

JOINT STATEMENT OF THE MULTILATERAL SANCTIONS MONITORING TEAM (MSMT) ON THE REPORT COVERING THE DPRK'S OVERSEAS LABOUR PROGRAM

The text of the following statement was released by the Governments of Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America on the occasion of the release of the latest report of the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team.

We, the participating states of the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team (MSMT), have released a report today on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) violations and evasions of United Nations Security Council resolutions (UNSCRs) through the ongoing overseas deployment of North Korean labourers. The MSMT is a multilateral mechanism established in October 2024 to monitor and report on the implementation of UN sanctions measures relating to the DPRK. The report is available on the official MSMT website (<https://msmt.info>).

This report details the systemic evasion of UN sanctions by the DPRK and other countries through a global network of unlawful overseas labour, prohibited by UNSCRs 2375 and 2397. The report consolidates information provided by MSMT participating states and open-source information to show how the DPRK continues to deploy an estimated 35,600 to 101,280 labourers, nearly all of whom are located in the People's Republic of China and Russian Federation.

Despite the 2019 repatriation deadline mandated by UNSCR 2397, at least 17 countries are suspected of continuing to host labourers, generating between US \$450 million and \$800 million in 2025 to fund the DPRK's unlawful nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs. The report highlights that nearly all of the wages earned by overseas North Korean labourers are confiscated by the DPRK.

The MSMT is sharing this information with the international community to highlight the significant risks associated with employing North Korean overseas labourers and the need to deter the employment of such labourers. We encourage all UN Member States to raise awareness and hold responsible parties and facilitators accountable for UNSCR violations, including through domestic action.

This report addresses the monitoring gap created by the disbandment of the UN Security Council's 1718 Committee Panel of Experts in April 2024, caused by Russia's veto in March 2024. The report will assist the international community in fully implementing the relevant UNSCRs. Considering the continued violations and evasions of relevant UNSCRs, we urge the UN Security Council to reestablish the Panel of Experts in the same strength and structure it had prior to its disbandment.

We underscore once again our shared determination to fully implement the UNSCRs. The MSMT will continue to monitor the implementation of UNSCRs related to the DPRK and expose ongoing attempts by the DPRK and others to violate and evade these measures.

Quick Facts

- In 2017, the UN Security Council (UNSC) made it unlawful for any UN Member State to allow North Koreans to earn income within their jurisdictions. All countries were required to repatriate any North Koreans earning income within their jurisdictions back to the DPRK by 2019.
- An estimated 20,000-70,000 North Korean labourers are deployed in China. Despite a temporary repatriation of 10,000-20,000 workers between 2023 and 2025, approximately 10,000 new North Korean labourers arrived in China between January 2025 and January 2026.
- North Korean labourers are increasingly deployed to work in Russia, with 15,000-30,000 working in Russia as of the end of 2025. North

Korean labourers are manufacturing military drones for Russia on Russian soil, such as in drone factories located in Russia. The Russian government has created a student visa scheme to camouflage North Korean labourers in Russia as students. Each North Korean labourer in Russia generates an average estimated US \$7,500 in wages annually.

- Estimates indicate that monthly wages earned by North Korean labourers in Russia may be up to five times as high compared to monthly wages in China, depending on the industry.
- The DPRK confiscates 80-90% of wages earned by North Korean labourers. In some cases, the confiscated amount exceeds their actual earnings, leaving North Korean labourers indebted to the DPRK. DPRK authorities exercise extreme control over labourers' movement and interactions with outsiders in order to prevent defections, while labourers who do defect risk reprisals against family members remaining in North Korea.

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