogue, this time to explain the outcome of its recently concluded North Korea policy review, but Pyongyang continues to remain unresponsive, a Washington Post columnist wrote. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Washington's top diplomat shared the new U.S. North Korea policy review with his South Korean and Japanese counterparts, Seoul's foreign ministry said on Wednesday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- The Hong Kong-based artist Ted Lau took his first trip to Pyongyang and the surrounding countryside in 2019, having grown up with regular headlines about the country's missile tests, and keen to explore the less reported side of life in North Korea. (Emma Tucker, *Creative Review*)?

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250808140837/https://mailchi.mp/104513de1e18/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-koreas-kim-regime-a-contemporary-apartheidpolice-conduct-raid-over-anti-nk-leafleting?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, May 7, 2021**

## Does the World Care about Suffering in North Korea?

**Top News:**
Does the World Care about Suffering in North Korea? (*HRNK YPWP*, 05/06/2021)

**In North Korea:**
COVID-19 vaccine likely to arrive in North Korea in second half of this year (*The Korea Times*, 05/07/2021)
Kim Jong Un praises North Korea's 'ideologically correct' military (*UPI*, 05/06/2021)
N.K. leader holds photo session with families of army after attending performance(*Yonhap*, 05/07/2021)
N.K. tightens antivirus efforts in border area within range of anti-Pyongyang leaflets(*Yonhap*, 05/07/2021)
N. Korea briefly placed under state of alert following kidnapping of security agency official's son (*Daily NK*, 05/07/2021)
N. Korea unlikely to carry out provocations ahead of S. Korea-U.S. summit: minister(*Yonhap*, 05/07/2021)
North Korea Has a Sizable (Though Mostly Obsolete) Submarine Force. Why?(*National Interest*, 05/07/2021)

North Korea moves forward with efforts to prevent future flooding of rivers (*Daily NK*, 05/07/2021)
North Korea says propaganda leaflets sent from South could carry coronavirus (*The Guardian*, 05/07/2021)
North Korea warns against 'carriers' of 'malicious viruses' after leaflet launch (UPI, 05/07/2021)
North Korea's Massive Special Operation Force: Just What Can They Do? (*National Interest*, 05/07/2021)
Number of N. Korean defectors plunges in Q1 (*The Korea Herald*, 05/07/2021)
The Type 88: North Korea's Very Own (And Very Strange) AK-47 (*National Interest*, 05/07/2021)

**In South Korea:**
PM nominee calls anti-N.K. leafleting threat to public safety (*Yonhap*, 05/07/2021)
South Korea to hold regular military drills starting next week (*NK News*, 05/07/2021)

**International:**
FM Chung says it's 'desirable' for U.S. to appoint special representative for N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 05/07/2021)
G7 countries made a dangerous and unhelpful statement on North Korea (*NK News*, 05/07/2021)
No matter what Biden does, North Korea will still accuse him of 'hostile policy' (*NK News*, 05/07/2021)
US and South Korean defense officials to discuss North Korea next week (*NK News*, 05/07/2021)
U.S. seeks judgment on North Korea sanctions violators (UPI, 05/07/2021)

**Top News:**

- North Korea and the Kim regime are synonymous with nuclear weapons proliferation and isolationism. However, there is much more occurring that fails to reach the mainstream media when it comes to North Korea. While the regime's nuclear priorities fill the news, a much darker truth continues unencumbered—crimes against humanity. North Korea runs merciless political prison camps in which arbitrarily imprisoned individuals are forced to endure brutal crimes, including torture, starvation, forced abortions, and enslavement. Justice Michael Kirby, Chair of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, stated that the crimes being committed in these camps rival those committed by Nazi Germany during the Holocaust. (Carter Thompson, *HRNK YPWP*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea is expected to receive COVID-19 vaccines in the second half of the year through international vaccine organizations, to help it deal with the ongoing pandemic. According to Radio Free Asia (RFA), Edwin Salvador, head of the World Health Organization (WHO) office in Pyongyang, said the organization will cooperate with the North to comply with the technical requirements to obtain the vaccines. (Kwon Mee-yoo, *The Korea Times*)

- Kim Jong Un praised North Korea's "exemplary" military for its patriotism during a performance that featured military families at Mansudae Art Theater. Korean Workers' Party newspaper Rodong Sinmun reported Thursday that Kim attended the event the day before with first lady Ri Sol Ju. The ruling family was last seen attending a concert together in April on the 109th birth anniversary of Kim Il Sung. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un held a photo session with families of the army, a day after attending their art performance, state media reported Friday. Earlier on Wednesday, Kim and his wife, Ri Sol-ju, attended the performance of the art groups of servicemen's families from large combined units of the Korean People's Army (KPA). (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has tightened antivirus efforts in an eastern inter-Korean border region, the country's main newspaper said Friday, a day after the paper issued a warning about coronavirus infections through anti-Pyongyang leaflets sent from South Korea. The Rodong Sinmun said the North is stepping up efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the border county of Kosong in Kangwon Province, especially in the sea and forest areas. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea was recently placed under a state of alert after two people from Songchon County in South Pyongan Province kidnapped the local Ministry of Social Security (MSS) preliminary examination department director's son. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young said Friday that North Korea is not likely to carry out major provocations ahead of summit talks between the United States and South Korea slated for later this month. "We cannot rule out all possibilities of North Korea raising tensions but many experts say that the chances of the North heightening military tensions ahead of the South Korea-U.S. summit remain relatively low," Lee told a local radio show. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's reliance on submarines exposes a harsh reality for the country: U.S. and South Korean naval and air forces are now so overwhelmingly superior that the only viable way for Pyongyang's navy to survive is to go underwater. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- North Korea is conducting nationwide river redevelopment efforts to prevent floods. A source in the country said that the authorities have mobilized every available agency to excavate river bottoms. However, in areas where the availability of equipment is insufficient to do the job, human labor is being used instead. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea has warned its citizens against reading propaganda leaflets sent via balloon over the border with the South, saying they could be carrying coronavirus. The state-run Rodong Sinmun newspaper urged people to stay away from the leaflets, according to news agency Yonhap, saying: "Even when we come across a strange object flying in the wind, we must consider them as a possible route of transmission of the malicious virus rather than a natural phenomenon." It advised people to "think and move" according to Covid-19 guidelines. (*The Guardian*)
- North Korea's state media said it is strengthening anti-epidemic measures to prevent the novel coronavirus from entering the country, a day after it warned against "strange objects in the wind." Korean Workers' Party newspaper Rodong Sinmun reported Friday that authorities have ordered increased monitoring of an area that faces South Korea, in North Korea's Kosong County, Kangwon Province. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

- North Korean special forces have evolved from a nuisance force designed to stage attacks in the enemy's rear into something far more dangerous. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- The number of North Korean defectors coming into South Korea dropped 77 percent to 31 in the first quarter this year as the North's anti-coronavirus border closures remained in place, a Unification Ministry official said. During the same period last year, 135 North Korean defectors entered the South. The ministry official cited the North's border closure as one of the reasons for the sharp decline. (Nam Kyung-dom, *The Korea Herald*)
- The Type 88 rifle will probably see further improvements in the coming years, but how much new tech North Korea can sustain across hundreds of thousands of rifles remains to be seen. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- Prime Minister nominee Kim Boo-kyum on Friday described the sending of anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets to North Korea by activist groups as a threat to the safety of South Koreans. "It is an act that threatens (the safety) of our people," Kim said about the anti-Pyongyang leafleting activities during a parliamentary confirmation hearing on his nomination at the National Assembly. (*Yonhap*)
- Drills will cover wartime invasion scenarios, weapons of mass destructions and non-conventional threats like COVID-19. (Kelly Kasulis, *NK News*)

**International:**

- Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong has said it is desirable for the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden to name a point man on North Korea, noting the appointment, if made, may signal America's focus on engagement with Pyongyang. Chung made the remarks during an interview with Yonhap News Agency in London on Thursday, amid questions over whether the U.S. would appoint a new special representative for North Korea, a post previously held by former Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun under the former Donald Trump administration. (*Yonhap*)
- The joint statement issued by several nations' foreign ministers at the G7 meeting in London this week is a huge step backwards for North Korea policy, reminiscent of George W. Bush's "axis of evil rhetoric from the early 2000s. Unless quickly walked back and qualified, this statement effectively kills any chance of engagement with Pyongyang. The G7 countries — which include the United States, the U.K., Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan — issued a joint statement on Wednesday saying they will work on the "complete, verifiable and irreversible abandonment" of all North Korean nuclear and ballistic missiles. South Korea, attending the high-level meeting as a guest, seemingly signed off on the statement as well. (Glyn Ford, *NK News*)
- Earlier this month, a top North Korean official accused U.S. President Joe Biden's administration of taking on a "hostile" stance against the DPRK — a condemnation that the White House swiftly tried to refute. (Edward Howell, *NK News*)
- Officials will meet in Washington and discuss the transfer of wartime operational control. Top defense officials from the United States and South Korea will meet in Washington next week to discuss North Korea and other alliance issues ahead of the two countries' upcoming presidential summit later this month. (Kelly Kasulis, *NK News*)
- The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia is seeking to seize about $2.3 million in assets from three entities that are owned by Singaporean and Chinese

nationals, in connection to North Korea sanctions violations, according to a recent press report. The three companies that were found in violation of U.S. domestic laws are Hong Kong-based Apex Choice Ltd., China-based Yuanye Wood Ltd., and an unnamed Singaporean company, Voice of America's Korean service reported Friday. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

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Prepared by Damian Reddy, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250808140958/https://mailchi.mp/911a1187c3e9/hrnk-news-itemsdoes-the-world-care-about-suffering-in-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, May 8, 2021**

## New book offers unfettered look into life in North Korea; Summary of domestic news in North Korea this week

**In North Korea:**
New book offers unfettered look into life in North Korea (*The Korea Herald*, 05/08/2021)
North Korea has much to consider — when, and if, talks resume (*The Hill*, 05/07/21)
North Korea Punishes Local Officials After Secret Document Leaks (RFA, 05/07/2021)
Summary of domestic news in North Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 05/07/2021)

**In South Korea:**
South Korea inaugurates team of North Korean defector 'reporters' (UPI, 05/07/2021)
South Korean opposition politician meets with U.S. North Korea rights activist (UPI, 05/07/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Missile Deployments on the Korean Peninsula: An Accelerating Arms Race (*38 North*, 05/07/2021)
Summary of inter-Korean news this week (*Yonhap*, 05/07/2021)

**International:**
Biden's foreign policy has been admirably illusion-free — but it must retain its ambitions (*The Washington Post*, 05/07/2021)
Key developments on North Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 05/07/2021)
Summary of external news of North Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 05/07/2021)
U.S. lawmaker to propose U.S.-N. Korea liaison office (*Yonhap*, 05/07/2021)

U.S., S. Korea must remain firm and flexible in dealing with N. Korea: Hwang (*Yonhap*, 05/08/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Lindsey Miller recounts the stress of constant questioning, her decision to believe in authenticity of relationships during her two years in Pyongyang. (Kim Hoo-ran, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea's heated response to the Biden administration's approach to the nuclear challenge — calling it a blunder and threatening dire consequences — no doubt conveys a certain frustration with the results of the long-awaited policy review. It also had a formulaic, retro look to it, as if it could have been written years ago, regardless of the substance of the Biden policy review. (Christopher Hill, *The Hill*)
- North Korea has begun cracking down on government officials responsible for handling sensitive documents after dozens of incidents where the documents went missing and secrets were leaked, officials in the country told RFA. (Myungchul Lee, RFA)
- The following is a summary of domestic news in North Korea this week. (*Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's unification ministry held a virtual ceremony for government-commissioned "reporters," including defectors recruited to serve as spokespeople for the South Korean government. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- A former South Korean prime minister strongly criticized Seoul's North Korea human rights approach after meeting with U.S. rights activist Suzanne Scholte. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korea's significant improvements in its conventional force capabilities are an important driver of North Korean efforts to accelerate its development of more advanced ballistic missile and nuclear weapons capabilities. The North's incorporation of new technologies into its ballistic missiles will significantly increase the threat to South Korean and US national security. (Sangsoo Lee, *38 North*)
- The following is a summary of inter-Korean news this week. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- A defining characteristic of President Biden's foreign policy, thus far, is its relentless pragmatism. That's especially evident in comparison to his recent predecessors. Donald Trump bet he could quickly persuade the North Korean regime of Kim Jong Un to give up its nuclear arsenal, but Mr. Biden harbors no such illusions. (*The Washington Post*)
- The following are key developments regarding North Korea this week. (*Yonhap*)
- The following is a summary of external news of North Korea this week. (*Yonhap*)
- A U.S. lawmaker plans to submit a bill calling for U.S. efforts to establish lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula that will include the establishment of a liaison office between the United States and North Korea, an organization said Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- The United States and South Korea must remain firm in their commitment to denuclearize North Korea, though some flexibility may be needed to advance denuclearization negotiations with Pyongyang, a former South Korean prime minister said Friday. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Carter Thompson, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250808141234/https://mailchi.mp/376404e23ce9/hrnk-news-items-new-book-offers-unfettered-look-into-life-in-north-koreasummary-of-domestic-news-in-north-korea-this-week?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, May 9, 2021**

## He Balloon-Dropped 500,000 Anti-Kim Flyers on North Korea—Then Cops Knocked on His Door

**In South Korea:**
He Balloon-Dropped 500,000 Anti-Kim Flyers on North Korea—Then Cops Knocked on His Door (*Daily Beast*, 05/08/2021)
Southern county got a U.S. missile shield -- and little else (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/09/2021)

International:
Resolving US-North Korea tension requires a formal end to Korean War (*The Hill*, 05/08/2021)
State Department announces winners of Diversity Visa Program (CNN, 05/08/2021)

**In South Korea:**

- Park Sang-Hak, who fled North Korea 21 years ago with his family, has defied Kim Yo Jong and President Moon by sending thousands of leaflets cascading over the North in defiance of a new law rammed through the South's National Assembly banning this expression of free speech. The police may have listened in on the interview with The Daily Beast—Park's last phone contact with a journalist before they confiscated his mobile along with documents from his office in Seoul. (Donald Kirk, *Daily Beast*)
- The county in which the government allowed a controversial American defense shield to be placed was promised 2.2 trillion won ($1.97 billion) in construction and development projects -- but little has actually been delivered. (Kim Jung-seok, Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- A peace agreement between the United States and the two Koreas would bindingly end the state of the Korean War and recognize once and for all that wartime rights to use force have ended. A peace agreement would also enable the normalization of relations and pave the way toward more effective engagements on complex issues like denuclearization and human rights. (Colleen Moore, *The Hill*)
- The State Department on Saturday announced the winners of the 2022 Diversity Immigrant Visa Program, also known as "The Green Card Lottery." This year's program has taken on new meaning as restrictions put in place by former President Donald Trump were struck down by President Joe Biden. In 2017, Trump took a series of actions

aimed at placing restrictions on foreign nationals from eight countries: Chad, Iran, Libya, North Korea, Syria, Venezuela, Somalia and Yemen. (Kelly Mena, CNN)

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Prepared by Jungeun Lee, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250808141635/https://mailchi.mp/6dc1a1c8bfba/hrnk-news-itemshe-balloon-dropped-500000-anti-kim-flyers-on-north-koreathen-cops-knocked-on-his-door?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, May 10, 2021**

## "I escaped North Korea... living the American dream"; Has the pandemic made it harder to escape North Korea?

**Top News:**
"I escaped North Korea... living the American dream" (*Nexus YouTube*, 05/06/2021)
Has the pandemic made it harder to escape North Korea? (*Nexus YouTube*, 05/07/2021)
The Trafficking of North Korean Women to China (*HRNK YouTube*, 04/27/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Kaesong party committee tries to send people to mines and rural areas (*Daily NK*, 05/10/2021)
The magic of a diplomatic pouch (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/10/2021)
N.K. paper highlights nationwide support for farming amid rice-planting season(*Yonhap*, 05/10/2021)
North Korea claims zero confirmed COVID-19 cases while facing vaccine delays (*NK News*, 05/09/2021)
Two Organization and Guidance Department officials expelled to rural areas with their families (*Daily NK*, 05/10/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Defector activist grilled by police over anti-N.K. leafleting (*Yonhap*, 05/10/2021)
Leaflet-flying defector reports to police for ban violations (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/10/2021)
Moon, entering final year, pledges last-ditch efforts to revive NK diplomacy (*The Korea Herald*, 05/10/2021)
Moon promises 'strict' response to activities that hinder inter-Korean relations (*NK News*, 05/10/2021)
S.Korean police summon activist over anti-N.Korean leaflets (StarTribune, 05/10/2021)
**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
COVID-19 rears its head in Korean football (*Korea Times*, 05/10/2021)
Incheon reviews plans to build North Korea hub at airport (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/10/2021)
Moon urges North Korea to return to negotiation table (*Korea Times*, 05/10/2021)

Who's lying? (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/10/2021)

**International:**
China's gateway to North Korea feels chill of Covid-19 border closure (*South China Morning Post*, 05/09/2021)
How to deal with a nuclear-armed Kim Jong Un (CNN, 05/10/2021)
Indo-Pacific strategy signals renewed commitment: Top EU envoy (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/10/2021)
North Korea Is China's Weapon (*Newsweek*, 05/10/2021)
Russia, China are cozying up to North Korea (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/09/2021)

**Top News:**

- What's really going on inside North Korea? The secretive nation - led by Kim Jong Un - claims to have zero Covid cases but with China right next door - can that really be true? We hear from Jake Kim, HRNK research intern and a North Korean who escaped more than 10 years ago, who doesn't believe it... or anything the North Korean government says anymore. (*Nexus YouTube*)
- HRNK's Director of Programs and Editor, Rosa Park, was interviewed by Turkish Radio and Television (TRT) World to speak about how the number of people successfully defecting from North Korea has fallen dramatically over the past year. (*Nexus YouTube*)
- Lord Alton of Liverpool, Crossbench Peer at the UK House of Lords, Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of HRNK, and Jihyun Park, North Korean defector and Human Rights Activist, discuss recent reports suggest that North Korean women in China are subjected to systematic rape, sex trafficking, sexual slavery, sexual abuse, prostitution, cybersex trafficking, forced marriage, and forced pregnancy. Reportedly, tens of thousands of North Korean women and girls are being trafficked into China and sold into the sex trade. The business of the sale of North Korean women is worth an estimated $105 million annually. It is a business that will not cease without intervention and certainly not until an organised international effort is underway. (*HRNK YouTube*)

**In North Korea:**

- The Kaesong party committee is trying to send people to mining facilities and rural areas, Daily NK has learned. The party committee reportedly claims that the surplus workforce employed in factories and businesses needs to be reduced and reallocated to the areas in need of workers. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)
- A diplomatic pouch became an untouchable privilege 60 years ago. It was stipulated in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations in 1961. For example, diplomatic pouches are exempt from customs clearance and X-ray screening. They are literally a free pass. (Kang Ki-Heon, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Monday highlighted state-led efforts to support the farming sector amid a full-fledged rice-planting season as the country is striving to bolster grain production in the face of chronic food shortages. (*Yonhap*)
- Last week, NK News reported that 1.7 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine originally slated to reach North Korea by May are now facing delays partly because of complications in India, which has been facing a surge of thousands of recorded

coronavirus-related deaths per day. The vaccines were supposed to come from an Indian pharmaceutical manufacturer, but Indian vaccine exports have been put on a temporary hold because of domestic demand. (Kelly Kasulis, *NK News*)

- North Korean authorities recently expelled two personnel management officials from the Organization and Guidance Department (OGD) and their families to the countryside on bribery allegations, Daily NK has learned. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- A vocal North Korean defector and activist known for flying anti-Pyongyang leaflets into the North by balloon was questioned by police on Monday over his recent claim to have sent leaflets, in the first violation of South Korea's anti-leaflet law that took effect in March. (*Yonhap*)
- Police on Monday summoned Park Sang-hak, a North Korean defector who claims his organization dispatched anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets from near the demilitarized zone into the North, for questioning as a suspect in his alleged defiance of the leaflet ban. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- President Moon Jae-in on Monday said he would not be pressed by time in reviving the collapsed diplomacy with North Korea but pledged last-ditch efforts to make a breakthrough in the remaining year of his presidency. (Lee Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)
- Marking his four-year anniversary in office, South Korean President Moon Jae-in on Monday promised to respond with “strict” measures to activities that break inter-Korean agreements and relevant laws, in an apparent reference to violations of the new “anti-leaflet” law. (Jeongmin Kim, Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- South Korean police on Monday summoned an activist who said he flew hundreds of thousands of anti-North Korean propaganda leaflets toward the North by balloon in defiance of a new law that criminalizes such activities. (Kim Tong-hyung, *StarTribune*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Korean soccer came to a halt when FC Seoul defender Hwang Hyun-soo tested positive with COVID-19. The virus has also caused North Korea to withdraw from all qualification matches for the 2022 World Cup. (John Duerden, *Korea Times*)
- The Incheon Metropolitan Government reviewed plans to invest some 4.4 trillion won ($3.9 billion) to make Incheon International Airport a hub for exchanges with North Korea and build and repair its airports, according to a study commissioned by the city revealed Sunday. (Lee Chul-Jae, Kim Sang-Jin, Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- President Moon Jae-in said Monday that the new North Korea policy developed by President Joe Biden's administration was "another chance" for Pyongyang to begin dialogue, pledging he will do his utmost to facilitate talks between the two Koreas and the U.S. (Nam Hyun-woo, *Korea Times*)
- Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong and National Intelligence Service Director Park Jie-won have sent mixed signals on inter-Korean and foreign/security matters. (Chang Se-jeong, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- The border between North Korea and China closed for travel and trade in January 2020 after the emergency of COVID-19. Dandong, a city on the Chinese side of the border has been a hub for tourism and trade, has been closed and impacted by the international ban on processed goods from North Korea as well as the virus. (Kinling Lo, *South China Morning Post*)
- The Biden administration has pledged to pursue "calibrated" diplomacy to persuade North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to halt his mad dash toward a deliverable nuclear weapon. But that is a vain hope. Instead, the world and especially the United States must find a way to live with a North Korea armed with The Bomb. And keep Kim from using -- or selling -- it. (David A. Andelman, CNN)
- Mario Castillo-Fernandez, ambassador of the European Union (EU) to Korea, highlights the EU's wishes to enhance cooperation with partners in Asia in an interview with Korea JoongAng Daily. She describes her experiences working on the EU's relations with the Korean Peninsula and what she believes is the best tool for denuclearization in North Korea. (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- In China's hands, North Korea is a weapon. American presidents and secretaries of state know the way to the Chinese capital to seek help in restraining the Kims, and the Chinese demand concessions in return. President Biden looks like he is going to repeat the pattern, established by George W. Bush, of looking to China. On March 18, Secretary of State Antony Blinken publicly said the Chinese should work to rein in Pyongyang. (Gordon G. Chang, *Newsweek*)
- As the Joe Biden administration tries to bring allies South Korea and Japan closer together, Russia and China are showing signs of warmer ties with North Korea. (Jeong Yong-Soo, Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

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Prepared by Mindy Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250808142010/https://mailchi.mp/8c9d61b9e27c/hrnk-news-itemsi-escaped-north-korea-living-the-american-dreamhas-the-pandemic-made-it-harder-to-escape-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, May 11, 2021**

## N. Korea reports no coronavirus cases; S. Korean President Pledges to Restore Dialogue with N. Korea

**In North Korea:**
Former member of leadership bodyguard unit killed a female student in March (*Daily NK*, 05/11/2021)
New activity at Kim Jong Un's private beach may signal visit to east coast (*NK News*, 05/11/2021)

N.K. pushes to improve efficiency of power production amid chronic shortage(*Yonhap*, 05/11/2021)
N. Korea says U.S. offer to explain outcome of policy review 'well received' (*Yonhap*, 05/11/2021)
N. Korea reports no coronavirus cases: WHO report (*Yonhap*, 05/11/2021)
North Korea orders Youth League reshuffle for more effective self-criticism sessions(*RFA*, 05/10/2021)
Woman who endured physical pain during Military Foundation Day performance praised for loyalty (*Daily NK*, 05/11/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Military to complete first dose vaccination of troops over 30s this week (*Yonhap*, 05/11/2021)
South Korea's Kakao to buy two U.S. storytelling apps for $950 million (*Reuters*, 05/11/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Moon's leaflet stance effort to manage NK ties before summit with Biden: experts(*Korea Herald*, 05/11/2021)
S. Korean President Pledges to Restore Dialogue with N. Korea (VOA *News*, 05/11/2021)

**International:**
Biden administration is open to sharing coronavirus vaccines with North Korea (CNN, 05/11/2021)
Biden's North Korea outreach may be supported by missile defense (NK *News*, 05/11/2021)
Iowa Soldier's Remains Coming Home From North Korea (KWQC, 05/10/2021)
Korean War soldier's remains returned to Illinois home town (AP, 05/11/2021)
S. Korea working closely with US to secure COVID vaccines before June (*Yonhap*,05/11/2021)
Source, destination of illicit weapons seized at sea still under investigation: Kirby(*Yonhap*, 05/11/2021)
Unification minister planning to visit Washington next month: official (*Yonhap*, 05/11/2021)
US reaches out to North Korea again for policy briefing (*Korea Herald*, 05/11/2021)

**In North Korea:**
- Belated reports have come out that a discharged soldier from Unit 974 sexually assaulted and killed a female student in Myongchon County, North Hamgyong Province in late March. The soldier was a retired member of Unit 974, the unit in charge of serving as bodyguards for North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- A large, luxurious pool boat was moved back in front of Kim's private beach in Wonsan on Monday, a sign the North Korean leader may soon travel to the east coast for pleasure or for economic or military inspections. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea has stepped up efforts to produce and distribute electricity more efficiently, state media said Tuesday, amid a chronic power shortage and challenges in meeting the country's five-year economic goals. (*Yonhap*)

- North Korea is said to have acknowledged a recent U.S. offer to explain the outcome of its policy review on Pyongyang after earlier overtures from the administration of Joe Biden went unanswered. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has conducted coronavirus tests on around 26,000 people so far but found no infections, the World Health Organization (WHO) said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea is ordering local leaders of the country's main youth organization to change reviewers of self-criticism meetings to force young people to snitch on each other "more honestly," sources in the country told RFA. (Hyemin Son, RFA)
- A woman in Chongjin, North Hamgyong Province reportedly collapsed on Apr. 25 of this year after enduring appendicitis pain until the end of a Military Foundation Day celebratory performance. North Korean authorities have reportedly praised the woman for her loyalty to the country and publicized the incident widely. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- The military is expected to wrap up giving the first jabs of coronavirus vaccines to service members aged 30 and older this week, the defense ministry said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's Kakao Entertainment Corp said on Tuesday it was acquiring U.S.-based online comic app Tapas and serialized fiction app Radish for $510 million and $440 million, respectively. (Joyce Lee, *Reuters*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- In a speech marking the start of his final year in office, President Moon Jae-in issued a strongly worded statement, apparently condemning an activist group for sending anti-Pyongyang leaflets across the inter-Korean border. (Ahn Sung-mi, *Korea Herald*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in is vowing to spend his final year in office trying to finally bring a lasting peace on the Korean peninsula. (*VOA News*)

**International:**

- The Biden administration is open to sharing coronavirus vaccines and other humanitarian assistance to help North Korea combat the deadly pandemic, according to two sources familiar with internal discussions. (Kylie Atwood, CNN)
- The Pentagon supports the Biden administration's approach to North Korea, a U.S. Department of Defense official said on Monday. According to experts, this support will likely involve investments in missile defense in order to deter a potential North Korean attack. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- An Iowa soldier who was killed in North Korea in 1950 is finally coming home. The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced today the remains of Army Cpl. Eldert J. Beek, 20, of Sibley, Iowa, were identified on April 14, 2020. (Sharon DeRycke, KWQC)
- The remains of U.S. Army Cpl. Asa E. Vance on Monday were brought to his family 70 years after he left Decatur, Illinois, to serve in the Korean War. (AP)
- South Korea is closely consulting with the United States to quickly secure COVID-19 vaccines, South Korea's ambassador to the United States said Monday, adding the United States understands the difficulty South Korea faces. (*Yonhap*)

- The source and destination of illicit weapons seized over the weekend in Arabian waters are still under investigation, a Pentagon spokesman said Monday, adding the U.S. does not exclude North Korea from its list of potential destinations. (*Yonhap*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young is planning to visit the United States next month, an official said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- The US government last week reached out to North Korea again to explain the outcome of its policy review on Pyongyang, and the North responded to confirm the contact, according to diplomatic sources on Tuesday. (Lee Ji-yoon, *Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Emalyn Atkins, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250808142909/https://mailchi.mp/e8b14a9e20ba/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-reports-no-coronavirus-cases-s-korean-president-pledges-to-restore-dialogue-with-n-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, May 12, 2021**

## N. Korea continues to strictly restrict religious freedom; N. Korea unlikely to respond to US vaccine offer

**In North Korea:**
Biden Shouldn't Pressure Seoul into 'Strategic Clarity' (*National Interest*, 05/11/2021)
N. Korean authorities mobilize inminban leaders to crackdown on street vendors(*Daily NK*, 05/12/2021)
N. Korea continues to strictly restrict religious freedom: U.S. State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 05/13/2021)
North Korea imports COVID-19 vaccine samples from China and Russia (*Daily NK*, 05/12/2021)
North Korea Orders Farmers to Collect Urine for Fertilizer Amid Shortage (RFA, 05/11/2021)
North Korea unlikely to respond to US vaccine offer (*Korea Times*, 05/12/2021)
North Korea's Takes Self-Reliance to the Extreme. Case In Point: Its Tanks (*National Interest*, 05/11/2021)
**In South Korea:**
Analysis-S.Korea's COVID-19 vaccine shortages overshadow Moon-Biden summit(*Reuters*, 05/12/2021)
Ex-PM asks US for 10 million COVID-19 vaccines (*Korea Herald*, 05/12/2021)
Government teases eased social distancing measures for second half (*JoongAng Daily*, 05/12/2021)
Local govt. office raided over public servant's alleged land speculation (*Korea Herald*, 05/12/2021)
Moody's maintains S. Korea's credit rating at Aa2 (*Korea Herald*, 05/12/2021)
Samsung sees pandemic-led appliances boom extending run to rest of year(*Reuters*, 05/11/2021)

Seoul 'positively assesses' reports about North Korea responding to US overture(*NK News*, 05/11/2021)
Provincial universities face impending doom with low enrollment (*JoongAng Daily*, 05/12/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
N. Korea leaves out photos of inter-Korean summit from album of leader's diplomatic activities (*Yonhap*, 05/12/2021)

**International:**
Business executives head to U.S. as Moon meets Biden (*JoongAng Daily*, 05/12/2021)
Japan conducts first joint drills with France and US with eye on China, North Korea(SCMP, 05/11/2021)
Korea-U.S.-Japan intelligence chiefs meet and discuss geopolitics (*JoongAng Daily*, 05/12/2021)
S. Korea, US to hold regular defense talks on N. Korea, OPCON transfer (*Korea Herald*, 05/12/2021)
S. Korea, US to talk security amid new NK policy (*Korea Herald*, 05/12/2021)
Spy chiefs of S. Korea, Japan, U.S. meet and discuss N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 05/12/2021)
US spy chief visits Seoul ahead of Moon-Biden summit next week (*Korea Herald*, 05/12/2021)
US spy chief lands in Seoul after visiting Tokyo: South Korean media (*NK News*, 05/12/2021)
U.S. willing to share COVID vaccine with N. Korea if requested: report (*Yonhap*, 05/11/2021)
Vaccine cooperation among key agenda items for Moon-Biden summit: official(*Korea Herald*, 05/12/2021)

**In North Korea:**
- South Korea's attempts to remain in the good graces of both China and the U.S. are becoming increasingly untenable. Washington runs some serious risks by forcing it to choose. (James Park, *National Interest*)
- North Korean authorities have recently mobilized *inminban* (people's unit) leaders in some areas of the country to crackdown on street vendors, Daily NK has learned. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea continues to strictly limit the basic rights of its people, including religious freedom, with up to 200,000 people believed to be held in prison camps because of their beliefs, the U.S. State Department said Wednesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea recently imported some COVID-19 vaccine samples from Russia and China, but these samples are being used for research and development purposes, not for inoculating North Koreans, Daily NK has learned. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- Each farmer in North Korea must donate two liters of their urine daily to make fertilizer, sources in the country told RFA. (Jeong Yon Park, Leejin Jun, Eugene Whong, RFA)
- he U.S. is making efforts to facilitate talks with North Korea with an offering of COVID-19 vaccines, but the probability of Pyongyang accepting this offer seems to be low, given the Kim Jong-un regime's ignoring of humanitarian aid offers and its strict quarantine policy. (Nam Hyun-woo, *Korea Times*)
- The Chonma-ho may be the first DPRK tank that uses explosive-reactive armor paneling to defeat tandem warheads, though the paneling does not cover the tank fully, and offers many gaps in protection. (Caleb Larson, *National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's struggle to boost coronavirus vaccine supplies is threatening to overshadow President Moon Jae-in's first summit with U.S. President Joe Biden. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- Former prime minister Hwang Kyo-ahn said Wednesday that he had requested 10 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines for South Korea from the US during his meeting with Kurt Campbell. (Ahn Sung-mi, *Korea Herald*)
- Health authorities announced they will ease the social distancing scheme from the second half of the year after completing vaccination for the older population in June, stating that a large number of the vulnerable population will be immunized by then. (Seo Ji-eun, *JoongAng Daily*)
- Police raided the North Jeolla Province government office Wednesday over alleged land speculation by a public servant. (*Yonhap*)
- Global ratings firm Moody's has kept the credit rating of South Korea at Aa2, affirming the outlook at stable, according to the Ministry of Economy and Finance on Wednesday. (Kim Young-won, *Korea Herald*)
- A pandemic-driven boom in home appliance sales will last longer than previously anticipated and extend into the second half of the year, Samsung Electronics Co Ltd's head of the business said. (Joyce Lee, *Reuters*)
- The "cherry blossom ending" of provincial universities in Korea has become reality, exacerbated by the low birthrate and the tendency of high school students to choose prestigious schools in Seoul over those in other areas. (Seo Ji-eun, *JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea "positively assesses" reports of contact between North Korea and the U.S., an official from Seoul's unification ministry said in a background briefing on Tuesday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- North Korea published a photo album showing leader Kim Jong-un's diplomatic activities but has left out photos of his summit meeting with South Korean President Moon Jae-in amid chilled inter-Korean relations. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- A group of business executives will join a delegation headed to the United States for a meeting between President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Joe Biden next week, according to industry sources and local media reports. (Park Eun-jee, *JoongAng Daily*)
- French naval and ground units on Tuesday began taking part in joint military maneuvers with their Japanese and US counterparts in southernJapan, with the exercises simulating a number of scenarios, including defending remote islands and intercepting vessels at sea. (Julian Ryall, SCMP)
- The intelligence chiefs of Seoul, Washington and Tokyo held talks in Japan Wednesday to discuss North Korea policy and other relevant geopolitical issues, according to diplomatic sources. (Sarah Kim, *JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea and the United States were to hold biannual defense talks in Washington on Wednesday to discuss regional security situations and major bilateral issues, such as

the transition of the wartime operational control (OPCON), the defense ministry said. (*Korea Herald*)

- Senior defense officials of South Korea and the US will hold a two-day dialogue on Korean Peninsula issues as the Biden administration seeks to engage North Korea with a new policy it recently revealed after a monthslong review. (Choi Si-young, *Korea Herald*)
- The intelligence chiefs of South Korea, Japan and the United States held a meeting in Tokyo on Wednesday and exchanged views on North Korea and other relevant issues, informed diplomatic sources said. (*Yonhap*)
- US Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines arrived in Seoul on Wednesday, ahead of next week's summit between South Korean President Moon Jae-in and US President Joe Biden. (Lee Ji-yoon, *Korea Herald*)
- U.S. Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines touched down in South Korea on Wednesday after meeting with her South Korean and Japanese counterparts in Tokyo (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- The United States may consider sharing COVID-19 vaccines with North Korea if requested by the impoverished nation, if the vaccines will reach the intended beneficiaries, a U.S. news outlet reported Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- Cooperation on COVID-19 vaccines will be a key agenda item during the upcoming summit between the leaders of South Korea and the United States, a senior Seoul official said Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Emalyn Atkins, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250808142325/https://mailchi.mp/c6c82400ba6c/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-continues-to-strictly-restrict-religious-freedom-n-korea-unlikely-to-respond-to-us-vaccine-offer?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, May 13, 2021**

## President Moon's remarks on North Korean leaflets; Biden must tell Kim: begin denuclearization, end dehumanization of North Koreans

**Top News:**

** President Moon's remarks on North Korean leaflets: concerns over "burdening the Biden administration" (*VOA,* 5/13/2021)

Biden must tell Kim: Begin denuclearization, end dehumanization of North Koreans(*The Hill*, 5/11/2021)

**In North Korea:**

Hungry North Korean construction workers in Pyongyang rob and murder citizens to buy food (RFA, 5/12/2021)

More details emerge about the forced repatriation in 2018 of a N. Korean soldier working in Russia (*Daily* NK, 5/13/2021)
N. Korea expands the number of soldiers going abroad to earn foreign currency (*Daily* NK, 5/13/2021)
North Korea in regular contact about COVID-19 vaccine rollout, Gavi says (*NK News*, 5/13/2021)
N.K. paper warns against inflow of capitalistic culture into country (*Yonhap*, 5/13/2021)
N. Korea still in talks with COVAX to receive coronavirus vaccines: official (*Yonhap*, 5/13/2021)
North Koreans attended virtual seminars with outside world: Choson Exchange (*NK News*, 5/13/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Activist files criminal complaint against Moon for 'siding with' North Korea (*NK News*, 5/13/2021)
Unification Minister says Korea-US summit could be 'watershed' moment on the peninsula (*Korea Herald*, 5/13/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Unification minister urges N.K. to resume nuclear talks after upcoming Moon-Biden summit meeting (*Yonhap*, 5/13/2021)

**International:**
Blinken offers outcome of N. Korea policy review to Russian counterpart (*Yonhap*, 5/13/2021)
UN approves North Korea sanctions exemption for COVID-19 testing kits (*NK News*, 5/13/2021)
Unlikely US spy chief contacted North Korea during DMZ visit: Experts (*NK News*, 5/13/2021)
U.S. alliance with S. Korea key deterrent to N. Korean threats: defence official (*Yonhap*, 5/13/2021)
U.S. intel chief Haines visits DMZ amid policy coordination efforts on N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 5/13/2021)
U.S. will address N. Korean human rights and security issues at same time: official(*Yonhap*, 5/13/2021)

**Top News:**

- Ahead of the summit meeting with President Biden, President Moon's remarks about anti-North Korean leaflets have caused concern in Washington. Criticism has been raised that these remarks will undermine human rights, burden U.S.-ROK relations, and adversely affect President Moon's diplomatic status with the United States. Greg Scarlatoiu**,** HRNK Executive Director, offers his remarks: "Years from now, decades from now, centuries from now, history will judge President Moon Jae-in, and now based on this declaration, based on the statement, we know that he's fully aware of what's going on. And we know he is a staunch opponent of sending information into North Korea, he is a staunch opponent of anything that has to do with human rights." David Maxwell, Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and HRNK Board Member, also provides his comments: "It's disappointing because we really need to be focused on getting information into North Korea, the Korean people in the North. They deserve that information and we know from talking to escapees that they value that information. It

gives them hope, it gives them understanding and knowledge that they need to know to survive." (Baek Seong-weon, VOA)

- The Biden administration recently completed its North Korea policy review. Joseph Bosco discusses how the U.S. can incorporate human rights into its North Korea policy. Bosco writes, "Biden speaks passionately and empathetically about human rights and the human suffering that occurs when they are denied. He should tell Kim directly (but in a private conversation at first) that if North Korea conducts any further nuclear tests or ballistic missile launches, the United States will do a launch of its own — a sustained global shaming campaign that will pick up where Trump left off." Bosco further states that Biden must "provide the gruesome details of North Korea's gulag system." HRNK's work on North Korea's prison camp system is mentioned: "The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) has been working on these issues for 20 years. HRNK facilitated Trump's White House-hosting of North Korean victims and his spotlighting of Ji Seong-ho, the disabled North Korean defector who tearfully waved his crutch in defiance of Kim's brutal tyranny during the 2018 State of the Union." (Joseph Bosco, *The Hill*)

**In North Korea:**

- Residents of the North Korean capital Pyongyang are living in fear after construction workers on a major national project in the area have resorted to violent robberies to get enough money to feed themselves, sources in the city told RFA. (Jeong Yon Park, Leejin Jun, Eugene Whong, RFA)
- When North Korean authorities found out that the man intended to escape to South Korea, they gave orders to bring him back dead or alive, a source told Daily NK. (*Daily NK*)
- Soldiers being sent abroad can earn more money for state coffers compared to ordinary, civilian workers. Many of the laborers recently selected for overseas assignments are soldiers, Daily NK has learned. (*Daily NK*)
- North Korea is in touch with various international organizations regarding its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Gavi, a global vaccine alliance that has helped allocate 1.7 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine to the country. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- North Korea's official newspaper called Thursday for efforts to prevent capitalistic culture from seeping into the country, warning that otherwise, the country could fall "like a damp wall." (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea is still in talks with the COVAX Facility project, a unification ministry official said Thursday, denying a media report that Pyongyang has rejected cooperation with the global vaccine distribution program. (*Yonhap*)
- People in North Korea successfully connected with the outside world through a series of video conference seminars in recent weeks, the Singapore-based non-profit Choson Exchange said on Thursday, amid hopes that similar technology could be used to facilitate international diplomacy with the DPRK in future. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- Park Sang-hak, a defector-activist whose office was recently raided by police after he claimed to have violated South Korea's new "anti-leaflet law," filed a criminal complaint

against South Korean President Moon Jae-in on Thursday for “siding with” North Korea. (Jeongmin Kim, NK News)

- Unification Minister Lee In-young on Thursday pinned his hopes on the upcoming South Korea-US summit as a “watershed” moment that could make progress in the stalled diplomacy with North Korea, and urged Pyongyang to return to the dialogue. (Ahn Sung-mi, Korea Herald)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Unification Minister Lee In-young urged North Korea on Thursday to come back to the negotiating table for denuclearization talks, saying the upcoming summit meeting between Seoul and Washington will serve as a "big turning point." (Yonhap)

**International:**

- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Wednesday explained the outcome of the recently concluded North Korea policy review to his Russian counterpart, the State Department said, amid a continued silence from North Korea to a U.S. offer to do the same for the country. (Yonhap)
- A Singapore-based humanitarian organization has been granted a sanctions exemption to donate COVID-19 testing kits and related items to local hospitals in North Korea by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) sanctions committee. (Won-Gi Jung, NK News)
- The U.S.’ top intelligence official visited the demilitarized zone (DMZ) separating the two Koreas on Thursday, but experts say it’s unlikely the trip was anything more than a standard orientation. (Jeongmin Kim, Chad O'Carroll, NK News)
- A strong alliance between South Korea and the United States is key to deterring threats posed by China and North Korea, a U.S. defense official said Wednesday. (Byun Duk-kun, Yonhap)
- U.S. Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines visited the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating the two Koreas on Thursday to take a first-hand look at the heavily fortified border, as Washington seeks to round out its policy on North Korea. (Yonhap)
- The United States will continue to tackle the North Korean nuclear issue while at the same time pressing for improved human rights conditions, including freedom of religion, in the reclusive state, a senior U.S. official said Wednesday. (Byun Duk-kun, Yonhap)

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VOA Article

**President Moon’s Remarks on North Korean Leaflets: Concerns in Washington Over “Burdening the Biden Administration”**

**Reporter Baek Seong-weon**

Ahead of the summit meeting with President Biden, President Moon’s remarks about anti-North Korean leaflets have caused concern in Washington. Criticism has been raised that these remarks will undermine human rights, burden U.S.-ROK relations, and adversely affect President Moon’s diplomatic status with the U.S. This is Baek Seong-weon reporting.

On the distribution of these leaflets, President Moon has stated that he “can’t help but strictly enforce the law”. His warnings have drawn criticism that they are shaking the foundation of liberal democracy and human rights.

In a speech marking the fourth anniversary of his inauguration on the 10th of this month, President Moon likened violation of the anti-leaflet law to “pouring cold water on inter-Korean relations.” His interest in further investigating the violations stands in sharp contrast to the Biden administration’s human rights-focused stance, and concerns are being raised that it may pose challenges at the upcoming summit between the two countries on the 9th.

On the 11th, John Sifton, Asia Advocacy Director at Human Rights Watch, told VOA in a phone call that, “Neither President Moon nor Kim Jong-un seems to really understands how freedom of speech works. It doesn't really matter what the content is of the speech, or how it's transmitted.”

Sifton added that, “People of South Korea have the right to express themselves, even if it's inconvenient or problematic for diplomatic efforts. That's the bottom line. It may not be productive, it may cause tensions, but that's how freedom of speech works.”

On the 15th of last month, Sifton attended a hearing on South Korea’s anti-leaflet law held by the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, a bipartisan human rights commission in the U.S. Congress. At the hearing, he advised the United States to, “invest in the inflow of information to North Korea by strengthening support for broadcasting and civil society”.

There has been some surprise in Washington that President Moon seems intent on personally addressing the anti-North Korean leaflet issue. Generally, these kinds of issues are raised and processed in other government departments, including the Ministry of Unification.

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), stated that, “Years from now, decades from now, centuries from now, history will judge President Moon Jae-in, and now based on this declaration, based on the statement, we know that he's fully aware of what's going on. And we know he is a staunch opponent of sending information into North Korea, he is a staunch opponent of anything that has to do with human rights.”

Another reason why U.S. experts on the Korean peninsula are taking this issue seriously is that President Moon’s remarks are seen as a direct follow up to Deputy Director of the Workers’ Party of Korea Kim Yo-jong’s threats, and as “an attack on his own people.”

Concerning these anti-North Korean leaflets, Deputy Director Kim said in a statement on the 2nd that, “We can’t just wait and see what happens,” adding that North Korea would “consider corresponding actions.” Shortly after Kim Yo-jong made her statements, South Korean National Police Agency Commissioner Kim Chang-ryong ordered that “a quick and thorough investigation into the distribution of anti-North Korean leaflets be conducted.”

On the same day that President Moon announced that he would “strictly enforce the law,” the South Korean police summoned Park Sang-hak, chairman of the Fighters for a Free North Korea, who claimed to have sent 500,000 leaflets into North Korea at the end of last month. He was questioned for six hours.

David Maxwell, senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD), stated that, “It was very disappointing to hear those remarks because it really goes against what we all believe in terms of human rights, and individual liberty and freedom. I mean he is actually denying the human rights of Korean citizens. Those escapees from the North are Korean citizens.”

He emphasized, “It's disappointing because we really need to be focused on getting information into North Korea, the Korean people in the North. They deserve that information and we know from talking to escapees that they value that information. It gives them hope, it gives them understanding and knowledge that they need to know to survive.”

On President Moon’s speech on the 10th, Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu pointed out that, “Blaming division, blaming tension, blaming a cold war mentality on North Korean escapees who suffered so much, and went through a lot to escape and settle in South Korea is preposterous.”

He continued, “There are four stark reminders of the Cold War on the Korean peninsula. The division of North Korea and South Korea, the North Korean political prison camps, where at least 120,000, men, women and children are held and the other detention facilities which of course remind us of the Soviet gulag and German extermination camps. Third, North Korea's nuclear weapons. Fourth, North Korea's ballistic missiles. So, it is not human rights activists who maintain a Cold War atmosphere on the Korean peninsula. It's the Kim regime."

Experts fear that even if President Moon personally comes forward and signals his willingness to address North Korea’s complaints, it will only backfire and fail to achieve the goal of restoring inter-Korean and U.S.-North Korean dialogue.

Celeste Arrington, professor of political science at George Washington University, stated that, “Given the current conditions, it is hard to imagine that just curbing leaflets would induce the DPRK back to talks with the Moon administration, as its term is running out. So it seems that Moon may lose more than he gains by sticking rigidly with the anti-leafleting law.”

Professor Arrington, who researches Northeast Asian politics and security with a focus on the two Koreas and Japan, added, “Importantly, highlighting the anti-leaflet law only inflames ROK conservatives, who just won the by elections pretty handily, albeit not mainly on North Korea issues per se. As such and given the DPRK's consistent stiff-arming of South Korea for over a year, the political calculus behind emphasizing the anti-leaflet law is not clear to me.”

President Moon’s “strict law enforcement” order came out ten days ahead of his first summit with President Biden. Amid a number of security and economic issues between the United

States and South Korea, some have pointed out that the Biden administration has needlessly picked out an issue that it cannot easily solve.

The United States, which has always been invested in human rights issues in North Korea, will be burdened with checking South Korea's human rights status as well. This will likely have a negative impact on the upcoming summit, as South Korea is an important ally for the United States in terms of security and shared values.

Senior Fellow David Maxwell adds, "I think this is going to have a problem between President Biden and President Moon because I suspect President Biden has a different view about this, and does not agree with this law that is really doing nothing to protect really anyone on the Korean peninsula."

He continues, "And so, this doubling down on violating human rights or attacking Korean citizens is so disappointing and this I think will be discussed. I just don't think it's acceptable for an alliance. Our alliance partners, South Korea and the US share values. We've long shared the values of freedom, individual liberty, liberal democracy, free market economy, the rule of law and human rights for all. And so this could be a real friction point in the alliance."

However, experts predict that the Biden administration, which prioritizes security cooperation between the United States, South Korea, and Japan as it competes against China for supremacy, will focus on this issue at the upcoming summit, but that it will also present a united front with South Korea.

HRNK Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu states that, "Despite a lot of noise in the press both here and in Korea, despite our own leadership at times, we have managed to maintain, preserve and strengthen our strategic alliance with our friends, partners, allies, brothers and sisters in South Korea. So I would expect the Biden administration to be very focused on preserving the alliance and preserving the sovereignty of the Republic of Korea, our great ally, while at the same time perhaps issuing some signals that we are concerned about these developments in South Korea."

Professor Arrington states, "While I understand the Moon administration's hope for resuming engagement with the DPRK, I think the US government's subdued questioning of the anti-leafleting law and the US Congress' hearing about it are justified and in line with the North Korea Human Rights Act."

Director Sifton explains that, "The real issue is can the United States and South Korea reconcile what appear to be different viewpoints on how important human rights are in negotiations with the North. Right now President Moon wants to de-emphasize it and President Biden wants to emphasize more. So that's what needs to be reconciled."

According to the anti-leaflet law enacted in March, those who send leaflets to North Korea or use loudspeakers around the DMZ to broadcast messages can face up to three years in prison or a fine of 30 million won (equivalent to $26,500 as of the 12th).

On the 12th, President Moon accused Park Sang-hak, the chairman of the Fighters for a Free North Korea, who was investigated on suspicions of disseminating leaflets, of treason, along with Choi Dae-zip, former chairman of the Korean Medical Association. Park has accused President Moon of, "gagging the mouth of the people and trying to send them to prison."

U.S. experts on the Korean peninsula have pointed out that talk of South Korean human rights has disappeared from U.S. congress since the mid-1980s, and that it is a "shameful regression" that it be mentioned for the first time in 30 years alongside North Korean human rights issues in Washington.

Executive Director Scarlatoiu asks, "Why is South Korea better than North Korea? Is it because of more money, nicer cars, nicer apartments? No, it is because the Republic of Korea has been established based on a set of values. Human rights are at the core of these values."

In its country report on human rights released this past March, the U.S. State Department said that it would hold North Korea accountable for its atrocious human rights violations. It also criticized South Korea's anti-leaflet law as a serious restriction on freedom of expression.

In emails sent to VOA on the 13th and 23rd last month, a spokesperson at the State Department hinted that the anti-North Korean leaflet law may need to be revised, while stating, "We respect the fact that South Korea has the means to review this law as an independent democracy with a strong judiciary."

This was Baek Seong-weon with VOA.

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VOA Article Translation by Audrey Gregg, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Madeline Hieneman, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250923214037/https://mailchi.mp/9e588d393b34/hrnk-news-itemspresident-moons-remarks-on-north-korean-leafletsbiden-must-tell-kim-begin-denuclearization-end-dehumanization-of-north-koreans?e=8a9aae5198

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**Friday, May 14, 2021**

## The Biden administration: is a North Korean human rights reset possible?; The neglected North Korean crisis: women's rights

**Top News:**
** President Moon's remarks on North Korean leaflets: concerns over "burdening the Biden administration" (VOA, 5/13/2021)
Biden must tell Kim: Begin denuclearization, end dehumanization of North Koreans(*The Hill*, 5/11/2021)

** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**
Hungry North Korean construction workers in Pyongyang rob and murder citizens to buy food (RFA, 5/12/2021)
More details emerge about the forced repatriation in 2018 of a N. Korean soldier working in Russia (*Daily* NK, 5/13/2021)
N. Korea expands the number of soldiers going abroad to earn foreign currency (*Daily* NK, 5/13/2021)
North Korea in regular contact about COVID-19 vaccine rollout, Gavi says (*NK News*, 5/13/2021)
N.K. paper warns against inflow of capitalistic culture into country (*Yonhap*, 5/13/2021)
N. Korea still in talks with COVAX to receive coronavirus vaccines: official (*Yonhap*, 5/13/2021)
North Koreans attended virtual seminars with outside world: Choson Exchange (*NK News*, 5/13/2021)
**In South Korea:**
Activist files criminal complaint against Moon for 'siding with' North Korea (*NK News*, 5/13/2021)
Unification Minister says Korea-US summit could be 'watershed' moment on the peninsula (*Korea Herald*, 5/13/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Unification minister urges N.K. to resume nuclear talks after upcoming Moon-Biden summit meeting (*Yonhap*, 5/13/2021)

**International:**
Blinken offers outcome of N. Korea policy review to Russian counterpart (*Yonhap*, 5/13/2021)
UN approves North Korea sanctions exemption for COVID-19 testing kits (*NK News*, 5/13/2021)
Unlikely US spy chief contacted North Korea during DMZ visit: Experts (*NK News*, 5/13/2021)
U.S. alliance with S. Korea key deterrent to N. Korean threats: defence official (*Yonhap*, 5/13/2021)
U.S. intel chief Haines visits DMZ amid policy coordination efforts on N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 5/13/2021)
U.S. will address N. Korean human rights and security issues at same time: official(*Yonhap*, 5/13/2021)

**Top News:**
- Dr. Nicholas Eberstadt and Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director, provide an overview of the Biden administration's potential and initiative to address North Korea's

proliferation of weapons and North Korean human rights. Dr. Nicholas Eberstadt currently holds the Henry Wendt Chair in Political Economy at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) and is a Founding Board Member at HRNK. This event is part of the ongoing HRNK Board Member Speaking Series. (*HRNK YouTube*)

- This essay examines the dangers of exploitation that North Korean women face and highlights the ethical and legal imperatives of supporting their roles in marketizing the economy and liberalizing the society in one of the worst human rights–violating states. Women are North Korea's most deserving recipients of international assistance and the country's most promising partners to the world. HRNK's report, *Lives for Sale: Personal Accounts of Women Fleeing North Korea to China*, is referenced. (Sea Young Kim, Leif-Eric Easley, *Cambridge University Press*)

**In North Korea:**

- The North Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs recently established a new organization specializing in strategic policy towards the United States, Daily NK has learned. The new office's establishment could be seen as an attempt by North Korea to conduct more proactive analysis of US intentions in its preparations to negotiate with the US. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea has ordered residents of a city that lies across the border from China to keep their lights on until 10 p.m. every night to hide the fact that the country is suffering from energy shortages, sources in the city told RFA. (Jieun Kim, Leejin Jun, Eugene Whong, RFA)
- Amid North Korean government efforts to prevent information leaks by "wiping out" Chinese cell phone use in the country, Daily NK has learned that the country's authorities have recently begun encouraging people to report on others for using cell phones. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- The COVID-19 pandemic caused the rapid expansion and normalization of video conferencing around the world, North Korea included. While Zoom may be the most prominent platform for businesses globally, North Koreans are connecting through a domestically developed video conferencing system called Rakwon (락원), which means "paradise." (Martyn Williams, *38 North*)

**In South Korea:**

- A South Korean court said Friday that it had rejected an injunction request from NGOs to ban the sales and distribution of a memoir of North Korea's founder Kim Il-sung. (Kim So-hyun, *Korea Herald*)
- South Koreans can now freely conduct searches on article titles published by the North's *Rodong Sinmun* newspaper, with more DPRK state media outlets set to be added to the database in the future. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- Free speech should not get in the way of peace with North Korea, Gyeonggi Province governor and potential presidential candidate Lee Jae-myung declared Friday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**International:**

- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken reaffirmed his country's commitment to U.N. Security Council resolutions on North Korea on Thursday, amid U.S. outreach for engagement with the reclusive North. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

- China reported its fuel exports to North Korea for the first time in months, according to the United Nations (U.N.). According to the most recent data, China sent some 587 tons (4,893 barrels) of refined petroleum products to North Korea in March this year. (Won Gi-Jung, *NK News*)
- China exported around 587 tons of refined oil to North Korea in March, according to data that the country provided to a U.N sanctions committee for the first time in six months. (*Yonhap*)
- A law against sending leaflets into North Korea has been in effect in South Korea since March. On May 6, South Korean police searched the office of Park Sang-hak, a North Korean defector who had sent leaflets into North Korea. Police then summoned him for questioning four days later. On May 12, RFA Korean Service reporter Albert Hong discussed Park's case with U.S. Congressman Chris Smith, co-chair of the bipartisan Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission. (Albert Hong, RFA)
- U.S. President Joe Biden faces a delicate problem when he hosts his South Korean counterpart, Moon Jae-in, at the White House on May 21. The two leaders don't see eye to eye on North Korea, and both sides are playing a masterful game to cover up the rift. David Maxwell, a retired U.S. Army colonel, Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, and HRNK Board Member, provides his comments: "The fundamental problem is the Moon administration's peace agenda—peace at any cost." (Donald Kirk, *Foreign Policy*)
- Redeploying tactical nuclear weapons to South Korea does little to deter North Korea, a former White House official said Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- Senior South Korean and US defense officials agreed to hold three-way minister-level talks with Japan in the coming days, potentially to discuss security issues involving the Korean Peninsula, at a two-day dialogue that ended Thursday in Washington, DC. (Choi Si-young, *Korea Herald*)
- A U.N. Security Council panel has approved temporary sanctions exemptions for the Singapore Red Cross' project to provide North Korea with test kits and other preventive equipment against the coronavirus, its website showed Friday. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Madeline Hieneman, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250808143711/https://mailchi.mp/f6bb9c867107/hrnk-news-itemsthe-biden-administration-is-a-north-korean-human-rights-reset-possible-the-neglected-north-korean-crisis-womens-rights?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, May 15, 2021**

## How the North Korean dinner table transformed under Kim Jong Un

**In North Korea:**

Article lists of Rodong Sinmun available online: ministry (*Yonhap*, 5/15/21)
How the North Korean dinner table transformed under Kim Jong Un (*NK News*, 5/14/21)
North Korea's Cement Industry: More Than Meets the Eye (*38 North*, 5/14/21)

**In South Korea:**
Introducing nuclear weapons not ideal against North Korea's nukes (*Korea Times*, 5/14/21)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
N. Korea deployed anti-aircraft guns in apparent protest to anti-Pyongyang leaflets, S. Korean government detected (*Hankyoreh*, 5/14/21)

**International:**
Aussie cyber experts fight back against North Korea (*Financial Review*, 5/14/21)
Convincing Kim Jong Un he's safer and better off without his nukes (*NK News*, 5/14/21)
New U.S. policy toward North Korea builds partly on 2018 agreement (*Kyodo News*, 5/13/21)
South Korea is pushing America for new talks with the North (*The Economist*, 5/15/21)
U.S. vows to tackle human rights violations in the North (*The Dong-a Ilbo*, 5/14/21)

**In North Korea:**

- The lists of articles of the Rodong Sinmun, North Korea's main newspaper, will be made available online to help expand people's access to information and improve their understanding of the reclusive state, the unification ministry here said Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- For many generations, a slab of meat on most East Asian dinner tables was a sign of wealth for families, who would normally have no choice but to opt for vegetables and grains over a greasy pork loin. But that has changed in the last century or so as countries developed into greater economic powers, with North Korea consuming more animal protein starting around 2005. (Andrei Lankov, *NK News*)
- For decades, cement has been the preferred building material in North Korea. Limestone, a key ingredient in making cement, is in great abundance, as is high-quality river sand, an aggregate for making concrete. Assessing the cement industry through satellite imagery, however, is a difficult task. (Peter Makowsky, Jenny Town, Michelle Y. Kae, Samantha J. Pitz, *38 North*)

**In South Korea:**

- Military buildup such as introducing U.S. tactical nuclear weapons or a NATO-style "nuclear sharing" system is not the right answer for South Korea to deal with growing nuclear threats from North Korea, according to diplomatic experts, Friday. (Jung Da-min, *Korea Times*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korean President Moon Jae-in's unexpected message emphasizing the need to "strictly enforce the laws" in response to people "violating inter-Korean agreements and current laws" during his special address Monday to mark four years in office was based on the detection of signals suggesting that North Korea's discontent over the scattering of propaganda leaflets by defectors might result in its taking some form of concrete action, sources said. (*Hankyoreh*)

**International:**

- Australian cyber security experts are playing a critical role in teaching governments, regulators and financial institutions how to fortify their IT systems against an increasingly aggressive North Korea. (Ronald Mizen, *Financial Review*)
- Recently, former U.S. National Security Advisor and U.S. Army Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster (ret.) sat down with NK *News* host Jacco Zwetsloot to discuss his time in the Donald Trump administration, the U.S.' North Korea strategy, past engagements with North Korea, the U.S.-ROK alliance and more. (NK *News*)
- A new U.S. policy toward North Korea under the administration of President Joe Biden builds on a June 2018 agreement between his predecessor Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, as well as other accords, diplomatic sources said Thursday. (*Kyodo News*)
- To the casual reader, the biggest danger in perusing "With the Century" may be the book's propensity to induce a deep sleep. Its author, Kim Il Sung, North Korea's founding dictator, takes eight volumes and nearly 3,500 pages to recount his heroic revolutionary exploits. Whether the topic is glorious campaigns against the Japanese, earnest conversations with brave peasants, or long-winded meditations on the true meaning of *juche* (self-reliance), the message is, "You had to be there". (*The Economist*)
- The U.S. State Department issued the 2020 International Religious Freedom Report on Wednesday, shedding light on the oppression of the freedom of religions in countries including North Korea and China where human right violations have been a perennial issue. U.S. President Joe Biden made it clear the agenda of human fights including the freedom of religions will not be put on the backburner even in the process of trying to resume dialogues with Pyongyang for Washington's new North Korea policy. (*The Dong-A Ilbo*)

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Prepared by Audrey Gregg, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250924045337/https://mailchi.mp/ba4c01f04da9/hrnk-news-itemsthe-biden-administration-is-a-north-korean-human-rights-reset-possible-the-neglected-north-korean-crisis-womens-rights-11186822

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**Sunday, May 16, 2021**

## Korean Air Force to participate in U.S.-led Red Flag drills

**In North Korea:**
AFC confirms N. Korea's decision to pull out of World Cup qualifiers (*Yonhap*, 5/16/2021)
Defector talks about struggle as woman in North Korea (*The Korea Times*, 5/15/2021)
N.K. Propaganda outlet slams S. Korea's biennial integrated defense drill (*Yonhap*, 5/16/2021)
N. Korea's Zoom-type app Rakwon gains traction (*The Korea Herald*, 5/16/2021)

**In South Korea:**

Korean Air Force to participate in U.S.-led Red Flag drills for first time in 3 years(*JoongAng Daily*, 5/13/2021)

**International:**
Japan, U.S., South Korea leaders eye meeting on fringes of June G-7 summit(*Kyodo News*, 5/15/2021)
Vaccine partnership, restarting N. Korea nuclear talks to top Biden-Moon summit agenda (*The Straits Times*, 5/16/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) confirmed Sunday that North Korea has withdrawn from Asian qualifiers for the 2022 Qatar World Cup. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean refugee, Park Eun-hee, detailed how women in North Korea are routinely deprived of the basic freedom of expression, which is what ultimately persuaded her to leave her home and come to South Korea when she was 19 years old. (Haley Son, *The Korea Times*)
- A North Korean propaganda outlet on Sunday criticized South Korea's ongoing biennial rear area training and recent joint exercise with the United States, warning that it will only "stab itself in the eyes" by confronting the North. (*Yonhap*)
- A videoconferencing platform similar to Zoom is widely used in North Korea as the country's citizens avoid face-to-face meetings just like most people around the world. (Ko Juntae, *The Korea Herald*)

**In South Korea:**

- For the first time in three years, the Korean Air Force is planning to participate in a U.S.-led multinational air force exercise next month, U.S. military officials said Tuesday. (Michael Lee, *JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- Leaders of Japan, the United States and South Korea are planning to meet on the fringes of the Group of Seven summit next month, with trilateral cooperation in dealing with North Korea's nuclear and missile threats expected to be on the agenda, sources close to the countries said Saturday. (*Kyodo News*)
- Vaccine partnership and restarting diplomacy with North Korea - these will be the two most pressing issues for South Korean President Moon Jae-in when he arrives in Washington this week for his first summit with his United States counterpart, President Joe Biden. (Chang May Choon, *The Straits Times*)

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Prepared by Caroline Ward, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250923214429/https://mailchi.mp/c2641fc09759/hrnk-news-itemsthe-biden-administration-is-a-north-korean-human-rights-reset-possible-the-neglected-north-korean-crisis-womens-rights-11186826?e=8a9aae5198

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## Monday, May 17, 2021

# North Korea moves forward with two-phased construction for border fences

**In North Korea:**
N. Korean authorities emphasize "reporting of illegal behavior" to prevent spread of external information (*Daily* NK, 5/17/2021)
N. Korea's food situation isn't as bad as it appears (*Yonhap*, 5/17/2021)
North Korea moves forward with two-phased construction for border fences, barriers (*Daily* NK, 5/17/2021)
North Korea withdraws from World Cup, but may still attend Beijing Olympics (*NK News*, 5/17/2021)
North Korea tests 26,720 people for COVID-19, reports no positive cases (*NK News*, 5/17/2021)
Toy Guns and Puppies: The latest art by North Korea's famous Mansudae Studios (*NK News*, 5/17/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Court dismisses civic groups' request to ban North Korea founder's memoirs (*Korea Times*, 5/16/2021)
Foreign Ministry denies report linking S. Korea-Japan ties to US policy on N.K.(*Yonhap*, 5/17/2021)
Gyeonggi to crack down on flying anti-Pyongyang leaflets (*Korea Joongang Daily*, 5/17/2021)
Ministry voices disappointment over N. Korea's decision to pull out of World Cup qualifiers (*Yonhap*, 5/17/2021)
**International:**
Seoul wants Washington to reaffirm Singapore agreement during Summit (*Korea Times*, 5/17/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Koreans are capable of providing food for themselves without outside help and chances are slim that they will experience another famine similar to that of the 1990s, an expert said Monday. (*Yonhap News*)
- Amid efforts to block the spread of information and South Korean media by formalizing legal punishments for consuming or distributing outside information, North Korean authorities have recently begun emphasizing the importance of "reporting illegal behavior" to prevent the spread of outside information. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean authorities have reportedly split the construction process of concrete barriers and high-voltage wires being built along the Sino-North Korean border into two phases. A source in North Korea says that the authorities will proceed with the two-pronged construction plan in three out of four border provinces (North Pyongan Province, Yanggang Province, and North Hamgyong Province). (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)

- North Korea officially withdrew from the 2022 FIFA World Cup and the 2023 AFC Asian Cup 2023, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) confirmed on Sunday, eliminating a potential opportunity to resuscitate inter-Korean sports diplomacy... However, North Korea could still attend the upcoming 2022 Winter Olympics in 2022. (Jeongmin Kim, *Daily NK*)
- After testing a cumulative total of 26,720 people, North Korea again claimed to have zero confirmed COVID-19 cases, according to a new report from the World Health Organization (WHO). (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- Though most of the world is prohibited from doing business with North Korea's Mansudae Art Studio due toU.N. Sanctions, that hasn't stopped the country's top atelier from turning out timely art promoting both state propaganda as well as more lighthearted projects by its artists. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- The foreign ministry on Monday denied a news report that the government promised to improve relations with Japan in exchange for the United States committing itself to a Trump-era summit deal with North Korea. (*Yonhap News*)
- A Seoul court has dismissed local civic groups' request to block the sales and distribution of memoirs of North Korean founder Kim Il-sung, judicial sources said Sunday. (*Korea Times*)
- The unification ministry on Monday expressed disappointment over North Korea's final decision to withdraw from a World Cup qualifier set to take place in the South next month. (*Yonhap News*)
- Gyeonggi provincial government announced Monday it would seek to block all attempts to fly anti-Pyongyang leaflets by balloon across the inter-Korean border by ramping up enforcement of the ban on such activities. (Michael Lee, *Korea Joongang Daily*)

**International:**

- The South Korean government is seeking to use this week's summit between President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Joe Biden as a vehicle to revive its North Korea diplomacy and facilitate inter-Korean peace talks, according to government sources and experts, Monday. (Nam Hyun-woo, *Korea Times*)

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Prepared by Veronica Coffey, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250808144424/https://mailchi.mp/c2641fc09759/hrnk-news-itemsthe-biden-administration-is-a-north-korean-human-rights-reset-possible-the-neglected-north-korean-crisis-womens-rights-11186826?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, May 18, 2021**

## Inside North Korea’s only mosque during Eid al-Fitr; New DPRK border security and infrastructure revealed by satellite imagery

**In North Korea:**
Inside North Korea's only mosque during Eid al-Fitr (*NK News*, 05/18/2021)
New DPRK border security and infrastructure revealed by satellite imagery (*NK News*, 05/18/2021)
N. Korea could stage provocations in time for S. Korea-U.S. summit, joint drills: experts (*Yonhap News*, 05/18/2021)
North Korea expected to test new weapons soon, analysts say (*UPI*, 05/18/2021)
North Korean Factory Hunts Down Workers Who Fled for Higher-Paying Fisheries Jobs (*Radio Free Asia*, 05/17/2021)
N.K. propaganda website calls 1980 pro-democracy movement 'historic event' in anti-fascism movement (*Yonhap News*, 05/18/2021)
Six students in Nampo sent to reeducation camp for watching South Korean dramas and movies (*DailyNK*, 05/18/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Employment rate of N.K. defectors drops 3.8 pct points last year amid pandemic: ministry (*Yonhap News*, 05/18/2021)
Moon vows to make Korea global hub of vaccine production (*The Dong-a Ilbo*, 05/18/2021)
North Korea's propaganda takes aim at Yoon Seok-youl ahead of election (*UPI*, 05/17/2021)

**International:**
Biden's Policy Review Leaves North Korea Challenge In Limbo (*Forbes*, 05/17/2021)
Biden Tries A New Approach, But North Korea May Stick To Its Old Playbook (*NPR*, 05/18/2021)
How Israel's Iron Dome can promote inter-Korean stability (*NK News*, 05/18/2021)
Economic incentives needed for North Korean denuclearization: experts (*Korea Times*, 05/18/2021)
Moon heading to Washington for summit with Biden (*The Korea Herald*, 05/18/2021)
Moon to visit U.S. from May 19-22; S. Korea-U.S. summit scheduled for Friday (*Arirang News*, 5/18/2021)
Moon weighs 'Quad lite' at Biden summit (*Nikkei Asia*, 05/18/2021)
N.K. accuses Western countries of spreading falsehoods to meddle in internal affairs of other countries (*Yonhap News*, 05/18/2021)
President Moon to leave for Washington on Wednesday for summit with President Biden (*Arirang News*, 05/18/2021)
South Korea Isn't a Junior Partner for America (*Foreign Policy*, 05/17/2021)
South Korea's Moon seeks urgency on N.Korea, vaccine deal at Biden summit(*Reuters*, 05/18/2021)
South Korean President to visit US for five days, talk North Korea with Biden (*NK News*, 05/18/2021)
There's No Choice but Negotiation With North Korea (*Foreign Policy*, 05/18/2021)
What to Expect from the Upcoming Biden-Moon Summit (*The Diplomat*, 05/17/2021)

**In North Korea:**
- Though North Korea's strict COVID-19 pandemic measures have barred North Korea's shrinking expat community from most social gatherings since Jan. 2020, a special

exception was made last week for the Muslim celebration of Eid al-Fitr. (Chad O'Carrell, *NK News*)

- North Korea has erected dozens of new guard posts and added extra layers of security in and around Sinuiju, the country's most populous city along its northwestern border with China, according to recent satellite imagery. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea could carry out provocations in time for this week's summit between President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Joe Biden or the upcoming joint drills in August, experts said Tuesday. (*Yonhap News*)
- North Korea could engage in a military provocation during the upcoming U.S.-South Korea summit in Washington or during scheduled joint exercises on the peninsula, analysts in the South say. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- A machinery factory in a North Korean border city has sent agents to track down workers who abandoned their government-assigned jobs when coronavirus idled their plant and headed to the coast to harvest seafood for higher wages, sources in the country told RFA. (Leejin Jun, Eugene Whong, *Radio Free Asia*)
- A North Korean propaganda outlet on Tuesday described a 1980 pro-democracy uprising in South Korea as a "historic event" in the anti-fascism movement, highlighting people's fearless fight in the face of a bloody crackdown. (*Yonhap News*)
- As North Korean authorities continue to crackdown on the consumption and distribution of foreign content in the country, Daily NK recently learned that six students in Nampo were arrested and given prison sentences for secretly watching South Korean videos. (Lee Chae Un, *DailyNK*)

**In South Korea:**

- The employment rate of North Korean defectors in South Korea fell 3.8 percentage points last year amid the coronavirus pandemic, the unification ministry said Tuesday. (*Yonhap News*)
- "I will take this visit as an opportunity to strengthen cooperation with the United States and make Korea a global hub of vaccine production," said South Korean President Moon Jae-in about the summit meeting between Seoul and Washington scheduled on Friday. This is the first time that President Moon has pointed out Covid-19 vaccine cooperation as one of the main agenda of the upcoming summit meeting with the U.S. (*The Dong-a Ilbo*)
- A North Korean propaganda service roasted a potential South Korean presidential candidate as a "fleeting political star," as Yoon Seok-youl leads in opinion polls ahead of an election in 2022. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)

**International:**

- In a speech to a joint session of Congress marking his first hundred days in office last month, U.S. President Joe Biden described his North Korea policy as a combination of "diplomacy, as well as stern deterrence." Hours later, Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters that the White House intends to adopt the classic middle ground policy option of a "calibrated, practical approach"—framed between former Presidents Barack Obama's "strategic patience" and Donald Trump's "grand bargain." (Scott Schneider, *Forbes*)
- The security situation of Israel and South Korea is quite different. One faces a nuclear armed North Korean state, while the other must confront terrorist organizations to its north and south equipped with an arsenal of rockets and missiles. But is it possible to

look at what is happening in Israel in terms of its demonstrated defense capabilities — especially the Iron dome in the current round of fighting — and consider if South Korea may gain if it had a similar air defense system? (Tal Inbar, NK News)

- North Korea watchers from South Korea and the United States have stressed the need to provide "economic incentives" to Pyongyang to encourage the reclusive country to take actions for denuclearization, Tuesday. (Jung Da-min, *Korea Times*)
- President Moon Jae-in is heading to Washington on Wednesday ahead of his first summit with President Joe Biden on Friday, marking his first overseas trip since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This will be his fifth visit to the US as president. (Lee Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)
- When South Korean President Moon Jae-in meets U.S. President Joe Biden in the White House on Friday, the two are likely to discuss ways for Seoul to cooperate with the Quad. (Yosuke Onchi, *Nikkei Asia*)
- North Korea's foreign ministry on Tuesday accused Western countries of spreading false information "under the signboard of freedom of speech" in an attempt to meddle in the internal affairs of other states. (*Yonhap News*)
- On May 21, South Korean President Moon Jae-in will visit the United States to meet with President Joe Biden, making Moon the second head of state to greet Biden in person. That's an appropriate priority for South Korea, one of the most significant nations for U.S. foreign policy as Washington's critical concerns move to East Asia. Moon's visit to Washington would be the right time for the Biden White House to announce a new era of the 68-year-old alliance. (S. Nathan Park, *Foreign Policy*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in is hoping to use his first summit with U.S. President Joe Biden this week to revive long-stalled talks with North Korea and urge the White House to embrace the issue with more urgency. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in will depart Seoul on Wednesday for a five-day trip to Washington D.C., the Blue House announced on Tuesday. Moon is scheduled to meet U.S. President Joe Biden Friday afternoon local time, followed by a joint press conference. (Jeongmin Kim, NK News)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in is set to meet U.S. President Joe Biden later this week, and even before the critical meet, Moon hasn't waited to give advice on dealing with North Korea. In an interview with the *New York Times*, Moon called on Biden to engage Pyongyang since denuclearization is a "matter of survival." (Doug Bandow, *Foreign Policy*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Joe Biden will meet on May 21 in Washington. This will be the second summit of Biden's presidency, following a meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Suga Yoshihide in April. Biden's decision to prioritize these two allies shows the importance he affords the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy. But he presumably regards South Korea as a weak link in U.S. attempts to deal with China. From a U.S. perspective, during his four years as president, Moon has been too friendly toward North Korea and China, and Biden may be looking to change that. (Sukjoon Yoon, *The Diplomat)*

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Prepared by Lauren Morrison, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250808145013/https://mailchi.mp/b7100922f780/hrnk-news-items-inside-north-koreas-only-mosque-during-eid-al-fitr-new-dprk-border-security-and-infrastructure-revealed-by-satellite-imagery?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, May 19, 2021**

# Here's What to Know About the Summit Between Joe Biden and Moon Jae-in; Biden to Build On Trump's Singapore Deal With North Korea

**In North Korea:**
Big red flag? Signs praising Kim Jong Un replaced by party slogan nationwide (*NK News*, 05/19/2021)
Fearing unrest, North Korea 'erased' Gwangju Uprising history, defector says (UPI, 05/18/2021)
Kim Jong-un Doesn't Like Skinny Jeans (GQ, 05/19/2021)
N. Korea appears to have executed two men forcibly repatriated by S. Korea to N. Korea in 2019 (*Daily*NK, 05/18/20210)
North Korea may be relaxing border controls as Chinese exports rise (*NK News*, 05/18/2021)
North Korea mentions new ministry of information industry in media report (UPI, 05/19/2021)
North Korean military sets up special facilities to beat back malnutrition among soldiers (*Daily*NK, 05/19/2021)
North Korea reluctant to accept U.N.-backed vaccination monitoring (*Kyodo News*, 05/19/2021)
N.K. premier visits limestone mine in latest economic inspection trip (*Yonhap*, 05/19/2021)
Officials Scared After Sister of North Korean Leader Has Their Colleagues Executed(*Radio Free Asia*, 05/19/2021)
Voice of Korea summer 2020 schedule (*38 North*, 05/19/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Action plan to make Korea a global COVID-19 vaccine factory takes shape (*The Korea Herald*, 05/19/2021)
Court awards W172m to family of man wrongfully convicted of spying for N. Korea(*Yonhap*, 05/19/2021)
Pro-unification group calls for suspension of S. Korea-U.S. military drills (*Yonhap*, 05/18/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Inter-Korean cooperation instrumental for settling nuclear issue (*The Korea Times*, 05/19/2021)

**International:**
Biden gov't inheriting Singapore accord may brighten N.K. dialogue prospects

(*Yonhap*, 05/19/2021)
Biden Looks to Build On Trump's Singapore Deal With North Korea (*Bloomberg*, 05/18/2021)
China denies knowledge of recovering North Korea trade (UPI, 05/19/2021)
EU extends sanctions to combat cyberattacks from North Korea and others (NK *News*, 05/19/2021)
Here's What to Know About the Summit Between Joe Biden and Moon Jae-in (*Time*, 05/19/2021)
Moon-Biden summit to produce 'tangible partnerships' on supply chains: Campbell (*Yonhap*, 05/19/2021)
Moon departs for Washington on Wednesday for summit with Biden (*Arirang News*, 05/19/2021)
Moon leaves for U.S. to hold summit with Biden on vaccines, N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 05/19/2021)
Moon's likely message to Biden: 'You can trust Kim Jong Un, trust me' (*The Hill*, 05/19/2021)
North Korea Condemns Japan Over Move to Revise Constitution, Calls It 'Declaration of War on Humankind' (*Newsweek*, 05/19/2021)
North Korea defectors urge U.S. rights pressure as South's Moon leaves for Biden summit (*Reuters*, 05/19/2021)
N. Korea slams Japan for seeking to revise pacifist constitution (*Yonhap*, 05/19/2021)
Seoul, Washington showing coordinated peace overture to Pyongyang (*The Korea Times*, 05/19/2021)
Top White House official says Singapore statement here to stay (NK *News*, 5/19/2021)
USFK nominee calls joint U.S.-S. Korea field exercises extremely important (*Yonhap*, 05/19/2021)
USFK can support out-of-area contingencies (*The Korea Herald*, 05/19/2021)
U.S. Forces Korea head nominee to work for better Japan-S. Korea ties (*Kyodo News*, 05/18/2021)
U.S. will build on Singapore agreement with N. Korea: Campbell (*Yonhap*, 05/19/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un appears to be sidestepping the spotlight in some official propaganda, as authorities have recently replaced a key slogan of his written on large, red flag-shaped signs nationwide with a message referencing the ruling party instead. The propaganda shift from Kim to the party in some places does not suggest an effort to efface the North Korean leader from the structure of state power. Instead, it could be part of efforts to boost the image of the party, but not necessarily at the expense of Kim's eminence. (Colin Zwirko, NK *News*)
- North Korea initially highlighted the Gwangju Uprising in state media, but then scrubbed the incident from its historical texts, a North Korean defector in the South said. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- Global pariah and C-tier fashion influencer Kim Jong-un is setting trends again, this time through force of law. The North Korean leader banned a range of garments, accessories, and hairstyles this week. Skinny jeans, Dear Leader says, are out. As are mullets, piercings, and other signs of the "decadent" influence of capitalism. (Colin Groundwater, GQ)

- Two North Koreans who crossed the Northern Limit Line (NLL) into South Korea in November of 2019 have reportedly appeared in educational materials published by North Korea's Ministry of State Security. The two men were forcibly returned to the North by the South Korean government for being "heinous criminals." (Seulkee Jang, *DailyNK*)
- Trade with China jumped significantly in April, but still far below pre-pandemic levels. China's exports to North Korea in April more than doubled compared to the previous month, according to Chinese customs data. For the month of April, China's General Administration of Customs reported a total China-DPRK trade volume of $30.6 million, with Chinese exports to North Korea making up $28.8 million. The newly released data shows a continuing uptick in trade between China and North Korea since the previous month. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- North Korea may have created a new ministry of information industry as part of Kim Jong Un's plan to modernize the economy. The ministry could be in charge of overseeing developments in the information technology sector, including Kim's policies relevant to the Fourth Industrial Revolution and artificial intelligence. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- North Korean Premier Kim Tok-hun visited a limestone mine and a collective farm north of Pyongyang, state media reported Wednesday, the latest in a series of on-site inspection trips to economic development sites across the country.
  The visit to the Sunchon Limestone Mine and the Phyongri Co-op Farm in Sunchon, about 50 km north of Pyongyang, is the third field inspection trip that Kim has made in less than a week as the country struggles to rebuild its economy amid international sanctions and the coronavirus pandemic. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has been reluctant to accept vaccination monitoring by a U.N.-backed COVAX facility, blurring the outlook for when the country can receive novel coronavirus vaccines through the platform, diplomatic sources said Wednesday. (*Kyodo News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un recently ordered military units to establish convalescent hospitals to treat soldiers suffering from malnutrition, Daily NK has learned. Efforts to set up the hospitals throughout the military are currently ongoing, based on a report from within the military. The move to establish the hospitals came after the Ministry of Defense's logistics department and military medical department wrote a joint report about the state of malnutrition in each unit of the military during the winter military exercise period. (Jeong Tae Joo, *DailyNK*)
- Government officials in North Korea are living in fear after a series of executions of their colleagues on the orders of leader Kim Jong Un's powerful sister, Kim Yo Jong, two officials told RFA. (*Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korea's international shortwave broadcasting station continues to broadcast just as it always has, despite a steep drop in the number of people tuning into shortwave radio. (*38 North*)

**In South Korea:**

- In the global fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, South Korea could step up as a global vaccine factory, if players unite to ramp up the country's total production capacity, already the world's second-largest, officials and industry insiders said Wednesday. The move is based on hopes of potential patent waivers and technology transfers related to US-developed vaccines, as state leaders of South Korea and the US

are to meet for their first face-to-face meeting later this week. A vaccine partnership deal of some kind is on the agenda. (Shim Woo-Hyun, *The Korea Herald*)

- A local court has awarded nearly 172 million won (US$152,000) to the family members of a fisherman who was kidnapped by North Korea in the 1960s and then released but was later wrongfully convicted of spying for Pyongyang, judiciary sources said Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- A pro-unification organization in South Korea called Tuesday for Seoul and Washington to suspend planned summertime joint military drills in order to induce North Korea to return to the negotiating table over its nuclear weapons. "The suspension of joint military drills between South Korea and the U.S. is the best method to show they have no intention of hostility toward North Korea," the group said. "The suspension should be officially declared." (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- During the press conference held to mark the fourth anniversary of his inauguration, President Moon Jae-in stated that he will find a way for the United States and North Korea to restart dialogue and cooperate towards peace. He also mentioned that he would do his best to restart the "peace clock" once again, if the opportunity is given to him. (Yang Moo-Jin, *The Korea Times*)

**International:**

- The Joe Biden administration's decision to embrace a 2018 summit agreement with North Korea is likely to brighten prospects of reengagement between the two countries, as Pyongyang appears wary of any nuclear deal bound to fall apart with a change of government in Washington, analysts said Wednesday. In a written interview with Yonhap News Agency, White House Policy Coordinator for the Indo-Pacific Kurt Campbell made clear that the Biden administration's approach to the North will "build on Singapore and other agreements made by previous administrations." (*Yonhap*)
- President Joe Biden is looking to build on a denuclearization agreement Donald Trump reached with North Korea, a move likely to be welcomed by South Korea, which has seen it as a starting point for disarmament discussions. (Jon Herskovitz, *Bloomberg*)
- Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said Tuesday at a regular press briefing that the government does not have updates despite the latest data from China's General Administration of Customs. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- The European Union (EU) extended sanctions on a North Korea-linked entity known to have facilitated global cyberattacks. About a year after that framework was established, the EU imposed its first sanctions related to cyberattacks in July 2020 on six individuals and three entities, including a North Korea-linked entity called Chosun Expo, for providing support and facilitating a series of cyberattacks. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- Moon wants Biden's commitment to secure a lasting peace with Pyongyang. Biden wants Moon to play a greater role in countering North Korea's greatest ally, China. (Chalie Campbell, *Time*)
- President Joe Biden and South Korean President Moon Jae-in will discuss ways to address COVID-19 vaccine shortages in the South and forge "tangible partnerships" on

semiconductor supply chains, White House Asia policy chief Kurt Campbell said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)

- President Moon Jae-in embarked on a trip to U.S. for a summit at the White House. The highly anticipated meeting is scheduled for Friday afternoon, eastern, early Saturday morning, Korea time. Likely topping the agenda: vaccine cooperation, semiconductors and North Korea. Kim Min-ji sheds light on what to expect. (*Arirang News*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in headed to the United States on Wednesday for summit talks with President Joe Biden on COVID-19 vaccine cooperation, North Korea, alliance issues and bilateral economic partnerships. He is scheduled to hold the session at the White House on Friday afternoon (local time). It will mark their first face-to-face meeting. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in's main message to President Biden at their first summit meeting this Friday promises to be disquietingly quixotic. Moon, who has met Kim Jong Un four times, is likely to repeat to Biden — who has yet to meet a North Korean leader — what he stated in a January news conference: Kim "has a clear will for peace, dialogue and denuclearization" in return for a U.S. pledge of "regime security guarantee and normalization of relations." (Sung-Yoon Lee, *The Hill*)
- North Korea recently condemned Japan over the country's move to revise its pacifist constitution and called it an "open declaration of war against humankind." (Matthew Impelli, *Newsweek*)
- In what critics called an effort to improve relations with the North, Moon's government this year introduced a law banning defectors and activists from launching anti-Pyongyean leaflets into the reclusive country. Activists and defectors called for Biden to swiftly appoint a special envoy on North Korean human rights and to stand up for their freedom of speech in South Korea. (*Reuters*)
- North Korea condemned Japan on Wednesday for pushing to revise its pacifist constitution, calling the move a "declaration of war against humankind." The North's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) made the criticism as Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga mentioned the need to discuss the possible revision of its war-renouncing constitution earlier this month to officially recognize its self-defense forces by the law. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the United States are displaying coordination in their approaches to North Korea before President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Joe Biden hold their summit in Washington, D.C., Friday (local time), with ranking U.S. officials dropping remarks aimed at drawing Pyongyang out for talks. (Nam Hyun-Woo, *The Korea Times*)
- Kurt Campbell describes Biden administration's North Korea policy ahead of summit. The Biden administration will base its future diplomatic efforts with North Korea on the milestone agreement that former U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un signed in Singapore in 2018, according to a top White House official. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Joint field exercises between South Korean and U.S. troops are extremely important to maintain their readiness, the nominee for commander of U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) said Tuesday, adding he will work for the resumption of field exercises if confirmed.
  Gen. Paul LaCamera insisted in-person training gives the combined forces an opportunity to work with each other and thus build their trust. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

- US Forces Korea commander nominee Gen. Paul LaCamera said he will advocate for inclusion of the USFK in contingency plans in the Indo-Pacific region, if it is confirmed he will take up the post. LaCamera said that if he succeeds the role, he will advocate for inclusion of USFK forces in US Indo-Pacific Command contingency and operational plans supporting US interests and objectives in the region. (Kim So-Hyun, *The Korea Herald*)
- Army Gen. Paul LaCamera, nominated to become the commander of U.S. forces in South Korea, vowed on Tuesday to work toward improving the soured relationship between Japan and South Korea in the face of North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile threats. (*Kyodo News*)
- Campbell, White House policy coordinator for the Indo-Pacific spoke on the Biden administration's policy towards North Korea. It marks the first time a ranking U.S. official has said on the record that the Biden administration will inherit the denuclearization agreement signed in Singapore by former President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in June 2018."Importantly: Our policy towards North Korea is not aimed at hostility, it's aimed at solutions. It's aimed at ultimately achieving the complete de-nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula," Campbell said. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Margaret Gillett, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250923214720/https://mailchi.mp/c91c0916755a/hrnk-news-items-heres-what-to-know-about-the-summit-between-joe-biden-and-moon-jae-in-biden-to-build-on-trumps-singapore-deal-with-north-korea?e=8a9aae5198

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**Thursday, May 20, 2021**

## Moon Jae-In hopes to ratify 2018 agreement with Kim Jong Un; NK refuses COVAX monitoring, causing delays in vaccination

**In North Korea:**
A North Korean ICMB or SLBM Test To Start the Biden-Moon Summit? (*The National Interest*, 5/19/2021)
All 13 N.K. ships inspected last year had safety deficiencies: port control agency(*Yonhap*, 5/20/2021)
Big jump in Chinese exports to North Kore lead by fertilizer, food (*NK Pro*, 5/20/2021)
How Did North Korea Get Its Hands on U.S.-Made Attack Helicopters? (*The National Interest*, 5/19/2021)
Kim Jae Ryong dispatched to Yanggang Province to inspect activities of local officials(*Daily* NK, 5/20/2021)
Kim Jong Un orders ban on Chinese medicine in Pyongyang hospitals following death of high-level official (*Daily* NK, 5/20/2021)

N. Korea opens regional hospital for better medical service amid coronavirus concerns (*Yonhap*, 5/20/2021)
North Korea rejected international monitors for COVID-19 vaccines, report says (*UPI*, 5/20/2021)
North Korea reminds the world that its aerospace program is forging ahead (*NK News*, 5/20/2021)
North Korea's Cement Industry: Further Concrete Leads (*38 North*, 5/19/2021)
North Korea's economic focus grows ahead of U.S, South Korea summit (*UPI*, 5/19/2021)
Reforestation Progress and Backsliding in North Korea's Northern and Southern Regions (*38 North*, 5/19/2021)
This. Is. Crazy: North Korea Could Use These Old Planes in a War Against America(*The National Interest*, 5/19/2021)
Why North Korea Won't Test Missiles During the Biden-Moon Summit (*The National Interest*, 5/19/2021)

**In South Korea:**
'Letters of truth' from South to N Korea strain Moon's diplomacy (*Aljazeera*, 5/19/2021)
Moon's push for engagement with N. Korea could create tension with U.S.: CRS report (*Yonhap*, 5/20/2021)
South Korea's balancing act will test Biden's plan to get tough with China (*The Guardian*, 5/20/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Moon Jae-in hoping to ratify 2018 agreement with Kim Jong Un in parliament (*NK News*, 5/20/2021)
Unification minister calls for nonpartisan support for ratification of 2018 summit agreement with N.K. (*Yonhap*, 5/20/2021)

**International:**
At White House Summit, South Korea's Moon Will Make A
Push For North Korea Peace (NPR, 5/20/2021)
Background Press Call by A Senior Administration Official on the Official Working Visit of the Republic of Korea (*White House*, 5/19/2021)
Biden, Moon to talk China, chip church at White House summit (*Aljazeera*, 5/20/2021)
Joe Biden's Summit With South Korea's Moon Jae-In Poses A Question of Shared Values (*Forbes*, 5/20/2021)
Moon's goals for Biden summit: vaccines and North Korea progress (*Nikkei Asia*, 5/20/2021)
Moon to start Washington itinerary with visit to Arlington National cemetery (*Arirang News*, 5/20/2021)
New U.S. policy on N.K. designed to be 'flexible' to enable 'best chance of diplomatic success': official (*Yonhap*, 5/20/2021)
NK refuses COVAX monitoring, causing delays in vaccination (*The Korea Herald*, 5/20/2021)
South Korean President to Meet Biden at White House Friday (VOA, 5/20/2021)

U.S. goal remains complete denuclearization of Korean Peninsula: State Dept.(*Yonhap*, 5/20/2021)
U.S. minimizes prospect of new North Korea initiative at Moon summit (*Reuters*, 5/20/2021)
US-South Korea summit: will North's nukes or China top agenda when Joe Biden meets Moon Jae-In? (SCMP, 5/20/2021)
U.S. to keep North Korea policy flexible, build on past agreement (*Kyodo News*, 5/20/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- U.S. President Joe Biden is set to host South Korean President Moon Jae-in for a five-day visit beginning later this week. The summit meeting between Presidents Biden and Moon will mark just the second such meeting that Biden has engaged in since coming to office. The summit follows the Biden administration's recent revelation of the results of its months-long North Korea policy review, and comes on the heels of North Korea tests of both cruise missiles and short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs), its first such launches since the Biden administration took office. (Eli Fuhrman, *The National Interest*)
- Thirteen North Korea ships underwent safety inspections while docked at ports in the Asia-Pacific region last year and all of them were found to have defects, an intergovernmental port control agency said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- New Chinese data shows that North Korea continued to bring in fertilizer from China this past April, as agricultural demand may be rising. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK Pro*)
- North Korea likely acquired the MD 500s so it could use them to infiltrate across the demilitarized zone with South Korea markings, conducting surprising raids and inserting spies and saboteurs. North Korea maintains more than two hundred thousand commandos in its Special Operations Forces, more than any other country in the world. In the event of a conflict with its southern neighbor, Pyongyang would deploy thousands of operatives behind South Korean lines via tunnels, submarines, stealthy motorboats and helicopters to disrupt communication and supply lines and spread panic. (Sebastien Roblin, *The National Interest*)
- North Korea leader Kim Jong Un recently sent Kim Jae Ryong, the head of the Organization and Guidance Department (OGD), to Yanggang Province, Daily NK has learned. Kim Jae Ryong is in charge of ensuring Workers' Party control over North Korean public security agencies. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- A high-level North Korean official recently died after being given a Chinese-made injection, Dail NK has learned. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un reportedly became very angry after learning about the incident and has banned the use of Chinese medicines at major hospitals in Pyongyang. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea has opened a large hospital in an eastern province to provide better medical service to the people outside its capital, state media said Thursday as the country continues its fight against the global coronavirus pandemic. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea requested deliveries of COVID-19 vaccines from the World Health Organization's COVAX Facility, but has refused to allow international health workers to monitor distribution, according to a Japanese press report. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- North Korea wants the world to know that its aerospace program remains active despite widespread opposition to its activities in the past. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

- After not one but two articles this month already on North Korea's cement industry, 38 North readers might feel that this is all the, ahem, concrete information they need, or which exists. (Aidan Foster-Carter, *38 North*)
- North Korea is turning its attention to the economy ahead of the first U.S.-South Korea summit under President Joe Biden. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- An assessment of forestland changes to North Korea's more remote mountainous areas in the northern and southern provinces indicates that some devastated slope fields have been reforested and revegetated, especially in urban and tourist areas like Pyongyang, the Kaesong Industrial Complex and the Mt. Kumgang International Tourism Zone. However, the damaged slopes in some parts have been neglected to the point of devastation, and many of the steep, more arable hillsides appear to have been reclaimed by the local residents in the rural mountainous areas, likely as farmlands. (Bruce Songhak Chung, Samantha J. Pitz, *38 North*)
- How could chunky biplanes pose a threat to adversaries fielding guided missiles and supersonic stealth fighters? North Korea has a found a way, banking on its own experience in the Korean War. (Sebastien Roblin, *The National Interest*)
- North Korea will almost certainly resume missile testing and return to a strategy of probing the limits of U.S tolerance as it looks to continue to develop its ballistic missile capabilities, particularly if it does not see what it perceives as favorable conditions for diplomacy with the United States. But for now, North Korea remains likely to continue to assess the Biden administration's approach before it does so. (Eli Fuhrman, *The National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- "Is South Korea a dictatorship?" asked Park Sang-hak, a North Korea defector and leader of Fighters for Free North Korea who regularly sends helium balloons laden with leaflets about the North across the border. "Is it a free and democratic country?" (Frank Smith, *Aljazeera*)
- President Moon Jae-in's calls for aggressive engagement with North Korea could create tension with the United States, a recent congressional report said. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The Moon Jae-in administration will ask South Korea's National Assembly to ratify the 2018 agreement signed between President Moon and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, Seoul's unification minister Lee In-young said on Thursday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young called Thursday for nonpartisan parliamentary support for the ratification of a 2018 inter-Korean summit agreement, saying such cross-border issues should be shielded from "wasteful" political controversies. (*Yonhap*)
- When the South Korean president goes to Washington DC on Friday, his discussions with Joe Biden about China will test the limits of the US president's rhetoric to "work with [its] allies to hold China accountable". It will also exhibit the dilemma faced by middle-sized powers such as South Korea. (Vincent Ni, *The Guardian*)

**International:**

- It isn't hard to see a pattern in the first two foreign heads of state to visit the Biden White House: Both are leaders of key Asian allies and free market democracies. Last month, Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga was the first to meet with President Biden

in Washington. On Friday, South Korea's President Moon Jae-in will be the second. (Anthony Kuhn, NPR)

- Background press call by a senior administration official on the official working visit of the Republic of Korea (*White House*)
- The new North Korea policy of the Joe Biden administration is designed to be flexible to enable the "best chance of diplomatic success" by learning from past unsuccessful efforts, a senior U.S. administration official said Thursday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea is reportedly refusing to cooperate with monitoring by the UN-backed vaccine-sharing program COVAX, which could further delay the supply of vaccines. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in is visiting the White House on Friday, the second foreign leader who United States President Joe Biden has welcomed to Washington since taking office. On the agenda is likely to be the global semiconductor chip shortage that's paralyzing the US auto industry as well as China's dominance in the region. (Dominic Fitzsimmons, *Aljazeera*)
- The Joe Biden administration has framed its main foreign policy paradigm primarily in terms of competition between democracy and authoritarianism, emphasizing cooperation among like-minded allies as its fundamental strategy for confronting China. There should be no questions as to where South Korea stands, both as a security ally and a vibrant democracy. (Scott Snyder, *Forbes*)
- In a speech marking the beginning of his fifth and final year in office, South Korean President Moon Jae-in pledged to work to attain an "irreversible peace" with North Korea. That elusive goal that will be at the front of his mind when he sits down on Friday for his first summit with U.S. President Joe Biden. (Steven Borowiec, *Nikkei Asia*)
- President Moon Jae-in is in Washington for his first summit with President Biden. He starts his official schedule Thursday with a visit to Arlington National Cemetery and a sit-down with members of the U.S. Congress. (*Arirang News*)
- The United States' goal to completely denuclearize the Korean Peninsula, a State Department spokesperson said Wednesday, ahead of an upcoming summit this week between the leaders of South Korea and the United States. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in will be the second world leader to meet face-to-face with U.S. President Joe Biden at the White House on Friday. The visit may be his final visit to the United States as head of state and and last chance to fulfill campaign pledges before his term ends. (Grace Moon, VOA)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in has been hoping to use his first summit with U.S. President Joe Biden this week to press a legacy policy of engaging North Korea, but Washington has played down the prospect of any quicky impetus on the issue. (David Brunnstrom, Jarrett Renshaw, *Reuters*)
- The meeting follows the completion of a US policy review that called for a focus on practical diplomatic steps to reduce tensions on the Korean peninsula (Park Chan-kyong, SCMP)
- The U.S. administration of President Joe Biden plans to keep its North Korea policy flexible, while building on a 2018 summit agreement that included Pyongyang's commitment toward denuclearization, according to a senior official. (*Kyodo News*)

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Prepared by Yeji Chung, HRNK Research Intern

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**Friday, May 21, 2021**

## Queen's Speech Debate "Uphold human rights and democracy across the world"; FM calls Biden's N.K. policy 'realistic'

**Top News:**
Queen's Speech Debate "Uphold human rights and democracy across the world"(*David Alton*, 05/21/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Dozens of highrises sprout up in Pyongyang as Kim Jong Un's June deadline looms(*NK News*, 05/21/2021)
N. Korea is in the midst of a massive campaign against illegal money transfer brokers (*Daily NK*, 05/21/2021)

N. Korea limits export of uranium concentrate in Pyongsan to just a few key organizations (*Daily NK*, 05/21/2021)
North Korean Security Services Given Food for a Year While Others Go Hungry (*Radio Free Asia*, 05/20/2021)
North Korea's hackers launch attacks following action on sanctions (*NK News*, 05/21/2021)
N.K. paper warns youngsters against 'bourgeois' culture and 'individualism' (*Yonhap*, 05/21/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Foreign minister still hopeful on North Korea (*The Korea Herald*, 05/21/2021)

**International:**
Alliance, 'comfort women' discussed at Moon-Pelosi meeting (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/21/2021)
Biden Is Facing an Uneasy Truth: North Korea Isn't Giving Up Its Nuclear Arsenal (*The New York Times*, 05/20/2021)
Biden set to host South Korean President Moon Jae-in at White House Friday(*UPI*, 05/21/2021)
Could North Korea Use Diplomacy to Test Joe Biden's Intentions? (*The National Interest*, 05/20/2021)
FM calls Biden's N.K. policy 'realistic' (*Yonhap*, 05/21/2021)

Moon-Biden joint statement may acknowledge Panmunjeom Declaration (*The Korea Herald*, 05/21/2021)
Moon, Biden set for talks on vaccine, N. Korea, economic ties (*The Korea Herald*, 05/21/2021)
Moon, Biden to discuss lifting missile restrictions (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/21/2021)
Moon meets Pelosi, discusses alliance, N. Korea, vaccines (*The Korea Herald*, 05/21/2021)
New U.S. policy on N.K. designed to be 'flexible' to enable 'best chance of diplomatic success': official (*Yonhap*, 05/20/2021)
North Korea Hasn't Forgotten the Time They Got Smoked By the U.S. Navy (The National Interest, 05/21/2021
South Korea rebuffed Trump. Here's why it might cooperate with Biden. (*The Washington Post*, 05/21/2021)
South Korea's Moon to nudge Biden on North Korea diplomacy (*AP News*, 05/21/2021)
The Daily 202: Biden to flesh out North Korea policy at Friday summit with Moon(*The Washington Post*, 05/20/2021)
Unification minister hopes for S. Korea-U.S. summit to create new momentum for dialogue with N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 05/21/2021)
U.S. lawmaker proposes bill calling for declaration to end Korean War (*Yonhap*, 05/21/2021)
What a bridge on North Korea's secret border says about China's cold war with the West (*The Telegraph*, 05/21/2021)

**Top News:**

- Following the Queen's speech, the House of Lords debates subject areas. Lord David Alton, HRNK Advisory Council member, included in his speech, "I would like to invite the Government to enlarge on the statement in the Gracious Speech that they will 'uphold human rights and democracy across the world.' ... In North Korea, a 2014 UN Commission of Inquiry described the country as 'without parallel' and called for Crimes against Humanity to be referred by the Security Council to the ICC. Seven years later the CCP's veto ensures it doesn't happen. (Lord David Alton, *David Alton*)

**In North Korea:**

- Dozens of new high-rise apartments have begun to dot the Pyongyang skyline two months after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un demanded the army build two entirely new urban districts for more than 10,000 families by the end of the year. Soldiers and North Korea's so-called "youth shock brigades" seem to have worked day and night to build concrete apartment buildings at least 10 stories high as of mid-May, according to images published in state media as well as the Russian embassy in Pyongyang. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea's Ministry of State Security (MSS) is reportedly in the midst of a massive campaign against illegal money transfer brokers operating in the Sino-North Korean border region. After the MSS arrested around 20 money transfer brokers in the border region, the agency submitted the proposal to the Central Committee asking for permission to "completely wipe out" people who perform illegal money transfers through China, based on the source's account. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- Amid increasing signs that North Korea is expanding its uranium mining, North Korean authorities recently introduced new regulations on the export of uranium concentrate

in Pyongsan, North Hwanghae Province. Now only a few key institutions can export the material. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)

- North Korean authorities have distributed food supplies for a year to law enforcement and other security agencies in a move to shore up loyalty to the regime at a time of general shortages across the country, North Korean sources say. “The food distributions to the police and security agencies were carried out nationwide, despite the country’s difficult food situation,” the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. (*Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korea appears to ramp up cyberattacks against some U.S. organizations within weeks after new sanctions are imposed or existing ones are enforced, a report by the RAND Corporation published earlier this month suggests. Researchers said they analyzed phishing attacks against RAND attributed to the DPRK-linked Kimsuky group over the course of two years, and found a high correlation between sanctions activity and attempts to trick RAND staff into clicking malicious links. (Nils Weisensee, *NK News*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Friday urged young people to tighten their ideological discipline, expressing concerns that "bourgeois" culture and "individualism" could make it hard to safeguard socialism. The paper stressed that a lack of education on morality led youngsters in some socialist countries to be contaminated by "bourgeois" culture and "individualism," which caused them to believe that protection of socialism is out of their responsibility. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong continued to be hopeful on North Korea, but failed to give details or reasons when pressed on the issue in a US media interview on Thursday, a day ahead of a summit between President Moon Jae-in and US President Joe Biden in Washington DC. (Kim So-hyun, *The Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- Nancy Pelosi, speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, expressed hope that justice will be served for the Korean victims of Japan’s wartime sexual slavery. “Speaker Pelosi said the House of Representatives passed a resolution on comfort women in 2007 and she had addressed the issue multiple times when she met with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in the past,” Chung Man-ho, senior presidential secretary for public communications said. "She said she wants to see justice for the comfort women.” (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- As President Biden prepares to meet South Korea’s president, he must grapple with the fact that the North’s stockpile of nuclear weapons and fuel has roughly doubled in the past four years. (David E. Sanger, William J. Broad, Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*)
- President Joe Biden will host South Korean President Moon Jae-in at the White House on Friday and the pair are expected to discuss several issues of importance between the two longtime allies, including North Korea's nuclear program. Moon's visit will be the second in-person bilateral meeting of Biden's presidency. (Don Johnson, UPI)
- The Biden-Moon summit comes in the aftermath of the Biden administration’s unveiling of the results of its months longs North Korea policy review. That review has given birth to the Biden administration’s nascent North Korea policy. What is clear about the new

policy is that it will require a heavy dose of diplomacy with North Korea if it is to successfully reduce the threat posed to the United States by North Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile arsenals. (Eli Fuhrman, *The National Interest*)

- Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong made the remark that the new U.S. policy on North Korea is "realistic" as it embraces past agreements with Pyongyang, including a 2018 summit deal committing the regime to complete denuclearization, South Korea's top diplomat said. (Kim Seung-yeon, (*Yonhap*)
- A joint statement by Presidents Moon Jae-in and Joe Biden after their summit talks at the White House on Friday is likely to acknowledge commitments made by the two Koreas under the Panmunjeom Declaration, according to a ranking Cheong Wa Dae official on Thursday. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in will hold one-on-one talks with US President Joe Biden at the White House on Friday (local time), as the allies have a range of pending issues to coordinate, especially on North Korea, COVID-19 vaccines and global supply chain resilience. (*The Korea Herald*)
- At their summit Friday in Washington, President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Joe Biden will discuss the possibility of ending an agreement that constrains Korea's missile activities, a presidential source said Thursday. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in reaffirmed Seoul's commitment to a stronger alliance with Washington during a meeting with US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and other congressional leaders Thursday. (*The Korea Herald*)
- The new North Korea policy of the Joe Biden administration is designed to be flexible to enable the "best chance of diplomatic success" by learning from past unsuccessful efforts, a senior US administration official said Thursday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- While American jet fighters secured air superiority over North Korea's World War II-vintage air force, it fell to the U.S. and British navies to try to stem the seemingly unstoppable North Korean advance. (Sebastien Roblin, *The National Interest*)
- Today, on May 21, President Biden will host South Korean President Moon Jae-in. The United States is seeking South Korea's cooperation on numerous issues, ranging from North Korea's nuclear program to global supply chains, climate change and coronavirus vaccines. (Ramon Pacheco Pardo, *The Washington Post*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in is hoping Friday's White House meeting with President Joe Biden will lead to renewed diplomatic urgency by the U.S. on curbing North Korea's nuclear program. The White House, however, is signaling that it is taking a longer view on one of the most difficult foreign policy challenges Biden faces. (Aamer Madhani, *AP News*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young on Friday expressed hope that this week's summit between President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Joe Biden will provide new momentum for dialogue with North Korea. (*Yonhap*)
- President Biden's Friday summit with South Korean President Moon Jae-in will focus on North Korea and may end months of speculation about how Biden hopes to defang a nuclear threat his four predecessors failed to blunt four different ways. (Oliver Knox, *The Washington Post*)
- A U.S. lawmaker proposed a bill on Thursday that calls for U.S. efforts to declare a formal end to the Korean War and exchange liaison offices with North Korea.

- The bill, proposed by Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA), also seeks to require the State Department to consider lifting its travel ban on North Korea for Korean Americans with separated families in the North. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Workers began conducting safety inspections last week – preparations that suggest the long-delayed New Yalu River Bridge may soon open, allowing official trade to resume between China and North Korea, which closed its borders after the coronavirus outbreak emerged in Wuhan. (Sophia Yan, *The Telegraph*)

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Prepared by Margaret Gillett, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250923215118/https://mailchi.mp/5af767b857d1/hrnk-news-itemsqueens-speech-debate-uphold-human-rights-and-democracy-across-the-worldfm-calls-bidens-nk-policy-realistic?e=8a9aae5198

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**Saturday, May 22, 2021**

## Moon and Biden hail a win-win summit; Biden, Moon agree on 'complete denuclearization' but approaches diverge

**International:**
Biden and Moon pledge denuclearization talks with North Korea (*NK News*, 05/21/2021)
Biden announces US to vaccinate 550,000 South Korean service members against Covid-19 (CNN, 05/21/2021)
Biden makes strong case for engagement, but N. Korea unlikely to react soon: experts (*Yonhap*, 05/22/2021)
Biden, Moon agree on 'complete denuclearization' but approaches diverge (UPI, 05/21/2021)
Biden sends special envoy to South Korea to press North Korea on nuclear arms(*The Guardian*, 05/21/2021)
Biden, South Korea's Moon 'deeply concerned' about N. Korea (*AP News*, 05/21/2021)
Could the US army really destroy North Korea's nuclear weapons? (*The National Interest*, 05/21/2021)
Moon and Biden hail a win-win summit (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/22/2021)
Moon, Biden agree on need for dialogue with N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 05/22/2021)
Moon, Biden share commitment to vaccine partnership, NK dialogue (*The Korea Herald*, 05/22/2021)
This photo is one thing: North Korea's nightmare come true (*The National Interest*, 05/22/2021)
US, South Korea vow 'pragmatic steps' to reduce tensions, denuclearize North Korea(*Radio Free Asia*, 05/21/2021)

**International:**

- South Korean President Moon Jae-in said Friday he has agreed with U.S. President Joe Biden on the importance of dialogue with North Korea. The most pressing common task for the allies is to achieve the complete denuclearization of Korea and permanent peace, Moon stressed during a joint press conference with the U.S. leader following their summit talks at the White House. (Lee Chi-dong, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. President Joe Biden has demonstrated a clear commitment to engaging with North Korea by appointing a special envoy to specifically deal with North Korea issues, but whether the North will come to the table in the near future remains to be seen, U.S. experts said Friday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- In a summit at the White House, President Moon Jae-in secured major vaccine cooperation with the United States, including supplies for Korean troops, and a lifting of restraints on Korea's missile development. In return, U.S. President Joe Biden received investment pledges from Korean companies totaling $40 billion. Top executives from SK, Samsung, LG, and Hyundai Motors were present at a White House news conference after the summit, and Biden made them stand up to accept a round of applause. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- President Moon Jae-in and US President Joe Biden agreed at their summit Friday to pursue a global COVID-19 vaccine partnership while reaffirming their commitment to dialogue with a recalcitrant North Korea. (*The Korea Herald*)
- U.S. president willing to meet Kim Jong Un after working-level talks, appoints Sung Kim as special envoy on DPRK policy. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- US president Joe Biden said he and his South Korean counterpart Moon Jae-in remain “deeply concerned” about the situation with North Korea, and announced he will deploy a new special envoy to the region. After talks in Washington on Friday, Biden told a joint news conference with Moon that he was dispatching former US ambassador to Seoul, Sung Kim, to help refocus efforts on pressing Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear weapons program. (*The Guardian*)
- The US will provide Covid-19 vaccinations for 550,000 South Korean service members who work in close contact with American forces, President Joe Biden announced Friday. South Korean President Moon Jae-in thanked Biden at a joint news conference on Friday at the White House and said the move extended the two countries' alliance "to the field of health in a meaningful measure." (Kare Sullivan, Betsy Klein, Kevin Liptak, CNN)
- Though the manual doesn’t specifically mention North Korea, many of its recommendations would apply should large formations of U.S. ground troops enter North Korea. Regardless of whether the goal is regime change, a punitive incursion, or destroying WMDs, it is quite possible that American troops would encounter production, storage, or launch facilities for weapons of mass destruction. The Pentagon has just released a new manual that lays out how the United States might destroy North Korea’s nukes. (Michael Peck, *The National Interest*)
- U.S. President Joe Biden said North Korea continues to pursue the development of nuclear weapons but lack of progress on denuclearization does not mean he will forgo diplomacy. Biden said during a joint news conference at the White House with South Korean President Moon Jae-in that the two leaders are committed to the "complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" in order to "increase security for the United States and our allies." (Elizabeth Shim, Don Johnson, *UPI*)

- U.S. President Joe Biden and South Korean President Moon Jae-in on Friday said they would pursue diplomacy with North Korea to try to reduce tensions over Pyongyang's nuclear weapons and missile programs. "We both are deeply concerned about the situation," Biden said after talks with Moon at the White House. “Total denuclearization is our objective.” (Soyoung Kim, Kyung Ha Rhee, *Radio Free Asia*)
- President Joe Biden on Friday said he and South Korean President Moon Jae-in remain “deeply concerned” about the situation with North Korea, and announced he will deploy a new special envoy to the region to help refocus efforts on pressing Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear weapons program. Moon, meanwhile, welcomed “America’s return” to the world stage and said both leaders pledged in their meeting to work closely toward denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. (Aamer Madhani, Darlene Superville, Zeke Miller, *AP News*)
- The roughly 100 U.S. F-16s and A-10s in South Korea and Japan—and any F-35s that deployed in time for the first day of fighting—likely would be the first to hit North Korean artillery. And they'd have to launch fast to save lives in Seoul. (David Axe, *The National Interest*)

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Prepared by Veronica Coffey, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250923215403/https://mailchi.mp/605d0fd7ae25/hrnk-news-itemsqueens-speech-debate-uphold-human-rights-and-democracy-across-the-worldfm-calls-bidens-nk-policy-realistic-11186890?e=8a9aae5198

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**Sunday, May 23, 2021**

## US human rights experts to P. Moon: Take care of North Koreans instead of Kim Jong Un; SK, US, Japan schedule defense minister talks

**Top News:**
U.S. human rights experts message to President Moon during visit: “Take care of North Koreans instead of Kim Jong Un” (VOA *Korea*, 05/21/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Inside North Korea's Scheme to Destroy America's Most Important South Korean Base (*National Interest*, 05/23/2021)
North Korea’s Military Is A Monster (Well, If We Were in 1965) (*National Interest*, 05/23/2021)

**International:**
Biden Appoints Career Diplomat Sung Kim To Serve As Special Envoy To North Korea (NPR, 05/21/2021)
Biden pledges to provide vaccines for all South Korean troops (*Korea JoonAng Daily*,

05/23/2021)
On North Korea denuclearization, yet another diplomatic dance for the U.S.(*Japan Times*, 05/23/2021)
S. Korea, U.S. agree to end bilateral missile guidelines (*Yonhap*, 05/22/2021)
S. Korea, U.S., Japan rearranging schedule for defense ministers' talks (*Yonhap*, 05/23/2021)
Time to reinforce alliance (*Korea JoonAng Daily*, 05/23/2021)
U.S. waiting to see if North Korea wants to engage in diplomacy (*Reuters*, 05/23/2021)

**Top News:**

- Former U.S. officials working on human rights issues and North Korean human rights experts appealed to South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who visited the United States for a summit meeting with President Joe Biden, to pay attention to the serious human rights issues in North Korea. They urged him not to instill in Washington the image of Kim Jong-un, who sees human rights as an obstacle to peace, but instead to speak in a unified voice with the U.S. government, which prioritizes human rights. (Sungwon Baik, *VOA Korea*)

**In North Korea**

- Pyongyang has been improving its heavy artillery in parallel with efforts to develop increasingly heavy, accurate, and long-range ballistic missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads. "Though the expanding range of North Korea's ballistic missiles is concerning, a serious, credible threat to 25 million [Republic of Korea] citizens and approximately 150,000 U.S. citizens living in the [Greater Seoul Metropolitan Area] is also posed from its long-range artillery." U.S. Army General Vincent Brooks, head of U.S. Forces Korea, told a U.S. Senate committee in March 2018. (David Axe, *National Interest*)
- North Korea's defense budget occupies a staggering 23% of its GDP, by far the highest proportion of any 21st-century country. The DPRK's massive military outlays have gone, in no small part, towards sustaining the fourth-largest standing army in the world. There is little question that North Korea's prodigious ground forces are, and will be, the backbone of its capacity to wage conventional war on the Korean Peninsula. However, a closer look at North Korea's current ground forces paints the picture of a bloated army, crippled by technical backwardness and severe logistical deficits. (Mark Episkopos, *National Interest*)

**International:**

- Career diplomat Sung Kim will serve as the U.S. special envoy to North Korea, President Biden announced on Friday. Biden said Kim's "deep policy expertise" would help drive efforts to engage diplomatically with North Korea and help "reduce tensions as we move toward our ultimate goal of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula." Moon, in his remarks, said Kim's appointment showed the Biden administration's "firm commitment of the U.S. to explore diplomacy" with North Korea. (Alana Wise, NPR)
- U.S. President Joe Biden said Friday the United States will provide Covid-19 vaccines to cover all 550,000 South Korean troops. "There are 550,000 Korean soldiers, sailors, airmen who work in close contact with the American forces in Korea," the U.S. president said. "We'll provide full vaccinations for all 550,000 of those Korean forces engaging

with American forces on a regular basis, both for their sake, as well as the sake of the American forces." (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- Signs are emerging that the U.S. and North Korea are once again engaging in a delicate diplomatic dance over Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program. The Biden administration has said it will maintain an ultimate goal of "the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" while exploring diplomacy with Pyongyang. Pointedly, however, the White House has maintained that it will not "rely on strategic patience" for dealing with the North, a reference to former President Barack Obama's policy. (Jesse Johnson, *Japan Times*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in announced a joint decision Friday with the United States to terminate guidelines that have long restricted Seoul's development of missiles. "I am pleased to announce the termination of the missile guidelines," Moon told reporters, with Biden standing next to him. Moon described it as a "symbolic and substantive" measure demonstrating the robustness of the alliance along with a recent deal on sharing the cost for American troops stationed on the peninsula.(Lee Chi-dong, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea, the United States and Japan are rearranging trilateral defense talks after they were forced to cancel a meeting slated for June in Singapore due to the COVID-19 pandemic, officials said Sunday. The push for the trilateral meeting comes as Washington calls for better relations between Seoul and Tokyo. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)
- The first summit between President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Joe Biden has ended. The seven-page joint statement issued after the summit confirmed the need for both sides to escalate the military and security alliance to economy and technology levels based on shared values. Moon has decided to consolidate the alliance for the remainder of his term", an action interpreted as "not as an impromptu action but as a result of heated analysis, debate and deliberation with his aides amid the U.S.-China contest". "The only way to bring North Korea to the table" is "through close coordination with the Biden administration". (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Sunday the United States is waiting to see if North Korea wants to engage in diplomacy over the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. "We are waiting to see if Pyongyang actually wants to engage," Blinken said on ABC's "This Week with George Stephanopoulos" program. "The ball is in their court." (*Reuters*)

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VOA Article

**U.S. human rights experts message to President Moon during visit: "Take care of North Koreans instead of Kim Jong Un"**

Reporter Sungwon Baik
2021.05.21 2:00 pm

Former U.S. officials working on human rights issues and North Korean human rights experts appealed to South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who visited the United States for a summit

meeting with President Joe Biden, to pay attention to the serious human rights issues in North Korea. They urged him not to instill in Washington the image of Kim Jong-un, who sees human rights as an obstacle to peace, but instead to speak in a unified voice with the U.S. government, which prioritizes human rights. This is Sungwon Baik reporting.

U.S. human rights experts hold a common perception that among the key agenda items of the U.S.-Korea summit such as semiconductor and vaccine cooperation, keeping China in check, the North Korean nuclear issue, etc., North Korean human rights issues must be included as well, which symbolizes shared values of the alliance.

They expressed concern over a series of remarks by South Korean leaders who are wary of President Biden's mention of North Korean human rights and called for Moon Jae-in not to continue to ignore the realities of human rights in North Korea during the first meeting with President Biden, and rather to keep pace with the U.S. "Diplomacy First" policy.

During a call with VOA, Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights in the Department of State, stated that, "At the moment, it's a very discordant policy between the two. President Moon wanting to remain silent when it comes to human rights in North Korea, President Moon adopting the North Korean line that concern about human rights is an obstacle to peace and wanting US president Biden to accept such a policy line."

She added that, "My main message would be that the US and South Korea, that Presidents Biden and Moon, work out a unified policy towards human rights in North Korea."

Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights Cohen voiced her criticism saying that, "President Moon has also been harassing and making life difficult for human rights groups in South Korea, who are engaged with human rights in the North."

Earlier, the South Korean government claimed that the spreading of leaflets to North Korea could threaten the lives and safety of residents living along the border and banned the spreading of leaflets. According to this law criminalizing the distribution of leaflets which has been enforced since March, if a loudspeaker is used to broadcast or leaflets are flown across the border, punishment includes imprisonment for up to three years or a fine of 30 million won, which as of May 20th, is 26,600 dollars or less.

Cohen emphasized that, "South Korea has also not cosponsored resolutions at the United Nations on human rights in North Korea. So the US position is different on these issues. I mean, the US position has supported UN resolutions since the Biden administration came in and has supported resolutions at the UN and considers it a very important forum. So there has to be unity in the South Korean and the US position on the United Nations forum on resolutions on Security Council meetings or North Korean human rights on appointing special envoys for human rights in North Korea."

This message reflects Washington's concern that South Korea will not participate as a co-sponsoring country of resolutions submitted by the European Union earlier this year

following previous resolutions in 2019 and 2020. It includes criticism that five years have passed since the North Korean Human Rights Act was enacted in South Korea, however the organization of the North Korean Human Rights Foundation and the reappointment of the North Korean Human Rights ambassador have yet to be made.

Cohen added that, “I think that the strength of the alliance on this particular issue will be greater if there can be unified positions, and certainly not one of the alliance, South Korea takes the positions that North Korea is putting forward. North Korea cannot set the agenda for talks.”

Robert King, former Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea pointed out that, “The main thing to remember with regard to North Korea human rights is that it has to be a part of the policy towards North Korea. Human rights violations in North Korea are one of the worst things that that country faces and it colors everything that North Korea does.”

He explained that, “It's important that we engage with North Korea. It's important that we work towards denuclearization with North Korea, but we also have to remember that human rights is part of that engagement, part of that denuclearization. And then if we ignore human rights, we're not going to be able to make progress.”

Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director, urged that, “It will be very important that we return to significant action at the United Nations. The Republic of Korea must once again join the informal alliance of like-minded allies and partners that have been pressing for significant North Korea action—action on North Korean human rights at the United Nations.”

He shared that, “It is my view as a private citizen of the United States that the Biden administration greatly emphasizes values, shared with our friends, allies and partners, as well as a multilateral approach to international relations, and therefore, I hope that all friends, allies and partners in South Korea will highlight the importance of human rights as a fundamental value at the very core of our alliance, in particular, the fundamental human rights of the North Korean people.”

Suzanne Scholte, chair of the North Korea Freedom Coalition, stated that, “My message to President Moon is to please follow the Republic of Korea Constitution and uphold the freedoms of all Korean people whether they were born south of the DMZ, or north of the DMZ, like your own family.”

In particular, she urged, “President Moon, remember you were elected by the citizens of the Republic of Korea to serve them, and preserve the precious liberal democracy, which was only made possible by the spilt blood of many Korean and American patriots. Please remember that, and serve them, and not Kim Jong-un whose grandfather was responsible for the deaths of a million people because of his attempt to destroy South Korea and destroy South Korea's Republic.”

She further explains, “And please save the lives of the North Korean refugees in detention in China who are in mortal danger if they are repatriated. Every single South Korean president has

safely resettled North Korean refugees from China. So I urge President Moon to do the same, especially because the ones that are in detention right now are, as I said, in mortal danger because they were trying to get to South Korea. And if the border opens up in North Korea and North Korea starts accepting repatriated refugees back, China will send them back, so he has the chance to save the lives of these people."

Scholte, who has been leading the North Korea Freedom Coalition for 18 years, continued, "And return to the policy of getting information into North Korea. Because we really saw during North Korea Freedom Week people in North Korea are discontent, they're opposed to the regime, there's opposition in North Korea at every level of society, they want to change their circumstances. They know about the outside world. Please let them hear how much we care about them and how we want to see the North Korean people have the same freedoms and human rights as South Korea."

On the 15th, Scholte attended a hearing on South Korea's anti-leaflet law, held by the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, a bipartisan human rights organization in the U.S. Congress, stating that North Korea is the threat and that the North Korean groups are simply trying to convey information to their loved ones.

On one hand, experts state that at the U.S.-Korea summit, North Korean human rights issues should be discussed along with the universal values of democracy and peace, and that if President Moon, a former human rights lawyer, selectively deals with different countries' human rights issues, comparisons can be drawn to the recent U.S.-Japan summit.

Bruce Klinger, senior research fellow at The Heritage Foundation said, "South Korean President Moon Jae-in's summit meeting with President Joe Biden on May 21 at the White House will inevitably be graded against Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's highly successful visit in April. Suga set the bar high for an ally, calling out China's human rights violations in Hong Kong and against Uighur Muslims, belligerent tactics in the East and South China Seas, and intimidation of Taiwan."

Klinger predicts, "President Moon must not fall short on these topics. A U.S.–South Korean joint statement that does not include similar sentiments would reflect poorly on the Moon administration."

After talks on the 16th last month, President Biden and Prime Minister Suga announced a joint statement referring to the 'peace and stability of the Taiwan Strait' for the first time since 1960, a topic which China is sensitive to. The two leaders also expressed opposition to changes in the current situation in the East China Sea, expressing opposition to China's illegal maritime activities in the South China Sea as well as sharing concerns regarding the human rights issue in Hong Kong and Xinjiang.

This was Sungwon Baik reporting for VOA.

VOA Article Translation by Mindy Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Kathy Yu, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250923215335/https://mailchi.mp/3300c1b5e32f/hrnk-news-itemsus-human-rights-experts-to-p-moon-take-care-of-north-koreans-instead-of-kim-jong-unsk-us-japan-schedule-defense-minister-talks?

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**Monday, May 24, 2021**

# N. Korea keeps mum on S. Korea-U.S. summit; South Korea says unilateral sanctions against North Korea 'useless'

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea keeps mum on S. Korea-U.S. summit (*Yonhap*, 5/24/21)
North Korean authorities ferret out traders involved in smuggling (*Daily* NK, 5/24/21)
North Korea says it's COVID-free after pulling out of Olympics and World Cup (NK *News*, 5/24/21)
Over 100 pigs die at a farm in Sariwon in early May, leading to a swift government response (*Daily* NK, 5/24/21)

**In South Korea:**
South Korea says unilateral sanctions against North Korea 'useless' (NK *News*, 5/24/21)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
(LEAD) Unification minister says Moon-Biden summit creates 'sufficient' conditions for dialogue with N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 5/24/21)

**International:**
Blinken reiterates commitment to N.K. diplomacy to achieve denuclearization(*Yonhap*, 5/24/21)
'The ball is in North Korea's court,' says Blinken after Biden-Moon summit (NK *News*, 5/24/21)
US ready to engage with North Korea: Blinken (*The Korea Herald*, 5/24/21)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea has stayed mum on the results of last week's summit between President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Joe Biden amid questions about how Pyongyang will react to Biden's willingness to engage diplomatically with the country. (*Yonhap*)
- While North Korea has been making moves to reopen trade with China, it appears hesitant to lift the border blockade between the two countries. A Daily NK source recently reported that the authorities have been ferreting out and punishing traders

involved in smuggling. This crackdown could be an attempt to encourage trade workers to be cautious until the authorities open the border. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)

- North Korea has yet again claimed to have zero confirmed COVID-19 cases inside its territory after testing a total of 27,446 persons, according to an updated report from the World Health Organization (WHO) on Monday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Over 100 pigs at a pig farm in Sariwon, North Hwanghae Province, died on May 5, prompting an emergency response from the authorities, Daily NK has learned. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- Sanctions against North Korea that have been in place since the DPRK attacked and killed dozens of South Korean sailors in 2010 are no longer effective, Seoul's unification ministry said Monday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korea Relationship:**

- Last week's summit between President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Joe Biden created "sufficient" conditions needed to resume the long-stalled dialogue with North Korea, Unification Minister Lee In-young said Monday. (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)

**International:**

- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Sunday reiterated Washington's commitment to diplomacy with North Korea to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, saying, "The ball's in their court." (*Yonhap*)
- It's up to North Korea whether or not to resume talks with the United States, America's top diplomat said just two days after U.S. President Joe Biden and South Korean President Moon Jae-in met for their first summit in Washington. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- The US has put the diplomatic ball in Pyongyang's court, with its Secretary of State Antony Blinken stressing that Washington is prepared to engage with North Korea to discuss denuclearization, but it remains uncertain whether the reclusive regime will respond. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250923220126/https://mailchi.mp/99905d6d61d5/hrnk-news-itemsn-korea-keeps-mum-on-s-korea-us-summitsouth-korea-says-unilateral-sanctions-against-north-korea-useless

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**Tuesday, May 25, 2021**

## The Fall Guy; U.S.-ROK Leaders' Joint Statement; FACT SHEET: United States – Republic of Korea Partnership

**Top News:**
The Fall Guy (*Buzzfeed News*, 5/24/21)
U.S.-ROK Leaders' Joint Statement (*The White House*, 5/21/21)
FACT SHEET: United States – Republic of Korea Partnership (*The White House*, 5/21/21)
**In North Korea:**
Alleged North Korean hackers scouted crypto exchange employees before stealing currency, researchers say (*Cyberscoop*, 5/24/21)
Freight trains have not entered North Korea from China at all this year (*Daily NK*, 5/25/21)
N. Korea may approach South Korea to hear about U.S. policy: scholar (*Yonhap*, 5/25/21)
N.K. paper urges all-out efforts to finish planting rice within optimal period (*Yonhap*, 5/25/21)
N.K. touts national education of pro-Pyongyang group in Japan on 66th founding anniversary (*Yonhap*, 5/25/21)
North Korea bans mullet haircuts, nose piercings, and skinny jeans in Kim Jong Un's latest crackdown on 'anti-socialist behavior' (*Insider*, 5/24/21)
North Korea Nightmare: How The Kim Family's Assassins Ravaged the Korean Peninsula (*National Interest*, 5/24/21)
North Korean dictator in tune with Gen Z vibe, bans skinny jeans. Also out: the mullet, and nose and lip piercings (*South China Morning Post*, 5/24/21)
North Korean websites go dark after botched server upgrade (*NK News*, 5/25/21)
North Korean ship named in sanctions report sinks near Japan's west coast (*NK News*, 5/25/21)
Researchers Link CryptoCore Attacks On Cryptocurrency Exchanges to North Korea(*The Hacker News*, 5/24/21)
Wonsan man executed for illegally selling CDs and USBs with S. Korean movies, dramas and music videos (*Daily NK*, 5/25/21)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Biden, Moon Vow Unity on North Korea (*Bloomberg*, 5/24/21)
Pro-unification organization calls for suspension of joint military drills to resume dialogue with N.K. (*Yonhap*, 5/25/21)
**International:**
3 out of 4 Americans view N. Korea's denuclearization as 'important' issue: survey(*Yonhap*, 5/25/21)
75% of Americans think denuclearization deal with NK important: poll (*The Korea Herald*, 5/25/21)
America Just Freed South Korea To Make Better Rockets To Lob At North Korea(*Forbes*, 5/24/21)
New book offers rare look at North Korea through lens of a foreign resident (*UPI*, 5/24/21)

**Top News:**

- By the time Christopher Ahn signed on to the mission inside North Korea's embassy in Madrid, the plan was already finalized. Other people had mapped out how to restrain the staff, how to hoover up any useful intel materials, and most important, how to make it look like the diplomat they were grabbing was being kidnapped rather than defecting — a fiction that would spare his relatives back home from brutal retribution. (Bradley Hope, *Buzzfeed News*)

- Over seventy years ago, the alliance between the United States and the Republic of Korea was forged on the battlefield, as we stood shoulder-to-shoulder in war. Bonded in common sacrifice, our partnership has helped to keep the peace in the decades since, allowing both of our countries and our peoples to thrive. The linchpin for stability and prosperity, our alliance has continued to evolve as the world around us has changed. Now, as the regional security environment in the Indo-Pacific grows more complex, and existential issues, from the COVID-19 pandemic to the threat of climate change, reshape the globe, we recommit ourselves to an ironclad alliance. (Jen Psaki, *The White House*)
- The United States and the Republic of Korea (ROK) pledge to strengthen our alliance and to broaden its focus to address issues of critical importance to the Indo-Pacific region and the world. We will deepen our cooperation on advanced technologies, increase global vaccinations and protect the world from future pandemics, combat the climate crisis, and enhance economic cooperation and our people-to-people ties. Through these concrete initiatives, the United States and the Republic of Korea will demonstrate that our alliance is prepared to lead the region towards a prosperous, secure, dynamic, and bright future. (U.S.-ROK Leaders, *The White House*)

**In North Korea:**

- Suspected North Korean hackers have breached cryptocurrency exchanges in Japan, Europe, the U.S. and Israel in an effort to steal millions of dollars from the platforms in the last three years, according to a new private sector report. (Sean Lyngaas, *Cyberscoop*)
- Despite signs Sino-North Korean trade was set to resume in mid-May, Daily NK has learned that freight cars destined for North Korea at a Dandong railway station are sitting in the same place as they were last month. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea may approach South Korea to figure out what the new U.S. policy on Pyongyang looks like, as last week's summit between President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Joe Biden did not offer any concrete specifics, a former security adviser to Moon said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Tuesday called for all-out efforts to promptly finish planting rice within the optimal period at all costs amid concerns unexpected rainfall could hamper rice planting. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea touted an organization of pro-Pyongyang residents in Japan for its efforts to hand down the Korean national identity and patriotism on the 66th anniversary of its founding on Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has banned mullets, certain piercings, and skinny jeans in a bid to keep the country free from "decadent" Western fashion trends. (Joshua Zitser, *Insider*)
- Seoul raises the alert status of its forces…and does nothing. What can be done to change the regime's behavior? In fact, relations with Pyongyang resume their thaw in 1985 as the first visits between North and South Korean family members are arranged. (Sebastien Roblin, *National Interest*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and Gen Z have something in common: they both hate skinny jeans. According to various reports, the North Korean dictator has banned skinny jeans and other "decadent" Western trends like the mullet, the controversial haircut that has had a resurgence of sorts in recent months. (Vincenzo La Torre, *South China Morning Post*)

- More than a dozen North Korean websites were knocked off the internet on Tuesday morning due to a failed software update, according to screenshots obtained by NK News. Websites affected by the outage included the online presence of The Pyongyang Times, the Ministry of Public Health, and at least 14 other sites hosted on the same server, records on the internet's Domain Name System (DNS) showed. (Nils Weisensee, *NK News*)
- A sanctioned North Korean-flagged ship carrying 6,500 tons of iron sank in the East Sea last Saturday on May 22. (Min Chao Choy, Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- State-sponsored hackers affiliated with North Korea have been behind a slew of attacks on cryptocurrency exchanges over the past three years, new evidence has revealed. (Ravie Lakshmanan, *The Hacker News*)
- In late April, North Korean authorities publicly executed a man living in Wonsan (Gangwon Province) who illegally sold CDs and USBs filled with South Korean movies, dramas, and music videos. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)

**Inter-Korea Relationship:**

- President Joe Biden said he would appoint a special envoy to address issues regarding North Korea and vowed to coordinate policy toward Pyongyang closely with South Korea's government following meetings with South Korean President Moon Jae-in in Washington on Friday. Bloomberg's Jon Herskovitz reports on "Bloomberg Daybreak: Asia." (*Bloomberg*)
- A pro-unification civic group on Tuesday urged South Korea and the United States to suspend joint military drills as practical action needed to signal they have no hostility toward North Korea and resume dialogue with Pyongyang. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Three out of 4 Americans view denuclearization of North Korea as an "important" issue that should be resolved, a survey showed Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- Three out of 4 Americans think it is "very important" or "important" for the US to reach an agreement with North Korea on dismantling the North's nuclear weapons, a survey of 1,000 American adults conducted earlier this month showed. (Kim So-hyun, *The Korea Herald*)
- During a press conference at the White House on Friday, President Joe Biden and South Korean President Moon Jae-in announced the end of the 42-year-old rocket accord. The new agreement is "symbolic and substantive," Moon told reporters. (David Axe, *Forbes*)
- Images of North Korea that make it to the outside world tend to feature military parades, goose-stepping soldiers, missile tests and perfectly synchronized mass spectacles. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)

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Prepared by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250923220204/https://mailchi.mp/7dfe926ed571/hrnk-news-itemsthe-fall-guyus-rok-leaders-joint-statementfact-sheet-united-states-republic-of-korea-partnership

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**Wednesday, May 26, 2021**

# US experts to Moon “Take care of North Koreans instead of Kim Jong Un”; SK Gov't moving to resume inter-Korean economic cooperation

**Top News:**
***U.S. human rights experts message to President Moon during visit: “Take care of North Koreans instead of Kim Jong Un”, TV Program (VOA, *VOA TV Program*, 05/25/2021)
**In North Korea:**
Kim Jong Un Bets on Riverfront Property to Boost North Korea’s Economy (*Wall Street Journal*, 05/25/2021)
Kim Jong Un’s private ‘floating amusement park’ appears headed for Wonsan villa(*NK Pro*, 05/25/2021)
N.K. paper calls for competition among regional governments for balanced growth(*Yonhap*, 05/26/2021)
North Hamgyong Province party committee evaluates COVID-19 control measures over past year (*Daily NK*, 05/26/2021)
North Korean Capital Cracks Down on Illegal TVs to Prevent Access to South Korean Broadcasts (RFA, 05/25/2021)
North Korea ramping up rabbit breeding to meet demand, state media says (UPI, 05/25/2021)
North Korea’s security agency arrests family of three trying to defect on Kim Il Sung’s birthday (*Daily NK*, 05/26/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Foreign minister talks about difference between ‘nuclear free zone’ and denuclearization (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 05/26/2021)
Gov't moving to resume inter-Korean economic cooperation (*Korea Times*, 05/26/2021)
Moon throws cold water on joint drills resumption (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/26/2021)
S. Korea should build int'l consortium to support N.K. with vaccines: expert (*Yonhap*, 05/26/2021)
S. Korea's intelligence chief leaves for U.S. to coordinate policy on N. Korea: sources (*Yonhap*, 05/26/2021)
South Korea leader Moon Jae-in says U.S. wants to resume talks with North (UPI, 05/26/2021)
South Korea police raid office, residence of Kim Il Sung memoir publisher (UPI, 05/26/2021)

**International:**
Biden and Moon Are Getting North Korea Wrong (*New York Times*, 05/26/2021)
Biden WH seeks to extradite Marine vet in danger of being executed by North Korea, supporters warn (*Fox News*, 05/25/2021)
Expert roundup: How will North Korea view the U.S.-ROK summit results? (*NK News*, 05/26/2021)
Madrid embassy raid suspect attends extradition hearing (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 05/26/2021)

New North Korea envoy to be part-time only (*NK News*, 05/25/2021)
Russia and China are not a monolith when it comes to North Korea (*NK Pro*, 05/26/2021)
Russian diplomats, Assembly speaker discuss North Korea issue (*Korea Times*, 05/25/2021)
Sung Kim begins work as special representative with call to Japanese counterpart(*Yonhap*, 05/26/2021)
What's the big deal about US-ROK missile guidelines? (*NK Pro*, 05/25/2021)

**Top News:**

- Former U.S. officials working on human rights issues and North Korean human rights experts appealed to South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who visited the United States for a summit meeting with President Joe Biden, to pay attention to the serious human rights issues in North Korea. They urged him not to instill in Washington the image of Kim Jong-un, who sees human rights as an obstacle to peace, but instead to speak in a unified voice with the U.S. government, which prioritizes human rights. (Sungwon Baik, VOA, *VOA TV Program*)

**In North Korea:**

- In North Korea's capital, the prime riverfront property went untouched for decades. It was once a site for an American missionary school. Then it briefly became a residence for the country's founder, Kim Il Sung. Now, it is the site of Pyongyang's hottest housing development. The modern block of apartments represents a cog in Kim Jong Un's national strategy to project strength amid economic strife, sanctions and pandemic lockdowns. (Andrew Jeong, *Wall Street Journal*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's largest luxury watercraft was seen on Monday being towed towards his sprawling Wonsan mansion complex on the east coast, according to NK Pro analysis of Planet Labs satellite imagery. (Colin Zwirko, *NK Pro*)
- North Korea's official newspaper called Wednesday for competition among cities and counties to promote a balanced economic growth across the country. (*Yonhap*)
- Earlier this month, North Hamgyong Province's party committee held a meeting to evaluate the province's COVID-19 control measures over the past year and to announce future efforts to control the spread of the disease. (Kim Yoo Jin, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea has ordered residents of the capital Pyongang to report the number of televisions in each household to stop them from watching banned shows from prosperous, democratic South Korea, sources in the country told RFA. (Jieun Kim, Yong Jae Mok, Leejin Jun, Eugene Whong, *RFA*)
- Rabbit breeding is the key to increasing North Korea's food supply, Pyongyang's state media said. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- North Korea's Ministry of State Security (MSS) arrested a family of three trying to defect over the Sino-North Korean border on Kim Il Sung's birthday (Apr. 15), Daily NK has learned. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korean Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong said on Tuesday that there is no significant difference between the term "nuclear free zone," used by North Korea, and denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula, used both by South Korea and the United States. His remarks, however, have caused controversy since North Korea has been using the term to demand the withdrawal of U.S.' extended deterrence commitments,

including the nuclear umbrella provided to South Korea and the pullout of U.S. troops from South Korea. (Oh-Hyuk Kwon, *Dong-A Ilbo*)

- Following President Moon Jae-in's summit with U.S. President Joe Biden that drew Washington's support for inter-Korean cooperation, the government here is providing glimpses of what it will do in its efforts to restore inter-Korean economic cooperation. (Kang Seung-woo, *Korea Times*)
- President Moon Jae-in on Wednesday expressed skepticism over the idea of a big joint military drill by Korea and the United States this year -- after Washington supplies Covid-19 vaccines to Korean troops. (Ser Myo-Ja, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea should form an international consortium with the United States and other countries to help North Korea with vaccine supplies, an expert said Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's intelligence chief departed for the United States on Wednesday to discuss cooperation on North Korea after their leaders held a summit and agreed to diplomatically engage with Pyongyang, sources said. (*Yonhap*)
- The United States has signaled a desire to resume stalled nuclear negotiations with North Korea by designating a special envoy, South Korean President Moon Jae-in said on Wednesday. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- South Korean police raided the office of a book publisher that sold copies of former North Korean dictator Kim Il Sung's memoir -- a series of books available on the Internet for free. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

**International:**

- The recent White House meeting between President Biden and President Moon Jae-in of South Korea produced a comprehensive and substantive joint statement emphasizing cooperation on climate change, global health, sustainable development, and democracy in Myanmar, among other issues. But the lofty language that flowed from the White House meeting was worrisome, indicating that the United States and South Korea were on a path that could put both countries at greater risk from the North. (Nicholas Eberstadt, *New York Times*)
- A Los Angeles federal courtroom was riveted Tuesday as Cindy Warmbier, mother of Otto Warmbier, gave a heartfelt plea of support to protect the life of a former U.S. Marine who was arrested for being an activist against North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's regime. (Eric Shawn, *Fox News*)
- U.S. President Joe Biden and South Korean President Moon Jae-in met in Washington, D.C. last Friday and spoke extensively on North Korea, vowing to implement U.N. sanctions against the DPRK while pursuing diplomacy and dialogue. The following analysts spoke with NK News and shared their thoughts on the outcome of the summit and the future of Washington and Seoul's North Korea policy. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Christopher Ahn, a Korean-American indicted by U.S. prosecutors on charges of participating in a group raid on the North Korean embassy in Spain, appeared in court in Los Angeles on Monday to attend his extradition hearing. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Sung Kim, the new U.S. special envoy to North Korea, will only fulfill his role on a part-time basis, multiple informed sources confirmed to NK News on Wednesday. His

main job will continue to be U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia, based in Jakarta. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)

- Korean security has received considerable attention in Russia-U.S. relations under the Biden administration, possibly because the White House views it as a relatively "safe" issue on which it can maintain cooperative ties with Moscow in an otherwise acrimonious relationship. (Anthony V. Rinna, *NK Pro*)
- Former Russian diplomats, including envoys posted to South and North Korea, anticipate the possibility of talks again taking place between Pyongyang and Washington, and advise that the issue of North Korea's denuclearization be resolved through the resumption of inter-Korean dialogue and multilateral cooperation similar to the six-party talks of the past. (Jung Da-min, *Korea Times*)
- The new U.S. special representative for North Korea, Sung Kim, spoke by phone with his Japanese counterpart and the two sides reaffirmed their commitment to complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the State Department said Tuesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- One of the most consequential outcomes of the May 21 summit meeting between U.S. President Joe Biden and South Korean President Moon Jae-in is the termination of the bilateral missile guidelines. South Korea may now pursue the development of longer-range, more sophisticated missiles. As a result, new dynamics stand to be introduced to the inter-Korean military balance with broader implications for stability in the Indo-Pacific region. (Ankit Panda, *NK Pro*)

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VOA Source, TV Program

**U.S. human rights experts message to President Moon during visit: "Take care of North Koreans instead of Kim Jong Un"**
Reporter Sungwon Baik

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U.S. human rights experts hold a common perception that among the key agenda items of the U.S.-Korea summit such as semiconductor and vaccine cooperation, keeping China in check, the North Korean nuclear issue, etc., North Korean human rights issues must be included as well, which symbolizes shared values of the alliance.

They expressed concern over a series of remarks by South Korean leaders who are wary of President Biden's mention of North Korean human rights and called for Moon Jae-in not to continue to ignore the realities of human rights in North Korea during the first meeting with President Biden, and rather to keep pace with the U.S. "Diplomacy First" policy.

During a call with VOA, Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights in the Department of State, stated that, “At the moment, it's a very discordant policy between the two. President Moon wanting to remain silent when it comes to human rights in North Korea, President Moon adopting the North Korean line that concern about human rights is an obstacle to peace and wanting US president Biden to accept such a policy line.”

She added that, “My main message would be that the US and South Korea, that Presidents Biden and Moon, work out a unified policy towards human rights in North Korea.”

Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights Cohen voiced her criticism saying that, “President Moon has also been harassing and making life difficult for human rights groups in South Korea, who are engaged with human rights in the North.”

Earlier, the South Korean government claimed that the spreading of leaflets to North Korea could threaten the lives and safety of residents living along the border and banned the spreading of leaflets. According to this law criminalizing the distribution of leaflets which has been enforced since March, if a loudspeaker is used to broadcast or leaflets are flown across the border, punishment includes imprisonment for up to three years or a fine of 30 million won, which as of May 20th, is 26,600 dollars or less.

Cohen emphasized that, “South Korea has also not cosponsored resolutions at the United Nations on human rights in North Korea. So the US position is different on these issues. I mean, the US position has supported UN resolutions since the Biden administration came in and has supported resolutions at the UN and considers it a very important forum. So there has to be unity in the South Korean and the US position on the United Nations forum on resolutions on Security Council meetings or North Korean human rights on appointing special envoys for human rights in North Korea.”

This message reflects Washington’s concern that South Korea will not participate as a co-sponsoring country of resolutions submitted by the European Union earlier this year following previous resolutions in 2019 and 2020. It includes criticism that five years have passed since the North Korean Human Rights Act was enacted in South Korea, however the organization of the North Korean Human Rights Foundation and the reappointment of the North Korean Human Rights ambassador have yet to be made.

Cohen added that, “I think that the strength of the alliance on this particular issue will be greater if there can be unified positions, and certainly not one of the alliance, South Korea takes the positions that North Korea is putting forward. North Korea cannot set the agenda for talks.”

Robert King, former Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea pointed out that, “The main thing to remember with regard to North Korea human rights is that it has to be a part of the policy towards North Korea. Human rights violations in North Korea are one of the worst things that that country faces and it colors everything that North Korea does.”

He explained that, “It's important that we engage with North Korea. It's important that we work towards denuclearization with North Korea, but we also have to remember that human rights is part of that engagement, part of that denuclearization. And then if we ignore human rights, we're not going to be able to make progress.”

Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director, urged that, “It will be very important that we return to significant action at the United Nations. The Republic of Korea must once again join the informal alliance of like-minded allies and partners that have been pressing for significant North Korea action—action on North Korean human rights at the United Nations.”

He shared that, “It is my view as a private citizen of the United States that the Biden administration greatly emphasizes values, shared with our friends, allies and partners, as well as a multilateral approach to international relations, and therefore, I hope that all friends, allies and partners in South Korea will highlight the importance of human rights as a fundamental value at the very core of our alliance, in particular, the fundamental human rights of the North Korean people.”

Suzanne Scholte, chair of the North Korea Freedom Coalition, stated that, “My message to President Moon is to please follow the Republic of Korea Constitution and uphold the freedoms of all Korean people whether they were born south of the DMZ, or north of the DMZ, like your own family.”

In particular, she urged, “President Moon, remember you were elected by the citizens of the Republic of Korea to serve them, and preserve the precious liberal democracy, which was only made possible by the spilt blood of many Korean and American patriots. Please remember that, and serve them, and not Kim Jong-un whose grandfather was responsible for the deaths of a million people because of his attempt to destroy South Korea and destroy South Korea's Republic.”

She further explains, “And please save the lives of the North Korean refugees in detention in China who are in mortal danger if they are repatriated. Every single South Korean president has safely resettled North Korean refugees from China. So I urge President Moon to do the same, especially because the ones that are in detention right now are, as I said, in mortal danger because they were trying to get to South Korea. And if the border opens up in North Korea and North Korea starts accepting repatriated refugees back, China will send them back, so he has the chance to save the lives of these people.”

Scholte, who has been leading the North Korea Freedom Coalition for 18 years, continued, “And return to the policy of getting information into North Korea. Because we really saw during North Korea Freedom Week people in North Korea are discontent, they're opposed to the regime, there's opposition in North Korea at every level of society, they want to change their circumstances. They know about the outside world. Please let them hear how much we care about them and how we want to see the North Korean people have the same freedoms and human rights as South Korea.”

On the 15th, Scholte attended a hearing on South Korea's anti-leaflet law, held by the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, a bipartisan human rights organization in the U.S. Congress, stating that North Korea is the threat and that the North Korean groups are simply trying to convey information to their loved ones.

On one hand, experts state that at the U.S.-Korea summit, North Korean human rights issues should be discussed along with the universal values of democracy and peace, and that if President Moon, a former human rights lawyer, selectively deals with different countries' human rights issues, comparisons can be drawn to the recent U.S.-Japan summit.

Bruce Klinger, senior research fellow at The Heritage Foundation said, "South Korean President Moon Jae-in's summit meeting with President Joe Biden on May 21 at the White House will inevitably be graded against Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's highly successful visit in April. Suga set the bar high for an ally, calling out China's human rights violations in Hong Kong and against Uighur Muslims, belligerent tactics in the East and South China Seas, and intimidation of Taiwan."

Klinger predicts, "President Moon must not fall short on these topics. A U.S.–South Korean joint statement that does not include similar sentiments would reflect poorly on the Moon administration."

After talks on the 16th last month, President Biden and Prime Minister Suga announced a joint statement referring to the 'peace and stability of the Taiwan Strait' for the first time since 1960, a topic which China is sensitive to. The two leaders also expressed opposition to changes in the current situation in the East China Sea, expressing opposition to China's illegal maritime activities in the South China Sea as well as sharing concerns regarding the human rights issue in Hong Kong and Xinjiang.

This was Sungwon Baik reporting for VOA.

Translated by Mindy Kim

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Prepared by Jeune Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250923220331/https://mailchi.mp/3666f4268325/hrnk-news-items-us-experts-to-moon-take-care-of-north-koreans-instead-of-kim-jong-un-sk-govt-moving-to-resume-inter-korean-economic-cooperation

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**Thursday, May 27, 2021**

## "Biden and Moon Are Getting North Korea Wrong"

**Top News:**
Biden and Moon Are Getting North Korea Wrong(*The New York Times*, 05/27/2021)
**In North Korea:**
Today in Korean history(*Yonhap*, 05/27/2021)
N. Korean leader appears to reduce public activities amid coronavirus concerns(*Yonhap*, 05/27/2021)
N.K. leader urges struggle against non-socialist practices in letter to trade union body(*Yonhap*, 05/27/2021)
North Korean family in Hyesan placed in isolation facility for illegally raising cat(*Daily NK*, 05/27/2021)

**In South Korea:**
(LEAD) Joint military exercises key to ensuring defense readiness of S. Korea, U.S.: Pentagon(*Yonhap*, 05/27/2021)
S. Korea seeks unfettered access to space tech after ban lifted(*Korea herald*, 05/27/2021)
To the Moon? South Korea, US to explore space and develop satellites together(*NK news*, 05/27/2021)
Kim vows to build N. Korea socialism amid US nuclear impasse(*AP news*, 05/27/2021)

**International:**
[Herald Interview] Korail CEO Son Byung-seok maps out new future(*Korea herald*, 05/27/2021)
S. Korea provides 10,000 more face masks to Colombia(*Korea herald*, 05/27/2021)

**Top News:**
- The recent White House meeting between President Biden and President Moon Jae-in of South Korea produced a comprehensive and substantive joint statement emphasizing cooperation on climate change, global health, sustainable development, and democracy in Myanmar, among other issues. (*Nicholas Eberstadt, The New York Times*)

**In North Korea:**
- A railroad linking the capital city of Seoul with the port city of Busan in the southeastern part of the country opens to passengers and cargo.(*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has been seen less frequently this year amid concerns over the global coronavirus pandemic, a unification ministry official said Thursday.(*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's official newspaper called Wednesday for competition among cities and counties to promote a balanced economic growth across the country. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has called on his country's largest trade union to wage a "do-or-die battle" against non-socialist practices in a letter he sent to mark its latest congress session, state media said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- Amid efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19, North Korean authorities in Hyesan, Yanggang Province, recently placed a family into an isolation facility for secretly raising a cat, Daily NK has learned. (*Daily NK*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has vowed an “uncompromising struggle” against anti-socialist elements at home, state media reported Thursday, as he tries to fortify his power amid pandemic-related difficulties and U.S.-led economic sanctions. (*AP news*)

**In South Korea:**

- Joint military drills are a key measure to ensure the readiness of South Korean and U.S. forces, a Pentagon spokesman said Wednesday, even as the pandemic has thrown the timetable out the window.(*Yonhap*)
- South Korea is now free to flex its military muscles in space, as it was cut loose from a Korea-US missile pact that has long capped Seoul's missile program and space reach, experts said Thursday.(*Korea herald*)
- Experts say that Seoul seeks to expand its North Korea monitoring capabilities. (*Jeongmin Kim, NK news* )

**International:**

- Could South Korea's railroad network one day be connected all the way to Europe? It's a vision the country has long hoped for, after its railroad tracks were severed at the 38th parallel border line during the 1950-53 Korean War that now divides the North from the South. (*Korea herald*)
- South Korea's veterans affairs ministry said Thursday it has provided 10,000 additional face masks to Colombia to express gratitude for the country's participation in the 1950-53 Korean War. (*Korea herald*)

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VOA Source, TV Program

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They expressed concern over a series of remarks by South Korean leaders who are wary of President Biden's mention of North Korean human rights and called for Moon Jae-in not to continue to ignore the realities of human rights in North Korea during the first meeting with President Biden, and rather to keep pace with the U.S. "Diplomacy First" policy.

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Translated by Mindy Kim

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Prepared by Seshni Moodley, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250923220630/https://mailchi.mp/063244129e0c/hrnk-news-items-biden-and-moon-are-getting-north-korea-wrong

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**Friday, May 28, 2021**

## "First we take Pyonghattan, then we take Pyongyang"

**Top News:**
First We Take Pyonghattan, Then We Take Pyongyang(*Youtube*, 05/28/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Ex-minister calls on S. Korea, U.S. to suspend joint military drills to resume talks with N.K(*Yonhap*, 05/28/2021)
Key developments on North Korea this week(*Yonhap*, 05/28/2021)
Suspect in NK Embassy raid says he could be killed if he leaves US(*The Korea Herald*, 05/28/2021)
North Korean children rush to coal mines to 'repay' party's love: state media(NK *News*, 05/28/2021)

**In South Korea:**
S. Korea to seek resumption of dialogue with N. Korea based on achievement of Moon-Biden agreement(*Yonhap*, 05/28/2021)
Chief nuke envoys of S. Korea, US hold phone talks on peninsula denuclearization(*The Korea Herald*, 05/28/2021)
Lawmaker proposes a South Korean-version of 'Otto Warmbier Act'(NK *news*, 05/28/2021)

**Inter-Korean relations:**
DP, gov't recognize need to resume inter-Korean dialogue to restore cross-border ties(*Yonhap*, 05/28/2021)

**International:**
(LEAD) N. Korean ICBMs pose 'real danger' to U.S. homeland: Gen. Milley(*Yonhap*, 05/28/2021)
U.S. must continue to develop vaccines against N. Korean biological weapons: nominee(*Yonhap*, 05/28/2021)
Moon-Biden summit further deepens alliance: foreign ministry(The Korea Herald, 05/28/2021)

**Top News:**

- North Korean escapees Ms. Seo-hyun Lee and Mr. Hyeun-seung Lee join HRNK Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu to discuss the current state of the North Korean economy, society, politics, and human rights as well as the North Korean elites and Kim regime dynamics. They also address the potential role of North Korea's youth and the "Jangmadang Generation" in transforming North Korea moving forward.(*Youtube*)

**In North Korea**

- A former unification minister on Friday called on South Korea and the United States to suspend their planned joint military drills to bring North Korea back to the negotiating table.(*Yonhap*)
- The following are key developments regarding North Korea this week.(*Yonhap*)
- A Korean American facing extradition to Spain for taking part in a raid of the North Korean Embassy in Madrid in February 2019 said he could be assassinated if he leaves the US.(*Kim So-hyun, The Korea Herald*)
- Orphans brought up by the state reportedly volunteering to work in "difficult and labor-consuming fields".(*Colin Zwirko, NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- The unification ministry said Friday it will seek to restore communication lines and dialogue with North Korea based on "sufficient conditions" for engagement created by last week's summit between President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Joe Biden.(*Yonhap*)
- he top nuclear envoys of South Korea and the United States held their second phone talks in less than a week on Friday to discuss cooperation to achieve denuclearization and lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula, the foreign ministry said.(*The Korea Herald*)
- South Korean lawmaker Ji Seong proposed a bill that would give North Korean escapees in the South legal grounds to demand financial compensation for the human rights abuses they suffered in North Korea.(*Jeongmin Kim, NK News*)

**Inter-Korean relations**

- The government and the ruling Democratic Party (DP) on Friday agreed on the need to restart dialogue with North Korea to restore inter-Korean relations as early as possible based on last week's Seoul-Washington summit deal that reaffirmed the allies' peace commitment toward the Korean Peninsula.(*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- North Korea continues to build up its ballistic missile capability, which poses "real danger" to the U.S. mainland, the top U.S. military commander said Thursday.(*Yonhap*)
- Developing and producing vaccines for biological weapons is critical to protecting U.S. forces in South Korea and ensuring their defense readiness, nominee for U.S. assistant secretary of defense for nuclear, chemical and biological defense programs said Thursday.(*Byun Duk-kun, Yonhap*)
- The summit talks between President Moon Jae-in and US President Joe Biden last week helped the two countries further deepen their alliance in a "comprehensive, constructive and mutually beneficial" manner, the foreign ministry said Friday.(*The Korea Herald*)

VOA Source, TV Program

**U.S. human rights experts message to President Moon during visit: “Take care of North Koreans instead of Kim Jong Un”**
Reporter Sungwon Baik

Former U.S. officials working on human rights issues and North Korean human rights experts appealed to South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who visited the United States for a summit meeting with President Joe Biden, to pay attention to the serious human rights issues in North Korea. They urged him not to instill in Washington the image of Kim Jong-un, who sees human rights as an obstacle to peace, but instead to speak in a unified voice with the U.S. government, which prioritizes human rights. This is Sungwon Baik reporting.

U.S. human rights experts hold a common perception that among the key agenda items of the U.S.-Korea summit such as semiconductor and vaccine cooperation, keeping China in check, the North Korean nuclear issue, etc., North Korean human rights issues must be included as well, which symbolizes shared values of the alliance.

They expressed concern over a series of remarks by South Korean leaders who are wary of President Biden's mention of North Korean human rights and called for Moon Jae-in not to continue to ignore the realities of human rights in North Korea during the first meeting with President Biden, and rather to keep pace with the U.S. "Diplomacy First" policy.

During a call with VOA, Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights in the Department of State, stated that, "At the moment, it's a very discordant policy between the two. President Moon wanting to remain silent when it comes to human rights in North Korea, President Moon adopting the North Korean line that concern about human rights is an obstacle to peace and wanting US president Biden to accept such a policy line."

She added that, "My main message would be that the US and South Korea, that Presidents Biden and Moon, work out a unified policy towards human rights in North Korea."

Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights Cohen voiced her criticism saying that, "President Moon has also been harassing and making life difficult for human rights groups in South Korea, who are engaged with human rights in the North."

Earlier, the South Korean government claimed that the spreading of leaflets to North Korea could threaten the lives and safety of residents living along the border and banned the spreading of leaflets. According to this law criminalizing the distribution of leaflets which has been enforced since March, if a loudspeaker is used to broadcast or leaflets are flown across the border, punishment includes imprisonment for up to three years or a fine of 30 million won, which as of May 20th, is 26,600 dollars or less.

Cohen emphasized that, "South Korea has also not cosponsored resolutions at the United Nations on human rights in North Korea. So the US position is different on these issues. I mean, the US position has supported UN resolutions since the Biden administration came in and has supported resolutions at the UN and considers it a very important forum. So there has to be unity in the South Korean and the US position on the United Nations forum on resolutions on Security Council meetings or North Korean human rights on appointing special envoys for human rights in North Korea."

This message reflects Washington's concern that South Korea will not participate as a co-sponsoring country of resolutions submitted by the European Union earlier this year following previous resolutions in 2019 and 2020. It includes criticism that five years have passed since the North Korean Human Rights Act was enacted in South Korea, however the organization of the North Korean Human Rights Foundation and the reappointment of the North Korean Human Rights ambassador have yet to be made.

Cohen added that, "I think that the strength of the alliance on this particular issue will be greater if there can be unified positions, and certainly not one of the alliance, South Korea takes the positions that North Korea is putting forward. North Korea cannot set the agenda for talks."

Robert King, former Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea pointed out that, “The main thing to remember with regard to North Korea human rights is that it has to be a part of the policy towards North Korea. Human rights violations in North Korea are one of the worst things that that country faces and it colors everything that North Korea does.”

He explained that, “It's important that we engage with North Korea. It's important that we work towards denuclearization with North Korea, but we also have to remember that human rights is part of that engagement, part of that denuclearization. And then if we ignore human rights, we're not going to be able to make progress.”

Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director, urged that, “It will be very important that we return to significant action at the United Nations. The Republic of Korea must once again join the informal alliance of like-minded allies and partners that have been pressing for significant North Korea action—action on North Korean human rights at the United Nations.”

He shared that, “It is my view as a private citizen of the United States that the Biden administration greatly emphasizes values, shared with our friends, allies and partners, as well as a multilateral approach to international relations, and therefore, I hope that all friends, allies and partners in South Korea will highlight the importance of human rights as a fundamental value at the very core of our alliance, in particular, the fundamental human rights of the North Korean people.”

Suzanne Scholte, chair of the North Korea Freedom Coalition, stated that, “My message to President Moon is to please follow the Republic of Korea Constitution and uphold the freedoms of all Korean people whether they were born south of the DMZ, or north of the DMZ, like your own family.”

In particular, she urged, “President Moon, remember you were elected by the citizens of the Republic of Korea to serve them, and preserve the precious liberal democracy, which was only made possible by the spilt blood of many Korean and American patriots. Please remember that, and serve them, and not Kim Jong-un whose grandfather was responsible for the deaths of a million people because of his attempt to destroy South Korea and destroy South Korea's Republic.”

She further explains, “And please save the lives of the North Korean refugees in detention in China who are in mortal danger if they are repatriated. Every single South Korean president has safely resettled North Korean refugees from China. So I urge President Moon to do the same, especially because the ones that are in detention right now are, as I said, in mortal danger because they were trying to get to South Korea. And if the border opens up in North Korea and North Korea starts accepting repatriated refugees back, China will send them back, so he has the chance to save the lives of these people.”

Scholte, who has been leading the North Korea Freedom Coalition for 18 years, continued, “And return to the policy of getting information into North Korea. Because we really saw during North Korea Freedom Week people in North Korea are discontent, they're opposed to the

regime, there's opposition in North Korea at every level of society, they want to change their circumstances. They know about the outside world. Please let them hear how much we care about them and how we want to see the North Korean people have the same freedoms and human rights as South Korea."

On the 15th, Scholte attended a hearing on South Korea's anti-leaflet law, held by the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, a bipartisan human rights organization in the U.S. Congress, stating that North Korea is the threat and that the North Korean groups are simply trying to convey information to their loved ones.

On one hand, experts state that at the U.S.-Korea summit, North Korean human rights issues should be discussed along with the universal values of democracy and peace, and that if President Moon, a former human rights lawyer, selectively deals with different countries' human rights issues, comparisons can be drawn to the recent U.S.-Japan summit.

Bruce Klinger, senior research fellow at The Heritage Foundation said, "South Korean President Moon Jae-in's summit meeting with President Joe Biden on May 21 at the White House will inevitably be graded against Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's highly successful visit in April. Suga set the bar high for an ally, calling out China's human rights violations in Hong Kong and against Uighur Muslims, belligerent tactics in the East and South China Seas, and intimidation of Taiwan."

Klinger predicts, "President Moon must not fall short on these topics. A U.S.–South Korean joint statement that does not include similar sentiments would reflect poorly on the Moon administration."

After talks on the 16th last month, President Biden and Prime Minister Suga announced a joint statement referring to the 'peace and stability of the Taiwan Strait' for the first time since 1960, a topic which China is sensitive to. The two leaders also expressed opposition to changes in the current situation in the East China Sea, expressing opposition to China's illegal maritime activities in the South China Sea as well as sharing concerns regarding the human rights issue in Hong Kong and Xinjiang.

This was Sungwon Baik reporting for VOA.

