

The DPRK's Use of Overseas Labour to Violate and Evade UN Sanctions

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Background

The Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team (MSMT) is a multilateral mechanism to monitor and report violations and evasions of sanction measures stipulated in the relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs). MSMT Participating States include Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea (ROK), the United Kingdom, and the United States. Our goal is to assist the full implementation of UN sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) by publishing information based on rigorous inquiry into sanctions violations and evasion attempts. MSMT Participating States are committed to continuing to work with UN Member States mentioned in this report to improve sanctions implementation.

The information contained in this report is sourced from participating governments' information and open-source information. Although the MSMT cannot independently verify all information reported by media sources referenced in this report, the content included has been evaluated and corroborates the MSMT's understanding of the DPRK's unlawful overseas labour program, lending high confidence to the assertions herein.

Ahead of this report's publication, the MSMT engaged nearly all countries identified in the report to make them aware of North Korean labourers within their jurisdictions. This prenotification step gave named governments advance notice and the opportunity to respond before the report became public. The MSMT delivered prenotifications to 35 countries.

The MSMT has included in this report responses to prenotifications from countries that provided new, substantive information on North Korean labourers or actions those countries had taken to respond to the presence of North Korean labourers in their countries.

Beyond the prenotification process, the MSMT urges action from countries named in the report to investigate the potential for North Korean labourers to earn income in their countries in violation of UNSCRs and take enforcement measures. Countries that provide evidence of investigations or repatriation efforts will be given the opportunity for their positive efforts to be highlighted in upcoming MSMT releases or events.

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1. Executive Summary

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK or North Korea) WMD and ballistic missile programs continue to stand in violation of multiple UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs or "UN sanctions"). The DPRK funds these unlawful weapons programs in part through the deployment of North Korean labourers overseas, earning an estimated \$450 to \$800 million in 2025 for the DPRK government.¹ 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. This would have prevented the government of the DPRK from sending North Korean labourers overseas and using earned funds for its unlawful nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

The 2019 repatriation deadline came and went. Many countries continue to host North Korean labourers to this day. This report unveils new information about North Korea's overseas labour program, including where North Korean labourers are deployed, in violation of UNSCRs.

Major Findings

- **Generating Illicit Revenue:** Despite the strict 2019 repatriation deadline, the DPRK continues to operate an unlawful overseas labour program that generated between \$450 million and \$800 million in 2025 alone. The DPRK government actively deploys an estimated 35,600 to 101,280 North Korean labourers across at least 17 countries, funnelling earnings into the government's strategic priorities, including its unlawful nuclear and ballistic missile programs.
- **Most Located in China:** Most North Korean labourers are deployed in China, with an estimated 20,000 to 70,000 labourers currently operating there. 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. The number of North Korean labourers dispatched to China is expected to grow.
- **Russia a Growing Hub:** North Korean labourers are increasingly deployed to work in Russia, including an estimated 15,000 to 30,000 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 Alabuga, Tatarstan. 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 \$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.²

¹ All dollar figures are reported in USD.

² North Korean IT workers in Russia and China may earn up to \$10,000 per month: Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team, "The DPRK's Violation and Evasion of UN Sanctions Through Cyber and Information Technology Worker Activities", October 2025, <https://msmt.info/Publications/detail/MSMT%20Report/4221>

- **Wage Confiscation and Exploitative Working Conditions:** The DPRK government confiscates 80-90% of wages earned by North Korean labourers. In some cases, the confiscated amount exceeds their actual earnings, leaving North Korean overseas labourers indebted to the DPRK government. North Korean labourers endure long work hours and exploitative conditions. DPRK authorities also 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.

Summary of Locations of North Korean Labourers

Figure 1: Countries Currently Hosting North Korean labourers (2024 to Present)³

Location	Estimated number of North Korean Labourers as of the end of 2025	Possible Sectors
China	20,000-70,000 ⁴	Manufacturing, ⁵ Construction, ⁶ IT, ⁷ Restaurants, Fishing Vessels, ⁸ Car Parts, Textiles, ⁹ Exporting, ¹⁰ Seafood Processing ¹¹
Russia	15,000-30,000 ¹²	Defence Industrial Base, ¹³ Manufacturing, Shipbuilding, Steel Processing, Construction, ¹⁴ IT, ¹⁵ Restaurants, ¹⁶ Medical ¹⁷ , Forestry, ¹⁸ Textiles, Agriculture ¹⁹
Asia		
Cambodia	0-10 ²⁰	IT, ²¹ Restaurants
Laos	30-60 ²²	IT, ²³ Restaurants
Vietnam	5-10 ²⁴	IT, ²⁵ Trade
Mongolia	1-10 ²⁶	Restaurants
Kyrgyz Republic	1-10 ²⁷	Medical
Africa		
Cameroon	40-60 ²⁸	Construction
Equatorial Guinea	200-300 ²⁹	Medical, construction, IT ³⁰
Guinea	150-200 ³¹	Medical, construction, IT ³²
Mozambique	40-90 ³³	Medical
Niger	1-10 ³⁴	Construction
Nigeria	40-250 ³⁵	Medical, insurance, construction, IT
Senegal	40-100 ³⁶	Medical, construction
Tanzania	10-80 ³⁷	Medical, IT, ³⁸ trade ³⁹
Uganda	50-80 ⁴⁰	Medical, manufacturing
Zimbabwe	0-10 ⁴¹	Medical

³ The table below reflects current known and suspected worker deployments. The countries listed in the historical table in Annex B may still have North Korean overseas labourers present, but MSMT Participating States could not confirm their presence or absence.

⁴ MSMT Participating State information; Kyung Soo-hyun, "China to Accept Thousands of New North Korean labourers This Year" Yonhap News, 27 Jun 2025: <https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20250627038100073>; Seoul DailyNK, "South Korean NGO: Dandong factories struggle as North Korean labor force plummets", 28 May 2025, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/dandong-factories-struggle-north-korean-labor-force-plummets/>; Seulkee Jang, "A large number of North Korean labourers who had been staying in Liaoning Province returned

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- to China... Chinese factories also closed" DailyNK, 11 May 2025, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/n-korean-workers-leaving-chinas-liaoning-province-as-factories-close/>; Seulkee Jang, "TB cases among North Korean overseas workers put Chinese factories on alert", DailyNK, 21 May 2026, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/north-korean-workers-china-tuberculosis/>
- ⁵ Lee Sang-yong, "China steps in as US pulls back from North Korea" DailyNK, 3 July 2025, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/china-steps-in-as-us-pulls-back-from-north-korea/>
- ⁶ Dr. Jo Jun-hwa, "[Ubuntu Column] Namibia, the Crossroads of North-South Diplomatic Wars... 'Brothers' vs. 'Practicality'" Yonhap News, 7 July 2025, <https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20250617021100898>
- ⁷ Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team, "The DPRK's Violation and Evasion of UN Sanctions Through Cyber and Information Technology Worker Activities", October 2025, <https://msmt.info/Publications/detail/MSMT%20Report/4221>
- ⁸ Park Boram, "Yonhap: N. Korean Labourers Face Forced Labour Aboard Chinese Fishing Vessel", Yonhap News, 24 February 2025, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20250224008400315>,
- ⁹ Lee Sang Yong, Hwang Hyun-uk, "South Korean NGO: North Korea prepares to send more labourers to China with stricter screening and surveillance", DailyNK, 18 October 2025, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/northkorea-prepares-to-send-more-workers-to-china-with-stricter-screening-and-surveillance/>; Nihon Keizai Shimbun, "China's trade with North Korea up 30% in January-June; passenger train services to resume", 18 July 2025, <https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXZQOGM147O20U5A710C2000000/>
- ¹⁰ Jang Seul-gi, "North Korea-China trade is booming, and overland trade between Dandong and Sinuiju, which had been sluggish, is also expanding", DailyNK, 20 October 2025, <https://www.dailynk.com/20251020-6/>; Lee Sang-yong, "China steps in as US pulls back from North Korea" DailyNK, 3 July 2025 <https://www.dailynk.com/english/china-steps-in-as-us-pulls-back-from-north-korea/>
- ¹¹ Jang Seul-gi, "North Korean labourers dispatched to China in small groups, scattered across remote factories", DailyNK, 3 December 2025, <https://www.dailynk.com/20251203-1/>; Lee Sang Yong, Hwang Hyun-uk, "South Korean NGO: North Korea prepares to send more labourers to China with stricter screening and surveillance", Daily NK, 18 October 2025, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/north-korea-prepares-to-send-more-workers-to-china-with-stricter-screening-and-surveillance/>; Seon Hwa, "South Korean NGO: N. Korea sends fresh wave of labourers to China after Kim's visit", DailyNK, 22 September 2025, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/north-korea-sends-fresh-wave-workers-china-after-kim-visit/>
- ¹² MSMT Participating State information
- ¹³ MSMT Participating State information; Joseph S. Bermudez Jr., Victor Cha, Jennifer Jun, "A Closer Look as the Yelabuga UAV factory" Beyond Parallel, 9 March 2026, <https://beyondparallel.csis.org/a-closer-look-at-the-yelabuga-uav-factory/>; Robert Stefanicki, "North Korea to send military engineers to Russian drone factories", Gazeta Wyborcza Online, 31 December 2025, <https://wyborcza.pl/7,75399,32500090,korea-polnocna-wysle-wojskowych-inzynierow-do-rosyjskich-fabryk.html>
- ¹⁴ DailyNK, "North Korea to fuel Russian space city with 500 workers", 23 August 2024, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/north-korea-fuel-russian-space-city-500-workers/>; KBS World News, "The National Intelligence Service (NIS) announced that 5,000 North Korean construction troops were moving sequentially to Russia, with 1,000 engineers clearing mines", 4 November 2025, https://world.kbs.co.kr/service/news_view.htm?lang=e&Seq_Code=197161
- ¹⁵ Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team, "The DPRK's Violation and Evasion of UN Sanctions Through Cyber and Information Technology Worker Activities", October 2025, <https://msmt.info/Publications/detail/MSMT%20Report/4221>
- ¹⁶ Park Sun-min, "North Korean Restaurant Opens in Moscow Amid Sanctions Concerns", Chosun Ilbo Online, 27 November 2025, <https://www.chosun.com/english/north-korea-en/2025/11/27/7BCAWK5NOBADFGK3S5AGVRI7FY/>
- ¹⁷ Anton Sokolin, "North Korean doctors illegally working at clinics in Russia and Kyrgyzstan" <https://www.nknews.org/2026/03/north-korean-doctors-illegally-working-at-clinics-in-russia-and-kyrgyzstan>, NK News, 6 March 2026; Jung Young-kyo, "Russia To Train North Korean Doctors in Moscow", JoongAng Ilbo, 26 March 2025, <https://www.joongang.co.kr/article/25323647>
- ¹⁸ RBC Primorye, "Primorsky developer: Number of North Korean labourers in Russia will triple" <https://prim.rbc.ru/prim/freenews/685f39cf9a794709650dfbdd>, 28 June 2025; "Eskadra Developer: Number of North Korean Construction Workers in Russia to Triple" 26 June 2025, <https://realty.ria.ru/20250626/chislo-2025542009.html>