Translated by Mindy Kim

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Prepared by Seshni Moodley, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250812152527/https://mailchi.mp/1607d9af4c95/hrnk-news-itemsfirst-we-take-pyonghattan-then-we-take-pyongyang?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Saturday, May 29, 2021

# Defector politician introduces bill to compensate NK human rights victims; China, N. Korea envoys lock arms in first official meeting

**In North Korea:**
Kim's Troopers: How Tough are North Korea's 200,000 Special Forces? (*National Interest*, 05/28/2021)
North Korea Using Barges to Move Cargos Other Than Sand, Coal (*38 North*, 05/28/2021)
North Korean family in Hyesan placed in isolation facility for illegally raising cat (*Daily NK*, 05/28/2021)
North Korea's population lacking food, trading valuables at border, analysts say (*UPI*, 05/28/2021)
North Korea's Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center: Satellite Update (*38 North*, 05/28/2021)
Orphans, soldiers, students: N.Korea turns to 'volunteers' for coal mines, construction (*Reuters*, 05/29/2021)
Two soldiers die after stepping on minefield near the Sino-North Korean border(*Daily NK*, 05/28/2021)
Understanding Kim Jong Un's Economic Policymaking: Project Overview (*38 North*, 05/28/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Defector politician introduces bill to compensate North Korean human rights victims (*UPI*, 05/28/2021)

**International:**
China, North Korea envoys lock arms in first official meeting (*UPI*, 05/28/2021)
N. Korean authorities order expatriates in China to avoid any direct or indirect contact with South Koreans (*Daily NK*, 05/28/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean special forces have evolved from a nuisance force designed to stage attacks in the enemy's rear into something far more dangerous. Their ability to distribute nuclear, chemical, biological, or radiological weapons could, if successful, kill thousands of civilians. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- High-resolution satellite imagery of North Korea's Nampho port area taken in July last year shows two barges carrying unusual cargos, adding to findings from the United Nations (UN) Panel of Experts (POE) that North Korea is now using these difficult-to-trace vessels to move a wider variety of sanctions-breaking shipments. (Leo Byrne, *38 North*)

- Amid efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19, North Korean authorities in Hyesan, Yanggang Province, recently placed a family into an isolation facility for secretly raising a cat, Daily NK has learned. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea's economy could be susceptible to collapse because of the prolonged suspension of trade with China, according to a recent press report. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- New commercial satellite imagery of North Korea's Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center indicates: 1) continued activity at the Radiochemical Laboratory (RCL) and the Thermal (Steam) Plant which supports it, but no clear evidence that spent fuel rods have been transferred from storage near the 5 MWe Reactor to produce plutonium; 2) new activity at the Experimental Light Water Reactor (ELWR) that is probably related to maintenance/repair; 3) minor observable activity at the Uranium Enrichment Plant (UEP); 4) continued water management efforts along the Kuryong River; and 5) continued construction of a new wing of a large laboratory building in the Main Research and Administrative Headquarters Area. (Peter Makowsky, Frank Pabian, Jack Liu, Olli Heinonen, *38 North*)
- Orphans, conscripted soldiers, and students - some appearing to be children - are "volunteering" to work manual labour in North Korea, including in coal mines, farms, and large construction projects, the country's state media have reported. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- Two soldiers building electric wire fences and concrete walls on the Sino-North Korean border near Hoeryong, North Hamgyong Province, recently died after inadvertently stepping on a minefield, Daily NK has learned. (Kim Yoo Jin, *Daily NK*)
- 38 North has launched a project that reviews the dynamics of North Korea's economic policymaking under Kim Jong Un, from when he assumed power in 2012 until 2020. In the coming months, the authors will follow up with analyses of the specific themes they have identified for closer inspection. Translations of the North Korean economic journal tables of contents and articles used for this project will also be made available on 38 North. (Rachel Minyoung Lee, Robert Carlin, *38 North*)

**In South Korea:**

- Ji Seong-ho, a North Korean defector who was elected to South Korea's parliament last year, introduced a bill Friday that would provide financial compensation to victims of human rights abuses in North Korea. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)

**International:**

- Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and North Korean Ambassador Ri Ryong Nam were all smiles as they exchanged elbow bumps in their first official meeting, according to images released by Beijing. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- North Korean authorities are implementing measures to ferret out and blacklist business projects with links to South Korea before fully restarting Sino-North Korean trade. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)

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Prepared by Timothy Goo, HRNK Research Intern

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tor-politician-introduces-bill-to-compensate-nk-human-rights-victimschina-n-korea-envoys-lock-arms-in-first-official-meeting?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, May 30, 2021**

# NK trade union holds oath-taking ceremony against non-socialist practices; NK says orphan children volunteering on mines and farms

**In North Korea:**
N.K. continuing activities at Yongbyon but no clear sign of spent fuel rods transfer: 38 North (*Yonhap*, 05/29/2021)
N.K. trade union holds oath-taking ceremony against non-socialist practices(*Yonhap*, 05/30/2021)
North Korea claims orphans volunteered to work in mines, factories (*New York Post*, 05/29/2021)
North Korea says orphan children volunteering on mines and farms(*BBC*, 05/29/2021)

**International:**
North Korea Is Sweating: 5 Weapons the U.S. Marines Need to Beat Kim Jong Un(*National Interest*, 05/29/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea appears to be continuing activities at its Yongbyon nuclear complex but no clear evidence has been detected to determine if spent fuel rods have been transferred from the storage facility to produce plutonium, a U.S. think tank has said. (*Yonhap*)
- Members of North Korea's umbrella trade union held an oath-taking ceremony and vowed to stamp out anti-socialist practices, state media said Sunday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea wants the world to believe that orphans are volunteering to work in state-owned mines and farms. (Eileen AJ Connelly, *New York Post*)
- The Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said hundreds of children "with wisdom and courage in the prime of their youth" have chosen to perform manual labour for the state. (Laura Bicker, BBC)

**International:**

- In the event of a conflict on the Korean Peninsula, U.S. and South Korean forces will root and and destroy the regime of Kim Jong-un. The need to properly secure the country's weapons of mass destruction will necessitate an invasion of North Korea, much of which will come by sea. Leading the way will be the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC). Here are five USMC weapon systems necessary in Korean War II. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)

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Prepared by Timothy Goo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250812153214/https://mailchi.mp/6e282f4917aa/hrnk-news-itemsnk-trade-union-holds-oath-taking-ceremony-against-non-socialist-practicesnk-says-orphan-children-volunteering-on-mines-and-farms?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, May 31, 2021**

# North accuses US of hostility for S. Korean missile decision; N. Korean leader out of public eye for longest time this year

**In North Korea:**
Cargo in freight train at Dandong Station transported into North Korea by boat (*Daily NK*, 5/31/2021)
Forget Nuclear Weapons: North Korea's Type 88 Assault Rifle Is Everywhere (*National Interest*, 5/30/2021)
N. Korea says lifting of 'missile guidelines' on S. Korea reminder of U.S. hostility (*Yonhap*, 5/31/2021)
N. Korean authorities using new law to crackdown on spread of South Korean content (*Daily NK*, 5/31/2021)
N. Korean leader out of public eye for longest time this year (*Yonhap*, 5/31/2021)
NK brands end to missile range limits as hostile policy (*The Korea Herald*, 5/31/2021
North accuses US of hostility for S. Korean missile decision (AP, 5/31/2021)
North's KCNA editorial blasts U.S. for missile 'hypocrisy' (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 5/31/2021)
North Korea accuses US of 'hostile act' in terminating ROK missile limits (*NK News*, 5/30/2021)
North Korea Accuses U.S. of 'Shameful Double-Dealing' on Missile Policy (*New York Times*, 5/31/2021)
North Korea calls U.S. lifting of S. Korea missile restrictions a "hostile act" (UPI, 5/31/2021)
North Korea calls U.S.-South Korea missile development hostile policy (*The Hill*, 5/31/2021)
North Korea keeps dialogue momentum alive in low-profile protest (*The Korea Times*, 5/31/2021)
North Korea: Orphans 'volunteered' into hard labor (CNN, 5/30/2021)
North Korea rebukes U.S. for allowing Seoul to build up missile capability (*Washington Post*, 5/31/2021)
North Korea slams end to U.S. guidelines limiting South Korea missile range (*Reuters*, 5/30/2021)
North Korea still claiming it's COVID-free in latest WHO report (*NK News*, 5/31/2021)
Timeline: From US-ROK summit to child mine workers (*NK News*, 5/31/2021)

**In South Korea:**
The limitations of a South Korean Iron Dome (*NK News*, 5/31/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Unification minister to meet biz leaders to discuss inter-Korean exchanges (*Yonhap*, 5/31/2021)

**International:**
Extradition to Spain would be highly risky: Ahn (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 5/30/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- The cargo aboard a North Korean freight train at Dandong Station was recently transferred into North Korea by boat, Daily NK has learned. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea's arms industry is poor and backward but full of surprises. Pyongyang's infantry and special operations forces make up a disproportionate amount of its armed forces and a major part of its offensive capability, giving it considerable incentive to provide new technology when possible. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- North Korea on Monday slammed the U.S. lifting of all restrictions on South Korean missiles as a "stark reminder" of Washington's hostile approach to Pyongyang, saying the recently unveiled U.S. policy on the North is "just trickery." (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)
- The North Korean government has been actively using its new "anti-reactionary thought law" to crackdown on all forms of anti-socialist behavior, including going as far as ordering executions as punishment for those engaging in such acts. (Gabriela Bernal, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has not made any public appearances for the past 24 days, marking his longest absence this year, the unification ministry said Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea on Monday slammed the US for terminating guidelines that have restricted Seoul's development of ballistic missiles as a "stark reminder" of Washington's hostile approach to Pyongyang. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea said Monday the U.S. allowing South Korea to build more powerful missiles was an example of the U.S.'s hostile policy against the North, warning that it could lead to an "acute and instable situation" on the Korean Peninsula. (Hyung-Jin Kim, AP)
- North Korea's state news agency published an editorial Monday blasting the United States for "talking about dialogue while pursuing conflict in its actions" by lifting missile restrictions on South Korea. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea's state-run news agency released its first reaction to the recent U.S.-South Korea summit on Monday, accusing Washington of committing a "deliberate and hostile act" in agreeing to terminate limits on Seoul's missile development. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea's state media on Monday criticized the United States for lifting restrictions on South Korea's ability to build more powerful ballistic missiles in its first response to the summit between President Biden and Moon Jae-in, the leader of South Korea, earlier this month. (Choe Sang-Hun, *New York Times*)
- North Korea on Monday criticized an agreement by the United States to end decades-long restrictions on South Korea's missile development, calling it "hostile" and

a "blunder," and warning that it would exacerbate tensions on the Korean Peninsula. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)

- A North Korean commentator on Monday said that the Biden administration's lifting of restrictions on South Korea's missile development program was an example of "hostile policy" toward the nation. (Celine Castronuovo, *The Hill*)
- North Korea issued a long-awaited response Monday to the South Korea-U.S. summit held May 21, slamming Washington's lifting of all restrictions on Seoul's missile development program. But diplomatic observers believe that despite the criticism, the "toned-down" delivery of its message left the door open for dialogue with the United States, while urging the Joe Biden administration to be more specific on its new policy toward the country. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korea is denying accusations that it sent orphaned children into forced labor camps. Instead, state media claims the children volunteered to work in the country's coal mines and on its farms. (Will Ripley, CNN)
- North Korea on Monday criticized the United States for ending restrictions on South Korea's missile development, calling it a "deliberate and hostile act" that could lead to an "acute and instable situation" on the Korean Peninsula. (Min Joo Kim, *Washington Post*)
- North Korea's state media on Monday criticised the recent termination of a pact between the United States and South Korea that capped the development of South Korea's ballistic missiles, calling it a sign of Washington's "shameful double-dealing." (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- North Korea says it has not detected COVID-19 in the country after testing over 28,000 people, according to a newly updated report by the World Health Organization (WHO). (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- NK Pro timeline charts the key events from May 1 to May 31. For Korea watchers, the biggest event of May 2021 was the first summit meeting between U.S. President Joe Biden and South Korean President Moon Jae-in, which came a few weeks after the White House announced that its North Korea policy review was finally complete. (*NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- The May 2021 conflict between Israel and Hamas spotlighted the remarkable performance of the Iron Dome missile defense system. In South Korea, the Iron Dome system's performance has weighed on ongoing debates. Seoul, as part of its Intermediate-Term National Defense Plan announced last year, plans to develop an indigenous analog to the Iron Dome. (Ankit Panda, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Unification Minister Lee In-young will hold meetings this week with the leaders of businesses that participated in the long-suspended tourism project at North Korea's Mount Kumgang to discuss cross-border cooperation and exchanges, his office said Monday. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- The man caught on surveillance cameras entering the North Korean embassy in Madrid on Feb. 22, 2019 strikes an imposing figure. Broad-chested and sporting sunglasses and a beard, the intruder lingers only briefly in the entrance to the building before making his way inside. (Park Hyun-Young and Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

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Prepared by Carter Thompson, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250923221218/https://mailchi.mp/b2f2375cb54a/hrnk-news-items-north-accuses-us-of-hostility-for-s-korean-missile-decisionn-korean-leader-out-of-public-eye-for-longest-time-this-year

# 6. JUNE

### Tuesday, June 1, 2021

## N. Korea creates 'first secretary' post in revised party rules; US shrugs off North Korean accusations of ‘hostile’ duplicity

**In North Korea:**
China-North Korea trade resumes, but it appears less sustainable than ever (*NK News*, 06/01/2021)
N. Korea creates 'first secretary' post in revised party rules (*Yonhap*, 06/01/2021)
N. Korea slams countries for piling up excessive supply of vaccines amid shortage (*Yonhap*, 06/01/2021)
N. Korea's ruling party sets up new post under leader Kim (*Reuters*, 06/01/2021)
North Korea slams ‘vaccine nationalism’ at World Health Assembly in Geneva (*NK News*, 06/01/2021)
Seventh General Bureau official publicly executed for engaging in “corrupt construction practices” (*Daily NK*, 06/01/2021)
Tracking changes at North Korea’s Camp 14 through satellite imagery (*Daily NK*, 06/01/2021)
Using and buying consumer electronics in North Korea [Holiday in North Korea] (*The Korea Times*, 06/01/2021)

**In South Korea:**
A ridiculous switchover (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/01/2021)
S. Korea discovers more Korean War remains in DMZ (*Yonhap*, 06/01/2021)
S. Korea's intelligence chief to return home after weeklong trip to U.S.: sources (*Yonhap*, 06/01/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
S. Korea says vaccine shipment to N. Korea from COVAX delayed again (*Reuters*, 06/01/2021)
Time is on their side: Thinking long-term about North Korea (*NK News*, 06/01/2021)
Unification minister reiterates 'unwavering commitment' to Mount Kumgang tourism project (*Yonhap*, 06/01/2021)

**International:**
Ask a North Korean: Can Joe Biden reach a breakthrough with North Korea? (*NK News*, 05/31/2021)
Ironclad alliance [Editorial] (*The Korea Herald*, 06/01/2021)
U.S. aware of N. Korean criticism, remains committed to diplomacy: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 06/01/2021)
US shrugs off North Korean accusations of ‘hostile’ duplicity (*NK News*, 06/01/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Rising Sino-DPRK trade despite ongoing COVID-19 concerns in North Korea is yet another sign of improving bilateral relations. (John Petrushka, *NK News*)
- North Korea created a new No. 2 position at the ruling Workers' Party right behind leader Kim Jong-un, and a close aide to the leader could have taken up the "first secretary" post, sources said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea criticized some countries for storing an excessive stock of coronavirus vaccines while others suffer from a lack of supplies in a recent United Nations session. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's ruling party has amended its rules to create a de facto second-in-command under leader Kim Jong Un as he looks to revamp domestic politics, South Korea's Yonhap news agency said on Tuesday. (Sangmi Cha, *Reuters*)
- North Korea has been stuck waiting for 1.7 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines due to a "global supply shortage," and now the country has taken aim at "vaccine nationalism." (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Daily NK learned Monday that a member of the political committee of the North Korean military's Seventh General Bureau was publicly executed in mid-May for engaging in corrupt construction practices. The Seventh General Bureau handles national construction projects. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- Camp 14 is one of North Korea's prison camps for political prisoners, located in Oedong-ri, Gaechon, South Pyongan Province. It faces another camp, Camp 18, which sits two kilometers to the southeast across the Daedong River. (*Daily NK*)
- It's unlikely we'll see North Korean consumer electronics available in the market [in South Korea] any time soon, but it is somewhat reassuring to see their technological advances catching up with the rest of the world. (Jon Dunbar, *The Korea Times*)

**In South Korea:**

- In a shocking development, Pyongyang appeared in a video instead of Seoul — the host city of the Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030 (P4G) Summit — on Sunday. The dumbfounding moment took place in the largest-ever international conference hosted by South Korea. Global audiences watched the mysterious video broadcast live on television and the internet. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea discovered 28 more bone fragments believed to be from troops killed in the 1950-53 Korean War as well as thousands of artifacts inside the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) so far this year, the defense ministry said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's intelligence chief is expected to return home Tuesday after a weeklong trip to the United States that apparently focused on discussions with his counterparts on North Korea, sources said. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- A shipment of coronavirus vaccines to North Korea via the global COVAX sharing programme that was expected for late May has been delayed again amid protracted consultations, South Korea's Unification Ministry said on Tuesday. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- How can Kim Jong Un trust Seoul to keep its promises when the president resets every five years? The electoral clock is ticking for South Korean President Moon Jae-in. The

country's constitution is quite clear: Five years, and you're out. No second term is allowed, unlike in many other democracies. (Aidan Foster-Carter, NK News)

- Unification Minister Lee In-young reiterated his commitment Tuesday to resume a long-suspended tourism project to North Korea's Mount Kumgang when he met with the head of Hyundai Group, which used to run tours to the scenic mountain. (Yonhap)

**International:**

- Will Kim Jong Un respond positively to the new U.S. president, or will it simply interpret Biden as more of the same? How can Washington reach a breakthrough in Pyongyang? Hyun-Seung Lee — who lived in North Korea for decades before defecting in 2014 — has the answer. (Hyun-Seung Lee, NK News)
- South Korea and the US have recently struck a different cord on whether to resume their joint outdoor military drills, though last month's meeting between the leaders of the two countries was seen as contributing to further bolstering the seven-decade alliance. (The Korea Herald)
- The United States remains committed to diplomatic engagement with North Korea, the U.S. State Department said Monday, in reaction to the North's criticism of what it calls U.S. hostility toward Pyongyang. (Yonhap)
- A day after North Korea accosted the U.S. for terminating limits on Seoul's missile development, the U.S. State Department said the door remains open for talks. (Jeongmin Kim, NK News)

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Prepared by Carter Thompson, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250812153655/https://mailchi.mp/a53f9bbdc312/hrnk-news-itemsn-korea-creates-first-secretary-post-in-revised-party-rulesus-shrugs-off-north-korean-accusations-of-hostile-duplicity?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, June 2, 2021**

## HRNK News Items: Appointment of U.S. point man on N. Korea signals readiness for dialogue with Pyongyang: Sherman

**In North Korea:**

Kim Jong Un gets new second-in-command in major changes to North Korea's ruling party (CNN, 06/02/2021)
N.K. leader's powerful sister likely to fill new 'first secretary' post in case of emergency: expert (*Yonhap*, 06/02/2021)
North Korea acquired two new oil tankers last year, report says (UPI, 06/02/2021)
North Korea finally opens state-run food stores to little excitement among consumers (*Daily NK*, 06/02/2021)

North Korea introduced 'first secretary' position under Kim Jong Un, report says(UPI, 06/01/2021)
North Korea's Hwasong Ballistic Missiles are the West's Worst Nightmare (*The National Interest*, 06/02/2021)
Why Kim Is Gloating About North Korea's New Ballistic Missile (*The National Interest*, 06/01/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Why a South Korean publisher could face years in prison for publishing a memoir(*NK News*, 06/02/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
South Korea's unification chief seeks resumption of Mount Kumgang tourism (*UPI*, 06/01/2021)

**International:**
Appointment of U.S. point man on N. Korea signals readiness for dialogue with Pyongyang: Sherman (*Yonhap*, 06/02/2021)
Monthly wages of many North Korean workers in China increase (*Daily NK*, 06/02/2021)
The Real North Korea Foreign Policy Joe Biden Needs to Implement (*The National Interest*, 06/01/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has a new second-in-command, according to excerpts of a government document seen by CNN. The position was created in January as part of a revision to the rules of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK), the communist political organ that rules the secretive country. (Yoonjung Seo and Joshua Berlinger, CNN)
- The newly created No. 2 position at North Korea's ruling Workers' Party likely remains vacant and could be filled by leader Kim Jong-un's powerful sister Yo-jong in case of health issues or other emergencies, an expert said Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- Pyongyang evaded global sanctions and obtained two new oil tankers for its smuggling operations in 2020, according to an analysis by Washington, D.C.-based think tank the Center for Strategic and International Studies. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- North Korean authorities have finally opened the new state-run food stores they created to stabilize food prices. However, as the shops have yet to draw many customers, they are having little impact on grain prices in markets. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea has created a "first secretary" position directly below leader Kim Jong Un, and it is likely North Korean official Jo Yong Won has been appointed to the role, according to a recent press report. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- Hwasong-16 is, like all its predecessors, liquid-fueled, defying the widespread expectations of western experts that North Korea is finally ready to make the leap to solid-fueled ICBM technology. Whereas a solid-fueled ICBM can be launched nearly at a

moment's notice, deploying a liquid-fueled missile can take as long as eighteen hours. (Mark Episkopos, *The National Interest*)

- Given the inverse relationship between payload weight and range, it is fairly unlikely that Pyongyang's new missile has both a 2,500-kilogram warhead and a 600-kilogram maximum operating range. This would not be the first time that North Korea exaggerated the performance of its missiles, with the principal goal of pressuring its southern counterpart. (Mark Episkopos, *The National Interest*)

**In South Korea**

- In April this year, a small publisher in Seoul began to list books that had never before been available to most South Koreans: the memoirs of Kim Il Sung, the founding leader of North Korea. The publisher, Kim Seung-kyun, set the price at around $250 for the eight-volume set, called "With the Century." But within weeks, police had raided the office and private home of the publisher and seized all copies of the book. Kim now may face up to several years in prison for violating South Korea's National Security Act. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship**

- South Korea's chief of inter-Korean affairs said he is confident suspended projects, including South Korean tourism to Mount Kumgang, will resume after the U.S.-South Korea summit in May. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

**International:**

- The United States' recent appointment of a point man on North Korea signals its readiness for dialogue, Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman said Wednesday, voicing hope for Pyongyang to "take us up on that possibility." (*Yonhap*)
- The wages of many North Korean workers in China have recently increased, signaling they will likely stay in the country for the foreseeable future. According to a Daily NK source in China on Monday, the average monthly wages of North Korean workers in China's Liaoning Province have increased to RMB 3,200-3,300 (approximately USD 501 – 516). (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- President Donald Trump appealed to North Korea's Kim Jong-un by touting the sort of economic development, including hotels and condos, that the Supreme Leader could expect if he made a deal with the U.S. and abandoned his nuclear weapons. The president even included a video that played like a Hollywood-style movie trailer. (Doug Bandow, *The National Interest*)

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Prepared by Rick Herssevoort, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250812154009/https://mailchi.mp/2affc876164e/hrnk-news-itemsappointment-of-us-point-man-on-n-korea-signals-readiness-for-dialogue-with-pyongyang-sherman?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Thursday, June 3, 2021

# S. Korea to build 7 more video reunion centers for Korean War-separated families; How North Korea has waged 'a war to improve nature'

**In North Korea:**
How North Korea has waged 'a war to improve nature' (*NK News*, 06/02/2021)
Kim Jong Un skips post-congress photo op for first time amid lengthy absence (*NK News*, 06/03/2021)
N. Korea faces food shortage of 1.35 mln tons: think tank (*Yonhap*, 06/03/2021)
N. Korea urges youth to play leading role in achieving economic goals (*Yonhap*, 06/03/2021)
New party rules show North Korean leader breaking away from predecessors (*The Korea Times*, 06/03/2021)
North evades sanctions and gets 3 new tankers: CSIS report (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/03/2021)
North Hamgyong Province moves to replace older generation of officials at historical sites (*Daily* NK, 06/03/2021)
Reality of life in North Korea revealed in new book by diplomat's wife Lindsey Miller(*7News*, 06/02/2021)
Two young children in Yanggang Province abducted for ransoms in May (*Daily* NK, 06/03/2021)
What Kim Jong Un's regime shake-up says about his leadership (*Vox*, 06/02/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
N.K. propaganda outlet slams S. Korea for decision to take part in upcoming air drills with U.S., Japan (*Yonhap*, 06/03/2021)
North Korea likely to talk with South Korea before the US: Moon Chung-in (*NK News*, 06/03/2021)
S.Korea says vaccine shipment to N.Korea from COVAX delayed again (*Reuters*, 06/02/2021)
S. Korea to build 7 more video reunion centers for Korean War-separated families(*Yonhap*, 06/03/2021)
Seoul's new mayor pushes inter-Korean Olympics with Pyongyang (*NK News*, 06/02/2021)

**International:**
Report: North Korea's Embassy plays up Xi, Kim friendship with photos (*UPI*, 06/02/2021)
U.S. assumes 'ready' position for talks with North: Sherman (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/03/2021)
Vaccine alliance working with North Korea on COVID-19, report says (*UPI*, 06/02/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- While many analysts and policymakers are focused on Pyongyang's nuclear development program, an unlikely environmentalist initiative has taken place in Kim Jong Un's North Korea — "a war to improve nature." In the last six years, the North Korean government has focused on combating deforestation in its mountainous terrain with some success. It has advocated creating a landscape of "treasure and gold mountains" covered in thickly wooded forests within the next decade. (Benjamin R. Young, *NK News*)

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un appears to have skipped a post-event appearance for a large political congress held in Pyongyang last week, the first time ever he has failed to show up to take a photo with attendees after an event like this. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea is expected to face a food shortage of about 1.35 million tons this year affected by last summer's typhoons, flooding and a lack of farming materials amid the global pandemic, a state-run think tank said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's largest youth group on Thursday urged its members to play a leading role in the economic field to help achieve the country's economic goals. The Socialist Patriotic Youth League (SPYL) made the appeal at an enlarged meeting of the 10th congress Wednesday via a teleconference system, according to the official Korean Central News Agency. (*Yonhap*)
- The latest revisions to North Korea's ruling Workers' Party regulations indicate that its leader Kim Jong-un is cementing his own leadership style in the reclusive state. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korea obtained two new oil tankers for its smuggling operations last year in evasion of international sanctions, in addition to another vessel in 2019, according to an analysis by Washington-based think tank the Center for Strategic and International Studies. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A source in North Hamgyong Province told Daily NK on Wednesday that the provincial party committee is placing a priority on achieving policies set out in the first year of the country's five-year economic development plan, and that the committee ordered "the replacement of historical site cadres with younger ones" to "better protect and promote revolutionary battle sites and revolutionary historical sites within the province." (Kim Yoo Jin, *Daily NK*)
- Eye-opening images taken by a westerner showing life inside the world's most secretive state have been revealed for the first time in a new book. The fascinating pictures have been released in the new book North Korea: Like Nowhere Else by Lindsey Miller and is published by September Publishing. (Rebecca Drew, *7News*)
- A source in the province reported on Tuesday that a six-year-old child was kidnapped from Gangan Kindergarten in Hyesan on May 12 and a five-year-old child was abducted from a kindergarten in Samsu County on May 24. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is rewiring his nation's government to operate less like a dictator's playground and more like an organization that can handle multiple crises at once. (Alex Ward, *Vox*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship**

- A North Korean propaganda outlet on Thursday denounced South Korea's decision to participate in an upcoming annual U.S.-led multinational air force drill with Japan. Earlier, the Air Force announced its plans to send F-15K fighter jets, cargo planes and dozens of troops to the Red Flag-Alaska 21-2 exercise set to take place in Alaska beginning next week. (*Yonhap*)
- A former special adviser on North Korea issues and confidant of South Korean President Moon Jae-in said that Pyongyang is likely considering returning to talks — but that it would prefer talking to Seoul first rather than Washington. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- A shipment of coronavirus vaccines to North Korea via the global COVAX sharing programme that was expected for late May has been delayed again amid protracted

consultations, South Korea's Unification Ministry said on Tuesday. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)

- The unification ministry said Thursday it will spend 1.18 billion won (US$1.06 million) of inter-Korean cooperation funds to build more video conference centers for reunions of families separated since the 1950-53 Korean War. (*Yonhap*)
- New Seoul mayor Oh Se-hoon said he will push forward with a proposal to jointly host the Olympic Games with Pyongyang in 2032, despite the International Olympics Committee (IOC) having already chosen Brisbane as the "preferred host" that year. Oh, who took office this past April, made the announcement Tuesday in a video conference with IOC officials where he lobbied the committee to consider the proposal. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**International:**

- The North Korean Embassy in Beijing swapped out photos of former leader Kim Jong Il with more pictures of Kim Jong Un visiting China in 2018. The embassy's display case of photographs that hangs on its outside wall includes 26 photographs of Kim's visits to China in March, May and June of 2018. The images replaced those of Kim's father. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- U.S. President Joe Biden's appointment of a new special envoy for North Korea signals Washington's readiness for dialogue, said U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman Wednesday, encouraging Pyongyang to "take us up on that possibility." (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Gavi, an international vaccine alliance that works to improve immunization in low-income countries, said talks are ongoing with Pyongyang, Voice of America's Korean service reported Wednesday. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

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Prepared by Rick Herssevoort, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250812153939/https://mailchi.mp/1b75e47424e6/hrnk-news-itemss-korea-to-build-7-more-video-reunion-centers-for-korean-war-separated-familieshow-north-korea-has-waged-a-war-to-improve-nature?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, June 4, 2021**

## HRNK Letter to Her Excellency Ms Siobhán Mullally; "I did not know what freedom means"; State Department on North Korean Orphan Labor

**Top News:**

HRNK Letter to Her Excellency Ms Siobhán Mullally (Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children) (*HRNK Insider*, 06/03/2021)

I did not know what freedom means or what rights mean in North Korea (VOA,05/27/2021)
** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

State Department on North Korean Orphan Labor: "Human Rights is Central to Diplomacy" (RFA, 06/01/2021)
** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**
How Mao's Dynasty Died in North Korea (*The National Interest*, 06/04/2021)
Key developments on North Korea this week (*Yonhap*, 06/04/2021)
Kim Jong-un's disappearance from public view stokes speculation (*The Korea Herald*, 06/04/2021)
N.K. leader sends congratulatory message to former Cuban party chief on 90th birthday (*Yonhap*, 06/04/2021)
N. Korea slams Japan for describing Dokdo as its territory in Olympic map (*Yonhap*, 06/04/2021)
North Korea expresses interest in Russia's COVID-19 vaccines -Ifx (*Reuters*, 06/04/2021)
North Korean hackers appear to be targeting remote workers (*NK News*, 06/04/2021)
North Korea's Ninth Corps lets soldiers go home on "grain leave" (*Daily NK*, 06/04/2021)
North Korea places Yanggang Province village under seven-day lockdown in late May (*Daily NK*, 06/04/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
South Korean minister vows to resume inter-Korean tourism at Mount Kumgang (*NK News*, 06/04/2021)

**International:**
Expanded NATO role in Indo-Pacific could drive China, DPRK together: experts (*NK News*, 06/04/2021)
UN may probe possible sanctions violations by South Korean firms involving oil tanker transfer to North Korea (*The Korea Times*, 06/04/2021)

**Top News:**

- The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) made a submission for the upcoming Human Rights Council's 47th Session to the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons. The submission highlights the plight of the North Korean people, especially women and children, who are victims of trafficking based on the policies and practices of the North Korean government and China. The submission further emphasizes that this remains a serious and life-threatening concern for vulnerable North Koreans. The definition of "trafficking in persons" according to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Trafficking in Persons Protocol) provides that exploitation is the express purpose of trafficking in

persons. Exploitation includes forms of sexual exploitation and forced labor. Based on twenty years of experience as a Civil Society Organization (CSO) focusing on North Korean human rights, we see a continued pattern of exploitation by the DPRK and PRC against vulnerable DPRK persons, especially women and children. (Greg Scarlatoiu, Amanda Mortwedt Oh, Rick Herssevoort, and Damian Reddy, *HRNK Insider*)

- Siblings, Lee Seo-Hyun and Lee Hyeun-Seung, who escaped North Korea and settled in the United States with their father, who served as senior staff in the Pyongyang regime, testified that they did not know what freedom meant or what rights meant. In a virtual conference hosted by HRNK, they mentioned that the freedom to which they were introduced in the United States was something they had never experienced before. (Kim Young-Gyo, VOA)
- The state media, run by the North Korean government, recently claimed that North Korean orphans willingly volunteered to work in state-run mines, factories, farms, and forests, raising international concerns. North Korean authorities claimed that in order to repay the love they received from their country, orphans went to Cheonnae Coal Mine and Pocheon Cooperative Farm in Hoeyang County to dedicate their vows to the North Korean cause. Also speaking to RFA was HRNK Co-chair, Emeritus Roberta Cohen and HRNK Executive Director, Greg Scarlatoiu, both expressing great concern for the North Korean children who are subjected to such inhumane treatment and horror at the North Korean government's actions which go unpunished. (Jie-rin, RFA)

**In North Korea:**

- War has brought a premature end to countless promising young lives in absurd and horrifying ways. This is the tale of how the death of one man accorded high honor by North Korea may have changed the fate of China. (Sebastien Roblin, *The National Interest*)
- The following are key developments regarding North Korea this week. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's monthlong disappearance from state media has fueled speculation over his whereabouts, as it marked his longest absence this year. The last time Kim appeared in a public setting was on May 6 when he held a photo session with military family members, according to state media. Since then, there have been reports of him sending letters to foreign leaders and his people, but he was not seen in any official events. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has sent a message to congratulate Raul Castro, former secretary of Cuba's communist party, on his 90th birthday, stressing his role in strengthening relations between the two countries, state media said Friday. "Our party and people always remember and appreciate the great contributions made by Raul Castro Ruz to strengthening the genuine comradely unity and the ties of friendship and cooperation between the two parties and the two countries," Kim said in the message, according to the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's state news agency on Friday slammed Japan for describing South Korea's easternmost islets as Japanese territory in a map for the Tokyo Olympics, saying that Japan is using the sports event to realize its ambition for "territorial robbery." *(Yonhap)*
- Cybersecurity experts say that North Korea may have ramped up its cyber activities on social media since the COVID-19 pandemic began, targeting remote workers as they spend more time online. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)

- North Korea has expressed interest in Russia's Sputnik V and Sputnik Light COVID-19 vaccines, the Interfax news agency cited a pharmaceutical source as saying on Friday. (*Reuters*)
- According to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaints Center, there was a 61% increase in the number of suspected cybercrimes reported in 2020, with nearly 800,000 complaints filed. That huge jump coincides with an increase in hacking attempts from North Korea. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- North Korea's Ninth Corps is quickly sending large numbers of their soldiers home on so-called "grain leave," Daily NK has learned. In a phone conversation with Daily NK on Thursday, a source in North Hamgyong Province said soldiers "with financial means" affiliated with the military unit have gone on leave "on the condition that they bring back grain needed by the unit." North Korea has long allowed officers and enlisted personnel to leave for 10 to 20 days to obtain supplies for their units. Ninth Corps soldiers who have recently gone on leave are expected to dedicate 10 to 20 days to their "mission" before returning to base. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean authorities placed the village of Hwajeon-ri, in Pochon County, Yanggang Province, under a seven-day lockdown in late May after bird carcasses were discovered in the town, Daily NK has learned. In a phone conversation with Daily NK on Thursday, a source in Yanggang Province said "the carcasses of three dead swallows" were found in Hwajeon-ri on May 24. "After that, the provincial branch of the Emergency Anti-epidemic Command issued a seven-day lockdown order for Hwajeon-ri," he added. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korea's unification minister met this week with the heads of Hyundai and Ananti — both of which invested in Mount Kumgang tourism in North Korea — and vowed that the government will push to resume tourism there after the COVID-19 pandemic settles down. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**International:**

- U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken encouraged the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to "deepen" cooperation with its allies in the Indo-Pacific, including South Korea as it seeks to confront "systematic challenges" from Russia and China. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- The United Nations Security Council Sanctions Committee on North Korea may begin investigating allegations that at least two oil tankers previously owned by S. Korean companies were transferred to North Korea, which is a violation of U.N. sanctions on Pyongyang. (Nam Hyun-woo, *The Korea Times*)

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**I did not know what freedom means or what rights mean in North Korea**
Reporter Young-Gyo

The siblings who escaped North Korea and settled in the United States with their father, who served as senior staff in the Pyongyang regime, testified that they did not know what freedom

meant or what rights meant. The freedom to which they were introduced in the United States was something they had never experienced before.

During the online conference that HRNK held last week, North Korean escapee Lee Seo-Hyun, who currently lives in Northern Virginia, stated that she was not aware of the concept of freedom and rights.
[record: Lee Seo-Hyun] “I didn't know what freedom or rights meant. And then, I didn't know North Korea is actually a dictatorship, and never suffered from hunger in North Korea, but I didn't have the full freedom as the other members of international society enjoy.”

Moreover, she could not recognize that North Korea is under dictatorial leadership as she did not suffer from hunger. Yet, unlike other democratic societies today, she was not able to fully enjoy her freedom.
In October 2014, she escaped North Korea, then settled in America as a refugee with her father, Lee Jung-Ho, a former senior staff of Central Committee Bureau 39 of the Workers' Party of Korea, her mother, and her brother Lee Hyun-Seung. In the year when her family stayed in South Korea after their escape, she was astonished by the economic development and the freedom that South Korea achieved 75 years after the war.

[record: Lee Seo-Hyun] “It was really amazing to see how South Korea had enjoyed all that development over 75 years. It was the same country before it was divided into South Korea and North Korea. We are all the same nation. The only thing that made the two parts different was the system, I believe so. If North Korea accepted democracy and capitalism instead of socialism, I believe North Korean people would under live pretty similar condition to the South Korean people.”

Knowing that North Korea and South Korea were one country, she affirmed that what made the difference between the two countries was the system of government. Thus, she and her family believe that North Korean citizens would have lived under the same conditions as South Korean citizens if their country embraced democracy and capitalism instead of socialism.

The older brother Lee Hyun-Seung was also astonished by the freedom he was able to experience earlier while studying abroad at Dongbei University of Finance and Economics in China, after three years of serving in the North Korean military. However, later when he was in South Korea, he learned that the citizens there enjoy greater freedom.

[record: Lee Hyun-Seung] “China achieved so many things, in terms of freedom and free speech and travel and then freedom of movement. But I defected in 2014, and I realize South Korea has more freedom and more to enjoy in your life, and then all this economic development, and then those freedoms. What they have does not come from the government.”

He learned that the possessions of South Korean citizens are not directly bestowed by their government, and the economic development and the freedom of South Korea were astonishing.
He also described the freedom and the quality of life he and his family have experienced after moving to the United States for protection as a vast ocean.

[record: Lee Hyun-Seung] “Life in the United States is like an ocean, life in South Korea is like a river, life in China is like a stream, and North Korean life is like a pool in terms of freedom, and in terms of quality of life.”

He described North Korea as a pool, China as a stream, and South Korea as a river with regard to freedom and the quality of life. For Lee Hyun-Seung, the crucial moment when he decided to escape from North Korea was when he witnessed his relatives being executed or put into concentration camps created and run by the North Korean regime under Kim Jung-Un.

[record: Lee Hyun-Seung] “We found out that, you know, my friends were executed, and several were sent to prison camps, and things happened to my father's friend and my sister’s friends as well and we are very tired of seeing this instance, and then we believe it's not the country we want to continue to live in, and it's not the leader we should serve.”

Soon, he and his family realized that North Korea is not a country where they could live, while Kim Jung-Un is not a leader whom people can serve any longer.

All the while, he underlines that the human rights crisis is one of the central problems of North Korea, including nuclear weapons, and thus he hopes that the Biden Administration would prioritize this particular issue.

Reporter: Kim Young-Gyo (VOA)
Translated by: Juheung Kim (HRNK)

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**State Department on North Korean Orphan Labor: “Human Rights is Central to Diplomacy”**
**Caption: Children working on railroad repairs.**

Reporter Jie-rin

The state media, run by the North Korean government, recently claimed that North Korean orphans willingly volunteered to work in state-run mines, factories, farms, and forests, raising international concerns.

North Korean authorities claimed that in order to repay the love they received from their country, orphans went to Cheonnae Coal Mine and Pocheon Cooperative Farm in Hoeyang County to dedicate their vows to the North Korean cause.

From the photos released by the North Korean media, it remains difficult to determine the ages of the orphans, but presumably they are believed to be at least 10 years old. On the first day of the month, a spokesperson from the U.S. State Department commented to Radio Free Asia (RFA)

that “the United States is committed to centering on human rights issues in foreign policy.” “We are working with like minded partners to raise a collective voice on human rights issues.”

The 2020 Human Rights Report on North Korea found significant human rights violations, including: the worst forms of child labor, the use of domestic forced labor through mass mobilizations and as a part of the re-education system, and the imposition of forced labor conditions on overseas contract workers.

In the annual human rights report published in late March, the U.S. State Department pointed out that North Korean authorities are sending young students to factories and other sites for the purpose of shoveling snow in the winter or to meet lagging production goals.

Speaking to RFA on June 1, Executive Director of the Committee on Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) Greg Scarlatoiu expressed his extreme disappointment in North Korea for failing to uphold the international standards of the 21st century set by the International Labor Organization (ILO) which bans child labor under the age of 15. North Korea is not a member state of the ILO, Scarlatoiu added.

Executive Director Scarlatoiu continued, “I am bewildered by the apparent pride that the North Korean regime has in forcing children to work in such conditions.” “The North Korea regime continues to go unpunished for their actions.”

Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Rights in the State Department, also told RFA that the long-term forced labor of children violates not only North Korean domestic law but also international law.

This is a clear example of the North Korean state exploiting labor from its country’s most vulnerable category: children. Cohen postulated that the withdrawal of international aid organizations from North Korea due to the COVID-19 pandemic might have made it easier for North Korean authorities to exploit child labor. Cohen remained concerned that the North Korean regime will continue to ignore the international community’s recommendations for improving human rights and perpetuate poor labor conditions, immensely hurting the most vulnerable category during a time of economic hardship worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Last weekend, CNN, NBC, and the U.K.’s BBC also pointed out the poor human rights conditions for children in North Korea, highlighting the news about orphan labor. As these young “volunteers” were forced into labor, North Korean authorities glorified them as “volunteers overflowing with wisdom and courage.” The BBC interpreted this as the authorities emphasizing the necessity and importance of self-sacrifice for the Korean Workers’ Party.

Reporter: Jie-rin (RFA)
Translated by: Jason Yoo (HRNK)

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Prepared by Damian Reddy, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250812154549/https://mailchi.mp/5858106c42b7/hrnk-news-itemshrnk-letter-to-her-excellency-ms-siobhn-mullally-i-did-not-know-what-freedom-meansstate-department-on-north-korean-orphan-labor?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, June 5, 2021**

# A year since Shigeru Yokota's death, progress elusive on North Korea abductions; N Korean leader calls to review battered economy

**In North Korea:**
A New Skyline Emerges in Sinuiju (*38 North*, 06/04/2021)
Hwangtho Island: No More Target Practice (*38 North*, 06/04/2021)
Killer or Clunker: Is North Korea's Massive Tank Force Any Good? (*National Interest*, 06/05/2021)
Kim Jong Un sends birthday wishes, flowers to Cuba's Raul Castro (UPI, 06/04/2021)
Kim Needs to Smile: North Korea Sits on $10 Trillion in Minerals (*National Interest*, 06/05/2021)
N.K. leader presides over politburo meeting in first public appearance in a month(*Yonhap*, 06/05/2021)
NKorean leader calls for meeting to review battered economy (*AP News*, 06/05/2021)
North Korea's Kim Appears in Public for the First Time in Month (*Bloomberg*, 06/04/2021)
Report: North Korea interested in Russia's Sputnik V, Sputnik Light vaccines (UPI, 06/04/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Ruling party chief to push to visit U.S. to find way for resumption of Kaesong complex (*Yonhap*, 06/05/2021)

**International:**
1 yr after Yokota's death, little progress in abductions by N. Korea (*Kyodo News*, 06/05/2021)
A year since Shigeru Yokota's death, progress elusive on North Korea abductions(*The Japan Times*, 06/05/2021)
Lifting missile curbs on S. Korea 'complementary' to U.S. regional deterrence efforts: senator (*Yonhap*, 06/05/2021)
Putin calls for guaranteeing North Korea's security to resolve nuclear quandary(*Yonhap*, 06/05/2021)
Relatives of abductees to North Korea fret about lack of progress (*Japan News*, 06/05/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Commercial satellite imagery shows construction is progressing on six large buildings on a riverbank in Sinuiju, and more could be on the way. The buildings, one of which can already be easily seen from China, will create a more cosmopolitan look to the city when viewed from the opposite bank of the Yalu River. (Martyn Williams, *38 North*)
- Commercial satellite imagery indicates redevelopment is underway of a small island off the coast of Wonsan, historically used as a training base by North Korean specialist infiltration teams. (Martyn Williams, Peter Makowsky, *38 North*)
- North Korea appears to be aware of the deficiencies of its tank force. Tanks seen in this spring's competition appeared outfitted with externally mounted twin machine-gun mounts, twin antitank guided-missile mounts, and surface-to-air missiles in a desperate attempt to keep them relevant on the battlefield. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- Kim Jong Un sent a "comradely greeting" to Cuba's Raul Castro and a basket of flowers, according to Pyongyang's state media. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- In May, South Korea's infrastructure ministry invited bids for possible infrastructure projects in the North, including those concerning the resource sector. It reportedly sees such resources as potentially covering the cost of repairing the North's infrastructure, should reunification occur. (Anthony Fensom, *National Interest*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un presided over a politburo session of the Workers' Party in his first public appearance in a month and discussed convening a key party meeting, as well as, organizational matters, state media said Saturday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has presided over a meeting of his ruling party in his first public appearance in about a month, and called for a larger political conference to discuss efforts to salvage a decaying economy. (Kim Tong-Hyung, *AP News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un made his first public appearance in about a month, with state media showing him at a Party meeting that discussed ways to improve the country's deteriorating economy. (Jon Herskovitz, *Bloomberg*)
- North Korea is signaling interest in acquiring doses of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine, according to a Russian press report. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)

**In South Korea:**

- The head of the ruling Democratic Party said Saturday that he would seek a visit to the United States in the near future to explore a "clue" for the resumption of the now-shuttered inter-Korean industrial complex in North Korea's border city of Kaesong. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Saturday marked the first anniversary of the death of Shigeru Yokota, a torchbearer of Japan's campaign to bring home citizens abducted by North Korea after his teenage daughter Megumi was taken in 1977. (*Kyodo News*)
- Saturday marked the first anniversary of the death of Shigeru Yokota, a torchbearer of Japan's campaign to bring home citizens abducted by North Korea after his teenage daughter, Megumi, was taken in 1977. (*The Japan Times*)
- The recent lifting of U.S. curbs on South Korea's missile development would be "complementary" to America's regional deterrence efforts, a U.S. senator said Saturday,

amid North Korea's angry reactions and China's apparent misgivings over the move. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin has called for guaranteeing the security of North Korea to resolve the standoff over its nuclear program, stressing that pressure and sanctions alone are not going to solve the quandary. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- Saturday was the first anniversary of the death of Shigeru Yokota, whose daughter Megumi was abducted by North Korean agents in 1977 at age 13. (*Japan News*)

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Prepared by Sophia Hapin, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250812154838/https://mailchi.mp/ccd1d9f0239d/hrnk-news-itemsa-year-since-shigeru-yokotas-death-progress-elusive-on-north-korea-abductionsnkorean-leader-calls-to-review-battered-economy?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, June 6, 2021**

## NK experts submit ‘letter of opposition against extradition of Ahn’- "NK’s diplomatic missions have served as bases for surveillance"

**Top News:**
**North Korean experts submit ‘letter of opposition against extradition of Christopher Ahn’ (VOA, 05/20/2021)
** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**
Ex-N.K. admiral responsible for Yeonpyeong naval skirmishes dies (*Yonhap*, 06/06/2021)
N. Korea accuses Israel of turning Gaza into 'human slaughterhouse' (*Israel Hayom*, 06/06/2021)

**In South Korea:**
President Moon's quiet, effective leadership (*The Korea Times*, 06/06/2021)
South Korea to Accelerate Space Program, Expand U.S. Cooperation (*Bloomberg*, 06/05/2021)
Unification minister calls for 'maximum flexibility' on joint military exercises with U.S. (*Yonhap*, 06/06/2021)

**International:**
Calls intensify for Biden administration to help save former Marine's life (*Fox News*, 06/05/2021)

**Top News:**

- Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu expressed deep concern regarding Christopher Ahn's extradition, noting that North Korea has established diplomatic relations with Spain and still maintains an embassy in Madrid. He also emphasized that for decades, North Korea's diplomatic missions abroad have served as operational bases for surveillance, abduction and assassination of North Koreans, South Koreans, and foreigners. He also notes that during the raid, portraits of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il were thrown on the floor and trampled on, claiming that such behavior is not tolerated in any way by the Kim Jong-un regime. Along with this, he pointed out that if the perpetrators of these crimes are of Korean descent, the danger is only more immediate and greater. (Ji-ha Ham, VOA)

**In North Korea:**

- A former North Korean admiral, who led the country's navy at the time of bloody naval skirmishes with South Korea in 1999 and 2002, has died and his remains have been buried at a national cemetery, the official Korean Central News Agency reported Sunday. (*Yonhap*)
- The North Korean Foreign Ministry has commented on the latest round of fighting between Israel and Hamas, accusing Israel of massacring children. (Neta Bar, *Israel Hayom*)

**In South Korea:**

- The meeting on May 21 between President Joe Biden of the United States and President Moon Jae-in of South Korea was a significant event, characterized by the relative absence of media coverage. The conversations between these two highly experienced leaders were extensive, but not public, which is how the best most effective diplomacy is conducted. (Arthur I. Cyr, *The Korea Times*)
- South Korea plans to accelerate its space development program including by boosting cooperation with the U.S. in a move that may help the Biden administration's Asia strategy to check China's growing global clout. (Jeong-Ho Lee, *Bloomberg*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young called Sunday for "maximum flexibility" in deciding what to do with joint military exercises with the United States set for August, saying such drills should never serve as a chance to cause additional tensions on the Korean Peninsula. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Cindy Warmbier, the mother of Otto Warmbier, brought a federal courtroom to tears as she pleaded for the life of former Marine Christopher Ahn. He was part of an activist group that helps high-level North Korean diplomats and officials defect. (Eric Shawn, *Fox News*)

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VOA Source

**North Korean experts submit 'letter of opposition against extradition of Christopher Ahn'**
Reporter Ji-ha Ham

North Korean experts have submitted a letter to the court, the contents of which oppose the extradition of Christopher Ahn, who is being tried for an attack on the North Korean embassy in Spain. It argues that Ahn's life would be in jeopardy if he were extradited to Spain, which maintains diplomatic relations with North Korea. This is Ji-ha Ham reporting.

On May 18th, Christopher Ahn's attorney submitted a letter to the United States District Court, Central District of California, containing the opinions of three North Korean experts.

All of the letters opposes the extradition of Mr. Ahn, who is currently on trial pending extradition to Spain. The letters were written by Sung-yoon Lee, a North Korean expert and professor at Tufts University, Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, and Sandra Fahy, a professor at Sophia University in Japan.

Christopher Ahn, a member of the anti-North Korean group Free Joseon, is the only person who has been arrested for the raid on the North Korean embassy in Spain on February 22, 2019, during which he is accused of tying up and assaulting North Korean diplomats.

Spanish authorities have requested the U.S. government to extradite Mr. Ahn, and the U.S. District Court is currently undergoing proceeds over his extradition..

In the letter, Professor Sung-yoon Lee emphasized the fact that North Korea is a State Sponsor of Terrorism as stipulated by the U.S. government and others and argued that extradition could endanger Ahn's life.

He writes specifically, "There is no doubt that if Mr. Ahn is extradited out of the United States, he would be in danger of being killed" and points out, "North Korea is a terrorist state that can go to the end of the earth to assassinate its enemies."

He further argued that North Korea's perceived "enemies" include foreign officials as well as civilians who help defectors, which Kim Yo-Jong, the sister of North Korea's supreme leader, calls "human garbage."

While listing all of the international terrorist acts and kidnappings committed by North Korea over the past decades, Professor Lee pointed out the murder of Kim Jong-un's half-brother Kim Jong-nam with the nerve agent 'VX' at Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Malaysia in February 2017.

He also mentioned that North Korea maintains close ties with the Communist Party of Spain, and that one of the biggest advocates of the North Korean regime and founder and president of the Korea Friendship Association, Alejandro Cao de Bénos, is a Spanish citizen.
Professor Lee further argued in the letter that the basis for Mr. Ahn's extradition is weak, and expressed doubt regarding the credibility of the testimony by the North Korean embassy staff in Spain at the time.

Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu expressed deep concern regarding Mr. Ahn's extradition, noting that North Korea has established diplomatic relations with Spain and still maintains an embassy in Madrid.

He also emphasized that for decades, North Korea's diplomatic missions abroad have served as operational bases for surveillance, abduction and assassination of North Koreans, South Koreans, and foreigners.

He also notes that during the raid, portraits of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il were thrown on the floor and trampled on, claiming that such behavior is not tolerated in any way by the Kim Jong-un regime.

Along with this, he pointed out that if the perpetrators of these crimes are of Korean descent, the danger is only more immediate and greater.

After describing 12 assassinations and attempted assassinations by North Korea abroad, Professor Fahy revealed that these historical records show that North Korea targets people it considers its enemies.

Professor Fahy's judgement is that Christopher Ahn fits the North Korean regime's category of individuals which it is trying to kidnap or assassinate.

Professor Fahy presented the fact that Ahn was active in Free Joseon and rescued Kim Jong-nam's son, Kim Han-sol to protect the basis of her claim.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Central District Court of California, which is in charge of the extradition trial of Mr. Ahn, is scheduled to hold a hearing on Mr. Ahn on the May 25th after several delays.

Previously, Ahn's lawyers argued last February in a 'refutation of charges' submitted to the court that the raid was in fact carried out in consultation with officials from the North Korean embassy in Madrid who wished to defect.

In particular, at the time of the incident, those who requested to escape were terrified and things simply did not go as planned, so Ahn and the others did not commit any criminal acts as stipulated by U.S. law.

This was Ji-ha Ham reporting for VOA.

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Translated by Mindy Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Jungeun Lee, HRNK Research Intern

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tems-nk-experts-submit-letter-of-opposition-against-extradition-of-ahn-nks-diplomatic-missions-have-served-as-bases-for-surveillance?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, June 7, 2021**

# Experts submit letter to U.S. court 'opposing the extradition of Christopher Ahn'

**Top News:**
**Experts submit letter to U.S. court 'opposing the extradition of Christopher Ahn' (RFA, 05/19/2021)
** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**
Ministry of Social Security ordered to form new helicopter unit in mid-March (*Daily* NK, 06/07/2021)
NK calls for strengthened discipline ahead of key party meeting (*Korea Herald*, 06/07/2021)
North Korea reports zero positive cases after testing 28,905 people for COVID-19(*NK News*, 06/07/2021)
Pro-N. Korea paper says Pyongyang continues to pursue unification of Korean Peninsula (*Yonhap*, 06/07/2021)
Why Kim Jong-un is waging war on slang, jeans and foreign films (BBC, 06/06/2021)

**In South Korea:**
S. Korea to add more shipping services to North America amid freight cost hike(*Yonhap*, 06/07/2021)
South Korea court dismisses forced labour case against Japanese firms (*Reuters*, 06/07/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
'Farmland of peace' project will promote inter-Korean cooperation: unification ministry (*Yonhap*, 06/07/2021)
Seoul pushes for reviving inter-Korean tour programs (*Korea Times*, 06/07/2021)

**International:**
IAEA: North Korea's suspected uranium enrichment facility active (UPI, 06/07/2021)
Is Joe Biden Serious about Negotiating with North Korea? (*National Interest*, 06/07/2021)
Is Nuclear Peace with North Korea Possible? (*Daily* NK, 06/07/2021)
North Korea Slams Israel for Turning Gaza Into 'Huge Human Slaughterhouse,' 'Massacring Children' (*Newsweek*, 06/06/2021)
U.N. nuclear watchdog sees indications of plutonium work in North Korea (*Reuters*, 06/07/2021)

**Top News:**

- North Korea experts have submitted a letter to a U.S. court opposing the extradition of Christopher Ahn, who is on trial for the attack on the North Korean embassy in Spain. Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, also said in the letter that he opposes the extradition of Mr. Ahn, arguing that he could be at risk of being kidnapped and assassinated if returned to Spain. Executive Director Scarlatoiu emphasized that North Korean diplomatic missions abroad have served as operational bases for surveillance, kidnapping and assassination. He also said that Christopher Ahn and others smashed portraits of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il inside the North Korean embassy at the time of the incident, which to a country like North Korea where the supreme leader has absolute power, gives them further reason to retaliate against Mr. Ahn. (Jung-eun Ji, *RFA*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean authorities have reportedly created a new helicopter unit under the Ministry of Social Security. The unit ostensibly exists to protect lives and safety during disasters and accidents, but the ulterior aim appears to be strengthening control over the people. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Monday urged officials to strengthen discipline in executing the country's economic goals ahead of an important party meeting this month. The Rodong Sinmun stressed that the five-year economic development plan laid out early this year was an order from the ruling Workers' Party and was the "nation's law," one that all North Koreans were obliged to execute. (Sung-mi Ahn, *Korea Herald*)
- North Korea claimed there were no positive COVID-19 cases in the country after testing a cumulative total of more than 28,900 people, according to self-reported data in an updated World Health Organization (WHO) report. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- A pro-North Korea newspaper said Monday that North Korea will continue to push for unification of the Korean Peninsula, refuting claims that Pyongyang has abandoned the long-held wish in its latest revision to the ruling party's rules. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has recently introduced a sweeping new law which seeks to stamp out any kind of foreign influence - harshly punishing anyone caught with foreign films, clothing or even using slang. (Laura Bicker, *BBC*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea said Monday it plans to increase the number of government-supported shipping services to North America starting next month to help local exporters cope with the hike in freight costs. (Yoon-seung Kang, *Yonhap*)
- A South Korean court on Monday dismissed a lawsuit filed by 85 victims of wartime forced labour seeking compensation from 16 Japanese firms, saying accepting the case might violate a 1965 treaty under international law. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The Gyeonggi provincial government's plan to turn an inter-Korean border area into a "farmland of peace" and grow rice there for North Korea could create positive conditions for further inter-Korean cooperation, the unification ministry said Monday. (*Yonhap*)

- The government is re-igniting its drive for inter-Korean tourism projects as part of efforts to improve ties with North Korea, but is not expected to achieve its desired result, according to Pyongyang watchers, Monday. (Seung-woo Kang, *Korea Times*)

**International:**

- North Korea's nuclear facilities are active, the International Atomic Energy Agency says. IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi said Monday in his quarterly update to the group's 35-country Board of Governors that there are signs that activity continues at North Korea's suspected uranium enrichment site. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- The United States has no ambassador to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. That reflects Washington's foolish belief that diplomatic recognition would imply approval. During the Cold War America and the Soviet Union exchanged ambassadors, maintained embassies, and communicated regularly. Yet the closest diplomatic contact between the United States and DPRK is New York City, with North Korea's United Nations mission. (Doug Bandow, *National Interest*)
- North Korea's recent public displays of new intercontinental and submarine-launched ballistic missiles have raised fresh concerns about the risks the regime in Pyongyang poses to the US mainland. As President Joe Biden's administration reviews US policy toward the DPRK over the past four years and draws what lessons it can from Donald Trump's nuclear summitry with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, it should consider a new arms-control approach. (Bennett Ramberg, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea has condemned Israel for turning the Gaza Strip "into a huge human slaughterhouse and place of massacring children" after the latest violent conflict between Jerusalem and Hamas. (Christina Zhao, *Newsweek*)
- The U.N. atomic watchdog has seen indications in North Korea of possible reprocessing work to separate plutonium from spent reactor fuel that could be used in nuclear weapons, the head of the agency said on Monday. (Francois Murphy, *Reuters*)

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RFA Source

**Experts submit letter to U.S. court 'opposing the extradition of Christopher Ahn'**
Reporter Jung-eun Ji

North Korea experts have submitted a letter to a U.S. court opposing the extradition of Christopher Ahn, who is on trial for the attack on the North Korean embassy in Spain. This is Jung-eun Ji reporting for RFA.

On May 18th, three experts on the North Korea issue submitted a letter to the U.S. court opposing the extradition of Korean-American Christopher Ahn, who was arrested by U.S. law enforcement for participating in the raid on the North Korean embassy in Spain in February 2019.

The letters, submitted through Ahn's attorney, were written by Professor Sung-yoon Lee of Tufts University in the United States, Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), and Professor Sandra Fahy of Sophia University in Japan.

First, Professor Sung-yoon Lee argued that the U.S. prosecutors are severely downplaying the risk of North Korean retaliation and that if Ahn is extradited, he could be killed by North Korean agents.

Professor Lee emphasized the fact that North Korean authorities made several kidnapping and assassination attempts abroad, including the murder of Kim Jong-un's half-brother, Kim Jong-nam, in Malaysia.

In particular, he mentioned that currently, North Korea has a close relationship with the Spanish Communist Party and that Alejandro Cao de Bénos, president of the Korean Friendship Association, famous pro-North Korean organization, resides in Spain.

In addition, the testimonies of the North Korean witnesses about the 2019 North Korean embassy attack are conflicting. It is suspected that the witnesses may have given false testimonies in fear of retaliation from the authorities against their families who remain in North Korea.

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, also said in the letter that he opposes the extradition of Mr. Ahn, arguing that he could be at risk of being kidnapped and assassinated if returned to Spain.

Executive Director Scarlatoiu emphasized that North Korean diplomatic missions abroad have served as operational bases for surveillance, kidnapping and assassination.

He also said that Christopher Ahn and others smashed portraits of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il inside the North Korean embassy at the time of the incident, which to a country like North Korea where the supreme leader has absolute power, gives them further reason to retaliate against Mr. Ahn.

In the letter to the court, Sandra Fahy, a professor at Sophia University in Japan, also said that the North Korean government had silenced individuals that it considers enemies of the state by kidnapping or killing them, stressing that Mr. Ahn would be at such risks if repatriated.

In particular, she pointed out that the U.S. prosecution's claim that Mr. Ahn would be safe in countries such as Spain, where North Korean agents enjoy freedom of movement, is not valid.

In the letter, Professor Fahy listed 12 assassination and kidnapping attempts by North Korea overseas thus far, stating that Mr. Ahn is also at risk.

'Free Joseon', led by Koreans of foreign descent including Christopher Ahn and Adrian Hong, broke into the North Korean embassy in Spain on February 22, 2019 and allegedly assaulted the

employees. 'Free Joseon' is also suspected of having stolen computers and removable storage devices, etc. before getting away.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation indicted Mr. Ahn on six counts, including trespassing, illegal detention, intimidation, violent robbery, personal injury, organized crime, etc., with U.S. prosecutors insisting that Ahn be extradited under the extradition treaty with the Spanish government.

Earlier on May 2nd, columnist Max Boot and a senior researcher at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Sue Mi Terry, wrote an article in the Washington Post stating that Mr. Ahn pretended to be a kidnapper to help North Koreans seek asylum, and was unfairly accused of being a criminal.

In the article, they state that the FBI had also conveyed the opinion that Mr. Ahn was facing threats to his life due to his history of infiltrating the embassy and helping Kim Jong-nam's son, Kim Han-sol.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Central District Court of California is scheduled to hold a hearing on the extradition of Mr. Ahn on May 25th.

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Translated by Mindy Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Eric Ryu, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250812155715/https://mailchi.mp/a870f3faee66/hrnk-news-items-experts-submit-letter-to-us-court-opposing-the-extradition-of-christopher-ahn?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, June 8, 2021**

## HRNK Letter to The Honorable Antony J. Blinken; HRNK Letter to High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell Fontelles

**Top News:**

HRNK Letter to The Honorable Antony J. Blinken (*HRNK Insider*, 05/25/2021)
HRNK Letter to High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell Fontelles (*HRNK Insider*, 05/18/2021)

**In North Korea:**

Kim Jong Un Announces Plans to Bring 'Tangible Change' to North Korea's Economy (*Newsweek*, 06/08/2021)
Kim Jong Un is waging a culture war, and North Korea is cracking down on foreign movies, slang, and even clothes and hairstyles (*Insider*, 06/07/2021)
Kim Jong Un looks thinner, and intelligence agencies are likely paying attention (*NK News*, 06/08/2021)
Kim Jong Un promises economic 'stabilization' at meeting of party officials (*NK News*, 06/07/2021)
N.K. leader holds meeting with top officials to discuss economic policies in second half (*Yonhap*, 06/08/2021)
N. Korea faces serious humanitarian crisis: report (*Yonhap*, 06/08/2021)
N. Korean Leader Kim Jong-un Discussed Economic Policy with Senior Advisors(VOA, 06/08/2021)
North Korea is "scrambling" to secure large amounts of COVID-19 vaccine for its military (*Daily NK*, 06/08/2021)
North Korea Taps Workers in Russia to Fund Pyongyang Construction (*RFA*, 06/07/2021)
North Korea's Isolation Is Deepening (*The Diplomat*, 06/07/2021)
North Korea's Kim meets senior officials to address economy - KCNA (*Reuters*, 06/07/2021)
State media: Kim has plans to stabilize N. Korean economy (*AP News*, 06/08/2021)

**In South Korea:**
South Korea's Killer Air Force Should Worry Kim Jong-Un (*National Interest*, 06/07/2021)

**International:**
Biden will appoint special envoy for N. Korean human rights as required: Blinken(*Yonhap*, 06/08/2021)
Christopher Ahn at very low risk of being killed in Spain, some experts say (*NK News*, 06/08/2021)
IAEA sees signs of possible reprocessing in Kangson (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/08/2021)
Korean-Americans eager for reunions with kin in North (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/08/2021)
Pro-North Korea newspaper in Japan denies changes in unification policy (*UPI*, 06/07/2021)
US will appoint North Korea human rights envoy in future: Blinken (*NK News*, 06/07/2021)
U.S. will work for family reunion of Korean Americans with DPRK relatives: Blinken(*Yonhap*, 06/08/2021)

**Top News:**

- The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) submitted a letter to Secretary Antony J. Blinken, ahead of the upcoming United States and European Union summit in Brussels. The letter emphasizes the need to include North Korea's human rights situation and the situation facing North Koreans seeking resettlement in South Korea and other countries on the agenda. (Greg Scarlatoiu, *HRNK Insider*)
- The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) submitted a letter to High Representative Josep Borrell Fontelles, ahead of the upcoming United States and European Union summit in Brussels. The letter emphasizes the need to include North

Korea's human rights situation on the agenda as it would send a vital message that the European Union and its allies are committed to upholding human rights for those who are suffering under regimes committing atrocities. (Greg Scarlatoiu, *HRNK Insider*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un announced plans to senior ruling party officials that are intended to bring "tangible change" to the North Korean economy and people's living conditions, state media said Tuesday. (Rebecca Klapper, *Newsweek*)
- The oppressive North Korean regime is cracking down hard on things like foreign movies and slang in a crusade to drive out international influence and anti-socialist behavior, what Kim Jong Un has called a "dangerous poison." North Korean laws are strict and violations come with harsh punishments, but enforcement can be unpredictable. (Ryan Pickrell, *Insider*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un reappeared in state media last Saturday after not being seen in public for almost a month, and seasoned North Korean workers were quick to point out that the DPRK leader may have lost a significant amount of weight. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un promised “stabilization” of the economy amid ongoing problems, state media reported Tuesday after Kim gathered top state and provincial-level party officials for a small and informal “consultative” meeting in preparation for this week’s larger party plenum. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un held a consultative meeting with top officials to discuss economic policies for the second half of the year ahead of a key party meeting, state media said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea faces a serious humanitarian crisis due to food insecurity and limited health care, aggravated by global sanctions and the coronavirus, an international nongovernmental organization has said. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un gathered his senior advisors Monday to discuss his economic policies ahead of a key meeting of the North’s ruling party. (VOA)
- North Korea has reportedly been scrambling to secure large amounts of COVID-19 vaccine since the United States pledged to provide the South Korean military with vaccines during last month’s US-South Korean summit. The authorities apparently plan to inoculate the military first with any proven vaccines they can get their hands on, regardless of country of origin. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean workers dispatched to Russia must now pay their government an additional U.S. $100 in so-called “loyalty funds” to help cover the costs of a 10,000-home construction project in the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, sources in Russia told RFA. (Jeong Yon Park, RFA)
- Even before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, North Korea had a reputation as one of the most (if not the most) isolated societies on Earth. It was as if North Korea was already living under the conditions of a permanent COVID-19 lockdown. Indeed, it was hard to imagine that the hermit nation could get any more reclusive than it already was. Yet with COVID-19 raging all over the world, North Korea seems to be rolling down the path of new unprecedented levels of isolationism. (Daminov Ildar, *The Diplomat*)

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un convened a meeting of senior officials of the Workers' Party to evaluate and improve the economy in the second half of the year, state media KCNA reported on Tuesday. (Sangmi Cha, *Reuters*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un presented economic plans to senior ruling party officials before an upcoming meeting to review efforts to overcome hardships brought about by the pandemic, state media said Tuesday. (Tong-Hyung Kim, *AP News*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's air force is well positioned to counter its primary—and only—adversary. The Republic of Korea Air Force (ROKAF) is the most powerful air force on the Korean Peninsula, with a capability far greater than its northern rival, providing air cover and support to ground forces defending south of the thirty-eighth parallel. Recently, the air force has taken on a new task as Seoul shapes a conventional force to deter North Korea's nuclear weapons. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)

**International:**

- The Joe Biden administration will appoint a special envoy for North Korean human rights as required by law, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Monday. Blinken, however, said he does not yet have an exact timeline for such an appointment. (Duk-kun Byun, *Yonhap*)
- Former U.S. marine Christopher Ahn is fighting extradition to Spain for his role in the 2019 raid at the North Korean Embassy in Madrid. His defense team alleges Ahn is at high risk for a revenge killing by North Korean agents if he leaves the United States. These allegations have been amplified by several media outlets in recent days, but in conversations with *NK News* some North Korea experts expressed skepticism that Ahn faces any risk of bodily harm if he is extradited to Spain. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said there are continued signs of activity at a suspected uranium enrichment facility in North Korea as the UN nuclear watchdog is "intensifying" its readiness to play a role in any new denuclearization negotiations. (Sarah Kim, *Korea Joongang Daily*)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken pledged Monday to work with both Seoul and Pyongyang to help arrange reunions of Korean-Americans who were separated from family members during the 1950-53 Korean War. (Sarah Kim, *Korea Joongang Daily*)
- North Korea's position on the unification of the Korean Peninsula remains "firm" despite new policies, a pro-Pyongyang newspaper in Japan said. The Choson Sinbo, published by the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan, or Chongryon, said in an article published Monday that a policy of "advancing" unification reflects the "unwavering" position of the Korean Workers' Party. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- Washington is planning to appoint a North Korea human rights envoy in the near future, but the "vetting process" is taking a long time, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Monday. The remarks come weeks after President Joe Biden appointed Sung Kim, the U.S. ambassador to Indonesia and an acting assistant secretary of state, to serve as the U.S. special envoy to the DPRK. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken pledged Monday to work with both South Korea and North Korea to help realize long-awaited reunions of Korean Americans with their loved ones in the North, calling it a "heart wrenching" issue. (Duk-kun Byun, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Eric Ryu, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250812160240/https://mailchi.mp/76ab8eeff634/hrnk-news-items-hrnk-letter-to-the-honorable-antony-j-blinken-hrnk-letter-to-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-fontelles?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, June 9, 2021**

## News and Commentary on special envoy for N. Korean human rights

**Top News:**
06/08/2021 News and Commentary on special envoy for N. Korean human rights(*Small Wars Journal*, 06/09/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Defector and former diplomat work together to protect human rights in North (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/09/2021)
Elite North Korean Farm Sells Chicken Embryos as Health Supplements to Raise Cash (*RFA*, 06/08/2021)
Is North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un learning to delegate? (*Associated Press*, 06/09/2021)
Kim said to unveil 'tangible change' plan for North Korea economy (*AlJazeera*, 06/08/2021)
N. Korea appears focused on internal affairs: defense minister (*Yonhap*, 06/09/2021)
N.K. paper calls for scientific development conducive to actual growth, production(*Yonhap*, 06/09/2021)
North Korea's Punggye-ri Nuclear Test Site: Three Years After its Dismantlement (*38 North*, 06/09/2021)
North Korean media warns COVID vaccines may be ineffective for 'next few years' (*NK News*, 06/09/2021)
Proposal to shift "general markets" to "specialized markets" finds little support among N. Korean leaders (*Daily NK*, 06/09/2021)
The political priorities, preferences and fears of Kim Jong Un - "Intelligence Matters"(*CBS News*, 06/09/2021)
**Inter-Korean Relationship**
S. Korea continues attempts to call N.K. every day through Panmunjom hotline to no avail: official (*Yonhap*, 06/09/2021)

**International:**
Could America Defeat North Korea Using Its Navy Alone? (*The National Interest*, 06/09/2021)
IOC moves forward with reallocation of North Korea's Olympic quota places (*UPI*, 06/09/2021)
Pyongyang officially pulls plug on going to Olympics (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/09/2021

US dollar and Chinese reminbi plummet against North Korean won once again (*Daily NK*, 06/09/2021)

**Top News:**

- Colonel David Maxwell's commentary on the article, *Biden will appoint special envoy for N. Korean human rights as required: Blinken*: "My recommendation is my good friend Greg Scarlatoiu who is the executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (hrnk.org). A fluent Korean speaker, a great American with decades of Korea experience and someone who survived another despotic regime with parallels and close ties to north Korea until the revolution in Romania. There are few who understand the north Korean human rights situation to the depth that Greg does." (Dave Maxwell, *Small Wars Journal* )

**In North Korea:**

- Human rights violations in North Korea have worsened during the Moon Jae-in administration, says former South Korean diplomat Kim Suk-woo and Lee Ae-ran, a defector from the North, who are also leading major civic groups on North Korean human rights in Seoul. "It's not an overstatement to say that [the Moon administration] has put the stability of the North Korean regime as the foremost priority," said Kim, chairman of the Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights. "On the issue of human rights of North Korean people, the administration has completely turned their backs on it." (*Korean JoongAng Daily*)
- The meat and poultry farm that has served Kim Jong Un and the earlier two generations of North Korea's ruling family is selling chicken embryos as "nutritional supplements" and selling beef on the black market to fill holes in a budget hit hard by the coronavirus, sources in the country told RFA. (RFA)
- Kim Jong-un, North Korea's Supreme Leader and the bearer of a dizzying array of military and party titles, is learning the value of delegating a busy workload. In recent months, Kim has signed off on the creation of a number of high-ranking positions for trusted figures, while state media have begun to portray meetings of the ruling Workers' Party as a collaborative affair where decisions are made as a group. (*Associated Press*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un presented economic plans to senior ruling party officials before an upcoming meeting to review efforts to overcome hardships brought about by the coronavirus pandemic, state media said on Tuesday. (*AlJazeera*)
- North Korea appears to be focused on taking care of internal affairs rather than showing unusual military moves, Defense Minister Suh Wook said Wednesday. Suh made the assessment during a parliamentary session when asked if there were any unusual moves by the North Korean military after Pyongyang condemned Seoul over the lifting of U.S. curbs on South Korea's missile development. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's official newspaper called Wednesday for drawing up science and technology development plans in a way that truly contributes to economic growth and production, saying some plans are put together in a "perfunctory" manner. "Some units have shown a tendency of drawing up plans for the development of science and technology in a perfunctory manner without concrete calculations," the Rodong Sinmun, the organ of the ruling Workers' Party, said. (*Yonhap*)

- Three years ago, on May 24, 2018, in the lead-up to the first US-DPRK summit, North Korea dismantled the Punggye-ri Nuclear Test Site in a dramatic fashion, using explosives to demolish support buildings and test tunnel entrances. While international reporters were present to witness and document this event, questions remained about the permanency of these actions, given little evidence the test tunnels were destroyed past the entrances, and the Headquarters Building and Command Center were untouched. . .over the past three years, commercial satellite imagery has indicated only limited activities throughout the site, including ongoing security foot patrols and probable radiation monitoring throughout the test tunnel area, as well as post-flooding road repairs to keep the site accessible. (Jack Liu, Frank Pabian, and Peter Makowsky, *38 North*)
- North Korean state media warned domestic readers on Tuesday that COVID-19 vaccines cannot be trusted to be effective for the "next few years," as the country awaits delivery of vaccines from abroad and its borders remain almost completely shut to the outside world. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News* )
- A proposal to divide the country's "general markets" into "specialized markets" reportedly came to naught after North Korean authorities judged that the new markets would be difficult to manage. North Korean authorities are making various attempts to bring markets and other commercial activities under state control, but it appears that a practical plan to accomplish this has yet to emerge. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- In this episode of Intelligence Matters, host Michael Morell speaks with Syd Seiler, National Intelligence Officer for North Korea at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. Seiler and Morell discuss the political priorities, preferences and fears of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, and evaluate the prospects for diplomatic engagement during the Biden administration. Seiler, who has spent over four decades studying the country and its leadership, also shares insights from his travels to Pyongyang and his experience negotiating with North Korean counterparts. (*CBS News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korea has been attempting to call North Korea via a cross-border communication line every morning for the past year, but there has been no response from the North, a unification ministry official said Wednesday. Last year, the North vowed to cut off all communication lines with the South and even blew up an inter-Korean liaison office in its border city of Kaesong in anger over anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets coming in from the South. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- How can the U.S. Navy destroy North Korea should Washington give the word? It can't. Or at least it stands little chance of doing so by its lonesome barring improbable circumstances. What the navy can do is contribute to a joint or multinational campaign that destroys the Northern regime or its armed forces. But even that would involve perils, hardships and steep costs (James Holmes, *The National Interest*)
- The International Olympic Committee has decided to reallocate North Korean spots at the 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympics after the reclusive nation said it would not participate in the Summer Games. James McLeod, the IOC's director of Olympic Solidarity, said the decision was made after Pyongyang provided no formal

communication on the issue, Inside The Games reported Wednesday. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI )
- North Korea will not be part of the Tokyo Olympics, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) confirmed Tuesday, the first time it will skip the Summer Games in 33 years (*Korean JoongAng Daily*)
- The US dollar and Chinese renminbi have plummeted against the North Korean won once again. Despite the fact North Korean authorities recently issued new *waku* (trade certificates), North Korean trade-related institutions and individuals rushed to dump their foreign currency when the government unveiled new trade control measures. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK* )

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Prepared by Abraham Reiss, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250923222132/https://mailchi.mp/ff06ddd0212e/hrnk-news-items-news-and-commentary-on-special-envoy-for-n-korean-human-rights

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**Thursday, June 10, 2021**

## HRNK executive director Greg Scarlatoiu warns against the extradition of Christopher Ah

**Top News:**
North Korea threats; Moon's disappointment. Greg Scarlatoiu (*The John Batchelor Show*, 06/09/2021)
Report: FBI warned of 'credible North Korea threat' to Christopher Ahn (*UPI*, 06/09/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Kim Jong-un: apparent weight loss prompts speculation over North Korean leader's health (*The Guardian*, 06/09/2021)
Kim Jong Un recasts party rulebook to forge own identity (*Nikkei Asia*, 06/10/2021)
N. Korea stresses cooperation with international Red Cross organizations amid global virus pandemic (*Yonhap*, 06/10/2021)
North Korea hikes "party contributions" Russia-based workers must pay by 30-55% (*Daily NK*, 06/10/2021)
Seoul: North Korea showing no unusual military activity ahead of plenary session (*UPI*, 06/09/2021)
Tracking the "unidentified yellow substance" being dried out near the Yongbyon Nuclear Center (*Daily NK*, 06/10/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Reestablishing our spy agency (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/10/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**
Historic border footbridge in Panmunjom to begin repair work this month (*Yonhap*, 06/10/2021)
Repulic bloc seeks to ratify Panmunjom Declaration (*The Korea Herald*, 06/09/2021)
South Korea Should Reassess Its Push for Inter-Korean Engagement (*The National Interest*, 06/09/2021)
Unification ministry has nothing to say about N.K. leader's health amid speculation over weight loss: official (*Yonhap*, 06/10/2021)
**International:**
China Has a Big Problem Called "North Korea" (Would Beijing Invade?) (*The National Interest*, 06/09/2021)
China passes law to counter foreign sanctions (*Reuters*, 06/10/2021)
How US Congress Can Help Advance North Korea Diplomacy (*The Diplomat*, 06/10/2021)
Jeanne D'Arc mission projects French power in Indian Ocean, Pacific (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/10/2021)
N. Korean missiles pose increasing threat to U.S., allies: Secretary Austin (*Yonhap*, 06/10/2021)
New York City's message to Kim Jong Un honoring Otto Warmbier (*Fox News*, 06/09/2021)
US outlines increased missile defenses as North Korean threats ramp up (*NK News*,06/10/2021)
U.S. seeks to make progress with N. Korea through diplomacy: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 06/10/2021)
Why Biden Should Extend Vaccine Diplomacy to Sanctioned States Like Venezuela, Iran, and North Korea (*The National Interest*, 06/09/2021)

**Top News:**

- Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, warns against the extradition of Christopher Ahn and responds to this: https://www.nknews.org/2021/06/christopher-ahn-at-very-low-risk-of-being-killed-in-spain-experts-say/ *(The John Batchelor Show)*
- A document released by a Los Angeles federal court showed that an FBI agent called Ahn's attorney Naeun Rim on July 31, 2019, the same month Ahn was released on bail, Radio Free Asia's Korean service reported Wednesday....The FBI informed Rim that the North Koreans could be planning to make contact. Pyongyang's agents wanted to know whether Rim had information on the whereabouts of Adrian Hong Chang, an anti-Pyongyang activist who is believed to have masterminded the raid on the embassy. Ahn faces a "credible threat" from North Korea, the document reportedly said. The FBI raised concerns regarding Ahn's safety overseas and advised against traveling abroad. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)

**In North Korea:**

- Kim looks noticeably slimmer in his first public appearance for a month, highlighting possible health issues over weight and lifestyle. (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)
- North Korean leader shifts from 'military first' to 'people first' in bid to form popular mandate. (Yosuke Onchi, *Nikkei Asia*)
- North Korea held a Red Cross meeting and stressed the importance of cooperation with international aid organizations amid the global coronavirus pandemic, state media said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)

- North Korean authorities have substantially hiked the “party contributions” North Korean workers in Russia must contribute to state coffers, Daily NK has learned. This essentially means authorities have begun aggressively securing foreign currency through workers dispatched overseas. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- South Korea said Pyongyang could be shifting its focus from military activity to "internal affairs," as the Kim Jong Un regime prepares to hold a plenary meeting of the Workers' Party Central Committee. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- Using satellite imagery and a bit of research, a South Korean expert tries to explain what kind of grains the North Koreans have been drying out near the center. (Bruce Songhak Chung, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- Former South Korean ambassador to Japan Ra Jong-yil urges reform within the National Intelligence Service (NIS) and emphasizes the importance of the NIS to South Korea’s anti-espionage efforts. (Ra Jong-yil, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- A historic footbridge at the truce village of Panmunjom where President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un walked along during their first summit in 2018 is set for an overhaul, the United Nations Command (UNC) said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- The ruling Democratic Party and the government agreed Wednesday to push for the ratification of a 2018 inter-Korean summit agreement in hopes of reviving the stalled peace process on the Korean Peninsula, and to strengthen coordination with the US on the implementation of its North Korea policy. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald)*
- Has Pyongyang ever reciprocated Seoul or Washington’s goodwill gestures or concessions in the past? Unfortunately for Lee, copious evidence from prior negotiations demonstrates not only that North Korea has consistently failed to do so, but that concessions only further embolden North Korea. (Matthew Ha, *The National Interest*)
- The unification ministry is keeping an eye on North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's health but currently has nothing to say about any unusual signs amid speculation that he has significantly lost weight, an official said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- If a crisis were to occur in North Korea, it might be in the best interest of the Chinese to intervene. (Kyle Mizokami, *The National Interest*)
- China passed a law on Thursday to counter foreign sanctions, as it strives to resist U.S. and EU pressure over trade, technology, Hong Kong and Xinjiang….Washington has also targeted Chinese companies such as Huawei and ZTE for violating U.S. sanctions on Iran or North Korea, an act China called “long-arm jurisdiction." (Yew Lun Tian, *Reuters*)
- U.S. legislators have a long and storied history of meeting North Korean leaders. Time to dust off that legacy. (Matt Abbott, *The Diplomat*)
- France took part in an allied naval exercise, dubbed the Jeanne D'Arc mission, in the Indian and Pacific Oceans with the United States, Australia and Japan between May 11 and 16. “The Jeanne d'Arc Group also participates in Operation AETO, which is the French effort to enforce United Nations Security Council resolutions against North Korea.” (Lee Chul-jae, Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- North Korea continues to develop its nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities, posing an increasing threat to the United States and its allies, U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said Thursday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Mayor Bill de Blasio hails bipartisan push to rename Manhattan street at North Korean UN mission. (Eric Shawn, *Fox News*)
- Better defense systems could motivate enemies to build up 'more sophisticated offensive weapons,' experts say. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- The United States seeks to engage with North Korea diplomatically to make progress toward the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, a State Department spokesman said Wednesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Distributing U.S. vaccines to these countries won't be easy as current sanctions regimes and political scrutiny will make distribution challenging, but it may be one of the only current tools to chip away at growing dependency on China and Russia during the pandemic. (Jason Bartlett, *The National Interest*)

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Prepared by Claire McCrea, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250812161021/https://mailchi.mp/2274561963dc/hrnk-news-items-hrnk-executive-director-greg-scarlatoiu-warns-against-the-extradition-of-christopher-ahn?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, June 11, 2021**

## Escaping Paradise.

**Top News:**
Escaping Paradise with Greg Scarlatoiu and Doohyun Kim (*HRNK*, 06/10/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Hamhung man arrested for corruption while working at a state-run department store(*Daily NK*, 06/11/2021)
Kim Jong Un appears to have lost some weight — and that could have geopolitical consequences (*The Washington Post*, 06/10/2021)
North Korea holds Red Cross meeting amid COVID-19 vaccine delay (*UPI*, 06/10/2021)
North Korea's premier inspects apartment construction in Pyongyang (*UPI*, 06/11/2021)
North Korea reports heavy rain, warns of 'inevitable' typhoons (*NK News*, 06/11/2021)
N. Korea stays mum on key party meeting set to be held early this month (*Yonhap*, 06/11/2021)

**In South Korea:**
South Korea Can Now Build Missiles Able to Reach Beijing, With U.S. Blessing (*Wall Street*

*Journal*, 06/11/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**
Kim Jong-un Calls K-Pop a 'Vicious Cancer' in the New Culture War (*New York Times*, 06/10/2021)
Koreas officially out of running for 2032 Summer Olympics (*Yonhap*, 06/11/2021)
Recent inter-Korean 'significant communication' leads to rampant speculation (*The Korea Times*, 06/11/2021)
Unification minister hopes border farmland project serves as starting point for cross-border cooperation (*Yonhap*, 06/11/2021)

**International:**
Across the North Korean Border in China, an Economic Winter That Never Ends(*Foreign Policy*, 06/11/2021)
From KL with Love: North Korea-Malaysia Relations (*East-West Center in Washington*, 06/01/2021)
North Korea's electricity exports to China jump amid reported domestic shortages(*NK News*, 06/11/2021)
Spain not seeking extradition of South Koreans involved in DPRK embassy break-in(*NK News*, 06/11/2021)

**Top News:**
- Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, sits down with former North Korean Doohyun Kim. Doohyun Kim shares his life experiences and explains how he and his family miraculously escaped North Korea. (Greg Scarlatoiu and Doohyun Kim, *HRNK*)

**In North Korea:**
- A resident of Hamhung, South Hamgyong Province, was recently subjected to public criticism and then arrested after he was caught filling his own pockets as an employee of a state-run department store. (Lee Sang Yong, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea held a meeting of its Red Cross, state media said in a report that did not mention the country's response to COVID-19. State media said officials representing the central government and regions outside Pyongyang attended the event. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, who made his first public appearance in around a month last week, appears to have lost a significant amount of weight, fanning speculation among the nuclear-armed country's watchers about his health. (Michael E. Miller, *The Washington Post*)
- North Korea's second-in-command inspected a construction site for 10,000 new apartment units in Pyongyang, state media said. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- A severe weather warning comes after a series of typhoons caused significant damage across North Korea in Aug. and Sept. 2020. Years of preparation campaigns had apparently failed to result in adequate protection from high winds and heavy rain. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

- North Korea remains silent about a key Workers' Party meeting that it said it would hold early this month, raising questions about whether the meeting was held at all and if not, why it is being delayed. (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- Last month, the Biden administration removed the final limits on Seoul's missile program, abolishing what had been a roughly 500-mile cap on South Korea's ballistic-missile range. It is a key change: Seoul's missiles, in theory, can now fly far enough to strike Beijing, Moscow or anywhere else. (Andrew Jeong, *Wall Street Journal*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- South Korean music, movies and dramas are winning the hearts of young North Koreans. Their influence is seen as a threat to Mr. Kim's grip on society. (Choe Sang-Hun, *New York Times*)
- Seoul's drive for co-hosting the 2032 Summer Olympics with Pyongyang has come to an end, following a decision by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to name an Australian city as the only candidate up for a member vote next month. (Yoo Jee-ho, *Yonhap*)
- A recent reference by National Intelligence Service chief Park Jie-won of "significant communication" taking place between South and North Korea around the time of the South Korea-U.S. summit last month has left Pyongyang watchers scrambling to find out the North's real intentions. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young on Friday expressed hope that a project to build a "farmland of peace" in an inter-Korean border area would be a meaningful starting point for cooperation between the two Koreas in farming and environmental sectors. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Isolated even in normal times, North Korea does nearly all of its international trading with China, with which it shares a border that largely traces the snaking Yalu River. But last year, the two countries' trade volume plummeted by over 80 percent compared with 2019. (Tang Yuan, *Foreign Policy*)
- In March 2021, North Korea severed diplomatic relations with Malaysia, breaking ties with a country that until a few years previously had been on friendly terms with Pyongyang. In this North Korea in the World webinar, Dr. Chiew-Ping Hoo discusses the history of North Korea's relations with Malaysia, and the scope of the country's relationship in recent years. (Chiew-Ping Hoo, *East-West Center in Washington*)
- Amid recent media reports that domestic power shortages have become more severe in rural parts of North Korea, customs data analyzed by NK Pro shows that DPRK exports of electricity into the Chinese grid have been on an upward trend since Sept. 2020. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- Spanish authorities have not sought the extradition of any South Korean nationals involved in the 2019 raid of the North Korean Embassy in Madrid, a June-dated court document seen by NK News shows. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)

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Prepared by Jason Yoo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250812161559/https://mailchi.mp/92f4b9d39a28/hrnk-news-items-escaping-paradise?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, June 12, 2021**

# No North Koreans Have Gained Refugee Status in 15 Months

**Top News:**
No North Koreans Have Gained Refugee Status in 15 Months (*RFA*, 06/07/2021)
**This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**
Japanese opposition lawmaker proposes donating COVID vaccines to North Korea(*NK News*, 06/11/2021)
Kim Jong Un stresses national defense in meeting with top military officials (*NK News*, 06/11/2021)
North Korean Missiles Continue to Pose a Big Threat (*The National Interest*, 06/11/2021)
North Korea Preaches Self-Reliance to Struggling Citizens (*RFA*, 06/11/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Facing North Korea, Imjingak Park is a reminder of peace on the Korean Peninsula(*The Korea Herald*, 06/12/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**
'Assassins,' about death of N.Korean's Kim Jong-nam, denied art film status (*The Korea Herald*, 06/12/2021)

**International:**
As the Dust Settles, How Healthy is the ROK-US Alliance? (*38 North*, 06/11/2021)
Blinken stresses need to work together on N. Korea in call with Chinese counterpart (*Yonhap*, 06/12/2021)
N. Korean missiles pose increasing threat to US, allies: Secretary Austin (*Yonhap*, 06/11/2021)

**Top News:**

- For more than a year, no North Korean refugee has settled in the United States by attaining refugee status. The United States government paused in granting refugee status starting March 19 of last year. Greg Scarlatoiu argues that "The U.S. should put in a stronger effort to accept and support more North Korean refugees." (Albert Hong, RFA)

**In North Korea:**

- A veteran Japanese opposition lawmaker has proposed donating COVID-19 vaccines to North Korea in an effort to break the stalemate over the issue of Japanese citizens abducted by DPRK agents in the 1970s and 80s. (Kosuke Takahashi, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Friday guided a meeting of top military officials and discussed ways to set forth "important tasks" regarding national defense, the country's state media has reported. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korea has continued to pursue improvements to its nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities despite the presence of pressing domestic challenges including the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. (Eli Fuhrman, *The National Interest*)
- North Korea is forcing citizens to attend ideological education sessions promoting self-reliance as the solution to their economic woes, but the people say the sessions are an unhelpful waste of time, sources in the country told RFA. (RFA)

**In South Korea:**

- PAJU, Gyeonggi Province -- A large peaceful ground, Imjingak Pyeonghwa Nuri Park stands facing the Imjin River, just south of the Demilitarized Zone. Although it sounds like an area of heightened tensions, the park is crowded with visitors, especially on weekends, who come for a picnic and to view the works of art on display. (Park Yuna, The *Korea Herald*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- Local film distributors are protesting the Korean Film Council's decision to deny art film status to "Assassins," a documentary about Kim Jong-nam's assassination. (Kim Hae-yeon, *The Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken stressed the need for his country and China to work together to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula in his rare conversation with Chinese counterpart, Yang Jiechi, on Friday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- A summit meeting took place on May 21 between President Moon Jae-in of South Korea and US President Joseph Biden. At many previous US-Republic of Korea (ROK) summits, the threat posed by North Korea has been the most important issue discussed, but the remarkable summit joint statement underscores how much this one was clearly focused on China. The alliance between the ROK and the US has historically been predominantly military in character and focused on threats to peace on the Korean Peninsula. But it is now being integrated into the broader US Indo-Pacific Strategy, with its focus on the threat from China, as well as cooperation on more general regional and global issues. (Sukjoon Yoon, *38 North*)
- North Korea continues to develop its nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities, posing an increasing threat to the United States and its allies, US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)

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**No North Koreans Have Gained Refugee Status in 15 Months**

<PICTURE>

Caption: The photo shows six North Korean defectors who entered the U.S. as refugees visiting Washington, D.C. in May 2006.

For more than a year, no North Korean refugee has settled in the United States by attaining refugee status. This is Albert Hong reporting.

The United States government paused in granting refugee status starting March 19 of last year

During that time, the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migrations (PRM) stated to Radio Free Asia (RFA) that it would implement such measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

In January and February last year, only two North Korean refugees, one per the respective month, received U.S. refugee status, and no North Korean refugees have settled in the U.S. for 15 months since the U.S. government's suspension of refugee acceptance.

However, 136 refugees per Asian country from nearby Burma, Myanmar, and Vietnam, have each acquired refugee status, with the recent addition of another one, bringing the number to a total 137 refugee per country this year alone.

A spokesman for the Bureau said in an e-mail to Radio Free Asia on the 7th, "North Koreans undergo the same entry programs as refugees from other countries when applying for refugee status, settled by the President of the United States in the same fiscal year. There are no special programs specifically tailored for North Korean refugees.

The spokesperson further explained that the U.S. administration approved the resumption of refugee travel to the U.S. from July 30 last year, allowing North Korean defectors to resume their applications for refugee entry.

The U.S. government is currently accepting refugee applications from North Korean defectors, but there are no pending applications or refugee cases.

If true, why have no North Korean refugees pursued refugee status in the U.S. even after the resumption of refugee applications and immigration programs?

The most likely reason is that COVID-19 has not been contained in China, the first state outside of North Korea that refugees set foot on, and the censorship in China has been strengthened, making it difficult for North Korean defectors to continue their migration.

The U.S. government's strict refugee screening standards and long processing periods are also some of the main reasons why North Korean refugees hesitate to settle in the U.S.

In addition, North Koreans have been brainwashed to think of the U.S. as an enemy country, and because the U.S. also requires learning an unfamiliar language and culture, settling in the U.S. is

much less attractive than settling in South Korea. South Korea is more attractive to North Korean refugees because it has relatively more settlement support than the United States.

Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea in Washington, D.C., said on the 7th in a telephone interview with Radio Free Asia (RFA), "Although the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004 has been in effect for 17 years, only 230 North Koreans have received refugee status in the U.S." He continued, "The U.S. should put in a stronger effort to accept and support more North Korean refugees."
Executive Director Scarlatoiu: Currently, there is no information campaign for North Korean refugees. The U.S. government cannot pursue such a campaign, which leaves NGOs to have no choice but to pursue it. Efforts to educate North Korean refugees can be seen as lacking.

Meanwhile, according to the South Korean Ministry of Unification, the number of North Korean defectors who entered South Korea was 1,137 in 2018 and 1,047 in 2019, but dropped sharply to 229 in 2020 when the COVID-19 outbreak went global.
Reporter: Albert Hong (RFA)

Translated by: Jason Yoo (HRNK)

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Prepared by Scott Cho, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250812161911/https://mailchi.mp/a16a0745d918/hrnk-news-itemsno-north-koreans-have-gained-refugee-status-in-15-months?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, June 13, 2021**

## G-7 calls for 'complete' denuclearization of N. Korea, welcomes Washington's diplomacy towards Pyongyang: communique

**In South Korea:**
'G-7 invitation signifies Korea's elevated status' (*The Korea Herald*, 06/13/2021)
S. Korea's first Vatican prefect looks forward to arranging pope's visit to NK (*The Korea Herald*, 06/13/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**
U.S., South Korea reaffirm cooperation toward denuclearization of Korean Peninsula (*Reuters*, 06/12/2021)

**International:**

G-7 calls for 'complete' denuclearization of N. Korea, welcomes Washington's diplomacy towards Pyongyang: communique (*Yonhap*, 06/13/2021)
'Talking about mountains:' Swiss mountaineers visit peaks of North Korea for exhibition (*The Korea Times*, 06/13/2021)
5 Ways North Korea Would Try to Kill an Aircraft Carrier (*The National Interest*,06/13/2021)

**In South Korea:**

- Moon holds bilateral summits with leaders of Australia, Britain, EU and Germany. (Kan Hyeong-woo, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korean Archbishop Lazzaro You Heung-sik, the newly appointed Vatican prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy, said he will work toward arranging a visit to North Korea for Pope Francis if he is given the opportunity to do so. (Kim Hae-yeon, *The Korea Herald*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and South Korean Foreign Minister Chung Eui-Yong reaffirmed a commitment between their countries and Japan to work closely toward the "denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula," the State Department said. (*Reuters*)

**International:**

- The Group of Seven (G-7) nations on Sunday issued a joint statement calling for the complete denuclearization of North Korea, while welcoming the commitment of Washington under President Joe Biden to engage with Pyongyang through diplomacy. (*Yonhap*)
- A group of researchers at the Swiss Alpine Museum in Bern, a museum dedicated to the nature and culture of the Swiss Alps as well as other mountains around the world, decided to focus on how mountains shape the identity, culture and economy of North Korea. (Kwon Mee-yoo, *The Korea Times*)
- Aircraft carriers have been the primary capital ship of naval combat since the 1940s, and remain the currency of modern naval power. (Robert Farley, *The National Interest*)

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Prepared by Scott Cho, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250812164840/https://mailchi.mp/4e4f85bad085/hrnk-news-itemsg-7-calls-for-complete-denuclearization-of-n-korea-welcomes-washingtons-diplomacy-towards-pyongyang-communique?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, June 14, 2021**

## "North Korean Authorities Also Tried to Contact Christopher Ahn's Lawyer"

**Top News:**
"North Korean Authorities Also Tried to Contact Christopher Ahn's Lawyer" (*RFA*, 6/9/2021)
**This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**
After 29,615 tested, North Korea says it's still COVID-free (*NK News*, 6/14/2021)
Kim Jong-un calls K-pop 'vicious cancer' (*The Korea Times*, 6/14/2021)
N.K. leader sends birthday gift to miner to emphasize 'self-reliance' (*Yonhap*, 6/14/2021)
North Korea tries to accelerate building of walls and fences along border with China(*Daily*NK, 6/14/2021)
Ordinary Pyongyang residents have not received government rations since mid-April(*Daily*NK, 6/14/2021)
2.5 magnitude natural quake hits N. Korea's northeastern region: KMA (*Yonhap*, 6/14/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Busan to bid for World Expo in 2030 (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 6/14/2021)
Inoculations ramp up, along with vaccine mishaps (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 6/13/2021)
Moon says S. Korea will push for COVID-19 vaccine supplies if North Korea agrees(*Yonhap*, 6/14/2021)
Moon signs on to Biden's statement on freedoms (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 6/14/2021)
S. Korea to conduct Dokdo defense drill this week (*Yonhap*, 6/14/2021)
Unification ministry urges N. Korea to respond to calls for talks ahead of summit anniv. (*Yonhap*, 6/14/2021)

**International:**
China's border city with North Korea suffers blockage, tourism loss (*Kyodo News*, 6/13/2021)
Japan unilaterally broke plan for Moon-Suga meeting at G-7 (*The Korea Herald*, 6/14/2021)
North Korea could have 40 to 50 nuclear weapons, think tank says (*UPI*, 6/14/2021)
Serious talk at G7 (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/14/2021)
Spanish evidence claims Free Joseon used violence, weapons during embassy breach (*NK News*, 6/14/2021)

**Top News:**

- It has been revealed that the North Korean authorities have even tried to reach the lawyer of Christopher Ahn, who is undergoing an extradition hearing relating to a raid on the North Korean embassy in Spain. Greg Scarlatoiu told Radio Free Asia "There is no doubt that there is a significant threat to Christopher Ahn. If North Korea finds out the whereabouts of Adrian Hong Chang, it will be a great threat to his personal safety. Virtually everyone involved in this case can be considered to be in danger." (Ji Jeong-un, RFA)

**In North Korea:**

- Self-reported data to the WHO continues record streak while no apparent progress made on vaccine deliveries to DPRK (Kim Jeong-min, *NK News*)
- A recent media report that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un defined K-pop as a "vicious cancer" is shedding spotlight on the regime's culture war. (Yoon Ja-young, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has sent a birthday gift to a miner in South Hamgyong Province, state media said Monday, in an apparent effort to stress "self-reliance" in the face of global sanctions. (*Yonhap*)
- As North Korea continues to build concrete walls and high-voltage wires along the entire Sino-North Korean border, the country's leadership recently sent a "storm trooper contingent" to certain border regions in Yanggang Province to accelerate construction efforts. (Ha Yoon-ah, *DailyNK*)
- Ordinary residents of Pyongyang have not received government rations since mid-April, Daily NK has learned. The authorities are reportedly scrambling to come up with a plan to distribute rations as discontent spreads in Pyongyang amid recent hikes in prices of gasoline, diesel fuel and even food commodities like rice and corn. (Jang Seul-kee, *DailyNK*)
- A 2.5 magnitude natural earthquake has struck North Korea's northeastern region, South Korea's state weather agency said Monday. The quake occurred about 40 kilometers northwest of Kilju, North Hamkyong Province, at 11:57 p.m. Sunday, according to the Korea Meteorological Administration (KMA). Kilju is where North Korea's nuclear testing site is located. (*Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- Busan is hoping to host the World Expo in 2030, the city government announced Monday. (Hwang Sun-yoon, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The first death in Korea after a Janssen Covid-19 vaccine was reported Sunday, while five people were accidentally administered five doses of the vaccine each last week, apparently without ill effect. (Seo Ji-eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in said Monday his country will, if Pyongyang agrees, push proactively for cooperation to provide COVID-19 vaccine supplies to North Korea. (*Yonhap*)
- President Moon Jae-in signed a statement along with other world leaders calling for human rights and democratic rule of law -- becoming part of Washington's attempt to contain the rise of China. (Ser Myo-ja, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea plans to stage an annual military exercise on and around its easternmost islets of Dokdo this week to beef up the country's defense capabilities, sources said Monday. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)
- The unification ministry on Monday urged North Korea to respect the spirit of reconciliation and to respond to calls for dialogue ahead of the anniversary of the first-ever summit between the two Koreas over two decades ago. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Earlier this year, expectations briefly mounted that North Korea and China would resume land transportation in a couple of months, but in fact, there are no signs in Dandong that restrictions on travel between the two countries will be lifted anytime soon. (Tomoyuki Tachikawa, *Kyodo News*)

- South Korean President Moon Jae-in and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga had agreed to hold talks on the sidelines of the G-7 summit in England, but Japan unilaterally called the meeting off, citing the Dokdo issue, according to the Foreign Ministry on Monday. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea continues to develop weapons of mass destruction and the regime is believed to have increased its nuclear arsenal, according to a Swedish think tank. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- The key themes of the G7 Summit in the UK from Friday through Sunday were checking China's rise, North Korean denuclearization, Covid-19 and climate change. Except for denuclearization and climate challenges, most issues involved a critical approach to China. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Newly released court documents contain transcripts of interviews with authorities after the Madrid embassy raid, with the North Korean diplomatic staff saying some at the embassy were left needing stitches. Photos included in the court documents show an array of weapons that Free Joseon members brought into the embassy compound, and CCTV footage appears to show multiple North Koreans in handcuffs. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)

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**"North Korean Authorities Also Tried to Contact Christopher Ahn's Lawyer"**

Anchor: It turns out that North Korean authorities have tried to reach out to Christopher Ahn, who was involved in the North Korean embassy incident in Spain, as well as his lawyer. Experts also suggested that North Korea poses a threat to all involved in the incident. Reporter Ji Jeong-eun reports.

It has been revealed that the North Korean authorities have even tried to reach the lawyer of Christopher Ahn, who is undergoing an extradition hearing relating to a raid on the North Korean embassy in Spain.

According to a document released by the Federal District Court of Los Angeles (LA), California, USA on the 8th, Attorney Na-eun Lim, who is representing Ahn, submitted a written statement to the court in February.

The document was kept private at the time, but on the 8th, Judge Jean Rosenbluth decided to disclose it, and the related facts became known.

According to the document, on July 31, 2019, FBI agent Bill McCabe spoke with Attorney Lim over the phone to inform her that the North Korean side planned to approach Lim.

In particular, Agent Mcabe said that the North Korean side planned to personally approach Lim to find out what Christopher Ahn's attorney, Lim, knew about the whereabouts of Adrian Hong Chang, the head of Free Chosun.

Adrian Hong Chang is known as the mastermind behind the raid on the embassy, and his whereabouts remain unclear.
The U.S. government first identified this fact and reported it to Attorney Lim, but the conversation was kept confidential.

However, it is not known whether North Korean agents and others actually contacted Attorney Lim.

According to the document, FBI agent McCabe also said that a credible threat from North Korea to the lives of Free Chosun members, including Christopher Ahn, still exists, and insisted that Ahn should not leave the United States, for personal safety reasons.

Attorney Na-eun Lim told Radio Free Asia on the 9th, "I don't know if North Korea has ever tried to approach me. What I do know is that the FBI called to warn me of that fact."

"I've never met Adrian Hong Chang and I don't know where he is," she said. "In my 13 years as a lawyer, this is the only time I've ever received a call from the FBI warning about my safety and the safety of my clients."

"It is very disappointing that the United States has chosen to continue this trial in spite of these risks," she added.

In this regard, Sung-yoon Lee, a professor at Tufts University, who attended the extradition hearing against Ahn last month as a witness, told Free Asia Broadcasting (RFA) on the 9th, “North Korea intends to use all means and methods, including coercion and intimidation against Lim, and they are trying to find Ahn and Adrian Hong Chang and all the people involved in the raid on the North Korean embassy.”

Professor Lee added, “This reinforces the common-sense assumption that the North Korean authorities will use all means and methods to gain access to Mr. Ahn if he is extradited to Spain.”

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Human Rights Commission in North Korea (HRNK) also told Radio Free Asia (RFA) that North Korea poses a threat to everyone involved in the incident.

Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director: There is no doubt that there is a significant threat to Christopher Ahn. If North Korea finds out the whereabouts of Adrian Hong Chang, it will be a great threat to his personal safety. Virtually everyone involved in this case can be considered to be in danger.

David Maxwell, a senior researcher at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracy (FDD), told Radio Free Asia on the same day, “People who do not believe that Christopher Ahn is in danger do not understand the essence, purpose and strategy of the Kim Jong-un regime.”

"Free Chosun has become a threat to the North Korean regime. Mr. Ahn and Adrian Hong Chang helped the family of Kim Jong-nam (son, Kim Han-sol), the half-brother of Kim Jong-un," said Maxwell. He pointed out that the North Korean regime must have been outraged by the incident.

He added, "The murder of Kim Jong-nam in Malaysia has proven that the North Korean regime's security organizations are capable of conducting covert operations abroad."

Meanwhile, Ahn currently denies all allegations and claims that the raid on the North Korean embassy in Spain was a disguised kidnapping at the request of a North Korean diplomat to help him escape.

Reporter: Ji Jeong-un (RFA)
Translated by: Doohyun Kim (HRNK)
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Prepared by Caroline Ward, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250812165043/https://mailchi.mp/520172a388f2/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-korean-authorities-also-tried-to-contact-christopher-ahns-lawyer?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, June 15, 2021**

## NATO calls for complete denuclearization of DPRK; Border patrol unit placed into quarantine following "paratyphoid" outbreak

**In North Korea:**
Apparent jet ski activity ramps up near Kim Jong Un's east coast retreat (*NK News*, 06/15/21)
Citizens Anxious as Food Prices Fluctuate in North Korea (*Radio Free Asia*, 06/14/21)
Entire border patrol unit in North Hamgyong Province placed into quarantine following "paratyphoid" outbreak (*Daily NK*, 06/15/21)
Price spike: Shampoo now selling for $200 in Pyongyang, bananas for $45 (*NK News*, 06/15/21)
There are signs that North Korea is running into serious difficulties with its corn harvest (*Daily NK*, 06/15/21)

**In South Korea:**
S. Korea to deploy mobile robots, AI-based surveillance system in border areas(*Korea Herald*, 06/15/21)
Saemangeum to be mecca of green industries in Korea (*Korea Herald*, 06/15/21)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Minister vows efforts to resume stalled talks with N. Korea on summit anniv. (*Yonhap*, 06/15/21)
Moon Jae-in says South Korea could supply COVID-19 vaccines to North (*UPI*, 06/14/21)
Seoul PM urges Pyongyang leadership to engage in dialogue for Korean peace (*Yonhap*, 06/15/21)
South Korea willing to provide COVID vaccines to North Korea, says Moon Jae-in(*NK News*, 06/14/21)
Unification minister puts U.S. trip on hold amid uncertain inter-Korean relations(*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/15/21)
Unification ministry calls on N. Korea to restore inter-Korean communication channels (*Yonhap*, 06/15/21)

**International:**
2021 G7 Summit & Korea's New Role (*Arirang Issue*, 06/14/21)
After nearly 71 years, a Korean War veteran returns home and is laid to rest (*Siouxland Proud*, 06/15/21)
Controversy rises after film about murder of NK leader's brother denied art film status (*Korea Herald*, 06/15/21)
In Europe, Moon talks up vaccine partnerships (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/15/21)
NATO calls for complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization of DPRK (*NK News*, 06/15/21)
NATO leaders call on N. Korea to engage in dialogue with U.S. (*Yonhap*, 06/15/21)
Out of the freezer (KOR) (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/15/21)
Serious talk at G7 (KOR) (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/15/21)
South Korean, Austrian leaders express intention to supply vaccines to North Korea(*Korea Times*, 06/15/21)
Unification minister's trip to Washington postponed (*Korea Herald*, 06/15/21)
US pledges Pfizer vaccines to low-income economies, including North Korea (*NK News*, 06/15/21)
U.S. supports provision of COVID-19 vaccine to N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 06/15/21)

**In North Korea:**
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un or those around him may have taken to riding jet skis in the waters off his east coast mansion complex this month, according to *NK News* analysis of satellite imagery. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Koreans are growing anxious as food prices have begun to fluctuate wildly amid uncertainty over the reopening of the border with China and the resumption of trade with Pyongyang's largest trading partner. (Eugene Whong, *Radio Free Asia*)
- An entire border patrol unit in Gyongsong County, North Hamgyong Province, has been put into quarantine after many of its members began suffering from fevers, Daily NK has learned. (Kim Yoo Jin, *Daily NK*)
- The cost of some imported goods has once again dramatically increased in Pyongyang, an informed source told *NK News* on Tuesday, with some shampoo selling for U.S. $200 and a kilogram of bananas for $45. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)

- Insufficient supplies of basic agricultural supplies such as fertilizer and farm machinery, combined with a lack of proper manpower, have reportedly caused corn fields to be overrun by weeds. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea plans to deploy moving robots on guard missions and establish an artificial intelligence (AI)-based surveillance system in border areas to beef up border security, the arms procurement agency said Tuesday. (*Korea Herald*)
- Saemangeum, located in the west of South Korea, is drawing wide attention under the government's fresh vision to foster the area, where futuristic, eco-friendly industries as well as tour destinations can coexist. (Kim Yon-se, *Korea Herald*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korea will strive to resume the long-suspended dialogue and exchanges with North Korea, Unification Minister Lee In-young said Tuesday as the country marked the 21st anniversary of the first-ever inter-Korean summit in 2000. (*Yonhap*)
- Seoul will seek to supply COVID-19 vaccines to North Korea if the South becomes a global vaccine hub, President Moon Jae-in said Monday. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- South Korea's prime minister on Tuesday urged Pyongyang to engage in dialogue with Seoul in hopes of reviving the stalled peace process on the Korean Peninsula. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in on Monday said that the country is willing to provide COVID-19 vaccines to North Korea amid a delay in the delivery of AstraZeneca vaccines to the North. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young has put a plan to visit the United States this month on hold considering uncertainty over inter-Korean relations, a ministry official said Tuesday. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The unification ministry urged North Korea on Tuesday to restore inter-Korean communication lines immediately as this week marks one year since the cross-border communication lines were suspended. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- On Sunday, the curtains fell on the three-day G7 Summit in the UK with the release of a joint communique between the gathered leaders. (*Arirang Issue*)
- A summit between the US and North Korea in 2018 led to the return of the remains of the man they called "Uncle Eldy". After 71 years, it was a return many thought wouldn't happen. (Jason Takhtadjian, *Siouxland Proud*)
- A US documentary film about the murder of the North Korean leader's brother Kim Jong-nam has come into the spotlight as the South Korean film authority refused to give the work the status of an art movie. (*Korea Herald*)
- Korea wants help from Europe to become a global vaccine production hub, President Moon Jae-in stressed Tuesday in a videoconference with Franz-Werner Haas, CEO of German biotech company CureVac, while on a visit to Austria. (Sarah Kim, Ser Myo-Ja, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) vowed to work toward the "complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of North Korea" in a joint statement on Monday after holding a summit in Brussels. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

- The United States and 29 other member countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) urged North Korea on Monday to engage in "meaningful" dialogue with the U.S. toward complete denuclearization. (*Yonhap*)
- In an another ugly turn, Korea and Japan are bent on blaming each other for the cancellation of a meeting between President Moon Jae-in and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in the UK. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The key themes of the G7 Summit in the UK from Friday through Sunday were checking China's rise, North Korean denuclearization, Covid-19 and climate change. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen said the country will provide help to North Korea if Pyongyang showed "signs." (Nam Hyun-Woo,*Korea Times*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young's planned trip to the US has been put off, his office said Tuesday, as Pyongyang remains largely unresponsive to overtures from Seoul and Washington. (Ahn Sung-mi, *Korea Herald*)
- The U.S. has decided to purchase 500 million doses of Pfizer vaccines to provide to developing countries including North Korea, the U.S. State Department and global vaccine alliance Gavi confirmed to *NK News* this week. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- The United States has no immediate plan to directly provide COVID-19 vaccine to North Korea but supports international efforts to assist the impoverished country cope with the pandemic, the State Department said Monday. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Emalyn Atkins, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250812165510/https://mailchi.mp/86e385332d1e/hrnk-news-items-nato-calls-for-complete-denuclearization-of-dprk-border-patrol-unit-placed-into-quarantine-following-paratyphoid-outbreak?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, June 16, 2021**

## International human rights organization "The U.S. and the EU need to discuss issues pertaining to human rights in North Korea."

**Top News:**
International human rights organization "The U.S. and the EU need to discuss issues pertaining to human rights in North Korea" (*RFA*, 06/08/2021)
**This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**

Kim warns of 'tense' food situation, longer COVID lockdown (*AP News*, 06/16/2021)
Ministry of State Security continues to conduct random arrests of illegal cell phone users near border (*Daily* NK, 06/16/2021)
New research center formed to develop "personal security equipment" to protect Kim Jong Un during on-the-spot inspections (*Daily* NK, 06/16/2021)
N.K. leader opens key party meeting to discuss how to cope with 'current international situation' (*Yonhap*, 06/16/2021)
N Korea's Kim looks much thinner, causing health speculation (*AP News*, 06/16/2021)
NK ruling party meeting tackles food shortage, 'current international situation' (*The Korea Herald*, 06/16/21)
North Korea Hints at 'Prolonged' COVID Lockdown (VOA, 06/16/2021)
North Korea Is Facing a 'Tense' Food Shortage (*The New York Times*, 06/16/2021)
North Korea's ruling party rule revisions presage trouble at the top (*NK News*, 06/16/2021)
Turning Waste into Treasure: North Korea's Recycling Push (*38 North*, 06/15/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Cheonan captain's document shows military didn't respond to warnings (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/16/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
End of North Korean unification magazine another sign of friction on peninsula (*NK News*, 06/16/2021)
Moon Jae-in Suggests He Could Send COVID-19 Vaccines to North Korea (*National Interest*, 06/16/2021)
North Korea's Kim Jong-un isn't a K-pop fan anymore (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/16/2021)
Ruling party chief proposes small modular reactors as way of energy aid to nuke-free N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 06/16/2021)

**International:**
JCS chairman visits military units on western border island (*Yonhap*, 06/16/2021)
Kritenbrink pledges efforts to strengthen alliance, denuclearize Korean Peninsula(*Yonhap*, 06/15/2021)
Note to President Biden: Talk to Kim Jong Un (*38 North*, 06/15/2021)
Russian Embassy in Pyongyang to send large number of staff home soon (*NK News*,06/16/2021)
Sanctions important for denuclearizing DPRK, says US nominee for top Asia post(*NK News*, 06/16/2021)

**Top News:**

- While the United States and the European Union prepare for the summit on June 15, human rights organizations urge that the summit needs to discuss the human rights issue of North Korea. Meanwhile, in an interview with RFA, the executive director of HRNK (The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea), Greg Scarlatoiu, also emphasized that the human rights issue of North Korea must be discussed in the US-EU summit.
  "It is an opportunity to emphasize the importance of a rules-based international order.

It is significant to highlight this tragic case of North Korea that comprises both great security challenges and human rights violations," he said. (Ji Jung-eun, RFA)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un warned about possible food shortages and urged the country to brace for extended COVID-19 restrictions as he opened a major political conference to discuss national efforts to salvage a broken economy. (Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)
- Detention centers are reportedly filling up as the Ministry of State Security continues to conduct random arrests of illegal cell phone users near the Sino-North Korean border. A Daily NK source claimed that some of those arrested previously in North Hamgyong and Yanggang provinces have been publicly executed. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- In early June, North Korea's Military Security Command established a new research center to develop personal security equipment to protect leader Kim Jong Un during his inspection visits to military bases. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un opened a key Workers' Party meeting to discuss ways to deal with the "current international situation," food shortages, anti-pandemic efforts and other economic issues, state media said Wednesday. (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)
- The health of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has long been a source of morbid fascination in rival South Korea, which sits in the shadow of Kim's 1.2-million-strong army and his growing arsenal of nuclear-armed missiles. (Hyung-jin Kim, Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un convened an important ruling party meeting on Tuesday to discuss ways to tackle the country's food shortage and deal with the "current international situation," state media said Wednesday. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un warned of "prolonged" anti-coronavirus measures, the latest indication his country's strict lockdown will not end anytime soon. (William Gallo, *VOA*)
- North Korea is bracing itself for a possible food crisis in the coming months. Kim Jong-un, the North Korean leader, issued a rare warning about a "tense" food situation brought about by extensive flooding, the coronavirus pandemic and international sanctions, the state news media reported on Wednesday. (Choe Sang-hun, *The New York Times*)
- Recently, *NK News* acquired the full text of the Workers' Party of Korea's (WPK) rules and it is a remarkable document indeed. The new 2021 rules, officially approved in January at the Eighth Party Congress but not published in open media, clearly indicate that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and his inner circle believe they are heading toward trouble. (Andrei Lankov, *NK News*)
- North Korea is undergoing something of a recycling revolution. Workplaces and homes across the country are being urged to recycle waste material and, according to state media, are responding. But this is about much more than bottles, cans and paper. (Martyn Williams, *38 North*)

**In South Korea:**

- Captain Choi Won-il of the Navy corvette Cheonan handed a document to the JoongAng Ilbo Tuesday which shows the military took no measures in response to warnings of

North Korean preparations for an attack at sea. (Park Yong-han, Michael Lee, Korea JoongAng Daily)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The past year has been a troubling period for North Korean institutions that handle inter-Korean dialogue. In June 2020, Pyongyang destroyed the inter-Korean liaison office in Kaesong, and in March 2021 the North threatened to abolish the Committee for Peaceful Reunification of the Country, the counterpart to the South's Ministry of Unification. (Martin Weiser, *NK News*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in, while speaking at a joint press conference with Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen following a summit meeting between the two leaders, suggested that South Korea could send COVID-19 vaccines to North Korea. (Eli Fuhrman, *National Interest*)
- North Korea has turned its back on K-pop, seeing it as a threat to socialism, despite welcoming a performance by popular South Korean girl group Red Velvet in Pyongyang just three years ago. (Sarah Kim, Jeong Yong-soo, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The head of South Korea's ruling party on Wednesday proposed the installation of small modular reactors (SMRs) in North Korea, calling it a useful way to supply energy to the country when it is free from nuclear weapons. "Under the precondition of resolving the North Korean nuclear issue, SMRs could be a useful way to supply energy to North Korea that has many mountainous regions and a shortage of power transmission and distribution networks," Rep. Song Young-gil, chairman of the ruling Democratic Party (DP), said in his speech to a parliamentary plenary session. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Won In-choul visited military units on the western border island of Yeonpyeong Wednesday and called for a staunch posture against any contingencies, his office said. His visit to Navy and Marine Corps bases on the frontline island in the Yellow Sea came on the first anniversary of North Korea's blowing up of an inter-Korean liaison office in its border city of Kaesong in protest over anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets flown by South Korean activists. (Grace Oh, *Yonhap*)
- Daniel Kritenbrink, nominee for U.S. assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, said Tuesday that he would work to strengthen the U.S. alliance with South Korea and other key allies, if confirmed. The U.S. ambassador to Vietnam also pledged efforts to completely denuclearize the Korean Peninsula through diplomacy. (Byun Duk-hun, *Yonhap*)
- The Biden administration recently announced its review of US policy toward the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is complete. While some signs are encouraging, such as the appointment of Ambassador Sung Kim as special representative for North Korea Policy, others are disappointing and risk undoing some of the gains made by former President Donald Trump and Chairman Kim Jong Un at the 2018 Singapore Summit. (Kenneth B. Dekleva, *38 North*)
- The Russian Embassy in Pyongyang plans to send home a large number of staff and family members this summer, multiple informed sources told *NK News*, further shrinking the skeletal international presence inside North Korea. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)

- Secondary sanctions on North Korea, along with the international sanctions imposed by the United Nations, are "important" tools in pressuring North Korea to denuclearize, a top U.S. official nominated to lead the State Department's East Asian and Pacific affairs bureau said on Tuesday. (Jeongmin Kim, NK News)

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**International human rights organization "The U.S. and the EU need to discuss issues pertaining to human rights in North Korea."**

Anchor: While the United States and the European Union prepare for the summit on 15 June, human rights organizations urge that the summit needs to discuss the human rights issue of North Korea. Reporter Ji Jung-Eun.

In an interview with the RFA (Radio Free Asia) last week, Phil Robertson, the deputy director (Asia Division) of Human Rights Watch, said that "the human rights crisis of North Korea must be immediately discussed in any circumstances."

He underlined that the "Kim Jung-Un regime reinforced its dictatorship and oppressive policies while the entire world was paying attention solely to the pandemic issue."

According to the director, in North Korea today, the citizens could face the death penalty or imprisonment not only by attempting to escape the country but through watching foreign videos, wearing trendy clothes, and fixing one's hair like K-pop stars.

He then pointed out that "the task of the US-EU summit is to deliver the message to North Korean officials that there cannot be any diplomatic reconciliation, resolution of the international economic relations, halting the consistent pressure on the North Korean government until the authorities consider the human rights situation."

Also, "the crisis occurring in North Korea is an insult to the international human rights law system that the US and the EU advocate. Thus, the summit needs to address the threat that is coming from North Korea."

Meanwhile, in an interview with RFA on the same day, the executive director of HRNK (The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea) also emphasized that the human rights issue of North Korea must be discussed in the US-EU summit.

Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu: It is an opportunity to emphasize the importance of a rules-based international order. It is significant to highlight this tragic case of North Korea that comprises both great security challenges and human rights violations.

Last month, he sent out a letter to Antony Blinken (United States Secretary of State) urging that "the upcoming summit would be an excellent opportunity for the United States and the European Union to discuss a coordinated approach to bring human rights, security, and denuclearization to the Korean Peninsula."

The message of the letter also included that both sides in the summit must cooperate to make a breakthrough concerning the human rights and the denuclearization of North Korea as the approach of the Biden Administration to the human rights, denuclearization, and sanctions on North Korea shares many similarities with the European Union whose diplomatic approach to North Korea is known as 'Critical Engagement.'

He anticipates that the discussion regarding human rights and the escapees from North Korea would reinforce confidence that the United States and the European Union are devoted to taking an uncompromising approach to advocate the human rights of the North Korean citizens.

He further added that since the United States and the European Union are currently expanding cooperation fields and pursuing multilateral diplomacy, addressing human rights crisis in North Korea could be a concrete example of cooperation.

Executive director Greg Scarlatoiu also sent a letter to the high representative of the European Union for foreign affairs and security policy Joseph Borrell, stating that even though the role of the EU concerning the issues in the Korean Peninsula had been limited on previous occasions, such as the Geneva Agreement between the US and North Korea (1994) and the Six-Party Talks (2003), the EU has the potential to contribute to peace on the Korean Peninsula as the EU pursues advocating human rights and the multilateralism.

He specifically addressed that the EU, several of whose member states have embassies in Pyongyang and provided humanitarian aid to North Korea since 1995, has to resume conversation with North Korean authorities regarding politics and human rights and discuss with the United States to find solutions for the human rights crisis in North Korea by having summits and multilateral conferences.

Reporter: Ji Jeong-un (RFA)
Translated by: Juheung Kim (HRNK)

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Prepared by Audrey Gregg, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250812165733/https://mailchi.mp/1fa70b2e7ecd/hrnk-news-itemsinternational-human-rights-organization-the-us-and-the-eu-need-to-discuss-issues-pertaining-to-human-rights-in-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, June 17, 2021**

# Kim Jong-un admits North Korea facing a 'tense' food shortage; North Korea mistakenly credited with $300,000 in aid to Myanmar

**In North Korea:**
A growing number of South Pyongan Province households are suffering from food shortages (*DailyNK*, 6/17/2021)
Kim Jong-un admits North Korea facing a 'tense' food shortage (*BBC*, 6/17/2021)
Kim Jong Un warns that North Korea is running out of food as reports say a bunch of bananas now costs $45 (*Business Insider*, 6/17/2021)
N.K. holds key party meeting for second day with focus on economy (*Yonhap*, 6/17/2021)
North Korea Cracks Down on Illegal Phone Calls to China and South Korea (RFA, 6/16/2021)
North Korea Has Been Importing Chinese COVID-19 Vaccines Since Early May(RFA, 6/15/2021)
North Korea mistakenly credited with $300,000 in foreign aid to post-coup Myanmar(UPI, 6/17/2021)
North Korea short 860,000 tons of food this year, U.N. agency says (UPI, 6/15/2021)
North Korea's top diplomat attends second day of Party meeting (UPI, 6/17/2021)
Ruling party chief proposes small modular reactors as energy aid to North Korea(*The Korea Times*, 6/16/2021)
Shampoo Is Now $200 in North Korea. That Is Bad News. (*The National Interest*, 6/16/2021)
Some of North Korea's state-run food stores are selling processed foods in addition to rice and corn (*DailyNK*, 6/17/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Moon expresses hope for closer S. Korea-Spain exchange at bilateral tourism biz roundtable (*Yonhap*, 6/17/2021)
Moon's loyalists blast Suga for avoiding G7 meeting (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 6/17/2021)
PPP sees influx of young members following new leader's sensational election(*Yonhap*, 6/17/2021)
S.Korea provides $900,000 for U.N. Myanmar aid (*Reuters*, 6/17/2021)
112 Uzbek migrant workers enter country through gov't program (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 6/17/2021)

**International:**
Both sanctions and diplomacy critical to denuclearizing North Korea: Kritenbrink(*The Korea Times*, 6/16/2021)
Debates arise over call to cancel joint military drills (*The Korea Times*, 6/17/2021)
'Goodwill' gestures, suspension of joint military drills needed to bring N. Korea to dialogue: experts (*Yonhap*, 6/17/2021)
MacArthur Really Wanted to Nuke Korea (*The National Interest*, 6/17/2021)
Moon wraps up Europe visit highlighted by G-7 summit, upgraded ties with Austria, Spain (*Yonhap*, 6/17/2021)
S. Korea's nuke envoy to hold bilateral, trilateral talks with U.S., Japanese counterparts next week (*Yonhap*, 6/17/2021)

U.N. discloses thousands of files related to North Korea human rights abuses (UPI, 6/16/2021)
US envoy for North Korea to visit Seoul for three-way talks with Japan (*The Korea Herald*, 6/17/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- A growing number of households in South Pyongan Province are suffering from food shortages due to the prolonged closure of the Sino-North Korean border, Daily NK has learned. (Jang Seul-kee, *DailyNK*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has formally acknowledged that his country is facing food shortages. Addressing a meeting of senior leaders, Mr Kim said: "The people's food situation is now getting tense". (Laura Bicker, *BBC*)
- Kim Jong Un has warned that North Korea is struggling to maintain food supplies, as reports say prices of everyday goods are skyrocketing. (Bill Bostock, *Business Insider*)
- North Korea held a key Workers' Party meeting for the second day with a focus on economic issues, according to state media Thursday, amid speculation that foreign policy could also have been discussed. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has recently begun a harsh crackdown on international phone calls to South Korea and China, which hard-pressed residents of areas near the Chinese border rely on as channels for remittances from relatives in exile, sources in the country told RFA. (Lee Myung-chul, Park Jeong-yon, Jun Lee-jin, Eugene Whong, RFA)
- North Korea has begun clandestinely importing Chinese COVID-19 vaccines since early May, but sources on both sides of the Sino-Korean border told RFA they were unsure how much vaccine is entering the reclusive country. (Son Hye-min, Ji Jeong-eun, Lee Myung-chul, Jun Lee-jin, Eugene Whong, RFA)
- North Korea, usually a recipient of international humanitarian assistance, was mistakenly credited with donating $300,000 to a United Nations-led fund to provide aid to Myanmar on Thursday before the information was corrected by the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs financial tracking service. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- North Korea is short 860,000 tons of food, and the situation could get worse in August, according to the United Nations. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Son Gwon was in attendance at the third plenary meeting of the Workers' Party's Eighth Central Committee on Day 2 of the event, but state media did not mention foreign policy. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- The head of South Korea's ruling party on Wednesday proposed the installation of small modular reactors (SMRs) in North Korea, calling it a useful way to supply energy to the country when it is free from nuclear weapons. (*The Korea Times*)
- Prices on some goods have risen dramatically in North Korea recently, according to various news outlets. The price increases come amid North Korea's continued border closures and stalled foreign trade as the country continues to take efforts to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus within its borders. (Eli Fuhrman, *The National Interest*)
- State-run food stores in some parts of North Korea are selling processed foods in addition to rice and corn, Daily NK has learned. The lack of processed food, however, has made it difficult for state officials to uniformly distribute these food products to the stores. (Jang Seul-kee, *DailyNK*)

**In South Korea:**

- President Moon Jae-in on Thursday expressed hope for South Korean and Spain to form closer and more active ties in the tourism sector going forward, with the countries having decided to extend a bilateral travel exchange campaign that was canceled due to the pandemic. (*Yonhap*)
- President Moon Jae-in's key aides on Thursday blasted Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga for breaking an arrangement to meet on the sidelines of the Group of Seven (G7) summit, which they branded a political ploy to look good at home. (Ser Myo-ja, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The conservative main opposition People Power Party (PPP) has seen an influx of new members, especially those in their 20s and 30s, in the wake of the sensational ascent of young new party leader Lee Jun-seok. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea has provided $900,000 to a U.N.-led humanitarian aid initiative for Myanmar, U.N. data showed on Thursday. (Shin Hyon-hee, *Reuters*)
- A total of 112 Uzbekistanis entered Korea a week ago to work across farms in Yeongyang County, North Gyeongsang, the county office announced Thursday. The Uzbeks came through an official program organized by the government to legally work in Korea as seasonal migrant workers. (Kim Youn-ho, Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- Strict and continued enforcement of sanctions on North Korea while also seeking to engage with the reclusive state diplomatically are important to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the nominee for U.S. assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs said Tuesday. (*The Korea Times*)
- A debate has arisen over whether South Korea and the U.S. should cancel their annual joint military exercises scheduled to be held in August, with some government officials and experts — who advocate engagement with North Korea — saying Pyongyang will not return to denuclearization talks as long as they continue to be held. (Jung Da-min, *The Korea Times*)
- The United States and South Korea need to make more conciliatory gestures, including a suspension of their planned joint military exercise, to bring North Korea back to the negotiating table, U.S. and South Korean experts said Wednesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- General MacArthur felt that a nuclear attack could achieve victory quickly and efficiently. "... I would have dropped between 30 to 50 tactical atomic bombs on his air bases and other depots strung across the neck of Manchuria..." (*The National Interest*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in headed back to Seoul on Thursday after a weeklong trip to Europe, during which he focused on making clear Seoul's commitment to playing a bigger role in global issues and improving strategic ties with Austria and Spain. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's top nuclear envoy, Noh Kyu-duk, will hold bilateral and trilateral talks with his U.S. and Japanese counterparts in Seoul next week to discuss cooperation over the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the foreign ministry said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)

- The United Nations has a record of more than 3,830 files of North Korea-related human rights violations and is maintaining an electronic archive for future legal reference. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- Sung Kim, the newly appointed US special envoy for North Korea, is set to visit South Korea on Saturday for a three-way meeting with his counterparts in Seoul and Tokyo, the Foreign Ministry said Thursday. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Caroline Ward, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250812170328/https://mailchi.mp/a86dac4e0e49/hrnk-news-items-kim-jong-un-admits-north-korea-facing-a-tense-food-shortage-north-korea-mistakenly-credited-with-300000-in-aid-to-myanmar?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, June 18, 2021**

## North Korea hackers target S.Korea nuclear think tank; Kim Jong-un prepares for 'dialogue and confrontation' with the US

**In North Korea:**
In North Korea a packet of coffee costs $100, and that's a problem for Kim Jong Un(CNN, 06/18/2021)
North Korea encourages cell phone users to install new "cooking app" (*Daily NK*, 06/18/2021)
Poster of nuke attack on US still on display slips past North Korean censors (*NK News*, 06/17/2021)
Why you can't believe everything you read about North Korea (*NK News*, 06/17/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Foreign Ministry considers requesting probe into Pyongyang map mishap at P4G(*The Korea Herald*, 06/18/2021)
NK hackers attacked S Korean atomic energy think tank (*The Korea Herald*, 06/18/2021)
N.K. propaganda outlet criticizes Seoul court ruling on forced labor victims as 'sophistry' (*Yonhap*, 06/18/2021)
'North Korea hacked into South Korean nuclear energy institute' (*The Korea Times*, 06/18/2021)
North Korea hackers target S.Korea nuclear think tank - lawmaker (*Reuters*, 06/18/2021)
**International:**
Another US official handling North Korea issues to visit Seoul this weekend (*NK News*, 06/18/2021)
Kim Jong Un: North Korea must be prepared for 'confrontation' with U.S. (*UPI*, 06/18/2021)
Kim Jong-un prepares for 'dialogue and confrontation' with the US (*BBC*, 06/18/2021)
Kim Jong-un pushes to prep for talks and confrontation with U.S. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/18/2021)

Kim says N. Korea should be ready for both dialogue, confrontation with U.S.(*Yonhap*, 06/18/2021)
New U.S. special representative for N. Korea to visit Seoul this week: State Department (*Yonhap*, 06/18/2021)
Next Target: MacArthur Really Wanted to Nuke Korea (*National Interest*, 06/17/2021)
North Korea's Kim says it must prepare for 'both dialogue and confrontation' with US (*The Korea Times*, 06/18/2021)
North Korea's Kim vows to be ready for confrontation with US (*Reuters*, 06/18/2021)
North Korea should prepare for both talks and confrontation with US, says Kim (*NK News*, 06/17/2021)
Top US official on North Korea policy to visit Seoul June 19 to 23 (*NK News*,06/17/2021)
Will Pyongyang return to negotiating table? (*The Korea Times*, 06/18/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has bigger problems than the United States right now. He needs to feed his people, and his options are not good. The ruler of the secretive, hereditary communist dictatorship opened an important political meeting on Tuesday acknowledging the grim situation his country now faces. (Joshua Berlinger, Paula Hancocks, CNN)
- North Korean authorities have recently begun encouraging cell phone users to pay money to install a new cooking app on their phones, but many people who have used the app are disappointed with it. (Kim Yoo Jin, *Daily NK)*
- A poster depicting a nuclear missile attack against the United States was still on display at a North Korean factory last month, a state TV program showed Wednesday, a rare indication that anti-U.S. education remains active in the DPRK's carefully controlled state propaganda. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Early Thursday morning Korean time, Radio Free Asia reported in Korean that North Korea had donated $300,000 in COVID-19 relief to Myanmar, citing a U.N. database. This was quickly picked up by *Yonhap News Agency* and proliferated from there to other English and Korean media. (Martin Weiser, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korea's Foreign Ministry is considering requesting an investigation by state auditors or police to find out why a controversial video screened at the P4G summit showed Pyongyang instead of Seoul, and whether it was an intentional act or purely accidental. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- An opposition lawmaker claimed on Friday that a hacking unit of the North Korean intelligence agency attacked the internal network of a South Korean state-funded atomic energy think tank which holds critical information on nuclear power plants and nuclear materials. (Kim So-hyun, *The Korea Herald*)
- A North Korean propaganda media outlet on Friday criticized a recent South Korean court's rejection of a damages suit by wartime forced labor victims during Japan's colonial rule as a ruling based on nothing but "sophistry." (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's state-run institute dealing with nuclear-related technology was the target of an attack by a group of North Korean hackers, main opposition People Power Party lawmaker Ha Tae-keung said Friday. (Kim Rahn, *The Korea Times*)

- A North Korean hacking group known as Kimsuky broke into the network of South Korea's state-run nuclear think tank last month, the latest in a series of cyberattacks by the North, a South Korean lawmaker said on Friday. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)

**International:**

- The U.S. Deputy Special Representative for North Korea Jung H. Pak will visit South Korea this weekend alongside Sung Kim, the country's point man on North Korea affairs, according to the U.S. State Department. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un made his first public pronouncements on the United States under the Biden administration on Friday, saying Pyongyang must be "prepared for both dialogue and confrontation" with Washington, according to state-run media. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has said his country needs to prepare for both "dialogue and confrontation" with the US, and "especially to get fully prepared for confrontation". (BBC)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un stressed the need to prepare for both dialogue and confrontation with the United States during his address of the Workers' Party Thursday. (Esther Chung, Park Hyun-ju, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said the country should be ready for both dialogue and, more importantly, confrontation with the United States, while calling for efforts to stably control the situation on the Korean Peninsula, state media reported Friday. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- The new U.S. special representative for North Korea, Sung Kim, will travel to Seoul later this week for trilateral talks with his South Korean and Japanese counterparts, the State Department said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- Would MacArthur really have employed atomic weapons in Korea and Red China as the Considine interview asserted? One of his aides, Col. Sid Huff, wrote in his 1951 memoir My 15 Years With Gen. MacArthur, "I feel … that he didn't like the idea of using the atomic bomb against Japan, although I never heard him express a direct opinion on that question either before or after Hiroshima." But in a memo to President Eisenhower in December 1952, MacArthur suggests basically the same plan as he shared with Considine. (Warfare History Network, *National Interest*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has said his country needs to prepare for "both dialogue and confrontation" with the United States under President Joe Biden, state media reported Friday. (*The Korea Times*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ordered his government to be prepared for both dialogue and confrontation with the Biden administration — but more for confrontation — state media reported Friday, days after the United States and others urged the North to abandon its nuclear program and return to talks. (Hyung-jin Kim, *Reuters*)
- Kim Jong Un spoke of North Korea's policy on relations with the U.S. for the first time in months on Thursday, reportedly saying the country should prepare for dialogue but also improve readiness for conflict. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Sung Kim, Washington's new special representative for North Korea, is scheduled to visit South Korea this weekend and stay for several days, an official from Seoul's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) said on Thursday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un emphasized stable control of the situation on the Korean Peninsula, Friday, and said the isolated state should be ready for "both dialogue and confrontation," in an apparent conciliatory gesture toward South Korea and the United States. (Kwon Mee-yoo, *The Korea Times*)

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Prepared by Audrey Gregg, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250923223243/https://mailchi.mp/dfc6ea4029e2/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-korea-hackers-target-skorea-nuclear-think-tankkim-jong-un-prepares-for-dialogue-and-confrontation-with-the-us

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**Saturday, June 19, 2021**

## Push to honor Otto Warmbier by renaming street outside North Korean UN mission gets bipartisan support

**Top News:**
Push to honor Otto Warmbier by renaming street outside North Korean UN mission gets bipartisan support (*Fox News*, 6/19/2021)
Push to honor Otto Warmbier by renaming street outside North Korean UN mission gets bipartisan support (WCSI, republished from *Fox News*, 6/19/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Bad News: North Korea Is Suffering from Rapidly Rising Food Prices (*National Interest*, 6/18/2021)
Kim Carefully Nudges the Dialogue Door Open Wider (*38 North*, 6/18/2021)
Kim closes party meeting with plea for loyalty, vows to overcome 'difficulties' (*NK News*, 6/18/2021)
Kim Jong-un says North Korea preparing for 'dialogue and confrontation' with US (*The Guardian*, 6/18/2021)
Kim Jong-un says ready for negotiations with US as food shortages bite (*The Telegraph*, 6/18/2021)
N.K. leader vows to overcome difficulties as he concludes key party meeting: state media (*Yonhap*, 6/19/2021)
North Korea: Why doesn't it have enough food this year? (*BBC News*, 6/18/2021)
North Korean leader swears to overcome economic hardships (*AP News*, 6/19/2021)
N.Korea's Kim tightens ruling party discipline, appoints new politburo members (*Reuters*, 6/18/2021)
Special North Korean military investigation reveals combat reserve supply shortages (RFA, 6/18/2021)

**In South Korea**:
North Korea attempted to hack South Korea's nuclear think tank, lawmaker says (*ABC News*, 6/18/2021)
S. Korean man caught trying to cross western sea border into N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 6/18/2021)
South Korean man arrested after attempting to defect to North Korea (*UPI*, 6/18/2021)
**International:**
New U.S. nuke envoy arrives in Seoul (*Yonhap*, 6/19/2021)
U.S. brigade combat team arrives in S. Korea for rotational deployment (*Yonhap*, 6/19/2021)

**Top News:**

- The North Korean mission to the United Nations is located in a Manhattan office building at 820 Second Avenue, just one block from the U.N. Now, there are growing calls to change the building's address to: 820 "Otto Warmbier Way." Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director, provided his comments to Fox News: "The Kim regime imprisoned and killed Otto Warmbier," said HRNK Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu. "Millions of unknown North Koreans are similarly subjected to the brutality of this regime. More than a hundred thousand men, women and children are being tortured, starved, and abused in North Korea's political prison camps. Renaming the stretch of road in front of the North Korean permanent mission to the United Nations in New York City 'Otto Warmbier Way' could be the opening salvo in a global effort to call the Kim regime to account for its crimes." (Eric Shawn, *Fox News*)
- Otto Warmbier was a 22-year-old University of Virginia student on an educational tour of North Korea when he was falsely arrested, tortured and sent home to Cincinnati severely brain-damaged and unable to speak or hear. He died of his injuries on June 19, 2017. Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director, offered his comments regarding the push to rename 820 Second Avenue in Manhattan, the location of North Korea's mission to the UN, to 820 "Warmbier Way." (WCSI, republished from Eric Shawn, *Fox News*)

**In North Korea:**

- Storm damage to the country's agricultural sector and the inability of North Korea to replace the lost crops with imports, due to closed borders, have led to rising food prices, including sugar, soybean oil and flour. (Stephen Silver, *National Interest*)
- Kim Jong Un's comments on US policy at the ongoing party plenum—a notable shift from the heavily domestic agendas that dominated the series of meetings in the last few months—build on North Korea's messaging since the Eighth Party Congress that it is keeping the door open for reengagement. (*38 North*)
- North Korea's party plenum came to a close after four days on Friday, with Kim Jong Un reportedly taking the stage to call out "serious problems" with some top officials and make a fresh plea for loyalty and self-sacrifice. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has said his country needs to prepare for "both dialogue and confrontation" with the United States under Joe Biden, state media reported on Friday. (*The Guardian*)
- Kim Jong-un has declared that North Korea should be ready for negotiations with the United States, striking an unusually conciliatory note amid a growing economic crisis that has led to dire shortages of fuel and food. (Julian Ryall, *The Telegraph*)

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un vowed to break through difficulties facing the country as he concluded a key Workers' Party meeting after discussing ways to deal with food shortages and relations with the United States, state media said Saturday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has suffered deadly famines in the past and now its leader, Kim Jong-un, has warned of severe food shortages ahead. One of the clearest indicators of shortages is a rise in the price of basic foods. (Jack Goodman, Alistair Coleman, *BBC News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un "solemnly swore" to navigate his country out of deepening economic troubles as he concluded a major ruling party meeting, acknowledging food shortages and urging officials to prepare for both dialogue and confrontation with the U.S. (Kim Tong-Hyung, *AP News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has reinforced the ruling Workers' Party discipline and appointed new members of its powerful politburo, state media KCNA reported on Saturday. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- A North Korean investigation into military combat reserve supplies has revealed shoddy maintenance and discrepancies between inventory records and actual supplies of food, fuel and medicine, sources in the military told RFA. (Myungchul Lee, Jinha Shin, Eugene Whong, RFA)

**In South Korea:**

- A North Korean hacker group allegedly broke into South Korea's nuclear research center last month, marking the latest in a series of cyberattack attempts, a South Korean lawmaker said in a press briefing Friday. (Hakyung Kate Lee, *ABC News*)
- A South Korean man was caught trying to cross the inter-Korean border in the Yellow Sea into North Korea aboard a boat, government sources said Friday. (Grace Oh, *Yonhap*)
- A South Korean man was arrested after stealing a boat and attempting to flee to North Korea. The man, in his 40s, was taken into custody Thursday after he tried to flee on the stolen boat, but ended up drifting into a nearby area. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)

**International:**

- The new U.S. special representative for North Korea, Sung Kim, arrived in Seoul on Saturday for talks with his South Korean and Japanese counterparts, as they seek a coordinated strategy to resume nuclear diplomacy with Pyongyang. (*Yonhap*)
- Soldiers and equipment of a U.S. armored brigade combat team have started to arrive in South Korea for a rotational deployment, the U.S. military said Saturday. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Madeline Hieneman, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250812170718/https://mailchi.mp/d57b97e98366/hrnk-news-itemspush-to-honor-otto-warmbier-by-renaming-street-outside-north-korean-un-mission-gets-bipartisan-support?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Sunday, June 20, 2021

# Kim acknowledges food problems in North Korea; Sung Kim arrives in Seoul to discuss North Korea

**In North Korea:**
Kim acknowledges food problems in North Korea (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/20/2021)
N. Korean leader watches musical performance after key party meeting (*Yonhap*, 06/20/2021)
N. Korea replaces chief of Kim Il-sung University: state media (*Yonhap*, 06/20/2021)
**Inter Korean Relations**:
Incoming Vatican Prefect You Heung-sik expected to serve as bridge builder for pope's NK visit (*Yonhap*, 06/20/2021)
**International:**
Counterattacks have begun (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/20/2021)
Sung Kim arrives in Seoul to discuss North Korea (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/20/2021)
That Time the U.S. Military Wanted to Nuke North Korea and China (*The National Interest*, 06/20/2021)
What enticements will Sung Kim offer to North Korea? (*The Korea Times*, 06/20/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un made a rare acknowledgement of a food shortage in his country during a four-day ruling Workers' Party meeting last week and issued a special order Thursday to improve people's livelihood. (Sarah Kim, Yongsoo Jeong, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un watched a musical performance, state media reported Sunday, after last week's four-day ruling party session highlighted a vow to "break through head-on" a series of challenges facing his country. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has replaced the president of Kim Il-sung University, who doubles as minister of higher education, a state broadcaster reported Sunday. An official named Kim Sung-chan was appointed to the post last week during a plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party, according to Korean Central Television. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- As South Korean archbishop Lazzaro You Heung-sik has been named the new prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy of the Holy See, his possible role in arranging Pope Francis' visit to North Korea is drawing attention from the Catholic community at home and abroad. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- The democratic states' response to China has begun. Their joint statement after the G7 Summit in the UK is aimed at establishing a coalition of democracies to stop China from threatening the rules-based international order. China desires to expel the United States from the Asian theater while Russia intimidates Europe with warhead-tipped hypersonic missiles and combat robots. (Minseok Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un signaled he is ready for "both dialogue and confrontation" on the eve of a visit by the new U.S. nuclear envoy to Seoul. Sung Kim, the U.S. special representative for North Korea, kicked off a five-day trip to Seoul

Saturday to hold talks on coordinating strategy to resume diplomacy with Pyongyang. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- Nuclear escalation on the Korean Peninsula would have gone terribly for everyone involved. The United States would have caused dreadful pain to uncertain strategic advantage, potentially pushing the Communist powers to escalate. (Robert Farley, *The National Interest*)
- The visit of Sung Kim, the U.S. special representative for North Korea, to Seoul is raising questions over whether Washington will offer enticements to Pyongyang in a bid to normalize stalled nuclear negotiations. (Seungwoo Kang, *The Korea Times*)

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Prepared by Juheung Kim, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250812170945/https://mailchi.mp/76056b3efd89/hrnk-news-itemkim-acknowledges-food-problems-in-north-koreasung-kim-arrives-in-seoul-to-discuss-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, June 21, 2021**

## Sung Kim: US willing to meet North Korea 'anytime, anywhere'; North Korea claims no COVID-19 cases as total tested exceeds 30,000

**In North Korea:**
North Korea claims no COVID-19 cases as total tested exceeds 30,000 (*NK News*, 6/21/2021)
Young couple arrested while trying to flee across the China-North Korea border near Hoeryong (*Daily*NK, 6/21/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Probe under way into hacking attempts against Daewoo Shipbuilding: gov't(*Yonhap*, 6/21/2021)
South Korean man who attempted defection has phone seized, home searched (UPI, 6/21/2021)
**Inter Korean Relations**:
A Battle Joined: North Korean Totalitarianism Versus South Korean K-Pop (*The National interest*, 6/20/2021)
Assembly speaker urges NK to engage in dialogue (*The Korea Herald*, 6/21/2021)
S. Korea hopes for resumption of talks with N. Korea after Kim's mention of dialogue(*Yonhap*, 6/21/2021)
**International:**
China's ambassador stresses cooperation with N. Korea for regional peace (*Yonhap*, 6/21/2021)
Ditch the History Book: The First Korean War Was in 1871 (Not 1950) (*The National Interest*, 6/21/2021)
How to Kill North Korea's Air Force in a War (*The National interest*, 6/21/2021)

New U.S. envoy for North Korea looks forward to 'positive response' on dialogue(*Reuters*, 6/21/2021)
*New U.S. envoy for North Korea to huddle with S.Koreans, Japanese* (*Reuters*, 6/20/2021)
Nuclear envoy says US ready for NK talks 'anywhere, anytime' (*The Korea Herald*, 6/21/2021)
S. Korea, Japan to hold working-level talks on wartime history, other issues (*Yonhap*, 6/21/2021)
S. Korean Olympic chief clinging to hope for N. Korean participation in Tokyo 2020(*Yonhap*, 6/21/2021)
Sung Kim: US willing to meet North Korea 'anytime, anywhere' (*NK News*, 6/21/2021)
Syria's Assad is Kim Jong Un's most frequent pen pal in first half of 2021 (*NK News*, 6/21/2021)
The Lazarus heist: How North Korea almost pulled off a billion-dollar hack (*BBC*, 6/20/2021)
U.S. diplomat offers talks with North Korea 'anywhere, anytime' (*UPI*, 6/21/2021)
US envoy hopes N. Korea responds positively on offered talks (*AP News*, 6/21/2021)
U.S. envoy hopes N. Korea will accept offer to meet 'anytime, anywhere without preconditions' (*Yonhap*, 6/21/2021)
US Envoy Offers to Meet North Korea 'Anywhere Anytime' (VOA, 6/21/2021)
U.S. nuke envoy to meet S. Korean, Japanese counterparts after key N.K. party meeting (*Yonhap*, 6/21/2021)
'US ready to sit down with North Korea anytime' (*The Korea Times*, 6/21/2021)
*White House says comments by N.Korea's Kim are 'interesting signal'* (*Reuters*, 6/20/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea has reported no COVID-19 case as of June 10, a new World Health Organization (WHO) report said over the weekend, as the cumulative number of people tested in the country passed the 30,000 mark. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Two young North Koreans were recently arrested after trying to defect over the Chinese-North Korean border near Hoeryeong, North Hamgyong Province. The two are currently being investigated by the authorities. (Lee Chae Un, *DailyNK*)

**In South Korea:**

- Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering Co., a major South Korean shipbuilder specializing in submarine and other naval vessels, has suffered hacking attempts by unidentified entities, prompting the authorities to launch a probe. North Korea has often been behind cyberattacks in South Korea and elsewhere, though Pyongyang has denied such accusations. (*Yonhap*)
- The South Korean man who attempted to defect to North Korea by boat had his mobile phone seized and his home searched, according to local press reports. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- Defectors report that most North Koreans, including children of government officials, have seen South Korean movies, TV programs, and K-pop. The impact has been huge, exposing much of the population to the world that exists beyond their nation's borders. Also, they learned that their government lied to them. (Doug Bandow, *The National Interest*)
- National Assembly Speaker Park Byeong-seug said he hoped North Korea would take a proactive role in inter-Korean dialogue, stressing that South Korea's National Assembly

was considering the ratification of the inter-Korean summit agreement. (Shin Ji-hye, *The Korea Herald*)

- South Korea hopes that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's recent mention of dialogue will lead to resumption of talks between the two Koreas, as well as between the United States and the North, the unification ministry said Monday. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- China's top envoy to North Korea stressed the importance of cooperation between the two allies on regional peace, stability and prosperity on the occasion of the second anniversary of President Xi Jinping's visit to Pyongyang, the North's state media showed Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- Here's What You Need to Remember: Seventy-nine years before American troops launched the landing operation at Inchon during the Korean War, U.S. troops were involved in another amphibious assault in that corner of Korea. (Sebastien Roblin, *The National Interest*)
- Here's What You Need to Remember: Surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) were added to the Biho in 2013 to increase its effective range. The "Shingung" missile doubles the effective range of the system, out to seven kilometers. (Charlie Gao, *The National Interest*)
- The United States' new top envoy for North Korea said on Monday in Seoul that he looks forward to a "positive response soon" on dialogue from North Korea. (Josh Smith, Sangmi Cha, *Reuters*)
- The United States' new top envoy for North Korea was scheduled to meet counterparts from South Korea and Japan during a visit to Seoul on Monday, amid an impasse in denuclearisation talks with Pyongyang. (Reuters Staff, *Reuters*)
- The US is willing to meet North Korea for dialogue "anywhere, anytime, without preconditions," President Joe Biden's point man on North Korea said, expressing hope for a positive response from the reclusive regime. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea and Japan will hold working-level talks in Seoul later Monday to discuss a prolonged row over wartime sexual slavery, forced labor and other pending issues. Funakoshi, who doubles as Japan's top nuclear envoy, was in Seoul this week for trilateral talks with his South Korean and U.S. counterparts to discuss North Korea's denuclearization. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's top Olympic official is holding on to hope that North Korea will change its mind and participate in the Tokyo Summer Games after all -- however slim those chances may be. (*Yonhap*)
- The U.S. is willing to meet with North Korea "anywhere, anytime," said Sung Kim, Washington's North Korea policy envoy, during a visit to Seoul. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Kim Jong Un and Syria's Bashar Assad have exchanged correspondence 12 times in 2021, NK News analysis of North Korean state media showed on Friday, four times the frequency of Kim's reported communications with China's Xi Jinping during the same period. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- In 2016 North Korean hackers planned a $1bn raid on Bangladesh's national bank and came within an inch of success - it was only by a fluke that all but $81m of the transfers were halted, report Geoff White and Jean H Lee. But how did one of the world's poorest and most isolated countries train a team of elite cyber-criminals? (BBC)

- The top U.S. diplomat in charge of North Korea negotiations said Biden administration officials are willing to meet with Pyongyang's negotiators without preconditions. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- President Joe Biden's special envoy for North Korea said Monday he hopes to see a positive reaction from the North soon on U.S. offers for talks after North Korea's leader ordered officials to prepare for both dialogue and confrontation. (Kim Tong-Hyung, AP *News*)
- The United States has offered to meet with North Korea "anywhere, anytime without preconditions" and looks forward to a positive response from Pyongyang, the new U.S. special envoy for the North said Monday (Song Sang-ho, Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. special representative for North Korea on Monday offered to meet with Pyongyang "anywhere, anytime, without preconditions," with no public contact so far between the Biden administration and the nuclear-armed nation. (Agence France-Presse, VOA)
- The new U.S. special representative for North Korea, Sung Kim, is set to hold back-to-back talks with his South Korean and Japanese counterparts in Seoul on Monday, days after North Korean leader Kim Jong-un signaled openness to dialogue. (*Yonhap*)
- The United States once again extended an olive branch to North Korea, Monday, saying that it was ready to hold a meeting with the reclusive regime "anywhere, anytime" amid deadlocked nuclear talks between the two countries. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- The United States said on Sunday it saw as an "interesting signal" North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's comments that he is ready for "dialogue and confrontation," but added that Washington was still waiting for direct communication from Pyongyang to start any talks relating to denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. (Humeyra Pamuk, Jan Wolfe, *Reuters*)

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Prepared by Margaret Gillett, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250812171129/https://mailchi.mp/2a07367ff7b1/hrnk-news-item-sung-kim-us-willing-to-meet-north-korea-anytime-anywherenorth-korea-claims-no-covid-19-cases-as-total-tested-exceeds-30000?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, June 22, 2021**

## N.K. leader's sister derides chance to talk; Unification minister calls for active efforts to bring N. Korea back to dialogue

**In North Korea:**
Amid North Korean 'food crisis,' farmers active near inter-Korean border (*NK News*, 6/22/21)

Grain-Short North Korea Forces Housewives to 'Volunteer' for Farm Work (RFA, 6/21/22)
Kim Jong Un directs stay-at-home moms to work fields, South's politician says (UPI, 6/21/21)
Kim Jong Un lectures women on raising children, how to dress (*NK News*, 6/21/21)
Kim sister derides US official, dismisses chances for talks (*AP News*, 6/22/21)
Kim Yo-jong warns U.S. about 'disappointment' (*Korea JoonAng Daily*, 6/22/22)
N.K. officials attend exhibition by Chinese Embassy resume in-person diplomacy (*Yonhap*, 6/22/21)
N.K. leader's sister says U.S. mention of 'interesting signal' shows it has 'wrong' explanation (*Yonhap*, 6/22/21)
N.K. leader urges support for women in letter to major union of housewives (*Yonhap*, 6/22/21)
N. Korean leader sends congratulatory message to Iranian message to Iranian president-elect (*Yonhap*, 6/22/21)
N. Korea tells WHO it has detected no virus cases (*AP News*, 6/22/21)
North Korea commodity prices skyrocket in some regions while currency exchange rates continue to plummet (*Daily* NK, 6/22/21)
North Korea is planning its largest military parade to date for Kim Il Sung's birthday next year (*Daily* NK, 6/22/21)
North Korea Sends Mixed Messages on Possibility of Talks with US (VOA, 6/22/21)
North Korea tested people showing 'severe acute respiratory infections,' WHO says (UPI, 6/22/21)
North Korea rejects US attempts to resume talks (*The Korea Times*, 6/22/21)

**In South Korea:**
Documents on South's naval vessels hacked (*Korea JoonAng Daily*, 6/21/21)
Former ruling party leader Lee calls for soft power diplomacy (*The Korea Herald*, 6/22/21)
I Fought a Second Korea War as the U.S. Military And Lost? (*National Interest*, 6/21/21)
Seoul, Washington agree to consider terminating working group on NK (*The Korea Herald*, 6/22/21)
S. Korea, U.S. agree to consider ending 'working group' forum on N. Korea policy (*Yonhap*, 6/22/21)
South Korean officials emphasize dialogue as Kim Yo Jong slams US (*NK News*, 6/22/21)
South needs to allow information to cross the border: U.S. analyst (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 6/22/21)
**Inter Korean Relations**:
A New Korean War would Make the DMZ the World's Deadliest Battlefield (*National Interest*, 6/22/21)
In 2020, A North Korean Attack Nearly Restarted the Korean War (*National Interest*,6/22/21)
Unification minister calls for active, agile efforts to bring N. Korea back to dialogue(*Yonhap*, 6/22/21)
Unification minister to meet U.S. nuclear envoy to discuss N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 6/22/21)
Seoul kept sending power to Kaesong, says rep (*Korea JoonAng Daily*, 6/22/21)
'Smaller drills won't earn lasting inter-Korean detente' (*The Korea Herald*, 6/22/21)
**International:**
Biden extends sanctions on N. Korea amid U.S. outreach (*Yonhap*, 6/22/21)
Foreign ministry to work for stable management of relations with China after G-7 summit(*The*

*Korea Herald*, 6/22/21)
Joint military exercise must be properly scaled to meet threats: Pentagon spokesman (*The Korea Herald*, 6/22/21)
North Korea to Washington: Timetable on Talks Is Up to Us, Not You (*The New York Times*, 6/22/21)
U.S. hopes N. Korea will respond to U.S. outreach for dialogue: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 6/22/21)
U.S. nuclear envoy waves olive branch at Kim Jong-un (*Korea JoonAng Daily*, 6/21/21)
U.S. nuclear envoy promises to do 'utmost' for dialogue with North (*Korea JoonAng Daily*, 6/22/21)

**In North Korea:**

- Peering across the inter-Korean border into North Korea from the South showed widespread agricultural activity near the west coast on Friday, as official DPRK state media confirmed over the weekend that the country is suffering a "food crisis" amid a broader national harvest failure. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- North Korea is forcing nearly 14,000 housewives to move to rural areas to toil on farms as part of a project to boost food output after a bad harvest, South Korean media reported. (Albert Hong, RFA)
- June 21 (UPI) -- Kim Jong Un ordered thousands of North Korean "housewives" to labor in the rice paddies of Yonbaek County, according to a former South Korean unification minister. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un dismissed prospects for an early resumption of diplomacy with the United States, saying Tuesday that U.S. expectations of talks would "plunge them into a greater disappointment." (Hyun-Jin Kim and Kim Tong-Hyung, *AP News*)
- Kim Yo-jong, the sister of the North Korean leader, warned Tuesday the United States could be in for great "disappointment" after the White House called Kim Jong-un's remarks on dialogue and confrontation an "interesting signal." (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- SEOUL, June 22 (Yonhap) -- North Korean officials attended a photo exhibition by the Chinese Embassy in Pyongyang and stressed close relations in an indication the country is gearing up to resume face-to-face diplomacy suspended amid coronavirus concerns, state media showed Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- SEOUL, June 22 (Yonhap) -- The sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said Tuesday that the United States has "wrong" expectations after U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan called Kim's comments about dialogue with the U.S. an "interesting signal." (*Yonhap*)
- SEOUL, June 22 (Yonhap) -- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un urged support for women in a message to the country's major organization consisting of housewives, state media said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- SEOUL, June 22 (Yonhap) -- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un called for efforts to strengthen friendly ties with Iran in a congratulatory message he sent to Iranian President-elect Ebrahim Raisi, Pyongyang's foreign ministry said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)

- SEOUL, South Korea -- North Korea has told the World Health Organization it tested more than 30,000 people for the coronavirus through June 10 but has yet to find a single infection. (*AP News*)
- Commodity prices in some regions of North Korea are skyrocketing while the country's currency exchange rates continue to plummet. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un claimed during a recent Central Committee plenary session that North Korea's economy had improved "overall" in the first half of the year, but reports from Daily NK sources in the country suggest that not all is well in the economy. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- The source, who is inside North Korea's military, told Daily NK yesterday that the General Staff Department of the Korean People's Army issued an order on Jun. 18 to the "operational training departments of each service and every military academy" laying out plans for recruiting and training soldiers to participate in a "commemorative military parade to mark the 110th Day of the Sun." (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA - North Korea on Tuesday downplayed the possibility of talks with the United States, several days after its leader Kim Jong Un hinted at the possibility of dialogue. (William Gallo, VOA)
- June 22 (UPI) -- The World Health Organization said North Korea has reported dozens of flu-like cases and even "severe acute respiratory infections." (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- North Korea shot down the hopes of the United States and South Korea for dialogue on inter-Korean cooperation and denuclearization, with Kim Yo-jong, the sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, saying Washington had the "wrong" expectations for talks. (Nam Hyun-Woo, *The Korea Times*)

**In South Korea:**

- Hackers connected to North Korea stole information about Navy vessels and submarines designed and built by Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering, possibly including research for a domestically designed nuclear-powered submarine, according to multiple government sources on Sunday. (Park Yong-Han and Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Rep. Lee Nak-yon, a former Democratic Party leader and presidential hopeful, said Tuesday South Korea should aim for "soft power diplomacy" in line with a global paradigm shift for peace and creativity. (Shin Ji-hye, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea denied responsibility for the attack, calling the the investigation into its cause a "fabrication orchestrated by a group of traitors." (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- Sung Kim, the U.S. special representative for North Korea, met with South Korean President Moon Jae-in and the country's unification minister on Tuesday and voiced support for "meaningful" inter-Korean cooperation and engagement, even as Pyongyang warned that U.S. expectations would lead to "disappointment." (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Seoul should repeal the ban on flying anti-Pyongyang leaflets across the border and allow efforts to put information about South Korea into the hands of young North Koreans, according to a U.S. analyst. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- SEOUL, June 22 (Yonhap) -- Unification Minister Lee In-young on Tuesday called for "active" and "agile" cooperation between South Korea and the United States to bring

North Korea back to the negotiating table as he met with the new U.S. special envoy for Pyongyang. (Koh Byung-Joon, *Yonhap*)

- South Korea's state-run electric company supplied power to Kaesong in North Korea for several months after all South Korean personnel withdrew from an industrial complex in January 2020, according to documents obtained by the JoongAng Ilbo on Monday. (Sohn Hae-Yong and Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- As South Korea mulls reducing or skipping joint military drills with the US in August, experts warn that suspending the biannual exercises would do little to bring about a lasting detente with North Korea. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- WASHINGTON, June 21 (Yonhap) -- U.S. President Joe Biden said Monday he decided to extend U.S. sanctions on North Korea for another year, a move that follows the latest U.S. outreach to the reclusive nation for dialogue at any time and place. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea will continue efforts to "stably manage" relations with China while taking into account the outcome of a Group of Seven (G-7) summit earlier this month, the foreign ministry said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- WASHINGTON -- The United States constantly reviews its joint military exercises with South Korea to make sure their forces are properly trained and prepared to meet threats, a Pentagon spokesman said Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- SEOUL — North Korea said on Tuesday that the United States would face a great “disappointment” if it expected a quick resumption of talks about its nuclear weapons program, offering a blow to a Biden administration envoy who had proposed a new round of negotiations. (Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*)
- The United States hopes that North Korea will respond positively to its offer “to meet anywhere, anytime, without preconditions,” its nuclear envoy said Monday in Seoul. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Sung Kim, the U.S. nuclear envoy, told President Moon Jae-in that he will do his “utmost to resume dialogue between North Korea and the United States” in a visit to the Blue House Tuesday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

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Prepared by Yeji Chung, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250812171423/https://mailchi.mp/1ffe302b636d/hrnk-news-itemsnk-leaders-sister-derides-chance-to-talk-unification-minister-calls-for-active-efforts-to-bring-n-korea-back-to-dialogue?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, June 23, 2021**

## Grain-Short North Korea Forces Housewives to ‘Volunteer’ for Farm Work; North Korea anticipated to solidify ties with China

**Top News:**
Grain-Short North Korea Forces Housewives to 'Volunteer' for Farm Work (*Radio Free Asia*, 6/23/21)

**In North Korea:**
DPRK imports from China collapse as official state media warns of 'food crisis' (*NK News*, 6/22/21)
Forget the Nukes: North Korea Holds a Massive Arsenal of Chemical Weapons (*National Interest*, 6/22/21)
Just How Stable Is North Korea? (*National Interest*, 6/22/21)
Masked heroes in new North Korean propaganda posters amid 'prolonged' pandemic (*NK News*, 6/23/21)
No human rights violations found at N. Korean defectors' debriefing center since 2014: NIS chief (*Yonhap News*, 6/23/21)
N.Korea's currency, commodity markets in turmoil as borders stay closed (*Reuters*, 6/23/21)
North Korea Faces Hunger, Malnutrition, and Maybe Worse (*National Interest*, 6/23/21)
North Korea is planning its largest military parade to date for Kim Il Sung's birthday next year (*Daily* NK, 6/23/21)
North Korea May Be on the Brink of Collapse—Or Not. (*National Interest*, 6/22/21)
North Korea Might Have Lots of Guns, But Are They Any Good? (*National Interest*, 6/23/21)
North Korean defector Yeonmi Park muddles human rights message with partisanship (*NK News*, 6/23/21)
North Korean man arrested in Onsong County for smuggling along North Korea-China border (*Daily* NK, 6/23/21)
North Korea policy coordination to continue without working group, says US (*NK News*, 6/23/21)
North Korean Women Say No to Motherhood Due to Economic Difficulties (*Radio Free Asia*, 6/22/21)
North Korea's National Institute of Hygiene Inspection elevated to a bureau (*Daily* NK, 6/23/21)
North Korea: Why doesn't it have enough food this year? (BBC, 6/23/21)
Regime Collapse in North Korea Would Be Catastrophic (*National Interest*, 6/22/21)
Risk analysis: North Korea faces crisis due to relentless COVID-19 controls (*NK News*, 6/23/21)
The self-sufficiency trap (*JoongAng Daily*, 6/23/21)
Some brief thoughts about North Korea's food situation, late June 2021 (*North Korean Economy Watch*, 6/23/21)

**In South Korea:**
South Korea testing new counter-drone surveillance system for military (UPI, 6/22/21)
**Inter Korean Relations**:
A New Korean War Would Make the DMZ the World's Deadliest Battlefield (*National Interest*, 6/22/21)
In 2010, A North Korean Attack Nearly Restarted the Korean War (*National Interest*, 6/22/21)
South needs to allow information to cross the border: U.S. analyst (*JoongAng Daily*, 6/23/21)

**International:**
How the U.S. Military Is Supporting North Korea Policy Through Missile Defense (*National Interest*, 6/22/21)
Kim Jong-un's sister dismisses hopes of US-North Korea nuclear talks (*The Guardian*, 6/22/21)
Making the Korean War the "Unforgotten War" (*Korea Herald*, 6/23/21)
N. Korea rules out possibility of contact with U.S. (*Yonhap News*, 6/23/21)
N. Korea, China hold rare joint symposium to mark anniversaries of leaders' reciprocal visits (*Yonhap News*, 6/23/21)
N. Korea, China move in lockstep to 'stably control' Korean Peninsula situation: pro-Pyongyang paper (*Yonhap News*, 6/23/21)
North Korea anticipated to solidify ties with China (*Korea Times*, 6/23/21)
North Korea says it's not interested in talks with US that will 'get us nowhere' (*NK News*, 6/22/21)
North Korea's foreign minister says no interest in US talks (*The Washington Post*, 6/23/21)
North Korea warns U.S. misinterpreting signals risks disappointment (*Reuters*, 6/22/21)
Uncertainty hangs over early N.K. dialogue resumption despite peace feelers (*Yonhap News*, 6/23/21)
U.S. nuke envoy wraps up Seoul trip marked by renewed appeal for N.K. dialogue (*Yonhap News*, 6/23/21)
U.S. remains committed to engaging with N. Korea: State Dept. (*Yonhap News*, 6/23/21)
Washington doesn't budge from latest outreach to Pyongyang (*JoongAng Daily*, 6/23/21)

**In Top News:**

- North Korea is forcing nearly 14,000 housewives to move to rural areas to toil on farms as part of a project to boost food output after a bad harvest, South Korean media reported. Mobilization of housewives, however, is likely a violation of human rights, according to Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the Washington-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK). (Albert Hong, *Radio Free Asia*)

**In North Korea:**

- Customs data indicates North Korea imported 90% less from China in May than during April. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- In recent years, North Korea's chemical weapons have taken a backseat to her nuclear weapons. They are, however, no less dangerous. The deterioration of the Korean People's Army (KPA) makes them more essential to victory than ever before. For both practical and doctrinal reasons, North Korea will almost certainly use chemical weapons in wartime, from riot control to lethal nerve gases. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- North Korea is once again having food shortages. This is by now a well-known problem, and the government is at least admitting it this time. Thankfully, current leader Kim Jong-un is admitting reality. This means he is more likely to do something about it. This Kim is no reformer, but at least he seems to care about the state of the economy more than his reclusive, disinterested father. (Robert E. Kelly, *National Interest*)
- Classic heroes of North Korean propaganda art, such as miners and scientists, are joined by masked farmers and COVID-19 fighters in the country's latest official propaganda posters, released in state media Tuesday to encourage the population's compliance with new party directives. The new posters, featuring standard propaganda slogans and

artistic characteristics that date back decades, more specifically call for meeting agricultural and other goals this year after Kim Jong Un last week revealed that North Korea is experiencing a "food crisis." (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

- No cases of human rights violations have been reported since 2014 at a debriefing center that South Korea runs for North Korean defectors, the chief of the country's main intelligence agency said Wednesday. (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)
- Currency exchange rates and commodity prices appear to be wildly fluctuating in North Korea as a resumption in major trade with China hasn't materialised, media reports and analysts say, increasing the hardship for residents facing food shortages. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un has warned of food shortages and an "arduous march," alliding to the terrible famine a quarter-century ago. The result was mass death and hardship. Yet the tragedy was not unexpected: A common fate of communist lands is famine and starvation. (Doug Bandow, *National Interest*)
- A Daily NK source recently reported that North Korea has begun preparations for its largest military parade ever to mark the 110th birthday of former leader Kim Il Sung on Apr. 15, 2022. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- There is little question that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) appears to be experiencing a period of intense stress. Earlier this year, Kim Jong-un made the unusual public admission that the coronavirus pandemic and economic woes had caused major problems for his country. (Ted Galen Carpenter, *National Interest*)
- Infantry weapons have long been a pillar of the North Korean People's Army, or KPA for short. The KPA that invaded South Korea was largely an infantry army, and despite significant mechanization in the 1970s the foundation of the army has been its infantry forces. Today, the bulk of the KPA's 1.1 million army is infantry, with approximately 200,000 light infantry and special forces. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- Yeonmi Park rose to prominence in 2014 when, at just 21 years old, she gave a speech at the One Young World Summit in Dublin. The speech propelled her to international acclaim as a human rights activist. Using her newfound status, she brought the world's attention to the needless suffering that the North Korean people have had to endure under the tyrannical rule of the Kim dynasty. Fast-forward seven years later, however, and Park was on Fox News where she said that the United States' future "is as bleak as North Korea." She claimed she was told to adopt "PC culture" during her time at Columbia University and complained about the need to acquiesce to people's preferred gender pronouns. (John Lee, *NK News*)
- The head of the Kumgang Trading Company's Onsong County office was arrested in early June for engaging in smuggling activities along the North Korea-China border. The company is affiliated with the Ministry of Social Security. (Kim Yoo Jin, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean women are becoming more and more reluctant to have children due to poor economic conditions and food insecurity, rejecting government propaganda aimed at increasing the plummeting birthrate, sources in the country told RFA. (Jeong Yon Park, *Reuters*)
- North Korean authorities recently elevated the Ministry of Public Health's National Institute of Hygiene Inspection to a "bureau" with a vastly strengthened role. A source in Yanggang Province told Daily NK on Tuesday that the North Korean government, under

the belief that the COVID-19 pandemic will continue into the future, ordered the elevation of the institute's status on June 14. The authorities also ordered that the newly minted "National Bureau of Hygiene Inspection" be expanded so it can exercise authority at "several magnitudes greater than in the past." (Kim Yoo Jin, *Daily NK*)

- North Korea has suffered deadly famines in the past and now its leader, Kim Jong-un,has warned of severe food shortages ahead. It's very difficult to get reliable information out of the highly secretive country. The agricultural economy is still recovering from years of famine and mismanagement under Kim family leadership; and North Korea's "military first" ethos means that civilians are prioritised behind the armed forces for many resources, including food. (Reality Check and BBC Monitoring, BBC)
- Is North Korea on the brink of collapse? Perhaps. Years of economic mismanagement exacerbated by hulking international sanctions have made it difficult for Kim Jong-un to make ends meet. The country is facing a food crunch. Energy has long been in short supply. And while North Korea claims to have shut out Covid-19 for the past 18 months, it is more likely that the pandemic's ravages have simply gone unreported and unaddressed. (Meriel Hahn, Peter Harris, *National Interest*)
- North Korea's paranoia surrounding COVID-19 has caused numerous economic problems and mounting humanitarian consequences. Those issues reached what appeared to be a crescendo in early 2021, when market prices and foreign exchange rates hit respective highs and lows for the past ten years. (Chad O'Carroll, Peter Ward, *NK News*)
- In mid-2010, I met a North Korean foreign ministry official who studied economics at the elite Kim Il Sung University. The 30-something envoy was well versed in English and intelligent. I took a seat next to him during a downtown bus tour after a meeting and struck up a conversation. I asked him if he had learned about supply and demand in economics class. He shook his head. So I asked him what he had learned at school. He said his class had been devoted to how special the North Korean economy was, being based on self-sufficiency, or juche ideology, and how much it had achieved. He more or less admitted that he learned little about the very foundations of economics. (Kim Byung-yeon, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- By all accounts, the current food situation in North Korea appears difficult. It's a crucially important topic that I unfortunately have not had much time to follow over the past few weeks. A few brief thoughts: First, it's important to keep in mind when hearing phrases such as "worst in a decade" that North Korea went through an actual famine in the 1990s and early 2000s. So that the food situation has gotten better over the last decade, while the country was arguably still rebounding from the famine, should not come as a surprise. (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, *North Korean Economy Watch*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's military began to test a new drone detection radar capable of identifying enemy vehicles within 5 miles and disabled them with jammers. Seoul's Defense Acquisition Program Administration said the counter-drone surveillance system is being deployed with South Korea's Army, Navy and Air Force, Newsis reported Tuesday. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- The Korean DMZ is almost certainly the most heavily armed place on Earth. The defection of a North Korean soldier across the demilitarized zone (DMZ) that separates the two Koreas highlights how difficult it is to cross from one Korea to the other. Fenced, mined and patrolled by soldiers from both sides, fortifications and large concentrations of combat-ready troops will make the Korean DMZ in the event of war the deadliest place on earth. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- In 2010, North Korea sank a South Korean warship, killing more than forty sailors. The bold attack, conducted in secret by submarine, was the deadliest incident between the two countries in decades. Although Pyongyang's involvement was suspected from the outset, an international commission set up to investigate the attack later conclude North Korea was indeed responsible. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- Seoul should repeal the ban on flying anti-Pyongyang leaflets across the border and allow efforts to put information about South Korea into the hands of young North Koreans, according to a U.S. analyst. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- The U.S. State Department on Tuesday stressed that the U.S. and South Korea will continue "close and constant" coordination on North Korea policy after the two allies agreed to scrap their "working group" on DPRK issues. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Kim Jong-un's influential sister appears to have dismissed hopes for a breakthrough on nuclear talks with the US, warning Washington that it faced "disappointment" if it believed engagement with North Korea was a possibility. (*The Guardian*)
- Situated between World War II and the Vietnam War, and overshadowed by the Cold War, the Korean War has inadvertently become the "Forgotten War." Strangely, people have kept silent about the war and seem to have forgotten it completely. Whenever I see the epigraph "The Forgotten War" at the Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington, I am as heartbroken as I can be because we should remember the Korean War forever. (Kim Seong-kon, *Korea Herald*)
- North Korea's top diplomat on Wednesday categorically rejected a U.S. offer for talks, saying the country is not considering "even the possibility of any contact with the U.S." Foreign Minister Ri Son-gwon made the remarks in a statement a day after Kim Yo-jong, the sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, said that the U.S. has "wrong" expectations for dialogue with Pyongyang. (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)
- China hosted a joint symposium with North Korea to mark the anniversaries of reciprocal visits by North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and Chinese President Xi Jinping, state media said Wednesday. The International Liaison Department of the Chinese Communist Party hosted the joint meeting Monday to celebrate the third anniversary of Kim's visit to China and the second anniversary of Xi's visit to North Korea, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said. (*Yonhap*)
- A pro-Pyongyang newspaper in Japan said Wednesday that North Korea and China are making concerted efforts to build peace in the region and to "stably control" the situation on the Korean Peninsula. The article came days after North Korean leader Kim Jong-un called on his country to be ready for both dialogue and confrontation with the United States and urged efforts to stably control the situation on the peninsula. (*Yonhap*)

- North Korea is showing signs of strengthening ties with China, in an apparent bid to strengthen its bargaining position before it talks to or confronts the U.S., both of which the North should be prepared for its leader Kim Jong-un said earlier this month. (Nam Hyun-woo, *Reuters*)
- North Korea is not considering talking with the U.S., said the country's foreign minister Ri Son Gwon on Wednesday in a press statement carried by the state-run *Korean Central News Agency* (KCNA). "We are not considering even the possibility of any contact with the U.S., let alone having it, which would get us nowhere, only taking up precious time," Ri wrote. The statement was published on KCNA around 8 a.m. Eastern Time. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korea's foreign minister on Wednesday said his country is not even considering a resumption of stalled nuclear talks with the United States, dismissing hopes expressed by U.S. and South Korean officials for a quick resumption of negotiations. The statement by Ri Son Gwon came a day after the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un issued a message saying that U.S. expectations of talks would "plunge them into a greater disappointment." (*Washington Post*)
- The sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un warned the United States on Tuesday it would be disappointed were it to seek comfort in comments by her brother, while a U.S. envoy met South Korea's president aiming to revive talks with North Korea. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- Despite a flurry of conciliatory gestures by South Korea and the United States, uncertainty lingers over the prospects for an early resumption of dialogue with North Korea, with the recalcitrant regime discontent about overtures short of concrete incentives, analysts said Wednesday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The new U.S. special representative for North Korea, Sung Kim, wrapped up his five-day trip to Seoul on Wednesday after redoubling Washington's calls for dialogue with a recalcitrant Pyongyang. Before departing for Jakarta, Kim said that he had "terrific" discussions with top Seoul officials, including President Moon Jae-in. Kim concurrently serves as ambassador to Indonesia. (*Yonhap*)
- The United States remains committed to engaging with North Korea, a State Department spokesman said Tuesday, despite a negative statement from the sister of the North Korean leader that the U.S. may be in for a great disappointment. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Despite the North Korean leader's sister throwing cold water on Washington's latest outreach efforts, the U.S. State Department stressed that it still maintains its offer to engage with Pyongyang without preconditions. Ned Price, State Department spokesman, said in a press briefing Tuesday, "We remain prepared to engage in principled negotiations with the DPRK to deal with the challenge of its nuclear program," referring to the North by its official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

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Prepared by Veronica Coffey, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
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tems-grain-short-north-korea-forces-housewives-to-volunteer-for-farm-worknorth-korea-anticipated-to-solidify-ties-with-china?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, June 24, 2021**

## Can Kim Jong Un Survive North Korea's Next 'Arduous March?'; Foreign minister: North Korea 'not considering' meeting U.S.

**In North Korea:**
A look inside the revamped North Korean defector debriefing center (*The Korea Herald*, 6/24/21)
Can Kim Jung Un Survive North Korea's Next 'Arduous March?' (*National Interest*,6/23/21)
Is North Korea On the Precipice of State Failure? (*National Interest*, 6/24/21)
Kim Jon Un's new favorite band lives life of luxury in new music videos (*NK News*, 6/24/21)
North Korea Gives the U.S. the Cold Shoulder on Nuclear Talks (The Wall Street Journal, 6/23/21)
North Korean FM rules out possibility of contact with U.S. (*Korea Times*, 6/23/21)
North Korea ramps up crackdowns on "non-socialist and anti-socialist behavior" in border region (*Daily NK*, 6/24/21)
North Korea says not considering contact with U.S. that would waste time (*Reuters*, 6/23/21)
North Korea seeks more concessions from US: experts (*Korea Times*, 6/24/21)
North Korea's Enduring Economic and Security Presence in Africa (*38 North*, 6/24/21)
North Korea to Replace 10,000 Workers Dispatched to China (*Radio Free Asia*, 6/23/21)
North Korea Upgrades Sunchon Airbase (*Beyond Parallel*, 6/24/21)
Not No, But Not Yet: Pyongyang Reacts to Washington's Reaction (*38 North*, 6/23/21)
What Happens If North Korea Won't Deal with Joe Biden? (*National Interest*, 6/23/21)

**In South Korea:**
Foreign minister: North Korea 'not considering' meeting U.S. (UPI, 6/24/21)
Ministry says dialogue and cooperation 'best way' for stable control of peninsula situations (*Yonhap News*, 6/24/21)
Moon stresses urgency of Korea peace in TIME interview (*Yonhap News*, 6/24/21)
South Koreans divided on whether to provide COVID-19 vaccines to North Korea(*NK News*, 6/24/21)
**Inter Korean Relations**:
Moon calls Kim Jong Un 'honest,' pushes talks with North Korea as term nears end(*NK News*, 6/24/21)
**International:**
Alternate Paths to Resuming Negotiations With North Korea (*38 North*, 6/23/21)
Russia proposes civil aviation safety agreement with North Korea (*NK News*, 6/24/21)
'This Is a Window of Opportunity.' Ret. General Vincent K. Brooks on Why Things Might Be Wrong Again With North Korea (*TIME*, 6/24/21)

U.S. remains open to diplomacy with N. Korea: State Dept. (*Yonhap News*, 6/24/21)
U.S. will lead diplomacy to mitigate threats from N. Korea: Austin (*Yonhap News*, 6/24/21)

**In North Korea:**

- Over 30,000 North Korean defectors have risked their lives to escape their communist homeland and settle in the South since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- Economically, it is clear that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is in the midst of a grim period. Politically, however, North Korea is as constant as the North Star. (Mitchell Lerner, *National Interest*)
- The peculiar rigidities of the DPRK suggest that it is one shock away from a total failure if not collapse, should the Kim dynasty lose legitimacy with its core sources of support in the party and military. (Tom Byrne, *National Interest*)
- Shiny new studios and Steinway pianos feature in videos for songs praising Kim and North Korea's ruling party (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- The Kim Jong Un regime this year has rebuked the Biden administration's outreach for engagement, without detailing what might woo North Korean officials back to talks beyond vague demands. As diplomacy stalls, Pyongyang is adding to its nuclear arsenal, which President Biden has called the biggest foreign-policy threat facing the U.S. (Timothy W. Martin and Andrew Jeong, *The Wall Street Journal*)
- North Korean authorities have recently reactivated a "unified command" tasked with inspections and crackdowns regarding "non-socialist and anti-socialist behavior" along the country's border with China. (Kim Yoo Jin, *Daily NK*)
- SEOUL, June 23 (Reuters) - North Korea is not considering any contact with the United States that would only waste time, Foreign Minister Ri Son Gwon said on Wednesday. (*Reuters*)
- North Korea is unlikely to return to dialogue with the United States unless Washington makes more concessions despite its hopes that Pyongyang will respond positively to its overtures, according to Pyongyang watchers, Thursday. (Jung Da-min, *Korea Times*)
- Three decades after the end of the Cold War, North Korea maintains an economic, diplomatic and security footprint in Africa. North Korea's engagement on the continent is sustained by its pressing need for hard currency, desire to escape international isolation and the inconsistent compliance of African countries with multilateral sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). (Samuel Ramani, 38 North)
- North Korea is planning to repatriate 10,000 workers dispatched to earn foreign currency in China but were stranded by the coronavirus pandemic, replacing them with younger recruits, sources in China told RFA. (Eugene Whong, *Radio Free Asia*)
- Following up on a recent report by Joseph Dempsey at IISS covering various North Korean Air and Air Defense Force (KPAF) developments, recent Maxar satellite imagery provides an opportunity to add details to North Korea's major maintenance and expansion project at the Sunchon Airbase in Pyongan-namdo (South Pyongan Province). (Joseph Bermudez and Victor Cha, *Beyond Parallel*)

- After silence from Pyongyang about the Biden administration's newly announced North Korea policy, Kim Jong Un had appeared to nudge open the door to diplomacy during a recent party meeting. (38 North)
- In mid-June North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un brought together leaders of the Workers' Party of Korea to discuss their nation's economic problems, particularly a growing food shortage. He also opined on the state of relations with the United States. North Koreans needed to prepare for "both dialogue and confrontation" with America, he said. (Doug Bandow, National Interest)

**In South Korea:**

- SEOUL, June 24 (UPI) -- North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Son Gwon dismissed the notion of dialogue with the United States, saying it "would get us nowhere," in a statement carried by government media. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- SEOUL, June 24 (Yonhap) -- Dialogue and cooperation are the best way to ensure stable and peaceful control of the situation on the Korean Peninsula, a unification ministry official said Thursday, after North Korea said that it is not interested in resuming talks with the United States. (Yonhap News)
- SEOUL, June 24 (Yonhap) -- President Moon Jae-in has reaffirmed his commitment to doing his best during the remainder of his tenure to reinvigorate the Korea peace process, according to the TIME magazine. (Yonhap News)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in has offered COVID aid to the North if it agrees to accept (Jeongmin Kim, NK News)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- South Korean president reflects on Kim, denuclearization in new interview as Pyongyang continues to stonewall (Bryan Betts, NK News)

**International:**

- There are three important anniversaries with North Korea all taking place within a few months, which provide a fitting moment for reflection on the status and potential future for US-DPRK relations. Indeed, an obvious first step would be to get Beijing to convince Kim Jong Un that it is in North Korea's interest to return to negotiations with the US and that the US is prepared to be fair and flexible in its negotiations for complete and verifiable denuclearization, in return for the eventual lifting of sanctions and a path for normal relations. (Joseph R. Detrani, 38 North)
- Draft emerges after Russia provided DPRK with almost $1 million in jet parts in 2020 (Chad O'Carroll, NK News)
- last month, U.S. President Joe Biden hosted his South Korean counterpart, Moon Jae-in, at the White House. The allies agreed on a raft of deals covering COVID-19 vaccine deployment and hi-tech investment, and emphasized "their shared commitment to the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula." (Charlie Campbell, TIME)
- WASHINGTON, June 23 (Yonhap) -- The United States continues to remain open to diplomacy with North Korea, a State Department spokesperson said Wednesday, hours after the North said it is not considering any dialogue with the U.S. (Byun Duk-kun, Yonhap News)
- WASHINGTON, June 23 (Yonhap) -- The United States will continue to maintain peace on the Korean Peninsula by reducing threats from North Korea through diplomacy, U.S.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Wednesday, amid a U.S. overture to the North for dialogue. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap News*)

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Prepared by Yeji Chung, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250812172144/https://mailchi.mp/f7cc749d96e4/hrnk-news-itemscan-kim-jong-un-survive-north-koreas-next-arduous-marchforeign-minister-north-korea-not-considering-meeting-us?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, June 25, 2021**

## Patterns of Impunity: Human Rights in North Korea and the Role of the U.S. Special Envoy

**Top News:**
Patterns of Impunity: Human Rights in North Korea and the Role of the U.S. Special Envoy (*HRNK YouTube*, 6/24/2021)

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea seen marking Korean War anniversary in low-key fashion (*Yonhap*, 6/25/2021)
North Korea food shortage: Kim Jong-un's COVID-19 policy could lead to mass starvation (*The Conversation*, 6/24/2021)
North Korea once again ignores key anti-US holiday in apparent friendly gesture (*NK News*, 6/25/2021)
North Korea pummeled by swings in currency and food prices (*The Financial Times*, 6/24/2021)
North Korean workers, volunteers warned against disobedience (UPI, 6/24/2021)
Satellite imagery suggests ongoing expansion of N. Korean airbase for larger aircraft(*Yonhap*, 6/24/2021)
The North Korean Air Force Belongs In A Museum—It Wouldn't Last Long In Combat (*Forbes*, 6/25/2021)
Where is North Korea heading? Major political rule changes may tell us (*NK News*, 6/24/2021)

**In South Korea:**
South Korea discloses list of Korean War abductees for first time (UPI, 6/24/2021)
S. Korea holds 71st Korean War anniversary event for first time in Busan (*Yonhap*, 6/25/2021)

**Inter Korean Relations**:
Seoul willing to offer COVID vaccines to North Korea to help it resume dialogue (*NK News*, 6/25/2021)
Slight majority of S. Koreans opposed to COVID-19 vaccine support to N. Korea: survey (*Yonhap*, 6/25/2021)

South Korea detains man suspected of spying for North Korea (*NK News*, 6/25/2021)
South Korea open to dialogue with North despite latest snub, report says (*UPI*, 6/25/2021)
**International:**
Ending S. Korea-U.S. working group on N.K. not an incentive for Pyongyang: ex-Moon adviser (*Yonhap*, 6/25/2021)
Korea-U.S. alliance remains linchpin of peace 71 years after start of Korean War: Pentagon (*Yonhap*, 6/25/2021)
North Korea slams the door on dialogue — for now (*The Hill*, 6/25/2021)
S. Korea, U.S. see dialogue with N.K. as still possible despite Pyongyang's rejection(*Yonhap*, 6/25/2021)
Unification minister hopes big trend changing despite N.K. rejection of U.S. dialogue offer (*Yonhap*, 6/25/2021)

**Top News:**

- Ambassador Robert King featured his latest book, "Patterns of Impunity: Human Rights in North Korea and the Role of the U.S. Special Envoy." Published by the Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Center, Freeman Spogli Institute, Stanford University, Ambassador King's book is a captivating account of his efforts to integrate human rights within U.S. policy with North Korea. The book also provides unique insights into the creation of the UN Commission of Inquiry on human rights in North Korea as well as obstacles to upholding internationally accepted human rights standards and the challenges to providing humanitarian assistance to North Korea. The event was moderated by HRNK Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu. (The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, *HRNK YouTube*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea appeared to be marking the anniversary of the outbreak of the 1950-53 Korean War in a low-key manner Friday as it is striving to fight the global coronavirus pandemic and bolster its anemic economy. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's Kim Jong-un has stated publicly that the country is facing a food shortage, a rare admission for the country's leader, who blamed the pandemic and a recent typhoon. Kim's response to COVID-19 has made North Korea even more isolated, leading to food shortages that are likely to impact millions. His slimmer look may also indicate Kim's own lack of access to the food he used to have. (Beth Daley, *The Conversation*)
- North Korea has sent a clear signal that it is still leaving space to improve relations with the U.S., after authorities apparently decided to skip public annual celebrations this week of the "June 25 Day of Struggle Against U.S. Imperialism." (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea has been hit by sharp swings in currency and food prices as economic pressures stemming from the Covid-19 pandemic and international sanctions create new risks for Kim Jong Un. The North Korean won has appreciated about 30% against the US dollar and 40% against China's renminbi since the start of the pandemic. Kim Jong Un is expected to lean on hacking army to alleviate this pressure. (Edward White and Kang Buseong, *The Financial Times*)

- North Korean workers have no right to refuse state orders, the regime's media said Thursday, as the country could be preparing to overcome a food shortage amid the coronavirus pandemic. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- Satellite imagery has shown ongoing work at a North Korean airbase that will result in modernization and expansion to house larger and more heavily armed aircraft, a U.S. think tank said Thursday. Citing satellite imagery dated June 12, Beyond Parallel, a project of the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies, said the maintenance and expansion project at North Korea's Sunchon Airbase will improve the conditions of the runway and also provide a smoother operating environment. (*Yonhap*)
- Several squadrons of the North Korean People's Air Force switched bases this spring. The relocations drove the secretive KPAF units out into the open for the first time in a long time. The KPAF by any account is a collection of museum pieces. Its antiquated—if still functional—warplanes wouldn't last long in a direct confrontation with the much bigger and much more modern South Korean and U.S. air arms. (David Axe, *Forbes*)
- By far the most serious revision in the new Worker's Party of Korea (WPK) rules is the creation of the "first secretary" position, along with other measures that appear to prepare for the death of incapacitation of Kim Jong Un. But the new statutes also contain a number of other meaningful revisions that warrant consideration, including the elimination of any mention of the Kim family, the softening of Pyongyang's rhetoric toward Seoul and the reappearance of "communism" as a part of the official state ideology. (Andrei Lankov, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea is disclosing the names of thousands of citizens who were abducted to the North during the 1950-53 Korean War, a first for the country in seven decades. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- South Korea marked the 71st anniversary of the outbreak of the 1950-53 Korean War with a ceremony held for the first time in the southern city of Busan that served as a temporary capital during the conflict. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- South Korea is willing to provide COVID-19 vaccines to North Korea in order to help the country reopen its long-closed borders and resume diplomacy with the outside world, Seoul's top foreign ministry official on DPRK affairs said Friday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- A little over half of South Koreans do not want the government to provide COVID-19 vaccination support to North Korea, according to a recent survey. (*Yonhap*)
- A researcher affiliated with a progressive-leaning and anti-U.S. organization in South Korea was arrested and charged with meeting and communicating with a North Korean agent. Lee Jeong-hoon, 57, a regular contributor to the 4.27-Era website, was accused of breaking the ROK's National Security Law for meeting a North Korean agent who entered South Korea in April 2017 using a false identity. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- South Korea will not give up the pursuit of inter-Korean dialogue despite multiple statements from Pyongyang signaling disinterest in talks, according to a local press report. A South Korean foreign ministry official who met with local reporters said Friday that the "possibility of dialogue is still open" with North Korea. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

**International:**

- Ending the bilateral "working group" forum on North Korea policy between South Korea and the United States cannot be an incentive for Pyongyang to return to the negotiating table, a former adviser to President Moon Jae-in said Friday. Moon Chung-in, a former special security affairs adviser for Moon, said "I don't think the abolition of the South Korea-U.S. working group itself will be an incentive for North Korea. The absence of the working group doesn't mean that South Korea and the U.S. will not cooperate.". (*Yonhap*)
- The United States remains committed to the South Korea-U.S. alliance, 71 years after the start of the Korean War, a Pentagon spokesman said Thursday, calling the alliance the "linchpin of peace" for the region and the world. (*Yonhap*)
- Pyongyang has dashed the hopes of experts who had interpreted Kim Jong Un's "dialogue or confrontation" statement last week as portending a return to negotiations. Two senior North Korean officials dismissed speculation that the regime was interested in dialogue, though atypically they refrained from adding threats of impending provocation. (Bruce Klinger, *The Hill*)
- South Korea and the United States believe that dialogue with North Korea is still possible despite North Korea's rejection of a U.S. dialogue offer, a foreign ministry official said Friday. U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Sung Kim called for talks with the North "anywhere, anytime without conditions" but Pyongyang rejected the offer, with its foreign minister saying the country is "not considering even the possibility of any contact with the U.S." (*Yonhap*)
- Despite North Korea's outright rejection of a U.S. dialogue offer, the overall trend appears to be moving toward dialogue, Unification Minister Lee in-Young said Friday, holding on to hopes that Pyongyang will ultimately return to talks. In his keynote speech at an annual peace forum co-hosted by his ministry and Yonhap News Agency, Lee called for the resumption of long-stalled dialogue with North Korea at an early date, saying that a longer stalemate could lead to heightening tensions in the region. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Kathy Yu, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250812172522/https://mailchi.mp/99dd54b9a0e9/hrnk-news-itemspatterns-of-impunity-human-rights-in-north-korea-and-the-role-of-the-us-special-envoy?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, June 26, 2021**

## Kim Jong-un's Demand for Self-Reliance Risks North Korean Lives; Pyongyang Speed Speed: 34 High-Rise Apartments Rise in 3 Months

**In North Korea:**
Is North Korea Struggling to Move Toward the Future? (*The National Interest*, June 25, 2021)

Kim Jong-un's COVID-19 Policy Could Lead to Mass Starvation (*The National Interest*, June 26, 2021)
Kim Jong-un's Demand for Self-Reliance Risks North Korean Lives (*The National Interest*, June 26, 2021)
North Korea expanding air base, according to satellite imagery (*Korea Times*, June 25, 2021)
North Korean hackers suspected of attacks using fake S. Korean gov't addresses(*Korea Times*, June 26, 2021)
North Korean Stability is in the Eye of the Beholder (*The National Interest*, June 25, 2021)
North Korea's Yongbyon Nuclear Complex: Assessing Activity at the Radiochemical Laboratory (*38North*, June 25, 2021)
Pyongyang Speed: 34 High-Rise Apartments Rise in 3 Months (*38North*, June 25, 2021)
Sinuiju authorities change tack in trying to wean people off of Chinese mobile phones (*Daily NK*, June 25, 2021)
What Is the North Korea's Recently Minted 'General Secretary' up To? (*The National Interest*, June 25, 2021)

**Inter Korean Relations**:
North Korea defined by 'hybridity,' South Korean analyst says in new book (*UPI*, June 25, 2021)
**International:**
U.S. must consider reconstituting six-party talks with N. Korea: former U.S. envoys(*Yonhap*, June 26, 2021)
What Russia, North Korea and China Have In Common: Millions of These Machine Guns (*The National Interest*, June 26, 2021)

**In North Korea:**

- If the past is any indicator, then the North Korean state and its people are extremely resilient to adversity. (Andrew Yeo, *The National Interest*)
- Kim Jong-un's COVID-19 border closures have caused a food shortage in North Korea, reminiscent of the "arduous march" of the 1990s. (Sojin Lim,*The National Interest*)
- Since his assumption of power in December 2011, Kim Jong-un reinforced the state ideology of juche, which emphasizes the principles of self-sufficiency and independence in a hostile world. (Spencer D, Bakich, *The National Interest*)
- North Korea is conducting "major maintenance and expansion" at its Sunchon Airbase, home to the most modern aircraft in the country's aging fleet, according to satellite imagery analyzed by Washington-based think tank the Center for Strategic and International Studies. (*Korea Times*)
- Hacker groups linked to North Korea are suspected of carrying out cyberattacks by using manipulated email addresses from the South Korean government to steal user information, cybersecurity firm ESTsecurity said Friday. (*Korea Times*)
- North Korea's dynastic dictatorship has defied odds by surviving as long as it has. But its good fortune—if that's the phrase—may well run out. But I wouldn't count on it running out this year. (Patrick M. Cronin,*The National Interest*)
- Commercial satellite imagery of the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center indicates that the Thermal (Steam) Plant, which provides steam for the various processes of the Radiochemical Laboratory (RCL)–North Korea's spent fuel reprocessing

plant for plutonium extraction–appears to have been operating from late February 2021 to the present.[1] This period of operation is longer than previous maintenance efforts and more consistent with the duration of earlier reprocessing campaigns. However, without additional visual signatures or on-the-ground inspection to confirm what is happening, it is possible that the current RCL activity is related to plutonium separation, the processing of remaining uranyl nitrate stocks, or treating radioactive wastes from previous reprocessing campaigns.(Olli, Heinonen, Frank Pabian, Jack Liu, 38North)

- Three months to the day after Kim Jong Un broke ground on a major project to build 10,000 apartments in Pyongyang in a year, commercial satellite imagery shows the new buildings are rising fast. (Martyn Williams, 38North)
- North Korean authorities in Sinuiju are marking this year's "Struggle Against US Imperialism Month" (June 25 – Jul. 27) by condemning the use of Chinese-made mobile phones during forced visits to the city's "Anti-Espionage Exhibition." (Lee Chae-eun, DailyNK)
- Speculation over Kim Jong-un's future should prompt discussions among the United States, South Korea, and Japan. (Doug Bandow, *The National Interest*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- A new book on North Korea from a South Korean academic proposes studying the country's "hybridity" to better understand North Korean society. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

**International:**

- The United States should consider engaging with North Korea multilaterally should its bilateral efforts continue to go ignored by the recalcitrant North, former U.S. envoys to denuclearization talks with the North said Friday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- The PPsH-41 submachinegun undoubtedly reigns as an icon of the Soviet war machine in World War II, immortalized in combat photographs and in films such as *Cross of Iron* and *The Tin Drum*. Like the T-34 tank and the Il-2 Shturmovik attack plane, the "Pepsha" or "Papasha" ("Daddy") was not only a rugged marvel of mass production, but performed well compared to more expensive contemporaries. Both the Red Army and later the Chinese and North Korean armies would employ the "burp gun" on an unprecedent scale. (Sebastien Roblin, *The National Interest*)

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Prepared by Lauren Morrison, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250812172851/https://mailchi.mp/57d2fb40dacb/hrnk-news-items-kim-jong-uns-demand-for-self-reliance-risks-north-korean-lives-pyongyang-speed-speed-34-high-rise-apartments-rise-in-3-months?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Sunday, June 27, 2021

# "Naming of 'Otto Warmbier Way' Should be Extended Across the Globe"

**Top News:**
Human Rights Experts "Naming of 'Otto Warmbier Way' Should be Extended Across the Globe" (*VOA Korea*, 6/23/2021)
** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**
'Everyone' in North Korea talking about 'emaciated' Kim Jong Un: state media (*NK News*, 6/27/2021)
How Stable Is North Korea Right Now? (*The National Interest*, 6/27/2021)
Imagery shows major work being done at North's air base (*JoongAng Daily*, 6/27/2021)
North Korea Admits Kim Jong Un Lost Weight (VOA, 6/27/2021)
North Korea Faces Crisis After Chinese Food Imports Drop by 90 Percent (*The Vision Times*, 6/25/2021)
North Korea policy failures causing food shortage: experts (*The Korea Times*, 6/27/2021)
North Koreans Reject Korean War Propaganda Claiming South Struck First (*Radio Free Asia*, 6/25/2021)
N.K. paper urges 'maximum vigilance' against COVID-19 amid global spread of Delta variant (*Yonhap*, 6/27/2021)
N.K. resident voice concerns over Kim's weight loss (*Yonhap*, 6/27/2021)
Will North Korea Remain Stable For the Foreseeable Future? (*The National Interest*, 6/26/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Minister vows to act 'more quickly' for resumption of dialogue with N. Korea(*Yonhap*, 6/27/2021)
**Inter Korean Relations**:
Private think tank researcher indicted on espionage charges (*Yonhap*, 6/27/2021)

**Top News:**
- Human rights experts in Washington say they strongly support changing the name of the street in front of North Korea's UN mission in New York to that of Otto Warmbier Way, an American college student who was released in a vegetative state after being detained in North Korea. There were also arguments that the same campaign should be held in all countries where North Korean diplomats reside to accuse the regime of cruel human rights violations. (Sung-won Baek, *VOA Korea*)

**In North Korea:**
- North Koreans are collectively "heartbroken" by Kim Jong Un's sudden recent weight loss, according to a Pyongyang citizen who spoke to the carefully controlled state television network on Friday, a rare official acknowledgment of domestic concerns over Kim's health. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- News more troubling than usual is coming out of North Korea. In the summer of 2020, the country was hit by a series of natural disasters in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, which has reportedly affected the country despite government claims of zero cases. Kim Jong-Un has also admitted the country's five-year economic plan had failed,

and that the country's food situation is "getting tense." These pieces of information suggest that the North Korean people may very well be facing their most dire living conditions in decades. However, the U.S. government should not assume that North Korea is on the verge of collapse. (Abby Bard, *The National Interest*)

- Satellite imagery from June 12 shows major ongoing maintenance and expansion at the Sunchon Air Base in South Pyongan, North Korea, which usually houses the country's most modern and flightworthy military aircraft, according to a U.S. think tank on Thursday. (Michael Lee,*JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean state television has acknowledged Kim Jong Un's apparent weight loss, even admitting that the leader's health is a subject of concern in Pyongyang. (William Gallo, VOA)
- North Korea is experiencing a food crisis after imports from China dropped by approximately 90 percent between April and May this year, a situation that North Korean dictator, Kim Jong-un, described as "getting tense," according to state media. n the aftermath of a damaging typhoon last growing season, and amidst the current global COVID-19 pandemic, prices for corn and white rice soared amidst reports that a single kilogram of bananas costs as much as US$45.00 in the country. (Todd Crawford, *The Vision Times*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's unusual acknowledgement of a food shortage is stirring up legitimate questions about the current situation inside the reclusive state and the reasons behind his admission. Pyongyang watchers also believe the country is facing a quite serious food shortage, and they see Kim's failed major policies as the culprits for the ongoing crisis, along with the triple whammy of last fall's typhoons, COVID-19 and international sanctions. (Seung-woo Kang, *The Korea Times*)
- Every year in the run up to the anniversary of the June 25, 1950 North Korean invasion of South Korea that started the three-year conflict, residents of the North are bombarded with propaganda that falsely claims it was the South who set off the conflict. Fewer and fewer North Koreans are buying the official line these days, sources in the North told RFA. (Hyemin Son, *Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Sunday called for "maximum vigilance" against the coronavirus amid the global spread of the highly contagious Delta variant and pandemic fatigue. "All workers and party members must bear deep in mind that the prolonged emergency system against the virus means prolonged maximum vigilance and strong discipline, and must strictly abide by the emergency measures." (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's state-run television recently aired an interview of a resident expressing concerns over a slimmer looking Kim Jong-un amid speculation that he has significantly lost weight. "The people were most heartbroken to see the respected General Secretary looking thinner," a North Korean resident said during an interview with Korean Central Television on Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- Despite significant economic problems, North Korea remains stable for now, meaning that the country is unlikely to descend into chaos or collapse. This is because North Korean leader Kim Jong-un appears to have a firm grip on power that enables him to contain any internal threats. While food scarcity and other economic uncertainties pose risks for Kim, whether they will lead to broader instability for the country remains to be seen. (Naoko Aoki, *The National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- Unification Minister Lee In-young on Sunday vowed to act "more quickly" to resume dialogue with North Korea while calling on Pyongyang to flexibly respond to offers for talks. Lee made the remarks during an event to mark the end of the ministry-organized "Unification Walk" campaign where dozens of participants walked together for 13 days along the border in the hope of the reunification of the two Koreas. "It has been about two years since the dialogue between the South and the North, and the North and the U.S. came to a halt, along with the walk toward peace," Lee told the participants during the event held in Paju, north of Seoul. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- A researcher from a Seoul-based private think tank has been indicted on espionage charges after allegedly contacting a North Korean agent and spying for the North, prosecutors said Sunday. (*Yonhap*)

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VOA Article

**Human Rights Experts "Naming of 'Otto Warmbier Way' Should be Extended Across the Globe"**
**6/23/2021**

Human rights experts in Washington say they strongly support changing the name of the street in front of North Korea's UN mission in New York to that of Otto Warmbier Way, an American college student who was released in a vegetative state after being detained in North Korea. There were also arguments that the same campaign should be held in all countries where North Korean diplomats reside to accuse regime of cruel human rights violations.