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- ¹⁹ Anton Sokolin, “Russian recruiter openly advertises 2K North Korean female labourers for hire”, NKNews, 17 September 2025, <https://www.nknews.org/2025/09/russian-recruiter-openly-advertises-2k-north-korean-female-workers-for-hire/>
- ²⁰ Phnom Penh Post, “Cambodia: North Koreans forced to work in Kingdom by Pyongyang regime?”, 31 May 2024, <https://phnompenhpost.com/national/north-koreans-forced-to-work-in-kingdom-by-pyongyang-regime/>; Chad O’Carroll, “North Korean Firm Advertises Illegal Restaurants in China and Cambodia”, NKNews, 26 February 2025, <https://www.nknews.org/2025/02/north-korean-firm-advertises-illegal-restaurants-in-china-and-cambodia/>,
- ²¹ Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team, “The DPRK’s Violation and Evasion of UN Sanctions Through Cyber and Information Technology Worker Activities”, October 2025, <https://msmt.info/Publications/detail/MSMT%20Report/4221>
- ²² MSMT Participating State information; Mainichi, “North Korean business looms in Laos, with allegations of hacking and money laundering”, 21 Aug 2024, <https://mainichi.jp/articles/20240820/k00/00m/030/083000c> ; Anton Sokolin, “North Koreans Still Running Restaurant in Laos to Earn Cash for Regime: Report”, NK News, 9 Nov 2023, <https://www.nknews.org/2023/11/north-koreans-still-running-restaurant-in-laos-to-earn-cash-for-regime-report/>
- ²³ Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team, “The DPRK’s Violation and Evasion of UN Sanctions Through Cyber and Information Technology Worker Activities,” October 2025, <https://msmt.info/Publications/detail/MSMT%20Report/4221>
- ²⁴ MSMT Participating State information
- ²⁵ Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team, “The DPRK’s Violation and Evasion of UN Sanctions Through Cyber and Information Technology Worker Activities,” October 2025, <https://msmt.info/Publications/detail/MSMT%20Report/4221>
- ²⁶ MSMT Participating State information
- ²⁷ Anton Sokolin, “North Korean doctors illegally working at clinics in Russia and Kyrgyzstan” NK News, 6 March 2026, <https://www.nknews.org/2026/03/north-korean-doctors-illegally-working-at-clinics-in-russia-and-kyrgyzstan/>
- ²⁸ MSMT Participating State information
- ²⁹ MSMT Participating State information
- ³⁰ Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team, “The DPRK’s Violation and Evasion of UN Sanctions Through Cyber and Information Technology Worker Activities” October 2025, <https://msmt.info/Publications/detail/MSMT%20Report/4221>
- ³¹ MSMT Participating State information
- ³² Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team, “The DPRK’s Violation and Evasion of UN Sanctions Through Cyber and Information Technology Worker Activities” October 2025, <https://msmt.info/Publications/detail/MSMT%20Report/4221>
- ³³ MSMT Participating State information
- ³⁴ MSMT Participating State information
- ³⁵ MSMT Participating State information; Samuel Ramani, “North Korea’s Enduring Economic and Security Presence in Africa”, STIMSON.org, 24 June 2021, <https://www.38north.org/2021/06/north-koreas-enduring-economic-and-security-presence-in-africa/>
- ³⁶ MSMT Participating State information; Christian-Geraud Neema B., “North Koreans in Chinese companies in Senegal”, Le Project Afrique Chine, 14 March 2023, <https://projetafriquechine.com/2023/03/14/des-nord-coreens-dans-les-entreprises-chinoises-au-senegal/>
- ³⁷ MSMT Participating State information
- ³⁸ Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team, “The DPRK’s Violation and Evasion of UN Sanctions Through Cyber and Information Technology Worker Activities,” October 2025, <https://msmt.info/Publications/detail/MSMT%20Report/4221>
- ³⁹ Jo Jun-hyung, “RFA’s Korean Journalists Trump Wants to Eliminate Win Awards for North Korea-Related Reports” Yonhap, 26 May 2025, <https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20250526063100071>
- ⁴⁰ MSMT Participating State information
- ⁴¹ MSMT Participating State information; Zimbabwe has not submitted an implementation report pursuant to UNSCR 2397 paragraph 8.

2. Response Measures and Recommendations

In light of North Korea's unlawful overseas labour program, the international community should make efforts to:

1. Urge UN Member States to immediately implement UNSCRs 2375 and 2397 by repatriating North Korean labourers from their countries and prohibiting the issuance of work permits to DPRK nationals.
2. Call on Member States to terminate existing labour dispatch arrangements with the DPRK, and prevent new arrangement from being concluded, consistent with the objectives of UNSCR 2375.
3. Assist Member States to i) identify businesses run by North Korean nationals or North Korean joint ventures in their jurisdictions, and ii) take steps to ensure legitimate private-sector entities refrain from dealing with entities known or suspected of employing North Korean labourers or businesses known to be suspected of being or acting on behalf of North Korean labour dispatch companies.
4. Investigate schemes, entities, and individuals in North Korea and other countries acting as intermediaries or facilitators that promote the employment and dispatch of North Korean labourers abroad and take action to disrupt their illicit activities.
5. Strengthen visa screening and immigration measures at embassies and ports of entry to determine the intent of North Korean nationals' travel overseas and avoid granting visas and entry to North Koreans that intend to earn income.
6. Conduct due diligence through methods including checking the management and ownership structure of companies that are suspected of employing DPRK nationals and/or show signs of potential obfuscation efforts.
7. Share information and alert Member States on the activities of North Korean overseas labourers and evolving sanctions-evasion methods, including the use of student visas, and the growing sectors of focus for North Korean labourers, such as information technology.
8. Prevent the abuse of student visas by North Korean labourers, in particular to ensure, in line with relevant UNSCRs, that DPRK students and other North Korean nationals do not earn income abroad.
9. Strengthen measures to monitor and block remittances by North Korea-affiliated overseas companies to the DPRK including through third-country intermediaries.
10. Inform companies about the legal, security, and reputational risks that may stem from being associated with North Korean overseas labourers and emphasize to companies the importance of due diligence in identifying, preventing and mitigating such labour in their supply chains and take appropriate measures to eliminate it.⁴²

⁴² The European Union's Forced Labour Regulation (FLR) prohibits products made with forced labour from being placed on the EU market or exported from the EU, while the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive

3. Overview of Overseas North Korean Labourers

The DPRK currently deploys 35,600 to 101,280 labourers overseas to raise funds for DPRK government priorities, including licit and illicit imports, as well as its unlawful WMD and ballistic missile programs.⁴³ In 2025, North Korean overseas labourers unlawfully generated between \$450 million and \$800 million in total for the DPRK government.⁴⁴ Estimates reflect a majority of these funds were earned by overseas North Korean IT workers.⁴⁵

In this report, the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team (MSMT) accounts for current and historical labourers in more than 38 countries since the 2019 deadline set by United Nations Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 2397 to repatriate all North Koreans earning income overseas back to the DPRK. The MSMT is bringing to light new information on the harmful impacts and consequences of employing North Korean labourers, including supporting the DPRK's unlawful activities.

The information in this report is intended to support UN Member States in implementing the relevant UNSCRs. The information contained herein was gathered by MSMT Participating States and corroborated by multiple sources.

The overwhelming majority of overseas North Korean labourers were based in China (20,000 - 70,000) and Russia (15,000 – 30,000). Labourers in Asia largely focus on IT, manufacturing, and construction, while labourers in Africa work mostly in the medical and construction fields.⁴⁶ The DPRK relies on foreign facilitators who organize the dispatch of North Korean labourers, including to secure employment, provide logistical support, and remit earnings back to the DPRK. These countries and the actors within them are engaged in violations of UNSCRs and related evasion activities through the DPRK's deployment of overseas labourers, particularly in industries including, but not limited to, apparel, construction, distant water fishing, footwear manufacturing, hospitality, information technology (IT) services, logging, medical, pharmaceuticals, restaurant, seafood processing, textiles, defence, and shipbuilding.⁴⁷

The DPRK utilizes its overseas workforce to circumvent UN sanctions and generate revenue for its priorities, including the unlawful development of its WMD and ballistic missile programs. Any country hosting North Korean labourers is consequently violating UN sanctions on the DPRK by enabling the DPRK's circumvention and facilitating North Korean labourers earning income in their jurisdictions, in turn providing funds for the DPRK's unlawful activities, including its unlawful WMD and ballistic missile programs.

(CSDDD) requires certain large companies to conduct due diligence to identify, prevent, mitigate, and address adverse human rights and environmental impacts in their chains of activities.

⁴³ MSMT Participating State information estimates range from 15,000 to 30,000 in Russia, 20,000 to 70,000 in China, and approximately 600 to 1,280 in other countries. Estimates of North Korean labourers in China are particularly difficult to estimate as they are often intentionally obscured to hide violations of UNSCRs. There are indications that North Korean labourers have returned to the DPRK from China in recent years, though this trend could change in 2026 and onward.

⁴⁴ MSMT Participating State information

⁴⁵ Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team, "The DPRK's Violation and Evasion of UN Sanctions Through Cyber and Information Technology Worker Activities", October 2025, <https://msmt.info/Publications/detail/MSMT%20Report/4221>

⁴⁶ MSMT Participating State information

⁴⁷ MSMT Participating State information

Working Conditions of North Korean Overseas Labourers

Most of the information on the conditions of overseas North Korean labourers comes from first-hand testimonies of current or former labourers. Overseas North Korean labourers face low wages, work 12 to 18 hours per day, six or seven days per week, and are required to forfeit 80-90 percent of their income – or more – to the DPRK government. Labourers are also charged an additional fee of up to 30% of the funds they send as remittances to family, in addition to paying other fees, including those related to travel, food, and lodging.⁴⁸ Often, this amounts up to complete wage confiscation; North Korean labourers therefore do not materially benefit from the work they perform and may find themselves in debt to the DPRK government as a result of working overseas.⁴⁹ These conditions, compounded with labourers often being subjected to strict monitoring by designated DPRK officials, including significant restrictions on movement, are indicative of North Korean labourers experiencing state-imposed forced labour, even if they initially volunteer to work overseas.⁵⁰

North Korea subjects its overseas labourers to rigorous screening before they are dispatched, which includes scrutiny of their ideology, background, family origin, and marital status. Many potential workers reportedly pay bribes to receive an overseas posting, although they are often unaware of the scale of wage theft and long, grueling work hours they will endure. Despite the rigorous selection process, the regime exercises extreme control over labourers' movement and interactions with outsiders to prevent defections, which the state views as an insult against the nation, and will subject the defecting labourer's family members remaining in North Korea to prosecution and punishment.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Seulkee Jang, "N. Korean diplomats profit from worker remittances", DailyNK, 5 August 2024, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/north-korean-diplomats-profit-workers-remittances/>

⁴⁹ Global Rights Compliance found evidence of the DPRK government confiscating 99% of wages earned by North Korean labourers in Russia (2026): Yeji Kim, "A Day in the Life of a DPRK State-sponsored Labourer in St. Petersburg, Russia" Global Rights Compliance, 10 March 2026, <https://globalrightscompliance.org/project/day-in-the-life-of-a-dprk-state-imposed-labourer/>

⁵⁰ Yeji Kim, "A Day in the Life of a DPRK State-sponsored Labourer in St. Petersburg, Russia" Global Rights Compliance, 10 March 2026, <https://globalrightscompliance.org/project/day-in-the-life-of-a-dprk-state-imposed-labourer/>; Anton Sokolin, "North Korea plans to send 12,000 workers to Russian drone factories: Ukraine" NK News, 14 November 2025, <https://www.nknews.org/2025/11/north-korea-plans-to-send-12000-workers-to-russian-drone-factories-ukraine/>; Mun Dong Hui, "South Korean NGO: N. Korean labourers at Chinese fisheries surrender 90% of wages to state" DailyNK, 29 July 2025, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/north-korean-workers-chinese-fisheries-surrender-90-percent-wages-state/>; Jean Mackenzie, "North Koreans tell BBC they are being sent to work 'like slaves' in Russia" BBC, 12 August 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c2077gwjlvxo>; Jeong Eun-i, "North Korean Overseas Workers Shifting from China to Russia", KINU, 1 September 2025, https://www.kinu.or.kr/main/module/report/view.do?idx=128323&nav_code=mai1674786581; Seulkee Jang, "South Korean NGO: N. Korean diplomats profit from worker remittances" DailyNK, 5 August 2024, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/north-korean-diplomats-profit-workers-remittances/>

⁵¹ Unique Kim, "Transnational Repression and Exploitation of North Korean labourers in Russia" Database for North Korean Human Rights, 22 September 2025, <https://en.nkdb.org/researchreport/?bmode=view&idx=167892918>; UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, "Forced Labor by the DPRK", 16 July 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/korea-republic/forced-labour-democratic-peoples-republic-korea-en.pdf>; Ian Urbina, "Inside North Korea's Forced-Labor Program", The New Yorker, 25 February 2024, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2024/03/04/inside-north-koreas-forced-labor-program-in-china>; Jean Mackenzie, "North Koreans working in China 'exploited like slaves'", BBC, 8 February 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-68226271>; Mun dong Hui, "N. Korea to limit young, childless women

The DPRK state maintains comprehensive oversight on all stages of overseas labour deployment, from worker selection and contract arrangement to on-site control, while deliberately restricting external exposure of its labourers in order to evade sanctions.⁵² North Korean labourers, who live collectively under strict surveillance by the National Intelligence Agency (formerly known as the Ministry of State Security or MSS) of North Korea, are restricted from external contact and are generally permitted to leave their residences only in pairs for essential activities such as grocery shopping, in order to monitor one another. Recently, North Korean labourers have had less public exposure, commuting only between residences and worksites, a marked change from earlier periods when they were frequently seen in public areas.⁵³

There have also been widespread reports of sexual violence – including sexual harassment, rape, and sex trafficking – perpetrated by North Korean managers against women labourers in Russia and China and unexplained disappearances of labourers.⁵⁴

Violations of UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs)

This report provides evidence that the DPRK and other countries are violating the following UN Security Council resolutions designed to address the DPRK's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs, which pose an ongoing threat to international peace and security.

- UNSCR 2397 (2017): UN Member States were obligated to repatriate all North Koreans earning income within their jurisdictions by 2019.⁵⁵

from being dispatched to China for work", DailyNK, 11 October 2022, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/north-korea-limit-young-childless-women-being-dispatched-china-work/>

⁵² Lee Sang Yong, Hwang Hyun-uk, "N. Korean overseas labourers face systematic control from selection to workplace", 12 September 2025, Daily NK, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/north-korean-overseas-workers-face-systematic-control-selection-workplace/>

⁵³ MSMT Participating State information

⁵⁴ The International Labour Organization (ILO) Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) defines forced labour as "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily". Regardless of whether North Korean labourers initially volunteered for overseas work, the DPRK authorities and local handlers often subject these workers to all 11 of the ILO's indicators of forced labour: abuse of vulnerability, deception, restriction of movement, isolation, physical and sexual violence, intimidation and threats, retention of identity documents, withholding of wages, debt bondage, abusive working and living conditions, and excessive overtime:

https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C029; Yuki Ishikawa, "The daily struggles of North Korean laborers, dubbed "slaves", working 20-hour shifts, and the reality of their deployment to Russia are gradually being revealed" Sankei Shimbun Database, 18 August 2025, <https://www.sankei.com/article/20250818-ZRLC6JDWSBOMRH56V5XL6DOW6M/>; Norio Sakurai, "Sexual exploitation commonplace among North Korean labourers, but still a steady stream of applicants, according to a South Korean private organization report" Sankei Shimbun, 4 August 2025, <https://www.sankei.com/article/20250804-AFPNTFU2BVPVHFUKYW4AMMWG4A/>; Lee Seung-ju, Transitional Justice Working Group (TJWG), "[North Korea Human Rights Index] #19 Enforced Disappearances, Unfinished Crimes and Our Responsibilities" DailyNK, 22 July 2025, <https://www.dailynk.com/20250722-4/>; Ian Urbina, "Inside North Korea's Forced-Labor Program" The New Yorker, 5 February 2024, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2024/03/04/inside-north-koreas-forced-labor-program-in-china>.