Sung-won Baek reporting.

While the work of renaming the street in Manhattan, New York, where North Korea's UN mission is located to "Otto Warmbier Way" is gaining momentum, positive evaluations of the plan continued in Washington as well.

Creating a 'Warmbier Way' right in front of the '820 Second Avenue' building in New York City, where North Korea's UN mission resides is expected to offer a physical reminder of the cruelty of the North Korean regime, both to North Korean diplomats and representatives of UN member states who pass by it every day.

Roberta Cohen, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, told VOA on the 22nd, "I certainly support renaming the street in front of North Korea's UN mission in honor of Otto Warmbier. Renaming the street would be a daily reminder to the North Korean government and to every North Korean official who crosses over to the United Nations that North Korea owes an apology and an honest accounting to the United States government as well as compensation for the Warmbier family for the brutal treatment it meted out to a young American student."

She added, “Second, the renaming of the street would be a reminder to member states at the United Nations that North Korea is and has been seriously ignoring UN General Assembly resolutions that call upon its government to provide foreign citizens detained in the DPRK with protections, including access to consular officials and their families.”

[Roberta Cohen, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights]: “Further, it would be a reminder to all Americans that despite recent appeals for calling off travel bans to North Korea in the interest of engagement, assurances must be negotiated with the United States government to provide safety for Americans who travel to North Korea. How foreigners are treated in North Korea must be essential to normalization of relations.”

In January 2019, Republican City Council member Joe Borelli of New York City proposed an ordinance to change the name of the street in front of North Korea's UN Mission building to “Otto Warmbier Way”. The location of the sign is located right in front of North Korea's UN mission between 43rd and 44th Street in Manhattan, New York City, one block from the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

If the name change bill is passed, the address of the ‘820 Second Avenue’ building, where the North Korean delegation is located on the 13th floor, may be changed to ‘820 Otto Warmbier Way.’

Robert R. King, Former State Department Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights pointed out, “The death of Otto Warmbier was very sad and unfortunate. I am particularly sorry for his parents because he had great promise. Renaming the street where the DPRK UN office is located will remind people of what an outstanding young man he was, and it will also remind people of the nature of the government whose actions resulted in his death."

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) also said “Changing the name of the street to Otto Warmbier Way would be a terrific idea. Every time a diplomat, an official or anyone visiting the DPRK permanent mission in New York City has to look it up, they would have to look up Otto Warmbier, his name. So that would be a tremendous symbolic gesture.”

[Transcript: Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director] “I would argue that this should be the opening salvo in a coordinated effort by international NGOs to have each and every street where there is a North Korean embassy or consular missions all over the world, renamed Otto Warmbier, from Bucharest to Madrid, and from Stockholm to Kuwait City—everywhere. I think this would be an extraordinarily important symbolic gesture to show the North Korean regime that the world knows and the world cares, and they cannot get away with murder.”

The ordinance, which is currently pending on the relevant standing committee, has already secured the support of big names, former Secretary of State John Kerry, former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, former US Ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson, former White House National Security Adviser John Bolton, etc., ahead of New York Mayor Bill de

Blasio's recent announcement of his support. In addition, senior Democrats and Republicans, including Senators Tim Kaine, Chris Van Hollen, and Rob Portman, have expressed their support.

Suzanne Scholte, Chair of the North Korea Freedom Coalition said, “We were enthusiastically supportive of it. We actually reached out to the council member in New York Borelli when he introduced the resolution two years ago. I think it's really important because we can never forget what happened to this young man. He is the face of the cruelty of this regime. So we, North Korea Freedom Coalition, enthusiastically endorsed this back when it was first proposed…We can't forget that this is how this regime treats people, and this is how they treat their own citizens as well.”

Attorney Joshua Stanton, an expert on sanctions and human rights against North Korea, explained, “Any action that sends a message of accountability and remembrance to Pyongyang for the evil that it does is helpful in making Pyongyang think twice about harming others".

He also suggested, "What would be even better? Requiring Pyongyang to fully account for what happened to Otto as a legal precondition to the lifting of sanctions.”

This is Sung-won Baek from VOA News.

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VOA Article Translation by Doohyun Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Kathy Yu, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250812173111/https://mailchi.mp/4f4da89e8046/hrnk-news-itemshuman-rights-experts-naming-of-otto-warmbier-way-should-be-extended-across-the-globe?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, June 28, 2021**

## Patterns of Impunity: Human Rights in North Korea and the Role of the U.S. Special Envoy Commentary

**Top News:**
06/26/2021 News & Commentary - Korea (*Small Wars Journal*, 6/26/21)
Push to honor Otto Warmbier by renaming street outside North Korean UN mission gets bipartisan support (*NewsNations USA*, 6/21/21)

**In North Korea:**
Analysis: North Korea sees 'propaganda value' in slimmer Kim, analysts say(*Reuters*, 6/28/21)
Factbox-North Korea's history of secrecy over leaders' health (*Reuters*, 6/28/21)
Kim's 'normal state' vision still far off (*The Korea Herald*, 6/28/21)
N. Korean paper warns officials against corruption, bureaucracy (*Yonhap*, 6/28/21)
North Korea self-reports no COVID-19 cases after testing 735 more people (*NK News*, 6/28/21)
North Koreans 'heartbroken' by Kim's purported weight loss, Pyongyang resident tells state media (CNN, 6/28/21)
Soon-to-be-discharged North Korean soldiers reassigned as workers in Komdok mines (*Daily NK*, 6/28/21)
State TV: NKoreans heartbroken over Kim's 'emaciated looks' (*AP News*, 6/28/21)
Unification ministry keeping eye on whether N.K. sends congratulatory delegation to China (*Yonhap*, 6/28/21)
**In South Korea:**
Interview: Former top nuclear negotiator says US, DPRK preparing for 'hardball' (*NK News*, 6/28/21)
S.Korea to develop 'Iron Dome'-style defence system to counter North's artillery(*Reuters*, 6/28/21)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Korean, US progressive Christian groups call for peace treaty, end to Korean War(*The Korea Times*, 6/28/21)

**Top News:**

- A commentary attached to articles about several articles on North Korea that were published on June 25 and June 26. This commentary also includes one on the HRNK's recent event "Patterns of Impunity: Human Rights in North Korea and the Role of the U.S. Special Envoy," with Ambassador Robert King as speaker. (Dave Maxwell, *Small Wars Journal*)
- The North Korean mission to the United Nations is located in a Manhattan office building at 820 Second Avenue, just one block from the U.N. Now, there are growing calls to change the building's address to: 820 "Otto Warmbier Way." (Liam cole, *NewsNation USA*)

**In North Korea:**

- A rare mention in North Korean state media of leader Kim Jong Un's health could be intended to head off speculation and play up shared sacrifice amid food shortages, analysts said. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- The health of North Korea's leaders is typically a tightly held state secret in a nuclear-armed country dominated by the Kim family dynasty since its founding in 1948. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un is continuing his quest to tighten his grip on his country, and to create an image of it as a "normal state." His new title as of 2021, president of the State Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, reflects this. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)

- North Korea's official newspaper on Monday warned officials against corruption and urged them to focus on improving people's living standards. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has continued to maintain that there have been no cases of the novel coronavirus in the country, according to the latest World Health Organization (WHO) report, after testing an additional 735 people. (Bryan Betts, *NK News*)
- North Korean state television aired an unusual interview Friday in which a Pyongyang resident said he and others living in the capital were "heartbroken" to see how much weight the country's leader Kim Jong Un had lost. (Yoonjung Seo, Joshua Berlinger, *CNN*)
- North Korean authorities will reassign soon-to-be discharged soldiers currently deployed in reconstruction efforts in flood-stricken Komdok, South Hamgyong Province, as miners in the region, Daily NK has learned. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- Heartbroken North Koreans have been worrying tearfully about leader Kim Jong Un's "emaciated looks," state media quoted a local resident as saying, in a rare acknowledgement of foreign speculation about his weight loss. (Hyung-Jin Kim, *AP News*)
- South Korea is keeping a close eye on whether North Korea dispatches a delegation to Beijing to mark the 100th anniversary of the Chinese ruling party, the unification ministry said Monday. (*Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- North Korea will likely return to talks with the U.S., but it is unlikely to present something new and tangible in the near future, South Korea's former chief nuclear negotiator told NK News. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- South Korea approved plans on Monday to pursue a $2.6-billion artillery interception system, similar to Israel's "Iron Dome", designed to protect against North Korea's arsenal of long-range guns and rockets, the defence acquisition agency said. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korea Relationship:**

- The National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCK) and the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (NCCCUSA) adopted a joint statement urging the governments of both South Korea and the United States to work towards declaring an end to the Korean War as well as to hold negotiations to sign a peace treaty on the Korean Peninsula. (Park Ji-Won, *The Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250812173324/https://mailchi.mp/0c163f677798/hrnk-news-itemspatterns-of-impunity-human-rights-in-north-korea-and-the-role-of-the-us-special-envoy-commentary?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Tuesday, June 29, 2021

# North Korean state TV acknowledges Kim Jong Un's 'emaciated looks'; UN provided $5.9m to North Korea to tackle food shortages

**In North Korea:**
Elderly members of Socialist Women's Union mobilized to take part in farm work (*Daily NK*, 06/29/2021)
N. Korea builds apartments on site for late founder's house (*Yonhap*, 06/29/2021)
North Korea calls attention to new beachside 'holiday camp' (*UPI*, 06/28/2021)
North Korea: Kim Jong-un weight loss remark aired on state TV (*BBC*, 06/28/2021)
North Korea Orders Nationwide School Renovations, Sends Bill to Parents (*Radio Free Asia*, 06/28/2021)
North Korea rails against women using nannies to take care of their children (*Daily NK*, 06/29/2021)
North Korean State Media Acknowledges "Emaciated' Kim Jong-un (*National Interest*, 06/28/2021)
North Korean state TV acknowledges Kim Jong Un's 'emaciated looks' (*The Hill*, 06/28/2021)

**In South Korea:**
South Korea police investigating treason charges against president (*UPI*, 06/28/2021)
South Korea to invest $2.6B in 'Iron Dome' interceptor (*UPI*, 06/28/2021)

**International:**
Fertilizer, oil account for most Chinese exports to North Korea in May (*NK News*, 06/28/2021)
UN provided $5.9m to North Korea to tackle food shortages (*The Korea Herald*, 06/29/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- With North Korean authorities mobilizing every age group and all means to weed agricultural fields this year, even 59-year-old members of the Socialist Women's Union of Korea are being forced to take part in farm work. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea's official newspaper said Tuesday that the site for riverside apartments now under construction in Pyongyang is where a special residence was once located for late state founder Kim Il-sung. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea is highlighting a beach resort in new publicity material that promotes the Thongchon Holiday Camp for Diplomatic Corps in Kangwon Province, in a move that appeared to be targeting international travelers. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- North Korea has aired unprecedented television footage of one of its citizens expressing concern for leader Kim Jong-un's sudden weight loss. (Alistair Coleman, *BBC*)
- North Korea has ordered universities and schools nationwide to renovate old, crumbling buildings and modernize their classrooms, but the funding, labor, and materials for each school is the responsibility of the students and their families, sources in the country told RFA. (Myungchul Lee, Jinha Shin, Leejin Jun, Eugene Whong, *Radio Free Asia*)

- North Korean authorities have ordered an end to the largely urban practice of hiring nannies to look after children. The order comes amid North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's recent emphasis on the issue of child rearing. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- In early June, those who watch North Korea started to notice something unusual: The nation's leader, Kim Jong-un, appeared to have lost a large amount of weight in a short period of time. (Stephen Silver, *National Interest*)
- North Korean state television on Monday acknowledged the country's leader Kim Jong Un's "emaciated looks," as speculation around his suspected weight loss and health continues. (Joseph Choi, *The Hill*)

**In South Korea:**

- Police in South Korea are investigating charges against President Moon Jae-in after a North Korean defector and the former head of the Korea Medical Association accused Moon of treason. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- South Korea plans to invest close to $2.6 billion in the research and development of a missile interceptor similar to Israel's Iron Dome. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)

**International:**

- Fertilizer and refined oil took up the majority of Chinese exports to North Korea this past May, new Chinese customs data shows. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- The United Nations provided $5.9 million to North Korea last year to tackle the country's severe food shortage and for its COVID-19 response, UN data showed Tuesday. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Timothy Goo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250812173455/https://mailchi.mp/a6783ccf80fa/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-korean-state-tv-acknowledges-kim-jong-uns-emaciated-looks-un-provided-59m-to-north-korea-to-tackle-food-shortages?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, June 30, 2021**

## The Governments of Australia, Japan, the US, and the European Union hosted the Online Symposium in the UN on the Abductions Issue

**Top News:**

The Governments of Australia, Japan, the US, and the European Union will host the Online Symposium in the UN on the Abductions Issue (*Abductions of Japanese Citizens by North Korea*, 06/29/2021)

**In North Korea:**

Critical Signs to Watch for Famine in North Korea (*The National Interest*, 06/29/2021)
How North Korea's cyber power can undermine US sanctions enforcement (*NK News*, 06/29/2021)
Inflation and food two factors in North's deepening crisis (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 06/29/2021)
Kim Jong-un Accepts Risks to Solidify Control Over North Korea (*The National Interest*, 06/29/2021)
Kim berates North Korean officials for 'crucial' virus lapse (*AP News*, 06/30/2021)
Kim Jong-un Lost Weight. No One Knows How or Why (*The New York Times*, 06/29/2021)
Memes, NFTs, sanctions: North Korea and the evolving world of cryptocurrencies (*NK News*, 06/29/2021)
N.K. leader says 'grave incident' has happened due to lapses in anti-epidemic efforts (*Yonhap*, 06/30/2021)
No. of N.K. defectors entering resettlement center drops 85 pct on year to 57 in first half (*Yonhap*, 06/30/2021)
North Korea Launches Investigation to Stop Gossip about Kim Jong Un's Health (*Radio Free Asia*, 06/29/2021)
N.K. state media urges thorough preparation ahead of monsoon season to minimize damage (*Yonhap*, 06/30/2021)
North Korea orders the release of military rice stores to general population (*Daily NK*, 06/30/2021)
Why Kim Jong Un is skipping public appearances amid health concerns (*NK News*, 06/29/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Popular ex-prosecutor in S. Korea launches presidential bid (*AP News*, 06/29/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
North Korea is Sweating Over South Korea's F-35s (*The National Interest*, 06/29/2021)

**International:**
ARF's preparatory meeting held ahead of annual session (*Yonhap*, 06/29/2021)
American student David Sneddon did not die in China, family says (UPI, 06/29/2021)
Naval Expert: North Korea Could Probably Sink a U.S. Aircraft Carrier (*The National Interest*, 06/29/2021)
Remarks by Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield at a UN Symposium Co-Hosted by the United States on DPRK Abductions (*United States Mission to the United Nations*, 06/29/2021)
Report: North Korea resuming maritime trade with China (UPI, 06/29/2021)

**Top News:**
- The governments of Australia, Japan, the US, and the European Union hosted the Online Symposium in the UN on the Abductions Issue on the theme of "International cooperation to resolve the abductions issue as a global issue." One of the speakers of this event was Ambassador Lee Jung-Hoon who is an HRNK Board Member. (Abductions of Japanese Citizens by North Korea)

**In North Korea:**

- In a speech before the Workers Party of Korea in April, Kim Jong-un warned of an "arduous march," the same language used to describe a period of famine that took place in North Korea in the 1990s. Whether Kim's use of the term arduous march is an exaggeration or not, there are indicators of famine that were observable during the Arduous March that are not observable now due to how closed off North Korea is from the rest of the world. (Olivia Enos, *The National Interest*)
- Cryptocurrency exchanges and state regulators could turn blind eye to DPRK's illicit activities to avoid getting hit. Enforcing sanctions against North Korea relies on cooperation from partners in third-party states and the country's ability to exploit this weak link may become easier as its cyber power grows. (Jenny Jun, NK News)
- North Korea faces a deepening crisis of fluctuating currency and food prices due to international sanctions, continued restrictions on trade resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic and a declining agricultural harvest, according to a South Korean think tank's report released June 23. (Michael Lee, Korea JoongAng Daily)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un appears to be taking some risks trying to solidify his grip on the North in the wake of events undermining his control. (Bruce W. Bennett, The National Interest)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un berated top officials for failures in coronavirus prevention that caused a "great crisis," using strong language that raised the specter of a mass outbreak in a country that would be scarcely able to handle it. The state media report Wednesday did not specify what "crucial" lapse had prompted Kim to call the Politburo meeting of the ruling Workers' Party, but experts said the North could be wrestling with a significant setback in its pandemic fight. (Kim Tong-Hyung, AP News)
- North Koreans say they were "heartbroken" when they saw Kim Jong-un looking "emaciated." The regime has turned the weight loss into a propaganda victory. (Choe Sang-Hun, The New York Times)
- As the market for cryptocurrency grows and the wider public engages with the technology behind it, there are new opportunities for illicit actors like North Korea to take advantage of the emerging digital space. (Won-Gi Jung, NK News)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said a "grave incident" has happened that could threaten the safety of his people and country in nationwide anti-epidemic efforts, state media reported Wednesday. The KCNA did not elaborate on what the grave incident was. (Yonhap)
- Fifty-seven newly arrived North Korean defectors were admitted to the government-run resettlement education center in the first half of the year, an 85 percent drop from a year earlier amid the North's anti-coronavirus border closure, an official said Wednesday. (Yonhap)
- North Korea has launched an investigation into gossip about the health of the country's leader Kim Jong Un, after he appeared on state media looking thinner after a lengthy absence, sources in the country told RFA. (Eugene Whong, Radio Free Asia)
- North Korea's state-run radio called Wednesday for greater efforts to minimize damage from flooding and heavy rains as the country braces for the summer monsoon season that wrought havoc on major farming areas last year. (Yonhap)
- North Korea's central government recently issued a nationwide order directing localities to release military rice stores to local citizens. The order included a promise to supply

North Koreans with food for a three-month period until the end of September. However, the order clearly stated that the rice will not be provided for free. (Lee Chae Un, Daily NK)

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un appears to have skipped another photo opportunity with attendees at a key event, raising questions over possible new COVID-19 precautions or personal health issues, or if the move is part of more changes to traditional party optics. (Colin Zwirko, NK News)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's former top prosecutor, Yoon Suk Yeol, launched a bid to run in next year's presidential election Tuesday, vowing to unseat the current liberal government that he once worked for and that he also investigated for possible corruption. (Hyung-Jin Kim, AP News)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The ROKAF, South Korea's Air Force received their first F-35A fighter jets in April 2019. The ROKAF hopes to eventually buy forty F-35As and should have ten F-35As by the end of the year. ROKAF's American F-35s are more survivable than current aircraft on the Korean Peninsula. (Charlie Gao, The National Interest)

**International:**

- Senior diplomats of the two Koreas and more than two dozen other countries held a virtual meeting Tuesday to prepare for a major regional security forum led by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Seoul's foreign ministry said. (Yonhap)
- The brother of an American student suspected to have been abducted to North Korea in 2004 said evidence exists that David Sneddon did not die in a hiking accident in Yunnan Province. The Sneddon story is one of many among the families of abductees who suspect their loved ones were forcibly taken to North Korea. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- How U.S. commanders arrange their forces will help determine whether a carrier suffers assault from North Korea. The U.S. Navy should avoid overconfidence in itself. (James Holmes, The National Interest)
- Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, U.S. Representative to the United Nations, condemns the DPRK government's involvement in international abductions and forced disappearances. Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield affirms U.S.' commitment to standing in solidarity with the abducted Japanese persons in North Korea and working closely with allies to address these longstanding injustices. (United States Mission to the United Nations)
- Shipping routes between China and North Korea are reopening after months of little to no activity, according to a South Korean press report. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

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Prepared by Michelle Dang, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250812173922/https://mailchi.mp/6a0f88cbee65/hrnk-news-itemsthe-governments-of-australia-japan-the-us-and-the-european-union-hosted-the-online-symposium-in-the-un-on-the-abductions-issue?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

# 7. JULY

### Thursday, July 1, 2021

## N.K. leader appears to have reshuffled top officials at recent politburo meeting: official

**In North Korea:**
Kim Jong Un says 'hostile forces' don't stand a chance against Chinese communism (*NK News*, 7/1/21)
Kim Jong-un signal for help could mark a turning point in North Korea's Covid fight(*The Guardian*, 7/1/21)
Kim Jong Un's "special order" includes directives to address electricity and running water shortages (*Daily NK*, 7/1/21)
Analysis-Kim's reshuffles serve to keep North Korea elite in line as crises mount(*Reuters*, 7/1/21)
(LEAD) N.K. leader appears to have reshuffled top officials at recent politburo meeting: official (*Yonhap*, 7/1/21)
(LEAD) N.K. leader vows to elevate relations with China to new strategic point(*Yonhap*, 7/1/21)
NKorea's Kim vows to boost China ties amid pandemic hardship (*AP News*, 7/1/21)
North Korea increases cyberattacks on South Korea (*The Korea Times*, 7/1/21)
North Korean hackers likely used new vulnerability to breach ROK defense firm (*NK News*, 7/1/21)

**In South Korea:**
South's key defense firms hacked by N. Korea: lawmaker (*The Korea Herald*, 7/1/21)
Vice FM says Moon gov't seeks 'irreversible' framework for denuclearization(*Yonhap*, 7/1/21)

**International:**
U.S. aware of NK leader Kim's remarks on 'grave incident' in anti-pandemic steps: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 7/1/21)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un sent congratulatory greetings to Chinese leader Xi Jinping on Thursday for the 100th anniversary of the founding of China's communist party, vowing to stand together with Beijing amid a "complicated international situation." (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

- Almost 18 months after the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, North Korea has come close to conceding that its attempts to keep the virus from its borders have failed. (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)
- The "special order" to stabilize the livelihoods of the North Korean people — signed by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un during the recent Third Plenary Meeting of the Eighth Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea — included directives that not only addressed food shortages, but also called for efforts to supply electricity, running water, and firewood. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- What may be the most significant reshuffle of top North Korean officials in years by leader Kim Jong Un serves as a warning to the ruling elite, analysts say, including those he accused this week of causing a "great crisis" with coronavirus lapses. (Josh Smith, Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un appears to have carried out a reshuffle of top officials at a recent politburo meeting of the ruling Workers' Party, a unification ministry official said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un vowed to elevate relations with China to a new strategic point as he sent a congratulatory message to Chinese President Xi Jinping to mark the 100th anniversary of the Communist Party of China, state media said Thursday. (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said Thursday he'll push to further upgrade relations with China, his main ally, as he struggles to navigate his country out of a deepening crisis linked to the pandemic. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)
- Several major South Korean facilities have fallen victim to cyberattacks originating from North Korea in recent months, as the reclusive state has been ramping up its cyberterrorism campaign against its southern neighbor. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- After a series of hacks against South Korea's nuclear research and defense sectors, the cybersecurity firm TeamT5 said a group linked to North Korea likely used a previously unknown vulnerability and new malicious tools to break into the highly sensitive systems. (Nils Weisensee, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- North Korea hacked key South Korean key defense firms, including Korea Aerospace Industries, which is building the country's first homegrown fighter jet, Rep. Ha Tae-keung of the main opposition People Power Party said Thursday. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- The government of President Moon Jae-in hopes to build an "irreversible framework" for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and hand the formula over to its successor, First Vice Foreign Minister Choi Jong-kun said Monday. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korea Relationship:**

- The United States is aware of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's remarks about a serious incident with regard to the North's fight against the new coronavirus, a State Department spokesperson said Wednesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern
Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250812174128/https://mailchi.mp/068e3bcc229f/hrnk-news-items-nk-leader-appears-to-have-reshuffled-top-officials-at-recent-politburo-meeting-official?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, July 2, 2021**

## Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea: The Role of the United Nations

**Top News**
Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea: The Role of the United Nations (*HRNK YouTube*, 07/01/2021)

**In North Korea**
Flooding And Pandemic Restrictions Compound North Korea's Food Insecurity(*NPR*, 07/01/2021)
Kim Jong Un Blasts 'Hostile Forces' Trying to Hold China Back in Message to Xi Jinping (*Newsweek*, 07/01/2021)
Kim Jong Un rediscovers his love of central planning (*The Economist*, 07/03/2021)
Kim Jong Un's Comments Reflect Growing Fear Over North Korea's Food Crisis(*The Diplomat*, 07/02/2021)
Mysteriously skinnier Kim Jong Un berates underlings for allowing "great crisis" with COVID (*CBS*, 07/02/2021)
North Korea's Covid Secrets (*Bloomberg*, 07/01/2021)
North Korea creates new "social order disciplinary units" to squash "non-socialist behavior" (*Daily NK*, 07/02/2021)
North Korea's emphasis on state industries could hurt economy, analyst says (UPI, 07/01/2021)
N. Korea's No. 2 leader keeps his seat in recent reshuffle, holds key party meeting (*Yonhap News Agency*, 07/02/2021)
North Korea's young generation becomes headache for Kim Jong-un (*Korea Times*, 07/02/2021)
North Korean leadership faults military for causing "grave incident" (*Daily NK*, 07/02/2021)
Reports of people 'starving' as N Korea struggles to feed itself (*Al Jazeera*, 07/02/2021)

**In South Korea**

Seoul monitoring North Korea after possible demotion of top military commanders (UPI, 07/02/2021)
Sources claim Moon, Kim exchanged letters on possible talks (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/02/2021)

**Inter-Korea Relationship**
New commander takes charge of US Forces Korea, (*NK News*, 07/02/2021)
NKorea's Kim vows to boost China ties amid pandemic hardship (*AP News*, 07/01/2021)
Unification ministry says it does not know about Moon-Kim letter exchanges (*Yonhap News Agency*, 07/02/2021)
U.S. awaits constructive response from Pyongyang for dialogue: State Dept, (*Yonhap News Agency*, 07/02/2021)
US shortlists North Korea among worst nations in human trafficking (*Korea Times*, 07/02/2021)

**Top News**

- "Human Rights in the Democratic Republic of Korea: The Role of the United Nations" is HRNK's 50th report in our 20-year history. This is even more meaningful as David Hawk's "Hidden Gulag" (2003) was the first report published by HRNK. In his latest report, Hawk detailed efforts by many UN member states and by the UN's committees, projects and procedures to promote and protect human rights in the DPRK. The report highlighted North Korea's shifts in its approach to human rights before and after the February 2014 UN Commission of Inquiry report. Following the collapse of the Hanoi Summit and the outbreak of the COVID epidemic, North Korea is currently in an extreme "anti-reform" and "anti-opening" phase. This HRNK report contended that recommendations the United Nations could make to the DPRK may provide a roadmap complete with specific steps for North Korea to become a more "normal" country. David Hawk, Ambassador Robert King, and HRNK Co-Chair Emeritus Roberta Cohen spoke on a panel moderated by HRNK Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu, (HRNK, *YouTube*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea's leader, Kim Jong Un, doesn't make casual public remarks. They service a particular agenda and are highly calculated at any moment. That's why it raised eyebrows last month when he called the food situation in North Korea "tense" during a meeting with the Central Committee of his ruling Workers' Party, (Rachel Martin, NPR)
- The North Korean dictator's love of high-end products from evil capitalist countries is well documented. The import of luxury goods into North Korea has been banned by un sanctions since 2006. Yet Kim Jong Un parades around Pyongyang in a million-dollar Maybach car, drinks rare whiskies and has a magnificent yacht moored off Wonsan, a seaside resort, (*The Economist*)
- Since the coronavirus pandemic began in early 2020, North Korea's government has taken aggressive measures to prevent a massive number of infections within the

country, cognizant of its lack of medical facilities. One of its aggressive measures was locking down the border with China, the biggest trade partner of the North. Since then, the North's economy has been sluggish as the pandemic continues – along with the border shutdown, (Mitch Shin, *The Diplomat*)

- In a message of unity with China, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called out "hostile forces" trying to curb Chinese advancements, (Lauren Giella, *Newsweek*)
- North Korea was one of the most isolated nations on the planet even before the coronavirus pandemic led dictator Kim Jong Un to shut its borders more than a year and a half ago. The Kim regime has claimed ever since then that its drastic measures have successfully kept COVID-19 out of North Korea, but while first-hand information from inside the "Hermit Kingdom" is virtually non-existent, even Kim appeared to acknowledge this week that his country is struggling, (Jen Kwon, CBS)
- Kim Jong Un's warning that North Korea faced a "great crisis" over a quarantine breach is raising more questions about what's going wrong inside his secretive regime, (Jon Herskovitz and Jeong-Ho Lee, *Bloomberg*)
- North Korea's No. 2 leader Choe Ryong-hae presided over a key Workers' Party meeting, state media said Friday, confirming that he survived a recent reshuffle carried out to sack officials responsible for causing a "crucial case" in the country's fight against the coronavirus, (Yi Wonju, *Yonham News Agency*)
- For North Korea's young leader Kim Jong-un, his peers increasingly seem to be becoming his biggest headache. Having experienced a market economy and foreign cultures while growing up, unlike their parents, they don't think they owe anything to the regime, (Yoon Ja-young, *Korea Times*)
- North Korea's leadership has raised serious issues with how the military carried out the "special order" by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to release military rice stores to local citizens. Specifically, they fault the military for allegedly bringing in rice from outside the country in violation of quarantine protocols, (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea is creating new "social order disciplinary units" to bolster efforts to control and squash "non-socialist behavior" occurring throughout North Korean society, (Lee Sang Yong, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea's state-owned enterprises only had a small role in economic development after the Great Famine of the '90s while informal markets were crucial to recovery, according to new South Korean analysis, (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- United Nations Security Council sanctions, the COVID-19 closure of its border with China, and a 2020 drought followed by typhoon rains are combining to create severe food shortages in North Korea, with concerns growing about widespread malnutrition and a potential repeat of the country's 1990s famine, (Frank Smith, *Al Jazeera*)
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**In South Korea:**

- President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un exchanged letters in May to discuss the possibility of holding virtual summit talks, a diplomatic source

well-informed about inter-Korean affairs told the JoongAng Ilbo on Thursday, (*Korea JoonAng Daily*)

- Lack of participation from North Korea's military top brass at the Politburo meeting of the ruling Workers' Party is prompting speculation of demotions or dismissals in the South, where the military said it is keeping an eye on developments, (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

**Inter-Korea Relationship:**

- The unification ministry on Friday said it is not aware of anything in connection with a news report that President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un exchanged letters to discuss the possibility of a video summit, (*Yonhap News Agency*)
- The United States hopes for a constructive response from North Korea as it remains willing to engage with the reclusive nation anytime and anywhere, a State Department spokesman said Thursday, (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap News Agency*)
- The United States has again shortlisted North Korea as a nation complicit in human trafficking and forced labor, an annual U.S. report said Thursday, (*The Korea Times*)
- General Paul LaCamera took charge of U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) as its new commander after a change-of-command ceremony at Camp Humphreys on Friday, (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said Thursday he'll push to further upgrade relations with China, his main ally, as he struggles to navigate his country out of a deepening crisis linked to the pandemic, (Hyung-Jin Kim, *Associated Press*)

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Prepared by David Shaw, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250812174407/https://mailchi.mp/194149af4703/hrnk-news-items-human-rights-in-the-democratic-peoples-republic-of-north-korea-the-role-of-the-united-nations?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, July 3, 2021**

## Women's Perspectives on a Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula

**Top News:**

Women's Perspectives on a Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula (*Women's Federation for World Peace* 07/01/2021)

"China operates to replace barbed wire in the border region along the river in North Hoeryong, North Korea" (RFA 06/29/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Kim Jong Un's Recent Weight Loss: A Medical Assessment (*38 North* 07/01/2021)
N.K. paper warns against irresponsibility, negligence after 'crucial' lapses in antivirus efforts (*Yonhap* 07/02/2021)
N. Koreans overtake S. Koreans in TOEFL score in 2020: report (*Yonhap* 07/03/2021)
N. Korea orders farms in Yanggang Province to stop selling off secretly stored up rice (*Daily NK* 07/01/2021)
North Korea cracks down on illegal drug use with new law (*NK News* 07/01/2021)
North Korea's Military Strategy Is a Total Joke (*The National Interest* 07/03/2021)
**International:**
What China Wants From North Korea (*The National Interest* 07/02/2021)
World War III? How America Would Fight Against North Korea (*The National Interest* 07/02/2021)

**Top News**

- "The second panelist from the US, Amanda Mortwedt Oh, a human rights attorney at The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, advocates for human rights issues alongside those who have escaped North Korea. She offered three recommendations and steps in order for the two countries to peacefully reunite. As a concept developed by Former Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki Moon, Ms. Oh advised to start with an upfront human rights approach and assessment process. This is to increase awareness about the facts and what is happening, and to encourage all parties to prioritize resolving human rights issues. In order to do this, human rights standards would need to be discussed and agreed upon, including how these standards would continue to be monitored. To further build trust, she shared examples of steps of good faith that could be arranged, such as allowing family reunions or releasing political prisoners. Finally, Ms. Oh emphasized the need for individuals to share their stories and experiences, to allow for justice, documentation, and accountability to take place. By setting up these practices and mutual agreements, long-term reconciliation and understanding can take place." (Kiyomi Schmidt, *Women's Federation for World Peace*)
- Chinese authorities are reportedly working on a new barbed wire fence on the North Korea-China border. **Executive Director Scarlatoiu:** This situation can have a significant adverse effect on the human security of the North Koreans. It is much more difficult, dangerous, and expensive for North Koreans to defect from North Korea. And in the end, it will have a negative impact on the market, the black market, and the farmers' market. (Albert Hong, RFA)

**In North Korea:**

- Recent media reports in the West, South Korea and even in North Korea have highlighted Chairman Kim Jong Un's recent weight loss, leading to a flurry of speculation as to whether his weight loss is intentional or due to illness. A careful review of comments in the North Korean media, plus Kim's recent political behavior and likely

intentions, suggest that Kim's weight loss is intentional and related to health concerns. (Kenneth Dekleva, 38 North)

- North Korea's official newspaper said Friday irresponsibility is "never acceptable," days after top officials were dismissed for "crucial" lapses in the country's fight against the coronavirus." While mistakes made during the process are forgivable, causing critical harm to our party, country and people due to irresponsibility and negligence of duty is never acceptable," the Rodong Sinmun, the organ of the ruling Workers' Party, said in an editorial. (*Yonhap*)
- North Koreans surpassed South Koreans in the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), one of the leading English language proficiency tests, last year, a report showed Saturday. According to a report from the U.S.-based Education Testing Service (ETS), the administrator of TOEFL, the average score in the internet-based TOEFL by North Korean nationals was 87 out of 120 in 2020. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean authorities recently handed down an "administrative order" in Yanggang Province to prevent some farms in the province from taking advantage of skyrocketing rice prices to sell off rice they secretly stored up from last fall's harvest. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea passed a law on the "Prevention of Drug-related Crimes" on Thursday to address "harmful illegal acts" to society, according to state media. A top group called the presidium from North Korea's rubber-stamp parliament, the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA), passed the new anti-drug measure along with laws meant to improve the metal, chemical and machine industries, the *Korean Central News Agency* (KCNA) reported on Friday. (*NK News*)
- Here's What You Need to Remember: Will 1950s tactics work today? When North Korean and American last met in open battle, it was seventy years ago and the Communists only faced poorly trained American and South Korean conscripts armed with World War II weapons. Today they would face professional American soldiers and well-trained South Korea conscripts. (*The National Interest)*

**International:**

- From the Chinese point of view, threats created by a stable and sovereign but nuclear North Korea are real, but still less grave than threats likely to be created by either unstable North Korea or Korea being unified under Seoul's stewardship. (Andrei Lankov, *The National Interest*)
- For years, the expectation had been that a second Korean War would resemble with the first, a big-unit conventional war with U.S. and South Korean forces first stopping the enemy and then counterattacking into North Korea. But OPLAN 5015 reportedly takes a more twenty-first century approach of limited war, special forces and precision weapons. (Michael Peck, *The National Interest*)

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RFA Article

**“China operates to replace barbed wire in the border region along the river in North Hoeryong, North Korea”**
06/29/2021

Anchor: Chinese authorities are reportedly working on a new barbed wire fence on the North Korea-China border. This is Hong Albert reporting.

Yongjeong City in the Yanbian County of North Hamgyong Province, China, where ethnic Koreans live, faces Hoeryeong City in North Hamgyong Province with the Tumen River between them.

The barbed wire fences on the banks of the Tumen River, called the Yongjeong Triad, have been under construction since April.

This construction the Chinese government is doing is to remove the existing barbed wire and build a stronger and new barbed wire fence.

A South Korean source, who refused to identify themselves due to personal safety, said in a telephone conversation with Radio Free Asia (RFA) on the 29th that a local resident in Yongjeong City had informed them of the construction work with a photo.

According to local sources, the Chinese authorities minced thick stones underneath the wire mesh to prevent people from escaping, and also tightly wove the wire mesh to prevent escapees from climbing over the fence.

And on top of the 3-meter-high wire fence, the authorities placed a sharp wire fence so that no one can reach the top with their fingertips and then attached a device that can flow high-pressure electricity.

Source: They’re completely replacing the barbed wire. In the past, barbed wire fences were made of rope and were sloppy. People would come through the openings, but they would also make holes underneath and go through. Now, they can't pass it at all.

Local sources also say the number of North Korean defectors has decreased significantly due to the border blockade between North Korea and China to prevent the spread of coronavirus infection, but as food shortages have increased, it has become more common for hungry North Korean soldiers to cross over and steal food. As a result, the sources explained that the new barbed wire fences have been set up to prevent North Korean soldiers from extorting food in addition to preventing North Koreans from defecting.

Although the construction of barbed wire fences is reportedly underway in areas where it is relatively easier for North Koreans to access, the specific construction areas and the amount of time it will take are not known.

In the meantime, it is expected that the defecting will be more difficult for North Koreans due to the construction and the reinforcement of the barbed wire fences. The following is Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK).

Executive Director Scarlatoiu: This situation can have a significant adverse effect on the human security of the North Koreans. It is much more difficult, dangerous, and expensive for North Koreans to defect from North Korea. And in the end, it will have a negative impact on the market, the black market, and the farmers' market.

Meanwhile, in September 2012, a new barbed wire fence was installed in the same area (in China opposite Hoeryeong, North Hamgyong Province) and the North Korea-China border upstream of the Tumen River was blocked.

At the time, Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported that as smuggling activities such as drug trafficking became more frequent due to the narrow river width, barbed-wire fences were set up in China to strengthen border order and prepare for mass North Korean refugees like they did in the 1990s.

Meanwhile, some predict that border security to China will be dangerous for a while as border security was seen being tightened by adding more security forces on the North Korea-China border in Sindo-gun, North Pyongan Province, in May.

Reporter: Albert Hong (RFA)

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Prepared by Juheung Kim, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250812174651/https://mailchi.mp/053247346515/hrnk-news-itemswomens-perspectives-on-a-peaceful-reunification-of-the-korean-peninsula?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, July 4, 2021**

## "Controversial 'Kim Jong-un Honesty'Appraisal..."Presidents Moon's Perception of North Korea is Distorted"

**Top News:**
Controversial 'Kim Jong-un Honesty' Appraisal..."President Moon's perception of North Korea is distorted" (*VOA News* 06/29/2021)

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea not cooperating with global vaccine distribution program: report (*Yonhap* 07/04/2021)
The Limits of Economic Leverage in North Korea (*National interest* 07/03/2021)

**Inter-Korean relationship:**
Suffering, South vs. North Korea (*The Korea Times* 07/03/2021)
**International:**
Korea needs new diplomacy (*The Korea Herald* 07/04/2021)

**Top News**

- Controversy continues over south korean president Moon Jae-in's appraisal regarding North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's positive qualities. (*VOA News*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea has not been cooperating with a United Nations-led global vaccine distribution program, failing to complete necessary paperwork to receive help against the coronavirus pandemic, a report said Sunday. (*Yonhap*)
- The fundamental problem with the alleged "China solution" is that Americans have long misunderstood the relationship between the Beijing and Pyongyang. (*National Interest*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- *Eom Yeong-nam was a featured speaker at the May 15 Asia Regional Forum organized by Freedom Speakers International and sponsored by UniKorea. Below is an excerpt of his remarks. — Ed.* (*The Korea Times*)

**International:**

- As seen at the recent US-South Korea Summit and G7 Summit, Korea is an attractive country in terms of its advanced economies equipped with high technology, organized democracy, diverse cultural content, stable disease control systems, and strong military capabilities. (*The Korea Herald*)

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**Controversial 'Kim Jong-un Honesty' Appraisal..."President Moon's Perception of North Korea is Distorted"**
6/29/2021

Controversy continues over South Korean President Moon Jae-in's appraisal regarding North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's positive qualities. After immediate refutation from human rights groups, Washington also continued to criticize this distorted perception. Of course, North Korean officials also pointed out that China, its only ally, places Chairman Kim's leadership very low.

Sung-won Baek reporting.

[Michael Green, Senior Advisor at Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and former Special Assistant to the President for National Security Council (NSC)]: "History will not view these comments charitably."

Michael Green, Senior Advisor at CSIS and former Senior Director for Asian Affairs at NSC at the White House, criticized President Moon Jae-in's favorable comments regarding North Korean leader Kim Jong-un for leaving a stain in history.

In an interview with the U.S. weekly 'Time' magazine published on the 23rd, President Moon praised North Korean leader Kim Jong-un as being "very honest, very enthusiastic and showing strong determination," adding that he "has international sense." In addition, he shared that Chairman Kim, "spoke genuinely with him that 'We must pass on a better future for our future generations, and we cannot let our children live with nuclear weapons in their heads.'"

However, Washington, which has portrayed Chairman Kim as the worst leader who destroyed both the economy and diplomacy and deprived his people of basic means for survival, points out that the gap between President Moon's perception of North Korea and reality is still huge.

Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, Roberta Cohen, refuted President Moon's remarks, criticizing Chairman Kim as "a man without a conscience."

[Roberta Cohen, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human rights]: "He is clearly a man without a conscience. Not only does he authorize the executions of family members and close colleagues or their imprisonment in secret camps, but spends a large portion of national resources on weapons of mass destruction plus luxury items like rolls Royces, Mercedes Benz, and cognac while his people struggle to have enough food, healthcare and basic necessities of life."

[Roberta Cohen, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human rights]: "While he sometimes feigns tears like a good actor, his tolerance for the suffering of his population could not be higher."

Politicians' remarks appreciating national leaders who have suppressed the freedom and human rights of their own people have often faced serious backlash in the United States. Some of the

remarks of former President Trump, who repeatedly defended Kim and emphasized his personal friendship, have led to reprimands from Democrats and Republicans as well as supporters to "stop praising Kim Jong-un."

[Transcript: Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), Greg Scarlatoiu]: "I have to say that Kim Jong-un is the ruler of the system that commits crimes against humanity, against the people of North Korea, and against nationals of South Korea and other countries.

[Transcript: Executive Director of HRNK, Greg Scarlatoiu]: "We have to remember that there are still South Korean ministers being held, imprisoned by the North Korean regime. Now, this never seems to come up in comments made by President Moon Jae-in. Are these issues discussed behind the scenes? I doubt it. We have seen absolutely no results."

Currently, there are six South Koreans who are detained in North Korea, including missionary Kim Jeong-wook, who was arrested on charges of smuggling in 2013 and detained for 7 years and 8 months, and missionaries Kim Kuk-ki and Choi Chun-gil, who were arrested in October and December 2014, respectively.

In Washington, critics say that, like former President Trump, President Moon Jae-in's unique speech and attitude seems to cover up for the North Korean leader and it has gone too far, only making solving the North Korean problem more difficult.

[Former Director of Policy Planning at the U.S. Department of State, Mitchell Reiss]: "There is something stoic in Moon's relentless pursuit of rapprochement with NK, despite all evidence to the contrary. It is also a fool's errand."

[Transcript: Executive Director of HRNK, Greg Scarlatoiu]: "Praising the North Korean leader doesn't get one anywhere. We still remember the summit meetings, the letters and the praise and everything else—they didn't get us anywhere. He has placed all of his bets on his reconciliation with a North Korean regime that is not working. It is the very North Korean regime that has been rebuffing South Korea."

[Transcript: Executive Director of HRNK, Greg Scarlatoiu]: "South Korea has offered aid, North Korea rejected. South Korea built up a liaison office, North Korea blew it up. South Korea was very hospitable and welcomed very warmly North Korean athletes and leadership and many others and cheerleaders during the Pyeongchang Olympics, North Korea continues to imprison South Korean missionaries So this situation is incomprehensible. In my view, it is the failure of leadership on President Moon-in's part."

In particular, Sino-North Korea relations experts point out that negative perceptions of Chairman Kim Jong-un are widespread not only in Washington, but also among the leadership of China, North Korea's only ally.

[Center Fellow at Stanford University's Freeman Spogli Institute (FSI), Oriana Mastro]: "My understanding is that Xi does not have a high opinion of Kim. He didn't meet with him for years - rumor has it the Chinese ambassador hadn't even met with Kim for at least the first 2.5 years of Kim's tenure as supreme leader. But then, with the direct talks between the US and North Korea potentially undermining China's influence, Xi decided it was worth it to cultivate a closer relationship with Kim."

[Center Fellow at Stanford's FSI, Oriana Mastro]: "I understand this type of flattery as a way to signal to the North Koreans that there is an opening for dialogue."

Ri Jong-ho, a former high-ranking official of the North Korean Workers' Party's Room 39, said, "In North Korea, the evaluation of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-un is different," and "Even North Korean officials would be shocked by President Moon Jae-in's praise that Kim Jong-un is honest and has international sense" he said.

[Transcript: Former Senior Official of Room 39 of the North Korean Workers' Party, Ri Jong-ho]: "Even North Korean elites are in a situation where they avoid getting close to Kim Jong-un and shake at his cruelty, can you say that a dictator who destroys human rights like that is honest, enthusiastic, or has international sensibility? Who in North Korea would make such a statement? If Kim Jong-un is really honest, he should have kept his promise of denuclearization. What has he done that is honest?"

Human Rights Watch, and international human rights organization, also sent a statement to VOA earlier on the 25th, saying, "Kim Jong-un should be tried for crimes against humanity in the International Criminal Court (ICC) rather than lead the North Korean government" and "The UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in North Korea (COI) provided comprehensive details regarding [Chairman Kim's] crimes against humanity and demanded that the North Korean leadership be referred to the ICC," he said.

Human Rights Watch said "But somehow, South Korean President Moon Jae-in considers Kim Jong-un to be a valuable leader," continuing, "fortunately, South Koreans have seen through President Moon's delusion of the North Korean regime."

This is Sung-won Baek from VOA News.

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VOA Article Translated by: Mindy Kim (HRNK)

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Prepared by Seshni Moodley, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250812174833/https://mailchi.mp/64e395b319e1/hrnk-news-itemscontroversial-kim-jong-un-honestyappraisalpresidents-moons-perception-of-north-korea-is-distorted?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, July 5, 2021**

# North Korea Faces Worsening Economic Woes Amid COVID Lockdown; China's role growing in North Korean denuclearization

**Top News:**
07/04/2021 News & Commentary – Korea (*Small Wars Journal*, 07/04/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Experts say North could be angling for foreign food aid (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/05/2021)
Hyesan residential housing complex set alight after gas explosion (*Daily NK*, 07/05/2021)
N. Korea hit recently with greater volatility in prices, exchange rate: ministry (*Yonhap*, 07/05/2021)
North Korea Faces Worsening Economic Woes Amid COVID Lockdown (VOA, 07/05/2021)
North Korean media ignores nuclear missile anniversary after rare 2020 coverage(*NK News*, 07/05/2021)
Slimmed down Kim Jong-un purges dozens of officials for 'disastrous failings' over country's famine (*The Sun*, 07/05/2021)
Two soldiers flee after murdering kindergarten teacher and her mother in Hoeryong(*Daily NK*, 07/05/2021)

**International:**
China's role growing in North Korean denuclearization (*The Korea Times*, 07/04/2021)
Int'l Red Cross stays committed to helping N. Korea, ready to resume assistance projects (*Yonhap*, 07/05/2021)
Japan discriminated against students at North Korea-tied university: UN experts (*NK News*, 07/05/2021)
Russian Embassy confirms large group of Russians left North Korea last Friday (*NK News*, 07/05/2021)
US Defense Department says there has been "no change" S. Korea-US joint military drill (*Hankyoreh*, 07/05/2021)

U.S. should address North Korea's 'legitimate concerns,' Chinese FM says (*NK News*, 07/05/2021)

**Top News:**

- David Maxwell's commentary includes key insights made by Amanda Mortwedt Oh, HRNK Human Rights Attorney, at the Global Women's Peace Network's series, *Women's Leadership in Reconciliation and Peacemaking*. (Dave Maxwell, *Small Wars Journal*)

**In North Korea:**

- Daily reports and commentary on domestic food shortages by North Korea's state media in recent months have raised questions about the intent behind such open admissions, with some analysts suggesting that the reclusive regime is angling for foreign aid by reporting on its troubles. (Michael Yee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A gas explosion set off a major fire recently at a residential housing complex in Hyesan, Yanggang Province. This is the second gas-related fire in the area since last August. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea is faced with greater volatility in foreign exchange rates and prices of goods, the unification ministry said Monday, amid economic challenges fueled by the protracted coronavirus pandemic. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's coronavirus lockdown has taken a major toll on its economy. Its leader, Kim Jong Un, has hinted at a humanitarian crisis. Some fear the situation could get much worse, as VOA's Bill Gallo reports from Seoul. (William Gallo, VOA)
- North Korean state media did not feature any coverage celebrating a key nuclear-capable missile test anniversary on Sunday, after acknowledging the day for the first time in 2020. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- The North Korean leader seems to have resumed a reign of terror, by axing the officials over his own disastrous failings amid a growing food shortage. (Alice Peacock, *The Sun*)
- Two soldiers with a military engineering unit in Hoeryong, North Hamgyong Province, have fled after murdering two locals last month, Daily NK has learned. Their unit has been tasked with constructing concrete walls and high voltage wires along the North Korea-China border. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)

**International:**

- Amid a prolonged deadlock in North Korean denuclearization talks, diplomatic observers believe that China should play a critical role in resolving the impasse. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) remains committed to humanitarian assistance for North Korea and ready to resume suspended projects in the country as soon as coronavirus situations improve, the head of its office in Seoul said. (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)
- Top United Nations (U.N.) human rights experts have expressed concern that the Japanese government discriminated against students at a North Korea-affiliated university in Tokyo by denying them access to benefits under a cash distribution program, according to a U.N. letter obtained by NK News. (Kosuke Takahashi, *NK News*)

- The Russian Embassy in Pyongyang said Monday that a group of Russian nationals left North Korea by rail on Friday, confirming an NK News report from June that Moscow was planning to evacuate a large number of staff and family from the country. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- The US Defense Department said there has been "no change" to joint military exercises with South Korea currently scheduled for August, despite calls from some Koreans to adjust the exercises. (Gil Yun-hyung, *Hankyoreh*)
- The United States should reconsider pressure on North Korea and address the country's "legitimate concerns" in response to steps it has taken toward denuclearization, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Saturday. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)

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Prepared by Sophia Hapin, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250812175341/https://mailchi.mp/4e025ce0d48d/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-korea-faces-worsening-economic-woes-amid-covid-lockdown-chinas-role-growing-in-north-korean-denuclearization?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, July 6, 2021**

## Kim warns North Korea food crisis threatens state security; Chinese, U.S. envoys on North Korea agree to maintain communication

**In North Korea:**
Few signs in North Korea that the government is releasing military rice stores to the public (*Daily* NK, 07/06/2021)
How North Korea received millions in Namibia constructing a 'white elephant' (*NK News*, 07/06/2021)
How will 'emaciated' Kim Jong-un ride out a famine in North Korea? With China's help (*South China Morning Post*, 07/06/2021)
Kim warns North Korea food crisis threatens state security (*Nikkei Asia*, 07/06/2021)
N.K. premier inspects economic sites, indicating his exclusion from recent reshuffle (*Yonhap*, 07/06/2021)
North Korea attacks Hong Kong outlet Apple Daily, accuses West of interference(*NK News*, 07/06/2021)
North Korea conducts large-scale inspections aimed at ending unauthorized trade(*Daily* NK, 07/06/2021)

North Korea's Kim sacks close aide as key ruling party committee member (*Kyodo News*, 07/06/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Discussions under way on upcoming S. Korea-U.S. combined exercise: defense ministry (*Yonhap*, 07/05/2021)
Ex-Prime Minister Lee Nak-yon declares presidential bid (*Yonhap*, 07/05/2021)
[Herald Interview] Korea needs a leader who can handle external issues: Lee Nak-yon (*The Korea Herald*, 07/06/2021)

**International:**
Chinese, U.S. envoys on N. Korea agree to maintain communication (*Kyodo News*, 07/06/2021)
Japan voices 'deep concern' about North Korean nukes at nonproliferation meeting(*NK News*, 07/06/2021)
Russians leave N. Korea en masse amid global pandemic (*Yonhap*, 07/06/2021)
Russians in North Korea flee country amid COVID-19 concerns (*UPI*, 07/06/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- In several places in North Korea, there are few signs the authorities are moving to release military stores of rice to local people despite an order by the leadership to do so. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- Newly revealed documents reveal waste and fraud of DPRK firm subcontracted to build country's state house in 2000s. The North Korean firm Mansudae Overseas Projects (MOP) may have earned millions of dollars for Pyongyang as a subcontractor on public prestige projects in Namibia during the mid-2000s, according to documents obtained by NK Pro, with the Chinese government providing primary funding for at least one project. (John Grobler and Min Chao Choy, *NK News*)
- With media reports suggesting that North Korea is struggling to navigate its way out of an impending famine, Kim Jong-un's message to President Xi Jinping on the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party is seen by analysts as a sign that strong ties with Beijing will help Pyongyang navigate any pandemic-induced food or economic crises. (Maria Siow, *South China Morning Post*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un replaced key party officials for their failure to deal with a protracted food shortage, noting that they put the security of the state and safety of the people at risk. (Yosuke Onchi, *Nikkei Asia*)
- North Korea's Premier Kim Tok-hun made field inspection visits to economic sites, state media said Tuesday, confirming that he has been spared from a recent reshuffle carried out to fire officials responsible for causing a "crucial case" in the country's fight against the coronavirus. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's foreign ministry attacked the now-defunct Hong Kong news outlet Apple Daily in a statement on Monday, showing support for the Chinese Communist Party's

recent controversial actions in the city and accusing "western countries" of meddling in China's affairs. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

- North Korean authorities are conducting large-scale inspections aimed at cracking down on unauthorized trade. This has led some North Korean trading companies involved in the trade of "unauthorized items" to cancel their transactions with Chinese traders. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has apparently sacked one of his close aides as a member of a key committee of the ruling party over what he considers mishandling of the novel coronavirus pandemic, diplomatic sources said Tuesday. (*Kyodo News*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea and the United States are discussing when and how to stage their annual summertime military exercise, the defense ministry said Monday, amid concerns the maneuvers could affect efforts to resume talks with North Korea. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)
- Ex-Prime Minister Lee Nak-yon officially launched his presidential bid Monday, pledging to recover the country's dwindling middle class. On the national security front, Lee stressed that Seoul should build a lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula via "institutions," saying a comprehensive accord, combined with phased implementations could settle the North Korean nuclear issue. (*Yonhap*)
- Rep. Lee Nak-yon, a Democratic Party of Korea heavyweight who announced his presidential bid Monday, believes South Korea now needs a new leader befitting its raised status. "South Korea's status has risen to a high level," Lee said in an interview with The Korea Herald. "The public has gained a lot of confidence both internally and externally, but at the same time we face a lot of challenges." (Shin Ji-hye, *The Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- Chinese and U.S. special representatives on North Korea agreed Tuesday to maintain communication with each other, in their apparent first phone talks since the administration of President Joe Biden was launched in January. (*Kyodo News*)
- Japan expressed "deep concern" about North Korea's nuclear weapons at a ministerial meeting on nuclear disarmament on Monday, urging countries to fully implement international sanctions against Pyongyang. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- A group of Russians left North Korea en masse last week after living in the country for the past several years, Russia's Embassy in Pyongyang said. (*Yonhap*)
- A "Russian town" in North Korea has emptied out after Moscow decided to evacuate Russian nationals from the country, the Russian Embassy in Pyongyang said, as North Korea's plans for a COVID-19 vaccine rollout remain in limbo. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)

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Prepared by Michelle Dang, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:

https://web.archive.org/web/20250812175816/https://mailchi.mp/10b6d51ee32a/hrnk-news-items-kim-warns-north-korea-food-crisis-threatens-state-security-chinese-us-envoys-on-north-korea-agree-to-maintain-communication?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, July 7, 2021**

## HRNK statement included in the 2021 UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) High-level Segment

**Top News:**
HRNK statement included in the 2021 UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) High-level Segment under the auspices of its consultative status (*UN ECOSOC*, 07/2021, pg. 528)
Don't let dictators grandstand with world leaders in Tokyo. Reclaim Olympics values. (*USA Today*, 07/07/2021)

**In North Korea:**
In Kim Jong Un's speeches, Marx returns to North Korea (*NK News*, 07/07/2021)
North Korea creates new nationwide organization to monitor and crack down on food hoarding and price gouging (*DailyNK*, 07/07/2021)
N. Korea faces food shortage of 860,000 tons: U.N. agency (*Yonhap*, 07/07/2021)
North Korean leaders planning event to officially open Pyongyang General Hospital early next year (*DailyNK*, 07/07/2021)
North Korean TV resumes Kim Jong Un propaganda film series after two-year hiatus(*NK News*, 07/07/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Critics dismiss ruling party's olive branch to North Korea (*Korea Herald*, 07/07/2021)
North Korea human rights activists in South Korea struggle under Moon Jae-in (*NK News*, 07/07/2021)
Over 600 cyber attacks against unification ministry detected last year: data (*Yonhap*, 07/07/2021)
S. Korea's intelligence agency dismisses rumors over N.K. leader's health as 'groundless' (*Yonhap*, 07/07/2021)
Why does Moon praise Kim? (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/07/2021)

**International:**
A bad trade (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/07/2021)
A modest proposal (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/07/2021)

Biden Seeks Xi's Help with North Korea's Nuclear Weapons, China Asks U.S. to Hear Kim Out (*Newsweek*, 07/06/2021)
Can China Bring North Korea to the Nuclear Negotiating Table? (*National Interest*, 07/06/2021)
China-North Korea friendship treaty 'remains in effect' all the time: FM spokesperson (*Global Times*, 07/07/2021)
China, Russia and North Korea named by Japan as cyberthreats (*Japan Times*, 07/07/2021)
China stresses support for North Korea after special envoys' phone conversation(*South China Morning Post*, 07/07/2021)
Congressional delegation urges North for a 'sign' (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/07/2021)
Crooks to move from Pyongyang to Seoul (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/07/2021)
Experts say North could be angling for foreign food aid (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/07/2021)
N. Korea in 'tug of war' with U.S. over policy direction: defense ministry (*Yonhap*, 07/07/2021)
North Korea blasts 'interfering' foreign aid, as vaccines delayed (*UPI*, 07/06/2021)
Russia says it is willing to provide vaccines to North Korea if needed (*NK News*,07/07/2021)
UN Command suspends DMZ border tours as COVID cases spike in South Korea(*NK News*, 07/07/2021)
U.S., Chinese envoys for N. Korea hold phone talks: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 07/07/2021)
U.S. envoy on North Korea speaks with Chinese counterpart (*Reuters*, 07/07/2021)
U.S. envoy Sung Kim, key Chinese diplomat hold phone talks on North Korea (*NK News*, 07/07/2021)
Xi, Kim, China and the North (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/07/2021)
1976: The Year a Disputed Tree Almost Plunged the Korean Peninsula into Chaos(*National Interest*, 07/07/2021)

**Top News:**

- A statement from HRNK on North Korean human rights was included by the 2021 UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) High-Level Segment. HRNK's paragraph was published under the auspices of its consultative status and is included alongside statements from other organizations in a document from ECOSOC that will be incorporated into the forum that will run from July 13 - July 16 (UN ECOSOC, page 528)
- In a matter of months, China will host the Beijing Winter Olympics, already dubbed the "Genocide Games" by human rights groups and policymakers concerned with the ongoing repression of Uyghurs in China. It's right to question the ethics of playing sports or doing business with a country with one of the world's worst human rights records, but this is not the only cause for concern. Whether the Olympics are hosted by an authoritarian government like China or a democracy like Japan, host of the 2020 Summer Olympics starting July 23, the Olympics too often provide dictators a unique opportunity to legitimize their rule and whitewash their image internationally (Katrina Lantos Swett and Thor Halvorssen, *USA Today*)

**In North Korea:**

- About a decade ago, North Korea took down the portraits of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin from Kim Il Sung Square in Pyongyang, and the last vestiges of Marxism-Leninism

in the country were suddenly gone. The disappearance of the portraits followed the 2009 removal of all references to communism from the North Korean constitution, as the DPRK's cultish leader worship system, known as Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism, became "the only guiding idea of the Party" (Benjamin R. Young, *NK News*)

- North Korean authorities recently created a new nationwide organization to monitor and crack down on the illegal hoarding of food and price gouging by food sellers. This development comes after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un discussed the country's "food problems" during the Third Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Workers' Party in mid-June (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea is expected to face a food shortage of around 860,000 tons this year, a U.N. agency said Wednesday, raising worries that its people could go through a "harsh lean period" in the coming months (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean authorities are planning an event to officially open the Pyongyang General Hospital early next year. It appears North Korean leader Kim Jong Un intends to highlight his "love for the people" with an opening ceremony timed to mark the 10th anniversary of his ascent to power (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea's propagandists released a new film in a documentary series about Kim Jong Un helping important political and historical figures on Saturday, resuming the series for the first time since 2018. The 90-minute film features scenes depicting Kim meeting or performing extraordinary gestures for a key foundational propagandist, anti-Japanese war heroes and drivers of important industries such as fertilizer and steel production (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- The ruling Democratic Party of Korea is desperately seeking to carry on President Moon Jae-in's legacy and revitalize inter-Korean ties, but with North Korea still unwilling to engage, its last-minute attempt at diplomacy stands little chance, critics say (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- The deep ideological divide in South Korean politics since the country's democratization has led to marked shifts in support for activism critical of North Korea depending on the government in office.This shift has been particularly pronounced since former human rights lawyer Moon Jae-in became president in 2017, with civil society organizations that focus on human rights violations in North Korea struggling under his government. Most notably, the current pro-engagement administration has been the first to pressure nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to bring their activism in line with government objectives or face deregistration (Sarah A. Son, *NK News*)
- Over 600 hacking attempts against South Korea's unification ministry were detected last year, government data showed Wednesday. According to the data released by the ministry, 633 cyber attacks against the ministry were detected last year, including 46 hacking attempts through the website (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's main intelligence agency said Wednesday that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un is believed to be handling state affairs "normally," rejecting rumors that he fell unconscious due to health problems (*Yonhap*)

- In the final year of their term, most presidents seek to define their legacy in ways that historians might find compelling. By that time, democratically elected leaders are lame ducks and often face a series of disappointments and unfulfilled promises. With diminished political capital and increasing awareness of their own mortality, they choose to work on those tasks that are achievable if not transformational. Which is why it is so curious that President Moon Jae-in is using his final year in office to emphasize the winning character of Kim Jong-un (Michael Green, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- It seemed that talks between North Korea and the United States would soon begin in the Biden Administration, but it has been stalled for more than five months. There were expectations that there would be movements once the North Korea Policy Review was released after a few months of preparation. But two months have passed since the release in April, and I haven't heard anything (Nam Jeong-ho, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- What would go through the mind of someone elected to be president for 51.82 million people? Few would be able to pin it down as only a select few have had the experience. Stephen Wayne, a professor at Georgetown University and an expert on presidencies, explained that upon being elected to the chief executive office, one becomes filled with enormous confidence and pride. If anyone gives you advice, it's natural to question their credentials. After all, they weren't elected president. It becomes hard to admit mistakes or to correct oneself. The first thing the U.S president does upon taking occupancy of the Oval Office is to make it clear to the No. 2, the vice president, that he is not the president (Choi Hoon, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- China has advised the United States to listen to North Korea and its grievances at a time when the leaders of the two allied Asian neighbors are emphasizing the growing ties between their nations (Tom O'Connor, *Newsweek*)
- There is a widespread belief among people who track activity in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) that, at the very least, China has huge influence over North Korea and can compel North Korea to do what it wants. This view has been prevalent among some Western countries since China's intervention in the Korean War in 1950. Before then, of course, it was the Soviet Union that was believed to play such a role, or that the Soviet Union and China were jointly doing so. The Sino-Soviet dispute put paid to that idea, although not to the belief that North Korea was a "puppet" of its larger neighbors, rather than an independent actor (James Hoare, *National Interest*)
- The China-DPRK Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, will remain in effect all the time until China and North Korea reach an agreement to amend or terminate it according to the Treaty's regulation, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on Wednesday, responding to a question about whether the treaty will be automatically extended (*Global Times*)
- The government named China, Russia and North Korea as posing threats of cyberattacks in its draft for the next cybersecurity strategy adopted on Wednesday. This is the first time that Japan has mentioned a specific country as a threat in a cybersecurity strategy (*Japan Times*)

- Beijing has reiterated its support for Pyongyang a day after the US and Chinese special envoys on North Korea spoke for the first time since President Joe Biden took office. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said on Wednesday that China would push for closer cooperation with North Korea (Shi Jiangtao, *South China Morning Post*)
- U.S. Rep. Young Kim said Wednesday the United States is ready to provide humanitarian support, such as coronavirus vaccines, to North Korea, but would like to see a "small sign" of change first. "If they ask for support from the United States, they need to show small steps to make us believe that they are sincere," Kim, a Republican from California, told reporters in Seoul (*Sarah Kim, Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Colin James Crooks, British ambassador to North Korea, is being posted to Seoul, the British government announced Tuesday. "Mr. Colin James Crooks LVO has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Korea in succession to Mr. Simon Smith CMG who will be retiring from the Diplomatic Service," the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the British government said on Tuesday (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Daily reports and commentary on domestic food shortages by North Korea's state media in recent months have raised questions about the intent behind such open admissions, with some analysts suggesting that the reclusive regime is angling for foreign aid by reporting on its troubles (Micahel Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea appears to have begun a "tug of war" with the United States over its policy on Pyongyang while focusing on strengthening internal unity and economic development, the defense ministry said Wednesday (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's foreign ministry said Tuesday that humanitarian aid interferes with national sovereignty as COVID-19 vaccine distribution could be being postponed in the country (*UPI*)
- Russia is willing to provide COVID-19 vaccines to North Korea if needed, Moscow's foreign minister Sergey Lavrov said at a press conference on Wednesday. His offer came a week after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un held an enlarged politburo meeting to scold officials for causing a "grave" incident related to the country's prolonged COVID-19 prevention efforts (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- The United Nations Command (UNC) announced that it has temporarily suspended visits to the Joint Security Area (JSA) at the inter-Korean border on Wednesday, after two UNC members came into contact with a COVID-19 patient. The announcement came as South Korea's Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency reported 1,212 more confirmed cases from the previous day, the most since last December. Health authorities warned in a briefing that the country appears to be approaching a "fourth wave" of the pandemic (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Sung Kim, Special U.S. representative for North Korea, held phone talks with his Chinese counterpart on Tuesday, the State Department said. The call between Kim and China's Liu Xiaoming apparently marks the first of its kind since Kim was named the special envoy in May. "I can confirm that a call took place," a department spokesperson told Yonhap News Agency without elaborating (*Yonhap*)

- The United States' top envoy for North Korea spoke with his Chinese counterpart on Tuesday, a State Department spokesman said, after Pyongyang's repeated rejection of the Biden administration's attempts to establish dialogue (Simon Lewis and David Brunnstrom, *Reuters*)
- Liu Xiaoming, China's special representative on Korean Peninsula affairs, has spoken by phone with Washington's North Korea policy envoy and called for a "dual-track approach" to solving Korean Peninsula issues. "Pleasure to speak with U.S. Special Representative for the DPRK Ambassador Sung Kim on the phone," Liu tweeted on July 6. "I stressed the need for the dual-track approach and the phased and synchronized principle in promoting the political settlement of the issues of Korean Peninsula" (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- Two years ago, while covering the wave of protests of 2 million people in Hong Kong, I had to return to Beijing after ten days as another story broke. Chinese President Xi Jinping was making his first visit to Pyongyang. People's Daily published on its front page that Xi Jinping and Peng Liyuan watched large-scale mass gymnastics and an art performance in North Korea. A photo of the couple at the podium in the Pyongyang May 1st Stadium was featured. The article recorded the performance as follow: It illustrated the characteristics of the North Korean people and sang about the development and accomplishments of North Korean socialist projects and described the desire of the North Korean people for a beautiful life in four verses, "Socialism is Our Hometown," "Echo of Victory," "For a Better Tomorrow" and "Invincible Friendship and Unity" (Shin Kyung-Jin, Korea JoongAng Daily)
- The American and South Korean soldiers went off to chop down a poplar tree. Instead, they were chopped into pieces by ax-wielding North Korean soldiers. And what should have been a case of routine landscaping nearly triggered a second Korean War. Thousands of lives could have been lost, and the Korean peninsula devastated as it had been in 1950. All because of a tree, a hot-tempered North Korean lieutenant, and the most heavily armed border zone on Earth (Michael Peck, National Interest)

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Prepared by Abraham Reiss, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250812175816/https://mailchi.mp/10b6d51ee32a/hrnk-news-items-kim-warns-north-korea-food-crisis-threatens-state-security-chinese-us-envoys-on-north-korea-agree-to-maintain-communication?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, July 8, 2021**

## South Korea's atomic energy think tank exposed to presumed North Korean hacking for 12 days: South Korea's NIS reported.

**In North Korea:**
Analysis-N.Korea reshuffle signals military policy not top priority now, analysts say(*Reuters*, 07/08/2021)
Facing Chronic Shortfalls, North Korea Tells Citizens to Start Supplying Their Own Food (*Radio Free Asia*, 07/07/2021)
Key NK military official ousted from top ruling body (*The Korea Herald*, 07/08/2021)
NIS ties North Korea's 'grave' incident to military grain, disinfection center (*NK News*, 07/08/2021)
N.K. leader visits mausoleum to mark late grandfather's death anniversary (*Yonhap*, 07/08/2021)
North Korea fails to shoot off its mouth (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/08/2021)
North Korea's paper reports on coronavirus situations in South Korea (*Yonhap*, 07/08/2021)
North Korea orders border walls and fences to be completed by October 10 (*Daily NK*, 07/08/2021)
North Korean leader lost 10-20 kg but healthy: South Korea spy agency (*Kyodo News*, 07/08/2021)
Seoul Spy Agency: no sign North Korean leader has been vaccinated (*AP News*, 07/08/2021)
Speculation about Kim Jong Un's health 'unfounded,' Seoul's spy agency says (*UPI*, 07/07/2021)
The reason why the president of Kim Il Sung University was replaced recently (*Daily NK*, 07/08/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Asleep at the wheel (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/08/2021)
Being a developed nation (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/08/2021)
Bithumb stops accepting new foreign users (*The Korea Herald*, 07/08/2021)
North Korea issue ignored by presidential hopefuls (*The Korea Times*, 07/08/2021)
South Korea's atomic energy think tank exposed to presumed North Korean hacking for 12 days: NIS (*Yonhap*, 07/08/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
1976: The Year a Disputed Tree Almost Plunged the Korean Peninsula into Chaos(*The National Interest*, 07/07/2021)
Armistice issues (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/08/2021)

**International:**
Amid North Korean food 'crisis,' signs of possible humanitarian aid imports (*NK News*, 07/08/2021)
China's Strategic Competition Addiction Influences Negotiations With North Korea(*The National Interest*, 07/07/2021)

China stands by mutual defense treaty with North Korea after 60 years (*UPI*, 07/07/2021)
Competition with China already requires Cold War era measures: U.S. intelligence officer (*Yonhap*, 07/08/2021)
Japan identifies North Korea as major cyber threat in national security document(*NK News*, 07/08/2021)
North Korea Needs the Bomb to Protect Itself From America (*Foreign Policy*, 07/07/2021)
North Korea stresses 'comradely' and 'strategic' relations with Vietnam (*Yonhap*, 07/08/2021)
Pope Francis could visit North Korea in a bid to "initiate a new era of peace" (*Express*, 07/07/2021)
Russia offers North Korea Covid vaccines again as crisis worsens (*BBC News*, 07/08/2021)
Russia pledges COVID-19 vaccines for North Korea (*UPI*, 07/07/2021)
Top nuclear envoys of S. Korea, U.S. hold phone talks (*Yonhap*, 07/08/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- New photos confirm North Korea has demoted a military leader in a reshuffle that left the ruling party's top body dominated by civilians, possibly signaling leader Kim Jong Un's focus on the economy and frustration with bureaucratic failures, analysts said. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- North Korea is ordering citizens to start producing their own food to prepare for a long-term food shortage that could last for three years, but ordinary people say that the government is shirking its responsibility, sources in the country told RFA. (Eugene Whong, *Radio Free Asia*)
- Ri Pyong-chol, who has led North Korea's nuclear and missile development, appears to have been ousted from the Presidium of the Politburo, the highest decision-making body of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea, according to a photo released by the North's state media on Thursday. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- The "grave" COVID-19 incident recently referred to in North Korean state media likely related to the mismanagement of military gain and delays in opening a new disinfection center, South Korea's intelligence agency reportedly told lawmakers on Thursday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un visited a mausoleum for his late grandfather and national founder Kim Il-sung to mark the anniversary of his death, state media reported Thursday, dismissing rumors about his health. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea allowed major holidays in the United States and China to pass in July without significant remarks or any unusual military movements, raising speculation about the regime's unusual silence. (Michael Lee and Park Hyun-ju, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Thursday ran detailed reports about recent spikes in coronavirus infections in South Korea. "Reports show that a huge stir is being caused as the number of new coronavirus infections in South Korea has spiked," the paper said, mentioning the number of confirmed cases here for Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)

- As North Korea builds concrete walls and high voltage wires along the entire China-North Korea border, military units and labor brigades tasked with the construction recently received an order to complete their work by Oct. 10, or Party Foundation Day. A source in Yanggang Province, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Daily NK on Monday that the Central Committee and Cabinet issued a joint order on June 26 to complete construction of the "bulletproof wall" and high voltage wires by Oct. 10 "at all costs." (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has lost 10-20 kilograms recently but is otherwise healthy with no apparent problems, South Korea's National Intelligence Service told lawmakers Thursday, according to one of them. (*Kyodo News*)
- There is no sign that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has been inoculated against the coronavirus and his country hasn't received any foreign vaccines, South Korea's spy agency said Thursday. (Hyung-jin Kim and Kim Tong-hyiung, *AP News*)
- South Korea's spy agency dismissed reports of Kim Jong Un's weight loss as a sign of ill health, after North Korean state television aired a segment showing a North Korean citizen bemoaning the change in Kim's physique. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- Daily NK has learned why Ri Kuk-chol, the minister of higher education and president of Kim Il Sung University, was replaced during the recent Third Plenary Meeting of the Eighth Central Committee after just five months on the job. After a party-led inspection of the education sector turned up several major problems, Ri was reportedly castigated for his irresponsibility as the man-in-charge and for his "attitude of self-preservation." (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's state nuclear research institute came under cyber attack by North Korean hackers. According to the National Intelligence Service (NIS) on Thursday, the computer network of the Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute (KAERI) was exposed to hackers for 12 days. The research institute was unaware of the intrusion. The NIS claimed no files of key technologies had been disrupted, although it admitted it does not know which files may have been stolen. Hackers do not leave any trace — not if they're any good. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A developed country has achieved development, while a developing country is in the process. South Korea has been finally categorized "developed." The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in a recent board meeting unanimously decided to include South Korea in the developed category alongside the United States, France and Japan. It is the first such promotion by UNCTAD since its founding in 1964. (Yum Tae-jung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Bithumb, one of South Korean major cryptocurrency exchanges, will stop accepting registrations of overseas users and block access from traders in four more countries that have been added to a money-laundering watch list. The watch list has 24 countries in total, including two blacklisted countries -- North Korea and Iran. (Park Ga-young, *The Korea Herald*)

- The issues of handling North Korea's nuclear program and improving inter-Korean relations are losing prominence among presidential hopefuls in South Korea, as heavyweight candidates have not offered specific policy roadmaps in their bids to run in the election slated for next March. (Nam Hyun-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- South Korea's national think tank on nuclear power has been exposed to a hacking attack presumably launched by North Korea, but no major data was leaked, the state spy agency said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- What should have been a case of routine landscaping nearly triggered a second Korean War. The American and South Korean soldiers went off to chop down a poplar tree. Instead, they were chopped into pieces by ax-wielding North Korean soldiers. (Michael Peck, *The National Interest*)
- The armistice system for the Korean Peninsula started in 1953, and it will be 68 years old on July 28. The armistice has created a constantly unstable situation on the Korean Peninsula, but at the same time, it serves the role of preventing another all-out war. Nevertheless, main points in the armistice agreement are not working, and unstable situations continue. (Park Tae-gyun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- Humanitarian aid appears to have been delivered to North Korea on at least two occasions in May and June 2021, analysis of satellite imagery and vessel tracking data reveals, as Pyongyang recently conceded that the country is battling a “food crisis.” (Chad O' Carroll and Joseph Byrne, *NK News*)
- Beijing’s superpower status comes with its fair share of pros and cons. It can facilitate or hinder nuclear talks between Washington and Pyongyang. Recent geopolitical changes suggest a pessimistic conclusion: while Beijing may have an interest in not having a nuclear-armed North Korea at its border, it may be less motivated to press North Korea in that direction than in the past. (Xu Tianran, *The National Interest*)
- A bilateral defense treaty between China and North Korea remains in effect, Beijing said ahead of a renewal that is likely to take place around Sunday, the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- Growing U.S. competition with China may lead to a second Cold War, a U.S. military intelligence officer said Wednesday. Rear Adm. Mike Studeman, director for intelligence at the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, also argued other U.S. adversaries such as North Korea consider every day a war with the U.S. for the upper hand. (*Yonhap*)
- A key Japanese goverment cybersecurity organization identified North Korea as one of the primary actors posing cybersecurity threats to the country on Wednesday, as it laid out plans to ramp up Tokyo's cyber defense capabilities. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- No doubt the North Korean regime sees other possible use for nuclear weapons, such as maintaining the military’s loyalty and extorting economic benefits from neighbors. However, when it comes to the United States, nukes have only one practical purpose: deterrence. (Doug Bandow, *Foreign Policy*)

- North Korea on Thursday stressed the importance of its "comradely" and "strategic" ties with Vietnam as it marked the anniversary of a summit between their leaders about six decades earlier. "The friendly and cooperative relations between North Korea and Vietnam have evolved into uniquely comradely and strategic ties of today," the North's foreign ministry said in a posting on its official website. (*Yonhap*)
- The plans would mark the first-ever papal trip to Kim Jong-un's hermit nation. Among the lesser-known nations Pope Francis has visited include Albania, Bosnia, Paraguay and the Central African Republic. Father Dinh Anh Nhue Nguyen, the director of Fides news agency, said: "Along with all the Korean faithful, we hope that, if it is God's will, Pope Francis can visit North Korea to initiate a new era of peace." (Steven Brown, *Express*)
- Russia has offered North Korea Covid vaccines once again, amid reports that a harsh lockdown is leading to extreme hunger. (*BBC News*)
- Russia said it would donate COVID-19 vaccines and medical equipment to "neighbor" North Korea, while dismissing speculation the Kim Jong Un regime was experiencing a surge of cases. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told reporters Wednesday that Moscow is in talks with Pyongyang and a supply of vaccines is being offered, Tass news agency and Sputnik reported. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- South Korea's chief nuclear negotiator, Noh Kyu-duk, spoke by phone with his U.S. counterpart, Sung Kim, on Thursday and discussed efforts to advance the peace process on the Korean Peninsula, the foreign ministry said. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Michelle Dang, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250812180428/https://mailchi.mp/025f0e576c49/hrnk-news-itemssouth-koreas-atomic-energy-think-tank-exposed-to-presumed-north-korean-hacking-for-12-days-south-koreas-nis-reported?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, July 9, 2021**

## 2020 Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office report; The world is a freer place thanks to Carl Gershman

**Top News:**
Human Rights and Democracy: 2020 Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office report (*UK Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Affairs by Command of Her Majesty*, 07/08/2021)
The world is a freer place thanks to Carl Gershman (*The Hill*, 07/07/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Kim Jong-un shifts focus 'away from nuclear programme' - North Korea famine fears erupt (*Express*, 07/08/2021)
Kim Jong Un's Covid-19 Go-To Move—Finger Wagging (*The Wall Street Journal*, 07/09/2021)
Komdok Mining Region: A Pending Promise (*38 North*, 07/09/2021)
N.Korea rejected AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine over side effects, says think-tank (*Reuters*, 07/09/2021)
N. Korea rejects AstraZeneca's coronavirus vaccine: think tank (*Yonhap*, 07/09/2021)
North Korea bolsters its crackdown on remittance brokers (*Daily NK*, 07/09/2021)
North Korea Cracks Down on Counterfeiting, on the Rise as Economy Worsens (*Radio Free Asia*, 07/08/2021)
North Korea issues rare order to shorten sentences of "model" inmates at reeducation prison camps (*Daily NK*, 07/09/2021)
North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has lost 44 pounds amid food shortage (*Wion*, 07/08/2021)
Slimmed-down Kim Jong Un makes appearance at mausoleum (*UPI*, 07/08/2021)

**In South Korea:**
24 more soldiers at Army boot camp test positive for virus (*Yonhap*, 07/08/2021)
Another sign of recovery: migrant workers back in fields (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/08/2021)
Korea delays stronger COVID-19 countermeasures despite record rise in cases(*Korea Herald*, 07/08/2021)
Nuclear research institute hacked by North for 12 days (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/08/2021)
Panmunjom tours suspended again amid virus resurgence (*Yonhap*, 07/09/2021)
South Korea to enforce social distancing in capital (*AP News*, 07/08/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Brother of late fisheries official asks N.K. diplomatic missions to deliver letter to leader Kim (*Yonhap*, 07/09/2021)
North Korea-linked hackers accessed South's atomic energy institute, Seoul says (*UPI*, 07/08/2021)
South Korean opposition party leader floats abolishing unification ministry (*NK News*, 07/09/2021)
Unification minister voices strong regret over PPP leader's call for abolition of his ministry (*Yonhap*, 07/09/2021)

**International:**
China stresses support for North Korea after special envoys' phone conversation(*The Star*, 07/09/2021)
Decision on Moon's Tokyo trip down to last minute (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/09/2021)
Moon thanks U.S. Congress for support in advancement of Seoul-Washington alliance (*Yonhap*, 07/09/2021)
N. Korea could return to dialogue with U.S., spy agency says (*Yonhap*, 07/09/2021)

N. Korea's malicious cyber activities pose threat to U.S., allies: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 07/09/2021)
North Korea informed China of plans to resume freight trains (UPI, 07/09/2021)
Orangeburg soldier killed in Korean War finally identified after North Korean turnover (*Post and Courier*, 07/08/2021)
Pro-North Korea Paper Acknowledges "Food Crisis" (*38 North*, 07/08/2021)
Seoul working for pope visit to N.Korea, Vatican agency says (*Reuters*, 07/08/2021)

**Top News:**

- There was no improvement in the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 2020. Human rights violations remained widespread and systematic, and the perpetrators unaccountable. (*UK Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Affairs by Command of Her Majesty*)
- Carl Gershman, the founding president of the National Endowment for Democracy, will retire from his post after almost four decades of extraordinary leadership. (Daniel F. Runde, *The Hill*)

**In North Korea:**

- Earlier this year the North Korean dictator warned the country could face a famine comparable with the 1994-1998 disaster, which killed 3.5 million. (James Bickerton, Express)
- Kim Jong Un, more so than his predecessors, has spread out responsibility among an elite group of North Korean government officials. Now, facing the worst home-front crisis of his nearly decadelong reign, the young dictator is making sure to share the blame. (Timothy Martin, *The Wall Street Journal*)
- Last summer Typhoon Maysak ravaged the mining area of Komdok. Imagery from May indicated new construction had begun. (Peter Makowsky, *38 North*)
- North Korea has rejected planned shipments of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine that were being organized under the global COVAX distribution scheme due to concerns over side effects, a South Korean think-tank said on Friday. (Sangmi Cha, *Reuters*)
- North Korea has rejected AstraZeneca's coronavirus vaccine that was to be delivered through the COVAX facility due to concerns about potential side effects. (*Yonhap*)
- In a telephone conversation with Daily NK on Thursday, a source in North Pyongan Province said the Ministry of State Security has been arresting "people who handle remittances" since May. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea has labeled counterfeiters of the country's currency as "traitors who are aligned with external enemies" as starving citizens forge notes worth less than a dollar to buy food and other necessities, sources told RFA. (Myung Chul Lee, *Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korea's Ministry of Social Security recently announced the shortening of sentences of "model" inmates in reeducation prison camps. (Lee Sang Yong, *Daily NK*)
- South Korea's spy agency said Thursday that Kim Jong Un has lost 44 pounds amid the food crisis in North Korea. (*Wion*)

- A visibly thinner Kim Jong Un visited the tomb of his biological grandfather Kim Il Sung, according to state media Thursday, the 27th death anniversary of the founding leader of North Korea. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

**In South Korea:**

- Twenty-four more newly enlisted soldiers have tested positive for the new coronavirus, bringing the total of recent infections at an Army boot camp to 77. (*Yonhap*)
- Counties in rural Korea are welcoming back migrant workers from abroad, who couldn't come to work during the year-long pandemic. (Park Jin-Ho, Choi Jong-Kwon, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea once again delayed imposing stronger anti-COVID-19 measures, despite counting a record number of new COVID-19 cases Thursday. (Kim Arin, *Korea Herald*)
- South Korea's main nuclear research institute was reportedly exposed for over 12 days to hacking attacks probably by North Korea, but no important data was leaked, according to a parliamentary intelligence committee member on Thursday. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Tours to the truce village of Panmunjom have been suspended again due to coronavirus concerns, shortly after health authorities here decided to impose the toughest virus curbs in the greater Seoul area. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea will enforce its strongest social distancing restrictions in the greater capital area starting next week as it wrestles with what appears to be the worst wave of the coronavirus since the start of the pandemic. (*AP News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The brother of a South Korean fisheries official killed in North Korean waters said Friday he sent emails to the North's diplomatic missions in Hong Kong and Mongolia asking them to deliver his letter to leader Kim Jong-un. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea-affiliated hackers infiltrated the South's Atomic Energy Research Institute and data was breached for 12 days, Seoul's spy agency said. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- The recently elected leader of South Korea's largest conservative party floated the idea of abolishing the Ministry of Unification in charge of inter-Korean affairs on Friday. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young expressed strong regret Friday after the chief of the main opposition People Power Party suggested a need to abolish the ministry handling inter-Korean affairs. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Beijing has reiterated its support for Pyongyang a day after the US and Chinese special envoys on North Korea spoke for the first time since President Joe Biden took office. (Shi Jiangtao, *The Star*)
- The Blue House said Friday that it will keep open the possibility of President Moon Jae-in going to Japan to the last minute, after Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said he would receive the Korean leader politely if he visits for the Tokyo Olympic Games. (Kang Tae-Hwa, Ser Myo-Ja, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- President Moon Jae-in on Friday expressed gratitude for the support the U.S. Congress has provided in the advancement of the decades-old Seoul-Washington alliance. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's spy agency has told lawmakers that North Korea could return to nuclear dialogue with the United States as it is intent on ending hostile relations with the country, a source said Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea poses a significant cyber threat to the United States and other countries, particularly to financial institutions, a State Department spokesman said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- Land-based trade could resume between China and North Korea in late July after months of little to no activity, according to a Japanese press report. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- A South Carolina soldier killed during the Korean War has finally been accounted for after his recovered remains were confirmed by the Pentagon. (Schuyler Kropf, *Post and Courier*)
- The pro-North Korean paper *Choson Sinbo* reported that North Korea addressed a "food crisis" and the need for stable food supply during the Third Plenary Meeting of the Eighth Workers' Party of Korea held from June 15 to 18. (Rachel Minyoung Lee, *38 North*)
- South Korea's intelligence chief has said he is working on a possible visit by Pope Francis to North Korea, a Catholic news agency associated with the Vatican says. (Philip Pullella, *Reuters*)

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Prepared by Emalyn Atkins, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250812181031/https://mailchi.mp/5360d5e7e008/hrnk-news-items-2020-foreign-commonwealth-development-office-report-the-world-is-a-freer-place-thanks-to-carl-gershman?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, July 10, 2021**

## China and North Korea Aren't Friends Yet Act Like Allies; Va. Marine identified 70 years after being killed in Korea

**In North Korea:**
North Korea's Kim lost as much as 20 kg, South Korean spies say (*The Japan Times*, 07/10/2021)

**In South Korea:**

Adoptees' nationality of state of origin and negligence of duty of protection (*The Korea Times*, 07/10/2021)
Korea aspiring to become battery business champion (*The Korea Times*, 07/10/2021)
South Korea's push to strengthen defences could trigger reaction from North and Japan (*South China Morning Post*, 07/10/2021)

**International:**
China and North Korea Aren't Friends Yet Act Like Allies (*The National Interest*, 07/10/2021)
Va. Marine identified 70 years after being killed in Korea (*The Washington Post*, 07/10/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un lost up to 20 kg (44 pounds) but has no major health issues affecting his rule, according to a South Korean lawmaker briefed by a spy agency. (*The Japan Times*)

**In South Korea:**

- From early 2000, Korea witnessed the permanent return of children it had once sent to the U.S. for adoption. Unlike adoptees visiting on motherland tours, these individuals had been deported by the U.S. after committing petty crimes. (Lee Kyung-eun, *The Korea Times*)
- With the global economy transitioning to clean energy to better respond to climate change, Korea is scurrying to foster local materials, components and equipment businesses for the secondary battery industry in a bid to make this a next-generation growth engine. (Baek Byung-yeul, The Korea Times)
- South Korea's push to develop its defensive capabilities saw it successfully test a submarine-launched ballistic missile last weekend, but some Chinese analysts have warned it risks a new arms race in east Asia. (Kristin Huang, *South China Morning Post*)

**International:**

- Pyongyang and Beijing remain formal military allies, having inked the Sino-DPRK Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance on July 11, 1961. The pact with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea renews automatically and again is being extended. (Doug Bandow, *The National Interest*)
- Henry Edward Ellis of Roanoke was killed in action in 1950 during a firefight that erupted when his unit's convoy encountered an enemy roadblock near Koto-ri, North Korea, just five months after the start of the Korean War. (Alicia Petska, *The Washington Post*)

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Prepared by Emalyn Atkins, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250812180428/https://mailchi.mp/025f0e576c49/hrnk-news-itemssouth-koreas-atomic-energy-think-tank-exposed-to-presumed-north-korean-hacking-for-12-days-south-koreas-nis-reported?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, July 11, 2021**

# The UN's Important Role in Promoting Human Rights in NK; The UN Should Actively Intervene in Order to Improve Human Rights in NK

**Top News:**
Human Rights Experts: "The UN's Important Role in Promoting Human Rights in North Korea" (VOA, 07/02/2021)

"The U.N. Should Actively Intervene in Order to Improve Human Rights in North Korea" (RFA, 07/01/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Seoul rebuts UN special rapporteurs' concerns over anti-leaflet law (*Korea Times*, 07/11/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Call to scrap Unification Ministry stirs debate (*Korea Herald*, 07/11/2021)

**International:**
History is not about animosity (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/11/2021)
Kim and Xi highlight strong relations on treaty-signing anniversary (*Yonhap*, 07/11/2021)
Leaders of North Korea, China vow to strengthen ties (*Washington Post*, 07/11/2021)
North and China reaffirm ties on treaty anniversary (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/11/2021)

**Top News:**

- Recently, experts have pointed out the significance of the role the U.N. plays in promoting human rights in North Korea. Pressure from the international community is necessary, as North Korea is uniquely closed off and self-isolated. David Hawk, former Executive Director of Amnesty International USA, said during an online conference held by the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) that the U.N. plays a crucial role in promoting human rights in North Korea. Hawk also introduced his new report,

"Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea: The Role of the United Nations". (Young-Gyo Kim, VOA)

- The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), a human rights organization located in Washington D.C., held an online panel titled "Human Rights in the Democratic Republic of Korea: The Role of the United Nations". The panelists called on the U.N. to make a more active effort towards improving the human rights situation for those who are suffering in North Korea. David Hawk, former Executive Director of Amnesty International USA, stated that in the current situation, it is impossible for North Korean citizens to rise up and fight for human rights themselves, so it is best that international organizations, like the U.N., and not individual nations, address the problem. Furthermore, Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights in the Department of State, stated that, above all, it's important that the human rights situation in North Korea be accurately understood. She stressed that on-site surveys should be conducted by UN-affiliated relief and support organizations first. (Albert Hong, RFA)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea has rebutted concerns expressed by a group of U.N. special rapporteurs that a new law that bans the launching of anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets across the inter-Korean border could restrict freedom of expression, a government document showed Saturday. In April, Tomas Ojea Quintana, Special Rapporteur on North Korea's human rights situation, along with three other rapporteurs, voiced concerns in a letter towards South Korea's so-called anti-leafleting law passed late last year. They expressed concerns that the ban may "negatively impact the enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression" and the "legitimate activities" of non-governmental organizations in Seoul. (*Korea Times*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Debate over the Unification Ministry, which oversees inter-Korean affairs, further heightened Sunday after remarks from the main opposition party leader drew backlash from the minister and ruling party lawmakers. People Power Party chief Lee Jun-seok had floated the idea of scrapping the ministry altogether, a notion his critics called "regrettable" and "unreasonable." (Ahn Sung-mi, *Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- Nearly eight decades after liberation from Japan's colonial rule, Korean society is sharply divided over whether the United States and the Soviet Union were an "occupying force" or a "liberating force" 76 years ago. The overheated debate does not do any good for the country other than waste our energy. The answer to the question is actually simple: Both the United States and the USSR served as "commanders of the military occupation" of the southern and northern halves of the Korean Peninsula to "disarm the imperial Japanese forces" in Korea after their defeat in World War II. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and Chinese President Xi Jinping highlighted their commitment to further strengthen relations between the two countries as they exchanged messages to mark the 60th anniversary of signing a friendship treaty, state

media reported Sunday. In the messages to celebrate the 1961 signing of the "DPRK-China Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance," Kim also said the international situation has been "unprecedentedly complicated" in recent years" while Xi said the world is undergoing "a great and rapid change unprecedented in 100 years." (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)

- The North Korean and Chinese leaders expressed their desire Sunday to further strengthen their ties as they exchanged messages marking the 60th anniversary of their countries' defense treaty. In a message to Chinese President Xi Jinping, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said it is "the fixed stand" of his government to "ceaselessly develop the friendly and cooperative relations" between the countries, the state-run Korean Central News Agency said. (Hyung-Jin Kim, *Washington Post*)
- The leaders of North Korea and China pledged greater mutual assistance and cooperation on the 60th anniversary of their treaty of friendship through a letter exchange, according to the North's state news agency on Sunday. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

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Translated Texts:

**** Human Rights Experts: "The UN's Important Role in Promoting Human Rights in North Korea"**

Recently, experts have pointed out the significance of the role the U.N. plays in promoting human rights in North Korea. Pressure from the international community is necessary, as North Korea is uniquely closed off and self-isolated. This is Young-gyo Kim reporting.

David Hawk, former Executive Director of Amnesty International USA, said during an online conference held by the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea that the U.N. plays a crucial role in promoting human rights in North Korea.

Hawk also introduced his new report, "Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea: The Role of the United Nations".

[David Hawk Recording] "The United Nations is important, particularly important for promoting human rights in North Korea for two reasons. The first of which is that North Korea is so self-isolated and closed up that the normal ways of promoting and protecting human rights in almost all other UN member states is not possible… because you can't engage in the normal kind of human rights promotion activities.

North Korea claims that human rights is a racket kicked up by hostile US policy and the US puppet states, but the activities that show that concern for human rights in North Korea is a subject, supported by a huge majority of governments at the United Nations, and in fact as the

North Koreans diplomats know full well the leadership on human rights at the UN has primarily come from the Europeans."

In the 120-page report, Hawk highlights interactions about human rights between North Korea and the United Nations since 1980.

[David Hawk Recording] "The language of the international community is in response to the COI report changed from deep concern, quote unquote, to condemnation in the strongest possible terms. And the Human Rights Council and General Assembly recommended that the Security Council refer North Korea to the International Criminal Court. You had the North Koreans respond to this in a variety of ways.

And the North Koreans had undertook a number of tactical openings to cooperate with the promotion and protection of human rights."

The report cited examples such as North Korea's amendment of the Children's Rights Protection Act in 2014 and the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2016.

Thus, the report predicts that if the U.N. continues to speak out about these human rights issues, North Korea will be open to creating more opportunities for cooperation in the future as well.

During the conference, Robert King, former special envoy for North Korea human rights issues at the U.S. Department of State, explained that the reason why it is crucial to pressure North Korea to address its human rights situation is because it so desperately wants to maintain its status as a UN member state.

[Robert King Recording] "North Korea is very, very anxious to maintain its membership in the United Nations, for a country that claims to represent all of Korea, and has a South Korea claiming to represent all of Korea and all of the citizens of those two areas. The United Nations is extremely important for the legitimacy of North Korea."

According to King, the pressure that the UN has applied on North Korea has brought some progress.

[Robert King Recording] "It's important for North Korea to be able to be treated as a fully participating independent state. And one of the things that the human rights activity has done has pressed North Korea to make some progress. The progress, as we've mentioned, has been minimal, but there has been progress."

Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights in the

Department of State, explained that North Korea signed five international human rights treaties and amended its legislation on human rights due to the actions of the UN.

[Roberta Cohen Recording] “In the area of legal reform, North Korea's accession to five international human rights treaties, has resulted in some changes in North Korea's laws, especially concerning the rights of women, children, and the disabled, the detention laws have also undergone some revision.”

However, Cohen emphasized that the North Korean regime has not informed its people of this fact.

[Roberta Cohen Recording] “UN agencies offered to provide support to the government in meeting its human rights commitments and the UN treaties and the UN's Universal Periodic Review. What bears watching, once the situation normalizes and we don't know when that will be, is the extent to which the UN resident coordinator, and the humanitarian agencies on the ground, tried to implement this offer to move human rights forward through legal reform.”

Reported by: Young-Gyo Kim (VOA)
Translated by: Juheung Kim (HRNK)

**** “The U.N. Should Actively Intervene in Order to Improve Human Rights in North Korea”**

Anchor: Recently, experts have pointed out that U.N. intervention and continued pressure from the international community are needed to improve the human rights crisis in North Korea. This is Albert Hong reporting.

On the 1st, The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), a human rights organization located in Washington D.C., held an online panel titled “Human Rights in the Democratic Republic of Korea: The Role of the United Nations”.

These panelists called on the U.N. to make a more active effort towards improving the human rights situation for those who are suffering in North Korea.

David Hawk, former Executive Director of Amnesty International USA, moderated the discussion. He stated that in the current situation, it is impossible for North Korean citizens to rise up and fight for human rights themselves, so it is best that international organizations, like the U.N., and not individual nations, address the problem.

David Hawk: North Korea is so self-isolated and closed up, that the normal ways of promoting and protecting human rights in almost all other UN member states is not possible in North Korea.

Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights in the Department of State, stated that, above all, it's important that the human rights situation in North Korea be accurately understood. She stressed that on-site surveys should be conducted by UN-affiliated relief and support organizations first.

She added that investigations into vulnerable groups, like women and children, and detention facilities, including political prison camps, should be thoroughly conducted. Because these kinds of activities can only be conducted by the U.N., North Korea should accept them.

Roberta Cohen: Opening for UN involvement is North Korea's acceptance of the recommendation that it familiarize its public with the international standards it succeeded to UNESCO, UNICEF the high commissioner's office should all step up.
Robert King, former special envoy for North Korea human rights issues at the U.S. Department of State, emphasized that U.N. member states should join together to continue putting pressure on the North Korean authorities.

King stated that in order for North Korea to be recognized as a dignified and independent state by the international community, it will have to join the U.N.'s efforts to establish international order.

Robert King: Nonetheless, other countries have continued that effort, and this is not just the United States pressing North Korea. It's the world, pressing North Korea, and it's extremely important that we continue that effort that we continue to do that.

Reported by: Albert Hong (RFA)
Translated by: Audrey Gregg (HRNK)
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Prepared by Damian Reddy, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250812181215/https://mailchi.mp/d07ff7b9898c/hrnk-news-items-the-uns-important-role-in-promoting-human-rights-in-nk-the-un-should-actively-intervene-in-order-to-improve-human-rights-in-nk?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, July 12, 2021**

## HRNK Board's Winston Lord explains how he and Henry Kissinger pulled off one of the greatest foreign policy feats of the 20th century

**Top News:**
Winston Lord on the 'Geopolitical Earthquake' of Kissinger's Secret Visit (*The Wire China*, 07/11/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Behind the appointment of the Central Public Prosecutors Office director as an alternate member of the politburo (*Daily*NK, 07/12/2021)
North Hamgyong Province's party committee holds meeting to address food provisions for locals (*Daily*NK, 07/12/2021)
North Korea again self-reports no COVID-19 as number tested exceeds 32,000(NK*News*, 07/12/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Gov't responds to UN's concerns about leaflet ban (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/12/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
N.K. propaganda outlet denies Pyongyang's hacking of S. Korean think tank(*Yonhap*, 07/12/2021)

**International:**
China, North Korea reaffirm ties on defence treaty anniversary (*South China Morning Post*, 07/12/21)
Pope awaiting invitation to visit North Korea (*The Korea Herald*, 07/12/2021)
N.K. foreign ministry accuses U.S. of using humanitarian aid for 'sinister purpose'(*Reuters*, 07/12/2021)

**Top News:**

- HRNK Board Member Winston Lord explains how he and Henry Kissinger prepared for, and then pulled off, one of the greatest foreign policy feats of the twentieth century. (David Barboza, *The Wire China*)

**In North Korea:**

- The extraordinary appointment of the Central Public Prosecutors Office director as an alternate member of the politburo last month may have been a move to restrain the power of the Ministry of State Security and Ministry of Social Security while strengthening the prosecutors office. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily*NK)
- The North Hamgyong Province Party Committee recently held an emergency enlarged meeting to address food provisions for local residents. The meeting came after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un issued a "special order" during the Third Plenary Meeting of

the Eighth Central Committee last month, making specific mention of the nation's food shortages. (Jong So Yong, *DailyNK*)

- North Korea has claimed that it has found no cases of COVID-19 after testing an additional 718 people, according to a weekly World Health Organization (WHO) report, pushing the total number of people tested in the country above 32,000. (Bryan Betts, *NKNews*)

**In South Korea:**

- The South Korean government on Friday rebuffed concerns by a United Nations group of special rapporteurs that the country's anti-leaflet law, which bans the sending of anti-Pyongyang propaganda materials across the inter-Korean border, violates freedom of expression. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- A North Korean propaganda outlet on Monday denied allegations Pyongyang was behind the recent hacking attacks on South Korea's nuclear power think tank and an aircraft manufacturer, denouncing such claims as an "act of provocation" that seeks to disgrace the regime. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- China and North Korea pledged greater cooperation in the face of what Pyongyang described as "hostile forces" as the two countries marked the 60th anniversary of their defense treaty on Sunday. North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said the two countries were "staunchly advancing towards a bright future by smashing the high-handedness and desperate maneuvers of hostile forces", according to a statement from Pyongyang's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (Kinling Lo, SCMP)
- North Korea's foreign ministry on Monday accused the United States of using humanitarian aid as a political tool for interfering in internal affairs and taking issue with human rights. Kang Hyon-chol, a senior researcher at the Association for the Promotion of International Economic and Technological Exchange, made the case in an article published on the website of the North's foreign ministry. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican's second in command, said Pope Francis wants to visit North Korea and is waiting for an official invitation. He conveyed the message during talks with National Assembly Speaker Park Byeong-seug, who visited last week, officials said Monday. (Shin Ji-hye, *The Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Jason Yoo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250812181401/https://mailchi.mp/739a5ce5e559/hrnk-news-items-hrnk-boards-winston-lord-explains-how-he-and-henry-kissinger-pulled-off-one-of-the-greatest-foreign-policy-feats-of-the-20th-century?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Tuesday, July 13, 2021

# N. Korea: U.S. uses humanitarian aid for 'sinister' purposes; N. Korea, China celebrate ties amid pandemic: unification ministry

**In North Korea:**
Kim family using newly-remodeled 'amusement park' boat on east coast: imagery(*NK News*, 07/13/2021)
North Korea begins selecting new residents for Pyongyang's 10,000 new homes(*Daily*NK, 07/13/2021)
North Korea, China celebrate ties amid pandemic: unification ministry (*NK News*, 07/12/2021)
North Korea may be using 5G mobile communications technology to monitor border(*Daily*NK, 07/13/2021)
North Korea Mobilizes Women for Border Wall Construction Near China (*Radio Free Asia*, 07/12/2021)
North Korean singer conferred high honors by Kim Jong Un (*UPI*, 07/12/2021)
Will North Korea make military provocation against combined drill? (*Korea Times*, 07/13/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Labor union of unification ministry voices 'strong regret' over calls to scrap ministry(*Yonhap*, 07/13/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
N.K. propaganda website warns S. Korea against staging joint military drill with U.S.(*Yonhap*, 07/13/2021)

**International:**
Can China Bring North Korea Back to the Negotiating Table? It Depends (*National Interest*, 07/12/2021)
Indian ambassador leaves Pyongyang as mass exodus out of DPRK continues (*NK News*, 07/13/2021)
Japanese defense white paper highlights 'North Korea's imminent threat' (*NK News*, 07/12/2021)
N. Korea continues to exploit own people, divert resources to weapons programs: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 07/13/2021)
N. Korea reports no coronavirus case: WHO report (*Yonhap*, 07/13/2021)
North accuses U.S. of 'sinister' uses of aid (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/12/2021)
North Korea: U.S. uses humanitarian aid for 'sinister' purposes (UPI, 07/12/2021)
North Korean Nuclear Weapons Pose an Existential Threat to China (*National Interest*, 07/12/2021)

UN says 42 percent of North Koreans undernourished (*Korea Herald*, 07/13/2021)
Will China Prod North Korea Back to the Nuclear Negotiating Table? (*National Interest*, 07/12/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- As North Korea grapples with a "food crisis" and prolonged pandemic lockdown, signs suggest that the country's leader Kim Jong Un or his family and friends are enjoying his newly remodeled "floating amusement park" on the east coast. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean authorities have already begun selecting families to move into 10,000 newly constructed homes in Pyongyang this autumn. The move follows a recent order by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea and China have been celebrating their friendly relations on major anniversaries with letter exchanges and a banquet, South Korea's unification ministry said Monday, with the two sides unable to send delegations due to COVID-19. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- North Korean authorities are incorporating cutting-edge technology into their efforts to control the country's border with China. According to a source in the country, the authorities plan to use 5G mobile communications technology to monitor the situation along the border from as far away as Pyongyang with surveillance cameras. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea is forcibly mobilizing married women living near the border with China to toil away making cement blocks for the construction of a wall, sources in the country told RFA. (Jieun Kim, *Radio Free Asia*)
- A North Korean singer who performed with visiting South Korean musicians in 2018 was conferred a new title by Kim Jong Un, according to state media. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- North Korea has resumed its belligerent rhetoric against a combined summertime military exercise between Seoul and Washington, raising questions about whether the Kim Jong-un regime will escalate the situation with a military provocation. (Nam Hyun-woo, *Korea Times*)

**In South Korea:**

- The labor union of unification ministry employees expressed "strong regret" Tuesday over the main opposition People Power Party leader's call for scrapping the agency handling reconciliation efforts with North Korea. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- A North Korean propaganda outlet on Tuesday warned South Korea against pushing ahead with its planned joint military drill with the United States, saying that war exercises and peace cannot go hand in hand. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Biden's policy toward North Korea could strike sequential negotiation in workable terms with Pyongyang to realize denuclearization in the Korean Peninsula. A new show of resilience from the White House would necessarily reopen the door to a diplomatic

solution of nuclear dismantlement of North Korea. There is no question that Beijing sincerely favors President Biden's new approach to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). (Zhu Feng, *National Interest*)

- The Indian ambassador to North Korea left Pyongyang by rail on July 2, informed sources told *NK News*, further diminishing the number of embassies with senior personnel still left in the country. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- Japan has cautioned that military developments in North Korea continue to "pose grave and imminent threats" to its security, according to Tokyo's annual defense report released Tuesday. (Kosuke Takahashi, *NK News*)
- North Korea continues to exploit its own people by diverting their much needed resources to build weapons of mass destruction, a State Department spokesperson said Monday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has conducted coronavirus tests on around 35,000 people so far but found no infections, the World Health Organization (WHO) said Tuesday, amid the global spread of the more contagious delta variant. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's Foreign Ministry accused the United States of using humanitarian aid for "sinister" political purposes amid the Covid-19 pandemic. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- As Pyongyang continues to struggle with economic difficulties worsened by a prolonged COVID-19 lockdown, a North Korean official accused the United States of using humanitarian assistance programs as a means of exerting political and economic influence over recipient countries. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- China's main goal with North Korea has always been regional stability. From a Chinese perspective, while Kim's nuclear weapons may not be ideal, the situation could become more dangerous should a power vacuum be introduced. Despite Beijing's rhetoric purporting the desire for an eventual denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, China's priority has always been maintaining the geopolitical status quo in the region. (Bruce W. Bennett, *National Interest*)
- Around 42 percent of North Koreans were undernourished last year, a UN report said Tuesday, as the impoverished nation faces acute food insecurity amid the prolonged pandemic and severe weather conditions, compounded by international sanctions. (Ahn Sung-mi, *Korea Herald*)
- The sixtieth anniversary of a "friendship pact" between China and North Korea has recently passed, and China's Xi Jinping and North Korea's Kim Jong-un have indicated a desire to take relations to a new stage. But does this include working towards finding a negotiated solution to bring about North Korea's 'denuclearisation'? Or is it more likely that China finds it convenient that the United States is confronted by Pyongyang equipped with nuclear weapons? (Malcolm Davis, *National Interest*)

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Prepared by Eric Ryu, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:

https://web.archive.org/web/20250812181530/https://mailchi.mp/d6d4c030c507/hrnk-news-itemsn-korea-us-uses-humanitarian-aid-for-sinister-purposesn-korea-china-celebrate-ties-amid-pandemic-unification-ministry?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, July 14, 2021**

## N. Korea says its food production down to 10-year low in 2018

**In North Korea:**
Is the North Korean Economy Under Kim Jong Un in Danger? "Arduous March" in the Age of COVID-19? (38 North, 07/13/2021)
Kim Jong Un's young propaganda musicians enjoy access to key Pyongyang palaces (*NK News*, 07/14/2021)
N. Korea says its food production down to 10-year low in 2018 (*Yonhap*, 07/14/2021)
North Korea Says It's Facing Worst Food Shortage in Decade (*Bloomberg*, 07/13/2021)
North Korea Sets Stern Punishments for 'Anti-Socialist' Acts (*Radio Free Asia*, 07/13/2021)
North Korea to increase production of traditional medicines, state media says (UPI, 07/13/2021)
No signs that North Korea plans to demolish South Korean structures at the Mt. Kumgang tourism zone (*Daily NK*, 07/14/2021)
Rice distributions in Yanggang Province lead to slight falls in market food prices (*Daily NK*, 07/14/2021)
Ri Pyong-chol fired by Kim for negligence (*Korea JooAng Daily*, 07/14/2021)

**In South Korea:**
In Seoul center, N Korean defectors find solace with locals (*AP News*, 07/14/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Kim Jong Un Could Easily Destroy South Korea and He Knows It (*The National Interest*, 07/14/2021)
N.K. propaganda outlets decry calls to abolish gender ministry, keeps mum on scrapping unification ministry (*Yonhap*, 07/14/2021)

**International:**
An interview with Stephen Biegun, former US special envoy to North Korea (*NK News*, 07/14/2021)
Can America Find North Korea's Nukes? (*The National Interest*, 07/14/2021)
Monument in Benin has North Korean fingerprints (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/14/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Some US media, citing selective claims made by South Korean economists and North Korean defectors, have been reporting that the North is on the brink of another famine or already in one, reminiscent of the 1990s. Although the North Korean economy faces daunting post-COVID-19 challenges, the North's situation today is fundamentally better than it was during the period of the Arduous March from 1994-1998. Food prices are stable, and disorder like the looting that was seen in the 1990s has not occurred. What's more, we are not witnessing large-scale movements of urban workers to the countryside in search of food. Rather, the current migration from rural regions into cities is the result of a wage gap between workers in these two areas. (Eun-Lee Joung, *38 North*)
- Rich and famous lifestyles feature prominently in music videos as state pushes ideological purity campaign. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea has reported to the United Nations that its food production dropped to the lowest level in 10 years in 2018 due to natural disasters, lack of farming materials and low levels of mechanization. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea is facing its worse food shortages in more than a decade, it said in a report to the United Nations, giving the world notice Pyongyang is bracing for one of its biggest domestic challenges since Kim Jong Un took power. (Jeong-Ho Lee, *Bloomberg*)
- North Korea is trying to reinforce its brand of socialism by punishing citizens for "anti-socialist acts," including distorting the lyrics of revolutionary songs, and forcing party officials to spend an extra two hours a day studying political ideology, sources in the country told RFA. (*Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korea plans to ramp up production of traditional herbal remedies, state media said. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ordered the demolition of South Korean facilities in the Mt. Kumgang tourist zone two years ago, but it appears the country has yet to implement that order. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- Grain prices in some regions of North Korea have recently fallen slightly after the authorities distributed food provisions. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un fired Ri Pyong-chol, vice chairman of the North's Central Military Commission, from the Presidium of the Politburo Standing Committee last month after accusing him of neglecting his official duties. (*Korea JooAng Daily*)

**In South Korea:**

- A small group of North Korean defectors gather at a sleek seven-story building in Seoul. Together with South Korean residents, they play the accordion, make ornaments and learn how to grow plants. Later, some go out for coffee. (Hyung-Jin Kim, *AP News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- A nuclear war would see Pyongyang targeting South Korean and American cities as well as U.S. bases in Japan. The costs of such a conflict would be catastrophic. The United States has substantial air, land, and sea forces stationed in South Korea, as well as several units based in Japan and the western Pacific earmarked for a Korean

contingency. Together, these forces far exceed the firepower of North Korea's armed forces and represent a powerful deterrent not just against Pyongyang but any potential adversary in the region. (Kyle Mizokami, *The National Interest*)

- North Korean propaganda outlets slammed the head of South Korea's main opposition party Wednesday for calling for the abolition of the gender equality ministry but stayed mum on a more relevant issue of his call for scrapping the unification ministry. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- In an exclusive interview with *NK News*, former top U.S. envoy on North Korea Stephen Biegun attributed the failure of the 2019 Hanoi summit in part to his counterparts' lack of authority to negotiate during working-level talks, while also concluding that Pyongyang empowered its foreign ministry to assume responsibility for negotiations with the U.S. from the United Front Department following the summit. (Bryan Betts, *NK News*)
- Special emphasis is placed on reconnaissance and intelligence collection to identify WMD sites. The manual distinguishes between seizing WMDs, which means using force to capture them from the enemy, and securing sites so that no one manages to walk off with a nuke or a nerve-gas bomb in the confusion. The Pentagon has just released a new manual that lays out how the United States might destroy North Korea's nukes. (Michael Peck, *The National Interest*)
- North Korea's Mansudae Art Studio is probably behind the construction of a monumental statue in the West African country of Benin, in violation of United Nations sanctions, according to a Voice of America (VOA) report Wednesday. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)

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Prepared by Scott Cho, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250812181905/https://mailchi.mp/6f683024b3c1/hrnk-news-itemsn-korea-says-its-food-production-down-to-10-year-low-in-2018?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, July 15, 2021**

## Gov't leaflet defense is pooh-poohed abroad

**Top News:**
Gov't leaflet defense is pooh-poohed abroad (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/14/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Calm Down: This North Korean Missile Isn't as Tough as It Looks (*The National Interest*, 07/15/2021)

North Hamgyong Province residents receive a week's worth of rice provisions (*Daily* NK, 07/15/2021)
North Korea admits medical supply 'shortage' in new United Nations report (NK *News*, 07/15/2021)
North Korea cites sanctions as obstacles to meeting U.N. development goals (UPI, 07/14/2021)
North Koreans with COVID-19 symptoms are dying after being released from quarantine facilities (*Daily* NK, 07/15/2021)
North Korea Reports Shortage of Medicine, Doctors in Rare Admission (*Newsweek*, 07/15/2021)
Ri Yong-gil may be North's defense minister (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/15/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Moon Jae-in asks for Vietnam's help in restarting North Korea dialogue (UPI, 07/15/2021)
NK defectors' debt growth far outstrips national average (*The Korea Herald*, 07/15/2021)
Son of slain fisheries official files damages suit against Coast Guard, calls for apology (*Yonhap*, 07/15/2021)
'Work from home vulnerable to North Korea's cyberattackes' (*The Korea Times*, 07/15/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
How a war between North and South Korea could quickly become a naval showdown (*Business Insider*, 07/15/2021)
North Korea's media attacks South's Lee Jun-Seok for gender remarks (UPI, 07/14/2021)

**International:**
Congress can set the Biden administration up for success with North Korea (NK *Pro*, 07/14/2021)
N.K. foreign ministry slams Japan's defense white paper as 'paper on reinvasion'(*Yonhap*, 07/15/2021)
N.K. media denounces Japan's wartime sexual slavery as war crime with 'no statute of limitations' (*Yonhap*, 07/15/2021)
North Korea bashes Japan's new defense white paper and its military 'build-up' (NK *News*, 07/15/2021)
North Korea blasts Japan's defense white paper after Tokyo warns of threats (UPI, 07/15/2021)
North Korea May Be Using 5G Technology to Monitor Its Border With China (*The Diplomat*, 07/15/2021)
North Korea Takes UN Hypocrisy to New Heights (*Human Rights Watch*, 07/14/2021)
Scale of US-South Korea joint drills is a 'bilateral' decision: Pentagon (NK *News*, 07/15/2021)
US commander stresses America's readiness to prevent attack on South Korea (NK *News*, 07/14/2021)

**Top News:**

- The South Korean government's response to a group of United Nations special rapporteurs criticizing its outlawing of sending anti-Pyongyang leaflets across the border was met with an icy reception. "The South Korean government has not made a convincing argument that public safety is threatened by leaflets being sent via balloon," said Ambassador Robert King, HRNK Board Member and the U.S. State Department's former special envoy on North Korean human rights, in an interview with Voice of America. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea is believed to own a stockpile of around sixty nuclear weapons, including a powerful and steadily growing arsenal of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM's). This is what three of North Korea's most powerful ICBM models—the Hwasong 14, 15, and 16—are capable of doing. (Mark Episkopos, *The National Interest*)
- North Hamgyong Province residents recently received provisions of food, Daily NK has learned. Discontent is apparently widespread, however, because the authorities have provided only a week's worth of sustenance. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea this week admitted a "shortage" of medicine in the country in a rare report to the United Nations, but it's not meant as a cry for help for immediate foreign assistance, an official from South Korea's unification ministry said on Thursday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korea's grain production reached a 10-year low in 2018 and international embargoes are to blame for ongoing problems, Pyongyang said in its first Voluntary National Review submitted to the United Nations on Tuesday. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- North Korean authorities continue to claim the country has had no confirmed cases of COVID-19, yet evidence is mounting that people with coronavirus symptoms are dying after being released from state quarantine facilities. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea rarely shares its faults with the world, but a recent report submitted to the United Nations highlighted challenges in its health care system, including a shortage of medicine. (Jenni Fink, *Newsweek*)
- North Korea is believed to have named former Minister of Social Security Ri Yong-gil as defense minister, removing Kim Jong-gwan from the post, according to a South Korean government source on Thursday. (Michael Lee, Jeong Yong-soo, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korean President Moon Jae-in requested Vietnam play a role in restarting North Korea dialogue during a phone call with Nguyen Phu Trong, the general secretary of Vietnam's Communist Party. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- The debt held by refugees from North Korea is catching up with the average for South Korean households, data for last year shows. (Kim Yon-se, *The Korea Herald*)
- The son of a South Korean fisheries official killed by North Korea's military last year filed a damages suit against the country's Coast Guard on Thursday, demanding an apology for defaming the deceased's family. (*Yonhap*)
- Rep. Tae Yong-ho of the conservative main opposition People Power Party (PPP) urged the government, Thursday, to review whether to allow employees of organizations

dealing with important national secrets to work from home, claiming that their environments could be vulnerable to North Korea's cyber attacks. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Last month, two of South Korea's largest shipbuilders unveiled designs and concept models for the country's future aircraft carrier, known as CVX. The new carrier is the latest example of how the South Korean military is preparing for a potential conflict with its nuclear-armed northern neighbor. (Benjamin Brimelow, *Business Insider*)
- North Korea's propaganda services issued a series of condemnations of new South Korean opposition leader Lee Jun-seok on Wednesday after he proposed abolishing Seoul's gender and unification ministries. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

**International:**

- While the administration may be able to end the war on its own, Congress can pass a number of provisions that would address public concerns as well as help set the administration up for diplomatic success post-armistice. (Daniel Jasper, NK Pro)
- North Korea's foreign ministry on Thursday slammed Japan for labeling Pyongyang's arms development "a grave and imminent threat" to regional peace and stability in its latest defense policy paper. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's official news agency on Thursday slammed Japan over its wartime sexual enslavement of Korean women, calling it a "war crime to which no statute of limitations is applicable." (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's foreign ministry blasted Japan's recently released annual defense white paper in a statement attributed to a researcher on Thursday. (Won-Gi Jung, NK News)
- North Korea accused Japan of harboring ambitions of "reinvasion" after Tokyo released its annual defense white paper Tuesday that outlines threats Pyongyang poses to Japan's security. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- North Korean authorities are incorporating cutting-edge technology into their efforts to control the country's border with China. According to a source in the country, the authorities plan to use 5G mobile communications technology to monitor the situation along the border from as far away as Pyongyang with surveillance cameras. (Seulkee Jang, *The Diplomat*)
- Hypocrisy is commonplace at the United Nations. Delegates routinely stand at UN podiums and blame everyone and everything but their own governments for their countries' problems. North Korea took this practice to new level on Tuesday at a High Level Political Forum on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. (Lina Yoon, *Human Rights Watch*)
- The scale of U.S.-ROK joint exercises is a "bilateral" decision that should be made by the allies, not just Washington, a Pentagon spokesperson stressed in a press briefing on Wednesday, as the two countries prepare to hold drills amid a spike in COVID-19 cases in South Korea. (Jeongmin Kim, NK News)
- The United States is maintaining a "full readiness posture" to prevent an armed attack on South Korea, the commander of the U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) said

Wednesday, as the two allies prepare to hold joint military drills next month. (Jeongmin Kim, NK News)

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Prepared by Irene Kang, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250812182210/https://mailchi.mp/84458e4ad57c/hrnk-news-itemsgovt-leaflet-defense-is-pooh-poohed-abroad?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, July 16, 2021**

## N. Korea blames outside forces for anti-gov't protests in Cuba, Only 2 N.K. defectors arrive in S. Korea in Q2, lowest ever

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea blames outside forces for anti-gov't protests in Cuba (*Yonhap*, 07/16/2021)
North Korea arrests around 20 trading company heads in latest crackdown on unauthorized trade (*Daily NK*, 07/16/2021)
North Korea warns of health problems due to ongoing heat wave (*NK News*, 07/16/2021)
There's Little Reason to Fear North Korea's Massive Ground Forces (*The National Interest*, 07/16/2021)
Three Haeju university students brought to court for watching and distributing S. Korean videos (*Daily NK*, 07/16/2021)

**In South Korea:**
More than 90% of South Koreans think North Korea won't give up nukes: survey (*NK News*, 07/16/2021)
Protester rushed to hospital after clash at South Korea THAAD site (*UPI*, 07/15/2021)
S. Korea's upgraded K9 self-propelled guns deployed to front-line island (*Aju Business Daily*, 07/15/2021)
Why is South Korea developing an Israeli-style Iron Dome? (*Al Jazeera*, 07/16/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Nearly 60 pct of S. Koreans think unification with N.K. necessary: poll (*Yonhap*, 07/16/2021)
North Korea-backed hackers linked to attack on Seoul National University Hospital (*UPI*, 07/15/2021)
Only 2 N.K. defectors arrive in S. Korea in Q2, lowest ever (*Yonhap*, 07/16/2021)

**International:**

B-2: This Plane Could Be the Last Thing North Korea Ever Sees (*The National Interest*, 07/15/2021)

Chinese Traders in Dire Straits Over Frozen Border Trade With North Korea (*Radio Free Asia*, 07/16/2021)

Kim-Trump summit in Hanoi could have eliminated 80% of N. Korea's nuclear capacity, a report says (*Hankyoreh*, 07/16/2021)

Senior US envoy Sherman to visit Korea next week (*The Korea Herald*, 07/16/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea claimed on Friday that recent anti-government demonstrations in Cuba must be an "outcome of behind-the-scene manipulation by the outside forces," apparently blaming the United States for causing instability in a country with which Pyongyang has been seeking to strengthen ties. (*Yonhap*)
- The atmosphere along the China-North Korea border is growing even more tense due to the North Korean government's inspections of trade-related entities. Daily NK has learned recently that the authorities have arrested almost two dozen trading company managers and related cadres for conducting unauthorized trade. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean state media is warning citizens of the deadly potential of an ongoing heat wave, amid dangerously high temperatures in areas of the country lacking regular access to electricity and air conditioning. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Pyongyang's massive conventional defense outlays continue to yield negligible military value. They have succeeded only in propping up a bloated and increasingly unviable military-industrial complex that cannot be meaningfully reformed without a comprehensive decommission and modernization effort. (Mark Episkopos, *The National Interest*)
- Three university students in Haeju, South Hwanghae Province, were tried in a public court late last month for watching and distributing South Korean videos. According to a Daily NK source in South Hwanghae Province on Wednesday, North Korean authorities publicly tried the three individuals before a crowd gathered in the yard of the Haeju Farm Machine Factory on June 30. They were accused of watching and distributing so-called "capitalist recorded material (videos)" consisting of South Korean movies and music videos. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- The Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU) asked 1,003 South Koreans their views on a number of inter-Korea issues in an annual survey and found that 90.7% of respondents did not believe denuclearization was a realistic outcome on the Korean Peninsula. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- A South Korean protester collapsed and was transferred to a nearby hospital during a military delivery to the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense base in Seongju on Thursday. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)

- K9A1, an upgraded version of South Korea's K9 self-propelled gun, has been deployed to a front-line island that was shelled by North Korea's artillery in 2010, killing four people and briefly triggering concerns of a full-scale conflict. There was no publicity or official confirmation on the placement of advanced guns that put North Korea's coast batteries in range. (Lim Chang-won, *Aju Business Daily*)
- South Korea is developing a new artillery and short-range rocket defence system modelled after Israel's Iron Dome, in a further upgrade to its military hardware on a peninsula that technically remains at war. (Frank Smith, *Al Jazeera*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Nearly 60 percent of South Koreans think that reunification with North Korea is necessary, a survey showed Friday. According to the poll of 1,003 adults by the state-run Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU), 58.7 percent replied that unification is necessary, showing an increase of 6 percentage points from last year's survey. (*Yonhap*)
- A group of hackers under North Korea's Reconnaissance General Bureau is believed to be behind the recent hacking of a major hospital in South Korea. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- Only two North Korean defectors arrived in South Korea in the second quarter, the lowest number ever since the government began compiling quarterly defector data in 2003, the unification ministry said Friday. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- In any conflict in the skies over North Korea, the U.S. Air Force will likely follow a familiar pattern. First, it will need to sweep the skies of enemy fighters—not a difficult prospect considering the decrepit state of the North Korean air force. Concurrent with that will be a campaign to shut down the country's command and control and air defense systems, and finally a close air support and interdiction campaign designed to support friendly forces and locate and destroy enemy ground forces. (Kyle Mizokami, *The National Interest*)
- China's exporters to North Korea are struggling under mounting debts as chemicals, medicines, and metal products ordered by their neighbor decay in warehouses awaiting the reopening of border that has been closed since early 2020 to fight the coronavirus, according to sources in the main Chinese border city. (Jieun Kim, Jinha Shin, Roseanne Gerin, *Radio Free Asia*)
- If the second North Korea-US summit, held in Hanoi at the end of Feb. 2019, had succeeded and North Korea had dismantled its Yongbyon nuclear plant, a symbol of the North's nuclear program, it would have eliminated 80% of the North's capacity for producing nuclear weapons, a new report finds. (Gil Yun-hyung, *Hankyoreh*)
- US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman will visit South Korea and Japan next week for talks on global and regional security issues, such as North Korea, the State Department said Thursday. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Claire McCrea, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:

https://web.archive.org/web/20250812182625/https://mailchi.mp/dc8468c4fc1d/hrnk-news-itemsn-korea-blames-outside-forces-for-anti-govt-protests-in-cubaonly-2-nk-defectors-arrive-in-s-korea-in-q2-lowest-ever?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, July 17, 2021**

# North Korea warns of heat wave's impact on crops; U.S. needs to work with China to denuclearize N. Korea: report

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea blasts Japan over claim to Dokdo (*Yonhap*, 07/17/2021)
North Korea warns of heat wave's impact on crops (UPI, 07/16/2021)
Why is Kim Jong-un clamping down on millennials, K-pop and slang? (*The Korea Herald*, 07/17/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Survey: Most South Koreans don't believe North will denuclearize (UPI, 07/16/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Just two North Korean defectors reach South Korea from April to June (NK *News*, 07/16/2021)

**International:**
U.S. needs to work with China to denuclearize N. Korea: report (*Yonhap*, 07/17/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea lashed out at Japan on Saturday for its claim to a set of South Korean islets in the East Sea, Dokdo, calling it a shameless act. "The Japan sports world has reached the extremes in its shameless act designed to seize Tok Island, part of the inviolable territory of Korea, even in defiance of the sacred idea and spirit of the Olympic movement," a spokesman for the North's Olympic Committee said in a statement carried by the country's official Korean Central News Agency. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea could be taking preventative measures against climate change by planting more trees and protecting crops from extreme heat as temperatures soar to record highs on the peninsula. Korean Workers' Party paper Rodong Sinmun said Friday that preventing crop damage from heat waves is a "struggle to protect the lives and safety of the people." (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has a new concern: how to control the country's younger generation. The 37-year-old leader warned in April that "a serious change" was taking place in the "ideological and mental state" of young North Koreans, and that their

ideological education was vital to the survival of the party and the country. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)

**In South Korea:**

- More than 9 in 10 South Koreans don't believe Pyongyang is willing to give up its nuclear weapons, according to a new survey by government-run think tank Korea Institute for National Unification. The annual survey, released Thursday, saw a dramatic increase in the percentage of respondents who believed that North Korea was unwilling to denuclearize over the past five years, from 71.3% in 2016 to 90.7% in April. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Only two North Korean defectors entered South Korea from April to June this year, the fewest ever in a single quarter, Seoul's unification ministry announced on Friday. Only one male and one female defector arrived in the country during the second quarter of 2021, according to South Korea's Ministry of Unification, the lowest-ever quarterly figure since such data began to be recorded in 2003. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)

**International:**

- The United States will need to work with China in its efforts to denuclearize North Korea, a State Department official said Friday. The official also noted Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman may visit China during her upcoming trip to Asia that is currently scheduled to take her only to Japan, South Korea and Mongolia, according to a report by Reuters. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Rick Herssevoort, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250812182708/https://mailchi.mp/367c8ece2e2a/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-korea-warns-of-heat-waves-impact-on-cropsus-needs-to-work-with-china-to-denuclearize-n-korea-report?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, July 18, 2021**

## N. Korea's imports from China surge on-month in June

**In South Korea:**

Can South Korea Build an 'Iron Dome' to Protect Against North Korean Artillery?(*The National Interest*, 07/17/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

N. Korea's imports from China surge on-month in June (*Yonhap*, 07/18/2021)

N.K. media outlet reports on S. Korean criticism of call for abolishing unification ministry (*Yonhap*, 07/18/2021)
N. Korea warns youth against adopting foreign speaking habits, lifestyles (*Yonhap*, 07/18/2021)
Why is Kim Jong-un clamping down on millennials, K-pop and slang? (*The Korea Herald*, 07/17/2021)

**International:**

China-North Korea first-half trade at record low amid pandemic and food shortages(*South China Morning Post*, 07/18/2021)
Mexico Floats Restoring Diplomatic Relations With North Korea (*Bloomberg*, 07/17/2021)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's Defense Minister Suh Wook announced on June 28, 2021, plans to spend 2.89 trillion won ($2.6 billion) developing an equivalent of the Iron Dome air defense system used by Israel (Sebastien Roblin, *The National Interest*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- North Korea's imports from China rose sharply to US$12.3 million last month from $2.71 million a month earlier, Chinese trade data showed Sunday (*Yonhap*)
- A North Korean propaganda media outlet reported Sunday that the leader of South Korea's main opposition party is under fire over his calls for abolishing the unification ministry, which handles inter-Korean affairs, a move seen as indirect criticism of the abolition idea (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Sunday called on younger generations to speak the country's own standard language and follow traditional lifestyles, amid the regime's crackdown on language expressions widely used in South Korea (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has a new concern: how to control the country's younger generation. The 37-year-old leader warned in April that "a serious change" was taking place in the "ideological and mental state" of young North Koreans, and that their ideological education was vital to the survival of the party and the country (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- Trade between China and North Korea hit a record low in the first half of the year as the coronavirus pandemic and food shortages took their toll (Orange Wang, *South China Morning Post*)

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Prepared by Abraham Reiss, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250812182850/https://mailchi.mp/ed150a20bccb/hrnk-news-itemsn-koreas-imports-from-china-surge-on-month-in-june?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, July 19, 2021**

# The U.S. and South Korea must discuss the North Korean 'POW Issue'; Moon Jae-in's Government is Passive Regarding POWs

**Top News:**
American Experts: The United States and South Korea must discuss the North Korean 'POW Issue' (VOA, 7/14/2021)
** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

Moon Jae-in's Government is Passive Regarding Prisoners of War (RFA, 7/13/2021)
** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**
Chinese refined oil imports lead to fall in North Korean gasoline and diesel prices (*Daily NK*, 7/19/2021)
North Korea delays major farmers' meeting amid 'food crisis,' drought fears (*NK News*, 7/19/2021)
N.K. official paper calls for continued efforts for self-reliance even if economic conditions improve (*Yonhap*, 7/19/2021)
North Korea tells WHO it has no COVID cases after testing additional 696 people (*NK News*, 7/19/2021)
North Korea warns young people against using slang from the South (*BBC News*, 7/18/2021)
Young North Koreans ordered to stop speaking, dressing and dancing like South Koreans - or else (*Sky News*, 7/19/2021)
Young North Koreans told to shun slang and 'cultural penetration' from South (*The Guardian*, 7/19/2021)
**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Long critical of unification ministry, North Korea condemns call to shut it down (*NK News*, 7/19/2021)
**International:**
For North Korean workers, Russia's Far East remains a windfall for them and for Kim's regime (*The Washington Post*, 7/18/2021)
North Korean trade with China continues to shrink, dropping 84 percent (*Nikkei Asia*, 7/18/2021)

**Top News:**

- American experts have stated that when the U.S and South Korean governments resume negotiation with North Korea, the issue of POWs in the Korean War should be raised as

a human rights abuse. HRNK's event, "Never Forgotten: South Korean POWs Still Held in North Korea," is highlighted. (Hyung-Joo Park, VOA)

- Marking the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War, the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), headquartered in Washington D.C., held a virtual conference on the 13th for the repatriation of South Korean prisoners of war. (Han Duk-in, RFA)

**In North Korea:**

- The price of refined oil—which had been skyrocketing due to shortages—has recently fallen by more than 50% after the country received supplies of the commodity from China. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea appears to have delayed its first major farmers' congress in five years as the country faces mounting challenges from intense summer heat and what Kim Jong Un recently called an emergency "food crisis." (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Monday called for continued efforts to realize a self-reliant economy even if the situation improves, saying the country would end up subservient to others unless it is able to stand on its own. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has once again reported no cases of COVID-19 in the country after testing an additional 696 people, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), as the country told the U.N. last week that a lack of medicine and health professionals "remain as challenges." (Bryan Betts, *NK News*)
- North Korean state media has urged its young people against using slang from South Korea and told them to speak North Korea's standard language. (*BBC News*)
- Young North Koreans have been warned they must follow traditional lifestyles and adhere to the country's dialect. Seoul's creeping influence on the secluded state's way of life "is even more dangerous than enemies who are taking guns," according to an official newspaper. (Connor Sephton, *Sky News*)
- Young North Koreans have been warned to adhere to the country's standard language and follow "traditional lifestyles" as part of the regime's campaign to stamp out cultural influences from neighbouring South Korea. (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- North Korean state media slammed South Korea's conservative party on Sunday, following recent remarks by party leader Lee Jun-seok that Seoul's Ministry of Unification (MOU) should be abolished. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)

**International:**

- More than a year after U.N. Security Council sanctions banned countries from hosting North Korea's regime-directed workforce, North Korean workers remain in Vladivostok, a port city of about 600,000 near the Russia-North Korea border. (Isabelle Khurshudyan and Min Joo Kim, *The Washington Post*)
- North Korea's trade with China dropped 84% to $65.72 million in the first six months of the year, statistics released by Beijing on Sunday show, as precautions taken to combat the coronavirus pandemic halted the flow of people and goods from China. (Shin Watanabe, *Nikkei Asia*)

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VOA Article

****American Experts: The United States and South Korea must discuss the North Korean 'POW Issue'**

**Reporter: Hyung-Joo Park**

American experts have stated that when the U.S and South Korean governments resume negotiation with North Korea, the issue of POWs in the Korean War should be raised as a human rights abuse.

This is Hyung-Joo Park reporting.

An argument has been raised that the United States and South Korea should adopt a government-level consultative body to resolve the issue of the Korean War POWs remaining in North Korea.

David Maxwell, a Senior Fellow at a non-governmental organization in Washington D.C, Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FFD), spoke on the 13th at an online conference hosted by HRNK titled "Never Forgotten: Korean POWs Still Detained in North Korea."

He said, "We must not forget this issue, despite the fact that many POWs in the Korean War have already passed away," and added that, "the descendants of the POWs are still suffering and are discriminated against based on the songbun social classification system."

David Maxwell proposed to address this issue in the 'U.S.-ROK Democracy and Governance Consultations' (DGC) that was announced as a result of the summit between President Joe Biden and South Korean President Moon Jae-In.

[David Maxwell, Senior Fellow at FFD]: "At the recent Biden-Moon summit, the factsheet, outlines a new concentrated mechanism, the US-ROK democracy and governance consultation mechanism which will serve to coordinate ROK-US focus on human rights and democracy promotion at home and abroad."

In particular, he explained that the U.S. and South Korea need to approach this issue from an integrated point of view, and that it is necessary to draw attention to the crimes against humanity that the Kim family regime of North Korea continues to commit.

During a seminar on the same day, Son Myeong-Hwa, who is the current representative of 'the Korean War POW Family Association,' testified about the discrimination she experienced in North Korea as the daughter of a prisoner of war. She escaped North Korea in 2006.

[Son Myeong-Hwa, head of the Korean War POW Family Association]: "Fathers did not tell their children that they were POWs of the Korean War. However, I found out later that due to a songbun background tag that indicates 'prisoner of war, category 43,' the children of POWs cannot go to universities even if they are bright students, and men cannot serve in the military."

She explained that even though she tried to restore her father's honor after arriving in South Korea, she is still regarded as a "child of a presumed prisoner of war," because the Korean government had already classified her father as a soldier killed in action (KIA) in 1951.

Amanda Mortwedt Oh, a human rights attorney at the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), emphasized that the issue of POWS can be addressed by the UN as issues related to "enforced disappearance" and "crimes against humanity."

[Amanda Mortwedt Oh, HRNK human rights attorney] "In 2014, the UN Commission of Inquiry characterized this denial of repatriation for POW in part as enforced disappearance...North Korea's enforced disappearance of POW is an act that may constitute a crime against humanity if it is widespread or systematic."

Attorney Oh explained that the North Korean authorities claimed that the issue was resolved by the exchange of prisoners of war under the armistice agreement and that the POWs voluntarily remained in North Korea. Yet, the South Korean POWs who escaped from North Korea testified that this claim is false.

She also introduced the activities of the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and pointed out that even though the authority of the organization is limited, it can help the international community identify, record, and draw attention to the practices of North Korea.

She stated that this process could build evidence that would be used to hold the North Korean authorities accountable for their practices.

Fredrick Vicenzo, a visiting Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council who served in the U.S. Navy for 28 years, said the gravity of the POW issue is directly related to national values.

Fredrick Vicenzo, a visiting Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council, said that we should raise this issue while remembering and honoring the ROK POWs.

The Commission of Inquiry (COI), in its final report released in 2014, estimated that 82,000 South Korean prisoners went missing during the Korean War, and about 50,000 to 70,000 of them were detained and failed to return to South Korea.

The report pointed out that after the armistice agreement was signed, the North Korean regime created an involuntary construction brigade composed of POWs and sent the prisoners to the northernmost coal mines, factories, and rural areas for forced labor. Henceforth, the regime sent them to mines in a remote place to live for the rest of their lives.

South Korea's Ministry of National Defense stated in its Defense White Paper that a total of 80 South Korean POWs escaped on their own and returned to South Korea by 2010, beginning with Lieutenant Cho Chang-ho in 1994.

According to UN reports and media reports, it is estimated that between 300 and 500 South Korean POWs are still alive in North Korea.

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VOA Article Translation by HRNK Research Intern, Juheung Kim

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RFA Article

**** Moon Jae-in's Government is Passive Regarding Prisoners of War**
**Reporter: Han Duk-in**

Anchor: Some claim that the South Korean government is too inactive regarding the issue of unreturned prisoners of war in North Korea.

This is Han Duk-in reporting.

Marking the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War, the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), headquartered in Washington D.C., held a virtual conference on the 13th for the repatriation of South Korean prisoners of war.

Son Myung-hwa, daughter of Son Dong-sik, a prisoner of war who was captured just before the signing of the 1953 armistice, said that the South Korean government's inaction concerning prisoners of war captured in North Korea and their children is regrettable.

In particular, Son expressed frustration that despite several previous attempts to inform the South Korean government, the biographical information of prisoners of war has not been corrected properly.

Son Myung-hwa: "My father's military record states that he died in 1951 on an unknown battlefield. I was born in 1962, so who exactly is my father and which country is my father's homeland? I wanted to ask the South Korean government, and that's all I asked of the United States. However, my father's record still states that he died in 1951.

Despite bringing my father's remains to South Korea, going through DNA testing, and identifying his body, my family's requests for correction, let alone a recognition of merit, have not been accepted."

Son, who defected from North Korea and settled in South Korea in 2006, said the children of South Korean prisoners of war were "not treated as human beings in North Korea, but we are not treated as human beings in South Korea, either. We are a forgotten people," she said.

Son Myung-hwa: "Our fathers were not willing prisoners, nor did they want to die in North Korea...we did not want to be born as the descendants of prisoners of war, nor labeled as the low status of "43rd." We did not willingly choose to live in a sit-in cage for our whole lives."

Representative Son Myung-hwa said she and the affected families of prisoners of war held a protest against the South Korean government, but the only answer they received was a cold response from the Ministry of National Defense to "go protest against the Kim Il-sung regime that caused the war in the first place."

David Maxwell, a Senior Fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies (FDD), who was a panel speaker, said it is difficult to imagine the discrimination and suffering that prisoners of war and their children have experienced thus far.

Senior Fellow Maxwell reiterated that the United Nations is aware that South Korean prisoners of war who were taken to North Korea are discriminated against based on the system of songbun, and that such discrimination unjustly extends to the families of prisoners of war.

Maxwell stressed that South Korean and U.S. authorities should continue to be involved in matters regarding North Korea in the future while prioritizing human rights.

In the case that the United States and South Korea can negotiate with North Korea in the future, authorities should be able to bring up the buried issue of South Korean POWs that both South Korea and the U.S. have so far failed to address.

Maxwell further stressed that efforts to bring the remains of prisoners of war back home should not be stopped by excuses such as the length of time since the war or political tension.

Meanwhile, Pastor Park Sang-won, head of the Gideon Brothers Mission World based in Seattle, USA, said, "the majority of South Koreans have imported North Korean minerals and coal on a humanitarian basis for decades with good intentions to help North Korean children dying of starvation."

Pastor Park explained that "in actuality, the coal mines were worked by prisoners of war who had been working 24 hours a day under a system of slave labor. We can call this blood coal."

Pastor Park pointed out that Moon Jae-in's government carefully watches North Korea but allows this issue to go unaddressed.

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RFA Article Translation by HRNK Research Intern, Jason Yoo

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Prepared by Madeline Hieneman, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here
https://web.archive.org/web/20250812183133/https://mailchi.mp/edc99a2032f3/hrnk-news-itemsn-koreas-imports-from-china-surge-on-month-in-june-11187358?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, July 20, 2021**

## The U.S. and South Korea must discuss the North Korean 'POW Issue'; Moon Jae-in's Government is Passive Regarding POWs

**Top News:**
All-Party Parliamentary Group on North Korea Releases its Inquiry into Human Rights Violations 2014-2020 Report (*APPG*, 7/20/2021)

Kim Jong Un is the president of North Korea (*Gridpop.ID*, 07/17/2021)

**In North Korea:**
North Korea's quarantine policies are generating discrimination against those with COVID-19 symptoms (*Daily NK*, 7/20/2021)
North Korea's attempts to get people to use banks are showing little success (*Daily NK*,

7/20/2021)
Satellite images show Kim Jong-Un's water-slide yacht in action, while North Korea struggles with famine and COVID-19 (*Business Insider*, 7/20/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

N.K. propaganda website slams S. Korea for pushing ahead with upcoming joint military drill with U.S. (*Yonhap*, 7/20/2021)
[Herald Interview] Opposition leader against opening up to refugees (*Korea Herald*, 7/20/2021)

**International:**

N. Korea highlights friendly ties with Russia on summit anniversary (*Yonhap*, 7/20/2021)
U.S. possesses capabilities to counter cyber attacks: Pentagon (*Yonhap*, 7/20/2021)
S. Korea, Japan agree to continue efforts to resolve pending issues despite tension over diplomat's remarks (*Yonhap*, 7/20/2021)
U.S., Japan highlight need to work with Seoul to denuclearize N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 7/20/2021)
Appeal made to Britain's top envoy on North defectors (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 7/20/2021)
Interview: Wi Sung-lac says Singapore summit 'ruined' denuclearization talks (*NK News*, 7/20/2021)
Concern About Fate of 50 North Korean Escapees Sent Home by China (RFA, 7/19/2021)

**Top News:**

- Today the All-Party Parliamentary Group ("APPG") on North Korea released its report on the "Inquiry into Human Rights Violations in North Korea 2014-2020." The report is the culmination of the APPG on North Korea's inquiry into human rights violations committed in North Korea since the 2014 report of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The report also "renews calls for action on the human rights abuses occurring in North Korea, and offers recommendations to the UK government." In March 2021, HRNK provided oral testimony and a written submission to the APPG. (APPG)
- Executive Director of HRNK, Greg Scarlatoiu was quoted in a Gridpop.ID article regarding the North Korean regime and its handling of the COVID-19 situation, saying, "This is a regime that preserves itself by committing unimaginably cruel acts to its people." (Luvy Octaviani, *Gridpop.ID*)

**In North Korea:**

- A Daily NK source in North Korea said Monday that people who go into quarantine with a fever, cough, or other symptoms of COVID-19 are "treated like traitors to the Korean people." (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Koreans continue to show little interest in saving money in the country's banks despite the government's attempts to encourage people's use of financial institutions. Daily NK also understands that, broadly speaking, North Koreans are becoming less interested in so-called "lottery savings accounts." (Moon Dong-hui, *Daily NK*)
- Kim Jong-Un's 260-ft luxury yacht has been spotted moving towards his private compound, suggesting he or his associates are reading to party during North Korea's struggles with famine and COVID-19. (Mia Jankowicz, *Business Insider*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- A North Korean propaganda outlet on Tuesday slammed South Korea for pushing ahead with a joint military drill with the United States set for next month, calling it a scheme to invade the North. (*Yonhap*)
- Lee Jun-seok, 36, the youngest-ever leader of the nation's main opposition People Power Party, has been outspoken on a number of sensitive issues since taking office last month. Sitting down with The Korea Herald on Monday, he candidly spoke about hot topics like refugees, immigrants and North. (Shin Ji-hye, *Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- North Korea on Tuesday vowed efforts to advance friendly relations with Russia on the occasion of the anniversary of a joint declaration adopted when Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Pyongyang in 2000. (*Yonhap*)
- The United States maintains and continues to advance its capabilities to counter any cyber attacks from countries such as China and North Korea, a Pentagon spokesman said Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea and Japan agreed Tuesday to continue efforts to resolve pending issues rooted largely in wartime history, the foreign ministry said Tuesday, despite the flare-up of tension over a Japanese diplomat's disparaging remarks on President Moon Jae-in's approach to Tokyo. (Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman and her Japanese counterpart, Takeo Mori, stressed the importance of trilateral cooperation between their countries and South Korea in denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula, the State Department said Tuesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- A British parliamentary group asked Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab to get involved in hundreds of North Koreans trying to defect from China to South Korea. It asked Raab to meet with the South Korean and Chinese ambassadors in London. (Park Hyun-ju, Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- *NK News* spoke to Wi about what he thinks caused the current deadlock in the U.S.-DPRK denuclearization talks, the follies of the Singapore Statement and what he believes are the biggest obstacles to South Korea's foreign affairs and diplomatic efforts. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- China has repatriated about 50 North Korean escapees, including air force pilots and others who could face severe punishment including the death penalty, sources on the Chinese side of the border told RFA. (Jieun Kim, Jinha Shin, Eugene Whong, *RFA*)

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Prepared by Mindy Kim, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here
https://web.archive.org/web/20250812183301/https://mailchi.mp/d99103496d73/hrnk-news-itemsn-koreas-imports-from-china-surge-on-month-in-june-11187366?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, July 21, 2021**

# North Korea food shortage turns into new Asia humanitarian crisis; NYC's Push for "Otto Warmbier Way"

**Top News:**
North Korea food shortage turns into new Asia humanitarian crisis (*Nikkei Asia*, 07/21/2021)
NYC's Push for "Otto Warmbier Way": Calls for International Solidarity against the Kim Regime's Brutal Tyranny (*Foreign Policy Association*, 07/19/2021)

**In North Korea:**
A shattered mirror (*Korea Joongang Daily*, 07/21/2021)
China's glass-floor tourism craze arrives at North Korea's doorstep (*NK News*, 07/20/2021)
N.K. paper calls on officials to make 'big leap' in achieving economic goals (*Yonhap*, 07/21/2021)
North Koreans Alarmed by Starvation Deaths of Well-Off Ethnic Chinese (*Radio Free Asia*, 07/20/2021)
North Korea-linked firm offering expanded range of radio hardware online (*NK Pro*, 07/21/2021)
North Korean soldier deserts his Haeju-based military unit while armed (*Daily NK*, 07/21/2021)
Some North Koreans are too poor to buy rice sold by the government at below-market prices (*Daily NK*, 07/21/2021)
Tobacco leads North Korean imports from China in June amid anemic trade (*NK Pro*, 07/21/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
A social agreement on unification (*Korea Joongang Daily*, 07/21/2021)

**International:**
China's refined oil supplies to N. Korea hit 11-month high in June: U.N. data(*Yonhap*, 07/21/2021)
Deputy US Secretary of State Sherman renews calls for North Korea to resume dialogue (*The Korea Times*, 07/21/2021)
Japan, US, South Korea reaffirm cooperation on North Korea (*AP News*, 07/21/2021)
Korea, Japan, U.S. diplomats meet in Tokyo (*Korea Joongang Daily*, 07/21/2021)
Report: U.S. mum on Mexico's public overtures to North Korea (UPI, 07/20/2021)
Senior U.S. diplomat Sherman to visit China - State Department (*Reuters*, 07/21/2021)
Sherman to visit China for talks on bilateral relationship, regional issues: State Dept.(*Yonhap*, 07/21/2021)
South Korea, US, Japan agree to up cooperation over NK, pandemic (*The Korea Herald*, 07/21/2021)

Top US official begins Asia tour stressing denuclearization of Korean Peninsula (*NK News*, 07/21/2021)

**Top News:**

- North Korea's food shortages have reached crisis levels, and inequalities have sharply widened ever since the COVID-19 pandemic forced the country to close its borders in January last year. But it is not just the food situation that has worsened. The human security aspect of this problem also deserves attention, according to Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK). "Due to travel restrictions and border closures imposed under the pretext of COVID-19 prevention, the human security of North Koreans is even more dire than it was during the pre-COVID period." (Gabriela Bernal, *Nikkei Asia*)
- The heightened bipartisan consensus among NYC councilmen to rename after Otto Warmbier – an American college student who passed away in 2017 from injuries sustained while imprisoned in North Korea – the street on which the Kim regime's mission to the UN is located, is creating a ripple effect: Washington's most prominent public figures and the heads of international NGOs are joining a growing wave of enthusiasm for commemoration of Warmbier's sacrifice. As Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), anticipates, this local activist movement could be "the opening salvo in a coordinated effort by international NGOs to have each and every street where there is a North Korean embassy or consulate mission, all over the world, renamed after Otto Warmbier, from Bucharest to Madrid, and from Stockholm to Kuwait City—everywhere." (Mark (Won Min) Seo, *Foreign Policy Association*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea recently submitted to the United Nations a voluntary national review of the sustainable development goals it agreed to achieve. It might have either inflated the figure for propaganda or reported its official data. (Kim Byung-yeon, *Korea Joongang Daily*)
- Chinese tourists now have a new way to see North Korea — from a glass-floor suspension bridge hanging hundreds of feet directly above the river that separates the two countries. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Wednesday warned officials against working irresponsibly and urged them to make a "big leap" to achieve the country's economic goals. (*Yonhap*)
- The starvation deaths of three ethnic Chinese residents of North Korea, who were cut off from their economic lifeline to China by a border closure to fight the coronavirus pandemic, has shocked North Koreans by showing that the economy is failing even privileged groups, sources in the country told RFA. (Eugene Whong, *Radio Free Asia*)

- A military radio company said to be run by North Korean intelligence services is offering a widening range of military equipment for sale on its website despite U.N. sanctions, NK News analysis shows. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK Pro*)
- An armed North Korean soldier recently deserted from his unit, the 4th Corps in Haeju, South Hwanghae Province, Daily NK has learned. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean authorities have recently begun selling rice to citizens at prices lower than those found in markets, but some destitute families are still unable to buy rice. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- Tobacco-related goods took up the lion's share of North Korean imports in June, Chinese customs data shows, outstripping goods like rubber and chemicals as Pyongyang continues to restrict trade due to the pandemic. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK Pro*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The national agreement on unification is a kind of "social pact" to be agreed to — and consistently executed — by members of society, the National Assembly and the government to help peacefully address South-North and South-South conflicts and eventually present a desirable vision for a reunified Korea. (Jhe Seong-ho, *Korea Joongang Daily*)

**International:**

- China supplied around 10,000 barrels of refined oil to North Korea in June, the largest monthly amount in 11 months, Chinese data provided to the United Nations showed Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman renewed calls Wednesday for North Korea to return to dialogue, stressing Washington's willingness to take "some patience" and holding out prospects of a "brighter future" for Pyongyang. (*The Korea Times*)
- The United States, Japan and South Korea on Wednesday reaffirmed their commitment to work together on North Korea's denuclearization and other regional threats but made no progress in bringing closer together the two U.S. allies. (Mari Yamaguchi, *AP News*)
- U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman called on North Korea to "respond positively" to America's call for engagement and dialogue after meeting with her Korean and Japanese counterparts in Tokyo on Wednesday. (Esther Chung, Jeong Jin-woo, *Korea Joongang Daily*)
- A U.S. official at the United Nations said they had no comment after Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard said Mexico is seeking to "reopen" its relationship with North Korea. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- Sherman, the State Department's second-ranked official, will meet with State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi and other officials in the city of Tianjin, southeast of Beijing. North Korea, climate and Iran are issues of shared concern she will be hoping to make progress on in China. (Simon Lewis, David Brunnstrom, *Reuters*)

- U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman will visit China this week for talks with Chinese officials on ways to manage the countries' relationship and cooperate in areas of mutual concern, the State Department said Wednesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean, US and Japanese envoys on Wednesday stressed cooperation in their approach toward the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and other global issues, including the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman discussed the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula during bilateral talks with Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Mori Takeo on Tuesday in Tokyo. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)

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Prepared by Irene Kang, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here
https://web.archive.org/web/20250812183301/https://mailchi.mp/d99103496d73/hrnk-news-itemsn-koreas-imports-from-china-surge-on-month-in-june-11187366?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, July 22, 2021**

## Death of Two North Korean Prisoners Highlights Starvation Diets

**Top News:**
HRNK report on "the bone-breaking, life-crushing, relentless inhumanity of North Korea's detention system which has persisted for over seven decades." (*Lord David Alton of Liverpool*, 07/22/2021)
Death of Two North Korean Prisoners Highlights Starvation Diets (*Radio Free Asia*, 07/21/2021)

**In North Korea:**
DPRK-flagged carrier tied to coal exports visits China's Longkou port in July (*NK News*, 07/22/2021)
Four North Korean cadres sacked in N. Hamgyong Province for failures in managing COVID-19 quarantine efforts (*Daily NK*, 07/22/2021)
N.K. foreign ministry again accuses U.S. of involvement in anti-gov't protests in Cuba (*Yonhap*, 07/22/2021)
No more defectors? What the drop in numbers means for North Korea and the world (*NK News*, 7/22/2021)
North Korea's Food Shortage Seems To Be Getting Worse (*National Interest*, 07/22/2021)
North Korean military encourages use of the "Pyongyang cultural language" (*Daily NK*, 07/22/2021)

North Korea shows support for Cuban government amid protests (UPI, 07/22/2021)
North Korea warns youth to shun slang from South as Kim Jong Un guards against 'cultural penetration' (NBC News, 07/22/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Four in 10 South Koreans think their military is stronger than North Korea's (NK News, 07/22/2021)
S. Korea seeks unification not 'by absorption' but through peaceful means (Yonhap, 07/22/2021)
Whither the Unification Ministry? (Korea JoongAng Daily, 07/22/2021)
Why South Korea cannot achieve denuclearization of Korean Peninsula (The Korea Times, 07/21/2021)

**International:**
Beijing defends its envoy's opinions about Yoon (Korea JoongAng Daily,07/22/2021)
Moon Jae-in asks for U.S. diplomatic push on North Korea (UPI, 07/22/2021)
Moon, Sherman discuss dialogue with North (Korea JoongAng Daily, 07/22/2021)
President Moon asks U.S. diplomat for efforts to bring N. Korea back to talks(Arirang News, 07/22/2021)
Seoul, Washington agree to induce Pyongyang back to nuclear talks (The Korea Herald, 07/22/2021)
Sherman to visit China for talks on bilateral relationship, regional issues: State Dept.(Yonhap, 07/22/2021)
S. Korea, U.S., Japan agree on cooperation for complete denuclearization of Korean peninsula (Arirang News, 07/22/2021)
US, S. Korea say they'll push North to return to nuke talks (Associated Press, 07/22/2021)
US, South Korea to work toward 'diplomacy and dialogue' with North Korea (NK News, 07/22/2021)

**Top News:**

- Based on satellite imagery analysis and former prisoner testimony, new HRNK report highlights changes at North Korean detention facility. HRNK Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu, says "cross-checking satellite imagery analysis with escapee testimony to create baseline reports of North Korean detention facilities and updating them periodically certifies that, while changes occur at these facilities, the bone-breaking, life-crushing, relentless inhumanity of North Korea's detention system has persisted for over seven decades." (*Lord David Alton of Liverpool*)
- A 2012 report by the Washington-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) said North Koreans who are sent to the various levels of the penal system--sometimes for very arbitrary reasons--endure brutal interrogations that include torture. (Jieun Kim, Jinha Shin, and Eugene Whong, *Radio Free Asia*)

**In North Korea:**

- At least one North Korea-flagged bulk carrier linked to coal exports and three DPRK-flagged cargo ships have made voyages to the Chinese port of Longkou since July 1, according to NK *Pro* analysis of vessel tracking data and satellite imagery. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- According to a Daily NK source in North Hamgyong Province, the four provincial cadres sacked on July 7 included the head of the political department of the provincial branch of the Ministry of State Security and the head of the political department of the provincial branch of the Ministry of Social Security. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea on Thursday accused the United States of interfering in internal affairs in Cuba and plotting "behind-the-scene" schemes to inflame the recent anti-government demonstrations in the Caribbean nation. (*Yonhap*)
- The number of North Korean defectors arriving in the South is at an all-time low, and this is bad news for everyone except the Kim regime. (James Fretwell, *NK News*)
- North Korea is currently in the midst of what appears to be a rather significant food shortage. North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has acknowledged North Korea's current food challenge, describing the country's food situation as "tense," and in recent months has called on North Koreans to wage "another more difficult Arduous March," a reference to the deadly famine that ravaged North Korea in the 1990s. (Eli Fuhrman, *National Interest*).
- North Korean military authorities have recently railed against the use of South Korean expressions, strongly encouraging young soldiers to use the so-called "Pyongyang cultural language." (Jeong Tae Joo, *NK Daily*)
- North Korea expressed support for the Cuban government's response to protests in a statement endorsing the view that economic turmoil was the result of U.S. sanctions. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*).
- Young North Koreans have been told to avoid using "dangerous" slang, with the country's official newspaper telling younger generations to honor traditional lifestyles as part of a ramped-up campaign to block cultural influences from South Korea. (Chantal Da Silva, *NBC News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- A recent survey suggests that South Koreans' confidence in their military compared to North Korea's has grown in the last two years, but a significant number still believe the North's capabilities outweigh the South's. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- South Korea seeks unification with North Korea through peaceful means and based on agreement between the two sides, a unification ministry official said Thursday after the chief of the main opposition party expressed his wish for unification "by absorption." (*Yonhap*)
- It is the time for the unification ministry to look back on itself. Is there any other way other than inducing North Korean residents to recognize the system of South Korea as their future goal and encouraging them to voluntarily make a decision and work with us? The essential task is to show them the outside world and Korean society, let them

feel how we want to be together, and win their hearts. Has the government dealt with defector success stories properly so that North Koreans could envy our society?(Son Gi-woong, *Korea Joongang Daily*)

- The U.S. saved hundreds of thousands of South Koreans in World War II from Japan and during the Korean War from North Korea. Now, South Korea's strong military and diplomatic ties with the U.S. are what the North grabs as its bargaining chip to sustain Kim's autocratic power. (Mitch Shin, *The Korea Times*)

**International:**

- China's Foreign Ministry defended its ambassador's criticism of a Korean presidential candidate for his views on the Thaad missile system, a serious point of contention between China and Korea. (Yoo Jee-Hye, Park Hyun-Ju, Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in requested the United States' No. 2 diplomat to make efforts to resume U.S. dialogue with North Korea during a meeting at the presidential Blue House on Thursday. (Elizabeth Shim,UPI)
- President Moon Jae-in asked U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman for her help resuming dialogue between Washington and Pyongyang during a meeting in Seoul on Thursday. (Esther Chung, *Korea Joongang Daily*)
- President Moon Jae-in met with Washington's number two diplomat at the nation's top office. He called for efforts to resume dialogue with North Korea, while Wendy Sherman expressed hope the regime will respond to those efforts soon. (Kim Min-ji, Arirang News)
- US Deputy Secretary Wendy Sherman on Thursday held talks with key officials here, underscoring close coordination between the allies to induce North Korea back to the stalled denuclearization talks. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman will visit China this week for talks with Chinese officials on ways to manage the countries' relationship and cooperate in areas of mutual concern, the State Department said Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- The number two diplomats from South Korea, the U.S. and Japan met in Tokyo Wednesday for talks on boosting three-way cooperation. They also agreed to work together on North Korea-related issues. (Yoon Jung-min, Arirang News)
- Top U.S. and South Korean officials agreed Thursday to try to convince North Korea to return to talks on its nuclear program, which Pyongyang has insisted it won't do in protest of what it calls U.S. hostility. (Hyung-Jin Kim, *Associated Press*)
- U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman met with South Korean President Moon Jae-in and foreign minister Chung Eui-yong on Thursday and stressed "diplomacy and dialogue" with North Korea to achieve the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, according to South Korea's Blue House and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)

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Prepared by Lia Vincenzo, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here
https://web.archive.org/web/20250813142338/https://mailchi.mp/a099ac656a37/hrnk-news-items-death-of-two-north-korean-prisoners-highlights-starvation-diets?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, July 23, 2021**

# China Restarts Forced Returns of Refugees to North Korea; U.S. seeks 'reliable, predictable' way forward with N. Korea

**Top News:**
China Restarts Forced Returns of Refugees to North Korea (*Human Rights Watch*, 07/22/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Another group of diplomats and expats leaves North Korea via China (*NK News*, 07/23/2021)
Humanitarian aid and the civil environment of North Korea (*NK News*, 07/23/2021)
N. Korea beefs up crackdown on use of mobile phones, digital devices in border regions: report (*Yonhap*, 07/23/2021)
N.K. paper calls grain production 'life-or-death' matter (*Yonhap*, 07/23/2021)
North Korean capital bustling with changes amid prolonged lockdown (*NK News*, 07/23/2021)
The Sunchon Phosphatic Fertilizer Factory is still unable to produce fertilizer properly (*Daily NK*, 07/23/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Moon to hold interagency meeting on coronavirus (*Yonhap*, 07/23/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Moon requests Sherman's role in efforts for dialogue with North Korea (*Yonhap*, 07/22/2021)

**International:**
Absence of North Korean women's soccer team at Olympics a loss for diplomacy(*NK News*, 07/23/2021)
N. Korea is one area U.S. and China share 'aligned' interests: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 07/23/2021)
S. Korea expects U.S. bill to build institutional ground for reunions of separated families (*Yonhap*, 07/23/2021)
US diplomat worried about pandemic, food supply in N Korea (*AP News*, 07/23/2021)
U.S. seeks 'reliable, predictable' way forward with N. Korea (*Reuters*, 07/23/2021)

**Top News:**

- Concerns among relatives spiked last week when Chinese authorities forcibly returned nearly 50 North Korean refugees who now face torture, imprisonment, sexual violence, and forced labor. The North Korean government reopened its borders on July 14 after closing them in early 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, increasing the risk of forced repatriation. At least 1,170 North Koreans face torture, sexual abuse if sent back (Lina Yoon, *Human Rights Watch*)

**In North Korea:**

- The full foreign staff of the Indonesian Embassy to the DPRK joined the delegation, as well as the sole remaining Bulgarian Embassy staff member, sources said. Both embassies join a long list of diplomatic missions in the country that have temporarily closed since the outbreak of COVID-19. (Chad O' Carroll, *NK News*)
- Former North Korea aid worker, travel guide weigh in on major risks in the event of a nationwide crisis. With official North Korean state media increasingly transparent about the problems the country is facing as COVID-19 restrictions take their toll, there is increasing concern in the international community about the risks of a major humanitarian crisis developing. (Chad O' Carroll, *NK News*)
- North Korea appears to have intensified its crackdown on the use of mobile phones and other digital devices in border regions to prevent the inflow of culture from South Korea, a think tank report showed Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Friday called for all-out efforts to maximize grain production this year, saying successful farming is a "life-or-death" matter that could determine the country's fate. (*Yonhap*)
- The Sunchon Phosphatic Fertilizer Factory — promoted by North Korean authorities as “a creation of self-reliant strength and prosperity” — has been unable to properly produce phosphatic fertilizer since the plant’s completion over a year ago. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- New high-resolution satellite imagery reveals the changing shape of Pyongyang. The North Korean capital was bustling with new construction activity in early 2021, according to high-resolution satellite imagery, despite persistent economic difficulties and a prolonged pandemic-related lockdown. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- President Moon Jae-in will chair an interagency meeting on COVID-19 this weekend to be joined by the heads of 17 local governments, Cheong Wa Dae said Friday. Earlier Friday, the government made public a decision to prolong the highest level of social distancing restrictions in the greater Seoul area by two weeks, as the virus is continuing to spread rapidly. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- President Moon Jae-in asked U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman to play a proactive role for the resumption of talks between Washington and Pyongyang, as they met each other at Cheong Wa Dae on Thursday. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Sports diplomacy advocates lament loss of key opportunity for engagement with North Korea as Summer Games begin Friday (Chaewon Chung, NK *News*)
- The United States and China may share similar interests when it comes to the issue of denuclearizing North Korea despite their sometimes competitive and even adversarial relationship, a State Department spokesman said Thursday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea hopes that a recently passed U.S. House bill will help create an institutional foundation for Korean Americans to meet their war-severed families in North Korea, the unification ministry said Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- America's No. 2 diplomat on Friday expressed sympathy for North Koreans facing hardships and food shortages linked to the pandemic, and renewed calls for the North to return to talks over its nuclear program. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)
- The United States is seeking a "reliable, predictable and constructive" way to secure progress in stalled denuclearisation talks with North Korea, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman said on Friday. The two sides discussed how to reopen negotiations after North Korea brushed off the Biden administration's proposals for talks, casting a cloud over prospects for dismantling its nuclear and missile programmes.

  "We are looking forward to a reliable, predictable, constructive way forward with the DPRK," Sherman told reporters, referring to North Korea by its official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. "We all feel for the people of the DPRK who are indeed facing all of the most difficult circumstances given the pandemic and what it means as well for their food security." (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)

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Prepared by Diletta De Luca, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here
https://web.archive.org/web/20250813142338/https://mailchi.mp/a099ac656a37/hrnk-news-items-death-of-two-north-korean-prisoners-highlights-starvation-diets?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, July 24, 2021**

## The Rationing System is on the Verge of Collapse, and North Korea's Food Shortage is Approaching a Humanitarian Crisis

**Top News:**
** The Rationing System is on the Verge of Collapse, and North Korea's Food Shortage is Approaching a Humanitarian Crisis (*Newtalk*, 07/21/2021)

**In North Korea:**

N.K. leader expresses support for China's flood recovery efforts in message to Xi: state media (*Yonhap*, 07/24/2021)
North Korea Commits Two People to Mental Institutions After Public Outbursts (RFA, 07/23/2021)
North Korean defectors forced to pay more in bribes, research says (UPI, 07/23/2021)
North Korea state media mocks South's 'tragic' housing market (UPI, 07/23/2021)

**In South Korea:**
South Korea does not pursue 'unification by absorption': ministry (*NK News*, 07/23/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Why North Korea is so afraid of K-pop (CNN, 07/24/2021)

**International:**
Sherman: US Looks Forward to 'Reliable, Predictable and Constructive' Way Forward with North Korea (VOA, 07/23/2021)
'Substantial' new evidence delays case of only North Korean in US custody (*NK News*, 07/23/2021)
US Working to Ease Suffering of N. Koreans in Response to Repatriation Concerns(*KBS World*, 07/24/2021)

**Top News:**

- North Korea has closed its borders since the pandemic outbreak last year, which has led to an increasingly severe food shortage. Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), pointed out that "The regime is using COVID as a pretext to crack down on markets and information from the outside world, which it perceives as major threats to its legitimacy." (Hong Shengfei, *Newtalk*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un sent a message of sympathy to Chinese President Xi Jinping over damage from recent flooding in the neighboring country, state media reported Saturday. (*Yonhap*)
- Authorities in North Korea have committed two disgruntled food merchants to mental institutions after they lost their composure publicly, a situation that is becoming increasingly common due to the people's difficulty in making a living during the coronavirus pandemic, sources in the country told RFA. (Hyemin Son, RFA)
- North Korea is cracking down on defections as arbitrary home searches and surveillance are on the rise, according to a new annual report from Seoul's Korea Institute for National Unification. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

- North Korea blasted South Korea's rising home prices Friday in a statement that claimed the Kim Jong Un regime's "socialist system" was superior to the South's capitalist economy. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

**In South Korea:**

- The South Korean government's official stance is that it "does not pursue unification by absorption," a Ministry of Unification (MOU) spokesperson stressed on Friday, after an opposition party leader voiced support for the idea. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- North Korea is doubling down on its culture war, warning citizens to stay away from all things South Korean -- including its fashion, music, hairstyles and even slang. (Jessie Yeung, Yoonjung Seo, CNN)

**International:**

- U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman said Friday that Washington is waiting for North Korea's response to a proposal for resuming dialogue and looks forward to a "reliable, predictable and constructive way forward" with Pyongyang. (Hwanyong Kim, VOA)
- Attorneys representing the only North Korean citizen currently in custody in the U.S. agreed to delay further deliberations until September, as prosecutors claimed they are pursuing "substantial" new evidence. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- The U.S. State Department has stressed efforts to alleviate the suffering of North Korean people in regards to the regime's human rights concerns, after reports emerged of a possible repatriation of North Korean escapees detained in China. (*KBS World*)

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Prepared by Jungeun Lee, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here
https://web.archive.org/web/20250813142823/https://mailchi.mp/238699ae9a7e/hrnk-news-itemschina-restarts-forced-returns-of-refugees-to-north-korea-us-seeks-reliable-predictable-way-forward-with-n-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, July 25, 2021**

## What If Kim Jong-un Isn't Really in Charge of North Korea?; More foreign diplomats exit North Korea amid COVID-19

**In North Korea:**

North Korea's Very Own 'AK-47' Is Everywhere (And It's A Strange Gun) (*National Interest*, 07/24/2021)
What If Kim Jong-un Isn't Really in Charge of North Korea? (*National Interest*, 07/25/2021)

3.5 Million Dead: How North Korea Literally Starved to Death in the 1990s (*National Interest*, 07/25/2021)

**International:**

Korean Americans separated by war have waited 70 years for a reunion. Their time is running out (CNN, 07/25/2021)

More foreign diplomats exit North Korea amid COVID-19 (*The Korea Herald*, 07/25/2021)

Sanctions relief possible if North begins nuke talks: Sherman (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/25/2021)

US diplomat worried about pandemic, food supply in N Korea (*AP News*, 07/24/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- One of the largest armies in the world has adopted one of the most unusual variants of the AK-series of assault rifles. The North Korean People's Army Type 88 rifle is similar to the Soviet-era AK-74 with one key difference: unusual helical magazines that carry up to five times as many rounds as conventional 30-round magazines. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- U.S. policymakers desperately want to discern why the North takes certain actions, but often are left with little more than the knowledge that the country is, after all, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. But what if the conventional wisdom about who is in charge in Pyongyang is wrong? (Doug Bandow, *National Interest*)
- North Korea appears to be facing what could be a significant food shortage. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un recently described the country's food situation as "tense," the blame for which he assigned to failures in the agricultural sector owing to a strong of natural disasters last summer. North Korean state media, meanwhile, has described the current situation as representing a food crisis. (Eli Fuhrman, *National Interest*)

**International:**

- Michael Roh remembers the tears that rolled down his grandmother's face as she watched former President Donald Trump meeting with North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un on TV. The weight of this unprecedented encounter in 2018 was beyond political for the then 89-year-old woman. It made her confront the pain caused by being separated from her seven younger siblings who live in North Korea. (Nicole Chavez, CNN)
- More foreign diplomats stationed in North Korea, including from Indonesia and Bulgaria, have fled the reclusive regime due to dire living conditions amid prolonged COVID-19 restrictions. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman evaded answering whether Washington will provide any incentives to get Pyongyang to return to the negotiation table during her visit to Seoul last week. Sherman in an interview with the JoongAng Ilbo conducted Friday said on North Korea, "I hope they respond to a very sincere gesture by the United States to be open to dialogue without any preconditions." (Yoo Jee-hye, Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- America's No. 2 diplomat on Friday expressed sympathy for North Koreans facing hardships and food shortages linked to the coronavirus pandemic and renewed calls for the North to return to talk.