⁵⁵ There is a clear distinction in the relevant UNSCRs between the labour planned and operated by the DPRK state, and the circumstances of DPRK nationals fleeing persecution. DPRK defectors fleeing human rights

- UNSCR 2375 (2017): UN Member States are prohibited from providing DPRK nationals with work authorizations.
- UNSCRs 2371 and 2375 (2017): UN Member States are required to prohibit, by their nationals or in their territories, the opening, maintenance, and operation of all joint ventures or cooperative entities, new and existing, with DPRK entities or individuals.
- UNSCR 2094 (2013): UN Member States are required to prevent provision of any financial services or financial or other assets or resources that could contribute to the DPRK's nuclear-related, ballistic missile-related, or other WMD-related programs or activities.
- UNSCRs 1718 (2006), 2094 (2013), and 2270 (2016): UN Member States are required to freeze the assets, funds, and economic resources of designated persons and entities, as well as any persons or entities acting on behalf of or at their direction, or those owned or controlled by them. This includes economic resources, including cryptocurrency, of designated entities detailed in this report that engage in overseas revenue generation.

Flows of Funds and Labourers

Overseas labourers were mostly sent by state-controlled DPRK trading companies, which used their respective earnings to help fund state priorities such as procurement-related transactions, including but not limited to the sale and transfer of military equipment and raw materials such as copper, which is used in munitions production.⁵⁶ The direct or indirect supply, sale, or transfer to or from the DPRK of arms and related material is prohibited under UNSCRs 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009), 2094 (2013), 2270 (2016), 2321 (2016), 2371 (2017), 2375 (2017), and 2397 (2017).

The DPRK has deployed overseas labourers via several methods including the false use of student visas, fabricated “training programs”, and “technical exchanges”.⁵⁷

Since 2024, some sources report that the DPRK's preferred overseas destination for labourers has shifted from China to Russia.⁵⁸ The shift is largely attributable to wages in Russia being significantly higher than in China.⁵⁹ In one example, according to a source from a Russian agricultural company, in August 2025 approximately 300 labourers repatriated from China were preparing to be dispatched to Primorsky Krai, including in the agricultural, forestry, and fisheries sectors.⁶⁰

abuses in North Korea may be forced by necessity into working illegally in countries they transit. States hosting DPRK defectors are obligated to scrupulously respect their rights as asylum seekers under international human rights law, in particular with respect to prohibitions on refoulement. North Korean labourers dispatched overseas by the DPRK state are not entitled to the same provisions.

⁵⁶ MSMT Participating State information

⁵⁷ MSMT Participating State information; Ha Chae-rim, “North Korean Residents in Russia Increase 12-fold in One Year”... Possibility of Illegal Dispatch of Labourers”, Yonhap Online, 5 February 2025, <https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20250205025300504>

⁵⁸ Jeong Eun-i, “North Korean Overseas Workers Shifting from China to Russia”, KINU, 1 September 2025, https://www.kinu.or.kr/main/module/report/view.do?idx=128323&nav_code=mai1674786581

⁵⁹ Jeong Eun-i, “North Korean Overseas Workers Shifting from China to Russia”, KINU, 1 September 2025, https://www.kinu.or.kr/main/module/report/view.do?idx=128323&nav_code=mai1674786581; Jooheon Kim, “North Korean labourers see significant wage increase, benefits in China: report” NK News, 11 May 2026, <https://www.nknews.org/2026/05/north-korean-workers-see-significant-wage-increase-benefits-in-china-report/>

⁶⁰ MSMT Participating State information

Income generated by North Korean IT workers is far higher than other labourers. For example, as reported in the October 2025 MSMT report on the DPRK's violation and evasion of UN sanctions through cyber and information technology worker activities, overseas North Korean IT workers earn an average of \$10,000 per month.⁶¹

Remittance Methods

UNSCR 2094 (2013) prohibits UN Member States from providing financial services or transferring any financial or other assets and resources to the DPRK, including bulk cash, that could contribute to the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

Furthermore, UNSCRs 1718 (2006), 2094 (2013), and 2270 (2016) require Member States to freeze any financial assets or resources that belong to: i) the UN-sanctioned persons or entities; ii) persons or entities acting on their behalf or at their direction; or iii) entities of the Government of the DPRK or the Worker's Party of Korea that the Member State determines are associated with the DPRK's nuclear or ballistic missile programs. However, the DPRK and its enablers evade these measures.

In Russia, revenue generated from the large-scale dispatch of North Korean labourers is paid in Russian rubles and subsequently used for procurement purposes in Russia or sent to China for use in procurement activities. Smaller portions of funds are sent to the DPRK through the overseas representative offices of UN-designated North Korean entities such as *Foreign Trade Bank* (KPe.047).⁶²

One of these entities, *Korea Kwangson Banking Corporation* (KKBC, KPe.025) was sanctioned by the UN Security Council in March 2016 for financing the DPRK's WMD programs and subsequently severed from the international payment system. In response, KKBC has pursued joining the Russian alternative to the SWIFT system, the *System for Transfer of Financial Messages* (SPFS), which if approved would enable the sanctioned entity to conduct international transactions in Russian rubles.

The DPRK has traditionally laundered funds through money exchange brokers in China. However, intensified anti-money laundering (AML) monitoring by Chinese banks and government crackdowns on illegal brokers have made such practices increasingly difficult. As a result, a growing reliance on physical cash delivery, has been observed as an alternative to bank transfers.⁶³

To physically courier foreign cash across borders, the DPRK relies on personnel traveling abroad and the use of diplomatic cover, including through the use of vehicles, pouches and embassy premises. This frequently involves DPRK banking officials who are stationed overseas. In some instances, North Korean diplomatic personnel also act as couriers, transporting physical cash to settle trade payments. Although smaller in volume, North Korean overseas labourers also physically transport foreign currency upon their return to the DPRK.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team, "The DPRK's Violation and Evasion of UN Sanctions Through Cyber and Information Technology Worker Activities", October 2025, <https://msmt.info/Publications/detail/MSMT%20Report/4221>

⁶² MSMT Participating State information

⁶³ MSMT Participating State information

⁶⁴ MSMT Participating State information

Following the 11th Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for Cooperation in Trade, Economy, Science, and Technology, held November 19, 2024 in Pyongyang, Russia and the DPRK have actively pursued bilateral financial cooperation. This has included i) the digitization of financial transactions, which can be utilized to circumvent existing financial sanctions on Russia and the DPRK, and ii) the integration of electronic payment systems. This will enable the introduction of dual-network payments cards which would allow North Korean officials to conduct transactions more easily in Russia.⁶⁵

Dispatch Methods

The dispatch of North Korean labourers is closely coordinated between the DPRK's corporations, government organizations, and their respective counterparts in countries hosting such labourers.

In particular, numerous DPRK-, China-, and Russia-based organizations are involved in the recruitment, dispatch, and employment of North Korean overseas labourers. **See Annex A for a non-exhaustive list of organizations which participate in the deployment of overseas labourers.**

Numerous DPRK defence, proliferation, and cyber-related entities named in the October 2025 MSMT report on North Korea's cyber and IT worker activities, including the Second Academy of Natural Sciences Foreign Affairs Bureau (SANS FAB), General Reconnaissance and Intelligence Bureau (GRIB, formerly known as the Reconnaissance General Bureau), and Office 39, are involved in the coordination and deployment of DPRK overseas labourers.⁶⁶

Spotlight: North Korean Ministry of External Economic Relations

In recent years, the North Korean government has reinvigorated the role of the Ministry of External Economic Relations (MEER) in revenue generation for the DPRK state.⁶⁷ With backing from the Cabinet, MEER is capable of exerting its power within the North Korean system to expedite processes and resolve technical hurdles. MEER operates from 21 DPRK embassies and separately runs dozens of offices and subordinate entities overseas.⁶⁸

MEER's primary success has been encouraging deeper economic ties to Russia through its leading role on the DPRK-Russia Intergovernmental Committee for Cooperation in Trade, Economy, Science, and Technology. MEER has also revived trade with countries beyond North Korea's top trade partners,

⁶⁵ MSMT Participating State information

⁶⁶ MSMT Participating State information

⁶⁷ Kim Soo-yeon, "North Korea Allows Citizens Abroad To Return Home Following Pandemic Closure", Yonhap Online, 27 Aug 2023, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20230827000451325>

⁶⁸ MSMT Participating State information; Daniel Wertz, Jean H. Lee, "DPRK Diplomatic Relations", National Committee on North Korea, June 2024, <https://www.ncnk.org/resources/briefing-papers/all-briefing-papers/dprk-diplomatic-relations>

China and Russia. In 2024, for example, they coordinated North Korean imports of electronics, food, and household items from Indonesia.⁶⁹

MEER has also been at the forefront of large-scale revenue-generation efforts, such as boosting labour deployments and attracting foreign tourists.⁷⁰ In November 2024, MEER and Russian officials committed to increasing flights between the DPRK and Russia to further promote tourism.⁷¹

As of April 2024, MEER had reduced some bureaucratic delays slowing the provision of North Korean labourers to Russia by asserting its role as facilitator and manager of North Korean labourers deployed overseas.⁷² By June 2024, MEER's economic and commercial sections expedited labour dispatches, particularly to Russia.⁷³

MEER has been active in Africa as well, with an emphasis on increasing the number of North Korean labourers earning revenue.⁷⁴ In October 2024, MEER secured higher wages for a planned dispatch of North Korean restaurant workers to Zimbabwe, where North Korea has traditionally sent medical workers, indicating MEER is working to grow the scale and sectors of labour revenue in Africa.⁷⁵ In 2023, a MEER-subordinate dispatched additional North Korean labourers to Guinea to expand its influence in Guinea and other West African countries.⁷⁶ Across African countries, MEER is likely to continue to place emphasis on increasing the number and scale of North Korean labourers earning revenue.⁷⁷

⁶⁹ MSMT Participating State information; Korea Times, "N. Korea, Russia boost high-level exchanges to unprecedented level ahead of Kursk recapture anniversary" 23 April 2026 <https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/foreignaffairs/northkorea/20260423/n-korea-russia-boost-high-level-exchanges-to-unprecedented-level-ahead-of-kursk-recapture-anniversary>; Reform.news, "Belarus and North Korea Interested in New Economic Projects", 2 June 2026, <https://reform.news/en/belarus-and-north-korea-interested-in-new-economic-projects>; Online Newspaper of the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, "Viet Nam treasures relationship with North Korea", 26 October 2024, <https://en.baohinhphu.vn/viet-nam-treasures-relationship-with-north-korea-111241026100632084.htm>

⁷⁰ MSMT Participating State information

⁷¹ MSMT Participating State information; Park Boram, "N. Korea, Russia discuss issues of mutual cooperation at committee meeting on economy", Yonhap News, 20 Nov 2024, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20241120002200315>; Anton Sokolin, "North Korea, Russia reach deals on expanding ties in tourism, education and more", NK News, 20 November 2024, <https://www.nknews.org/2024/11/north-korea-russia-reach-deals-on-expanding-ties-in-tourism-education-and-more/>

⁷² MSMT Participating State information

⁷³ MSMT Participating State information

⁷⁴ MSMT Participating State information

⁷⁵ MSMT Participating State information

⁷⁶ MSMT Participating State information

⁷⁷ MSMT Participating State information

4. North Korean Labourers in China

Overview⁷⁸

An estimated 20,000-70,000 North Korean labourers work in China, the most of any country. Most labourers are engaged in simple processing work, including clothing production and food processing, as well as IT work.

From 2023 to 2025, approximately 10,000-20,000 North Korean labourers returned to the DPRK from China likely due both to changes in the bilateral relationship and the post-pandemic reopening of the DPRK border, possibly reducing the number of North Korean labourers in China to 20,000-50,000 in total.⁷⁹ However, following a diplomatic thaw between DPRK and China beginning in 2025, China reportedly began to increase issuance of shorter-term trainee, student, and border crossing visas to North Korean nationals.⁸⁰

For example, North Korean factory workers have been issued six-month “training” visas, while restaurant employees have reportedly been issued “student” visas.⁸¹ Some training visas can reportedly be renewed without requiring the workers to return to the DPRK. These visas help facilitate new labour deployments to China while obfuscating the true purpose of North Koreans traveling to China, because these visa categories are not widely associated with “earning income”. North Korea is continuing to increase the number of deployed labourers in China in 2026.⁸² It is estimated that around 10,000 North Korean labourers newly arrived in China between January 2025 and January 2026.⁸³ As of September 2026, following this trend, this number is likely higher and is expected to continue growing.⁸⁴

DPRK overseas labourers often enter China under various visa categories not formally designated for employment and travel by bus across the China-DPRK border. Resumption of train service between China and the DPRK in March 2026 may facilitate additional movement of workers.⁸⁵

⁷⁸ MSMT Participating State information; Seon Hwa, “South Korean NGO: N. Korea sends fresh wave of workers to China after Kim's visit”, Seoul DailyNK, 21 September 2025, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/north-korea-sends-fresh-wave-workers-china-after-kim-visit/>; Seoul DailyNK, “South Korean NGO: Dandong factories struggle as North Korean labor force plummets”, 28 May 2025, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/dandong-factories-struggle-north-korean-labor-force-plummets/>; Seulkee Jang, “A large number of North Korean labourers who had been staying in Liaoning Province returned to China... Chinese factories also closed” DailyNK, 11 May 2025, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/n-korean-workers-leaving-chinas-liaoning-province-as-factories-close/>

⁷⁹ MSMT Participating State information

⁸⁰ MSMT Participating State information; Victor Cha, Bonny Lin, Andy Lim, and Truly Tinsley, “Renewed China-DPRK Diplomacy: Symbolism or Substance?”, CSIS, 14 October 2025, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/renewed-china-dprk-diplomacy-symbolism-substance>

⁸¹ MSMT Participating State information

⁸² Seon Hwa, “South Korean NGO: N. Korea sends fresh wave of workers to China after Kim's visit”, DailyNK, 21 September 2025, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/north-korea-sends-fresh-wave-workers-china-after-kim-visit/>

⁸³ MSMT Participating State information

⁸⁴ MSMT Participating State information

⁸⁵ MSMT Participating State information

North Korean labourers are primarily concentrated in Liaoning and Jilin Provinces and sent to cities along the DPRK-China border such as Dandong City and Hunchun City, where dedicated factories depend on low-cost North Korean labour.⁸⁶ North Korea has also dispatched some labourers to more remote areas of Chinese provinces that lie near the border with North Korea, such as factories and seafood processing plants in Heilongjiang Province, probably to control their exposure to, and potential detection by, the outside world.⁸⁷

North Korean labourers in China face difficulties in remitting funds to the DPRK due to restrictions by Chinese authorities, including constraints on wire transfers and limits on moving foreign currency outside the country.⁸⁸ The labourers' wages are typically transferred to DPRK authorities based in China, which remain in China to be used to pay for goods for the DPRK. Because China is the primary procurement market for goods and materials used for projects in the DPRK, funds earned by North Korean labourers in other countries are also funneled to China.⁸⁹

The current framework for dispatching North Korean labourers to Chinese companies, in which companies and organizations designated by local authorities act as intermediaries, appears to have been operational since the second half of 2024. Although the exact scope of operations differs by each company and region, intermediary companies normally handle tasks such as receiving and approving various applications from North Korean companies that dispatch labourers and Chinese companies that receive them, consulting with dispatching and receiving companies, and distributing and managing the labourers.⁹⁰

Recent Trends⁹¹

Efforts to dispatch larger numbers of North Korean labourers to China have been observed since April 2025, including via the entry of labourers into China through Dandong Customs, progress on dispatch

⁸⁶ Seoul DailyNK, "South Korean NGO: N. Korean worker exodus from China intensifies labor burden on remaining few", 21 February 2025, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/n-korean-worker-exodus-from-china-intensifies-labor-burden-on-remaining-few/>

⁸⁷ MSMT Participating State information

⁸⁸ MSMT Participating State information; Yonhap News Agency, "Chinese Banks Completely Block Remittances to North Korea... Tightening North Korea's Financial Supply Starts" 2 March 2016, <https://www.yna.co.kr/view/MYH20160302020100038>; Jang Seul-gi, "Chinese Customs Strictly Inspects Even Cash of Returning North Korean labourers", DailyNK, 23 June 2024, <https://www.dailynk.com/20240723-1/>

⁸⁹ MSMT Participating State information

⁹⁰ MSMT Participating State information

⁹¹ MSMT Participating State information; Lee Sang Yong, Hwang Hyun-uk, "South Korean NGO: North Korea prepares to send more labourers to China with stricter screening and surveillance", Daily NK, 18 October 2025, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/north-korea-prepares-to-send-more-workers-to-china-with-stricter-screening-and-surveillance/>; Seon Hwa, "South Korean NGO: N. Korea sends fresh wave of workers to China after Kim's visit", DailyNK, 21 September 2025, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/north-korea-sends-fresh-wave-workers-china-after-kim-visit/>; Nihon Keizai Shimbun, "China's trade with North Korea up 30% in January-June; passenger train services to resume", 18 July 2025, https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXZQOGM147O20U5A710C2000000/?n_cid=SNSTW001&n_tw=1752822255; Lee Sang-yong, "China steps in as US pulls back from North Korea", DailyNK, 3 July 2025, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/china-steps-in-as-us-pulls-back-from-north-korea/>; Rimjin-Gang, "Female Workers Head to China – Over 300 from Northern Hyesan Since the Start of the Year – "100 Times Better Than Here" - Chinese Side Urgently Seeks Interpreters", 17 February 2026, <https://www.asiapress.org/rimjin-gang/2026/02/society-economy/workers-dispatch/>

contracts involving thousands of labourers, and dispatches to Chinese cities near the border.⁹² Over 2,900 North Korean labourers have been dispatched to garment factories in China via Dandong Customs since September 2025.⁹³

As of late 2025, the DPRK authorities were reportedly preparing to deploy additional North Korean overseas labourers for employment in China's seafood processing sector. As recently as 2026, North Korean overseas labourers were employed within multiple sectors of China's manufacturing industry including the electronics sector.⁹⁴

According to an MSMT Participating State, in late January 2026 China began issuing long-term visas for North Korean individuals engaged in trade in Dandong City. Although this measure appears to be limited to Dandong City, such individuals had previously been issued visas allowing stays of only up to one month. The issuance of longer-term visas could enable North Korean traders to stay in China for an extended period of time and facilitate continued commercial activities without the need for frequent travel to and from the DPRK.⁹⁵

While most North Korean labourers are engaged in simple processing work including clothing production and food processing, North Korea is reportedly seeking to have its labourers acquire skills in electrical appliance assembly, in addition to their traditional clothing manufacturing expertise, and has requested China to secure employment opportunities in that field.⁹⁶ Chinese businesses are reportedly permitted to employ North Korean labourers in Dandong City, Liaoning Province, and Yanbian Prefecture, Jilin Province to address labour shortages and attract electrical appliance assembly factories and similar businesses to these regions. The Dandong City Government has requested both the Chinese Central Government and the Liaoning Provincial Government to dispatch additional North Korean labourers; however, the Central Government is reportedly limiting the number of North Korean labourers sent to Dandong City to approximately 2,000 labourers per dispatch.⁹⁷

Although the exact scope of operations differs by company and region, intermediary companies typically handle tasks such as: receiving and approving applications to dispatch and receive labourers, consulting with the relevant companies, and distributing and managing labourers.