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Prepared by Audrey Gregg, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here
https://web.archive.org/web/20250813145225/https://mailchi.mp/850fe0f74ea8/hrnk-news-itemswhat-if-kim-jong-un-isnt-really-in-charge-of-north-koreamore-foreign-diplomats-exit-north-korea-amid-covid-19?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, July 26, 2021**

## Pope must not allow himself to be propaganda tool for North Korea

**Top News:**
The pope must not allow himself to be propaganda tool for North Korea (*UCA News*, 07/26/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Blistering summer heat wave is killing North Korean crops: state media (*NK News*, 07/26/2021)
Hamgyong Province organizes "secret disciplinary units" to crack down on anti-socialist behavior (*Daily NK*, 07/26/2021)
India closes embassy in DPRK following departure of diplomats (*NK News*, 07/26/2021)
North Korea to hold national conference of war veterans to celebrate end of Korean War (*Yonhap News*, 07/26/2021)
North Korea urges citizens to become 'water pumps' amid drought (UPI, 07/26/2021)
North Korea's economic paradox: how de-marketization is driving up value of North's won (*Korea Times*, 07/26/2021)
North Koreans respond to their government's push for more "recycling" (*Daily NK*, 07/26/2021)
**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Bracing for future war (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/26/2021)
South Korea Too Preoccupied with Survival to be Asia's Sweden (*The National Interest*, 07/26/2021)

**International:**
Global Hawk drone flies near North Korea ahead of Korean War anniversary (UPI, 07/21/2021)
N. Korea denounces Japan for denying wartime forced labor (*Yonhap News*, 07/26/2021)

N.K. propaganda website slams Japan for taking issue with S. Korean banners at Olympics (*Yonhap News*, 07/26/2021)
Sherman stresses importance of cooperation on N. Korea during visit to China: State Dept. (*Yonhap News*, 07/26/2021)
North Koreans and their families in the US have waited 70 years for a reunion. Their time is running out (CNN, 07/26/2021)

**Top News:**

- If Pope Francis visits Pyongyang, he should try to break through the wall of isolation that surrounds Kim Jong-un's brutal regime (Benedict Rogers, *UCA News*)

**In North Korea:**

- Official newspaper reports second-lowest rainfall total ever as drought threatens to aggravate ongoing 'food crisis' (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- North Korean authorities have recently established "secret disciplinary units" led by Socialist Women's Union of Korea organizations and members in North Hamgyong Province to stamp out "anti-socialist and non-socialist behavior." (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)
- International community in Pyongyang continues to dwindle as only handful of embassies remain operational (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- North Korea plans to hold a national conference of war veterans to celebrate the 68th anniversary of the end of the 1950-53 Korean War, state media said Monday, despite the global coronavirus pandemic. (*Yonhap News*)
- North Korean farmers could be reeling from the impact of record-high temperatures as extreme weather takes a toll on crops. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- To borrow from Winston Churchill's quote on Russia, North Korea is "a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma." But recent economic reports coming out of North Korea seem to indicate that there is yet another layer inside the riddle: a paradox. The movements in North Korea's foreign exchange market since late last year have been perplexing. The exchange rate between the North Korean won and U.S. dollar (as well as Chinese yuan) has been stable for a long period, balanced at around 8,000 won per dollar since 2013. But this apparent stability collapsed last year as the North Korean won appreciated from the long-term equilibrium of 8,000 won per dollar to 5,000 won per dollar by this June, before falling back to 6,000 won per dollar in July.(Go Myong-hyun, *Korea Times*)
- North Korea is running into problems supplying raw materials and supplies due to protracted international sanctions and the suspension of trade in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of this, North Korean authorities are aggressively pressing workplaces and citizens to recycle supplies to mitigate resource shortages. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The presidential election clock is ticking. With the protracted Covid-19 pandemic, South Korea's low growth, North Korea's persistence with nuclear weapons, the United States

with sophisticated global strategies, and China trying to confront the U.S., countries around the globe are uniting and colliding. For the next five years and beyond, what national strategies do we need? I believe we should build a triple-layered system to develop our future strategy and manage security risks. (Choi Chang-yong, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- South Korea's circumstances may garner sympathy and a measure of respect, but they are not conducive to the country gaining global recognition as a transcendent authority on how to improve the international system. (Denny Roy, *The National Interest*)

**International:**

- An unmanned U.S. reconnaissance aircraft flew over the Korean Peninsula ahead of North Korea's observance of "Victory Day," which marks the anniversary of the 1953 Korean Armistice Agreement. (Elizabeth Shin, *UPI*)
- North Korea condemned Japan on Monday for denying the wartime brutality of forcing Koreans into harsh labor and reneging on its promise to honor victims at an information center about early modern industrial facilities designated as World Heritage. (*Yonhap News*)
- A North Korean propaganda outlet slammed Japan on Monday for labeling cheer banners that South Korea's Olympic delegation hung at the athletes' village as anti-Japanese and forcing them to be taken down. (*Yonhap News*)
- U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman highlighted the need for her country and China to work together in dealing with regional and global issues, such as nuclear-armed North Korea, during her visit to China, the State Department said Monday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap News*)
- Michael Roh remembers the tears that rolled down his grandmother's face as she watched former President Donald Trump meeting with North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un on TV. (Nicole Chavez, CNN)

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Prepared by Lauren Morrison, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250813145816/https://mailchi.mp/dc471d735cbf/pope-must-not-allow-himself-to-be-propaganda-tool-for-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, July 27, 2021**

## China has a yen for North Korea

**Top News:**
China has a yen for North Korea. (*John Batchelor Show*, 07/21/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Infectious disease brucellosis is a growing problem among cattle in North Korea(*Daily NK*, 07/27/2021)
N. K. leader pays respects to fallen soldiers to mark anniversary of Korean War armistice (*Yonhap News*, 07/27/2021)
NK's Kim pays tribute to Pyongyang's fallen soldiers in Korean War (*The Korea Herald*, 07/27/2021)
North Korean schools will go on vacation in August (*Daily NK*, 07/27/2021)
**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Cheong Wa Dae says no plan yet to send special envoy to N. Korea (*Yonhap News*, 07/27/2021)
Chronology of major events leading to restoration of inter-Korean communication lines (*Yonhap News*, 07/27/2021)
Explainer- What we know about inter-Korean hotlines, unique symbol for testy times(*Reuters*, 07/27/2021)
Hotline restoration raises hopes for inter-Korean summit, resumption of nuclear talks(*Yonhap News*, 07/27/2021)
Hotlines restored between two Koreas (*The Korea Herald*, 07/27/2021)
Inter-Korean military hotlines in normal operation after 13-month suspension: defense minister (*Yonhap News*, 07/27/2021)
Koreas reopen severed cross-border hotlines: Cheong Wa Dae (*Yonhap News*, 07/27/2021)
N. Korea says restoration of cross-border hotline will play positive role in improving relations (*Yonhap News*, 07/27/2021)
North Korea Resumes Dialogue with South. What Happens Next? (VOA, 07/27/2021)
North and South Korea restore hotline after a year (*BBC News*, 07/27/2021)
North and South Korea restore severed hotlines after a year (*UPI*, 07/27/2021)
Prudence is needed (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/27/2021)
Pyongyang restore cross-border communication lines (*Korea Times*, 07/27/2021)
Restored hotline with Pyongyang raises hopes for inter-Korean thaw (*The Korea Herald*, 07/27/2021)
Rival parties welcome restoration of communication lines between two Koreas(*Yonhap News*, 07/27/2021)
Seoul announces hotline communications breakthrough with Pyongyang (*NK News*, 07/26/2021)
Seoul and Pyongyang restore direct hotlines (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/27/2021)
South, North Korea reopen hotlines as leaders seek to rebuild ties (*Reuters*, 0726/2021)
Unanswered questions on Seoul-Pyongyang hotline restoration (*The Korea Herald*, 07/27/2021)

**International:**
U.S. supports inter-Korean dialogue: Kurt Campbell (*Yonhap News*, 07/27/2021)

**Top News:**

- "The Korean People's Army (KPA) has 1.2 million men and women in uniform. Eighty percent of them are forward-deployed, south of the Pyongyang-Wonsan line, poised to invade South Korea. China continues to prop up the Kim regime because it is a thorn in the side of the United States. South Koreans have learned how to live with this ever-present threat of the sheer mass and proximity of the North Korean military. Brazen provocations have been initiated by the North. [The armistice] is just a temporary arrangement. We must get beyond just an armistice. Koreans must find the road to reconciliation, peace, and unification. That can happen only under a free, democratic, prosperous, market economy, capitalist Republic of Korea. Not under Kim family regime terms."- Greg Scarlatoiu (*John Batchelor Show*)

**In North Korea:**

- The bacterial disease brucellosis is reportedly rampant in some parts of North Korea. According to a source, apprehension is building in rural communities with the number of outbreaks in the first half of the year alone far surpassing last year's total. (Moon Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un visited a cemetery to pay respects to the soldiers killed during the 1950-53 Korean War to commemorate the armistice that ended the fighting in the war, a state broadcaster reported Tuesday. (*Yonhap News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un paid his respects to fallen soldiers from the 1950-53 Korean War as Pyongyang marked the anniversary of the armistice that ended the war, a state broadcaster reported Tuesday. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea's education ministry recently issued orders regarding this year's summer vacation during a virtual meeting with the education departments of the nation's 13 provinces and provincial-level cities. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The office of President Moon Jae-in said Tuesday it has no plan, for now, to dispatch a special envoy to North Korea (*Yonhap News*)
- The following is a chronology of major events leading to the restoration of communication lines between South and North Korea on Tuesday, 13 months after the North unilaterally severed them in protest of anti-Pyongyang leaflets sent across the border by activists. (*Yonhap News*)
- South and North Korea reopened their hotlines on Tuesday after a yearlong communications vacuum that had flared tensions and soured relations. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- The surprise restoration of inter-Korean communication lines is raising hopes for a possible virtual summit between President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and the resumption of nuclear talks between the United States and North Korea, experts said Tuesday. (Song Sang-ho and Yi Wonju, *Yonhap News*)
- South and North Korea have reopened direct communication lines as of 10 a.m. Tuesday, with President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un agreeing to restore mutual trust and improve the soured inter-Korean relationship (Lee Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)

- Inter-Korean military hotlines are back to normal operation after a 13-month suspension, the defense ministry confirmed Tuesday, saying the two Koreas will resume regular daily calls via the communication lines. (*Yonhap News*)
- The two Koreas on Tuesday reopened direct cross-border communication lines that Pyongyang severed last year in protest of propaganda leaflets coming in from the South, Cheong Wa Dae said, a positive sign for an improvement in the inter-Korean relationship. (*Yonhap News*)
- North Korea said Tuesday that the restoration of communication lines with South Korea will play a positive role in improving relations between the two sides after the severed lines returned to operation after a 13-month suspension. (*Yonhap News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has exchanged several letters since April with his South Korean counterpart Moon Jae-in, Seoul announced Tuesday, in a possible sign Pyongyang is ready to resume engagement with the outside world. (William Gallo, VOA)
- North and South Korea have restored a communication hotline that was cut off by Pyongyang last June. (BBC)
- Hotlines that were severed in June of last year by North Korea were turned back on Tuesday, restoring communications between the two Koreas in a move both sides called a positive step in improving a fractured relationship. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- Inter-Korean communication lines have been restored 13 months after North Korea cut them after criticizing South Korea's dispatching of propaganda leaflets across the border. The timing is delicate. The U.S. administration has just activated its Korean Peninsula policy and President Moon Jae-in has less than 10 month before he steps down next May. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South and North Korea have restored their communication lines, Cheong Wa Dae said Tuesday, with leaders of the two countries agreeing to rebuild mutual trust for better inter-Korean relations. (Nam Hyun-woo, *the Korea Times*)
- South and North Korea restored their severed hotlines on Tuesday after a 13-months hiatus, raising hope that resumed cross-border communications could give way to a thaw in strained inter-Korean ties. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- Rival parties welcomed the restoration of cross-border communication lines between Seoul and Pyongyang on Tuesday, voicing hope for a breakthrough in inter-Korean relations. (*Yonhap News*)
- Phone line apparently restored after North Korea said it severed all inter-Korean communication lines last year (Jeongmin Kim and Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- South and North Korea restored all hotlines Pyongyang pulled the plug on 13 months ago. Park Soo-hyun, senior Blue House secretary for public communication, announced Tuesday that Seoul and Pyongyang decided to restore all severed inter-Korean communication lines starting at 10 a.m. and made test calls. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South and North Korea have restored hotlines that Pyongyang severed a year ago when ties deteriorated sharply, and the two countries' leaders are renewing efforts to rebuild relations, Seoul's presidential office said on Tuesday. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)

- Following Cheong Wa Dae's surprise announcement on the hotline restoration between South and North Korea earlier in the day, questions poured in on its official KakaoTalk chat room for registered reporters only. Due to the heightened social distancing rules, its Chunchugwan press center is currently shut down, with all official communications being done online. (Lee Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- The United States supports dialogue between South Korea and North Korea, a senior White House official said Tuesday, welcoming the reopening of direct communication lines between the divided Koreas. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap News*)

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Prepared by Lauren Morrison, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250813145959/https://mailchi.mp/01910a523d7a/hrnk-news-item-china-has-a-yen-for-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, July 28, 2021**

## Koreas hold daily liaison phone call after restoring communication lines; Soldier reported MIA during Korean War accounted for

**In North Korea:**

Kim Jong Un compares COVID-19 'hardships' to Korean War at veterans conference (*NK News*, 07/27/2021)
Many North Korean farms still need to be properly weeded (*Daily NK*, 07/28/2021)
N.K. leader makes no mention of nuclear deterrence at national conference of war veterans (*Yonhap News*, 07/28/2021)
North Korean Soldiers Steal from Civilians to Celebrate End of Korean War (*Radio Free Asia*, 07/27/2021)
North Korea tests 691 more people for COVID-19, reports zero positive cases (*NK News*, 07/27/2021)
North, South Korea hotline reopening goes unreported in North Korea (*UPI News*, 07/27/2021)
Still no signs that North Korea is distributing food to ordinary people (*Daily NK*, 07/28/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

Cheong Wa Dae says no talks held yet on inter-Korean summit (*Yonhap News*, 07/28/2021)
FM Chung calls inter-Korean hotline restoration leaders' commitment to restore trust, improve ties (*Yonhap News*, 07/28/2021)

Game of phones? Experts assess the first inter-Korean call in over a year (*NK News*, 07/27/2021)
Inter-Korean talks going virtual? (*The Korea Herald*, 07/28/2021)
Koreas hold daily liaison phone call after restoring communication lines (*Yonhap News*, 07/28/2021)
A hotline history: Why North Korea changes the game when it picks up the phone (*NK News*, 07/27/2021)
'Hotline restoration between two Koreas shouldn't be overplayed' (*Korea Times*, 07/28/2021)
North Korea confirms hotline reconnection, seeks 'big stride' toward trust (*NK News*, 07/27/2021)
North, South Korea in talks over summit, reopening liaison office (*Reuters*, 07/28/2021)
Seoul refocuses on roads, railway projects with Pyongyang (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/28/2021)
S. Korea to raise N. Korea's killing of fisheries official through restored communication lines (*Yonhap News*, 07/28/2021)
South and North Korea agree to restore severed telephone hotline (*The Telegraph*, 07/27/2021)
Stocks surge in South Korea on hopes of renewed inter-Korean projects (*NK News*, 07/27/2021)

**International:**

Even in absence, North Korea's presence felt at Tokyo Games (*AP News*, 07/28/2021)
Restored hotlines may indicate North's willingness for dialogue with U.S. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/28/2021)
Soldier reported MIA during Korean War accounted for (*AP News*, 07/28/2021)
U.S. approach toward N. Korea leaves doors open to dialogue: Austin (*Yonhap News*, 07/28/2021)
US-China coordination on North Korea may be long way off, experts say (*NK News*, 07/27/2021)
U.S. supports inter-Korean dialogue: Kurt Campbell (*Yonhap News*, 07/28/2021)
U.S. welcomes reopening of inter-Korean communication lines as 'positive step' (*Yonhap News*, 07/28/2021)
US welcomes restored inter-Korean hotlines. (*The Korea Herald*, 07/28/2021)
Washington, Beijing welcome surprise restoration of inter-Korean hotlines (*NK News*, 07/27/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean authorities provided people throughout the country with food at lower-than-market prices in early July, but no food distributions have been detected since. A source in Yanggang Province told Daily NK on Tuesday that there has been no talk of food provisions since North Korean authorities sold locals five days' worth of food at bargain prices earlier this month. "There's been no relevant orders from the leadership, either," he said, speaking on condition of anonymity. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- Following North Korea's acknowledgement to the United Nations that it is suffering food shortages, Daily NK has learned that insufficient agricultural supplies, such as pesticides and fertilizers, have hindered the weeding of rice fields this year. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)

- Elderly Veterans of the Korean War gathered in Pyongyang on Tuesday night for the first-ever outdoor national veterans' conference, complete with fireworks and a speech by Kim Jong Un in which the leader compared pandemic "hardships" to those of the war. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea continues to claim that it is free of Covid-19 after testing an additional 691 people, according to the World Health Organization. (Bryan Betts, *NK News*)
- Members of North Korea's military are robbing citizens on the streets to secure materials needed to celebrate the signing of the July 27, 1953 armistice agreement that ended Korean War hostilities, sources in the country told RFA. (Jeong Yon Park, *Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korea reopened a military hotline with the South, but the breakthrough has not been reported to a domestic North Korean audience. A communication line on the eastern coast of the Korean Peninsula also has not been restored, according to a South Korean press report. North Korea disclosed news of the military hotline on only specific channels, including Korean Central News Agency and Pyongyang Broadcasting, South Korean news agency Yonhap reported Wednesday. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said the country's armed forces are fully ready to deal with any outside threats as he addressed a conference of war veterans but unlike last year, made no mention of "nuclear deterrence," according to state media Wednesday. (*Yonhap News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and South Korean President Moon Jae-in agreed to make a "big stride" in recovering inter-Korean trust. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- This week's restoration of inter-Korean communication lines underscores the commitments by President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un to restore mutual trust and improve bilateral ties, Seoul's top diplomat said Wednesday. (*Yonhap News*)
- South Korea will use the now-restored communication lines with North Korea to raise the issue of the North's killing of a South Korean fisheries official near the inter-Korean sea border, the unification ministry said Wednesday. Earlier in the day, Lee Rae-jin, the brother of the deceased official, urged the ministry to push ahead with a meeting with North Korean authorities and to deliver his letter to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un asking for cooperation so that he could visit the North to find the truth behind the killing. (*Yonhap News*)
- The office of President Moon Jae-in dismissed a news report Wednesday that the two Koreas are in talks to arrange another summit. Quoting unnamed government sources, Reuters reported that the two sides are seeking to hold summit talks between Moon and the North's leader Kim Jong-un. One of the sources was quoted as adding that a virtual summit could be an option due to the COVID-19 pandemic. (*Yonhap News*)
- South and North Korea held their daily liaison phone call on Wednesday, the unification ministry said, a day after Pyongyang restored inter-Korean communication lines after a 13-month suspension. (*Yonhap News*)

- After the two Koreas restored key communication lines Tuesday, Seoul signaled its willingness to resume stalled joint projects such as connecting roads and railways. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The restoration of communication hotlines between South and North Korea, Tuesday, has led Seoul and Washington to express optimism about a potential reconciliatory mood on the Korean Peninsula.

  However, experts said, the government here should not get too excited over the resumption of inter-Korean calls, noting that the North may only be reaching out to address its economic difficulties, food supplies and COVID-19 vaccinations, rather than for candid talks on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. (Nam Hyun-woo, *Korea Times*)
- Cheong Wa Dae is considering setting up a virtual meeting system for inter-Korean talks, signaling that working-level talks could start soon following Tuesday's restoration of the hotlines between the two Koreas after a 13-month hiatus. "The direct hotlines may not be enough for intensive talks and negotiations," President Moon Jae-in's senior secretary for public communication, Park Soo-hyun, said during a radio interview on Wednesday. "Building a virtual meeting system may be one of the options to have more convenient conversations." (Lee Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)
- The Kim regime has dictated the pace of events on the peninsula by choosing when — and when not — to answer the phone. On Tuesday morning, both North and South Korea confirmed that key communication channels had been reestablished, after nearly 13 months of silence from Pyongyang since it cut all its hotlines with Seoul in June 2020. North Korea is picking up the phone again, and history shows that major developments in inter-Korean relations could be just around the corner. (James Fretwell, *NK News*)
- The resumption of communication through hotlines between the two Koreas is an encouraging sign, experts told *NK News* on Tuesday, but some cautioned against overestimating the significance following a long diplomatic dry spell between the South and North. "What's most important here is that there is some room for improvement in inter-Korean relations," said Lee Woo-young, professor at the University of North Korean studies. "They are now restoring what's been cut for many reasons, so this also creates space to carry out other items agreed upon at [the inter-Korean summit]." (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- The stock prices of several major companies linked to inter-Korean projects increased sharply on Tuesday following the news that North and South Korea had reestablished key communication channels. Investors appeared to eye the possibility of new construction and tourism opportunities stemming from increased inter-Korean economic cooperation, which has been practically dormant since Seoul-Pyongyang ties soured in 2019. (Bryan Betts, *NK News*)
- North and South Korea said Tuesday they had restored cross-border communications, more than a year after Pyongyang severed all official hotlines between the two rivals, who technically remain at war. The North unilaterally cut off all official military and

political communication links with the South in June last year after threats over activists sending anti-Pyongyang leaflets over the border. (*The Telegraph*)

- North and South Korea are in talks to reopen a joint liaison office that Pyongyang demolished last year and hold a summit as part of efforts to restore relations, three South Korean government sources with knowledge of the matter said. South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un have been exploring ways to improve strained ties by exchanging multiple letters since April, the sources said on condition of anonymity due to diplomatic sensitivity. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)

**International:**

- By restoring the direct hotline between the two Koreas, Pyongyang may be considering re-engaging with the United States in dialogue, some Korean experts noted. “The North knows that the Biden administration, unlike the Trump administration, places a strong emphasis on the U.S.-South Korea alliance,” said Kim Jin-a, a senior researcher on North Korea at the Korea Institute for Defense Analysis in Seoul. “North Korea knows that it will not be able to engage the United States in dialogue without South Korea.” (Yoo Jee-hye, Esther Chung, Park Hyun-ju, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The United States welcomes the reopening of direct communication lines between the two Koreas, a State Department spokesperson said Tuesday, calling it a "positive step." (*Yonhap News*)
- The United States continues to take a practical approach toward North Korea that leaves open the door for dialogue, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Tuesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap News*)
- The United States supports dialogue between South Korea and North Korea, a senior White House official said Tuesday, welcoming the reopening of direct communication lines between the divided Koreas. "We are supportive of the dialogue and communication with North Korea," Kurt Campbell, policy coordinator for the Indo-Pacific, told reporters after taking part in a breakfast meeting in Washington hosted by the Korea-U.S. Alliance Foundation. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap News*)
- The US welcomed the reopening of the inter-Korean hotlines that had been severed for more than a year, calling it a “positive step,” sparking conjecture on whether the development could lead to another round of summits or progress installed nuclear talks between Pyongyang and Washington. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- The U.S. and China will likely struggle to find alignment on security issues like North Korea, experts indicated Tuesday, as a high-level meeting this week once again highlighted bilateral tensions. U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and other PRC officials on Monday and discussed a range of issues including North Korea. The meeting came during Sherman’s surprise detour to Tianjin, China as part of a trip that was originally announced as an eight-day tour of Japan, South Korea, and Mongolia. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- Both Washington and Beijing welcomed North and South Korea’s decision to restore hotline communications this week, despite bilateral tensions that have made it difficult for the U.S. and China countries to find common ground on North Korea issues. South

Korea's Blue House made a surprise announcement on Tuesday that the two Koreas had reestablished communication channels following the exchange of letters between the two countries' leaders beginning in April. (Chaewon Chung, NK News)

- An Army officer from Massachusetts who was reported missing in action during the Korean War has been accounted for and is coming home for burial, military officials said Wednesday. The remains of 1st Lt. Thomas J. Redgate, are scheduled to buried at the veterans' cemetery in Bourne on Sept. 17, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency said in a statement. (AP News)
- North Korea isn't at the Tokyo Olympics this summer. And therein lies a tale — one of sports and viruses, but most of all a tale of complex politics. While it's not making headlines here, the North's absence is noteworthy, especially among those who watch the intersection of sports and diplomacy — and the way North Korea's propaganda machine uses international attention to advance its needs. (Foster Klug, AP News)

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Prepared by Veronica Coffey, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250813150411/https://mailchi.mp/c99166eac9e6/hrnk-news-items-koreas-hold-daily-liaison-phone-call-after-restoring-communication-lines-soldier-reported-mia-during-korean-war-accounted-for?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, July 29, 2021**

## North Korean Prison Labor Camp Suspected of Forcing Prisoners to Attach Eyebrows to Dolls; Cuban protests probably scare Kim Jong-un

**Top News:**
** North Korean Prison-Labor Camp 'Sunghori' Suspected of Forcing Its Prisoners to Attach Eyebrows to Dolls - Those Who Don't Reach Their Quota are Tortured" (VOA *Korea*, 07/23/2021)

**In North Korea:**
How Stable Is North Korea? (*The National Interest*, 7/28/2021)
Kim Jong Un makes rare visit to Chinese friendship monument on war anniversary (NK *News*, 07/28/2021)
N. Korea's trade down 73.4 pct in 2020: KOTRA (*Yonhap News*, 7/29/2021)
North Korea hides news of inter-Korean hotline reconnection from its people (NK *News*,

07/29/2021)
North Korea marked Korean War armistice with greater fanfare, report says (*UPI News*, 07/28/2021)
North Korea reports a 'great crisis' in its virus response (*The New York Times*, 07/29/2021)
North Korea's forced rural relocation schemes sometimes lead to heartbreak (*Daily NK*, 07/29/2021)
The number of inmates in North Korean political prisons have increased by at least 20,000 since March 2020 (*Daily NK*, 07/28/2021)
Senior North Korea military official reappears after absence, rebuke (*UPI News*, 07/29/2021)
When North Korean doctors stood up to the government against overwork (*NK News*, 07/28/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
In diplomacy with North Korea, Moon Jae-in dances alone (*NK News*, 07/28/2021)
Inter-Korean military hotlines back to normal operation: defense ministry (*Yonhap News*, 07/29/2021)
North Korea Watchers Parse Motives Behind Restored Hotline with Seoul (*Radio Free Asia*, 07/28/2021)
North yet to send signal on denuclearization after restoring hotlines (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/29/2021)
Nuke envoy says humanitarian support for N. Korea can contribute to dialogue mood (*Yonhap News*, 07/29/2021)
The Rangoon Bombing: North Korea's 1983 Attempt to Destroy South Korea's Government (*The National Interest*, 07/29/2021)
Restored East Sea hotline another buoy to inter-Korean talks (*NK News*, 07/29/2021)
Seoul seeks video conference setup with Pyongyang (*Yonhap News*, 07/29/2021)
Seoul to push for video-linked family reunion as priority project with North: Cheong Wa Dae (*Yonhap News*, 07/29/2021)
S. Korea to discuss with N.K. ways to hold virtual inter-Korean talks via restored hotlines (*Yonhap News*, 07/29/2021)

**International:**
Australian sentenced to 3.5 years for brokering arms sales with North Korea (*NK News*, 07/29/2021)
Cold-blooded assassins or innocent pawns? (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/29/2021)
Hundreds of North Koreans stay behind in Russia during pandemic (*UPI News*, 07/29/2021)
N.K. leader says 'kindred ties' with China will last for generations (*Yonhap News*, 07/29/2021)
N. Korea pulls out of U-23 Asian Cup, Women's Asian Cup in 2022 (*Yonhap News*, 07/29/2021)
No decision yet on details of summertime S. Korea-U.S. combined exercise: defense ministry (*Yonhap News*, 07/29/2021)
North Korea eyes China trade restart as COVID-19 import zone activity ramps up (*NK News*, 07/29/2021)

Senior diplomats of S. Korea, U.S. hold phone talks after reactivation of inter-Korean hotline (*Yonhap News*, 07/29/2021)
South Korea, US to work for return of 1/4 of Yongsan base by 2022 (*The Korea Herald*, 07/29/2021)

**Top News:**

- On July 22nd, the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) based in Washington, D.C. released a satellite photo analysis report containing additional information on the prison camp in Sungho-ri, which is located 25 kilometers away from Pyongyang... In the narration of a 3-D video of the detention facility produced in conjunction with the report, HRNK exposed that the Sungho-ri camp was forcing its prisoners to work putting eyebrows on dolls. “In the export unit, prisoners were forced to affix eyelashes on dolls from 5 AM to 10 PM daily.” (Kim Young-kyo, *VOA News*)
- North Korea's regime is reportedly anxious about massive anti-government protests in Cuba, its communist ally. Some have pointed out that the Kim Jong-un regime will regard the anger of the Cubans who have protested against the Communist Party, complaining of the hardships of living, as a challenge to the dictatorship, and that the regime will watch nervously. (Sungwon Baik, *VOA News*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un made a rare visit to the Friendship Tower in Pyongyang on Wednesday to offer respects to Chinese soldiers who helped fight American troops during the Korean War. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea's annual trade plunged a whopping 73.4 percent in 2020 from a year earlier, as the country shut down its border amid the COVID-19 pandemic, data showed Thursday. (Kang Yoon-seung, *Yonhap News*)
- Major North Korean state media outlets have yet to tell the country’s people about the reestablishment of inter-Korean hotlines this week, a stark contrast to the South Korean government’s jubilation. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korea observed "Victory Day" on a grander scale than last year, and Kim Jong Un focused on domestic affairs on the 68th anniversary of the Korean War armistice, according to a South Korean press report. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI News*)
- Young people in North Korea continue to suffer heartbreak and other losses as the authorities encourage them to “volunteer” to live in rural agricultural and mining communities. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- The number of inmates at North Korean political prisons has climbed by at least 20,000 or more since March of last year. This suggests North Korean authorities are responding to public discontent and ideological laxity in the wake of COVID-19-sparked economic troubles by maximizing control and fear. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- A North Korean official who may have been upbraided by Kim Jong Un in June for poor COVID-19 planning was shown at the North Korean leader's side during Kim's visit to the Sino-Korean Friendship Tower in Pyongyang. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI News*)

- The Kim family regime is often accused of working its population to extremes for little pay in the hopes of increasing economic production, and such overwork in North Korea isn't a recent phenomenon. In the late 1950s, Pyongyang policymakers announced the Cheollima, or thousand-mile horse, mass labor mobilization campaign. Inspired by China's Great Leap Forward, the campaign aimed to achieve an impossibly high growth rate simply by forcing people to work more, with little regard for long-term impacts on infrastructure, the environment, and people's health. (Tatiana Gabroussenko, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Direct military communication lines between South and North Korea are back to normal operation Thursday after technical problems with one of the lines were fixed, the defense ministry said. (*Yonhap News*)
- North and South Korea have restored an inter-Korean hotline cut off last year by Pyongyang amid deteriorated relations, in a move that experts called a positive step, but warned against overinterpreting its significance. (Kyung Ha Rhee, Sangmin Lee, Albert Hong, *Radio Free Asia*)
- Despite the restoring of inter-Korean communication lines Tuesday and speculation of a possible summit, Pyongyang has not sent any signs of its intention to denuclearize so far. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Humanitarian support for North Korea could help foster the mood for dialogue, Seoul's top nuclear envoy said Thursday, after this week's restoration of inter-Korean communication lines fanned hopes for the resumption of nuclear diplomacy with Pyongyang. (*Yonhap News*)
- The two Koreas continued their restoration of contact lines this week, reestablishing a military hotline on Thursday after resolving technical problems two days after Seoul and Pyongyang announced they had reestablished other inter-Korean communication channels. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- Seoul will seek to establish a video conference system with Pyongyang so that the two governments can keep an open line of communication for face-to-face talks through the Covid-19 pandemic, the Unification Ministry said Thursday. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The government will push for a video-linked reunion of divided families with North Korea as the most urgent inter-Korean project, Cheong Wa Dae said Thursday. (*Yonhap News*)
- South Korea is planning to use the restored communication lines with North Korea to discuss ways to hold virtual inter-Korean talks amid the global pandemic, a unification ministry official said Thursday. (*Yonhap News*)

**International:**

- Close to 1,000 North Koreans remain in Russia and Russian authorities say COVID-19 is the reason they have been unable to return home. Russia's Ministry of Internal Affairs in Primorsky Krai, in the Russian Far East, said that immigration data show 969 North Korean nationals are in the region closest to the North Korean border, Interfax News Agency reported Tuesday. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI News*)

- A court has sentenced a Sydney man to three and a half years in prison for brokering the sale of military equipment, coal, and other sanctioned commodities by North Korea, according to Australian authorities. The Supreme Court of New South Wales found that Choi Chan Han provided sanctioned services by brokering North Korea's sale of Man-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADs) — small surface-to-air missiles — inertial measurement units (IMUs), coal and pig iron, as well as the country's purchase of Indonesian petroleum products. (Won-Gi Jung, NK News)
- On Feb. 13, 2017, news outlets around the world turned their attention to Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Malaysia where Kim Jong-nam, the half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, had been assassinated in broad daylight. The news reports that followed became more and more astonishing as it was revealed the two suspects accused of killing Kim in the middle of a bustling airport were two young women in their 20s who had smeared the highly toxic VX nerve agent on his face. (Lee Jae-Lim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un stressed that "kindred ties" with China will carry on generation after generation as he visited a monument symbolizing friendly relations between the two countries, state media said Thursday. (*Yonhap News*)
- North Korea has withdrawn from U-23 Asian Cup in Uzbekistan and Women's Asian Cup in India, both scheduled for next year, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) said Thursday. (*Yonhap News*)
- South Korea and the United States are discussing when and how to stage their annual summertime military exercise, the defense ministry said Thursday, amid concerns the maneuvers could affect peace efforts involving North Korea. (*Yonhap News*)
- North Korea has restarted construction at a new import disinfection complex near the Chinese border, according to *NK Pro* analysis of satellite imagery, in a move that may signal Pyongyang is preparing to resume large-scale trade with China. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Senior diplomats of South Korea and the United States held phone talks Thursday, the foreign ministry said, after this week's restoration of inter-Korean communication lines raised hopes for the resumption of nuclear diplomacy with North Korea. (*Yonhap News*)
- South Korea and the US will work together to seek the return of about one-quarter of the US military's Yongsan Garrison site in central Seoul by next year, the Foreign Ministry said Thursday. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)

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VOA Article

**"North Korean Prison-Labor Camp 'Sunghori' Suspected of Forcing Its Prisoners to Attach Eyebrows to Dolls - Those Who Don't Reach Their Quota Are Tortured"**
Reporter Kim Young-kyo
(Translated by Jason Yoo)

A recent report by a private organization said that dolls are imported to China from Sungho-ri Prison-Labor Camp near Pyongyang, North Korea, where workers are made to attach eyebrows to them. Workers are tortured when they do not meet their quotas. This is Kim Young-kyo reporting.

On July 22nd, the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) based in Washington, D.C. released a satellite photo analysis report containing additional information on the prison camp in Sungho-ri, which is located 25 kilometers away from Pyongyang.

The organization also released a virtual video showing a 3-D model of the prison's structure.

HRNK said it will continue its efforts to portray the harsh reality of North Korean camps through 3-D video work.

They also stated that they would continue their efforts to better understand the North Korean prison camp system where crimes against humanity are being committed and urge the regime to improve.

In the narration of a 3-D video of the detention facility produced in conjunction with the report, HRNK exposed that the Sungho-ri camp was forcing its prisoners to work putting eyebrows on dolls.

"In the export unit, prisoners were forced to affix eyelashes on dolls from 5 AM to 10 PM daily."

Every day, from 5 AM to 10 PM, prisoners worked on the assembly lines.

HRNK quoted North Korean refugees who were previously imprisoned at Sungho-ri. They confirmed that products made under these conditions are exported to China.

Joseph Bermudez, a senior researcher at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), said in a video conference after the report was released that female prisoners appeared to have been mobilized for the work.

"These females are also engaged … in producing eyelashes or putting eyelashes on dolls for Chinese customers, which is kind of interesting. It's also probably extremely tedious work."

The report quoted North Korean refugees from the camp who said that when progress slowed, the workers were tortured.

On one occasion when the prisoners failed to attach an assigned 12,000 eyebrows, they were forced to kneel on a hot floor and had their skin burned for five minutes.

HRNK said further investigation into North Korea's exploitation of labor in prison labor facilities is needed.

HRNK Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu said that labor exploitation in the iron and coal ore supply chains continues today, and this exploitation has extended to products like toys and dolls. “We basically certify that the mineral supply chain in North Korea, the coal and mineral supply chain is tainted by forced labor. The same applies to for example toys and dolls and so many other products."

Based on the comments of former North Korean prisoners in the early 2000s, the report estimates that there are approximately 1,500-1600 prisoners in the prison labor facility, some 1,000 of whom are male and the rest female.

In addition, due to the reconstruction and expansion of the labor facility between 2010 and 2015, more people could be imprisoned.

The satellite photographs in the report confirmed that the prison labor facility was operating normally between 2017 and 2020.

Executive Director Scarlatoiu confirmed that political prisoners have also been detained in forced labor camps, not only in political prison camps. ‘Kwanliso’ is a political prison camp, and ‘kyohwaso’ is a forced labor detention facility… Over the past many years we have also discovered that political prisoners are held at these kyohwaso detention facilities [not only at the “kwanliso” political prison camps].”

Scarlatoiu explained that ‘kyohwaso’ is a long-term labor camp, not a political prison camp, and that his team has spent the past few years uncovering the truth about the prisoners that are held there.

This was reporter Kim Young-kyo.

VOA Article

**Former U.S. officials, "Cuban protests probably scare Kim Jong-un… No dictatorship lasts forever.”**
Reporter Sungwon Baik
2021.7.27 3:00 AM
(Translated by Grace Shin)

North Korea's regime is reportedly anxious about massive anti-government protests in Cuba, its communist ally. Some have pointed out that the Kim Jong-un regime will regard the anger of the Cubans who have protested against the Communist Party, complaining of the hardships of

living, as a challenge to the dictatorship, and that the regime will watch nervously. This is Sungwon Baik reporting on Washington's view of North Korea's response.

"We call on the government — the government of Cuba to refrain from violence or attempts to silence the voice of the people of Cuba."

“The United States stands firmly with the people of Cuba as they assert their universal rights,” U.S. President Joe Biden said.

[Recording: U.S. President Joe Biden] “The United States stands firmly with the people of Cuba as they assert their universal rights. We call on the government — the government of Cuba — to refrain from violence or attempts to silence the voice of the people of Cuba.”

Former U.S. officials and human rights defenders came together to say that President Biden's message about the largest anti-government protests in Cuba since the summer of 1994 applies to North Korea.

They point out that North Korea's Kim administration, which has been leading a brutal dictatorship that far exceeds Cuba's political tyranny for more than 70 years, should take the angry roar of Cuban citizens exhausted from food and power shortages as a serious warning.

"When citizens in Cuba take to the streets to protest against deteriorating living conditions, lack of basic goods and services, and scarcity of coronavirus medicines, North Korea should beware," said Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights.

"Although the North Korean regime keeps such a tight lid on its society that it is hard to imagine protests, North Korean leaders must be wondering in these desperate times: Where is the tipping point? When will its population cease to put up with the hunger, deprivation, and inadequate medical care to which it is daily subjected?" she explained.

Demonstrations that began in San Antonio de Los Banos, a city south of Havana, on July 11th, spread rapidly on social media, and more demonstrations took place in more than 40 places in Cuba, including Havana and Santiago de Cuba.

The Cuban Constitution states that action against the goal of building a socialist state or the Communist Party's decisions is not acceptable.

But Cuban citizens are marching, looting shops, overturning vehicles belonging to police and Communist officials, and shouting "libertad" which means "freedom."

"As one of the world's most authoritarian dictatorships, North Korea is no doubt unnerved by the recent events in Cuba. All the more so because the demonstrations were a spontaneous

eruption of anger at the regime by the Cuban people," said Evans J.R. Revere, former assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs.

Cubans have taken to the streets because they have continued to suffer from a shortage of necessities and power outages, and the spread of the coronavirus has reached its worst level in history, making it impossible for the people to lead their basic daily lives. The steep rise in prices since the abolition of the dual currency system in January has also raised social instability and anger among citizens.

But experts in Washington say Cuba's internal situation, which has made public sentiment explode, is no match for the oppression of the Kim Jong Un regime and the economic distress of its people.

"[Cuba] is an egregious dictatorship. And yet, things, if I may say, are not as bad as they are in North Korea," said Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea. "At the very least, the Cuban regime has allowed professionals to leave the country, work overseas and come back. They bring money back to the country and this was not necessarily a system of slave labor the way that the North Koreans run it...So, I don't mean to say that Cuba is not an oppressive regime, it is a dictatorship, but compared to North Korea in recent years, perhaps Cubans have had a little bit more room to maneuver."

"[Kim Jong-un] should learn the lesson that] no dictatorship lasts forever," he followed. "Choose the path of reform, change, openness, transparency on your watch, then peaceful change can come to North Korea," he urged.

"The protests in Cuba probably scare the Kim regime. Hopefully, the Kim regime will see the protests in Cuba as a signal to help the North Korean people rather than using scarce resources to develop nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, build luxury villas, and provide special perks to North Korean elites," said Anthony Ruggiero, currently a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD) and formerly a National Security Council (NSC) Senior Director for Counterproliferation and Biodefense.

North Korea and Cuba have been very close for over 60 years, ever since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1960, which is based on the ties between former North Korean President Kim Il-sung and former Cuban President Fidel Castro.

It is pointed out that North Korea's sensitive response to Cuba's anti-government protests, or their questions that the U.S. might be behind them, is due to extreme anxiety over the situation of a leading communist ally. The Cuban demonstrations, which went from insecurity of livelihood to anger toward the system, are proof that the Kim Jong-un administration may also be under heavy pressure.

On July 22nd, North Korea's Foreign Ministry said on its website, "In several cities including Havana, crowd rallies were held to subdue anti-government protests challenging the revolutionary government and to denounce and reject hostile forces' intervention in internal affairs." They expressed their support by saying, "The Cuban people's struggle to defeat U.S. intervention in internal affairs and defeat anti-government protests against the revolutionary government in Havana and other cities is bound to win." They claimed the protests are "the product of the U.S. manipulation behind the scenes and its relentless anti-Cuba blockade plan to eradicate socialism and revolution."

North Korea's Foreign Ministry accused the U.S. of being behind the protests against the Cuban government on July 16th and on July 21st.

They said, "The United States has violated Cuban people's human rights for 60 years under sanctions," which is in line with Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel's claim that the United States is to blame for this crisis.

[Recording: Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel] (Spanish)

Former U.S. Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Robert King said, "My guess is Kim Jong-un is looking at this very carefully and probably with quite a bit of concern."

"Cuba has been one of North Korea's closest supporters at the United Nations," King pointed out. "I think [Kim Jong-un is] looking at that and having doubts and questions and concerns about what's going on in his own country where the repression is probably even worse than what it is in Cuba. I'm sure he's watching carefully," he explained.

Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Cohen pointed out that "blaming an outside government like the United States for the mass demonstrations is an effort to distract from the real causes of the disruption which could resonate with North Korea's citizens."

"The events in Cuba have probably sent a shock wave through the leadership in Pyongyang," said Revere, former assistant secretary of state. "It's therefore not surprising that Pyongyang has joined the chorus of Communist and authoritarian states expressing support for the Cuban regime, and in blaming this spontaneous outburst on the United States."

"The DPRK has been carrying out a campaign against ideological laxity, foreign ideas, and even South Korean language, fashion, and music for some time," he said in particular. "This tells us that the regime is concerned about the influence of outside ideas and culture, and the implications of allowing external 'pollution' to 'corrupt' its people."

Experts predict that no matter how much the North Korean regime flaunts solidarity with Cuba and condemns the United States for allegedly being behind the protests, the North's elite will

understand exactly why the protests were triggered and they will be watching the Cuban people express their anger at the authoritarian regime.

This means that North Korean elites will be concerned about themselves and their country's future as they see Cuban citizens who shout “overthrow the dictatorship,” “freedom,” and other phrases on the streets of Havana and Santiago and on social media as well as Cuban immigrants who support such anti-government protests in Miami, Florida and other foreign cities.

"I've spoken with numerous North Korean diplomats who defected and who had contact with Cubans. They know, they understand what's going on and I'm sure that both the diplomatic corps of North Korea and those running North Korea's overseas hard currency earning operations understand what's going on. The elites of North Korea at the very least understand what's going on,” Executive Director Scarlatoiu said.

"We may be witnessing the last months or years of the Cuban regime," Executive Director Scarlatoiu reiterated. "No dictatorship lasts forever, no matter how much they suppress and monitor their people.”

This is Baek Sung-won from VOA News.

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Prepared by Veronica Coffey, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250813150746/https://mailchi.mp/d9ad3c849aec/hrnk-news-items-north-korean-prison-labor-camp-suspected-of-forcing-prisoners-to-attach-eyebrows-to-dollscuban-protests-probably-scare-kim-jong-un?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, July 30, 2021**

## Secretary Blinken’s Human Rights Guidelines Will Also Affect ‘Regulations on Flyers to North Korea’

**Top News:**
Secretary Blinken’s Human Rights Guidelines Will Also Affect ‘Regulations on Flyers to North Korea’ (VOA *Korea*, 7/21/2021)

**In North Korea:**
A Grand Bargain With North Korea: Pyongyang’s Economic Distress Offers a Chance for Peace (*Foreign Affairs*, 7/29/2021)

Covid hurls North Korean economy into worst slump since 1990s famine (*Telegraph*, 7/30/2021)
Forget the Nukes: North Korea Has Big Guns with Big Plans for Seoul (*The National Interest*, 7/30/2021)
Kim Jong Un gathers military for four-day lecture, criticizes US military drills (*NK News*, 7/29/2021)
North Hwanghae Province mobilizes locals for "irrigation struggle" to prevent drought damage to crops (*DailyNK*, 7/30/2021)
North Korea began the summer in a food crisis. A heat wave and drought could make it worse. (*The Washington Post*, 7/29/2021)
North Korea's economy in crisis because of COVID-19, sanctions (*Reuters*, 7/30/2021)
North Korea's economy shrunk 4.5% in 2020: BOK (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 07/30/2021)
North Korea isn't fretting about a long COVID-19 lockdown (*NK News*, 7/30/2021)
North Korea's state-run food shops have little or no rice to sell to consumers(*DailyNK*, 7/30/2021)
N.K. leader accuses 'hostile forces' of intensifying 'war drills for aggression (*Yonhap*, 7/30/2021)
N.K. leader presides over first-ever workshop for military commanders, political officers (*Yonhap*, 7/30/2021)
Nampho Naval Shipyard: Second Submersible Test Barge Still Out of Water (*38 North*, 7/30/2021)
Prejudice, not just COVID, is behind DPRK's expected absence from Paralympics(*NK News*, 7/30/2021)
Unusual Container Walls at the Nampho Container Port (*38 North*, 7/30/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Moon Jae-in's approval rating holds steady after inter-Korea hotline restored (*UPI*, 7/30/2021)
**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
South Korea greenlights first aid to DPRK since Sept. 2020 (*NK News*, 7/30/2021)
South Korea vs. North Korea: Who Has the More Powerful Military? (*The National Interest*, 7/29/2021)
S. Korea proposes talks with N. Korea about setting up video conferencing system: minister (*Yonhap*, 7/30/2021)

**International:**
Defense chiefs of S. Korea, U.S. reaffirm commitment to alliance, combined defense posture (*Yonhap*, 7/30/2021)
N Korea leader pays respect to Chinese war dead at memorial (*AP News*, 7/29/2021)
Razing North Korea: How Four U.S. Navy Battleships Took on Kim (*The National Interest*, 7/30/2021)
U.N.: Inter-Korea family reunions must be prioritized (*UPI*, 7/29/2021)
Wife of North Korean Consul in Russia Dies from COVID-19 (*Radio Free Asia*, 7/30/2021)
Xi Jinping thanks Kim Jong Un for flood condolence message (*UPI*, 7/30/2021)
Xi vows to strengthen China-N. Korea ties in letter to Kim (*Yonhap*, 7/30/2021)

**Top News:**

- Secretary Antony Blinken's diplomatic message emphasizes the significance of human rights and how democracy will affect human rights issues in both South and North Korea. Experts say that he is sending a signal to the South Korean government urging them to stop regulating the flow of information into North Korea, and that human rights will become a key variable in relations with North Korea. (Sung-Won Baek, VOA Korea)

**In North Korea:**

- At the Eighth Korean Workers' Party Congress in January, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un shifted away from his father's "Military First" principle (Songun), which gave precedence to the Korea People's Armed Forces, and supplanted it with an ideology of "People and Masses First" (Inmin Daejung Jaeil), setting the stage for efforts to resuscitate North Korea's dying economy. This also accompanies displays of self-restraint by the North Korean military by restraining from anti-US rhetoric. (Vincent Brooks and Ho Young Leem, *Foreign Affairs*)
- Covid has dealt North Korea's secretive dictatorship its biggest economic blow since the 1990s famine that killed hundreds of thousand of people, amid concerns over the health of Kim Jong-Un. (Russell Lynch, *Telegraph*)
- While the growing threat posed by Pyongyang's ballistic missiles, potentially with nuclear armament, is of greater concern, the effects of a sustained deluge of high explosive or chemical shells on a city with a population of ten million—greater than New York City—is still hair-raising to consider. (Sebastien Roblin, *The National Interest*)
- In a first of it's kind "workshop", Kim addressed KPA commanders. The speech was low-key, with no mention of new weapons or nuclear-related plans, although Kim did appear to criticize US-South Korean joint military drills, ahead of their tentative start in the coming weeks. "The hostile forces are strengthening their fanatical and persistent practices for invasion, continuing to systematically expand their ability to preemptively strike our nation and increasing their military spending," said Kim Jong Un. (Colin Zwirko, NK News)
- As North Korea swelters under a prolonged heatwave, North Hwanghae Province authorities have mobilized locals for an "irrigation struggle" to prevent crop losses due to drought, since North Korean authorities "did not create a proper irrigation system. (Jong So Yong, *DailyNK*)
- At the beginning of the summer, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un described the country's food situation as "tense" after border closures caused by the coronavirus pandemic and crippling floods. By midsummer, a cycle of grinding heat as high as 102 degrees in some areas, and record-low rainfall could be a sign of a greater food crisis and hunger ahead. (Michelle Ye Hee Lee and Min Joo Kim, *The Washington Post*)
- North Korea's economy suffered its biggest contraction in 23 years in 2020 as it was battered by continued U.N. sanctions, COVID-19 lockdown measures and bad weather. Kim Byeong-yeon, an economics professor at Seoul National University who specialises in North Korea, estimated that the economy there could have shrunk up to 20% from

2017-20, taking into account the role of informal markets which he said the BOK tends to overestimate during downturns. (Joori Roh and Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)

- North Korea's economy contracted 4.5 percent in 2020, the steepest fall since 1997, according to the Bank of Korea (BOK) Friday. The BOK estimated North Korea's real gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020 at 31.4 trillion won ($27.4 billion), 4.5 percent lower than a year earlier. (Kim Jeehee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Surprisingly, despite serious economic difficulties caused by Covid-19 due to its border lockdown, North Korea is not in a terrible rush to vaccinate its population. Pyongyang has only completed two of seven steps necessary to receive a promised shipment of around 1.7 million dozens of the AstraZeneca vaccine. (Andrei Lankov, *NK News*)
- Despite open doors and present staff, the food shops recently established by the North Korean government to control the supply and price of rice have little or no rice to sell. (Seulkee Jang, *DailyNK*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un accused "hostile forces" of intensifying "frantic and persistent war drills for aggression" as he presided over the first-ever workshop of military commanders and political officers this week. The remark came as South Korea and the United States are mulling over whether and how to conduct their annual military exercise expected for mid-August amid concern that it could negatively affect a conciliatory mood created in the wake of the North's restoration of inter-Korean communication lines this week. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un presided over the first-ever workshop of military commanders and political officers this week but made no mention of nuclear weapons or relations with South Korea or the United States, according to state media Friday. The workshop was held from Saturday to Tuesday in Pyongyang to "further enhance the military and political strength" of the Korean People's Army, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said. (*Yonhap*)
- Commercial satellite imagery of Nampho Naval Shipyard from July 21 indicates that the second of North Korea's two submersible test barges has remained on the repair ways since last November. (Peter Makowsky, *38 North*)
- With North Korea already out of the ongoing Summer Games, it's increasingly unlikely that they will participate in next month's Tokyo Paralympics due to COVID-19 concerns. Experts told NK News that, while North Korea has not yet made an official announcement, it's unlikely that Pyongyang prioritizes creating opportunities for athletes with physical disabilities. "Disabled people are treated like animals in the North," said a former North Korean doctor. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- Commercial satellite imagery from July 21 indicates workers at North Korea's largest container port have used shipping containers to create makeshift barriers between different areas of the dockside. hese actions are unusual for port procedures, but could be part of extreme precautions being taken to protect the country against COVID-19. It could also signal that North Korea is preparing for imports to increase in the near future. (Martyn Williams, *38 North*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korean President Moon Jae-in's overall approval rating remained at 40% this week after the restoration of an inter-Korean communication hotline that was severed last year. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korea has approved requests to send private humanitarian aid to North Korea for the first time since last September, the unification ministry announced on Friday, though it remains unclear whether Pyongyang will accept any outside aid due to fears of COVID-19 infection. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Comparing the capabilities of the two Koreas' militaries isn't easy given their radically different capabilities, especially the North's possession of nuclear weapons. But that judgment doesn't much matter so long as the U.S. is responsible for the ROK's defense. (Doug Bandow, *The National Interest*)
- South Korea has conveyed a proposal to North Korea, through a recently restored liaison hotline, to discuss ways to set up a virtual conference system for inter-Korean talks, Unification Minister Lee In-young said Friday. The proposal was made Thursday via the hotline restored Tuesday after nearly 14 months of suspension, and the North received a document containing the South's offer, he said. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Defense Minister Suh Wook held phone talks with his U.S. counterpart Lloyd Austin on Friday discussed bilateral defense issues and the security situation on the Korean Peninsula, "reaffirmed an ironclad South Korea-U.S. alliance and stressed the importance of close cooperation between the two countries," according to the ministry. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un paid tribute to China's war dead at a Pyongyang memorial and vowed to maintain firm ties with Beijing, state media reported Thursday, as he seeks to bolster relations with his country's main ally amid deepening hardships linked to the pandemic. (Hyung-Jin Kim, *AP News*)
- During the Korea War, the US dispatched the USS Missouri, Iowa, New Jersey and Wisconsin to rain terror down upon North Korean and Chinese forces. (Robert Farley, *The National Interest*)
- The United Nations' special rapporteur for North Korean human rights said inter-Korean reunions of separated families must take top priority if diplomacy resumes between the two Koreas. Tomás Ojea Quintana said this week that time is running out for Koreans on both sides of the border. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- The wife of a North Korean consul stationed in Vladivostok, Russia, contracted COVID-19 and died this month. Russian sources stated that the cost of vaccination in Vladivostok too high for the North's privileged diplomats. (Jieun Kim, *Radio Free Asia*)
- Chinese leader Xi Jinping responded to a letter from Kim Jong Un expressing condolences for the catastrophic floods in Henan Province, North Korea's. In his response Xi stressed the friendship between the two countries that shared the common value of "socialism" and that Xi sent his "sincere greetings" to Kim. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

- Chinese President Xi Jinping has pledged efforts to "defend, consolidate and develop" relations with North Korea, Pyongyang's state media reported Friday, after the North's Kim Jong-un said he will push to elevate the two countries' ties to a "new strategic point." (*Yonhap*)

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VOA Article

"North Korean Prison-Labor Camp 'Sunghori' Suspected of Forcing Its Prisoners to Attach Eyebrows to Dolls - Those Who Don't Reach Their Quota Are Tortured"
Reporter Kim Young-kyo
(Translated by Jason Yoo)

A recent report by a private organization said that dolls are imported to China from Sungho-ri Prison-Labor Camp near Pyongyang, North Korea, where workers are made to attach eyebrows to them. Workers are tortured when they do not meet their quotas. This is Kim Young-kyo reporting.

On July 22nd, the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) based in Washington, D.C. released a satellite photo analysis report containing additional information on the prison camp in Sungho-ri, which is located 25 kilometers away from Pyongyang.

The organization also released a virtual video showing a 3-D model of the prison's structure.

HRNK said it will continue its efforts to portray the harsh reality of North Korean camps through 3-D video work.

They also stated that they would continue their efforts to better understand the North Korean prison camp system where crimes against humanity are being committed and urge the regime to improve.

In the narration of a 3-D video of the detention facility produced in conjunction with the report, HRNK exposed that the Sungho-ri camp was forcing its prisoners to work putting eyebrows on dolls.

"In the export unit, prisoners were forced to affix eyelashes on dolls from 5 AM to 10 PM daily."

Every day, from 5 AM to 10 PM, prisoners worked on the assembly lines.

HRNK quoted North Korean refugees who were previously imprisoned at Sungho-ri. They confirmed that products made under these conditions are exported to China.

Joseph Bermudez, a senior researcher at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), said in a video conference after the report was released that female prisoners appeared to have been mobilized for the work.

“These females are also engaged … in producing eyelashes or putting eyelashes on dolls for Chinese customers, which is kind of interesting. It's also probably extremely tedious work.”

The report quoted North Korean refugees from the camp who said that when progress slowed, the workers were tortured.

On one occasion when the prisoners failed to attach an assigned 12,000 eyebrows, they were forced to kneel on a hot floor and had their skin burned for five minutes.

HRNK said further investigation into North Korea's exploitation of labor in prison labor facilities is needed.

HRNK Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu said that labor exploitation in the iron and coal ore supply chains continues today, and this exploitation has extended to products like toys and dolls. “We basically certify that the mineral supply chain in North Korea, the coal and mineral supply chain is tainted by forced labor. The same applies to for example toys and dolls and so many other products."

Based on the comments of former North Korean prisoners in the early 2000s, the report estimates that there are approximately 1,500-1600 prisoners in the prison labor facility, some 1,000 of whom are male and the rest female.

In addition, due to the reconstruction and expansion of the labor facility between 2010 and 2015, more people could be imprisoned.

The satellite photographs in the report confirmed that the prison labor facility was operating normally between 2017 and 2020.

Executive Director Scarlatoiu confirmed that political prisoners have also been detained in forced labor camps, not only in political prison camps. ‘Kwanliso’ is a political prison camp, and ‘kyohwaso’ is a forced labor detention facility… Over the past many years we have also discovered that political prisoners are held at these kyohwaso detention facilities [not only at the “kwanliso” political prison camps].”

Scarlatoiu explained that ‘kyohwaso’ is a long-term labor camp, not a political prison camp, and that his team has spent the past few years uncovering the truth about the prisoners that are held there.

This was reporter Kim Young-kyo.

VOA Article

Former U.S. officials, "Cuban protests probably scare Kim Jong-un... No dictatorship lasts forever."
Reporter Sungwon Baik
2021.7.27 3:00 AM
(Translated by Grace Shin)

North Korea's regime is reportedly anxious about massive anti-government protests in Cuba, its communist ally. Some have pointed out that the Kim Jong-un regime will regard the anger of the Cubans who have protested against the Communist Party, complaining of the hardships of living, as a challenge to the dictatorship, and that the regime will watch nervously. This is Sungwon Baik reporting on Washington's view of North Korea's response.

"We call on the government — the government of Cuba to refrain from violence or attempts to silence the voice of the people of Cuba."

“The United States stands firmly with the people of Cuba as they assert their universal rights,” U.S. President Joe Biden said.

[Recording: U.S. President Joe Biden] “The United States stands firmly with the people of Cuba as they assert their universal rights. We call on the government — the government of Cuba — to refrain from violence or attempts to silence the voice of the people of Cuba.”

Former U.S. officials and human rights defenders came together to say that President Biden's message about the largest anti-government protests in Cuba since the summer of 1994 applies to North Korea.

They point out that North Korea's Kim administration, which has been leading a brutal dictatorship that far exceeds Cuba's political tyranny for more than 70 years, should take the angry roar of Cuban citizens exhausted from food and power shortages as a serious warning.

"When citizens in Cuba take to the streets to protest against deteriorating living conditions, lack of basic goods and services, and scarcity of coronavirus medicines, North Korea should beware," said Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights.

"Although the North Korean regime keeps such a tight lid on its society that it is hard to imagine protests, North Korean leaders must be wondering in these desperate times: Where is

the tipping point? When will its population cease to put up with the hunger, deprivation, and inadequate medical care to which it is daily subjected?" she explained.

Demonstrations that began in San Antonio de Los Banos, a city south of Havana, on July 11th, spread rapidly on social media, and more demonstrations took place in more than 40 places in Cuba, including Havana and Santiago de Cuba.

The Cuban Constitution states that action against the goal of building a socialist state or the Communist Party's decisions is not acceptable.

But Cuban citizens are marching, looting shops, overturning vehicles belonging to police and Communist officials, and shouting "libertad" which means "freedom."

"As one of the world's most authoritarian dictatorships, North Korea is no doubt unnerved by the recent events in Cuba. All the more so because the demonstrations were a spontaneous eruption of anger at the regime by the Cuban people," said Evans J.R. Revere, former assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs.

Cubans have taken to the streets because they have continued to suffer from a shortage of necessities and power outages, and the spread of the coronavirus has reached its worst level in history, making it impossible for the people to lead their basic daily lives. The steep rise in prices since the abolition of the dual currency system in January has also raised social instability and anger among citizens.

But experts in Washington say Cuba's internal situation, which has made public sentiment explode, is no match for the oppression of the Kim Jong Un regime and the economic distress of its people.

"[Cuba] is an egregious dictatorship. And yet, things, if I may say, are not as bad as they are in North Korea," said Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea. "At the very least, the Cuban regime has allowed professionals to leave the country, work overseas and come back. They bring money back to the country and this was not necessarily a system of slave labor the way that the North Koreans run it...So, I don't mean to say that Cuba is not an oppressive regime, it is a dictatorship, but compared to North Korea in recent years, perhaps Cubans have had a little bit more room to maneuver."

"[Kim Jong-un] should learn the lesson that] no dictatorship lasts forever," he followed. "Choose the path of reform, change, openness, transparency on your watch, then peaceful change can come to North Korea," he urged.

"The protests in Cuba probably scare the Kim regime. Hopefully, the Kim regime will see the protests in Cuba as a signal to help the North Korean people rather than using scarce resources

to develop nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, build luxury villas, and provide special perks to North Korean elites," said Anthony Ruggiero, currently a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD) and formerly a National Security Council (NSC) Senior Director for Counterproliferation and Biodefense.

North Korea and Cuba have been very close for over 60 years, ever since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1960, which is based on the ties between former North Korean President Kim Il-sung and former Cuban President Fidel Castro.

It is pointed out that North Korea's sensitive response to Cuba's anti-government protests, or their questions that the U.S. might be behind them, is due to extreme anxiety over the situation of a leading communist ally. The Cuban demonstrations, which went from insecurity of livelihood to anger toward the system, are proof that the Kim Jong-un administration may also be under heavy pressure.

On July 22nd, North Korea's Foreign Ministry said on its website, "In several cities including Havana, crowd rallies were held to subdue anti-government protests challenging the revolutionary government and to denounce and reject hostile forces' intervention in internal affairs." They expressed their support by saying, "The Cuban people's struggle to defeat U.S. intervention in internal affairs and defeat anti-government protests against the revolutionary government in Havana and other cities is bound to win." They claimed the protests are "the product of the U.S. manipulation behind the scenes and its relentless anti-Cuba blockade plan to eradicate socialism and revolution."

North Korea's Foreign Ministry accused the U.S. of being behind the protests against the Cuban government on July 16th and on July 21st.

They said, "The United States has violated Cuban people's human rights for 60 years under sanctions," which is in line with Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel's claim that the United States is to blame for this crisis.

[Recording: Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel] (Spanish)

Former U.S. Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Robert King said, "My guess is Kim Jong-un is looking at this very carefully and probably with quite a bit of concern."

"Cuba has been one of North Korea's closest supporters at the United Nations," King pointed out. "I think [Kim Jong-un is] looking at that and having doubts and questions and concerns about what's going on in his own country where the repression is probably even worse than what it is in Cuba. I'm sure he's watching carefully," he explained.

Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Cohen pointed out that "blaming an outside government like the United States for the mass demonstrations is an effort to distract from the real causes of the disruption which could resonate with North Korea's citizens."

"The events in Cuba have probably sent a shock wave through the leadership in Pyongyang," said Revere, former assistant secretary of state. "It's therefore not surprising that Pyongyang has joined the chorus of Communist and authoritarian states expressing support for the Cuban regime, and in blaming this spontaneous outburst on the United States."

"The DPRK has been carrying out a campaign against ideological laxity, foreign ideas, and even South Korean language, fashion, and music for some time," he said in particular. "This tells us that the regime is concerned about the influence of outside ideas and culture, and the implications of allowing external 'pollution' to 'corrupt' its people."

Experts predict that no matter how much the North Korean regime flaunts solidarity with Cuba and condemns the United States for allegedly being behind the protests, the North's elite will understand exactly why the protests were triggered and they will be watching the Cuban people express their anger at the authoritarian regime.

This means that North Korean elites will be concerned about themselves and their country's future as they see Cuban citizens who shout "overthrow the dictatorship," "freedom," and other phrases on the streets of Havana and Santiago and on social media as well as Cuban immigrants who support such anti-government protests in Miami, Florida and other foreign cities.

"I've spoken with numerous North Korean diplomats who defected and who had contact with Cubans. They know, they understand what's going on and I'm sure that both the diplomatic corps of North Korea and those running North Korea's overseas hard currency earning operations understand what's going on. The elites of North Korea at the very least understand what's going on," Executive Director Scarlatoiu said.

"We may be witnessing the last months or years of the Cuban regime," Executive Director Scarlatoiu reiterated. "No dictatorship lasts forever, no matter how much they suppress and monitor their people."

This is Baek Sung-won from VOA News.

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Prepared by Kathy Yu, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:

https://web.archive.org/web/20250813150746/https://mailchi.mp/d9ad3c849aec/hrnk-news-items-north-korean-prison-labor-camp-suspected-of-forcing-prisoners-to-attach-eyebrows-to-dollscuban-protests-probably-scare-kim-jong-un?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, July 31, 2021**

# U.S. State Department is "Concerned about the Forced Repatriation of North Korean Defectors"

**Top News:**
U.S. State Department is "Concerned about the Forced Repatriation of North Korean Defectors"... Human Rights Activists: "South Korea Must Prevent Repatriation" (*Newspim*, 7/22/2021)

**In North Korea:**
200,000 North Korea's Special Forces: Kim's Real Super Weapon? (*The National Interest*, 7/30/2021)
Forget Nuclear Weapons: North Korea Has Underground Air Fields (*The National Interest*, 7/30/2021)
Kim Jong-un Doesn't Stand a Chance Against These 5 Marine Weapons (*The National Interest*, 7/31/2021)
Kim Jong-un Likens N. Korea's Plight to War (*The Chosun Ilbo*, 7/29/2021)
Kim stresses military preparations ahead of US-SKorea drills (*AP News*, 7/30/2021)
N. Korea's food shortage to worsen in H2: U.N. report (*Yonhap News*, 7/31/2021)
North Korea Is Strictly Enforcing Its Language Purification Policy (NPR, 7/30/2021)
North Korea's economy contracts most in 23 years, bank figures show (UPI, 7/30/2021)
North Korea's economy sees biggest contraction in 23 years, South Korea's central bank says (CNBC, 7/30/2021)

**In South Korea:**
S. Korea proposes talks with N. Korea about setting video conferencing system: minister (*Yonhap News*, 7/30/2021)
Too much haste of N. Korea policy (*The Dong-A Ilbo*, 7/31/2021)
**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
North Korea's Big Guns Could Start a War In No Time Flat (*The National Interest*, 7/31/2021)

**International:**
14 U.S. lawmakers endorse bill on declaration of official end to Korean War (*Yonhap News*, 7/31/2021)

UN warns hunger is expected to rise in 23 global hotspots (*The Washington Post*, 7/31/2021)
U.S. says seizes tanker used to evade North Korea sanctions (*Reuters*, 7/31/2021)
U.S. seizes Singapore-owned oil tanker in violation of N. Korea sanctions regimes (*Yonhap News*, 7/31/2021)
US takes ownership of ship suspected in N. Korea oil scheme (*AP News*, 7/30/2021)

**Top News:**

- The U.S. State Department expressed concern over reports that China forcibly repatriated more than 50 North Korean refugees. North Korean human rights activists in the United States have urged the South Korean government to take an active role in preventing the extradition of North Korean defectors. (Song Gi-uk, *Newspim*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean special forces have evolved from a nuisance force designed to stage attacks in the enemy's rear into something far more dangerous. Their ability to distribute nuclear, chemical, biological, or radiological weapons could, if successful, kill thousands of civilians. They have even trained to attack and destroy a replica of the Blue House, the official resident of the South Korean president. (Kyle Mizokami, *The National Interest*)
- According to a report by the Nautilus Institute, North Korea is also thought to have "radar sites in elevator shafts that can be raised up like a submarine periscope; submarine and missile patrol boat bases in tunnels hewn in rock; tunnels a kilometer or more in length for storing vehicles and supplies, or to hide the population of a nearby city." (Kyle Mizokami, *The National Interest*)
- The acquisition of the HIMARS rocket system in the mid-2000s gave marine artillery a big boost. HIMARS takes the proven 227mm rocket system from the U.S. Army's tracked MLRS system and puts it on a five-ton truck, providing a firing platform for up to six rockets (or one jumbo-sized ATACMS rocket) at a time. (Kyle Mizokami, *The National Interest*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has told war veterans that the impoverished state is experiencing a "crisis similar to a war" due to the coronavirus pandemic, the official Rodong Sinmun daily said Wednesday. (Kim Myong-song, *The Chosun Ilbo*)
- SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea said Friday that leader Kim Jong Un called for stronger capability to cope with any foreign provocation as he met with military officers ahead of annual drills next month between South Korea and the United States that Pyongyang views as an invasion rehearsal. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)
- North Korea's food security situation is expected to deteriorate in the next four months, a U.N. report has said, citing limited humanitarian access and trade disruptions as key factors leading to the country's widening food gap. (*Yonhap News*)
- Authorities in North Korea are locked in a battle against what they see as attempts to infiltrate and subvert their socialist system. One of the biggest threats, as they see it, comes from their own language, Korean. In particular, they're worried about the way

people speak it south of the border. As NPR's Anthony Kuhn reports from Seoul, controlling how people speak can be an uphill battle. (Anthony Kuhn, NPR)

- North Korea's economy shrank 4.5% in 2020, registering the greatest contraction in 23 years, according to South Korea's central bank. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- North Korea's economy suffered its biggest contraction in 23 years in 2020 as it was battered
  by continued U.N. sanctions, Covid-19 lockdown measures and bad weather, South Korea's central bank said on Friday. (CNBC)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea has conveyed a proposal to North Korea, through a recently restored liaison hotline, to discuss ways to set up a virtual conference system for inter-Korean talks, Unification Minister Lee In-young said Friday. (*Yonhap News*)
- The South Korean government on Thursday proposed to set up a video conferencing system between the two Koreas. It even resumed approval of private sector-led supply of goods to North Korea the next day, which had been completely suspended since the killing of an official of the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries by North Korea last September. In the meantime, the South Korean Ministry of Unification said that it is desirable that the joint military drills between Seoul and Washington should be put back. Just three days after the two Koreas restored their communication channels, Seoul cleared away the block to assistance to Pyongyang and expressed its intention of postponing joint military exercises with Washington. (*The Dong-A Ilbo*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- North Korea's forward-deployed ground forces likely include most if not all of the KPAGF's more than 14,000 artillery systems, including an estimated 8,600 artillery pieces and 5,500 multiple rocket launchers (MRLs). The proximity of these weapons to the border with South Korea places them in range of a number of important military targets and population centers including the Seoul metropolitan area and its over 25 million inhabitants. (Mark Episkopos, *The National Interest*)

**International:**

- More than a dozen U.S. lawmakers have signed a bill seeking to formally end the Korean War and establish liaison offices between the United States and North Korea, an activist group said Friday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap News*)
- Hunger is expected to rise in 23 global hotspots in the next three months with the highest alerts for "catastrophic" situations in Ethiopia's embattled Tigray region, southern Madagascar, Yemen, South Sudan and northern Nigeria, two U.N. agencies warned Friday. (Edith M. Lederer, *AP News*)
- The U.S. Justice Department (DoJ) on Friday announced the seizure of a 2,734-ton tanker it said was owned and operated by a Singaporean national and used to make shipments of petroleum products to North Korea in violation of international sanctions. (Reuters Staff, *Reuters*)
- A U.S. federal court on Friday decided to seize an oil tanker owned by a Singaporean national for violating U.S. and U.N. Security Council sanctions on North Korea that

prohibit illicit deliveries of petroleum products to the North, the U.S. Justice Department said. (*Yonhap News*)

- A tanker ship allegedly used in an illegal scheme to smuggle oil to North Korea has a brand-new owner: the U.S. government. A federal judge in New York City issued a judgment of forfeiture Friday authorizing the U.S. to take ownership of the 2,734-ton M/T Courageous, which is currently in Cambodia. (*AP News*)

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Prepared by Yeji Chung, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250813150746/https://mailchi.mp/d9ad3c849aec/hrnk-news-items-north-korean-prison-labor-camp-suspected-of-forcing-prisoners-to-attach-eyebrows-to-dollscuban-protests-probably-scare-kim-jong-un?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

# 8. AUGUST

## Sunday, August 1, 2021

## "The North Korean regime has tackled Covid-19 mostly as a political propaganda issue, and not a critical public health issue"

**Top News:**
Kim Jong-un hints at 'hardships', stoking fears of famine's return amid North Korea's pandemic isolation (*South China Morning Post*, 8/1/2021)
** "Human Rights Abuses at North Korean Labor Camps are Serious"... "North Korea Must Allow International Monitors" (*Radio Free Asia*, 7/22/2021)
** U.S. State Department: "Defectors Forcefully Repatriated from China Face Torture, Execution, and Sexual Assault" (PE News, 7/24/2021)

**In North Korea:**
If Kim Jong-Un Gets His Way, Pyongyang Will Have 242 Nuclear Weapons by 2027(*The National Interest*, 8/1/2021)
**In South Korea:**
Ruling party seeks to appease Kim Jong-un by ending Korean War (*One Korean Network*, 7/31/2021)
Seoul faces dilemma in upcoming joint military drill (*The Korea Times*, 8/1/2021)

**International:**
China's Xi Vows to 'Defend' and 'Develop' North Korea Ties as Kim Rallies Army(*Newsweek*, 7/30/2021)
Kim Yo Jong slams US-South Korea joint drills, casts doubt on leader summit (*NK News*, 8/1/2021)
N.K. leader's sister warns S. Korea-U.S. military exercise will cloud inter-Korean relations (*Yonhap*, 8/1/2021)
Second Michigan soldier identified among remains from North Korea (*ABC12 News*, 7/30/2021)
Unification official calls for delay in Korea-U.S. military exercises (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8/1/2021)
Vice unification minister plans to visit U.S. in September (*Yonhap*, 8/1/2021)
Wanna Know Why North Korea Is A Military Powerhouse? One Word: Russia (*The National Interest*, 7/31/2021)

**Top News:**

- Kim has indicated North Korea is in trouble 3 times this year. Observers have noted sealed borders, severe weather, and the presumed spread of Covid-19 have combined to create a 'gravely serious' humanitarian situation. Greg Scarlatoiu pointed out "It would be very difficult to believe that there are no Covid-19 cases in North Korea. Part of the reason may be the lack of testing kits. Also, the North Korean regime has tackled Covid-19 mostly as a political propaganda issue, and not a critical public health issue. The consequences could be devastating." (John Power, *South China Morning Post*)
- The international community is pushing for on-site inspections of North Korea's forced labor camps, where serious human rights abuses are being carried out. According to HRNK's new report, titled "North Korea's Long-term Prison-Labor Facility Kyo-hwa-so No. 8, Sŭngho-ri", there is a new labor camp located in Sungho District, Kangdong County, South Pyongan Province. HRNK Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu stated that there are between 1,500 and 2,000 prisoners at Sungho-ri, and that they are being tortured, sexually assaulted, and forced to work. (Albert Hong, *Radio Free Asia*)
- On July 14, reports indicated Chinese authorities repatriated about 50 North Korean defectors, and that they will likely be subject to torture, detention, summary execution, forced abortion, and sexual violence". Concerned about China's noncompliance with U.N. Convention agreements, Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of HRNK, stated "the South Korean government had the opportunity to rescue about 50 North Korean defectors, but turned a blind eye, allowing them to be repatriated to a place where they will face persecution". (Park Dong-hyeon and Kang Hye-jin, *PE News*)

**In North Korea:**

- Experts have estimated that North Korea likely possesses somewhere between 20-60 nuclear weapons. Others have projected that by 2027 North Korea could possess as many as 151 to 242 nuclear weapons. The Biden administration has outlined a denuclearization centered around partial sanctions relief in exchange for North Korea steps towards denuclearization. Experts argue that the United States should instead adopt a policy aimed at addressing the threat posed by a nuclear armed North Korea including by negotiating a freeze on plutonium and uranium nuclear activities at the Yongbyon facility. (Eli Fuhrman, *The National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's ruling Democratic Party (DP) is pushing ahead with a controversial approach to upend inter-Korean relations by passing a resolution calling for the end of the Korean War armistice agreement signed in 1953. The media already is speculating that President Moon Jae-in will try to make a final attempt at meeting with the North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un. This action drew strong criticism from conservatives, who view it as an attempt at appeasing the North that is bound to fail. (*One Korea Network*)
- Whether South Korea and the United States will carry out their annual summertime joint military exercises scheduled for August could affect the recent thawing of inter-Korean relations, according to North Korea watchers, Sunday. (Jung Da-min, *The Korea Times*)

**International:**

- Chinese President Xi Jinping has vowed to defend and develop his country's alliance with North Korea, according to a letter addressed to Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un. "Stressing that both China and the DPRK are the socialist states led by the Communist Parties," the Korean Central News Agency reported, "the message said under the new situation the Chinese side, together with the DPRK side, will contribute to accomplishing the cause of socialism in the two countries and make positive contributions to providing the peoples of the two countries." (Tom O'Connor, *Newsweek*)
- Kim Jong Un's sister said hopes of utilizing newly-reconnected hotlines rest on canceling joint drills. While a North-South leader summit remains unlikely in the near future, the US and South Korea must cancel their joint military exercises. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- The sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, Kim Yo-Jong warned Sunday that annual summertime military drills between South Korea and the United States will cloud the future of inter-Korean relations. "I surely see the military drill, which takes place at an important turning point like this, will become an unpleasant prelude to seriously hurting the will of the leaders of the North and South seeking to take the step toward rebuilding trust again and further clouding the path lying ahead for inter-Korean relations," Kim said. (Koh Byung-joon and Kim Boram, *Yonhap*)
- A second Michigan soldier is coming home for burial 71 years after a combat death in the Korean War. The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced Friday that the remains of 20-year-old Army Sgt. William E. Cavender of Leslie have been identified. North Korea turned over 55 boxes of remains from American military members after a summit between former President Donald Trump and North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un in 2018. Cavender was positively identified after further study at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. (ABC12)
- Contrary to the Blue House's denial of plans to postpone Korea-U.S. joint military exercises this month, a Unification Ministry official recently called for a delay in the exercises for the sake of inter-Korean and U.S.-North Korea dialogue. Though the official first cited the country's spike in Covid-19 infections as reason for the delay, he added that "engagement with the North can be actively pursued" following a delay in the military exercises. (Jeong Jinwoo, Park Hyunji and Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Vice Unification Minister Choi Young-jun plans to visit the United States next month to coordinate North Korea policy as South Korea seeks dialogue and reconciliation with North Korea after Pyongyang's restoration of inter-Korean communication lines, officials said Sunday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's considerable military strength would be utterly unsustainable were it not for a steady stream of Chinese economic subsidies. But there is an even more direct aspect of external aid to North Korea that goes largely unnoticed in contemporary defense commentary: North Korea's defense industry was built on, and is today predominantly composed of, Soviet arms and equipment. However, the USSR's Russian successor has been much less willing to act as a military beneficiary of Pyongyang. (Mark Episkopos, *The National Interest*)

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*Radio Free Asia* Article

**"Human Rights Abuses at North Korean Labor Camps are Serious"... "North Korea Must Allow International Monitors"**

Anchor: The international community is pushing for on-site inspections of North Korea's forced labor camps, where serious human rights abuses are being carried out. This is Albert Hong reporting.

The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, or HRNK, held a video conference to announce its most recent report, titled "North Korea's Long-term Prison-Labor Facility Kyo-hwa-so No. 8, Sŭngho-ri" on July 22nd.

According to the report, there is a new labor camp located in Sungho District, Kangdong County, South Pyongan Province, which is east of Pyongyang and near Pokchong-ni. The new labor camp, or kyohwaso, was located using satellite imagery and defectors' testimonies.

Joseph S. Bermudez Jr, a senior advisor at the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea and co-author of the report, explained that between 2007 and 2011, two new detention facilities, tentatively called Kondal-gon 1 and Kondal-gon 2, were built at Kyohawso No. 8 Sungho-ri.
Bermudez: "The fact that there is a wall built around the perimeter and guard posts everywhere, along with the single entrance, indicate that this is indeed a detention facility."
HRNK Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu stated that there are between 1,500 and 2,000 prisoners at Sungho-ri, and that they are being tortured, sexually assaulted, and forced to work.

Male prisoners are forced to work at cement factories and in limestone and coal mines near the facility, while female prisoners are forced to farm or affix eyelashes on dolls imported from China.

According to Scarlatoiu, prisoners must work for 13 hours and eat less than half of the government recommended 200 grams of food each day. He explained that there have been many deaths at the facility in the past three years.

Executive Director Scarlatoiu: "Think about the dolls you played with as a child. The eyelashes on those dolls could very well have been made through slave labor, or by the prisoners at a kyohwaso."

Scarlatoiu stressed that in order to identify the human rights abuses that are taking place in North Korea's kyohwaso and address them through countermeasures, on-site visits conducted by international monitoring organizations are desperately needed. Interest from the international community will not be enough.

Bermudez: “I hope we’ll have the opportunity to visit the kyohwaso in person. This way, we can identify the illnesses and injuries these prisoners have endured and hold North Korea responsible for these human rights violations. There must be justice.”

Article by RFA Reporter Albert Hong, Editor Yang Seong-won, Web Team Kim Sang-il

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PE News Article

**U.S. State Department: “Defectors Forcefully Repatriated from China Face Torture, Execution, and Sexual Assault”**

Concerned about China’s noncompliance with U.N. Convention agreements, Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), told Radio Free Asia on July 19th that “the South Korean government had the opportunity to rescue about 50 North Korean defectors, but turned a blind eye, allowing them to be repatriated to a place where they will face persecution”.

On July 21st, Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported that the U.S. State Department has expressed concern over China’s forced repatriation of about 50 North Korean defectors on July 14th. According to RFA, a spokesperson for the U.S. State Department said on July 20th that “we are deeply concerned about the plight of these North Korean refugees”. The spokesperson also pointed out that “North Korean defectors who are forcefully repatriated are generally subject to torture, detention, summary execution, forced abortion, and sexual violence”.

The spokesperson continued to urge China to fulfill its international obligations as a party to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol and the UN Convention Against Torture. Citing the testimonies of sources located in China, RFA reported that the Chinese authorities sent about 50 North Korean defectors back in a large bus on July 14th.

One source said, “the Dandong customs office was only open for a day, but the Chinese authorities immediately sent 50 defectors who had been imprisoned in Shenyang for more than a year back to North Korea”. Among these 50 defectors were North Korean soldiers and pilots who had served in the Air Force.

On the 19th, HRNK Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu told RFA that “the South Korean government had the opportunity to rescue about 50 North Korean defectors, but turned a blind eye, allowing them to be repatriated to a place where they will face persecution”.
After the RFA report came out, North Korean human rights groups in South Korea also issued statements condemning the Chinese and South Korean governments.

Dr. Lee Ae-ran, standing representative of the North Korean Human Rights Union, said that "the South Korean Constitution clearly stipulates that North Korean who escape from their country are South Korean citizens. Letting North Korean refugees be forcefully repatriated is fundamentally unconstitutional".

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Article Translations by Audrey Gregg, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Kathy Yu, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250813152043/https://mailchi.mp/049d79b4f60e/hrnk-news-items-the-north-korean-regime-has-tackled-covid-19-mostly-as-a-political-propaganda-issue-and-not-a-critical-public-health-issue?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, August 2, 2021**

## Cheong Wa Dae says inter-Korean hotlines should be kept

**In North Korea:**
High-ranking North Korean military official executed for calling Kim Jong Un's special order "unrealistic" (*Daily* NK, 8/2/21)
Mysterious spot and bandage appear on back of Kim Jong Un's head (NK *News*, 8/2/21)
N.K. state media reveals footage of ICBM blasting off from mobile launcher (*Yonhap*, 8/2/21)
N. Korea blames U.S. again for anti-gov't rallies in Cuba (*Yonhap*, 8/2/21)
N. Korea slams human rights group for criticizing China's forced return of defectors(*Yonhap*, 8/2/21)
North Korea denies report that 50 escapees forcibly repatriated from China (NK *News*, 8/2/21)
North Korean trade hits 30-year low amid sanctions, COVID-19 pandemic: report(NK *News*, 8/2/21)
Trading company officials in N. Hamgyong Province arrested for making and smuggling drugs (*Daily* NK, 8/2/21)
**In South Korea:**
S.Korea says no decision on joint U.S. military drills, but exercises should not create N.Korea tension (*Reuters*, 8/2/21)
South Korea's ruling party divided on whether to favor drills or diplomacy (NK *News*, 8/2/21)
**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
(LEAD) Cheong Wa Dae says inter-Korean hotlines should be kept (*Yonhap*, 8/2/21)

DP chief insists joint military drills proceed as planned amid calls for suspension(*Yonhap*, 8/2/21)
Kim Yo-jong dials up pressure over joint drill (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8/2/21)
Seoul seeks video calls with North Korea days after reconnecting hotlines (*NK News*, 8/2/21)
South Korea seeks to improve ties despite North's threat (*AP News*, 8/2/21)
Top nuclear envoys of S. Korea, Japan hold phone talks on cooperation for peninsula peace (*Yonhap*, 8/2/21)
Unification ministry stresses wise, flexible approach to joint military drills after N. Korea's warning (*Yonhap*, 8/2/21)

**In North Korea:**

- A high-ranking military cadre was reportedly executed for the crime of criticizing North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's recent "special order" to supply food to the people as "unrealistic." (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un appeared with a dark spot on the back of his head during public activities last week — the latest health-related issue Kim has faced in recent years. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea has revealed a video clip of what appears to be an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) blasting off from a transporter erector launcher (TEL), raising questions over whether Pyongyang has boosted its capability in recent years or fabricated the footage. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea on Monday denounced the United States again for meddling in internal affairs in Cuba by instigating anti-government demonstrations and unrest in the Caribbean country. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea on Monday slammed an international human rights group for criticizing China's repatriation of defectors, calling the group a "villainous human rights plot organization." (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's foreing ministry on Monday appeared to reject claims by Human Rights Watch (HRW) and others that China forcibly repatriated North Korea escapees, accusing the international nonprofit of being "anti-China" and spreading a "rumor." (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- North Korea's trading activity hit its lowest level in over three decades last year due to sanctions and COVID-19 control measures, according to a new report from a South Korean state-funded agency. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- North Korean authorities have reportedly arrested workers at the Unha General Trading Company branch in Onsong County, North Hamgyong Province, for allegedly manufacturing and smuggling drugs to achieve their foreign currency quota. (Jong So Yong, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea said on Monday no decision has been made on its joint military exercises with the United States but they should not create tension, after North Korea warned the

South against holding the exercises amid signs of a thaw in relations. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)

- The U.S. and South Korea have not yet determined the "schedule, scale and means" of their upcoming joint drills and the two allies will make a decision on it together, South Korea's defense ministry spokesperson Boo Seung-chan said on Monday. (Won Gi-Jung, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korea Relationship:**

- The office of President Moon Jae-in stressed the need Monday for the two Koreas to maintain their direct communication channels. (*Yonhap*)
- The head of the ruling Democratic Party (DP) on Monday urged South Korea and the United States to proceed with their annual summertime military exercise as planned, despite North Korea's latest warning that the drills will complicate future inter-Korean ties. (*Yonhap*)
- Kim Yo-jong, the sister of North Korea's leader, warned Sunday that annual summertime military exercises by Seoul and Washington could undermine inter-Korean relations, putting South Korea in a bind over the drills once again. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea sent a document to North Korea requesting discussions on an inter-Korean video call system, a few days after the two sides reconnected hotlines, the unification ministry said on Monday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- South Korea said Monday it'll keep pushing to improve ties and resume talks with rival North Korea, despite the North's threat to rekindle animosities if Seoul holds its summertime military drills with the United States. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)
- South Korea's chief nuclear envoy, Noh Kyu-duk, held phone talks with his Japanese counterpart, Takehiro Funakoshi, on Monday to discuss cooperation to foster lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula, the foreign ministry said. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea will deal with the issue of joint military drills with the United States in a "wise and "flexible" manner so as to not heighten tensions on the Korean Peninsula, the unification ministry said Monday after North Korea warned against such exercises. (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250813152951/https://mailchi.mp/91accab9636c/hrnk-news-itemscheong-wa-dae-says-inter-korean-hotlines-should-be-kept?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Tuesday, August 3, 2021

**Top News:**
INDISPENSABLE: U.S. Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea (*HRNK YPWP*, 8/3/21)

**In North Korea:**
Restoration of inter-Korean liaison hotlines requested by Kim Jong-un: NIS (*Yonhap*, 8/3/21)
N. Korea answers S. Korea's calls via radio hotline (*Yonhap*, 8/3/21)
Kim Yo-jong dials up pressure over joint drill (*Joong Ang Daily*, 8/3/21)
North Korea may be preparing to repatriate some workers from China (*Daily NK*, 8/3/21)
North Korea produces new vanity vlogs in social media propaganda comeback (*NK News*, 8/3/21)
North Korea to reportedly require three-month quarantine period for 3-5 years (*NK News*, 8/3/21)
North Korea planning to operate border disinfection complex within weeks: NIS (*NK News*, 8/3/21)
Mystery plaster on Kim Jong-un's head reignites speculation about North Korea leader's health (*Telegraph*, 8/3/21)
North Korea warns of torrential rain after weeks of drought (*UPI*, 8/3/21)
Seoul: North Korea releases army rice reserves amid shortage (*Washington Post*, 8/3/21)
**In South Korea:**
Ruling party reaffirms S. Korea-U.S. military exercises should go ahead (*Yonhap*, 8/3/21)
Ruling party split over North's objection to joint drill (*Joong Ang Daily*, 8/3/21)
Police detain three for carrying out orders from North (*Joong Ang Daily*, 8/3/21)
'Moon should not cave to NK's bullying' (*Korea Herald*, 8/3/21)
Foreign minister requests ASEAN's constructive role in Korean peace process(*Korea Herald*, 8/3/21)
**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Blinken to urge ASEAN members to fully implement U.N. sanctions on N. Korea: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 8/3/21)
North Korea wants US to allow fuel, metal trade to restart talks - South Korea lawmakers (*The Korea Times*, 8/3/21)
N.Korea criticises Britain for plan to deploy warships in Asia (*Reuters*, 8/3/21)
N.Korea wants sanctions eased to restart talks with U.S., S.Korea says (*Reuters*, 8/3/21)

**Top News**

- HRNK Research Intern Michelle Dang writes on the vital need for the Biden Administration to follow through on its promise to install a new U.S. Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea. (Michelle Dang, *HRNK YPWP*)

**In North Korea:**

- The recent restoration of long-severed communication hotlines between Seoul and Pyongyang was initiated at a request by North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, South Korea's spy agency said in a parliamentary briefing Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)

- North Korea answered South Korea's calls via a radio hotline on Tuesday for the first time since all fixed communication lines between the two sides were restored last week, officials said. (*Yonhap*)
- Kim Yo-jong, the sister of North Korea's leader, warned Sunday that annual summertime military exercises by Seoul and Washington could undermine inter-Korean relations, putting South Korea in a bind over the drills once again. (Sarah Kim, *Joong Ang Daily*)
- North Korean authorities recently ordered workplaces employing North Koreans workers or traders in China to report lists of employees who missed work due to sickness or who have abandoned their places of employment. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea's social media propaganda operations have made a resurgence in recent weeks after going mostly quiet late last year, resuming months after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called on the nation's propagandists to regroup and improve their messaging abroad. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean authorities have said that all goods entering the DPRK will soon need to be quarantined for three months, an experienced Chinese trader wrote on July 27, warning that the requirement will likely be in place for the next three to five years. (Chad O'Carroll, Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea plans to begin operating a disinfection complex under construction near the China-DPRK border sometime this month to resume cross-border trade, a South Korean lawmaker said on Tuesday, relaying information he received from a briefing with the country's intelligence agency. (Jeongmin Kim, Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- Kim Jong-un has appeared in public with a large plaster on the back of his head, sparking fresh speculation over the North Korean dictator's health. It comes as the country faces a growing food crisis, with officials releasing emergency military rice reserves. (Daniel Capurro, *Telegraph*)
- North Korea said the country must prepare for typhoons and potential flooding in August after weeks of record-high temperatures that may have damaged crops. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- North Korea is releasing emergency military rice reserves as its food shortage worsens, South Korea's spy agency said Tuesday, with a heat wave and drought reducing the country's supply. (Hyung-Jin Kim, *Washington Post*)

**In South Korea:**

- The chief policymaker of the ruling Democratic Party (DP) reaffirmed Tuesday that South Korea and the United States should conduct joint military exercises this month as planned. (*Yonhap*)
- Leaders of the ruling Democratic Party (DP) said a joint military exercise with the U.S. must take place as planned, though some within the party raised concerns about the reaction from the North. (Ser Myo-Ja, *Joong Ang Daily*)
- The police on Monday detained three people for having executed orders from North Korea to organize public protests against the government's plan to procure U.S.-built stealth fighter jets. (Ser Myo-Ja, *Joong Ang Daily*)
- South Korea should not suspend military exercises with the US to rebuild ties with North Korea because Pyongyang is not interested in peace efforts like Seoul, experts said Tuesday. (Choi Si-young, *Korea Herald*)

- South Korean Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong on Tuesday requested the 10-member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations play a "constructive role" in resolving the issues on the Korean Peninsula. (Ahn Sung-mi, *Korea Herald*)

**Inter-Korea Relationship:**

- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken plans to call for full implementation of U.N. Security Council sanctions on North Korea when he meets with his counterparts from the 10-member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), a State Department spokesman said Monday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea wants international sanctions banning its metal exports and imports of refined fuel and other necessities lifted in order to restart denuclearization talks with the United States, South Korean lawmakers said on Tuesday. (*The Korea Times*)
- North Korea criticised Britain on Tuesday for a plan to permanently deploy two warships in the Asia-Pacific region this year, calling it a "provocation." (*Reuters*)
- North Korea wants international sanctions banning its metal exports and imports of refined fuel and other necessities lifted before it restarts denuclearisation talks with the United States, South Korean lawmakers said on Tuesday. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)

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Prepared by David Shaw, HRNK Research Intern

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**Wednesday, August 4, 2021**

## A Policy of Public Diplomacy with North Korea; "Three people die every day from torture and malnutrition at the Sŭngho-ri prison"

**Top News:**

A Policy of Public Diplomacy with North Korea (*Belfer Center*, 08/2021)

** "Three people die every day from torture and malnutrition at the Sŭngho-ri long-term prison-labor facility in North Korea" (*Chosun-Ilbo*, 07/26/2021)

** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**

Crises mount in North Korea as major flooding follows drought, food shortages (*NK News*, 08/04/2021)

Kim Jong Un's mysterious head bandage fuels further speculation over his health(*The Washington Post*, 08/03/2021)

Kim Jong-un's fear about hallyu (*The Korea Times*, 08/04/2021)
N.K. officials attend Russian Embassy's exhibition, resume in-person diplomacy(*Yonhap*, 08/04/2021)
North Korea criticizes British fleet of warships ahead of port call in South (*Korea Times*, 08/04/2021)
North Korea Orders Military Officials to Host 'Soldiers' Day' Dog Meat Feast (RFA, 08/03/2021)
North Korea Is Willing to Talk, but First It Wants Fuel, Suits and Liquor (*The Wall Street Journal*, 08/03/2021)
Tracing Freedom to a Pair of Jeans (*The New York Times*, 08/04/2021)
Video footage shows grasshopper merchants scattering in the face of a government crackdown (*Daily* NK, 08/04/2021)

**In South Korea:**
DP chief says reopening Kaesong complex will help build trust among 2 Koreas, U.S. (*Yonhap*, 08/04/2021)
Ex-audit agency chief declares bid to run for president (*The Korea Herald*, 08/24/2021)
FM Chung calls for ASEAN's support for peninsula peace efforts (*Yonhap*, 08/04/2021)
Moon urges caution in planning South Korea-US military drills (*The Korea Herald*, 08/24/2021)
Seoul refutes spy chief's claim that Kim Jong Un requested hotline reconnection (*NK News*, 08/04/2021)
South Korea says North wants sanctions lifted before restarting nuclear talks (*The Hill*, 08/03/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
How about a McDonald's in Kaesong? (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/04/2021)
Joint drill with U.S. becomes object of tug of war (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/04/2021)
Kim Yo-jong causes internal conflicts in South over joint military drill with US (*The Korea Times*, 08/04/2021)
N.Korea wants sanctions eased to restart U.S. talks -S.Korea lawmakers (*Reuters*, 08/03/2021)
North Korea wants sanctions eased on metal, fuel and 'liquor and suits' to restart US talks (*The Guardian*, 08/03/2021)
**International:**
Any decision on U.S.-S. Korea joint military drill will be result of coordination: Pentagon (*Yonhap*, 08/04/2021)
Buyers Reject North Korean Banknotes Featuring Kim Il Sung Sold as Souvenirs in China (RFA, 08/03/2021)
U.S. will not accept nuclear N. Korea despite N. Korean ambitions: U.S. official (*Yonhap*, 08/04/2021)

**Top News**

- The North Korean nuclear threat remains one of the most persistent and complex foreign policy issues facing the United States today. The growing risk that the Kim

regime's nuclear and missile programs pose to the U.S. underscores the need to consider every tool of statecraft available to pursue the United States' policy objectives on North Korea. (Jieun Baek, *Belfer Center*)

- On July 22nd, the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) held a Zoom virtual conference to announce their latest report, "North Korea's Long-term Prison-Labor Facility *Kyo-hwa-so* No. 8, *Sŭngho-ri* - Update." A North Korean defector, referred to within the report as "i39," revealed, "Although the North Korean government is supposed to provide each prisoner with at least 200 grams of food per day, they only provided prisoners with 100 grams of food." (Kim Myong-song, *Chosun-Ilbo*)

**In North Korea:**

- Major flooding washed away homes, roads and bridges along North Korea's east coast in recent days, according to NK News analysis of satellite imagery, as DPRK state television said that some areas have already seen up to 320 millimeters of rain (12.5 inches). The floods come on the heels of a monthlong heat wave and drought in July that state media said damaged crops and may threaten upcoming harvests. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un admitted in June that the country was facing a "food crisis" after suffering typhoon damage last year. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea's Kim Jong Un was recently photographed out in public with what appeared to be a large green spot on the back of his head, once again fueling speculation over his health — long a topic of global fascination. Another image showed him sporting an oblong bandage over the blemish. (Jennifer Hassan, *The Washington Post*)
- In North Korea, the spread of South Korean pop culture, widely known as hallyu, is nothing new. But to a large extent it has gained traction, particularly since the global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic last year. According to media reports, an increasing number of North Koreans are enjoying South Korean TV dramas, movies and music as they spend more time at home amid fears about the coronavirus. Undoubtedly, hallyu is becoming more popular in the North than ever before. (Park Yoon-bae, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korean officials attended a photo exhibition held by the Russian Embassy in Pyongyang and highlighted their cooperative ties, state media showed Wednesday, signaling Pyongyang's resumption of in-person diplomacy suspended due to the coronavirus. The photo exhibition was held Tuesday "to mark the 20th anniversary of Chairman Kim Jong-il's historic visit to Russia and the 10th anniversary of his visit to the Siberian and the Far Eastern regions," according to the Korean Central News Agency. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea slammed a British decision to deploy the HMS Queen Elizabeth aircraft carrier in Asia ahead of the carrier's port call in South Korea later this month. Pyongyang's foreign ministry published on Tuesday a statement from Choe Hyon-do, a researcher with the North Korea-Europe Association, accusing Britain of escalating tensions in the region. (*Korea Times*)
- At a time when food is scarce, officials must provide expensive canine flesh to soldiers. North Korea has ordered its armed forces to hold a day of appreciation for the country's

soldiers, complete with a feast of dog meat believed to boost their stamina, with military officials made to foot the bill, sources in the military told RFA. (RFA)

- North Korea has a few demands to restart nuclear talks with the U.S., according to South Korea's spy agency. Kim Jong Un's regime wants sanctions restrictions relaxed to allow exporting minerals and importing more refined fuel. (Timothy W. Martin, *The Wall Street Journal*)
- Last May, in one of those reports that seemed both unbelievable and yet too tantalizing to ignore, there was a flurry of excitement in numerous Western newspapers over the supposed news that Kim Jong-un, the autocratic ruler of North Korea, had issued an official edict banning ripped or skinny jeans. Though it turned out to be a hyperbolic version of outdated news, three defectors who live in South Korea said the idea of jeans as symbolizing a kind of rebellion for a changed future for those living in North Korea is not as far-fetched as it might seem. (Hahna Yoon, *The New York Times*)
- Daily NK recently obtained video footage of so-called "grasshopper merchants" urgently scattering away from where they were seated to avoid a crackdown by North Korean authorities. The video footage, which was taken last month and obtained through a Daily NK source in China, begins in a busy downtown street in Hyesan, Yanggang Province. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's ruling party chairman suggested Wednesday reopening the long-shuttered inter-Korean industrial complex in North Korea's border town of Kaesong will help build trust among the two Koreas and the United States, and ease tension on the Korean Peninsula. "Reopening the Kaesong Industrial Complex is very critical to building trust between the U.S., South Korea and North Korea," Rep. Song Young-gil, head of the ruling Democratic Party (DP), said during a session of the Aspen Security Forum, being held online by the U.S.-based Aspen Institute. (*Yonhap*)
- Choe Jae-hyeong, former chief of the national audit agency, formally declared his presidential bid Wednesday, vowing to restore the principles of a free market economy and ensure fair job opportunities for young people. "As one of South Korea's citizens, I decided I can't just sit and watch the country crumble," Choe, the former chairman of the Board of Audit and Inspection (BAI), said, announcing his bid to run in the March 9 presidential election. (*The Korea Herald*)
- Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong has asked the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to back Seoul's efforts to foster a lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula after the recent restoration of inter-Korean communication lines, his office said Wednesday. Chung made the remarks during Tuesday's virtual ASEAN Plus Three foreign ministerial meeting, which also involved China and Japan. Until Friday, the minister is set to join a series of virtual sessions led by the regional bloc, including the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). (*Yonhap*)
- President Moon Jae-in on Wednesday directed the defense minister to discuss the S. Korea-US military drills "carefully" by taking into consideration multiple factors, a hint there could be possible changes ahead for the exercises. According to the presidential

office, Moon told Minister of National Defense Suh Wook to look at the drills with the US while "taking into account factors including the pandemic." (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)

- The two Koreas reached the decision to reconnect inter-Korean hotlines through mutual agreement, not due to a unilateral request from the DPRK, South Korea's Ministry of Unification (MOU) said Wednesday, refuting a claim made by the country's intelligence chief the previous day. (Jeong Min Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korea says it wants international sanctions lifted before it will restart nuclear talks with the United States. South Korean lawmakers who were briefed by Park Jie-won, the head of South Korea's main intelligence agency, said on Tuesday that North Korea has demanded sanctions prohibiting metal exports and imports of refined fuel and other necessities to be lifted before the country and the U.S. reconvene nuclear talks, Reuters reported. (Mychael Schnell, *The Hill*)

**Inter-Korea Relationship:**

- Opening a McDonald's in the Kaesong industrial complex could send a "strong signal" to Pyongyang that the U.S. won't invade North Korea, Song Young-gil, head of the Democratic Party (DP) told an international security forum Tuesday. "My opinion is that reopening the Kaesong industrial complex is a very critical point to building trust between the United States, South Korea and North Korea," Song said during a virtual session of the 2021 Aspen Security Forum. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Remarks made by Park Jie-won, director of the National Intelligence Service (NIS), indicating that Pyongyang would take "corresponding measures" if joint military drills are halted and a ban on luxury good imports to the North is lifted have stirred controversy. Park told the National Assembly's intelligence committee Tuesday, "I understand the importance of the Republic of Korea-U.S. exercises, but it is necessary to consider being flexible in regard to the joint drills in order to maintain the momentum of dialogue and achieve the larger picture of North Korea's denuclearization." (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The government is experiencing an internal divide over the joint summertime military exercises between Seoul and Washington, following a warning from North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's powerful sister that they would damage inter-Korean relations. Opinions are divided even within the ruling party and different government departments, over whether to delay, cancel or scale down the regular exercises or to go ahead with them as originally planned from the middle of the month. (Da-Min Jung, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korea wants international sanctions banning its metal exports and imports of refined fuel and other necessities lifted before it restarts denuclearisation talks with the United States, South Korean lawmakers said on Tuesday. Pyongyang has also demanded the easing of sanctions on imports of luxury goods, including fine liquors and suits, the lawmakers said after being briefed by Park Jie-won, head of the South Korea's National Intelligence Service (NIS). (*Reuters*)
- North Korea wants a raft of international sanctions eased – including on imports of luxury items such as high-class liquors and suits – before it will restart denuclearisation

talks with the United States, South Korean lawmakers have said. Pyongyang has also called for sanctions banning its metal exports and imports of refined fuel and other necessities to be lifted, the lawmakers said on Tuesday after being briefed by Park Jie-won, head of the South Korea's National Intelligence Service (NIS). (*The Guardian*)

**International:**

- Any decisions on military exercises between South Korea and the United States will be made jointly by the allies, a Pentagon spokesman said Tuesday, reiterating that their alliance remains strong. John Kirby, spokesman for the U.S. Department of Defense, also highlighted the U.S. commitment to the alliance and the joint security of the Korean Peninsula. **(**Byun Duk-kun**,** *Yonhap*)
- North Korean banknotes bearing founder Kim Il Sung's image displayed by street vendors in Chinese cities near the countries' shared border are finding no buyers, with both Chinese and North Korean passersby calling them worthless, sources in China said. (Jeong Yon Park, RFA)
- The United States will never accept a nuclear-armed North Korea despite the latter's apparent ambition to become a nuclear state, a ranking U.S. intelligence official said Tuesday. Sydney Seiler, national intelligence officer for North Korea at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, argued the North's true intention, at least for the time being, may be to be accepted as a nuclear state. (*Yonhap*)

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Chosun-Ilbo Article

**"Three people die every day from torture and malnutrition at the Sŭngho-ri long-term prison-labor facility in North Korea"**
By Kim Myong-song

There are allegations that prisoners are subjected to forced labor, violence, and torture at the Sŭngho-ri long-term prison-labor facility, located near Pyongyang, North Korea. There are also testimonies that inmates die every day from severe malnutrition and torture while being forced to work to "earn foreign currency."

On July 22nd, the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) held a Zoom virtual conference to announce their latest report, "North Korea's Long-term Prison-Labor Facility Kyo-hwa-so No. 8, Sŭngho-ri - Update." A North Korean defector, referred to within the report as "i39," revealed, "Although the North Korean government is supposed to provide each prisoner with at least 200 grams of food per day, they only provided prisoners with 100 grams of food." She stated, "(most of) the deaths in detention were due to malnutrition." The former prisoner added that "the rice porridge they received was regularly contaminated with mouse droppings" and that "around three people died every day (during the three years I was imprisoned) at the Sŭngho-ri prison-labor camp." "Deceased prisoners were taken to the crematory, and they [the

North Korean authorities] broke the bones of the inmates' bodies like origami in order to make their corpses fit," she also recalled.

According to the report, male prisoners were forced to work in limestone and coal mines and cement factories near the prison-labor camp. It was also said that female prisoners were forced to engage in agricultural labor or manufacture eyelashes for dolls imported from China for 13 hours a day. The finished dolls were then exported back to China. Testimony also revealed that the export unit was tortured when it failed to reach its quota to connect 12,000 eyelashes per day. As punishment, inmates were forced to kneel on the parts of the prison floor heated by a coal mine near the facility. This would cause their skin to burn within five minutes.

Meanwhile, the Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU) recently published their "2021 White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea," a report compiled from in-depth interviews with 50 North Korean defectors who escaped to South Korea. In the report, collected testimonies stated that "watching South Korean movies in North Korea is punished more severely than being caught doing 'bingdu' (North Korean slang for crystalline methamphetamine)." The White Paper also said that, "the number of 'kotjebi' (wandering child beggars) decreased when accommodation facilities were constructed around 2015, but increased in Nampo and Chongjin from 2019 due to sanctions against North Korea."

Reporter: Myong-Song Kim (Chosun-Ilbo)
Translated by: Irene Kang (HRNK)

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Prepared by Juheung Kim, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
http://web.archive.org/web/20250813153521/https://mailchi.mp/32c75f0fcaf3/hrnk-news-itemsa-policy-of-public-diplomacy-with-north-koreathree-people-die-every-day-from-torture-and-malnutrition-at-the-sngho-ri-prison?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, August 5, 2021**

## Women's Rights in North Korea

**Top News:**
Women's Rights in North Korea (HRNK YPWP, 08/05/2021)

**In North Korea:**

Former Korean ambassador to Somalia tells the real story of Mogadishu (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/05/2021)
N. Korea puts major rice-producing areas on high alert against flooding (*Yonhap*, 08/05/2021)
North Korean border patrol cadre arrested for abetting remittances from overseas(*Daily* NK, 08/05/2021)
North Korea COVID-19 vaccines face obstacles to delivery, UNICEF says (*UPI*, 08/05/2021)
North Korea's Public Security Gets Lessons From China (*The Diplomat*, 08/05/2021)
Video footage shows grasshopper merchants scattering in the face of a government crackdown (*Daily* NK, 08/05/2021)

**In South Korea:**
FM Chung restates commitment to resuming dialogue with N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 08/05/2021)
Seoul may finance aid groups working with 'vulnerable' North Koreans (*NK News*, 08/05/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Calls for delaying allied military drills gain traction inside ruling party (*Korea Herald*, 08/05/2021)
Unification ministry hopes for N. Korea to respond to offer for discussion on virtual conference system (*Yonhap*, 08/05/2021)

**International:**
Blinken reaffirms U.S. commitment to denuclearization of Korean Peninsula (*Yonhap*, 08/05/2021)
North Korea accuses U.S. gov't of plotting to stoke unrest in Cuba (*UPI*, 08/05/2021)
Strong U.S.-Korea alliance enables diplomatic engagement with N. Korea: Adm. Aquilino (*Yonhap*, 08/05/2021)

**Top News:**

- HRNK's Seshni Moodley contends that women's rights violations are a global issue. Women are continuously disadvantaged in many spheres of everyday life. There are various social, political and cultural constraints that hamper the promotion of women's rights in North Korea. Amongst the various barriers that are hampering the promotion of gender equality in North Korea, the most prominent are the laws of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), as these laws enforce the idea that women play an inferior role in society. (Seshni Moodley, *HRNK YPWP*)

**In North Korea:**

- Former Korean ambassador to Somalia Kang Shin-sung recalls vividly the day when he waved the Korean flag with all his might in front of the Italian Embassy in Somali capital Mogadishu in 1991, with a group of North Korean diplomats. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- North Korea has been taking flooding prevention measures in major farming areas in the country's southwest in an effort to minimize damage to grain production amid forecasts of heavy downpours. Experts say that North Korea needs to produce around 5.5 million tons of food every year to feed its population. A think tank in Seoul earlier said the North could face a food shortage of around 1.3 million tons this year. (*Yonhap*)
- A cadre with North Korea's border patrol in Yanggang Province was arrested in mid-July for abetting remittances from overseas, Daily NK has learned. A Daily NK source in North Korea said Monday that the political guidance officer of the Yanggang Province-based Third Company, Second Battalion, 252nd Regiment, 25th Brigade of the border patrol — a man in his 30s identified by his family name of Pak — was arrested on July 13. He suffered the indignity of being stripped of his epaulets in front of the company, then shackled and taken away in a military truck. Until February of this year, Pak reportedly used his soldiers to collect money from China and transfer it to remittance agents, or "brokers," despite the closure of the Sino-North Korean border due to COVID-19. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- Covid-19 vaccines for North Korea are being delayed because the Kim Jong Un regime has not completed requirements for their deployment, according to a new press report. A spokesperson for the United Nations Children's Fund said that Pyongyang has not been making the required arrangements after agreeing to import about 1.7 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines, Voice of America's Korean service reported Thursday. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- North Korean authorities have reportedly received training on the organizational systems of China's public security apparatus and have decided to implement some of what they have learned. Ostensibly, the move aims to protect North Korean lives and property by adopting China's advanced disaster response capabilities, but it also appears aimed at bolstering Pyongyang's ability to put down unrest by force. (Seulkee Jang, *The Diplomat*)
- The video footage, which was taken last month and obtained through a Daily NK source in China, begins in a busy downtown street in Hyesan, Yanggang Province. Everyone appears to be engaging in commerce. Then, suddenly, the merchants begin staring in a certain direction. They realize agents of the city branch of the Ministry of Social Security have begun a crackdown. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong has reiterated South Korea's commitment to resuming dialogue with North Korea during a regional forum, his office said Thursday, amid lingering uncertainty over the prospects of nuclear diplomacy with Pyongyang. Chung stressed Seoul's steadfast focus on dialogue efforts during Wednesday's virtual ministerial session of the East Asia Summit (EAS), as the North's blunt warning against the planned South Korea-U.S. military exercise eclipsed the hopes for dialogue that reemerged after last week's restoration of inter-Korean communication lines. (*Yonhap*)

- The South Korean government is reviewing ways to promote private humanitarian aid work on North Korea, Seoul's unification ministry said Thursday, some 10 days after the two sides renewed contact via key inter-Korean hotlines. (Jeongmin Kim, NK News)

**Inter-Korea Relationship:**

- Calls for postponing the regular joint summertime military drills between South Korea and the United States were gaining traction inside the ruling party Thursday amid growing hope for the resumption of inter-Korean dialogue. (*Korea Herald*)
- The unification ministry on Thursday expressed hope that North Korea will respond to South Korea's recent offer for discussion on setting up a virtual conference system for inter-Korean talks. South Korea made a proposal to discuss the matter with North Korea days after the two Koreas restored cross-border communication lines last week that had been severed for more than a year after North Korea cut them off in protest of anti-Pyongyang leaflets sent from the South. North Korea has yet to provide answers to the offer. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken underscored his country's commitment to the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a regional forum attended by the top diplomats of 17 other countries, including South Korea. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean state media on Thursday blamed the United States for fomenting anti-government protests in Cuba last month, saying that Washington was "clearly" behind the demonstrations. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- The strong U.S.-South Korea alliance helps ensure peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula while it also allows the allies to engage with the recalcitrant North with strength and confidence. Adm. John Aquilino noted North Korea was "certainly a security challenge" that faces the U.S. in the region. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Damian Reddy, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
http://web.archive.org/web/20250813153908/https://mailchi.mp/b218653ddc42/hrnk-news-itemswomens-rights-in-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, August 6, 2021**

## A Policy of Public Diplomacy with North Korea

**Top News:**

A Policy of Public Diplomacy with North Korea (*Harvard University Belfer Center*, 8/12/21)

**In North Korea:**
N.K. paper lauds Kim for holding timely party meetings to tackle challenges (*Yonhap*, 8/6/21)
Two North Korean soldiers die after suffering from COVID-19 symptoms (*Daily* NK, 8/6/21)
North Korea claims to have developed device to prevent myopia in children (*Daily* NK, 8/6/21)
North Korea floods damage more than 1,000 homes, state media reports (*The Guardian*, 8/6/21)
North Korea conducted tests at Yongbyon nuclear facility, report says (UPI, 8/6/21)
Report: North Korean teens caught listening to BTS song (UPI, 8/6/21)
Thousands evacuated in N Korea as heavy rain destroys houses (AP, 8/6/21)
North Korea's Vaccination Capabilities: Implications for a COVID-19 Campaign (*38 North*, 8/5/21)

**In South Korea:**
FM Chung to take part in ARF meeting on peninsula, regional security (*Yonhap*, 8/6/21)
Moon's party wants bold action on N. Korea: report (*Korea Herald*, 8/6/21)
FM to court ASEAN countries amid thaw with N. Korea (*Korea Herald*, 8/6/21)
U.S., South Korea discuss humanitarian aid for North Korea (UPI, 8/6/21)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Activists charged with espionage for allegedly taking N. Korean orders to stage anti-weapons protests (*Korea Herald*, 8/6/21)
South Korea's Moon dismisses link with activists charged with spying for North(*Reuters*, 8/6/21)

**International:**
Top diplomats of S. Korea, U.S. agree on efforts for N.K. engagement in phone talks (*Yonhap*, 8/6/21)
Biden gov't likely to seek incremental sanctions relief for N. Korea: CRS report(*Yonhap*, 8/6/21)
U.S., S. Korea hold director-level talks on N. Korea: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 8/6/21)
UNICEF helping North Korea prepare supply chains for COVID vaccines (NK *News*, 8/6/21)
Top Diplomats of US, South Korea Discuss Ways to Engage North Korea (VOA, 8/6/21)
Opinion: South Korea wants Biden to get serious about North Korea (Washington Post, 8/5/21)

**Top News:**

- HRNK Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu will join as part of a panel event commemorating the report launch for "A Policy of Public Diplomacy with North Korea: A Principled and Pragmatic Approach to Promote Human Rights and Pursue Denuclearization." This report is based on the insights of a working group of ten members that convened throughout the spring of 2021 to produce policy recommendations on North Korea for the Biden Administration. (*Harvard University Belfer Center*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea's official newspaper on Friday praised leader Kim Jong-un for convening meetings of the ruling Workers' Party at appropriate times in an effort to overcome challenges, such as the pandemic and typhoons. (*Yonhap*)
- Two soldiers from the Eighth Corps of the North Korean army who were quarantined together in a military medical ward with symptoms of COVID-19 have reportedly died. The two soldiers perished when they failed to receive treatment during a recently-held workshop (July 24-27) for military commanders and political cadres. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean media recently claimed that the country has developed an alarm device for eyesight protection as part of efforts to prevent myopia in children.(Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- More than 1,100 homes in North Korea were damaged, thousands of people evacuated and farms and roads washed away after days of heavy rains brought flooding, state media reported. (*The Guardian*)
- North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear facility was up and running several times between late 2020 and February, according to a Japanese press report Friday.(Elizabeth Shin, UPI)
- North Korean high school students who were caught singing and dancing to a song by South Korean boy band BTS are under investigation, according to a South Korean press report Thursday. (UPI)
- Heavy rains in northeastern North Korea have destroyed or flooded 1,170 houses and forced 5,000 residents to evacuate to safety, North Korea's state TV reported. (AP)

**In South Korea:**

- Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong was set to attend a regional security forum via video link Friday, as South Korea seeks to secure global support for its renewed push to resume dialogue with North Korea following last week's restoration of inter-Korean communication lines. (*Yonhap*)
- The South Korean government wants the US to endorse its initiative to rebuild ties with North Korea, the Washington Post said Friday, citing the leader of South Korea's ruling Democratic Party. (Choi Si-young, *Korea Herald*)
- South Korean Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong is expected to meet virtually with Southeast Asian foreign ministers Friday and ask for their support in building lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula, as the two Koreas seek to repair ties over recently reconnected hotlines. (Choi Si-young, *Korea Herald*)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and South Korean Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong held a phone conversation on ways to engage with North Korea, including the prospect of humanitarian aid, both of their offices said Friday. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- Although the Democratic People's Republic of Korea appears to have succeeded in preventing the coronavirus from entering its borders, the drastic isolation measures have hurt its economy and taken a toll on the vulnerable population. As the pandemic shows no sign of abating, the country will need to explore a path to reopening while minimizing the risk to its people. Vaccines, while not a panacea, are indispensable to any

strategy for reopening. However, questions have been raised about the country's ability to maintain the cold temperatures required for storage and transport and implement a national vaccination program. (Shafik Nagi, etc., *38 North*)

**Inter-Korea Relationship**:

- Four South Korean activists have been charged with espionage for allegedly taking orders from Pyongyang and staging a series of protests opposing Seoul's plan to procure US-built stealth fighter jets, sources said Friday. (*Korea Herald*)
- South Korea's presidential office on Friday dismissed opposition lawmakers' calls for explanations on a relationship between President Moon Jae-in and three activists who were arrested on charges of coordinating with North Korean agents. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)

**International:**

- Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken agreed to make continued efforts to engage with North Korea and foster lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula during their phone talks Friday, the foreign ministry said. (*Yonhap*)
- The U.S. government appears to envision offering partial sanctions relief in exchange for North Korea taking denuclearization steps but such "incremental" sanctions relief would be difficult to move forward without congressional support, a congressional report showed Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- U.S. and South Korea officials met this week to coordinate efforts to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the State Department said Thursday.(Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) is helping North Korea prepare supply chains needed to store, distribute and administer COVID-19 vaccines within specific temperature ranges, the U.N. agency's spokesperson told NK News on Thursday, amid questions about the country's "technical preparedness" for a mass inoculation campaign. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and South Korean Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong have discussed efforts to engage with North Korea, including the prospect of humanitarian aid, their offices said Friday. (VOA)
- The Biden administration hasn't been devoting much effort to the North Korea issue, perhaps calculating that entering new negotiations with Kim Jong Un is a high-risk, low-reward gambit. But South Korea, America's ally, can't afford to overlook any opening for peace talks, no matter how dim the prospects for success. Right now, Seoul is trying to tell Washington there's an opportunity that both governments should seize. But the Biden team doesn't seem to be listening. (Josh Rogin, *Washington Post*)

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Prepared by David Shaw, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250813154336/https://mailchi.mp/4947687ecf09/hrnk-news-items-a-policy-of-public-diplomacy-with-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, August 7, 2021**

# North Korea could give entire population single COVID-19 shot in less than 10 days

**In North Korea:**
KCTV: Floods in North Korea destroy hundreds of homes (*UPI*, 08/06/2021)
N. Korea continues to pursue nuclear, missile capabilities despite hardship: report (*Yonhap*, 08/07/2021)
N. Korea could give entire population single COVID-19 shot in less than 10 days: 38 North (*Yonhap*, 08/07/2021)
North Korea developing nuclear, missile programs in 2021 -U.N. report (*Reuters*, 08/06/2021)
North Korea Is Starving, Kim Jong-un Admits (*The National Interest*, 08/06/2021)
North Korean weightlifters' Olympic absence provided opening for other athletes (*NK News*, 08/07/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Anti-weapons activists in South dealt with North Korea for years (*UPI*, 08/06/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
S. Korea's foreign minister reiterates calls for N. Korea's return to dialogue (*Yonhap*, 08/07/2021)

**International:**
Flags to be at half-staff to honor WVa soldier killed in war (*AP News*, 08/06/2021)
U.S., South Korea discuss humanitarian aid for North Korea (*UPI*, 08/06/2021)
Will China Save North Korea From Famine and Collapse? (*The National Interest*, 08/06/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea could, in theory, give its entire population a single COVID-19 vaccine shot in less than 10 days if given time to ensure the integrity of its cold chain and make other preparations, a U.S. website monitoring the reclusive state has said. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has continued to develop its nuclear and ballistic missile programs this year despite poor food and economic conditions exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, a news report said Friday, citing an unpublished report by a U.N. sanctions committee. (*Yonhap*)

- North Korea was a perennial medalist in international weightlifting. Then COVID-19 happened. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- North Korea continued developing its nuclear and ballistic missile programs during the first half of 2021 in violation of international sanctions and despite the country's worsening economic situation, according to an excerpt of a confidential United Nations report seen by Reuters on Friday. (Michelle Nichols, *Reuters*)
- In his July 27 address commemorating the anniversary of the Korean War's 1953 armistice, North Korean supreme leader Kim Jong-un acknowledged that the coronavirus pandemic had created a "crisis of hardship" in the country. (Trevor Filseth, *The National Interest*)
- Torrential rains in North Korea have flooded more than 1,170 homes and led to the evacuation of 5,000 people, state media said, after a week of warnings from the regime's State Hydro-Meteorological Administration. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

**In South Korea:**

- The South Korean defendants charged with following the orders from the North Korean government to prevent Seoul's acquisition of U.S. weapons were found to have received dozens of directives from Pyongyang, according to a South Korean press report. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

**Inter-Korea Relationship:**

- South Korea's foreign minister has renewed calls for North Korea to return to dialogue during a regional security forum, his office said Saturday, as Seoul seeks to resume nuclear diplomacy with Pyongyang following the recent restoration of inter-Korean communication lines. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- U.S. and West Virginia flags on state-owned facilities are to be flown at half-staff Friday in honor of a West Virginia soldier killed in the Korean War, Gov. Jim Justice ordered. (*AP News*)
- Kim working to preserve his country's stability and the regime's survival amid another "arduous march," meaning a potential famine, increased aid from and trade with China is his best place to start. (Doug Bandow, *The National Interest*)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and South Korean Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong held a phone conversation on ways to engage with North Korea, including the prospect of humanitarian aid, both of their offices said Friday. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)

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Prepared by Ella Startt, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250813154600/https://mailchi.mp/6b2153268f31/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-korea-could-give-entire-population-single-covid-19-shot-in-less-than-10-days?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Sunday, August 8, 2021

# North Korea in Crisis, Deploying Armed Guards at Farm Fields and Operating Quarantine Camps

**Top News:**
North Korea in Crisis, Deploying Armed Guards at Farm Fields and Operating Quarantine Camps (*Maeil Business News*, 8/1/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Kim Jong Un orders disaster relief days after major flooding hits North Korea (*NK News*, 8/7/2021)
North Korea Is Starving, Kim Jong-un Admits (*National Interest*, 8/6/2021)
North Korea: Kim Jong-un calls for relief in flood-hit areas (*BBC News*, 8/8/2021)
N.K. leader orders full state support for flood recovery efforts (*Yonhap*, 8/8/2021)
N.Korea's Kim calls for relief campaign in rain-hit areas (*Reuters*, 8/8/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
S. Korea's foreign minister reiterates calls for N. Korea's return to dialogue (*Yonhap*, 8/7/2021)

**International:**
China highlights North Korean food crisis with call to lift UN sanctions (*South China Morning Post*, 8/7/2021)
Countering China and North Korea's mad dash for missiles (*East Asia Forum*, 8/7/2021)
Joint drill going ahead despite Pyongyang's bluster (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8/8/2021)
Seoul, Washington eye aid to engage Pyongyang (*The Korea Herald*, 8/8/2021)

**Top News:**

- North Korea is facing serious food shortages due to international sanctions, the novel coronavirus infection (COVID-19), and floods caused by typhoons. Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, said he had heard from North Korean defectors who have connections with North Korea that respiratory infections were clearly on the rise. "This is anecdotal evidence provided via word of mouth, but it would be very difficult to believe that there are no COVID-19 cases in North Korea," he said. (*Maeil Business News*)

**In North Korea:**

- A provincial military commission of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) held an emergency meeting earlier this week to discuss countermeasures for destructive flooding in the region, according to state media on Sunday, as North Korean leader Kim

Jong Un delivered instructions for disaster relief apparently without visiting the area. (Chaewon Chung, NK News)

- In his July 27 address commemorating the anniversary of the Korean War's 1953 armistice, North Korean supreme leader Kim Jong-un acknowledged that the coronavirus pandemic had created a "crisis of hardship" in the country. The supreme leader's comments marked the third time since the beginning of the year that he has described a negative state of affairs within the country. (Trevor Filseth, *National Interest*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has called on the military to carry out relief work in areas recently hit by heavy rains, state media report. More than 1,000 homes were damaged and about 5,000 people evacuated after the ensuing flooding, state television reported earlier this week. (*BBC News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has ordered full state support for recovery efforts in a flood-hit eastern province as the country convened an emergency meeting of the provincial military commission to come up with recovery plans, state media reported Sunday. (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has mobilised the military to carry out relief work in areas recently hit by heavy rains, state media said on Sunday, amid concerns over an economic crisis and food shortage. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)

**Inter-Korea Relationship:**

- South Korea's foreign minister has renewed calls for North Korea to return to dialogue during a regional security forum, his office said Saturday, as Seoul seeks to resume nuclear diplomacy with Pyongyang following the recent restoration of inter-Korean communication lines. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- China has renewed calls for international sanctions on North Korea to be lifted and accused the United States of stoking regional tensions with talks to hold military exercises with the South. (Teddy Ng and Minnie Chan, *South China Morning Post*)
- China and North Korea have accumulated a significant arsenal of ballistic missiles. These missiles could target the United States and allied military bases in a Taiwan Strait confrontation. The United States and its allies could respond in kind and deploy missiles arrayed against Chinese and North Korean assets to establish deterrence. They could expand missile defences in the Asia Pacific region to mitigate the threat. (Jaganath Sankaran, *East Asia Forum*)
- Seoul will hold its summertime joint military exercise with Washington starting Aug. 16 as planned, but with fewer troops taking part because of the COVID-19 situation, said military sources here Sunday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea and the US are discussing the possibility of offering humanitarian assistance to North Korea as a way to engage the recalcitrant regime, but it remains to be seen whether Pyongyang is ready to return to dialogue. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)

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Maeil Business News Article

**"North Korea in Crisis, Deploying Armed Guards at Farm Fields and Operating Quarantine Camps"**

Hong Kong media: "North Korea is experiencing a serious humanitarian crisis due to lockdown, extreme weather, and COVID-19."

Experts pointed out that North Korea is facing a very serious humanitarian crisis and that the international community must act without delay to prevent a disaster.

On August 1st, Hong Kong's South China Morning Post (SCMP) cited North Korea experts who reported that North Korea is in great trouble and is experiencing a very serious humanitarian crisis. They pointed out that Kim Jong-un has made remarks on internal difficulties, including food shortages, three times this year.

"North Korea's default disposition is bombast and bragging. If they say they are in trouble, they usually mean it," said Dan Chung of Crossing Borders, a non-governmental organization that provides humanitarian aid to North Korean refugees.

Tim Peters, Director of Helping Hands Korea, a non-governmental organization that supports North Korean refugees, said, "We seldom agree with Kim Jong-un, but Kim Jong-un's remarks hinting that coronavirus and sanctions have a huge impact coincides with our analysis that North Korea is facing an incredibly complex crisis due to the coronavirus pandemic."

North Korea is facing serious food shortages due to international sanctions, the novel coronavirus infection (COVID-19), and floods caused by typhoons.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) have estimated that the annual grain shortage in North Korea will reach 860,000 tons from November last year to October this year in a joint report released on the 30th of last month, 'Early warning of emergency food insecurity: Outlook for August to November 2021.'

"North Korea has officially announced that there are no COVID-19 cases, but many experts are skeptical of such an announcement," the SCMP said.

In addition, the SCMP said, "Moreover, as diplomats and staff of relief organizations left North Korea due to shortages and harsh sanctions, it has become more difficult to gather information about the already difficult situation in North Korea."

Peters said he had heard through sources inside North Korea of a "very serious humanitarian situation" in North Korea, including operating emergency quarantine camps with minimal food supplies and armed guards deployed in rice fields and cornfields.

"Every indication I've heard so far points to enormous stress on the North Korean population due to the direct and indirect impacts of the prolonged pandemic," he said.

He added that, despite the official denial by the authorities, it is very likely that the spread of COVID-19 in North Korea is high, and it is very worrying given the widespread situation of malnutrition and the poor health care system.

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea said he had heard from North Korean defectors who have connections with North Korea that respiratory infections were clearly on the rise.

"This is anecdotal evidence provided via word of mouth, but it would be very difficult to believe that there are no COVID-19 cases in North Korea," he said.

On the other hand, a US non-profit organization official, who requested anonymity, said that North Korea is taking extreme measures and does not see the spread of COVID-19 in North Korea and that North Korean farmers are more resilient than most think.

However, he said that his organization has not had people inside the country since 2019.

Dr. Nazanin Zadeh-Cummings, associate director of the Center for Humanitarian Leadership at Deakin University in Australia, said that whether the COVID-19 is prevalent in North Korea or not, the COVID-19 control policy would have had a negative impact on the safety and well-being of North Koreans.

Dan Chung of Crossing Borders, pointed out, "If the world waits to verify that this is actually true, it might be too late and tens of thousands of lives might be lost."

Translated by Doohyun Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Madeline Hieneman, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250813155015/https://mailchi.mp/dc0a6a8d5cd4/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-in-crisis-deploying-armed-guards-at-farm-fields-and-operating-quarantine-camps?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, August 9, 2021**

# North Korea: the failure of 'maximum pressure' on Kim's isolated regime; Don't Beg North Korea to Talk

**In North Korea:**
Factory manager in Musan Iron Mine arrested for embezzling four tons of diesel over several years (*Daily NK*, 8/9/2021)
Kim Jong-un orders military to help as floods hit North Korea (*The Telegraph*, 8/9/2021)
North Korea complains about 'hostile' foreign pressure at ASEAN forum (*NK News*, 8/9/2021)
North Korea ignores some areas, favors others in latest flood recovery efforts (*NK News*, 8/9/2021)
North Korea maintains it's COVID-free as it prepares vaccine supply chains (*NK News*, 8/9/2021)
N.K. paper says current hardships from pandemic, flood damage as challenging as war (*Yonhap*, 8/9/2021)
North Korea: the failure of 'maximum pressure' on Kim's isolated regime (*Financial Times*, 8/9/2021)
Sources: Rice in food distributions is from outside of North Korea (*Daily NK*, 8/9/2021)
What If Kim Jong-un Dies? It Could Mean Nuclear War. (*National Interest*, 8/9/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Activists charged with espionage allegedly used local newspaper for N. Korean propaganda (*Yonhap*, 8/9/2021)
More South Koreans oppose delaying joint exercises despite North Korea concerns (UPI, 8/9/2021)
North-South spies suspected of converting thousands of dollars to won (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8/9/2021)
Seoul seeks ambiguous approach to North Korea before Korea-US military drills (*Korea Times*, 8/9/2021)
S. Korea decides to conduct military exercise with U.S. as planned despite N.K. warning (*Yonhap*, 8/8/2021)
South-U.S. training to begin ahead of summertime joint military exercise (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8/9/2021)
S.Korea and U.S. to begin preliminary military exercises on Tuesday (*Reuters*, 8/9/2021)
South Korean ministries gearing up for North Korea humanitarian assistance (*NK News*, 8/9/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

Don't Beg North Korea to Talk (*National Interest*, 8/9/2021)
S. Korea to explore all possibilities of helping N.K. with recovery from flood damage: unification ministry (*Yonhap*, 8/9/2021)

**International:**
Blinken says open to 'different options' in renewed call for N.K. dialogue: official (*Yonhap*, 8/9/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- The manager of the March 23 Factory in the Musan Iron Mine was recently sacked and arrested on charges of embezzling supplies. In a phone conversation with Daily NK on Thursday, a source in North Hamgyong Province said the manager, a man in his 50s identified by his family name of Pak, was arrested by the Musan branch of the Ministry of Social Security in mid-July. "He is being charged with having sold about four tons of diesel over several years," he said. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has ordered the military to carry out relief efforts in areas flooded by excessive rainfall as the reclusive country joins a growing list of extreme weather hotspots this summer. (Nicola Smith, *The Telegraph*)
- A senior North Korean official attended the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) last Friday, complaining of "hostile" pressure from other countries and stressing Pyongyang's efforts to improve its economy. (Chaewon Chung and Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and state media have ignored some areas of the country devastated by last week's flooding while favoring others for immediate relief, *NK News* analysis of satellite imagery and state media shows, as the northeast region braces for heavy storms again this week. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea tested 674 people for COVID-19 around the last week of July and found no positive cases, the country told the World Health Organization (WHO), as a U.N. agency reported that it is working with the country to prepare supply chains for future vaccine distribution. (Bryan Betts, *NK News*)
- North Korea's main newspaper said Monday that the country is faced with war-like challenges from a triple whammy of the prolonged coronavirus pandemic, global sanctions and recent flooding. (*Yonhap*)
- Pyongyang is finding inventive ways to get around sanctions and keep developing its weapons programme. (Edward White, Kang Buseong, and Song Jung-a, *Financial Times*)
- North Korean authorities recently provided rice to government cadres and their families, but multiple sources inside the country say the rice originated from outside the country. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- Amid speculation on Kim Jong-un's health, Doug Bandow explores the implications of a potential succession crisis in North Korea. "Given the lack of an obvious heir apparent, a succession fight would likely be brutal and unpredictable. Heads of security agencies might make a grab for the brass ring," writes Bandow. (Doug Bandow, *National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- Four South Korean activists charged with espionage were found to have used a local online newspaper to disseminate N. Korean propaganda and to update Pyongyang about investigations against them, sources said Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- About half of South Koreans in a recent poll said they are opposed to any postponement of planned joint exercises. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- Four civic activists suspected of having received at least $20,000 from North Korea in 2019 were also discovered to have converted almost $24,800 into won between 2017 and 2018, according to a warrant application filed by police and the National Intelligence Service (NIS) on July 27. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Seoul is resorting to an ambiguous approach to Pyongyang over its upcoming combined military exercises with the U.S., by consulting with Washington on offering humanitarian aid to the North. (Nam Hyun-woo, *Korea Times*)
- South Korea has tentatively decided to conduct the upcoming military exercise with the United States as planned, albeit in a scaled-back manner due to the pandemic, sources said Sunday, despite North Korea's warning the maneuvers will cast a pall over inter-Korean relations. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the United States will hold a four-day crisis management staff training starting Tuesday ahead of next week's summertime joint military exercise. Korean and U.S. troops will conduct the crisis management staff training (CMST) through Friday to prepare for various local provocations and terrorism, said military sources Monday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea and the United States will begin preliminary military drills on Tuesday, the Yonhap news agency reported on Monday, despite North Korea's warning that the exercises would dent signs of an inter-Korean thaw. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- South Korea's Moon Jae-in administration may be turning to private and nonprofit groups to provide humanitarian assistance to North Korea as severe weather, natural disasters and COVID-19 lockdowns batter the DPRK. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korea Relationship:**

- Doug Bandow writes on inter-Korean relations under the Moon Jae-in administration. "Moon Jae-in deserves credit for having pushed so assiduously to bring the North into civilized international society, such as it is. However, to have any chance of success he must accept the possibility, even probability, of failure." (Doug Bandow, *National Interest*)
- South Korea will try to help North Korea with recovery efforts in a flood-hit eastern province while leaving all possibilities open as to how to provide assistance, the unification ministry said Monday. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken showed a willingness to consider different "options" and "possibilities" with North Korea in a renewed call for its return to dialogue during a regional forum last week, a Washington official said Monday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Madeline Hieneman, HRNK Research Intern

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**Tuesday, August 10, 2021**

# Why The Number of North Korean Refugees in the U.S. Is So Low; Kim Yo Jong condemns U.S.-South Korea joint military exercises

**Top News:**
Why The Number of North Korean Refugees in the United States Is So Low (HRNK YPWP, 8/10/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Kim Jong-un's powerful younger sister accuses South Korea and the US of planning invasion (*The Telegraph*, 8/10/2021)
Kim Jong Un's Sister Threatens to Bolster Military After Being Ignored by U.S. (*Wall Street Journal*, 8/10/2021)
Kim Yo Jong condemns U.S.-South Korea joint military exercises (UPI, 8/10/2021)
Kim Yo-jong keeps banging drum against drill (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8/10/2021)
Kim Yo Jong promises nuke buildup, demands US military leave South Korea (*NK News*, 8/9/2021)
North Hamgyong Province organizes inspection team to supervise product quality (*Daily NK*, 8/10/2021)
N.K. leader's sister slams S. Korea, U.S. over joint military exercise (*Yonhap*, 8/10/2021)
North Korea reopens Pyongyang locations to foreigners, easing COVID restrictions (*NK News*, 8/9/2021)
North Korea says South, US should 'pay' for military drills (*Al Jazeera*, 8/10/2021)
North Korea says U.S., South Korea will face new threats for military drills (*Reuters*, 8/10/2021)
N. Korea Slams US-South Korea Drills, Promises Own Weapons Buildup (VOA, 8/10/2021)
North Korea threatens to boost nuclear program ahead of drills between U.S. and 'perfidious' South (*Washington Post*, 8/10/2021)
N Korea vows stronger attack capabilities over allied drills (AP, 8/10/2021)
North Korea's Curious COVID-19 Strategy (*Foreign Policy*, 8/9/2021)
Report: North Korea likely to reopen land trade routes with China (UPI, 8/9/2021)

Thousands Evacuate Homes as Heavy Rains Flood North Korea (*Radio Free Asia*, 8/9/2021)
'Treacherous': Kim Jong-un's sister condemns South Korea-US war games (*The Guardian*, 8/10/2021)

**In South Korea:**
The South Korean People Have Given Up on Denuclearization (*National Interest*, 8/9/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
After NK warning, South on watch for response to drills (*Korea Herald*, 8/10/2021)
Inter-Korean communication channels in normal operation despite N.K. threats (*Yonhap*, 8/10/2021)
North Korea ignores calls from South Korea weeks after hotlines reconnected (*NK News*, 8/10/2021)
North Korea not picking up hotlines after warning South, U.S. over joint drills (*Reuters*, 8/10/2021)
N.K. refuses to answer calls from S. Korea in apparent protest against military exercise (*Yonhap*, 8/10/2021)

**International:**
Pentagon declines comment on N.K. statement on exercises (*Yonhap*, 8/10/2021)
Senior diplomats of S. Korea, U.S. hold phone talks after N.K. berates allied exercise (*Yonhap*, 8/10/2021)

**Top News:**

- Eric Ryu, HRNK Research Intern, writes on the lack of North Korean refugees in the United States and calls upon the U.S government to accept more North Korean refugees. (Eric Ryu, *HRNK YPWP*)

**In North Korea:**

- Kim Jong-un's powerful younger sister lashed out at South Korea and the United States on Tuesday, warning that their upcoming joint military drills would spur Pyongyang to fine-tune its preemptive strike capabilities. (Nicola Smith, *The Telegraph*)
- Kim Jong Un's sister vowed North Korea would amp up its national defense and deterrence after joint U.S.-South Korea military exercises that she demanded be canceled appeared likely to begin next week. (Timothy W. Martin, *Wall Street Journal*)
- Kim Yo Jong, the sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, called joint military exercises between South Korea and the United States a "war rehearsal" and warned that they would inflame tensions on the peninsula in a statement released in state-run media on Tuesday. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- Kim Yo-jong, the North Korean leader's sister, lambasted Seoul and Washington Tuesday for their annual summertime joint military exercise and demanded the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Korean Peninsula. Through an English-language statement in the

North's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), Kim expressed her "deep regret at the perfidious behavior of the south Korean authorities," warning that a "a dear price should be paid." (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's sister, Kim Yo Jong, warned the U.S. that Pyongyang will further build up its military and nuclear weapons in response to joint U.S.-South Korea military drills expected to go ahead this month. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- The authorities have reportedly organized an inspection team in North Hamgyong Province to supervise the quality of all items produced in the province with the goal of improving quality standards. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)
- The sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un on Tuesday slammed South Korea and the United States for going ahead with joint military exercises, denouncing the drills as the "most vivid expression" of Washington's hostile policy toward Pyongyang. (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea will allow foreigners to visit 22 locations in Pyongyang that were previously off-limits due to COVID-19 measures, the Russian Embassy in the DPRK said Monday, after waves of diplomats and aid workers left the capital in recent months due to stifling pandemic restrictions. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- South Korea and the United States should pay a price for going ahead with annual joint military drills due to begin this week, Kim Yo Jong, a powerful North Korean official and leader Kim Jong Un's sister says. (*Al Jazeera*)
- South Korea and the United States will face even greater security threats for going ahead with scheduled joint military drills due to begin this week, Kim Yo Jong, a powerful North Korean official and sister of leader Kim Jong Un said on Tuesday. (Hyonhee Shin and Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- North Korea has condemned U.S.-South Korea military exercises that begin this week, saying the drills show the need for Pyongyang to develop more of its own military capabilities. (William Gallo, VOA)
- The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un warned Tuesday that Pyongyang could move to bolster its nuclear and conventional weapons program in response to a major joint military exercise between the United States and South Korea set for this month. (Min Joo Kim and Simon Denyer, *Washington Post*)
- The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ripped South Korea for proceeding with military exercises with the United States she claimed are an invasion rehearsal and warned Tuesday that the North will work faster to strengthen its preemptive strike capabilities. (Kim Tong-hyung, AP)
- Despite the mounting difficulties, North Korea has shown no urgency to inoculate its population, sending out mixed signals about vaccines that could potentially ease its predicament. (Pratik Jakhar, *Foreign Policy*)
- North Korea is likely to reopen suspended land-based trading routes with China after months of delays, according to a Japanese press report. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- Rainy season flooding has forced thousands of North Koreans to evacuate their homes and entire cities went without power as rising waters damaged buildings in distant parts

of the country, sources in the region told RFA. (Albert Hong, Jeong Yon Park, Leejin Jun, Eugene Whong, *Radio Free Asia*)

- The influential sister of the North Korean ruler, Kim Jong-un, has called Seoul authorities "treacherous" over the South's joint military exercises with the US, warning the two allies would face greater security threats as a result. (*The Guardian*)

**In South Korea:**

- A recent survey released by the Korea Institute for National Unification found that over 90 percent of South Koreans no longer believe that North Korean denuclearization is a realistic outcome. Furthermore, over half of the respondents were unconcerned with North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons, while over 80 percent believe the nuclear program does not influence their lives at all. (Jaejoon Kim, *National Interest*)

**Inter-Korea Relationship:**

- The presidential office is monitoring North Korea for a further reaction to the South Korea-US military exercises as the four-day preliminary drills took off Tuesday, a senior Cheong Wa Dae official said in response to Pyongyang's accusation earlier in the day that the drills threatened peace. (Choi Si-young, *Korea Herald*)
- Inter-Korean communication lines were in normal operation Tuesday despite an angry statement that North Korea issued against joint military exercises between South Korea and the United States, officials said. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea on Tuesday afternoon did not answer calls from South Korea made through key inter-Korean hotlines reconnected just two weeks ago, South Korea's unification and defense ministries confirmed to *NK News*. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korea did not answer routine calls on inter-Korean hotlines on Tuesday, South Korea said, hours after a senior official in Pyongyang warned the South and the United States over annual joint military drills set to begin this week. (Hyonhee Shin and Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- North Korea did not answer daily phone calls from South Korea via liaison and military hotlines on Tuesday afternoon, hours after the sister of the North's leader Kim Jong-un blasted Seoul and Washington for going ahead with combined military exercises. (Choi Soo-hyang and Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)

**International:**

- The Pentagon declined comment Monday on a statement that the sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un issued to denounce joint military exercises between South Korea and the United States. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Senior diplomats of South Korea and the United States held phone talks Tuesday, the foreign ministry said, after the sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un slammed the allies for pressing ahead with their combined military exercise. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Madeline Hieneman, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250813155402/https://mailchi.mp/bd66035769eb/hrnk-news-items-why-the-number-of-north-korean-refugees-in-the-us-is-so-low-kim-yo-jong-condemns-us-south-korea-joint-military-exercises?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, August 11, 2021**

## NK says it will make S. Korea, U.S. feel serious security crisis every minute; NK constructs "specialized quarantine facilities"

**In North Korea:**
Heavy rain pummels northern region of North Korea: state media (*Yonhap*, 8/11/2021)
N. Korea allows foreigners to visit 22 more facilities in Pyongyang: Russian embassy(*Yonhap*, 8/11/2021)
N. Korea Returns to 'Old Playbook' of Confrontation, Dialogue (VOA, 8/11/2021)
N. Korea's state TV airs Tokyo Olympics footage days after closing ceremony(*Yonhap*, 8./11/2021)
North Korea creates 'central command team' for flood damage recovery (*NK News*, 8/11/2021)
North Korean TV airs first Tokyo Olympics coverage days after closing ceremony(*NK News*, 8/20/2021)
North Korea orders construction of "specialized quarantine facilities" (*Daily*NK, 8/11/2021)
Sanctioned North Korean oil tanker reappears after more than yearlong absence (*NK News*, 8/11/2021)

**In South Korea:**
[Kim Seong-kon] Out of the past and into the future (*Korea Herald*, 8/11/2021)
World Forestry Congress to take root in Seoul next year (*Korea JoongAng Daily*,8/11/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
A big backfire (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8/10/2021)
Cheong Wa Dae: No secret deal behind reconnection of hotlines with N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 8/11/2021)
Ex-USFK heads worry about politicization of joint drills (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8/11/2021)
Hackers use malicious PDFs on inter-Korean issues as lure (*NK News*, 8/10/2021)
N. Korea refuses to answer S. Korea's hotline calls for 2nd day (*Yonhap*, 8/11/202)
N Korea repeats threat as US says joint drills are defensive (*AP News*, 8/11/2021)
N.Korea warns of 'security crisis' if U.S., S.Korea escalate tensions (*Reuters*, 8/10/2021)
North Korea issues warning to US and South Korea over 'hostile acts' (*CNN*, 8/11/2021)
North Korea leaves hotline with South unanswered during military drills (*BBC*, 8/10/2021)
North Korea likely to ditch inter-Korean military agreement (*Korea Times*, 8/11/2021)

North Korea refuses to answer inter-Korean hotline calls for second straight day (*NK News*, 8/10/2021)
North Korea warns of 'security crisis' over joint drills (UPI, 8/11/2021)
North's threats rise, hotlines not being answered (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8/11/2021)
Tensions rise as another top DPRK official blasts Seoul over US-ROK drills (*NK News*, 8/10/2021)
The sister speaks (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8/10/2021)

**International:**
Canadian businessman Michael Spavor sentenced by Chinese court to 11 years in prison for spying (CNN, 8/11/2021)
Chinese Ambassador Xing calls for concerted efforts for peninsula peace at 'complicated juncture' (*Yonhap*, 8/11/2021)
Chinese court sentences DPRK consultant Michael Spavor to 11 years in prison (*NK News*, 8/11/2021)
Group of Chinese residents asked to return to China as border remains closed to trade (*Daily*NK, 8/11/2021)
N. Korea says it will make S. Korea, U.S. feel serious security crisis every minute(*Yonhap*, 8/11/2021)
NK warns of 'serious security crisis,' upping threats against Seoul, Washington(*Korea Herald*, 8/11/2021)
North's spies allegedly on NIS's radar for over 2 decades (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8/11/2021)
U.S. Army Report: North Korea's Military Thinking Is Still Stuck in the 1950s(*National Interest*, 8/10/2021)
US harbors no hostile intent toward North Korea: State Department (*NK News*, 8/10/2021)
U.S. holds no hostile intent toward N. Korea: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 8/11/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Heavy rain battered northern parts of North Korea on Wednesday, the North's state-run broadcaster said, after the country's eastern province was hit with torrential rain earlier this month. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has allowed foreigners to visit 22 more facilities in Pyongyang, Russia's Embassy in Pyongyang said, in an apparent move to ease coronavirus-prompted restrictions for access to public areas. (*Yonhap*)
- In June, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ordered his country to prepare for both "dialogue and confrontation" with the United States. It didn't take long for the U.S. and its ally South Korea to experience both sides of that directive. (William Gallo, VOA)
- UK vs. Chile women's football match airs in low quality, without commentary and three weeks late. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea's state-run TV station began to air recorded footage of the Tokyo Olympic Games two days after its closing ceremony. (*Yonhap*)

- North Korean officials are operating a "central command team" to handle "state emergency measures" such as flood damage relief, state media reported on Tuesday. The announcement came after devastating floods hit the country's northeast last week, destroying more than 1,000 houses and forcing 5,000 people to evacuate. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korean authorities have reportedly ordered the construction of specialized quarantine facilities to manage suspected cases of COVID-19, even as the country continues to claim to have had no confirmed cases so far. (Seulkee Jang, *DailyNK*)
- Appearance of the ship near Nampho suggests sanctioned ship-to-ship oil transfers, experts say (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- The past is something from which we should learn valuable lessons, not something to have a grudge about or to misuse for the sake of personal vendettas. Regrettably, however, our left-wing politicians are hopelessly obsessed with past resentments, thereby preventing South Korea from soaring into the future. (Kim Seong-kon, *Korea Herald*)
- Some call it the Olympics of forestry, said Choi Byeong-am, minister of the Korea Forest Service, speaking of the World Forestry Congress that Korea will host with the United Nations in Seoul next year. (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**Inter-Korea Relationship:**

- Kim Yo-jong, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's sister and vice director of the Workers' Party, has issued a statement denouncing the South Korea-U.S. joint military exercise after a preliminary drill to prepare for the computer-simulated Combined Command Post Training (CCPT) began Tuesday. The statement defining the drill as a "preparation for war" and a "betraying act" throws cold water on the possibility of resuming talks after the restoration last month of military communication lines between South and North Korea. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea did not answer South Korea's phone calls via liaison and military hotlines for the second consecutive day Wednesday, officials said, as Pyongyang is ramping up criticism against the South for going ahead with its summertime exercise with the United States. (*Yonhap*)
- Former four-star generals that served as commanders of the U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) were more disturbed by South Korean liberal lawmakers' calls to postpone the Seoul-Washington summertime military exercise than squawking by Pyongyang. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A recent cyber campaign against professionals working on inter-Korean issues shows that North Korean hackers continue to tailor their malware for highly specific targets, cybersecurity experts told NK News on Tuesday. (Nils Weisensee, *NK News*)
- The office of President Moon Jae-in dismissed an allegation Wednesday that it might have had a secret deal with North Korea for the reconnection of direct communication channels earlier this month. (*Yonhap*)

- North Korea on Wednesday repeated a threat to respond to U.S.-South Korean military exercises it claims are an invasion rehearsal, while the United States insisted the drills were “purely defensive in nature” to maintain the South’s security. (Kim Tong-Hyun, AP *News*)
- North Korea on Wednesday said South Korea and the United States missed a chance to improve relations and are risking a “serious security crisis” by choosing to escalate tensions as they conduct joint military drills. (Sangmi Cha, Josh Smith, Reuters)
- A senior North Korean official has denounced South Korea over its joint military exercises with the United States, which are due to begin this week, warning that such actions risked provoking "a serious security crisis." (Gawon Bae, Chandler Thornton, CNN)
- North Korea has failed to respond to phone calls from the South, just weeks after the two countries restored hotlines, officials in Seoul say. (*BBC*)
- A series of threats by North Korea regarding combined military exercises run by South Korea and the United States could lead to Pyongyang scrapping an inter-Korean military pact and demolishing South Korean facilities at the Mount Geumgang tourist resort, as a means to extract more concessions from Washington, according to diplomatic observers here. (Kang Seung-woo, *Korea Times*)
- Seoul's unification, defense ministries confirm lack of response as top DPRK officials rail against joint US-ROK drills (Chaewon Chung, Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- North Korea issued a warning in state media for the second day in a row over joint military exercises being held by South Korea and the United States, saying Seoul made a "dangerous choice" and cautioning that it will "pay dearly." (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- North Korea again slammed South Korea and the United States Wednesday for going ahead with their summertime joint military exercise, warning of a "serious security crisis" to follow. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Kim Yong Chol, North Korea’s senior official in charge of South Korea affairs, slammed Seoul on Wednesday morning for pushing ahead with planned U.S.-ROK military drills. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- North Korea’s demand for a suspension of the joint drill is nothing new. But it looks quite unusual this year. What I really don’t understand is our response to North Korea whenever it pressures South Korea to stop the drill. It is worth going back in chronological order. (Yeh Young-june, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- Spavor, a Beijing-based businessman who regularly traveled to North Korea, was sentenced after being found guilty of spying and illegally providing state secrets to foreign countries, the Dandong Intermediate People's Court said in a statement Wednesday. (Ben Westcott, CNN)
- North Korea on Wednesday slammed South Korea and the United States again for going ahead with its joint military exercise, warning it will make the allies feel a serious security crisis every minute. (*Yonhap*)

- A Chinese court sentenced Michael Spavor, a Canadian citizen and consultant on North Korean business issues, to 11 years in prison for spying, a charge that critics say is linked to a Beijing campaign to pressure Ottawa over its 2018 arrest of a Chinese business executive. Ottawa condemned the ruling against the Canadian citizen for its lack of 'fairness and transparency'. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- A source recently told Daily NK that a group of Chinese residents of North Korea who entered China last month via the Sino-Korean Friendship Bridge had asked the North Korean authorities to return to China when no signs emerged of renewed trade between the two countries. (Seulkee Jang, *DailyNK*)
- Chinese Ambassador to Seoul Xing Haiming called Wednesday for concerted efforts to foster peace on the Korean Peninsula at a "complicated" juncture amid renewed inter-Korean tensions over the ongoing South Korea-U.S. military drills. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea on Wednesday stepped up threats against Seoul and Washington, saying that it will give the allies “a serious security crisis” for hosting joint military drills. (Lee Ji-yoon, *Korea Herald*)
- The four people in Cheongju, North Chungcheong, currently under formal investigation by the National Intelligence Service (NIS) for allegedly working for North Korea, have been on the spy agency's radar for 21 years, raising questions on why it took so long to bring the group into custody. (Michael Lee, Kim Min-Joong, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- When North Korean and American soldiers last met in open battle, it was seventy years ago and the Communists only faced poorly trained American and South Korean conscripts armed with World War II weapons. Today they would face professional American soldiers and well-trained South Korea conscripts. (Michael Peck, *National Interest*)
- U.S. reiterates this month's joint drills with ROK are defensive in nature after Kim Yo Jong denounces exercises. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- The United States holds no hostile intent toward North Korea, a State Department spokesman said Tuesday, in reaction to a statement by North Korea denouncing the U.S. and South Korea over their joint military exercises. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Margaret Gillett, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250813160210/https://mailchi.mp/3637c7e4bd46/hrnk-news-items-nk-says-it-will-make-s-korea-us-feel-serious-security-crisis-every-minute-nk-constructs-specialized-quarantine-facilities?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Thursday, August 12, 2021

# NSC urges N. Korea not to escalate tensions over allies' defense drills; N. Korea unresponsive to S. Korea's hotline calls

**In North Korea:**
Amid food crisis, North Korea promotes elite homes with too much to eat (*NK News*, 8/12/2021)
As economy struggles, North Korea invokes self-reliance to inspire workers (*NK News*, 8/12/2021)
Kim Jong Un, in naming a successor, follows a similar precedent to Mao (*NK News*, 8/12/2021)
N.K. premier visits flood-hit areas, calls for speedy recovery efforts (*Yonhap*, 8/12/2021)
North Korea's hackers target South Korea's hacks (*Korea JoongAng Daily*,8/12/2021)
North Korea deploys military units to South Hamgyong Province for post-monsoon recovery operations (*Daily* NK, 8/11/2021)
North Korea to Impose Hard Labor Sentences for COVID-19 Gathering Violations(*Radio Free Asia*, 8/11/2021)
Violators of North Korea's quarantine protocols sent to "total control zones" (*Daily* NK, 8/11/2021)

**In South Korea:**
How North Korean Spies Posed as Defectors to Get Eyes on the South (*National Interest*, 8/12/2021)
NSC urges N. Korea not to escalate tensions over allies' defense drills (*Yonhap*, 8/12/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
N.K. envoy demands U.S. troops' withdrawal from S. Korea, denounces military drills as war rehearsal: TASS (*Yonhap*, 8/12/2021)
N. Korea unresponsive to S. Korea's hotline calls for 3rd day (*Yonhap*, 8/12/2021)

**International:**
Don't Doubt It: North Korean Naval Mines Could Wreck the U.S. Navy (*National Interest*, 8/12/2021)
N.Korean envoy calls for cooperation with Russia to counter United States (*Reuters*, 8/12/2021)
North Korea, U.N. agencies move forward with COVID-19 vaccine plans (UPI, 8/11/2021)
Pandemic demands revamped, inclusive international order (*Korea Herald*,8/12/2021)
U.S. says joint military exercise is defensive, holds no hostility toward DPRK(*Yonhap*, 8/12/2021)
U.S. draws line with concessions for North through military drills (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8/12/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean state media revealed in June that the country was going through a "food crisis" and that Kim Jong Un ordered his government to revive food distribution to alleviate the emergency situation. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Juche is being reemphasized in Kim Jong Un's North Korea. That's not a good sign for the North Korean economy. Recently under leader Kim Jong Un, North Korean media has reemphasized the official state ideology of Juche, or self-reliance, as a cornerstone of national pride and patriotic vigor. (Benjamin R. Young, *NK News*)
- When the new Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) rules became public in June, some North Korea analysts were puzzled to discover the new position of WPK first secretary, explicitly defined as immediate deputy to the leader Kim Jong Un. (Martin Weiser, *NK News*)
- North Korea's Premier Kim Tok-hun visited a flood-hit eastern province and called for speedy recovery efforts, state media reported Thursday, as the country ramps up its drive to prevent damage from heavy downpours. Kim inspected the damaged areas in South Hamgyong Province, including Yonggwang, Sinhung and Hongwon counties, and encouraged local residents and members of the North Korean army involved in the recovery campaign, the official Korean Central News Agency said. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea recently conducted numerous hacking attacks on prominent journalists from around 10 South Korean media outlets, according to a cyber-security source who spoke on the condition of anonymity. (Michael Lee, PARK Yong Han, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A source in South Hamgyong Province told Daily NK on Tuesday that authorities have deployed to recovery efforts all of the engineering units based on the province, including "those of the Army's 108th Training Camp and Seventh Corps, the Navy's East Sea Command and its subordinate flotillas and the Air Force's 2nd Division command and Toksan Airbase." (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea will impose hard-labor sentences on citizens who gather and dine in groups of more than three in violation of coronavirus quarantine rules, sources in the country told RFA. (Hyemin Son, *Radio Free Asia*)
- With North Korea reportedly locking up people who violate quarantine protocols in political prisons, a source has claimed that these inmates will ultimately spend the rest of their lives in the camps. (Moon Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- North Korea and South Korea recently restored their bilateral hotline, a move that was made after an exchange of letters between the leaders of North Korea and South Korea. However, that doesn't mean that there isn't still spying going on. NK News recently looked at how North Korea conducts its modern-day spying operations on South Korea. (Stephen Silver, *National Interest*)
- South Korea's top national security officials stressed Thursday that North Korea should refrain from taking actions to escalate tensions on the peninsula, according to Cheong Wa Dae. They analyzed North Korea's move in connection with the upcoming joint military exercise with the United States and checked plans for response under various

scenarios during a weekly meeting of the standing committee of the National Security Council. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korea Relationship**:

- North Korea's top envoy in Russia has called for the U.S. troops' withdrawal from South Korea and called the allies' joint military exercise a "war rehearsal," a Russian news agency said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea did not answer South Korea's phone calls via cross-border communication lines for the third straight day Thursday, officials said, in apparent protest against the summertime military exercise between the South and the United States. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Beginning in February 1951, the port was subject to a U.N. naval blockade that would become the longest in modern history. During the 861-day long blockade, three more small boats were sunk by mines, and over two dozen more ships were damaged by them and coastal gunfire. (Sébastien Roblin, *National Interest*)
- North Korea intends to strengthen cooperation with Russia to counter the United States, and peace on the Korean peninsula will not be possible until American troops are withdrawn, Pyongyang's ambassador to Russia told TASS news agency. (*Reuters*)
- North Korea is expected to receive assistance from the United Nations Children's Fund for COVID-19 vaccine distribution, according to a recent press report. UNICEF told Radio Free Asia's Korean service that the agency is supplying advice to Pyongyang. COVID-19 vaccines for North Korea have been delayed, despite an agreement with the World Health Organization. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the fragility of the US-led liberal international order, says professor John Ikenberry of Princeton University, but the world should rebuild the system and improve it. Ikenberry, a prominent US scholar whose focus is the liberal international order, acknowledged that the liberal order had been "breaking up" for years and said the pandemic had revealed the system's limits and the need for international cooperation. (Ahn Sung Mi, *Korea Herald*)
- The United States on Wednesday reiterated the defensive nature of its joint military exercise with South Korea, one day after North Korea called it a "hostile act." A State Department spokesperson also said the U.S. holds no hostility toward the North. (*Yonhap*)
- The Joe Biden administration, while saying it is open to dialogue, is drawing its line in terms of its approach to North Korea in regard to making any concessions or compromising on the Seoul-Washington military drills. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

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Prepared by Juheung Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250813160428/https://mailchi.mp/ca0e63b49631/hrnk-news-itemsnsc-urges-n-korea-not-to-escalate-tensions-over-allies-defense-drillsn-korea-unresponsive-to-s-koreas-hotline-calls?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, August 13, 2021**

## North Korea military threats intended to deflect from economic crisis

**In North Korea:**
Help on the way? UNICEF could provide vaccine storage equipment to North Korea(*NK News*, 8/13/2021)
N. Korea accuses U.S. of involvement in anti-gov't protests in Cuba (*Yonhap*, 8/13/2021)
N. Korea slams U.S. for putting millions of residents at risk of eviction during pandemic (*Yonhap*, 8/13/2021)
N.K. paper stresses close relations with Cuba on birth anniversary of former leader(*Yonhap*, 8/13/2021)
North Korea's propaganda and agitation department orders journalists to "take lead" in ideological education (*Daily* NK, 8/13/2021)
North Korea military threats 'intended to deflect from economic crisis (*The Guardian*, 8/13/2021)
North Korea's Military Thinking Is Still in the 1950s (And It Shows) (*The National Interest*, 8/13/2021)

**In South Korea:**
South Korea prepared to call on Pope Francis to visit North, defector says (UPI, 8/12/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relations**:
Global Peace Foundation discusses diplomacy for unified Korea (*The Korean Times*, 8/13/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) will have another 12 months to send humanitarian assistance items into North Korea after the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) extended a sanctions exemption for the organization, the UNSC 1718 Sanctions Committee website showed on Friday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Son-gwon on Friday accused the United States of meddling in Cuba's internal affairs and instigating anti-government demonstrations to bring down the Caribbean country. (*Yonhap*)

- North Korea on Friday denounced the expiration of a pandemic-related U.S. government ban on residential evictions, saying Washington should address its own human rights issues before "poking its nose" into other countries' affairs. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's main newspaper on Friday stressed close relations with Cuba in time for the 95th birth anniversary of a former Cuban leader. (*Yonhap*)
- The Central Committee's Propaganda and Agitation Department has reportedly issued an order to "bolster the skill and party loyalty" of local journalists who "should take a lead in politically awakening and ideologically educating the people." (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea's threat to boost its military capacity to counter hostility from Washington before joint US- South Korea military drills is intended to divert attention from its economic crisis but could lead to a resumption of missile tests, according to analysts. (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)
- When North Korean and American last met in open battle, it was seventy years ago and the Communists only faced poorly trained American and South Korean conscripts armed with World War II weapons. Today they would face professional American soldiers and well-trained South Korean conscripts. (Michael Peck, *The National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea could try to persuade Pope Francis to visit North Korea when President Moon Jae-in travels to Rome in October for the G20 summit, according to a former North Korean diplomat. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- The world is looking at Korea's diplomatic priorities as South Korea pursues peaceful unification of the two Koreas, participants in an international forum organized by the Global Peace Foundation said Friday, sharing ideas on ways to achieve peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula. (Kwon Mee-yoo, *The Korea Times*)

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Prepared by Seshni Moodley, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250813160844/https://mailchi.mp/bb3dad536a6c/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-korea-military-threats-intended-to-deflect-from-economic-crisis?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, August 14, 2021**

## How North Korean diplomatic missions help proliferation and arms trafficking; N.K. urges S. Korea, U.S. to stop joint military drills

**In North Korea:**

How North Korean diplomatic missions help proliferation and arms trafficking (*NK Pro*, 8/13/2021)
N.K. media urges S. Korea, U.S. to stop joint military drills, withdraw American troops (*Yonhap*, 8/14/2021)
North Korea airs Olympics coverage days after it ends (BBC, 8/13/2021)

**International:**
North Korea and China must team up to take on 'common US threat in Asia-Pacific'(*South China Morning Post*, 8/14/2021)
The Real Lessons of the Trump-Kim Love Letters (*Foreign Policy*, 8/13/2021)
US is bound to pay a price for joint drills with S.Korea: N. Korean ambassador to China (*Global Times*, 8/14/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- The persistent role of North Korea's diplomatic missions in its proliferation and arms trafficking activities is a "wicked problem" – with the response constrained by diplomatic privileges, immunity and politics. (Daniel Salisbury, *NK Pro*)
- A North Korean propaganda outlet on Saturday urged South Korea and the United States to stop their joint military exercise and pull American troops out of the South if the South wants peace on the peninsula. (*Yonhap*)
- According to local news reports, Korean Central Television aired 70 minutes of a women's football match between the UK and Chile this week. The decision not to participate put an end to South Korea's hopes of using the Games to engage with the North. (Yvette Tan, *BBC*)

**International:**

- The United States is a threat to both China and North Korea and the two neighbors need to step up cooperation to tackle it, according to Pyongyang's envoy to Beijing. (Teddy Ng, *South China Morning Post*)
- There is probably no other bilateral relationship today where letter writing between two countries' leaders has played such a dramatic role as that between North Korea and the United States. The 27 letters exchanged between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and then-U.S. President Donald Trump between April 2018 and August 2019—characterized as "beautiful letters" by Trump—contained tactical feints, unctuous flattery, and psychological ploys that have marked exchanges of leaders of all stripes and stations throughout history. (Robert L. Carlin, *Foreign Policy*)
- Ri Ryong-nam, North Korean ambassador to China, told the Global Times in an exclusive interview recently that a series of US-South Korea joint military exercises that started on Tuesday are the most concentrated performance of US hostile policy against North Korea. "It's unwelcome and they will definitely pay the price for that." (*Global Times*)

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Prepared by Jungeun Lee, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250813163037/https://mailchi.mp/c8f1214a52be/hrnk-news-itemshow-north-korean-diplomatic-missions-help-proliferation-and-arms-traffickingnk-urges-s-korea-us-to-stop-joint-military-drills?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, August 15, 2021**

# N.K. organization demands Japan's atonement for wrongdoings; S. Korea, U.S. to kick off scaled-back combined exercise this week

**In North Korea:**
Does North Korea Owe Its Military Might to the Soviet Union? (*National Interest*, 8/14/2021)
Looks are Deceiving: North Korea's Huge Army Isn't So Tough (*National Interest*, 8/14/2021)
N.K. organization demands Japan's atonement for wrongdoings during its colonial rule of Korea (*Yonhap*, 8/15/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Full text of President Moon Jae-in's address on Korea's 76th Liberation Day (*Yonhap*, 8/15/2021)
U.S. nuke envoy expected to visit S. Korea this month: official (*Yonhap*, 8/15/2021)
S. Korea, U.S. to kick off scaled-back combined exercise this week (*Yonhap*, 8/15/2021)
South Korean president once more pitches COVID-19 cooperation to Pyongyang (*NK News*, 8/14/2021)
Turn N. Korea into ally, Army general says (*Korea Herald*, 8/15/2021)

**International:**
Kim, Putin exchange messages on anniv. of Korea's liberation from Japan (*Yonhap*, 8/15/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- There is little historical question that North Korea's defense industry was not only founded and sustained by direct Soviet military-technological transfers over a period of half a century, but that Soviet and Soviet-licensed hardware continues to be a pillar of North Korea's current military equipment roster. (Mark Episkopos, *National Interest*)
- Pyongyang's massive conventional defense outlays continue to yield negligible military value. They have succeeded only in propping up a bloated and increasingly unviable military-industrial complex that cannot be meaningfully reformed without a comprehensive decommission and modernization effort. (Mark Episkopos, *National Interest*)

- A North Korean organization called Sunday for Japan's sincere apology and atonement for its wrongdoings and atrocities committed during its 1910-45 colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula, state media said Sunday. (*Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- The following is an unofficial translation of President Moon Jae-in's speech Sunday to commemorate the 76th anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japan's colonial rule. It was provided by his office, Cheong Wa Dae.(*Yonhap*)
- The U.S. special representative for North Korea, Sung Kim, is expected to visit Seoul later this month for talks with his South Korean counterpart and a trilateral session involving the Russian nuclear envoy, a diplomatic source said Sunday. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the United States will kick off a major summertime combined exercise in a scaled-back manner on Monday, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) announced, after North Korea vowed to punish the two countries when they started a preliminary training last week. (Choi Soo-Hyang, *Yonhap*)
- In a speech commemorating the 76th anniversary of Korean independence from Japanese colonial rule, Moon described projects discussed in the Northeast Asia Cooperation Initiative for Infectious Disease Control and Public Health. These include information-sharing, shared stockpiling of medical supplies and joint-training of COVID-19 response personnel, according to Moon. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- South Korea and the US should not miss a rare opportunity to gradually turn North Korea into their ally by helping out Pyongyang, which is desperate to find a way out of its worst economic crisis, said Leem Ho-young, former deputy commander at the allies' Combined Forces Command. (Choi Si-Young, *Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and Russian President Vladimir Putin stressed the friendly ties of their countries and vowed further bilateral cooperation as they exchanged messages to mark the 76th anniversary of the liberation of the Korean Peninsula from Japan's colonial rule, Pyongyang's state media reported Sunday. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Juheung Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250813163346/https://mailchi.mp/c716f9011c7a/hrnk-news-itemsnk-organization-demands-japans-atonement-for-wrongdoingss-korea-us-to-kick-off-scaled-back-combined-exercise-this-week?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, August 16, 2021**

## S. Korea decides to temporarily close Afghan embassy; S. Korea, U.S. start joint training amid N. Korea's protest

**In North Korea:**
Kim Jong Un takes 6th extended break from public this year amid national crises(*NK News*, 8/16/21)
North Korea reports no COVID cases amid rumblings of humanitarian aid (*NK News*, 8/16/21)

**In South Korea:**
No letup in cases as schools ready to reopen (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8/26/21)
Seoul may have paid part of Hanoi summit bill (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8/26/21)
S. Korea decides to temporarily close Afghan embassy, evacuates most diplomatic staff (*Yonhap*, 8/26/21)

**International:**
North Korea may soon receive textbooks, medical equipment from US-based NGO(*NK News*, 8/26/21)
S. Korea, U.S. start joint training amid N. Korea's protest (*Yonhap*, 8/16/21)
US nuke envoy likely to visit Seoul later this week (*Korea Times*, 8/26/21)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has once again taken an extended break from public appearances, this time coinciding with a slew of challenges facing the country such as flooding, economic hardships, and a shortage of food. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea claims it still has had no cases of COVID-19 after testing an additional 693 people, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), amid reports that humanitarian aid flows into the country may soon resume. (Bryan Betts, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- Korea's new coronavirus infections hit a record high for a Monday amid concerns over some schools reopening on Tuesday. The country registered 1,556 new Covid-19 cases over the past 24 hours, including 1,493 local infections, raising the total caseload to 225,481, according to the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA). (Seo Ji Eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Seoul may have helped Pyongyang cover the costs of its summit with Washington in Hanoi in 2019, according to multiple sources in the Korean government. The funds were allegedly procured through the National Intelligence Service. (Kang Tae Hwa, Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea has decided to temporarily close its embassy in Afghanistan and evacuated most of its diplomatic staff to a third country in the Middle East, the foreign ministry said Sunday. The decision came as the Taliban militant group reportedly entered the Afghan capital of Kabul and sought a "peaceful transfer of power" over the weekend, just

weeks before the U.S. completes the pullout of its troops to end nearly 20 years of war. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Group plans to send South Korean medical equipment to Pyongyang hospital after UN extends another sanctions waiver. (Kim Jeong Min, *NK News*)
- South Korea and the United States kicked off their annual joint military training Monday, undeterred by North Korea's strong protest and threats of a serious security crisis. (*Yonhap*)
- Sung Kim, the U.S. special representative for North Korea, is expected to make a four-day trip to South Korea starting Aug. 21, according to a diplomatic source. (Kang Seung Woo, *Korea Times*)

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Prepared by Caroline Ward, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250813163839/https://mailchi.mp/a4b56941ee45/s-korea-decides-to-temporarily-close-afghan-embassys-korea-us-start-joint-training-amid-n-koreas-protest?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, August 17, 2021**

## N. Korea sees ties with China as 'fundamentally distrustful': think tank

**In North Korea**

Construction work on Sino-North Korean oil pipeline underway (*Daily NK*, 8/17/21)
Hotline fling? North Korea ignores Seoul's calls for more than a week (*NK News*, 8/17/21)
N. Korea sees ties with China as 'fundamentally distrustful': think tank (*Yonhap*, 8/17/21)
North Korean diplomats lash out at US in interviews with foreign media (*NK News*, 8/17/21)
North Korea using augmented reality in classrooms, pro-Pyongyang media says(UPI, 7/17/21)
North Hamgyong Province party committee convenes emergency meeting in mid-July to discuss childcare policies (*Daily NK*, 8/17/21)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

Unification ministry, think tank launch English online journal on N.K. issues (*Yonhap*, 8/17/21)
Unification ministry will keep close watch on N.K. response to joint exercise: official(*Yonhap*, 8/17/21)

**International:**

U.S. surveillance of North intensifies during military exercise (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8/17/21)

**In North Korea:**

- With relations between North Korea and China growing closer due to tensions between Washington and Beijing, Daily NK has obtained photographs of a construction site in China where work on a pipeline facility bringing oil to North Korea is underway. There is speculation that China is already preparing to expand support to North Korea with the relaxation of international sanctions on Pyongyang in mind. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- South Korea's unification and defense ministries told NK News that North Korea has not answered calls via inter-Korean hotlines for a week as of Tuesday, as Pyongyang takes issues with ongoing U.S.-ROK military exercises. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korea is economically dependent on China but views their relationship as fundamentally based on distrust, a U.S. think tank said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- Three North Korean ambassadors slammed the United States in interviews with Chinese, Russian and Syrian media last week, while taking aim at ROK-U.S. joint military exercises that began Monday. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- North Korea is employing virtual reality and augmented reality devices in elementary school classrooms, according to a pro-Pyongyang newspaper based in Japan. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- Daily NK has learned that the provincial party committee of North Hamgyong Province convened an emergency meeting of cadres in mid-July to discuss the matter of improving the party's childcare policies. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- The unification ministry on Tuesday said it has launched an online journal in English to reach out to global audiences on issues regarding North Korea and the Korean Peninsula. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea will keep a close eye on how North Korea will respond to a major joint military exercise under way with the United States, the unification ministry said Tuesday, as Pyongyang remains silent in contrast to angry reactions to last week's preliminary exercise. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- U.S. military surveillance activities on North Korea have begun in earnest as the joint U.S.-South Korean military exercise began on Monday. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

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Prepared by Grace Shin, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250813164217/https://mailchi.mp/45fcf0928f49/hrnk-news-itemsn-korea-sees-ties-with-china-as-fundamentally-distrustful-think-tank?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Wednesday, August 18, 2021

# N. Korea reports no coronavirus cases: WHO

**In North Korea:**
Hackers infect DailyNK website with malware to spy on readers (*NK News*, 8/18/21)
N. Korea reports no coronavirus cases: WHO (*Yonhap*, 8/18/21)
N.K. paper warns officials against corruption, bureaucracy (*Yonhap*, 8/18/21)
North Korea-China border wall running into trouble due to lack of supplies (*Daily NK*, 8/18/21)
North Korea crafts new legal provisions to punish businesses that fail to regularly pay electrical bills (*Daily NK*, 8/18/21)
North Korea Threatens to Punish China-Based Workers Moonlighting for Local Companies (*Radio Free Asia*, 8/17/21)
North Korea using augmented reality in classrooms, pro-Pyongyang media says(*The Korea Times*, 8/18/21)
Spy investigation goes no where (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8/18/21)
**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Kim in a corner (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8/18/21)
North Korean media denounces South's plan to build new frigates (*The Korea Times*, 8/18/21)
Unification minister urges N.K. to return to negotiating table within this year (*Yonhap*, 8/18/21)
**International:**
Germany wins sanctions exemption to send COVID test equipment to North Korea(*NK News*, 8/18/21)
Puzzling contradictions (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8/18/21)
White House assures Korea it isn't pulling its troops (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8/18/21)

**In North Korea:**

- Cybersecurity firm links attack to North Korean group, with expert warning site still vulnerable to similar breaches. (Nils Weisensee, *NK News*)
- North Korea has reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) that the country has conducted coronavirus tests on around 36,000 people so far but found no confirmed cases, the U.N. agency said Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Wednesday warned officials against corruption and urged them to rally for public support amid deepening economic woes. (*Yonhap*)
- Construction work on a concrete wall and high voltage lines along the Sino-North Korean border is reportedly running into trouble due to lack of supplies. Moreover, a source says the military is selling supplies they have received to buy food for soldiers working on the wall. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea has reportedly crafted new legal provisions to punish people and businesses who fail to regularly pay their electrical bills. This suggests the authorities

intend to strictly deal with defaulters while simultaneously rooting out widespread corruption in the assessment of electrical fees. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)

- North Korea has banned its trade representatives in China from making money on the side to support themselves and will punish those who violate the restrictions for betraying the party and the country's leader Kim Jong Un, sources in China told RFA. (*Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korea is employing virtual reality and augmented reality devices in elementary school classrooms, according to a pro-Pyongyang newspaper based in Japan. (*The Korea Times*)
- A civilian group sympathizing with Pyongyang received funding from North Korea and campaigned against the import of U.S. stealth fighter jets as well as pledging loyalty to North Korean leadership. Members of the civic group based in North Chungcheong were even listed as special advisors on the campaign for President Moon Jae-in during his 2017 presidential bid and collected funding to publish an ad to impeach Prosecutor General Yoon Seok-youl. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Inter-Korean military communication lines have gone dead just two weeks after they were reconnected. That could be North Korea's reaction to a South Korea-U.S. joint military exercise going ahead as scheduled despite a demand from Kim Yo-jong, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's sister and vice director of the Workers' Party, that Seoul and Washington cancel it. But Pyongyang's calculation is more complex than that. After the two allies prepared for a scaled-back drill, Kim Yo-jong went so far as to demand the withdrawal of U.S. forces from South Korea followed by a threat from Kim Yong-chol, head of the United Front Department, to let South Koreans feel an acute sense of security crisis. Why did the North react to a scaled-down drill so angrily? Does the Moon Jae-in administration understand North Korea at all? (Kim Byung-yeon, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A North Korean propaganda service condemned the South's military Tuesday for a decision to build new frigates, calling the policy "preparations for a war against the North." (*The Korea Times*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young urged North Korea on Wednesday to come back to the negotiating table within this year, voicing concerns that upcoming political events in the region could slow down the peace process with Pyongyang. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- UN grants 9-month window for 'export of medical equipment for the prevention and control of COVID-19 in the DPRK' (Bryan Betts, *NK News*)
- Hong Hyun-ik, the new chancellor of the Korea National Diplomatic Academy (KNDA), claimed he found no need for the continuation of joint South Korea-U.S. military drills. (Nam Jeong-ho, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Washington has no plans to withdraw forces from Korea, said U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, as it did from Afghanistan. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)

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Prepared by Scott Cho, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
http://web.archive.org/web/20250813164217/https://mailchi.mp/45fcf0928f49/hrnk-news-itemsn-korea-sees-ties-with-china-as-fundamentally-distrustful-think-tank?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, August 19, 2021**

# N. Korea issued navigational warning for E. Sea in indication of missile; North may have attempted missile launches on Liberation Day

**In North Korea:**
DPRK-China trade inches up in July, but experts say normalization still far off (*NK News*, 8/19/21)
DPRK-linked ships move illicit coal to China for 'humanitarian aid' (*NK News*, 8/18/21)
More than 100,000 livestock perish amid continued heat waves in North Korea (*Daily NK* , 8/19/21)
North Korea tortures, executes religious believers (*UPI*, 8/19/21)
N. Korea investigates State Academy of Sciences for possible involvement in manufacture of narcotics (*Daily NK* , 8/19/21)
N. Korea issued navigational warning for East Sea in indication of missile launch preparations (*Yonhap*, 8/19/21)
N.K. nuclear talks will fall behind on U.S. priority list due to Afghan situation: expert (*Yonhap*, 8/19/21)
North Korea Warns Citizens Not to Speculate About Leader's Health After Weight Loss (*Radio Free Asia*, 8/18/21)
North may have attempted missile launches on Liberation Day (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8/18/21)
**In South Korea:**
S. Korea to invest 1.6 trillion won to develop military satellite technologies (*Yonhap*, 8/19/21)
S. Korea to begin mass production of surface-to-air interceptor missile (*Yonhap*, 8/18/21)
South Korean activists seek to raise funds for North Korea rice donations (*UPI*, 8/19/21)
**International:**
Afghanistan shows need for U.S. to give S.Korea control of troops, lawmaker says(*Reuters*, 8/18/21)
Chinese, Russian diplomats accuse US of escalating tensions with North Korea (*NK News*, 8/18/21)
COVAX allocates 3m Sinovac vaccines to North Korea (*Korea Herald*, 8/18/21)

Experts split over impact of US pullout from Afghanistan on N. Korea issue (*The Korea Times*, 8/19/21)
North Korea is a Nuclear Weapons Power: Should the U.S. Accept Reality? (*National Interest*, 8/19/21)
Nuclear-test-ban body chief seeks to untangle challenge of ratification (*Reuters*, 8/18/21)
U.N. panel allows Germany to send COVID-19 test equipment to North Korea (*Yonhap*, 8/19/21)
What the US withdrawal from Afghanistan means for North Korea (*NK News*, 8/18/21)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea imports from China inched up to nearly $17 million in July, with exports more than doubling from the previous month, according to newly released Chinese customs data. But experts cautioned against reading too much into the increase due to the meager volume of bilateral trade during the pandemic. (Bryan Betts, *NK News*)
- At least half of 26 North Korea-linked vessels anchored near the DPRK port of Nampho in May 2021 likely returned from China laden with "humanitarian aid," information contained in a forthcoming U.N. report shows, suggesting Pyongyang may have taken steps earlier this year to stem what eventually became a domestic "food crisis." (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- Heatwaves are leading to significant losses of livestock in North Korea and these deaths may have led to rising prices for livestock products in the country's markets. According to a Daily NK source in North Korea on Wednesday, as of late July, more than 100,000 heads of livestock have perished in South Pyongan Province due to heatwaves. (Seul Kee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea enforces "the absolute denial of religious belief" through methods including torture and execution, a new report from the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom said. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- Since North Korea passed legislation to prevent drug-related crimes, the country's authorities have been inspecting units capable of involvement in the manufacture of narcotics, especially the State Academy of Sciences and its regional branches.(Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea had declared a no-sail zone for ships off the east coast earlier this week, sources said Thursday, indicating that it had plans to launch missiles amid an ongoing combined exercise between South Korea and the United States. (Oh Seok-Min, *Yonhap*)
- Nuclear talks with North Korea will fall behind on the priority list of the United States for the next several months as Washington is expected to focus on dealing with the aftermath of its troop withdrawal from Afghanistan, an expert said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has warned citizens to refrain from talking about national leader Kim Jong Un's health after he recently lost weight, calling such gossip as a "reactionary act," sources in the country say. (Jeong Yon Park, *Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korea may have attempted missile launches on Liberation Day, according to intelligence sources. A 4.3 magnitude earthquake in Rajin, in the far northeastern corner

of the country, was detected by U.S. reconnaissance aircraft on the evening of Aug. 16. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea plans to invest 1.6 trillion won (US$1.37 billion) in the next 10 years to secure core technologies for satellite development in the defense sector, the arms procurement agency said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea will begin mass production of a newly upgraded interceptor missile, often dubbed the Korean equivalent of the U.S.-made Patriot missile defense system, after successfully completing a number of quality tests, officials said Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korean civil society groups have launched a fundraising campaign to donate more than 500,000 tons of rice to North Korea, with the goal of delivering the first shipment by Sept. 21. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

**International:**

- The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan underscores the need for South Korea to quickly secure wartime operational control of its troops from the United States, a leader of the ruling Democratic Party said on Wednesday. (Josh Smith and Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- China's Special Representative on Korean Peninsula Affairs Liu Xiaoming met Russian Ambassador to China Andrey Denisov on Thursday, accusing the U.S. of provoking North Korea and calling for less pressure on the DPRK, according to Liu's official Twitter account. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- The UN-backed vaccine-sharing program COVAX has allocated around 3 million doses of the Sinovac coronavirus vaccine to North Korea, but it remains to be seen whether the reclusive regime will accept them. (Ahn Sung Mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan is drawing mixed responses here, on speculation that it could leave room for Washington to concentrate efforts on the North Korean nuclear issue that seems to have been put on the back burner under the new Joe Biden administration. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- Sydney Seiler, a national intelligence officer in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, believes that North Korea is unlikely to give up its nuclear weapons. Its objective, he observed, is to gain acceptance as a nuclear state. (Doug Bandow, *National Interest*)
- The new head of the body that would police a global ban on nuclear tests hopes to bring that ban into force by breaking down the main barrier - getting countries such as Iran, Pakistan and North Korea to ratify it - into regional clusters, he told Reuters. (Francois Murphy, *Reuters*)
- A U.N. Security Council panel has approved sanctions exemptions for a German project to provide North Korea with medical equipment for the prevention of COVID-19, its website showed Thursday. The exemptions will allow Germany to export medical equipment to prevent and control the coronavirus, including the delivery of "six units of a Rotor-Disc 100 Starter Kit" for PCR testing to the North's Ministry of Public Health, according to the website of the North Korea sanctions committee. (*Yonhap*)

- Pyongyang hardliners may think their idea of reunification is real again, but Korea differs vastly from Afghanistan. The North Korean leadership likely views the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan as a positive development for its strategic ambitions. (Benjamin R. Young, NK *News*)

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Prepared by Juheung Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250813164724/https://mailchi.mp/af01163a41e0/hrnk-news-itemsn-korea-issued-navigational-warning-for-e-sea-in-indication-of-missilenorth-may-have-attempted-missile-launches-on-liberation-day?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, August 20, 2021**

## What Does Fall of Kabul Mean for North Korea?; Biden reaffirms commitment to South Korea's defense amid Afghan withdrawal

**In North Korea:**
Former science and education department head Choe Sang Gon sent to political prison camp (*Daily* NK, 08/20/21)
More than 100,000 livestock perish amid continued heat waves in North Korea (*Daily* NK, 08/19/21)
More Vaccines Offered by COVAX to North Korea (*National Interest*, 08/20/21)
N. Korea holds conference on technology, construction amid prolonged virus measures (*Yonhap*, 08/20/21)
N.K. flight of same jet type as leader's personal plane makes flight towards Wonsan: aviation tracker (*Yonhap*, 08/20/21)
North Korean rocket launch site, villages flooded as state media silent (NK *News*, 08/20/21)
North Korea lambastes Western nations amid Afghanistan refugee crisis (UPI, 08/19/21)
Not Nukes: Could This Be North Korea's Scariest Weapon? (*National Interest*, 08/20/21)
Report: North Korea issuing navigational warnings ahead of potential weapon tests(*UPI*, 08/19/21)
Small But Mighty: North Korea is Ready to Swarm South Korea with Small Missile Boats (*National Interest*, 08/20/21)

**In South Korea:**
[Newsmaker] PPP presidential contenders in slugfest (*The Korea Herald*, 08/20/21)
South Korea detaining North Korea-linked ship suspected of sanctions violations(NK *News*, 08/20/21)

Seoul-based nonprofit publishes human rights dossiers on 30 North Koreans (*NK News*, 08/20/21)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
7 additional video reunion centers for separated families to be completed this month(*Yonhap*, 08/20/21)
In 2010, a Sudden Crisis Could Have Destroyed the Korean Peninsula (*National Interest*, 08/20/21)
Sanctions obstacles: The fate of Moon Jae-in's inter-Korean economic projects (*NK Pro*, 08/20/21)

**International:**
Analysis: What Does Fall of Kabul Mean for North Korea? (VOA, 08/19/21)
Biden reaffirms commitment to S. Korea's defense amid Afghan withdrawal (*The Korea Herald*, 08/20/21)
Experts split over impact of US pullout from Afghanistan on N. Korea issue (*The Korea Times*, 08/20/21)
How the Afghanistan Withdrawal Looks from South Korea, America's Other 'Forever War' (VOA, 08/20/21)
Post-Kabul worries (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/19/21)
Statement Regarding Recent Volexity Report on Daily NK Malicious Code Attack(*Daily NK*, 08/20/21)
The strange case of the Japanese man who chose to stay in North Korea (*NK News*,08/19/21)
U.S. envoy for North Korea to visit South amid standoff over military drills (*Reuters*, 08/20/21)
WHO to allot 3 million Chinese vaccine doses to North Korea (*UPI*, 08/19/21)

**In North Korea:**

- The former head of the ruling Workers' Party's science and education department, Choe Sang Gon, has been sent to a political prison camp, Daily NK has learned. Choe was rebuked during an enlarged meeting of the Second Politburo of the Eighth Central Committee in late June. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- Heatwaves are leading to significant losses of livestock in North Korea and these deaths may have led to rising prices for livestock products in the country's markets. According to a Daily NK source in North Korea on Wednesday, as of late July, more than 100,000 heads of livestock have perished in South Pyongan Province due to heatwaves. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- Voice of America (VOA) reported last week that UN-affiliated organization COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) had been scheduled to deliver 1.7 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine to North Korea in March, but that talks "stalled" with the Kim regime on those deliveries. (Stephen Silver, *National Interest*)

- North Korea held a series of technology conferences on construction, information technology and the power industry this week, state media said Friday, in a move seen as aimed at tackling economic challenges with science and education. (*Yonhap*)
- An airplane of the same jet type as that of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un was spotted flying to the eastern part of the country, an aviation tracker said. According to Flightradar24, a flight-tracking website, North Korean carrier Air Koryo's AN-148 jet departed from Pyongyang at 9:08 a.m. Thursday and flew towards the eastern coastal town of Wonsan. (*Yonhap*)
- More heavy rains in August have wiped out North Korean villages, damaged a key missile and satellite launching base and destroyed a major rail bridge for the second time in a 12-month period in the country's northeastern region, according to NK News analysis of satellite imagery. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea accused the West of causing the global refugee crisis after the Taliban takeover of Kabul but made no mention of recent events in Afghanistan. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- In recent years, North Korea's chemical weapons have taken a backseat to her nuclear weapons. They are, however, no less dangerous. The deterioration of the Korean People's Army (KPA) makes them more essential to victory than ever before. For both practical and doctrinal reasons, North Korea will almost certainly use chemical weapons in wartime, from riot control to lethal nerve gases. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- North Korea has been issuing warnings to passing ships since the beginning of the week, a sign the regime could be getting ready for weapons tests, according to a South Korean press report. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)
- If South Korea goes to war with its northern neighbor, one of the threats that it will face is swarms of small naval craft armed with missiles and torpedoes. And how is South Korea is preparing to defeat them? With swarms of rockets fired from multiple rocket launchers mounted on small patrol vessels. (Michael Peck, *National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- People aiming to be the main opposition party's candidate for president are busy attacking each other ahead of the primary. Rep. Hong Joon-pyo of the People Power Party has been blasting Yoon Seok-youl for his lack of experience; former legislator Yoo Seung-min and ex-chief state auditor Choe Jae-hyeong have been arguing over adding a clause in the primary rules; and former Jeju governor Won Hee-ryong has been harassing PPP leader Lee Jun-seok. (Kim So-hyun, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea detained a U.N.-sanctioned oil tanker linked to North Korea in May after it entered the Busan area disguised as a Mongolia-flagged vessel, *NK News* confirmed on Friday. Sailing under the name Shun Fa but sanctioned by the U.N. under the name Billions No. 18 for illicit ship-to-ship fuel deliveries to North Korea in 2017, the vessel also features prominently in a forthcoming U.N. Panel of Experts report seen by NK News. (Chad O'Carroll, Jeongmin Kim, and Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- The Seoul-based Database Center for North Korean Human Rights (NKDB) announced on Thursday that it has published dossiers on 30 North Koreans alleged to have

committed human rights abuses in the country, an effort the group claims will "increase accountability for crimes against humanity." (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- An additional seven video conference facilities for separated family reunions will be completed by the end of this month, the unification ministry said Friday. Earlier, a civilian-government committee on inter-Korean exchanges approved the decision to establish the additional video reunions centers outside Seoul, in addition to the existing 13. (*Yonhap*)
- In 2010, North Korea sank a South Korean warship, killing more than forty sailors. The bold attack, conducted in secret by submarine, was the deadliest incident between the two countries in decades. Although Pyongyang's involvement was suspected from the outset, an international commission set up to investigate the attack later conclude North Korea was indeed responsible. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- Ever since South Korean President Moon Jae-in began his rapprochement with North Korea in 2018, a multitude of inter-Korean economic projects has been put on the table. But three years and a pandemic later, most of these projects remain dormant, stuck between Pyongyang's unwillingness to cooperate and Washington's resistance to lift sanctions. (Chad O'Carroll and Gabriela Bernal, *NK Pro*)

**International:**

- Experts are split on how the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan could affect North Korea. Some argue that the collapse of Kabul, triggered by the withdrawal of U.S. forces, could encourage North Korea's nuclear ambitions, while others suggest the fall of Kabul may work against Pyongyang because getting Washington's attention would be harder given the complex aftermath of the withdrawal from Afghanistan. (Christy Lee, VOA)
- US President Joe Biden said Thursday in the US that his country is committed to the mutual defense treaty with South Korea, noting the situation in South Korea is different from Afghanistan, where the Taliban swiftly took over the government after the withdrawal of US troops. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan is drawing mixed responses here, on speculation that it could leave room for Washington to concentrate efforts on the North Korean nuclear issue that seems to have been put on the back burner under the new Joe Biden administration. Despite completing its policy review of Pyongyang in April, the Biden administration has been less productive to engage the Kim Jong-un regime, unlike Biden's predecessor who held summits with the North's leader on three occasions. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- U.S. President Joe Biden this week was asked what the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan means for Washington's other global military commitments. In response, Biden stressed the "fundamental difference" between Afghanistan and places like South Korea, where the U.S. also has a major troop presence.(William Gallo, VOA)
- The way the U.S. abandoned Afghanistan after spending trillions of dollars sends a sobering message to other parts of Asia facing potential security threats such as South Korea, Taiwan and even Japan. The only problem spot is South Korea, for whose

freedom the U.S. has invested so many dollars and lives. Despite the fact that North Korea has developed and acquired nuclear weapons, the government of President Moon Jae-in mouths empty slogans of peace and detente while undermining the U.S.-Korean alliance, cutting down annual military exercises, hinting that the U.S. should wink and accept the nukes as fait accompli. (Shim Jae-hoon and Donald Kirk, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- Volexity, a cyber security company based in the US, recently reported through a blog post that it had observed malicious code on Daily NK's website from "at least late March 2021 until early June 2021." (*Daily NK*)
- Captured decades ago, Takeshi Terakoshi still lives in Pyongyang with his North Korean wife and kids. (Oliver Jia, *NK News*)
- The U.S. special envoy for North Korea will visit South Korea this weekend amid a standoff over U.S.-South Korean military exercises that North Korea has warned could trigger a security crisis. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- The World Health Organization said it plans to allocate about 3 million doses of Chinese-made vaccines to, but did not disclose a timeline. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

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Prepared by Michelle Dang, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
http://web.archive.org/web/20250813165127/https://mailchi.mp/4e8f44eab2ca/hrnk-news-itemswhat-does-fall-of-kabul-mean-for-north-korea-biden-reaffirms-commitment-to-south-koreas-defense-amid-afghan-withdrawal?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, August 21, 2021**

## U.S. nuclear envoy arrives in Seoul for talks with S. Korean, Russian counterparts; North Korea threat actor hacked South Korean site

**In North Korea:**
Are North Korea's Special Forces Really That Dangerous? (*National Interest*, 8/20/2021)
Arrests of North Korean Wives of Chinese Men Spooks Refugee Community (RFA, 8/20/2021)
Its Not Just Nuclear: North Korea Also Has 5,000 Tons of Chemical Weapons(*National Interest*, 8/21/2021)
N.K. leader again inspects apartment construction site for riverside flats (*Yonhap*, 8/21/2021)

**In South Korea:**

New cases below 2,000 for first time in 2 days, virus curbs extended for 2 weeks(*Yonhap*, 8/21/2021)
South Korea's Daewoo K2 Rifle Brings The Firepower Seoul Needs to Defend Itself(*National Interest*, 8/20/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
North Korea threat actor hacked South Korean site, researchers say (UPI, 8/20/2021)

**International:**
U.S. nuclear envoy arrives in Seoul for talks with S. Korean, Russian counterparts(*Yonhap*, 8/21/2021)
When being in hot water is a good thing (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8/21/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- In the event of war, North Korea would likely launch dozens of separate attacks throughout South Korea, from the DMZ to the southern port of Busan. Whether or not these forces can make their way through Seoul's considerable air and sea defenses is another question. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- A spate of arrests of North Korean wives of Chinese men—raids seizing long-time residents in front of their families—has put the refugee community in northeastern China on edge. (Park Jeong Yon, Jun Lee Jin, Eugene Whong, *RFA*)
- In recent years, North Korea's chemical weapons have taken a backseat to her nuclear weapons. They are, however, no less dangerous. The deterioration of the Korean People's Army (KPA) makes them more essential to victory than ever before. For both practical and doctrinal reasons, North Korea will almost certainly use chemical weapons in wartime, from riot control to lethal nerve gases. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un inspected a site for riverside apartments under construction in Pyongyang again in nearly five months, state media said Saturday. (*Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's daily new coronavirus cases fell below 2,000 for the first time in two days Saturday, while half of the nation's population have received at least the first vaccine dose. (*Yonhap*)
- In the late twentieth century, one of the hallmarks of a modern military was a country's ability to design and manufacture its own rifles. South Korea, an emerging military power, took that to heart and produced the K2 assault rifle. A blend of good ideas borrowed from other rifles, the K2 has served Republic of Korea forces for 35 years and with a raft of upgrades will serve for years more to come. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- A South Korean media organization specializing in North Korea news may have been hacked, according to a U.S. cybersecurity solutions provider. Volexity said in a blog post this week on its proprietary website that Daily NK, a news site that has received funding for its reporting from the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy, was hacked from March to June, South Korean network YTN reported Friday. (Elizabeth Shim, UPI)

**International:**

- The U.S. special representative for North Korea, Sung Kim, arrived in Seoul on Saturday for talks with his South Korean and Russian counterparts, as they seek North Korea's return to dialogue amid renewed tensions over the ongoing military exercise between Seoul and Washington. (*Yonhap*)
- Boilers are usually difficult to export due to different heating systems in various countries. But Kyung Dong Navien, a leading boiler company in Korea, became the No.1 seller of wall-hung gas boilers in Russia by customizing the product. KRX-listed Kyung Dong Navien has more than 23 percent of the wall-hung gas boiler market in Russia, according to data from the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (Jin Min Ji, *Korea JoongAng Daily*).

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Prepared by Caroline Ward, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250813165250/https://mailchi.mp/f9ba8edfe6d5/hrnk-news-items-us-nuclear-envoy-arrives-in-seoul-for-talks-with-s-korean-russian-counterparts-north-korea-threat-actor-hacked-south-korean-site?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, August 22, 2021**

## Gyeonggi Gov. Lee pledges to meet with Biden, Kim Jong-un to broker denuclearization deal

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

In the Next Korean War, the DMZ Will Become a Total Death Trap (*The National Interest*, 08/21/2021)

North Korean Assassins Almost Murdered South Korea's President in 1968 in His Own House (*The National Interest*, 08/22/2021)

**International:**

For a Gun Named "daddy" the Soviet PPsH-41 Was not Very Friendly (*The National Interest*, 08/22/2021)

Gyeonggi Gov. Lee pledges to meet with Biden, Kim Jong-un to broker denuclearization deal (*The Korea Herald*, 08/22/2021)
Imagine This: What If China Invaded North Korea? (*The National Interest*, 08/22/2021)
North Korea accuses Japan of trespassing, mulls "strong countermeasures" (*Kyodo News*, 08/22/2021)
Pope Francis thanks Korean Catholics for vaccine share drive, prays for Korean peace (*The Korea Herald*, 08/22/2021)
U.S., Russian nuclear envoys to discuss North in Seoul this week (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/22/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Fenced, mined and patrolled by soldiers from both sides, fortifications and large concentrations of combat-ready troops will make the Korean DMZ in the event of war the deadliest place on earth. (Kyle Mizokami, *The National Interest*)
- Here's What You Need to Remember: In all, twenty-six South Korean soldiers and civilians die in the firefight in front of the Blue House and the manhunt that follows, and sixty-six are wounded. Additionally, three American soldiers are killed by North Korean forces while combing the DMZ for the infiltrators. (Sebastien Roblin, *The National Interest*)

**International:**

- While more flexible assault rifles have mostly superseded weapons like the PPsH on the frontline, the submachine gun remains a symbol of the Soviet struggle in World War II, a deadly tool that allowed Communist troops to overwhelm their enemies in close-quarter combat. (Sebastien Roblin, *The National Interest*)
- Gyeonggi Province Gov. Lee Jae-myung, the front-runner in the ruling Democratic Party's presidential primary race, pledged Sunday to meet with US. President Joe Biden and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un to broker a step-by-step deal to resolve the North Korea nuclear issue. (*The Korea Herald*)
- While North Korea has traditionally been a Chinese client state, ties between the two countries have deteriorated in recent years. Pyongyang's fiery anti-American rhetoric and nuclear weapons program have provoked the United States, making North Korea a major point of contention between Washington and Beijing. (Kyle Mizokami, *The National Interest*)
- North Korea on Sunday accused Japan of "illegally intruding" into waters over which it exercises maritime rights and warned of possible "strong countermeasures." (*Kyodo News*)
- Pope Francis on Saturday thanked the South Korean Catholic community for sharing donations to provide COVID-19 vaccines to poor countries and prayed for the continued efforts toward the reconciliation of the Korean Peninsula. (*The Korea Herald*)
- The U.S. and Russian top nuclear envoys are visiting South Korea this week to discuss ways to get the North to return to the dialogue table in the midst of the ongoing Seoul-Washington summertime military drill. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

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Prepared by Claire McCrea, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250813165457/https://mailchi.mp/c11976ba7b31/hrnk-news-itemsgyeonggi-gov-lee-pledges-to-meet-with-biden-kim-jong-un-to-broker-denuclearization-deal?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, August 23, 2021**

## N. Korea's main paper urges people to prioritize socialist ideology; N. Korea develops real-time PCR equipment to test for covid

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea develops real-time PCR equipment to test for coronavirus: state media(*Yonhap*, 08/23/2021)
N. Korea's main paper urges people to prioritize socialist ideology (*Yonhap*, 08/23/2021)
Police in some regions of North Korea take bribes to protect transport of goods(*Daily NK*, 08/23/2021)
Thieves steal around 30 rechargeable batteries, sodium cyanide in South Pyongan Province (*Daily NK*, 08/23/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Presidential candidate Lee Jae-myung's North Korea policy statement (*NK News*, 08/23/2021)
South Korea's Marines are Geared Up for a Lethal Fight Against the North (*National Interest*, 08/23/2021)
Top presidential candidate calls for 'conditional' North Korea sanctions relief (*NK News*, 08/23/2021)

**International:**
Biden's special envoy urges North Korea to return to talks (*AP*, 08/23/2021)
North Korea channels Chinese and Russian criticism of US over Afghanistan (*NK News*, 08/23/2021)
South, U.S. envoys discuss humanitarian support for North (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/23/2021)
Tires, medicine lead North Korea's paltry imports from China in July (*NK News*, 08/23/2021)
Top nuclear envoys of S. Korea, U.S. hold talks on N.K. diplomacy (*Yonhap*, 08/23/2021)

US holds no hostile intent toward North Korea, urges for dialogue: nuclear envoy (*Korea Herald*, 08/23/2021)
US makes clear its support for inter-Korean humanitarian aid (*Korea Times*, 08/23/2021)
US, ROK to keep close eye on North Korea amid joint drills: foreign ministry (*NK News*, 08/23/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea has developed real-time PCR (polymerase chain reaction) coronavirus testing equipment on its own, state media said Monday, as the country continues to fight against the global pandemic. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's official newspaper called Monday for putting socialist ideology ahead of anything else, stressing that ideologically arming people should be the basis for moving science and technology and other areas forward. (*Yonhap*)
- Police in some regions of North Korea have begun making money by looking the other way at streetside commerce despite orders from the authorities to "mop up" such businesses. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- Daily NK has learned of a string of thefts of state property in North Korea. Theft is rising amid economic difficulties, but the authorities are pulling their hair out with the whereabouts of these most recent criminals unknown, says a source. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- The South Korean ruling party's leading presidential candidate for 2022, Lee Jae-myung, revealed his comprehensive views on the country's North Korea and foreign policy in a Facebook post on Sunday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Here's What You Need To Remember: Under the mentorship of the U.S. Marine Corps, South Korea has maintained one of the largest marine forces in the world. As one USMC colonel put it during the Vietnam War, which saw a brigade's worth of South Korean marines (and their U.S.-trained officers) sent to Southeast Asia, "We taught them everything we know, and now they know it better than us." (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- The ruling party's frontrunner for the 2022 presidential election has argued that North Korea sanctions should be lifted but must "snap back" if Pyongyang reneges on its denuclearization promises, in the first major policy statement on North Korea by a top candidate. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**International:**

- U.S. President Joe Biden's special envoy for North Korea said Monday he's ready to meet his North Korean counterparts "anywhere and at any time" as he held discussions with South Korean officials over stalled nuclear talks with the North. (Kim Tong-hyung, AP)
- North Korean state media has accused the U.S. of being the "main culprit" raising tensions and sabotaging global peace, citing Chinese and Russian criticisms of U.S. actions in Afghanistan. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)

- Sung Kim, the U.S. top nuclear envoy, discussed humanitarian support for North Korea in talks with his South Korean counterpart Monday while upholding Washington's offer to meet with Pyongyang "anytime, anywhere." (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Medicine appeared in Chinese customs data on exports to North Korea for the first time this year, making it the DPRK's second-most-imported item after tires, in what one expert described as a possible sign that authorities are seeking to address health problems in the country. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- The top nuclear envoys of South Korea and the United States held talks in Seoul on Monday to discuss joint efforts to resume dialogue with North Korea amid renewed tensions with Pyongyang over the allies' ongoing military exercise. (*Yonhap*)
- The US holds no hostile intent toward Pyongyang, President Joe Biden's point man on North Korea said Monday, reaffirming a willingness to meet his North Korean counterparts "anywhere, at anytime." (Ahn Sung-mi, *Korea Herald*)
- The United States made clear its commitment to inter-Korean humanitarian projects, Monday, a step forward from its previous stance, as South Korea is seeking to find a breakthrough in its ties with North Korea. (Kang Seung-woo, *Korea Times*)
- The United States' top North Korea envoy visited Seoul this past weekend, meeting with his South Korean counterpart to discuss ongoing U.S.-ROK military drills and humanitarian assistance to the DPRK. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)

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Prepared by Audrey Gregg, HRNK Research Intern.

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250813165752/https://mailchi.mp/12875748b4e9/hrnk-news-itemsn-koreas-main-paper-urges-people-to-prioritize-socialist-ideologyn-korea-develops-real-time-pcr-equipment-to-test-for-covid?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, August 24, 2021**

## U.S. Withdrawal from Afghanistan: The View From Pyongyang; Top US official says Washington seeking bilateral talks with Pyongyang

**Top News:**
U.S. Withdrawal from Afghanistan: The View From Pyongyang (*Small Wars Journal*, 08/23/2021)

**In North Korea:**
As Kim Jong Un slims down, North Korean state media covers body weight issues(*NK News*, 08/23/2021)

Coronavirus: North Korea Says it Has Its Own PCR Test (*The National Interest*, 08/23/2021)
N.K. paper calls for Japan to make reparations for colonial-era brutality (*Yonhap*, 08/24/2021)
North Korea has yet to begin coronavirus vaccinations as delays hamper U.N.-backed rollout (*The Washington Post*, 08/24/2021)
North Korea; The Real Loser in the Afghanistan Crisis? (*The National Interest*, 08/24/2021)
North Korean illicit trade nosedives during pandemic, PoE report finds (*NK News*, 08/24/2021)

**International:**
South Korea, Russia affirm need to induce Pyongyang back to nuclear talks (*The Korea Herald*, 08/24/2021)
Top US official says Washington seeking bilateral talks with Pyongyang (*NK News*, 08/24/2021)
U.S. envoy says no hostile intent toward North Korea, calls for talks (*Reuters*, 08/23/2021)
U.S. envoy seeks diplomatic breakthrough with North Korea on visit to Seoul (*UPI*, 08/23/2021)
UNICEF secures another sanctions exemption to send COVID aid to North Korea(*NK News*, 08/24/2021)
Unification minister hold talks with U.S. nuclear envoy on N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 08/24/2021)
Unification minister, US nuclear envoy discuss ways to restart talks with Pyongyang(*The Korea Herald*, 08/24/2021)
US Says Open to N. Korea Aid, Regardless of Denuclearization Progress (VOA, 08/24/2021)
US Special Envoy for North Korea Visits South Korea (*The Diplomat*, 08/24/2021)

**Top News:**

- The Kim regime has had few opportunities as significant as America's chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan to manipulate the Republic of Korea into doubting, even distrusting, its alliance with the United States. HRNK author and Senior Advisor Robert Collins writes on Pyongyang's view of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. (Robert Collins, *Small Wars Journal*)

**In North Korea:**

- As North Korean leader Kim Jong Un continues to slim down rapidly, North Korean state television aired a new cartoon last week featuring criticism about a girl's weight, the latest of several broadcasts about diet in North Korean state media. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- The North Korean regime has allegedly developed "real-time PCR (polymerase chain reaction) coronavirus testing equipment," and that the equipment "meets global standards," according to a Yonhap News Agency report over the weekend, which cited North Korean state media. (Stephen Silver, *The National Interest*)
- North Korea's main newspaper on Tuesday urged Japan to repent and make reparations for colonial-era brutality on the occasion of the 111th anniversary of Tokyo's annexation of the Korean Peninsula. (*Yonhap*)

- The United Nations-backed global vaccination effort is offering additional doses of coronavirus vaccines to North Korea, one of a few countries yet to start inoculating residents after a delay in a distribution program slated to begin this summer. (Michelle Ye Hee Lee, Min Joo Kim, *The Washington Post*)
- With the administration already unenthused about addressing North Korea, the Afghanistan imbroglio could provide a convenient excuse to put the issue off still further. However, attempting the geopolitical equivalent of "kicking the can down the road" would only ensure a bigger and more dangerous North Korean missile and nuclear arsenal. (Doug Bandow, *The National Interest*)
- COVID-19 "significantly affected" North Korea's illicit trade with the outside world in the first half of 2021, a forthcoming U.N. report seen by NK Pro shows, resulting in historically low coal and fuel exports. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)

**International:**

- Seoul and Moscow on Tuesday reaffirmed the importance of close coordination and the need to induce Pyongyang back to the stalled denuclearization talks, in the meeting between the two sides' top nuclear envoys. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- The U.S. envoy for North Korea continued to press Washington's willingness to engage with Pyongyang, reiterating in an interview with South Korea's public broadcaster that the two sides can talk "anytime, anywhere, without preconditions." (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- The United States has no hostile intent toward Pyongyang and is open to meeting any time and any place, Washington's special envoy for North Korea said on Monday during a visit to South Korea. (Josh Smith, Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- Washington's point man for nuclear negotiations met with his South Korean counterpart in Seoul on Monday, saying he was looking to engage with North Korea's representatives while raising the possibility of humanitarian assistance to the North. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has received another sanctions exemption extension to send humanitarian aid to North Korea aimed at helping the country with COVID-19, according to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) 1718 Sanctions Committee website. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young met with the U.S. envoy for North Korea and discussed a coordinated approach to jump-start stalled talks with Pyongyang, his office said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young met with the visiting US envoy for North Korea on Tuesday and together they discussed ways to resume stalled nuclear talks at the earliest and engage with Pyongyang. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- The United States supports humanitarian aid for North Korea regardless of progress on the country's denuclearization, the U.S. envoy to Pyongyang said Tuesday. (William Gallo, VOA)

- Sung Kim, the U.S. special envoy for North Korea, visited South Korea on Saturday to discuss efforts for the denuclearization of North Korea with his South Korean counterparts. (Mitch Shin, *The Diplomat*)

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Prepared by Irene Kang, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250813165909/https://mailchi.mp/1b0986bd131d/hrnk-news-itemsus-withdrawal-from-afghanistan-the-view-from-pyongyangtop-us-official-says-washington-seeking-bilateral-talks-with-pyongyang?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wedneday, August 25, 2021**

## Rosa Park, Director of Programs and Editor, speaks at Global Women's Peace Network webinar on Unified Korea

**Top News:**
A Unified Korea English edited (Global Women's Peace Network, 08/24/2021)

**In North Korea:**
N.K. foreign ministry defends Cuba's capture of American, bout seizure as 'legitimate measure' (*Yonhap News*, 08/25/2021)
N. K. paper urges military's absolute obedience to ruling party on Army-First Day(*Yonhap News*, 08/25/2021)

**International:**
Peace on Korean Peninsula ultimate goal of U.S. in relations with N.K.: State Dept.(*Yonhap News*, 08/25/2021)
Unification minister urges Russia to play 'constructive role' for peninsula peace(*Yonhap News*, 08/25/2021)
US back to waiting on NK amid standoff (*The Korea Herald*, 08/25/2021)

**Top News:**

- Director of Programs and Editor Rosa Park spoke at a webinar representing the American perspective of women's work in Unifying Korea. (Global Women's Peace Network)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea said Wednesday that Cuba has captured an American attempting to smuggle people from Havana to the United States, calling it a "legitimate measure." (*Yonhap News*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Wednesday called for the military's absolute obedience to the ruling Workers' Party as the country marked the 61st anniversary of its Army-First Day. (*Yonhap News*)

**International:**

- Peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula is the ultimate goal for the United States in its relationship with North Korea, the State Department said. (*Yonhap News*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young called on Russia to play a "constructive role" in advancing the peace process on the Korean Peninsula during his talks with Moscow's top nuclear envoy, his office said Wednesday. (*Yonhap News*)
- The US is being forced back to former President Barack Obama's strategic patience on North Korea, as Pyongyang rebuffs any diplomatic outreach and shows no signs of returning to nuclear negotiations, experts said Wednesday. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Lauren Morrison, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250813170059/https://mailchi.mp/17c790490d60/hrnk-news-rosa-park-director-of-programs-and-editor-speaks-at-global-womens-peace-network-webinar-on-unified-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Thursday, August 26, 2021

# North Korea to hold Supreme People's Assembly session next month; U.S. Envoy Calls for Bilateral Talks with North Korea

**In North Korea:**

Amid economic crash, DPRK tried to import $1 million in Lexus vehicles in 2020 (*NK News*, 08/26/21)
N. Korea to hold Supreme People's Assembly session next month: state media(*Yonhap*, 08/26/21)
N.K. propaganda outlet denounces S. Korea-U.S. military drill as 'playing with fire'(*Yonhap*, 08/26/21)
North Korea Gets Tough With Residents Caught With South Korean Products or Cash (*Radio Free Asia*, 08/25/21)

**In South Korea:**
Afghan evacuees arrive in Seoul (*The Korea Herald*, 08/26/21)
S. Korea, U.S. set to wrap up summertime combined exercise (*Yonhap*, 08/26/21)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Seoul's vice defense chief calls for N. Korean cooperation (*AP News*, 08/26/21)

**International:**
Biden should end North Korea travel ban, humanitarian and advocacy groups say(*Washington Post*, 08/26/21)
Debating North Korea: US and Chinese Perspectives (*38 North*, 06/25/21)
No breakthroughs on DPRK from Russian envoy's Seoul visit, but ROK, US benefit(*NK Pro*, 08/26/21)
US approves sale of $258 million worth of guided munitions to South Korea (*NK News*, 08/25/21)
U.S. Envoy Calls for Bilateral Talks with North Korea (*National Interest*, 08/25/21)

**In North Korea:**
- North Korea sought to acquire Lexus SUVs through China despite limited trade during pandemic, PoE report shows (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- North Korea will convene a meeting its rubber-stamp legislature in Pyongyang next month, state media said Thursday. The standing committee of the Supreme People's Assembly met in Pyongyang on Tuesday and decided to convene an SPA session on Sept. 28, the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said. (*Yonhap*)
- A North Korean propaganda outlet on Thursday slammed South Korea and the United States over their summertime joint military drill, calling it "a dangerous playing with fire" that heightens tensions on the Korean Peninsula. (*Yonhap*)
- A North Korean used-clothing trader who kept two South Korean banknotes she found in a bundle of garments was hauled away by state security agents in June and hasn't been heard from since — the victim of a tightening crackdown on foreign cultural influences, sources in the reclusive state told RFA. (Changgyu Ahn, *Radio Free Asia*)

**In South Korea:**
- South Korea and the United States on Thursday were set to conclude a major summertime combined exercise held in a scaled-back manner due to the coronavirus situation and peace efforts involving North Korea, officials said. (*Yonhap*)
- A military jet carrying 378 at-risk Afghans who worked alongside the Korean government arrived in South Korea on Thursday, as part of Seoul's mission to evacuate civilians fleeing the Taliban takeover. (Ahn Sung-mi, *Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korea's vice defense minister on Thursday called for North Korea to resume cooperation under a 2018 military agreement on reducing tensions, which the North has threatened to abandon over U.S.-South Korean military exercises. (Kim Tong-Hyung, AP *News*)

**International:**

- Until a few years ago, Americans traveled to North Korea for a host of reasons. Korean Americans reunited with loved ones from whom they were separated during the Korean War. Medical groups treated patients and trained doctors. Cultural exchange programs sought to introduce sports and entertainment, such as surfing and the New York Philharmonic. (Michelle Ye Hee Lee, *Washington Post*)
- The following exchange of views between Susan Thornton, Project Director of the Forum on Asia-Pacific Security at the National Committee on American Foreign Policy, and Li Nan, Senior Fellow at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, highlights the differing perspectives, mutual suspicions and lingering contradictions between the US and China on North Korea policy and the prospects for future negotiations. (Susan A. Thornton, Li Nan, and Juliet Lee, *38 North*)
- Deliberately or by happenstance, Seoul has enjoyed valuable face time with senior diplomats representing two major players in the Korean security crisis this week, while also fostering direct contact between them. (Anthony V. Rinna, *NK Pro*)
- Seoul's weapons purchase will support joint plans for possibility of conflict with North Korea, according to US agency (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- The U.S. envoy for North Korea is visiting South Korea this week, and that envoy told a Korean broadcaster in an interview that the U.S. is seeking bilateral talks with North Korea. Sung Kim told the Korean Broadcasting System that the United States and North Korea can talk "anytime, anywhere, without preconditions." He added in the interview that he has "no hostile intent" towards North Korea. (Stephen Silver, *National Interest*)

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Prepared by Michelle Dang, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
http://web.archive.org/web/20250813170450/https://mailchi.mp/ca61761e6c51/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-korea-to-hold-supreme-peoples-assembly-session-next-monthus-envoy-calls-for-bilateral-talks-with-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, August 27, 2021**

## North Korea's Potential Long-Term Prison-Labor Facility at Sŏnhwa-dong

**Top News:**

North Korea's Potential Long-Term Prison-Labor Facility at Sŏnhwa-dong (*HRNK*, 8/26/2021)

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea's main paper urges ideological education for youth ahead of anniversary(*Yonhap*, 8/27/2021)
U.N. presses North Korea for details on executions under thought-crime law (UPI, 8/27/2021)
North Korea Reportedly Enacts Shoot-On-Sight Orders for Trespassers Into Country(*Newsweek*, 8/27/2021)

**In South Korea:**
S. Korea's top nuclear envoy to visit U.S. for talks on N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 8/27/2021)
South Korea designates arriving Afghans as 'persons of special merit' (*The Guardian*, 8/27/2021)
'Taliban kill women like me': Afghans in South Korea say they don't want to go back(*South China Morning Post*, 8/27/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
N. Korea remains unresponsive to S. Korea's hotline calls even after summertime join exercise wraps up (*Yonhap*, 8/27/2021)

**International:**
U.S. currently has enough capabilities to counter N. Korean threat: Strategic Commander (*Yonhap*, 8/27/2021)
UN asks N Korea to clarify alleged shoot-on-sight orders (*ABC News*, 8/27/21)
'We were punch bags': North Korean Prison beatings may be form of torture, says UN (*The Guardian*, 8/27/2021)

**Top News:**

- Through satellite imagery analysis and witness testimony, HRNK has identified a previously unknown potential *kyo-hwa-so* long-term prison-labor facility at Sŏnhwa-dong, P'ihyŏn-gun, P'yŏngan-bukto, North Korea. While this facility appears to be operational and well maintained, further imagery analysis and witness testimony collection will be necessary in order to irrefutably confirm that Sŏnhwa-dong is a *kyo-hwa-so*. (Joseph S. Bermudez, Jr., Greg Scarlatoiu, Amanda Mortwedt Oh, and Rosa Park; *HRNK*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea's main newspaper on Friday highlighted the importance of ideological education for younger generations in honor of the county's Youth Day, urging officials to look out for any "exotic elements" in lifestyles (*Yonhap*)

- Investigators from the United Nations Human Rights Council sent a letter to North Korea seeking explanations about shoot-to-kill orders at borders and a recent law against, which has been linked to executions (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- North Korea reportedly has enacted shoot-on-sight orders for trespassers who enter through its border with China and Russia, violating the nation's COVID-19 pandemic closure, said the Associated Press (Julia Marnin, *Newsweek*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's top nuclear envoy, Noh Kyu-duk, will visit the United States next week for discussions with his U.S. counterpart, Sung Kim, about efforts to resume dialogue with North Korea, according to the foreign ministry (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea welcomes Afghan refugees who supported its operations before the Taliban took control of Afghanistan, designating them as "persons of special merit" (Raphael Rashid, *The Guardian*)
- Rabia Samet, a computer science major at a university in Seoul, speaks about fears of South Korean government saying she must return to Afghanistan (John Power, *South China Morning Post*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- North Korea did not answer liaison calls from South Korea on Friday morning, a unification ministry official said (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Commander of U.S. Strategic commander states that The United States has enough capability, including missile interceptors, deployed to counter any threats emanating from North Korea (Yonhap)
- U.N. human rights investigators ask North Korea to clarify if its orders entails that their troops shoot on sight any trespassers who cross its northern border in violation of the country's pandemic closure (Kim Tong-Hyung, *ABC News*)
- Detainees in North Korea are forced into extremely demanding manual labour and beaten so severely it may be a form of torture, says the UN (*The Guardian*)

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Prepared by Shruti Nallappa, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250813170654/https://mailchi.mp/d29367d03b97/hrnk-news-items-north-koreas-potential-long-term-prison-labor-facility-at-snhwa-dong?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, August 28, 2021**

## UN and EU "No request for flood recovery assistance from North Korea" sent

**Top News:**
UN and EU "No request for flood recovery assistance from North Korea (*Radio Free Asia*, 08/12/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Ethnic Chinese Leaving North Korea Sign Pledge Not to Return Through 2023(*Radio Free Asia*, 08/27/2021)
Inside a North Korean University (*Times Higher Education*, 08/27/2021)
North Korea upgrades new skyscraper to 80 floors, making it 2nd-tallest in DPRK(*NK News*, 08/27/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Unification minister promises efforts for wise use of inter-Korean cooperation fund(*Yonhap*, 08/27/2021)

**International:**
Aid workers, activists urge US to lift DPRK travel ban ahead of renewal deadline (*NK News*, 08/27/2021)

**Top News:**

- Greg Scarlatoiu, the Executive Director of the U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), also told RFA that it will be difficult for North Korea to fully recover from the disaster, emphasizing that "recovery is even more challenging when large-scale damage
  continues for two years in a row." (Ji-Jeong-eun, Kim Sang-il, Lee Sang-min, *Radio Free Asia*)
- **In North Korea:**
- Ethnic Chinese stranded in North Korea when the border was closed last year amid coronavirus concerns have been allowed by Pyongyang to return home, but only after promising not to return to the reclusive country before the end of 2023, sources say. (Jinha Shin, Richard Finney, and Yong Jae Mok, *Radio Free Asia*)
- An article published this month in *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* offers an extremely rare look at social interaction in a country that its former leader Kim Jong Il described as "shrouded in fog." (Joyce Lau, *Times Higher Education*)
- North Korean soldiers have finished framework construction of an 80-story skyscraper in Pyongyang, state media claimed Wednesday, revealing that designers added about 30 floors to what was originally planned to be a 50-odd-story building. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Unification Minister Lee In-young said Friday the government will make the best use of the inter-Korean cooperation fund to open dialogue with North Korea and address challenges, including the coronavirus. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- In Sept. 2017, following the death of American college student Otto Warmbier, Washington banned U.S. passport holders from traveling to North Korea. Four years later, the prohibition is still in effect. The U.S. State Department is expected to announce soon whether to extend the ban, as it is set to expire on Aug. 31. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)

Free Radio Asia Article

**UN and EU "No request for flood recovery assistance from North Korea"**
By Ji Jeong-eun

On August 12 th , the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported that North Korean Premier Kim Tok-hun visited areas of the country damaged by floods, including Yonggwang County, Sinhung County, Hongwon County, and Tanchon in South Hamgyong Province. Premier Kim encouraged troops to carry out relief efforts and learned about the living conditions of flood victims and the problems that arose during recovery. He also visited the Hungnam Fertilizer Complex, the Ryongsong Machine Complex, and the February 8th Vinalon Complex and discussed measures to return to normal production levels.

**Anchor**: Amid heavy rains in areas of North Korea, North Korean authorities have yet to request assistance from the United Nations (UN) or the European Union (EU). However, experts predict that it would be difficult for North Korea to recover from the continuous torrential rain on its own. Reporter Ji Jeong-eun reports.

On August 11th, around ten days after heavy rain flooded 1,170 homes and roads in South Hamgyong Province earlier in August, the North Korean state media reported further downpour in North Hamgyong Province.

**Broadcast content**: Today heavy rain fell in areas along the coast of North Hamgyong Province and clouds covered the whole region.

A media broadcast revealed that the water submerged roads of Hwadae County in North Hamgyong Province. Unable to ride through the muddy waters, residents were seen dragging their bicycles over waterways.

However, North Korea has still not requested outside aid from international organizations. It declined to request aid from such organizations last year as well.

Jens Laerke, spokesperson for the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), told Radio Free Asia (RFA) on August 12th, "I can confirm that as of this morning (the 12 th ) Geneva time, there has been no request for international assistance from the Government of DPRK."

An EU official also told RFA, "We are closely following developments but at this stage have not received a request for help from the North Korean authorities."

Furthermore, the South Korean Ministry of Unification reported on August 9th that North Korea had not yet shared any information regarding the flood situation.

**Lee Jong-joo, spokesperson for the South Korean Ministry of Unification**: "So far, no information regarding the current flood situation in North Korea has been exchanged through the inter-Korean joint liaison office."

Even so, experts predict that it would be difficult for North Korea to fully recover from the flood damage without external assistance.

Jérome Sauvage, former head of the UN Development Program's Pyongyang office, told RFA on August 12th that it is difficult to independently ascertain the extent of damage caused by the flood because there are currently no international staff in North Korea, but pointed out that "countries usually need foreign aid for disaster recovery such as floods, and North Korea is no exception."

"As external support is limited, the impacts of the flood will first affect people living in rural areas, rather than those living in the capital," he explained.

Olivia Schieber, senior program manager of the foreign and defense policy department at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), predicts that "it will be difficult for the North Korean authorities to deal with the recent floods."

She explained that there had already been alarming signs of severe food shortages and famine last year, and without foreign aid, these crises could become even more complex this year. Schieber continued, "Flood damage is a recurring problem in North Korea," and to prevent damage, efforts will need to go beyond short-term aid, adding that "long-term, large-scale investigations into outdated farming techniques will be necessary."

Greg Scarlatoiu, the Executive Director of the U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), also told RFA that it will be difficult for North Korea to fully recover from the

disaster, emphasizing that "recovery is even more challenging when large-scale damage continues for two years in a row."

Moreover, research shows it will not be easy for North Korea to recover from the flood damage due to widespread deforestation, lack of resources, and strict restrictions on information dissemination.

However, if the North Korean leadership were to accept external support, Executive Director Scarlatoiu anticipates that it could be seen as a failure of the authorities, making it difficult for them to reach a political decision.

Reporter: Ji Jeong-eun (Radio Free Asia)
Editor: Lee Sang-min (Radio Free Asia)
Web Editor: Kim Sang-il (Radio Free Asia)
Translated by: Irene Kang (HRNK)

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Prepared by Lia Vincenzo, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250813170840/https://mailchi.mp/367c59b1e900/hrnk-news-itemsun-and-eu-no-request-for-flood-recovery-assistance-from-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, August 29, 2021**

## Seoul's nuclear envoy to visit Washington for talks on N. Korea; Of All Things, North Korea Tried to Buy Lexuses Last Year

**In North Korea:**
N.K. stresses close relations with Cuba on 61st anniversary of diplomatic ties(*Yonhap*, 08/29/2021)
Of All Things, North Korea Tried to Buy Lexuses Last Year (*The National Interest*, 08/29/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Seoul's nuclear envoy to visit Washington for talks on N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 08/29/2021)

**International:**
Seoul, Washington expected to hold in-depth talks over humanitarian aid to Pyongyang (*The Korea Times*, 08/29/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea on Sunday stressed its close relations with Cuba and expressed continued support and solidarity on the occasion of the 61st anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties. (*Yonhap*)
- Despite its many struggles during the pandemic, the North Korean regime attempted to buy $1 million worth of Lexus SUVs in 2020, NK News reported, citing a forthcoming report from the United Nations Panel of Experts. (Stephen Silver, *The National Interest*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korea's top nuclear envoy is set to depart for the United States on Sunday for talks on efforts to resume dialogue with North Korea, the foreign ministry said. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- South Korea's chief nuclear envoy Noh Kyu-duk's trip to the United States is raising speculation that Seoul and Washington are expected to discuss inter-Korean humanitarian projects in a more concrete way, according to diplomatic observers, Sunday. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)

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Prepared by Audrey Gregg, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250813171005/https://mailchi.mp/cba1d03e0a05/hrnk-news-itemsseouls-nuclear-envoy-to-visit-washington-for-talks-on-n-koreaof-all-things-north-korea-tried-to-buy-lexuses-last-year?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, August 30, 2021**

## Nuclear watchdog sounds warning over restart of North Korean reactor

**Top News:**

Nuclear watchdog sounds warning over restart of North Korean reactor (*Financial Times*, 08/30/2021)

**In North Korea:**

DPRK promises to build 'strongest war deterrent' in response to military drills (*NK News*, 08/30/2021)
IAEA: N Korea appears to have resumed nuke reactor operation (*AP News*, 08/30/2021)
N. Korea denounces S. Korea, U.S. over joint military drill, vows to strengthen war deterrence (*Yonhap*, 08/30/2021)
North Korea appears to have restarted Yongbyon nuclear reactor, IAEA says (UPI, 08/30/2021)

North Korean nuclear reactor used for plutonium production appears active, IAEA says (CNN, 08/30/2021)
North Korea reports no COVID cases after testing 665 more people (*NK News*, 08/30/2021)
North Korea Restarted Plutonium-Producing Reactor, U.N. Agency Warns (*The New York Times*, 08/30/2021)
Renewed activity at N. Korea nuclear reactor 'deeply troubling', IAEA says (*Reuters*, 08/30/2021)
UN atomic watchdog says North Korea appears to have restarted nuclear reactor (*The Guardian*, 08/30/2021)
Yongbyon nuclear reactor appears to be in operation: IAEA report (*Yonhap*, 08/30/2021)
Yongbyon: UN says North Korea appears to restart nuclear reactor (*BBC News*, 08/30/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Military sources peep indigenous nuclear submarine (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/29/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
IAEA report puts pressure on Seoul's bid to restart peace initiative (*The Korea Times*, 08/30/2021)
Seoul's top nuclear negotiator arrives in Washington for talks on N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 08/30/2021)

**International:**
U.S. stresses 'urgent need for dialogue, diplomacy' with N.K. after IAEA report (*Yonhap*, 08/30/2021)

**Top News:**

- The UN's nuclear watchdog has warned that North Korea appeared to have restarted a critical reactor at its biggest nuclear materials complex, raising another security challenge for Joe Biden as the US president faces immense pressure over the crisis in Afghanistan. (Edward White, Kang Buseong, *Financial Times*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea has threatened to strengthen its preemptive strike capabilities in response to recent U.S.-ROK joint military exercises, recycling language and criticisms that the North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's sister made in an earlier statement. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- North Korea appears to have restarted the operation of its main nuclear reactor used to produce weapons fuels, the U.N. atomic agency said, as the North openly threatens to enlarge its nuclear arsenal amid long-dormant nuclear diplomacy with the United States. (*AP News*)
- North Korea slammed South Korea and the United States over their recent summertime joint military drill, vowing to strengthen "war deterrence" strong enough to counter and remove any external threats. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea appears to have begun operating a nuclear reactor capable of producing weapons-grade plutonium after a pause of more than two-and-a-half years, according

to a new report by the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)

- North Korea appears to have restarted operations at a power plant capable of producing plutonium for nuclear weapons, according to the United Nations' nuclear watchdog. The International Atomic Energy Agency said that clues, such as the discharge of cooling water, observed in early July indicated the plant is active. No such evidence had been observed since December 2018, the IAEA said. (Joshua Berlinger, Will Ripley, Jake Kwon, CNN)
- North Korea claims that it has tested an additional 665 people for COVID-19 but discovered no positive cases, according to the World Health Organization. State media continues to emphasize 'epidemic prevention campaign' as Pyongyang defends its border lockdown. (Bryan Betts, *NK News*)
- North Korea appears to have restarted a reactor in its main nuclear complex, the United Nations' nuclear watchdog said in a report, an indication that the North has been ramping up its nuclear weapons program while talks with the United States remain stalled. (Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*)
- North Korea appears to have restarted a nuclear reactor that is widely believed to have produced plutonium for nuclear weapons, the U.N. atomic watchdog said in an annual report, highlighting the isolated nation's efforts to expand its arsenal. (Francois Murphy, Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- North Korea appears to have restarted a nuclear reactor that is widely believed to have produced plutonium for nuclear weapons, the UN atomic watchdog has said in an annual report. (*The Guardian*)
- The U.N. nuclear watchdog has detected "deeply troubling" indications that a key nuclear reactor at North Korea's main Yongbyon complex has been in operation since July, including the release of cooling water, an annual report showed Monday. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea appears to have restarted its Yongbyon nuclear reactor, the UN atomic agency has said in a report. Plutonium, which is used for nuclear weapons, is believed to be produced at the reactor's complex. (*BBC News*)

**In South Korea:**

- Expectations are rising that the Korean military will announce the development of an indigenous nuclear submarine within the year, according to military sources who spoke on the condition of anonymity. (Michael Lee, Lee Chul-jae, Park Yong-han, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- A recent International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report indicating the fact that North Korea has restarted its nuclear reactor in Yongbyon is likely to pour some cold water on South Korea's efforts toward the early resumption of the stalled Korean Peninsula peace process, according to diplomatic observers, Monday. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)

- South Korea's top nuclear envoy arrived here Sunday for talks with his U.S. counterparts on ways to resume dialogue with North Korea. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- The United States on Sunday stressed the "urgent need for dialogue and diplomacy" with North Korea after the U.N. nuclear watchdog reported that Pyongyang appears to have restarted its plutonium-producing nuclear reactor. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Diletta De Luca, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
http://web.archive.org/web/20250813171304/https://mailchi.mp/e8f8542b8451/hrnk-news-itemnuclear-watchdog-sounds-warning-over-restart-of-north-korean-reactor?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, August 31, 2021**

## Engage NK, but hold it accountable; The darkness of NK Prisons: U.S. human rights organizations paid attention to "torture dolls"

**Top News:**

Opinion: Engage North Korea, but hold it accountable (*Washington Post*, 08/31/2021)
The darkness of North Korean prisons: U.S. human rights organization paid attention to"torture dolls" (*Yahoo News*, 08/15/2021)

**In North Korea:**

IAEA: N Korea appears to have resumed nuke reactor operation (*AP News*, 08/30/2021)
Kim Jong Un meets disaffected youth who found redemption through hard labor (*NK News*, 08/30/2021)
N.K. leader urges young ex-convicts to become 'kindling spark' for national development (*Yonhap*, 08/31/2021)
N.Korea's Kim praises young 'volunteers' in difficult, challenging sectors (*Reuters*, 08/31/2021)
N. Korea's reactivation of Yongbyon 'low-level provocation' amid stalemated nuclear talks: expert (*Yonhap*, 08/31/2021)
North Korean Phone Brokers Take Huge Risk to Resume Remittances (*Radio Free Asia*, 08/30/2021)
North Korea tightens fishing rules for Chinese boats due to COVID event: UN PoE(*NK News*, 08/31/2021)
North Korea's Yongbyon Nuclear Complex: More Evidence the 5 MWe Reactor Appears to Have Restarted (*38th North*, 08/30/2021)
Satellite imagery signals resumption of work on North Korea nuclear reactor (*The Hill*,

08/31/2021)
Satellite photo suggests North Korea back at work on nuclear arsenal (*NBC News*, 08/31/2021)
Satellite Photos Show North Korea Has Resumed Processing Nuclear Fuel, IAEA Says (NPR, 08/31/2021)
Shut the Yongbyon Facility (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/30/2021)
UN atomic watchdog believes North Korea has restarted nuclear reactor (*The Telegraph*, 08/30/2021)

**In South Korea:**
S. Korea, US launch joint Korean War remains excavation project near DMZ (*The Korea Herald*, 08/31/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Seoul's unification minister claims Pyongang receptive to inter-Korean aid (*NK News*, 08/31/2021)
Unification minister calls for early resumption of dialogue with N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 08/31/2021)

**International:**
Biden's North Korea policy inflexible, 'lacks novelty': former Chinese official (*NK News*, 08/31/2021)
Report on North Korea's Yongbyon Prompts Calls by US, South Korea For Restart of Denuclearization Talks (*Radio Free Asia*, 08/30/2021)
Ripples from Afghanistan (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/23/2021)
Sanctions won't convince North Korea to denuclearize (*NK News*, 08/21/2021)
S. Korea, US envoys discuss humanitarian aid for NK, nuclear issue (*The Korea Herald*, 08/31/2021)
Top U.S. envoy expresses hope for N. Korea's return to dialogue (*Yonhap*, 08/31/2021)
'Urgent need' for talks with North Korea, White House says after nuclear report (*NK News* 08/31/2021)
U.S. continues to seek dialogue with N. Korea: White House (*Yonhap*, 08/31/2021)
White House still waiting to engage Pyongyang (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 08/23/2021)

**Top News:**

- Any lifting of the U.S. travel ban on North Korea must go with assurances that Americans who travel to North Korea to meet family members, do business, cover news stories, teach and provide humanitarian aid will not be subject to intimidation, arrests, and harsh and prolonged sentencing on unacceptable grounds, influenced by the political climate. (Roberta Cohen, HRNK Co-Chair Emeritus, *Washington Post*)
- The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), a U.S.-based NGO, published a report last month on the *Kyo-hwa-so* (prison-labor facility) No.8 located in the east of Pyongyang, Sungho-ri. The report revealed serious human rights violations within the facility. (Ko Young-gi, *Yahoo News*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea appears to have restarted the operation of its main nuclear reactor used to produce weapons fuels, the U.N. atomic agency said, as the North openly threatens to enlarge its nuclear arsenal amid long-dormant nuclear diplomacy with the United States. (Hyung-Jin Kim and Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un met a group of young men who were reportedly "lagging behind" ruling party expectations before earning a fresh start laboring at "difficult" work sites this year, state media reported on Tuesday. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un met and held a photo session with young ex-convicts volunteering to work in "difficult and challenging sectors," and urged them to become a "kindling spark" for national development, state media said Tuesday.(*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un met with young people who had "volunteered" to work in "difficult and challenging" sectors and praised them, the country's state media reported on Tuesday. (Sangmi Cha, *Reuters*)
- North Korea's reported reactivation of a plutonium-producing nuclear reactor is a "low-level provocation" intended to draw attention from the United States amid worries that Washington may be returning to the Obama-era's "strategic patience," an expert said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- A new report released Wednesday by the Washington-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) details how the North Korean government has been reacting to the increased access to information. Merely jamming shortwave radio broadcasts is no longer enough in the smartphone era, so the authorities have had to find innovative ways to slow the infiltration of information from outside. (Jeongmin Yon Park, Jinha Shin, and Leejin Jun, *Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korean authorities have issued strict quarantine guidelines for Chinese fishing boats operating in DPRK waters, citing a COVID-19 "danger" likely posed by third country vessels, according to a draft of the forthcoming U.N. Panel of Experts (PoE) seen by NK Pro. (Jeongmin Kim, NK News)
- Commercial satellite imagery of the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center provides more evidence that operations at the 5 MWe Reactor have likely restarted. Consistent with a recent report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), a discharge of cooling water into a new outflow channel leading into the Kuryong River is visible in satellite imagery from August 25. This has historically been one of the key indicators of reactor operations. (Frank Pabian, Jenny Town, and Jack Liu, *38th North*)
- New satellite images of North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear reactor indicate that the site has resumed work. (Mychael Schnell, *The Hill*)
- A satellite image obtained by NBC News shows water flowing out of a North Korean reactor, the latest sign the regime has resumed work that could enable it to build more nuclear weapons. (Dan De Luce, *NBC News*)

- The United Nation's atomic watchdog describes a new development in North Korea as "deeply troubling." The agency says the North has restarted its main nuclear reactor. (Anthony Kuhn, NPR)
- The reactivation of nuclear facilities at Yongbyon by North Korea gathers dark clouds over the Korean Peninsula once again. The facilities revealed by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) include the 5MWe reactor and the Radiochemical Laboratory. The gas-cooled reactor, which resumed operations in July, produces plutonium for nuclear bombs. The lab has reprocessed the spent nuclear fuel from the reactor to extract plutonium since February. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The United Nations atomic watchdog has detected "deeply troubling" signs that North Korea has restarted a nuclear reactor that is widely believed to have produced plutonium for nuclear weapons. (Nicola Smith, *The Telegraph*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea and the United States launched a joint project Tuesday to recover the remains of troops killed during the 1950-53 Korean War at a former battle site near the inter-Korean border, the defense ministry said. (*The Korea Herald*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- International sanctions should not get in the way of humanitarian assistance for North Korea, South Korea's unification minister Lee In-young said at a forum hosted by the Ministry of Unification (MOU) on Tuesday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young called Tuesday for the early resumption of talks with North Korea, saying dialogue is the only way toward achieving objectives that everyone wants. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- The Biden administration's North Korea policy "lacks novelty" and "substantive changes," a retired senior Chinese official told a forum in Seoul on Tuesday, despite a recently finished policy review process meant to differentiate fresh U.S. efforts from the past. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- A new report by the U.N.'s atomic energy agency that North Korea may have restarted a five-megawatt nuclear reactor at its Yongbyon nuclear power facility believed to be capable of producing plutonium for nuclear weapons, has sparked calls by the United States and South Korea for the resumption of international talks to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. (Soyoung Kim, Albert Hong, and Roseanne Gerin, *Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korea is in danger of being forgotten because of Afghanistan. In such times, North Korea tried to attract attention with provocations. Now is no time to care about appeasement measures such as a family reunions or the Pope's visit to Pyongyang. (Nam Jeong-ho, *Korea JoonAng Daily*)
- The current sanctions regime has its limits, even if the US could convince China, Russia and others to fully enforce it. (Doug Bandow, *NK News*)

- South Korea and the US discussed potential humanitarian aid to North Korea and reiterated calls for the reclusive regime to return to dialogue, Washington's top nuclear envoy said Monday, as Pyongyang may be on track to expand its nuclear program. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- The top U.S. envoy for North Korea again expressed hope for North Korea's return to dialogue Monday, saying his country remains committed to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through dialogue and diplomacy. (*Yonhap*)
- The White House stressed the "urgent need" for dialogue and diplomacy with North Korea on Monday following news that the North had restarted activity at its primary nuclear reactor for the first time in three years. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- The United States continues to seek negotiations with North Korea to discuss a range of issues related to denuclearization, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki affirmed Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- The United States is committed to dialogue and diplomacy with North Korea, said the White House, despite a recent report of the North restarting its nuclear facilities. (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

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Yahoo News Article Translated by Hayoung Paik, HRNK Research Intern

**The darkness of North Korean prisons: U.S. human rights organization paid attention to "Torture Dolls"**
By Ko Young-gi

The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), a U.S.-based NGO, published a report last month on the Kyo-hwa-so (prison-labor facility) No.8 located in the east of Pyongyang, Sungho-ri. The report revealed serious human rights violations within the facility.

According to HRNK, prisoners in the facility were made to manufacture dolls exported to China, and they could be tortured if they failed to meet the quota assigned to each working unit.

Moreover, it was mainly female prisoners that were mobilized for these types of tasks.
(Reference article: The truth of the North Korean prison that kills young women by "smell torture" )

The HRNK report was prepared based on the testimony of North Korean defectors who were once imprisoned in this kyo-hwa-so. According to North Korean defectors who were imprisoned in the early 2000s, the kyo-hwa-so was estimated to have 1,500 to 1,600 prisoners at the time, 1,000 of whom were men, and the rest were women.

Through satellite images, HRNK analysis found that the kyo-hwa-so was expanded from 2015 to 2020 and speculated that the expansion may indicate that more people are currently imprisoned here than before.

The main task for the doll laborers was connecting eyelashes, and the work continued from 5 am to 10 pm. If the prisoners failed to reach the quota, they were forced to kneel down on the hot floor, which would cause their skin to burn in about five minutes.

As aforementioned, the dolls manufactured like this may have been exported to China.

Recently, at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum (ARF) held online on the 6th, China's State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi commented on the situation surrounding the Korean peninsula, stating, “An effective way to break the deadlock is to ease sanctions on North Korea.”

In addition, Yi did not try to keep his support of North Korea secret by stating, “Conducting the U.S.-ROK joint military exercise is not constructive considering the current situation, and if the United States really wants to restore dialogue with North Korea, it should not take any action that strains the situation.”

The main purpose of these remarks is to contain the United States as China has intensified conflicts with it. However, China's restraint against the United States by using the North Korean situation could eventually lead to a bitter counterattack. There are several issues between North Korea and China, such as these “torture dolls,” accepting North Korean workers who can be seen as forced labor and in violation of sanctions, or deporting of North Korean defectors, all of which North Korea and China do not want attention on from the international community.

Reporter: Ko Young-gi

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Prepared by Lia Vincenzo, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
http://web.archive.org/web/20250813171543/https://mailchi.mp/e709b08e7426/hrnk-news-items-engage-nk-but-hold-it-accountable-the-darkness-of-nk-prisons-us-human-rights-organizations-paid-attention-to-torture-dolls?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

# 9. SEPTEMBER

### Tuesday, September 1, 2021

## Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea Vacancy To Be Filled Following Approval from Assistant Secretary of State

**Top News:**
Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea Vacancy To Be Filled Following Approval from Assistant Secretary of State (VOA, 08/17/2021)

**In North Korea:**
At least one Mercedes-Benz shipped to North Korea in 2019 despite sanctions (*NK News*, 09/01/2021)
N. Korea May Be Pushing Biden for Nuclear Deal Trump Rejected (VOA, 08/31/2021)
NK rejects offer of 3m Sinovac vaccine doses (*The Korea Herald*, 09/01/2021)
North Korea turns down Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine doses - WSJ (*Reuters*, 09/01/2021)
Two North Korean Children Kidnapped by Desperate, Hungry Citizens (*Radio Free Asia*, 08/31/2021)
Was Kim Jong Un Vaccinated Earlier This Year? (*National Interest*, 08/31/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Alleged North Korean collaborator claims he was preparing for unification (*NK News*, 08/31/2021)
Cost-sharing deal on Seoul's contribution for US troops enters into force (*NK News*, 09/01/2021)
S. Korea asks for continued efforts to encourage N. Korea's participation at health security forum (*The Korea Herald*, 09/01/2021)
WHO chief welcomes S. Korea's push for regional cooperation forum against health crises (*Yonhap*, 09/01/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
How the F-35 Stealth Fighter Jet Could Change North Korea's Calculus (*National Interest*, 08/31/2021)
September: An important month for inter-Korean relations (*The Korea Times*, 09/01/2021)

**International:**
Door remains open for dialogue with N. Korea: White House (*Yonhap*, 09/01/2021)

EDITORIAL from Korea Times on Sept. 1 (*Yonhap*, 09/01/2021)
North Korean diplomat dies after car accident in Vladivostok (*NK News*, 09/01/2021)
South Korean envoy visits US to talk North Korean nukes, humanitarian aid (*NK News*, 09/01/2021)
U.S. remains firmly committed to dialogue with N. Korea: S. Korean envoy (*Yonhap*, 09/01/2021)

**Top News:**

- [Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea] "It might take a while, but the very important thing is that the US State Department has stated this firm commitment to human rights as a central part of our foreign policy…I think that we will see a special envoy for North Korean Human Rights appointed, at some point, hopefully soon." (Baik Sung-won, VOA, translated by Juheung Kim, HRNK)

**In North Korea:**

- UN report shows North Korea-linked vendor also purchased three other luxury vehicles, with their whereabouts unknown (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- Experts say North Korea's reactivation of the reactor at its Yongbyon nuclear facility may be a calculated step by Pyongyang to gain leverage in a renewed effort to gain concessions from the U.S. (Christy Lee, VOA)
- North Korea has asked for China's Sinovac COVID-19 shots offered by COVAX to be redirected to other countries low on vaccines, UNICEF said Tuesday, referring to a global vaccine program. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea has rejected roughly three million COVID-19 vaccine doses developed by China's Sinovac Biotech (SVA.O), saying the shots should be sent to harder-hit countries, the Wall Street Journal reported on Wednesday, citing UNICEF. (Manas Mishra and Sangmi Cha, *Reuters*)
- As economic conditions worsen in North Korea, some desperate citizens have turned to kidnapping, with at least two children snatched in separate incidents in an attempt to extract ransom money from their families, sources in the country told RFA. (Hyemin Son and Jeong Yon Park, *Radio Free Asia*)
- A new report claims that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un may have received a coronavirus vaccine earlier this year. (Stephen Silver, *National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korean man denies charges that he and three others took orders from DPRK operatives (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- Six-year deal, signed in April and ratified this week, ties annual increases in Seoul's contribution to defense spending. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- South Korea has called for member countries of a regional health security forum to work together to encourage North Korea to take part in the forum on pandemics and other challenges, the foreign ministry said Wednesday. (*The Korea Herald*)
- The head of the World Health Organization (WHO) said Wednesday he welcomes President Moon Jae-in's initiative for a regional cooperation forum to tackle public health crises, like the coronavirus pandemic. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- It is clear that a stealthy fifth-generation fighter jet could give South Korea an increased ability to destroy North Korean air defenses--and much more. (Kris Osborn, *National Interest*)
- This September will mark an important month for the Moon Jae-in administration, as it is making its final efforts to improve inter-Korean relations before the President's term ends in May. (Nam Hyun-woo, *The Korea Times*)

**International:**

- The U.S. remains willing to meet with North Korea anywhere and anytime, White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Tuesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- A U.N. watchdog's report on North Korea's presumed resumption of the operation of its main nuclear reactor is bad news for South Korea and the United States. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said in its annual report that North Korea appears to have restarted its plutonium-producing reprocessing reactor in the Yongbyon nuclear complex, north of Pyongyang. (*Yonhap*)
- Source confirms deaths of two North Koreans, including consul to Khabarovsk, after their SUV reportedly overturned (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- The U.S. and South Korea continue to closely monitor North Korea's nuclear activities, Seoul's chief nuclear envoy said during a visit to Washington this week, following reports of new activity at a key nuclear facility in the DPRK. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- The United States remains strongly committed to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through diplomacy and dialogue, and is working closely with South Korea to bring North Korea back to the dialogue table, Seoul's top nuclear envoy said Tuesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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VOA News Article, Translated by Juheung Kim, HRNK Research Intern

**Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea Vacancy To Be Filled Following Approval from Assistant Secretary of State**

Reporter Baik Sung-won

Following the prolonged vacancy of the State Department's Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea, it is predicted the position will be filled with the Assistant Secretary of State's approval. The State Department also reaffirmed its commitment to appointing a Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea, as is stipulated by law. This is reporter Baik Sung-won.

The Biden administration reaffirmed its commitment to re-appointing the Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea, a position which was vacant throughout Trump's term. Experts are optimistic that the position will be filled naturally at the same time as other key posts.

Robert King, former Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea, explained on the phone with VOA,, “I was appointed to the position in 2009. It took some time before everything was sorted out…I was asked by Secretary Clinton at the end of May, if I would accept the position. And it took the White House and the State Department security people three months to conduct the background investigations, prepare the information that needs to be done before it can be submitted. I was officially nominated by the President at the end of September. It took another month or so before the Senate held the hearing and then it took three or four weeks. I was sworn in at the end of November.”

“That was when things were moving fairly quickly. This administration has a lot of foreign policy issues going on and there are a number of things that probably have to be done and based on my own experience, I don't think there's a problem with making the appointment. I think it's very clear. Secretary Blinken has said they're going to make the appointment, the statement that you have by the State Department is consistent with that. So, I wouldn't be concerned for another couple of months.”

Secretary of State Antony Blinken, in the House Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing on June 7, said “Special envoy for North Korea human rights issues will certainly be appointed,” and explained that “the nominee confirmation process is more complicated and taking longer than before.”

On the 13th, VOA asked a spokesperson for the State Department why the Biden Administration has not appointed a special envoy yet. In response, he said, “The United States is committed to placing human rights at the center of our foreign policy, including in North Korea. There is a statutory requirement for that role.”

The reason why the State Department called it a "legal requirement" is the North Korean Human Rights Act, which was enacted in 2004 under the agreement of both Democratic and Republican parties, which has been re-approved three times so far, making it legally mandatory to appoint a Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea.

Roberta Cohen, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights in the Department of State, explained, “I do know that the Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs and the Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor State have not yet been confirmed by the Senate. The process for appointments takes time. Once the above two are confirmed, I would imagine that the nomination of a special envoy for human rights in North Korea would gain in priority.”

[Roberta Cohen, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights in the Department of State] “Probably nominees are being discussed and vetted. Given the Biden Administration’s stated commitment to human rights in foreign policy, and its statements about North Korea, it would seem likely that someone will be nominated. That a delay could take place

for political reasons is always a possibility, but that does not yet seem to be the case."

Young Kim, a Republican Congress member, in the interview with Korean reporters on July 7, said, "The Biden Administration should immediately appoint a special envoy for North Korea human rights issues. The position has been vacant since 2017. I am disappointed that there was not any progress even after State Secretary Antony Bliken told me personally that he would look into this issue."

In a letter to President Joe Biden on March 19, ten U.S. congressmen said the appointment of a Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea would play a pivotal role in the inter-Korean and U.S.-North Korea family reunions.

A total of eleven international human rights organizations, including Human Rights Watch, also urged the appointment of Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea in the joint letter to President Biden on April 15.

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, pointed out that Sung Kim, diplomat of the United States Special Representative for North Korea Policy, could not take responsibility for North Korean policies at the same time, as he is currently the ambassador to Indonesia. He explained, "One has to remember that we do have a special envoy for North Korea policy here, brilliant diplomat Ambassador Sung Kim also happens to be ambassador to Indonesia, so there is no full- time government official, covering those responsibilities…The reality is that there are a lot of appointments in the making. I'm sure that the State Department is very busy looking at all of these potential appointments. We do not have a confirmed Ambassador to the Republic of Korea—to South Korea yet. These appointments take time."

[Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea] "It might take a while, but the very important thing is that the US State Department has stated this firm commitment to human rights as a central part of our foreign policy…I think that we will see a special envoy for North Korean Human Rights appointed, at some point, hopefully soon."

Before the inauguration of President Biden, Greg Scarlatoiu sent a letter to the presidential transition team urging the appointment of a Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea, protection of North Korean escapees, an increase of information into North Korea, and humanitarian aid that accompanies human rights improvement.

After special envoy Robert King stepped down in January 2017, the U.S. State Department had consistently stated that there was nothing to announce. Yet, two weeks after Biden took office, the State Department, for the first time, hinted at the possibility of re-appointing the Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea.

On February 4, The State Department spokesman told VOA that, “As part of the policy review process, the Secretary of State will work with relevant departments to look at maintaining and filling the envoy position to best align resources with the foreign policy priorities of the Biden-Harris administration.” He added, “This includes the title of Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights.”

However, at the U.S.-South Korea summit, President Biden announced that he would appoint Sung Kim, the U.S. ambassador to Indonesia, as a special representative for North Korea, causing experts to speculate that the appointment could be delayed until negotiations resume with the North.

[Suzanne Scholte, President of Defense Forum Foundation] “It is very important to remember that it took President George Bush and President Barack Obama nine months, each to appoint an envoy. After the passage of the North Korea Human Rights Act, it took President Bush nine months, and then when Obama got elected President, it took him nine months…So I would not read anything into it other than that they're trying to fill—they’ve got ambassadors, they've got high ranking State Department officials, there's a lot of people, there are a lot of positions that need to be filled. And this is obviously one of them.

[Suzanne Scholte, President of Defense Forum Foundation] “What you should say is what the Biden administration has been saying about North Korean human rights. Reread what they said from North Korea Freedom Week. It was powerful…Their commitment on North Korea human rights was very very strongly stated, And I think Tony Blinken has always been a very strong advocate for human rights, and what he said is very powerful. So that's what I would consider.”

Human rights experts also evaluated the awareness of the problem and the approach that the Biden administration takes concerning human rights issues in North Korea.

[Robert King, former special envoy for North Korea human rights issues at the U.S. Department of State] “I think they're doing well. There hasn't been a crisis, there hasn't been an issue that's come up, but all of the statements that have been issued by the State Department have been positive and encouraging. So my sense is they understand, but the issue is they're giving attention to it.”

[Suzanne Scholte, President of Defense Forum Foundation] “I would love to see him appoint a special envoy who's actually involved with North Korea human rights. That would be my preference. We'd like somebody who's been involved in the North Korea human rights movement. That'd be great. But I've been really pleased with what they said and how they've interacted with us and how they've helped on what we're doing with trying to help refugees and they've been very receptive to requests that we’ve had. I've been very pleased with that so far.”

[Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea] “As far

as I know, the US State Department continues to be supportive of efforts to shine athe light s on the North Korean human rights situation. We will know much better before the end of the year. Remember that the DPRK human rights resolution in the Third Committee of the General Assembly of the UN will come up this fall. Also, a big test is going to be whether the United States is going to lead an effort to place the North Korean human rights issue on the agenda of the UN Security Council."

The U.N. Security Council, led by the U.S., has issued statements criticizing North Korea's human rights issues every year since 2014, but failed to hold meetings in 2018 and 2019 due to lack of a quorum. Biden, who was a presidential candidate at the time, criticized this failure as a "betrayal to American values."

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Prepared by Ella Startt, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250814235902/https://mailchi.mp/bb9cc7e37929/hrnk-news-items-special-envoy-for-human-rights-in-north-korea-vacancy-to-be-filled-following-approval-from-assistant-secretary-of-state?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, September 2, 2021**

## N. Korean troops observed at Pyongyang airfield in possible sign of military parade preparations

**In North Korea:**
How Using a Cell Phone Got a North Korean Woman Arrested for Spying (*The National Interest*, 9/2/2021)
Kim Jong-un slimmer than ever as North Koreans ordered not to discuss tyrant's weight (*The Mirror*, 9/1/2021)
N. Korean troops observed at Pyongyang airfield in possible sign of military parade preparations: sources (*Yonhap*, 9/2/2021)
North Korea rejects offer of almost three million Covid-19 jabs (*BBC*, 9/1/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Military to build 'Korean Iron Dome,' increase long range strike capabilities (*The Korea Herald*, 9/2/2021)
More Than Half a Million South Korean Troops Are Ready To Face Kim Jong Un (*The National Interest*, 9/2/2021)
President seeks to rehome puppies born to dog from North Korea (*The Korea Times*, 9/2/2021)

S. Korea developing massive ballistic missile as powerful as tactical nuclear weapon (*Yonhap*, 9/2/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

Resumption of Yongbyon activity was not surprising: Former unification ministers(*NK News*, 9/2/2021)

Strategic Insults (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 9/1/2021)

Unification ministry requests 1.9 pct hike in 2022 budget for inter-Korean cooperation (*Yonhap*, 9/2/2021)

**International:**

S. Korean nuclear envoy returns home from U.S. visit (*Yonhap*, 9/2/2021)

USFK commander calls for more achievements after summertime Korea-U.S. exercise (*Yonhap*, 9/2/2021)

U.S. extends travel ban on N. Korea for one year (*Yonhap*, 9/2/2021)

UN General Assembly: Moon's next stage for peace efforts? (*The Korea Herald*, 9/2/2021)

Unification minister voices hope for inter-Korean cooperation in tourism to expand to Russia (*Yonhap*, 9/2/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Last year, North Korea started cracking down harder on Chinese cell phones. "North Korean authorities have apparently taken their sweeping operation against the use of Chinese-made mobile phones to the next level, instituting tough measures against offenders by confiscating their homes and exiling their families," said reports. (Stephen Silver, *The National Interest*)
- Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un appears thinner than ever before as he made an appearance in another propaganda broadcast. The tyrant's health has sparked worldwide debate with North Koreans ordered not to discuss his weight. (Sam Elliott-Gibbs, *The Mirror*)
- Nearly 10,000 troops have been observed at Mirim Parade Training Ground in Pyongyang, North Korea recently, a possible sign that the country is preparing for a military parade to mark major anniversaries. The South Korean military is closely monitoring related activities. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has asked that almost three million Covid-19 jabs offered to it be redirected elsewhere, the UN says. A spokesperson said the country had asked that the shots be relocated to harder hit nations in view of global vaccine shortages. (BBC)

**In South Korea:**

- The military said Thursday it will pursue a homegrown missile defense system and a greater strike capability as part of a 315 trillion-won ($271 billion), five-year plan starting next year. "We will have ironclad defense against North Korean fire targeting Seoul and the surrounding areas," the Ministry of National Defense said, referring to the capital

that is home to over 9 million people, nearly one-fifth of South Korea's population. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)

- South Korea has traditionally maintained a large army, in part because a large army is necessary to properly guard the 160 mile-long demilitarized zone, and in part because the Korean People's Army is also manpower-intensive. This has led to the unusual situation in which the 560,000-strong ROK Army, which is only responsible for the defense of South Korea, is larger than the 475,000-strong U.S. Army, which has a global presence. (Kyle Mizokami, *The National Interest*)
- President Moon Jae-in is seeking to rehome seven puppies of the North Korean Pungsan breed. The parents of the litter were gifted to him by North Korean leader Kim Jong-un three years ago. (Jung Da-min, *The Korea Times*)
- South Korea has been developing a massive ballistic missile as powerful as a tactical nuclear weapon after the full lifting of U.S.-imposed restrictions on missile development. The defense ministry vowed to develop new missiles "with significantly enhanced destructive power," deploy new interceptors against long-range artillery threats and upgrade the Patriot system. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The apparent resumption of activity at North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear facility was not a surprising move, three former South Korean unification ministers under progressive administrations said. The remarks come after the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said in a report last week that there were "deeply troubling" indications that North Korea had resumed activity at its primary nuclear site for the first time in three years. (Jeongmin Kim and| Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- North Korea strategically uses a signature "pressure strategy" with the Moon Jae-in administration. After creating an amicable environment by accepting South Korea's proposals and coming to the negotiating table, North Korea suddenly does an about-face with political — and personal — insults lobbed at South Korean leaders if its real demands are not met. At the very moment of confusion, Pyongyang abruptly changes the agenda or conditions for negotiations. (Chae Byung-gun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The unification ministry requested a 1.9 percent hike in its budget for cooperative projects with North Korea next year despite stalled cross-border relations. About 1.27 trillion won (US$1.1 billion) was requested for next year's budget for the Inter-Korean Cooperation Fund, up 23.8 billion won from this year's spending plan. The increase stemmed in part from a rise in planned spending for the "peaceful use" of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), the heavily fortified inter-Korean border area. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- South Korea's top nuclear envoy, Noh Kyu-duk, returned home Thursday after meeting with his U.S. counterpart and other officials in Washington to discuss efforts to resume dialogue with North Korea. "We confirmed the U.S. stance that it remains committed to resolving the North Korea issues with urgency and as a priority," he said. (*Yonhap*)

- U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) commander Gen. Paul LaCamera has said that the latest joint exercise between South Korea and the United States served as a chance to display readiness and strengthen the bilateral alliance, but the two sides need to and can "achieve more." (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)
- The United States has extended its travel ban on North Korea for one year, marking the first extension of the travel restrictions under the Joe Biden administration, a report said Wednesday. "The Department of State has determined there continues to be serious risk to U.S. citizens and nationals of arrest and long-term detention constituting imminent danger to their physical safety," the department said. (*Yonhap*)
- President Moon Jae-in is weighing whether to attend the UN General Assembly set to be held in New York later this month in his renewed push to resume stalled talks with North Korea. “This is a significant year that marks the 30th anniversary of South and North Korea becoming UN members together. It would be very meaningful for the two Koreas to send a unified peace message on such a huge diplomatic stage,” said officials. (Le Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young on Thursday voiced hope that inter-Korean cooperation in tourism could expand to Russia once the "political situation improves" on the Korean Peninsula. Lee suggested a three-nation tour program taking South Koreans to scenic spots in North Korea and then to Russia as an example. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Kathy Yu, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250815000942/https://mailchi.mp/320836d8457d/hrnk-news-items-n-korean-troops-observed-at-pyongyang-airfield-in-possible-sign-of-military-parade-preparations?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, September 3, 2021**

## Scrutinizing North Korea’s Record on Civil and Political Rights: The New ICCPR Reporting Cycle

**In North Korea:**
Kim Jong Un orders tougher measures to fight climate change COVID-19 (*UPI*, 09/03/2021)
North Korea steps up efforts to draw attention from US (*The Korea Times*, 09/03/2021)
North Korea Controls Youth Through ‘Hard Labor’ (*Human Rights Watch*, 09/02/2021)
North Korea: Kim Jong-un calls for urgent action on climate change (*BBC*, 09/03/2021)
N.K. leader chairs politburo meeting to discuss antivirus efforts, food shortage(*Yonhap*, 09/03/2021)

Unification ministry closely watching N. Korea for signs of military parade preparation (*Yonhap*, 09/03/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Military to resume search for Korean War dead (*The Korea Herald*, 09/03/2021)

**International:**
Phased approach to North Korea's nuclear program gaining traction (*The Korea Times*, 09/03/2021)
Scrutinizing North Korea's Record on Civil and Political Rights: The New ICCPR Reporting Cycle (*38 North*, 09/02/2021)
U.S. stands ready to respond to any N. Korean missile launch: U.S. commander(*Yonhap*, 09/04/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called on officials to tighten COVID-19 prevention measures and to improve damage control for extreme weather caused by climate change, state media reported on Friday. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- North Korea appears to have increased its provocative military activities on purpose in a bid to get the attention of the Joe Biden administration, according to Pyongyang watchers. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korea's economy has taken a hit as the country's borders remain sealed during the Covid-19 pandemic. This week, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un expressed appreciation to the country's youth for "volunteering" to do hard labor to compensate for "lagging behind" or to cleanse "cultural infiltration." (Lina Yoon, *Human Rights Watch*)
- North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un called on his officials to deal with food supply issues and highlighted the danger of climate change. Typhoons last year badly impacted vital crops, while weeks of drought followed by heavy monsoon rains have damaged them this year as well. He said measures to overcome "abnormal climate" were needed, and asked also officials to tackle drought and floods. (BBC)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un presided over a politburo meeting to discuss key issues, such as nationwide anti-coronavirus measures and farm production, state media reported Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- The unification ministry said Friday it will closely watch North Korea for any signs they are preparing a military parade to celebrate major national anniversaries after a large number of troops were reportedly detected in Pyongyang. Earlier, 38 North, a U.S. website monitoring the North, said troop formations were observed at an airfield in Pyongyang. Sources in Seoul also said about 10,000 troops have been observed in Pyongyang in a sign that North Korea is preparing a military parade ahead of its state and ruling party founding anniversaries on Sept. 9 and Oct. 10, respectively. (*Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- The military is resuming its search for the remains of Korean and UN soldiers killed in the 1950-53 Korean War, the Ministry of National Defense said Friday. The first search, from April 2019 to June 2021 near Arrowhead Hills inside the Demilitarized Zone, uncovered the remains of 424 people. It is expected that a similar number will be found at the second site to be searched, near White Horse Hills next to Arrowhead Hills. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- Grappling with the fallout from its withdrawal from Afghanistan, the United States is weighing the possibility of shifting its tone on North Korea's nuclear program. In other words, seeking to maintain the status quo on the Korean Peninsula rather than aggressively pursuing complete denuclearization. Under the circumstances, diplomatic observers believe that the Biden administration is open to reaching an interim deal, which means that the two sides would take simultaneous steps that could lead to the denuclearization of North Korea and they believe are more practical and realistic. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- Earlier this year, the Human Rights Committee (HRC) of the ICCPR adopted an official "list of issues" that the government is expected to address by April 2022 under a new simplified reporting procedure. How likely is it that North Korea will now engage with the work of the Committee, and what should be the focus of scrutiny for its members and the international community at large? (Ben Willis, *38 North*)
- The United States stands ready to respond to any missile launch by North Korea should the North decides to stage such a provocation, the commander of U.S. Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) said Friday. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Michelle Dang, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250815002707/https://mailchi.mp/6724bad58b62/hrnk-news-itemsscrutinizing-north-koreas-record-on-civil-and-political-rights-the-new-iccpr-reporting-cycle?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, September 4, 2021**

## Don't sugarcoat it - Why candor is the best policy with North Korea

**Top News:**

Don't sugarcoat it: Why candor is the best policy with North Korea (*NK News*, 08/30/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Coronavirus: why did North Korea turn down 3 million Sinovac vaccine doses?(*South China Morning Post*, 09/03/2021)
Domestic Politics Could be Behind North Korea's Rejection of Sinovac Jabs, Experts say (*Radio Free Asia*, 09/03/2021)
Kim Jong-un rejects Covax vaccine offer as North Korea fights pandemic in 'our style' (*The Guardian*, 09/03/2021)
Kim orders tougher virus steps after N. Korea shuns vaccines (*AP Press*, 09/03/2021)
North Korea Has 200,000 Commandos—That Number Seems Crazy High (*National Interest*, 09/03/2021)
Why North Korea Turned Inward After the Trump Era (*National Interest*, 09/03/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Al Jazeera.S Korea developing missile as powerful as nuclear weapon. (*Al Jazeera*, 09/03/2021)

**International:**
Chinese city bordering North Korea cracks down on 'illegal' foreigners (*NK News*, 09/03/2021)
U.S. stands ready to respond to any N. Korean missile launch: U.S. commander(*Yonhap*, 09/04/2021)

**Top News:**

- Ambassador Thomas Schäfer's book shows the value of speaking truth to power about the unjust system under Kim Jong Un. While the world watches whether North Korea and the United States can agree on removing nuclear weapons from the Korean Peninsula and normalizing relations. German Ambassador Thomas Schäfer's new book should be on the table. (Roberta Cohen, HRNK Co-Chair Emeritus of the Board of Directors, *NK News*)

**In North Korea:**

- For North Korea, the threat posed by Covid-19 could hardly be more stark. The impoverished country's health care system is dilapidated and overstretched, while its 26 million people are especially vulnerable to disease due to chronic undernourishment that the UN estimates affects more than 40 per cent of the population. (John Power, *South China Morning Post*)
- North Korea's rejection of nearly three million doses of a Chinese-made coronavirus vaccine this week might be an attempt by leader Kim Jong Un to use the pandemic to consolidate power, experts told RFA. (Jeongeun Ji, *Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has ordered officials to wage a tougher epidemic prevention campaign in "our style" after he turned down some foreign Covid-19 vaccines offered via the UN-backed immunisation program. (Associated Press, *The Guardian*)

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ordered officials to wage a tougher epidemic prevention campaign in "our style" after he turned down some foreign COVID-19 vaccines offered via the U.N.-backed immunization program. (Hyung Jin Kim and Kim Tong-Hyung, *AP Press*)
- The country maintains twenty-five special-forces and special-purpose brigades, and five special-forces battalions, designed to undertake missions from frontline DMZ assault to parachute and assassination missions. North Korean special forces have evolved from a nuisance force designed to stage attacks in the enemy's rear into something far more dangerous. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)
- Kim Jong-un has launched a campaign against access to the outside world. Kim Jong-un continues to abandon what once appeared to be a hallmark of his tenure: a commitment to economic growth and support for economic reform. Indeed, Kim seems to be racing back into North Korea's collectivist past. (Doug Bandow, *National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea is in the final stages of developing a surface-to-surface ballistic missile as powerful as a tactical nuclear warhead, as the country unveiled budget proposals aimed at bolstering its defences against North Korea. (*Al Jazeera*)

**International:**

- Chinese government authorities in a city bordering North Korea are cracking down on foreigners illegally entering and staying in the area, according to a municipal agency's announcement this week.(Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- The United States stands ready to respond to any missile launch by North Korea should the North decide to stage such a provocation, the commander of U.S. Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) said Friday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Lia Vincenzo, Ella Startt and Michelle Dang

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250815003018/https://mailchi.mp/25698a533770/hrnk-news-itemsdont-sugarcoat-it-why-candor-is-the-best-policy-with-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, September 5, 2021**

## North Korea turns down foreign Covid vaccines to fight disease in their 'style'

**Top News:**

North Korea turns down foreign Covid vaccines to fight disease in their 'style' (*The Global Herald*, 09/04/2021)

**In North Korea:**
NK's vaccine refusal may be due to side effects, efficacy concerns (*The Korea Herald*, 09/05/2021)
North Korea Rejects 3 Million Chinese Vaccine Doses (NDT, 09/04/2021)
North Korea Would Depend on its Subs in a War With the U.S. (*The National Interest*, 09/04/2021)

**International:**
The United States Calls For Talks With North Korea: A Renewed Effort For Peace(*The Organization for World Peace*, 09/04/2021)

**Top News:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has ordered officials to wage a tougher pandemic prevention campaign, despite turning down foreign Covid-19 vaccines offered via the UN-backed immunisation programme. [...] The leader also told officials to deal with coronavirus in "our style" after previously calling for North Koreans to prepare for prolonged restrictions despite a deteriorating economy and food shortages. (*The Global Herald*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea has turned down some million doses of COVID-19 vaccines, which may be largely out of concerns about side-effects as well as mistrust over the vaccine efficacy, pundits have said. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea has rejected roughly three million COVID-19 vaccine doses of China's Sinovac Biotech, saying they should be sent to severely affected countries, according to UNICEF. (Tiffany Meier, NDT)
- North Korea should by all rights be a naval power. A country sitting on a peninsula, Korea has a long naval tradition, despite being a "shrimp" between the two "whales" of China and Japan. However, the partitioning of Korea into two countries in 1945 and the stated goal of unification lent the country to building up a large army, and reserving the navy for interdiction and special operations roles. Now, in the twenty-first century, the country's navy is set to be the sea arm of a substantial nuclear deterrent. (Kyle Mizokami, *The National Interest*)

**International:**

- During a recent visit to Seoul in South Korea, United States Special Envoy to North Korea, Sung Kim, expressed intent to resume talks with them as soon as possible. As Special Envoy, Sung Kim met with government officials in South Korea, like his South Korean counterpart Noh Kyu-duk. He emphasized that the U.S. "has no hostile intent" towards North Korea and is open to meeting with representatives "anytime, anywhere without preconditions," as he said in a 23 August interview. This comes amidst the U.S. and South Korea conducting annual joint military exercises, which has deterred any

progress made with regards to thawing relations with North Korea. (Sabrina Marty, *The Organization for World Peace*)

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Prepared by Diletta De Luca, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250815210142/https://mailchi.mp/a566a2070a79/hrnk-news-itemnorth-korea-turns-down-foreign-covid-vaccines-to-fight-disease-in-their-style?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, September 6, 2021**

## "The Youth Culture Security Act proves that it is difficult to control the ideology of the North Korean youth"

**Top News:**
"The Youth Culture Security Act proves that it is difficult to control the ideology of the North Korean youth"(RAF,08/30/2021)
HRNK "Potential Long-Term Prison-Labor Facility at P'ihyŏn-gun, P'yŏngan-bukto Revealed"(RFA,08/26/2021)

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea paper stresses effective land management as top economic priority(*The Korea Herald*,09/06/2021)
Five Eyes invitation may come with costs(*The Korea Herald*,09/06/2021)
What Happens When You Have Too Many Nuclear Cooks in the Kitchen(*The National Interest*,09/06/2021)

**Inter Korean relationship**
S. Korea to continue efforts to improve relations with N.K. on occasion of major anniversaries (*Yonhap*,09/06/2021)

**Top News:**
A previously unknown potential long-term prison-labor facility(kyo-hwa-so)located in P'longan-bukto,North Korea has been identifed.The prisoners at this location are believed to have been mobilized for forced labor in a nearby factory. (RFA)

As North Korea has announced the adoption of the 'Youth Culture Security Act' in order to strengthen its ideological control of young people, experts and intelligence groups say that the

new legislation suggests that the North Korean youth, who are familiar with foreign videos, ideology, and technology, are the regime's weakness.(RAF)

**In North Korea:**

North Korea's official newspaper stressed Monday that effective land management should be a top priority in the country's economic policy, calling for thorough preventive measures against flooding and other natural disasters.(*The Korea Herald*)

Making strategy for an increasingly heterodox epoch—an epoch when more and more societies sport the ultimate weapon and think differently about how to brandish it—represents a trying task. Indeed, it could prove more trying than Cold War strategy-making from yesteryear.(James Holmes,*The National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

South Korea has received a fresh invitation from the world's most exclusive intelligence-sharing alliance, the so-called Five Eyes, but experts warn there is no such thing as free lunch in diplomacy. (Lee Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)

**Inter Korean relationship:**

The unification ministry said Monday it will continue efforts to use major inter-Korean anniversaries coming up this month as opportunities to resume dialogue and improve relations with North Korea.

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**1. "The Youth Culture Security Act proves that it is difficult to control the ideology of the North Korean youth"**

Anchor: As North Korea has announced the adoption of the 'Youth Culture Security Act' in order to strengthen its ideological control of young people, experts and intelligence groups say that the new legislation suggests that the North Korean youth, who are familiar with foreign videos, ideology, and technology, are the regime's weakness.

North Korea announced that it will adopt the 'Youth Culture Security Act' at the Supreme People's Assembly on September 28, following the enactment of the 'Reactionary Ideology and Culture Rejection Act' in December of last year, which calls for the death penalty of those who disseminate South Korean videos.

The specific content of the 'Youth Culture Security Act' has not been disclosed, but it is known that the strict control of the Jangmadang generation, that is, the youth, is expected to be included as part of the crackdown on youth ideology that the North Korean authorities have recently emphasized.

North Korean state media have recently emphasized ideological education several times to prevent the youth from being influenced by foreign ideology, and General Secretary Kim Jong-un also referred to the issue of youth culture as 'the most important matter' at the Conference of Cell Secretaries of the Workers' Party of Korea in April, and he has requested stricter controls on clothing, hairstyles, language, relationships, etc.

On this, Soo Kim, an analyst at the RAND Corporation, who served as a policy analyst for the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), told Free Asia Broadcasting (RFA) on July 27th, "This new law emphasizes the North Korean regime's position on the consumption of foreign video by North Koreans, but there will be nothing new really."

When asked why the law is aimed at young people, she said, "The younger generation has become more skilled in using technology, and technological advances in recent years, such as portable storage devices such as USB, have made it easier for North Koreans to smuggle foreign videos into their country."

However, she added that the North Korean authorities enacted related laws this year as well as last year, and "Enacting new laws and foretelling the consequences of violations can still be effective in terms of sending a message to the public."

Amanda Mortwedt Oh, Human Rights Attorney at the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), told RFA on the same day, "The Youth Culture Security Act will be another way to target and punish anyone deemed disloyal to the Kim Jong-un regime."

"This law suggests that the youth are the weakness for the Kim Jong-un regime," she added.

She also pointed out that North Korean youths who have experienced an influx of outside information and smuggling due to economic difficulties may not be willing to accept all the ideologies and teachings that the regime instills.

"The inflow of outside information could undermine the ideological principles that help the Kim Jong-un regime control North Korea", because of that, the North Korean regime could also be threatened, Amanda said.

Pastor Eric Foley, president of Voice of the Martyrs Korea (VOM Korea), a Christian missionary organization, also pointed out to RFA on August 30th that the Youth Culture Security Act proves that the North Korean regime is feeling threatened by its identity due to the influx of outside ideas.

Pastor Foley: The North Korean authorities must have recognized the threat that there are other ideas that young people in North Korea may encounter, and they have felt the need to respond to it.

Pastor Foley was also concerned that the stricter ideological control by the North Korean authorities could have a more adverse effect on not only the consumption of foreign videos but also the people with religious ideologies such as Christianity.

Wendy Wright, CEO of Christian Freedom International, which sends food, medicine, and Bibles to North Korea, told Radio Free Asia on August 27th, "If North Korea regime believed that its system is really effective and it was beneficial to people, they would not be afraid what the North Korean youth learn other cultures or beliefs."

She added, "[The North Korea regime's efforts to control ideology] suggest that North Korean youth want exposure to other beliefs besides the regime's totalitarianism".

Meanwhile, sources from South Pyongan Province and North Hamgyong Province told Radio Free Asia (RFA) on August 24th that crackdowns and punishments on South Korean goods and recordings have been greatly strengthened after the 'Reactionary Ideology and Culture Rejection Act' was enacted at the end of last year.

Reporter Jeong-Eun Ji, Editor Seong-won Yang, Web Team Sang-Il Kim

Translated by Doohyun Kim,HRNK Research Intern

**2. HRNK "Potential Long-Term Prison-Labor Facility at P'ihyŏn-gun, P'yŏngan-bukto Revealed"**

The Sŏnhwa-dong Kyo-hwa-so, located near the P'ihyŏn Silica Brick Factory, visible in a satellite image taken in 2018.

Anchor: A previously unknown potential long-term prison-labor facility (kyo-hwa-so) located in P'yŏngan-bukto, North Korea has been identified. The prisoners at this location are believed to have been mobilized for forced labor in a nearby factory. This is reporter Kim So-young.

The U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) said in a report released on July 26th that it had identified a facility believed to be a kyo-hwa-so in P'ihyŏn-gun, P'yŏngan-bukto.

This facility, located in Sŏnhwa-dong, P'ihyŏn-gun, about 150 kilometers from P'yŏngyang

and 17 kilometers from Sinŭiju, has been tentatively named as "Sŏnhwa-dong Kyo-hwa-so."

According to the report, during interviews conducted from 2018 to 2019 with North Korean defectors, a defector from Sinŭiju testified about the Sŏnhwa-dong Kyo-hwa-so. The

preliminary information on the Sŏnhwa-dong Kyo-hwa-so was analyzed by synthesizing satellite imagery data collected up to May of this year.

Surrounded by brick walls, the kyo-hwa-so complex consists of eight buildings, including a 4,700 square meter main building, a warehouse, and central headquarters. The total area encompassed by the facility is approximately 7,140 square meters. The capacity was estimated to be between 100 to 150 people.

Based on satellite imagery analysis, the report also estimated that the Sŏnhwa-dong kyo-hwa-so was built sometime between the late-1980s and mid-1990s.

Report author and Executive Director of HRNK Greg Scarlatoiu said in a phone call with Radio Free Asia (RFA) on July 26th that continued investigation and testimony are needed to confirm the facility as a correctional center.

Executive Director Scarlatoiu: This facility is very similar to a kyo-hwa-so. However, we hope that further satellite imagery and testimonies from North Korean refugees who know about this facility will confirm that this place is indeed operating as a correctional center.

Executive Director Scarlatoiu also explained that the Sŏnhwa-dong Kyo-hwa-so is located within walking distance of the P'ihyŏn Silica (Silicate) Brick Factory, completed in 1986, indicating that inmates held here are engaged in labor within the factory.

Most North Korean kyo-hwa-so are located near farms, mines, or factories to facilitate forced labor.

HRNK said that, as the existence of the Sŏnhwa-dong Kyo-hwa-so has been discovered, North Korean human rights groups and international organizations must secure additional information through continued background investigation and monitoring.

Executive Director Scarlatoiu emphasized that once the facility is officially confirmed as a kyo-hwa-so, it will be necessary to investigate the prisoner population size, working conditions, and possible human rights abuses and take measures to improve the problem.

Then, he suggested that humanitarian aid from the United Nations and international organizations should be guaranteed to the Sŏnhwa-dong Kyo-hwa-so.

Executive Director Scarlatoiu: I urge the United Nations, international organizations, and civil society organizations, especially North Korea aid organizations, to understand what kind of facility this is and then deliver humanitarian assistance to vulnerable groups, such as prisoners, children, and the elderly.

Furthermore, the report urged North Korea to abide by international standards for human rights, including the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, known as the "Nelson Mandela Rules," and the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Female Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders, known as the "Bangkok Rules."

HRNK also requested that North Korean authorities allow international humanitarian organizations, such as the United Nations, access to correctional centers and political prison camps within North Korea.

HRNK has been continuously investigating political prison camps, kyo-hwa-so, and kwan-li-so in North Korea through former prisoner interviews and satellite imagery. Last month, the organization disclosed additional information about Kyo-hwa-so no. 8, located in Sŭngho-ri.

Reporter Kim So-young, Editor Yang Sung-won, Web Editor Kim Sang-il

Translated by Irene Kang, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Seshni Moodley, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
http://web.archive.org/web/20250815210655/https://mailchi.mp/2d723a488b7e/hrnk-news-items-the-youth-culture-security-act-proves-that-it-is-difficult-to-control-the-ideology-of-the-north-korean-youth?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, September 7, 2021**

## "The Youth Culture Security Act proves that it is difficult to control the ideology of the North Korean youth"

**Top News:**
"The Youth Culture Security Act proves that it is difficult to control the ideology of the North Korean youth" (RFA,08/30/2021)

HRNK "Potential Long-Term Prison-Labor Facility at P'ihyŏn-gun, P'yŏngan-bukto Revealed" (RFA,08/26/2021)

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea's trade with China plunges 82 pct on-year amid pandemic: unification minister (*Yonhap*, 09/07/2021)

N. Korea promotes demoted military chief to member of politburo presidium (*Yonhap*, 09/07/2021)
North Korean hackers breach prominent defector's accounts in targeted attack (*NK News*, 09/07/2021)
Kim Jong-un to face human rights abuse claims in Japanese court (*The Guardian*, 09/07/2021)

**In South Korea:**
South Korea tests first SLBM (*Korea Herald*, 09/09/2021)
Military reports 3 COVID-19 cases (*Korea Herald*, 09/09/2021)

**International:**
Military closely monitoring N.K. amid signs of military parade preparation (*Yonhap*, 09/07/2021)
Nearly half of Americans concerned about N. Korean nuclear program: report(*Yonhap*, 09/07/2021)
Chinese envoy to visit for talks on bilateral issues, North (*JoongAng Daily*, 09/07/2021)
U.S., Japan, S.Korea prepare for possible meeting on N.Korea -report (*Reuters*, 09/07/2021)
Chinese FM to visit S.Korea amid stalled N.Korea talks (*Reuters*, 09/07/2021)
Japan Demands $900k Per Person From North Korea for Human Rights Abuses(Newsweek, 09/07/2021)

**Top News:**

- As North Korea has announced the adoption of the 'Youth Culture Security Act' in order to strengthen its ideological control of young people, experts and intelligence groups say that the new legislation suggests that the North Korean youth, who are familiar with foreign videos, ideology, and technology, are the regime's weakness.(RFA)
- A previously unknown potential long-term prison-labor facility (kyo-hwa-so) located in P'longan-bukto,North Korea has been identifed.The prisoners at this location are believed to have been mobilized for forced labor in a nearby factory. (RFA)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea's trade with China plunged 82.1 percent on-year amid prolonged border closures due to the coronavirus pandemic, the unification minister said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's military chief, Pak Jong-chon, has been elected a member of the Presidium of the ruling Workers' Party, state media reported Tuesday, in a comeback after he was demoted earlier this year for a lapse in anti-coronavirus efforts. (*Yohap*)
- In a multilingual social engineering attack, North Korean hackers broke into several accounts of a prominent defector and used their access to send a malicious document to a contact working on DPRK issues, an NK News investigation found. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

- A Japanese court has summoned North Korea's leader to face demands for compensation by several ethnic Korean residents of Japan who say they suffered human rights abuses in North Korea after joining a resettlement program there that described the country as a "paradise on Earth", a lawyer and plaintiff have said. (*The Guardian*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea has become the first non-nuclear state to develop a submarine-launched ballistic missile, having run a test-firing from a newly built submarine, sources said Tuesday. (Cho Si-youg, *Korea Herald*)
- An Air Force officer and two Army soldiers have tested positive for the new coronavirus, raising the total caseload reported among the military population to 1,644, the defense ministry said Tuesday. (*Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- The US military is closely monitoring North Korea amid signs it is preparing a large-scale military parade to celebrate major national anniversaries, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- About half of people in the United States are concerned about North Korea's nuclear program, a report said Tuesday, citing a recent poll.(*Yohap*)
- Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi will make a two-day visit to Seoul next Tuesday and Wednesday for talks with his South Korean counterpart, Chung Eui-yong, on bilateral relations and the North Korea issue, Seoul's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced. (*JoongAng Daily*)
- The United States, South Korea and Japan are preparing for a possible meeting of officials handling North Korea next week in Tokyo, Kyodo news agency reported on Tuesday. (*Reuters*)
- China's foreign minister will visit South Korea next week amid stalled denuclearization talks with North Korea, Seoul's foreign ministry said on Tuesday. (*Reuters*)
- A Japanese court is demanding 100 million yen, the equivalent to $900,000, from North Korea for each ethnic Korean resident of Japan who has said they experienced human rights abuses in the Orwellian nation. (Mary Ellen Cagnassola, *Newsweek*)

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**1. "The Youth Culture Security Act proves that it is difficult to control the ideology of the North Korean youth"**

Anchor: As North Korea has announced the adoption of the 'Youth Culture Security Act' in order to strengthen its ideological control of young people, experts and intelligence groups say that the new legislation suggests that the North Korean youth, who are familiar with foreign videos, ideology, and technology, are the regime's weakness.

North Korea announced that it will adopt the ‘Youth Culture Security Act’ at the Supreme People's Assembly on September 28, following the enactment of the 'Reactionary Ideology and Culture Rejection Act' in December of last year, which calls for the death penalty of those who disseminate South Korean videos.

The specific content of the ‘Youth Culture Security Act’ has not been disclosed, but it is known that the strict control of the Jangmadang generation, that is, the youth, is expected to be included as part of the crackdown on youth ideology that the North Korean authorities have recently emphasized.

North Korean state media have recently emphasized ideological education several times to prevent the youth from being influenced by foreign ideology, and General Secretary Kim Jong-un also referred to the issue of youth culture as 'the most important matter' at the Conference of Cell Secretaries of the Workers’ Party of Korea in April, and he has requested stricter controls on clothing, hairstyles, language, relationships, etc.

On this, Soo Kim, an analyst at the RAND Corporation, who served as a policy analyst for the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), told Free Asia Broadcasting (RFA) on July 27th, "This new law emphasizes the North Korean regime's position on the consumption of foreign video by North Koreans, but there will be nothing new really.”

When asked why the law is aimed at young people, she said, “The younger generation has become more skilled in using technology, and technological advances in recent years, such as portable storage devices such as USB, have made it easier for North Koreans to smuggle foreign videos into their country.”

However, she added that the North Korean authorities enacted related laws this year as well as last year, and "Enacting new laws and foretelling the consequences of violations can still be effective in terms of sending a message to the public."

Amanda Mortwedt Oh, Human Rights Attorney at the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), told RFA on the same day, "The Youth Culture Security Act will be another way to target and punish anyone deemed disloyal to the Kim Jong-un regime."

"This law suggests that the youth are the weakness for the Kim Jong-un regime," she added.

She also pointed out that North Korean youths who have experienced an influx of outside information and smuggling due to economic difficulties may not be willing to accept all the ideologies and teachings that the regime instills.

“The inflow of outside information could undermine the ideological principles that help the

Kim Jong-un regime control North Korea", because of that, the North Korean regime could also be threatened, Amanda said.

Pastor Eric Foley, president of Voice of the Martyrs Korea (VOM Korea), a Christian missionary organization, also pointed out to RFA on August 30th that the Youth Culture Security Act proves that the North Korean regime is feeling threatened by its identity due to the influx of outside ideas.

Pastor Foley: The North Korean authorities must have recognized the threat that there are other ideas that young people in North Korea may encounter, and they have felt the need to respond to it.

Pastor Foley was also concerned that the stricter ideological control by the North Korean authorities could have a more adverse effect on not only the consumption of foreign videos but also the people with religious ideologies such as Christianity.

Wendy Wright, CEO of Christian Freedom International, which sends food, medicine, and Bibles to North Korea, told Radio Free Asia on August 27th, "If North Korea regime believed that its system is really effective and it was beneficial to people, they would not be afraid what the North Korean youth learn other cultures or beliefs."

She added, "[The North Korea regime's efforts to control ideology] suggest that North Korean youth want exposure to other beliefs besides the regime's totalitarianism".

Meanwhile, sources from South Pyongan Province and North Hamgyong Province told Radio Free Asia (RFA) on August 24th that crackdowns and punishments on South Korean goods and recordings have been greatly strengthened after the 'Reactionary Ideology and Culture Rejection Act' was enacted at the end of last year.

Reporter Jeong-Eun Ji, Editor Seong-won Yang, Web Team Sang-Il Kim

Translated by Doohyun Kim,HRNK Research Intern

**2. HRNK "Potential Long-Term Prison-Labor Facility at P'ihyŏn-gun, P'yŏngan-bukto Revealed"**

The Sŏnhwa-dong Kyo-hwa-so, located near the P'ihyŏn Silica Brick Factory, visible in a satellite image taken in 2018.

Anchor: A previously unknown potential long-term prison-labor facility (kyo-hwa-so) located in P'yŏngan-bukto, North Korea has been identified. The prisoners at this location are believed to have been mobilized for forced labor in a nearby factory. This is reporter Kim So-young.

The U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) said in a report released on July 26th that it had identified a facility believed to be a kyo-hwa-so in P'ihyŏn-gun, P'yŏngan-bukto.

This facility, located in Sŏnhwa-dong, P'ihyŏn-gun, about 150 kilometers from P'yŏngyang

and 17 kilometers from Sinŭiju, has been tentatively named as "Sŏnhwa-dong Kyo-hwa-so."

According to the report, during interviews conducted from 2018 to 2019 with North Korean defectors, a defector from Sinŭiju testified about the Sŏnhwa-dong Kyo-hwa-so. The preliminary information on the Sŏnhwa-dong Kyo-hwa-so was analyzed by synthesizing satellite imagery data collected up to May of this year.

Surrounded by brick walls, the kyo-hwa-so complex consists of eight buildings, including a 4,700 square meter main building, a warehouse, and central headquarters. The total area encompassed by the facility is approximately 7,140 square meters. The capacity was estimated to be between 100 to 150 people.

Based on satellite imagery analysis, the report also estimated that the Sŏnhwa-dong kyo-hwa-so was built sometime between the late-1980s and mid-1990s.

Report author and Executive Director of HRNK Greg Scarlatoiu said in a phone call with Radio Free Asia (RFA) on July 26th that continued investigation and testimony are needed to confirm the facility as a correctional center.

Executive Director Scarlatoiu: This facility is very similar to a kyo-hwa-so. However, we hope that further satellite imagery and testimonies from North Korean refugees who know about this facility will confirm that this place is indeed operating as a correctional center.

Executive Director Scarlatoiu also explained that the Sŏnhwa-dong Kyo-hwa-so is located within walking distance of the P'ihyŏn Silica (Silicate) Brick Factory, completed in 1986, indicating that inmates held here are engaged in labor within the factory.

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kyo-hwa-so, it will be necessary to investigate the prisoner population size, working conditions, and possible human rights abuses and take measures to improve the problem.

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Executive Director Scarlatoiu: I urge the United Nations, international organizations, and civil society organizations, especially North Korea aid organizations, to understand what kind of facility this is and then deliver humanitarian assistance to vulnerable groups, such as prisoners, children, and the elderly.

Furthermore, the report urged North Korea to abide by international standards for human rights, including the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, known as the "Nelson Mandela Rules," and the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Female Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders, known as the "Bangkok Rules."

HRNK also requested that North Korean authorities allow international humanitarian organizations, such as the United Nations, access to correctional centers and political prison camps within North Korea.

HRNK has been continuously investigating political prison camps, kyo-hwa-so, and kwan-li-so in North Korea through former prisoner interviews and satellite imagery. Last month, the organization disclosed additional information about Kyo-hwa-so no. 8, located in Sŭngho-ri.

Reporter Kim So-young, Editor Yang Sung-won, Web Editor Kim Sang-il

Translated by Irene Kang, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by David Shaw, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250815211021/https://mailchi.mp/6f02d3d4e6ea/hrnk-news-itemsthe-youth-culture-security-act-proves-that-it-is-difficult-to-control-the-ideology-of-the-north-korean-youth?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, September 8, 2021**

## U.S. lawmaker urges Biden to consider providing COVID vaccines to N. Korea

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea boosts celebratory mood for founding anniversary amid speculation on military parade (*Yonhap*, 09/08/2021)
Preparations ramp up for North Korean military parade in Pyongyang (*NK News*, 09/08/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Gov't struggles over news about Yongbyon (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 09/08/2021)
S. Korea opens annual int'l security forum (*The Korea Herald*, 09/08/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
A love affair with Pyongyang (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 09/08/2021)
Foreign ministry, presidential office slammed for defending North Korea's suspected nuke program (*Korea Times*, 09/08/2021)
National Assembly speaker repeats call for inter-Korean parliamentary conference (*NK News*, 09/08/2021)
Seoul downplays Pyongyang's Yongbyon activity (*The Korea Herald*, 09/08/2021)
Unification minister calls for inter-Korean joint response system against natural disasters (*Yonhap*, 09/08/2021)

**International:**
Does America Have a Secret Plan to Defeat North Korea? (*National Interest*, 09/08/2021)
(LEAD) U.S. lawmaker urges Biden to consider providing COVID vaccines to N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 09/08/2021)
Nearly half of Americans seriously concerned about DPRK's nuclear program: poll(*NK News*,09/08/2021)
NSC officials stress U.S. has no hostile intent toward N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 09/08/2021)
The F-84 Rocked North Korea's World (*National Interest*, 09/08/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea on Wednesday ramped up the celebratory mood ahead of its founding anniversary this week amid speculation that Pyongyang is preparing a military parade. (*Yonhap*)
- The parade may mark upcoming national holidays in September and October, sources and satellite evidence suggest (Chad O'Carroll, Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- Asked if he thought North Korea violated agreements signed in 2018 if it restarted the Yongbyon nuclear reactor, First Vice Foreign Minister Choi Jong-kun replied, "No, I don't think so." (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- An annual international security forum hosted by the defense ministry kicked off in Seoul on Wednesday for discussions on situations on the Korean Peninsula and the surrounding region. (*The Korea Herald*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Appearing at the Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee of the National Assembly on Tuesday, Vice Foreign Minister Choi Jong-kun said that the reactivation of the Yongbyon nuclear facility in North Korea does not constitute a violation of inter-Korean agreements. He could make such arguments as a scholar, but must not do so as a senior government official. The reopening of the facility is directly related to the production of nuclear materials to make more nuclear weapons. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has come under fire for defending North Korea's suspected resumption of its nuclear development program in Yongbyon after the vice minister stated that it would not be in violation of a series of inter-Korean agreements which contain Pyongyang's promise to abandon such a program. (Nam Hyun-woo, *Korea Times*)
- South Korea's National Assembly speaker requested international support this week for an inter-Korean parliamentary conference, while repeating Seoul's stance that it does not pursue "unification by absorption." (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- South Korea appears to be downplaying renewed tensions over North Korea's apparent restarting of its nuclear activity, possibly in an attempt to leave room for dialogue with the reclusive regime amid a flurry of diplomacy efforts among allies. (Lee Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young said Wednesday that South and North Korea should build a joint response system to better cope with natural disasters on the Korean Peninsula. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- In 2015, a new approach was taken toward the old problem of how to fight a bellicose North Korea. (Michael Peck, *National Interest*)
- A U.S. lawmaker has called on President Joe Biden to consider providing COVID-19 vaccines to North Korea as a way of improving relations between the two countries, an informed source said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- About half of all Americans are "extremely or very concerned" about North Korea's nuclear program, according to a new U.S. poll released Tuesday, with two-thirds of respondents also expressing serious concerns about cyberattacks. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- South Korea's top security officials stressed the United States has no hostile intent toward North Korea, the presidential office Cheong Wa Dae said Wednesday, as Seoul steps up diplomacy to resume dialogue with Pyongyang. (*Yonhap*)
- The F-84 wasn't the most sophisticated fighter, but it had incredible firepower, and was an incredible ground-attack fighter. (Sebastien Roblin, *National Interest*)

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Prepared by Ella Startt, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
http://web.archive.org/web/20250815211344/https://mailchi.mp/6842e3639bfe/hrnk-news-itemsus-lawmaker-urges-biden-to-consider-providing-covid-vaccines-to-n-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, September 9, 2021**

## North Korea holds military parade, but few weapons to be found

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea holds midnight military parade without Kim's address, new weapons (*Yonhap*, 09/09/2021)
Pyongyang's parade featured tractors, motorbikes (*JoongAng Daily*, 09/09/2021)
One of North Korea's dirtiest businesses may be back amid border lockdown (*NK News*, 09/09/2021)
Smugglers fake ship identities to evade North Korea sanctions - research report(*Reuters*, 09/09/2021)
Did North Korean Soldiers Die of the Coronavirus? (*National Interest*, 09/09/2021)
What's happening inside North Korea? Since the pandemic, the window has slammed shut. (*Washington Post*, 09/09/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Moon's hopes for talks with North Korea at Beijing Games dashed by IOC decision(*Korea Times*, 09/09/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
S. Korea to seek sports exchanges with N. Korea, Cheong Wa Dae says (*Yonhap*, 09/09/2021)
North Korea's Olympic ban creates opportunities for ROK, China: experts (*NK News*, 09/09/2021)

**International:**
EU's top diplomat vows support for dismantling N. Korea's nuclear program (*Yonhap*, 09/09/2021)
EU's top diplomat vows support for dismantling N. Korea's nuclear program (*Yonhap*, 09/09/2021)
IOC suspends N. Korean Olympic committee for not participating in Tokyo Olympics (*Yonhap*, 09/09/2021)
IOC suspension of N. Korea latest wrinkle in inter-Korean sports cooperation (*Yonhap*, 09/09/2021)

Xi, Putin vow efforts to advance relations with N. Korea on founding anniversary (*Yonhap*, 09/09/2021)
The Future of Southeast Asia-DPRK Engagement (*38 North*, 09/09/21)
Could America and China Go to War Over North Korea Again? (*National Interest*, 09/09/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea held a midnight military parade to mark the 73rd anniversary of its founding, but leader Kim Jong-un did not deliver an address and no new strategic weapons were displayed, according to state media and South Korean officials. (*Yonhap*)
- While South Korean intelligence expected North Korea to show off its latest weaponry at a parade to celebrate the 73rd anniversary of the country's founding, Pyongyang put on a much less ominous display on Thursday: of tractors and motorcycles. (*JoongAng Daily*)
- Nearly 30 coal-laden ships were anchored on the Taedong River about 25 miles (40 km) southwest of Pyongyang in April this year, according to a forthcoming U.N. report, possibly indicating the large-scale export of illicit coal from North Korea. (Ethan Jewel, *NK News*)
- North Korean state media photos of the night-time military parade showed marching soldiers and workers in hazmat suits instead of the weapons that had been anticipated. (*BBC*)
- Smugglers suspected of evading sanctions on North Korea have turned to schemes to create fraudulent identities for sanctioned ships, a U.S.-based research group said in a report released on Thursday. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- There are reports that forty-five soldiers died in July and August at a temporary ward in North Korea's Gangwon Province. (Stephen Silver, *National Interest*)
- North Korea has locked down access to the country for both allies and adversaries to an extent not seen in years. (Michelle Ye Hee Lee, *Washington Post*)

**In South Korea:**

- President Moon Jae-in's hopes of improving inter-Korean relations at the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics has hit a major setback, after the International Olympic Committee (IOC) suspended North Korea from participation. (Nam Hyun-woo, *Korea Times*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korea will continue efforts for sports exchanges with North Korea and progress in the Korea peace process, Cheong Wa Dae said Thursday in response to the North's suspension from the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing. (*Yonhap*)
- The International Olympics Committee's (IOC) decision on Wednesday to suspend North Korea for its absence from the Tokyo Games appeared to shut down hopes for sports diplomacy at next year's Winter Games in Beijing, but experts told NK News that the penalty could actually prove a boon for efforts to engage Pyongyang — if South Korea and China can find a way to bring North Korea back on board for the Games. (*NK News*)

**International:**

- The foreign policy chief of the European Union (EU) pledged support Thursday for building peace on the Korean Peninsula, stressing the importance of implementing sanctions on North Korea in ending its nuclear program. (*Yonhap*)
- The foreign policy chief of the European Union (EU) pledged support Thursday for building peace on the Korean Peninsula, stressing the importance of implementing sanctions on North Korea in ending its nuclear program. (*Yonhap*)
- The International Olympic Committee (IOC) decided Wednesday to suspend North Korea's national Olympic committee for unilaterally deciding not to take part in the Tokyo Olympic Games, a suspension that will bar the North from participating in next year's Beijing Winter Games. (*Yonhap*)
- A recent decision by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to suspend North Korea until the end of 2022 for skipping the Tokyo Olympics has added another wrinkle to inter-Korean sports cooperation and exchanges, which have been dormant for the past couple of years. (*Yonhap*)
- Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin vowed efforts to advance relations with North Korea in messages sent to leader Kim Jong-un to congratulate him on his country's 73rd founding anniversary Thursday, Pyongyang's state media reported. (*Yonhap*)
- Humanitarian cooperation between the DPRK, ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and individual Southeast Asian countries could provide more space for broader diplomatic engagement. (Chiew-Ping Hoo, *38 North*)
- Miscalculation on the Korean peninsula led to one bloody conflict and could still lead to another. (Robert Farley, *National Interest*)

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Prepared by David Shaw, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250815211621/https://mailchi.mp/754bfa3866cb/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-holds-military-parade-but-few-weapons-to-be-found?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, September 10, 2021**

## [The North from the Sky] Newly established labor facility verified in Pihyon County, North Pyongan province

**Top News:**
[The North from the Sky] Newly established labor facility verified in Pihyon County, North Pyongan province. [*Daily* NK, 08/31/2021]

**In North Korea:**

Kim Jong Un Is Trim, Tanned and Loving a Parade (*Bloomberg*, 09/09/2021)
N.K. leader visits mausoleum of late leaders to mark founding anniversary (*Yonhap*, 09/10/2021)
North Korea's military parade targeted domestic audience: experts (*NK News*, 09/10/2021)
North Korea's military parade features hazmat suits and gas masks (*BBC News*, 09/09/2021)
N.Korea puts hazmat suits on parade for national day, but no missiles (*Reuters*, 09/09/2021)
North Korea Held a Midnight Military Parade and No One Is Sure What to Make of It(*Foreign Policy*, 09/09/2021)
North Korean Restaurants Abandon Price Controls Amid Food Shortages (*Radio Free Asia*, 09/09/2021)
Thinner, energetic Kim stands out at North Korean parade (*AP News*, 09/10/2021)
Thinner, more energetic Kim Jong Un steals the spotlight at North Korea parade(*CBS News*, 09/09/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Korea, Mongolia level up relations to 'strategic partnership' (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 09/10/2021)
S. Korea, Poland agree to strengthen defense ties in vice-ministerial talks (*Yonhap*, 09/10/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Talk of a Nuclear Deterrent in South Korea (*Foreign Policy*, 09/09/2021)

**International:**
Top nuke envoys of S. Korea, U.S., Japan to meet in Tokyo next week (*Yonhap*, 09/10/2021)
US court sentences Canadian man for role in North Korean hacking scheme (*NK News*, 09/10/2021)
U.S., Japan, S.Korea to meet over N.Korea nuclear standoff (*Reuters*, 09/10/2021)

**Top News:**

- North Korea is operating a newly established labor facility in Sonhwa-dong, Pihyon County, North Pyongan Province. The news reports are based on research published on August 26 by the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK). (Song Hak Yung, *Daily NK*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un held center stage at a military parade, showing off to a national television audience a thinner frame, a trace of a tan and a haircut reminiscent of his grandfather -- state founder Kim Il Sung. (Jon Herskovitz, *Bloomberg*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un visited a mausoleum of his late grandfather and national founder Kim Il-sung, and late father and former leader Kim Jong-il to mark the 73rd anniversary of the country's founding. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)

- North Korea hosted another military parade this week but did not reveal missiles or other new weapons tech — a departure from most recent processions. Instead, "paramilitary and public security forces," some even riding horses, motorcycle sidecars or firetrucks, filled Pyongyang's Kim Il Sung Square past midnight on Sept. 9. Despite saber-rattling around US-ROK joint drill, the regime focused on internal solidarity amid food crisis and COVID-19 geared towards the domestic audience. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- North Korea has held a military parade to mark the communist state's 73rd founding anniversary, but did not display any major ballistic missiles. State media photos of the night-time parade showed marching soldiers in what appeared to be bright red hazmat suits and gas masks. This may be a sign that a special force has been created to help prevent the spread of Covid-19. (*BBC News*)
- North Korea celebrated the 73rd anniversary of its foundation with a night-time military parade in the capital. Rodong Sinmun, the ruling Worker's Party's newspaper, published photographs of people in orange hazmat suits with medical-grade masks in an apparent symbol of anti-coronavirus efforts, and troops holding rifles marching together. No ballistic missiles were seen or mentioned in the reports, and Kim did not deliver any speech, unlike last October when he boasted of the country's nuclear capabilities and showcased previously unseen intercontinental ballistic missiles during a pre-dawn military parade. (Hyonhee Shin, Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- North Korea toned-down, night time parade did not show off any ballistic missiles, but that does not necessarily mean Kim Jong Un is ready for talks with Biden. (Robbie Gramer, Jack Detsch, *Foreign Policy*)
- Pyongyang's Okryu-gwan restaurant can no longer carry out its state-sponsored mission to serve naengmyeon noodles to the masses. With food prices on the rise in North Korea, Pyongyang's signature dish has had to abandon price controls, causing a more than twentyfold increase and making a casual meal outside the house an expensive luxury that ordinary residents of the capital can no longer afford. (Jeong Yon Park, *Radio Free Asia*)
- At an unusual North Korean parade showcasing military dogs and virus workers in orange hazmat suits, leader Kim Jong Un still stood out by looking thinner and more energetic than he has in years. (Kim Tong-Hyung, *AP News*)
- North Korea held a parade on Thursday showcasing military dogs and virus workers in orange hazmat suits, but leader Kim Jong Un still managed to seize the spotlight by looking thinner and more energetic than he has in years. Kim's weight loss is more likely a result of efforts to improve his shape than an indicator of health problems, considering his regular public activity. It may also have a political purpose. Such image-making efforts would align with the latest parade, which showcased civil defense units involved in efforts to rebuild the economy and communities destroyed by floods and emphasized a domestic message for unity. (*CBS News*)

**In South Korea:**

- Korea and Mongolia upgraded the two countries' relations to a "strategic partnership" during a virtual summit between the two countries' leaders. Topics of discussion included issues in the COVID-19 response, health care, economy, environment and the Korean Peninsula situation. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea and Poland agreed Friday to boost exchanges and cooperation in a wide range of defense and related fields, Seoul's defense ministry said. "The Polish vice minister expressed his country's will to expand and deepen the bilateral defense cooperation with South Korea in such fields as cyber security, and the Korean vice minister shared the need." (Grace Oh, *Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Recent resumption of activity at North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear complex, which is suspected of producing the plutonium needed for the country's nuclear weapons, has fueled existing convictions among some conservative South Korean politicians that Pyongyang will never agree to give up its nukes so Seoul needs a nuclear deterrent of its own. (Morten Soendergaard Larsen, *Foreign Policy*)

**International:**

- South Korea's top nuclear envoy, Noh Kyu-duk, will visit Tokyo next week for bilateral and trilateral talks with his U.S. and Japanese counterparts, the foreign ministry said Friday, as Seoul steps up diplomacy to resume dialogue with Pyongyang. Noh, Kim and Funakoshi are expected to discuss humanitarian aid and other incentives to encourage the North's return to dialogue, as the country struggles with economic and other hardships exacerbated by pandemic-driven border closures. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Ghaleb Alaumary, who pled guilty to laundering funds from DPRK-linked online banking theft, received 11 years in prison. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- Officials from the United States, South Korea and Japan will hold a meeting on North Korea next week in Tokyo. The three countries have been discussing ways to break a standoff with North Korea over its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes, which have drawn international sanctions. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)

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**Translated by Yeji Chung, HRNK Research Intern.

[The North from the Sky] Newly established labor facility verified in Pihyon County, North Pyongan province. [Daily NK, 08/31/2021]

Reported by Song Hak Jung, Vice President of Satellite Intelligence Department at Kyungpook National University.

Interpretation of the details of a newly operating labor facility and nearby factory facilities in Sonhwa-dong, Pihyon County, North Pyongan Province, near Sinuiju.

Recently, Radio Free Asia and Voice of America reported that North Korea is operating a newly established labor facility in Sonhwa-dong, Pihyon County, North Pyongan Province. The news reports are based on research published on August 26 by the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), a North Korean human rights organization based in the United States. HRNK's report includes an interpretation of a series of testimonies provided by North Korean defectors and satellite images.

The location of this facility was confirmed via Google Earth video. HRNK carefully examined the facilities of the nearby brick factory and railway consignment note, including the labor facility (figure 1).

Figure 1. Lower center of the photo is what is supposedly known as 'Sonhwa-dong labor facility' and the rest of the above is the Pihyon brick factory. Upper center of the photo shows the Samgyochon [Samgyo Stream], and it seems like the water and sand for industrial use at the factory are collected from this stream. /Picture= Google Earth

In the above figure, the Pihyon brick factory, tentatively named the "Sonhwa-dong Labor Facility", is where bricks and roof tiles are produced to be distributed to various construction sites. Five gantry cranes and a conveyor belt are visible inside the factory.

There are also three railroad service lines shown in the figure that lead into the building, which branch off from nearby Yong-gye station, which is the middle layover point of the Baek-ma line.

Figure 2. 'Sonhwa-dong labor facility' view. This place is composed of 8 buildings of various size and large storehouses. According to HRNK, they are predicted to be built between the late 1980s to the mid-1990s and seem to have transformed the original structure into a labor facility.

As shown in the video (figure 2), the 'Sonhwa-dong labor facility' is predicted to encompass an area of 0.72 hectares and comprises eight buildings of different sizes. According to the report published by HRNK, there is a big warehouse (14m x 66m) in the upper right corner, a fishery (area 320$m^2$) right below, and a pile of sand in the center of the building that is 13.4 m in diameter.

It seems to be an important facility that requires high security and rigorous restrictions, considering high walls and fences that wrap around it. The labor facility population is estimated to be between 100 and 150 people, and the inmates are reported to undergo forced labor in the nearby Pihyon brick factory.

It is still difficult to identify the facility as a forced labor facility just by examining satellite pictures. In the process of verification, the testimony of a North Korean defector who either has worked in the facility or was a resident of the village would play a vital role, under the premise that the testimonies are reliable.

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Prepared by Teresa Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250815211851/https://mailchi.mp/761fd4ef6c7c/hrnk-news-items-the-north-from-the-sky-newly-established-labor-facility-verified-in-pihyon-county-north-pyongan-province?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, September 11, 2021**

## U.S. envoy for N. Korea Sung Kim to visit Tokyo next week

**In North Korea:**

- U.S. envoy for N. Korea Sung Kim to visit Tokyo next week (Yonhap, 09/11/2021)

**In South Korea:**

- 'It's a Godsend': 9-Cent Taxi Rides in Rural South Korea (New York Times, 09/11/2021)

**International:**

- U.S. special representative for North Korea to travel to Tokyo next week(KFGO, 09/10/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Sung Kim, special U.S. envoy for North Korea, will visit Japan next week to meet with his South Korean and Japanese counterparts on various issues that will include ways to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula, the State Department said Friday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- "The 100-won taxi," taxis that costs a few cents per ride, are revolutionizing the public transportation in rural South Korea. (Choe Sang-Hun, *New York Times*)

**International:**

- The U.S. special representative for North Korea will travel to Tokyo next week for talks with South Korean and Japanese counterparts on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and other issues, the State Department said on Friday. (Thomson Reuters, KFGO)

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Prepared by Jiwoo Hwang, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250815212235/https://mailchi.mp/8b23de3f59b6/hrnk-news-itemsus-envoy-for-n-korea-sung-kim-to-visit-tokyo-next-week?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Sunday, September 12, 2021

# N. Korea-linked hackers attempt to break into emails of Seoul's defense panel members

**In North Korea:**

- Did a Recent Heatwave Make North Korea's Food Crisis Even Worse? (*The National Interest*, 9/12/2021)
- N. Korea-linked hackers attempt to break into emails of Seoul's defense panel members (*Yonhap*, 9/12/2021)
- N. Korea calls U.S.-led Afghan war 'human rights crime' (*Yonhap*, 9/12/2021)
- N.K. outlet accuses S. Korea of 'sharpening knife behind curtain of peace'(*Yonhap*, 9/12/2021)
- Thinner, energetic Kim stands out at North Korean parade (*The Korea Times*, 9/11/2021)

**In South Korea**:

- How a Used U.S. Navy Ship Saved South Korea in the Korean War (*The National Interest*, 9/12/2021)
- Military competence matters (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 9/12/2021)
- S. Korea's top nuke envoy heads for Tokyo for talks with US, Japan (*The Korea Herald*, 9/12/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- 'Discussions on inter-Korean humanitarian projects make progress' (*The Korea Times*, 0/12/2021)

**In International:**

- Analysis: Is Biden Summoning 'Strategic Patience' With North Korea? (VOA, 9/11/2021)
- Assembly speaker returns after parliamentary summit diplomacy (*The Korea Herald*, 9/12/2021)
- S. Korea, Poland agree to strengthen defense ties in vice-ministerial talks (*The Korea Herald*, 9/10/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- A heat wave has led to the death of more than 100,000 livestock as of late July, in South Pyongan Province alone. Farmers risk the wrath of the North Korean regime if a cow is found to have died on their watch—and that this has even led to some farmers stealing cows from one another. (Stephen Silver, *The National Interest*)
- A hacker group believed to be linked to North Korea has attempted to steal data from South Korean experts working as members of an advisory panel for the defense ministry, a cybersecurity firm said Sunday. (*Yonhap News*)
- North Korea on Sunday denounced the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan as a "human rights crime," accusing Washington of committing "atrocities of mass destruction" against innocent people of the country. (*Yonhap News*)

- A North Korean propaganda outlet on Sunday blasted South Korea's recently announced defense plan, accusing Seoul of "sharpening a knife aimed at the brethren behind a curtain of peace." (*Yonhap News*)
- At an unusual North Korean parade showcasing military dogs and virus workers in orange hazmat suits, leader Kim Jong-un still stood out by looking thinner and more energetic than he has in years. (*The Korea Times*)

**In South Korea:**

- A refurbished American boat repelled North Korea at a pivotal moment. As Pusan would subsequently serve for months as the last foothold of territory for South Korean forces and their United Nations allies on the peninsula, this engagement known as the 'Battle of the Korea Strait' was arguably of immense consequence. (Sebastien Roblin, *The National Interest*)
- The marines' artillery drill was planned under such volatile circumstances. President Lee Myung-bak and Defense Minister Kim Kwan-jin risked everything because of the possibility of North Korea striking back if South Korea conducted a shelling drill. That's why its plan included a scenario of effectively responding to a counterattack from the start. Both the president and the defense minister had to stake their political life on the drill in case the North's counterblow triggered massive casualties in the South or led to an expanded war. But the defense ministry was convinced of victory in any case. (Kim Min-seok, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea's top nuclear envoy departed for Japan on Sunday for bilateral and trilateral talks with his US and Japanese counterparts on North Korean issues. (*The Korea Herald*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korea's chief nuclear envoy Noh Kyu-duk said, Sunday, that discussions with the United States on inter-Korean humanitarian projects had made significant progress. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)

**International:**

- As the stalemate between the United States and North Korea persists, some experts are wondering whether the Biden administration is returning to the Obama-era policy of strategic patience. (Christy Lee, VOA)
- National Assembly Speaker Park Byeong-seug returned Saturday after meeting with his counterparts at the fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in Vienna. They agreed to cooperate on issues concerning economics, business, defense and North Korea, officials said Sunday. (Shin Ji-hye, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea and Poland agreed Friday to boost exchanges and cooperation in a wide range of defense and related fields, Seoul's defense ministry said. (The Korea Herald)

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Prepared by Yeji Chung, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250815213425/https://mailchi.mp/57f21f602a02/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-linked-hackers-attempt-to-break-into-emails-of-seouls-defense-panel-members?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, September 13, 2021**

## N. Korea test-fires new long-range cruise missiles

**In North Korea:**

- Kids these days: North Korea calls on youth to emulate their virtuous parents(*NK News*, 9/13/2021)
- N. Korea test-fires new long-range cruise missiles (*Yonhap*, 9/13/2021)
- North Korea Doesn't Want its People Worried About Kim Jong-Un's Health(*The National Interest*, 9/12/2021)
- North Korea once again imports refined oil from China (*Daily NK*, 9/13/2021)
- North Korea's Kumsong 121 recently employed social media to launch a cyber attack (*Daily NK*, 9/13/2021)
- N.K. paper criticizes workers in flood-hit areas for irresponsibility in water management *Yonhap*, 9/13/2021)
- The Kim regime's failed witch hunt against magic and 'superstition' (*NK News*, 9/13/2021)
- Why North Korea tested new cruise missiles days after a military parade (*NK News*, 9/13/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Inter-Korean missile race intensifies amid tension (*The Korea Herald*, 9/13/2021)
- Military competence matters (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 9/13/2021)
- Was North Korea Behind the Bombing of a South Korean Airport? (*The National Interest*, 9/12/2021)

**International:**

- A New Look at Biden's North Korea Strategy (*The National Interest*, 9/13/2021)
- N. Korea slams UK for 'miserable' children's rights situation (*Yonhap*, 9/13/2021)
- Top nuke envoys of S. Korea, Japan hold talks amid renewed tensions over N.K. missile launch (*Yonhap*, 9/13/2021)
- U.S. Media Notes Kim 'Stealing the Show' at North Korean Parade (*The National Interest*, 9/12/2021)
- U.S. military says N.K. missile launches show threats it poses to int'l community (*Yonhap*, 9/13/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- A North Korean radio drama gives important insights into growing generational divides inside the country. (Tatiana Gabroussenko, NK *News*)
- North Korea has successfully test-fired a new type of long-range cruise missiles over the weekend, state media said Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- Notice a recent drop in the North Korean leaders' weight? "Nothing to see here," says the regime. (Stephen Silver, *The National Interest*)
- North Korea has once again imported refined oil from China, Daily NK has learned. Amongst themselves, officials in North Korea are saying that imports of oil from China may continue through the end of the year. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- The North Korean hacker group Kumsong 121 recently launched a cyber attack using social media. Computer and mobile phone users should be wary as North Korean hacking attacks grow more sophisticated. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Monday criticized officials in flood-hit eastern areas for carrying out flood prevention projects along rivers and streams in an irresponsible manner. (*Yonhap*)
- Shamans and fortune-tellers continue to operate in North Korea despite crackdowns and punishments. (Andrei Lankov, NK *News*)
- North Korea's reported long-range cruise missile tests over the weekend sought to boost domestic morale but have potentially larger implications for its ongoing weapons development and geopolitical considerations, experts told NK *News* on Monday. (Chaewon Chung, NK *News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korea and North Korea are locked in an expanding arms race to bolster their naval power through submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) with no end to tensions in sight. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- 1:30 p.m., December 20, 2010. A silence fell in the underground bunker of the headquarters of the Joint Chiefs of Staff inside the Ministry of National Defense in central Seoul. That was shortly before the marines launched an artillery drill around the waters off Yeonpyeong Island in the West Sea. The target zone was located below the Northern Limit Line (NLL), but was a very sensitive spot for North Korea. In a telephone notice to South Korea three days earlier, North Korea threatened to "retaliate with our second and third strikes to protect our territorial waters" if the South Korean military pressed ahead with the shelling exercise near the tense maritime border. The artillery drill was a reaction to the North's shelling of Yeonpyeong Island on November 23, which killed two marines, injured two civilians and burned the central section of the small island. (Kim Min-seok, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The CIA considers the case unsolved. But we all know who did it—and why. (Sebastien Roblin, *The National Interest)*

**International:**

- The recent missile launch is likely to affect the Biden Administration's approach to North Korea policy. (Steven Silver, *The National Interest*)

- North Korea's foreign ministry on Monday accused the United Kingdom of severe maltreatment of children and warned against meddling in the human rights of other countries. (*Yonhap*)
- The top nuclear envoys of South Korea and Japan held talks in Tokyo on Monday to discuss cooperation in resuming dialogue with North Korea, amid renewed tensions caused by Pyongyang's recent cruise missile launches. (*Yonhap*)
- While most of the mainstream press in the United States had not taken note of it until now, Kim has been looking notably thinner for several months, kicking off lots of speculation among watchers of the goings-on in North Korea. (Steven Silver, *The National Interest)*
- North Korea's test-firing of long-range cruise missiles shows the threats the country poses to the region and beyond, the U.S. military said. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Scott Cho, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250815212954/https://mailchi.mp/a7eadd3b4c3f/hrnk-news-itemsn-korea-test-fires-new-long-range-cruise-missiles?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, September 14, 2021**

## U.S. ready to help address N.K. humanitarian concerns regardless of denuclearization: envoy

**In North Korea:**
N.K. calls for speedy recovery efforts in flood-hit eastern regions (*Yonhap*, 09/14/21)
N. Korea paper urges scientists to be more open to joint research (*Yonhap*, 09/14/21)
North Korea keeps ignoring engagement efforts (*Korea Times*, 09/14/21)
North Korea-linked account poses as KBS scriptwriter to dupe DPRK watchers (*NK News*, 09/14/21)

**In South Korea:**
2.2 magnitude quake hits S. Korea's southeastern region: KMA (*Korea Herald*, 09/14/21)
China's top envoy visits Seoul (*JoongAng Daily*, 09/14/21)
Rev. Cho Yong-gi, 85, founder of Yoido Full Gospel Church, dies (*JoongAng Daily*, 09/14/21)
South Koreans have learned to stop worrying and love the bomb, polling suggests (*NK News*, 09/14/21)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
All municipalities designated as 'independent operators' of aid projects for N.K.: unification ministry (*Yonhap*, 09/14/21)
Military chief inspects eastern border unit, checks N. Korean military moves (*Yonhap*, 09/14/21)
S. Korea, Australia urge N. Korea to return to dialogue 'without preconditions' (*Korea Herald*, 09/14/21)
Unification ministry vows efforts for resumption of inter-Korean liaison office as it marks 3rd anniversary (*Yonhap*, 09/14/21)

**International:**
Nuclear watchdog chief urges North Korea to uphold nonproliferation treaty (*NK News*, 09/14/21)
S. Korea, U.S. have yet to determine details of N. Korea's recent cruise missile tests: sources (*Yonhap*, 09/14/21)
U.S. ready to help address N.K. humanitarian concerns regardless of denuclearization: envoy (*Yonhap*, 09/14/21)
U.S. remains open to diplomacy with N. Korea after latest missile launch: White House (*Yonhap*, 09/14/21)

**In North Korea:**
- North Korea called on officials to finish recovery efforts at a flood-hit eastern province before the founding anniversary of the Workers' Party next month as it held an enlarged meeting of the provincial military commission, state media reported Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's official newspaper called on scientists Tuesday to stop building "fences" around themselves and be more open to joint research with others. (*Yonhap*)
- Humanitarian assistance-based efforts by South Korea and the United States to engage North Korea appear to be falling on deaf ears as Pyongyang is opting for confrontation over dialogue to seize some kind of initiative before returning to denuclearization negotiations. (Kang Seung-woo, *Korea Times*)
- An NK News investigation has uncovered connections between the North Korea-linked phishing scam against DPRK defector Kang Mi-jin earlier this month and at least two other attacks, suggesting the extent of the sophisticated social-engineering scheme is larger than previously understood. (Ethan Jewel and Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**
- A 2.2 magnitude earthquake struck South Korea's southeastern region early Tuesday, the state weather agency said. (*Korea Herald*)
- Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi kicked off a two-day visit to Seoul Tuesday following North Korea's tests of long-range cruise missiles over the weekend, an issue also being addressed by nuclear envoys from South Korea, the United States and Japan meeting in Tokyo. (*JoongAng Daily*)

- Rev. Cho Yong-gi, the founder of the world's largest Christian congregation Yoido Full Gospel Church based in Seoul, died Tuesday at the age of 85. (*JoongAng Daily*)
- A majority of South Koreans have expressed support for developing nuclear weapons every year for the past decade, according to a Seoul-based think tank's analysis of survey data. (Won-Gi Jung, NK News)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- All municipalities of South Korea will be allowed to pursue humanitarian aid projects for North Korea on their own, the unification ministry said Tuesday, as Seoul wants to increase cross-border exchanges despite stalled inter-Korean relations. (*Yonhap*)
- Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Won In-choul visited an inter-Korean border unit on Tuesday and checked recent moves by the North Korean military, his office said. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea and Australia have urged North Korea to return to talks "without preconditions," stressing that diplomacy and dialogue are essential to bringing peace on the Korean Peninsula. (*Korea Herald*)
- The unification ministry said it will continue efforts to resume operations of the inter-Korean liaison office as it marked the third anniversary of the office, an official said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Rafael Grossi urged North Korea on Monday to abide by U.N. Security Council resolutions and implement safeguards consistent with the Non-Proliferation Treaty on preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. (Chaewon Chung, NK News)
- South Korea and the United States have yet to figure out detailed information on North Korea's latest cruise missile tests, including the location of their launch and impact sites, sources said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- The United States is prepared to work with North Korea to address its humanitarian concerns "regardless of progress on denuclearization," Washington's point man on Pyongyang said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- The United States remains open to diplomacy and dialogue with North Korea, a White House spokesperson said Monday, despite North Korea's missile launch that it said poses threat to U.S. allies in the region. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by David Shaw, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250815213705/https://mailchi.mp/913349c85fdb/hrnk-news-itemsus-ready-to-help-address-nk-humanitarian-concerns-regardless-of-denuclearization-envoy?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, September 15, 2021**

# N. Korea fires 2 ballistic missiles into East Sea: JCS

**In North Korea:**
N.K. media slams U.S. for meddling in Taiwan issues, voices support for 'One China policy' (*Yonhap*, 8/15/2021)
N. Korea fires 2 ballistic missiles into East Sea: JCS (*Yonhap*, 8/15/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Cheong Wa Dae to convene emergency NSC meeting on N. Korea's missile launches (*Yonhap*, 8/15/2021)
Koreans in their 20s and 40s show generational divide on key issues (*JoongAng Daily*, 8/15/2021)
Moon requests China's unswerving support for Korea peace process (*The Korea Herald*, 8/15/2021)
Seoul seeks to improve inter-Korean relations through 2022 Olympics: Blue House(*NK News*, 8/15/2021)
S. Korean top nuclear envoy discusses NK missile launches with US, Japanese counterparts (*The Korea Herald*, 8/15/2021)
S. Korea's NSC expresses 'deep concern' about N. Korea's missile launches (*Yonhap*, 8/15/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Moon says S. Korea's SLBM development can be deterrent to N. Korean provocation: Cheong Wa Dae (*Yonhap*, 8/15/2021)
N.K. leader's sister warns of 'complete destruction' of inter-Korean ties if Moon finds faults with Pyongyang (*Yonhap*, 8/15/2021)
North and South Korea test ballistic missiles hours apart (*BBC*, 8/15/2021)
North Korea ups tension with ballistic missile launches (*The Korea Herald*, 8/15/2021)
Peninsula sees dueling missile launches from both Koreas (*JoongAng Daily*, 8/15/2021)
S. Korea develops supersonic cruise missile amid tensions with N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 8/15/2021)

**International:**
U.S. condemns N. Korean missile launch, urges Pyongyang to return to dialogue (*Yonhap*, 8/15/2021)
U.S. expert suggests elimination of N.K. chemical weapons as confidence-building step for nuke disarmament (*Yonhap*, 8/15/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- A North Korean state media outlet on Wednesday denounced the United States for meddling in Taiwan issues and voiced its support for Beijing's "One China policy" amid the deepening Sino-U.S. rivalry. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea fired two ballistic missiles into the East Sea on Wednesday, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said. (*Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- President Moon Jae-in received an immediate briefing on North Korea's firing of ballistic missiles Wednesday, according to Cheong Wa Dae. (*Yonhap*)
- Young adults in South Korea were less likely to wish for unification with North Korea, less happy to share vaccines with the North or accept refugees, and less inclined for closer diplomatic relations with China compared to the older generation, according to a recent survey conducted by the JoongAng Ilbo with Embrain Public, a local poll research institute. (*JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in expressed hope Wednesday that China will continue support for the Korea peace process while meeting with the neighboring country's visiting top diplomat. (*The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea's top nuclear negotiator, Noh Kyu-duk, held separate phone talks Wednesday with his counterparts of the United States and Japan to discuss North Korea's latest missile launches, the foreign ministry said. (*The Korea Herald*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in said he hopes the upcoming 2022 Beijing Olympics will be a chance to improve relations with North Korea, according to a Blue House spokesperson on Wednesday. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- South Korea's top national security officials expressed "deep concern" Wednesday about a series of missile launches by North Korea. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- President Moon Jae-in said Wednesday that South Korea's upgrading of its missile capabilities can help deter North Korean provocation. (*Yonhap*)
- The sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un on Wednesday warned that inter-Korean relations could be completely destroyed, criticizing President Moon Jae-in's attendance at a test of a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM). (*Yonhap*)
- North and South Korea have tested ballistic missiles hours apart from each other, highlighting an arms race on the peninsula as nuclear talks with the North remain stalled. (BBC)
- North Korea on Wednesday fired a pair of ballistic missiles into the East Sea, following a cruise missile test that took place less than a week ago. (Lee Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)
- The Korean Peninsula was the site of dueling launches on Wednesday as North Korea fired two tactical ballistic missiles around mid-day, followed by South Korea testing a new submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) later in the afternoon. (*JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea on Wednesday unveiled the development of a supersonic cruise missile to improve its maritime defense capabilities just days after the North fired a new long-range cruise missile in a sign of accelerating military competition between the two Koreas. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)

**International:**

- The U.S. State Department on Wednesday condemned North Korea's ballistic missile launches, calling the act a violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions that poses a threat to its neighbors and the international community. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- The elimination of North Korea's chemical weapons could serve as a confidence-building step to convince the communist nation to eventually give up its nuclear power, an American expert said Wednesday. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Scott Cho, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
http://web.archive.org/web/20250815213957/https://mailchi.mp/54f81b0abf76/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-fires-2-ballistic-missiles-into-east-sea-jcs?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, September 16, 2021**

## Diplomats of S. Korea, U.S. hold working-level talks following N.K. missile launches

**In North Korea:**
Assets held by NK defectors shrink since 2017 (*The Korea Herald*, 8/16/2021)
Ballistic missile from train (*The Korea Times*, 8/16/2021)
Initial Analysis of North Korea's "New Type Long-Range Cruise Missile" (*38th North*, 8/15/2021)
N.K. says it held firing drill of railway-borne missile regiment (*Yonhap*, 8/16/2021)
N.Korea says it tested new railway-borne missile system to strike 'threatening forces' (*Reuters*, 8/16/2021)
North blasts South for calling tests 'provocations' — but look at that train (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 8/16/2021)
North Korea says it tested rail-launched ballistic missiles (*AP News*, 8/16/2021)
North Korea: What we know about its missile and nuclear programme (*BBC News*, 8/16/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Cheong Wa Dae: no comment on N. Korea's criticism of President Moon (*Yonhap*, 8/16/2021)
Ruling party expresses regret over N.K. missile launches amid engagement efforts(*Yonhap*, 8/16/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

Both North and South Korea fire ballistic missiles as tensions rise on peninsula(CNN, 8/16/2021)
N.K. media for domestic audience keeps mum on Kim Yo-jong's statement against Moon (*Yonhap*, 8/16/2021)

**International:**
As Japanese election approaches, Shinzo Abe's legacy on North Korea looms large(*NK News*, 8/16/2021)
Diplomats of S. Korea, U.S. hold working-level talks following N.K. missile launches(*Yonhap*, 8/16/2021)
U.S. condemns N. Korean missile launch, urges Pyongyang to return to dialogue (*Yonhap*, 8/16/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Refugees from North Korea have seen their assets -- both real estate and cashable -- shrink in 2020, compared to 2017 when the nation started compiling the relevant data. (Kim Yon-se, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea launches a short-range ballistic missile from a train during a live-fire exercise in a central mountainous area of the country. (*The Korea Times*)
- On September 13, North Korea released a statement reporting successful flight tests on September 11 and 12 of "new type long-range cruise missiles." It also released photographs depicting a cruise missile resembling the US Tomahawk and other foreign long-range cruise missiles, both in flight and being launched from one of five launch tubes/canisters mounted on a wheeled mobile launcher. (Vann H. Van Diepen, *38th North*)
- North Korea said Thursday that a railway-borne missile regiment held a firing drill a day earlier to increase capability in better coping with various threats. "The railway-borne missile regiment took part in the drill with a mission to strike the target area 800 kilometers away from its location after moving to the central mountainous area at dawn on September 15," the official Korean Central News Agency said. (*Yonhap*)
- The missiles fired by North Korea on Wednesday were a test of a new "railway-borne missile system" designed as a potential counter-strike to any forces that threaten the country, state news agency KCNA reported on Thursday. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- The North's official news agency on Thursday revealed that its latest ballistic missiles were fired from a train-borne launcher, following Pyongyang's criticism of Seoul late Wednesday for labeling the missile tests as provocations. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea said Thursday it successfully launched ballistic missiles from a train for the first time and was continuing to bolster its defenses, after the two Koreas test-fired missiles hours apart in dueling displays of military might. (Kim Tong-Hyung and Hyung-Jin Kim, *AP News*)

- North Korea's recent missile tests show continuing progress in its weapons programme, which it says is necessary to defend itself against a possible US invasion. (*BBC News*)

**In South Korea:**

- The office of President Moon Jae-in said Thursday it would not respond formally to North Korea's direct condemnation of Moon over what it describes as "improper" and "stupid" remarks. Cheong Wa Dae is apparently seeking to prevent inter-Korean tensions from escalating especially in advance of Moon's speech at the U.N. General Assembly next week, which is widely expected to include Seoul's unswerving commitment to the peace process. Cheong Wa Dae has attached a special meaning to the 30th anniversary this year of the two Koreas becoming members of the U.N. simultaneously. (*Yonhap*)
- The ruling Democratic Party (DP) on Thursday expressed regret over North Korea's latest ballistic missile launches amid concerns that military tensions could hamper Seoul's drive to resume engagement with Pyongyang. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Both North and South Korea tested ballistic missiles on Wednesday, ratcheting up tensions exponentially in what was already one of the most volatile regions on the planet. Pyongyang fired the first missiles on Wednesday, sending two into waters off the east coast of the Korean Peninsula five minutes apart, at 12:38 p.m. and 12:43 p.m. local time (11:38 p.m. and 11:43 p.m. ET), according to Japan's Coast Guard. (CNN)
- North Korea's main newspaper, the Rodong Sinmun, and other media outlets targeted toward the domestic audience did not carry a statement by leader Kim Jong-un's sister that warned South Korea of the deadlock of inter-Korean relations. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- This week marks one year since Shinzo Abe, Japan's longest-serving prime minister, stepped down from office. It also comes as the country's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) is set to soon decide the future of its leadership — and likely Japan's next prime minister — ahead of a nationwide general election. Foreign policy toward North Korea will likely not be an immediate priority. The LDP, however, aims to appoint a leader who can take the party in a long-term sustainable direction, which means it will inevitably need to address Pyongyang at some point. (Oliver Jia, *NK News*)
- Diplomats of South Korea and the United States held talks Thursday to discuss the Korean Peninsula situation, the foreign ministry said, after North Korea ratcheted up tensions with two ballistic missile launches the previous day. The talks between Rim Kap-soo, director general at the ministry's peninsula peace regime bureau, and Jung Pak, the deputy U.S. special representative for North Korea, came amid concerns the North's missile launches could hamper Seoul's drive to resume dialogue with Pyongyang. (*Yonhap*)
- The U.S. State Department on Wednesday condemned North Korea's ballistic missile launches, calling the act a violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions that poses a threat to its neighbors and the international community. A department official, however, said the U.S. remains committed to dialogue with the North. (Byun Duk-Kun, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Damian Reddy, HRNK Research Intern

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**Friday, September 17, 2021**

## Why North Korea's cruise missile launch could worry other nations

**In North Korea:**

Body of former N.K. premier buried at national cemetery 15 years after death(*Yonhap*, 9/17/2021)

N.K. paper urges farmers to brace for hailstone damage ahead of fall harvest (*Yonhap*, 9/17/2021)

N. Korea says U.S. 'double standard' to blame for deadlock in talks (*Yonhap*, 9/17/2021)

N. Korea's major women's union calls for eradication of anti-socialist practices(*Yonhap*, 9/17/2021)

North Korea blames US anti-DPRK rhetoric for preventing return to dialogue (*NK News*, 9/17/2021)

North Korea fired ballistic missiles from train amid rising tensions with the South(*The Guardian*, 9/17/2021)

Uranium enrichment in Yongbyon is growing: report (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 9/17/2021)

Why North Korea's cruise missile launch could worry other nations (*BBC News*, 9/17/2021)

Yongbyon Nuclear Research Center's UEP May Not Be Operating (*38 North*, 9/16/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

Kim Jong Un's sister warns of 'destruction' of S.Korean ties (*AP News*, 9/16/2021)

Moon says two Koreas' accession to U.N. 30 years ago was 1st step for cooperation, but still long way to go (*Yonhap*, 9/17/2021)

Seoul seeks aid for North Korea despite missile tests: unification minister (*NK News*, 9/17/2021)

Unification minister promises support for humanitarian aid to N. Korea despite missile launches (*Yonhap*, 9/17/2021)

**North Korea:**

- The body of a former North Korean premier was buried belatedly at a national cemetery in Pyongyang about 15 years after he died, state media reported Friday The body of Kang Song-san, who served as prime minister twice from 1984-1986 and from 1992-1997, was enshrined in the Sinmiri national cemetery, according to the Korean Central News Agency. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Friday urged farmers to stay on high alert against possible damage from hailstones, saying just a moment of carelessness could cause "irrevocable" consequences. (*Yonhap*)
- The U.S. "double standard" toward North Korea is to blame for the prolonged deadlock in talks between the two countries, a North Korean international affairs commentator claimed Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- A major North Korean women's union called on its members to wage a battle against anti-socialist practices as it convened a workshop for local leaders, state media reported Friday. The Socialist Women's Union of Korea (SWUK) held a workshop for its local committee heads from Tuesday to Thursday and discussed the issue of "wiping out anti-socialist and non-socialistic practices," the Rodong Sinmun, the organ of the North's ruling party, said. (*Yonhap*)
- A North Korean “international affairs analyst” slammed the U.S. on Friday for labeling its recent missile tests as threats but not those of South Korea, accusing Washington of a “double-dealing attitude.” In a commentary published by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), Kim Myong Chol defended the country’s “recent activities” as consistent with its right to self-defense, while blaming Washington’s “hostile policy toward the DPRK” for the continuing deadlock in denuclearization negotiations. (Bryan Betts, *NK News*)
- North Korea says it successfully launched ballistic missiles from a train for the first time and was continuing to bolster its defences, after the two Koreas test fired missiles hours apart in duelling displays of military might. (*The Guardian*)
- North Korea is expanding a uranium enrichment plant within the Yongbyon nuclear complex, reported the Middlebury Institute of International Studies on Thursday. (Kim Sang-Jin, Yoo Jee-Hye and Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Cruise missiles, unlike ballistic missiles, can swerve and turn through most of their flight - allowing them to attack from unexpected angles. It shows North Korea is continuing its pursuit of ever more diverse and sophisticated means to deliver nuclear weapons. (Ankit Panda, *BBC News*)
- Recent commercial satellite imagery of North Korea’s Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center indicates the cooling units on the annex rooftop next to the cascade halls at the Uranium Enrichment Plant (UEP) were removed between August 25 and September 1. As proper air conditioning and system cooling is essential to the uranium enrichment process—including maintaining a consistent temperature inside the cascade halls—it is unlikely that the UEP is currently operating if no other means for cooling is in place. It remains to be seen if the cooling units will be replaced or relocated. Additionally, new construction has started in an area just north of Cascade Hall #2,

where a wall was constructed between September 1 and September 9. Excavations then started between September 9 and September 14 at the eastern end of this area as reported by CNN, but the purpose of this activity is not yet evident. (Frank Pabian, Ollie Heinonen, Jack Liu and Jenny Town, 38 North)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Wednesday criticized South Korea's president and threatened a "complete destruction" of bilateral relations after both countries tested ballistic missiles hours apart. (Hyung-Jin Kim and Kim Tong-Hyung, AP News)
- President Moon Jae-in issued a message Friday on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of South and North Korea becoming members of the United Nations together. (Yonhap)
- South Korean Unification Minister Lee In-young said Friday that South Korea will continue to seek ways to provide humanitarian assistance to North Korea despite Pyongyang's new cruise and ballistic missile tests this week. At an event marking three years since the Sept. 2018 inter-Korean summit, the minister emphasized that the South Korean government has maintained that humanitarianism is separate from the "political, military and security situation." (Chaewon Chung, NK News)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young said Friday his office will continue to cooperate with the United States to provide humanitarian aid to North Korea despite tensions over Pyongyang's recent missile launch. Lee made the remark at an event to mark the 2018 Pyongyang Declaration on Sept. 19, in which President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un shared the view that the peninsula must be turned into a region free from nuclear weapons. (Yonhap)

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Prepared by Damian Reddy, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250815220057/https://mailchi.mp/d999945c3dcb/hrnk-news-itemswhy-north-koreas-cruise-missile-launch-could-worry-other-nations?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Saturday, September 18, 2021

# Kim's launches show push to boost nuke arsenal; Initial Evaluation of North Korea's Rail-Mobile Missile Launches

**In North Korea:**

EXPLAINER: Kim's launches show push to boost nuke arsenal (*AP News*, 9/17/2021)
It's the Launcher, Not the Missile: Initial Evaluation of North Korea's Rail-Mobile Missile Launches (*38 North*, 9/17/2021)
North Koreans Resentful of Missile Launches Amid Hunger and Poverty (RFA, 9/17/2021)

Photos show North Korea expanding uranium enrichment plant (*AP News*, 9/18/2021)
Yongbyon Nuclear Research Center: Construction Activity Near ELWR (*38 North*, 9/17/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
U.S. remains open to dialogue with N. Korea: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 9/18/2021)

**International:**
China's August exports to North Korea up for third month (*Reuters*, 9/18/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea's recent sword-rattling after months of relative quiet makes clear that leader Kim Jong Un is working on expanding his weapons arsenal. (Hyung-Jin Kim, Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)
- North Korea's September 15 launches of short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) from a railcar are significant for its first-time use of a rail launcher, not because of the missiles that were tested. (Vann H. Van Diepen, *38 North*)
- Citizens in North Korea are becoming increasingly angry that state media is touting this week's cruise missile tests as a major national defense achievement when many are struggling to find their next meal, sources in the country told RFA. (Jeong Yon Park, RFA)
- Recent satellite images show North Korea is expanding a uranium enrichment plant at its main Yongbyon nuclear complex, a sign that it's intent on boosting the production of bomb materials, experts say. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)
- Recent commercial satellite imagery of the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center indicates that construction has been ongoing at a site just south of the Experimental Light Water Reactor (ELWR) since April and has recently picked up pace. Although the exact purpose of the future building is still unclear, it may be intended to play a supportive role in future ELWR operations. (Frank Pabian, Olli Heinonen, Jack Liu, Samantha J. Pitz, *38 North*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The United States remains committed to engaging with North Korea in a diplomatic approach to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula, a spokesperson for the U.S. State Department said Friday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

**International:**

- China's exports to North Korea rose for the third straight month in August, but were still a fraction of their pre-COVID levels, Chinese customs data showed on Saturday. (Ryan Woo, *Reuters*)

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Prepared by Jungeun Lee, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250815220904/https://mailchi.mp/e939cf21405d/hrnk-news-items-kims-launches-show-push-to-boost-nuke-arsenal-initial-evaluation-of-north-koreas-rail-mobile-missile-launches?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, September 19, 2021**

# Photos show North Korea expanding uranium enrichment plant; North Korea Says It Can Now Launch Missiles from Trains

**In North Korea:**
North Korea Says It Can Now Launch Missiles from Trains (*The National Interest*, 09/19/2021)
North Korea may be ramping up nuclear weapons program again, satellite images show (*Fox News*, 09/19/2021)
Photos show North Korea expanding uranium enrichment plant (*AP News*, 09/19/2021)
Satellite images show N Korea expanding Yongbyon nuclear facility (*Al Jazeera*, 09/19/2021)

**International:**
Remains of Korean War soldier identified as Oklahoma native (*AP News*, 09/18/2021)
The U.S. Just Made Travelling to North Korea Easier—For Some (*The National Interest*, 09/19/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea test-fired a pair of ballistic missiles earlier this week, and it turns out it launched them in a unique way: from a train. The nation's state media announced the launch Thursday, per KCNA Watch. (Stephen Silver, *The National Interest*)
- North Korea has been relatively quiet since President Trump last met with Kim Jong Un at the DMZ in June 2019. It has carried out no major weapons tests, and focused largely on dealing with COVID, droughts and keeping its ailing economy afloat. But now, eight months into the Biden administration, it is reverting to old ways, and it appears North Korea leader Kim Jong Un is upgrading his weapons arsenal, showcasing new technologies and testing President Biden — once again posing a serious threat to regional and global security. (Benjamin Hall, *Fox News*)
- Recent satellite images show North Korea is expanding a uranium enrichment plant at its main Yongbyon nuclear complex, a sign that it's intent on boosting the production of bomb materials, experts say. The assessment comes after North Korea recently raised tensions with its first missile tests in six months amid long-dormant nuclear disarmament negotiations with the United States. (Hyung-Jin Kim, *AP News*)
- Recent satellite images show North Korea is expanding a uranium enrichment plant at its main Yongbyon nuclear complex, a sign that it is intent on boosting the production of

bomb materials, experts say. A report from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey said photos taken by satellite imagery company Maxar showed construction in an area adjoining the uranium enrichment plant at Yongbyon. (*Al Jazeera*)

**International:**

- The remains of a U.S. Army soldier killed during the Korean War have been identified as an Oklahoma native, according to the U.S. Army. The remains are those of Sgt. Billy Rodgers of Panama, Oklahoma, who was 19 when he disappeared on Dec. 2., 1950. (*AP News*)
- The State Department has issued a small rule change that will affect aid workers who go to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). According to NK News, the State Department will now "allow humanitarian workers to visit North Korea multiple times on a single authorization, rather than just once." Under normal circumstances, holders of American passports are not allowed to travel to North Korea, unless they receive a "special validation" passport. The new rule went into effect September 3 and will remain so for four years, continuing through September 30. (Stephen Silver, *The National Interest*)

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Prepared by Rick Herssevoort, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250815225822/https://mailchi.mp/c88e03b69a56/hrnk-news-itemsphotos-show-north-korea-expanding-uranium-enrichment-plantnorth-korea-says-it-can-now-launch-missiles-from-trains?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, September 20, 2021**

## N Korea says US-Australia submarine deal 'extremely undesirable'

**In North Korea:**
A diplomat's life: The uncertainty and tedium of lockdown in North Korea (*NK News*, 09/20/2021)
North Korea expanding weapons-grade uranium plant, satellite images suggest (*The Guardian*, 09/19/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

N.Korea derides South's submarine-launched missile as clumsy, rudimentary (*Reuters*, 09/20/2021)
N. Korea discounts S. Korea's new SLBM as 'rudimentary, toddling-stage' weapon(*Yonhap*, 09/20/2021)
N. Korea downplays S. Korea's SLBM test (*The Korea Herald*, 09/20/2021)

**International:**
Aukus could trigger a 'nuclear arms race', says North Korea (*BBC News*, 09/20/2021)
N Korea says US-Australia submarine deal 'extremely undesirable' (*Al Jazeera*, 09/20/2021)
N.K. says U.S-Australia submarine deal 'extremely undesirable,' vows to take counteraction (*Yonhap*, 09/20/2021)
NKorea slams US over submarine deal, warns countermeasures (*AP News*, 09/20/2021)
N.Korea warns U.S. risks 'dangerous nuclear arms race' over Australia subs(*Reuters*, 09/20/2021)
North Korea slams AUKUS deal as 'undesirable and dangerous' (*NK News*, 09/20/2021)
Ruling party chief says U.S. policy on N. Korea remains too 'vague' (*Yonhap*, 09/20/2021)
Ruling party leader says Biden vague on NK (*The Korea Herald*, 09/20/2021)
Taro Kono and Fumio Kishida open to holding Japan-North Korea summit (*The Japan Times*, 09/18/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- A former diplomat in Pyongyang gives a first-person account of how authorities responded to the pandemic (Taylor Darby, *NK News*)
- Recent satellite images appear to show North Korea is expanding a uranium enrichment plant at its main Yongbyon nuclear complex, with experts saying the move shows an intent to boost the production of bomb materials. (*The Guardian*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship**:

- A North Korean military think tank on Monday dismissed South Korea's recently tested submarine-launched ballistic missile as clumsy and rudimentary but warned its development would rekindle cross-border tension. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- North Korea on Monday questioned whether South Korea's newly unveiled submarine-launched ballistic missile is a real SLBM, claiming even if it is, it would be nothing more than a "rudimentary, toddling-stage" weapon that cannot serve as an effective means of attack. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea said Monday that the submarine-launched ballistic missile South Korea test-fired last week was primitive and not a threat. Pyongyang is seen as trying to discredit Seoul's missile capabilities because South Korea is the first non-nuclear state to have tested an SLBM. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- North Korea has condemned a new security pact between the US, UK and Australia, saying it could trigger a "nuclear arms race". (*BBC News*)

- North Korea has criticised the US decision to provide nuclear-powered submarines to Australia, describing the deal as “extremely undesirable and dangerous” and warning of unspecified countermeasures if it undermines the North’s security. (*Al Jazeera*)
- North Korea on Monday denounced a United States decision to help build nuclear-powered submarines for Australia as an "extremely undesirable and dangerous" move that can trigger off a nuclear arms race. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea has criticized a U.S. decision to provide nuclear-powered submarines to Australia and threatened unspecified countermeasures if it finds the deal affects its security. (Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)
- North Korea warned on Monday that the United States risked a dangerous nuclear arms race by providing submarine technology to Australia, criticising its "double standards" and vowing counter-measures. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- North Korea slammed a new submarine deal between the US, Australia, and the UK on Monday, threatening countermeasures if the deal impacts North Korea's national security in any way. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- The United States must not return to the so-called strategic patience when dealing with North Korea, the head of South Korea's ruling Democratic Party said Sunday, also arguing the Joe Biden administration's policy on the North may be too "vague." (*Yonhap*)
- Rep. Song Young-gil, leader of the ruling Democratic Party, blamed a flare-up in inter-Korean tensions on the uncertainty of US policy on North Korea, in comments delivered Sunday US time. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- Taro Kono and Fumio Kishida, two of the four candidates for president of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, each said Saturday they are open to holding talks with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to resolve the issue of Pyongyang’s abductions of Japanese citizens decades ago. (*The Japan Times*)

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Prepared by Diletta De Luca, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250815230032/https://mailchi.mp/4d918cdd01ef/hrnk-news-itemsn-korea-says-us-australia-submarine-deal-extremely-undesirable?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Tuesday, September 21, 2021

**Top News:**
U.S. seeks diplomacy to completely denuclearize Korean Peninsula: Biden (*Yonhap*, 09/21/2021)

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea discounts S. Korea's new SLBM as 'clumsy product' in 'elementary' development stage (*Yonhap*, 09/21/2021)

North Korea says nuclear sub deal could lead to arms race (*The Korea Times*, 09/21/2021)
North Korea: What we know about its missile and nuclear programme (BBC, 09/21/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Moon meets Pfizer CEO, discusses vaccine cooperation (*Yonhap*, 09/21/21)
S. Korea calls for Japan's reconsideration of Fukushima water release plan (*Yonhap*, 09/21/21)
New cases slightly over 1,700; concerns grow over further spread after Chuseok holiday (*Yonhap*, 09/21/21)
In summit, Moon hails Slovenia's plan to open embassy in Seoul (*The Korea Times*, 09/21/21)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Expert roundup: What to make of recent missile tests by North and South Korea (*NK News*, 09/21/21)
UN chief hopes for progress in inter-Korean ties during meeting with President Moon(*The Korea Times*, 09/21/21)

**International:**
Moon set for vaccine diplomacy in New York (*Yonhap*, 09/21/21)
S. Korea likely to receive 1 mln doses of mRNA vaccines from Britain in swap deal(*Yonhap*, 09/21/21)
Moon says S. Korea will be steadfast partner for inclusive global cooperation for SDGs (*Yonhap*, 09/21/21)
South Korea's balancing act amid US-China Indo-Pacific rivalry (*The Diplomat*, 09/21/21)
Moon discusses North Korea issue during summit with British PM (*The Korea Times*, 09/21/21)

**Top News:**

- U.S. President Joe Biden said Tuesday that his country seeks to completely denuclearize the Korean Peninsula through diplomacy. The U.S. leader made the remark in his address to the United Nations General Assembly in New York.(Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea on Monday questioned whether South Korea's newly unveiled submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) is real, claiming that even if it is, the "clumsy product" is in the elementary development stage and cannot serve as an effective means of attack. (Oh Seok-min, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea denounces a Untied States decision to help Australia and Britain with building nuclear-powered submarines that can ultimately trigger a nuclear arms race. (*The Korea Times*)
- North Korea's recent missile tests have shown how the nation's weapons program is developing. (BBC)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korean President, Moon-Jae meets with the head of Pfizer Inc. to discuss "multilateral cooperation." (Lee Chi-Dong, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's cases of COVID-19 have increased dramatically, to a number of over 17,000 after the Chuseok holiday. (*Yonhap*)
- President Moon-Jae welcomes Slovenia's desires to open an embassy in Seoul at a summit during the U.N. General Assembly session. (*The Korea Times*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Analysts and experts review how the recent missile tests will affect North and South Korea's relationship. (Chaewon Chung & Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- President Moon Jae-in and U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres had discussions on Korean peace and pending global issues during their meeting at U.N headquarters Monday, Cheong Wa Dae reports. (*The Korea Times*)

**International:**

- South Korean President, Moon-Jae is scheduled to engage in another round of vaccine diplomacy in New York. (Lee Chi-Dong, *Yonhap*)
- President Moon-Jae expresses South Korea's commitments towards "inclusive international cooperation" and honoring the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals. (Lee Chi-Dong, *Yonhap*)
- As the March 2022 presidential election approaches in South Korea, the candidates of both ruling and opposing parties are competing over their platforms on various issues. Voters are concerned about South Korea's foreign policy towards China. (Thomas Chan & Seong Hyeon Choi, *The Diplomat*)
- President Moon-Jae and Prime Minister Boris Johnson discuss concerns over North Korea's recent missile launches and Seoul's push for denuclearization of the Korean peninsula (*The Korea Times*)

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Prepared by Shruti Nallappa, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250815230341/https://mailchi.mp/3050c2f372ee/hrnk-news-itemsthe-rationing-system-is-on-the-verge-of-collapse-and-north-koreas-food-shortage-is-approaching-a-humanitarian-crisis-11187802?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Wednesday, September 22, 2021

**Top News:**

Full text of President Moon Jae-in's speech at U.N. General Assembly (*Yonhap*, 09/22/21)
One Korea Network (OKN) and KCPAC (Korean Conservative Political Action Conference) Sends a Message to President Moon Jae-in at Times Square (*One Korea Network*, 09/22/2021)

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea calls U.N. Security Council's meeting on Afghanistan 'ridiculing' international community (*Yonhap*, 09/22/21)
Uranium enrichment in Yongbyon is growing: report (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 09/22/21)
Understanding Kim Jong Un's Economic Policymaking: Defense Versus Civilian Spending (*38 North*, 09/22/21)
Pushing the 'nuclear envelope': North Korea's missile diplomacy (*The Guardian*, 09/22/21)

**In South Korea:**
Yoon says he will request redeployment of US tactical nukes in case of emergency(*The Korea Herald*, 09/22/21)
Change or continuation: Presidential race heats up (*The Korea Herald*, 09/22/21)
On Chuseok, Koreans pray for their loved ones across the border in North Korea(*NK News*, 09/22/21)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
South Korean leader repeats call for declaration to end Korean War (*Reuters*, 09/22/21)

**International:**
U.S. seeks diplomacy to completely demilitarize Korean Peninsula: Biden (*Yonhap*, 09/22/21)
U.S. names North Korea as a main culprit in ransomware attacks (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 09/22/21)
Korea to give Vietnam 1 million doses of vaccine next month (*The Korea Times*, 09/22/21)
UK to send 1m Pfizer Vaccine doses to South Korea in swap deal (*The Guardian*, 09/22/21)

**Top News:**
- Full text of President Moon Jae-in's speech at the U.N. General Assembly. (*Yonhap*)
- One Korea Network (OKN) and KCPAC (Korean Conservative Political Action Conference) released a digital advertisement in New York City's Times Square, coinciding with South Korean President Moon Jae-in's visit to the 76th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 76) this week to highlight the current campaign to counter House Resolutions 3446 and 826. (*One Korea Network*)

**In North Korea:**
- North Korea denounced a recent meeting of the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) on Afghanistan, saying the meeting ridicules the international community, while accusing the United States and western countries about addressing human rights crimes. (*Yonhap*)
- The Middlebury Institute of International Studies reports that North Korea is expanding a uranium enrichment plant within the Yongbyon nuclear complex. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- There has long been a tug-of-war in the North Korean leadership over military versus civilian spending. (Robert Carlin & Rachel Minyoung Lee, *38 North*)
- Pyongyang last weekend launched what was claimed to be new long-range cruise missiles capable of hitting Japan, followed hours later by the test launch of two ballistic missiles. (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)

**In South Korea:**

- Yoon Seok-youl, the leading opposition presidential contender, said Wednesday he will demand the United States redeploy its tactical nuclear weapons to South Korea. (*Yonhap*)
- The election is still nearly half a year away, but the race for the South Korean presidency is already building up and garnering attention. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- Over Chuseok, the three-day Korean holiday celebrating the fall harvest, South Koreans gather and remember their loved ones in North Korea. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News)*

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korean President Moon Jae-in speaks at his last U.N. General Assembly in favor of beginning the peace process and ending the Korean war. (*Reuters*)

**International:**

- President Joe Biden said on Tuesday that the United States seeks to completely denuclearize the Korean Peninsula through diplomacy. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- The United States Treasury issued an updated advisory highlighting ransomware risks and naming North Korea as one of the main culprits of ransomware attacks. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in announces that at least 1 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines will be given to Vietnam within the next month. (*The Korea Times*)
- 1 million doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine are being sent from the UK to South Korea as a part of the swap deal. (Andrew Gregory, *The Guardian*)

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Prepared by Shruti Nallappa, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
http://web.archive.org/web/20250815231023/https://mailchi.mp/bdc61ccfabf0/hrnk-news-itemsthe-rationing-system-is-on-the-verge-of-collapse-and-north-koreas-food-shortage-is-approaching-a-humanitarian-crisis-11187806?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Thursday, September 23, 2021

# "US Human Rights Experts Say President Moon Jae-in Must Rescue His Citizens Detained in North Korea"

**Top news:**

US Human Rights Experts Say President Moon Jae-in Must Rescue His Citizens Detained in North Korea(*Voa*,09/23/2021)

**In North Korea:**
(LEAD) FM Chung calls for 'snap-back' incentives to bring N. Korea back to dialogue(*Yonhap*,09/23/2021)
N.K. paper calls for speedy harvests to minimize loss from natural disasters(*Yonhap*,09/23/2021)
Facing declining birthrates, N. Korea calls on provinces to better account for new mothers, families with young children(*DailyNK*,09/23/2021)
Defector caught trying to return to N. Korea(*The Korea Herald*,09/23/2021)
North Korea Wants You to Know That It Doesn't Like the AUKUS Deal Either(*National interest*,09/23/2021)

**In South Korea:**
S. Korea seeks to turn Korean War armistice into peace regime through end-of-war declaration: official(*Yonhap*,09/23/2021)
Moon says end-of-war declaration to offer new hope, courage(*Yonhap*,09/23/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Chewing Wa Dae still pins hope on Beijing olympics for inter-Korean summit(*The Korea Herald*,09/23/2021)

**International:**
Moon flies home with remains of 68 Korean War heroes(*Korea joongang daily*,09/23/2021)
Foreign Ministry slashed budget for North's human rights protection(*Korea joongang daily*,09/23/2021)
US open to discussion with North Korea on end of war declaration: Pentagon spokesman(*The Korea Times*,09/23/2021)
Many female N. Korean defectors in China unable to receive COVID-19 shots(*DailyNK*,09/23/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- The United States and South Korea should actively consider offering conditional incentives to North Korea to bring the regime back to denuclearization talks, Seoul's top diplomat has said.(Kim Seung-yeon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's official newspaper on Thursday called for all-out efforts to speed up harvests of crops to minimize loss from natural disasters and maximize grain production amid worries about chronic food shortages. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's Central Committee recently disseminated orders to each province to "practically implement model child-care policies" as the country faces a continued decline in birthrates.(*DailyNK*)

- Police said Thursday that they have launched a probe into a female North Korean defector for seeking to cross the inter-Korean border to return to North Korea.(*The Korea Herald*)
- On Monday, the pact gained a new opponent: North Korea, when a Foreign Ministry official warned that it could "upset the strategic balance in the Asia-Pacific region" and potentially bring about a nuclear arms race.(*National interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea remains committed to turning the Korean War armistice into a stable peace regime through a formal declaration of an end to the war, a unification ministry official said Thursday.(*Yonhap*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in stressed the need to declare a formal end to the Korean War, speaking at a major alliance event held at a U.S. military base here Wednesday.(*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship**:

- An inter-Korean summit on the sidelines of the Beijing Winter Olympics in February is still a possibility, President Moon Jae-in's senior secretary for communications, Park Soo-hyun, said Thursday. (Lee Ji-yoon,*The Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- President Moon Jae-in received the remains of 68 South Korean soldiers killed in the 1950-53 Korean War from the United States in a handover ceremony in Hawaii Wednesday.(*Korea joongang daily*)
- The Foreign Ministry's budget for human rights protection in North Korea was reduced this year to a third of what it was three years ago.(*Korea joongang daily*)
- The United States is open to discussing a possible end of war declaration with North Korea as it seeks to engage with the reclusive state in dialogue over a number of other issues, a Pentagon spokesman said Wednesday.(*The Korea Times*)
- Many female defectors living illegally in China have been unable to receive even a single shot of the country's COVID-19 vaccine, Daily NK has learned.(Jeong Tae Joo, *DailyNK)*

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Criticism of the South Korean government, which has stayed silent on North Korea's detention of South Koreans, is growing in Washington. Many argue that the Moon Jae-in administration, which has recently succeeded in transporting Afghan "friends" to help with refugee resettlement in South Korea, should pay the same attention and effort to rescue its citizens detained in North Korea. This is reporter Baik Sungwon.