While the living and working conditions of North Korean overseas labourers are often below commonly accepted standards, the DPRK has recently been demanding better working conditions for their labourers – especially for those in Chinese factories.⁹⁸

⁹² MSMT Participating State information

⁹³ MSMT Participating State information

⁹⁴ MSMT Participating State information

⁹⁵ MSMT Participating State information; Voice of America, "U.S. State Department on Reports of North Korean Workers Entering China: "China Continues to Undermine Implementation of UN Sanctions Against North Korea", 24 April 2026, <https://www.voakorea.com/a/state-department-says-china-undermining-u-n-sanctions-on-north-korea-amid-reports-of-dprk-workers-entering-china-042326/8141759.html>

⁹⁶ MSMT Participating State information

⁹⁷ MSMT Participating State information

⁹⁸ MSMT Participating State information

Spotlight: North Korean Overseas Worker Deployments through the Dandong Customs Area⁹⁹

Since May 2025, North Korean labourers entering China through Dandong Customs have been frequently witnessed arriving by bus to the customs office. Upon arrival, immigration procedures are reportedly conducted inside the buses. The labourers are then transported to the North Korean Consular Office in Dandong City and later directly to their designated workplaces by bus.

In October 2025, 11 empty coach buses with heavily tinted windows and bearing no signage departed for North Korea from the Dandong Customs area. Some time later, the coaches returned from North Korea with passengers. Half an hour later, one of the coaches carrying many young women departed from Dandong Customs, heading to the west area of Dandong City.

In May 2026, two coach buses carrying people believed to be North Korean labourers departed from Dandong Customs. These buses were escorted by a vehicle bearing a license plate of the North Korean Consular Office in Dandong City. A Chinese public security officer was also observed at the Dandong Customs area, as shown in the photographs below.

These arrangements may be a sign of intent to dispatch and receive labourers discreetly.

⁹⁹ MSMT Participating State information

Dandong Customs



Normal passengers and luggage are usually gathered here, but when this photo was taken, there was no one there, which seemed unusual.



Tents built at the Dandong Customs facility building possibly to obstruct the view of passengers.

Public security officer



Public security patrol car



The coach windows were darkly tinted



No signboard indicating a company name or destination



Figure 2: North Korean labourers boarding multiple buses while being concealed under temporary shelters at Dandong Customs, alongside Chinese public security officers as well as a black SUV bearing the North Korean Consulate's licence plate, indicated by the yellow circle in the picture above. Pictures taken in October 2025 and May 2026.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ MSMT Participating State information

Additional Cases and Examples of North Korean Labourers in China

Kaishantun Industrial Park, Longjing City, Jilin Province, China

Kaishantun Industrial Park was built by the Longjing City Government to promote investment and aimed to attract up to six companies. As of March 2025, it had signed contracts with four companies and some factories were already in operation. According to the government-affiliated media, companies operating in *Kaishantun Industrial Park* are commercial partners of major Chinese apparel companies such as “Bosideng (波司登)” and “Yaloo (雅鹿)”.¹⁰¹ There is a possibility that North Korean labourers are involved in the production of “Original Equipment Manufacturer” (OEM) products for famous apparel brands, as Bosideng has an OEM business with global companies.¹⁰²

Figure 3: Chinese companies known to operate in *Kaishantun Industrial Park*

Company Name	Establishment
Yanbian Xinmeida Industrial Co., Ltd.	April 2023
Jilin Chaoxian Clothing Co., Ltd.	June 2023
Jilin Siyun Clothing Co., Ltd.	Unknown

Since September 2025, approximately 4,600 North Korean labourers have been dispatched to *Kaishantun Industrial Park* in Longjing City by *O-il Trading Corporation*. North Korea’s *O-il Trading Corp.* is a key player in dispatching North Korean labourers.¹⁰³ And as of December 2025, it is estimated that *O-il Trading Corp.* has dispatched approximately 5,000 labourers to Hunchun Industrial Park in Hunchun City in Jilin Province.¹⁰⁴

Dispatches to Border Cities in Liaoning and Jilin Provinces, China

In 2025, an estimated total of 7,800 North Korean labourers had been dispatched to Hunchun City, Jilin Province in China. In May 2025, around 500 more labourers arrived in Dandong City, Liaoning Province, where they were assigned to local clothing factories and seafood processing plants.¹⁰⁵ In September 2025, groups of 40 to 50 labourers were dispatched on three separate occasions to seafood processing factories in Dandong City and Donggang City, Liaoning Province, cities with active fisheries and high demand for low-cost labour.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ China Jilin Network, “Longjing Border Economic Cooperation Zone Continues to Focus on Investment Promotion Through “Three Key Aspects””, 27 November 2023, <https://yb.cnjiwang.com/cs/202311/3796612.html>

¹⁰² MSMT Participating State information

¹⁰³ MSMT Participating State information

¹⁰⁴ O-il Trading Corporation is headquartered in Mangyongdae District, Pyongyang, represented in Dandong by Kong, Yong-Sim (Age: late 50s to late 60s). The Corporation is alleged to have violated UN sanctions including by dispatching a total of 500 garment factory labourers to China in 2019 and 2020, according to the 2020 UN Security Council Panel of Experts Interim Report.

¹⁰⁵ MSMT Participating State information; Kang Jung-a, “China accepts thousands of North Korean workers, raising sanctions violation concerns”, ChosunBiz, 27 June 2025, <https://biz.chosun.com/en/en-international/2025/06/27/J62Q5CJMHB6FB5JEIU7JXAOLI/>

¹⁰⁶ Seon Hwa, “South Korean NGO: N. Korea sends fresh wave of labourers to China after Kim’s visit”, 22 September 2025, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/north-korea-sends-fresh-wave-workers-china-after-kim-visit/>

North Korean Restaurants in China

In China, approximately 80% of North Korean restaurants are operated by the North Korean Ministry of Physical Culture and Sports.

There has been a recent trend of DPRK restaurant labourers returning to North Korea. Subsequently, in older North Korea-affiliated restaurants near the DPRK embassy in Beijing, as well as newer establishments in suburban areas, North Korean staff have been replaced by Chinese labourers. Female North Korean labourers employed at some North Korean restaurants in Beijing have returned home en masse since late November 2025, and these restaurants have since hired Chinese staff or suspended serving North Korean cuisine.¹⁰⁷ North Korean restaurant labourers in Shenyang City have also been observed purchasing various supplies in preparation of their return to the DPRK. A North Korean restaurant *Moranguan* (牡丹館) in Shenyang City, Liaoning Province, currently employs 5 North Korean staff. According to testimonies from North Korean defectors, Chinese authorities have, more recently, only permitted the deployment of North Korean labourers in border regions while restricting their presence in other parts of the country.¹⁰⁸

Some North Korean restaurant labourers previously working at the North Korean restaurants in Beijing and Shanghai have been relocated to restaurants in Dandong City in Liaoning Province, and the restaurants in Beijing and Shanghai temporarily closed.¹⁰⁹ North Korean labourers have been observed at the restaurants such as *Songdowon restaurant* (松涛园饭店), *Pyongyang Koryo restaurant* (丹东高丽饭店), and *Chosun 3 Beer* (朝鮮 3 啤酒坊).¹¹⁰ However, the company that operated these restaurants in Beijing and Shanghai remains operational, indicating the possibility that these former restaurants could potentially reopen when labourers are available to work.

Approximately 20 North Korean employees newly arrived at a North Korean restaurant in Dandong City around August 2025, with Dandong City believed to have authorised the dispatch of 80 new female labourers to North Korean restaurants. In Dandong City, there is also an increasing trend of new restaurants opening that employ North Korean labourers.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Yonhap News, “Female N. Korean restaurant labourers return home en masse from Beijing since late November: report”, The Korea Times, 17 December 2025, <https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/foreignaffairs/northkorea/20251217/female-n-korean-restaurant-workers-return-home-en-masse-from-beijing-since-late-november-report>

¹⁰⁸ MSMT Participating State information

¹⁰⁹ MSMT Participating State information

¹¹⁰ MSMT Participating State information; the restaurant’s signboard shows “Pyongyang” in English while the Chinese name is indicated as “丹东” (Dandong).