In a phone call with the VOA, Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), pointed out that it is contradictory to discuss the 'peace process on the Korean Peninsula' without asking inquiring about the whereabouts and situation of South Korean citizens imprisoned in North Korea.

[Transcript: Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director] “One cannot talk peace declarations, peace treaties, reconciliation, rapprochement while South Korean citizens are still being held in North Korea.”

While the South Korean government was immersed in the nuclear issue and focused on aid and peace initiatives, there are concerns that people are forgetting that North Korea has been detaining South Koreans for a long time.

A total of six South Koreans have been officially confirmed as detained in North Korea since 2010, including three missionaries and three defectors.

Missionary Kim Jeong-wook, who was arrested on October 8, 2013 on charges of entering North Korea illegally, has been detained for eight years. North Korea sentenced missionary Kim to life imprisonment for conspiracy against the state and espionage, saying he was liaising with the National Intelligence Service (NIS). In addition, Missionary Kim Kuk-ki, who was arrested in October 2014, and Missionary Choi Chun-gil, who was arrested in December of the same year, were sentenced to life imprisonment as well.

The other three, including Ko Hyun-chul, whose detention was revealed at a press conference in Pyongyang in July 2016, are North Korean defectors.

[Transcript: Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director] “Can you imagine an American President going to a foreign country and talking about rapprochement in diplomatic contacts and humanitarian aid, while the respective country is holding American citizens hostage? That would be unthinkable, and that President would have to pay a very heavy political price.”

Human rights experts in the United States, who remember Otto Warmbier, who died after being released from North Korea unconsciously, fear that South Koreans who have been detained for much longer than Americans who have been detained in the past, will suffer the same tragedy.

[Transcript: Suzanne Scholte, Chair of the North Korea Freedom Coalition] “We always say silence is death. If you don't advocate and talk about these things, silence is death. So it's absolutely appropriate that the government of South Korea ask for their release and continue to bring their names before the North Koreans in any bilateral talks.”

[Transcript: Suzanne Scholte, Chair of the North Korea Freedom Coalition] “Even if we can't get the North Koreans to immediately release them, at least we give hope that by bringing up their names and bringing attention to the issue and letting them know that they're not forgotten.”
North Korea, which emphasizes the homogeneity of the two Koreas by advocating 'between our people’ while releasing all Americans who are labeled 'sworn enemies’, have detained South

Koreans for nearly 10 years and do not allow them access to consulates. This has been criticized as an extreme contradiction and inhumane treatment.

Some observe that Kenneth Bae, who has been dubbed "the American who has been detained in North Korea for the longest period of time," is of "Korean descent", which has likely had an impact on his long-term detention.

[Transcript: Robert R. King, Former State Department Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights] "The Americans that tend to be arrested by the North Koreans are, for the most part, tourists, travelers—they're not the kind of people who are involved in humanitarian efforts…It's people who don't quite understand what they're doing in North Korea who make mistakes…In the case of South Korea…they're going there because they're religious people who are trying to spread Christianity. They are people who have families there, who are trying to help them. There are more South Koreans who are involved in trying to get North Koreans out who want to go to South Korea. And I think it makes it somewhat more complicated.

[Transcript: Robert R. King, Former State Department Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights] "The North Koreans hold hostages, and they want to use them to barter with another country to gain an advantage, and it has little to do with the accuracy or inaccuracy of the charges brought against the individuals…And I think that's where the problem comes."

In Washington, many critics point out that the United States repatriated three of its citizens ahead of the first US-North Korea summit, that Japan always puts the abductee issue first, and the response of the South Korean government.

There is criticism that in addition to the six South Koreans detained in North Korea since 2013, pursuing individual tourism despite the risks of detention, proposing unconditional support, and hastily seeking 'peace' could put the public at risk. Currently, the number of victims of abduction during the Korean War and after the war is estimated at more than 100,000.

[Joshua Stanton, Attorney] "Nations should and do feel a responsibility to protect their citizens. South Korean governments, regardless of party or ideology, should have made the release of all South Korean citizens a non-negotiable condition for any kind of economic engagement, credits, or non-humanitarian aid."

Human rights experts in Washington continue to make this kind of poignant criticism of the current South Korean government's approach to North Korea.

[Transcript: Robert R. King, Former State Department Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights] "He is very anxious to develop a relationship with the North. There have been all kinds of bending over backwards to try to accommodate the North Korean demands. And I think for

Moon, he does not want to get into the issue of South Koreans in North Korea because it might irritate this very fragile relationship that he's trying to build on.

[Transcript: Robert R. King, Former State Department Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights] “I think his argument would be ‘if we solve the north-south relationship problem in larger terms, it'll be easy to solve these problems of the people who are there,’ but I think the numbers are small, he doesn't want this to get in the way of his effort to improve overall relations.”

Experts praised the South Korean government's operation to evacuate Afghan people at the end of last month and appealed to them to use the same determination and effort they showed to rescue refugees in releasing their citizens detained in North Korea.

[Transcript: Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director] "Congratulations and big kudos to the government of South Korea for having brought to South Korea Afghan nationals who worked with South Koreans and their families…On the South Korean ministers being held in North Korea, this is an unacceptable situation.”

Shortly after the Afghans entered South Korea, South Korean Justice Minister Park Beom-gye said, “We can never give up on our Afghan friends who have helped South Korea.”

[Transcript: Suzanne Scholte, Chair of the North Korea Freedom Coalition] “I think the reason why the Moon government hasn't done that is because they're in total appeasement mode of North Korea regime, and they want to open up exchanges and they don't want to remind South Koreans that they're holding people in detention.”

[Transcript: Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director] “So it's a very strange position that is very much the result of not only having given up leverage, but it is the result of having given up on the human rights of the people of North Korea. It's a matter of having given up on the human rights of South Korean citizens abducted by North Korea. It's a matter of having given up on the human rights of South Korean citizens imprisoned by North Korea.”

[Transcript: Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Directo] “President Moon has placed all of his bets on the Kim Jong-un card, things are not going well, the South Korean government and senior South Korean government officials are simply paralyzed by this fundamental strategic mistake they made. They gave up all leverage, they placed their fate in the hands of Kim Jong-un and his regime.”

Meanwhile, the State Department, which has consistently responded that it should inquire to the South Korean government regarding North Korea's South Korean detention issue, responded to the VOA's request for comment on the matter on September 8, saying, "We

remain concerned about the human rights situation in the DPRK and the United States is committed to placing human rights at the center of our foreign policy."

In a statement sent to VOA on September 8, Human Rights Watch, an international human rights organization, criticized the Moon administration, saying, "The Blue House has failed to pass the moral test to protect its citizens and ensure their human rights by fundamentally disregarding the South Koreans detained in North Korea."

Human Rights Watch urged "President Moon Jae-in should change direction and make it clear publicly that South Koreans should be released without any conditions, and make it clear that abduction and human rights issues will be part of all future inter-Korean dialogue."

This is Baek Sung-won from VOA News.

Translated by Doohyun Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Seshni Moodley, HRNK Research Intern

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http://web.archive.org/web/20250815231334/https://mailchi.mp/f6db3a953b38/hrnk-news-itemsus-human-rights-experts-say-president-moon-jae-in-must-rescue-his-citizens-detained-in-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, September 24, 2021**

## "North Korea has the Highest Work-Related Mortality Rate in the World"

**Top news:**
UN: "North Korea has the Highest Work-Related Mortality Rate in the World" (VOA, 09/21/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Dismantlement of Spent Fuel Storage Building at Yongbyon's 50 MWe Reactor (*38 North*, 09/25/2021)
N.K. diplomats engaging in illicit financing activities: British gov't report (*Yonhap*, 09/25/2021)
N. Korean leader highlights strong ties with China against 'hostile forces' (*Yonhap*, 09/25/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

N.K. leader's sister holds out prospect of end-of-war declaration, inter-Korean summit (*Yonhap*, 09/25/2021)

**International:**
Quad leaders urge N. Korea to engage in dialogue, refrain from provocations (*Yonhap*, 09/25/2021)
U.S. holds no hostile intent, hopes N. Korea will respond positively to dialogue offer: Price (*Yonhap*, 09/25/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Recent commercial satellite imagery of North Korea's Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center indicates that the spent fuel storage building at the abandoned, never-completed 50 MWe Reactor is being dismantled or repurposed. (Frank Pabian, Olli Heinonen, Jack Liu, Samantha J. Pitz, *38 North*)
- North Korean Embassies and diplomatic personnel are engaging in illicit financing activities to fund the country's nuclear and other destructive weapons activities, a British government report has said. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has said his country's strong relations with China will further grow against "vicious challenges and obstruction by the hostile forces" in a letter to Chinese President Xi Jinping, Pyongyang's state media reported Saturday. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship**:

- North Korea could declare a formal end to the Korean War as suggested by South Korea and even discuss holding an inter-Korean summit if the South treats the North with "impartiality" and mutual respect, the sister of leader Kim Jong-un said Saturday. (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)

**International:**

- The leaders of the United States, Australia, Japan and India on Friday called on North Korea to engage in dialogue and abide by U.N. Security Council resolutions that prohibit its ballistic missile tests. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- A spokesman for the U.S. State Department on Friday reiterated the U.S. holds no hostile intent toward North Korea, while urging the North to come to the dialogue table. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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유엔 "북한, 노동 관련 사망률 세계에서 가장 높아"
**UN: "North Korea has the Highest Work-Related Mortality Rate in the World"**

North Korea has the highest labor-related mortality rate in the world, multiple UN agencies stated in a joint report. U.S. experts have pointed out that North Korea's work environment puts

a great deal of physical stress on its citizens. This is reporter Kim Yeong-gyo.

Recently, the World Health Organization (WHO) and International Labour Organization (ILO) released a report titled, “Joint Estimates of the Work-related Burden of Disease and Injury.”

The content of the report is based on survey research conducted on 183 countries between 2000 and 2016, and analyzed the demands in each working environment that could lead to illness or death.

According to the report, in North Korea 41.6 people per 100,000 died of work-related causes in 2000, 60.4 in 2010, and 63 in 2016.

The figures from each of these years were record-setting. North Korea’s work-related mortality rate is the highest in the world, taking population size into account.

However, the report did not explain the sharp increase in mortality rate between 2000 and 2010.

In comparison, in South Korea 23.9 people died of work-related causes per 100,000 in 2000, 19.5 in 2010, and 17.6 in 2016.

Over time, South Korea’s mortality rate declined while North Korea’s increased.

As of 2016, Indonesia, which follows North Korea, recorded only 39.2 work-related deaths, 23.8 less than North Korea. Thus, North Korea’s labor-related mortality rate was much higher than that of other countries.

The United States recorded 24.4 work-related deaths in 2000, 21 in 2010, and 20.8 in 2016. China recorded 37.2, 32.4, and 32.5, respectively.

In addition, North Korea has the largest number of deaths from work-related stroke among the 183 countries surveyed. In North Korea, 12.9 people per 100,000 died of stroke from overwork in 2000, 21.2 in 2010, and 22.3 in 2016.

In 2016, Indonesia recorded 14.5 deaths from work-related stroke.

In South Korea, 7 people died from work-related strokes in 2000, 4.1 in 2010, and 3.4 in 2016.

On September 20, Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, told VOA, “It's a combination of ignoring human rights standards and ignoring in this particular case, standards for workers. The state sees people who have to work for the state, and these mass campaigns or in very difficult jobs of construction of mining, they see these

people having a principal goal of supporting the state. So, if that is the case, then they can be expected to work very, very high numbers of hours."

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, explained, "It's always about meeting production targets, it's always about mobilizing the workforce. Oftentimes, to do jobs and perform jobs that they're not qualified for. Thus, the high rate of workplace accidents and other incidents."

He continued, "Remember that a lot of people are not qualified to work in coal mines or work road construction, even children are mobilized to work, railway construction road construction to work in mines, in the extractive industry."

Chairwoman of the North Korea Freedom Coalition Suzanne Scholte, said, "Reflecting that also is what happens in the political prison camps. We know this from eyewitnesses there, for example, the coal mine like coal mines the places where they are extracting coal that there's absolutely no safety standards and there's a very large percentage of the people that are working in these coal mines, these political prison camps, end up dying. It's not unusual to have led death."

Executive Director Scarlatoiu explained, "This is compounded by other problems. There is a perpetual lack of antibiotics and painkillers and anesthesia medicine in North Korea. So if you get hurt, and you don't have the antibiotics. It is very likely that that injury will go to amputation, especially if it's a more serious injury."

This is Kim Yeong-gyo with VOA News.
Translated by Audrey Gregg, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Claire McCrea, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
http://web.archive.org/web/20250815231508/https://mailchi.mp/9a9481478988/hrnk-news-itemsun-north-korea-has-the-highest-work-related-mortality-rate-in-the-world?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, September 26, 2021**

## "S. Korea says N. Korean leader sister's weekend remarks 'meaningful'", "Kim Yo-jong extends an olive branch to Moon"

**In South Korea:**
Key takeaways from S. Korea's missile tests (*The Korea Herald*, 09/26/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
S. Korea says N. Korean leader sister's weekend remarks 'meaningful' (*Yonhap*, 09/26/2021)
Kim Yo-jong extends an olive branch to Moon (*Korea Joongang Daily*, 09/26/2021)
Kim Yo-jong pressures Seoul to negotiate with US: experts (*The Korea Times*, 09/26/2021)
North Korea's overture on talks is a test: experts (*The Korea Herald*, 09/26/2021)
North Korea says hope is alive for peace, summit with South (*Reuters*, 09/26/2021)

**International:**
N. Korea slams Japanese PM Suga over U.N. Assembly speech (*Yonhap*, 09/26/2021)

**In South Korea:**

- The recent missile tests President Moon Jae-in oversaw and praised marked a milestone that experts say shows a rapidly growing South Korean missile capability. Here are key takeaways on what it means for North Korea and foreign powers. (Si-young Choi, *The Korea Helrald*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship**:

- The unification ministry on Sunday described the weekend remarks by North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's sister about the possibility of holding "constructive" discussions on inter-Korean issues as "meaningful." (*Yonhap*)
- Kim Yo-jong, sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, said Saturday that Pyongyang will take steps to improve relations with Seoul – including another summit between the two countries' leaders – if South Korea abandons what she characterized as "hostility" and "double standards." (Michael Lee, *Korea Joongang Daily*)
- North Korea's second straight day of positive statements concerning inter-Korean engagement are a means to get South Korea to advocate on its behalf with the United States for sanctions relief rather than a serious attempt at improving ties with Seoul, according to diplomatic observers. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korea's offer to reopen inter-Korean dialogue could be a test to see South Korea's response and make it accountable for whatever actions Seoul takes in its dealings with Pyongyang later, experts said Sunday amid growing speculation for a thaw in ties. (Si-young Choi, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea is willing to consider another summit with South Korea if mutual respect between the neighbours can be assured, state news agency KCNA said on Saturday, citing Kim Yo Jong, the sister of the North's leader Kim Jong Un. (Heekyong Yang, Cynthia Kim, *Reuters*)

**International:**

- A North Korean researcher berated Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga on Sunday for his recent remarks at the U.N. General Assembly, stressing Pyongyang would not associate with whoever his successor will be if Tokyo's "hostile policy" toward it continues. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Jiwoo Hwang, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
http://web.archive.org/web/20250815233032/https://mailchi.mp/97258219384c/hrnk-news-items-s-korea-says-n-korean-leader-sisters-weekend-remarks-meaningful-kim-yo-jong-extends-an-olive-branch-to-moon?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, September 27, 2021**

## North Korea hints at celebrations for Kim Jong Un's first decade in power; Pyongyang remains unresponsive to Seoul's hotline calls

**In North Korea:**
North Korea hints at celebrations for Kim Jong Un's first decade in power (*NK News*, 09/27/2021)
North Korea's Vintage Tanks Definitely Don't Belong on the Battlefield (*National Interest*, 09/26/2021)
Total tested for COVID-19 in North Korea exceeds 40,000 (*NK News*, 09/27/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Cheong Wa Dae says inter-Korean communication lines should be back in operation first (*Yonhap*, 09/27/2021)
N. Korea remains unresponsive to Seoul's hotline calls after Kim Yo-jong's statements (*Yonhap*, 09/27/2021)
N.K. to hold parliamentary session after expressing willingness to improve inter-Korean ties (*Yonhap*, 09/27/2021)
Pyongyang still remains unresponsive to Seoul's hotline calls (*The Korea Herald*, 09/27/2021)

**International:**
A diplomat's life: The pleasures of retail therapy in the North Korean capital (*NK News*, 09/27/2021)

Aid workers, activists urge US to lift DPRK travel ban ahead of renewal deadline (*NK News*, 09/27/2021)
Japan's next leader has a chance to reshape the country's North Korea policy (*NK News*, 09/27/2021)
NGOs call for 'whitelist' to facilitate UN sanctions exemptions: PoE (*NK News*, 09/27/2021)
NK slams US as 'most heinous human rights abuser' (*The Korea Herald*, 09/27/2021)
N. Korean media outlet denounces U.S. as 'worst heinous human rights abuser'(*Yonhap*, 09/27/2021)
UK says it has seen ships breaching North Korea sanctions (*Reuters*, 09/26/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean state media has stepped up celebrations this month for Kim Jong Un's first decade in power, in a campaign that may culminate in high-profile public events for the leader despite ongoing economic challenges. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- If the KPA were to use the T-34/84 as part of mechanized formation conducting actual maneuver warfare, it would probably not end well for those crews. The North Koreans are more likely to use the T-34/85 for their reserve units and would probably use the machines for infantry support or in a defensive role from dug in positions. (*The National Interest*)
- The total number of people tested for COVID-19 in North Korea has surpassed 40,000, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), as the country continues to maintain that it is COVID-free nearly two years after the pandemic began. (Bryan Betts, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship**:

- The office of President Moon Jae-in said Monday North Korea needs to put its hotlines with South Korea back in operation first for consultations on ways to improve bilateral ties, including the possibility of another summit between their leaders. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea remained unresponsive to South Korea's calls via liaison and military hotlines Monday despite cautious optimism created after the sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said the two Koreas could discuss improvements in long-strained relations. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea is set to convene a session of its rubber-stamp legislature this week, drawing attention to whether any message to South Korea would come out of the meeting after the sister of leader Kim Jong-un expressed a willingness to improve inter-Korean relations. (Yi Wonju, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's presidential office on Monday appeared to be cautiously optimistic about a conciliatory overture from North Korea over the weekend, saying the reclusive regime had shown renewed eagerness for dialogue. (Lee Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- A former diplomat in Pyongyang recounts the realities of shopping in the city and the propaganda purpose of many stores. (Taylor Darby, *NK News*)

- In Sept. 2017, following the death of American college student Otto Warmbier, Washington banned U.S. passport holders from traveling to North Korea. Four years later, the prohibition is still in effect. The U.S. State Department is expected to announce soon whether to extend the ban, as it is set to expire on Aug. 31. (Won-Gi Jung, NK *News*)
- Earlier this month, after a collapse in his poll ratings, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga announced he would stand down as leader of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Given the LDP's majority in parliament, the winner of the party leadership vote on Sept. 29 will replace Suga as prime minister, and he or she will almost certainly go on to win late November's general election thanks to a divided and distrusted opposition. (Glyn Ford, Marialaura De Angelis, NK *News*)
- Nongovermental organizations (NGOs) working on North Korea issues have urged the United Nations to create a "whitelist" to facilitate sanctions exemptions for humanitarian assistance, a draft of the forthcoming U.N. Panel of Experts (PoE) report seen by NK *News* shows. (Jeongmin Kim, NK *News*)
- North Korea dismissed the US as the "most heinous human rights abuser" for using its human rights agenda to put pressure on other countries and interfere in their internal affairs, its state media said Monday. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- A North Korean state media outlet on Monday denounced the United States as the "most heinous human rights abuser" for using human rights as a means to pressure other countries and realize its global dominance. (*Yonhap*)
- Britain said on Sunday it had collected evidence of multiple ships from various nationalities apparently breaching United Nations sanctions against North Korea which ban the sale of fuel to the country. (William James, *Reuters*)

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Prepared by Audrey Gregg, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
http://web.archive.org/web/20250815233233/https://mailchi.mp/c71f912ad03c/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-korea-hints-at-celebrations-for-kim-jong-uns-first-decade-in-powerpyongyang-remains-unresponsive-to-seouls-hotline-calls?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, September 28, 2021**

## North Korea has reportedly built a new political prison camp; U.S. prepared to meet N. Korea without any conditions

**Top News:**
New prison camp in N. Pyongan Province is a political prison camp (*Daily* NK, 09/27/2021)

**In North Korea:**
N.K. appears to have held parliamentary session after missile launch (*Yonhap*, 09/28/2021)
North Korea launches missile as diplomat decries US policy (*AP News*, 09/28/2021)
N Korea fires missile, defends weapons tests at UN (*Al Jazeera*, 09/28/2021)
North Korea tests missile hours before South Korea launches new submarine (CNN, 09/28/2021)
North Korea fires projectile into sea, South Korea says (*AP News*, 9/27/2021)
N.Korea fires unidentified projectile, criticises U.S. 'hostile' policy (*Reuters*, 9/27/2021)
North Korea fires unidentified projectile into sea, South Korea military says (*The Guardian*, 9/27/2021)
North Korea fires what appears to be ballistic missile: Japan (*Nikkei Asia*, 09/28/2021)
North Korea fires 1 unidentified projectile: Joint Chiefs of Staff (*The Korea Times*, 09/27/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Moon orders comprehensive analysis of N. Korea's missile launch, recent statements on inter-Korean ties (*Yonhap*, 09/28/2021)
S. Korea pledges efforts to advance inter-Korean ties despite N.K. missile launch(*Yonhap*, 09/28/2021)

**International:**
Britain condemns N.Korea missile test, urges dialogue (*Reuters*, 09/28/2021)
Cryptocurrency expert pleads guilty to conspiring to help North Korea dodge sanctions (*The Washington Post*, 09/27/2021)
S. Korea, U.S. agree to enhance defense against N. Korean threats (*Yonhap*, 09/28/2021)
Top nuke envoys of S. Korea, U.S. discuss N.K. missile launch over phone (*Yonhap*, 09/28/2021)
U.S. prepared to meet N. Korea without any conditions: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 09/28/2021)
U.S. still prepared to engage with North Korea after missile test (*Reuters*, 09/28/2021)

**Top News:**

- North Korea has reportedly built a new political prison camp in North Pyongan Province's Pihyon County. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea appears to have convened a session of its rubber-stamp legislature Tuesday after firing a short-range missile earlier in the day, drawing attention to whether any message to South Korea would come out of the meeting. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea fired a short-range missile into the sea Tuesday at nearly the same moment its U.N. diplomat was decrying the U.S.'s "hostile policy" against it, in an apparent return to its pattern of mixing weapons displays with peace overtures to wrest outside concessions. (Hyung-Jin Kim, *AP News*)

- North Korea has fired a suspected ballistic missile into the sea, officials in South Korea and Japan said, shortly before Pyongyang's representative told the United Nations the country had the "righteous right" to test weapons because of the "hostile" policies directed against it. (*Al Jazeera*)
- North Korea has fired an unidentified projectile into waters off the east coast of the Korean Peninsula, according to a statement from South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff. (Yoonjung Seo, CNN)
- North Korea on Tuesday fired a suspected ballistic missile into the sea, Seoul and Tokyo officials said, the latest in a series of weapons tests by Pyongyang that came days after it offered talks with South Korea. (Hyung-Jin Kim, *AP News*)
- North Korea fired an unidentified projectile towards the sea off its east coast on Tuesday, South Korea's military said, amid Pyongyang's calls for the United States and South Korea to scrap their "hostile policy". (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- North Korea fired an unidentified projectile towards the sea off its east coast, less than two weeks after it tested a new railway-borne missile system, South Korea's military said. (*The Guardian*)
- North Korea on Tuesday fired what appeared to be a ballistic missile in the second such launch this month, with the projectile believed to have splashed into waters outside of Japan's exclusive economic zone, Japanese government officials said. (*Nikkei Asia*)
- North Korea fired one unidentified projectile into the East Sea on Tuesday, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said, just days after Pyongyang held out the prospect of an inter-Korean summit if the South drops "double standards." (*The Korea Times*)

**In South Korea:**

- President Moon Jae-in ordered his national security team Tuesday to comprehensively analyze North Korea's intentions behind its latest missile launch and statements, issued a few days earlier, on inter-Korean relations. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea will continue efforts to stabilize situations on the Korean Peninsula and advance stalled inter-Korean relations through dialogue and cooperation despite North Korea's latest missile test, the unification ministry said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Britain on Tuesday said it condemned the firing of a ballistic missile by North Korea, urging Pyongyang to return to talks with the United States and South Korea. (Alistair Smout,*Reuters*)
- A cryptocurrency connoisseur admitted Monday that he conspired to coach North Korea on how to evade economic sanctions by using the popular financial technology to conceal illegal transactions. (Shayna Jacobs, *The Washington Post*)
- Senior defense officials from South Korea and the United States have agreed to seek ways to enhance their joint defense against North Korea's missile threats, the two sides said Tuesday. (Byun Duk-kun,*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's top nuclear envoy, Noh Kyu-duk, spoke by phone Tuesday with U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Sung Kim to discuss the North's latest missile launch, the foreign ministry said. (*Yonhap*)

- The United States is prepared to meet with North Korea without any pre-conditions, a State Department spokesperson said Monday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- The United States remains prepared to engage with North Korea, a White House spokeswoman said on Monday, despite Pyongyang's announcement that it had tested a new long-range cruise missile over the weekend. (Reuters)

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Prepared by Maria D. Corte, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
http://web.archive.org/web/20250815233432/https://mailchi.mp/ea84b512466b/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-has-reportedly-built-a-new-political-prison-camp-us-prepared-to-meet-n-korea-without-any-conditions?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, September 29, 2021**

## N. Korea says it tested newly developed hypersonic missile; US to continue to pursue diplomacy with N. Korea despite missile launches

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea accuses US of hostility, continues weapons tests (*AP News*, 9/28/2021)
North Korea's ambitious economic targets belie struggles on the ground (*NK News*, 9/29/2021)
N.K. convenes Supreme People's Assembly meeting without leader Kim, message toward S. Korea (*Yonhap*, 9/29/2021)
North Korea emphasizes strict management of grain supplies ahead of autumn harvest (*Daily NK*, 9/29/2021)
N. Korea's 'hypersonic missile' appears to be at early stage of development: JCS(*Yonhap*, 9/29/2021)
North Korea issues order allowing people to use foreign currency at state-run food shops (*Daily NK*, 9/29/2021)
N. Korea is taking its time to put new foreign currency vouchers into full circulation(*Daily NK*, 9/28/2021)
North Korea launches missile as diplomat decries US policy (*AP News*, 9/28/2021)
N. Korea's newly unveiled hypersonic missile feared to be hard-to-intercept 'game changer' (*Yonhap*, 9/29/2021)
North Korea says it tested a hypersonic missile. If true, it could change the military equation in east Asia (*CNN*, 9/29/2021)
North Korea says it tested new hypersonic ballistic missile this week (*UPI*, 9/29/2021)
N. Korea says it tested newly developed hypersonic missile (*Yonhap*, 9/29/2021)

North Korea says it fired new hypersonic missile into sea (*The Guardian*, 9/29/2021)
North Korea Tested a Hypersonic Missile. Here's Why it Matters (VOA, 9/29/2021)
North Korea urges US to permanently stop joint military exercise (*The Korea Times*, 9/28/2021)
North Korea: What we know about its missile and nuclear programme (BBC, 9/29/2021)
Population aging, low fertility continue in N. Korea: CIA data (*Yonhap*, 9/29/2021)
Pyongyang's newest skyscraper and giant housing construction projects, in photos(*NK News*, 9/29/2021)
Renewable Power for North Korea (*The National Interest*, 9/28/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Afghan refugees begin social adaptation program (*The Korea Herald*, 9/29/2021)
Chungcheong picks up pace in bid to host 2027 World University Games (*The Korea Herald*, 9/29/2021)
Nearly 70 pct of South Koreans agree on need to declare formal end to Korean War: poll (*Yonhap*, 9/29/2021)
New cases spike to 2nd largest; infections in greater Seoul top 2,000 again (*Yonhap*, 9/29/2021)
North Korea's ambivalent stance puzzles Seoul (The Korea Times, 9/28/2021)
Nuclear weapons tempt Seoul, but the obstacles to armament are insurmountable(*NK News*, 9/29/2021)
Seoul expresses regret over North Korea's missile launch (*The Korea Times*, 9/28/2021)
Seoul treads lightly around Pyongyang's 'ballistic' missile (*The Korea Herald*, 9/29/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
End-of-war declaration 'very useful' step to build trust, peace between Koreas: unification minister (*Yonhap*, 9/29/2021)
Two Koreas could hold additional summit under next presidency of South: Cheong Wa Dae official (*Yonhap*, 9/29/2021)
Will inter-Korean summit affect presidential election? (*The Korea Times*, 9/28/2021)

**International:**
Cryptocurrency guru pleads guilty to conspiracy to violate North Korea sanctions(*NK News*, 9/28/2021)
Fumio Kishida wins vote to become Japanese ruling party leader, PM (*Reuters*, 9/29/2021)
Normalize relations (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 9/29/2021)
Top nuclear envoys of S. Korea, China discuss N.K. missile launch in video talks(*The Korea Times*, 9/29/2021)
U.S. says it is seeking information on North Korea tests, remains open to talks(*Reuters*, 9/29/2021)
U.S. to continue to pursue diplomacy with N. Korea despite missile launches: nuke envoy (*The Korea Times*, 9/29/2021)

U.S. wants to meet with N. Korea to discuss their concerns, intentions: U.S. official(*Yonhap*, 9/29/2021)
U.S. working to confirm nature of N.K. missile launch, condemns any illicit missile launch: official (*Yonhap*, 9/29/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea on Monday accused the United States of keeping up its "hostile policy" and demanded the Biden administration permanently end joint military exercises with South Korea even as it continued its recent streak of weapons tests apparently aimed at pressuring Washington and Seoul over slow nuclear diplomacy. (Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)
- This year marked the start of North Korea's five-year plan (2021-25), a road map for the country's economic development launched at the Eighth Party Congress in January. Such plans have long been a pillar of centralized planning in communist states, outlining key economic objectives and strategies for achieving them. The DPRK's latest five-year plan again sets unrealistic goals, as state media reports provide a veneer of success. (Peter Ward, *NK News*)
- North Korea opened a session of its rubber-stamp legislature without leader Kim Jong-un in attendance and dealt with economic and other domestic issues without issuing any message to South Korea or the United States, according to state media Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean authorities are stressing strict management of grain supplies ahead of the autumn harvest and have been engaging in political education efforts at the regional work unit level to eradicate the illegal syphoning off of grain during the harvest or distribution process. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea's newly unveiled "hypersonic missile" appears to be at an early stage of development and can be intercepted by South Korean and U.S. military assets, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean authorities have recently allowed locals to purchase food using foreign currency, Daily NK has learned. This comes amid efforts by North Korean authorities to provide food to the population at lower-than-market prices. (Lee Chae-un, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea has recently issued new foreign currency vouchers, but has yet to make full-fledged efforts to put them into circulation, Daily NK has learned. It appears the country's leadership is closely managing the release of the vouchers out of concern of both their economic impact and effectiveness. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea fired a short-range missile into the sea Tuesday at nearly the same moment its U.N. diplomat was decrying the U.S.'s "hostile policy" against it, in an apparent return to its pattern of mixing weapons displays with peace overtures to wrest outside concessions. (Kim Hyung-jin, *AP News*)
- North Korea's first hypersonic missile unveiled this week could ultimately prove to be a "game changer," experts warned Wednesday, as such missiles traveling at a speed of at

least Mach 5 -- five times the speed of sound -- are hard to intercept with existing missile defense shields. (*Yonhap*)

- The hypersonic missile North Korea claims to have tested on Tuesday has the potential to be one of the world's fastest and most accurate weapons -- and could be fitted with a nuclear warhead, experts say. If North Korea can successfully produce and deploy a hypersonic weapon, analysts say it could even change the military equation in the region. (Brad Lendon, CNN)
- The North Korean government said Wednesday that the "projectile test" it performed this week involved a hypersonic missile -- which experts say, if true, could give Pyongyang one of the fastest weapons in the world. (Clyde Hughes, UPI)
- North Korea said Wednesday it conducted the first test-launch of a newly developed hypersonic missile a day earlier that has "strategic significance" in bolstering its self-defense capabilities. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has fired what it described as a hypersonic missile towards the sea off its east coast, as Pyongyang repeated a call for Washington and Seoul to scrap their "hostile policy" to restart talks. (*The Guardian*)
- North Korea's latest missile launch involved a new hypersonic weapon, state media said Wednesday, the country's first test of an advanced missile system that would add yet another unpredictable component to its fast-expanding arsenal. (William Gallo, VOA)
- The United States must permanently stop its joint military exercises with South Korea and the deployment of its strategic weapons to the South if it wishes to promote peace on the Korean Peninsula, North Korea's U.N. ambassador said Monday. (*The Korea Times*)
- Recent missile tests show North Korea continuing to advance its weapons programme, which it says is necessary to defend itself against a possible US invasion. State media says a new hypersonic missile, called the Hwasong-8, has been tested. This follows recent launches of a train-based ballistic missile and a new long-range cruise missile. (BBC)
- North Korea's population is steadily aging, with the number of people aged 65 years and older accounting for 9.75 percent this year, up 0.1 percentage point from last year, recent U.S. government data showed. (*Yonhap*)
- Back in March this year, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un stood before an open patch of land on the outskirts of Pyongyang and declared that a new neighborhood of 10,000 homes for ordinary people would be built across over 50 new buildings before the end of 2021. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Experts forecast hundreds of tons of old wind turbines, batteries, and solar modules will need to be disposed of or recycled in this decade—and millions of tons by 2050. This could be a potential economic opportunity for North Korea. (Tony Stangarone, *The National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- Afghan evacuees in Korea started a new chapter of their lives Wednesday, as the government kicked off a basic social adaptation program to help the refugees settle in the country. (Kan Hyeong-woo, *The Korea Herald*)

- Korea's four local governments in the central region -- Daejeon, Sejong, North and South Chungcheong provinces -- are picking up the pace in their bid to host the 2027 FISU World University Games. (Kan Hyeong-woo, The Korea Herald)
- A majority of South Koreans agree on the need to declare a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War, as proposed by President Moon Jae-in, a survey showed Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's daily coronavirus cases stayed in the 2,000s for a fourth day Wednesday, bouncing back to the second largest since the outbreak of COVID-19 in January last year on a spike in infections in the greater Seoul area. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea launched what was assumed to be a short range missile Tuesday, the same day that its envoy to the United Nations called for the U.S. and South Korea to stop their joint military exercise and withdraw their "hostile policies." The actions seemed to present a puzzle for the Moon Jae-in administration. (Nam Hyun-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- Sept. 2021 was a "month of flying missiles" on the Korean Peninsula. Both North and South Korean rocket scientists showed off the fruits of their hard labor, and the show was both impressive and terrifying. Despite growing North Korean threat, ROK nuclear ambitions face US opposition and risk incurring economic sanctions. (Andrei Lankov, *NK News*)
- South Korea convened an emergency meeting of its National Security Council (NSC) on Tuesday in response to North Korea's latest "short-range missile" launch, Cheong Wa Dae said. Its members expressed "regret" over the launch that came at a time when the stabilization of the Korean Peninsula security situation is very important, it added. (*The Korea Times*)
- Cheong Wa Dae on Wednesday continued to exercise caution regarding North Korea's latest missile test, while the US and Japan have condemned Pyongyang for firing what appears to be a ballistic missile, a violation of UN resolutions. (Lee Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Declaring an end to the Korean War could be a "very useful" and "meaningful" step that builds mutual trust between the two Koreas, and would pave the way for peace and cooperation on the Korean Peninsula, Unification Minister Lee In-young said Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- The two Koreas could hold an additional summit under the next presidency of the South if another meeting between the leaders isn't able to take place before the end of President Moon Jae-in's term next year, a senior Cheong Wa Dae official said Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's "unexpected" overture for talks, including a possible inter-Korean summit, is prompting speculation that another period of detente on the Korean Peninsula could be emerging that may have an influence on next year's presidential election here. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)

**International:**

- An American cryptocurrency specialist has pleaded guilty to charges of conspiring to violate U.S. sanctions on North Korea, the Justice Department (DOJ) announced on Monday (U.S. time). He has been accused of delivering a lecture on cryptocurrencies at a conference in Pyongyang and detailing how North Korea could use blockchain technology to launder money and avoid sanctions. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) anointed former foreign minister Fumio Kishida as its new leader on Wednesday, a victory for the party elite that virtually ensures the soft-spoken consensus-builder will become prime minister within days. (Antoni Slodkowski, Park Ju-min, Kiyoshi Takenaka, *Reuters*)
- Japan's next prime minister, Fumio Kishida, hopes the change of hands offers an opportunity to recover the frozen relations between Korea and Japan. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea's chief nuclear negotiator, Noh Kyu-duk, held video talks with his Chinese counterpart Wednesday and discussed North Korea's latest missile launch and recent statements, the foreign ministry said. (*The Korea Times*)
- The United States is seeking more information on North Korea's recent testing, including its hypersonic missile test, but remains keen to resume diplomatic talks, a senior U.S. arms control official said on Wednesday. (*Reuters*)
- North Korea's latest missile launches will not affect the U.S.' determination to seek diplomacy with the North for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the U.S. nuclear envoy for Pyongyang said Wednesday. (*The Korea Times*)
- The United States wants to meet with North Korea to discuss any concerns they have, a senior U.S. diplomat said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- The United States is still trying to confirm the type of missile launched by North Korea this week, but it condemns any illicit missile launch by the North that poses threats to other countries, a U.S. official said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Caroline Ward, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250815233812/https://mailchi.mp/6a94b039a004/hrnk-news-itemsn-korea-says-it-tested-newly-developed-hypersonic-missileus-to-continue-to-pursue-diplomacy-with-n-korea-despite-missile-launches?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, September 30, 2021**

## Leader of the People Power Party Visits the Family of a North Korean Defector in the U.S.; Kim Jong-un orders hotlines back in use

**Top News:**

Lee Jun-seok, Leader of the People Power Party, Visits the Family of a North Korean Defector in the U.S.: "Peace on the Korean Peninsula Will Only Be Possible When North Koreans Have Human Rights" (VOA *Korea*, 9/24/2021)

** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**

Kim Yo Jong, sister of North Korean leader, promoted to nation's top ruling body(CNN, 9/30/2021)
N. Korea makes steady development on hypersonic missiles since establishing research institute and college earlier this year (*Daily* NK, 9/30/2021)
N.Korea joins race for new hypersonic missile with latest test (*Reuters*, 9/29/2021)
North Korea could not have tested a hypersonic missile without help (*The Telegraph*, 9/30/2021)
North Korea says hypersonic missile made 1st test flight (*AP News*, 9/29/2021)
North Korean 'first sister' Kim Yo Jong's star is rising (*UPI*, 9/30/2021)

**In South Korea:**

A foolish and sad war (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 9/30/2021)
Main opposition head urges cautious approach toward end-of-war declaration(*Yonhap*, 9/30/2021)
Military closely monitoring N. Korea amid concerns over additional missile launch(*Yonhap*, 9/30/2021)
Perfectly persistent diplomacy (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 9/30/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

Kim Jong Un will restore hotline to South Korea; slams U.S. 'hostile policy' (*UPI*, 9/29/2021)
Kim Jong-un orders hotline with the South to reopen as he condemns 'cunning' US(*The Guardian*, 9/29/2021)
Kim Jong-un orders hotlines back in use (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 9/30/2021)
N.K. leader says inter-Korean communication lines will be restored in early Oct.(*Yonhap*, 9/30/2021)
N.Korea's Kim offers to reopen hotline with South; denounces 'hostile' U.S.(*Reuters*, 9/29/2021)
North Korea offers to revive military hotline with the South and issues warning (*The Telegraph*, 9/30/2021)
North Korea's Kim Jong-un offers to restore inter-Korean hotline (*BBC*, 9/30/2021)
North Korea's Kim seeks better ties with South, but slams US (*AP News*, 9/30/2021)

Pyongyang issues olive branch to Seoul, warning to Washington (*The Korea Herald*, 9/30/2021)
South Korea vows to prepare for 'early October' inter-Korean hotline talks (*NK News*, 9/30/2021)

**International:**
Chinese diplomat urges South Korea to address DPRK's 'reasonable concerns' (*NK News*, 9/30/2021)
N. Korea does not seek improved relations with S. Korea: U.S. official (*Yonhap*, 9/30/2021)
North Korea Dismisses US Calls for Talks (VOA, 9/29/2021)
Top nuclear envoys of S. Korea, U.S. hold talks on N.K. diplomacy (*Yonhap*, 9/30/2021)
U.S. nuclear envoy reiterates 'no hostile intent' toward N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 9/30/2021)

**Top News:**

- A group of South Korean lawmakers including Lee Sun-seok, the leader of the People Power Party, visited the U.S. to speak with defectors who had resettled in the U.S. and with a representative from a North Korean human rights organization. (Kim Young-kwon, *VOA Korea*)

**In North Korea:**

- Kim Yo Jong, the younger sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, has been promoted to the nation's top decision-making body, state media said on Thursday. (Jake Kwon, Helen Regan, CNN)
- For the first time, North Korea has tested a newly developed hypersonic missile. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea test-fired a newly developed hypersonic missile this week, state news media KCNA reported on Wednesday, joining a race headed by major military powers to deploy the advanced weapons system. (Sangmi Cha, *Reuters*)
- North Korea could not have tested a hypersonic missile without help. If North Korea is to be believed, its new 'hypersonic missile' could allow Kim Jong-un to fire a nuclear warhead at five times the speed of sound, under the line of sight of conventional radars - reducing impact warning times to mere minutes. (Joseph Byrne, Gary Somerville, Sidharth Kaushal, *The Telegraph*)
- North Korea said Wednesday that it successfully tested a new hypersonic missile it implied was being developed as nuclear capable, as it continues to expand its military capabilities and pressure Washington and Seoul over long-stalled negotiations over its nuclear weapons. (Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)
- The supreme leader's sister first came to international attention in 2018, when she became the first member of North Korea's Kim dynasty to visit South Korea in an official capacity. (Sojin Lim, *UPI*)

**In South Korea:**

- Ra Jong-il, former ambassador to Japan, writes on the Korean War as a "foolish" war. (Ra Jong-il, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The head of the main opposition People Power Party (PPP) on Thursday stressed the need to maintain caution in approaching President Moon Jae-in's proposal of seeking a declaration to formally end the Korean War. (*Yonhap*)
- The military is closely monitoring North Korea over possible signs of an additional missile launch but has nothing to comment on as of now, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- Kim Hyun-ki reflects on the diplomacy of the Moon administration. (Kim Hyun-ki, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said that Pyongyang would restore severed communications lines with Seoul in early October in a sign of thawing inter-Korean relations, while at the same time slamming U.S. efforts at diplomacy as a "petty trick," state-run media reported Thursday. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)
- Kim Jong-un has condemned a US offer of dialogue as a "facade", state media reported, but said he had ordered officials to restore communication lines with South Korea to "promote peace". (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said Wednesday he will restore inter-Korean hotlines early next month, while calling Washington's outreach to Pyongyang for dialogue "a petty trick." (Jeong Yong-soo, Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said that cross-border communication lines with South Korea will be restored in early October as part of efforts to improve chilled relations but warned that it is entirely up to Seoul to determine the future trajectory of their ties, state media reported Thursday. (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said he is willing to restore severed inter-Korean hotlines next month but accused the United States of proposing talks without changing its "hostile policy", the North's KCNA state news agency reported on Thursday. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has indicated he is willing to reopen an inter-Korean hotline next month, in Pyongyang's latest diplomatic gesture despite ongoing missile tests to expand the country's nuclear arsenal. (Nicola Smith, *The Telegraph*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has said he is willing to restore a vital communication hotline with South Korea, in a possible offer of reconciliation. (Laura Bicker, BBC)
- North Korea leader Kim Jong Un expressed willingness to restore stalled communication lines with South Korea in coming days while shrugging off U.S. offers for dialogue as "cunning ways" to conceal its hostility against the North, state media reported Thursday. (Hyung Jin-kim, Kim Tong-hyung, AP News)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un held out an olive branch to South Korea, saying he was willing to reopen the severed inter-Korean hotlines in October, while denouncing the US offer of dialogue without it changing its "hostile policy" toward the regime, the North's state media said Thursday. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)

- South Korea's unification ministry on Thursday welcomed North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's expressed interest in restoring inter-Korean communication lines, vowing to "prepare" promptly for the potential reconnection. (Jeongmin Kim, NK News)

**International:**

- China's diplomat for Korean affairs emphasized the importance of a political settlement between the two Koreas on Wednesday, calling for Seoul to address Pyongyang's concerns in the process. (Chaewon Chung, NK News)
- The top U.S. intelligence officer on North Korea on Wednesday argued the North does not seek a permanently improved relationship with South Korea, arguing the North's long-term objective remains decoupling the U.S.-South Korea alliance and possibly invade South Korea. (Byun Duk-kun, Yonhap)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has dismissed the United States' offer to resume a dialogue but says he is open to improving ties with South Korea. (William Gallo, VOA)
- The top nuclear envoys of South Korea and the United States held talks in Jakarta on Thursday to discuss joint efforts to resume dialogue with North Korea, after its leader Kim Jong-un voiced a willingness to restore inter-Korean communication lines following tensions over recent missile tests. (Song Sang-ho, Yonhap)
- The U.S. special representative for North Korea, Sung Kim, reiterated Thursday that Washington has no hostile intent toward Pyongyang and supports humanitarian aid to the country. (Song Sang-ho, Kim Seung-yeon, Yonhap)

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VOA Korea Article

A group of South Korean lawmakers including Lee Sun-seok, the leader of the People Power Party, visited the U.S. to speak with defectors who had resettled in the U.S. and with a representative from a North Korean human rights organization.

These representatives stressed that the North Korean human rights crisis needs to be addressed on a humanitarian level, not on a political or ideological level, in order to advance peace and prosperity on the Korean peninsula.

This is reporter Kim Yeong-gweon.

On June 23rd, a group of South Koreans including Lee Jun-Seok, who became leader of Korea's opposition party, the "People Power Party", at age 30, and Thae Yong-ho, a national assembly member who defected from North Korea after serving as a diplomatic minister in the U.K., met the family of Lee Jeong-ho at a hotel in Washington D.C. Before he defected, Lee Jeong-ho was a high-ranking official associated with North Korea's Room 39.

[Lee Jun-seok] “It is in the national interest to defend democracy. And it’s in the national interest to defend human rights! That’s what I think.”

[Lee Jeong-ho] “You said it best. There is no peace without human rights! I think it’s outrageous that North Korea even talks about peace when there is no freedom and no human rights.”

It is very unusual for these influential South Korean politicians to visit Washington D.C. and meet with North Korean defectors instead of U.S. government officials or policy makers.

After meeting with the politicians, Lee told VOA that they included him in the discussion because the Moon Administration and the ruling party are concerned about applying a double standard to these human rights issues, which should be universal values.

Some critics have pointed out that South Korea tends to take a passive stance towards not only North Korea, but also other human rights issues, like the democratization movement in Hong Kong, the crisis in Myanmar, and China’s suppression of Uyghurs, under the pretense of protecting national interests.

[Lee Jun-seok] “Human rights aren’t different in North Korea, Hong Kong, or in other nations. They are a universal value. However, the Democratic Party of Korea, the ruling party, tends to take a contradictory stance towards these issues, and puts a price on human rights. The party will state that it will not intervene in these issues in order to protect national interests, but I think that “national interest” should be about national dignity, which belongs to the nations of the world that protect these universal values.”

The South Korean government and the ruling party maintain their position that improving inter-Korean relations and establishing peace on the Korean Peninsula could lead to a substantial improvement in human rights in North Korea.

For this reason, it has been virtually silent on North Korea's human rights issues and has been absent from the UN's joint resolution on North Korean human rights since 2019.

However, U.N. reporters and international human rights organizations have sent letters of concern to Cheong Wa Dae, calling for policy changes, including its re-participation in the UN resolutions on human rights violations in North Korea.

National Assembly member Thae Yong-ho told VOA that it is deplorable that South Korea is turning its back on the human rights crisis in North Korea, which the U.N. has described as worse than any other nation in the world. He said that he would inform the U.S. of its importance and seek cooperation.

[Thae Yong-ho] “The human rights crisis in North Korea has been completely neglected, and now it’s impossible for anyone to get the government’s attention about this issue. So what can we do? I believe that peace can only be secured through security and human rights. Real peace on the Korean peninsula can only be achieved through telling the world of the severity of the human rights crisis in North Korea, and by meeting with the Biden administration during our stay in the United States.”

The meeting was also attended by Lee Hyeon-seung and Lee Seo-hyeon, Lee Jeong-ho’s children. They currently campaign for human rights in North Korea through their work at NGOs and YouTube. Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, also attended.

Lee believes that the international community, including South Korea and the U.S., should raise concerns about Kim Jong-un’s role in the human rights crisis in North Korea.

[Lee Jeong-ho] “What effort does the leader of North Korea make to keep his people alive? I think we need to stress the importance of this issue. We said we’d give North Korea humanitarian aid, that we’d implement appeasement policies, etc. There’s a leader in North Korea too, and what do you think he’s doing? Why do we feel like we have to support North Korea around the clock?”

Lee Jeong-ho said that it is important that the officials in North Korea who commit human rights violations are punished, and this is one way to prevent the human rights situation in North Korea from getting worse.

[Lee Jun-seok] “We have this idea that we need to accurately record these human rights violations that are taking place in North Korea, and punish them accordingly. Starting now, I believe that we need to warn these individuals that they will be considered liable for future violations.”

Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, stressed that the human rights crisis in North Korea should not be politicized or associated with one party or another.

[Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu] “I don’t view the issue of human rights in North Korea as political at all. It’s not about the ruling party, opposition party, the U.S., or South Korea. The most important thing is that we create policies surrounding the human rights crisis in North Korea. Over the past 30 years, we have negotiated with North Korea in regards to their missiles and nuclear weapons, but we can’t say that it’s been a great success. If we don’t deal with the human rights issues, I think that negotiating with North Korea will be very difficult going forward.”

The North Korean leadership calls the efforts of the international community a plot to steal its national power, and has repeated its claim that it is “a socialist state focused on its people, who are the owners of the country and can fully enjoy true freedom and human rights”.

Officials who attended the meeting said the influx of information on North Korea is very important for this reason, and stressed the importance of co-existence and shared prosperity with North Koreans who have human rights, not just the Kim regime.

This is VOA reporter Kim Yeong-gweon.

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Translated by Audrey Gregg, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Irene Kang, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250815233651/https://mailchi.mp/4c9e3440a416/hrnk-news-items-leader-of-the-people-power-party-visits-the-family-of-a-north-korean-defector-in-the-uskim-jong-un-orders-hotlines-back-in-use?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

# 10. OCTOBER

### Friday, October 1, 2021

## HRNK Report Launch; North Korea test-fires new anti-aircraft missile

**Top News:**
HRNK Launched Report on North Korea's Political Prison Camp Kwan-li-so No.25(*HRNK*, 09/30/2021)
**In North Korea:**
EXPLAINER: Kim's sister leads N. Korea's pressure campaign (*AP News*, 10/01/2021)
N. Korea test-fired new anti-aircraft missile: state media (*Yonhap*, 10/01/2021)
North Korea Forces Hungry Citizens to Pay for Propaganda Murals (*Radio Free Asia*, 09/30/2021)
N.K. leader vows support for China's fight against 'hostile forces' (*Yonhap*, 10/01/2021)
N. Korea's highest court urges regional cooperation against U.S.' hostile policy(*Yonhap*, 10/01/2021)
North Korea's new hypersonic missile and its likely implications (*NK Pro*, 10/01/2021)
North Korea Sends Confusing Signals: Dialogue or Tension? (*The New York Times*, 10/01/2021)
What does Kim Yo-jong's SAC appointment mean? (*The Korea Times*, 10/01/2021)

**In South Korea:**
FM Chung dismisses Pyongyang's call for withdrawal of hostile policy as 'unilateral'(*Yonhap*, 10/01/2021)
Foreign ministry reaffirms continued efforts with U.S. to reengage with N. Korea(*Yonhap*, 10/01/2021)
Leak found in Seoul's inter-Korean cooperation budget (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/01/2021)
Moon voices strong confidence in defense posture after N.K. missile test (*Yonhap*, 10/01/2021)
Top nuke envoy returns from Indonesia after N.K. talks with U.S. (*Yonhap*, 10/01/2021)
'Trust and pride' in the military behind proposal to end Korean War, says Moon (*NK News*, 10/01/2021)
Unification minister calls for Europe's role in peace process, humanitarian assistance to N.K. (*Yonhap*, 10/01/2021)
Why South Korea Decided to Build Its Own Aircraft Carrie (*National Interest*, 10/01/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
N. Korea remains unresponsive to Seoul's calls after Kim's offer to restore hotlines(*Yonhap*, 10/01/2021)

**International:**
Blinken says N. Korea increasing instability, insecurity: report (*Yonhap*, 10/01/2021)
South Korea's Formal Membership in the Quad Plus: A Bridge Too Far? (*38 North*, 09/30/2021)
Senior defense officials from S. Korea, U.S., Japan discuss N.K. missile launches(*Yonhap*, 10/01/2021)

**Top News:**

- The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) released an update on the Susŏng-dong Political Prison Camp No. 25 in North Korea. This report provides an abbreviated update to our three previous reports on a long-term political prison commonly identified by former prisoners and researchers as *Kwan-li-so* No. 25 by providing details of significant activity observed during 2016–2021. (*HRNK*)

**In North Korea:**

- As North Korea goes back to its pattern of pressuring South Korea to get what it wants from the United States, the powerful sister of leader Kim Jong Un has emerged as the face of its campaign of mixing weapons demonstrations and peace offers. (Kim Tong-Hyung and Hyung-Jin Kim, *AP News*)
- North Korea said Friday it had test-fired a new type of anti-aircraft missile. "The Academy of Defence Science of the DPRK test-fired an anti-aircraft missile newly developed by it on September 30, aiming at confirming the practicality of operation of the launcher, radar and comprehensive battle command vehicle as well as the comprehensive combat performance of the missile," the official Korean Central News Agency said. (*Yonhap*)
- Rural citizens in North Korea are angry that their government is building mosaic murals at their expense that idolize the ruling Kim family at a time when people are struggling to find their next meal, sources in the country told RFA. (Jeong Yon Park, *Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un pledged support for China's fight against "hostile forces' frantic anti-China confrontational moves" in a message he sent to Chinese President Xi Jinping to celebrate the 72nd founding anniversary of the ally, Pyongyang's state media reported Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's highest court called for cooperation among Asia-Pacific countries in the face of the U.S.' hostile policy, saying such joint efforts are needed to realize regional stability and economic stability, state media reported Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- Ampulized missiles, if widely deployed, would represent a significant upgrade to North Korea's weapon arsenal. On Wednesday, North Korean state media announced that the country's Academy of Defence Science had test-fired a new missile known as the Hwasong-8. (Ankit Panda, *NK Pro*)
- The signals are confusing. One day, North Korea is raising hopes for dialogue with South Korea, and the next, it is firing missiles or showing off the latest weaponry in its nuclear arsenal. (Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*)
- The appointment of Kim Yo-jong, the influential sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, to the country's top government organization, has yielded many

interpretations regarding her growing presence in the country's politics. (Jung Da-min, *The Korea Times*)

**In South Korea:**

- Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong on Friday dismissed North Korea's demand for South Korea and the United States to withdraw "hostile policy" as "unilateral," reiterating the allies do not have such a policy toward the regime. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea remains committed to working closely with the United States on measures that would bring North Korea back to dialogue, including envisioned humanitarian cooperation with Pyongyang, the foreign ministry said Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- Some of the more than 100 billion won ($84.5 million) of the Seoul Metropolitan Government's budget that had been set aside for "inter-Korean cooperation" for 10 years during the term of late Seoul Mayor Park Won-soon was found to have flowed into civic groups attended by some members of the city's Inter-Korean Exchange and Cooperation Committee. (Sung Ji-Won and Seo Ji-Eun, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- President Moon Jae-in voiced strong confidence in South Korea's defense posture Friday, saying he proposed an end-of-war declaration with North Korea based on such readiness and vowing to deal sternly with any threats to the country. (Chang Dong-woo, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's chief nuclear envoy, Noh Kyu-duk, returned home from Indonesia Friday after holding talks with his U.S. counterpart, Sung Kim, on efforts to resume dialogue with North Korea. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korean president applauds ROK military advancements as he repeats calls for end-of-war declaration with DPRK. South Korean President Moon Jae-in said in his pitch to formally end the Korean War is based on "trust and pride" in South Korea's military, as he marked the country's Armed Force Day. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young on Friday asked Europe to support South Korea's efforts in advancing the peace process on the peninsula, his office said Friday. Lee met with Jutta Urpilainen and Janez Lenarcic of the European Commission in Belgium on Thursday and requested Europe play a "more active role" in providing humanitarian assistance to the North and in building trust among the two Koreas and the United States. (*Yonhap*)
- Carrier-based aircraft would be more mobile than those at static airfields on land, and could also provide a new vector for attack or infiltration of North Korea. Seoul announced it would build an aircraft carrier in July 2019 after years of study. The ship would be paired with a $2.7 billion order for twenty F-35B Lightning stealth jump-jet fighters, complementing sixty land-based F-35As. (Sebastien Roblin, *National Interest*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- North Korea remained unresponsive to South Korea's regular calls via military and liaison hotlines Friday morning after leader Kim Jong-un offered to restore severed cross-border communication lines in early October. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Thursday expressed concerns over North Korea's recent missile launches, saying the country is increasing insecurity and instability in the region, a report showed. "We're concerned about these repeated violations of Security Council resolutions that create, I think, greater prospects for instability and insecurity," Blinken told reporters. (*Yonhap*)
- On September 24, the four leaders of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue ("Quad") countries held their first in-person summit, solidifying the partnership between the United States, Australia, India and Japan in the face of pressing issues facing the Indo-Pacific. As the original Quad countries solidify their partnership, however, key obstacles persist to including South Korea as a formal member, a country with a longstanding interest in balancing between the US and China and a much greater interest in resolving the North Korea issue. If South Korea were to join a consultative group based on the Quad Plus, it would constitute a dramatic shift in its foreign policy. (Jason Li, *38 North*)
- Senior defense officials from South Korea, the United States and Japan on Friday discussed a series of missile launches by North Korea and vowed to work closely to respond to its threats, Seoul's defense ministry said. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Michelle Dang, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250816162417/https://mailchi.mp/14aaad688d26/hrnk-news-items-hrnk-report-launch-north-korea-test-fires-new-anti-aircraft-missile?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, October 2, 2021**

## U.S., South Korea, Japan hold talks on North Korean missile threats

**In North Korea:**
Fake news? North Korea quickly recalled Rodong Sinmun after name mix-up (*NK Pro*, 10/01/2021)
North Korea Increases Fines for Quarantine Violations to Exorbitant Levels (*Radio Free Asia*, 10/01/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Civic group calls for lifting anti-N. Korea sanctions, resuming Kaesong complex(*Yonhap*, 10/02/2021)

Standing on their own: North Korean refugees test startup dreams (*The Korea Times*, 10/02/2021)

**International:**

How to stop the coming crisis with North Korea (*The Washington Post*, 10/01/2021)
North Korea-China trade may be on the up and up, says South Korean association(*NK Pro*, 10/01/2021)
U.S., S. Korea, Japan hold talks on N. Korean missile threats: Pentagon (*Yonhap*, 10/02/2021)
U.S. remains prepared to discuss 'full range of issues' with N. Korea: Psaki (*Yonhap*, 10/02/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- DPRK propagandists made a rare mistake that could have been a misprint, or a sign of behind-the-scenes power struggles. North Korea's state media machine made a small mistake last month, leading to an unprecedented rollout of a revised Rodong Sinmun within hours. (Martin Weiser, *NK Pro*)
- North Korea has increased fines for violators of its extensive COVID-19 emergency rules to levels many times citizens' salaries in an effort to enforce its draconian national quarantine effort, officials of state-run enterprises told RFA. Since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, North Korea has imposed strict rules on its 25 million people, including shoot-to-kill orders near its border with China and lockdowns of entire cities and counties. (Chang Gyu Ahn, *Radio Free Asia*)

**In South Korea:**

- A civic group advocating for national reunification called Saturday for the lifting of South Korea's standalone sanctions against North Korea and the resumption of a now-shuttered joint industrial complex to pave the way for a thaw in cross-border ties. (*Yonhap*)
- Ahn Myeong-hee, a 31-year-old defector from North Korea, was overwhelmed by the hardworking people, the rapidly changing social phenomena, and the highly competitive environment when she first arrived in the South. In 2019, she launched the fashion startup Ryu Ae with her sister, who works there as a designer. (Park Han-na, *The Korea Times*)

**International:**

- North Korea is testing new missiles. Victor Cha — a hardliner — encourages U.S. diplomacy in response. A foreign policy advisor to George W. Bush, Cha advocates for humanitarian assistance. (*The Washington Post*)
- Trade group says some DPRK factories are seeing pre-pandemic demand levels, though COVID is still a limiting factor. China-North Korea trade may be gaining steam, a new South Korean report says, citing the rising cost of foreign currencies used for international transactions and increased manufacturing activity along the border. (Ethan Jewell, *NK Pro*)

- Defense officials from South Korea, Japan, and the United States held talks Friday to discuss North Korea's nuclear and missile threats, the U.S. Department of Defense said. The trilateral talks follow a series of missile launches by North Korea that Pyongyang claims to have included the test-firing of a new hypersonic gliding missile. The talks involved Kim Man-gi, deputy minister of defense for defense policy of South Korea, Kazuo Masuda, director-general for defense policy of Japan, and Ely Ratner, U.S. assistant secretary of defense for Indo-Pacific security affairs, according to the Pentagon. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- A White House spokeswoman on Friday reiterated U.S. commitment to engage with North Korea, saying the U.S. is prepared to discuss a "full range of issues" with the North. Jen Psaki made the remark after North Korean leader Kim Jong-un accused the U.S. of harboring a hostile intent toward the North. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Michelle Dang, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250816163343/https://mailchi.mp/8eec500a4506/hrnk-news-itemsus-south-korea-japan-hold-talks-on-north-korean-missile-threats?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, October 3, 2021**

## North Korea accuses U.N. of double standards over missile tests; Seoul strives to resuscitate inter-Korean peace momentum

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea develops enhanced translator using AI technology: propaganda outlet(*Yonhap*, 10/03/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Seoul strives to resuscitate inter-Korean peace momentum (*The Korea Times*, 10/03/2021)

**International:**
North Korea accuses U.N. of double standards over missile tests, warns of consequences (*Reuters*, 10/03/2021)
N. Korea blasts U.N. Security Council for convening meeting on its missile launches(*Yonhap*, 10/03/2021)
North Korea denounces UN Security Council for criticizing missile launch (*NK News*, 10/03/2021)
S. Korea, US differ over NK sanctions (*The Korea Herald*, 10/03/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea has developed an artificial intelligence-based translation program with enhanced speed and accuracy, a propaganda outlet reported Sunday. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korea is striving to resuscitate peace momentum on the Korean Peninsula, releasing a series of messages directed toward the North, which, in turn, has also shown some signs recently of a reconciliatory attitude. (Nam Hyun-woo, *The Korea Times*)

**International:**

- North Korea blasted the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) on Sunday for convening a meeting on its recent missile launches, calling it "a manifestation of double-dealing standard." (*Yonhap*)
- A top North Korean government official has denounced the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) for criticizing the country's recent missile test, accusing the council of a "double-dealing standard." In a statement, Jo Chol Su, director of the DPRK foreign ministry's Department of International Organizations, denied that the country's launch of the Hwasong-8 hypersonic missile on Sept. 27 posed a threat to international peace and security. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- The US State Department said allies should continue enforcing UN sanctions over North Korea's nuclear and missile programs, in response to the South Korean foreign minister's suggestion to ease sanctions for nuclear talks amid North Korea's latest weapons tests. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Audrey Gregg, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250816163704/https://mailchi.mp/1fff101c2fcf/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-korea-accuses-un-of-double-standards-over-missile-testsseoul-strives-to-resuscitate-inter-korean-peace-momentum?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Monday, October 4, 2021

# Koreas restore cross-border hotlines 55 days after suspension; North Korea issues warning to U.N. Security Council

**In North Korea:**

Have your cake and eat it too: North Korea combines talks and 'provocations' (*NK Pro*, 10/04/2021)
N. Korea says all inter-Korean hotlines to be restored starting at 9 a.m. Monday(*Yonhap*, 10/04/2021)

Reshuffles at North Korea's parliament session suggest volatility at the top (*NK Pro*, 10/04/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Gov. Lee gets one step closer to DP presidential ticket (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/04/2021)
Unification minister says restoration of cross-border hotlines is a 'restart' (*Yonhap*, 10/04/2021)
U.A.E.-Korea cooperation spans from peace and energy to Covid (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/04/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Koreas restore cross-border hotlines 55 days after suspension (*Yonhap*, 10/04/2021)

**International:**
How Cuban cigars bankroll North Korean overseas missions (*NK Pro*, 10/04/2021)
North calls UN Security Council meeting 'intolerable provocation' (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/03/2021)
NKorea Accuses UN Security Council of Double Standards Over Missile Test (VOA, 10/03/2021)
North Korea issues warning to U.N. Security Council (*Politico*, 10/03/2021)
The United States Speaks Out on North Korea's 'Hypersonic' Missile Launch(*The National Interest*, 10/03/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- DPRK to dangle opportunities for peace while continuing weapons tests in an effort to push Seoul in the direction it wants. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK Pro*)
- North Korea said Monday that it will reactivate all of its communication lines with South Korea later in the day. It urged Seoul to make "positive" efforts as well to put inter-Korean relations back on track. The announcement came days after North Korean leader Kim Jong-un expressed an intention during a major policy speech to restore the severed hotlines in early October as part of efforts to improve inter-Korean relations. (*Yonhap*)
- The latest round of promotions and demotions highlights major changes in DPRK leadership since January. With a two-day session from Sept. 28, North Korea's parliament finally reshuffled its own committees and the important State Affairs Commission (SAC) that Kim Jong Un heads. (Martin Weiser, *NK Pro*)

**In South Korea:**

- Gyeonggi Gov. Lee Jae-myung just got closer to securing the ruling Democratic Party's (DP) ticket for next year's presidential election after winning a majority of votes in the party's second "super week." Gov. Lee, the DP's frontrunner presidential contender, accumulated a total of 54.9 percent of the ballots, or 545,537 votes, cast through Sunday, the second super week in the DP primaries. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- Unification Minister Lee In-young said Monday that South and North Korea's restoration of cross-border hotlines marks a "restart" in efforts to improve ties. Lee spoke to Yonhap News Agency during a visit to Berlin to mark the 31st anniversary of German reunification. (*Yonhap*)
- The launch of the nuclear power project between the two countries was the beginning of expanded cooperation since, the envoy recalled, as the two countries relations have been elevated twice within a decade and came to include regular foreign and defense vice-ministerial meetings and high-level consultations on nuclear energy. To People Power Party Rep. Lee Myoung-su, who heads the Korea-U.A.E. parliamentary association this year, the U.A.E. policies on renewables as well as in regional peace and security pose several takeaways for Korea. (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South and North Korea restored their direct communication lines Monday, raising hopes for the resumption of stalled inter-Korean dialogue amid a drawn-out deadlock in denuclearization talks. The two sides had contact through a military hotline and a separate joint liaison office channel, according to South Korean officials. (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Slinging stogies has long been a reliable side hustle for DPRK envoys, who regularly abuse their diplomatic privileges. (Ethan Jewell, *NK Pro*)
- Jo Chol-su, director of the international organization department at the North's Foreign Ministry, said in a statement carried by the state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) that the UN Security Council meeting was in “open ignorance” and a “wanton encroachment on the sovereignty of the DPRK and a serious intolerable provocation against it.” He referred to the acronym for the North’s official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. (Seo Ji-eun and Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea said Sunday the United Nations Security Council applied double standards over military activities among U.N. member states, state media KCNA said, amid international criticism over its recent missile tests. (VOA)
- North Korea has warned the U.N. Security Council against criticizing the isolated country’s missile program, in a statement Sunday that included unspecified threats against the international body. (*Politico*)
- Despite the multiple launches of different types of missiles by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea this year, the United States continues to call for the North Koreans to return to diplomatic talks. (Stephen Silver, *The National Interest*)

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Prepared by Michelle Dang, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:

https://web.archive.org/web/20250816164049/https://mailchi.mp/65b92ddf3dde/hrnk-news-itemskoreas-restore-cross-border-hotlines-55-days-after-suspensionnorth-korea-issues-warning-to-un-security-council?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, October 5, 2021**

# [Washington Talk] North Korea's persistent 'missile launches'...discussions of 'North Korean human rights'?

**Top News:**

An exclusive VOA interview featuring Roberta Cohen, Co-Chair Emeritus at HRNK and Jieun Baek, a Fellow at Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center.

- [Washington Talk] North Korea's persistent 'missile launches'...discussions of 'North Korean human rights'? (VOA, 10/02/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea tests 667 more people for COVID, reports no positive cases (*NK News*, 10/04/2021)
- Severe rains hit North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear complex: state media (*NK News*, 10/05/2021)

**In South Korea:**

- Moon tries to fan flame of warmer relations with North (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/05/2021)
- Only 44 pct of S. Koreans think unification with N.K. necessary: poll (*Yonhap*, 10/05/2021)
- One More Korean Summit Before Moon Jae-In's Term Ends? (*National Interest*, 10/05/2021)
- S. Korea to keep close eye on possibility of N.K.'s participation in Beijing Olympics: ministry (*Yonhap*, 10/05/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Koreas talk on hotline restored after North's missile tests (*AP News*, 10/04/2021)
- North and South Korea restore severed communications hotlines (*UPI*, 10/04/2021)
- North bullies South over communication lines (*Korea Times*, 10/05/2021)
- North Korea answers inter-Korean hotline for first time in nearly 2 months (*NK News*, 10/05/2021)

- North Korea reopens communication and military hotline with South (CNN, 10/04/2021)
- North Korea reopens hotline with South in bid to mend ties (*BBC News*, 10/04/2021)
- 'North rehearsed submarine attacks on South during 2018 peace talks' (*The Korea Herald*, 10/05/2021)
- S. Korea preparing to resume dialogue with N. Korea after restoration of communication lines (*Yonhap*, 10/05/2021)
- Two Koreas hold daily liaison, military calls after restoring communication lines (*Yonhap*, 10/05/2021)

**International:**

- Assembly speaker to visit Italy for G-20, climate summits (*The Korea Herald*, 10/05/2021)
- Blackouts in China Deprive North Korean Factory Workers of Hot Water and Light (*Radio Free Asia*, 10/04/2021)
- China's refined oil supplies to N. Korea hit 13-month high in Aug: U.N. report(*Yonhap*, 10/05/2021)
- Family of abductee calls for Japan-DPRK summit to resolve kidnapping issue(*NK News*, 10/05/2021)
- Japan's new prime minister ready to meet North Korea, unconditionally(*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/05/2021)
- Japan's Kishida, Biden agree to cooperate on China, N Korea (*AP News*, 10/05/2021)
- Naughty or nice? How North Korea can change the game up to Christmas and beyond (*NK News*, 10/05/2021)
- N. Korea continues to develop nuclear, missile programs despite sanctions: report (*Yonhap*, 10/05/2021)
- North Korea Hints It's Ready to Talk, Just Not With the US (VOA, 10/05/2021)
- North Korea: What we know about its missile and nuclear programme (*BBC News*, 10/04/2021)
- No immediate Moon-Kishida summit in sight (*The Korea Herald*, 10/05/2021)
- Singapore's Winson denies U.N. accusation it supplied oil to North Korea(*Reuters*, 10/05/2021)
- S. Korea, U.S. pursue 'fully coordinated' N. Korea policy: foreign ministry(*Yonhap*, 10/05/2021)
- UN report notes North Korea's continued nuclear, missile programs (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/05/2021)
- UN Report paints web of connections between oil giant Winson and North Korea (*NK News*, 10/05/2021)
- U.S. urges full implementation of UNSC sanction on N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 10/05/2021)

**Top News:**

An exclusive VOA interview featuring Roberta Cohen, Co-Chair Emeritus at HRNK and Jieun Baek, a Fellow at Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center.

- In addition to cruise missiles, North Korea recently test-fired short-range ballistic, hypersonic missiles, and new surface-to-air missiles, raising tensions. Kim Jong-Un rejected the US proposal for dialogue, arguing that the US has not changes its hostile policy toward North Korea since the inauguration of the new administration. A resolution on human rights violations in North Korea is expected to be submitted this year as the UN continues to voice concerns and condemnation over North Korea's missile launch. (VOA)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea has tested an additional 667 people for COVID-19 and reported zero positive cases, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), as DPRK leader Kim Jong Un recently stressed virus prevention measures in a key policy speech. The DPRK has now tested 40,700 people in total, as Kim Jong Un demands 'flawlessness' in anti-epidemic measures. (Bryan Betts, *NK News*)
- Weeks after North Korea appeared to restart its nuclear reactor at Yongbyon, heavy rains totaling 136 millimeters, or over 5 inches, blanketed the area on Monday, according to state media. Flooding could damage or disrupt activity at the nuclear reactor, which has reportedly ramped up activity this year. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- President Moon Jae-in said that there is “no reason for confrontation” between the two Koreas Tuesday, a day after the restoring of cross-border hotlines, stressing the importance of co-prosperity with the North. “Now, it is even more important to prosper together,” continued Moon. “Even if unification takes time, the South and North can cooperate and get along well with each other.” (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Only 44 percent of South Koreans think that reunification with North Korea is necessary, recording the lowest percentage since the survey began in 2007. (*Yonhap*)
- Moon Jae-In’s presidency in South Korea will end early next year. Moon has staked his presidency on a breakthrough with North Korea. He appears to be considering another summit with North Korean supreme leader Kim Jong-un. Ostensibly on the agenda is a formal end to the Korean War, with the hardly disguised hope of bringing Kim to the table for wider discussions and, ideally, nudging him to speak to the Americans. (Robert E. Kelly, *National Interest*)
- The unification ministry will keep a close eye on discussions between North Korea and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for any possibility of its participation in the 2022 Beijing Olympics. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- North Korea restored dormant communication hotlines with South Korea in a small, fragile reconciliation step Monday in an apparent hard push to win outside concessions with a mix of conciliatory gestures and missile tests. (Hyung-Jin Kim, *AP News*)
- The two Koreas reopened communications and military hotlines and successfully tested the systems on Monday, both governments reported, amid signs of thawing relations on the Korean Peninsula. The move followed Kim Jong Un's recent vow to restore the lines, which had been mostly dormant for more than a year after Pyongyang cut off all communications with Seoul. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- North Korea could cut the communication lines again if it regards the South is not showing an effort to carry out the "important tasks." Kim Yong-tae, a member of the main opposition People Power Party's Supreme Council and Youth Council, said the North is "gaslighting" the Moon administration. "North Korea tested missiles multiple times just last week, but President Moon merely suggests a formal end to the Korean War to nearby countries and the Korean people. The South Korean government cannot even say that what the North is doing is a 'provocation.'" (Kwon Mee-yoo, *Korea Times*)
- After nearly two months of silence, North Korea began answering calls from South Korea on inter-Korean hotlines on Monday, according to Seoul's Ministry of Unification (MOU) and Ministry of National Defense (MND). The ministries confirmed that calls were successfully made at 9 a.m. KST through the North-South joint liaison office channel and east and west coast military hotlines. The restoration of the communication lines "lays the foundation for stabilizing the situation on the Korean Peninsula and restoring inter-Korean relations," according to the MOU. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- Communication lines between North and South Korea have been restored for the first time in months. The reopening follows North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's vow last week to restart communication in an address to the country's rubber-stamp legislature. "North Korea has no reasons to provoke or hurt the South," Kim said at the time. (Jake Kwon, *CNN*)
- North Korea has restored communication lines with the South, months after it cut a cross-border hotline. The move comes days after the country's leader Kim Jong-un said he was willing to restore communication as a conditional olive branch. (*BBC News*)
- Most of North Korea's naval drills involving submarines in the past seven years took place in 2018, even as the two Koreas held talks three times to defuse tensions, Rep. Han Ki-ho of the opposition People Power Party said Tuesday, citing the Joint Chiefs of Staff. "This is catastrophic. North Korea still has eyes set on infiltration no matter what Moon says," Rep. Han, a former three-star Army general. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea continues to make preparations necessary to resume long-stalled dialogue with North Korea after their inter-Korean communication lines were restored following about two months of suspension. Their reactivation came days after North Korean leader Kim Jong-un expressed an intention to improve chilled inter-Korean relations. (*Yonhap*)

- South and North Korea held daily phone calls via their liaison and military hotlines Tuesday, a day after Pyongyang restored the inter-Korean communication channels. The two Koreas reopened the cross-border communication lines following a near two-month suspension. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- National Assembly Speaker, Park Byeong-seug, is embarking on trips to Italy and Egypt to attend G-20, climate summits and discuss bilateral relations. As Egypt maintains ties with both South and North Korea, Park will be asking for continued support for the peace process on the Korean Peninsula pursued by the Moon administration. (Kang Hyeong-woo, *The Korea Herald*)
- Rolling blackouts in northeastern China have deprived North Korean factory workers of hot water and lighting in their cramped dormitories, making their living and working conditions even more unbearable, sources in China told RFA. "Power has been cut off to some of the large factories in Hunchun since the 24th of September," said a Chinese citizen of Korean descent, from Jilin province in China's heavily industrialized northeast. "The Chinese authorities explain that it's because crowded large factories increase the risk of COVID-19 infection," said the source, who requested anonymity for security reasons. The source said that the government's explanation was a ruse. (Jeong Yon Park, *Radio Free Asia*).
- China supplied about 12,000 barrels of refined oil to North Korea in August, the largest monthly shipments in 13 months, a U.N. report showed Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- Family members of a Japanese national abducted by Pyongyang in the 1970s have urged the country's new prime minister to hold a summit with Kim Jong Un to resolve the long-standing kidnapping issue. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida says he's willing to meet Kim Jong Un for talks on kidnapping of Japanese nationals. (Kosuke Takahashi, *NK News*)
- Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Monday said he is willing to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un "without preconditions." Emphasizing the issue of Japanese abductees in the North, a thorny issue between Japan and North Korea for years, Kishida said he will prioritize their swift return to Japan, adding that he is willing to meet with Kim to discuss the matter. (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Japan's new Prime Minister Fumio Kishida held his first talks as Japanese leader with President Joe Biden and confirmed they will work to strengthen their alliance and cooperate in regional security in the face of growing challenges from China and North Korea. (Mari Yamaguchi, *AP News*)
- With only months to go before Moon Jae-in's term in office ends, Kim Jong Un is dangling the prospect of an inter-Korean breakthrough in front of the South Korean president's face. But Moon has to play nice, Kim says — otherwise, the North will have to get naughty. Moon's term in office may end in Olympic and summit glory, but Kim could spoil it all with more and bigger missile tests. (James Fretwell, *NK News*)
- North Korea continues to advance its nuclear and ballistic missile programs despite worsening economic conditions exacerbated by U.N. Security Council (UNSC) sanctions,

a U.N. report showed Monday. The report by a panel of experts on North Korean sanctions also said the North continues to evade sanctions by ever sophisticating means. (Byun Duk-hun, *Yonhap*)

- Although North Korea took initial steps toward improving ties with South Korea, no indication has been given to restart talks with the United States. North Korea has rejected or ignored near-daily U.S. offers to hold talks without preconditions. In a speech last week, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un dismissed the U.S. invitations as a "cunning" distraction meant to disguise U.S. hostility. (William Gallo, VOA)
- BBC's Reality Check reports in light of recent missile tests, which shows North Korea continuing to advance its weapons programme, saying it is necessary to defend itself against a possible US invasion. (*BBC News*)
- A potential South Korea-Japan summit may face further delays despite Monday's election of Japan's new Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, amid protracted rows over wartime history and trade. In his first press conference on Monday, Kishida made no specific comment on the strained ties with South Korea. On the North Korean issue, he stressed he was willing to meet North Korean leader Kim Jong-un "without any conditions" to secure the return of Japanese abductees -- reiterating a Pyongyang policy held by his predecessors. (Lee Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)
- Singapore-based oil trader Winson Group denied on Tuesday a U.N. Security Council report alleging that it supplied fuel to North Korea in breach of international sanctions. (*Reuters*)
- South Korea and the United States pursue a "fully coordinated" policy towards North Korea, the foreign ministry said Tuesday, apparently dismissing speculation the allies differ on the enforcement of sanctions against the recalcitrant regime. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea continues to advance their nuclear and ballistic missile programs despite sanctions by the United Nations, a panel of experts of the UN Security Council said in a recent report. The report also found indications that maritime exports from North Korea of coal and other sanctioned goods continued from February to August this year, though they were at a reduced level compared to the previous months. (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A major Singaporean oil trader called the Winson Group is connected in multiple ways to two sets of ship-to-ship transfers of fuel that went to North Korea in May and June 2020, a new U.N. report suggests. The case is notable for linking a major international oil trader that reportedly has billions of dollars of credit to the illicit sale of fuel to North Korea in possible breach of U.N. sanctions, an activity usually dominated by low-level smugglers and criminal networks. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- A spokesman for the U.S. State Department on Monday stressed the need to fully implement U.N. Security Council sanctions on N. Korea while also urging the North to comply with U.N. resolutions that prohibit the North from testing or developing weapons of mass destruction. Ned Price made the remark after North Korea criticized

the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) for convening an emergency meeting last week to discuss its recent missile launches. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Teresa Kim, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250924013006/https://mailchi.mp/b7906866c014/hrnk-news-items-washington-talk-north-koreas-persistentmissile-launchesdiscussions-ofnorth-korean-human-rights

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**Wednesday, October 6, 2021**

## N. Korea waiting to hear U.S. commitment to 'action for action' approach: Andy Kim

**In North Korea:**

- A peek behind the curtain: inside North Korea- in pictures (*The Guardian*, 10/06/2021)
- N. Korea waiting to hear U.S. commitment to 'action for action' approach: Andrew Kim (*Yonhap*, 10/6/2021)
- N. Korea vows to strengthen friendly ties with China (*Yonhap*, 10/06/2021)
- North Korean provinces see 'dramatic' decline in crop health: report (*NK News*, 10/06/2021)
- North Korean state media keeps criticizing Seoul despite hotline restoration(*NK News*, 10/06/2021)

**In South Korea:**

- New 'peace park' offers up-close views of North Korea (*UPI*, 10/05/2021)

**International:**

- U.S. urges full implementation of N. Korea sanctions by all U.N. members (*Yonhap*, 10/05/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Hong Kong native Ted Lau's new book tries to understand everyday life in the 'dystopian utopia' of a totalitarian country shrouded in mystery (*The Guardian*)
- North Korea is likely waiting to hear from the United States that Washington is committed to an action-for-action approach toward the complete denuclearization of North Korea, a former U.S. intelligence official said Tuesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

- North Korea on Wednesday vowed to strengthen its friendly relations with China, as the two neighbors marked the 72nd anniversary of the establishment of bilateral diplomatic ties. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- US think tank says DPRK may reap a smaller harvest amid lingering flood damage and self-described 'food crisis' (Ethan Jewell, *NK News*)
- DPRK likely seeks concessions on arms buildup and drills with US, while Seoul emphasizes need for talks on such issues (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- As tensions appear to be lifting on the Korean Peninsula, local officials in South Korea unveiled a new park on the border with the North that they hope will draw tourists and help build a new spirit of cooperation. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)

**International:**

- The U.S. State Department on Tuesday called on all members of the United Nations to faithfully implement U.N. sanctions on North Korea. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Lauren Morrison, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250924013352/https://mailchi.mp/fcfa0898dc2b/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-waiting-to-hear-us-commitment-to-action-for-action-approach-andy-kim

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**Thursday, October 7, 2021**

## WHO to ship COVID-19 medical supplies to North Korea; Construction Activity Continues at Yongbyon's Uranium Enrichment Plant

**In North Korea:**

Construction Activity Continues at Yongbyon's Uranium Enrichment Plant (*38 North*, 10/06/2021)
North Korea Trying to Hide Uranium Plant Expansion, Group Says (*Bloomberg*, 10/07/2021)
North Korean Man Shot and Killed on the Chinese Border (*The National Interest*, 10/06/2021)
Widespread rebuilding efforts underway in North Korea after floods: Imagery (*NK News*, 10/07/2021)

**In South Korea:**

Seoul approves three new requests to provide humanitarian aid to North Korea (*NK News*, 10/07/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Inter-Korean Hotline Re-Opens, But Conflicts Remain (*The National Interest*, 10/06/2021)

**International:**
Humanitarian aid reaches North Korea amid strict border lockdown, UN says (*NK News*, 10/07/2021)
Ministry approves 3 requests by civilian groups to provide humanitarian aid to N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 10/07/2021)
North Korea's New 'Hypersonic' Missile May Not Be a Big Deal—But Its Fuel Ampoule Tech Might (*The National Interest*, 10/06/2021)
The W.H.O. says North Korea is accepting medical supplies, after a long pandemic blockade. (*The New York Times*, 10/07/2021)
'Two pedals': North Korea sends conflicting messages with missile tests and hints of outreach (*The Washington Post*, 10/07/2021)
U.N. expert calls for N.Korea sanctions to be eased as starvation risk looms(*Reuters*, 10/07/2021)
U.S. expert suggests easing sanctions on N.K., with snapback clause attached, for nuclear talks (*Yonhap*, 10/07/2021)
WHO says it began shipment of COVID-19 medical supplies to N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 10/07/2021)
WHO says COVID-19 aid to North Korea being held in quarantine (*Reuters*, 10/07/2021)
WHO to ship COVID-19 medical supplies to North Korea (*Al Jazeera*, 10/07/2021)
WHO working to get COVID-19 medical supplies to North Korea (*AP News*, 10/07/2021)
With time running out, experts urge 'creative' solutions on N. Korea nukes(*The Korea Herald*, 10/07/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Recent commercial satellite imagery indicates continued construction activity at North Korea's Uranium Enrichment Plant (UEP) at the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center. (Olli Heinonen, Jack Liu, Samantha J. Pitz, Jenny Town, *38 North*)
- North Korea appears to have taken steps to conceal upgrades to an uranium-enrichment plant from spy satellites, as it reopens communications with South Korea's pro-engagement president, Moon Jae-in. (Jon Herskovitz, *Bloomberg*)
- North Korea continues to claim zero coronavirus cases, despite sharing a border with China, where the pandemic began. Now, there's a report that a North Korean has been shot dead near that border. (Stephen Silver, *The National Interest*)
- Two months after severe storms washed away homes and bridges in the northeast region of North Korea, new home construction for flood victims appears underway in at least six counties. State media has focused mostly on reconstruction work in Sinhung county and a few other spots in South Hamgyong province, but satellite imagery shows relief efforts at a former rocket launch site and other towns in North Hamgyong province as well. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- Seoul has approved three new requests to provide health care-related aid to North Korea, the Ministry of Unification (MOU) announced on Thursday. The approval follows recent restoration of inter-Korean hotlines, though it's unclear when delivery will take place. (Chaewon Chung, NK News)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The hotline's re-opening appears to have come about at the request of Kim Jong-un. However, some observers have questioned whether Kim intends to honestly pursue good relations, noting a series of missile tests recently conducted by North Korea—possibly suggesting that the hotline's restoration is a distraction from the tests, which have been condemned by the UN Security Council. (Trevor Filseth, *The National Interest*)

**International:**

- Humanitarian goods reached North Korea "in recent weeks" according to the U.N., following a report from the World Health Organization (WHO) that suggested a major trade lane between China and North Korea had reopened to aid-related cargo. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) claims that medical goods related to the treatment of malnutrition and tuberculosis were delivered to North Korea, but did not specify how or in what quantities. (Jeongmin Kim, NK News)
- The unification ministry said Thursday that it has approved three requests by civilian organizations to provide humanitarian assistance to North Korea, which are meant to help bolster cross-border cooperation and exchanges. (*Yonhap*)
- Data from South Korean and Japanese radars did not identify anything all that impressive in the missile's performance. It is hard to know for certain how far along North Korea really is in creating fuel ampoules, or how extensively it could be applied to both its older and future liquid-fuel missiles. However, this technology arguably poses greater near-term challenges to U.S. and South Korean security strategy than a hypersonic glid vehicle in the early stages of development. (Sebastien Roblin, *The National Interest*)
- The World Health Organization said on Thursday that it had resumed shipments of medical supplies to North Korea to help its Covid-19 response, in what appears to signal a relaxation of the closed-border policies enforced by Pyongyang early in the pandemic. (Nick Cumming-Bruce, *The New York Times*)
- With just a few months left in Moon's five-year term, critics of the South Korean president say he is rushing to coax Kim back to negotiations without making serious efforts toward denuclearization. "Declaring peace at the same time while acknowledging their nukes — how does that mean anything to us?" said Lee Jun-seok, the chairman of South Korea's opposition People Power Party. "It's like putting your feet on both pedals while driving the car. Pressing two pedals at the same time, it will break your car eventually." (Michelle Ye Hee Lee, *The Washington Post*)
- North Korea's most vulnerable risk starvation after it slipped deeper into isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic and U.N. sanctions imposed for its nuclear and missile

programmes should be eased, a U.N. rights investigator said in report. (Stephanie Nebehay, *Reuters*)

- The United States should consider easing sanctions against North Korea under the so-called snapback mechanism for the resumption of denuclearization talks. Ken Gause, a senior analyst at the Center for Naval Analyses, made the point in an online seminar, stressing the need for the U.S. administration to adopt a reciprocal and phased strategy centered on implementing a peace regime. (*Yonhap*)
- The World Health Organization (WHO) said that it has begun the shipment of COVID-19 medical supplies to North Korea through the Chinese port of Dalian, raising the possibility that the North might be easing its long-enforced tight border controls amid the global pandemic. (*Yonhap*)
- COVID-19 aid supplies have arrived in North Korea but are being held in quarantine in its seaport of Nampho, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Thursday, as the isolated nation shows few signs of easing strict border lockdowns. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- The World Health Organization (WHO) says it is working to ship COVID-19 medical supplies into North Korea through the Chinese port of Dalian for "strategic stockpiling and further dispatch" to North Korea. (*Al Jazeera*)
- The World Health Organization is working to ship COVID-19 medical supplies into North Korea, a possible sign that the North is easing one of the world's strictest pandemic border closures to receive outside help. WHO said in a weekly monitoring report that it has started the shipment of essential COVID-19 medical supplies through the Chinese port of Dalian for "strategic stockpiling and further dispatch" to North Korea. (Kim Tong-Hyung, *AP News*)
- North Korea has been advancing its nuclear and missile capabilities over the past decades, and time is running out to prevent the country from becoming a full-fledged nuclear state. Pointing out that past South Korean and US administrations had failed to dismantle the regime's nuclear program, experts attending a Korea Institute for National Unification seminar called for "creative solutions." (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Teresa Kim, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250816164738/https://mailchi.mp/864cd7d30130/hrnk-news-itemswho-to-ship-covid-19-medical-supplies-to-north-korea-construction-activity-continues-at-yongbyons-uranium-enrichment-plant?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, October 8, 2021**

# U.S. supports humanitarian aid for N. Korean people; North Korea's Yongbyon Nuclear Complex: 5 MWe Reactor May Still be Operating

**In North Korea:**
Kim Jong Un worked on tourist resort designs during 2021 absences: KCTV (*NK News*, 10/08/2021)
N. Korea's food situation appears perilous, experts say (*Reuters*, 10/08/2021)
North Korea accepts COVID aid from WHO amid border shutdown (*Korea Herald*, 10/08/2021)
North Korea Accepts Pandemic Aid, But Border With China Remains Closed (*Radio Free Asia*, 10/07/2021)
North Korea's Yongbyon Nuclear Complex: 5 MWe Reactor May Still be Operating (*38th North*, 10/08/2021)

**In South Korea:**
South Korean support for reunification drops to record low, poll finds (*NK News*, 10/08/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Ministry: N. Korea seems to maintain strict land border controls despite signs of easing sea route (*Yonhap*, 10/08/2021)
Unification minister talks with Jim Rogers, renews calls for 'New Deal' initiative related to inter-Korean cooperation (*Yonhap*, 10/08/2021)

**International:**
Blinken, Motegi reaffirm joint efforts with S. Korea to denuclearize peninsula (*Yonhap*, 10/08/2021)
CIA shuts down N. Korea Mission Center amid focus on China: report (*Yonhap*, 10/08/2021)
Japan's Kishida urges Seoul to act on soured relations (*Korea Herald*, 10/08/2021)
Japanese leader says North Korean nuclear development 'absolutely unacceptable' (*NK News*, 10/08/2021)
New spy satellites can provide data on North Korea and other key areas (*Yahoo News*, 10/08/2021)
U.N. member countries voice concern over N.K. missile launches (*Yonhap*, 10/08/2021)
US blames Pyongyang for its people's 'suffering,' but supports humanitarian aid (*NK News*, 10/08/2021)
U.S. expert suggests easing sanctions on N.K., with snapback clause attached, for nuclear talks (*Yonhap*, 10/07/2021)
U.S. supports humanitarian aid for N. Korean people: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 10/08/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un spent much of his time away from the public eye this year reviewing more than 100 designs for tourist resorts, wine bottles and cargo ships, according to state media reports on this year's annual National Industrial Art Exhibition. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea's food situation remains perilous according to analysts and a United Nations expert who raised doubts this week about its harvest, and there are signs that it is receiving large shipments of humanitarian aid from China.(Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- The COVID-19 medical supplies sent by the World Health Organization and other UN agencies have reached the North Korean port of Nampo, an apparent signal that the reclusive regime is easing its strict border lockdown and welcoming outside help. (Ahn Sung-mi, *Korea Herald*)
- North Korea has begun accepting international aid to help it combat the spread of COVID-19, but its border with China remains tightly sealed, experts and observers told RFA. (Jeongeun Ji, Leejin Jun, and Eugene Whong, *Radio Free Asia*)
- Recent commercial satellite imagery of the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center indicates that the discharge of water from the 5 MWe Reactor into the outflow channel leading to the Kuryong River can still be observed, although intermittently. Imagery shows water being discharged from August 25 to at least September 9; no water was observed on October 1, but it was detected again the next day. While no other indicators of reactor operations, such as steam emissions from the generator building or CO2 coolant deliveries, have been observed, intermittent discharge is not uncommon when the reactor is operating. (Olli Heinonen, Jack Liu, and Samantha J. Pitz, *38th North*)

**In South Korea:**

- A new poll suggests that less than half of all South Koreans believe reunification with the North is necessary, the lowest percentage recorded in nearly 15 years. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- North Korea appears to maintain its tight restrictions on the movement of materials through land borders with China despite some signs that it is easing up its maritime border controls to bring in outside assistance, Seoul's unification ministry said Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young stressed the need for the Korean-version New Deal project to expand to cross-border cooperation with North Korea, while speaking online with Jim Rogers, a well-known investor, according to the ministry Friday. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and his Japanese counterpart Toshimitsu Motegi reaffirmed their commitment to working closely with South Korea toward the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the U.S. State Department said Thursday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

- The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is shutting down its mission center dedicated to gathering intelligence about North Korea, a report said Thursday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- On the matter of North Korea, Kishida said its development of nuclear missiles cannot be tolerated, but that Japan seeks to normalize diplomatic relations with Pyongyang by resolving the "unfortunate past." (Ahn Sung-mi, *Korea Herald*)
- In his first policy speech to the Japanese legislature, Japan's new prime minister Fumio Kishida criticized North Korea's nuclear and missile development as "absolutely unacceptable," pledging as a leader from Hiroshima to work toward a "world without nuclear weapons." (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- The director of the National Reconnaissance Office has revealed that two new satellite programs developed in collaboration with the private sector have been delivering new insights into North Korea and other areas of interest to U.S. intelligence. (Virginia Abram, *Yahoo News*)
- U.N. member countries, including Italy and Britain, have voiced concerns over North Korea's recent missile launches during a U.N. General Assembly committee session, calling for the regime to return to dialogue, relevant documents showed Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- The U.S. said it supports humanitarian efforts to help the North Korean people after a report that the U.N. pointman on DPRK human rights will suggest the possibility of easing sanctions to improve conditions in the country. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- The United States should consider easing sanctions against North Korea under the so-called snapback mechanism for the resumption of denuclearization talks, an American expert said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- The United States supports efforts to alleviate the suffering of North Korean people and is engaged in efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to such people in the reclusive North, a State Department spokesman said Thursday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Lia Vincenzo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250816165024/https://mailchi.mp/5ccdff440702/hrnk-news-items-us-supports-humanitarian-aid-for-n-korean-peoplenorth-koreas-yongbyon-nuclear-complex-5-mwe-reactor-may-still-be-operating?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, October 9, 2021**

## N. Korea's nuclear reactor appears to be still operating: 38 North

**In North Korea:**
Behind-the-scenes in North Korea through diplomat's wife's lens (*The Korea Times*, 10/09/2021)

Family member of security agent in Hoeryong murdered recently (*Daily NK*, 10/08/2021)
N. Korea's nuclear reactor appears to be still operating: 38 North (*Yonhap*, 10/09/2021)
North Korea distributes news emergency COVID-19 rules to its population (*Daily NK*, 10/08/2021)
North Korea's Progress on Poultry Farms (*38 North*, 10/08/2021)
No signs of parade or other celebrations in Pyongyang ahead of key holiday (*NK News*, 10/09/2021)

**International:**
China, Russia, North Korea See New U.S.-U.K.-Australia Alliance as Threat to Pacific(*Newsweek*, 10/08/2021)
China's Xi, Japan's New PM Hold First Talks, Agree on Need for Dialogue (VOA, 10/08/2021)
Kishida vows to lead with 'trust and empathy' to fix Japan (*AP News*, 10/09/2021)
North Korea, Thailand, Indonesia ruled non-compliant by WADA (*Reuters*, 10/07/2021)
North Korea warns of 'gloomier' relations with Japan as it downplays abduction issue(*Stars and Stripes*, 10/08/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea test-fired four weapons in September, with footage from North Korea's state media showing people gathered in the city center and applauding the announcement. However, Lindsey Miller, who lived in North Korea from 2017 to 2019 with her diplomat husband at the British Embassy there, has her own, different memories of similar past occasions. (Kwon Mee-yoo, *The Korea Times*)
- According to a Daily NK source in North Hamgyong Province, a woman identified by her family name of Kim — the wife of an agent of the local branch of the Ministry of State Security in Hoeryong — left her house at around 10 AM on Sept. 28 after receiving a phone call from an unknown individual. Three hours later, she was discovered dead. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea appears to be still operating its uranium enrichment plant at the Yongbyon nuclear complex, a U.S. website monitoring the reclusive state said Saturday. (*Yonhap*)
- Daily NK has learned that North Korea recently distributed emergency COVID-19 rules to locals. A source says the materials stressed that residents must stay away from designated danger spots and avoid contact with suspected COVID patients. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- Commercial satellite imagery shows construction of the Kwangchon Chicken Farm—a large chicken farm south of Pyongyang—remains incomplete, more than a year after Kim Jong Un visited the site. However, the project continues to attract senior leadership visits and state media reports have hinted that completion is on the horizon. (Martyn Williams, *38 North*)
- A month after a large nighttime parade marked the 73rd anniversary of the country's founding, North Korea may be forgoing large celebrations for another key holiday on Oct. 10. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)

**International:**

- China, Russia and North Korea have all expressed their grievances toward a new security arrangement in the Pacific among the United States, United Kingdom and Australia, which Beijing, Moscow and Pyongyang see as a threat to regional stability. (Tom O'Connor, *Newsweek*)
- Japan's new Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said on Friday he had agreed in his first talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping since taking office on the need to work together on issues of shared concern. (VOA)
- In his first policy speech, new Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida promised Friday to strengthen the country's response to the coronavirus pandemic in case of another resurgence and revive its battered economy while bolstering defenses against threats from China and North Korea. (Mari Yamaguchi, *AP News*)
- North Korea, Thailand and Indonesia were declared non-compliant by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) on Thursday, making them ineligible to be awarded the right to host regional, continental or world championships during the suspension. (*Reuters*)
- North Korea on Thursday downplayed its unresolved history of abducting Japanese citizen and called for new Prime Minister Fumio Kishida to be "discreet about his words and actions," days after he raised the issue with the U.S. president. (David Choi and Hana Kusumoto, *Stars and Stripes*)

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Prepared by Yeji Chung, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250816165530/https://mailchi.mp/1f95b3896619/hrnk-news-items-n-koreas-nuclear-reactor-appears-to-be-still-operating-38-north?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, October 10, 2021**

## N. Korea quietly marks 76th founding anniversary of ruling party

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea quietly marks 76th founding anniversary of ruling party (*Yonhap*, 10/10/2021)
N. Korea's top insurance firm suffers 16.8 pct profit fall in 2020: corporate date (*Yonhap*, 10/10/2021)
N. Korea unveils new apartment construction site under plan to build 10,000 homes this year (*Yonhap*, 10/10/2021)
North Korea employs charm offensive for leverage with U.S. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/10/2021)
North Korea remains low-key on party founding day (*The Korea Times*, 10/10/2021)
What's Behind North Korea's Extreme Vaccine Hesitancy? (*Vestnik Kavkaza*, 10/10/2021)

**In South Korea:**

Gyeonggi Gov. Lee cements lead in race for DP presidential nomination (*Yonhap*, 10/10/2021)
New infections under 2,000 for 2nd day amind concerns over spread during holidays(*Yonhap*, 10/10/2021)
S. Korea to form gov't-private panel for move toward 'living with COVID-19' (*Yonhap*, 10/10/2021)

**International:**
Chosin Reservoir—Where Mao's China Saved North Korea from Obliteration (*The National Interest*, 10/09/2021)
Into the Breach: Here's How the United States Entered the Korean War (*The National Interest*, 10/10/2021)
Last embassy from EU country shuts down in Pyongyang, say sources (*NK News*, 10/10/2021)
Pakistani scientist known for role in N. Korea's nuclear development dies: media (*Yonhap*, 10/10/2021)
The Deadly Battle of Taejon Turned the Tide of the Korean War (*The National Interest*, 10/09/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea appears to be marking the 76th founding anniversary of its ruling Workers' Party on Sunday without a military parade or any other provocative show of force. (*Yonhap*)
- A leading North Korean insurance company reported a 16.8 percent drop in its net profit last year due to massive spending on flood damage coverage, corporate data showed Sunday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea is accelerating the drive to construct new apartment buildings in its capital city, state media showed Sunday, as it aims to provide 10,000 new homes within this year and 40,000 more by 2025. (*Yonhap*)
- Despite indications of North Korea's continued activity at its Yongbyon nuclear complex, leader Kim Jong-un appears to be engaging in a charm offensive to lure both South Korea and China to increase negotiating leverage with the United States. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea did not mark the 76th founding anniversary of its ruling Workers' Party with a military parade, Sunday. Instead, the totalitarian state was focused on bolstering ideological education in what seemed to be a move to tighten leader Kim Jong-un's grip on power. (Seung-woo Kang, *The Korea Times*)
- On October 7, the World Health Organization said that it had resumed shipments of COVID-19 medical supplies to North Korea, for the first time since January 2020. At the same time, North Korea has yet to receive vaccines to fight the pandemic – and still officially reports zero cases. As The Diplomat reports, The North's recalcitrance to join the international vaccination effort is extreme. Like the iconic nighttime satellite image of a dark North Korea surrounded by a sea of light from South Korea and China, North Korea is a blank in global maps of national COVID-19 vaccination programs. (*Vestnik Kavkaza*)

**In South Korea:**

- Gyeonggi Gov. Lee Jae-myung on Saturday clinched another sweeping victory in the penultimate round of the presidential primary of the ruling Democratic Party (DP), all but formally ensuring his nomination. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's daily new COVID-19 cases remained below 2,000 for a second straight day Sunday amid concerns over the spread of the virus during and after another extended weekend. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea said Sunday it will set up a committee this week for a strategy on the "New Normal" of "living with COVID-19," with the vaccination campaign picking up speed. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Today, North Korea and the United States face the possibility of a major war, one that could end up going nuclear. May we not again be guilty of underestimating an apparently inferior enemy; the cost of being wrong this time could dwarf the cumulative price we've paid since 1950. (Daniel L. Davis, *The National Interest*)
- All the units had been badly shaken psychologically, as just three weeks before the battle began, these men were all in Japan living the luxurious and easy life of occupation troops. That life had been permanently shattered for them all. The 21st RCT in particular had been crushed in early fights, suffering 1,400 casualties of its initial strength of 2,500. More would die soon—and the fate of the war hung on the outcome of the Battle of Taejon. (Daniel L. Davis, *The National Interest*)
- The Romania embassy in Pyongyang closed on Saturday, informed sources told *NK News*, after the last two of its officials left the DPRK with a group of other foreigners across the land border into China. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- A Pakistani atomic scientist, known to have played a key role in helping North Korea develop its nuclear weapons program in the 1990s, reportedly died Sunday. Abdul Qadeer Khan, revered as the founder of Pakistan's nuclear bomb program, died at 85 while being treated for a lung infection Sunday morning after contracting COVID-19 in August, according to Pakistan's state-run PTV News and other media reports. (*Yonhap*)
- The Battle of Taejon had been a tactical loss for the United States, but it had been a strategic victory that prevented the North to win the war in July 1950. (Daniel L. Davis, *The National Interest)*

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Prepared by Yeji Chung, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250816170026/https://mailchi.mp/37acd2a9eca7/hrnk-news-itemsn-korea-quietly-marks-76th-founding-anniversary-of-ruling-party?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, October 11, 2021**

# Drugs, arms, and terror: A high-profile defector on Kim's North Korea; Kim Jong-un aims to improve the lives of his people

**In North Korea:**
Drugs, arms, and terror: A high-profile defector on Kim's North Korea (*BBC*, 10/11/2021)
Kim Jong-un aims to improve the lives of his people (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/11/2021)
Kim Jong-un calls for improving people's lives amid economic woes (*Korea Herald*, 10/11/2021)
N.K. leader urges improvement in people's living conditions on party's founding anniversary (*Yonhap*, 10/11/2021)
No new missile debuts, parades on key North Korean holiday (*NK News*, 10/11/2021)
North Korea boasts of 'full-scale' work towards new space capabilities (*NK News*, 10/11/2021)
North Korean leader calls for improved living conditions (*AP News*, 10/11/2021)
North Korea reports no COVID-19 cases amid reports of humanitarian aid shipment(*NK News*, 10/11/2021)

**International:**
Disagreement on North Korea sanctions feared to weaken Seoul-Washington alliance (*Korea Times*, 10/11/2021)
Japan explores defense options for emerging North Korean threats (*Nikkei Asia*, 10/11/2021)
S. Korean, US top security advisers to discuss NK (*Korea Herald*, 10/11/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Mr Kim spent 30 years working his way to the top ranks of North Korea's powerful spy agencies. He claims he kept their secrets, sent assassins to kill their critics, and even built an illegal drugs-lab to help raise "revolutionary" funds. Now, the former senior colonel has decided to tell his story to the BBC. (Laura Bicker, *BBC*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un stressed the need to improve people's lives in a speech to mark the 76th anniversary of the founding of its ruling Workers' Party, state media reported Monday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un urged his party officials to improve people's lives in the next five years amid a growing economic crisis aggravated by the coronavirus pandemic, the official Korean Central News Agency said Monday. (Choi Si-young, *Korea Herald*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un stressed the need to improve people's living conditions, as he held a lecture to mark the 76th founding anniversary of its ruling Workers' Party, state media said Monday. (Yi Won-ju, *Yonhap*)
- After a massive intercontinental ballistic missile on an 11-axle transporter vehicle debuted on last year's 75th Party Foundation Day, this year's 76th anniversary passed by much more quietly in North Korea. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)

- North Korea's aerospace sector is "pressing forward" with the development of space launch technologies, state media reported on Sunday, in line with DPRK leader Kim Jong Un's plans to launch a new reconnaissance satellite. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea said Monday leader Kim Jong Un urged officials to overcome a "grim situation" facing the country and make stronger efforts to improve the food and living conditions of his people. (Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)
- North Korea has tested an additional 693 people for COVID-19 and reported zero positive cases, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), amid recent news that North Korea accepted an aid shipment through a major sea route from China. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**International:**

- As ever-tightening U.S. sanctions have yet to achieve its policy goals, a discrepancy between South Korea and the United States in their respective views on whether to continue full implementation of economic punishment against North Korea is coming to the fore. (Kang Seung-woo, *Korea Times*)
- Recent North Korean rocket tests have raised the possibility that Japan's current missile defenses may be rendered ineffective, forcing policymakers here to consider new options -- including a constellation of small tracking satellites and the ability to attack the missile launch itself in enemy territory. (Junnosuke Kobara, *Nikkei Asia*)
- President Moon Jae-in's top security adviser, Suh Hoon, is expected to meet with his US counterpart and make his case for signing a declaration to end the 1950-53 Korean War armistice as a way to facilitate North Korea's denuclearization. (Choi Si-young, *Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Jungeun Lee, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250816170328/https://mailchi.mp/625981d7675e/hrnk-news-itemsdrugs-arms-and-terror-a-high-profile-defector-on-kims-north-koreakim-jong-un-aims-to-improve-the-lives-of-his-people?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, October 12, 2021**

## North Korea's Political Prison Camp, Kwan-li-so No. 25, Estimated to Hold Between 2500 and 5000 Prisoners

**Top News:**

North Korea's Political Prison Camp, Kwan-li-so No. 25, Estimated to Hold Between 2500 and 5000 Prisoners… U.N. Secretary-General Insists that the Camps be Closed (VOA, 10/04/2021, Translated below by HRNK Research Intern Audrey Gregg)

**In North Korea:**

At exhibition showing off nuclear arms, N. Korea displays apparent new weapon(*Washington Post*, 10/21/2021)
Defector-turned-lawmaker calls for efforts to improve N.K. human rights (*Yonhap*, 10/12/2021)
Eliminating prejudice, discrimination should be policy goal for North Korean defectors: resettlement agency chief (*Korea Times*, 10/12/2021)
It's an allegory: North Korea website says 'Squid Game' reflects South Korea's 'beastly' society (*Reuters*, 10/12/2021)
Kim Jong-un says South is not North's 'main enemy' (*JoongAng Daily*, 10/12/2021)
N. Korea vows to strengthen ties with Russia on 73rd anniv. of bilateral ties (*Yonhap*, 10/12/2021)
N. Korea will continue to strengthen self-defensive deterrent: Pyongyang envoy (*Yonhap*, 10/12/2021)
N. Korean leader says there are no grounds to believe U.S. is not hostile to Pyongyang (*Yonhap*, 10/12/2021)
N.K. leader calls for boosting military capabilities but says enemy is 'war itself'(*Yonhap*, 10/12/2021)
New missiles and Kim Jong Un idolatry dominate 'Self-Defense-2021' expo (*NK News*, 10/12/2021)
North Korea continues to seek sanctions lifting, recognition as nuclear state (*Korea Times*, 10/12/2021)
North Korea Displays Large Missile Arsenal Amid Stalled Talks (NYT, 10/21/2021)
North Korea: Kim Jong-un vows to build 'invincible military' (*BBC*, 10/12/2021)
North Korean leader Kim Jong-un marks 76th anniversary of ruling party – video(*Guardian*, 10/21/2021)
Unification minister seeks EU's support for bid for end-of-war declaration (*Yonhap*, 10/12/2021)
(Yonhap Interview) Eliminating prejudice, discrimination should be ultimate goal in policy for N.K. defectors: resettlement agency chief (*Yonhap*, 10/12/2021)

**In South Korea:**

S. Korea calls for talks with N. Korea after NK leader cites 'double standards' (*Yonhap*, 10/12/2021)
S. Korean, Russian nuclear envoys to discuss N. Korea issue this week (*Yonhap*, 10/12/2021)
Top security adviser to discuss end-of-war declaration, other issues with U.S. (*Yonhap*, 10/12/2021)

**International:**
Seoul, Washington analyzing weapons showcased at N. Korean defense show (*Yonhap*, 10/12/2021)

**Top News:**

- A private organization based in the U.S. has reported that prison camps in North Korea, including Kwan-li-so No. 25, are still operating across the country. There are concerns that more prison camps are being built as the President of the State Affairs Commission, Kim Jong-un, has repeatedly emphasized the eradication of anti-socialist ideology. (VOA, Translated below by HRNK Research Intern Audrey Gregg)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea showcased its latest nuclear and military weaponry during a "self-defense" exhibition on Monday, including a version of the "hypersonic" weapon that Pyongyang said it tested last month. (Michelle Ye Hee Lee, *Washington Post*)
- North Korean defector-turned-lawmaker said Monday that South Korea should step up efforts to improve the human rights situation in North Korea, along with its proposal to declare the formal end to the Korean War. (*Yonhap*)
- The ultimate goal of policy on North Korean defectors living in South Korea should go beyond helping their economic stability but making them accepted as "ordinary neighbors" facing no prejudice and discrimination, the head of South Korea's state-run resettlement agency said. (*Korea Times*)
- A North Korean propaganda website said on Tuesday that the international Netflix hit “Squid Game” exposes the reality of South Korean capitalist culture where “corruption and immoral scoundrels are commonplace”. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said that South Korea was not the reclusive regime's "main enemy" as he opened an exhibition showcasing his country's most advanced military hardware, according to state media reports on Tuesday. (*JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea on Tuesday stressed its "invariable" friendship with Russia as they celebrated the 73rd anniversary of establishing ties, vowing to further enhance their cooperation against an "adverse environment." (Choi Soo-hyang and Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea will continue to strengthen its "self-defensive" deterrent, its ambassador to the United Nations said Monday, claiming military activities between South Korea and the United States are reaching a "dangerous level." (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has said there are no grounds to believe the United States is not hostile toward Pyongyang, accusing Washington of raising tensions on the Korean Peninsula, state media reported Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has called for boosting the country's military capabilities to counter what he called "hostile forces" against Pyongyang but said the move is not aimed at a war against South Korea or the United States. (*Yonhap*)

- North Korea showed off its newest weapons at the “Defense Development Exhibition ‘Self-Defense-2021’” on Monday, revealing new details in state media about recently tested missile systems and emphasizing leader Kim Jong Un’s apparent military prowess. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea has doubled down on its ambition to be declared a nuclear state, while urging the United States to change its "hostile" policy toward the country, and offer sanctions relief. (Kang Seung-woo, *Korea Times*)
- North Korea on Monday showed off its growing arsenal of missiles in one of its largest-ever exhibitions of military gear, as its leader, Kim Jong-un, said he didn’t believe repeated assertions by the United States that it harbored no hostile intent toward his country. (Choe Sang-Hun, NYT)
- North Korea's leader has vowed to build an "invincible military" in the face of what it says are hostile policies from the United States, state media report. (BBC)
- The North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un, has attended celebrations for the 76th anniversary of the founding of the Workers' party of Korea. Kim made a speech to a gathering of officials, the KCNA news agency said. (*Guardian*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young on Tuesday requested the European Union members' support for South Korea's push to declare a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War, his office said. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)
- The ultimate goal of policy on North Korean defectors living in South Korea should go beyond helping their economic stability but making them accepted as "ordinary neighbors" facing no prejudice and discrimination, the head of South Korea's state-run resettlement agency said. (Koh Byung-joon, *Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- The South Korean government proposed Tuesday North Korea resume inter-Korean dialogue in order to narrow differences and promote mutual understanding after its leader accused Seoul of being "hypocritical" and having "double standards." (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's chief nuclear envoy will visit Russia this week to discuss ways to get North Korea back to denuclearization talks with his Russian counterpart, the foreign ministry said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- A top South Korean national security official said Monday that he plans to discuss President Moon Jae-in's recent proposal for the declaration of a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War and other issues with senior U.S. officials in Washington this week. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- South Korea and the United States are analyzing an intercontinental ballistic missile and other weapons systems showcased at a defense exhibition hosted by Pyongyang, Seoul's defense ministry said Tuesday. (Kang Yoon-seung, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by David Shaw, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here: https://web.archive.org/web/20250924014022/https://mailchi.mp/ea38576dae70/top-newsnorth-koreas-political-prison-camp-kwan-li-so-no-25-estimated-to-hold-between-2500-and-5000-prisoners

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**Wednesday, October 13, 2021**

# North Korea is more connected to global markets than you might think; North Korea: Vulnerable at risk of starvation

**In North Korea:**
Flanked by missiles, North Korea's Kim says U.S. and South Korea threaten peace(*Reuters*, 13/10/2021)
Kim Jong-un says South is not North's 'main enemy' (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/13/2021)
N. Korea's ballistic missiles constitute a threat to US: State Dept (*Korea Herald*, 10/13/2021)
North Korea is more connected to global markets than you might think (*North Korea Economic Watch*, 10/13/2021)
North Korea: Soldiers smash bricks, bend iron rods in combat display (BBC, 10/13/2021)
North Korea: Vulnerable at risk of starvation, UN expert says (BBC, 10/13/2021)
North Korean soldier in blue generate buzz on social media (*Korea Times*, 10/13/2021)
Power for peace: Kim Jong Un frames missiles as deterrent against 'war itself' (*NK News*, 10/13/2021)
T-shirt with portrait of Kim appears at N. Korea's public event for 1st time (*Yonhap*, 10/13/2021)

**In South Korea:**
S. Korea's top nuclear envoy says Russia's role 'important' in restarting N. Korea talks (*Yonhap*, 10/13/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Minister hopes for momentum from restored hotlines for implementation of inter-Korean accords (*Yonhap*, 10/13/2021)
Unification minister says Han River estuary is space for inter-Korean cooperation(*Yonhap*, 10/13/2021)

**International:**
N. Korea's ballistic missiles constitute a threat to U.S.: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 10/13/2021)

South, U.S. security advisers reiterate willingness for talks with North (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/13/2021)
U.S. to host virtual meeting on countering ransomware attacks from N. Korea, others (*Yonhap*, 10/13/2021)
US stresses 'sincerity' in its overture toward North Korea (*Korea Herald*, 10/13/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Standing beside North Korea's largest missiles, leader Kim Jong Un said his country's weapons development is necessary in the face of hostile policies from the United States and a military buildup in South Korea, state media said on Tuesday. (Josh Smith and Sangmi Cha, *Reuters*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said that South Korea was not the reclusive regime's "main enemy" as he opened an exhibition showcasing his country's most advanced military hardware, according to state media reports on Tuesday. Tuesday was the first time for a defense exhibition to be held in lieu of a military parade, which usually takes place on the anniversary of the Workers' Party's founding, celebrated annually on Oct. 10. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs pose a threat to the US and its allies, a State Department spokesperson said Tuesday. The remark comes after North Korean leader Kim Jong-un claimed North Korea's enemy is not South Korea nor the US while calling for efforts to further advance the North's military capabilities. (*Korea Herald*)
- After a hiatus during the summer following my PhD defense, I now plan to get back to posting regular analyses and news content here. First up, an interesting example of why the North Korean economy is in fact more connected to global commodity markets than many might think. (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, *North Korea Economic Watch*)
- North Korean state media has aired footage of soldiers putting on a display of their combat prowess and ability to smash various objects with their bare hands. (BBC)
- The UN's special rapporteur on human rights in the country blamed international sanctions and a Covid blockade for worsening food shortages. As a result, North Koreans are struggling daily to "live a life of dignity" Tomas Ojea Quintana said. He called for the sanctions - imposed over North Korea's nuclear programmes - to be lifted to prevent a crisis. (BBC)
- A North Korean soldier clad in a super-tight blue outfit in a state media photo has generated a buzz on social media, with some calling him "a superhero," "a captain DPRK," or "a rocket man." He was among nearly 30 soldiers who posed for a photo with leader Kim Jong-un during an exhibition of weapons systems on Monday. North Korea published photos of the event the following day. (*Korea Times*)
- In defense expo speech, North Korean leader dismisses US as insincere and criticizes those who 'incite' tensions. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

- A T-shirt with a printed portrait of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un was spotted during a public event in Pyongyang for the first time, state media showed, amid the reclusive regime's push to rev up an image of being a "normal state." According to footage released by the North's official Korean Central TV Broadcasting Station on Tuesday, an orchestra conductor was clad in the white T-shirt with Kim's face printed in black and white on the front at a defense expo the previous day. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's chief nuclear envoy said Wednesday that Russia has an "important" role to play to restart denuclearization talks with North Korea, as he departed the country to meet with his Russian counterpart. Noh Kyu-duk, the special representative for Korean Peninsula peace and security affairs, made the remarks at Incheon International Airport before leaving for Moscow to meet with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov on Thursday. "The peace process on the Korean Peninsula is currently at a stop," said Noh, when asked by reporters about the agenda of his meeting in Russia. "The dialogue process needs to restart quickly, and Russia's role is important." (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Chae Yun-hwan and Choi Soo-hyangh Korea's minister in charge of inter-Korean ties expressed hope Wednesday for multisided implementation of existing agreements between the two Koreas, as he visited an estuary of the Han River near their western border. He reaffirmed Seoul's resolve not to cease efforts to bring lasting peace to the peninsula and achieve co-prosperity. (*Yonhap*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young on Wednesday visited an estuary of the Han River near the border with North Korea and urged Pyongyang to respond to Seoul's call for dialogue to jointly use the waterway as agreed earlier. Under a military agreement signed at a 2018 summit between President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, the two sides agreed on the joint use of the estuary along their western border and conducted joint waterway research in November that year. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)

**International:**

- North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs pose a threat to the U.S. and its allies, a State Department spokesperson said Tuesday. The remark comes after North Korean leader Kim Jong-un claimed North Korea's enemy is not South Korea nor the U.S. while calling for efforts to further advance the North's military capabilities. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan stressed that Washington holds “no hostile policy” towards North Korea and reiterated Washington’s stance that it is always ready to engage in negotiations with Pyongyang, in talks with his South Korean counterpart Tuesday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Officials from more than 30 countries, including South Korea, will discuss ways to counter ransomware attacks from countries, including Russia and North Korea, in a

U.S.-led virtual meeting this week, a U.S. official said. The virtual meeting, to be held Wednesday and Thursday, comes after a series of recent ransomware attacks on U.S. businesses and government offices from perpetrators believed to be based in other countries, including China, Russia and North Korea. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

- The top national security advisers of South Korea and the US on Tuesday reaffirmed their commitment to engaging with North Korea, pledging to work together to bring Pyongyang back to the negotiating table. (Lee Ji-yoon, *Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Damian Reddy, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250817181529/https://mailchi.mp/70936d719237/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-is-more-connected-to-global-markets-than-you-might-think-north-korea-vulnerable-at-risk-of-starvation?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, October 14, 2021**

## CNN interviews Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu, regarding North Korea using Netflix's new series "Squid Game" to attack "beastly" capitalism

**Top News:**
See how North Korea is seizing on Netflix's new hit show (CNN, 10/13/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Defectors sue North Korea's Kim Jong-un in Tokyo over repatriations (*Korea Times*, 10/14/2021)
Defectors tell court they were promised 'paradise on Earth' in North Korea (*The Guardian*, 10/14/2021)
North Korean elites from across the country get first close-up views of ICBMs (*NK News*, 10/14/2021)
North Korean hackers likely behind barrage of cyberattacks against journalists (*NK News*, 10/14/2021)
Shirtless soldiers lie on broken glass, smash bricks as Kim Jong Un vows 'invincible' military (*Washington Post*, 10/14/2021)
UN investigator: North Korea kids and elderly risk starving (*Korea Times*, 10/14/2021)
U.S. needs to reassure allies against N. Korean threats: U.S. expert (*Yonhap*, 10/14/2021)

**In South Korea:**

South Korean spy agency to support university program on counterespionage (*NK News*, 10/14/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Analysis-N.Korea threatens to upstage S.Korea defence expo with duelling military show (*Reuters*, 10/14/2021)
S. Korea's top nuke envoy calls for Russia's 'constructive' role on N.K. dialogue (*Yonhap*, 10/14/2021)
Seoul's foreign ministry monitoring withdrawal of embassies in Pyongyang (*Yonhap*, 10/14/2021)

**International:**
In Times of Food Scarcity in North Korea, Food-Deprived Political Prisoners Should Be a Priority for the International Community (*HRNK Insider*, 10/14/2021)
U.S., S. Korea working to restart dialogue with N. Korea: Amb. Lee (*Yonhap*, 10/14/2021)

**Top News:**

- HRNK's Greg Scarlatoiu is interviewed as part of a recent CNN segment analyzing North Korea's response to Netflix's new #1 show, "Squid Game." (Brian Todd, CNN)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean defectors in Tokyo symbolically summoned Kim Jong Un to court on Thursday over a repatriation program they describe as "state kidnapping". (*Korea Times*)
- Five people who say they were lured to North Korea decades ago as part of a resettlement programme have told a court in Japan they were promised a “paradise on Earth” but were instead denied basic human rights. (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)
- A day after North Korea staged its first-ever weapons expo for leader Kim Jong Un and his top party and military officials, elites from across the country were granted access to see the DPRK's wide range of missiles up close for the first time. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Two prolific hacking groups assumed to be working on behalf of North Korea have launched a series of unusual attacks against journalists covering the DPRK, an *NK News* investigation in cooperation with cybersecurity firm Kaspersky found. (Nils Weisensee, *NK News*)
- North Korean state media on Tuesday released footage of Kim Jong Un smiling and clapping as shirtless soldiers participated in an exhibition intended to showcase the muscular power of the country’s troops, as well as weapons Pyongyang has developed to launch nuclear strikes. (Rachel Pannett, *Washington Post*)
- North Koreans living under strict pandemic restrictions are facing a growing food crisis and the most vulnerable children and elderly people in the isolated Asian nation are at risk of starvation, a U.N. investigator said in a report released Wednesday. (*Korea Times*)

- The United States must reassure its allies of American commitment to help defend them against possible North Korean attacks to prevent key strategic alliances from falling apart, a former U.S. ambassador to NATO said Thursday. (Byun Duk-kin, *Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's state intelligence agency has agreed to work with a local university to support education programs in counterespionage and security, as the country continues to address cyber and other security threats from North Korea. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korea will hold its biennial defence fair in Seoul next week, just days after North Korea opened a highly unusual military exhibition that analysts said may be partly aimed at stealing some thunder from Seoul amid a growing arms race. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)
- South Korea's top nuclear envoy Noh Kyu-duk asked Thursday for Russia's cooperation in persuading North Korea to return to dialogue during a meeting with his Russian counterpart in Moscow, the foreign ministry said. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's foreign ministry said Thursday it is closely monitoring the withdrawal of foreign diplomats in North Korea amid the COVID-19 pandemic, following reports the Romanian embassy there has also temporally halted its activities. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- This essay draws attention to the risks facing political prisoners as the food situation in North Korea worsens. (Roberta Cohen, *HRNK Insider*)
- South Korea and the United States are working closely together to restart the Korean Peninsula peace process, South Korea's ambassador to the U.S., Lee Soo-hyuck, said Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by David Shaw, HRNK Research Intern:

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250817181750/https://mailchi.mp/b82401560442/cnn-interviews-executive-director-greg-scarlatoiu-regarding-north-korea-using-netflixs-new-series-squid-game-to-attack-beastly-capitalism?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, October 15, 2021**

# IN TIMES OF FOOD SCARCITY IN NORTH KOREA, FOOD-DEPRIVED POLITICAL PRISONERS SHOULD BE A PRIORITY FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

**Top News:**

IN TIMES OF FOOD SCARCITY IN NORTH KOREA, FOOD-DEPRIVED POLITICAL PRISONERS SHOULD BE A PRIORITY FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY (HRNK, 10/15/2021)

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea opens western sea route to receive medical supplies: UNICEF (*Yonhap*, 10/15/2021)
North Korea Forces New Military Officers to Volunteer for Harsh Front-Line Duty(*Radio Free Asia*, 10/14/2021)
North Korea's Kim Jong-un faces 'paradise on Earth' lawsuit (BBC, 10/14/2021)

**In South Korea:**
S. Korea considering 'diverse' ways with U.S. for N. Korea dialogue: ministry (*Yonhap*, 10/15/2021)
What we're dealing with (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/14/2021)

**International:**
France, Canada deploy aircraft to bolster North Korea sanctions enforcement (*NK News*, 10/15/2021)
Top nuke envoys of S. Korea, U.S., Japan likely to discuss Pyongyang's hostile acts(*The Korea Times*, 10/15/2021)
U.S. awaits N. Korean response to U.S. proposals for dialogue: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 10/15/2021)
US made 'specific proposals' to the DPRK in latest attempt to engage regime (*NK News*, 10/15/2021)
U.S. needs to reassure allies against N. Korean threats: U.S. expert (*Yonhap*, 10/15/2021)

**Top News:**

- According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, North Korea is facing a severe food shortfall—a gap of at least 860,000 tons of food, which corresponds to two months' supply.[i] In ordinary times, more than 40 percent of North Korea's population is food insecure, but conditions at present are said to be more dire. Damaging floods and the government's Covid-19 restrictions have exacerbated the food shortage. International aid agencies have been prevented from operating and cross-border trading has been curtailed. State media openly speaks of a food crisis. (Roberta Cohen, HRNK)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea has opened a key sea route on the western coast to receive humanitarian aid deliveries following its closure attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic, a United Nations agency official said Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea is "encouraging" newly graduated military officers to take up harsh assignments on the front lines in yet another example of forcing less privileged people to "volunteer" for unpleasant duties, sources in the country told RFA. (*Radio Free Asia*)

- North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un should pay damages for a 1959-84 scheme that saw more than 90,000 people move there from Japan, a Tokyo court is hearing. (BBC)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea is closely cooperating with the United States on "diverse" measures to restart talks with North Korea, the unification ministry said Friday, after the U.S. said it had made overtures to Pyongyang. (*Yonhap*)
- In an address in late September, Kim Yo-jong — the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un — called for "action" from the South Korean government. A few days later, North Korea's state-run news outlet KCNA reiterated that Seoul must work "aggressively" to address pending issues with North Korea. (Kim Byung-yeon, *Korean JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- Dispatch of surveillance assets to US bases in Japan may reflect unease over DPRK's increasing coal exports. (Ethan Jewell, *NK News*)
- The chief nuclear negotiators of South Korea, the United States and Japan are expected to discuss ways to cope with North Korea's recent bellicosity, according to Pyongyang watchers. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- The United States continues to be prepared to meet with North Korea without preconditions as it awaits the North's response to its "specific proposals," a State Department spokesperson said Thursday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- State Department says North Korea has not responded, emphasizes Washington's openness to dialogue. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- The United States must reassure its allies of American commitment to help defend them against possible North Korean attacks to prevent key strategic alliances from falling apart, a former U.S. ambassador to NATO said Thursday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Scott Cho, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250817182055/https://mailchi.mp/9eccaf5ca81a/hrnk-news-itemsin-times-of-food-scarcity-in-north-korea-food-deprived-political-prisoners-should-be-a-priority-for-the-international-community?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, October 16, 2021**

## N. Korea blames outside forces for anti-gov't protests in Cuba, Only 2 N.K. defectors arrive in S. Korea in Q2, lowest ever

**In North Korea:**

N. Korea blames outside forces for anti-gov't protests in Cuba (*Yonhap*, 07/16/2021)

North Korea arrests around 20 trading company heads in latest crackdown on unauthorized trade (*Daily NK*, 07/16/2021)
North Korea warns of health problems due to ongoing heat wave (*NK News*, 07/16/2021)
There's Little Reason to Fear North Korea's Massive Ground Forces (*The National Interest*, 07/16/2021)
Three Haeju university students brought to court for watching and distributing S. Korean videos (*Daily NK*, 07/16/2021)

**In South Korea:**
More than 90% of South Koreans think North Korea won't give up nukes: survey (*NK News*, 07/16/2021)
Protester rushed to hospital after clash at South Korea THAAD site (*UPI*, 07/15/2021)
S. Korea's upgraded K9 self-propelled guns deployed to front-line island (*Aju Business Daily*, 07/15/2021)
Why is South Korea developing an Israeli-style Iron Dome? (*Al Jazeera*, 07/16/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Nearly 60 pct of S. Koreans think unification with N.K. necessary: poll (*Yonhap*, 07/16/2021)
North Korea-backed hackers linked to attack on Seoul National University Hospital (*UPI*, 07/15/2021)
Only 2 N.K. defectors arrive in S. Korea in Q2, lowest ever (*Yonhap*, 07/16/2021)

**International:**
B-2: This Plane Could Be the Last Thing North Korea Ever Sees (*The National Interest*, 07/15/2021)
Chinese Traders in Dire Straits Over Frozen Border Trade With North Korea (*Radio Free Asia*, 07/16/2021)
Kim-Trump summit in Hanoi could have eliminated 80% of N. Korea's nuclear capacity, a report says (*Hankyoreh*, 07/16/2021)
Senior US envoy Sherman to visit Korea next week (*The Korea Herald*, 07/16/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea claimed on Friday that recent anti-government demonstrations in Cuba must be an "outcome of behind-the-scene manipulation by the outside forces," apparently blaming the United States for causing instability in a country with which Pyongyang has been seeking to strengthen ties. (*Yonhap*)
- The atmosphere along the China-North Korea border is growing even more tense due to the North Korean government's inspections of trade-related entities. Daily NK has learned recently that the authorities have arrested almost two dozen trading company

managers and related cadres for conducting unauthorized trade. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)

- North Korean state media is warning citizens of the deadly potential of an ongoing heat wave, amid dangerously high temperatures in areas of the country lacking regular access to electricity and air conditioning. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Pyongyang's massive conventional defense outlays continue to yield negligible military value. They have succeeded only in propping up a bloated and increasingly unviable military-industrial complex that cannot be meaningfully reformed without a comprehensive decommission and modernization effort. (Mark Episkopos, *The National Interest*)
- Three university students in Haeju, South Hwanghae Province, were tried in a public court late last month for watching and distributing South Korean videos. According to a Daily NK source in South Hwanghae Province on Wednesday, North Korean authorities publicly tried the three individuals before a crowd gathered in the yard of the Haeju Farm Machine Factory on June 30. They were accused of watching and distributing so-called "capitalist recorded material (videos)" consisting of South Korean movies and music videos. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- The Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU) asked 1,003 South Koreans their views on a number of inter-Korea issues in an annual survey and found that 90.7% of respondents did not believe denuclearization was a realistic outcome on the Korean Peninsula. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- A South Korean protester collapsed and was transferred to a nearby hospital during a military delivery to the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense base in Seongju on Thursday. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)
- K9A1, an upgraded version of South Korea's K9 self-propelled gun, has been deployed to a front-line island that was shelled by North Korea's artillery in 2010, killing four people and briefly triggering concerns of a full-scale conflict. There was no publicity or official confirmation on the placement of advanced guns that put North Korea's coast batteries in range. (Lim Chang-won, *Aju Business Daily*)
- South Korea is developing a new artillery and short-range rocket defence system modelled after Israel's Iron Dome, in a further upgrade to its military hardware on a peninsula that technically remains at war. (Frank Smith, *Al Jazeera*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Nearly 60 percent of South Koreans think that reunification with North Korea is necessary, a survey showed Friday. According to the poll of 1,003 adults by the state-run Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU), 58.7 percent replied that unification is necessary, showing an increase of 6 percentage points from last year's survey. (*Yonhap*)
- A group of hackers under North Korea's Reconnaissance General Bureau is believed to be behind the recent hacking of a major hospital in South Korea. (Elizabeth Shim, *UPI*)

- Only two North Korean defectors arrived in South Korea in the second quarter, the lowest number ever since the government began compiling quarterly defector data in 2003, the unification ministry said Friday. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- In any conflict in the skies over North Korea, the U.S. Air Force will likely follow a familiar pattern. First, it will need to sweep the skies of enemy fighters—not a difficult prospect considering the decrepit state of the North Korean air force. Concurrent with that will be a campaign to shut down the country's command and control and air defense systems, and finally a close air support and interdiction campaign designed to support friendly forces and locate and destroy enemy ground forces. (Kyle Mizokami, *The National Interest*)
- China's exporters to North Korea are struggling under mounting debts as chemicals, medicines, and metal products ordered by their neighbor decay in warehouses awaiting the reopening of border that has been closed since early 2020 to fight the coronavirus, according to sources in the main Chinese border city. (Jieun Kim, Jinha Shin, Roseanne Gerin, *Radio Free Asia*)
- If the second North Korea-US summit, held in Hanoi at the end of Feb. 2019, had succeeded and North Korea had dismantled its Yongbyon nuclear plant, a symbol of the North's nuclear program, it would have eliminated 80% of the North's capacity for producing nuclear weapons, a new report finds. (Gil Yun-hyung, *Hankyoreh*)
- US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman will visit South Korea and Japan next week for talks on global and regional security issues, such as North Korea, the State Department said Thursday. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Claire McCrea, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250817182452/https://mailchi.mp/dc8468c4fc1d/hrnk-news-itemsn-korea-blames-outside-forces-for-anti-govt-protests-in-cubaonly-2-nk-defectors-arrive-in-s-korea-in-q2-lowest-ever?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, October 17, 2021**

## Moon calls on Japanese PM to seek solution for forced labor issue; Japan, S Korea leaders look to deepen ties despite strains

**In South Korea:**

Moon calls on Japanese PM to seek solution for forced labor issue (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/17/2021)

S. Korea's nuclear envoy pins hope on end-of-war declaration to resume talks with North (*Yonhap*, 10/17/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Unification minister reiterates resolve to revive peace efforts with N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 10/16/2021)

**International:**
Counter-terrorism experts eye Korea's border control practices (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/17/2021)
Japan, S Korea leaders look to deepen ties despite strains (*AP News*, 10/16/2021)
Seoul, Washington almost ready for humanitarian aid to Pyongyang: nuclear envoy (*Korea Herald*, 10/17/2021)
S. Korea, U.S., Japan cooperation important to denuclearizing peninsula: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 10/16/2021)

**In South Korea:**

- President Moon Jae-in in his first call with Japan's prime minister on Friday called on Fumio Kishida to "seek a diplomatic solution" to the issue of forced labor, a longstanding controversial and thorny topic between the two countries. (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea's chief nuclear envoy said Saturday that a formal declaration of an end to the 1950-53 Korean War could pave the way for resuming the stalled denuclearization talks with North Korea. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Unification Minister Lee In-young on Saturday reiterated South Korea's resolve to revive peace efforts with the North, pinning hopes on the recent reactivation of communication lines between the two Koreas. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Korea kept an open and secure border throughout the pandemic, a feat that was not easy for many other countries to pull off, and it's something counter-terrorism experts are eyeing worldwide, said Jehangir Khan, director of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (Unoct) during his visit to Seoul on Friday. (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The leaders of Japan and South Korea spoke by phone on Friday, saying they would look to deepen ties in the face of regional security threats despite strained bilateral relations. (Mari Yamaguchi, *AP News*)
- South Korea and the US are almost ready in their preparation to provide humanitarian assistance to North Korea, Seoul's top nuclear envoy said Saturday, amid the allies' efforts to revive stalled diplomacy with the recalcitrant regime. (Ahn Sung-mi, *Korea Herald*)

- The United States is committed to working with its allies in denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula, a State Department spokesperson said Friday, also stressing the importance of key U.S. allies, South Korea and Japan, working together to that end. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Jungeun Lee, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250817183008/https://mailchi.mp/3a26103678b3/hrnk-news-itemsmoon-calls-on-japanese-pm-to-seek-solution-for-forced-labor-issuejapan-s-korea-leaders-look-to-deepen-ties-despite-strains?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, October 18, 2021**

## South Korean, U.S., and Japanese intelligence chiefs to discuss N. Korea in Seoul

**In North Korea:**
North Korea calls Seoul 'spineless' for seeking cooperation with Japan (*NK News*, 10/18/2021)
North Korea is slamming 'Squid Game.' Here's why (CNN, 10/18/2021)
North Korean exports to China more than double to near pre-pandemic levels (*NK News*, 10/18/2021)
North Korea says its COVID-free, shares 'best practices' for virus surveillance (*NK News*, 10/18/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Seoul closely monitoring N. Korean leader's increased messages toward U.S.: ministry (*Yonhap*, 10/18/2021)
S. Korea to kick off large-scale defense exhibition (*Yonhap*, 10/18/2021)
Unification Minister calls for talks to discuss the North's 'double standard' accusation (*The Korea Herald*, 10/18/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Is discussion of end-of-war declaration gaining momentum? (*The Korea Times*, 10/18/2021)

**International:**
Japan leader calls for greater military capability, spending (*AP News*, 10/18/2021)
North Korea may test long-range missile over next year: U.S. report (*Kyodo News*, 10/17/2021)
S. Korean, U.S., Japanese intelligence chiefs to discuss N. Korea in Seoul: source(*Yonhap*, 10/18/2021)

U.S. intel chief meets S. Korea's top security advisor to discuss N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 10/18/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- South Korean president and new Japanese prime minister held first official phone call last week, promised coordination. North Korea accused the South of abandoning "national pride" after the call. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- North Korea is criticizing Netflix's worldwide hit show "Squid Game," slamming it for highlighting the negative aspects of South Korean culture, including consumerism and inequality. (Brian Todds, CNN)
- September spike could signal DPRK's willingness to expand trade for first time since the pandemic began, expert says. The total value of China-North Korea trade more than doubled between August and September, reaching its highest value in more than a year, newly released data shows. (Ethan Jewell, *NK News*)
- World Health Organization reports the DPRK tested 702 additional people but has yet to introduce vaccines (Bryan Betts, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has publicly mentioned the United States more often recently, drawing attention to Pyongyang's next move amid a prolonged deadlock in their nuclear talks, according to South Korea's unification ministry Monday. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea will kick off a biennial defense exhibition this week to showcase cutting-edge military hardware and technologies, including stealth fighters, hydrogen-fuel drones and laser weapons, organizers said Monday. (Kang Yoon-seung and Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young on Monday stressed the need for talks with North Korea on the regime's demand that the South drop its "double standards" as a condition of progress on inter-Korean relations. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- A series of moves regarding North Korea is raising speculation that talks for a declaration to officially end the Korean War are gaining momentum.According to sources, Park Jie-won, head of South Korea's National Intelligence Service (NIS), sat down for talks in Seoul, Monday, with Avril Haines, the U.S. director of national intelligence, and Hiroaki Takizawa, Japan's Cabinet intelligence director. The meeting follows a similar one in May. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)

**International:**

- Prime Minister Fumio Kishida called for increases in Japan's military capability and spending in response to what he described as growing threats from China and North Korea in a public debate with eight other political party leaders ahead of upcoming national elections. (Mari Yamaguchi, AP News)
- North Korea may resume long-range ballistic missile tests over the next year, the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency says in a report analyzing the country's military

capabilities, warning that Pyongyang will continue to pose a "critical security challenge" for the United States and its allies. (*Kyodo News*)

- The intelligence chiefs of South Korea, the United States and Japan will meet in Seoul on Monday behind closed doors for talks on North Korea and other pending issues, according to a source. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- U.S. Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines held talks with a top South Korean security official in Seoul on Monday to discuss North Korean issues as Seoul and Washington crank up diplomacy to resume dialogue with Pyongyang, sources said Monday.(Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Michelle Dang, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250817183348/https://mailchi.mp/23768efc3ee2/hrnk-news-item-south-korean-us-and-japanese-intelligence-chiefs-to-discuss-n-korea-in-seoul?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, October 19, 2021**

## North Korea tests possible submarine missile amid tensions

**In North Korea:**
(7th LD) N. Korea fires what seems to be SLBM toward East Sea: S. Korea(*Yonhap*,10/19/2021)
North Korea fires suspected submarine-launched missile into waters off Japan(*BBC News*, 10/19/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Kim Jong-un's half-brother was linked with South Korea's spy agency: report(*The Korea Times*, 10/19/2021)
North Korea tests possible submarine missile amid tensions(*AP News*, 10/19/2021)

I**nter-Korean Relationship:**
N. Korea tests missile amid South's efforts to resume talks(*The Korea Herald*, 10/19/2021)
North Korea has fired ballistic missile into sea, says South(*The Guardian*, 10/19/2021)

**International:**
Intelligence heads discuss North's missile launch,peninsula issues(*Korea JoongAng Daily*,10/19/2021)
End-of-war talks happening in Washington, Seoul(*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/18/2021)

Japan's PM interrupts campaign as N Korea test fires missile(*The Korea Herald*, 10/19/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea fired what appears to be a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) toward the East Sea on Tuesday, South Korea's military said, in yet another setback to Seoul's drive for peace with Pyongyang.(*Yonhap*)
- Pyongyang unveiled the missile in January, describing it as "the world's most powerful weapon".(*BBC News*)

**In South Korea:**

- Kim Jong-nam, the half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, who was murdered in Malaysia in 2017, was linked to South Korea's National Intelligence Service (NIS), according to a report by South Korean broadcaster SBS, Tuesday.(*The Korea Times*)
- North Korea on Tuesday fired at least one ballistic missile, which South Korea's military said was likely designed to be launched from a submarine, in what is possibly the most significant demonstration of the North's military might since U.S. President Joe Biden took office.(*AP News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- North Korea test-fired what appeared to be a submarine-launched ballistic missile into the East Sea, the Joint Chiefs of Staff said Tuesday, as South Korea, the US and Japan step up efforts to bring Pyongyang back to nuclear talks.(*The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea launched a ballistic missile – possibly from a submarine – into the Sea of Japan, South Korea's military has said, in the latest in a series of tests by Pyongyang over recent weeks.(*The Guardian*)

**International:**

- The intelligence chiefs of Korea, the United States and Japan met in Seoul Tuesday to discuss the latest missile launch by North Korea, said the National Intelligence Service (NIS).(*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The chief U.S. nuclear negotiator said he discussed an end-of-war declaration proposal with his South Korean counterpart Monday in Washington and will continue such talks in Seoul later this week.(*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Japan's new prime minister interrupted his first day of election campaigning on Tuesday, as he returned to the capital of Tokyo to deal with rising regional tensions following North Korea's test-firing of a missile earlier in the day.(*The Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Seshni Moodley, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250924014833/https://mailchi.mp/533c16a86cf3/hrnk-news-itemnorth-korea-fires-suspected-submarine-launched-missile-into-waters-off-japan

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## Wednesday, October 20, 2021

# "North Korea has the Highest Work-Related Mortality Rate in the World"

**Top News**: North Korea has the Highest Work-Related Mortality Rate in the World(VOA, 10/20/2021)

**In North Korea:**
(2nd LD) FM Chung says N. Korea sanctions relief can be an option if it accepts dialogue offer (*Yonhap*,10/20/2021)
N. Korea unlikely to reject humanitarian aid from Seoul, Washington: ministry official (*Yonhap*,10/20/2021)
SLBM launched from sub, says North (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/20/2021)
N. Korea plans to send around 1,000 workers to Russia as loggers (*Daily NK*, 10/20/21)
N. Hamgyong Province party committee censures workers for failing to abide by recycling rules (*Daily NK*, 10/20/21)

**In South Korea:**
Explore everything defense and aerospace at ADEX 2021 (*Korea JoongAng Daily*,10/20/2021)
Korea finds new ways to dispose of and reuse its trash mountains (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/20/2021)
Yoon Seok-youl in hot water for defending ex-dictator (*The Korea Herald*, 10/20/2021)

I**nter-Korean Relationship:**
Two Koreas showcase weapons tech despite attempts for talks (*The Korea Times*, 10/20/2021)
N. Korean threat won't change even after end-of-war declaration: ex-USFK chief(*The Korea Herald*, 10/20/2021)
Moon says S. Korea seeks strong defense capability to ensure peace (The Korea Herald, 10/20/2021)

**International:**
Nuclear envoys meet in Washington to discuss North (*Korea JoongAng Daily*,10/20/2021)
N. Korean missile launch underscores 'urgent' need for dialogue: White House (*The Korea Herald*, 10/20/2021)
Reports: UNSC announces emergency meeting following North Korean SLBM test(*NK News*, 10/20/2021)
Cigarettes over medicine? Tobacco imports to North Korea lead trade with China(*NK News*, 10/20/2021)

**Top News:**

- The World Health Organization (WHO) and International Labor Organization (ILO) stated that North Korea has the world's highest work-related mortality rate in a recently released joint report. (VOA)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea's recent missile test underscores the need for engaging the reclusive state and sanctions relief can be considered as part of incentives to bring it back to the negotiating table, Seoul's top diplomat said Wednesday. (*Kim Eun-jung,Yonhap*)
- North Korea is unlikely to refuse joint humanitarian support from South Korea and the United States, a senior unification ministry official said Wednesday, as the allies intensify consultations on how to bring the North back to dialogue. (*Chae Yun-Hwan, Yonhap*)
- North Korean state media said the country successfully launched a new ballistic missile from a submarine, which would be a significant increase in the country's attack capabilities. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- According to a Daily NK source in Pyongyang on Tuesday, North Korean authorities are currently training the workers before their departure to Russia next month. (*Seulkee Jang, Daily NK*)
- North Hamgyong Province's party committee turned over several workers at the food distributor to the provincial prosecutor's office on Oct. 12 after they were investigated by the party's organizational department for failing to properly carry out party policy on recycling. (*Jong So Yong, Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- Korea kicked off the largest defense and aerospace exhibition in Northeast Asia, the Seoul International Aerospace & Defense Exhibition (ADEX) 2021, on Tuesday at Seoul Air Base in Seongnam, Gyeonggi. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- According to the city government of Mungyeong, North Gyeongsang, a Korean drama set for major national television network tvN will be completed next month, in lieu of a 50,000-ton heap of trash. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Yoon Seok-youl, a leading presidential contender for the main opposition People Power Party, on Wednesday hastened to provide an explanation for his remarks that seemed to defend former President Chun Doo-hwan, after rebukes from both within and outside his party. (*Shin Ji-hye, The Korea Herald*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- President Moon Jae-in paid a visit to the Seoul International Aerospace & Defense Exhibition 2021, Wednesday, which kicked off a day earlier at Seoul Airbase in Seongnam, Gyeonggi Province, and stressed the importance of defense technologies for national security. (*Nam Hyun-woo, The Korea Times*)
- North Korean security threats won't change even if a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War is declared, a former US Forces Korea (USFK) chief said Wednesday, as Seoul pushes

for the political declaration to help revive nuclear diplomacy with Pyongyang. (*The Korea Herald*)

- Ensuring peace is the reason for South Korea to build strong defense capabilities, President Moon Jae-in said Wednesday. (*The Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- The top nuclear envoys of South Korea, the United States and Japan expressed "concern" over North Korea's latest submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) launch in a meeting in Washington Tuesday, amid ongoing talks of reengaging Pyongyang. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The United States remains ready to engage with North Korea anytime and anywhere, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said Tuesday, adding that North Korea's missile tests underscored the urgent need to engage with the reclusive state. (*The Korea Herald*)
- US special envoy to North Korea urges return to dialogue during a trilateral meeting in Washington (*Chaewon Chung, NK News*)
- Tobacco products led North Korea's imports from China last month, newly-released customs data shows, far outstripping inflows of critical goods such as food and medicine. (*Ethan Jewell, NK News*)

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유엔 "북한, 노동 관련 사망률 세계에서 가장 높아"

**UN: "*North Korea has the Highest Work-Related Mortality Rate in the World*"**

The World Health Organization (WHO) and International Labor Organization (ILO) stated that North Korea has the world's highest work-related mortality rate in a recently released joint report. U.S. experts have pointed out that North Korea's work environment puts a great deal of physical stress on its citizens. This is reporter Kim Yeong-gyo. The World Health Organization (WHO) and International Labor Organization (ILO) recently published a joint report on estimates of the work-related burden of disease and injury. This report is based on a survey of 183 countries around the world from 2000 to 2016 and analyzed the demands in each working environment that could lead to illness or death. According to the report, North Korea recorded 41.6 deaths per 100,000 people of all ages due to work-related reasons in 2000, 60.4 in 2010, and 63 in 2016. The figures from each of these years were record-setting, and North Korea is reported to have the highest work-related mortality rate of all 183 countries surveyed. In comparison, South Korea recorded 23.9 deaths per 100,000 in 2000, 19.5 deaths in 2010, and 17.6 deaths in 2016. This revealed contradictory trends between the two countries, as the mortality rate in South Korea decreased over time whereas that of North Korea increased. Based on a 2016 report, the North Korean work-related mortality rate was much higher than that of other countries, including Indonesia, which follows North Korea and had recorded 39.2 deaths per 100,000 people. North Korea has the largest number of deaths from work-related stroke among the 183 countries surveyed. In 2000, 12.9 people per 100,000 died of work-related

strokes, compared to 21.2 in 2010, and 22.3 in 2016. In 2016, Indonesia recorded 14.5 deaths from work-related stroke. South Korea recorded 7 deaths from work-related strokes in 2000, 4.1 in 2010, and 3.4 in 2016. Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, said that, “It's a combination of ignoring human rights standards and ignoring in this particular case, standards for workers. The state sees people who have to work for the state, and these mass campaigns or in very difficult jobs of construction of mining, they see these people having a principal goal of supporting the state. So, if that is the case, then they can be expected to work very, very high numbers of hours.” Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), stated that the problem is that North Korea is forcibly mobilizing its citizens to achieve unreasonable production goals. Most of the citizens are not appropriately trained for certain positions, thus causing accidents in the workplace. “Remember that a lot of people are not qualified to work in coal mines or work road construction, even children are mobilized to work, railway construction road construction to work in mines, in the extractive industry,” Scarlatoiu explained. Experts have also pointed out that a lack of medical supplies in North Korea is aggravating this issue. North Korea does not have enough antibiotics, painkillers, or anesthesia medicine for its citizens, causing serious workplace injuries that often lead to amputation. This is Kim Yeong-gyo reporting.

Translated by Yeji Chung

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Prepared by Shruti Nallappa, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250817184445/https://mailchi.mp/bc2cb1f8b773/hrnk-news-items-north-korea-has-the-highest-work-related-mortality-rate-in-the-world?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, October 21, 2021**

## N. Korea still shuns nuclear, ICBM tests, indicating intention for dialogue: unification minister

**In North Korea:**
(LEAD) N. Korea's SLBM in early development stage, likely can be intercepted: defense minister(*Yonhap*, 10/21/2021)
N. Korea still shuns nuclear, ICBM tests, indicating intention for dialogue: unification minister(*Yonhap*, 10/21/2021)
(3rd LD) N. Korea says its recent SLBM test-launch not targeting U.S.(*Yonhap*, 10/21/2021)

**In South Korea:**

Defense minister says S. Korea can thwart North's 'rudimentary SLBM'(*The Korea Herald*, 10/21/2021)

[News Focus] US nationals could overtake Chinese as most numerous foreign visitors to Korea(*The Korea Herald*, 10/21/2021)

S. Korea prepares to launch 1st homegrown space rocket(*The Korea Herald*)

**International:**

U.S. remains consistently open to dialogue with N. Korea: Psaki(*Yonhap*, 10/21/2021)

Foreign minister to visit Russia next week for talks on peninsula issues(*The Korea Herald*, 10/21/2021)

US alliances with S. Korea, others key to countering China, N. Korea: ambassador nominees(*The Korea Herald*, 10/21/2021)

Singapore sugar trader admits to forging documents to hide North Korea ties(*NK News*, 10/21/2021)

Does Biden Have a Plan for North Korea?(*The National Interest*, 10/21/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea's recently tested submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) appears to be in an early stage of development and can be intercepted, South Korea's defense minister said Thursday.(*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's continued moratorium on nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) testing suggests its intention to explore dialogue opportunities, according to a top South Korean official Thursday(*Yonhap*)
- North Korea said Thursday its recent test-firing of a new submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) was not targeted toward the United States, adding there is no need for Washington to "worry" over it.(*Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- North Korea is still working on improving missiles, but its latest submarine-launched ballistic missile tested Tuesday is still an early-stage weapon that can be intercepted, Defense Minister Suh Wook told the National Defense Committee on Thursday.(*The Korea Herald*)
- US nationals are likely to make up the largest proportion of inbound foreign visitors this year, overtaking Chinese visitors, who have held the No. 1 position for more than a decade.(*The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea was preparing Thursday to launch its first homegrown space launch vehicle in the latest attempt to foster its space program and join the elite global space club.(*The Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- The United States remains open to dialogue with North Korea, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said Wednesday.(*Yonhap*)
- Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong will visit Russia next week for discussions on bilateral ties and issues surrounding the Korean peninsula, the foreign ministry said Thursday.(*The Korea Herald*)
- The United States' alliances with South Korea and others are key to dealing with many challenges facing the US, including Chinese aggression and North Korean threats, nominees for US ambassadors to Japan and China said Wednesday.(*The Korea Herald*)
- Court fines man $156,000 for falsifying invoices after legally sending sugar, other goods to DPRK-linked entities(*NK News*)
- The reactor at Yongbyon and a nearby radiochemical laboratory represent the only publicly known facilities in North Korea that produce plutonium for nuclear weapons. A resumption of activity at the Yongbyon reactor is therefore a strong indicator that North Korea is following through on Kim Jong Un's January orders to improve the country's nuclear arsenal.(*The National Interest*)

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Prepared by Shruti Nallappa, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250817185053/https://mailchi.mp/fb57fa9ddea6/hrnk-news-itemsn-korea-still-shuns-nuclear-icbm-tests-indicating-intention-for-dialogue-unification-minister?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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[The following email was issued on October 22, 2021, but was mislabeled as October 21]

**Thursday, October 21, 2021***

## 12 N. Korean defectors reach S. Korea in Q3: ministry, Pyongyang tells Washington to chill out over SLBM test

**In North Korea:**
DPRK foreign ministry slams US diplomats for alleged theft in Moscow (*NK News*, 10/22/2021)
N. Korea's nuclear activity spawning, a big challenge for safeguard efforts: IAEA chief (*Yonhap*, 10/22/2021)
North Korea sends farmers to labor camps for hiding corn amid food shortages (RFA, 10/22/2021)
North Korea's "New Type Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile": More Political Than Military Significance (38*North*, 10/22/2021)
Seoul says North Korea's new missiles at an 'elementary level' (*NK News*, 10/22/2021)

Sinpho South Shipyard: Evidence of the SINPO-Class SSBA Participation in Recent SLBM Test (*38North*, 10/21/2021)

**In South Korea:**
12 N. Korean defectors reach S. Korea in Q3: ministry (*Yonhap*, 10/22/2021)
Navy gets upgraded destroyer with stronger anti-sub capabilities (*The Korea Herald*, 10/22/2021)
S. Korea to hold annual Hoguk defense exercise next week (*The Korea Herald*, 10/22/2021)
U.S. envoy on N. Korea to visit Seoul to discuss ways to resume dialogue (*Yonhap*, 10/22/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Art knows no borders as seen at DMZ exhibition (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/21/2021)
Nuri rocket launch could prompt North Korea to test ICBM (*The Korea Times*, 10/21/2021)

**International:**
China calls for loosening North Korea sanctions despite recent missile tests (*NK News*, 10/22/2021)
Humanitarian aid will not weaken U.S. sanctions but win hearts of people: U.S. officials (*Yonhap*, 10/22/2021)
N. Korean delegation to attend U.N. climate conference in Glasgow (*Yonhap*, 10/22/2021)
NSC calls for efforts for stability after N. Korea's SLBM test (*The Korea Herald*, 10/22/2021)
Pyongyang tells Washington to chill out over SLBM test (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/21/2021)
U.S. calls for sustained, substantive talks with North Korea (*UPI*, 10/21/2021)
U.S. report suggests climate change may increase N. Korean risk (*Yonhap*, 10/22/2021)

**In North Korea:**
- North Korea's foreign ministry took aim at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow on Wednesday after three embassy staffers allegedly stole the belongings of a Russian citizen. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- North Korea's nuclear activities has expanded over the years and continue to move ahead, creating a big challenge for verification and safeguard efforts, the head of the U.N. nuclear watchdog said Thursday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Authorities in North Korea have sentenced five farmers to disciplinary labor for hiding corn meant for redistribution to state supplies, sources in the country told RFA. (Myung Chul Lee, RFA)
- North Korea launched a KN-23 short-range ballistic missile (SRBM) from its submerged GORAE/SINPO-class experimental ballistic missile submarine on October 19. The launch and associated announcements have much greater political than military significance. (Vann H. Van Diepen, *38North*)

- North Korea's recent missile advancements appear to be at an "elementary level," South Korea's defense ministry said on Thursday, responding to the DPRK's recent tests of hypersonic and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs). (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- Commercial satellite imagery of the Sinpho South Shipyard on October 20, 2021 suggests that the GORAE-class experimental ballistic missile submarine (SSBA), also referred to as the SINPO-class SSBA, was probably the vessel used in the October 19 at-sea ballistic missile test, which reportedly originated off the east coast of North Korea near Sinpho. (Peter Makowsky and Jack Liu, *38North*)

**In South Korea:**

- A dozen North Korean defectors arrived in South Korea during the third quarter of this year, a slight increase from a record-low figure posted the previous quarter, according to unification ministry data released Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- The Navy received an upgraded destroyer on Friday, after more than a year of refurbishment aimed at bolstering anti-submarine and other capabilities, the state arms procurement agency said. (*The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea will kick off an annual military exercise next week to strengthen defense readiness, officials said Friday, amid lingering tensions over North Korea's recent submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) test. (*The Korea Herald*)
- The top U.S. envoy for North Korea will visit Seoul this weekend, with his arrival delayed a day for an unspecified reason, an informed source said Friday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea is a paradoxical place. Its complicated and contradicting qualities have been inspiring many local and foreign artists as shown in the DMZ Art and Peace Platform exhibition being held at UniMARU, the first-ever cultural center in the DMZ set up earlier this year. (Moon So-young, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea's launch of its first-ever, locally developed space launch vehicle, Thursday, was a partial success. While South Korea vows to succeed in a second launch scheduled for next May, there are increasing concerns that the move might prompt North Korea to develop and test-fire more advanced inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), while claiming it was pursuing a "balance of power on the Korean Peninsula." (Kwon Mee-yoo, *The Korea Times*)

**International:**

- UN ambassador cites humanitarianism, but expert says Beijing more interested in signaling support to Pyongyang. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- Allowing humanitarian assistance to a country under U.S. sanctions does not weaken the sanctions against the regime but rather serves American interests in the long-term, U.S. officials said Thursday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- A North Korean delegation is expected to attend a U.N. climate conference slated to kick off in Britain later this month, a Seoul official said Friday. (Kim Eun-jung and Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)

- Ensuring stability on the Korean Peninsula is the most important goal in handling issues surrounding North Korea, the presidential National Security Council (NSC) said Friday, after the North's test of a submarine-launched ballistic missile. (*The Korea Herald*)
- Pyongyang said Thursday there's no need for Washington to "worry or trouble itself" over its submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) launch earlier this week. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A day after North Korea fired a ballistic missile into the East Sea, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations said it was time for the Asian nation to halt its belligerent behavior and engage in "sustained and substantive dialogues" toward denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula. (Darryl Coote, *UPI*)
- Climate change may lead to increased risks for the United States on the Korean Peninsula as North Korea stands unable to cope with growing physical effects of the environmental challenge, a U.S. intelligence report said Thursday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Claire McCrea, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250924015333/https://mailchi.mp/e96742d8952c/hrnk-news-items12-n-korean-defectors-reach-s-korea-in-q3-ministrypyongyang-tells-washington-to-chill-out-over-slbm-test

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**Saturday, October 23, 2021**

## UN investigator: North Korea has never been more isolated, Issue of Seoul pursuing nuclear armament re-ignited

**In North Korea:**
UN investigator: North Korea has never been more isolated (*The Korea Times*, 10/23/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Issue of Seoul pursuing nuclear armament re-ignited (*The Korea Times*, 10/23/2021)

**International:**
China's Xi vows to bolster ties with N. Korea in letter to Kim (*Yonhap*, 10/23/2021)
U.S. supports humanitarian aid for N. Korea, but sanctions must remain in place: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 10/23/2021)
N. Korea denounces U.S. for meddling in Taiwan issue, accuses of hostile intent(*Yonhap*, 10/23/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea has never been more isolated from the international community as a result of its drastic steps to prevent COVID-19, and the ruptured global ties are having "a dramatic impact on the human rights of the people inside the country," the U.N.'s independent investigator on the reclusive northeast Asian nation said Friday. (*The Korea Times*)

**In South Korea:**

- The years-long subject of South Korea possessing its own nuclear weapons is being rekindled in response to North Korea's rapid expansion of its nuclear program. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)

**International:**

- Chinese President Xi Jinping has reaffirmed efforts to strengthen bilateral relations with North Korea, Pyongyang's state media reported Saturday. (*Yonhap*)
- The United States supports providing humanitarian assistance to the vulnerable people of North Korea, a State Department spokesperson said Friday, however, suggesting U.S. opposition to easing U.N. sanctions on the recalcitrant country. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea on Saturday blasted the United States for causing military tension with China by meddling in Taiwan affairs. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Jiwoo Hwang, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250817223955/https://mailchi.mp/7a63f79f802d/hrnk-news-itemsun-investigator-north-korea-has-never-been-more-isolatedissue-of-seoul-pursuing-nuclear-armament-re-ignited?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, October 24, 2021**

## U.S. to continue talks with S. Korea on end-of-war declaration, other options for N. Korea diplomacy: envoy

**In North Korea:**

Media reports of N.K. leader's sister staging coup not true at all: spy agency(*Yonhap*, 10/24/2021)

**International:**
N. Korean media decries proposed S. Korea-U.S. defense dialogue (*Yonhap*, 10/24/2021)
U.S. to continue talks with S. Korea on end-of-war declaration, other options for N. Korea diplomacy: envoy (*Yonhap*, 10/24/2021)
Ex-USFK chief stresses solidarity in S. Korea-U.S. alliance amid lingering NK threats(*The Korea Herald*, 10/23/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- South Korea's spy agency said Sunday media reports of North Korean leader's sister succeeding coup against her brother are not true at all. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- A North Korean media outlet on Sunday slammed the United States for its recent proposal to create a new working-level defense dialogue with South Korea, accusing Washington of seeking to raise military pressure on Pyongyang. (*Yonhap*)
- The U.S. special representative for North Korea said Sunday that he looks forward to continuing exploring different options with South Korea to resume dialogue with North Korea, including the proposed declaration of a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War. (Song Sang-ho, Kim Eun-jung, Yonhap)
- Former US Forces Korea (USFK) chief Curtis Scaparrotti has stressed the importance of solidarity between the militaries of South Korea and the United States in the face of continued North Korean threats, an organization dedicated to promoting the alliance said Saturday. (Yonhap, *The Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Jiwoo Hwang, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250924020248/https://mailchi.mp/d804b864d66b/hrnk-news-itemsus-to-continue-talks-with-s-korea-on-end-of-war-declaration-other-options-for-n-korea-diplomacy-envoy

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**Monday, October 25, 2021**

## South Korea's leader vows final push for talks with North; Possible papal visit to North Korea revisited

**In North Korea:**
North Korea closes weapons expo after 10 days, says event generated 'new ideas'(*NK News*, 10/25/2021)
North Korean leader's weight loss leads to diverse speculation (*The Korea Times*, 10/25/2021)

North Korea tests 678 additional people and finds zero COVID cases: WHO (*NK News*, 10/25/2021)
North Korea's Ambitious Plan to Defeat America's Missile Defenses (*National Interest*, 10/25/2021)

**In South Korea**:
Moon vows last-minute push to engage North Korea as his term nears end (*NK News*, 10/25/2021)
South Korea's leader vows final push for talks with North (*AP News*, 10/25/2021)
Talks for end-of-war declaration gather pace, but skepticism lingers(*Yonhap*, 10/25/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Arms buildup between two Koreas heightens risk of conventional and nuclear war(*NK News*, 10/25/2021)

**International:**
Congressional support for North Korea sanctions undercuts Seoul's peace drive (*NK News*, 10/25/2021)
Former U.S. ambassador Gregg calls for 'dynamic' steps toward N. Korea diplomacy (*Yonhap*, 10/25/2021)
N. Korea denounces Canada, France for monitoring illicit maritime activities(*Yonhap*, 10/25/2021)
N. Korea touts 'invincible' ties with China on Korean War anniversary (*Yonhap*, 10/25/2021)
Possible papal visit to North Korea revisited (*The Korea Times*, 10/25/2021)
Seoul says pope's possible N.K. visit to 'greatly' contribute to regional peace(*Yonhap*,

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea closed an exhibition of nuclear missiles and other new weapons on Friday after a ten-day run, according to state media, with Kim Jong Un's top military official stating that the event helped generate "new ideas" to speed up weapons development. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, who seems to have succeeded in a rigorous diet plan, is facing diverse speculation due to his change in appearance. Following speculation of him being sick, now there are rumors that he was murdered, which South Korea's spy agency rebut. (Yoon Ja-young, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korea has found no COVID-19 cases after testing an additional 678 people, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), as state media reported on a new, more virulent strain of the coronavirus spreading overseas. (Bryan Betts, *NK News*)
- As tension continues to ramp up between the United States and North Korea, that country is "working to develop capabilities that can degrade or even defeat U.S. missile

defense systems deployed in its region." That's according to a new report issued by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), as cited in an article by Yonhap News Agency. (Stephen Silver, *National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korean President Moon Jae-in pledged on Monday to push for engagement with Pyongyang until the end of his presidency, stating that talks with North Korea remain unfinished. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)
- South Korea's president said Monday he'll keep striving to promote peace with North Korea through dialogue until the end of his term next May, after Pyongyang raised animosities with a resumption of provocative weapons tests. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)
- South Korea's push for the declaration of a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War appears to be gaining steam, with the United States publicly confirming ongoing consultations with the ally and North Korea signaling conditional interest. (Song Sang-ho, Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Overshadowed by decades' long efforts toward denuclearization, is the ongoing conventional arms buildup on the Korean Peninsula that will prove central to any future armed conflict between the two Koreas. (James M. Minnich, *NK News*)

**International:**

- Since the concurrent launch of the Biden administration and the 117th U.S. Congress in January, the executive and legislative branches of the U.S. government have been fairly united in their assessment of the importance of the ROK-U.S. alliance and how to approach Seoul as an equal partner. Yet in spite of this unity, a contrast with preceding years, Washington must nevertheless still contend with discrepancies between South Korea and the U.S. over North Korea policy. (Anthony V. Rinna, *NK News*)
- Donald Gregg, a former U.S. ambassador to South Korea, stressed that the United States should take a more proactive approach to resume talks with North Korea and break the impasse in the Korean peace process. (Yonhap)
- North Korea's foreign ministry on Monday denounced Canada and France for dispatching patrol planes near the Korean Peninsula to monitor the North's activities violating U.N. Security Council resolutions, calling it a "military provocation" endangering the security situation in the region. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea and China will continue their "invincible" friendly relations for a "common cause," the North's official newspaper said Monday, marking the 71st anniversary of China's participation in the Korean War. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- On the occasion of President Moon Jae-in's scheduled meeting with Pope Francis later this week, a possible papal visit to North Korea is once again emerging. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- Pope Francis' visit to North Korea, if made, will "greatly contribute" to establishing peace on the Korean Peninsula, South Korea's unification ministry said Monday, as Seoul prepares for President Moon Jae-in's papal meeting at the Vatican this week. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)

10/25/2021)
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Prepared by Audrey Gregg, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250817224802/https://mailchi.mp/40b1d5ea5569/hrnk-news-itemssouth-koreas-leader-vows-final-push-for-talks-with-northpossible-papal-visit-to-north-korea-revisited?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, October 26, 2021**

## Turning the Tables: Interviewee becomes the Interviewer; N. Korea accuses U.N. special rapporteur of 'distorting reality'

**Top News:**
Turning the Tables: Interviewee becomes the Interviewer (*Pyonghattan*, 10/23/2021)

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea accuses U.N. special rapporteur of 'distorting reality' (*Yonhap*, 10/26/2021)
North Korean leader Kim Jong Un builds luxury villas over grandfather's old home(*Radio Free Asia*, 10/25/2021)
N. Korea reports no coronavirus case: WHO (*Yonhap*, 10/26/2021)
U.S., S. Korea aligned on N. Korea, but may differ on sequence of steps: NSA Sullivan (*Yonhap*, 10/26/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Roh Tae-woo, ROK president who helped shape inter-Korean relations, dies at 88 (*NK News*, 10/26/2021)

**International:**
Canadians to privately sponsor North Korean refugees under new program (*NK News*, 10/26/2021)
China can and should help denuclearize N. Korea: Pentagon spokesman (*Yonhap*, 10/26/2021)
EU open to video talks with North Korea after diplomats withdraw from meetings (*NK News*, 10/26/2021)
Kim says N.K.-China ties are 'sealed in blood,' will strengthen for generations (*Yonhap*, 10/26/2021)

**Top news:**

- North Korean escapee Ms. Seo-Hyun Lee interviews HRNK Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu on the occasion of HRNK's 20th anniversary Gala on October 20, 2021. (*Pyonghattan*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea on Tuesday rebuked the U.N. special rapporteur on its human rights situation for "distorting our reality" and acting "at the urging of the United States" as the country responded to his recent criticism of the regime. (*Yonhap*)
- A new luxury apartment complex built over the former residence of North Korea's founder Kim Il Sung is seen by citizens as an example of third-generation leader Kim Jong Un trying to erase parts of his grandfather's legacy, sources in the country told RFA. (*Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korea has conducted coronavirus tests on around 42,000 people but found no infections, a World Health Organization (WHO) report showed Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- The United States and South Korea are aligned on the need to engage with North Korea diplomatically, but may differ when it comes to what steps should be taken when to bring the recalcitrant North back to the dialogue table, U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Roh Tae-woo, the former South Korean president who helped engineer landmark agreements between the two Koreas and normalized relations with other communist bloc nations at the end of the Cold War, died Tuesday at the age of 88. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)

**International:**

- A Canadian human rights organization has announced a new program that will allow Canadians to privately sponsor North Korean refugees to help them to resettle in the country. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- China should help denuclearize North Korea if it wishes to see stability on the Korean Peninsula, a Pentagon spokesman said Monday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- The European Parliament Delegation for Relations with the Korean Peninsula (DKOR) is open to video talks with North Korean diplomats after they withdrew from EU-related meetings in Brussels, the chair of the delegation told *NK News* on Monday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has said the North's close ties with China are "sealed in blood" and will further strengthen for generations as he marked the anniversary of China's participation in the 1950-53 Korean War, state media reported Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Maria D. Corte, HRNK Research Intern

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**Tuesday, October 27, 2021**

# Romania Temporarily Closes Its Last Embassy in North Korea; S. Korea, Russia agree to cooperate for resumption of Korea peace efforts

**Top News:**
Romania Temporarily Closes Its Last Embassy in North Korea... "Full Withdrawal of E.U. Embassies" (*RFA*, 10/13/2021)

**This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**
Black swan meat now on the menu in North Korea as food supply problems persist(*NK News*, 10/27/2021)
Chongjin residents recently asked to fulfill "non-tax burdens" to help bolster national defense (*DailyNK*, 10/27/2021)
Kim Jong Un keeps up reclusive streak as boats cruise around east coast mansion(*NK News*, 10/27/2021)
Kim Jong-un on North Korea's import problem (*North Korea Economic Watch*, 10/26/2021)
Meeting held for trade-related officials in Yanggang Province (*DailyNK*, 10/26/2021)
North Korea accuses UN special rapporteur of 'distorting reality' (*The Korea Times*, 10/26/2021)
N. Korea calls for implementing five-year economic plan at Cabinet meeting(*Yonhap*, 10/27/2021)
N. Korea orders military training camps into "No. 1 combat posture" (*DailyNK*, 10/27/2021)
North Korea rails against UN special rapporteur for criticizing COVID controls (*NK News*, 10/27/2021)
North Korea tells hungry citizens to 'tighten belts' until 2025 (*RFA*, 10/26/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Military reports 2 additional COVID-19 cases (*Yonhap*, 10/27/2021)
Moon administration stays quiet about most North Korean provocations (*The Korea Times*, 10/26/2021)
Top security official says hard to predict another inter-Korean summit (*Yonhap*, 10/26/2021)
Unification minister calls for inter-Korean climate cooperation (*Yonhap*, 10/27/2021)
Unification ministry to host DMZ peace forum (*Yonhap*, 10/27/2021)

**International:**

Canada launches pilot program to accept N. Korean refugees (*AP News*, 10/26/2021)
S. Korea, Russia agree to closely cooperate for early resumption of Korea peace efforts (*Yonhap*, 10/27/2021)
U.S., S. Korea aligned on N. Korea, but may differ on sequence of steps: NSA Sullivan (*Yonhap*, 10/27/2021)
US, South Korea may differ on end-of-war proposal (*The Korea Herald*, 10/27/2021)
U.S. unaware of N. Korean participation in COP26 climate summit: State Dept.(*Yonhap*, 10/27/2021)

**Top news:**

- This month, Romania announced that it will temporarily close its Pyongyang-based embassy, making it the last EU member state to do so. (Ji Jeong-eun, RFA)

**In North Korea:**

- As North Korea battles a poor economy and persistent food shortages, the country's state media has begun to call black swans a new and valuable food source. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Residents of the city of Chongjin, North Hamgyong Province were recently tasked with "non-tax burdens," ostensibly to bolster national defense. (Lee Chae Un, *DailyNK*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has made a habit of taking extended breaks from public view since the onset of the global pandemic in early 2020, and he is now on his eighth absence of two or more weeks this year alone. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- In a speech to the Supreme People's Assembly on September 30th, 2021, Kim spoke about the need to strengthen state "guidance" over the economy, and to make "all trade activities" in the "direction" of "decreasing the reliance on imports" (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, *North Korea Economic Watch*)
- The Propaganda Department of the ruling party committee of Yanggang Province recently held a four-day ideological training session for trade-related officials. Trade officials who attended the meeting are saying the authorities might open the border soon. (Jong So Yong, *DailyNK*)
- North Korea on Tuesday rebuked the U.N. special rapporteur on its human rights situation for "distorting our reality" and acting "at the urging of the United States" as the country responded to his recent criticism of the regime. (*The Korea Times*)
- North Korea has held a Cabinet meeting and urged officials to put utmost efforts to accomplish the country's five-year economic development plan, state media reported Wednesday. (*Yonhap*)
- The North Korean military recently ordered training camps in all branches into "No. 1 combat posture." The order also announced impending "mock attack drills" by mechanized units. (Jeong Tae Joo, *DailyNK*)

- Defense of strict border measures comes after Tomás Ojea Quintana raised alarm over DPRK's isolation and food shortages. (Chaewon Chung, NK News)
- North Korea is telling citizens to tighten their belts through at least 2025, the year they will reopen the border with China which they closed last year to ward off the coronavirus, causing severe food shortages. (Jeong Yon Park, Leejin Jun, Eugene Whong, RFA)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's military reported two additional COVID-19 cases Wednesday, bringing the total caseload among its personnel to 2,019, the defense ministry said. (Yonhap)
- The Moon Jae-in administration has refrained from firmly condemning North Korea's military provocations. Moon has denounced the North's military actions as provocations only seven times. (Kang Seung Woo, The Korea Times)
- President Moon Jae-in's security adviser said Tuesday it is difficult to predict whether another summit between Moon and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un can take place, citing "many uncertainties." (Yonhap)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young said Wednesday climate change is the most timely, as well as feasible, area for inter-Korean cooperation, vowing to make efforts to kick-start cross-border talks in the field. (Choi Soo-hyang, Yonhap)
- South Korea's unification ministry said Wednesday it will host a forum this week on the peaceful use of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating the two Koreas. (Yonhap)

**International:**

- A Toronto-based human rights organization says it is launching a private sponsorship program to resettle North Korean refugees in Canada, which will become the third country after South Korea and the U.S. to accept North Koreans. (Kim Tong Hyun, AP News)
- South Korea and Russia agreed Wednesday to closely cooperate for an early resumption of stalled peace efforts on the Korean Peninsula, Seoul's top diplomat said, stressing the two countries concurred on the urgency of the North Korean nuclear issue. (Yonhap)
- The United States and South Korea are aligned on the need to engage with North Korea diplomatically, but may differ when it comes to when and what steps should be taken to bring the recalcitrant North back to the dialogue table, U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said Tuesday. (Yonhap)
- Washington and Seoul appear to be on different trajectories on the matter of declaring a formal end to the Korean War, with a top US security official saying the allies could have "different perspectives" on the timing and conditions. (Ahn Sung Mi, The Korea Herald)
- The United States is not aware of North Korea's possible participation in the upcoming U.N. climate change conference, a state department spokesperson said Tuesday. (Byun Duk-kun, Yonhap)

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**Romania Temporarily Closes Its Last Embassy in North Korea… "Full Withdrawal of E.U. Embassies"**

Anchor: This month, Romania announced that it will temporarily close its Pyongyang-based embassy, making it the last EU member state to do so. This is reporter Ji Jeong-eun.

On October 12th, Romania's foreign ministry confirmed the news, stating, "Following the tightening of measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic applied in the last year and a half by the North Korean authorities, the activity of the Romanian Embassy in Pyongyang was temporarily suspended, with local diplomatic and consular activities ceasing on October 9, 2021."

It further explained, "The restrictions imposed locally in the context of the pandemic have negatively affected the efforts of the Romanian side to carry out the periodic rotation of staff, necessary for ensuring the sustainability of the mission."

The Czech Republic, Poland, and Bulgaria's embassies in North Korea were tentatively closed one after another. Now that the Romanian embassy has closed as well, there are no diplomats left in North Korea from any country in the European Union.

NK News, a U.S.-based media outlet specializing in North Korea, reported on October 10th that two Romanian embassy staffers left North Korea via Dandong on October 9th.

In its coverage of the embassy closure, NK News cited John Everard, former UK ambassador to North Korea, who stated, "This is the first time since Sweden opened its embassy in Pyongyang in the 1970s that there have been no westerners at all on the ground."

On October 13th, Alastair Morgan, another former UK ambassador to North Korea, explained, "When I was in contact with the Romanian embassy in 2017, they seemed intent on continuing their operations even under difficult circumstances. The Romanian government must have been reluctant to make this decision."

Morgan also pointed out, "The withdrawal of diplomats and international staff from the United Nations and non-governmental organizations means that functions such as program implementation and distribution monitoring can no longer be carried out. It is not easy to perform these tasks abroad. In many cases, it's impossible."

Morgan also added that it will not be easy to resume diplomatic operations after the hiatus.

Remco Breuker, a professor of Korean studies at Leiden University, told Radio Free Asia that, "The kind of situation in which diplomats from the E.U. cannot stay in North Korea, whether it

be due to food shortages, Covid-19, a political situation, or other reasons, is not a good sign for North Korea."
He added that there are not many exchanges between the E.U. and North Korea as is, so the embassy closures are not likely to have a significant impact on diplomatic relations going forward, but that it will be more difficult for the E.U. to understand the situation in North Korea.

Nikolai Spreckels, head of the German human rights group "People", also expressed his concern that they would lack objective data to understand the situation in North Korea.

Spreckels: "As long as the embassies of E.U. member states remain closed, then there's no way to know the actual situation inside of North Korea. In cases like these, there's no option but to rely on North Korean state-run media reports or official announcements, but they aren't always reliable."

Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea and native Romanian, told Radio Free Asia that, "The temporary closure of the Romanian embassy in North Korea suggests that the situation there is no longer tenable. The deterioration of the public health environment in North Korea could put Romanian diplomats at risk for their own health and personal safety."

Scarlatoiu anticipates that it will be very difficult to give North Korea aid if all the E.U. member countries' embassies in Pyongyang are closed.

With the closure of the Romanian Embassy in North Korea, only nine countries, including China, Cuba, and Russia, are reportedly maintaining their diplomatic missions in North Korea.