¹¹¹ MSMT Participating State information



Figure 4: A sign board of a newly opened restaurant believed to be a North Korean restaurant “Pyongyang Myohyang Restaurant (平壤妙香馆)” located in Dandong City¹¹²

North Korean IT Workers in China

China is the largest destination for North Korean IT workers and has continuously hosted IT workers in its northeast region.

Between 2016 and 2019, North Korea dispatched at least 52 groups of IT-related labourers, totaling 482 people, to Shenyang City and Dandong City in Liaoning Province, and Yanji City in Jilin Province. Over half of them (289 labourers) had ties with military-related entities in North Korea. Out of the 482 labourers, 358 were dispatched to Shenyang City, 95 to Dandong City, and 29 to Yanji City.

It appears that revenue obtained through work carried out by North Korean IT workers is being consolidated online. One such case has been observed when in October 2025 a cybersecurity expert monitoring chat groups on the digital platform *Slack* among North Korean IT workers (although their location is unknown) revealed that a designated collection officer regularly specified addresses to which obtained cryptocurrency should be sent and urged monthly transfers. See the box below for the wallet addresses of the recipients and the contact details of the person in charge in the *Slack* chat. The phone numbers provided are registered in North Korea.

¹¹² MSMT Participating State information

ADDRESS FOR DEPOSIT :

Following addresses are fixed for your unit from August 14th (2025) till I provide new ones. Pls deposit at any time and leave transaction URL though I get offline.

bep:OXCa607C13Fdef4C756baB09B79d441667346c98be
trc:TM75V8LSFulhjby9tcURiaSuppR1ebyLNz

Bigant contact for deposit: Hera

Phonenumber:02-523-3458 / 191-259-6525

Financial section Mrs.Jang:191-510-8277 / 02-523-3616

Best regards

From payment team lead-Hera

2025.8.23

- bep: Token standard used in the BSC network
- trc: Token standard used in the TRON network

However, IT workers in China have recently been facing operational challenges due to stricter and increased surveillance by Chinese authorities. Concurrently, there have been reports of North Korean IT workers being arrested in China for engaging in espionage activities. In particular, in April 2025, a North Korean IT worker dispatched to China was reportedly arrested and detained by Chinese public security authorities for allegedly stealing Chinese military secrets.¹¹³

Moreover, stricter and increased surveillance has restricted DPRK's ability to deploy new batches of IT workers. As of July 2025, North Korean IT workers have had trouble entering China. Consequently, a North Korean trading company, which operates an IT business in Dandong, has leased a building in the North Korean city of Sinuiju along the Chinese border. There, North Korean IT workers can utilize Chinese internet lines, undertake overseas video production orders and earn foreign currency without needing to enter China. As reported in the October 2025 MSMT report on North Korea's cyber and IT worker activities, the DPRK is expanding its capacity to base IT workers domestically, enabling them to avoid the consequences of conducting IT worker operations overseas and further evade sanctions.¹¹⁴

Other DPRK-affiliated enterprises are attempting to disguise their IT workers from Chinese oversight. According to an MSMT Participating State, a DPRK-affiliated IT company attempted to secure residency permits from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China by disguising its IT personnel as employees of a DPRK trading company. Another DPRK company attempted to deploy dozens of IT workers to China under the guise of garment processing labourers.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Hyun Ye-seul, "North Korean IT Technician Steals Military Technology from Blood Ally China... Arrested and Detained by Public Security", JoongAng Ilbo, 29 April 2025, <https://joongang.co.kr/article/25332333>; Micah McCartney, "China's Arrest of North Korea Spy Reveals Cracks in Xi-Kim Alliance", Newsweek, 8 May 2025, <https://newsweek.com/china-north-korea-spy-arrest-military-espionage-xi-kim-alliance-2069558>

¹¹⁴ Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team, "The DPRK's Violation and Evasion of UN Sanctions Through Cyber and Information Technology Worker Activities", October 2025, <https://msmt.info/Publications/detail/MSMT%20Report/4221>

¹¹⁵ MSMT Participating State information

As of November 2025, a North Korean diplomatic mission in China reportedly collects and centrally manages cryptocurrency stolen by North Korean IT workers or APT groups.¹¹⁶ Under this system, mission staff cash out the cryptocurrency and remit the funds to North Korea. Staff of the North Korean diplomatic mission are converting cryptocurrency into cash through Chinese collaborators and transferring the funds to North Korea. As noted in the October 2025 MSMT report, North Korea relies heavily on collaborators such as Chinese underground banks and over-the-counter (OTC) brokers to convert cryptocurrency into cash, and China remains the primary hub for money laundering.

Clothing Manufacturing in China

In December 2025, a garment factory in Dandong City employed approximately 150 North Korean labourers excluding managerial staff. Labourers were women aged 24 to 42, with over half in their 20s, all from the DPRK's Jagang Province, and without previous related work experience. Some North Korean trading companies have outsourced the selection process to administrative agencies in Pyongyang and other regions of North Korea.¹¹⁷

During the same month, a contract was signed between a Chinese clothing company and North Korea's *Mangyongbong Trading Corp.* providing for the dispatch of personnel, consisting primarily of women between the ages of 18 and 35. Working hours are set at 8 hours per day, 6 days a week, with national holidays of both countries observed, which is an outlier compared to available evidence on working conditions of North Korean labourers in China.

Similarly, North Korean entity *Korea Pusong Corp.* agreed to dispatch a total of 1,000 female labourers to a Chinese garment manufacturing company in late April 2025 through an intermediary organization.¹¹⁸ Although a document issued by the Chinese facilitating organization states that "we will accept North Korean trainees and provide training to promote economic and personnel exchanges between China and North Korea", available information suggests that the activities involve regular employment rather than genuine training.

Taken together, these cases highlight the continued deployment of North Korean labourers, particularly female workers, to China's garment manufacturing sector. They also illustrate how such deployments may be facilitated through North Korean trading companies and intermediary organizations and framed as technical cooperation or training, although available information indicates that the workers are engaged in regular employment.

¹¹⁶ An APT (Advanced Persistent Threat) group is a highly skilled cybercriminal group that conducts stealthy, long-term targeted attacks on specific networks to steal data or spy.

¹¹⁷ MSMT Participating State information

¹¹⁸ MSMT Participating State information

5. North Korean Labourers in Russia

According to testimonies from North Korean defectors and information from MSMT Participating States, there are currently 15,000 to 30,000 North Korean labourers in Russia affiliated with 70 to 80 North Korean companies.¹¹⁹ North Korea divides Russia into four operational regions, with its embassy in Moscow, its St. Petersburg office, its consulate general in Vladivostok, and its Khabarovsk office each overseeing the dispatch of labourers and the overall management of the workers' activities in their respective regions of concern. Third-country facilitators may also be involved in recruiting and deploying North Korean overseas labourers to Russia, including at least one individual in Belarus.¹²⁰

Russia hosts the second highest number of North Korean overseas labourers, falling just behind China. The number of North Korean overseas labourers has expanded greatly since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. North Korean labourers provide much-needed labour in the fields of manufacturing and construction, including a contingent deployed at Russia's Alabuga Special Economic Zone (SEZ), which is involved in the supply of drones to the Russian armed forces for use against Ukraine.¹²¹

Each North Korean labourer in Russia generates an average estimated \$7,500 in wages annually, nearly all of which is forfeited to the DPRK state.¹²²

In recent years, Russia and the DPRK have built an extensive ecosystem of state-led sanctions evasion activities and corruption. Their practices include utilizing student and tourist visas instead of work permits, adjusting Russian law to allow those on student visas to earn income, bribing Russian universities, and employing a network of intermediaries to obscure the presence and scale of North Korean labourers in Russia.¹²³

One study which included interviews with North Koreans who escaped Russia between 2018 and 2023 showed that, at that time, there were approximately 15,000 North Korean labourers working in Russia, despite UN sanctions.¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ MSMT Participating State information

¹²⁰ Reformation, "Dallas investigators revealed how a MAZ engineer helps evade sanctions", 11 February 2026, <https://reform.news/rassledovateli-dallas-rasskazali-kak-inzhener-maza-pomogaet-obhodit-sankcii>

¹²¹ MSMT Participating State information; Fararu, "Shahed drone upgraded to hunt Ukrainian attack helicopters", 3 February 2026, <https://fararu.com/fa/news/944712>; Robert Stefanicki, "North Korea to send military engineers to Russian drone factories", Gazeta Wyborcza Online, 31 December 2025, <https://wyborcza.pl/7,75399,32500090,korea-polnocna-wysle-wojskowych-inzynierow-do-rosyjskich-fabryk.html>; Anton Sokolin, "North Korea plans to send 12,000 workers to Russian drone factories: Ukraine" NK News, 14 November 2025, <https://www.nknews.org/2025/11/north-korea-plans-to-send-12000-workers-to-russian-drone-factories-ukraine/>; Lim Jeong-Won, "North May Send 25,000 Workers To Russian Drone Factory, NHK Reports", JoongAng Ilbo Online, 19 June 2025 <https://www.koreajoongangdaily.com/korea/north-may-send-25000-workers-to-russian-drone-factory-nhk-reports/12067277>

¹²² MSMT Participating State information

¹²³ Unique Kim, "Transnational Repression and Exploitation of North Korean labourers in Russia" Database for North Korean Human Rights, 22 September 2025, <https://en.nkdb.org/researchreport/?bmode=view&idx=167892918>

¹²⁴ Unique Kim, "Transnational Repression and Exploitation of North Korean labourers in Russia" Database for North Korean Human Rights, 22 September 2025, <https://en.nkdb.org/researchreport/?bmode=view&idx=167892918>

According to a March 2026 report by the non-governmental organization Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights (NKHR), over 110 companies, organizations, and individuals have been identified as associated with North Korean business operations in Russia. To facilitate the dispatch of its workers to Russia, the DPRK relies on a vast web of opaque entities that operates in a manner akin to a "mushroom network", where the establishment of one company leads to the subsequent creation of numerous affiliated entities, and the closure of one company is often followed by the establishment of a clone under a different name. The NKHR report shows that this pattern is a recurring theme that is consistently evident throughout the DPRK's many efforts to dispatch workers globally.¹²⁵

Spotlight: Sanctions Evasion Using Russian Student Visas

In 2025, nearly all North Korean labourers entered Russia on student visas, posing as international students. Notably, following the adoption of UNSCR 2375 (2017), which prohibits Member States from providing work authorizations to DPRK nationals, the number of Russian student visas issued to DPRK nationals has increased significantly (41 student visas in 2017, 3,124 visas in 2018, 10,876 visas in 2019). Student visas continuously exceed the number of Russian work visas reportedly issued to North Koreans.