Reported by: Ji Jeong-eun (RFA)
Translated by: Audrey Gregg (HRNK)
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Prepared by Caroline Ward, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250924021025/https://mailchi.mp/93d4fdfe3b88/hrnk-news-items-romania-temporarily-closes-its-last-embassy-in-north-koreas-korea-russia-agree-to-cooperate-for-resumption-of-korea-peace-efforts

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## Wednesday, October 28, 2021

# Top Chinese diplomat meets North Korea ambassador to Beijing; Signs of activity detected at North Korea's Yongbyon facility

**In North Korea:**
Kim Jong Un orders enlargement of department that screens new strategic and tactical weapons (*DailyNK*, 10/28/2021)
N. Korea builds more houses in Samjiyon under major development project (*Yonhap*, 10/28/2021)
N. Korea's Kim lost 20 kilograms but remains healthy (*AP News*, 10/28/2021)
N.K. leader loses 20 kilograms, has no health issues: Seoul's spy agency (*Yonhap*, 10/28/2021)
N. Korea possibly open to end-of-war declaration talks without preconditions: Seoul spy chief (*Yonhap*, 10/28/2021)
North Korea Reportedly Having Trouble Printing Bills (*National Interest*, 10/27/2021)
North Korea securing 'every grain of rice' amid apparent food shortage: NIS (*NK News*, 10/28/2021)
N. Korea slams U.S., some western countries for skipping U.N. meeting on racism(*Yonhap*, 10/28/2021)
N. Korea stays mum on ex-president Roh's death despite his feat in inter-Korean ties (*Yonhap*, 10/28/2021)
Signs of activity detected at North Korea's Yongbyon facility: NIS (*The Korea Herald*, 10/28/2021)
Some N. Koreans eager to work in Russia bribe officials or cheat to pass physicals(*DailyNK*, 10/28/2021)
Vessels involved in likely 'coal-for-food' arrangement reappear in Longkou (*NK News*, 10/28/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Cheong Wa Dae official rejects notion of S. Korea-U.S. rift over end-of-war declaration (*Yonhap*, 10/28/2021)
Moon leaves for G20, COP26, Hungary (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/28/2021)
Moon leaves for Italy for meeting with Pope Francis, G20 on Europe swing (*Yonhap*, 10/28/2021)
S. Korea's defense minister holds talks with U.S. Navy chief on regional security, alliance (*Yonhap*, 10/28/2021)
S. Korea discovers more Korean War remains in DMZ (*Yonhap*, 10/28/2021)
South Korea Plans Even Bigger Missile Submarines, But They're Not Going Nuclear—Yet (*National Interest*, 10/27/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

Unification minister's rare trip with President shows Moon's determination for inter-Korean relations (*The Korea Times*, 10/28/2021)

**International:**

Moscow urges all parties not to 'increase tension' on the Korean Peninsula (*NK News*, 10/28/2021)
S. Korea, U.S. in speedy, serious discussions on end-of-war declaration proposal: official (*Yonhap*, 10/28/2021)
Top Chinese diplomat meets North Korea ambassador to Beijing (*Reuters*, 10/28/2021)
Top envoys Chung, Lavrov meet twice in one year (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/28/2021)
U.S. Senate committee passes bill on battling N. Korean censorship (*Yonhap*, 10/28/2021)
WFP chief calls for int'l cooperation to improve N. Korea's food situation (*Yonhap*, 10/28/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has reportedly ordered a strengthening of the "expertise" of the department screening strategic and tactical weapons. The order comes as North Korea continues to focus on developing nuclear weapons. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea has completed building 1,000 more houses in the northwestern city of Samjiyon near the border with China, state media reported Thursday, as part of a major development project under way at the birthplace of leader Kim Jong-un's late father. (Choi Soo Hyang, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has recently lost about 20 kilograms (44 pounds), but remains healthy and is trying to boost public loyalty to him in the face of worsening economic problems, South Korea's spy agency told lawmakers Thursday. (Kim Hyung Jin, Kim Tong Hyung, *AP News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has lost around 20 kilograms after previously weighing about 140 kg, but he appears to have no health issues, South Korea's spy agency was quoted as saying Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- It is "possible" North Korea will meet South Korea for talks on declaring the end of the Korean War without any strings attached, Seoul's spy chief was quoted as saying Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- There have been reports going back to August that North Korea had been using the coupons in lieu of cash, possibly because ink and paper are no longer being imported from China. (Stephen Silver, *National Interest*)
- South Korean spy agency says Kim Jong Un ordered all-out farming campaign amid food supply issues, economic downturn (Jung Won Gi, *NK News*)
- North Korea rebuked the United States and other western nations Thursday for having double standards on human rights and racism, taking issue with their absence from a recent symbolic U.N. meeting. (Chaw Yun Hwan, *Yonhap*)

- North Korea stayed silent Thursday on the death of South Korea's former President Roh Tae-woo in spite of his widely credited legacy on inter-Korean relations. (Choi Soo Hyang, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea may have reprocessed spent nuclear fuel rods at the Yongbyon Nuclear Complex this year, the South Korean spy agency was quoted as saying Thursday. (Ji Da Gyu, *The Korea Herald*)
- With North Korean authorities soon set to dispatch North Korean laborers to Russia, some applicants are apparently bribing officials to pass the physical or faking results. This is causing a stir. North Korean authorities focused on selecting healthy adult males for dispatch abroad, but many of the workers are reportedly so underweight as to classify as malnourished. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- The reappearance of several vessels not seen for months or years coincides with an uptick in China-DPRK trade (Ethan Jewell, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea and the United States may have "somewhat different perspectives" on the issue of declaring a formal end to the Korean War, but the perspectives should not be seen as a "difference of views," a senior Cheong Wa Dae official said Thursday. (Lee Haye Ah, *Yonhap*)
- A summit between President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Joe Biden may take place on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Rome, according to the Foreign Ministry. (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- President Moon Jae-in left for Italy on Thursday for a meeting with Pope Francis and a Group of 20 summit with other global leaders expected to focus on tackling the climate crisis and helping the world end the COVID-19 pandemic. (Kim Deok Hyun, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea's Defense Minister Suh Wook held talks with the visiting U.S. secretary of the Navy in Seoul on Thursday to discuss security on the Korean Peninsula, the bilateral alliance and other issues, his ministry said. (Song Sang Ho, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea has found more than two dozen bone fragments presumed to be from troops killed in the 1950-53 Korean War during recent excavation work in a former battle site, the defense ministry said Thursday. (Kang Yoon Seung, Song Sang Ho, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea is diving ahead at flank speed with its plans to build a fleet of nine KSS-III ballistic missile submarines (SSBs) armed with powerful land-attack cruise and ballistic missiles. (Sebastien Roblin, *National Interest*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Unification Minister Lee In-young will be participating in President Moon Jae-in's overseas trip, in a rare move during which he is expected to play a role in promoting peace efforts on the Korean Peninsula, according to diplomatic observers. (Kang Seung Woo, *The Korea Times*)

**International:**

- Seoul asks Moscow to continue helping denuclearization process, but experts question how much Moscow can deliver (Jung Won Ji, *NK News*)

- With regard to the sensitive issue of declaring a formal end to the Korean War, South Korea and the United States are holding "fast-paced and serious" discussions in a "mutually desirable" direction, a South Korean government official said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- Top Chinese diplomat Yang Jiechi met North Korea's ambassador to China on Thursday and expressed Beijing's willingness to maintain high-level interactions and strengthen strategic coordination, China's foreign ministry said. (*Reuters*)
- Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong and his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov emphasized dialogue and diplomacy with North Korea during a meeting in Moscow Wednesday. (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The U.S. Senate foreign relations committee has passed a bill aimed at countering North Korea's repressive censorship and providing outside information to the people of the reclusive North, a cosponsor of the bill said Wednesday. (Byun Duk Kun, *Yonhap*)
- The head of the World Food Programme (WFP) on Thursday called for international cooperation to improve North Korea's food situation, raising concerns over a "growing threat" from extreme weather caused by climate change. (Yonhap)

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Prepared by Caroline Ward, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250924021239/https://mailchi.mp/2e0751afc0a3/hrnk-news-itemstop-chinese-diplomat-meets-north-korea-ambassador-to-beijingsigns-of-activity-detected-at-north-koreas-yongbyon-facility

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**Friday, October 29, 2021**

## Pope's visit to North Korea' might attract attention; A Family of 4 Fled North Korea, Kim Jong-Un Ordered Arrest at All Costs

**Top News:**
'Pope's visit to North Korea' might attract attention... "Fear of justifying the dictatorship and using it for political purposes" (VOA *Korea*, 10/29/2021)
A Family of 4 Fled North Korea, Kim Jong-Un Ordered Arrest at All Costs (*The Epoch Times*, 10/29/2021)

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea appears to be building "townhouses" as part of large-scale housing project in Pyongyang (Daily NK, 10/29/2021)

N. Korea issues "emergency order" to arrest locals who violate nighttime curfew (Daily NK, 10/29/2021)
Printing coupons and eating swans: North Korea innovates amid food, economic woes (Reuters, 10/29/2021)

**International:**
Moon asks Pope Francis to visit N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 10/29/2021)
N. Korea seen preparing to reopen border with China amid economic woes (*Yonhap*, 10/29/2021)
S. Korea, U.S. envoys hold phone talks on N.K. nukes, end-of-war declaration (*Yonhap*, 10/29/2021)
South Korea's Moon meets pope, urges him to visit North Korea (*Reuters*, 10/29/2021)
U.N. committee approves draft resolutions calling for N. Korea to give up nukes(*Yonhap*, 10/29/2021)
U.S. conducting in-depth review of Korean War's end declaration: U.S. official (*Yonhap*, 10/29/2021)

**Top News:**

- HRNK's Greg Scarlatoiu is interviewed about the potential visit of the Pope to North Korea: "If the pope visits Pyongyang, would he have to officiate a mass? Would other priests have to office mass in Pyongyang? They have pretend Catholic priests. They're not real Catholics. A Catholic priest cannot give Holy Communion to a pretend Catholic, especially a pretend Catholic priest. So there are multiple issues on all levels. And for this reason, I think that the papal visit is not going to take place." (*VOA Korea*)
- Recently, a family of four fled North Korea to China after dosing the border guards with sleeping pills. After learning the news, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un declared: "The defectors must be caught and punished no matter the cost!"
  According to The Chosun Ilbo, a South Korean daily newspaper, a family of four in North Korea crossed the Yalu River and escaped to China in the early hours of Oct. 1 by creating a security gap at the border. The family apparently had been making a living from smuggling so they were familiar with the route to China. They were often allowed by the guards to be at the border. (Jessica Mao, *The Epoch Times*)

**In North Korea:**

- Single-story houses with gardens reportedly account for 20% of the new homes being built as part of a large-scale housing project in Taepyong District, one of Pyongyang's outlying districts. North Korean authorities appear to be building townhouses — of a sort — in the suburban district. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean authorities issued an emergency order to the Ministry of Social Security early this month calling for sweeping arrests of locals who violate the nighttime curfew, according to a source. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)

- From printing coupons as replacement cash to breeding ornamental black swans to eat, North Korea is being forced to innovate to handle economic woes and food shortages as anti-pandemic border lockdowns drag on, reports suggest. (Josh Smith, *Reuters*)

**International:**

- South Korean President Moon Jae-in on Friday asked Pope Francis to visit North Korea to bring peace on the Korean Peninsula, and the pope said he is willing to do so if he receives an invitation from the North. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea appears to be making earnest preparations to reopen its train routes with China after a period of COVID-19-induced border controls, Seoul officials said Friday. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)
- The top nuclear envoys of South Korea and the United States had phone talks Friday on stalled nuclear negotiations with North Korea and Seoul's proposal for an end-of-war declaration, Seoul's foreign ministry said Friday. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in met Pope Francis on Friday, giving him a cross made from barbed wire from the peninsula's demilitarized zone and again urging him to visit North Korea. (Philip Pullella, *Reuters*)
- A U.N. General Assembly committee has approved three draft resolutions concerning North Korea, including one reaffirming the Assembly's commitment to the "complete, verifiable and irreversible" abandonment of Pyongyang's nuclear program, its website showed Friday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- The United States is reviewing the possibility of declaring a formal end to the Korean War from various angles, a ranking U.S. diplomat has said, according to a South Korean official visiting the U.S. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Diletta De Luca, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250817231026/https://mailchi.mp/38ee18f5e1a9/hrnk-news-items-popes-visit-to-north-korea-might-attract-attention-a-family-of-4-fled-north-korea-kim-jong-un-ordered-arrest-at-all-costs?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, October 30, 2021**

## VOA Coverage of UN Special Rapporteur's Quintana HRNK Speaking Event; S. Korea, China FMs discuss end-of-war declaration

**Top News:**

VOA Coverage of UN Special Rapporteur's Quintana HRNK Speaking Event (*VOA Korea*, 10/28/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Is North Korea Reopening Its Border with China? (*The National Interest*, 10/29/2021)
N. Korea demands sanctions relief before discussing end-of-war declaration: NIS(*The Korea Herald*, 10/29/2021)
North Korean import disinfection zone busy amid report it may open soon: imagery(*NK News*, 10/29/2021)
Sinpho Secure Boat Basin: Probable Testing Activity (*38 North*, 10/29/2021)
What Is Kim Jong-un Doing in Seclusion? (*The National Interest*, 10/29/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Moon invites pope to NK again as part of peace efforts (*The Korea Herald*, 10/29/2021)
Seoul Turns to Vatican to Salvage Diplomacy with Pyongyang (VOA, 10/29/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
N.K. propaganda outlet calls S. Korea's Nuri space rocket launch 'failure' (*Yonhap*, 10/30/2021)

**International:**
Australia deploys warship to enforce UN sanctions against North Korea (*NK News*, 10/29/2021)
China and Russia submit proposal to ease UN sanctions on North Korea: sources(*NK News*, 10/30/2021)
S. Korea, China FMs discuss end-of-war declaration, cultural issues in Rome(*Yonhap*, 10/30/2021)
U.S. to offer $12 mln in grants to prevent proliferation of N. Korean WMD (*Yonhap*, 10/30/2021)

**Top News:**

- VOA Korea covers The Honorable Tomás Ojea Quintana's discussion of his role as Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the DPRK on his second and final visit to Washington, D.C. (*VOA Korea*)

**In North Korea:**

- Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, North Korea has taken extraordinary efforts to keep its border with China closed. While North Korea has claimed throughout the pandemic that it has zero cases of the coronavirus, its regime appears to have long been fearful that the virus could cross the border from China. (Stephen Silver, *The National Interest*)
- North Korea demanded UN sanctions relief and the suspension of South Korea-US military exercises as preconditions for talks on an end-of-war declaration, the South Korean spy agency said on Thursday. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)

- North Korea may soon open a large COVID-19 disinfection zone near its border with China to resume cross-border trade via rail, South Korea's National Intelligence Service (NIS) claimed Thursday, as NK Pro analysis of satellite imagery shows fresh activity at the zone. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Commercial satellite imagery of the Sinpho South Shipyard from October 28, 2021 indicates continued activity around North Korea's SINPO-class experimental ballistic missile submarine consistent with preparations for additional testing of submarine-launched ballistic missiles. (Peter Makowsky, Jack Liu, Samantha J. Pitz, *38 North*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has been known to disappear from public view for long stretches. During one period in 2020, Kim's disappearance even led to widespread rumors around the world that he was ill or even dead. Earlier this year, Kim emerged from an extended absence appearing to have lost a great deal of weight, leading to another round of speculation about his personal health and his hold on power. (Stephen Silver, *The National Interest*)

**In South Korea:**

- President Moon Jae-in invited Pope Francis to North Korea again as he made another effort to reopen nuclear talks, at a meeting at the Vatican on Friday. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in is again attempting to arrange for Pope Francis to visit North Korea in what appears to be another push by the South Korean leader to resume diplomacy with Pyongyang. (Christy Lee, VOA)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- A North Korean propaganda outlet on Saturday described South Korea's "half-success" launch of its first homegrown space rocket as "a definite failure," saying the South has a long way to go before proving its launch capabilities. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Australia has assigned a warship to monitor North Korean sanctions violations, a routine deployment that follows Canberra's recent signing of a trilateral security pact with the U.S. and U.K. (Chaewong Chung, *NK News*)
- China and Russia submitted a draft proposal to U.N. Security Council nations on Friday calling for the relaxation of North Korea-related sanctions, citing the absence of nuclear and long-range missile testing by Pyongyang since 2017, multiple informed sources told NK News. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- The top diplomats of South Korea and China met in Rome and discussed ways to revive the peace process on the Korean Peninsula and boost cultural ties, Seoul's foreign ministry said Saturday. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. State Department seeks to provide up to US$12 million in grants to entities working to implement U.N. sanctions on North Korea and prevent weapons proliferation by the reclusive state, a public post showed Friday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Irene Kang, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250817231441/https://mailchi.mp/f44360a049e9/hrnk-news-itemsvoa-coverage-of-un-special-rapporteurs-quintana-hrnk-speaking-events-korea-china-fms-discuss-end-of-war-declaration?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, October 31, 2021**

# North Korean Defectors Watch South Korean Dramas at Immigration Camps; The Symbolism Behind the Reparations Trial

**Top News:**
North Korean Defectors Watch South Korean Dramas at Immigration Camps (*RFA*, 10/07/2021)
** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

The Symbolism Behind the Reparations Trial for the Victims of North Korea's Repatriation Project (VOA, 10/09/2021)
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**In North Korea:**
N. Korea accuses U.S. of acquiescing in nuclear proliferation with 'double standards' (*Yonhap*, 10/31/2021)
North says no more sanctions in return for end-of-war talks (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/31/2021)

**In South Korea:**
DSME admits hacking attempts last week (Korea JoongAng Daily, 10/31/2021)
Moon pushes for pope's visit to Pyongyang (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/31/2021)
S. Korea to bid farewell to late former President Roh (*Yonhap*, 10/30/2021)
Unification minister meets with WFP chief, senior Vatican official in Rome (*Yonhap*, 10/31/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
N. Korea accuses S. Korean entertainment industry of helping Netflix (*Yonhap*, 10/31/2021)
No one except for Moon rushing for talks with North Korea (*The Korea Times*, 10/31/2021)

**International:**

Academics involved in North Korea studies are hacked (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 10/31/2021)
S. Korea, U.S. FMs discuss end-of-war declaration, bilateral ties in Rome (*Yonhap*, 10/31/2021)
Vatican working for papal visit to N. Korea: archbishop (*Yonhap*, 10/31/2021)

**Top News:**

- Many North Korean defectors watch various South Korean dramas during their stay in Southeast Asian countries before their arrival in South Korea. According to these defectors, they were allowed to watch these dramas on a wide-screen television until midnight, which served as a form of entertainment in any otherwise boring and squalid environment. (No Jeong-min, RFA)
- On October 14th, a trial will be held to demand reparations for the victims of a North Korean repatriation program. A Japanese court has ordered Kim Jong-un to appear in person at the trial. U.S. experts say that this trial represents the increasing efforts that the international community is making to force North Korea to take responsibility for its human rights violations. (Jo Eunjeong, VOA)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea's foreign ministry on Sunday accused the United States of "acquiescing" in nuclear proliferation around the world based on "double standards," taking issue with the U.S.' recent submarine deal with Australia and other policy moves. The ministry made the accusations in an article, entitled "Is the U.S. really a guardian of the nuclear non-proliferation regime?," claiming that the international community is paying attention to the U.S.' "systematic" violation of the regime. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea demanded that sanctions be lifted as a condition for negotiations to discuss a formal declaration to end the Korean War, a parliamentary audit found on Thursday. The North's stipulation for beginning talks to formally end the war was confirmed during an audit of the National Intelligence Service (NIS) conducted by the National Assembly's intelligence committee. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**In South Korea:**

- Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering (DSME) announced hacking attempts were made last week, but no defense or security-related information was grabbed. DSME is a manufacturer of submarines and a supplier to the South Korean navy. It successfully tested a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) in mid-September and built Korea's first 3,000-ton submarine Dosan Ahn Chang-ho in August. It is currently conducting research to build an indigenous nuclear submarine. DSME released a statement Sunday saying it was aware of hacking attempts made on the company's networks on Oct. 24, and asked the police to investigate the following day. (Lee Tae-hee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Joe Biden met briefly on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in Rome on Saturday and discussed Moon's request to Pope Francis that he visit North Korea for humanitarian purposes. "The pope prayed for peace on the Korean Peninsula and said that he would visit North Korea if invited," Moon was quoted

by his office to have told Biden during their two- to three-minute encounter. (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- South Korea was set to bid farewell to late former President Roh Tae-woo on Saturday, marking the end of a five-day state funeral for a leader who drew both criticism and praise for his role in staging a coup and then embracing democracy. (Lee Haye-ah, *Yonhap*)
- Unification Minister Lee In-young held meetings with the chief of the World Food Program (WFP) and a senior Vatican official during a trip to Rome and discussed issues related to North Korea, the ministry said Sunday. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- North Korea accused the South Korean entertainment industry on Sunday of working in favor of U.S. companies, such as Netflix, through "unfair" deals. The North's propaganda outlet, Meari, said South Korean entertainment firms have turned to Netflix to improve their margins amid a business slump caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. (*Yonhap*)
- President Moon Jae-in is making a pitch for his Korean Peninsula peace initiative during his meetings with the pope and global leaders, but he is facing a limit in drawing desirable responses, as those leaders and countries are not as urgent as Moon, whose presidency will end in May next year, in tackling North Korea issues. (Nam Hyun-woo, *The Korea Times*)

**International:**

- A cyber security company warned on Thursday that hackers connected to North Korea were attempting to break into South Korean computers using an e-mail message disguised as a news update regarding President Roh Tae-woo's death. The company, called East Security, explained that hackers sent e-mails bearing the sender ID “Naver News” to academics and experts working in North Korea-related fields. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The top diplomats of South Korea and the United States met in Rome on Sunday to discuss ways to resume the stalled nuclear talks with North Korea and bolster cooperation in various areas, Seoul's foreign ministry said. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- The Vatican is working on a possible visit by Pope Francis to North Korea, an archbishop has said, after South Korean President Moon Jae-in asked the pope to visit the North to bring peace on the Korean Peninsula. (Kim Deok-hyun, *Yonhap*)

RFA Article (10/07/2021)

****North Korean Defectors Watch South Korean Dramas at Immigration Camps**
**Reporter: No Jeong-min**

Many North Korean defectors watch various South Korean dramas during their stay in Southeast Asian countries before their arrival in South Korea. According to these defectors,

they were allowed to watch these dramas on a wide-screen television until midnight, which served as a form of entertainment in any otherwise boring and squalid environment.
Experts have stated that this may be an effort by the authorities in these countries to introduce Korean society to the defectors in advance.
This is reporter No Jeong-min.

**From Historical to Modern Entertainment Dramas**
Kim Seo-young and Lee Su-jin (pseudonyms requested for the safety of their families in North Korea), are two defectors who were imprisoned in an immigration camp located in a country they entered in 2019. They have stated that they will never forget the South Korean dramas they watched there.

The two recently told RFA that they cured their boredom by watching South Korean dramas in the immigration camps they were sent to. This suggests that watching South Korean dramas was helpful for them while they spent time in immigration camps with little else to do.

**Kim Seo-young (pseudonym):** The only thing we could do while staying at immigration camps was to watch South Korean dramas, such as 'Dongi,' 'The Legend of the Blue Sea,' and 'High Kick Through the Roof.' They prepared it for us in advance. The television cut off at midnight.

**Lee Su-jin (pseudonym):** There were many Korean drama DVDs. There was a huge television in the camp, so I kept putting the DVDs in to watch those dramas. I think they prepared those DVDs for us, since we couldn't leave.

The South Korean dramas the defectors watched spanned a variety of genres, including historical dramas, modern dramas, and entertainment dramas. Back when there were no time restrictions, defectors reportedly stayed up all night to watch these dramas.North Korean defectors and human rights groups view the screening of South Korean dramas in these immigration camps as a positive thing.

The Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, Greg Scarlatoiu, told the RFA on October 5th that it can be seen as an effort of the related authorities to improve the poor quality of life for North Korean defectors in these camps.

**Greg Scarlatoiu:** We all know that the immigration camps are in poor conditions. It seems like related authorities are trying to improve the defectors' lives to the best of their ability by showing them these South Korean dramas. Being able to watch these dramas before arriving in South Korea is truly a great opportunity.

North Korean expert Moon Sung-hee, editor in charge of the Korean Peninsula section of the Shukan Kinyobi magazine of Japan, has expressed that it may be a kindness that the related

authorities offer the defectors on their way to South Korea. By watching these South Korean dramas, they are able to get a taste of the free world.

**Dr. Moon Sung-hee**: It may be a type of training for the defectors, who find themselves suddenly headed to South Korea. The authorities in these countries might show them the dramas thinking that some of the defectors might have not had a chance to watch them before, or as a way to send the message that they are free to watch whatever they want from now on. It could be a way of welcoming the defectors to a world of freedom.

**Greg Scarlatoiu:** While some North Koreans may have watched South Korean dramas in their hometowns, watching the dramas at immigration camps will make them think, 'South Korea must be able to make these great dramas because it is a country that respects the freedom of expression of citizens, unlike North Korea.'

Olivia Schieber, a senior researcher of the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), told RFA that the defectors must have been able to watch South Korean dramas at local immigration camps, since the dramas are popular beyond North Korea and even in Southeast Asian countries, adding that this is an example of the influence of South Korea's culture on North Korea and the rest of the world.

**Poor Standards of Living in Police Detention Centers and Immigration Camps**

Kim and Lee confessed that life in the police detention centers and the immigration camps was very difficult.

The two recalled that the detention center they stayed in for a week was very uncomfortable since it was very crowded and had an open bathroom in their cell.

**Kim Seo-young (pseudonym)**: After completing some procedures at the police station, we paid a fee and went into a small cell. The cell was tiny, but there were about ten people, all women. The air quality was very bad, and we had to eat there, even though the toilet was in there, too. It was very difficult.

**Lee Su-jin (pseudonym):** When we were in the police station, the toilet itself was open and was in the cell, which made me think 'Is this really a life for a human?' There was a cell for men right in front of ours, so what women could do was very limited.

The facilities of the immigration camp they were sent to after their deportation trial was better. The room was spacious, bathrooms were separated from the room, and they could not only go for a walk every other day, but also could buy some food.

**Kim Seo-young (pseudonym)**: The life in the immigration camp was decent. It was pretty spacious. They provided meals, although it was not to my taste, but there was a person who visited to sell goods, and he knew some Korean words. Simple words like banana or apple.

There was a mart there, where we could visit every other day when we went out for a walk. There, we bought chips with local money.

Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu emphasized that one must acknowledge the Southeast Asian countries' efforts to protect the defectors, although the facilities may be substandard.

**Greg Scarlatoiu**: I have heard that it is very difficult to live in immigration camps. But what must be recognized is that the governments of these countries send these defectors to South Korea or other countries, unlike China. Needless to say, as a human rights organization, we will make efforts to improve the lives of the defectors in immigration camps, but one must acknowledge the role of the authorities in these countries in protecting the defectors.

In fact, Kim stated that she could endure the discomfort of immigration camps because it was a part of the process of going to South Korea.

**Kim Seo-young (pseudonym)**: While many view it as a prison, it is considered as a part of the journey to South Korea. The feeling was definitely different.

According to the two, there weren't many defectors other than eleven who crossed the Mekong River. Many infer that the strengthened border security between North Korea and China, the increased cost of defection to China, and the spread of Covid-19 may have caused the sharp drop in the number of North Korean defectors.

*Translated by Jiwoo Hwang, HRNK Research Intern

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VOA Article (10/09/2021)

****The Symbolism Behind the Reparations Trial for the Victims of North Korea's Repatriation Project**

**Reporter: Jo Eunjeong**

On October 14th, a trial will be held to demand reparations for the victims of a North Korean repatriation program. A Japanese court has ordered Kim Jong-un to appear in person at the trial. U.S. experts say that this trial represents the increasing efforts that the international community is making to force North Korea to take responsibility for its human rights violations. This is reporter Jo Eunjeong.

The first trial will be held on October 14th, and was filed by five North Korean defectors living in Japan against the North Korean government.

U.S. experts say that this trial, which is the first civil trial in Japan to demand reparations for North Korea's human rights violations, is incredibly symbolic and an important move.

In a telephone interview with VOA on October 8th, Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights in the Department of State, stated that, “This case and other national court cases that have been brought, reflect a momentum building around the need for accountability for North Koreans who have committed crimes against humanity... you have to see the case as well as the Warmbier case, You have to see these cases as part of a broader framework which is setting the groundwork for eventual prosecution of North Koreans responsible for crimes against humanity.”

Roberta Cohen explained that the courts in multiple countries and private organizations have become more active after the COI (or the Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) stated that North Korea should be held accountable for its human rights violations in its most recent report, released in 2014.

Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, Greg Scarlatoiu, explained that, “The significance of the latest case to be brought up in a Japanese court, it’s a civil case of course, is that there is responsibility for committing grave human rights abuses and crimes against humanity and responsibility pursuant to the Nuremberg Principles goes all the way up the chain of command, all the way up to Kim Jong Un.”

Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu states that these trials will set a precedent that will allow victims to hold North Korea accountable for its human rights violations against both North Korean citizens and foreigners.

The New York-based international human rights organization Human Rights Watch issued a statement on October 8th, appealing for active support from the Japanese government and the international community, as the lawsuit for damages filed by the five victims of the North Korean repatriation program in Japan will be held soon.

Human Rights Watch urged North Korean leader Kim Jong-un to pay reparations to the victims of the repatriation program and their families.

It also urged the international community to recognize decades-long "cruel acts" in connection with the North Korean repatriation project in Japan and support these efforts.

Phil Robertson, Deputy Director of Human Rights Watch’s Asia Division, told VOA via email on October 8th that, “They have suffered unimaginable, systematic violations of their rights... This massive historic abuse must be undone and since this occurred to people residing in Japan, it is the duty of Tokyo to lead the way in demanding justice and accountability for all those deceived by the ‘Paradise on Earth’ campaign.”
Japan's Tokyo District Court ordered Chairman Kim Jong-un to appear in court at a trial to be held on October 14th.

The lawsuit was filed against the North Korean government in 2018 by five Korean victims and their families who had escaped from North Korea and went to Japan between 1959 and 1984.

They claimed 100 million yen per person (about $900,000) in reparations, stating that North Korea did not only lure them to North Korea with promises of a “paradise on Earth” just to overwork and starve them, but that it violated even their most basic human rights, including restriction of movement and discrimination on the basis of identity.

Eiko Kawasaki, the 79-year-old who led the lawsuit, explained to VOA that she hopes that those in charge in North Korea will face substantial legal punishment, and cares less about the actual sum of compensation money, stating that, “I believe that individuals or countries should be punished by law for ignoring human rights and suppressing human freedom. The 100 million yen compensation money is not the real problem. Through this trial, I hope we let the world know that no matter how powerful a dictator may be, they are not above the law.”

The plaintiff's lawyer said at a press conference last month that he does not expect Chairman Kim Jong-un to attend the trial or pay reparations, but said he hopes this issue will be raised during negotiations between Japan and North Korea in the future.

The latest version of the COI Report, released in 2014, has classified North Korea’s repatriation project as an anti-humanitarian crime, like kidnapping or forced disappearance.

This is Jo Eunjeong with VOA News.

*Translated by Audrey Gregg, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Michelle Dang, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250817231654/https://mailchi.mp/2fb683f1ffee/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-korean-defectors-watch-south-korean-dramas-at-immigration-campsthe-symbolism-behind-the-reparations-trial?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

# 11. NOVEMBER

### Monday, November 1, 2021

## U.N. Special Rapporteur Quintana - "China Told Me Not to Speak About the North Korean Defector Issue"

**Top News:**
U.N. Special Rapporteur Quintana: "China Told Me Not to Speak About the North Korean Defector Issue" (*MBC News*, 10/27/2021)
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China: "Don't Mention the North Korean Defectors"...Rejects UN Rapporteur's "Mandate" (*Maeil Business Newspaper*, 10/27/2021)
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**In North Korea:**
New time horizon on North Korea's border shutdown? (*North Korea Economic Watch*, 10/31/2021)
North says no more sanctions in return for end-of-war talks (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/01/2021)
North Korea strengthens financial control, tackles e-payments in new laws (*NK News*, 11/01/2021)
North Korean fishing boats may be resuming greater activity in East Sea: Imagery(*NK News*, 11/01/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Moon urges solidarity to tackle global supply chain crisis (*The Korea Herald*, 11/01/2021)
Moon pushes for pope's visit to Pyongyang (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/01/2021)
Moon says Pope Francis stated intent to visit N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 11/01/2021)
S. Korea to develop homegrown lightweight torpedoes by 2028(*Yonhap*, 11/01/2021)
S. Korea, U.S. kick off joint air exercise (*Yonhap*, 11/01/2021)
Unification ministry to discuss resuming Panmunjom tours with UNC (*Yonhap*, 11/01/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Seoul urges Pyongyang to accept proposed visit by pope (*Yonhap*, 11/01/2021)

**International:**

Foreign minister pushes for end of war in talks with U.S. envoy (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/01/2021)
Military monitors NK for signs of missile test (*The Korea Herald*, 11/01/2021)
Nuke envoys of S. Korea, China discuss end-of-war declaration for NK dialogue(*Yonhap*, 11/01/2021)
South Korea, U.S. quietly hold joint air exercises amid calls for talks with North Korea (*Reuters*, 11/01/2021)
S. Korea, U.S. discussing Washington's nuke policy review on 'various occasions': Seoul official (*Yonhap*, 10/31/2021)
Talk of possible shift in U.S. nuke policy rekindles questions over America's security assurances for allies (*Yonhap*, 11/01/2021)
USFK chief stands firm on alliance on visit to JSA (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/01/2021)
US, ROK hint at disagreements on ending Korean War after top diplomats meet (*NK News*, 10/31/2021)
Why Kishida is unlikely to improve Japan's ties with the two Koreas (*NK News*, 10/31/2021)

**Top News:**

- Tomás Ojea Quintana, the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in North Korea, stated that China has asked him to avoid talking about the issue of North Korean defectors within its borders. During an online conference hosted by the U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, Quintana said, "Several times the Chinese have asked me to 'refrain' from speaking on the issue of North Korean escapees in China." (Son Ryung, *MBC News*)
- Tomás Ojea Quintana, the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in North Korea, stated, "Several times the Chinese have asked me to 'refrain' from speaking on the issue of North Korean escapees in China," adding that this issue is within his mandate. Special Rapporteur Quintana spoke at a conference hosted by the D.C.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea. (*Maeil Business Newspaper*)

**In North Korea:**

- There have been many rumors on when the North Korean government might end the current shutdown and restore the border trade with China to a somewhat normal, pre-pandemic flow. A recent data point from Radio Free Asia reports that North Koreans have been told the hardships will last at least until 2025. (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, *North Korea Economic Watch*)
- North Korea demanded that sanctions be lifted as a condition for negotiations to discuss a formal declaration to end the Korean War, included the lifting of sanctions on mineral exports and imports of refined oil along with the suspension of joint training exercises between South Korea and the United States. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- North Korea has established new laws to strengthen organizational control over markets and financial systems, that aim to improve the state's ability to raise revenue. DPRK also passes laws on rail freight, pollution and farm animals. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean fishing activities in the East Sea may be returning to some form of normalcy, as satellite imagery suggests more vessels are leaving a major port on the East Coast to head out to sea. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- President Moon Jae-in on Sunday attended a global supply chain summit that was convened by US President Joe Biden in an apparent move to rally allies in reshaping the global supply ecosystem less dependent on China. For Moon, support from both the US and China is crucial in resuming diplomacy with a defiant North Korea, a last-ditch effort to cement his legacy before he leaves office in May. (Lee Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)
- President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Joe Biden met briefly on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in Rome on Saturday and discussed Moon's request to Pope Francis that he visit North Korea for humanitarian purposes. "The pope prayed for peace on the Korean Peninsula and said that he would visit North Korea if invited," Moon was quoted by his office to have told Biden during their two- to three-minute encounter. (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- President Moon Jae-in said Monday that Pope Francis stated his intention to visit North Korea during their meeting at the Vatican last week. Pope Francis prayed as always for peace on the Korean Peninsula and stated his intention to visit North Korea," Moon wrote on Facebook before departing Rome. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea approved a plan Monday to develop homegrown lightweight torpedoes by 2028 to enhance the Navy's anti-submarine capabilities. The move came after North Korea test-fired a new submarine-launched ballistic missile last month, in a development that underscored the need for the South to reinforce its underwater defense capabilities. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the United States kicked off a combined annual air exercise Monday, a military source said, in a low-key manner apparently to back ongoing diplomacy to resume dialogue with North Korea. (*Yonhap*)
- The unification ministry said Monday it will begin discussions with the U.S.-led United Nations Command (UNC) to resume tours to the inter-Korean border village of Panmunjom as South Korea began its "living with COVID-19" scheme meant to phase out coronavirus restrictions amid a rising vaccination rate. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The South Korean government on Monday urged North Korea to respond positively to a suggestion that the pope visit there, expressing hope for progress in efforts to promote regional peace. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong pushed for a formal declaration to end the 1950-53 Korean War during his meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on the sidelines of the G-20 Summit in Rome on Sunday. (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korean and US intelligence are closely monitoring for signs of North Korea's next missile test, the military said Monday in response to satellite images showing preparations to launch a submarine-launched ballistic missile for the second time since October. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- The top nuclear envoys of South Korea and China held a videoconference Monday to discuss measures for an early resumption of the Korean peace process, including the proposed declaration of a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the United States kicked off joint aerial drills on Monday, a military official in Seoul said, amid tensions over North Korea's recent missile tests and calls for a restart of denuclearisation talks. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- South Korea and the United States have been discussing the latter's nuclear policy review on "various occasions," a Seoul official said Sunday, amid reports that Washington is mulling a policy shift feared to weaken military deterrence. (*Yonhap*)
- Talk of the United States' possible policy shift to reduce its use of nuclear arms under the Joe Biden administration is raising anew consequential questions over the future of America's security commitments to South Korea and other allies. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- United States Forces Korea (USFK) commander Paul LaCamera visited the Panmunjom Joint Security Area (JSA) on Friday and promised that the United States would defend South Korea in the event of war. Describing the JSA as a "frontline of freedom," LaCamera pledged that the United States would defend South Korea on a Friday visit to the area with its iconic blue houses that straddle the border between the two Koreas. (Michael Lee, Park Yong-Han, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The top diplomats of the U.S. and South Korea met on Sunday to discuss North Korea-related issues, signaling broad agreement on the need to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. But readouts from Washington and Seoul after the meeting hinted at possible differences of opinion on an end-of-war declaration, a measure that South Korean President Moon Jae-in has prioritized in recent months. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- New Japanese prime minister unlikely to break through Tokyo's disillusionment with Seoul and disinterest in Pyongyang. (Yeo Hyun-jun, *NK News*)

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MBC News Article (10/27/2021)

****U.N. Special Rapporteur Quintana: "China Told Me Not to Speak About the North Korean Defector Issue"**

**Reporter: Son Ryung**

Tomás Ojea Quintana, the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in North Korea, stated that China has asked him to avoid talking about the issue of North Korean defectors within its borders.

During an online conference hosted by the U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, Quintana said, "Several times the Chinese have asked me to 'refrain' from speaking on the issue of North Korean escapees in China."

He explained, "I have been looking into this issue since I began my term as a Special Rapporteur, and I believe that it is within my mandate," adding that, "it has been taken as a matter of principle, but this is what I believe."

He stated, "We believe that 1,170 North Koreans that were arrested in China after the border closed last year face repatriation."

Special Rapporteur Quintana also pointed out, "the North Korean people have had to struggle for their livelihoods every day. They trade, they do other activities, they try to survive. But at the same time, the element of oppression and violence of the system prevails."

*Translated by Audrey Gregg, HRNK Research Intern

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Maeil Business Newspaper Article (10/27/2021)

****China: "Don't Mention the North Korean Defectors"... Rejects UN Rapporteur's "Mandate"**
**Reporter: Yonhap News**

Tomás Ojea Quintana, the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in North Korea, stated, "Several times the Chinese have asked me to 'refrain' from speaking on the issue of North Korean escapees in China," adding that this issue is within his mandate.

On October 27th, Special Rapporteur Quintana spoke at a conference hosted by the D.C.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea.

He explained, "I have been looking into this issue since I began my term as a Special Rapporteur, and I believe that it is within my mandate," adding that, "it has been taken as a matter of principle, but this is what I believe." He vowed to continue to monitor the issue of North Korean defectors in China.

In a letter to the Chinese government that Quintana wrote in August, he stated, “We believe that 1,170 North Koreans that were arrested in China after the border closed last year face repatriation.”

In the letter, he also revealed that he had reason to believe that the Chinese government had repatriated more than 50 North Koreans who had been detained for more than a year on July 14th. He also inquired about the Chinese government’s position on this incident, the legal basis for arrest and detention, and the current status of those North Koreans.

During the conference, Quintana added that North Korea has never been more isolated, saying that the Covid-19 pandemic has strengthened the Juche principle of self-reliance and works in favor of hard-liners in North Korea.

He also pointed out that, “the so-called ‘socialist system’ has failed completely in North Korea,” and that, “the [North Korean] people have had to struggle for their livelihoods every day. They trade, they do other activities, they try to survive. But at the same time, the element of oppression and violence of the system prevails.

Special Rapporteur Quintana has proposed a "two-track approach" that can be used to hold North Korea accountable for armed provocations and human rights abuses while easing some sanctions for North Korean citizens.

After Quintana submitted a report to the U.N. on October 22nd detailing the human rights abuses in North Korea, the country responded, calling Quintana, “part of a U.S.-backed scheme”.

*Translated by Audrey Gregg, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Teresa Kim, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250818135613/https://mailchi.mp/ca9bd2a07e36/hrnk-news-items-un-special-rapporteur-quintana-china-told-me-not-to-speak-about-the-north-korean-defector-issue?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, November 2, 2021**

## Unification minister, WHO chief agree to cooperate for humanitarian aid to N.K.

**In North Korea:**
Explosion at Chongjin chemical and textile plant leaves several workers injured(*Daily NK*, 11/01/2021)
Fighting North Korean Human Rights Abuses (*Inside Sources*, 11/01/2021)
Lack of cabbage makes it difficult for N. Koreans to make kimchi (*Daily NK*, 11/02/2021)
North Korean ambassador to UK attends UN climate conference in Glasgow (*NK News*, 11/02/2021)
North Korean fishing boats may be resuming greater activity in East Sea (*NK Pro*, 11/01/2021)
North Korea preparing rail crossing at Russian border for possible trade restart (*NK Pro*, 11/02/2021)
North Korea reports no COVID cases after again defending its virus controls (*NK News*, 11/02/2021)
Some N. Korean workers welcome blackouts in Chinese factories (*Daily NK*, 11/02/2021)
Suspects in murder of Ministry of Social Security officer's wife apprehended (*Daily NK*, 11/01/21)

**In South Korea:**
Is the South Korea Nuclear Umbrella Worth the Risk to America? (*The National Interest*, 11/02/2021)
Pope Francis unlikely to visit N. Korea in winter: Cheong Wa Dae (*Yonhap*, 11/02/2021)
Seoul vows efforts to implement inter-Korean deal on forestry cooperation (*Yonhap*, 11/02/2021)
S. Korea, U.S. hold deputy-level talks on N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 11/02/2021)
Unification minister, WHO chief agree to cooperate for humanitarian aid to N.K.(*Yonhap*, 11/02/2021)
Unification ministry to discuss resuming Panmunjom tours (*The Korea Times*, 11/01/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Will forestry cooperation speed up inter-Korean talks? (*The Korea Herald*, 11/02/2021)

**International:**
China and Russia's new appeal to UN for North Korea sanctions relief (*NK Pro*,11/02/2021)
China Aids and Abets North Korea's Abuse of Christians (*The National Interest*, 11/02/2021)
Construction near DPRK-China border bridge latest sign land trade may resume (*NK News*, 11/02/2021)
Nuke envoys of S. Korea, Japan discuss Korea peace process (*The Korea Herald*, 11/02/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- An explosion at Chongjin Chemical and Textile Factory in North Hamgyong Province reportedly left several workers injured. The factory was conducting chemical

experiments in accordance with the party's "self-reliance" policy at the time of the explosion. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)

- A recurrent theme at a lavish Washington dinner marking the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea was how great it would be if the committee 20 years from now had outlived its usefulness. By that time, Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director, would hope the conditions that make North Korea the world's worst violator of the rights of its citizenry would have vanished. (Donald Kirk, *Inside Sources*)
- Economic difficulties are reportedly forcing residents of Yanggang Province to give up making winter kimchi for the second straight year. In a telephone conversation with Daily NK on Monday, a source in Yanggang Province said people usually begin the *kimjang* in mid-October. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean Ambassador to the U.K. Choe Il joined the 26th U.N. Climate Change Conference (COP26) on Monday in Glasgow, Scotland, one of the first international conferences a DPRK delegation has attended in person in nearly two years. Choe reportedly sat through South Korean President Moon Jae-in's address at the conference, in which Moon pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on the Korean Peninsula through forestry cooperation with North Korea. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- North Korean fishing activities in the East Sea may be returning to some form of normalcy, as satellite imagery suggests more vessels are leaving a major port on the East Coast to head out to sea. The development comes after a port at Chongjin appeared tightly packed with fleets of small-sized fishing vessels until early this year, amid reports that the country's stringent COVID-19 quarantine rules were limiting commercial fishing. (Won-Gi Jung, *NK Pro*)
- North Korea is conducting major new construction on railway facilities at its narrow border with Russia, *NK Pro* analysis of satellite imagery shows, as signs mount of an impending resumption of rail freight trade with Russia and China. The new development comes nearly two years after the DPRK shut all land border crossings at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and as it appears to be preparing to increase imports to address economic problems. (Colin Zwirko, *NK Pro*)
- North Korea has tested an additional 691 people for COVID-19 and found no positive cases, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), after the country's state media defended its pandemic measures as "realistic and appropriate." According to the WHO's weekly situation report, the DPRK screened 109 people with flu-like illness and severe acute respiratory infections and 582 health workers from Oct. 15-21. The country now says it has conducted polymerase chain reaction tests on a cumulative 43,464 people, while collecting 86,654 samples. (Bryan Betts, *NK News*)
- With China experiencing acute power shortages, factories employing North Korean workers are also suffering blackouts. Laborers are unable to work when this happens, but a source says some workers welcome the situation. (Mun Dong Hui, *Daily NK*)

- The suspects in the killing of the wife of a North Hamgyong Province Ministry of Social Security officer in late September have recently been apprehended, Daily NK has learned. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- North Korea's continued pursuit of nuclear weapons has encouraged greater South Korean interest in developing nuclear weapons. Two months ago popular support for constructing a nuclear deterrent hit 69 percent in the south. (Doug Bandow, *The National Interest*)
- SEOUL, Nov. 2 (Yonhap) -- Pope Francis is unlikely to visit North Korea in the winter, although it is difficult to predict when the trip will happen, the Cheong Wa Dae spokesperson said Tuesday. President Moon Jae-in asked the pope during their meeting at the Vatican last week to visit North Korea to help foster peace on the Korean Peninsula. The pope responded that he would do so if he received an invitation from the North. (*Yonhap*)
- SEOUL, Nov. 2 (Yonhap) -- The unification ministry on Tuesday vowed efforts to push for inter-Korean cooperation in the forestry sector as agreed to in an earlier deal, after President Moon Jae-in again stated on the global stage that Seoul will seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on the peninsula in cooperation with Pyongyang. Moon was addressing an annual U.N. climate conference in Glasgow on Monday (local time) that brought together more than 100 world leaders, including U.S. President Joe Biden. Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a written message to the session. (*Yonhap*)
- WASHINGTON/SEOUL, Nov. 2 (Yonhap) -- Senior officials from South Korea and the United States held talks in Washington on Monday on ways to restart dialogue with North Korea, the State Department said. U.S. Deputy Special Representative for the DPRK Jung Pak hosted a "deputy-level consultation meeting" with her South Korean counterpart, Rim Kap-soo, according to the department. (*Yonhap*)
- SEOUL, Nov. 2 (Yonhap) -- South Korea's minister in charge of inter-Korean relations held a series of meetings with heads of international organizations in Geneva this week to discuss North Korea issues, his office said Tuesday, amid brisk talks between Seoul and Washington on providing humanitarian assistance to the reclusive state. (*Yonhap*)
- The unification ministry said Monday it will begin discussions with the U.S.-led United Nations Command (UNC) to resume tours to the inter-Korean border village of Panmunjom as South Korea began its "living with COVID-19" scheme meant to phase out coronavirus restrictions amid a rising vaccination rate. (*The Korea Times*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- President Moon Jae-in made another overture toward North Korea at a UN climate summit Monday, suggesting planting trees together to reduce carbon emissions on the Korean Peninsula and pledging to make good on a 3-year-old promise in an apparent bid to reengage Pyongyang. (Lee Ji-Yoon, *The Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- China and Russia submitted a draft proposal to U.N. Security Council (UNSC) nations last Friday calling for the relaxation of North Korea-related sanctions, citing the absence of nuclear and long-range missile testing by Pyongyang over the last four years. (NK Pro)
- If you tell them that you went to a church and believed in Jesus, they would not stop at just beating you." These are the words of North Korean defector Lee Kang In, quoted in a report released last week by UK-based human rights group Korea Future. The report adds substantial evidence to what the world already knows—North Korea is not just a national security threat; it is the world's worst violator of human rights. (Arielle Del Turco, *The National Interest*)
- China appears to be moving forward with the construction of a land port on its side of the New Yalu River Bridge, according to recent bidding announcements, a development that aligns with reports that cross-border land trade may resume soon. (Ethan Jewell, NK News)
- The top nuclear negotiators of South Korea and Japan held phone talks Tuesday to explore measures for progress in stalled denuclearization efforts, Seoul's foreign ministry said. (*The Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Yeji Chung, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250818140248/https://mailchi.mp/dc83dc7c6ae2/hrnk-news-items-unification-minister-who-chief-agree-to-cooperate-for-humanitarian-aid-to-nk?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, November 3, 2021**

## Fighting North Korean Human Rights Abuses; Political Obstacles in Getting Humanitarian Aide to North Korea

**Top News:**
Fighting North Korean Abuses (*Inside Sources*, 11/01/2021)
Political Obstacles Getting Humanitarian Aid to North Korea (*KEI*, 11/01/2021)

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea in final stage of building 10,000 apartment units in capital: state media(*Yonhap*, 11/03/2021)
North Korea may launch space rock next year: expert (*the Korea Harold*, 11/03/2021)
North Korea seeks to boost education with toy-like robots (*Reuters*, 11/03/2021)
North Korean soldier injured picking chestnuts in leader Kim Jong Un's name (RFA, 11/03/2021)

**International:**

Accidental conflict with N. Korea unlikely for time being: U.S. military chief (*Yonhap*, 11/03/2021)

China, Russia urge UNSC to end key sanction on North Korea (*AP News*, 11/03/2021)

China urges US to acknowledge North Korea's 'denuclearization measures' (*NK News*, 11/03/2021)

N. Korea's U.N. ambassador calls for dismantlement of UNC (*Yonhap*, 11/03/2021)

**In Top News**

- A recurrent theme at a lavish Washington dinner marking the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea was how great it would be if the committee 20 years from now had outlived its usefulness. By that time, Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director, would hope the conditions that make North Korea the world's worst violator of the rights of its citizenry would have vanished. (Donald Kirk, *Inside Sources*)
- In a recent report by Radio Free Asia, sources in Sinuiju, near the Chinese border, say residents have been told to expect food shortages until 2025. "Some of the residents are saying that the situation right now is so serious they don't know if they can even survive the coming winter," said the source, according to RFA. "They say that telling us to endure hardship until 2025 is the same as telling us to starve to death." Despite the urgent need, experts caution that that there are several obstacles to getting humanitarian aid to people in North Korea. (Terrence Matsuo, *KEI*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea is nearing the completion of a major housing project to construct 10,000 high-rise apartment units in its capital eight months after breaking ground, state media said Wednesday.(*Yonhap*)
- North Korea may launch a space rocket next year as part of the regime's program to enhance weapons capabilities amid long-stalled denuclearization talks with the US, a state-run think tank report says. (Ahn Sung-mi, *Yonhap*)
- A toy-like robot with scowling blue eyes and a North Korean flag across its chest roams around a classroom at a university in Pyongyang in a recent demonstration of tools aimed at helping children learn basic maths, music and English. (Sangmi Cha, *Reuters*)
- A North Korean soldier fell from a tree and broke his arm after authorities mobilized his unit to harvest chestnuts to be sold below cost in Pyongyang to demonstrate leader Kim Jong Un's love for the privileged citizens of the capital, his father told RFA. (Chang Gyu Ahn, Leejin Jun, Eugene Whong, *RFA*)

**International:**

- An accidental conflict with North Korea is unlikely anytime soon with Pyongyang maintaining a very tight grip on its military, the chairman of U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff said Wednesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- China and Russia are urging the U.N. Security Council to end a host of sanctions against North Korea including a ban on exports of seafood and textiles, a cap on imports of refined petroleum products and a prohibition on its citizens working overseas and sending home their earnings. (Edith M. Lederer, *AP News*)
- China's foreign ministry said North Korea has taken "denuclearization measures" and urged the U.S. to re-engage with Pyongyang, days after Beijing and Moscow sent a joint proposal to the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) seeking DPRK sanctions relief. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- North Korea's ambassador to the United Nations (UN) has called for the dismantlement of the U.S.-led United Nations Command (UNC) on the Korean Peninsula, claiming it is only serving the political and military interests of Washington. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Lauren Morrison, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250818140616/https://mailchi.mp/f9ac94a09cfe/hrnk-news-items-fighting-north-korean-human-rights-abuses-political-obstacles-in-getting-humanitarian-aide-to-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, November 4, 2021**

## HRNK News Items

**Top News:**
[VOA News Today] October 12, 2021 featuring HRNK's Executive Director on the addition of Korean words to the Oxford Dictionary. (VOA *News*)

High-definition satellite images of the No. 3 Toseong-ri Correctional Center in Sinuiju, North Korea. (VOA *News*, 11/04/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Inside North Korea: 12 must-see photos for 2022 and beyond (NK *News*, 11/04/2021)
N. Korea calls for thorough wintertime anti-virus measures (*Yonhap*, 11/04/2021)
N. Korean Cabinet calls on commercial sector to eradicate the "import disease"(*Daily* NK, 11/04/2021)
N. Korea's new foreign currency vouchers still facing an uphill battle to broader circulation (*Daily* NK, 11/04/2021)

N. Korea in final preparations to reopen border with China: official (The *Korea Herald*, 11/04/2021)

**In South Korea:**
CFC chief LaCamera hints at possible adjustment in OPCON transfer plan (*The Korea Herald*, 11/04/2021)
[Kim Myong-sik] Roh Tae-woo missed for embracing leadership role (*The Korea Herald*, 11/04/2021)
Korean War remains of 3 British troops to be buried at UN cemetery (The *Korea Herald*, 11/04/2021)
Military reports 9 additional COVID-19 cases (The *Korea Herald*, 11/04/2021)

**International:**
China's objectives for Korea include denuclearization, keeping U.S. from border: State Dept.(*Yonhap*, 11/04/2021)
Chinese city to expand border facilities with North Korea (*Reuters*, 11/04/2021)
The Houthis Might be Using North Korean Missiles (*The National Interest*, 11/04/2021)
Pope's N. Korea visit possible in accordance with Pyongyang's determination: Seoul minister (Yonhap, 11/04/2021)

**In Top News:**

- Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea Greg Scarlatoiu told VOA on October 8th that the addition of Korean words to the Oxford Dictionary will lead to economic development and increased influence for South Korea. Scarlatoiu himself is from Europe and speaks four languages, including Korean. It's impossible to deny that South Korea is a developed country now. (*VOA News Today*)
- An American private organization has released for the first time the latest data, including high-definition satellite images of the No. 3 Toseong-ri Correctional Center in Sinuiju, North Korea. The group is particularly concerned about the forced labor of prisoners here and has urged North Korean authorities to comply with the minimum UN standard for the treatment of prisoners, called the Nelson Mandela Rules. (Kim Young-Kwon, *VOA News Today*)

**In North Korea:**

- NK News unveils its annual 2022 wall calendar, a limited edition product designed to help support independent journalism on North Korea. Since 2012, the NK News wall calendar has been the bestselling and most sought-after NK News merchandise item, featuring photos from throughout North Korea. After a one-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the calendar returns for 2022 with twelve brand new, high-resolution images that capture rarely seen aspects of life inside North Korea. (*NK News*)
- North Korea called Thursday for thorough preventive measures against COVID-19 for the winter season. The Rodong Sinmun, an organ of the North's Workers' Party,

highlighted the importance of remaining vigilant against the pandemic, saying the virus can be transmitted even through falling snow. (*Yonhap*)

- The party committee of North Hamgyong Province recently called in commercial officials to convey a Cabinet order calling on the commercial sector to "thoroughly" eradicate the "import disease," i.e., a dependence on imports. In a telephone conversation with Daily NK on Wednesday, a source in the province said the provincial party committee gathered officials in the commercial sector at 10 AM on Oct. 27 to issue a Cabinet order calling on them to "thoroughly eradicate the import disease" and develop the commercial sector by commoditizing domestically produced products since "nobody knows when the border will reopen." (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)
- Though North Korean authorities recently issued "foreign currency vouchers" to bolster state finances, they have yet to put them into full-scale circulation. The authorities reportedly will decide how widely to use them after trial operations at select foreign exchange shops, but relevant preparations to put them into wider use seem wanting. Multiple Daily NK sources in North Korea recently said customers at foreign exchange shops and department stores in Pyongyang and other major cities now pay using the vouchers. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea is in the final stage of preparations to reopen its train routes with China following prolonged border controls to stave off the coronavirus, a unification ministry official said Thursday. The North is expected to first resume cargo transportation via land routes, the official said, though adding it's hard to tell exactly when the operations would begin. "Our assessment is that various preparations for the resumption of goods exchange through train routes are at the final stage," the official told reporters on background. (*The Korea Herald*)

**In South Korea:**

- The top US military commander in South Korea hinted Thursday that the two allies could adjust their plan for a conditions-based transfer of wartime operational control (OPCON). Speaking at a webinar, Gen. Paul LaCamera, the chief of the South Korea-US Combined Forces Command, touched on the envisioned OPCON transition, saying, "Most plans never survive first contact. "Seoul and Washington have been working on the bilaterally agreed-upon transfer - a process that has been delayed due in part to a COVID-19-driven scaling-down of an allied program to test South Korea's capabilities to retake the OPCON. (*The Korea Herald*)
- Since gaining independence after World War II, the nation has had 12 presidents. The world admires the postwar history of South Korea as a rare success story, but the fates of our former presidents only remind us what a rugged path we have had to arrive here now. (*The Korea Herald*)
- The remains of three British troops killed during the 1950-53 Korean War will be buried at the UN Memorial Cemetery in South Korea's southeastern port city of Busan later this month, the veterans affairs ministry said Thursday. (*The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea's military reported nine additional COVID-19 cases Thursday, bringing the total caseload among its personnel to 2,059, the defense ministry said. Among the new

cases were three Army officers stationed in Damyang, 344 kilometers south of Seoul, who were tested positive following an infection of one of their acquaintances. (The *Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- China's objectives for the Korean Peninsula include stability and denuclearization, but also keeping U.S. troops away from its border, the U.S. Department of State said Wednesday. In an annual report to Congress on China, the department also indicated that China regularly holds military exercises to that end. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- The Chinese city of Dandong aims to build more facilites at its border crossing with North Korea as the two countries resumed cross-border rail freight traffic, media reported, fuelling anticipation of the complete reopening of the border soon. North Korea shut its borders in January 2020, one of the first countries to do so after cases of COVID-19 infection were reported in neighbouring China, its most important trade partner. China, which has a zero-tolerance policy on coronavirus prevention, has also been wary in opening its borders to other countries. (*Reuters*)
- North Korean missiles may very well have found their way across Asia. The Houthis inherited from the defunct Yemeni military a large number of Soviet-exported Scuds as well as North Korean-made Scuds called “Hwasong-6s.” It’s possible the missile strikes that badly damaged a key Saudi oil facility on Sept. 14, 2019 involved far-flying drones firing small, guided munitions. (David Axe, *The National Interest*)
- Pope Francis' visit to North Korea is "definitely possible" and is up to Pyongyang's "determination," South Korea's top government official in charge of inter-Korean ties said Thursday, a week after President Moon Jae-in again formally proposed the papal visit at the Vatican. Unification Minister Lee In-young accompanied Moon on his visit to the Vatican last week, during which the president met with Pope Francis and asked him to travel to the reclusive North. Moon believes it would help foster peace on the Korean Peninsula. The pope reaffirmed his willingness to go to the North if he received an invitation from its regime. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)

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[VOA News Today] October 12, 2021

Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea Greg Scarlatoiu told VOA on October 8th that the addition of Korean words to the Oxford Dictionary will lead to economic development and increased influence for South Korea. Scarlatoiu himself is from Europe and speaks four languages, including Korean. It’s impossible to deny that South Korea is a developed country now.

South Korea has developed a great deal in recent years and was shaped by the influence of other foreign languages, but now Korean words are being used as loanwords in other countries,

too. That's how open the world is. This is cultural exchange. This reflects the power of South Korea's economy, society, and politics.

However, North Korea is the only country in the world that views the "Korean Wave" and other foreign culture as criminal, and has been strengthening punishments against its citizens that use such expressions, resulting in increasing criticism from the international community.

In an open letter to the U.N. on October 10th, the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the Workers' Party of North Korea, 40 civil society organizations criticized the North Korean leadership for criminalizing foreign culture by enacting the Counter-Verbal Thinking and Cultural Disclaimer Act.

The Korea National Intelligence Service said in a report to the National Assembly in July that the North Korean leadership has been strictly controlling how young people dress and whether they use South Korean phrases or mannerisms. Those caught using phrases like "oppa" to address their boyfriends or husbands are branded as "enemies of the revolution" and face up to two years of hard labor.

The citizens of other countries, including the U.K., have been reacting to this absurd decree.
"I'm angry, speechless actually. There's almost no one in the U.K. who doesn't know BTS. Parasite and Squid Game are the same. I think North Korea is the only country in the world like that. It's a country that sends people to prison for even mentioning such things. I have friends that are asking if a country like that really exists on Earth."

North Korean defectors and other civil society organizations have accused North Korea of hypocrisy. According to the New York Times, Kim Jong-un referred to K-pop as a "vicious cancer", but in 2018, Red Velvet, a South Korean girl group, performed in Pyongyang and even shook hands with Kim.

They have also pointed out that if North Korea truly wants to become a citizen-centered society, it should focus on accepting foreign cultures and cultivating openness, not eradicating "anti-socialism".

This was Kim Young-geon with VOA News.

*Translated by Irene Kang & Audrey Gregg, HRNK Research Interns

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High-definition satellite images of the No. 3 Toseong-ri Correctional Center in Sinuiju, North Korea. (VOA News, 11/04/2021)

On Wednesday, November 3, 2021, HRNK launched North Korea's Long-term Prison-Labor Facility Kyo-hwa-so No. 3, T'osŏng-ni (토성리), its latest report in a project to use satellite imagery and former prisoner interviews to shed light on human suffering in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This is the first time HRNK investigates this particular facility. The report provides baseline analysis of Camp No. 3.

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Prepared by Nikita Rosemary Morrison-Young, HRNK Research Intern

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**Friday, November 5, 2021**

## Four out of 10 North Koreans undernourished: FAO; Seoul vows close communications with UNSC following N.K. sanctions relief proposal

**In North Korea:**
As winter looms, reports of starvation in North Korea (*BBC*, 11/04/2021)
Four out of 10 N. Korean undernourished: FAO (*Yonhap*, 11/05/2021)
4 out of 10 North Koreans undernourished: FAO (*The Korea Herald*, 11/05/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Yoon Seok-youl, wild card on North Korea, wins conservative presidential primary(*NK News*, 11/05/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Seoul vows close communications with UNSC following N.K. sanctions relief proposal (*Yonhap*, 11/05/2021)

**International:**
Are Sanctions Curbing North Korean Arms Proliferation? (*National Interest*, 11/05/2021)
North Korea casts itself as victim of US vilification over nuclear capabilities (*NK News*, 11/05/2021)
Pandemic 'paranoia' in Pyongyang stalled warming ties with Beijing: report (*NK News*, 11/05/2021)

US reiterates commitment to NK sanctions amid China and Russia's push to ease them (*The Korea Herald*, 11/05/2021)
U.S. remains committed to U.N. sanctions on N. Korea: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 11/05/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- The warnings are stark and coming from inside and outside of North Korea. Defectors based in South Korea have told us that their families in the North are going hungry. There is a concern as winter approaches that the most vulnerable will starve. (Laura Bicker, BBC)
- More than four out of 10 North Koreans are suffering from undernourishment, a recent U.N. report showed, as the impoverished country struggles from chronic food shortages. (*Yonhap*)
- Around 42 percent of North Koreans have suffered from undernourishment over the past three years, a UN report said Friday, as the impoverished nation grapples with acute food insecurity amid the prolonged pandemic and severe weather conditions, compounded by international sanctions. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)

**In South Korea:**

- Former prosecutor general Yoon Seok-youl won the conservative opposition People Power Party's (PPP) presidential primary on Friday, setting up a face off with the progressive candidate Lee Jae-myung in March next year. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- South Korea will continue close communications with key U.N. Security Council (UNSC) members, the unification ministry said Friday, after China and Russia again proposed easing sanctions against North Korea. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)

**International:**

- There is no shortage of proxies interested in buying North Korean weapons. (Mark Episkopos, *National Interest*)
- At UN, DPRK diplomat calls it hypocritical to criticize its weapons tests but not those of US, South Korea (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- China-DPRK relations have stagnated over the last year due to Pyongyang's extreme COVID-19 prevention measures, the U.S Department of Defense (DoD) states in a report released Wednesday, as the country's near-total border lockdown stymied both trade and diplomatic exchange between the two communist nations. (Ethan Jewell, *NK News*)
- The US said it remains committed to imposing UN Security Council resolutions on North Korea aimed at limiting its nuclear and ballistic missile program, amid Beijing and Moscow's push to ease sanctions on the regime. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- The United States remains committed to implementing U.N. Security Council sanctions on North Korea, a State Department spokesperson said Thursday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Lauren Morrison, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250818142908/https://mailchi.mp/082fe996fa25/hrnk-news-items-four-out-of-10-north-koreans-undernourished-fao-seoul-vows-close-communications-with-unsc-following-nk-sanctions-relief-proposal?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, November 6, 2021**

# North Korea's "Anti-Capitalist" Crackdown: Old Roots but New Vigor; Rights Watch

**Top News:**
North Korea's "Anti-Capitalist" Crackdown: Old Roots but New Vigor (*38 North*, 11/05/2021)
Fighting North Korean Human Rights Abuses - InsideSources (*Irish Legal News*, 11/05/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Another bad harvest in hungry North Korea underscores root cause of food crisis(*Radio Free Asia*, 11/06/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Ex-prosecutor in S Korea wins opposition presidential ticket (*AP News*, 11/05/2021)

**International:**
America's diplomatic approach with North Korea is flawed. It's time to change tack (*The Guardian*, 11/06/2021)
Americans Underestimate the Danger in Continuing to Defend South Korea (*National Interest*, 11/06/2021)

**Top News:**

- A major crackdown is currently underway in North Korea to root out foreign culture, primarily from South Korea, as well as "capitalist tendencies," including corruption. The roots of the campaign go back to early in Kim Jong Un's tenure, but it has become particularly intensive this year, with several new laws and ordinances enacted to strengthen social control. (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, *38 North*)
- A recurrent theme at a lavish Washington dinner marking the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea was how great it would be if the committee 20 years from now had outlived its usefulness. (*Irish Legal News*)

**In North Korea:**

- A poor harvest in North Korea may raise the risks that the country will face a repeat of the devastating famine it suffered in the 1990s that left millions of citizens dead. (Jong Min Noh, Soram Cheon, Sooyoung Park, Nawar Nemeh, Claire Lee and Leejin Jun, and Eugene Whong, *Radio Free Asia*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's conservative former top prosecutor, who has called for a stronger U.S. security guarantee to neutralize North Korean nuclear threats, won the main opposition party's hotly contested nomination for next March's presidential election on Friday. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)

**International:**

- If the Biden Administration follows the failed playbook of virtually every other Administration since the early 1990s and holds out for a complete denuclearization by North Korea as a prerequisite for progress, Biden will come up short as all those before him did. But if he instead places denuclearization as an eventual aspiration – as, pointedly, both Moon and Kim Jong Un have done – featuring instead a step-by-step approach in which we make a number of progressively small steps matched by Pyongyang making steps of their own, the chances of even accidental war will continue to diminish and the prospects for peace rise. (Lt. Col. Daniel L. Davis (ret), *The Guardian*)
- The North issues prolific threats against countries that it perceives as a threat—South Korea, America, and Japan. Outside of that, the DPRK ignores the rest of the world. Warning China and Russia that it might turn their cities into lakes of fire would be counterproductive. But North Korea also doesn't mention anyone else. America is on Pyongyang's target list only because America is targeting the North. (Doug Bandow, *National Interest*)

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Prepared by Lia Vincenzo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250818143255/https://mailchi.mp/a541fe263558/hrnk-news-items-north-koreas-anti-capitalist-crackdown-old-roots-but-new-vigor-rights-watch?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, November 7, 2021**

## Where the Hell is Kim Jong Un's Eric Clapton-Obsessed Brother? ; A Last Security Option; Nuclear Niceties.

**Top News:**

Where the Hell Is Kim Jong Un's Eric Clapton-Obsessed Brother? (*The Daily Beast*, 11/07/2021)

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea holds artillery fire competition: state media (*Yonhap*, 11/07/2021)

**In South Korea:**
A last security option (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/07/2021)
New COVID-19 cases stay over 2,000 for 5th straight day amid relaxed virus curbs(*Yonhap*, 11/07/2021)
Nuclear niceties (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/07/2021)

**International:**
N. Korea's ambassador to China holds talks with Chinese assistant FM (Yonhap, 11/07/2021)

**Top News:**

- Where and why has North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's older half-brother, Kim Jong Chul, disappeared? Considering the persistent doubts about the health of Kim Jong Un and his own habit of vanishing for weeks at a time—that question assumes some urgency. If 37-year-old Kim Jong Un were to die, Jong Chul, 40, never an active contender for power, would be a prime candidate to take over. (Donald Kirk, *The Daily Beast*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea has conducted an artillery fire competition to boost the country's defense capabilities as set forth by the "militant policy" of the ruling Workers' Party, state media reported Sunday. The competition was held Saturday to inspect "how the mechanized troops of the KPA have conducted drills in order to increase their mobile artillery combat capabilities," according to the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). KPA stands for the Korean People's Army. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- In early 2015, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) head entered the defense minister's office at the Ministry of National Defense in Seoul to brief the minister about an advanced SLBM and submarine being developed by North Korea. The decapitation operation plan drawn up by the defense ministry is a last-ditch campaign to deter North Korea from rushing to a nuclear attack, above all, which could kill or injure millions of people in South Korea. For the clandestine operation, the DIA methodically traces the movement of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un with help from U.S. intelligence. (Kim Min-soek, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea's new coronavirus cases stayed above 2,000 for the fifth consecutive day Sunday amid worries over a resurgence of infections after the country relaxed virus curbs to gradually return to normalcy under its "living with COVID-19" scheme. (*Yonhap*)

- President Moon Jae-in made an unlikely remark last week about the role of nuclear reactors in achieving carbon neutrality during his summit with Hungarian President Janos Ader. Given the ramifications of the comment, the Blue House first refused to comment on it until it later reluctantly admitted to it. The presidential office added that the president's commitment to wean the country off nuclear energy remains intact. The explanation is not just incongruous, but also indecent as it could be seen as discourteous to the summit. (Lee Hyun-sang, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- North Korea's top envoy to Beijing met with China's assistant foreign minister last week to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral ties and issues of mutual concern, Pyongyang's foreign ministry said Sunday. During the talks on Friday, Ambassador Ri Ryong-nam and Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Wu Jianghao "exchanged in-depth opinions about issues of mutual interest, and agreed to continue enhancing strategic and tactical cooperation down the road," the ministry said. *(Yonhap)*

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Prepared by Nikita Rosemary Morrison-Young, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250818143538/https://mailchi.mp/fecdfb96f5c5/hrnk-news-items-where-the-hell-is-kim-jong-uns-eric-clapton-obsessed-brother-a-last-security-option-nuclear-niceties?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, November 8, 2021**

## A North Korean Defector Escaped from a Chinese Prison... Defectors Face Many Difficulties in China

**Top News:**

A North Korean Defector Escaped from a Chinese Prison... Defectors Face Many Difficulties in China (VOA, 11/8/2021, Translated below by HRNK Research Intern Doohyun Kim)

**In North Korea:**

North Korea warns vaccines aren't a silver bullet, again says it's COVID-free (*NK News*, 11/8/2021)

**In South Korea:**

Lee to meet top US diplomat for East Asia this week (*Korea Herald*, 11/8/2021)

Military holds meeting of generals, admirals on defense reform, leadership (*Korea Herald*, 11/8/2021)

S. Korea to keep monitoring N. Korean military's moves: ministry (*Yonhap*, 11/8/2021)

Yoon says he is open to inter-Korean summit, but not 'for show' (*Yonhap*, 11/8/2021)

**Inter-Korea Relations:**

Not just summits: North and South Korea have met nearly 700 times since 1970s (*NK News*, 11/8/2021

**International:**

German warship arrives in Japan to join DPRK sanctions mission for first time (*NK News*, 11/8/2021)

'The UN's eyes': French Navy enforces North Korea sanctions (*Yahoo*, 11/8/2021)

**Top News:**

- Chinese people are showing great interest in the escape of a North Korean defector who was serving time in a Chinese prison. Major American media reported the news in detail as well. North Korean defectors and human rights experts say the incident shows the plight of North Koreans in China, and that China should stop forced repatriation. This is reporter Jo Eun-jung. (VOA, Translated below by HRNK Research Intern Doohyn Kim)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea has found no cases of COVID-19 after testing an additional 669 people, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), as the country's state media warns that more contagious mutations are undermining the effectiveness of vaccines. (Bryan Betts, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- Lee Jae-myung, the presidential nominee of the ruling Democratic Party, will meet with the top US diplomat for East Asia in Seoul this week, his party said Monday. (*Korea Herald*)
- South Korea's military held an annual meeting of general-grade officers from all armed services via video links Monday to discuss defense reform, inter-service cooperation and other security issues, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said. (*Korea Herald*)
- The South Korean government reacted cautiously to a report of North Korea's military having staged an "artillery fire competition," saying it will keep a close watch on related situations. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- Yoon Seok-youl, the presidential nominee of the main opposition People Power Party (PPP), has said he is open to meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un for a summit but is not interested in doing it "for show." (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korea Relations:**

- South Korea and North Korea have held a total of 667 inter-Korean meetings over the past 50 years, underscoring the multiple levels at which dialogue is possible with Pyongyang, according to a new report published by Seoul's Ministry of Unification (MOU) on Monday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**International:**

- A German warship has arrived in Japan to help monitor potential North Korean sanctions violations in the Indo-Pacific for the first time ever this month, according to Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

- Flying above the Yellow Sea between Korea and China, a French naval crew scans the ocean surface for signs of contraband headed for North Korea. (Mathias Cena, *Yahoo*)

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A North Korean Defector Escaped from a Chinese Prison... Defectors Face Many Difficulties in China

Chinese people are showing great interest in the escape of a North Korean defector who was serving time in a Chinese prison. Major American media reported the news in detail as well. North Korean defectors and human rights experts say the incident shows the plight of North Koreans in China, and that China should stop forced repatriation. This is reporter Jo Eun-jung.

On October 20th, the Washington Post and CNN reported that a North Korean defector had escaped from a Chinese prison.

This story is also attracting a lot of attention in China. CNN reported that North Korean defector Joo Hyeon-geon escaped from Jilin Prison in Jilin Province, Northeast China, at 6 p.m. on October 18th, and that his “dramatic escape” was captured by surveillance cameras and published on social networking services throughout various Chinese state-run media.

CNN said that in the video, while Joo was on his way to the prison building after finishing his work day, he climbed up the wall of the building and onto the roof, and ran to the end of the building where he hung a rope on a high-voltage wire. Pulling on the rope caused sparks to fly from the electric wire. The report said that Joo then climbed the fence, jumped off, and disappeared.

CNN reported that "Joo's escape received a lot of public attention in China, where jailbreaking is rare," and the related search query on Weibo, a Chinese portal site, recorded 22 million views. But soon after the Chinese authorities censored it, Joo's bounty announcement on the Jilin prison website was deleted, and videos and articles about Joo disappeared from Weibo, CNN reported.

Chinese authorities disclosed the appearance of Joo and conducted search operations, and also announced a bounty of 100,000 yuan, or $15,600, for general information leading to the arrest of Joo, and 150,000 yuan, or $23,400 for information that leads directly to his arrest.

The Washington Post newspaper also covered Joo's escape in an article titled "Chinese city hunts for North Korean defector facing deportation who escaped from prison."

The newspaper, citing court records, details the circumstances of Joo's arrest.
Joo, a mining worker from North Hamgyong Province, who escaped to Tumen, Yanbian

Korean Autonomous Prefecture, China, in July 2013, broke into three homes and stole goods immediately after defecting. He stole cash (equivalent to US $230), a phone, six packs of cigarettes, clothes, and sneakers. In the third home, he was discovered by an elderly woman who Joo stabbed several times, and he fled in a taxi before being caught hours later.

In 2014, the Yanji City People's Court sentenced Joo to 11 years and 3 months of prison, a fine, and an order of deportation upon the completion of his prison term on charges of smuggling, theft, and robbery. In prison, he was recognized as an exemplary prisoner and twice received sentence reductions, for a total of 14 months, and was due to be released in August 2023.

The Washington Post, citing the international human rights group, Human Rights Watch, said that North Korean authorities have significantly increased the sentences for North Korean defectors repatriated to North Korea over the past few years, and that they have faced not only hard labor, but also torture and sexual violence.

They also reported that as of July this year, about 450 North Korean men are to be repatriated to North Korea after completing their sentences in Jilin Prison.

Matthew Kim, a North Korean defector who settled in Chicago about 10 years ago, told VOA on October 20th that while it was wrong for Joo to commit a crime, it is difficult for North Korean defectors to live in China without money.

[Transcript: Matthew Kim] “Anyone who has escaped from North Korea with money has no problem in China, but it is difficult if you do not have money. It is truly unfortunate. He did what he did to survive.”

Park Ji-hyeon, head of Stepping Stones, a North Korean human rights group in the U.K., also explained that North Korean defectors who are living illegally in China struggle a great deal.

[Transcript: Park Ji-hyeon] “Those who report North Korean defectors living in China can get a reward, so there is no place for North Korean defectors to go. Many struggle to get by because there is no way for North Korean defectors to find work. Joo found himself in a similar situation, so he committed robbery, and because of it he was sent to jail. It was a matter of survival. Defectors can’t work to make money, and no one is able to feed them. Of course, that's not to say that it’s okay to commit crimes, but it’s what they have to do to survive.”

[Transcript: Park Ji-hyeon] “For him, I think there is a fear of another punishment he would have to face when he goes to North Korea in 2023. So, he risked his life to escape from the prison.”

Park also pointed out that if the Chinese government had recognized North Korean

defectors as refugees and had sent them to a third country, Joo would not have committed such a crime.

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), explained, "This case shows that we must continue to press China to do the one simple but important thing of providing protection to North Korean refugees."

[Transcript: Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director] “The situation of North Korean defectors in China is truly dire. The fundamental problem is that China does not abide by its obligations under the 1951 UN convention concerning the status of refugees or the 1967 additional protocol.”

Matthew Kim blamed the North Korean authorities.

[Transcript: Matthew Kim] “First, the North Korean authorities are the real problem. Joo escaped from North Korea because he did not want to die of starvation. Life is difficult in North Korea, so he came to China and did something wrong. To make sure it doesn't happen again, the North Korean authorities need to take responsibility."

Phil Robertson, Deputy Director of Human Rights Watch, an international human rights organization, said in an interview with VOA, “While I can’t speak about what Joo may or may not have done in terms of robberies, what is clear is North Koreans entering China are desperate to survive and have virtually no opportunities to live openly in the country. They must run and hide, or face being arrested and forced back to North Korea, where they would face torture and worse for leaving the country without permission. Joo is now going to be targeted in a massive dragnet of officials, as well as ordinary Chinese people seeking that massive reward.”

Translated by HRNK Research Intern Doohyn Kim

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Prepared by David Shaw, HRNK Research

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250818143838/https://mailchi.mp/334bda6ed8d9/top-newsa-north-korean-defector-escaped-from-a-chinese-prison-defectors-face-manydifficulties-in-china?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, November 9, 2021**

# Satellite imagery shows continued operation of N. Korea's uranium enrichment plant: report

**In North Korea:**
Deal with your own human rights issues': North Korea bristles at EU over UN resolution (*Korea Times*, 11/9/2021)
N. Korea bristles at EU over U.N. resolution on human rights (*Yonhap*, 11/9/2021)
N. Korea calls for heightened anti-coronavirus measures ahead of winter (*Yonhap*, 11/9/2021)
North Korean workers stuck in Qatar nearly 2 years after UN sanctions deadline (*NK News*, 11/9/2021)
Satellite imagery shows continued operation of N. Korea's uranium enrichment plant: report (*Yonhap*, 11/9/2021)

**In South Korea:**
S. Korea to launch new frigate named after warship torpedoed by N. Korea in 2010 (*Korea Herald*, 11/9/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
[Herald Interview] Peace comes from people, not handshakes: Korean War veterans (*Korea Herald*, 11/9/2021)
Korean War veterans question necessity of Moon's 'end-of-war' declaration (*Korea Times*, 11/9/2021)
Seoul monitoring signs of N. Korea's border reopening amid reports of train operation (*Korea Herald*, 11/9/2021)

**International:**
23 U.S. reps get behind end-of-war declaration (*JoongAng Daily*, 11/9/2021)
China can and should help steer N. Korea toward denuclearization: Pentagon spokesman (*Yonhap*, 11/9/2021)
China's new COVID controls risk upending trade restart with North Korea (*NK News*, 11/9/2021)
Japan retracts claim North Korea fired 2 ballistic missiles on Oct. 19 (*Kyodo News*, 11/9/2021)
U.S. lawmakers call on Biden to declare formal end to Korean War (*Yonhap*, 11/9/2021)
U.S., S. Korea see 'eye-to-eye' on need to denuclearize Korean Peninsula: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 11/9/2021)
Washington to Beijing: 'Put some bite' into sanctions against North Korea (*NK News*, 11/9/202)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea on Tuesday slammed the European Union (EU) for leading a U.N. resolution condemning its human rights situation, calling the move an act of hostility based on "false and fabricated" documents. (*Korea Times*)
- North Korea on Tuesday slammed the European Union (EU) for leading a U.N. resolution condemning its human rights situation, calling the move an act of hostility based on "false and fabricated" documents. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has urged its people to stay on high alert against the possible spread of COVID-19, with the winter season just around the corner, according to its state media Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- Two North Koreans are still in Qatar awaiting deportation to their home country, Doha told a U.N. committee in a report made available Monday, nearly two years after U.N. sanctions made it illegal for DPRK citizens to work abroad (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea continues to operate its key uranium plant, a U.S. think tank said Monday, suggesting a steady growth in North Korea's stockpile of the material used to build nuclear weapons. (*Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea was set Tuesday to hold a ceremony launching a new frigate named after a warship torpedoed by North Korea in 2010, the Navy and state arms procurement agency said. (*Korea Herald*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- Peace comes from people and their hearts and minds, not from an organization, according to Vincent Courtenay, a Canadian veteran who took part in the 1950-53 Korean War and is visiting Busan on Thursday with fellow veterans to commemorate International Memorial Day for UN Veterans. (Choi Si-young, *Korea Herald*)
- A number of veterans who fought in the 1950-53 Korean War have questioned the necessity of a declaration to officially end the war, which was proposed by President Moon Jae-in as part of his peace initiative on the Korean Peninsula. (Nam Hyun-woo, *Korea Times*)

**International:**

- A group of 23 American lawmakers sent a letter to U.S. President Joe Biden urging him to "prioritize" engagement with North Korea and support a formal declaration to end the 1950-53 Korean War. (*JoongAng Daily*)
- China has the ability to help steer North Korea toward a diplomatic solution of its nuclear standoff, the Pentagon Press Secretary said Monday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Chinese authorities in Liaoning Province bordering North Korea have strengthened local COVID-19 control measures, potentially upending efforts to restart trade between the PRC and DPRK, recent government announcements reviewed by *NK News* indicate. (Ethan Jewell, *NK News*)
- Japan's Defense Ministry on Tuesday retracted its earlier claim that North Korea fired two ballistic missiles rather than one on Oct. 19, saying it had mistakenly detected a man-made object in space. (*Kyodo News*)

- A group of U.S. lawmakers sent a letter to President Joe Biden last week, urging his administration to quickly engage with North Korea and discuss declaring a formal end to the Korean War, an activist group said Monday. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea is closely monitoring signs of North Korea's reopening of its border long closed due to the coronavirus, a unification ministry official said Tuesday, amid reports a train in operation was spotted in the region bordering China. (*Korea Herald*)
- The U.S. Department of Defense has accused China of not using its influence over North Korea in a "constructive way," urging the country to take stronger sanction enforcement measures. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)

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Prepared by David Shaw, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250818144123/https://mailchi.mp/18ad08381bb3/hrnk-news-items-satellite-imagery-shows-continued-operation-of-n-koreas-uranium-enrichment-plant-report?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, November 10, 2021**

## Spy indicted for working to send defectors back to North Korea; Biden Faces Calls for North Korea Sanctions Relief

**In North Korea:**
North Korea seeks 'close' foreign cooperation on women's rights, health (*NK News*, 11/10/2021)
North Korea's Expanding Missile Arsenal Unpacked (*Wall Street Journal*, 11/10/2021)
North Korea teeters on the brink of famine as winter approaches (DW, 11/10/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Korean War veterans honored in annual ceremony (*The Korea Herald*, 11/10/2021)
Moon to hold live Q. and A. sesh with public on TV (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/101/2021)
Spy indicted for working to send defectors back to North Korea (*Korea Times*, 11/10/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Unification minister says inter-Korean medical cooperation 'inevitable' (*Yonhap*, 11/10/2021)

**International:**
Biden Faces Calls for North Korea Sanctions Relief (VOA, 11/10/2021)
S. Korea, U.S. in active discussion over end of war declaration: Amb. Lee (*Yonhap*, 11/10/2021)

Top U.S. diplomat for East Asia policy due in Seoul for talks on alliance, economic ties (*Yonhap*, 11/10/2021)
U.N. disarmament chief: Resumption of diplomatic efforts is only effective path for denuclearization, peace on Korean Peninsula (*Yonhap*, 11/10/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea seeks "close" cooperation with the international community over women's rights and health, the country's foreign ministry said in a statement Tuesday, a rare expression of interest in humanitarian collaboration during the pandemic. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- From railway-launched missiles to hypersonic ones, North Korea has been displaying new weapons alongside its nuclear bombs and submarines. WSJ takes a look at Pyongyang's growing arsenal to see what message it sends to the world. (Diana Chan, *Wall Street Journal*)
- Aid organizations fear that malnutrition will soon start claiming lives in North Korea as a subpar harvest combines with ongoing food shortages brought on by coronavirus border closures. (*DW*)

**In South Korea:**

- The annual ceremony honoring UN veterans of the 1950-53 Korean War will be held in Busan on Thursday. The ceremony, which has invited veterans and their families as well as top diplomats representing 22 countries here that helped South Korea, will involve a minute's silence to pay respects. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- President Moon Jae-in will be taking questions from the public live on TV on Nov. 21 for 100 minutes to get a better understanding of people's thoughts on his administration's Covid-19 policies, said the Blue House on Wednesday. "The conversations will center on the topics of Covid-19 challenges and the economic livelihood of the people," said Park Kyung-mee, presidential spokesperson, in a statement on Wednesday. "The televised conference will be shown live on KBS from 7:10 p.m. on Nov. 21." (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAnh Daily*)
- A North Korean spy in South Korea has been indicted for allegedly working to send defectors from her country back home, according to legal sources Wednesday. The 40-something female North Korean security ministry agent, whose name was kept private, was indicted by prosecutors in Suwon, south of Seoul, in May on charges of violating the national security law. (*Korea Times*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- South Korea's Unification Minister Lee In-young stressed Wednesday inter-Korean cooperation is "inevitable" against emerging health crises, saying North Korea apparently needs it as well. (Choi Soo-hyang,*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- The Biden administration is facing calls to review sanctions that affect humanitarian efforts in North Korea even as the regime of Kim Jong Un rejects talks with the United States and maintains strict pandemic border closures. (Christy Lee, VOA)

- South Korea and the United States are actively discussing the possibility of declaring a formal end to the Korean War with North Korea, South Korean Ambassador to the U.S. Lee Soo-hyuck said Tuesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- The top U.S. diplomat for East Asia was set to arrive in Seoul on Wednesday as part of his first Asia trip since taking office in September, officials said, with North Korea, the bilateral alliance and economic cooperation likely to top the agenda in discussions with Seoul officials. (Kim Eun-jung and Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's recent series of ballistic missile tests contravene U.N. Security Council resolutions and negatively impact peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and beyond, a senior U.N. official pointed out. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Michelle Dang, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250818144601/https://mailchi.mp/1d200b18df0c/hrnk-news-itemsspy-indicted-for-working-to-send-defectors-back-to-north-koreabiden-faces-calls-for-north-korea-sanctions-relief?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, November 11, 2021**

## Starving prisoners lined up in North Korean prison camp seen in new satellite images; Nicholas Eberstadt on What Declining Birthrates

**Top News:**
Starving prisoners lined up in North Korean prison camp seen in new satellite images (*The Mirror*, 11/11/2021)
Podcast: Nicholas Eberstadt on What Declining Birthrates Mean for the Future of the West (*Mosaic*, 11/11/2021)
North Korean prisoners are seen lined up for another day of grueling work in rare photos (*Newschant*, 11/11/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Kim Jong Un not seen for a month, longest absence in 7 years (NK *News*, 11/11/2021)
North Korea urges embassies in Pyongyang to place import orders (NK *News*, 11/11/2021)
North Korea cracks down on printers to stop anti-state publishing (RFA, 11/11/2021)
North Korea Intensifies War Against Foreign Influence (*38 North*, 11/10/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Foreign minister says S. Korea-U.S. talks over end-of-war declaration in final stages(*Yonhap*, 11/11/2021)
Seoul to comprehensively review whether to co-sponsor U.N. resolution on N. Korea human rights: minister (*Yonhap*, 11/11/2021)
Seoul rejects refugee claims by Chinese N. Korean defectors (*AP News*, 11/10/2021)

**International:**
Japan retracts its assessment that North Korea launched two SLBMs last month(*NK News*, 11/11/2021)
Japan's new FM hopes for better ties, says Korea should provide 'solutions' (*The Korea Herald*, 11/11/2021)
Memorial for fallen U.S. troops in Korean War to be established in California(*Yonhap*, 11/11/2021)
Top U.S. diplomat for East Asia policy to touch on alliance, economic issues during Seoul visit (*Yonhap*, 11/11/2021)
U.S. diplomat for East Asia policy discusses alliance, regional issues in Seoul(*Yonhap*, 11/11/2021)
US repeats decision on when to change command has not yet come (*The Korea Herald*, 11/11/2021)

**Top News:**
- Prisoners at T'os ng-ni, a labour camp only a few miles from the Chinese border, have been caught on camera lining up to begin manual labour, which they often have to complete with little to no food under the brutal North Korean regime. (Kate Buck, *The Mirror*)
- America's birthrate is declining rapidly. Nicholas Eberstadt, an HRNK Board Member and a distinguished social scientist, discussed why that's happening, whether it can be reversed, and, if it can't, how America can cope with it. (Nicholas Eberstadt, *Mosaic*)
- Starving prisoners line up to face another day of grueling compelled labour in rare photos of inmates at a North Korean jail camp. Satellite photos of T'osŏng-ni, a labour camp just a few miles from the Chinese border, reveal the shambling figures of prisoners, standing in formation alongside stacks of grain. (*Newschant*)

**In North Korea:**
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has not made a new appearance in state media for 30 days as of Thursday, marking the longest period of absence from public activities since 2014 and coming amid an uptick in reports of health issues this year. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean authorities urged the handful of remaining embassies in Pyongyang to prepare orders for foreign supplies and products, multiple informed sources told *NK News*, a sign that trade with the outside world may continue to creep up. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)

- North Korea is cracking down on the use of unauthorized printers to prevent citizens from publishing anti-state materials, but sources told RFA that confiscation of the high-cost printing machines is ruining small businesses. (Chang Gyu Ahn, RFA)
- In early December 2020, a plenary meeting of North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly (SPA), its highest legislative body, approved several new laws, including one called the Reactionary Ideology and Culture Rejection Law. While the text of the law was not made public outside of the North, anecdotal reports since indicate that this has prompted a widespread crackdown on foreign content and influence in the country. (Martyn Williams, 38 *North*)

**In South Korea:**

- Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong said Thursday coordination between Seoul and Washington over a declaration to formally end the 1950-53 Korean War is in its final stages. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's Unification Minister Lee In-young said Thursday Seoul will review whether to co-sponsor this year's U.N. resolution, condemning North Korea's human rights situation, in line with efforts to improve inter-Korean relations and promote peace in the region. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea has rejected refugee status for ethnic Chinese people who have been "stateless" since they fled North Korea years ago, two of the applicants and an activists' group said Wednesday. Unlike North Korean defectors, who receive citizenship, almost-free apartments and other economic assistance in South Korea, ethnic Chinese from North Korea are denied access to such benefits if they maintained Chinese nationality in North Korea. About 30 of them have been designated as "stateless" in South Korea after authorities found they were attempting to pose as North Korean nationals and detained them, observers say. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)

**International:**

- Japan's Ministry of Defense has retracted its initial assessment that North Korea tested two submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) in October, bringing Tokyo's analysis in line with U.S. and South Korean claims of a single projectile. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- Japan's newly appointed Foreign Minister on Thursday expressed willingness to step up dialogue with South Korea to improve their strained ties, but urged Seoul to take appropriate action to resolve the historical issues at the center of their feud. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- A group of Korean Americans was set to unveil a new monument in the United States this week to commemorate the sacrifices of U.S. troops killed during the 1950-53 Korean War, the veterans affairs ministry said Thursday. (Kang Yoon-Seung and Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- The top U.S. diplomat for East Asia is set to meet with South Korean officials Thursday to discuss various issues, with North Korea, the bilateral alliance and economic cooperation likely to top the agenda, officials said. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

- The top U.S. diplomat for East Asia met with South Korean officials Thursday to discuss ways to enhance the bilateral alliance and cooperation in regional issues, according to the U.S. embassy and officials here. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea and the US have not made any decisions on when Seoul will take over wartime operational control from Washington, the US Defense Department said Wednesday, amid signs of a rift in the allies' position on the wartime role the US first assumed in the 1950-53 Korean War. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Michelle Dang, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250818145110/https://mailchi.mp/28081591d3f4/hrnk-news-itemsstarving-prisoners-lined-up-in-north-korean-prison-camp-seen-in-new-satellite-images nicholas-eberstadt-on-what-declining-birthrates?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, November 12, 2021**

## Starving North Korean prisoners are seen lined up for another day of grueling work in rare photos of labour camp from space

**Top News:**
Starving North Korean prisoners are seen lined up for another day of grueling work in rare photos of labour camp from space (*Daily Mail*, 11/11/2021)
Starving North Korean prisoners being 'worked to death' spotted from space (*Daily Star*, 11/11/2021)

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea calls for efforts to achieve economic goals under five-year plan (*Yonhap*,11/12/2021)
North Koreans urged to meet economic goals (*The Korea Herald*, 11/12/2021)
Too good to be true: North Korean films that double as propaganda for the South(*NK News*, 11/12/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Conservative presidential candidate comes out against end-of-war declaration (*NK News*, 11/12/2021)
Seoul monitoring N. Korea's move to mark 10th anniv. of Kim's leadership: ministry (*Yonhap*, 11/12/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

Natl. Security Office, Coast Guard ordered to disclose info on NK killing of S. Korean official (*The Korea Herald*, 11/12/2021)
Seoul can provide economic support if N. Korea move to denuclearize: Yoon (*The Korea Herald*, 11/12/2021)

**International:**
Two South Koreans in Japan sought to obtain foreign currency for North Korea (*NK News*, 11/12/2021)
Vice FM Choi to meet US, Japanese counterparts in Washington next week (*The Korea Herald*, 11/12/2021)
(Yonhap Interview) U.S. seeks closer ties with S. Korea for resilient supply chains: key diplomat (*Yonhap*, 11/12/2021)

**Top News:**

- Starving prisoners line up to face another day of grueling forced labour in rare photos of inmates at a North Korean prison camp. (Michael Havis, *Daily Mail*)
- Inmates at a forced labour camp in North Korea have been spotted being "worked to death" from space in satellite images. An escaped ex-prisoner revealed that the conditions are terrible (Michael Havis, *Daily Star*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea urged its people Friday to make utmost efforts to accomplish the country's five-year economic plan under the spirit of "unconditionality, thoroughness and accuracy." (*Yonhap*)
- North Koreans should make the best use of the remainder of the year to support the regime's economic plan, the official newspaper Rodong Sinmun said Friday, as the North faces a growing economic crisis. (Choi Si-young, *The Korea Herald*)
- While aimed at discouraging defection, a pair of DPRK films counterproductively exaggerates South Korea's wealth (Tatiana Gabroussenko, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- Yoon Seok-youl says denuclearization steps must come first, while floating US-ROK-DPRK liaison office in Washington (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- South Korea is monitoring the possibility of North Korea holding a major event to celebrate the 10th anniversary of leader Kim Jong-un's rise to power, Seoul's unification ministry said Friday. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Cheong Wa Dae's National Security Office (NSO) and the Coast Guard were ordered Friday to provide undisclosed information in connection to North Korea's killing of a South Korean fisheries official near the inter-Korean sea border in September last year to his family. (*The Korea Herald*)
- Presidential hopeful Yoon Seok-youl on Friday said he is open to providing economic support in return for Pyongyang's progress toward denuclearization, while pledging to

change the current “master-servant” relationship between the two Koreas. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- Two South Korean nationals arrested in Japan last year allegedly sought to obtain foreign currency for North Korea under the direction of a DPRK spy, *NK News* confirmed on Friday. (Kosuke Takahasi, *NK News*)
- South Korea's vice foreign minister will visit Washington next week for talks with his US and Japanese counterparts, the foreign ministry said Friday. The two are expected to discuss ways to bring North Korea to nuclear negotiations that have been stalled since 2019, and Seoul's proposal to declare a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War. (*The Korea Herald*)
- The U.S. State Department official in charge of East Asian and Pacific affairs on Friday emphasized the need for closer cooperation between Washington and Seoul to ensure the resilience of major global supply chains and to protect critical technologies from excessive dependence on a single country. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Scott Cho, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250818145438/https://mailchi.mp/26ad20016905/hrnk-news-itemsstarving-north-korean-prisoners-are-seen-lined-up-for-another-day-of-grueling-work-in-rare-photos-of-labour-camp-from-space?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, November 13, 2021**

## Kim Jong-un: North Korean leader’s longest absence in seven years sparks new health rumours

**In North Korea:**

Kim Jong-un: North Korean leader’s longest absence in seven years sparks new health rumours (*Independent*, 11/13/2021)
North Korea sends delegation to China for emergency supplies (RFA, 11/12/2021)
The 'floating hotel' rusting away in North Korea (CNN, 11/12/2021)
Why North Korea won’t hold its ‘mass games’ spectacle this year (*NK News*, 11/13/2021)

**In South Korea:**

Seoul can provide economic support if N. Korea move to denuclearize: Yoon (*The Korea Herald*, 11/12/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Moon's push for end-of-war declaration losing momentum: experts (*Korea Times*, 11/12/2021)
SKorean candidate takes tough line on NKorea nuclear program (*AP News*, 11/12/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has not been seen in public for more than a month, the latest absence in a series of breaks this year and sparking new rumours of possible ill health. (Arpan Rai, *Independent*)
- An unofficial delegation from North Korea travelled to China for emergency supplies on the same day the newly reopened border was shut down due to a spike in coronavirus cases. (RFA)
- It was once an exclusive five-star resort floating directly over Australia's Great Barrier Reef. Today, it sits dilapidated in a North Korean port, a 20-minute drive from the Demilitarized Zone, the restricted area that separates the two Koreas. For the world's first floating hotel, that's the last stop in a bizarre 10,000-mile journey that began over 30 years ago with glamorous helicopter rides and fine dining, but ended with a tragedy. Now marked for demolition, this rusty vessel with a colorful past faces an uncertain future. (CNN)
- North Korea's "mass games" propaganda spectacle appears likely to take its first year off since 2017, even as the ruling party celebrated the 50th anniversary of the organizing body Mass Gymnastic Production Company this week. A pause on production this year appears likely related to economic or political obstacles, as the country has faced a food crisis and other shortages throughout this year. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- Presidential hopeful Yoon Seok-youl on Friday said he is open to providing economic support in return for Pyongyang's progress toward denuclearization, while pledging to change the current "master-servant" relationship between the two Koreas. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korean Herald*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- With less than six months left before President Moon Jae-in leaves office, his administration is making last-ditch efforts in its push for a declaration to formally end the Korean War, which he re-emphasized in a speech at the U.N. General Assembly, Sept. 21. (Jung Da-min, *Korea Times*)
- South Korea's main opposition presidential candidate said Friday he will strengthen military cooperation with the United States and Japan if elected to better cope with North Korea's nuclear threat and would strive to make the North a leading foreign policy priority for the U.S. (Hyung-Jim Kim, *AP News*)

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Prepared by Damian Reddy, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250818145830/https://mailchi.mp/ea0d6c4a6f45/hrnk-news-itemskim-jong-un-north-korean-leaders-longest-absence-in-seven-years-sparks-new-health-rumours?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, November 14, 2021**

# We'll Stand With NKoreans Until Human Rights Situation Improves; Blue House "Pope is from Warm Country", Broadcast "Ski Slope in ARG"

**Top News:**
*We will Stand With North Koreans Until The Human Rights Situation Improves (*RFA*, 10/27/2021)
*Blue House Spokesperson "The Pope is from Warm Country", a U.S. Broadcast Responds "Did You Know There Are Ski Slopes in Argentina?" (*Naver*, 11/03/2021)

*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**In North Korea:**
[Newsmaker] Kim Jong-un's prolonged absence from public stokes speculation (*The Korea Herald*, 11/14/2021)
North Korea Threatened By Famine; Sends Delegation To China For Emergency Supplies: Report (*Republic World*, 11/14/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Rival candidates show clear differences in diplomacy (*The Korea Times*, 11/14/2021)

**International:**
Families renew resolve to see abductees returned from North Korea (*The Japan Times*, 11/14/2021)
(LEAD) Vice foreign minister due in Washington to meet U.S., Japanese counterparts (*Yonhap*, 11/14/2021)
S. Korea, US, Japan to discuss NK's nuclear stalemate, supply chain (*The Korea Herald*, 11/14/2021)
2 S Koreans arrested in Japan last year were part of N Korea cash operation: sources (*Japan Today*, 11/14/2021)

**Top News:**

- In the United States, there are many organizations working to improve the human rights situation for North Koreans, as if their suffering and misery were their own. Those who work for this cause know that if they turn away from North Korea, its citizens will not be able to enjoy universal freedoms and rights. Among them is the U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), a non-profit, non-governmental organization. On October 20th, the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, held a commemorative event to look back on its journey and towards future endeavors. (Young Jung, *RFA*)

- On November 3rd, VOA reported that controversy had arisen in the U.S. over a Blue House spokesperson's remarks regarding a Papal visit to North Korea. The spokesperson said that, "[the pope] is from a warm country, so it may be difficult for him to travel in the winter". She continued to explain that it would be difficult to schedule a papal visit to North Korea, citing the Beijing Olympics in February. (*Naver*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has been missing from public view for more than a month, fueling speculation over his whereabouts, as it marks his longest absence since 2014. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- An unofficial delegation from North Korea went to visit China's Dandong, a few days ago, in order to seek emergency supplies as the recently reopened border between the two nations was closed again due to a surge in coronavirus infections, according to a media report. On November 1, after a long halt, railway services had resumed between Dandong, China, and Sinuiju, North Korea, across the Yalu River. (Anwesha Majumdar, *Republic World*)

**In South Korea:**

- The rival presidential candidates of the nation's two major parties have made their first diplomatic moves, dropping hints of their foreign policies concerning the deepening U.S.-China competition and soured Korea-Japan relations. (Nam Hyun-woo, *The Korea Times*)

**International:**

- Family members of Japanese nationals abducted by North Korea decades renewed their call for cooperation to resolve the issue, stressing that they can never give up on the goal of bringing home their loved ones. (*The Japan Times*)
- South Korea's vice foreign minister embarked on a trip to Washington on Sunday for talks with his American and Japanese counterparts on North Korea and other pending issues. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's First Vice Foreign Minister Choi Jong-kun on Sunday left for Washington for talks with his US and Japanese counterparts, with North Korea's nuclear issue and the global supply chain disruption expected to top the agenda. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)

- Two South Koreans arrested in Japan last fall on suspicion of violating the country's immigration law had been involved in an operation to obtain foreign currency under the direction of a man believed to be a North Korean agent, investigative sources say. (*Japan Today*)

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**Translated articles:**
RFA Source

**"We Will Stand With North Koreans Until The Human Rights Situation Improves"**

In the United States, there are many organizations working to improve the human rights situation for North Koreans, as if their suffering and misery were their own. Those who work for this cause know that if they turn away from North Korea, its citizens will not be able to enjoy universal freedoms and rights.

Among them is the U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), a non-profit, non-governmental organization. On October 20th, the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, held a commemorative event to look back on its journey and towards future endeavors.

Today, we will report on this event, which was held at 6p.m. on October 20th in Washington, D.C., where the office of the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea is located.

About 150 former and current members of the U.S. Congress, administration officials, human rights activists, and North Korean defectors gathered to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the founding of HRNK.

U.S. Republican Rep. Young Kim, a Korean-American, celebrated the 20th anniversary of the founding of the HRNK and pledged support for its work.

<Rep. Young>: "Hello everyone! I am honor to be invited to join with this evening celebration 20th anniversary of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea."

Rep. Young Kim said that she has had a close relationship with the organization since she served as an assistant to the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Ed Royce, and thanked those involved in the effort to improve human rights in North Korea.

She also said that she continually raises human rights issues in Congress, and that North Korean human rights are among the most important. She said she supports the work of the HRNK, which fights on behalf of the people in North Korea.

Michael Kirby, former chairman of the UN Commission of Inquiry for Human Rights in North Korea (COI), said in a video message that the organization played a very important role in the preparation of the COI report.

In a congratulatory speech, Thomas Ojea Quintana, UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in North Korea, praised the HRNK's achievements on the international stage.

In addition, congratulatory speeches from various figures such as Democratic Party Representative Edward Markey, chairman of the Senate's Subcommittee on East Asia, and Suzanne Scholte, Chairwoman of the North Korea Freedom Coalition were also included in the video.

Ji Seong-ho and Thae Yong-ho, both former North Korean defectors and currently active South Korean National Assembly members, also gave congratulatory messages, adding that the emphasis that the U.N. has put on human rights in North Korea has given great strength to the citizens of North Korea.

The event was also attended by Fred and Cindy Warmbier, parents of American college student Otto Warmbier, who died in a coma after being detained by North Korea in 2015.

Cindy Warmbier said she is still very heartbroken over her son's death and stated that she will continue to fight to make a difference.

Fred Warmbier said HRNK helped by providing them with what they needed to sue North Korea. In 2018, the Warmbiers received a judgment from a US court that the North Korean authorities were responsible for their son's death.

David Hawk's book 'The Hidden Gulag', published by HRNK in 2003, contains 31 photos of seven North Korean political prison camps, which were released to the world for the first time.

This document is based on the testimonies by survivors from political prison camps and is currently being used to showcase the cruelty of the human rights abuses occurring in North Korea. It is frequently cited in the international arena, including the United Nations.

Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights at the U.S. Department of State, praised HRNK for its tireless efforts for the past 20 years. She thanked HRNK for informing the United Nations of the reality of political prison camps through satellite image analysis and for sending various North Korean human rights reports to Congress and other government agencies.

In 2009, the HRNK had published an investigative report about the trafficking of North Korean women in China, and it was featured in the Washington Post, a prominent American daily.

This organization also pointed out the problem of food shortages in North Korea through the publication of “Hunger and Human Rights: The Politics of Famine in North Korea” published in 2005.

This report emphasizes that the reason that North Korea has an unsolved hunger problem despite food aid from South Korea and the international community is because of the structure of its distribution system.

In addition, the HRNK has made efforts to expose the luxury and pleasures of the Kim family in North Korea.

Chuck Downs, former Executive Director of HRNK told RFA, “The North Korean people are starving, but Kim Jong-il has 17 private luxury villas and hundreds of luxury cars,” adding that, “However, military expenditures are enormous, and Kim buys off his subordinates with money to maintain power. Isn't this a human rights violation?"

The HRNK has been conducting activities to inform the world of the poor human rights condition in North Korea for the past 20 years, by exposing the reality of political prison camps in North Korea.

Regarding the achievements of the past 20 years, Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), said that, "Twenty years ago, the world did not know much about the human rights crisis in North Korea. That’s why HRNK was founded. This organization was founded with the spirit of researching, investigating, and reporting not only military, security, and political issues, but also human rights issues. Thus, HRNK played an important role in making the Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights.”

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of HRNK, emphasizes that the issue of improving human rights in North Korea is an area that the international community should pay attention to.

Greg Scarlatoiu: “If we look at the world now, there are many human rights issues. There are also a lot of refugee crises. However, it is very important for us to investigate, study, and expose Kim Jong-un’s North Korea, a state that oppresses human rights. So, of course, 20 years have passed, but I think the winds of reform and change can change North Korea in the future. However, our mission never ends. So, we need to continue fighting to improve the human rights situation in North Korea.”

He then explained the organization's plans for the future.

Greg Scarlatoiu: Currently, the Biden administration is emphasizing values that include human rights. So, human rights in North Korea are very important. The North Korean issue will be quite difficult to solve, but we must never give up. We will continue to work hard and continue to work until North Korea opens up and democracy and human rights come to North Korea.

According to HRNK's website, it is a nonpartisan human rights organization that collects evidence on the human rights situation in North Korea, publishes reports, and urges the international community to pay attention and implement measures advocated by its reports.

By: Young Jung, RFA
Translated by: Doohyun Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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Naver Source

**Blue House Spokesperson "The Pope is from Warm Country", a U.S. Broadcast Responds "Did You Know There Are Ski Slopes in Argentina?"**

On November 3rd, VOA reported that controversy had arisen in the U.S. over a Blue House spokesperson's remarks regarding a Papal visit to North Korea. The spokesperson said that, "[the pope] is from a warm country, so it may be difficult for him to travel in the winter".

The pope is from Buenos Aires, Argentina, which is close to Antarctica and well-known for its cold weather and ski resorts.

Park Kyung-mee, a spokesperson from the Blue House, announced over radio that, "The pope is from Argentina, which is a warm country, so my understanding is that it's difficult for him to travel in the winter".

She continued to explain that it would be difficult to schedule a papal visit to North Korea, citing the Beijing Olympics in February.

President Moon Jae In reportedly met with the Pope at the Vatican on October 29th to propose a visit to North Korea following the G20 summit in Rome. Pope Francis responded that he would do so if he received an invitation from the North.

VOA responded that, "Argentina is not necessarily a warm country as Park described. There are regions that face severe damage due to low temperatures." This statement has sparked controversy in Washington.

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North

Korea, retorted, “Did you know that there are ski slopes in Argentina?”

VOA explained, “The Patagonia Ski Resort in Bariloche, Argentina, recorded a temperature of -25.4 degrees Celsius in July 2017,” adding that, “Common opinion in Washington is that the factors that hinder the Pope's visit to North Korea are not limited to weather”.

David Maxwell, a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, stated, “I am still skeptical about the possibility of the Pope visiting North Korea. I doubt that Kim Jong-un will actually invite him”.

He added, “I can’t imagine that the Pope will be able to change Kim Jong-un from a rogue leader to a responsible member of the international community. I don’t understand why the Moon administration prioritizes a Papal visit. I don’t see how it will help.”

Translated by: Audrey Gregg, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Jungeun Lee, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250818150314/https://mailchi.mp/d8da4f13c5d1/hrnk-news-items-well-stand-with-nkoreans-until-human-rights-situation-improvesblue-house-pope-is-from-warm-country-broadcast-ski-slope-in-arg?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, November 15, 2021**

## N. Korea to hold conference on 'three revolutions,' S. Korean official voices optimism on accord with U.S. on end-of-war declaration

**North Korea:**
N. Korea to hold conference on 'three revolutions' in Pyongyang (*Yonhap*, 11/15/2021)
North Korea one of only two countries yet to begin COVID-19 vaccinations: WHO (*NK News*, 11/15/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Lee Jae-myung’s team slams Yoon Seok-youl’s DPRK views as ‘fear-mongering’ (*NK News*, 11/15/2021)
Progressive presidential candidate pledges full volunteer military system from 2030 (*The Korea Herald*, 11/15/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**
SIS students host fundraising event for young North Korean defectors (*The Korea Herald*, 11/15/2021)

**International:**
S. Korean official voices optimism on accord with U.S. on end-of-war declaration (*Yonhap*, 11/15/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea was to hold a conference on the country's "three-revolution movement" aimed at developing its ideology, technology and culture, state media reported Monday. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)
- Despite lack of vaccines, DPRK reports zero cases of new coronavirus after another round of testing. (Bryan Betts, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- Lee's campaign defends end-of-war declaration, while criticizing Yoon's call for closer cooperation with Japan. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Sim Sang-jeung, the presidential candidate of the minor progressive Justice Party, said Monday she will make the military switch to a full volunteer system from 2030 and reduce the number of standing troops if elected president. (*The Korea Herald*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- South Korean students at Seoul International School on Nov. 6 hosted a flea market to raise funds for young and teenage North Korean defectors suffering from economic hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic. (*The Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- South Korea and the United States are expected to reach an agreement soon related to Seoul's offer of declaring a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War, according to a senior diplomat. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Claire McCrea, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250818150657/https://mailchi.mp/ce9b57662cbf/hrnk-news-itemsn-korea-to-hold-conference-on-three-revolutions-s-korean-official-voices-optimism-on-accord-with-us-on-end-of-war-declaration?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Tuesday, November 16, 2021

# Biden, Xi discuss N. Korean issue in first virtual summit: White House

**North Korea:**
N. Korean leader visits Samjiyon city in first public activity in more than month (*Yonhap*, 11/16/2021)
U.N. rapporteur raps China over repatriation of N. Korean defectors: news report (*Yonhap*, 11/16/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Envoy describes end-of-war deal North can't 'walk away from' (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/16/2021)
Seoul claims end-of-war talks make progress (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/15/2021)
Seoul megachurch receives sanctions waiver to resume DPRK hospital construction(*NK News*, 11/16/2021)
SIS students host fundraising event for young North Korean defectors (*The Korea Herald*, 11/16/2021)

**International:**
Biden, Xi discuss N. Korean issue in first virtual summit: White House (*Yonhap*, 11/16/2021)
'Healthy debate,' but no breakthroughs in Biden's critical talks with China's Xi Jinping (CNN, 11/16/2021)
Husbands of undocumented North Koreans beg China not to deport their wives(Radio Free Asia, 11/15/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un visited the northwestern city of Samjiyon near the border with China where a major development project is under way in his first public activity in more than a month, state media reported Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- A U.N. official on the human rights situation in North Korea has criticized China for sending back North Korean defectors, describing the practice as a serious challenge to international law, according to a news report Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- A declaration to formally end the 1950-53 Korean War could create a denuclearization process that "no one can easily walk away from," said South Korea's First Vice Foreign Minister Choi Jong-kun in Washington Monday. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- Seoul and Washington are nearing some agreement on a proposal to formally end the 1950-53 Korean War, said South Korean First Vice Foreign Minister Choi Jong-kun Sunday ahead of a week-long trip to the United States. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- UN approves request to send over 1,200 items for cardiac hospital, but North Korea COVID-19 restrictions pose hurdle. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- South Korean students at Seoul International School on Nov. 6 hosted a flea market to raise funds for young and teenage North Korean defectors suffering from economic hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- U.S. President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping exchanged their views on various regional issues, including North Korea, in their first bilateral summit Monday, the White House said. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- When Chinese President Xi Jinping beamed into the White House on Monday evening for a_virtual summit with President Joe Biden, the two men needed no introduction. (Kevin Liptak, CNN)
- The UN has asked Beijing not to repatriate more than 1,100 detained North Koreans. (Jeong Eun Lee and Jeong Yon Park, *Radio Free Asia*)

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Prepared by Scott Cho, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250818151011/https://mailchi.mp/36809032854e/hrnk-news-items-biden-xi-discuss-n-korean-issue-in-first-virtual-summit-white-house?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, November 17, 2021**

## N. Korea a major area of cooperation between U.S., China; S. Korea says discussed end-of-war declaration with US

**North Korea:**

N. Korea calls on police in Yanggang Province to make "100 rounds a day" to prevent defections (*Daily* NK, 11/16/2021)

N. Korean drug prices begin to rise amid continued shortages of medical supplies(*Daily* NK, 11/17/2021)

N. Korea on the hunt for two men who escaped while being transported to forcedlabor camp (*Daily* NK, 11/17/2021)

N. Korea warns of 'catastrophic' COVID-19 crisis as other countries ease restrictions (*Yonhap*, 11/17/2021)

North Korea is addressing the pandemic in its 'style.' That means leaving a lot of people hungry. (*The Washington Post*, 11/17/2021)
North Korean military organizations slapped with fines or shutdown for breaking COVID-19 quarantine rules (*Daily NK*, 11/16/2021)
North Korean leader praises efforts to build 'model' city (*AP News*, 11/16/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
End-of-war declaration can be 'catalyst' for N. Korea talks: minister (*Yonhap*, 11/17/2021)
Yoon says sinking of Cheonan warship clearly act of N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 11/17/2021)
Yoon Seok-youl hints at possibility of ditching inter-Korean military agreement (*The Korea Herald*, 11/17/2021)
Unification minister predicts no North Korea nuclear, ICBM test 'for time being' (*NK News*, 11/17/2021)

**International:**
Analysts warn of intensifying arms race across Asia (CNN, 11/17/2021)
N. Korea a major area of cooperation between U.S., China: NSA Sullivan (*Yonhap*, 11/17/2021)
N. Korea slams U.S. military drill as a 'nuclear war exercise' (*Yonhap*, 11/17/2021)
S. Korea says discussed end-of-war declaration with US (*The Korea Herald*, 11/17/2021)
Senior S. Korean, U.S. diplomats discuss N. Korea, end-of-war declaration: ministry (*Yonhap*, 11/17/2021)
Top Biden aide stresses US-China coordination on DPRK after leaders' summit (*NK News*, 11/17/2021)
U.S. can work with China on North Korea, says White House adviser (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/17/2021)
U.S., S. Korea reaffirm commitment to denuclearization of Korean Peninsula: State (*Yonhap*, 11/17/2021)
U.S. State Dept. doesn't mention end-of-war declaration (*Korea JoongAng Daily*,11/17/2021)

**In North Korea:**
- North Korean authorities have reportedly been calling for the strengthening of public security organs to prevent defections and illegal border crossings into China. Believing that more people could try to defect with rivers on the Sino-North Korean border freezing over, the authorities appear to be taking measures to stop defections before they start. (Kim Chae Hwan, *Daily NK*)
- The price of medicines in North Korea has recently begun to rise amid continued shortages of medical supplies. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean authorities have put out a wanted notice for two young men in their late 20s who escaped while they were being transported to a forced labor camp after being convicted for using illegal foreign-made mobile phones. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea has expressed concerns over the spread of the coronavirus and a "catastrophic public health crisis," after countries across the globe eased a set of

antivirus rules as part of efforts to gradually get back to pre-pandemic normalcy. (*Yonhap*)

- North Korea shut its borders in January 2020 — arguably one of the world's most restrictive pandemic border closures, with reports of "shoot to kill" orders at the border. Although recent missile tests and the regime's claim of zero coronavirus cases suggest business as usual in North Korea, the country now confronts a major humanitarian crisis. (Andrew Yeo, *The Washington Post*)
- North Korean military entities have received fines or shutdowns for breaking quarantine rules, according to multiple sources. The punishments come after North Korea launched sweeping emergency inspections as a quarantine measure to prevent COVID-19 from spreading this winter. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has returned from a monthlong break from public view to inspect a major development project near the border with China, which he said epitomizes his country's "iron will" to achieve prosperity in the face of international isolation and pressure. (Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korea's minister in charge of inter-Korean relations stressed Wednesday that declaring a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War, suggested by Seoul, can serve as a "catalyst" to resume talks with North Korea by sending a positive message to Pyongyang in terms of its pursuit of security assurances. (*Yonhap*)
- Yoon Seok-youl, the presidential candidate of the main opposition People Power Party (PPP), said Wednesday that the deadly sinking of a South Korean warship in 2010 was clearly the act of North Korea. (Joo Kyung-don, *Yonhap*)
- Yoon Seok-youl, the presidential candidate of the main opposition People Power Party, said he could consider scrapping a symbolic inter-Korean military agreement if there is no sign of change in North Korea's attitude, adding he would not seek a summit with the North's leader Kim Jong-un "just for show." (Lee Ji-yoon, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea is unlikely to test any nuclear weapons or long-range missiles in the immediate future, South Korea's Minister of Unification Lee In-young said on Wednesday, as the country's March 2022 presidential election fast approaches (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**International:**

- While China is building nuclear-capable missile silos, enlarging their navy and flying warplanes, countries like Taiwan, Japan, North and South Korea and Australia are ramping up their military forces in an effort to counter China's growing threat. (CNN)
- North Korea is one of key areas where the United States and China can and should work together, U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said Tuesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

- North Korea on Wednesday slammed the United States for its ongoing nuclear command training exercise, calling it a nuclear war drill targeting the entire world. (*Yonhap*)
- Senior diplomats of South Korea and the US discussed how to restart stalled nuclear talks with North Korea, including Seoul's proposal to formally end the Korean War, the Foreign Ministry said Wednesday, amid concerns that the allies may be at odds over President Moon Jae-in's proposal. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- South Korea's vice foreign minister held talks with his U.S. counterpart and discussed ways to bring North Korea back to dialogue, including the possible declaration of a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War, Seoul's foreign ministry said Wednesday. (Choi Soo-hyang and Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Coordination between the US and China is "very important" to bringing North Korea back to the dialogue table, the top US security adviser said on Tuesday, following a virtual summit between the two countries' leaders. (Chaewon Chung, NK News)
- U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said Tuesday that North Korea is "one immediate challenge" that the United States and China should work together on, following a summit between the two countries' leaders. (Sarah Kim, *Korean JoongAng Daily*)
- U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman and her South Korean counterpart, Choi Jong-kun, reaffirmed the countries' joint efforts to completely denuclearize the Korean Peninsula, the state department said Tuesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Seoul and Washington may not see eye-to-eye on an end-of-war declaration, with no mention of the issue in a U.S. State Department statement after talks between high-level diplomats Tuesday. (Sarah Kim, *Korean JoongAng Daily*)

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Prepared by Diletta De Luca, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250818151320/https://mailchi.mp/0af87455dd50/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-a-major-area-of-cooperation-between-us-china-s-korea-says-discussed-end-of-war-declaration-with-us?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, November 18, 2021**

## "North Korea's Moral challenge to President Biden"

**Top News:**
North Korea's Moral Challenge to President Biden(*The Epoch Times*, 11/18/2021)

**North Korea:**
N. Korea underlines past feat from 'three-revolution' movement ahead of related event(*Yonhap*, 11/18/2021)
N. Korea orders regional party committees to “guarantee” military rice stores(*DailyNK*, 11/18/2021)
More dire trade figures for North Korea(*NKeconwatch*, 11/18/2021)

**South Korea:**
(LEAD) Moon calls for progress on East Asia railway bloc(*Yonhap*,11/18/2021)
SK Bioscience-AstraZeneca deal to expire by the end of this year(*The Korea Herald*, 11/18/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
S. Korea reaffirms continued efforts on N. Korean human rights issue over U.N. resolution(*Yonhap*, 11/18/2021)

**International:**
(LEAD) Japan boycotts joint press event with S. Korea, U.S. over Dokdo issue(*Yonhap*, 11/18/2021)
U.S. satisfied with consultations on ways to denuclearize Korean Peninsula: Sherman(*Yonhap*, 11/18/2021)
U.S. designates N. Korea as state violator of religious freedom(*Yonhap*, 11/18/2021)
U.N. adopts resolution on N. Korean human rights for 17th consecutive year(*Yonhap*, 11/18/2021)

**Top News:**
- China and Russia are demanding that the United States agree to lift U.N. economic sanctions against North Korea, which were put in place in 2006 to stop its nuclear weapons programs.(*The Epoch Times*)

**In North Korea:**
- North Korea's state-controlled media tried Thursday to shed light on the past progress made by its "three-revolution" movement aimed at developing its ideology, technology and culture, with preparations under way for a major conference on the movement.(*Yonhap*)
- North Korea recently ordered regional party organizations to “guarantee” military rice stores. The authorities are apparently devoting all their energy to securing food for the military ahead of the start of winter training on Dec. 1, mobilizing even local party organizations for the effort.(*DailyNK*)
- Amid speculation on when trade flows between North Korea and China might again be restored, new numbers show a significant dip in trade between the two countries in October. According to new Chinese customs figures, trade fell 40 percent between September and October, after a fairly steady but moderate climb in the months before.(*NKeconwatch*)

**In South Korea:**

- President Moon Jae-in said Thursday he hopes to see progress on expanding joint railway and other projects between South Korea and its northern neighbors.(*Yonhap*)
- SK Bioscience's contract manufacturing deal to produce AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine will expire by the end of this year, according to the company Thursday.(*The Korea Herald*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korea said Thursday it will continue efforts to address the human rights situations in North Korea via regional peace and the development of inter-Korean ties.(*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Takeo Mori refused to take part in a joint press conference with his South Korean and U.S. counterparts Wednesday, citing a recent visit by South Korea's top police official to Dokdo.(*Yonhap*)
- The United States is very satisfied with its consultations with South Korea and Japan on the best way to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman said Wednesday.(*Yonhap*)
- The United States has designated North Korea as a state violator of religious freedom, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Wednesday.(*Yonhap*)
- The United Nations on Wednesday adopted a resolution on North Korean human rights, condemning what it called "systematic" and "gross" violations of human rights in the reclusive state.(*Yonhap*)

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**The Blue House: "The Pope Doesn't Travel Much in the Winter"... U.S. Response: "There Are Ski Resorts in Argentina"**

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A Blue House spokesperson's comment that, "the pope is from a warm country, so it may be difficult for him to travel in the winter" have also sparked controversy.

Many experts have expressed that this statement reflects a lack of understanding about Argentina.

Not all of Argentina is warm. Some areas are so cold that they sustain severe damage due to the weather.

On November 2nd, Park Kyung-mee, a spokesperson from the Blue House, stated over KBS radio that, "The pope is from Argentina, which is a warm country, so my understanding is that it's difficult for him to travel in the winter".

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President Moon had previously met with Pope Francis on October 29th following the G20 summit to propose a visit to North Korea. He responded, "If you send me an invitation, I will gladly go to help you, for the sake of peace."

However, experts in Washington have pointed out that the Blue House cited the fact that the Pope is from a "warm country" as a reason why the visit would be difficult to hold.

Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, retorted, "Did you know that there are ski slopes in Argentina?" via VOA on November 3rd.

He also pointed out that the statement from the Blue House reflects a fundamental lack of understanding about the climate of South America, including Argentina.

In fact, the Patagonia Ski Resort in Bariloche, Argentina, a tourist city, recorded a temperature of -25.4 degrees Celsius in July 2017.

Thus, experts in Washington predict that the factors that hinder the Pope's visit to North Korea are not limited to weather.

A Papal visit could be a rare opportunity for North Korea to be exposed to outside influence, but many feel that it may be difficult for him to go, which could create more criticism surrounding human rights.

In addition, David Maxwell, a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, stated, "I am still skeptical about the possibility of the Pope visiting North Korea. I doubt that Kim Jong-un will actually invite him".

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He added that, "We need an acknowledgement from Kim Jong-un that he will not expect cooperation with international businesses or other governments until he addresses the ongoing UN-documented human rights crisis".

Translated by Audrey Gregg
https://n.news.naver.com/article/011/0003980818

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국제망신 靑 대변인 발언…美서 **"**아르헨티나에 스키장 있는 것 아나**"** 일침

**A Blue House Spokesperson's Statement Causes International Disgrace… U.S. Response: "Did you know that there are ski slopes in Argentina?"**

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Translated by Audrey Gregg, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Seshni Moodley, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250818151718/https://mailchi.mp/21b7b04b5aa7/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-koreas-moral-challenge-to-president-biden?e=%5BUNIQID%5D#expand

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**Friday, November 19, 2021**

# A Blue House Spokesperson's Statement Causes Disgrace; N. Korea more than 100,000 people with COVID-19 symptoms quarantined

**Top News:**
*The Blue House: "The Pope Doesn't Travel Much in the Winter"... U.S. Response: "There Are Ski Resorts in Argentina" (*Naver*, 11/03/2021)
*A Blue House Spokesperson's Statement Causes International Disgrace... U.S. Response: "Did you know that there are ski slopes in Argentina?" (*Naver*, 11/03/2021)

**North Korea:**
Experts: China May Attempt to Use North Korea to Counter US (VOA, 11/18/2021)
N. Korea has more than 100,000 people with COVID-19 symptoms quarantined in state facilities (*Daily NK*, 11/19/2021)
N. Korean leader calls for boosting self-reliance atconference (*Yonhap*, 11/19/2021)
North Korea begins promoting the 2022 Pyongyang Marathon (*The Korea Times*, 11/19/2021)
North Korea far and away the world's most corrupt country: report (*NK News*, 11/19/2021)
North Korea's food prices fall as new goods hit the market (*Daily NK*, 11/19/2021)
North Korean ideological movement 'losing steam,' better rewards needed: Kim (*NK News*, 11/19/2021)
North Korean soldiers face punishment for calling South Korea by its official name (*Radio Free Asia*, 11/18/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Assembly panel passes unification ministry budget amid opposition boycott (*Yonhap*, 11/19/2021)

S. Korea to establish new information center on unification (*Yonhap*, 11/19/2021)
Yoon Seok-youl's rise doesn't bode well for inter-Korean relations (*NK News*, 11/19/2021)

**International:**
Biden, Trudeau To Launch Dialogue To Align Policies On China, N. Korea - White House (*Urdu Point*, 11/19/2021)
China expands manhunt for escaped North Korean prisoner, ups bounty to $110,000 (*NK News*, 11/19/2021)
S. Korea, U.S. in final-stage talks over end-of-war declaration: unification minister(*Yonhap*, 11/19/2021)

**Top News:**

- Pope Francis has reportedly stated his intention to visit North Korea to South Korean President Moon Jae-in, but many experts in Washington predict that the chances are slim. (*Naver*, 11/03/2021)
- Regarding a visit by Pope Francis to North Korea, a Blue House spokesperson stated that, "the pope is from a warm country, so it may be difficult for him to travel in the winter". Experts in Washington feel that this statement reflects a lack of understanding about Argentina. (*Naver*, 11/03/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Experts believe Beijing may come to see North Korea as leverage for challenging Washington's position on multiple issues, including the U.S. goal to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. (Christy Lee, VOA)
- North Korea continues to claim to have had no confirmed cases of COVID-19. However, there are currently over 100,000 North Koreans isolated in state facilities with high fever, breathing problems and other symptoms of COVID-19. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has called for strengthening the country's self-reliance at a conference on its "three-revolution" movement aimed at developing its ideology, technology and culture, Pyongyang's state media reported Friday. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)
- With North Korea showing signs of lifting its ongoing restrictions against COVID-19, a tour agency has begun promoting the reclusive state's annual international marathon event, the Pyongyang Marathon, which is scheduled to take place next year. (Lee Hae-rin, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korea is the most corrupt country in the world, an anti-corruption association said on Thursday, second year in a row the DPRK received the ignominious title (Ethan Jewell, *NK News*)
- The market price of rice in North Korea recently fell from around KPW 5,000 a kilogram to around KPW 4,200 to 4,500 per kilogram, Daily NK has learned. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un wants to expand a loyalty reward system to spur development as a core ideological movement is "losing steam", according to new instruction released by state media Friday. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- The North Korean military will severely punish two soldiers for referring to South Korea by an abbreviation of its official name, which is essentially a political statement that recognizes the legitimacy of the government in Seoul, military sources in the North told Radio Free Asia (Myungchul Lee, *Radio Free Asia*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- A National Assembly committee passed the unification ministry's 2022 budget proposal on Friday despite a boycott by the main opposition party. (*Yonhap*)
- The South Korean government has decided to build a new database center on unification on the outskirts of Seoul, where the current information center will be relocated after expansion, according to a government source Friday. (*Yonhap*)
- In less than four months, South Korean voters will cast their ballots to determine who will be their country's next president, with wide-ranging implications for the DPRK (Andrei Lankov, *NK News*)

**International:**

- US President Joseph Biden and Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau have agreed to launch a strategic dialogue on the Indo-Pacific region in a bid to coordinate their policies on China and North Korea, the White House said on Friday. (Fahad Shabbir, *Urdu Point*)
- Chinese authorities are expanding their search for a North Korean man who escaped prison last month, raising the reward to $110,000 for information leading to his arrest, according to police in the border city of Dandong. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- South Korea and the United States are in final-stage talks over Seoul's proposal for the declaration of a f

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Translated by Audrey Gregg, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250818152007/https://mailchi.mp/aa67dee481f8/hrnk-news-items-a-blue-house-spokespersons-statement-causes-disgrace-n-korea-more-than-100000-people-with-covid-19-symptoms-quarantined?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, November 20, 2021**

# Skepticism Remains Over the Possibility of a "Papal Visit" to North Korea

**Top News:**
*Skepticism Remains Over the Possibility of a "Papal Visit" to North Korea... The Pope Should Exert His Influence to See That Detained South Koreans Are Released(VOA, 11/03/2021)

**In North Korea:**
[Graphic News] 4 out of 10 North Koreans undernourished: FAO (*The Korea Herald*, 11/19/2021)
In new cyber campaign, North Korean hackers likely sow seeds of future attacks(*NK News*, 11/19/2021)
Sinpho Secure Boat Basin: A Reassessment of Recent Developments (38North, 11/19/2021)

**International:**
N. Korea raps U.N. human rights council over 'arbitrary' standard (*Yonhap*, 11/20/2021)

**Top News:**

- Pope Francis has reportedly stated his intention to visit North Korea to South Korean President Moon Jae-in, but many experts in Washington predict that the chances are slim. If the Pope proceeds with a visit to North Korea, many feel that he should bring up the issues of religious persecution and the detention of South Korean citizens (Sungwon Baik, VOA)

**In North Korea:**

- More than 4 out of 10 North Koreans are suffering from undernourishment, a recent UN report showed, as the impoverished country struggles from chronic food shortages. (Nam Kyung-don, *The Korea Herald*)
- A North Korean hacking group deployed new malware in a recently uncovered spear-phishing campaign, security researchers said on Thursday, some of which could lay the groundwork for future intrusions. (Ethan Jewell, *NK News*)
- Commercial satellite imagery from November 12 and 13 show little activity at North Korea's Sinpho South Shipyard around the SINPO-class ballistic missile submarine other than the repositioning of the submersible test barge to be partially covered by the awning at the secure boat basin. The purpose of the repositioning is unclear, although the awning does obscure a portion of the barge and prevents complete monitoring. (Peter Makowsky, Jack Liu, and Samantha J. Pitz, *38North*)

**International:**

- North Korea's foreign ministry on Saturday criticized the U.N. Human Rights Council for adopting "arbitrary" Western standards to attack its human rights conditions. The ministry said the U.N. council's adoption of human rights resolutions "targets particular countries," which is against its purpose of treating human rights issues in a "fair, equal" manner. (*Yonhap*)

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Translated articles:
VOA Source

**Skepticism Remains Over the Possibility of a "Papal Visit" to North Korea... The Pope Should Exert His Influence to See That Detained South Koreans Are Released**

Pope Francis has reportedly stated his intention to visit North Korea to South Korean President Moon Jae-in, but many experts in Washington predict that the chances are slim. If the Pope proceeds with a visit to North Korea, many feel that he should bring up the issues of religious persecution and the detention of South Korean citizens. This is reporter Baik Sungwon.

President Moon has informed President Biden of Pope Francis' intention to visit North Korea, but the responses of experts in Washington are still largely negative.

The Blue House has announced that the Pope is interested in a visit to North Korea, but that the conditions are worse now than they were during his first visit three years ago.

Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights in the Department of State, stated, "The possibility of a visit right now is hard to imagine given North Korea's covid lockdown, recent missile tests, and the departure of all EU embassies.The

modalities of a papal visit would also be questionable. When visiting countries, the Pope likes to go to different cities, attend church services, meet with Christian leaders, talk to people. How would that be possible in North Korea?"

A Blue House spokesperson's comment on November 2nd that, "the pope is from a warm country, so it may be difficult for him to travel in the winter" have also sparked controversy.

Not all of Argentina is warm as the spokesperson suggested. Some areas are so cold that they sustain severe damage due to the weather.

To spokesperson Park's statement, Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, retorted, "Do you realize they have ski resorts in Argentina?" via VOA on November 3rd.

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Thus, experts in Washington predict that the factors that hinder the Pope's visit to North Korea are not limited to weather.

A Papal visit could be a rare opportunity for North Korea to be exposed to outside influence, but many feel that it may be difficult for him to go, which could create more criticism surrounding human rights.

David Maxwell, a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, stated,
"I remain skeptical and doubtful that he will even go. I'm doubtful that Kim Jong-un will even make an invitation because Kim Jong-un's legitimacy is threatened if the Pope comes and makes a statement on human rights. It will make Kim Jeong-un look very bad."

After his visit to the Vatican on October 29th, President Moon said, "Pope Francis wishes for peace on the Korean Peninsula and has expressed his intention to visit North Korea."

According to the Blue House, Pope Francis said, "If you send me an invitation, I will gladly go to help you, for the sake of peace."

The Blue House also refuted media reports that questioned the validity of the Vatican press release.

Although it is unlikely that the Pope will visit North Korea, experts in Washington still expect that a change in inter-Korean relations, including an official end to the war, will be hard to achieve.

Charles Armstrong, former history professor at Columbia University, said, “I think the Pope's visit will have an impact on public opinion in South Korea and possibly in the United States, but I doubt it will be much if any influence on North Korea and particularly Kim Jong Un and the North Korean leadership.”

Senior Fellow David Maxwell added, “We have to ask ‘How would a papal visit influence Kim Jong-un to pursue peace and to pursue President Moon's peace agenda?’ I just don't think that assumption is very valid. I can't imagine what the Pope could say or do would change Kim Jong-un from the rogue leader that he is into a responsible member of the international community. I just don't see the influence of the Catholic Church or even the Pope's reputation as a world leader of having any impact on Kim Jong-un. So I just cannot understand why this is such a priority for the Moon administration and how the Moon administration really thinks that this is going to help.”

President Moon’s decision to push a Papal visit to North Korea while a number of political and economic issues are at stake is raising doubts in Washington.

President Moon, who is currently visiting Europe, expressed the Pope’s intention to visit North Korea during a short 2-3 minute call with President Biden. He also asked the prime ministers of France and Australia for support for the peace process on the Korean Peninsula, but there is little interest in whether or not the Pope will visit North Korea in the American political sphere.

Rather, Washington's human rights community is demanding that President Moon use the Pope's influence to rescue the South Korea citizens who have been detained in North Korea for nearly a decade, not an abstract peace process.

Critics point out that raising the issue of detained Koreans, which includes a number of Christian missionaries, is the best move for the Pope to make and the most effective way for him to exert his influence on the issues in North Korea. They also feel that this would be much more in line with the status and mission of a world religious leader.

Suzanne Scholte, Chairwoman of the North Korea Freedom Coalition, emphasized, “The Pope could be raising the cases of the South Koreans that have been held in North Korea, most of whom were involved with the North Korea issue because of their faith. So this is something that Moon should be asking the Pope's help and getting the South Koreans to be released.”

There are a total of six South Koreans, including three missionaries and three North Korean defectors, who have been confirmed to have been detained in North Korea since 2010.

Missionary Kim Jung-wook, who was arrested on charges of sneaking into North Korea on October 8, 2013, has been detained for eight years.

North Korea sentenced Missionary Kim to a life-sentence of hard labor, alleging that he had been in communication with the National Intelligence Service.

Missionary Choi Chun-gil, who was arrested in October 2014, is also detained after being sentenced to hard labor.

The other three, including Ko Hyun-chul, are North Korean defectors. Their status as detainees was revealed in 2016 during a press conference in Pyongyang.

Unlike the Trump administration, which repatriated three nationals ahead of the first U.S.-North Korea summit, or the Japanese government, which frequently brings up the issue of repatriation, the Moon administration has not publicly mentioned the issue of detention.

For this reason, experts feel that if the Pope can successfully advocate for the release of detained South Koreans, including a number of Christian missionaries, his visit will be historic.

David Maxwell stated, “I think that if the Pope chooses to do that, I think it would be in the best interest of South Korea, the United States and the international community to look for ways to use the Pope's influence to try to free prisoners. And I think that would be an excellent effort.”

Greg Scarlatoiu emphasized that, “There are South Korean detainees in North Korea and many of them are Christian ministers. It doesn't matter that they're not from the same denomination. They are Christians. And, as a matter of fact, the Pope, as one of the world's most prominent religious leaders, certainly has the authority to demand the release of those imprisoned for their faith regardless of what that faith might be. I simply do not envision a papal visit to a country that is imprisoning Christians and people of other religious beliefs simply for the reason that they're religious believers. If a papal visit were indeed to happen, I think that this should be a very worthy agenda item. We've seen instances when, for example, former President Bill Clinton came back with the two journalists. Whenever a prominent figure, sometimes the former president and others secures the release of hostages from North Korea, these releases are negotiated beforehand so it would take a lot of cooperation on the part of the DPRK regime as well.”

Such proposals by human rights experts are pushing the Pope to pay attention to North Korea's lack of religious freedom and oppression of human rights.

Roberta Cohen explained, “While the Pope could speak publicly about tolerance and peace, he would have to be able, at least in private, to raise issues of freedom of religion and persecution of Christians. North Koreans are imprisoned for reading a Bible or holding an unofficial church service.”

David Maxwell added, “I would certainly hope if the Pope goes to North Korea, that he

absolutely must address human rights for his own legitimacy and reputation…The basic statement must be that Kim Jong-un cannot expect any kind of cooperation with businesses, with governments, with the international community unless he ceases the human rights abuses that have been documented by the United Nations. And perhaps the Pope could convince him of that, although I am very skeptical and doubtful that he would have any impact at all on Kim Jong-un."

Suzanne Scholte stated, "We should be calling for North Korea to open up and allow freedom of movement for its own citizens, and an approach should be calling for them to be able to have Catholic masses wherever they want. So that's what he should be doing. And he should say, "I would love to come to North Korea when Catholics can practice their faith and unfettered, have complete freedom to be able to practice their faith."

Scholte cited the example of Pastor Rick Warren, who visited North Korea 14 years ago. He was unable to bring up relevant issues, and his visit was deemed a failure.

In July 2006, the Korean president at the time, Roh Moo-hyun, met with Warren. Warren announced, "We will continue to make efforts to resolve North Korea's anxiety through dialogue and persuasion." He had planned to hold another rally in Pyongyang the following year, but ultimately it was cancelled.

Pastor Billy Graham, who visited North Korea in 1992 at the invitation of President Kim Il-sung, is an American religious leader who held a rally in Pyongyang.
This is Sungwon Baik with VOA News.

Translated by: Audrey Gregg, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Claire McCrea, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250818152303/https://mailchi.mp/fec7ab15dfcb/hrnk-news-itemsskepticism-remains-over-the-possibility-of-a-papal-visit-to-north-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, November 21, 2021**

## Under decade of Kim's rule, N. Korea makes strides in nuke, missile capabilities, Time for a neutral Cabinet

**North Korea:**
Under decade of Kim's rule, N. Korea makes strides in nuke, missile capabilities(*Yonhap*, 11/21/2021)

**South Korea:**
Time for a neutral Cabinet (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/21/2021)

**International:**
N. Korea denounces U.N. resolution criticizing its human rights abuses (*Yonhap*, 11/21/2021)
Boycotts of Beijing Olympics threaten Moon's diplomacy (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/21/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- A decade after taking power, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un boasts significant progress in menacing nuclear and missile programs -- a pivotal element of his regime's security in the face of the close-knit South Korea-U.S. alliance, analysts said. (Sang-ho Song, *Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- Chinese media outlets are blaming the "Korean government's incompetence and lack of crisis management ability" for the diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) crisis. This is dumbfounding as it was China that triggered the mess by restricting exports of urea. But we can hardly deny the failure of our government in not seeing the problem coming. Asked why the energy ministry was simply sitting on its hands, a senior official said that the ministry thought the crisis would affect fertilizers only, not ground all diesel cars and trucks. (Jung-min Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- North Korea on Sunday rejected a draft U. N. resolution criticizing the country's human rights violations as it vowed to continue to resolutely counter hostile forces. (*Yonhap*)
- The United States and Britain are mulling diplomatic boycotts of the Beijing Olympics next February, which could be a setback to South Korea's plans to engage North Korea at the Winter Games. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

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Prepared by Jiwoo Hwang, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250818152549/https://mailchi.mp/f1df74fa0472/hrnk-news-itemsunder-decade-of-kims-rule-n-korea-makes-strides-in-nuke-missile-capabilitiestime-for-a-neutral-cabinet?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Monday, November 22, 2021

# North Korea's Political Prison-Labor Facility, Tosong-ni Kwo-hwa-so, Revealed; North Korea calls for glorifying Kim's...

**Top News:**
North Korea's Political Prison-Labor Facility, Tosong-ni Kwo-hwa-so, Revealed (*Newstown*, 11/22/2021)
** This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**North Korea:**
North Korea calls for glorifying Kim's era as mass movement conference closes(*Yonhap*, 11/22/2021)
North Korea holds space conference, says launching satellites will help economy (*NK News*, 11/22/2021)

**South Korea:**
Yoon Seok-youl calls DPRK a 'failed' state, vows to defend democratic values (*NK News*, 11/22/2021)

**International:**
North Korea imports more soap from China, dials up electricity exports (*NK News*, 11/22/2021)
North Korea yet to reopen land border with China: unification ministry(*Yonhap*, 11/22/2021)
U.S. ambassador to UN will visit Korea for peacekeeping meeting (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/22/2021)

**In North Korea:**
- North Korea has called for praising the era of leader Kim Jong-un as a large-scale conference on carrying out a mass movement for the country's development wrapped up, its state media said Monday. (*Yonhap News*)
- Aerospace engineers, students gather after Kim Jong Un ordered development of military recon satellite earlier this year. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**
- North Korea is a "failed" state that has followed an "obsolete" socialist model, conservative ROK presidential candidate Yoon Seok-youl said on Monday, after his liberal opponent earlier rejected the premise of ideological competition between the Koreas. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**International:**
- North Korea imported increased quantities of soap and similar disinfectants from China last month even as overall trade sunk, newly released customs data shows, in a development that one expert said may aim to support sterilization efforts for a restart of overland trade. (Ethan Jewell, *NK News*)

- North Korea has yet to reopen its land border with China amid indications of brisk preparations to ease lockdown measures attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Seoul's unification ministry Monday. (*Yonhap News*)
- U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield will be in Korea next month, the third visit of a minister-level official of the Joe Biden administration to Seoul. (Jeong Jin Woo, Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

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Newstown News Article

**North Korea's Political Prison-Labor Facility, Tosong-ni Kwo-hwa-so, Revealed**

On November 4th, VOA reported that a U.S. based organization released data on Kyo-hwa-so No. 3 (Tosong-ni Kyohwa-so) located in Sinuiju, including high-definition satellite images. Satellite images taken in March of this year show prisoners lining up, security guards walking, nearby trucks, and even the correctional officials' housing located outside of the facility.

On November 3rd, the U.S.-based Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) a private organization in Washington, released high-definition satellite imagery of the Kyo-hwa-so No. 3 in Tosong-ni, Sinuiju. HRNK said that the Tosong-ni Kyohwa-so, which is known to have been established in 1968, has been expanded multiple times and is operating as usual.

Amanda Oh, Director of International Advocacy and Development, said in a video conference that she was well aware that inmates are subjected to forced labor in these types of inhumane prisons. "They inflict tremendous suffering on prisoners, sometimes even to the point of death," she stated. She emphasized that, "North Koreans should not die under the pretext of such a policy of rehabilitation through forced labor." Director Oh added that such a situation “can be 100% prevented by the North Korean leadership, including Kim Jong-un and the Ministry of Social Security.”

The group's chief researcher, Joseph S. Bermudez, who co-authored the report, said the resolution of civilian satellite images had improved by up to 30 centimeters, enough to capture the details of inmates lining up, which is important for gathering evidence. Satellite images can be used as evidence in court, and when combined with the testimonies of former prisoners of the Kyo-hwa-so, they can constitute important fact-based data.
Bermudez said that this is the reason for this surveillance and data collection, stating that this "provides strong evidence to bring the perpetrators to justice".

HRNK, which previously released up-to-date information on North Korean political prison camps and other Kyo-hwa-so, described the report as "part of a comprehensive and long-term

project to illuminate the suffering of North Koreans" through satellite images and interviews with former prisoners.

At the event, Doohyun Kim, a North Korean defector and Consultant at HRNK who recently graduated from university in the United States, testified in detail about the story of the loss of his father and the environment of the Kyo-hwa-so.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also expressed concern in a report on the situation of human rights in North Korea submitted to the 76th UN General Assembly to be held at the UN headquarters in New York, saying, “The lives of those detained in Kyo-hwa-so and Kwan-li-so are full of forced labor.”

In a report submitted to the UN Human Rights Council, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said, "North Korea's criminal and administrative laws provide a legal excuse for this type of exploitation, in fact, on the premise of education and reform through labor." He pointed out that forced labor under harsh conditions in these prisons “may amount to enslavement among other crimes against humanity".

Last year, the European Union (EU) put the Central Public Prosecutors Office under sanctions, as well as State Security Minister Jong Kyong-thaek, who oversaw the operation of the Kwo-hwa-so, and Public Security Minister Ri Yong-gil, who was in charge of the Kwan-li-so.

In a press release, Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of HRNK, said that the location of the Tosong-ni Kyo-hwa-so in Sinuiju near the border with China is very important for both illegal border trade and defection routes, and thus it is necessary to understand the specific role of the Kyo-hwa-so.

He also recommended that the United Nations and international humanitarian organizations operating near the Tosong-ni Kyohwa-so adopt a human rights-first approach in consideration of the vulnerability of the prisoners there.

In addition, he urged that the North Korean authorities must abide by the 'Minimum UN Standard Provisions on the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Regulations)', which stipulates the guarantee of human rights for prisoners around the world, and the 'United Nations Regulations on the Treatment of Female Prisoners and Non-Detention Alternatives for Female Offenders (Bangkok) regulations).

**Reported by**: Seong-min Choi
**Translated by**: Doohyun Kim, HRNK Consultant

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Prepared by Maricarmen Corte, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250818153102/https://mailchi.mp/aa02335e7bad/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-koreas-political-prison-labor-facility-tosong-ni-kwo-hwa-so-revealed-north-korea-calls-for-glorifying-kims?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, November 23, 2021**

# Inside South Korea's real 'Squid Game' of debt, shame and social pressure, Family of assassinated N. Korean defector

**Top News:**
Inside South Korea's real 'Squid Game' of debt, shame and social pressure (*The New York Post*, 11/20/2021)

**North Korea:**
Family of assassinated N. Korean defector requests state panel probe (*Yonhap*, 11/23/2021)
North Korea calls for 'glorification' of leader Kim Jong-un's era (*The Business Standard*, 11/22/2021)
North Korea emphasizes winter COVID measures as snow hits country (*NK News*, 11/23/2021)
N. Korea holds nationwide computer programming competition (*Yonhap*, 11/23/2021)
N. Korea's 'three revolutions' conference underlines importance of making 'Great Kim Jong-un..(*Arirang News*, 11/21/2021)

**South Korea:**
Tumultuous inter-Korean relations under rule of late ex-President Chun (*Yonhap*, 11/23/2021)
ROK presidential candidates slam North Korea on anniversary of Yeonpyeong attack (*NK News*, 11/23/2021)

**International:**
Preparations in 'final stage' to reopen North Korea's border with China: MOU (*NK News*, 11/23/2021)

**Top News:**

- Angela, a 62-year-old owner of a Midtown nail salon, used to send some of her earnings back to some of her relatives in Seoul. She still sends money to her older sister — but stopped giving funds to her son and daughter, both in their early 30s, about three years ago. (Dana Kennedy, *The New York Post*)

**In North Korea:**

- The bereaved family of a prominent North Korean defector, who was assassinated in South Korea more than two decades ago, has formally asked a state reconciliation panel here to look into the truth behind his killing, a civic group official said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea has called for 'glorifying' the era of leader Kim Jong-un as a large-scale conference on carrying out a mass movement for the country's development wrapped up, Pyongyang's state media said on Monday. (*The Business Standard*)
- North Korea says it remains free of COVID-19 after testing 734 more people, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced on Tuesday, as the country's state media warns of rising cases globally due to colder temperatures. (Bryan Betts, *NK News)*
- North Korea has opened a nationwide computer programming competition aimed at cultivating talents to lead the country's information and technology development, a propaganda outlet said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- N. Korea's 'three revolutions' conference underlines importance of making 'Great Kim Jong-un Era' glorious (*Arirang News*)

**In South Korea:**

- Inter-Korean relations went through turbulent developments under the military junta of former South Korean President Chun Doo-hwan, who died Tuesday, highlighted by the first-ever reunion of families on the peninsula separated by the 1950-53 Korean War and two deadly terrorist attacks by the North. (*Yonhap*)
- South Korea's leading presidential candidates sharply criticized North Korea for its attack on Yeonpyeong Island, as the nation marks the 11th anniversary of the deadly artillery shelling near the inter-Korean maritime border. (*NK News*)

**International:**

- North Korea will soon resume overland trade with China, Seoul's Ministry of Unification (MOU) suggested on Monday, nearly two years after the country closed its borders to keep out COVID-19. (Chaewon Chung, NK News)

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Prepared by Maricarmen Corte, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250818153032/https://mailchi.mp/29227dc3e184/hrnk-news-itemsinside-south-koreas-real-squid-game-of-debt-shame-and-social-pressure-family-of-assassinated-n-korean-defector?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, November 24, 2021**

## N. Korean sentenced to death after students caught watching Squid Game; End-of-war declaration, Beijing Olympics are separate issues

**North Korea:**
Dozens of Russians leave from Pyongyang amid ongoing exodus of embassy staff(*NK News*, 11/24/2021)
Kim Jong Un builds new mansions across country as North Korean public suffers(*NK News*, 11/24/2021)
North Korean sentenced to death after students caught watching Squid Game (RFA, 11/23/2021)
Some news on the donpyo implementation (*North Korea Economic Watch*, 11/23/2021)
Some wives of Komdok Mine workers are demanding divorces (*Daily*NK, 11/24/2021)

**South Korea:**
Assembly speaker meets WHO chief to discuss vaccines, N. Korea aid (*Yonhap*, 11/24/2021)
End-of-war declaration, Beijing Olympics are separate issues: minister (*Yonhap*, 11/24/2021)
Military reports 10 additional COVID-19 cases (*Yonhap*, 11/23/2021)
S. Korea commemorates sacrifices of 2 Marines in 2010 N. Korean artillery attack(*Yonhap*, 11/23/2021)
S. Korean Conservatives Vow to Get Tougher on China (VOA, 11/23/2021)
Temperatures dive below zero, snow falls in many parts of S. Korea: KMA (*Yonhap*, 11/23/2021)
Undoing Moon's policies, or going beyond them? (*The Korea Herald*, 11/24/2021)
Unrepentant former dictator Chun Doo Hwan dies at 90 (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/23/2021)

**International:**
Chinese envoy butters up Korea, Japan ahead of Beijing Olympics (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/24/2021)
Former Chinese ambassador says Beijing supports efforts for end-of-war declaration (*Yonhap*, 11/24/2021)
Past US envoy for DPRK says end-of-war declaration a 'positive step' (*NK News*, 11/24/2021)
State Department clarifies expectations of Seoul regarding Beijing (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/23/2021)
S. Korea, U.S., Japan can achieve bigger success when working together: Ned Price (*Yonhap*, 11/23/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Dozens of personnel attached to the Russian Embassy in Pyongyang will board a train to leave North Korea on Wednesday, multiple informed sources told *NK News*, further shrinking the significantly reduced international presence in the DPRK capital. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is building new mansions for himself or trusted family and friends at a countryside retreat and a secretive Pyongyang compound. The construction — and likely need to import sanctioned luxury goods to furnish the

mansions — comes as Kim repeated demands last week that the population work harder to overcome "present hardships such as economic difficulties." (Colin Zwirko, NK News)

- North Korea has sentenced to death a man who smuggled and sold copies of the Netflix series "Squid Game" after authorities caught seven high school students watching the Korean-language global hit show. (Myungchul Lee, RFA)
- There was a recent incident at a market in Pyongyang's Sosong District in which a money changer refused a request by an employee of the financial section of a particular enterprise to change *donpyo* for foreign currency. Ultimately, the money changer exchanged the vouchers at a rate of KPW 2,500 for each KPW 5,000 voucher, but he was arrested by police after they were called to the scene. (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, North Korea Economic Watch)
- With a housing construction project in South Hamgyong Province's Komdok District coming to an end, production workers at the local mine are preparing to move into the new dwellings in earnest. However, the wives of some of the workers are reportedly demanding divorces. (Ha Yoon-ah, DailyNK)

**In South Korea:**

- National Assembly Speaker Park Byeong-seug met with the World Health Organization (WHO) chief to discuss cooperation on vaccines and humanitarian aid to North Korea, his office said Wednesday. (Yonhap)
- South Korea's push to declare a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War and the upcoming Winter Olympics in Beijing are two separate issues, a top official in charge of inter-Korean relations said Wednesday, amid concerns that the U.S. move to boycott the games could throw a wet blanket on Seoul's peace initiative. (Choi Soo-hyang, Yonhap)
- South Korea's military reported 10 additional COVID-19 cases Tuesday, bringing the total caseload among its personnel to 2,203. (Yonhap)
- South Korea's defense chief vowed Tuesday to never forget the "noble" sacrifices of two Marines killed in a 2010 North Korean artillery attack on a western border island, stressing they laid the groundwork for peace. (Song Sang-ho, Yonhap)
- South Korea's main conservative party is signaling it will take a firmer stance on China, and place a bigger emphasis on human rights in its foreign policy, if it wins back the presidency in a hotly contested March election. (William Gallo, VOA)
- Temperatures fell by over 10 degrees to below zero in many parts of the country Tuesday morning, with snow falling in many regions as well, the state weather agency said. (Yonhap)
- The presidential race is heating up, with contenders from the two largest parties -- Lee Jae-myung of the Democratic Party of Korea and Yoon Seok-youl of the People Power Party -- dominating the news. (Ko Jun-tae, The Korea Herald)
- Former president Chun Doo Hwan, who seized power in a coup d'etat in 1979 and ordered a brutal crackdown on pro-democracy protests in Gwangju in May 1980, died Tuesday at the age of 90. (Michael Lee, Korea JoongAng Daily)

**International:**

- Liu Xiaoming, Chinese special envoy on Korean Peninsula affairs, stressed the importance of Chinese-Korean-Japanese trilateral ties on his Twitter account Tuesday, in what appears to part of a growing movement by Chinese officials to tone down calls to boycott the Beijing Olympics. (Park Hyun-ju, Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The former Chinese envoy in South Korea said Wednesday Beijing supports efforts to declare a formal end to the Korean War as one of the signatories to the armistice agreement that effectively ended the 1950-53 conflict. (*Yonhap*)
- Declaring an end to the Korean War could be a "positive step" to resolve the ongoing deadlock in talks with North Korea, Former Amb. Joseph Yun, said in an interview with *NK News* on Tuesday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- The U.S. State Department stressed Tuesday that South Korea and the United States must work together against China's rising assertions, clarifying what role Washington expects Seoul to play amid its growing rivalry with Beijing. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The press secretary for the U.S. Department of State reiterated the importance of trilateral cooperation between the U.S., South Korea and Japan on Monday, saying the countries will be more successful when working together. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Caroline Ward, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250818153718/https://mailchi.mp/d58148687d6e/hrnk-news-itemsn-korean-sentenced-to-death-after-students-caught-watching-squid-gameend-of-war-declaration-beijing-olympics-are-separate-issues?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, November 25, 2021**

## Russia pulls out majority of embassy personnel in N. Korea; North Korea steps up efforts to increase public trust in money vouchers

**North Korea:**
Experts doubt that 'Squid Game' has been smuggled into North Korea (*NK News*, 11/25/2021)
Faltering expectations of increased trade strengthens North Korean won against foreign currencies (*North Korean Economy Watch*, 11/25/2021)
Imagery of North's nuclear plant indicates continued usage (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/25/2021)
N. Korean border patrol's food provisions heavily impacted by COVID-19 border closure (*Daily NK*, 11/25/2021)

North Korea bans leather coats to stop citizens from copping leader's iconic look(*Radio Free Asia*, 11/24/2021)
North Korea likely continuing nuclear activities: IAEA (*The Korea Herald*, 11/25/2021)
North Korea steps up efforts to increase public trust in money vouchers (*Daily NK*, 11/25/2021)
North Korea warily eyes the markets that now dominate food distribution (*NK Pro*, 11/25/2021)
Satellite imagery indicates continued operation of N.K. nuclear reactor: 38 North(*Yonhap*, 11/25/2021)

**South Korea:**
Lee Jae-myung vows to meet Kim Jong Un but rejects Trump's 'rosy' approach (*NK News*, 11/25/2021)
Seoul monitoring possibility of new N.K. event marking 2017 ICBM launch (*Yonhap*, 11/25/2021)
SKorea governing party candidate takes softer line on North (*AP News*, 11/25/2021)
South Korea presidential hopeful seeks closer ties with Pyongyang (*UPI*, 11/25/2021)

**International:**
Canada spots 24 suspected ship-to-ship transfers in DPRK sanctions operations(*NK News*, 11/25/2021)
North Korean wives of Chinese men asked to apply for temporary ID cards (*Radio Free Asia*, 11/24/2021)
On North Korea, it's not just the US that's using 'strategic patience' (*NK News*, 11/25/2021)
Russia pulls out majority of embassy personnel in N. Korea: official (*Yonhap*, 11/25/2021)
The North Korea-Iran Relationship: An Anti-American Alliance or Transactional Partnership? (*38 North*, 11/24/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Experts familiar with contemporary North Korean border restrictions told NK News it's virtually impossible that "Squid Game" has made into the country, saying reports to the contrary are likely an attempt to take advantage of the TV show's popularity. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- Daily NK reports (thus far only in Korean) that a recent decision to strengthen border control measures has caused foreign currencies to depreciate versus the domestic currency. In normal times, when the Amnok (Yalu) river freezes, smuggling activities increase. This year, people expect things to be very different given the tightened border shutdown. (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, *North Korean Economy Watch*)
- Satellite imagery from Wednesday captured signs of continuing activity at North Korea's Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center in North Pyongan Province, home to a 5-megawatt nuclear reactor that produces plutonium for potential use in nuclear weapons. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- Daily NK has confirmed that the protracted closure of the Sino-North Korean border is having a major impact on food provisions to North Korean troops on the border. (Kim Chae Hwan, *Daily NK*)
- Authorities in North Korea are cracking down on residents wearing leather trench coats, saying that it is disrespectful to emulate the fashion choices of the country's leader Kim Jong Un, sources in the country told RFA. (Hyemin Son, *Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korea appears to have operated its Yongbyon nuclear reactor, which can produce weapons-grade plutonium, and continued nuclear activities at Kangson and Pyongsan, a UN watchdog revealed Wednesday. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korean authorities have recently stepped up efforts to alleviate public distrust in money vouchers, or donpyo. Even the country's government officials are uncertain why the vouchers were issued, which has led the authorities to convene lectures aimed at educating them about the new currency. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- The *Minju Chosun*, the newspaper of North Korea's Cabinet, has recently reviewed changes to the Food Administration Act that point to continued efforts to centralize control over the grain distribution system. (Peter Ward, *NK Pro*)
- North Korea appears to be continuing the operation of a plutonium-producing nuclear reactor at its mainstay Yongbyon complex, a U.S. monitoring website has said, citing the release of steam and water seen in recent satellite imagery. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- Donald Trump's approach to striking a "big deal" on denuclearization with North Korea was too "rosy," progressive presidential candidate Lee Jae-myung said on Thursday, vowing to meet U.S. and DPRK leaders in person to resolve the deadlock since the failed Hanoi summit. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- North Korea appears to be continuing the operation of a plutonium-producing nuclear reactor at its mainstay Yongbyon complex, a U.S. monitoring website has said, citing the release of steam and water seen in recent satellite imagery. (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- The South Korean governing party's presidential candidate said Thursday he will continue a conciliatory approach toward North Korea if elected and questioned the effectiveness of U.S.-led economic sanctions in pressuring the North to abandon its nuclear ambitions. (Kim Tong-hyung, *AP News*)
- Lee Jae-myung, the liberal party candidate in March's South Korean presidential election, said Thursday that Seoul should take the lead in inter-Korean affairs and reset relations with the nuclear-armed North around engagement and economic cooperation. (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)

**International:**

- Canada has spotted at least 24 ship-to-ship transfers and over a hundred "vessels of interest" potentially violating sanctions against North Korea since mid-October, the country's Ministry of Defense confirmed on Wednesday. (Ethan Jewell, *NK News*)
- Police in China are calling on North Korean women who entered the country illegally and then married Chinese husbands to apply for temporary ID cards that will allow them to stay in China, sources told RFA. (Jeong Yon Park, *Radio Free Asia*)

- Since the latter years of the Barack Obama administration, "strategic patience" has been a euphemism for playing it safe on the Korean Peninsula. It has become a term of disdain for both engagers and containers, as it is hostile to North Korea in appearance yet enables it in effect. Whatever else one says about Obama's second-term policies — from sanctions to human rights denunciations — they did nothing to curtail the North's weapons systems development. (Rob York, NK News)
- Russia has withdrawn most of its embassy staff in North Korea, a Seoul official said Thursday, as pandemic-driven shortages of everyday commodities and anti-virus restrictions have driven many foreign diplomats out of the impoverished country. (Yonhap)
- A recent United Nations (UN) report revealed that North Korea and Iran are cooperating on long-term missile development projects, which included the shipment of parts in 2020. North Korea's hypersonic missile tests have also raised concerns about technology transfers to Iran, which developed a testing facility for hypersonic weapons in 2014. (Samuel Ramani, 38 North)

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Prepared by Irene Kang, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250818154016/https://mailchi.mp/44b1c62025e8/hrnk-news-items-russia-pulls-out-majority-of-embassy-personnel-in-n-koreanorth-korea-steps-up-efforts-to-increase-public-trust-in-money-vouchers?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, November 27, 2021**

## What to expect on North Korea's new nuclear missile holiday next week; Why America is fighting a losing battle against NK cyber crime

**North Korea:**
Intimate Perspectives on North Korea by Fabian Muir – in pictures (*The Guardian*, 11/26/2021)
North Korea issues emergency order for all fishing boats to receive new "sea entry licenses" (*Daily* NK, 11/26/2021)
North Korea puts Kimhyongjik County under lockdown amid COVID-19 fears (*Daily* NK, 11/26/2021)
North Korea reels in cash from fishing permits this year, despite UN ban (*NK Pro*, 11/26/2021)
The cruel tales and emotional exhibitionalism of North Korean children's shows (*NK News*, 11/26/2021)
What to expect on North Korea's new nuclear missile holiday next week (*NK News*, 11/26/2021)

Why America is fighting a losing battle against North Korean cyber crime (*NK Pro*, 11/26/2021)

**South Korea:**

End-of-war declaration a 'good starting point' to address N.K. security concerns: unification minister (*Yonhap*, 11/26/2021)

Over half of S. Koreans say inter-Korean summit at Beijing Olympics not possible: poll (*Yonhap*, 11/26/2021)

Seoul monitoring N. Korea's nuclear, missile activities: unification ministry (*Yonhap*, 11/26/2021)

**International:**

Japan PM vows to step up defense amid China, NK threats (*AP News*, 11/27/2021)

Japan seeks extra defense budget amid China, N Korea concern (*AP News*, 11/26/2021)

Japan unlikely to support an end-of-war declaration with North Korea: experts (*NK News*, 11/26/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Fabian Muir's composition of images from inside North Korea give a delicate insight into the shuttered nation. Documented over two years the images reveal a complexity and nuance residing in their society. (*The Guardian*)
- Daily NK has learned that North Korea recently issued an emergency order for all fishing boats to exchange their current "sea entry licenses" for new ones. (Jong So Yong, *Daily NK*)
- The border town of Kimhyongjik County (formerly Huchang County), Yanggang Province has recently been placed under lockdown until Dec. 4, Daily NK has learned. (Kim Chae Hwan, *Daily NK*)
- As the fall fishing season comes to a close, ship tracking data shows scores of Chinese fishing vessels ventured into North Korea's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) over the last several months, in what likely amounts to extensive violations of sanctions against North Korea. (Ethan Jewell, *NK Pro*)
- The North Korean system strives to mold people throughout their life, and those efforts begin from the cradle. (Tatiana Gabroussenko, *NK News*)
- North Korea's nuclear weapons and defense scientists are set to take center stage next Monday as the country celebrates "Rocket Industry Day" for the first time. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- While the stated goal of U.S. policy toward North Korea remains complete denuclearization, such absolute objectives have no equivalent in cyberspace. Nobody demands that the DPRK destroys its computers or that China cut the country's access to the internet, even though there is little doubt that Pyongyang-sponsored hackers use that connection to wreak havoc online. (Nils Weisensee, *NK Pro*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's unification minister on Friday pitched the proposed declaration of a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War as a "good starting point" in the search for a "meaningful" solution to address North Korea's security concerns. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- More than half of South Koreans believe an inter-Korean summit at the Beijing Winter Olympics, slated for February, will not be possible, a survey showed Friday. (Chae Yun-hwan, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea is monitoring North Korea's nuclear and missile activities in close cooperation with the United States, the unification ministry said Friday, following reports the North appears to be continuing the operation of a nuclear reactor at its mainstay Yongbyon complex. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, at his first troop review Saturday, renewed his pledge to consider "all options," including acquiring enemy base strike capability, and vowed to create a stronger Self-Defense Force to protect the country amid growing threats from China and North Korea. (Mari Yamaguchi, *AP News*)
- Japan's Cabinet on Friday approved a 770 billion yen ($6.8 billion) request for an extra defense budget through March to expedite the purchase of missiles, anti-submarine rockets and other weapons amid rising concern over the escalation of military activities by China, Russia and North Korea. (Mari Yamaguchi, *AP News*)
- Seoul and Tokyo appear to be at odds again, this time over South Korean President Moon Jae-in's push to formally end the Korean War, following reports that Japan has voiced its objections to the initiative. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)

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Prepared by Irene Kang, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250818154458/https://mailchi.mp/e8d80a873023/hrnk-news-itemswhat-to-expect-on-north-koreas-new-nuclear-missile-holiday-next-week-why-america-is-fighting-a-losing-battle-against-nk-cyber-crime?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, November 28, 2021**

## Oxcarts, tractors and hitchhiking: Rural transport in North Korea; Chinese police capture North Korean convict on the run

**In North Korea:**

Oxcarts, tractors and hitchhiking: Rural transport in North Korea (*NK News*, 11/28/2021)
Report casts doubt on claim a North Korean was sentenced to death for smuggling 'Squid Game' (*Insider*, 11/28/2021)

**In South Korea:**
President Moon makes last-ditch effort to realize North Korea talks within tenure(*The Korea Times*, 11/28/2021)
**International:**
Chinese police capture North Korean convict on the run (*The Japan Times*, 11/28/2021)
Could North Korea Pull the U.S. and China Into a Nuclear War? (*National Interest*, 11/28/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- When it comes to getting around the North Korean countryside, it's rarely as simple as catching a bus or driving across town. Fuel shortages, run-down vehicles and poor infrastructure mean that everyday people must be resourceful to deliver goods and get from point A to B. Most can't even travel beyond their hometown or region due to restrictions on movement within the country. (*NK News*)
- A North Korea-focused news outlet cast doubt on a viral report that said the Netflix drama "Squid Game" had been smuggled into the secretive state, leading to a death sentence. NK News sought to debunk a recent story that said smuggled copies of the South Korean hit show were spreading in North Korea despite strict censorship of foreign media. (Mia Jankowicz, *Insider*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korean President Moon Jae-in is making a last-ditch effort to realize tangible progress in his proposal to declare a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War, which he believes will be a powerful enticement to bring North Korea back to denuclearization talks. (Nam Hyun-woo, *The Korea Times*)

**International:**

- Chinese police have captured a North Korean convict who staged a daring escape from prison in October and had been on the run for more than forty days, authorities said Sunday. Officials in northeast China were offering a $23,000 bounty for the recapture of the escapee, in a manhunt that has sparked massive interest on social media. (*The Japan Times*)
- War on the Korean Peninsula is almost too horrible to contemplate. Nuclear-armed adversaries, fighting in densely populated urban terrain, could cause humanitarian disaster on a scale that the world has never seen. But the scenario might grow even worse. (Robert Farley, *National Interest*)

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Prepared by Audrey Gregg, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250818154739/https://mailchi.mp/a7d9a57f7c8c/hrnk-news-itemswhat-to-expect-on-north-koreas-new-nuclear-missile-holiday-next-week-why-america-is-fighting-a-losing-battle-against-nk-cyber-crime-111?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Monday, November 29, 2021

# South Korea Wants to Declare Peace—Without Peace

**Top News:**
This article is written by Dr. Nicholas Eberstadt, a founding HRNK Board member:
South Korea Wants to Declare Peace—Without Peace (*Wall Street Journal*, 11/28/2021)

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea urges full vigilance against omicron variant (*Yonhap*, 11/29/2021)
N.K. state media sends congratulatory message on 60th anniversary of OANA(*Yonhap*, 11/29/2021)
North Korean ski resorts prep for tourists despite virus, economic concerns (*NK News*, 11/29/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Delving into presidential hopefuls' N. Korea policy: What's in the box? (*The Korea Herald*, 11/29/2021)
Education office's online cartoon attacked for 'praising NK' (*The Korea Herald*, 11/29/2021)
North-glorifying webtoon gets Gyeonggi in trouble (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/29/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
No unusual N.K. activities detected on day marking 2017 ICBM launch (*Yonhap*, 11/29/2021)
She Fled North Korea for Freedom. Then She Was Arrested. (*The New York Times*, 11/29/2021)
South Korean city to make longshot proposal for ferry to North Korea (*NK News*, 11/29/2021)

**International:**
China: North Korea fugitive captured after 40-day manhunt (*BBC News*, 11/29/2021)
Chinese police capture North Korean convict on the run (*The Korea Times*, 11/29/2021)
Food Aid to North Korea Leads to Starvation | Opinion (*Newsweek*, 11/29/2021)
North Korean group deploys sophisticated malware suite against DPRK watchers(*NK News*, 11/29/2021)
North Korean defector who escaped Chinese prison caught after 40-day manhunt(*The Telegraph*, 11/29/2021)
Pentagon chief to visit S. Korea this week for annual security talks (*Yonhap*, 11/29/2021)
Palestinian envoy exits DPRK while Russian ambassador refutes earlier report (*NK News*, 11/29/2021)
Where is the Russia-China Relationship Headed? (*The National Interest*, 11/28/2021)

5 things to know for November 29: Coronavirus, Iran, Capitol riot, Taiwan, Arbery(CNN, 11/29/2021)

**Top News:**

This article is written by Dr. Nicholas Eberstadt, a founding HRNK Board member.

- Seoul's government wants Biden to sign onto empty words that won't deter Pyongyang's aggression. South Korea's "Sunshiners" in President Moon Jae-in's administration have nothing to show for years of solicitousness to Kim Jong Un, and Mr. Moon's presidency is nearing its end. So they are doubling down, trying to stage a unilateral "end of war" declaration—a bit of diplomatic theater asserting the Korean War is formally over, no matter that the North says. The goal is to rope the U.S. in. (Nicholas Eberstadt, *Wall Street Journal*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea has strengthened preventive measures against COVID-19 in response to growing concern about the Omicron variant, a move that heralds a further delay in easing its stringent border control. The country's officials and other "workers" are concentrating all efforts on "thoroughly ensuring perfection" in the emergency virus control and prevention campaign. (Yun Hwan Chae, *Yonhap*)
- A North Korean state media outlet sent a message congratulating the Organization of Asia-Pacific News Agencies (OANA) on its 60th anniversary. Kim Pyong-ho, head of the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), stressed the important role of the organization in the region in a message sent to Yonhap News Agency, which currently chairs the organization. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's two largest ski resorts have begun preparing for domestic visitors this winter, according to satellite imagery, despite ongoing coronavirus-related travel restrictions and leader Kim Jong Un's recent warnings of "unprecedented" economic problems. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- North Korea policy is one of the main dividers between progressives and conservatives in South Korean politics, and the two leading presidential candidates -- Lee Jae-myung and Yoon Seok-youl -- are poles apart on how to secure stability and peace on the Korean Peninsula. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- The Gyeonggi Provincial Office of Education deleted a cartoon after it drew controversy for praising North Korea. The cartoon portrays the teacher explaining that North Korean children go on picnics and have a sport day at school. The South Korean students say, "I am jealous of the North Korean students," as they have not been able to enjoy such events due to social distancing restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. (Im Eun-byel, *The Korea Herald*)
- The Gyeonggi Provincial Office of Education was forced on Saturday to backtrack on a webtoon it posted to its social media depicting a seemingly rosy view of life in North Korea. Titled "I envy my North Korean friends," the webtoon — an online comic strip

where scenes are interspersed across consecutive slides — was posted on the Gyeonggi education office's official Instagram account at 7 p.m. on Friday. The account has over 13,000 followers. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korea has detected no unusual North Korean military activities, Seoul officials said, amid speculation Pyongyang could mark its 2017 launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) with a celebratory event or show of force. (*Yonhap*)
- Song Chun-son, a duck farm worker, endured two and a half years in a North Korean labor camp and was later coerced to work for its secret police, the Ministry of State Security. She defected to South Korea in 2018 to start a new life, until South Korean counterintelligence officers caught up with the details of her past in North Korea. (Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*)
- The South Korean city of Hwaseong, about 26 miles south of Seoul, plans to propose a ferry connecting it with North Korea's Haeju, as well as other forms of business cooperation with the provincial capital, in a longshot effort to achieve a breakthrough in stalled inter-Korean ties. Lim Jong-seok, the Moon administration's special adviser for foreign affairs, announced Hwaseong's plan to cooperate with Haeju on fourteen projects in a Facebook post Sunday. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)

**International:**

- A North Korean man has been re-captured after evading the police for 40 days, following a bold escape from a Chinese prison. Zhu had been sentenced to prison in the city of Jilin after fleeing to China from North Korea in 2013. The 39-year-old man, known by his Chinese name Zhu Xianjian, was arrested again on Sunday. (*BBC News*)
- Chinese police have captured a North Korean prisoner who staged a daring escape from jail in October and had been on the run for more than forty days. Officials in northeast China were offering a $23,000 bounty for the recapture of the escapee, in a manhunt that has sparked massive interest on social media. (*The Korea Times*)
- A North Korean court on November 10 sentenced two cadres to life imprisonment for "anti-socialist and non-socialist acts"—in this case, "violating the closed border." The officials, trying to alleviate a severe food shortage in North Hamgyong province, were buying rice from China. The convictions come as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea heads into another famine, perhaps even worse than the four-year "Arduous March" of the mid-1990s. North Korea's people have just been told to not expect relief until 2025. (Gordon G. Chang, *Newsweek*)
- North Korean hackers orchestrated a highly targeted attack against prominent individuals in the DPRK-watching community, cybersecurity firm Kaspersky detailed in a new report on Monday, using multiple malware strains with what one expert called "devastating" effects for privacy. (Ethan Jewell, *NK News*)
- A North Korean defector who was on the run for 40 days after staging an audacious escape by vaulting the electric fence of a Chinese jail has been captured by police. The 39-year-old man, who was identified by his Chinese name, Zhu Xianjian, was found after

a national manhunt fuelled by a huge £82,000 bounty on his head and widespread interest on social media. (Nicola Smith, *The Telegraph*)

- U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin will visit Seoul this week for annual defense talks with his South Korean counterpart on the envisioned transfer of wartime operational control (OPCON), North Korean threats, cybersecurity and other issues. The SCM comes as Seoul and Washington have been stepping up coordination to resume nuclear diplomacy with North Korea, despite indications of Pyongyang doubling down on its nuclear and missile programs. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Palestine's ambassador to North Korea left Pyongyang early on Monday morning, as Russia's ambassador to the DPRK took issue with specifics of recent reporting on the number of diplomats still active at the Russian Embassy. Ambassador Ismail Ahmed Mohamed Hasan, who had been the longest-serving diplomat in Pyongyang after being posted there in April 2009, left the capital by road toward the Chinese port city of Dandong early on Monday morning, sources said. He was accompanied by family members. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- Russia-China relations have been on a steady, upward trajectory now for at least the last three decades. Lyle J. Goldstein, a research professor in the China Maritime Studies Institute (CMSI) at the United States Naval War College, argues that Russia-China cooperation need not threaten global order and may even succeed in providing certain "public goods," whether in helping to stabilize the volatile North Korea situation or facilitating the construction of the new Silk Road. (Lyle J. Goldstein, *The National Interest*)
- Japan is adding $6.75 billion to its already record annual military spending in a rush to bolster air and maritime defenses as it grows more concerned about threats posed by China and North Korea. (AJ Willingham, CNN)

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Prepared by Teresa Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250818155033/https://mailchi.mp/2f3ce247db5c/hrnk-news-itemssouth-korea-wants-to-declare-peacewithout-peace?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, November 30, 2021**

## U.S. Organization Releases Up-To-Date Info on No.3 Kyo-hwa-so in T'osŏng-ni, N. Korea; Shocking Life of a N. Korean Female Solider

**Top News:**

Giving Tuesday 2021 (HRNK, 11/30/2021).
U.S. Organization Releases Up-To-Date Info on No.3 Kyo-hwa-so in T'osŏng-ni, North Korea… "Forced Labor Stop" (VOA, 11/04/2021)
The Shocking Life of a North Korean Female Solider: The Reality of North Korea (HRNK, 11/29/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Desperate North Koreans sell homes to raise money for food (*Radio Free Asia*, 11/29/2021)
Heat waves, tropical nights increase in N. Korea due to global warming: weather agency (*Yonhap*, 11/30/2021)
Juche H-bomb: North Korea's efforts to tie self-reliance to its nuclear weapons (*NK News*, 11/30/2021)
Why North Korean media stayed silent on new holiday celebrating nuclear missiles (*NK News*, 11/30/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Elections and Nukes (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/30/2021)
No ICBM launch anniversary in N. Korea's 2022 calendars: Seoul official (*Yonhap*, 11/30/2021)
S. Korea approves civic groups' applications for N. Korea aid: official (*Yonhap*, 11/30/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
National security adviser to visit China to discuss end-of-war declaration (*Korea Times*, 11/30/2021)

**International:**
Chinese city announces winning bids for upgrades to China-DPRK border station (*NK News*, 11/30/2021)
COVAX allocates 4.7 million more COVID-19 vaccines to N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 11/30/2021)
N. Korea slams AUKUS as U.S. 'tool for war' threatening world security (*Yonhap*, 11/30/2021)
Pentagon calls for enhancing alliance to deter China, NK in review (*Korea Herald*, 11/30/2021)
U.S. affirms nuclear umbrella over South Korea (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/30/2021)
US to maintain military posture in South Korea to deter DPRK, Chinese threats (*NK News*, 11/30/2021)

**Top News:**

- In a world overflowing with mind-numbing acts of brutality, your contribution will keep North Korean atrocities in focus. Donate today and help us in our efforts to end crimes against humanity in North Korea. We are confident that with persistence, tireless investigation, documentation, and public outreach, we can help PROTECT HUMAN

RIGHTS and END CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY IN NORTH KOREA. Our work depends on the generous support of our donors. Your contribution is our lifeline. (HRNK)

- A private U.S. organization released new information and high quality satellite images of the No.3 Kyo-hwa-so located in T'osŏng-ni, Sinuiju, North Korea. The organization urged North Korea to follow the minimum guidelines set by the United Nations and is concerned about the forced labor of the inmates imprisoned there. (Kim Young-gwon, VOA)
- Jennifer Kim, a former North Korean female soldier shares the horrific experience she had during her military service in North Korea. (Doohyun (Jake) Kim, *HRNK*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korean residents living near the border with China are selling their homes at rock bottom prices to raise money for food as the country prepares for winter amid the worst shortages since the 1990s famine. (Jieun Kim, Claire Lee, Eugene Whong, *Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korea has seen an increase in heat waves and tropical nights and a decline in cold spells over the past three decades as global warming has driven up temperatures, South Korea's state weather agency said Tuesday. (Park Boram, *Yonhap*)
- To believe or not to believe: This question seems all-too-prevalent among North Koreans with respect to the country's "Juche" ideology. Popular belief appears to be waning, and continuing to emphasize this doctrine of economic autarky will be an unsustainable way to keep the masses content if rhetoric does not bear fruit in material realities. (Edward Howell, *NK News*)
- North Korean media appeared to ignore a new holiday established this year to celebrate the country's nuclear missile development, as Pyongyang may remain cautious about promoting its most destructive weapons. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- Truth is the first casualty in war. In Korea, presidential elections are a graveyard of truth, and they are wars that determine more than a political victory or defeat. In this election, it is an undeniable truth that South Korea exists under a North Korean nuclear threat. Despite Korea's advancements in economics and culture, happiness suddenly feels strained.(Song Min-soon, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- North Korea's new calendars for next year have not marked its 2017 launch date of a new intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) as an anniversary unlike this year's, a unification ministry official said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- The South Korean government said Monday it has approved three new applications by local civic groups for the shipment of health care-related materials to North Korea. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- National security adviser Suh Hoon will visit China this week to meet with Beijing's top diplomat and discuss Seoul's push to declare a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War, sources said Tuesday. (*Korea Times*)

**International:**

- The Chinese city of Dandong has announced winning bids for upgrades to a key border facility between China and North Korea, recent project documents show, in the latest sign that preparations to resume overland trade continue despite renewed concerns over COVID-19. (Ethan Jewell, *NK News*)
- The COVAX Facility, a global vaccine distribution platform, has assigned 4.7 million doses of additional COVID-19 vaccines to North Korea in its latest distribution plan, its report showed Tuesday. (Yonhap)
- North Korea has criticized a new trilateral security partnership among Australia, Britain and the United States as an American "tool for war" that poses "serious threats" to world peace. (*Yonhap*)
- The US Defense Department on Monday called for enhanced cooperation with allies, including South Korea, to deter challenges posed by China and North Korea and to sustain stability in the Indo-Pacific region in its global posture review, or GPR. (Ji Da-gyum, *Korea Herald*)
- The Pentagon reaffirmed the United States' commitment to keeping its nuclear umbrella over South Korea, stressing that extended deterrence is "critical" following a months-long review of its global defense posture announced Monday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The U.S. has no plans to change its military posture in South Korea, the Pentagon announced Monday, while stating that it seeks "greater regional access for military partnership activities" in the region to deter Chinese and North Korean military threats. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)

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*VOA Article*

**U.S. Organization Releases Up-To-Date Info on No.3 Kyo-hwa-so in T'osŏng-ni, North Korea… "Forced Labor Stop"**

A private U.S. organization released new information and high quality satellite images of the No.3 Kyo-hwa-so located in T'osŏng-ni, Sinuiju, North Korea. The organization urged North Korea to follow the minimum guidelines set by the United Nations and is concerned about the forced labor of the inmates imprisoned there. This is reporter Kim Young-gwon.

Several buildings, livestock houses, and greenhouses on an area of 130,000 m sq., nearly twice the size of Pyongyang's Kim Il-sung Square, are clearly visible.

The satellite pictures taken in March show prisoners in line, security guards walking, trucks nearby, and even the accommodations of the correctional officers outside the Kyo-hwa-so. The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), an NGO based in Washington, released

high-quality satellite images and the latest information of the No. 3 Kyo-hwa-so in T'osŏng-ni, Sinuiju, North Korea, on November 3rd.

HRNK revealed that the T'osŏng-ni Kyo-hwa-so, established in 1968, has gone through several reconstructions and continues to operate normally.

HRNK's Director of International Advocacy and Development Amanda Oh stated in an online discussion that she is well aware of the fact that the inmates suffer due to forced labor, pointing out, "this causes the inmates excessive pain and sometimes even death."

[Director of International Advocacy and Development Amanda Oh] "People, of course, should not have to die in the name of this policy of re-education through labor...this is 100% preventable by the North Korean leadership, particularly Kim Jong-un and the Ministry of Social Security Leadership."

Joseph Bermudez, the chief researcher who co-authored the report, emphasized that the satellite images are very important for securing and defining evidence, as the quality of the satellite images have improved by as much as 30cm, making it possible to capture the inmates standing in a line.

Satellite images can be used as evidence in court, and when combined with the testimonies of former prisoners of the Kyo-hwa-so, they can constitute important fact-based data.

Chief Researcher Joseph Bermudez told the press that, "[this data] provides powerful evidence that can be used to bring those who perpetrated these issues to justice. That is what we intend to do."

HRNK, which released the latest information on political camps and Kyo-hwa-so, explained that the report is "a part of a long-term project that sheds light on the suffering of North Koreans," by including the satellite imagery and interviews of former inmates.

On this day of the event, defector Kim Doohyun, who recently graduated from university in the U.S., shared his story on how he lost his father, and testified about the poors condition of the T'osŏng-ni Kyo-hwa-so.

[Voice Recording: Kim Doohyun] "My story is not unique and it didn't happen 100 or 200 years ago. At this very moment, there are 1000s of people in North Korea like my father and our family suffering from this kind of oppression and human rights violations."

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also expressed concern in a report on the current situation of North Korea's human rights submitted to the 76th UN General Assembly held in New York, saying, "the lives of those detained are marked by forced labor."

Especially, explaining how North Korea's criminal law and administrative law disguises this exploitation as education and enlightenment, UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights pointed out that a report submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Council emphasized that the forced labor under the poor condition of the Kyo-hwa-so "may amount to enslavement among other crimes against humanity."

Last year, the European Union (EU) put the Central Public Prosecutors Office under sanctions, as well as State Security Minister Jong Kyong-thaek, who oversaw the operation of the Kwo-hwa-so, and Public Security Minister Ri Yong-gil, who was in charge of the Kwan-li-so.

Executive Director of HRNK Greg Scarlatoiu stated that the location of the Kyo-hwa-so in T'osŏng-ni, Sinuiju, North Korea, is crucial for both the illegal border trade and routes for North Korean defectors, and its role must be recognized.

Additionally, he advised that considering the vulnerability of the inmates of the Kyo-hwa-so, the United Nations and international humanitarian organizations near the T'osŏng-ni Kyo-hwa-so should introduce approaches that prioritize human rights.

In addition, he urged the North Korean authorities to abide by the 'Minimum UN Standard Provisions on the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Regulations)', which stipulates the guarantee of human rights for prisoners around the world, and the 'United Nations Regulations on the Treatment of Female Prisoners and Non-Detention Alternatives for Female Offenders'.

Reporter: Kim Young-gwon (VOA)
Translated by: Jiwoo Hwang (HRNK)

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Prepared by Lia Vincenzo, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250818155318/https://mailchi.mp/935bcdb4e1ff/hrnk-news-itemsus-organization-releases-up-to-date-info-on-no3-kyo-hwa-so-in-tosng-ni-n-korea-shocking-life-of-a-n-korean-female-solider?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

# 12. DECEMBER

### Wednesday, December 1, 2021

## N. Korea kicks up commemorative mood for late leader Kim Jong-il; With China and U.S. talks, Seoul tries to push forward on N. Korea

**In North Korea:**
A diplomat's life: Tight schedules and resort-like thrills touring North Korea (*NK News*, 12/01/2021)
In North Korea, "Squid Game" Can Get You Killed (*The National Interest*, 11/29/2021)
Kim Jong Un appears just once in 50 days as leader set to mark decade in power(*NK News*, 12/01/2021)
North Korea orders people to pay for candies as gifts from leader Kim Jong Un(*Radio Free Asia*, 11/30/2021)
N. Korea kicks up commemorative mood for late leader Kim Jong-il (*Yonhap*, 12/01/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Cardinal Yeom retires after 10 years of service (*The Korea Herald*, 11/30/2021)
Could South Korea Become a Submarine Power? (*The National Interest*, 12/01/2021)
DP's Lee changes his tune and gathers more support (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 11/30/2021)

**International:**
Ask a North Korean: What do North Koreans think of regime sympathizers? (*NK News*, 12/01/2021)
Canada spots ship-to-ship transfers, North suspected (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/01/2021)
Covax sets aside vaccine doses for North Korea. (*The New York Times*, 11/30/2021)
Korean War veteran receives Paik Sun-yup ROK-U.S. Alliance Award (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/01/2021)
National security adviser goes to China for talks (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/01/2021)
Nat'l security adviser to visit China amid push to declare formal end to Korean War (*Yonhap*, 12/01/2021)
North Korean diplomat meets Chinese counterpart ahead of ROK official's visit (*NK News*, 12/01/2021)
Pentagon chief due in Seoul for annual security talks on N. Korea, alliance (*Yonhap*, 12/01/2021)
South Korea and America Must Look Beyond Pyongyang (*The National Interest*, 11/29/2021)
Toward a Joint US-ROK Cyber Deterrence Strategy (*38 North*, 11/30/2021)

US JCS chief reaffirms defense, extended deterrence commitments for S. Korea(*The Korea Herald*, 12/01/2021)
US, S Korea to bolster alliance at talks but questions remain (AP *News*, 12/01/2021)
US, South Korea Updating War Plans for North Korea (VOA *News*, 12/01/2021)
What Does US Want From South Korea's Presidential Election? (VOA *News*, 11/30/2021)
With China and U.S. talks, Seoul tries to push forward on North Korea (*Reuters*, 12/01/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- State travel agencies plan every detail of visitors' itineraries, careful to show only the best it has to offer. The article is the eleventh in a multipart series by Taylor Darby, a pseudonym for a foreign diplomat that worked in Pyongyang for an extended period of time before being forced to leave in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. (Taylor Darby, *NK News*)
- Kim Jong Un has made just one appearance in the last 50 days, remaining out of the public eye for another two straight weeks after he returned from his longest stint away in seven years. It is the ninth time the leader has not made any new appearances for two or more weeks this year as he is on track to match his record high of 10 such breaks in 2020. His infrequent public appearances may suggest health complications, aversion to COVID-19 or simply a change in work habits. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- The government of North Korea has sentenced a man to death for smuggling copies of the Netflix series "Squid Game" into the country after seven high school students were caught watching the show. (Trevor Filseth, *The National Interest*)
- Local governments in North Korea are scrambling to make candies in preparation for a nationwide celebration of leader Kim Jong Un's birthday in January, but the government is forcing hungry citizens to pay for it. The gift of sweets to children on or around the birthday of the country's leader or his predecessors has been a longtime tradition in the north, dating back to the era of Kim's grandfather, national founder Kim Il Sung. "Residents are angry that the authorities are wiping out the pockets of the people at a time like this to make candy for children, supposedly from Kim Jong Un for his birthday." (Claire Lee, Eugene Whong, *Radio Free Asia*)
- North Korea's Rodong Sinmun newspaper published a series of stories lauding late leader Kim Jong-il ahead of the 10th anniversary of his death this month. In an editorial, the newspaper said, "The great leader Kim Jong-il's aspiration for a strong country ... is turning into a shining reality thanks to Kim Jong-un." Eyes are on whether North Korea will hold a massive public event for the upcoming anniversary, as Pyongyang usually marks every fifth or 10th anniversary with larger events. (*Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- Cardinal Andrew Yeom Soo-jung on Tuesday retired as the Catholic archbishop of Seoul, after some 10 years of service in the post. Yeom, who also held the post of apostolic administrator of the diocese, Pyongyang of North Korea, will soon leave Myeongdong Cathedral and move to Bishop's Hall at the Catholic University of Korea Songsin Campus in Seoul. "Even after I leave the diocese, I will be grateful for every moment and pray for

peace on the Korean Peninsula and our Church," Yeom said during his retirement Mass Tuesday morning at Myeongdong Cathedral. (Park Ga-young, *The Korea Herald*)

- The ultimate goal of the Republic of Korea Navy (ROKN) is to produce their own diesel-electric attack submarine. The current fleet is relatively modern and possesses a strong overall capability for a diesel-electric fleet. The KSS-II and KSS-III designs compare favorably to any submarine the Korean People's Navy can field. They possess advanced AIP propulsion designs allowing them to run quieter and longer and can fire more modern torpedos. They also have a superior sensor fit, having flank sonars, which have not been reported as being equipped on any North Korean submarines. (Charlie Gao, *The National Interest*)
- The ruling Democratic Party's (DP) presidential candidate Lee Jae-myung appears to be enjoying a bounce in popularity ahead of the March election as he adopts a more pragmatist approach in recent weeks. At a meeting of foreign journalists on Thursday, Lee suggested that he would pursue "conditional lifting of sanctions" on North Korea and tit-for-tat compromises, not "grand deals" as were attempted at the 2019 U.S.-North Korea summit. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- Hyun-seung Lee — who comes from an elite North Korean family and defected in 2014 — spoke about state propaganda on overseas sympathizers, how DPRK spy agencies leverage such support and how he would respond to those who deny his and other defectors' testimonies about North Korea. Lee claims: "That they believe the North Korean line — that American propaganda paints North Korean in a bad light — really surprised me at first. I couldn't wrap my head around there being foreigners who support the North Korean government and believe that defectors are liars." (Alek Sigley, *NK News*)
- The U.S. State Department called for North Korea to abide by United Nations Security Council resolutions and re-enter denuclearization talks following media reports of Canada spotting numerous ship-to-ship transfers in the East China Sea involving North Korean vessels. Illegal ship-to-ship transfers by North Korean vessels flying the flags of other countries have long been a method employed by Pyongyang to evade sanctions. While South Korean Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong in September suggested easing sanctions on the North as way to induce it back to the negotiating table, the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden said repeatedly that it will meet North Korea without pre-conditions to discuss denuclearization. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- Covax, the global vaccine-sharing initiative, announced that it had allocated more than 4.7 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines to North Korea, which is not believed to have administered any shots yet. North Korean officials did not immediately respond to the announcement. (Jin Yu Young, *The New York Times*)
- Korean War veteran Charles Rangel, who represented several New York districts in Congress over multiple decades, was awarded the 9th Paik Sun-yup ROK-U.S. Alliance Award by the Korean Defense Ministry. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- Suh Hoon, South Korea's national security adviser, will make a two-day visit to China, said the Blue House, amid expectations that Seoul will want to discuss its desire for a declaration to end the 1950-53 Korean War. The two are expected to discuss South Korea-China relations, Korean Peninsula issues and other regional and international affairs. Suh could ask for China's help in drawing North Korea back to dialogue ahead of next year's Beijing Winter Olympics. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin is set to arrive in Seoul for annual security talks with his South Korean counterpart on the envisioned wartime operational control (OPCON) transfer, North Korean threats and the bilateral alliance. At the 53rd Security Consultative Meeting, Seoul's Defense Minister Suh Wook and Austin are expected to discuss when and how to conduct the full operational capability (FOC) assessment — the second part of a three-phase program designed to verify if South Korea is ready to retake wartime OPCON. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- A high-level North Korean diplomat based in Beijing met a Chinese party official on Tuesday, two days before South Korean and Chinese officials are set to hold talks in Tianjin that reportedly could include discussion of an end-of-war declaration. Beijing's Liu Jinsong, director-general of the foreign ministry's Department of Asian Affairs, held talks with Jong Hyon U, a minister at the North Korean Embassy in China, on bilateral relations and matters of "mutual" concern, according to China's foreign ministry. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- National security adviser Suh Hoon will visit China this week to meet with Beijing's top diplomat, Cheong Wa Dae said Wednesday, as Seoul pushes to declare a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War. The Moon Jae-in administration believes an end-of-war declaration will help revive stalled peace talks with the North. The two sides could also discuss President Moon Jae-in's possible visit to Beijing for the Winter Olympics in February, as Seoul is believed to be considering the Olympics as a possible venue for declaring an end to the war. (*Yonhap*)
- As Beijing continues to push its preferences on the international order, it is time for South Korea and the United States to look beyond Pyongyang and assert more significant influence throughout the Indo-Pacific region. Semiconductor chips make it difficult for Seoul to ignore that it has a growing stake in Taiwan's security. South Korea and the United States need to collaborate more systematically in specific critical sectors of technology and supply chain security, from artificial intelligence to semiconductor chips. (Patrick M. Cronin, *The National Interest*)
- North Korea's malicious cyber activity presents a significant challenge for the US-ROK alliance, but the alliance has successfully deterred a strategic attack from North Korea for nearly 70 years. The allies should build on this history of deterrence cooperation by more actively formulating a cyber deterrence strategy. For South Korea, this would bolster its core asymmetric advantage over North Korea and the overall alliance with the United States. It would also position Seoul as an ideal partner for Washington to defend forward against Pyongyang's cyber threats. Taking the steps outlined here would let the

allies reseize the advantage in the cyber domain and better position themselves to deter future North Korean cyber threats. (James E. Platte, 38 North)

- The US chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff reaffirmed Washington's commitment to defending South Korea and providing extended nuclear deterrence at an annual top-level military meeting. At the meeting, both sides reaffirmed the "enduring alliance" and shared the view that Seoul and Washington have made "significant advancements" to strengthen bilateral cooperation. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin arrived in South Korea for annual security talks expected to bolster the countries' decades-long military alliance in the face of North Korean nuclear threats and mounting challenges from China. The allies are expected to announce a strengthening of their ties and the U.S. security commitment to South Korea. Although such announcements aren't something new, President Moon said it would still "discomfort North Korea, which basically aims to drive a wedge between South Korea and the U.S." amid stalled nuclear disarmament talks. (Hyung-Jin Kim, AP *News*)
- The United States and South Korea are preparing to develop "a new, operational war plan" to better address the growing threat from North Korea's military. The new plan would replace existing strategies meant to respond to potential North Korean aggressions which were drawn up about a decade ago and do not account for Pyongyang's military advances. (Jeff Seldin, VOA *News*)
- Experts say the Biden administration wants the next South Korean president to forge a strong alliance with the United States to defend an East Asia increasingly overshadowed by China's aggression and to tackle North Korea's threats. (Hyungjin Kim, VOA *News*)
- South Korea will broach North Korea separately with two different audiences on Thursday, holding talks with Beijing's top diplomat in China and with visiting U.S. military leaders in Seoul. In China, talks are expected to include South Korean President Moon Jae-in's hopes for a declaration to end the 1950-1953 Korean War. In Seoul, U.S. and South Korean top brass are expected to discuss ways to strengthen a military alliance whose top goal is deterring a conflict with Pyongyang, and being prepared to fight one if that fails. (Phil Stewart, *Reuters*)

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Prepared by Teresa Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250818213215/https://mailchi.mp/3ce57afb36ed/hrnk-news-items-n-korea-kicks-up-commemorative-mood-for-late-leader-kim-jong-ilwith-china-and-us-talks-seoul-tries-to-push-forward-on-n-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Wednesday, December 2, 2021

# North Korea's Prison-Labor Facility, Kyo-hwa-so No.3; North Korean female soldiers are ‘victims of sexual violence.'

**Top News:**
North Korea's Prison-Labor Facility, Kyo-hwa-so No.3 (*Radio Free Asia*, 12/02/2021)
North Korean female soldiers ‘victims of sexual violence’ are serious… Campaign to Eliminate Violence Against Women” Highlights HRNK Video (VOA *News*, 12/02/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Moon’s end of war proposal faces multitude of challenges (*The Korea Herald*, 12/02/2021)
N.Korea's Kim warns of 'very giant struggle' next year to boost economy (*Reuters*, 12/02/2021)
North Korea to hold major meeting around Kim Jong Un’s 10-year anniversary (NK *News*, 12/02/2021)

**In South Korea:**
S. Korea, U.S. hold annual security meeting in Seoul to address wartime operation control transfer (*Arirang News*, 12/02/2021)
U.S. and South Korea to Update Wartime Plans for North Korea (*The Wall Street Journal*, 12/02/2021)
U.S., S.Korea eye broader Asia role while sprucing up N.Korea plans (*Reuters*, 12/02/2021)
US Global Posture Review Calls for Stationing More Units in South Korea (*The Diplomat*, 12/02/2021)
US JCS chief reaffirms defense, extended deterrence commitments for S. Korea(*The Korea Herald*, 12/02/2021)

**International:**
Defense chiefs of S. Korea, US to hold annual talks on OPCON transfer, N. Korea(*The Korea Herald*, 12/02/2021)
S. Korea-U.S. cooperation amid complex regional dynamics (*Arirang News*, 12/02/2021)
U.S. affirms nuclear umbrella over South Korea (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/02/2021)
US and South Korea to develop new war plan to address North Korean military advancements (CNN, 12/02/2021)
US defense chief slams China’s drive for hypersonic weapons (AP *News*, 12/02/2021)

**Top News:**

- The testimony of a North Korean defector played a central role in this report. This defector was able to check satellite photos against the memories he had of the facilities while living in North Korea. The report’s analysis was made possible through the contributions of Doohyun Kim, who lived in the region the facility is located in. (Jeong Yeong, *Radio Free Asia*)

- North Korean refugee women participated in the UN's campaign to end violence against women [Orange the World] and to inform others of various types of violence suffered by North Korean women, including sexual violence in the military. North Korea's leadership has previously said that it supports the recommendations of the international community, including the United Nations, to take measures to end violence against women, but criticism continues to arise that there is no practical implementation. HRNK recently highlighted Jennifer Kim's story of sexual violence in the KPA in "The Shocking Life of a North Korean Female Soldier: The Reality of North Korea!" (*VOA News*)

**In North Korea:**

- President Moon Jae-in hopes to declare the end of the Korean War during his term, but such a declaration without corresponding denuclearization does not guarantee peace on the Korean Peninsula and time is too short to untangle complicated interests of all involved parties, experts say. (Shin Ji-hye, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has said the country must be prepared for a "very giant struggle" next year to continue to make progress in areas including defence, agriculture and construction, state media reported on Thursday. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- North Korea will hold a major party meeting called a plenum in “late December,” state media announced Thursday, falling around the official 10-year anniversary of Kim Jong Un coming to power. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- Defense Minister Suh Wook and his US counterpart, Lloyd Austin, will lead the 53rd Security Consultative Meeting (SCM), as the allies are stepping up cooperation for regional stability amid North Korea's evolving nuclear and missile threats and China's growing assertiveness. (*Arirang News*)
- From railway-launched missiles to hypersonic ones, North Korea has been displaying new weapons alongside its nuclear bombs and submarines. WSJ takes a look at Pyongyang’s growing arsenal to see what message it sends to the world. The U.S. and South Korea said they would update their joint wartime contingency plans for North Korea, as the Kim Jong Un regime has kept pursuing military advances amid a stall in nuclear talks. During a visit to Seoul, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, alongside his South Korean counterpart, approved an update to the strategic guidance used for wartime operation plans, a document that hadn’t been updated since 2010. The precise nature of the review, or what might change, wasn’t immediately disclosed. (Timothy W. Martin, *The Wall Street Journal*)
- The defence chiefs of the United States and South Korea said on Thursday they would review and update ways to deter North Korea, even as they emphasised a growing regional role for Seoul. North Korea's missile and weapons developments are increasingly destabilising for regional security, U.S. Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said after talks with his South Korean counterpart, Suh Wook, but the two sides also discussed issues beyond the Korean Peninsula. (Phil Stewart and Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)

- The U.S. Department of Defense announced on Monday that it will station an Apache attack helicopter squadron and artillery division headquarters permanently in South Korea in a bid to deter threats from China and North Korea in the region. (Mitch Shin, *The Diplomat*)
- The US chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Wednesday reaffirmed Washington's commitment to defending South Korea and providing extended nuclear deterrence at an annual top-level military meeting. South Korea's JCS Chairman Gen. Won In-choul and his US counterpart Gen. Mark Milley held the 46th Military Committee Meeting the same morning in Seoul, according to the JCS of each country. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- Ahead of talks slated for Thursday, Lloyd Austin emphasized the importance of the bilateral ties amid the growing intensity of U. S - China rivalry. For more, we connect to Dr. Mark P. Barry, an American expert who has been following North Korea affairs for over 3 decades. (*Arirang News*)
- South Korea and the United States are set to hold their annual defense ministerial talks in Seoul on Thursday to discuss the envisioned wartime operational control (OPCON) transfer, North Korean threats and bilateral alliance issues, officials here said. (*The Korea Herald*)
- The Pentagon reaffirmed the United States' commitment to keeping its nuclear umbrella over South Korea, stressing that extended deterrence is "critical" following a months-long review of its global defense posture announced Monday. When asked if the United States plans to continue to extend its nuclear umbrella over the region, Mara Karlin, deputy under secretary of defense for policy, said in a press briefing in Washington, "Our extended deterrence with our closest allies is critical, and I do not have anything to announce on changes regarding it." (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The US and South Korea will develop a new operational war plan to address the threat from North Korea, senior defense officials said Tuesday, as the Pentagon shifts its focus to the Indo-Pacific region following its recently completed global force posture review. (Oren Lieberman, CNN)
- U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Thursday that China's pursuit of hypersonic weapons "increases tensions in the region" and vowed the U.S. would maintain its capability to deter potential threats posed by China. (Hyung-Jin Kim and Kim Tong-Hyung, *AP News*)

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(Radio Free Asia)

**The testimony of a North Korean defector played a central role in this report. This defector was able to check satellite photos against the memories he had of the facilities while living**

Hello, everyone. This is Jeong Yeong, the host of “Human Rights From a North Korean’s Perspective”. On November 3rd, the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) released a report on North Korea's Long-term Prison-Labor Facility, Kyo-hwa-so No.3, located in T’osŏng-ni.

The testimony of a North Korean defector played a central role in this report. This defector was able to check satellite photos against the memories he had of the facilities while living in North Korea.

The report’s analysis was made possible through the contributions of Doohyun Kim, who lived in the region the facility is located in.

Let’s connect with Doohyun Kim, a recent graduate of Utah Valley University and consultant with HRNK, to learn more about Kyo-hwa-so No. 3.

Reporter: Hello!

Doohyun Kim: Hello.

Reporter: Recently, HRNK released a report on one of North Korea’s long-term prison-labor facilities, Kyo-hwa-so No.3, located in T’osŏng-ni. I understand that you played a significant role in the preparation of the report. Would you mind explaining a little more about it?

Kim: I didn’t contribute much. Co-authors Joseph S. Bermudez, Jr. and Amanda Mortwedt Oh have spent a very long time conducting research in order to write the report. I lived near the prison-labor facility, so my role was checking some parts of the report. For example, we had satellite images of prisoners walking in a line. From those pictures, we could estimate how the kyo-hwa-so operates, how big it is, what kinds of human rights violations are taking place, and how many prisoners are there now. It’s my job to check the research that they’ve been doing until now.

Reporter: In North Korea, there are huge detention facilities like prison camps, and Kyo-hwa-so No.1, No.2, and No.3. It must be very important to check the pictures that are taken from American commercial satellites. You’re saying that you were able to check these images because you lived in that region before you defected, right?

Kim: Yes. I lived there and have traveled to the surrounding areas multiple times, so I was able to confirm which building houses the kwo-hwa-so’s correctional officers.

Reporter: Would you mind explaining what Kyo-hwa-so No.3 is?

Kim: Yes. It is called “Kyo-hwa-so No. 3” in North Korea, and usually people living in Sinuiju call it “South Sinuiju Kwo-hwa-so”, or “Paek-to-ri Kwo-hwa-so”. Some people call it “T’osong-ni Kwo-hwa-so”. As you may already know, there are two kinds of crimes in North Korea: political and economic. Those who make statements opposing the government or are accused of such crimes wind up at political prison camps in Yodok or Kaechon and never leave. Those who commit ordinary crimes such as cutting electricity lines, eating cows, or embezzling money go to a kwo-hwa-so. Most of the prisoners at Kwo-hwa-so No. 3 are these kinds of ordinary criminals.

Reporter: On October 20th, HRNK held its 20th anniversary celebration in Washington, DC. I remember that you spoke in English about the death of your father who died in prison. There wasn’t a dry eye in the room. Do you mind if I ask you about your father?

Kim: Before I was born, my father lived as part of a special class. He was an officer in the North Korean military. There was a man named Kim Chang-bong who was Minister of National Security at the time. He created the so-called “Jumper Unit”. My father headed the South Chungcheong Province region, and he received intensive training in its geography, transportation, and broadcasting systems in order to someday occupy it. They were trained to invade South Korea and occupy South Chungcheong Province in the case of an emergency. But then Kim Chang-bong was branded a military bureaucrat and punished. As Kim Il-sung became more powerful, he began to feel threatened, and dealt with it by punishing people like this. In the aftermath, all the officers in the unit were forcibly disbanded, asked to turn in their uniforms, and deployed in droves to munitions factories. Because of his military background, my father was denied the opportunity to develop socially. Still, he made good money, and thus became a target of the regime. Howeber, his military background was not good, so he was sent to a detention house where he was to be tortured for one year. That place was Sinuiju Kyo-hwa-so No. 3. I already predicted that the police would not receive my father at the kyo-hwa-so. It’s not good if someone dies. They’d be criticized. So my father couldn’t be imprisoned there and was sent back home.

My father came home and started writing letters the very next day. If he made a mistake while writing, he would tear up the letter and start again. He wrote about twenty pages. At first, my family was afraid. We worried that he would be retaliated against, as the contents of the letters spoke very negatively of the North Korean government. Through our friends, my father sent letters directly to the Organization and Guidance Department under the Workers’ Party of Korea. After a while, the police came and took my father. In the end, we learned that he had passed away. We asked about how to get his body back, but the police officer said that we would only be able to retrieve his body after he had fulfilled his sentence, even after his death.

It was really beyond words. There can’t be a law like this. We were so devastated and we asked ourselves, “Can this really be a country? Is this really somewhere people live?” Until that time, I had been brainwashed to believe that the Kim family was the source of all happiness and virtue,

but after that, I became disillusioned with the government and became more curious about the outside world and how it views North Korea.

Reporter: So how did you wind up leaving North Korea?

Kim: In 2009, there was talk of a "small general", and strange songs began to crop up, like "Our General is Leaving".

At that time, I became aware of Kim Jong-un and learned about how old he was. Officials began to say that he would become our leader in the future. I figured out he was 28 years old.

There's no concept of a country. It's worse than the feudal era of the Joseon Dynasty. They think that as long as they say he's a king, you have to bow to him even when he's basically in nursery school. Now, even in the 21st century, the fact that these kinds of things happen in North Korea changed my life. Kim Jong-un is almost the same age as me. I couldn't breathe when I realized I would have to live the rest of my life like that. So I made up my mind to leave. I told myself, "I can't do this. Even if I risk my life, I have to leave."

I had some hope before that because of my father. I remember hearing from other officials that Kim Jong-il was going to die. There was a vague hope that the next leader would be better than the one we had back then. But when Kim Jong-un appeared, I thought, "I can't do this anymore," and left.

Reporter: Did you know anyone in South Korea at the time?

Kim: No. It's not an easy decision to leave behind your entire life, family, and friends to come to a place where no one welcomes you. I decided I would rather die than be caught. Making up your mind to die like that is not easy. There were two reasons I left. The first was the problem with my father. The second was the appearance of Kim Jong-un.

We will stop here today due to time constraints. Next time, we'll talk about how you came to the United States and your future plans. Today we heard from Doohyun Kim about North Korea's Kyo-hwa-so No.3, his hometown, and the process of his defection from North Korea.

This was Jeong Yeong with "Human Rights From a North Korean's Perspective". Thank you for tuning in.
Reporter: Jeong Yeong (Radio Free Asia)
Translator: Audrey Gregg, HRNK Reaserch Intern.

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Prepared by Nikita Morrison-Young, HRNK Research Intern

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**Thursday, December 3, 2021**

# Activity at the Uiju Airfield Suggests Further Preparations for Reopening the Border

**In North Korea:**

Activity at the Uiju Airfield Suggests Further Preparations for Reopening the Border(*38 North*, 12/02/2021)

Big event underway or imminent in Pyongyang, satellite imagery suggests (*NK News*, 12/03/2021)

Defending against nukes (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/03/2021)

More details emerge about N. Korean defector who escaped prison in China's Jilin Province (*Daily NK*, 12/02/2021)

N. Korean leader presides over politburo meeting (*Yonhap*, 12/02/2021)

N. Korea conducts final screening of project aimed at developing military reconnaissance satellites (*Daily NK*, 12/03/2021)

N. Korea to hold key party meeting as leader Kim set to mark 10 years in power(*Yonhap*, 12/02/2021)

North Korean leader sports new look (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/03/2021)

North Korean waitresses in China are made to work without masks (*RFA*, 12/02/2021)

People in parts of Yanggang Province no longer have access to tap water (*Daily NK*, 12/02/2021)

With Omicron spreading, N. Korea's coronavirus response headquarters calls for strengthened quarantine efforts (*Daily NK*, 12/03/2021)

**In South Korea:**

China supports declaration of Korean War's end: Chung Wa Dae (*The Korea Herald*, 12/03/2021)

Navy set for launch of light carrier project, spurred by budget passage (*The Korea Herald*, 12/03/2021)

South Korea passes record defense budget, floats funds for new aircraft carrier (*NK News*, 12/03/2021)

Speakers at Seoul forum question push for end-of-war declaration with DPRK (*NK News*, 12/02/2021)

Top Chinese official expresses support for Seoul's pursuit of end-of-war declaration: embassy (*Yonhap*, 12/03/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Unification ministry budget for inter-Korean cooperation rises 2 pct in 2022 (*Yonhap*, 12/03/2021)

**International:**
Not just North Korea: Washington eyes expanded role for US-ROK alliance (*NK News*, 12/03/2021)
Seoul, Washington update war plans to deter evolving North Korea's nuke, missile threats (*The Korea Times*, 12/02/2021)
U.N. excludes N. Korea from humanitarian aid plans for two straight years(*Yonhap*, 12/03/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Recent commercial satellite imagery indicates heightened activity in and around North Korea's Uiju Airfield, located near the Chinese border, providing support for reports that the country may be planning to resume some level of trade and import in the near future. (Martyn Williams and Peter Makowsky, *38 North*)
- A big event or political conference appears to be underway or planned for the coming days in Pyongyang, *NK News* analysis reveals. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- South Korea and the United States decided to draw up an aggressive military action plan to cope with nuclear threats from North Korea. In an annual Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) Thursday at the Ministry of National Defense in Seoul, defense chiefs of the two countries agreed to a new Strategic Planning Guidance (SPG). Both sides will reflect the new guidelines in their joint Operation Plan 5015 to effectively deal with the North Korean nuclear threat. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The North Korean defector who recently escaped from a prison in China's Jilin Province is a 39-year-old discharged soldier named Chu Hyon Kwon. North Korean authorities are reportedly carrying out a sweeping survey to ascertain where discharged soldiers live after learning that Chu's place of residence was unknown. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has presided over a politburo session of the ruling Workers' Party, Pyongyang's state media reported Thursday. During the session held the previous day, the North decided to hold a plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the party in late December, according to the Korean Central News Agency (*Yonhap*)
- Pyongyang recently began final screening of a project to develop military reconnaissance satellites and will soon carry out test launches, Daily NK has learned from multiple sources. (Jeong Tae Joo, *Daily NK*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has presided over a politburo session of the ruling party and decided to convene a key party meeting later this month, Pyongyang's state media reported Thursday. During the meeting held the previous day, Kim called 2021 a year of "victory" for "the stable management of the state economy and big successes made in the agricultural and construction sectors," and decided to discuss plans for the new year at the plenary session, according to the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). (*Yonhap*)

- A North Korean restaurant in China is forcing female waitstaff to work without facemasks even amid reports that the new Omicron coronavirus variant is spreading across the globe, sources in China told RFA. (Hyemin Son, RFA)
- North Koreans living in parts of Yanggang Province, including Hyesan, have not had access to tap water since mid-November, a source in the province told Daily NK yesterday. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- With the world going on alert due to the recent spread of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, North Korean authorities are focusing all their energy on bolstering quarantine efforts. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)

**In South Korea:**

- Top Chinese Communist Party diplomat Yang Jiechi said the nation supports President Moon Jae-in's push for the declaration of the end of the Korean War during talks with Korea's national security adviser Suh Hoon in Tianjin, China, officials said on Friday. (Shin Ji-hye, *The Korean Herald*)
- South Korea's Navy looks set to embark on a long-cherished project next year to secure a light aircraft carrier, as the National Assembly passed a 7.2 billion won ($6.1 million) budget for the project Friday in a reversal of an earlier move to slash it. (*The Korean Herald*)
- South Korea's National Assembly passed its largest-ever defense budget on Friday, greenlighting $46.3 billion (54.6 trillion won) for fiscal year 2022 to defend against nuclear weapons and other threats, including those from North Korea. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- South Korean lawmakers and experts raised concerns about the Moon administration's push for an end-of-war declaration at a Seoul forum on Thursday, with one analyst stressing the need to raise the issue of prisoners of war (POW) in peace talks with North Korea. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- A top Chinese official in charge of foreign affairs said Beijing supports Seoul's push for the declaration of a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War, according to South Korea's embassy Friday. (*Yonhap*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- The unification ministry's next year budget for inter-Korean cooperation slightly increased despite chilled cross-border exchanges in the face of deadlocked nuclear negotiations and the North's prolonged border lockdown, according to officials. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- The U.S. and South Korea have agreed to explore ways "to enhance regional security cooperation," the U.S. defense secretary said Thursday, as Washington signals its interest in expanding the scope of alliance concerns beyond the Korean Peninsula to contain China. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- South Korea and the United States agreed Thursday to update their joint wartime contingency plans to deter North Korea's evolving nuclear and missile threats, the two

sides said, in a sign of their stepped-up cooperation to reinforce deterrence against the recalcitrant regime. (*The Korea Times*)

- The United Nations has excluded North Korea from its global humanitarian assistance plan for 2022, its recent report showed, apparently due to the impoverished country's prolonged border lockdown against the COVID-19 pandemic. The Global Humanitarian Overview 2022 released by the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said, "Afghanistan, DPR Korea and Myanmar are facing acute food insecurity situations, which are likely to deteriorate further by the year's end." (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Yeji Chung, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250924025025/https://mailchi.mp/7ace94251c4c/hrnk-news-itemsactivity-at-the-uiju-airfield-suggests-further-preparations-for-reopening-the-border

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## Friday, December 4, 2021

# "If S. Korea Wants to Join the U.N. Security Council as a Non Permanent Member Cannot Stay Silent on Human Rights Crisis in N. Korea"

**Top News:**
U.S. Experts: "If South Korea Wants to Join the U.N. Security Council as a Non Permanent Member, It Cannot Stay Silent on the Human Rights Crisis in North Korea" (VOA, 11/30/2021)*
[Report: Decrease in Cell Phone Use in North Korea] Concerns Over Lack of Information and Communication (*Radio Free Asia*, 11/22/2021)
**In North Korea:**
Winter power outages cripple public transit in North Korean capital (*Radio Free Asia*, 12/03/2021)
**In South Korea:**
Minor quake hits off Baengnyeong Island, no damage reported (*Korea Herald*, 11/04/2021)
**International:**
Top Chinese official vows Bejing's 'constructive' role on bid for end-of-war declaration: Seoul official (*Yonhap*, 12/03/2021)

**Top News:**

- In a phone call with VOA on November 29th, Greg Scarlatoiu, the Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), stated, "How can South Korea

be in a position of leadership? How can South Korea join the UN Security Council as a non permanent member, while its government continues to ignore the egregious human rights violations being perpetrated in North Korea?" (Sungwon Baik, VOA)

- On November 19th, Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, told RFA that he is also concerned about the negative effects the sudden decline in cell phone usage could have on the citizens of North Korea. Scarlatoiu also emphasized that North Korean defectors and their families have been struggling economically as the fees for international calls and remittances have skyrocketed. (*Radio Free Asia*)

**In North Korea:**

- In the North Korean capital Pyongyang frequent power outages due to the onset of winter have made public transportation systems unreliable, sources in the country told RFA. (Chang Gyu Ahn, Claire Lee, Eugene Whong, *Radio Free Asia*)

**In South Korea:**

- A 2.3 magnitude earthquake occurred at 12:33 a.m. on Saturday in waters 16 kilometers northwest of Baengnyeong Island near the inter-Korean western border. (*Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- A top Chinese official in charge of foreign affairs said Beijing supports Seoul's push for the declaration of a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War, Cheong Wa Dae said Friday. (*Yonhap*)

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*VOA Article*

**U.S. Experts: "If South Korea Wants to Join the U.N. Security Council as a Non Permanent Member, It Cannot Stay Silent on the Human Rights Crisis in North Korea"**

As South Korea seeks to re-enter the U.N. Security Council as a non-permanent member, many have discouraged South Korea from overlooking human rights violations in North Korea.

Experts are concerned that South Korea's approach to the human rights issues in North Korea are at odds with the response from the international community. This is reporter Sungwon Baik.

Human rights experts in Washington are calling on South Korea to respond more actively to reports of human rights violations in North Korea and to play a leading role on the international stage.

Critics point out that South Korea, which is vying to enter the U.N. Security Council for the third time, should not be recognized as a country that is willing to step up and speak out on human rights violations in North Korea.

In a phone call with VOA on November 29th, Greg Scarlatoiu, the Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), stated, “How can South Korea be in a position of leadership? How can South Korea join the UN Security Council as a non permanent member, while its government continues to ignore the egregious human rights violations being perpetrated in North Korea?”

On September 21st, President Moon Jae-in delivered a keynote address at the UN General Assembly, stating that South Korea would try to join the U.N. Security Council as a non-permanent member in 2024.

[President Moon Jae-in] “Korea will make a bid for a seat as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the coming 2024-2025 term, and to build sustainable peace and thriving future generations, it stands ready to play an active part. I look forward to your cooperation and support in this regard.”

During his speech, President Moon also stated, “The recent situation in Afghanistan serves as a stark reminder of the crucial role that the UN plays in advancing peace and human rights,” but declined to mention the human rights issues in North Korea.

If South Korea joins as a non-permanent member, it will be the third time. It joined from 1996-1997 and 2013-2014 as well. The Security Council consists of five permanent member states and ten non-permanent member states. Half of the non-permanent member states are replaced every year.

Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights in the Department of State, stated, “South Korea, moreover, is hoping to become a member of the Security Council. It would make more of a contribution to world peace if it were to recognize the relationship between international peace and security and respect for human rights and promote that connection.”

In fact, North Korea's human rights issue was first adopted as an official agenda item by the Security Council in December 2014 when South Korea was acting as a non-permanent member.

At the time, U.N. Ambassador to South Korea Oh Joon stated in a speech he delivered to the U.N., "North Koreans are not just ‘anybodies’," adding, "Millions of South Koreans still have our family members and relatives living in the North. Even though we never hear from them and by now the pain of separation has become a cold fact of life…”

Experts’ criticism focuses on the fact that the Moon Jae-in administration has been at odds with international concerns over the human rights situation in North Korea.

Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights in the Department of State recalled that the South Korean government decided not to co-sponsor a UN resolution on human rights violations in North Korea this year, adding that, “South Korea's non-sponsorship of the resolution seems to be based on the idea that human rights has to be delinked from the pursuit of peace and security if progress is to be made. Yet the whole purpose of the United Nations is to bring those issues together. ”

Robert King, former special envoy for North Korea human rights issues at the U.S. Department of State, stated, “I think it's unfortunate because I think one can also work with North Korea, but at the same time, you don't have to cover up the human rights abuses that are particularly egregious in North Korea. This unfortunately reflects the changes that have taken place in South Korea's attitude towards North Korea. When I was a special envoy, it was a different time. South Korea was one of the leading sponsors of the resolution both in New York at the General Assembly and in Geneva at the UN Human Rights Council.”

On November 17th, the United Nations General Assembly Third Committee adopted a resolution on human rights in North Korea without a vote at the U.N. headquarters in North Korea. The resolution will be presented to the plenary session of the UN General Assembly next month.

South Korea, which has been listed as a joint proposal country for 11 consecutive years since 2008, has been absent for three consecutive years since 2019 and has only participated in the consensus.

Greg Scarlatoiu added, “South Korea used to be a member of the coalition of like-minded UN member states that pushed for significant action on North Korean human rights. We remember who those members were: the United States, South Korea, Japan, the European Union, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and others. South Korea has completely given up the high ground it once held on North Korean human rights. The government of President Moon Jae-in has sacrificed North Korean human rights on the altar of wishful thinking, and so called engagements with the North Korean leadership. It is truly saddening and disheartening to see how the government of South Korea has chosen to ignore the crimes against humanity committed by the Kim regime in North Korea. It is truly tragic. Sad to see how the government of South Korea is completely ignoring the egregious human rights violations being perpetrated by the Kim regime.”

Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights in the Department of State, commented on South Korea’s non sponsorship of the resolution, commenting that, “South Korea's non sponsorship of the resolution is unfortunate. It is a highly political response. It's basically expressing fear of North Korea's being displeased, if they were to co sponsor the text as they used to do. And this fear of North Korean displeasure is not shared by other states at the United Nations, the European Union, drafted and introduced the

text. The United States is a co sponsor, Japan is a co-sponsor, Australia is a co-sponsor and various other states. So South Korea really stands out in my mind as a state being intimidated by North Korea and believing that if human rights are dismissed as an issue of concern that North Korea will therefore negotiate a denuclearization and peace agreement. That linkage is South Korea's view. And so far there's no evidence to support that."

On November 18th, an official from the Ministry of Unification of Korea told the South Korean media, "the government's role is to work with the international community, including the United Nations, to improve the human rights of North Koreans," adding, "to this end, we have participated in the resolution consensus this year."

In addition, on November 11th, Unification Minister Lee In-young said that the South Korean government has no choice but to comprehensively address the North Korean human rights issues, taking into account the need to improve inter-Korean relations and promote peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Translated by: Audrey Gregg (HRNK)

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*RFA Article*

**[Report: Decrease in Cell Phone Use in North Korea] Concerns Over Lack of Information and Communication**

Anchor: The use of cell phones among North Koreans has dropped sharply as the authorities have strengthened the crackdown on imported Chinese cell phones. As a result, North Korean citizens have been unable to communicate both internally and with international contacts.

In this special report, journalist Park Soo-yeong will examine the impact of the decrease in cell phone usage on the human rights situation in North Korea.

North Korean human rights experts cite the decrease in the use of both North Korean and Chinese cell phones as one of the biggest difficulties that Covid-19 has created in North Korea. As a result of Covid-19, information cannot get in or out of the country.

Martyn Williams, a fellow at the Stimson Center, told RFA on November 11th that the biggest problem is that it is difficult to access news from inside North Korea due to the decrease in cell phone usage.

[Martyn Williams]: Less information is being delivered from North Korea to the outside world. Not knowing what's going on in North Korea could lead to bigger human rights issues down the

line, as the international community will have a harder time helping or responding to what's going on internally in North Korea.

Many suspect that North Korea is already struggling with a severe economic depression and public health issues, but the extent of these problems is unknown, so international organizations and North Korea aid organizations have been unable to help.

On November 19th, Greg Scarlatoiu, Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, told RFA that he is also concerned about the negative effects the sudden decline in cell phone usage could have on the citizens of North Korea. Scarlatoiu also emphasized that North Korean defectors and their families have been struggling economically as the fees for international calls and remittances have skyrocketed.

[Greg Scarlatoiu] The decrease in the use of mobile phones not only makes it difficult to obtain information from inside North Korea, but also directly affects the families of North Korean defectors remaining in North Korea. In particular, it has become more difficult and dangerous for North Korean defectors to remit money.

Jae-hoon Choi, a consultant with the Korean branch of Amnesty International, explained that some North Koreans may not fully understand the Covid-19 outbreak, including related quarantine measures and symptoms.

[Jae-hoon Choi] North Koreans may not be sure what Covid-19 is, or may not be aware of exact details. Information about Covid-19 varies from region to region, and some areas are struggling more with the outbreak than others. There are also lots of unconfirmed rumors about Covid-19 going around.

It goes without saying that Kim Jong-un's regime has been monitoring and regulating cell phone usage for the purposes of information control for a long time. However, many experts have pointed out that it has been easier than ever for the authorities to monitor cell phone usage, as many have been unable to use their phones since the outbreak of Covid-19 and the closure of the border between North Korea and China.

Scarlatoiu explained that in particular, cell phones imported from China were the only way for North Koreans to access the internet, but now they have been effectively cut off from the outside world.

[Greg Scarlatoiu] Chinese cell phones have become the target of government crackdowns. This is because North Koreans have relied heavily on Chinese mobile phones as a means of accessing the outside world.

Jiro Ishimaru, chief editor of the AsiaPress Osaka and expert on North Korea, stated that there is a limit to the extent to which the authorities can block the import of Chinese cell phones. In order to prevent contact with the outside world, the authorities have begun shifting their attention to monitoring North Koreans living close to the border with China.

On November 11th, Yonho Kim, Associate Director of George Washington University's Institute for Korean Studies explained the North Korean authorities are regulating both the importation and usage of Chinese cell phones, so North Korean defectors and their families are struggling to contact each other.

[Yonho Kim] It's impossible to make international calls or access the internet. Since the outbreak of Covid-19, the North Korean authorities have tightened border control and cracked down on the use of Chinese cell phones in border areas. It's very difficult for the families of North Korean defectors to receive remittance money from other countries. Many also struggle to keep in touch.

As the use of Chinese mobile phones becomes difficult, many are concerned that the use of North Korean mobile phones could be a channel for surveillance.

On November 17th, Suzanne Scholte, Chair of the North Korea Freedom Coalition, told RFA that when cell phones first became available in North Korea, many expected that its citizens would be guaranteed freedom of communication, but instead, it has led to fear that the Kim family dictatorship is becoming stronger.

[Suzanne Scholte] Cell phones have become a means of strengthening social control, not a means of communication. They're just another way to control the citizens of North Korea. Cell phones made in North Korea have a built-in function that monitors which sites the user visits. The government uses this feature to monitor its citizens and prevent them from accessing information from the outside world.

[Jae-hoon Choi] We are most concerned about the North Korean victims of these regulations. I still don't think many North Koreans are aware of the rights and freedoms they should be able to enjoy as human beings. I think the improvement of access to information is vital in promoting human rights in North Korea. North Koreans need to be able to access information about human rights.

Scholte believes that there are forces in North Korea that are fighting for change, and that the North Korean people should know that the international community wants to help their cause. She added that, for this reason, it is important to continue seeking ways to increase communication with the citizens of North Korea.

[Suzanne Scholte] We need to let the citizens of North Korea know that the international community is invested in their welfare. We are concerned about the possibility of a second Arduous March, and are ready to help. North Koreans need to know that the only obstacle preventing aid from reaching the country is the concern that Kim Jong-un will use it to strengthen his regime. The most important thing is that the international community pay attention to the situation in North Korea and try to reach North Koreans themselves. The sharp decline in the use of cell phones in North Korea has had a great impact on the daily lives and human rights status of the people living there. The effect this change is having on North Koreans, including exacerbating economic struggles and cutting off means of communication, is only getting worse.

This is why many experts argue that access to information is a fundamental human right.

Translated by: Audrey Gregg (HRNK)

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Prepared by Lia Vincenzo, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250822175751/https://mailchi.mp/6d040baee04b/hrnk-news-items-if-s-korea-wants-to-join-the-un-security-council-as-a-non-permanent-member-cannot-stay-silent-on-human-rights-crisis-in-n-korea?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, December 5, 2021**

## North Korea heads into 'tense' winter: Closed borders and food supplies in question

**In North Korea:**
Major event appears to be underway at Pyongyang venue: satellite imagery (*NK News*, 12/05/2021)
North Korea heads into 'tense' winter: Closed borders and food supplies in question(*The Washington Post*, 12/05/2021)
Sanctions Haven't Curbed North Korea's Arms Proliferation (12/04/2021, *The National Interest*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Cyberattacks targeting S. Korea's security strategies will increase during elections: NIS (*The Korea Herald*, 12/05/2021)

Unimaru: The art museum between North and South Korea where the curator wears a bulletproof vest (CNN, 12/04/2021)

**International:**
Age-Old Feud Between Allies Poses Challenge to Biden's Asia Policy (VOA, 12/04/2021)
China seems to support Moon's end-of-war declaration (*Korea JoonAng Daily*, 12/05/2021)
US Defense Secretary Talks Regional Stability with Japanese Counterpart (VOA, 12/04/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- One of Pyongyang's biggest venues appeared to host a political meeting or other large event on Saturday and Sunday, exclusive *NK News* analysis of satellite imagery reveals, days after thousands of people appeared to gather at a key hotel in the North Korean capital. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- SEOUL — North Korea's self-imposed border lockdown during the pandemic has exacerbated a shortage of food, supplies and cash, hurting the country's most vulnerable people as they hunker down for the winter ahead. (Michelle Ye Hee Lee, *The Washington Post*)
- North Korea's continued success in growing and expanding its illicit arms trade is perhaps the starkest illustration of a trend that has long drawn the alarm of Korea experts: the international sanctions regime has proven largely toothless, if not counterproductive, as a means of starving DPRK's military-industrial complex. (Mark Episkopos, *The National Interest*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Hackers with the backing of foreign governments will aggressively target information on Seoul's national security strategies in the runup to the presidential election next March, the South Korean spy agency warned in its recent annual report. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- Art has always had the power to be dangerous. But a newly opened art museum is taking that to another level. It's Unimaru's location that makes it unsafe. The museum rests on the DMZ, or Korean Demilitarized Zone, a no-man's-land along the 38th parallel which divides North and South Korea. (Lilit Marcus and Gawon Bae, CNN)

**International:**

- In its attempts to revitalize trilateral cooperation with Japan and South Korea, the Biden administration is facing a decadeslong dispute between the allies that is jeopardizing Washington's goals of curbing Beijing's growing aggression and Pyongyang's threats, according to experts. (Christy Lee, VOA)
- Beijing expressed support for Seoul's proposed declaration to formally end the 1950-53 Korean War in talks between South Korean national security adviser Suh Hoon and China's top diplomat, Yang Jiechi, said the Blue House Friday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- The United States is reaching out to more allies in the Indo-Pacific, hoping to keep tensions in the region from boiling over amid growing concerns about China and North Korea. (Jeff Seldin, VOA)

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Prepared by Yeji Chung, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250822181759/https://mailchi.mp/2d10725b360e/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-korea-heads-into-tense-winter-closed-borders-and-food-supplies-in-question?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, December 6, 2021**

## With North Korea's Kim snubbing talks, Seoul kindles ‘long shot’ bid for Pope Francis to help

**Top News:**
With North Korea's Kim snubbing talks, Seoul kindles ‘long shot’ bid for Pope Francis to help (*Washington Post*, 12/06/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Ball in Kim Jong-un's court for 'end of war' declaration (*The Korea Times*, 12/06/2021)
N.Korea ranked 17th for relative power among 26 Asia-Pacific countries (*The Korea Herald*, 12/06/2021)

North Korean leader sports new look (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/05/2021)
North Korean teen sentenced to 14-year forced labor for watching 'The Man from Nowhere': report (*The Korea Times*, 12/06/2021)
Prices of food, daily necessities estimated to be rapidly soaring in N. Korea: gov't(*Yonhap*, 12/06/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Seoul to step up monitoring fake news on N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 12/06/2021)

**International:**
China seems to support Moon's end-of-war declaration (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/06/2021)

**Top News:**

- With attempts to restart nuclear negotiations with North Korea going nowhere, the president of South Korea is looking anywhere for help as his term heads into its final stretch. His long-shot hope: that Pope Francis can step in. (Michelle Ye Hee Lee and Chico Harlan, *The Washington Post*)

**In North Korea:**

- President Moon Jae-in's proposal of declaring an official end to the 1950-53 Korean War now appears to hinge on North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, as the U.S. and China seem to have indicated their support for such a quadrilateral declaration, which could entice Pyongyang to return to talks on its denuclearization. (Nam Hyun-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korea was ranked 17th for its relative power among 26 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, Australia's Lowy Institute said in an annual report. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un sported a noticeably slimmed-down appearance and longer hair style in photos of a Politburo meeting of the reclusive regime's ruling party that he presided over on Wednesday, as reported by the party's newspaper. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- A North Korean teenager was reportedly sentenced to 14 years' forced labor for watching just five minutes of a South Korean film. (Yoon Ja-young, *The Korea Times*)
- The cost of groceries and daily necessities in North Korea is estimated to be rapidly increasing in the face of a prolonged border lockdown to stave off the COVID-19 pandemic, Seoul's unification ministry said Monday. (*Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- The South Korean government will beef up efforts to monitor fake news on North Korea that "distort the policy environment" for inter-Korean relations, officials said Monday. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- Beijing expressed support for Seoul's proposed declaration to formally end the 1950-53 Korean War in talks between South Korean national security adviser Suh Hoon and China's top diplomat, Yang Jiechi, said the Blue House Friday. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)

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Prepared by Scott Cho, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250822182047/https://mailchi.mp/86b5d58d5f02/hrnk-news-itemswith-north-koreas-kim-snubbing-talks-seoul-kindles-long-shot-bid-for-pope-francis-to-help?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Monday, December 7, 2021

# NK leader urges nurturing 'absolutely loyal' commanding officers; US diplomatic boycott of Olympics a setback for dialogue with DPRK

**In North Korea:**
How North Korea's 'use-it-or-lose-it' power grid impacts energy trade (*NK Pro*, 12/07/2021)
Kim Jong-un urges to nurture 'absolutely loyal' military officers, improve education(*The Korea Herald*, 12/07/2021)
Kim Jong Un demands military improve its education system at major event (*NK News*, 12/07/2021)
North Korea's Kim calls for 'absolutely loyal' military officers (*Reuters*, 12/06/2021)
North Korea installs solar panels along border to boost surveillance (*Radio Free Asia*, 12/06/2021)
North Korea's tense food situation (*North Korea Economic Watch*, 12/07/2021)
North Korea wants to give candies to kids for Kim Jong Un's birthday, but it's making its citizens pay to produce them: report (*Business Insider*, 12/07/2021)
N.K. leader Kim urges nurturing 'absolutely loyal' commanding officers (*Yonhap*, 12/07/2021)
Stars removed from shoulders of North's military commanders (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/07/2021)
The overlooked spelling error that underscores North Korea's culture of fear (*NK News*, 12/07/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Seoul to implement system for monitoring 'fake news' on North Korea (*NK News*, 12/06/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
This Is How North Korea Inserts Its Spies into Seoul (*The National Interest*, 12/06/2021)

**International:**
Biden administration expected to announce diplomatic boycott of Beijing Olympics this week (CNN, 12/06/2021)
First British envoy to NK to receive Woodang Award (*The Korea Herald*, 12/06/2021)
Japan PM seeks to boost workers' wages, defence capability (*Reuters*, 12/06/2021)
Korea keeps mum after U.S. announces Olympics diplomatic boycott (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/07/2021)
Moon's 'declaration' is downplayed by U.S. as a 'statement' (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/06/2021)
Moon faces dilemma over Beijing Olympics boycott (*The Korea Herald*, 12/07/2021)
Newsweek's Misfire on Aid Monitoring in North Korea (*38 North*, 12/06/2021)

North Korea warns daily of Omicron dangers, still reports zero COVID cases (*NK News*, 12/06/2021)
Pentagon fields long-range radar in Alaska for missile threats (*Reuters*, 12/06/2021)
U.S. fields new radar designed to detect ballistic missiles from N. Korea (*Yonhap*, 12/07/2021)
U.S. will not send official delegation to Beijing Olympics: White House (*Yonhap*, 12/07/2021)
US diplomatic boycott of Olympics a setback for dialogue with DPRK: experts (*NK News*, 12/07/2021)
US builds new radar to detect ballistic, hypersonic missiles from Indo-Pacific (*NK News*, 12/07/2021)
Which Will South Korea Choose: The U.S. or China? (*The National Interest*, 12/06/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Nighttime satellite imagery has long laid bare the reality of North Korea's power situation: While South Korea blazes white with electric light, punctuated by a bright core at the nation's capital, much of the North remains shrouded in darkness. With the two Koreas' energy situations cast in sharp relief, some may wonder why Pyongyang routinely exports tens of millions of kilowatt hours to China every year. (Ethan Jewell, *NK Pro*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un urged the military to improve its education system and nurture commanding officers with "absolute loyalty" to the ruling party, in a move in line with the regime's ongoing ideological campaigns. Experts also viewed that the two-day meeting was in line with the Kim Jong-un regime's efforts to strengthen Kim's control over the military as he marks his 10th year in office. The meeting could suggest that Kim would continue to push forward his "head-on breakthrough" strategy, adhering to his current hard-line stance against Seoul and Washington. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called on the military to solve problems with ideological loyalty at a major event held in Pyongyang over the weekend, according to state media. The country's top military commanders reportedly gathered for the Eighth Conference of Military Educators of the Korean People's Army (KPA) held from Dec. 4 to 5. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said the country's military education system must redouble efforts to turn out officers who "remain absolutely loyal" to the country's ruling party. "He underscored the need to prepare all the military educationists to be true soldiers immensely loyal to the idea and leadership of the Party and to organise and provide the military education, strictly guided by the Party's idea, policy and method so as to bring up all the cadets to be commanding officers who remain absolutely loyal to the Party Central Committee." The conference also reviewed "some deviations witnessed in the military education due to the lack of ideological awareness." (Reuters Staff, *Reuters*)
- North Korea is installing solar panels along the border with China to ensure that security facilities have enough electricity for nighttime surveillance. The military is

taking a cue from these residents by installing the panels along the border to ensure that flood lights can shine through the night, making it harder for people to escape. The military will finish installing solar panels by February 2022. (Myung Chul Lee, *Radio Free Asia*)

- It is very difficult to get a read on the domestic availability and production of food in North Korea. Nonetheless, the overarching picture continues to be grim, and the fears over the Omicron-variant seems to be making it all worse. It is difficult to see what could really change if the government continues to both refuse to let the outside world assist in a vaccination campaign, and at the same time responds to each new wave or variant of the virus by further tightening or extending the border lockdown. It is not a sustainable strategy but given the regime's fear of the havoc that a significant spread of the virus could wreak in society, given its very fragile health system, it might not change anytime soon. (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, *North Korea Economic Watch*)
- Local governments in North Korea are requiring that citizens pay for candy ingredients as the country rushes to manufacture sweets in time for dictator Kim Jong Un's birthday. Officials in some areas have imposed a tax on each household so their governments can buy raw confectionary ingredients, such as flour and sugar. A source said that families in some regions have also been asked to donate an egg to the candy-making effort, resulting in egg shortages in markets. "Residents are angry that the authorities are wiping out the pockets of the people at a time like this to make candy for children, supposedly from Kim Jong Un for his birthday." (Matthew Loh, *Business Insider*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has presided over a gathering of military educators and called on them to nurture commanding officers to be "absolutely loyal" to the ruling Workers' Party in order to make a "radical turn" in education projects in line with the "changing times." The gathering came as Kim has been seen as striving to strengthen national unity and tighten discipline among military personnel amid persistent economic woes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and crippling economic sanctions. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)
- Photos from a weekend gathering of North Korea's military brass appear to show that the country's Navy and Air Force commanders have been demoted by one rank, potentially reflecting a push to penalize military leaders deemed insufficiently committed to the regime. The photos show North Korean Navy Commander Kim Myong-sik and Air Force Commander Kim Chung-il seated in the front row of an educational session held for the North's military leaders, held at the April 25 Cultural Center in Pyongyang. The navy commander, who had previously sported three stars on his epaulettes, signifying his rank as admiral, appeared in uniform with only two stars, while the air force commander, who was previously known to be a two-star lieutenant general, had only one star on his uniform's epaulettes. (Michael Lee, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- In much of the English-speaking world, the country ruled by Kim Jong Un is known simply and succinctly as North Korea. Yet this, of course, is not the country's official

name — the much longer Democratic People's Republic of Korea — and Pyongyang shuns the shorter "North Korea" in all official and even semi-official dealings as a label legitimizing the peninsula's division. There is a degree of hypocrisy in these statements. Northerners themselves normally prefer to just say "the Republic" rather than to break their tongue over the convoluted sobriquet. But what's funnier, in a rather dark way, is that the DPRK once referred to itself by a wrong name for several years, in a little-known episode that highlights the enduring political culture of fear north of the DMZ. (Fyodor Tertitskiy, NK *News*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's Ministry of Unification (MOU) has set aside funding to start systematically monitoring "fake news" related to North Korea next year, though it is unclear whether the government plans to levy penalties for reports deemed false. The ministry has earmarked $170,000 (200 million won) for the project to counter fake news in its budget for the fiscal year 2022. The budget's total amount reaches $1.27 billion (1.5 trillion won), a 1.86% increase from 2021. (Jeongmin Kim, NK *News*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korea has caught North Korean agents trying to enter the South by posing as defectors. It is reasonable to suspect that South Korea's nearly 15,000 km of coastline continues to represent a likely entry point for North Korean spies. "It would be completely stupid if North Korea would not take advantage of this (defector) situation," Stephan Blancke, a specialist on DPRK intelligence gathering states. "Just as Islamist terrorists are smuggled into Europe with the refugees—and there is plenty evidence of this—North Korean intelligence services naturally also try to smuggle their agents among these people." (Stephen Silver, The National Interest)

**International:**

- The Biden administration is expected to announce this week that no US government officials will attend the 2022 Beijing Olympics, implementing a diplomatic boycott of the games. The move would allow the US to send a message on the world stage to China without preventing US athletes from competing. (Kaitlan Collins, CNN)
- The Woodang Foundation for Education and Culture is honoring James Edward Hoare, former member of the British diplomatic service and current research associate in Korean studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies University of London, for his contributions to the nation with this year's Woodang Award. At an online awards ceremony on Monday, North Korean defector-turned-lawmaker Tae Yong-ho of the main opposition People Power Party was expected to make a congratulatory speech and talk about the friendship he shares with Hoare. (Kim Hae-yeon, *The Korea Herald*)
- Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida vowed on Monday to ensure worker wage hikes to protect the economy from rising global inflation, while strengthening the country's defences as it deals with an assertive China and unpredictable North Korea. (Tetsushi Kajimoto, Kiyoshi Takenaka, *Reuters*)
- The Beijing Olympics used to be floated by the Moon Jae-in administration as a possible setting to open up dialogue with North Korea, and even to make progress on the

declaration to end the 1950-53 Korean War, a top diplomacy objective of the Moon government as of late. “I would like to reiterate that the Republic of Korea and the United States are currently closely discussing the issue of promoting an end-of-war declaration, and the discussions are making favorable headway for both,” said Foreign Ministry spokesperson Kim when asked about the possible influence of the American boycott on the Moon government’s end-of-war initiative. (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- American officials have started calling the end-of-war declaration, a signature diplomatic goal of the Moon Jae-in administration, an end-of-war statement, which may not be good news for Seoul. “'Declaration' or 'statement,' what really matters is what is stated inside,” a former diplomat told the JoongAng Ilbo. "But still, calling it a statement instead of a declaration does appear to lower its official standing." Semantics are always important in diplomacy, and this choice of words seems to signify a reluctance by the U.S. to sign on to the idea, or its intention to downplay it. (Park Hyun-Ju, Park Hyun-Young, Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The US decision to have its diplomats boycott the 2022 Beijing Olympics is posing a dilemma for South Korea, as Washington could prod allies to follow suit, while Seoul hopes to use the games as an opportunity to restart dialogue with Pyongyang. South Korea has taken an ambiguous diplomatic position, as it values both its security alliance with the US and its economic ties with China. But with Washington’s recent announcement, South Korea is increasingly in a position where it may have to choose a side. Shin Beom-chul, director of the Center for Diplomacy and Security at the Korea Research Institute for National Strategy, said an end-of-war declaration could be made at another time and that the two events should not be directly related: “However, given the changing situation, it seems to be getting more and more difficult for the US, China and North Korea to cooperate to come up with a document to reach an agreement like the declaration of an end to the war." (Shin Ji-hye, *The Korea Herald*)
- The diversion of food aid and other humanitarian assistance has been of paramount concern for international donors working in the DPRK through the years. Over the past 19 years of working on North Korea-related issues, first in the Senate and later in the nonprofit sector, Luse states that he has witnessed considerable progress by food and humanitarian assistance donors to the North in establishing more effective monitoring mechanisms. Anecdotal evidence strongly suggests North Korean citizens at the local level know that their own lives or the lives of their families or communities may have been saved because of the provision of US and other humanitarian assistance to their country. This reflects the best in citizen diplomacy. Therefore, the editorial’s statement that “Donors unfortunately allow the regime to distribute their food, which leads to a multitude of ills, including the regime bragging that other nations are sending tribute to the Kim family” is a misfire when it comes to the work of US NGOs and their direct contact with North Koreans at the grassroots level." (Keith Luse, *38 North*)
- North Korea has informed the U.N. health agency that it remains free of COVID-19 after screening an additional 1,421 people, as state media has called for strengthened

anti-virus measures to confront the new Omicron variant. According to the World Health Organization data, the DPRK conducted the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests during the two-week period from Nov. 12-25. The tests carried out from Nov. 19-25 covered 128 people with flu-like illness or severe acute respiratory infections and 579 health care workers. (Bryan Betts, NK News)

- The Pentagon completed military construction and will begin testing a long-range radar for a homeland missile defense system that can track intercontinental ballistic missiles as well as next generation threats such as hypersonic weapons. The 2015 U.S. Defense Department plan was to deploy a new long-range radar in central Alaska that would help the U.S. missile defenses better discern potential enemy missiles launched by Iran or North Korea and increase the capacity of interceptors in the ground in Alaska and California. (Mike Stone, *Reuters*)
- The US completed the construction of a new long-range radar in Alaska that is designed to give early warnings for incoming ballistic missiles from rogue nations, such as North Korea. Vice Adm. Jon Hill, director of U.S. Missile Defense Agency, explained the new long range discrimination radar (LRDR) will be powerful enough to discriminate or identify lethal objects, such as warheads, allowing the U.S. to successfully intercept such objects. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- The United States will diplomatically boycott the Beijing Winter Olympics over China's human rights abuses, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said. U.S. athletes, however, will be allowed to take part should they choose to do so. The U.S. diplomatic boycott of the Beijing games, slated to be held between Feb. 4-Feb. 20, may further undermine South Korea's efforts to restart denuclearization talks with North Korea. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- The U.S. announced a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Olympic Games on Monday, in another setback for Seoul's hopes to use the international event scheduled for Feb. 2022 to achieve a breakthrough in the peace process on the Korean Peninsula. The White House cited China's "ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity" in Xinjiang and "other abuses" for not sending official representatives to the Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, though the U.S. will still send its athletes. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- The U.S. has built a new defense radar in Alaska to protect the country from ballistic and hypersonic missile attacks, specifically citing threats from a "rogue" state in the region in an apparent reference to North Korea. The completion of the new Long Range Discrimination Radar (LRDR) comes around two months after North Korean state media boasted of testing a new hypersonic missile called the Hwasong-8, and after U.S. officials confirmed that China also tested a hypersonic glide vehicle in November – a claim that Beijing denied. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- The United States and China increasingly appear headed toward a new Cold War. As relations between the United States and PRC worsen, more countries are likely to be caught in between. The South Korean "shrimp" is likely to suffer when the American and

Chinese “whales” fight. If forced to choose, what will Seoul decide? (Doug Bandow, *The National Interest*)

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Prepared by Teresa Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250822182328/https://mailchi.mp/06062f3ecaa0/hrnk-news-items-nk-leader-urges-nurturing-absolutely-loyal-commanding-officers-us-diplomatic-boycott-of-olympics-a-setback-for-dialogue-with-dprk?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, December 8, 2021**

## HRNK Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu on an end-of-war declaration: "One way of ending an armed conflict is unconditional surrender."

**Top News:**
HRNK Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu on an end-of-war declaration: "One way of ending an armed conflict is unconditional surrender." (*The John Batchler Show*, 12/6/2021)
**In North Korea:**
North Korea prepares to open newest skyscraper street as deadline nears: Imagery(*NK News*, 12/8/2021)
North Korean authorities call street vending a “crime against the people” (*NK Economy Watch*, 12/8/2021)
**In South Korea:**
Covid infections surpass 7,000, an all-time record (*JoongAng Daily*, 12/8/2021)
S.Korea develops real-time, standoff chemical warfare agent detector (*Korea Herald*, 12/8/2021)
**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Politics or misguided conviction? Is Moon obsessed with ending the Korean War?(*Korea Herald*, 12/8/2021)
**International:**
Biden invites Korea to democracy summit (*JoongAng Daily*, 12/8/2021)
European Council renews human rights sanctions against North Korean officials (*NK News*, 12/8/2021)
U.S. committed to dialogue with N. Korea despite no success so far: White House czar (*Yonhap*, 12/8/2021)
US lawmakers urge White House to reject end-of-war declaration with North Korea (*Yonhap*, 12/8/2021)

UNICEF receives exemption to send ventilators, vaccine equipment to North Korea (*NK News*, 12/8/2021)

**Top News:**

- HRNK Director Greg Scarlatiou appears on The John Batchler Show to explain why North Korea's grievous human rights record means the international community can never agree to peace terms that enable the Kim Regime to color itself as the victor. (*The John Batchler Show*)
- North Korean authorities recently designated streetside commerce as a "crime against the people" and have begun ideological education efforts to tamper down discontent surrounding government crackdowns on street merchants. (Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, NK Economy Watch)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea appears set to celebrate the completion of a new skyscraper street project and a smaller elite residential project in Pyongyang in the coming weeks, according to *NK News* analysis of satellite imagery, as workers have paved most roads and begun to clear out of temporary camps. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- New Covid-19 infections soared past 7,000 for the first time Wednesday, signaling that the pandemic's fourth wave is only getting worse, with the number of critically ill patients also reaching a record high. (*JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea has developed its first homegrown technology for early detection of chemical weapons attacks at long distances, the state-run weapons development agency announced Wednesday. (Ji Da-gyum, *Korea Herald*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- With the clock ticking on his term in office, President Moon Jae-in is taking every opportunity to push his agenda to declare the end of the Korean War. But experts are raising questions about his motivations and about the validity of his goal. (Shin Ji-hye, *Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- President Moon Jae-in will take part in U.S. President Joe Biden's Summit for Democracy Thursday, said the Blue House Wednesday, which is aimed at bringing allies and partners together against authoritarian forces. (*JoongAng*)
- The European Council (EC) announced on Monday it had renewed sanctions against over a dozen human rights violators, including two high-ranking North Korean officials and the country's top public prosecutor's office. (Ethan Jewel, *NK News*)
- The United States remains committed to engaging with North Korea diplomatically despite having no success so far, White House policy coordinator for Asia Kurt Campbell said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)

- About three dozen lawmakers have urged the Biden administration not to support a declaration to end the Korean War until North Korea eliminates its nuclear weapons and improves human rights conditions in the country. (Chaewo Chung, NK *News*)
- The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has received international sanctions exemptions to ship COVID-19 relief items to North Korea, a letter from the U.N. Security Council 1718 sanctions committee showed on Wednesday. (Jeongmin Kim, NK *News*)

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Prepared by David Shaw, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250822182553/https://mailchi.mp/cea4a979ca13/top-newshrnk-executive-director-greg-scarlatoiu-on-an-end-of-war-declaration-one-way-of-ending-an-armed-conflict-is-unconditional-surrender?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, December 9, 2021**

## N.Korea continues operating main nuclear reactor at Yongbyon: CSIS

**In North Korea:**
N.Korea continues operating main nuclear reactor at Yongbyon: CSIS (*Korea Herald*, 12/9/2021)

**In South Korea:**
US missile defense in S. Korea under constant review, upgrade: Pentagon press secretary (*Korea Herald*, 12/9/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
End-of-war declaration a potential 'turning point' for peace: unification minister(*Yonhap*, 12/9/2021)
Families separated by Korean War giving up hope of meeting loved ones: Survey(NK *News*, 12/9/2021)
Most S. Koreans with families in N. Korea have no information on their fate: poll (*Yonhap*, 12/9/2021)
Seoul admits it's talking to Pyongyang on declaration (*JoongAng Daily*, 12/9/2021)

**International:**
Biden's Beijing Winter Olympics Boycott Is a Blow to South Korea's Peace Plan (*The Diplomat*, 12/9/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea is operating its main plutonium-producing nuclear reactor at the Yongbyon complex, a Washington-based think tank revealed Wednesday, citing thermal infrared imagery.(Ji Da-gyum, *Korea Herald*)

**In South Korea:**

- US missile defense system capabilities including those in South Korea are constantly reviewed and upgraded to meet evolving threats, Pentagon Press Secretary John Kirby said Wednesday. (*Korea Herald*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- South Korea's unification minister said Thursday the declaration to formally end the 1950-53 Korean War, if issued, could be a "turning point" to open a new phase for peace and urged North Korea to accept its dialogue offer. (*Yonhap*)
- More and more people separated from their families since the Korean War are giving up hope of reuniting with their loved ones in North Korea, as many consider themselves “too old” and in “bad health,” a new South Korean government survey showed Thursday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Eight out of 10 families divided by the 1950-53 Korean War have yet to confirm the fate of their parents and siblings in North Korea, a government survey showed Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- Seoul has been communicating directly with both Pyongyang and the United States on a declaration to end the 1950-53 Korean War, according to a Blue House official. (*JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- White House Spokesperson Jen Psaki announced on Monday that the United States would diplomatically boycott the Beijing Winter Olympics on Monday. With that, the Moon administration’s final attempt to reactivate the peace process by declaring a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War during the Games is de facto ended. (Mitch Shin, *The Diplomat*)

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Prepared by David Shaw, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250822182936/https://mailchi.mp/a9989444b260/nkorea-continues-operating-main-nuclear-reactor-at-yongbyon-csis?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, December 10, 2021**

## Moving North Korean Women’s Rights Issues Center Stage on Human Rights Day

**Top News:**
Moving North Korean Women's Rights Issues Center Stage on Human Rights Day(*The Diplomat*, 12/10/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Amid Omicron Worries, North Korea Orders Strengthened Quarantine on China Border (*The Diplomat*, 12/10/2021)
Many North Korean women outearn their husbands, but still do the chores (*The Economist*, 12/09/2021)
North Korea sees progress on transforming 'backward' mining town (*NK News*, 12/10/2021)
North Koreans scour farms for burnable waste to cope with fuel shortage (*RFA*, 12/09/2021)
The Secret of Kim Jong-un's Success (*National Interest*, 12/09/2021)

**International:**
In Biden's Washington, North Korea barely moves the needle (*NK News*, 12/10/2021)
US still game to talk to North Korea 'without preconditions': Ambassador to UN (*NK News*, 12/10/2021)
US to impose new sanctions against North Korea for first time under Biden (*NK News*, 12/10/2021)
What AUKUS Means to North Korea (*38 North*, 12/09/2021)
10 years of Kim Jong Un: What was Washington's best North Korea decision so far?(*NK News*, 12/10/2021)

**Top News:**

- HRNK Director of Programs and Editor Rosa Park-Tokola highlights proactive steps that can be taken to focus on North Korean women's rights issues today on Human Rights Day. (Rosa Park-Tokola, *The Diplomat*)

**In North Korea:**

- With the world on high alert due to the recent spread of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, North Korean authorities are focusing all their energy on bolstering quarantine efforts. (Lee Chae Un and Seulkee Jung, *The Diplomat*)
- Before she fled south six years ago, Kim Eun Kyoung spent her days in one of North Korea's many informal markets. She sold household goods and illicit South Korean tv dramas. In the evening, she did the housework and looked after her daughter. She says her husband worked just a few hours a day at his state-mandated factory job and spent the rest of his time gambling and drinking. They hardly ever saw each other. "I would have liked it if he'd helped with the housework, but we lived totally separate lives," says Ms Kim (not her real name). "The only thing we ever discussed honestly was our economic situation." (*The Economist*)

- North Korea has made significant progress this year on a top-priority project to transform a "backward" mining town in the country's northeast, as workers appear set to meet their deadline to build 5,000 homes in the area. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- A severe firewood shortage and rising fuel costs in North Korea have left citizens scrounging harvested cornfields for anything burnable to keep warm this winter. (Jieun Kim, RFA)
- It may seem odd to laud the longevity of a thirty-seven-year-old dictator. But from concluding and then quickly reneging on a missile agreement in his first months in office, to ordering the brutal death of his regent uncle, to staring down former-President Donald Trump's "fire and fury" pressure, Kim Jong-un is an improbable success story. (Patrick Cronin, *National Interest*)

**International:**

- The White House has to deal with a number of other emergencies and problems, largely related to domestic politics. To the extent the administration is willing to pay any attention to foreign policy, it concentrates on a small number of key issues — above all, of course, policy toward China. Once Donald Trump left the job, North Korea drifted away from the White House priority list. (Andrei Lankov, *NK News*)
- The U.S. is willing to meet North Korea "without preconditions" despite almost a year of stonewalling from Pyongyang, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations said on Thursday. "We hope that the DPRK will respond positively to our outreach," Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said at a press briefing in New York. "We don't have any hostile intent toward the DPRK. And we have made clear since the beginning of this administration that we are prepared to meet them without preconditions." (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- The U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) will sanction North Korea's central prosecutors' office, one of its animation studios and a high-level official, as well as seven DPRK-related foreign individuals and entities. The new sanctions, to be announced Friday (U.S. time), will mark the first such measures imposed under the Biden administration — and the first in a year's time. The administration has maintained it will continue to enforce the existing sanctions regime against North Korea but had not announced any new ones until now. (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)
- Declaring it an "extremely undesirable" act that could "upset the strategic balance in the Asia-Pacific region," North Korea's strong condemnation of the newly formed AUKUS (Australia-United Kingdom-United States) trilateral security pact came as no surprise. AUKUS emerged in September 2021, potentially serving as a strong deterring force against unstable and unreliable powers in the Indo-Pacific. However, it undoubtedly stirred debates on nuclear proliferation and brought greater attention to the arms race that has been developing in the region. In fact, the initiation of this security partnership has been the most significant geopolitical development yet in terms of its potential to shape power politics in the Indo-Pacific. (Jagannath Panda, *38 North*)
- Washington has for decades tried to convince North Korea not to pursue nuclear weapons, and then once it had them, to give them up. This hasn't worked, for the very

simple reason that there is no better security guarantee for a paranoid Pyongyang leadership that understands much of the world would rather it be gone. However, there have been times when it looked like U.S. policies were making inroads — sometimes to the surprise of long-time North Korea watchers. (Chad O'Carroll, NK *News*)

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Prepared by Damian Reddy, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250822183940/https://mailchi.mp/ca27807d96f2/hrnk-news-itemsmoving-north-korean-womens-rights-issues-center-stage-on-human-rights-day?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, December 11, 2021**

## 10 years of Kim Jong Un - What was Washington's best North Korea decision so far?

**Top News:**
10 years of Kim Jong Un: What was Washington's best North Korea decision so far?(*NK News*, 12/10/2021)
**In South Korea:**
Korea's 'Peace Island' draws crowds oblivious to COVID or North Korea threat (*The Hill*, 12/10/2021)
**International:**
China's SenseTime Hong Kong IPO in limbo after U.S. blacklisting - sources(*Reuters*, 12/11/2021)
Remains of US soldier killed in Korean War identified (*The Korea Times*, 12/10/2021)
U.S. designates entities in China, Russia for violation of U.N. sanctions on N. Korea(*Yonhap*, 12/11/2021)
U.S. designates N. Korean defense minister, others for human rights violation(*Yonhap*, 12/11/2021)
U.S. imposes sweeping human rights sanctions on China, Myanmar and North Korea (*Reuters*, 12/11/2021)
US issues sanctions, visa bans to mark Human Rights Day (*AP News*, 12/10/2021)
US Announces New Sanctions on Human Rights Day (VOA, 12/10/2021)
US imposes sweeping sanctions on China, Myanmar and North Korea (*Al Jazeera*, 12/10/2021)

**Top News:**

- For decades, Washington has tried to convince North Korea not to pursue nuclear weapons, and then once it had them, to give them up. This hasn't worked, for the very

simple reason that there is no better security guarantee for a paranoid Pyongyang leadership that understands much of the world would rather it be gone. However, there have been times when it looked like U.S. policies were making inroads — sometimes to the surprise of long-time North Korea watchers. Amanda Mortwedt Oh, HRNK's Director of International Advocacy and Development, comments: "The ROK-U.S. alliance remains vitally important to peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and in the Asia Pacific region...Washington has been diligent and consistent in promoting the alliance and communicating the need to continue to address North Korea from a position of strength and partnership with the ROK." (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- Flights to the South Korean resort island province of Jeju, 60 miles off the Korean peninsula's southern tip, are almost fully booked and hotels quickly run out of room. In the crush of visitors to Jeju, one sight that's not on most itineraries is a Korean naval base on the island's south coast. Jeju is also officially known an "island of peace," a reminder of a bloody uprising that broke out on April 3, 1948. It is easy to forget the sad saga of the Jeju revolt as it is to skip over the news about Moon's search for a peace deal with the North. Not many sign up for what's called a "dark tour" of sites of massacres or visit the Peace Park where obelisks display the names of more than 15,000 Jeju citizens who died in the revolt. (Donald Kirk, *The Hill*)

**International:**

- Chinese artificial intelligence startup SenseTime Group is considering whether it can proceed with a planned $767 million Hong Kong initial public offering after the U.S. added it to an investment blacklist, two sources familiar with the situation told Reuters. The designation was confirmed when the U.S. Treasury Department added SenseTime to a list of "Chinese military-industrial complex companies," part of sweeping human-rights-related sanctions on dozens of people and entities tied to China, Myanmar, North Korea and Bangladesh. (Reuters Staff, *Reuters*)
- Military officials have identified the remains of Benjamin Bazzell, an Army corporal who went missing in action during the Korean War in 1950. Bazzell was only 18 when he was killed on Nov. 30, 1950, when enemy forces attacked his unit in North Korea near the Chosin Reservoir. He served with the 57th Field Artillery Battalion, 7th Infantry Division. He will be buried at Tahoma National Cemetery in Kent, Washington. (*The Korea Times*)
- The United States designated a number of entities in China and Russia for violating U.N. Security Council resolutions that prohibit U.N. member states from employing or hosting North Korean workers. "DPRK nationals often work in other countries, including for the purpose of generating foreign currency earnings that the DPRK can use to support its unlawful weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs," the U.S. Department of Treasury said in a press release. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- The United States designated North Korea's new Defense Minister Ri Yong-gil and a number of other entities in North Korea, China and Russia for human rights violations. Ri, currently serving as North Korea's defense minister, was designated for his role as the former head of minister of social security, which, the department said, uses the

court system to "prosecute and punish persons for political wrongdoing in a legal process involving fundamentally unfair trials." (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

- The United States on Friday imposed extensive human rights-related sanctions on dozens of people and entities tied to China, Myanmar, North Korea and Bangladesh, and added Chinese artificial intelligence company SenseTime Group to an investment blacklist. (Daphne Psaledakis, David Brunnstrom, Simon Lewis, *Reuters*)
- The U.S. issued financial sanctions and visa bans on former and current government officials and entities in nine countries Friday — including China, Myanmar, North Korea and Russia — as part of coordinated actions with Canada and the U.K. to coincide with International Human Rights Day. U.S. authorities simultaneously issued financial sanctions and visa bans on a broad array of officials and entities from the throughout the world, including Chinese authorities involved in the repression of Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities and a Russian university that helps North Korea raise money with an abusive overseas labor program. (Ben Fox, *AP News*)
- As part of the Biden administration's efforts to infuse human rights into its foreign policy, the U.S. State Department on Friday designated 12 government officials from Uganda, China, Belarus, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Mexico for "gross violations of human rights." The Treasury Department has also sanctioned 25 individuals and entities under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act. A statement published Friday outlined sweeping sanctions on people and organizations in China, Bangladesh, North Korea and Burma, as well as a Russian university and its provost for sponsoring visas for "hundreds" of construction workers tied to Pyongyang's nuclear program. (John Bedard, VOA)
- The United States has imposed extensive human rights-related sanctions on dozens of people and entities tied to China, Myanmar, North Korea and Bangladesh, and added a Chinese artificial intelligence company to an investment blacklist. Canada and the United Kingdom joined the United States in imposing sanctions related to human rights abuses in Myanmar, while Washington also imposed the first new sanctions on North Korea under President Joe Biden's administration and targeted Myanmar military entities, among others, in action marking Human Rights Day. (Al Jazeera Staff, *Al Jazeera*)

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Prepared by Teresa J. Y. Kim, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250822184238/https://mailchi.mp/7307aa573f7b/hrnk-news-items10-years-of-kim-jong-un-what-was-washingtons-best-north-korea-decision-so-far?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, December 12, 2021**

# International cooperation to resolve the abduction issue as a global issue; US, JP Agree to Bolster Alliance on Sidelines of G-7

**Top News:**
International cooperation to resolve the abduction issue as a global issue (*Youtube*, 12/11/2021)
**In South Korea:**
Moon stresses Korea's democratic values in summit hosted by Biden (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/12/2021)
**International:**
Biden imposes first sanctions on North over human rights (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/12/2021)
Japan, U.S. agree to boost alliance amid tougher security environment (*Reuters*, 12/11/2021)
New NK sanctions could put brakes on Seoul's hopes of diplomacy with Pyongyang: experts (*The Korea Herald*, 12/12/2021)
New US sanctions on North Korea to dampen momentum for end-of-war declaration (*The Korea Times*, 12/12/2021)
US, Japan Agree to Bolster Security Alliance on Sidelines of G-7 (VOA, 12/11/2021)

**Top News:**

- The issue of the abductions by North Korea is a matter of grave concern pertaining to the sovereignty of Japan as well as the lives and safety of the Japanese citizens and is a top priority for the Japanese government. While the situation surrounding North Korea has changed substantially, close cooperation with countries concerned, beginning with the United States, is essential for the resolution of the abductions issue. Greg Scarlatoiu, the Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), argued that "*while food shortages are not as bad as the 1990s and the DPRK is likely not on the verge of a great famine, the humanitarian situation is dire.*" He also pointed out that the international community needs transparency in order to access the real humanitarian needs of North Koreans, especially political prisoners. Greg delivered a message of hope that "as the DPRK undergoes a Post-COVID reset, there can be hope for the North Koreans", emphasizing that Japanese families' torment at the hands of the Kim regime must come to an end. (*Youtube*)

**In South Korea:**

- President Moon Jae-in said Friday that Korea is an "exemplary testament" to the value of democracy. He made the remark at a virtual two-day summit hosted by U.S. President Joe Biden aimed at bringing together American allies and partners against authoritarian forces. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**International:**

- The United States imposed fresh sanctions on Pyongyang's new Defense Minister Ri Yong-gil, animation studios and other people and entities in North Korea, China and Russia for human rights violations Friday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken agreed on Saturday on the need to fortify their countries' alliance amid a tougher regional security environment, a Japanese government official said. (*Reuters*)
- The announcement of fresh US sanctions against North Korea might deal a blow to Seoul's attempts to revive diplomacy with Pyongyang, experts said Sunday. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)
- A fresh set of U.S. sanctions against North Korea is feared to dampen the momentum for South Korean President Moon Jae-in's proposal to declare an official end to the Korean War, as it comes as a virtual rejection of Pyongyang's demand for the U.S. to withdraw its "hostile policies" against it, which is a precondition that the bellicose regime set for end-of-war declaration talks. (Nam Hyun-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken agreed Saturday to bolster ties with Japan amid a changing security landscape in the Indo-Pacific region while meeting with Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi on the sidelines of the G-7 ministerial in Liverpool. (Nike Ching, VOA)

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Prepared by Jungeun Lee, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250924030503/https://mailchi.mp/d3b98f1e743a/hrnk-news-itemsinternational-cooperation-to-resolve-the-abduction-issue-as-a-global-issueus-jp-agree-to-bolster-alliance-on-sidelines-of-g-7

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**Monday, December 13, 2021**

# Statement of Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director, at "International cooperation to resolve the abduction issue as a global issue

**Top News:**

Statement of Greg Scarlatoiu, HRNK Executive Director, at "International cooperation to resolve the abduction issue as a global issue" (Int'l Symposium hosted by the Government of Japan, December 11, 2021) (*HRNK Insider*)

**International:**

S. Korea's intel chief says U.S. vaccine support to N.K. could help revive nuclear talks (*Yonhap*, 12/13/2021)

In Australia, Moon upgrades bilateral ties, denies challenges to China (*Korea JoonAng Daily*, 12/13/2021)

Moon says US, China, North Korea agree in principle on end-of-war declaration (*The Korea Herald*, 12/13/2021)
The 4th edition of Global Intelligence Summit kicks off (The Korea Herald, 12/13/2021)
North Korea slams US-style 'democracy' after summit against authoritarianism (*NK News*, 12/13/2021)
North and South Korea agree 'in principle' on formal end of war (*The Guardian*, 12/13/2021)

**Top News:**

- If the North Korean leadership wishes to qualify for Japanese, U.S., and international humanitarian and development assistance, it must provide a full, final, and verifiable solution to the abduction conundrum. If abductees are still in North Korea, they must be reunited with their family members. If they passed away while held against their will in North Korea, their remains must be returned to their families and hometowns. (Greg Scarlatoiu, *HRNK Insider*)

**International:**

- South Korea's intelligence chief said Monday Washington's possible proposal to provide COVID-19 vaccines to Pyongyang could serve as momentum to bring it back to long-stalled nuclear negotiations. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)
- Korean President Moon Jae-in and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison upgraded the countries' bilateral ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership and agreed to expand supply chain cooperation in a summit in Canberra Monday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- President Moon Jae-in said Monday that the United States, China and North Korea agree in principle on declaring a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War and Seoul will push to make it happen. (Yonhap, *The Korea Times*)
- The Institute for National Security Strategy kicked off the 2021 Global Intelligence Summit on Monday, to discuss the theme of a "Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative." (Shim Woo-hyun, *The Korea Herald*)
- North Korea has denounced Washington for using "American-style 'democracy'" as a tool to interfere in other countries' affairs, after the U.S. hosted its Summit for Democracy over the weekend with more than 110 countries participating. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- South and North Korea, China and the US have agreed "in principle" to declare a formal end to the Korean war, almost 70 years after the conflict ended in a shaky truce, the South Korean president, Moon Jae-in, has said. (Justin McCurry, *The Guardian*)

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Prepared by Jiwoo Hwang, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250825214010/https://mailchi.mp/fe5bccd737c4/hrnk-news-itemsstatement-of-greg-scarlatoiu-hrnk-executive-director-at-international-cooperation-to-resolve-the-abduction-issue-as-a-global-issu?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, December 14, 2021**

## "Recent N. Korean missile tests aimed at defeating missile defense programs: CRS report"

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea urges farmers with high yields to share experiences amid food shortages(*Yonhap*, 12/14/2021)
Recent N. Korean missile tests aimed at defeating missile defense programs: CRS report(*Yonhap*, 12/14/2021)
Hundreds of North Koreans arrested over the past year for using Chinese cellphones(*DailyNK*, 12/14/2021)
Domestically produced carbon monoxide alarms are being sold in Pyongyang(*DailyNK*, 12/14/2021)
Kim Jong Un's decade of rule: Purges, nukes, Trump diplomacy(*AP News*, 12/14/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Assessment for Opcon transfer to be held in the summer(*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/14/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**
Korea set to strengthen quarantine measures this week(*The Korea Times*, 12/14/2021)

**International:**
(LEAD) U.S. holds no hostility, awaits positive response for dialogue from N. Korea: State Dept.(*Yonhap*, 12/14/2021)
National Assembly speaker calls for support in peace progress during APPF(*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/14/2021)
Korea, Australia adopt joint statement on South China Sea(*Korea Herald*, 12/14/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea's main newspaper on Tuesday called on farmers to learn from those who achieved high yields this year as part of efforts to boost the country's crop output in the face of chronic food shortages.(*Yonhap*)

- North Korea appears to be aiming to counter or cripple U.S. missile defense programs deployed in the Northeast Asian region, the U.S. Congressional Research Service (CRS) said in a report released Monday.(*Yonhap*)
- Daily NK's investigation into the North Korean authorities' crackdown on users of Chinese-made mobile phones from January to Dec. 8 of this year has determined that hundreds of people were arrested by the Yanggang Province branch of the Ministry of State Security.(*DailyNK*)
- North Korea is selling locally built remote gas alarms to residents of Pyongyang to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning in the winter months, Daily NK has learned.(*DailyNK*)
- Friday marks 10 years since Kim Jong Un, the third generation of his family to rule North Korea, took power after his father's sudden heart attack.(*AP News*)

**In South Korea:**

- The full operational capability (FOC) assessment required for the pending transfer of wartime operational control (Opcon) from the U.S. military to South Korea will take place this coming summer, according to the Defense Ministry on Tuesday.(*Korea JoongAng Daily*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- The government is expected to introduce tougher social distancing rules in the coming days in a desperate bid to curb the unrelenting spread of COVID-19 amid a surge in the number of coronavirus deaths and critically ill patients.(*The Korea Times*)

**International:**

- The United States has no hostile policy toward North Korea while it continues to wait for a positive response from the reclusive state to its outreach, a state department spokesperson said Monday.(*Yonhap*)
- Korea's National Assembly speaker called for overseas parliamentarians' support and cooperation for progress in the Korean Peninsula peace process during 29th Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) Tuesday.(*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- In the wake of Monday's summit between South Korea and Australia, President Moon Jae-in and Prime Minister Scott Morrison adopted a joint statement on territorial disputes in the South China Sea.(*Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Seshni Moodley, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250825214316/https://mailchi.mp/2d311c3f29a2/hrnk-news-itemsrecent-n-korean-missile-tests-aimed-at-defeating-missile-defense-programs-crs-report?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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## Wednesday, December 15, 2021

# (LEAD) Brother of North Korea's founder Kim dies: state media

**In North Korea:**
(LEAD) Brother of North Korea's founder Kim dies: state media(*Yonhap*, 12/15/2021)

(LEAD) N. Korea to convene parliamentary meeting in February(*Yonhap*, 12/15/2021)

Has North Korea changed?(*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/15/2021)

Kim Jong-un regime 'strategically' continuing public executions in isolated areas: NGO(*The Korea Herald*, 12/15/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Moon wraps up Australia trip after signing deals on defense, supply chains(*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/15/2021)

Korea cites PyeongChang Games as reason for 'interest' in Beijing Olympics(*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/15/2021)

Spy agency warns of increased hacking attempts ahead of presidential election(*The Korea Herald*, 12/15/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

'Golden time' in inter-Korean relations is up till March presidential election: KINU(*The Korea Herald*, 12/15/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Kim Yong-ju, a younger brother of North Korea's late founder Kim Il-sung and once a powerful official of the regime, has died, according to Pyongyang's state media Wednesday.(*Yonhap*)
- North Korea will hold a session of its rubber-stamp legislature in February to discuss the state budget and issues of adopting laws on childcare and overseas compatriots, Pyongyang's state media reported Wednesday.(*Yonhap*)
- North Korea's mouthpieces are engrossed with glorifying the 10-year reign of its leader Kim Jong-un. They are championing the "entry of the construction of our-style socialism into an unprecedented development phase." The media outlets portray Kim's decade as an "era of triumph, miracle and glory."(*Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- North Korea has continued public executions in isolated areas under the Kim Jong-un regime, in an apparent strategic move to prevent the leakage of inside information and avoid international monitoring, a human rights nongovernmental organization said in a report.(*The Korea Herald*)

**In South Korea:**

- President Moon Jae-in wrapped up a four-day state visit to Australia Wednesday, sealing deals on defense, space and carbon neutral technology cooperation and securing stable critical minerals supply chains.(*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea has a "duty and obligation" as the host of the preceding Winter Games to take interest in the Beijing Olympics next February, said a Blue House senior official Wednesday, but will make a decision at a later date on whether President Moon Jae-in will attend the opening ceremony.(*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea's spy agency warned Wednesday of a possible rise in the number of hacking attempts to glean information on the country's diplomatic and security affairs ahead of the March presidential election.
  (*The Korea Herald*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- The runup to the March 9 South Korean presidential election could be a "golden time" to make strides in the stalled diplomacy with North Korea and a potential inter-Korean summit could be an answer for a breakthrough, experts at the state-funded think tank said Wednesday.(*The Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Seshni Moodley, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250825215322/https://mailchi.mp/69f5d1d41504/hrnk-news-itemsinternational-cooperation-to-resolve-the-abduction-issue-as-a-global-issueus-jp-agree-to-bolster-alliance-on-sidelines-of-g-11188454?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, December 16, 2021**

## Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield's Statements after session on DPRK human rights at the UNSC today; 10 years of Kim Jong Un

**Top News**

Following the Security Council Closed Consultations: The Ambassadors of the United States, Estonia, France, Ireland, Japan, Norway and the United Kingdom, on the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). (*United Nations*, 12/15/2021)

**In North Korea:**

(LEAD) N. Korea incommemorative mood ahead of 10th anniv. of ex-leader'spassing (*Yonhap*, 12/16/2021)
In pictures: Kim Jong Un's decade of total but isolated rule (*AP News*, 12/16/2021)
N. Korea's economy continues marketization under leader Kim: unification ministry (*Yonhap*, 12/16/2021)
North Korea after 10 years of Kim Jong-un: Better armed but more isolated than ever (*The Korea Times*, 12/16/2021)
North Korea barrels past oil cap after a slow start this year: Report (*NK News*, 12/16/2021)
North Korea continues to practice "politics of fear" as Kim Jong Un marks 10th year in power (*Daily NK*, 12/16/2021)
North Korea Executes People for Watching K-Pop, Rights Group Says (*The New York Times*, 12/15/2021)
North Korea hides public executions from world scrutiny, report says (*UPI*, 12/15/2021)
North Korea Would Be Weak Without Russian Military Aid (*The National Interest*, 12/16/2021)
Private sector overtakes state as North Korea's top economic actor under Kim - S.Korea (*Reuters*, 12/16/2021)
Yanggang Province security agency ordered to "root out every last user of Chinese mobile phones" (*Daily NK*, 12/16/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**
Undeterred by fruitless push in 2021, S. Korea seeks to revitalize peace process in coming year (*Yonhap*, 12/16/2021)

**International:**
Six UNSC members call for North's human rights issues to be addressed (Korea JoongAng Daily, 12/16/2021)
U.S. committed to Singapore Declaration, open to dialogue with N. Korea: Lambert(*Yonhap*, 12/16/2021)

**Top News:**

- Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, on behalf of UNSC Members Estonia, France, Ireland, Japan, Norway, UK, and US: "Last week we marked the 73rd anniversary of the UDHR. As we celebrate our rights, it is important we recognize those denied by governments. People of the DPRK are denied their rights. In the DPRK, the regime continues to hold more than 100k people in political prison camps, where they suffer torture, forced labor, starvations, and sexual and gender based violence. These abuses are exacerbated by the regime's response to COVID 19, including shoot-to-kill orders, and has prevented humanitarian aid.
- The DPRK's repression even extends beyond its borders. The regime has been implicated in abductions and forced disappearances. We urge the DPRK to resolve issues related to these abductees. We hope that tomorrow during the UNGA Resolution, the

UN membership will come together once again and condemn the regime's violations." (*United Nations*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea is holding a series of events memorializing late leader Kim Jong-il ahead of the 10th anniversary of his passing this week, Pyongyang's state media said Thursday. (*Yonhap*)
- Since assuming power 10 years ago, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has ruled the isolated country with absolute power, significantly expanded its nuclear arsenal and become the North's first ruler to hold a summit with a sitting U.S. president. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)
- The private-sector proportion of North Korea's economy has steadily been on the rise over the last decade since leader Kim Jong-un took power, Seoul's unification ministry said Thursday, in a sign of the country's continued marketization. (*Yonhap*)
- Ten years after Kim Jong-un assumed power North Korea is better armed but deeply isolated and more dependent on China, despite actions by the young leader that raised — and dashed — hopes of economic transformation or international opening. (*The Korea Times*)
- North Korea likely exceeded oil import limits set by the United Nations this year, according to a new report from the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), after Pyongyang appeared to kick-start smuggling operations in May. (Ethan Jewell, *NK News*)
- North Korean authorities continue to practice "politics of fear" even as Kim Jong Un marks the 10th year of his rule. In particular, authorities are using punishments and personnel transfers to keep cadres even more inline amid the protracted COVID-19 pandemic. (Ha Yoon Ah , *Daily NK*)
- At least seven people have been put to death in the past decade for watching or distributing K-pop videos, as the North cracks down on what its leader calls a "vicious cancer." (Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has tried to conceal public executions from international attention, while brutally cracking down on smuggled South Korean media, a human rights group said Wednesday (Thomas Maresca, *UPI*)
- There is little historical question that North Korea's defense industry was not only founded and sustained by direct Soviet military-technological transfers over a period of half a century, but that Soviet and Soviet-licensed hardware continues to be a pillar of North Korea's current military equipment roster. (Mark Episkopos, *The National Interest*)
- The private sector has overtaken state-led agents to become North Korea's biggest economic actor over the past decade, a sign of booming markets allowed by leader Kim Jong Un, South Korea's Unification Ministry said on Thursday. (Hyonhee Shin, *Reuters*)
- North Korean security authorities are charging anyone caught using the Chinese messaging app WeChat in the Sino-Korean border region as spies, regardless of why they were using the app. (Lee Chae Un , *Daily NK*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- After a pandemic-plagued year that saw North Korea grow even more insular, South Korea appears set to charge ahead with its bumpy drive for peace in 2022, an undertaking still beset by mutual distrust and geopolitical tensions as well as laden with uncertainty. (Song Sang-ho, *Yonhap*)

**International:**

- The UN Security Council (UNSC) should address the human rights issues of North Korea in an open session, said U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield to the United Nations, with representatives of Britain, Estonia, France, Ireland, Japan and Norway in a joint statement following their closed-door meeting Wednesday. (Park Hyun-ju, Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The United States is committed to the Singapore Declaration that calls for the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and normalization of U.S.-North Korea relations, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Japan and Korea Mark Lambert said Wednesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Diletta De Luca, HRNK Research Intern

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250825215446/https://mailchi.mp/67d6591f31e1/hrnk-news-itemsambassador-thomas-greenfields-statements-after-session-on-dprk-human-rights-at-the-unsc-today-10-years-of-kim-jong-un?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, December 17, 2021**

## U.N. adopts resolution on N. Korean human rights abuses; HRNK's statement on Kim Jong-un's first ten years in power

**Top News:**

U.N. adopts resolution on N. Korean human rights abuses (*Yonhap*, 12/17/2021)
HRNK's statement on Kim Jong Un's first ten years in power (*HRNK*, 12/16/2021)
*"I Will Work for Human Rights in North Korea" (*RFA*, 11/24/2021)
*U.S. Experts: "If South Korea Wants to Join the U.N. Security Council as a Non-Permanent Member, It Cannot Stay Silent on the Human Rights Crisis in North Korea" (*SPNews*, 11/30/2021)
Kim Jong Un's decade in power: Starvation, repression and brutal rule – just like his father and grandfather (*The Conversation*, 12/17/2021)

*This article has been translated from Korean. Please see the full English text at the bottom of

the email.

**In North Korea:**
How has North Korea's Kim Jong-un held on to power so long? – video (*The Guardian*, 12/17/2021)
Kim Jong-un: N Korean defectors reflect on last decade (*BBC News*, 12/16/2021)
Kim Jong Un's crackdowns leave North Korea defectors with little hope (Reuters, 12/17/2021)
N. Korean leader Kim attends memorial event for his late father: state media(*Yonhap*, 12/17/2021)
N. Korea urges 'absolute trust' in its leader, marking his father's death anniversary (*Yonhap*, 12/17/2021)
Rollercoasters, horses and weight loss: 10 years of Kim Jong-un image politics (*The Guardian*, 12/17/2021)
The pandemic forced Kim Jong Un into retreat. The world should brace for his resurgence (CNN, 12/16/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**
71 years later, prisoners of war in North Korea are still waiting to return home (*NK News*, 12/17/2021)
Ulsan's bid to invite North Korean athletes to national sports festival next year raises debate (*The Korea Times*, 12/17/2021)
**International:**
Britain names new ambassador to North Korea (*Yonhap*, 12/17/2021)
N.K. Embassy in China holds memorial service to mark 10th year since ex-leader's death (*Yonhap*, 12/17/2021)
U.S. keeps N. Korea on state sponsors of terrorism list (*Yonhap*, 12/17/2021)

**Top News:**

- The United Nations on Thursday adopted a resolution on North Korean human rights, condemning systematic and gross human rights violations in the reclusive nation. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)
- Ten years ago, North Korea's ruling Kim family and the Korean Workers' Party implemented the North Korean regime's second hereditary transfer of power. Despite early speculation that Swiss-educated Kim Jong-un might bring a semblance of hope to the people of North Korea, the most likely scenario has prevailed: Kim Jong-un has been following the Kim family regime's playbook since December 17, 2011. (HRNK)
- *Last time, North Korean defector and HRNK consultant Kim Doohyun spoke about Kyo-hwa-so No. 3 Tosong-ni. Today, we will discuss how he came to the U.S. from his hometown, Sinuiju, his current work, and his future plans. (RFA)
- *In a phone call with VOA on November 29th, Greg Scarlatoiu, the Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), stated, "how can South Korea be in a position of leadership? How can South Korea join the UN Security Council as a

non-permanent member, while its government continues to ignore the egregious human rights violations being perpetrated in North Korea?" (SPNews)

- By the grim metric of fatalities in the first 10 years of a dictator's rule, Kim Jong Un has yet to match the records set by his grandfather, Kim Il Sung, or father, Kim Jong Il – the two tyrants who reigned by terror in North Korea before him. (Sung-Yoon Lee, *The Conversation*)

**In North Korea:**

- Kim Jong-un emerged onto the world stage as a virtual unknown in 2011, a young man thrust into power at the head of North Korea – a nuclear-armed state – after his father's unexpected death. In the decade since, he has ruthlessly purged alleged political opponents, extended his country's nuclear capabilities, and tightened his grip on power as North Korea's supreme leader. (Justin McCurry, Jamie Macwhirter and Nikhita Chulani, *The Guardian*)
- It's 10 years since an untested 27-year-old took power in North Korea and in that time few world leaders have generated as many headlines. But what has it been like living under Kim Jong-un? (Laura Bicker, *BBC News*)
- In the 10 years since Kim Jong Un came to power, North Korea has cracked down on people trying to get out of the country, leaving many defectors without hope of seeing their families and homeland again. (Josh Smith and Sunghyuk An, *Reuters*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un attended a memorial event for his father Kim Jong-il on the 10th anniversary of his death Friday, Pyongyang's state media reported. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's state media called for "absolute trust" in leader Kim Jong-un, as the country marked 10 years since the death of former leader Kim Jong-il on Friday. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)
- As North Korea marks the 10th anniversary of the death of Kim Jong-il, we look at how official portraits of his son and successor have sought to portray him as both increasingly authoritative and popular. (Agence France-Presse, *The Guardian*)
- Now, few question Kim's authority, but some experts worry that his consolidated power could embolden him to take greater risks -- and that, as Covid drives North Korea to become more isolationist, its leader will only become more dangerous. (Paula Hancocks and Yoonjung Seo, CNN)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- The latest U.N. resolution on human rights in North Korea, which the U.N. General Assembly adopted on Thursday, mentions POW issues for the first time, expressing concerns about "allegations of continued violations of the human rights of unrepatriated prisoners of war and their descendants." A new amendment proposed in South Korea's National Assembly also seeks to expand the definition of those who qualify as POWs, in part to draw attention to the issue. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)
- The southeastern city of Ulsan, which will host the 103rd National Sports Festival next year, has made the ambitious move of inviting North Korean athletes to participate in

the South Korean sporting event. But its action is drawing criticism as inter-Korean relations remain deadlocked. (Kwon Mee-yoo, *The Korea Times*)

**International:**

- David Ellis, a former British deputy head of mission in Tokyo, has been appointed as the country's new ambassador to North Korea, London's foreign ministry has said. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)
- The North Korean Embassy in China held a memorial service to commemorate former leader Kim Jong-il on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of his death, Pyongyang's state media reported Friday, highlighting close ties between the two countries. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)
- The United States continues to keep North Korea on its list of state sponsors of terrorism, a state department report showed Thursday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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Translated articles:

**RFA Source**

**"I Will Work for Human Rights in North Korea"**

Last time, North Korean defector and HRNK consultant Kim Doohyun spoke about Kyo-hwa-so No. 3 Tosong-ni. Today, we will discuss how he came to the U.S. from his hometown, Sinuiju, his current work, and his future plans.
Reporter: Hello, Mr. Kim.

Kim: Hello.

Reporter: You are working as a consultant with HRNK. Could you tell us a little more about the kind of work you do there?

Kim: Sure. There are a lot of projects that I'm currently working on. Since I joined last year, I have worked on research projects, translations, etc.

Reporter: When did you come to the U.S.?

Kim: I first came to the U.S. in 2015 on a student visa. At first, I lived in South Korea for five years, and I wanted to study more and broaden my horizons, so I decided to go to the U.S.

Reporter: I heard you graduated from an American university. What did you study?

Kim: I graduated from Utah Valley State College, and studied international politics. Utah was the first state I ever visited and I wound up studying there, too.

Reporter: I'm sure North Korean listeners are both jealous and interested to hear that you graduated from university in the U.S. and are currently working as a human rights activist. What part of the journey was the most challenging for you?

Kim: Studying in the U.S. is tricky, especially for North Korean defectors. As I'm sure you know, North Koreans aren't expected to learn English. There were no opportunities to read books in English, and very few people travel abroad. That's why North Koreans don't really recognize the importance of being able to speak English.

When I was a student in North Korea, we were made to study Korean, math, and revolutionary history, never English. When I first came to South Korea, I didn't think about coming to the United States, but as time went by, I became more curious about exploring English-speaking countries.

It was challenging the first time. The British Embassy in Korea runs a British Cultural Center that provides English lectures to North Korean defectors. After I got off work, I would go there in the evening, and I also went to a private English academy. However, there was a limit to how much English I could learn in Korea.

Reporter: It sounds like you really worked hard.

Kim: I started to plateau, and my English stopped improving. So, I just came to the U.S. Here are my tips. If you want to learn a foreign language, you should try to absorb the culture. Don't be a foreigner. I think that's the fastest way to learn a language.

Reporter: But you were born in North Korea and taught anti-American propaganda. What was it like to go to the U.S.?

Kim: When I came to Korea, everything was shocking. Of course, both Korea and the United States are rich countries, but when I came to the United States, I realized why people call the United States a great country.

Oh, I also was very impressed by the civil society consciousness and education system of the U.S. It would've been impossible for me to graduate without the help of my American friends.

Because I was taught anti-American propaganda, I was used to calling Americans "American jackals". They were less than human to us. Even when I was working in South Korea, I didn't have the chance to meet American people. When I first came to the U.S., it felt more natural to say "American bastard" than "American [person]".

In North Korea, we never say “American person” or “American people”. It’s always “American bastards”. It’s just a habit. You know the jokes they make in North Korea. They say, “it’s because of the American bastards” or “it’s the American bastards’ fault”. I even shocked myself when I came to the U.S. and said these kinds of things out of habit. I didn’t say it because Americans are evil or bad, but because this kind of rhetoric is ingrained in me.

But American people are very kind and generous. There are many reasons that I came to the U.S. A big part of it was curiosity about the country itself.

I was taught about the ugly side of America, so I wanted to see if it was true or not. It turned out that Americans are very kind and I really like them.

Someone might hear this and think I’m a sycophant. But honestly, I can say this confidently. Thanks to the American people, I have been able to study, graduate, and live a good life. I have as many American friends as I do North Korean friends. It’s nice.

Reporter: Is there something you’d like to share with your family and friends in North Korea?

Kim: Yes, it seems like they’re struggling a great deal lately. I’ve heard that soldiers have to stand guard in the corn and rice fields. Things are the same as they were during the Arduous March, and it’s happening all over again. People in the U.S. and South Korea can’t imagine what it’s like. I really hope that they can help one another and overcome these difficult times. During the Arduous March, we would just pass the dead bodies on the street. Everyone was just focused on themselves. The people who lived through that time were all monsters, myself included. We could not call ourselves humans. If a similar situation happens again, and of course, it shouldn’t, but if it does, I want to ask that people take care of one another and show some humanity.

Reporter: What are your plans in the U.S.?

Kim: I think I was lucky to survive while defecting from North Korea. Many have died while defecting, and many have been repatriated, sent to prisons, or shot to death at the border.

I don’t take my life for granted. It doesn’t go without saying that I would risk my life, escape, then come to the U.S. to study and work. I believe I have a mission that I have to accept. I know how my family and friends in my hometown are living, but I have to forget that, and live in pursuit of the kind of life I want. I will do what I want with my life, and I will make sure to contribute to the wellbeing of the people living in my hometown.

In the future, I might be a human rights activist, or I might help human rights activists. Either way, I want to do something that will improve the lives of North Koreans and help the human

rights situation there.

Reporter: I hope your dreams come true. That's all for today. Thank you for your time.

Kim: Thank you.

Translated by: Lina Im, HRNK Research Intern

SPNews Source

**U.S. Experts: "If South Korea Wants to Join the U.N. Security Council as a Non-Permanent Member, It Cannot Stay Silent on the Human Rights Crisis in North Korea"**

Many have pointed out that if South Korea is to re-enter the U.N. Security Council as a non-permanent member, it must not turn a blind eye to human rights violations in North Korea.

In a phone call with VOA on November 29th, Greg Scarlatoiu, the Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), stated, "how can South Korea be in a position of leadership? How can South Korea join the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member, while its government continues to ignore the egregious human rights violations being perpetrated in North Korea?"

On September 21st, President Moon Jae-in delivered a keynote address at the UN General Assembly, stating that South Korea would try to join the U.N. Security Council as a non-permanent member in 2024.

During his speech, President Moon also stated, "the recent situation in Afghanistan serves as a stark reminder of the crucial role that the UN plays in advancing peace and human rights," but declined to mention the human rights issues in North Korea.

Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights in the Department of State, recalled that the South Korean government decided not to co-sponsor a UN resolution on human rights violations in North Korea this year, adding that, "South Korea's non-sponsorship of the resolution seems to be based on the idea that human rights have to be delinked from the pursuit of peace and security if progress is to be made. Yet the whole purpose of the United Nations is to bring those issues together."

Robert King, former special envoy for North Korea human rights issues at the U.S. Department of State, stated, "I think it's unfortunate because I think one can also work with North Korea, but at the same time, you don't have to cover up the human rights abuses that are particularly egregious in North Korea. This, unfortunately, reflects the changes that have taken place in South Korea's attitude towards North Korea."

Translated by: Doohyun Kim, HRNK Social Media Associate

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Prepared by Claire McCrea, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250825215954/https://mailchi.mp/b2f16cc8ec23/hrnk-news-itemsun-adopts-resolution-on-n-korean-human-rights-abuses-hrnks-statement-on-kim-jong-uns-first-ten-years-in-power?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Saturday, December 18, 2021**

# Holding to account: UN resolutions on DPRK human rights are not dead letters; How Kim Jong-un Advanced NK's Military in a Decade

**Top News:**
Holding to account: UN resolutions on DPRK human rights are not dead letters (*NK News*, 12/16/2021)

**In North Korea:**
How Kim Jong-un Advanced North Korea's Military in a Decade (*Council on Foreign Relations*, 12/17/2021)
Kim Jong Un's crackdowns leave North Korean defectors with little hope (*The Japan Times*, 12/18/2021)
Kim Yo-jong, sister of N. Korean leader,believed to have been promoted (*Yonhap*, 12/18/2021)
N. Korea slams G7 statement urging abandonment of nuclear weapons (*Yonhap*, 12/18/2021)
NKorea calls for unity on anniversary of Kim Jong Il's death (*AP News*, 12/17/2021)
North Korea comes to a standstill to mark 10 years since death of Kim Jong Il (*NK News*, 12/17/2021)
North Korea's progress on border wall slows with the onset of winter (*Daily NK*, 12/17/2021)
Soon-to-graduate N. Korean university students rush to secure employment certificates (*Daily NK*, 12/17/2021)
*The decade of Kim's hermit "reign", died and resurrected at least six times (*Huffington Post*, 12/17/2021)

*This article has been translated from Italian. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**International:**
Allies need more diplomatic dialogue to peacefully denuclearise the Korean Peninsula (*East Asia Forum*, 12/18/2021)
U.S. seeks step-by-step approach to denuclearization of N. Korea: Sullivan(*Yonhap*, 12/18/2021)

**Top News:**

- For 17 years, the U.N. General Assembly has adopted a detailed resolution setting forth major concerns about human rights in the DPRK. This year's resolution numbers 12 pages and once again "condemns in the strongest terms the long-standing and ongoing systematic, widespread and gross violations of human rights in and by the DPRK, including those that may amount to crimes against humanity." (Roberta Cohen, *NK News*)

**In North Korea:**

- Kim Jong-un's first ten years as North Korea's leader were marked by economic failures, halting nuclear diplomacy, and a steady ramp-up of military power. (Scott Snyder, *Council on Foreign Relations*)
- In the 10 years since Kim Jong Un came to power, North Korea has cracked down on people trying to get out of the country, leaving many defectors without hope of seeing their families and homeland again. (Josh Smith and Sung Hyuk An, *The Japan Times*)
- Kim Yo-jong, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's powerful sister, is believed to have been promoted to a higher official position, according to a North Korean media report Saturday. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea on Saturday slammed a recent G7 statement that called on the country to abandon all its banned weapons and refrain from provocative actions. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korea on Friday commemorated the 10th anniversary of former leader Kim Jong Il's death with calls for greater public loyalty toward his son and current leader Kim Jong Un, who is struggling to navigate the country out of deepening pandemic-related hardships. (Kim Hyung-jin , *AP News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un hosted a large "national memorial service" on Friday to mark 10 years since the death of his father and former leader Kim Jong Il, according to state television, which aired the event in the evening the same day. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- With cold weather hindering progress in the construction of a concrete wall along the Sino-North Korean border, North Korean authorities are reportedly hanging empty bottles and cans on a recently erected wire mesh fence as a temporary expediency to prevent defections. (Ha Yoon Ah, *Daily NK*)
- With North Korean authorities recently ordering that more than 80% of the university students set to graduate next February be dispatched to "Three Revolution teams," a source says some soon-to-be-graduates are resisting the authorities' measure and coming up with ways to avoid deployment. (Seulkee Jang, *Daily NK*)

- *Ten years surrounded by totalitarian darkness in North Korea, amidst reports of authentic cruelty and distortions of all kinds. After a decade since his ascension, Kim Jong-un's personality is explored among reports, testimonies, fake news and declarations. (Marco Lupis, *Huffington Post*)

*This article has been translated from Italian. Please see the full English text at the bottom of the email.

**International:**

- Although only a few months remain before the end of Moon Jae-in's presidential term, Seoul is relentlessly pursuing a declaration of an end to the Korean War between Washington and Pyongyang and attempting to revitalise momentum for a denuclearisation dialogue. But the United States and South Korea seem to perceive the tactical value of this declaration differently and are not on the same page over the scenarios they might confront once they issue the declaration. (Kuyoun Chung, *East Asia Forum*)
- The Joe Biden administration is seeking a "step-by-step" approach to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, a compromise between the opposite strategies of two previous U.S. administrations, U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said Friday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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**Translated article:**

Huffington Post, Marco Lupis

**The decade of Kim's hermit "reign", died and was resurrected at least six times**
Ten years surrounded by totalitarian darkness in North Korea, amidst reports of authentic cruelty and distortions of all kinds.

It was 1992. In a luxurious villa in Pyongyang, a very special birthday party is held for an eight-year-old boy. Among the gifts, one particularly stands out: a commander's uniform. Not a carnival dress, but a real uniform: it is tiny in size, but it is authentic. It is the uniform of a general in the North Korean People's Army. Other much older generals arrive at the party and bow to the eight-year-old. His name is Kim Jong-un.

In December 2011, the former chubby child inherited the power that had been before him from his father, Kim Jong-il, and before him from his grandfather Kim Il-sung, the latter considered the North Korean "father of the homeland", appointed, after his death, "eternal president". Today Kim Jong-un manages absolute power in his Hermit Kingdom, but the president of the most mysterious and disturbing nation in the world remains his grandfather, Kim Il-Sung; still president from the grave.

Since he came to power - on December 17, exactly ten years ago - Kim Jong-un has made disappear into thin air - murdered, "purged", someone even said tore apart by dogs or hit by cannon shots (but these are only a few of the colorful fake news that have always circulated on his account) - all seven senior officials who were seen alongside him in the official photographs from his father's funeral. Ten years of absolute power led Pyongyang to become an atomic and missile power that inspires fear not only to all its neighbors but to the whole world. A mysterious nation where the international embargo and Covid (although little or nothing is known about the real extent of the pandemic in North Korea) are hitting hard the population.

A report published today by the Transnational Justice Working Group (TJWG) reconstructs – alongside the exaggerations of the anti-Pyongyang propaganda conveyed above all by the hated "cousins" of the South - a decade of executions in North Korea. Executed, banished or "disappeared" was the fate of North Korean high officials under "King Kim", who fell from grace or were only suspected of being a threat to his rise. But this does not only apply to them. The TJWG report reconstructs in a very reliable and detailed way the picture of the situation beyond the 38th parallel, also based on the testimonies of the few North Koreans who - at the price of unspeakable risks and suffering - managed to flee the country. From the report's pages, it appears that among the crimes most frequently subject to public executions there were 7 documented cases of people executed for viewing or distributing South Korean videos, 5 for drug-related crimes and as many for prostitution, 7 for trafficking in human beings, murder or attempted murder and 3 for "obscene acts". Of the 23 public executions witnessed by the interviewees, 21 were carried out by shooting and 2 by hanging.

Finally, the report documents how, in this decade of terror dominated by the bulky figure of Kim Jong-un, his acts of clemency or grace have also multiplied, in the evident attempt by the North Korean regime to paint Kim Jong-un as a benevolent leader. But as Joshua Stanton, founder of the NGO One Free Korea declared: "Totalitarian regimes use terror as a rule and exceptional acts of clemency to burden their victims with a debt of loyalty". Stanton, a lawyer with 20 years of military and civilian experience, author of "Arsenal of Terror: North Korea, State Sponsor of Terrorism" published by the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, knows more than many others about what is happening in and around Pyongyang. He served as a US Army defense attorney in Seoul, Daegu, and Pyongtaek between 1998 and 2002, and since April 2013 he has worked with the United States House of Representatives, specifically the Foreign Affairs Committee, in the drafting of the law on the application of sanctions to North Korea.

Since Kim Jong-un took power ten years ago (after the death of his father, the "Dear Leader", Kim Jong-il, suddenly killed by a heart attack while traveling on his armored train), he has eliminated the most dangerous potential rivals for his leadership. He executed his uncle and MP-Jang Song Thaek, and it is now more than a suspicion that he ordered the murder of his exiled elder half-brother, Kim Jong-nam, in Malaysia. The uncle was arrested in late 2013,

during a Politburo meeting. His arrest was appropriately filmed by propaganda, which spread images of the two soldiers lifting him and dragging him away and then subjecting him to a fake trial that brought him to his execution. About the other five high officials who were seen following the procession in the funeral photos of the "Dear Leader", no trace remains. Kim Ki-nam, then head of propaganda, disappeared after being replaced in the important position by Kim Jong-un's younger sister, Yo-Jong. The same fate happened to Kim Yong-chun, minister and deputy marshal, general Kim Jong-gak, and the powerful former secret police chief, U Dong-chuk. Maybe only Choe Tae-bok, the old head of external affairs, was saved from the slaughter, ending - it seems - retired.

The story, then, of how that child became "General Kim" at the age of eight years old, was told by a maternal aunt who survived the family "purges" which, as we have said, have always been a "vice" that is transmitted "among the branches" of the Kim family. And if she was able to tell this story, it is only because, about six years after that grotesque birthday party, in 1998, Ko Yong-suk - this is the name of her aunt - and her husband deserted to the West. For some time now they have lived an anonymous life outside New York, protected by the CIA and exposed every day to the risk that some of their nephew's assassins will be able to put them on a deadly threat. "Kim Jong-un could not to grow up as a normal person while the people around him treated him that way, "said Ko, who was present at that birthday and who, a few years later, was commissioned to accompany Kim Jong-un when his father sent him to study in a Swiss boarding school, near Bern, describing the teenager Kim as irritating and arrogant.

“He wasn't a troublemaker, but he was short-tempered and lacked tolerance. When his mother tried to tell him that he played too much and did not study enough, he did not answer her but protested in another way, going on a hunger strike ”. A form of protest that the current dictator, growing up, must have abandoned, one might say. However, tiny fragments like these are pretty much all we know of Kim Jong-un's childhood. It is not much for really understanding why he was chosen to succeed his father instead of his older brother Kim Jong-chol and his half-brother Kim Jong-nam, then ruthlessly eliminated. According to the testimony of his aunt, “Kim Jong-chol was initially considered as the most likely successor. But his father, Kim Jong-il, used to say: "Jong-chol is no good, he's like a girl." His favorite was the youngest son, the second prince, Jong-un. He resembled his father in all respects, including ruthlessness".

After all, those who deal with the mysterious kingdom of Rocket Man - according to the "happy" definition of Donald Trump - know well that it is always very difficult to separate the truth from falsity among the few news that emerge from the darkness of the North Korean regime. For this reason, perhaps we will never know for sure why "the little general", the apparently harmless Kim Jong-un, was chosen to lead the last Orwellian tyranny on the planet. And why he continues to do so today, ten years later

Translated by Diletta De Luca, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Diletta De Luca, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250825220358/https://mailchi.mp/75013da28c31/hrnk-news-items-holding-to-account-un-resolutions-on-dprk-human-rights-are-not-dead-letters-how-kim-jong-un-advanced-nks-military-in-a-decade?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, December 19, 2021**

# US seeks ‘step-by-step’ approach toward denuclearization: Sullivan; 'South Korea needs to focus on details of end-of-war declaration'

**In North Korea:**
The Observer view on a decade of North Korea under Kim Jong-un (*The Guardian*, 12/19/2021)

**International:**
'South Korea needs to focus on details of end-of-war declaration' (*The Korea Times*, 12/19/2021)
US seeks ‘step-by-step’ approach toward denuclearization: Sullivan (*The Korea Herald*, 12/19/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- After his father’s death, he was propelled to the top of the totalitarian dynasty. How has he been allowed to last so long? The obvious answer is fear. Other factors – cunning, chutzpah, charisma – play a role, too. But terror is the tool of choice for your typical tyrant. This is a lesson Kim Jong-un, North Korea’s “supreme leader”, learned at his father’s knee. And when Kim Jong-il died, 10 years ago last week, his then 26-year-old son was propelled willy-nilly to the top of the totalitarian dynasty founded in 1948 by his grandfather, Kim Il-sung. (*The Guardian*)

**International:**

- At the United Nations General Assembly last September, President Moon Jae-in repeated his proposal to declare an end to the Korean War as part of efforts to normalize inter-Korean ties and jump-start stalled nuclear talks, and since then his administration has strongly pushed to bring about a peace settlement before his term ends in May 2022. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- The Biden administration seeks a “step-by-step” approach toward denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, which is a midpoint between strategic patience and grand bargain

with Pyongyang, US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said on Friday. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Jiwoo Hwang, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250825220940/https://mailchi.mp/1162d0d685cb/hrnk-news-itemsus-seeks-step-by-step-approach-toward-denuclearization-sullivan-south-korea-needs-to-focus-on-details-of-end-of-war-declaration?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, December 20, 2021**

## 10 years of Kim Jong Un: Where will North Korea be 10 years from now?

**Top News:**
10 years of Kim Jong Un: Where will North Korea be 10 years from now? (NK News, 12/20/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Despite uptick in exports, North Korea's trade with China sags in November: Data(NK News, 12/20/2021)
Kim Yo Jong almost certainly wasn't promoted, but she may be soon (*NK Pro*, 12/20/2021)
Kim Jong Un's decade in power: Starvation, repression, brutal rule (UPI, 12/20/2021)
North Korea reports no COVID cases as Omicron looms large in state media (NK News, 12/20/2021)

**In South Korea:**
South Korean gov't cautious on possible change in political status of North Korean leader's sister (Yonhap, 12/20/2021)
South Korea enshrines remains of 370 Korean War troops excavated this year (The Korea Herald, 12/20/2021)

**International:**
Biden administration puts North Korean nuclear issue on backburner (The Korea Times, 12/20/2021)
Defectors from North Korea pray for resettlement victims (AP News, 12/20/2021)
Longtime head of influential North Korea abductee group dies at 83 (NK News, 12/20/2021)
U.S. security advisor emphasizes middle ground approach toward North (Korea JoongAng Daily, 12/20/2021)

White House says it favors 'step-by-step' approach to North Korea nuclear issue(NK News, 12/20/2021)

**Top News:**

- Experts vote on a range of potential scenarios, from crisis and ongoing COVID-19 isolation to economic growth and more. Amanda Mortwedt Oh, HRNK Director of International Advocacy and Development, said the international community could soon have to act.

  "Based on current reports and human rights trends under Kim Jong Un over the last ten years, there is a very worrying and urgent need to address North Korea's current humanitarian and human rights situation, both exacerbated by COVID-19 and Kim's oppressive border and information controls." (Chad O'Carroll, *NK News*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea's exports to China rebounded slightly in November, Chinese customs data shows, but imports sagged and overall bilateral trade remained relatively low due to continuing effects from COVID-19 border controls. (Ethan Jewell, *NK News*)
- Kim Yo Jong made quite the impression last week after appearing close to North Korean leader and brother Kim Jong Un at an event marking the death of their father Kim Jong Il. (Martin Weiser, *NK Pro*)
- By the grim metric of fatalities in the first 10 years of a dictator's rule, Kim Jong Un has yet to match the records set by his grandfather, Kim Il Sung, or father, Kim Jong Il -- the two tyrants who reigned by terror in North Korea before him. (Sung-Yoon Lee, UPI)
- North Korea has tested an additional 1,464 people for COVID-19 and found no positive cases, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), with state media warning of breakthrough Omicron infections amid surging caseloads in the U.S. and Europe. (Bryan Betts, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's unification ministry responded cautiously Monday to reports of a possible change in the stature of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's sister, days after she was seen standing alongside members of the powerful politburo of the North's ruling party during a memorial event last week. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)
- South Korea on Monday held an annual ceremony enshrining the remains of 370 fallen troops that its excavation team recovered from key battle sites of the 1950-53 Korean War this year. (*The Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- The North Korean nuclear issue appears to have lost priority with the U.S. government, which is focusing heavily on ending China's control of global supply chains, cross-strait relations and other issues. (Kang Seung-woo, *The Korea Times*)
- Eiko Kawasaki stood at the port of Niigata, the place from which she left for North Korea more than 60 years ago, and tossed chrysanthemum flowers into the sea to pray for her peers who could not come back. Then she burst into tears. (Chisato Tanaka, *AP News*)

- The head of the most influential group representing families of Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea and a brother of one such victim has died at the age of 83. Shigeo Iizuka, whose sister Yaeko Taguchi was taken by North Korean agents in 1978, served for 14 years as head of the Association of the Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea until earlier this month. (Kosuke Takahashi, *NK News*)
- U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan reiterated the American government's "step-by-step" North Korea policy at a forum hosted by the Council on Foreign Relations in New York on Friday. "Our approach to North Korea when we came in was to look at the last two administrations," Sullivan said, speaking with the New York-based think tank on Friday. (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The Biden administration is taking a 'step-by-step" approach to the North Korea nuclear issue that straddles the line between Obama-era "strategic patience" and Donald Trump's "grand bargain," according to National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)

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Prepared by Michelle Dang, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250825221155/https://mailchi.mp/f61390ea4366/hrnk-news-items10-years-of-kim-jong-un-where-will-north-korea-be-10-years-from-now?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, December 21, 2021**

## Female North Korean soldier reveals hell women face in Kim Jong Un's army where they suffer 'relentless abuse'

**Top News:**
Sexual assault, abortions without anaesthesia and starvation: Female North Korean soldier reveals hell women face in Kim Jong Un's army where they suffer 'relentless abuse' (*Daily Mail*, 12/21/2021)

**The following news articles share similar content with the one above
Kim Jong-un's army forces North Korean women to have abortions without anaesthesia (*Brinkwire*, 12/21/2021)
North Korean women forced into abortions without anaesthesia in Kim Jong-un's army (*Daily Star*, 12/21/2021)
Sexual assault, abortions without anaesthesia and hunger: Female North Korean soldier reveals (*Newschant*, 12/21/2021)

Sexual assault, abortions without anaesthesia and starvation: Female North Korean soldier reveals (*Inentertainment*, 12/21/2021)
North Korean soldier reveals horrific torment women face in Kim Jong-un's army(*Mirror*, 12/21/2021)

**In North Korea:**
North Korea keeps quiet on callouts of human rights violations (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/21/2021)
North Korea's military staging drills (*The Korea Times*, 12/21/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**
Ending the Korean War: Risky gambit, with little chance of payoff (*The Korea Herald*, 12/21/2021)
Over 24,000 video messages await delivery to separated families in N. Korea(*Yonhap*, 12/21/2021)

**International:**
China, Russia agree to cooperate for 'constructive' roles on Korea peace: ministry(*Yonhap*, 12/21/2021)
IFRC allocates $1.2 mln to help N. Korea fight against COVID-19 (*Yonhap*, 12/21/2021)
North Korean leader 3rd most searched politician online in 2021: data (*Yonhap*, 12/21/2021)

**Top News:**

- The harrowing testimony of an escaped North Korean reveals the torment women face in Kim Jong Un's army – including sexual abuse, abortions without anesthesia and starvation rations. The former soldier, who gave her name as Jennifer Kim, revealed her ordeal in an interview with the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK). (Michael Havis, *Daily Mail*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea has kept quiet despite repeated callouts by the United States and the international community on its human rights violations. Some experts in Korea think it may have to do with the timing of North Korea's year-end party meeting and leader Kim Jong-un's New Year's address. All within this month, the Joe Biden administration imposed new sanctions on a few North Korean individuals for their human rights violations, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations called for an open meeting at the Security Council to discuss the regime's human rights records, and the United Nations passed a resolution condemning the regime for its "gross" human rights violations that "may amount to crimes against humanity." Kim Song, the North Korean ambassador to the UN, protested the resolution before its passage, calling it an anti-North Korea policy

and a collusion by the United States and the European Union. (Park Hyun-ju and Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)

- North Korea's military is conducting a wintertime exercise, as South Korea and the United States are closely monitoring related moves, Seoul's defense authorities said Tuesday. "We believe that wintertime drills by North Korea's military are under way," Col. Kim Jun-rak, the spokesperson of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), told reporters. (*The Korea Times*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- In Washington, there is a divergence of opinion on the utility of an end-of-war declaration as a means to reboot nuclear diplomacy with North Korea. But the majority sees more risk than opportunity, with adverse ramifications for the security of the Korean Peninsula, the South Korea-US alliance, American deterrence and the status of the United Nations Command. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- Families separated by the 1950-53 Korean War in South Korea have produced more than 24,000 video messages for their long-lost relatives in the North, but almost all of them have yet to be delivered, Seoul's unification ministry said Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- China and Russia had senior-level telephone consultations on Korean Peninsula issues and agreed to maintain close cooperation for "constructive roles" for a political resolution to the issues, according to Beijing's foreign ministry Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)
- The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has allocated 1.1 million Swiss francs (US$1.2 million) to help North Korea combat the COVID-19 pandemic from January last year to June next year, its interim financial report showed. (*Yonhap*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un is the third most searched politician by internet users worldwide this year, data showed Tuesday. (*Yonhap*)

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Prepared by Michelle Dang, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://mailchi.mp/d5112eabb1a5/hrnk-news-items-female-north-korean-soldier-reveals-hell-women-face-in-kim-jong-uns-army-where-they-suffer-relentless-abuse?e=8a9aae5198

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**Tuesday, December 22, 2021**

## North Korea’s Signaling on Nuclear Weapons and Negotiations; Biden bans nonhumanitarian aid to N. Korea for human trafficking

**In North Korea:**
A Growing Army of Hackers Helps Keep Kim Jong Un in Power (*Bloomberg*, 12/22/2021)
Cold wave to hit N. Korea as it prepares to mark leader's 10 years in power (*Yonhap*, 12/22/2021)
N. Korean economy unlikely to face imminent crisis despite sanctions, COVID-19: experts (*Yonhap*, 12/22/2021)
North Korea's Signaling on Nuclear Weapons and Negotiations (*38North*, 12/22/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Kim Chong-in vows to step up role in PPP campaign committee (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/22/2021)
Presidential frontrunner violated rules during North Korea border visit: UNC (*NK News*, 12/22/2021)
South Korean conservatives: Right on North Korea, wrong on everything else? (*NK News*, 12/22/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**
End-of-war declaration: What are US conditions, sequence, timing? (*The Korea Herald*, 12/22/2021)
Unification minister says security uncertainty could grow next year (*Yonhap*, 12/22/2021)
Video messages from separated relatives still waiting to be delivered in North Korea(*UPI*, 12/21/2021)

**International:**
Biden bans nonhumanitarian aid to N. Korea for human trafficking (*Yonhap*, 12/22/2021)
N. Korea's child mortality estimated at 17 per 1,000 in 2020: U.N. report (*Yonhap*, 12/22/2021)
With no ambassador yet, US signals South Korea at bottom of Biden's to-do list (*NK News*, 12/22/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Kim Jong Un marked a decade as supreme leader of North Korea in December. Whether he can hold on to power for another 10 years may depend on state hackers, whose cybercrimes finance his nuclear arms program and prop up the economy. (Jon Herskotivz and Jeong-Ho Lee, *Bloomberg*)
- North Korea issued a cold wave alert Wednesday, forecasting strong winds and heavy snow over the weekend amid keen attention from the outside world about whether leader Kim Jong-un will again visit Mount Paektu on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of his ascension to power. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's economy is unlikely to face an imminent crisis despite struggles stemming from crippling sanctions and border restrictions due to anti-virus efforts, experts said Wednesday. (Chae Yun-hwan and Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)

- The US-DPRK Summit in Hanoi in 2019 ended without a deal due to disagreements over the right mix of sanctions relief for the nuclear concession Kim Jong Un offered. After the US rejected the North's request to lift a significant portion of the sanctions imposed since 2017, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho explained, "...as we take steps toward denuclearization, the most important issue is security, but we thought it would be more burdensome for the US to take military-related measures, which is why we saw the partial lifting of sanctions as the corresponding action."This rationale illuminates Pyongyang's previous calculation: that partial sanctions relief for partial denuclearization would be an acceptable outcome. (Sangsoo Lee and Riccardo Villa, *38North*)

**In South Korea:**

- Veteran politician Kim Chong-in said Wednesday he will work to regroup and helm the main opposition People Power Party's (PPP) campaign after the party's chief, Lee Jun-seok, abruptly announced he will step down from all his positions in the election committee for presidential candidate Yoon Suk-yeol the previous day. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The United Nations Command (UNC) has issued a rare statement criticizing South Korean presidential candidate Yoon Suk-yeol after the conservative frontrunner donned a military uniform at the inter-Korean border earlier this week in violation of its dress code. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Elections tend to feature progressives who don't get the DPRK and reactionaries out of step with 21st-century values. (Rob York, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- Seoul has stressed time and again that its approach to North Korean issues are in sync with that of the US, but the allies appear far apart on Moon Jae-in administration's latest play -- declaring the end of the Korean War. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- The geopolitical situation surrounding the Korean Peninsula could face increased uncertainties next year if the current deadlock in nuclear negotiations and lack of dialogue continue, South Korea's minister in charge of inter-Korean relations said Wednesday. Unification Minister Lee In-young warned the peninsula is at an "extremely critical juncture" between peace and tensions, citing a possible change in the country's policy direction with President Moon Jae-in's term set to end in May. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)
- More than 24,000 video messages have been recorded by separated families hoping to reach relatives in North Korea since 2005 -- but almost none have been delivered, South Korea's Unification Ministry said on Tuesday. (Thomas Maresca, UPI)

**International:**

- U.S. President Joe Biden has banned the provision of nonhumanitarian aid to North Korea for fiscal year 2022, accusing the reclusive state of human trafficking, according to the White House. (*Yonhap*)

- North Korea's mortality rate for children under age 5 was estimated at 17 per 1,000 births last year with a 3.2 percent annual rate of reduction over the past three decades, a recent U.N. report showed. (*Yonhap*)
- As 2021 draws to a close, there's still no word on who will be the next U.S. ambassador to South Korea — rightly or wrongly giving the impression that Washington's "ironclad" relationship with Seoul isn't at the top of Joe Biden's to-do list. (James Fretwell, *NK News*)

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Prepared by Michelle Dang, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250825221814/https://mailchi.mp/3d2f48a5eb6f/hrnk-news-itemsnorth-koreas-signaling-on-nuclear-weapons-and-negotiationsbiden-bans-nonhumanitarian-aid-to-n-korea-for-human-trafficking?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, December 23, 2021**

## China's top envoy to N. Korea to return home after delay due to COVID-19; Moon plans to end Korean War before leaving office

**In North Korea:**
China's top envoy to N. Korea to return home after delay due to COVID-19 (*Yonhap*, 12/23/21)
Chinese ambassador to North Korea set to leave Pyongyang: State media(*NKNews*, 12/23/21)
N. Korea's economy tanks 4.5 pct in 2020 on sanctions, pandemic (*Yonhap*, 12/23/21)

**In South Korea:**

Moon plans to end Korean War before leaving office (*Korea JoongAng Daily*,12/23/21)
South Korea to expand cooperation with US on supply chain, technologies in 2022 (The Korean Herald, 12/23/21)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**
Seoul says it has '100% perfectly' detected North Korean ballistic missiles (*NK News*, 12/23/21)

**International:**
End-of-war: No reason for US to back 'end-of-rainbow' pursuit (*The Korean Herald*, 12/23/21)

**In North Korea:**

- Chinese Ambassador to North Korea Li Jinjun will leave Pyongyang following a seven-year stint, according to the North's state media Thursday, with his departure having been delayed apparently due to tight border control to stave off the COVID-19 pandemic. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)
- Chinese Ambassador to North Korea Li Jinjun will leave Pyongyang after almost seven years in the role, according to DPRK state media, which reported on Li's farewell visits with officials in the capital. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korea's economy shrank 4.5 percent in 2020 from a year earlier due to international sanctions and the coronavirus pandemic, government data showed Thursday. (*Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- The Moon Jae-in administration will use its last five months in office to focus on restarting dialogue with North Korea, and use the end-of-war declaration as a tool to engage Pyongyang, announced the top officials of the unification, foreign affairs and national defense ministries in a joint press briefing on Thursday. (Esther Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea's Foreign Ministry said Thursday the country would look to expand cooperation with the US on many fronts next year, including on supply chains and cutting-edge technology, as well as North Korea's denuclearization. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korean Herald*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- ROK ministries claim Moon administration's DPRK policies have been a success, vow to resume inter-Korean detente (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**International:**

- The Biden administration is skeptical of Seoul's diplomatic initiative to utilize an end-of-war declaration as a standalone measure to reboot nuclear diplomacy with North Korea. (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)

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Prepared by Maria D Corte, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250825222107/https://mailchi.mp/0720ec47e772/hrnk-news-itemschinas-top-envoy-to-n-korea-to-return-home-after-delay-due-to-covid-19moon-plans-to-end-korean-war-before-leaving-office?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Sunday, December 26, 2021**

## Female North Korean Soldier Testifies: "I Was Sexually Assaulted by an Officer

**Top News:**
Female North Korean Soldier Testifies: "I Was Sexually Assaulted by an Officer and Forced to Have an Abortion Without Anesthesia" (*The Chosun Ilbo*, 12/08/2021)**
Female North Korean Soldier Testifies: "I Was Assaulted by an Officer and Forced to Have an Abortion Without Anesthesia" (*JoongAng Ilbo*, 12/07/2021)**
Gravitas: Inside North Korea: A defector's horror story (WION, 12/22/2021)
Wion Wideangle: North Korea: the real Squid Game? (WION, 11/20/2021)

**In North Korea**:
Icy streets and cold noodles: North Korea's brutal winters — in photos (*NK News*, 12/25/2021)
N. Korea set for key party meeting amid deadlock in nuclear negotiations (*Yonhap*, 12/25/2021)
North Korea's 1-Million Person Army Should Not Be Underestimated (*National Interest*, 12/25/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Another Intra-Korean War Could Become the World's Deadliest Conflict (*National Interest*, 12/25/2021)

**Top News:**
- Jennifer Kim, a defector who served in the North Korean military for six years, spoke about the sexual assault she suffered in a video interview with the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK). She stated that, "I was sexually assaulted at the age of 23 and made to have an abortion without anesthesia". (Kim Ja-a, *The Chosun Ilbo*)
- Jennifer Kim, a defector who served in the North Korean military for six years, spoke about the sexual assault she suffered in a video interview with the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK). According to a VOA broadcast from December 2nd, Jennifer Kim served as a soldier in North Korea for six years, and stated that, "the most serious human rights violation against female soldiers is sexual assault". (Ha Su-yeong, *JoongAng Ilbo*)
- North Korea shows women soldiers fawning over Kim Jong-Un. But, do you know what these women really go through? A defector has shared harrowing details of abuse, atrocities & abortions without anaesthesia. (WION)
- The Hermit Kingdom is facing an acute food crisis - its citizens are starving. The totalitarian state functions on bizarre rules laid down by Kim Jong-un. (WION)

**In North Korea:**
- Winters in North Korea are long and bitterly cold. Average temperatures range from -13 C to -3 C (9 to 27 F) during the chilliest months, and snow often blankets the ground. Covered in soft white snow, the villages, towns and mountainous landscapes of the country are indeed postcard picturesque, but such conditions can also be unsympathetically inhospitable. Daily life is often brutally harsh, as many have to do laundry in frozen rivers and suffer from shortages of electricity and gasoline. (*NK News*)

- North Korea is expected to convene a key party meeting within the coming week amid expectations it could unveil the country's policy directions for the new year in the face of a prolonged stalemate in its nuclear negotiations with the United States. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)
- While analysts often focus on the so-called Democratic People's Republic of Korea's arsenal of ballistic missiles, the real threat emanating from the North comes in the form of heavy artillery and special operations forces, which could wreak havoc on the South. In the event of a war on the Korean Peninsula, Pyongyang's ground forces are the greatest threat to the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the U.S. forces stationed there—short of nuclear weapons. (TNI Staff, *National Interest*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- In the event of war, North Korea's plan is to use overwhelming firepower and speed of action to conduct a "One Blow Non-Stop Attack." In 1992, Kim Jong-il, the father of current leader Kim Jong-un, concluded that only a lightning assault across the border, known as "Occupying South Korea, All the Way to Pusan, in Three Days" could succeed in light of the overwhelming firepower that U.S. forces could bring to blunt any of Pyongyang's moves. (Kyle Mizokami, *National Interest*)

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Articles translated by Audrey Gregg, HRNK Research Intern.

Female North Korean Soldier Testifies: "I Was Sexually Assaulted by an Officer and Forced to Have an Abortion Without Anesthesia" (*The Chosun Ilbo*, 12/08/2021)

North Korean defector women have come forward to talk about the sexual assault they faced in North Korea, and have accused the country of serious human rights violations.

Recently, Jennifer Kim, a defector who served in the North Korean army for six years, was interviewed by the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK). She stated that, "the most serious human rights violation against female soldiers is sexual assault".

Ms. Kim explained that, "In my experience, over 70% of North Korean female soldiers are the victims of sexual assault or harassment," adding, "I am also the victim of sexual assault".

At the age of 23, Ms. Kim was sexually assualted by an officer. Afterwards, she was forced to have an abortion without anesthesia, performed by a military doctor.

Ms. Kim said, "I had to endure this kind of indignity, because if I didn't give into the demands of these powerful political and military officers, the kind that can control whether you are accepted to the Workers' Party or not, I would be giving up my future."

“The wounds and scars [from the procedure] still bother me a great deal. Because of what happened, I can’t have kids. Getting married is difficult as well.

These kinds of human rights violations extend beyond the military as well.

At the launching ceremony of the UN Women UK-sponsored ‘16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence’ campaign, Jihyun Park, a U.K.-based North Korean human rights activist, has also testified about the violence suffered by North Korean women.

According to VOA, on December 2nd, Ms. Park said, “In North Korea, the government itself is simply not involved in cases of sexual assault or harassment”.

“Rather, in North Korea, the victims of such assault are more heavily criticized than the perpetrators,” adding, “Even if North Korea announced a Gender Equality Act, men would still be able to commit crimes against a woman without punishment. It’s a really serious issue.”

North Korea’s criminal law stipulates that if a man sexual assaults his subordinate, he should be sentenced to a minimum of 2 years in prison, and a maximum of 5, in severe cases.

However, international human rights groups point out that this law is not properly implemented due to corruption amongst officials and the patriarchal culture of North Korea.

Female North Korean Soldier Testifies: “I Was Assaulted by an Officer and Forced to Have an Abortion Without Anesthesia” (*JoongAng Ilbo*, 12/07/2021)

Jennifer Kim, a defector who served in the North Korean military for six years, spoke about the sexual assault she suffered in a video interview with the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK).

She stated that, “I was sexually assaulted at the age of 23 and made to have an abortion without anesthesia”.

According to a VOA broadcast from December 2nd, Jennifer Kim served as a soldier in North Korea for six years, and stated that, “the most serious human rights violation against female soldiers is sexual assault”.

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“I had to endure this kind of indignity, because if I didn’t give into the demands of these powerful political and military officers, the kind that can control whether you are accepted to the Workers’ Party or not, I would be giving up my future.The wounds and scars still bother me a great deal even today. Because of what happened, I can’t have kids. Getting married is difficult as well.”

At the launching ceremony of the UN Women UK-sponsored “16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence” campaign, Jihyun Park, a U.K.-based North Korean human rights activist, has also testified about the sexual violence suffered by North Korean women.

Park also contributed to the website of the National Alliance of Women's Organisations (NAWO), writing that, “Under Kim’s male-led dynasty, women have no rights.” She also explained the negative impact that this kind of violence and trafficking had on her.

These statements, and others, were made by women participating in the UN-sponsored “16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence” campaign.

Ms. Park said, “Women in North Korea are located in the blindspot of violence. We have joined this campaign to make the international community aware of the atrocities that the North Korean and Chinese leadership has committed, and put pressure on them to improve.”

Ms. Park added, “In North Korea, the victims of such assault are more heavily criticized than the perpetrators. Men are never punished for committing crimes against women. It’s a really serious issue”.

On September 9th, the 73rd anniversary of the establishment of the regime, there was a military service ceremony for Worker-Peasant Red Guards and the Ministry of Social Security in Kim Il-sung Square in Pyongyang, the Korean Central Television reported.

Female soldiers who participated in the military parade were visibly crying as they looked toward where Kim Jong-un was standing.

North Korea’s criminal law stipulates that if a man sexual assaults his subordinate, he should be sentenced to a minimum of 2 years in prison, and a maximum of 5, in severe cases.

However, international human rights groups point out that this law is not properly implemented due to corruption amongst officials  and the patriarchal culture of North Korea.

Ms. Park said, “Ultimately, awareness is a problem. We need to educated North Koreans so they can be aware of all sorts of kinds of violence, including sexual violence.”

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Prepared by Audrey Gregg, HRNK Research Intern
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https://web.archive.org/web/20250825222356/https://mailchi.mp/6bbfc36067eb/hrnk-news-itemschinas-top-envoy-to-n-korea-to-return-home-after-delay-due-to-covid-19moon-plans-to-end-korean-war-before-leaving-office-11188538?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Monday, December 27, 2021**

# Will North Korea break its silence on an end-of-war declaration for New Year?; Seoul urges N. Korea to start new year by opening door for dialogue.

**In North Korea:**
N. Korea expands online education for workers: state media (*Yonhap*, 12/27/2021)
Policy bombshells and NYE concert: What to expect as North Korea wraps up 2021(*NK News*, 12/27/2021)

**In South Korea:**
New war plans don't target China's regional military activities: Seoul (*The Korea Herald*, 12/27/2021)
NK's nuclear problem requires both peace and denuclearization tracks: Lee's aide(*The Korea Herald*, 12/27/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**
Seoul urges N. Korea to start new year by opening door for dialogue (*Yonhap*, 12/27/2021)
Virtual inter-Korean summit unlikely before end of the year (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/27/2021)
Will North Korea break its silence on an end-of-war declaration for New Years? (*NK News*, 12/27/2021)

**International:**
SPECIAL REPORT-Taiwan chip industry emerges as battlefront in U.S.-China showdown (*Reuters*, 12/27/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea is spurring online education at major universities as part of efforts to train "intellectual-type workers" with science and technology expertise, according to its state media Monday. North Korea has been highlighting its efforts to develop the remote education system as a tool to help workers acquire "modern science and technology" necessary at their workplaces. (*Yonhap*)

- North Korea is set to end 2021 with a bang, as the country prepares to host a party plenum in the coming days that could produce major foreign policy announcements and mark a key anniversary for Kim Jong Un's first decade in power. Kim has used speeches around the new year holiday in the past to make friendly overtures to the U.S. and South Korea, but also to reveal nuclear weapon developments and other military plans. (Colin Zwirko, NK News)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's Defense Ministry on Monday publicly dismissed a former US Forces Korea commander's opinion that China's growing military activities and presence in the region should be a key consideration in updating military operational plans. Boo Seung-chan, the ministry's spokesperson, elucidated that the South Korean and US defense chiefs agreed on a new Strategic Planning Guidance, "reflecting changes to the strategic environment on the Korean Peninsula." (Ji Da-gyum, *The Korea Herald*)
- For years, South Korea, the US and the international community have tried to coax North Korea into giving up its nuclear and missile program. Despite a series of negotiations, headline-grabbing summits and carrot-and-stick tactics, the reclusive regime has not ceased from developing the weapons of mass destruction, but instead has been advancing them. (Ahn Sung-mi, *The Korea Herald*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- South Korea's unification ministry on Monday urged North Korea to start the new year with a step for dialogue and cooperation, as Pyongyang is set to convene a key party meeting this week to discuss domestic and foreign policy issues. North Korea earlier announced the ruling Workers' Party will hold a plenary meeting of its central committee "in the last third of December" to "discuss and decide on work plans for the new year." (*Yonhap*)
- A virtual inter-Korean summit is unlikely to come to fruition within this year despite the Moon Jae-in government's efforts to revive dialogue with the North and move along an end-of-war declaration. The Moon government has pushed a declaration to formally end the 1950-53 Korean War as a means to reengage the North and considered the Beijing Winter Olympics next February as a possible venue for such diplomacy to unfold. (Park Hyung-Ju & Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in's last-minute push for an end-of-war declaration in recent months has so far met with a North Korean response that has been familiar to Seoul and Washington as they've sought to engage the country — silence. (Chaewon Chung, NK News)

**International:**

- On the front line of the superpower struggle between the United States and China, Taiwan has fashioned a defensive masterstroke. It has become indispensable to both sides. In dominating the fabrication of the most advanced semiconductors, the giant Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company Ltd (TSMC) has captured a technology that's crucial to the cutting-edge digital devices and weapons of today and tomorrow. (Yimou Lee, Norihiko Shirouzu & David Lague, *Reuters*)

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Prepared by Nikita Rosemary Morrison-Young, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250825222507/https://mailchi.mp/b24e8397eaf4/will-north-korea-break-its-silence-on-an-end-of-war-declaration-for-new-year-seoul-urges-n-korea-to-start-new-year-by-opening-door-for-dialogue?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Tuesday, December 28, 2021**

# Analysis on the recent UN resolution on North Korea's human rights; The cruel testimony of a former soldier in the North Korean army

**Top News:**
1224 IN FOCUS 2: Analysis on the recent UN resolution on North Korea's human rights and the current of situations in North Korea (*Apple Podcasts*, 12/28/2021)
*"I survived on three or four tablespoons of corn a day": the cruel testimony of a former soldier in the North Korean army (Semana, 12/21/2021)

**In North Korea:**
Family of former soldier found collapsed due to hunger in unheated home (*Daily NK*, 12/28/2021)
N. Korean leader convenes key party meeting to discuss policy issues (*Yonhap*, 12/28/2021)
North Korea holds key meeting as Kim marks 10 years in power (*AP News*, 12/28/2021)

**In South Korea:**
S. Korea's military to deploy homegrown surveillance drones by 2031 (*Yonhap*, 12/27/2021)

**International:**
N. Korea could stage ICBM or nuclear test before U.S. midterm elections: think tank (*Yonhap*, 12/28/2021)
N. Korea pushes back after U.S. keeps it on state sponsors of terrorism list (*Yonhap*, 12/28/2021)
Security on the back burner (KOR) (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/28/2021)
South Koreans view US leadership as in decline but still support alliance: Poll (*NK News*, 12/28/2021)
U.S. hopes N. Korea will respond positively to outreach for dialogue: State Dept. (*Yonhap*, 12/28/2021)

**Top News:**

- HRNK Executive Director Greg Scarlatoiu discusses the recent UNGA resolution on human rights in the DPRK with TBS eFM This Morning in South Korea. (*Apple Podcasts*)
- *A fugitive North Korean revealed, through a testimony, the reality faced by many women in Kim Jong-in's army: sexual abuse, abortions without anesthesia and starvation rations are the main practices that the woman mentions. (*Semana*)

**In North Korea:**

- The family of a former military officer was recently found collapsed in their home due to starvation in Hoeryong, North Hamgyong Province, Daily NK has learned. (Lee Chae Un, *Daily NK*)
- North Korea has kicked off a key ruling party meeting to decide on "strategic and tactical policies," its state media said Tuesday, amid expectations the session could unveil Pyongyang's major policy directions for the new year. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea opened a key political conference Monday to review past projects and discuss new policies amid the pandemic and a diplomatic deadlock with the United States. (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's military approved a plan Monday to locally develop and deploy a reconnaissance and surveillance drone by 2031 to better defend the country's northwestern border islands, the state arms procurement agency said. (*Yonhap*)

**International:**

- North Korea could conduct an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) or nuclear test to put pressure on America ahead of the U.S. midterm elections slated for November next year, a Seoul-based think tank said Tuesday (Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea hit back Tuesday at a recent U.S. decision to retain it on the list of state sponsors of terrorism, accusing Washington of having engaged in terrorist acts under the pretext of "counterterrorism." (*Yonhap*)
- It turns out that the Moon Jae-in administration dismissed the need to upgrade the joint Korea-U.S. wartime operation plans (Oplans) to prepare for nuclear and missile attacks from North Korea. Despite repeated requests from the United States Forces Korea (USFK) to improve the Oplan since 2019 to cope with North Korean threats, the Ministry of National Defense refused. The ministry finally accepted the demand at an annual Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) on December 2. (*Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- One in two South Koreans think the United States' importance as a world leader is declining compared to the previous decade, a new survey showed on Tuesday, even as most support prioritizing the alliance with Washington above other relationships, including with North Korea. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- The United States continues to hope that North Korea will respond positively to its outreach for dialogue, a state department spokesperson said Tuesday. (Byun Duk-kun, *Yonhap*)

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**Translated article:**

"I survived on three or four tablespoons of corn a day": the cruel testimony of a former soldier in the North Korean army, Semana

*The woman assured that she was hungry, her menstrual cycle changed, and she had to endure other "torture" in order to be "a member of the Workers' Party of Korea."*

A fugitive North Korean revealed, through a testimony, the reality faced by many women in Kim Jong-in's army: sexual abuse, abortions without anesthesia and starvation rations are the main practices that the woman mentions.

Jennifer Kim, a former army soldier to the North Korean Supreme Leader, said the fighters also had to wear soaked foot bandages like sanitary napkins and endured cruel and unusual collective punishments, according to information compiled by the Daily Mail.

Punishments women received for their behavior included freezing their hands in cold water to hang them on an iron bar and possibly tearing the flesh.

The aforementioned media reports that 70% of the women in the North Korean army had been victims of sexual assault or harassment. Kim also expressed that she instinctively knew what was to come when a political adviser ordered her to come to his office at age 23.

The ex-soldier said in an interview that if she rejected the request to go to his office, she could not become a "member of the Korean Workers' Party" so, for this, she had to be "sexually assaulted," she added.

As for the food rations, Kim assured that she survived on three or four tablespoons of corn a day and her level of malnutrition was so frequent that her menstrual cycle became disturbed; she got her period every four or six months.

Despite the hormonal disorders, she did not avoid becoming pregnant and when she told one of the political leaders, the man told her to go "to the military medical office at ten o'clock that night."

**“I went to the military medical office, as he told me... a military surgeon was already waiting for me. They performed an abortion on me without anesthesia,”** said a part of the testimony that Jennifer gave through an interview with the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK).

"There were times when I took the used gauze left by the former senior officers that had been dismissed," the former soldier assured that **in four years of service she only used four sanitary napkins**. In effect, she only had single foot gauze that she had to constantly wash and reuse as a bandage. The fabric hurt her and caused bitter pain that made her cry, she said.

Kim, who currently lives in the United States, still feels the pain of when she was subjected to the brutal punishment of freezing her hands and seeing the way her flesh was torn from the iron bar. Similarly, she stated that while she was in Kim Jong-un's army, she counted "each grain of corn while she was eating it, so that it could last longer."

Greg Scarlatoiu, the executive director of HRNK, said the mistreatment of women reached the tip of North Korean society. "North Korean female soldiers are subjected to incessant abuse, induced malnutrition, cruel punishments, sexual harassment and sexual assault," he stressed.

“Today, this regime only cares about preserving itself, abuses and exploits the people of North Korea to ensure its own survival. The abuse suffered by the nation's daughters in uniform at the hands of the regime's henchmen reflects the deep-seated and incurable perversion and corruption of the party and all of the higher leadership, all the way to the top of the chain of command, ”he added.

It is important to mention that this testimony gives a voice to hundreds of women subject to the criminal trajectory of a regime established 73 years ago. Likewise, the Mail reported that military service has been mandatory for all North Korean women since 2015, and each woman is expected to serve from the time she graduates from school until age 23.

Translated by Maria Corte, HRNK Research Intern

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Prepared by Diletta De Luca and Michelle Dang, HRNK Research Interns

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https://web.archive.org/web/20250825222800/https://mailchi.mp/3fb409bf5321/hrnk-news-itemanalysis-on-the-recent-un-resolution-on-north-koreas-human-rights-the-cruel-testimony-of-a-former-soldier-in-the-north-korean-army?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Wednesday, December 29, 2021**

## NK puts 'rural problem' on agenda as party meeting extended

**In North Korea:**

For How Long Will North Korea Be Able to Sustain its Lockdown? (VOA *News*, 12/28/2021)
N.K. leader orders 'important revolutionary measures' for rural development(*Yonhap*, 12/29/2021)
North Korea puts 'rural problem' on agenda as party meeting extended (NK *News*, 12/29/2021)
North Korea's Kim Jong-un Convenes Annual Party Conference (*The National Interest*, 12/29/2021)
Pyongyang Times on financial management app (NK *Economy Watch*, 12/29/2021)

**In South Korea:**
7 out of 10 S. Koreans see China as biggest threat: poll (*Yonhap News*, 12/29/2021)
A presidential pardon catches South Korea by surprise (*The Economist*, 12/29/2021)
Lee leads Yoon 37.4 pct to 29.3 pct: poll (*Yonhap News*, 12/29/2021)
Most S. Koreans do not like China, Yoon says (*Yonhap News*, 12/28/2021)
Omicron cases on the rise along with critically ill (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/29/2021)
S. Korea conducted Dokdo defense drills last week: sources (*Yonhap News*, 12/29/2021)
The future of South Korea's defence transition (*East Asia Forum*, 12/29/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**
Defectors' remittances to N. Korea down 18% in 2021 amid pandemic: NGO (*The Korea Herald*, 12/29/2021)
Inter-Korean summit unlikely at Beijing Olympics: FM (*The Korea Times*, 12/29/2021)

**International:**
Biden may face a North Korea crisis within months (*Axios*, 12/28/2021)
Ex-USFK commander says joint war plans should address China. Seoul isn't happy.(NK *News*, 12/29/2021)
IAD Boss and FM Say Farewell to Li Jinjun (NK *Leadership Watch*, 12/29/2021)
Seoul, Washington agree on draft for end-of-war declaration: minister (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/29/2021)
Washington rejects 'strategic patience' label for Biden's North Korea Policy (NK *News*, 12/29/2021)

**In North Korea:**
- North Korea is about to enter its third year of a severe COVID-19 lockdown. The pandemic measures are devastating the country's economy and look increasingly unsustainable. (William Gallo, *VOA News*)
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has presided over the second-day session of a key party plenary to discuss rural development measures, Pyongyang's state media reported Wednesday amid its fraught efforts to tackle food shortages and other economic woes. (Choi Soo-Hyang, *Yonhap News*)

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un made a speech about rural development on the second day of an ongoing party plenary meeting Tuesday, according to state media. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un convened the "Fourth Plenary Meeting of the Eighth Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea," a North Korean party conference at which major policy announcements are usually made, on Monday, according to the North Korean state-run Korean Central News Agency. (Trevor Filseth, *The National Interest*)
- The North Korean English-language newspaper *Pyongyang Times* recently carried an interesting article about the electronic financial management app "Mulpangul." (Benjamin K. Silberstein, *NK Economy Watch*)

**In South Korea:**

- Seven out of 10 South Koreans chose China as the biggest threat to their country among the neighbors, excluding North Korea, a survey showed Wednesday. (Chae Yun-Hwan, *Yonhap News*)
- On December 24th Moon Jae-in, Ms Park's successor as president, announced he would pardon her and set her free on New Year's Eve. Few observers expected Mr Moon to make that decision. (*The Economist*)
- Ruling party presidential candidate Lee Jae-myung is leading his main opposition rival Yoon Suk-yeol with 37.4 percent support against Yoon's 29.3 percent, a survey showed Wednesday. (*Yonhap News*)
- Most South Koreans, especially younger people, don't like China even though the administration of President Moon Jae-in has pursued pro-China policies, main opposition presidential candidate Yoon Suk-yeol said Tuesday. (*Yonhap News*)
- Korea's Omicron cases hit a daily record of 109 Wednesday, reaching triple digits for the first time, while the number of critically ill patients in the country also soared to a new high of 1,151. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea conducted regular military drills to strengthen the defense of its easternmost islets of Dokdo last week, multiple sources said Wednesday, amid lingering tensions caused by Japan's persistent claims to the East Sea outcroppings. (Song Sang-Ho, *Yonhap News*)
- Lee Jae-myung, the ruling Democratic Party's presidential candidate, vows to swiftly realise the transition to operational control (OPCON) agreed to by South Korea and the United States, thereby consolidating the alliance relationship. (Jina Kim, *East Asia Forum*)

**Inter-Korean Relationship:**

- Remittances from North Korean defectors to their families living across the inter-Korean border fell by 18.2 percent while Pyongyang has maintained a border lockdown for two years and strengthened controls over its society, Seoul-based nongovernmental organizations said in a joint report. (Ji Da-Gyum, *The Korea Herald*)

- The South Korean government's hopes to hold another inter-Korean summit and eventually improve its ties with North Korea on the occasion of the upcoming Beijing Winter Olympics is unlikely to be realized, its foreign minister said, Wednesday. (Kang Seung-Woo, *The Korea Times*)

**International:**

- Kim Jong-un could force his way onto Biden's agenda in 2022 through a major provocation, a charm offensive, or a combination of the two, potentially ahead of the South Korean election in March, says Bruce Klingner, a senior fellow at the Heritage Foundation. (Dave Lawler, *Axios*)
- A former top U.S. military official has stirred up controversy in South Korea after stating in a media interview that Seoul and Washington should update their war plans to address "significantly" increasing threats from China, not just North Korea. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)
- Outgoing Chinese Ambassador to the DPRK Li Jinjun met with senior Workers' Party of Korea International Affairs Department (IAD) and Foreign Ministry officials as part of a series of farewell interactions before he returns home. (*NK Leadership Watch*)
- Seoul and Washington have effectively agreed on a draft text for a declaration to end the 1950-53 Korean War amid ongoing efforts to bring Pyongyang back to the dialogue table, said Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong Wednesday. (Sarah Kim, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- The Biden administration is not pursuing a policy of "strategic patience" toward North Korea, the U.S. State Department said Tuesday, emphasizing that its approach calls for resuming dialogue and diplomacy with Pyongyang. (Chaewon Chung, *NK News*)

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Prepared by Raymond Ha, HRNK Director of Operations & Research

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250825223039/https://mailchi.mp/51f030886931/hrnk-news-itemanalysis-on-the-recent-un-resolution-on-north-koreas-human-rights-the-cruel-testimony-of-a-former-soldier-in-the-north-korean-army-11188?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Thursday, December 30, 2021**

## Biden Urged to Appoint North Korea Human Rights Envoy; Kim Jong Un firmly in control of North Korea despite economic record

**In North Korea:**

Ask a North Korean: Do North Koreans like to go camping? (*NK News*, 12/30/2021)
For How Long Will North Korea Be Able to Sustain Its Lockdown? (VOA, 12/30/2021)

In officially tax-free North Korea, where does the state get its money? (*NK Pro*, 12/30/2021)
Kim Jong Un firmly in control of North Korea after 10 years despite economic record (RFA, 12/29/2021)
North Korea discusses next year's budget at party plenary (*Yonhap*, 12/30/2021)
North Korea's leader looks slimmer than ever (*The Korea Times*, 12/30/2021)
North Korea calls for troops' greater loyalty to Kim (*AP News*, 12/30/2021)
North Korea's Fail-Safe: Strategic Rocket Forces and a Million Man Army (*National Interest*, 12/30/2021)
Top N. Korean officials join discussions on major policies for 2022 at party plenary(*Yonhap*, 12/30/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Lee Jae-myung against Beijing Olympics boycott, opposes THAAD missiles (*The Korea Herald*, 12/30/2021)
Moon's final obsession (*Korea JoongAng Daily*, 12/30/2021)
Seoul approves three new requests to send nutrition-related aid to North Korea (*NK News*, 12/30/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**
The only way is up from a year of disappointments (*The Korea Herald*, 12/30/2021)

**International:**
Biden Urged to Appoint North Korea Human Rights Envoy (VOA, 12/29/2021)
Japan approves $1.2 billion for missile defense, eyeing North Korea threats (*NK News*, 12/30/2021)
U.S. declines comment on Chung's remarks about end of war declaration agreement (*Yonhap*, 12/30/2021)
What to expect from the planned US black hat intelligence center in South Korea (*NK News*, 12/29/2021)

**In North Korea:**

- Travel restrictions mostly rule out leisure camping, but there are other ways people spend time in the great outdoors. (Alek Sigley, *NK News*)
- When the coronavirus first emerged in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, North Korea locked its borders faster and harder than virtually any other country. (William Gallo, VOA)
- The DPRK has multiple revenue sources, including taxes, that have both positive and negative impacts on the economy. (Peter Ward, *NK Pro*)
- When the leather-jacket-clad Kim Jong Un opened the 8th Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea in January 2021, he sat firmly entrenched as the unquestioned authority

in North Korea, just as his father and grandfather had before him. (Jung Woo Park and Eugene Whong, *RFA*)

- North Korea has discussed the country's budget for the new year at the third-day session of a key party meeting, state media reported Thursday. North Korea opened the 4th Plenary Meeting of the ruling Workers' Party's 8th Central Committee on Monday amid expectations Pyongyang could unveil its new policy directions on the economy and foreign affairs for the new year. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)
- North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un, seems to be have reached his lowest weight in at least the past few years. (Yoon Ja-young, *The Korea Times*)
- North Korea on Thursday urged its 1.2 million troops to unite behind leader Kim Jong Un and defend him with their lives, as the country celebrated the 10th anniversary of Kim's ascension to supreme commander of the military (Hyung-jin Kim, *AP News*)
- While North Korea once nearly conquered the South in just a few weeks, today its military has no hope of defeating the much wealthier and more populous southern neighbor—let alone do so while fighting off U.S. forces.(Sebastien Roblin, *National Interest*)
- North Korea had high-profile discussions on key policy issues for 2022 during a year-end plenary session of the Workers' Party, with senior officials, including those in charge of inter-Korean relations and foreign affairs in attendance, according to its state media Thursday. (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)

**In South Korea:**

- Presidential nominee Lee Jae-myung of the ruling Democratic Party of Korea voiced his opinion against joining the US-led diplomatic boycott of the upcoming Beijing Olympics, saying South Korea should prioritize its own interests in its unique diplomatic circumstances. (Ko Jun-tae, *The Korea Herald*)
- An end-of-war declaration alone cannot solve problems, but it could be a start," said the late North Korean leader Kim Jong-il in a summit in Pyongyang with South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun in October 2007. Kim, then chairman of the National Defense Commission, employed rhetoric that sounds eerily like what President Moon Jae-in has repeatedly said. The Moon administration's insistence on a declaration to end the 1950-53 Korean War is nothing new. But it has come up with a new argument that an end-of-war declaration could kick-start a process leading to peace on the Korean Peninsula. (Yeh Young-june, *Korea JoongAng Daily*)
- South Korea has approved three new requests to send nutrition-related private humanitarian aid for North Korea this month, Seoul's unification ministry said on Thursday. (Jeongmin Kim, *NK News*)

**Inter-Korean Relations**

- The year is at its end, but the problems that many had hoped to see the ends of still aren't. The reality, however, has fallen far short of the hopes. (Choi He-suk, *The Korea Herald*)

**International:**

- Human rights groups are calling on U.S. President Joe Biden to appoint a special envoy for North Korean human rights, a position that has been vacant since January 2017. (Christy Lee, VOA)
- The cabinet of Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has approved a record defense budget of $47.2 billion (5.4 trillion yen) for fiscal year 2022, earmarking more than a billion dollars to buttress missile defense capabilities, in particular against threats from North Korea. (Kosuke Takahashi, NK News)
- The United States declined to directly comment on any progress made on a draft for an end to the Korean War declaration professed by the South Korean foreign minister on Wednesday, only saying the U.S. remains committed to dialogue with North Korea. (Byun Duk-kun, Yonhap)
- The $770 billion defense bill that U.S. President Joe Biden signed into law this week clocks in at over 900 pages, and buried in that mass of text is a short line item allocating $149 million to the U.S. Army for a Black Hat Intelligence Fusion Center (IFC) in South Korea. (Nick Miller, NK News)

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Prepared by Michelle Dang, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250826022326/https://mailchi.mp/b68f0d57b18d/hrnk-news-itemsbiden-urged-to-appoint-north-korea-human-rights-envoykim-jong-un-firmly-in-control-of-north-korea-despite-economic-record?e=%5BUNIQID%5D

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**Friday, December 31, 2021**

# Biden Urged to Appoint North Korea Human Rights Envoy; Trouble a-brewin':Overlooked North Korea developments set to boil over in 2022

**Top News:**
Biden Urged to Appoint North Korea Human Rights Envoy (VOA *News*, 31/12/2021)

**In North Korea:**
(LEAD) N. Korea has final review on draft resolution for year-end party plenary(*Yonhap*, 31/12/2021)
North Korea extends party meeting as country prepares to ring in new year (NK *News*, 31/12/2021)
Trouble a-brewin': Overlooked North Korea developments set to boil over in 2022(NK *News*, 31/12/2021)

**In South Korea:**
Defense minister reiterates political neutrality ahead of March presidential poll (*The Korea Herald*, 31/12/2021)
[Robert J. Fouser] South Korea pulls through, again (*The Korea Herald*, 31/12/2021)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**
Ex-UN chief says 'end goal' of inter-Korean cooperation efforts should be N.Korea denuclearization (*The Korea Herald*, 31/12/2021)

**Top News:**

- Human rights groups are calling on U.S. President Joe Biden to appoint a special envoy for North Korean human rights, a position that has been vacant since January 2017. (Christy Lee & Sungwon Baik, *VOA News*)

**In North Korea:**

- North Korea has discussed a draft resolution expected to be adopted at the close of an ongoing key party meeting, its state media reported Friday, amid expectations the document could include its foreign policy line for the new year. The North convened a fourth day of the 4th Plenary Meeting of the ruling Workers' Party's 8th Central Committee on Thursday, during which participants "concluded sectional workshops and consultative sessions," according to the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). (Choi Soo-hyang, *Yonhap*)
- North Korean party officials conducted a second day of departmental “workshops” as part of an ongoing plenary meeting on Thursday, according to state media, which reported that the meeting will go on until at least Friday. The report on the fourth day of the plenum in the party-run Rodong Sinmun on Friday morning was the shortest of the event yet, offering only three sentences that said the workshops wrapped up and that the meeting “continues.” It did not mention anything about leader Kim Jong Un’s participation. (Colin Zwirko, *NK News*)
- Missile launches stole spotlight, but nuclear reactor restart, food problems and other issues don’t bode well for future. Kim Jong Un’s striking weight loss and train-mounted missile systems dominated headlines on North Korea this year, but all the while, a number of other issues have festered quietly in the background. From reports of secret inter-Korean correspondence to the DPRK’s potential preparations for a satellite launch and mounting food problems, these overlooked developments from throughout 2021 could prove to be explosive in the year to come. (James Fretwell, *NK News*)

**In South Korea:**

- South Korea's Defense Minister Suh Wook reiterated calls Friday for military personnel to maintain political neutrality as rival parties are revving up preparations for the March 9 presidential election. Suh made the calls in his New Year's message that highlighted the Moon Jae-in administration's resolve to strengthen "across-the-board" national

defense while trying to reduce cross-border tensions. "As the presidential election and local elections are slated for March and June, respectively, I direct the military to strictly maintain political neutrality as stipulated in the Constitution," Suh said in the message. (*The Korea Herald*)

- The year 2021 began with great hope that vaccines would end the COVID-19 pandemic; it ends in fear as the omicron variant spreads at a torrid pace. As the world welcomes 2022, leaders are running short of political capital to rally weary citizens to cooperate with burdensome public health measures. Amid the dashed hopes of 2021, South Korea pulled through again, much as it did in 2020. The nation did far better than most other advanced democracies in limiting the impact of the pandemic on society. (Robert J. Fouser, *The Korea Herald*)

**Inter-Korean Relations:**

- Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said Friday that North Korea's denuclearization should be the "end goal" of South Korea's efforts to improve inter-Korean relations, in a message for Seoul's next administration set to be launched in May. Ban made the remarks in a New Year's message, as the incumbent Seoul government's efforts for cross-border rapprochement have remained stalled with little headway in the endeavors to denuclearize the North. (*The Korea Herald*)

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Biden Urged to Appoint North Korea Human Rights Envoy

Human rights groups are calling on U.S. President Joe Biden to appoint a special envoy for North Korean human rights, a position that has been vacant since January 2017.

The North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004 directs the U.S. president to name a person for the role, subject to Senate confirmation. The position, however, remains unfilled, even though Biden has elevated the issue of human rights globally.

His predecessor, Donald Trump, downplayed the issue of North Korea's human rights violations after his first Singapore summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in June 2018.

VOA's Korean Service has asked the State Department about the appointment several times, including earlier this month.

"I don't have any administrative announcement or updates at this time," a State Department spokesperson said via email. "We remain concerned about the human rights situation in the DPRK and the United States is committed to placing human rights at the center of our foreign policy." North Korea is officially known as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Phil Robertson, deputy director of Human Rights Watch's Asia Division, said, "For an administration that claims to care greatly about promoting human rights and democracy in the world," it is critical that it "immediately act to nominate a person well versed in human rights issues in North Korea to take on this important position."

The Biden administration should also prioritize the appointment of a U.S. ambassador to South Korea, a position that also remains vacant, said Greg Scarlatoiu, executive director at the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea.

"A strong alliance and bilateral relationship with South Korea is the prerequisite of success on all fronts, including North Korean human rights," Scarlatoiu said.

"It is past time for action from the Biden administration to match their words of wanting to support human rights," said U.S. Representative Young Kim, a California Republican. "I cannot see Kim Jong Un — as well as our allies like South Korea and Japan — taking our word seriously" when the "vital" human rights position remains unfilled.

**US actions so far**

On international Human Rights Day, December 10, the Biden administration placed its first sanctions designations on North Korea-related entities and individuals for rights violations.

On international Human Rights Day, December 10, the Biden administration placed its first sanctions designations on North Korea-related entities and individuals for rights violations.

Also this month, Biden hosted a virtual Summit for Democracy to promote the values of liberal democracy, including human rights, among allies and partners.

The Biden administration made a series of statements this year promising to fill the rights position while expressing concern about North Korea's human rights abuses.

In February, the State Department said the position would be filled as part of Biden's North Korea policy review. The administration announced that review had been completed in April, but it did not mention any nomination or appointment.

In March, Secretary of State Antony Blinken told the House Foreign Affairs Committee he felt "strongly" about the need to appoint a rights envoy. Blinken repeated the administration's determination to fill the position to the committee in June.

Roberta Cohen, who was the deputy assistant secretary of state for human rights during the Carter administration, said "there's no doubt" that the administration will fill the position.

"But the whole process of nominating and confirming ambassadors and envoys and officials within the government that require confirmation — this has been very slow," she said.

Cohen isn't the only one who suspects a bureaucratic backlog.

"The real problem is the delay in the Senate in terms of reacting, responding and approving nominees that have been made by the Biden administration for a number of ambassadorial appointments," said Robert King, who served as the special envoy for North Korean human rights issues under the Obama administration.

"While simple bureaucratic neglect may play a role, there is no disguising the fact that this delay shows a lack of political priority being given to North Korean human rights issues," added Robertson of Human Rights Watch.

At the same time, Scarlatoiu of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea said, the delay is reasonable as "the Biden administration has been dealing with multiple other priorities and emergencies."

**Pressure on North Korea**

Some experts think appointing a human rights envoy for North Korea will add pressure on North Korea as the Biden administration remains open to talks with the regime, which have been deadlocked since October 2019.

"Naming a human rights envoy ... would signify a return to a much-needed toughening of policy from the post-Singapore summit relaxation during the Trump administration," said Bruce Klingner, a senior research fellow at the Heritage Foundation.

Harry Kazianis, senior director of Korean studies at the Center for the National Interest, said, "I do think team Biden realizes a North Korean human rights special envoy, while a good idea, could provide [North Korea] an excuse to lash out."

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Prepared by Nikita Rosemary Morrison-Young, HRNK Research Intern

Original Newsletter Archived and available here:
https://web.archive.org/web/20250826022526/https://mailchi.mp/c1b2f61aedcf/hrnk-news-items-biden-urged-to-appoint-north-korea-human-rights-envoy-trouble-a-brewinoverlooked-north-korea-developments-set-to-boil-over-in-2022?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.

## NOTE ON MISSING NEWSLETTERS

This project aims to provide a complete collection of all newsletters from 2021. It should therefore be noted that occasionally, a newsletter was never issued and is thus not contained in this report.

## 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