After a decline during the COVID-19-related border closures, the number of student visas rose again in 2024 with 8,617 visas issued to North Koreans that year. In 2025, that number increased to 35,839. Meanwhile, according to official numbers released by the Russian government, the issuance of work visas to DPRK nationals has declined sharply since 2018, reaching zero in 2020 and thereafter.

According to a September 2025 report issued by the non-governmental organization Database Center for North Korean Human Rights (NKDB), Russia amended its Federal Law on the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens in the Russian Federation in February 2020, allowing full-time foreign students who join a state-accredited professional educational program to work without an additional work permit.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Dr. Joanna Hosaniak, Ji-yoon Lee, Bitna Kim, "Financing Oppression and Weapons Program: Russia-North Korea Joint Venture Through Military and Security Forces", NKHR, 25 March 2026, https://en.nkhr.or.kr/?act=board&bbs_code=survey&bbs_mode=view&bbs_seq=3517

¹²⁶ Unique Kim, "Transnational Repression and Exploitation of North Korean labourers in Russia", 22 September 2025, <https://en.nkdb.org/researchreport/?bmode=view&idx=167892918> (describing Russian Federal Law 16-FZ)

Figure 5: Number of visas issued by the Russian Consulate General in North Korea (2015-2025)¹²⁷

Year	Official	Personal	Business	Tour	Study	Work	Humanitarian	Transit	Total
2015	1	5	3	10	113	12,466	171	90	12,859
2016	-	24	19	9	62	11,853	81	27	12,075
2017	3	10	73	7	41	10,809	103	240	11,286
2018	29	7	1,214	2	3,124	232	113	254	4,975
2019	1	52	844	14	10,876	429	121	157	12,494
2020	1	-	26	-	1,469	-	-	87	1,583
2021	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2023	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
2024	68	3	179	6	8,617	-	307	60	9,240
2025	33	6	47	72	35,839	-	266	150	36,413

In 2024, the number of DPRK nationals who entered Russia on student visas surged from 38 in Q1 to 3,752 in Q4. Meanwhile, a senior Russian official stated that only 96 DPRK students were enrolled in Russian universities in 2024, accounting for only one percent of the total number of DPRK nationals that had arrived on student visas that year.¹²⁸ This discrepancy indicates that most North Korean entrants were not genuine students.

In 2025 the Russian government issued a total of 36,413 visas to North Koreans, according to official statistics. This is approximately four times the number of visas issued to North Koreans in 2024. Of these visas, more than 98% were issued as student visas for the purpose of 'education'.¹²⁹

After entering Russia on student visas, North Korean labourers are deployed to construction sites, agricultural/husbandry farms, and logging sites across the country under the guise of on-site training. The selection and approval process usually takes five to six months, and student visas typically remain valid for one to three years. In some cases, North Korean labourers reportedly use photocopies of previously obtained student visas rather than valid student visas.¹³⁰ Companies that secure student visas for workers often pass related costs, including tuition and bribes, on to workers, garnishing their wages and subjecting them to debt bondage.¹³¹

¹²⁷ Official consular statistics reported by the Russian Federation:

<https://www.kdmid.ru/opendata/7704206201-country-visas>

¹²⁸ The Moscow Times, "North Korea Makes Russian Language a Required School Subject, Minister Says", 27 November 2025, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/11/27/north-korea-makes-russian-language-a-required-school-subject-minister-says-a91259>

¹²⁹ Anton Sokolin, "Russia issued over 36K visas to North Koreans in 2025, almost all for education" 1 April 2026, <https://www.nknews.org/2026/04/russia-issued-over-36k-visas-to-north-koreans-in-2025-almost-all-for-education/?share=63372464>

¹³⁰ Kosmos Khoroshavin, Dylan Carter, "Workers of the world: Modern-day slave labor is being imported from North Korea into Russia despite a UN ban" The Insider, 20 June 2025, <https://theins.ru/en/inv/282300>

¹³¹ Unique Kim, "Transnational Repression and Exploitation of North Korean labourers in Russia", 22 September 2025, <https://en.nkdb.org/researchreport/?bmode=view&idx=167892918>, pages 8-10.

North Korean labourers are concentrated in the Far East, including Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, and Sakhalin, but some operate in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Irkutsk as well.¹³² They are mainly employed in construction, agriculture, and simple processing work. However, up to 1,000 workers are employed at critical sites, including weapons factories, steel processing plants or shipbuilding complexes.¹³³

With deepening bilateral cooperation between the DPRK and Russia, the number of North Korean labourers in Russia is expected to increase. That expectation is bolstered by factors such as the resumption of direct train routes between Pyongyang and Moscow in June 2025, the launch of new direct flights between the two capitals in July 2025, and the expected completion of the new Khasan-Tumangang border bridge in summer 2026.¹³⁴

Spotlight: North Korean Labourers Supporting Russia's Defence Industrial Base

North Korean overseas labourers are reportedly employed in Russia's manufacturing industry including as many as 25,000 North Korean labourers at a widely-sanctioned Russian drone factory in Alabuga, Tatarstan.¹³⁵ In 2025, Russia completed construction of a vast housing complex at the Alabuga Special Economic Zone (SEZ) to house foreign workers, including reportedly workers from the DPRK.¹³⁶ In early 2025, a Russian arms dealer sought DPRK nationals for unspecified labour purposes in Russia.¹³⁷

The DPRK has promoted the deployment of labourers to Russian Geran-2 drone factories in the Alabuga SEZ in Tatarstan, Russia since 2025.¹³⁸ The Alabuga SEZ is a specialized economic district that hosts manufacturing and processing facilities, including unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) assembly lines.

¹³² MSMT Participating State information

¹³³ MSMT Participating State information

¹³⁴ Heejin Kim, "North Korea, Russia aim to open new road bridge soon, KCNA says", Reuters, 22 April 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/north-korea-russia-aim-open-new-road-bridge-soon-kcna-says-2026-04-23/>

¹³⁵ MSMT Participating State information; Fararu, "Shahed" drone upgraded to hunt Ukrainian attack helicopters", 3 February 2026, <https://fararu.com/fa/news/944712>; Robert Stefanicki, "North Korea to send military engineers to Russian drone factories", Gazeta Wyborcza Online, 31 December 2025, <https://wyborcza.pl/7,75399,32500090,korea-polnocna-wysle-wojskowych-inzynierow-do-rosyjskich-fabryk.html>; Anton Sokolin, "North Korea plans to send 12,000 workers to Russian drone factories: Ukraine" NK News, 14 November 2025, <https://www.nknews.org/2025/11/north-korea-plans-to-send-12000-workers-to-russian-drone-factories-ukraine/>; Lim Jeong-Won, "North May Send 25,000 Workers To Russian Drone Factory, NHK Reports", JoongAng Ilbo Online, 19 June 2025, <https://www.koreajoongangdaily.com/korea/north-may-send-25000-workers-to-russian-drone-factory-nhk-reports/12067277>; Yomiuri, "Russia to Mobilize 12,000 North Korean labourers for Drone Factory, 12-Hour Workdays...Ukraine Points Out" 16 November 2025, <https://www.yomiuri.co.jp/world/20251116-OYT1T50022/>.

¹³⁶ David Albright, Spencer Faragasso, Institute for Science and International Security, "Major Developments at Alabuga SEZ Point to Significant Expansion in Military Drone Production", 28 July 2025, <https://isis-online.org/isis-reports/major-developments-at-alabuga-sez-point-to-significant-expansion-in-military-drone-production>

¹³⁷ MSMT Participating State information

¹³⁸ Rose Adams, "Alabuga: The Latest Destination for North Korea's Drone Ambitions", 28 North, 17 December 2025, <https://38north.org/2025/12/alabuga-the-latest-destination-for-north-koreas-drone-ambitions/>

In November 2025, Ukrainian Defence Intelligence estimated that up to 12,000 North Korean labourers could be dispatched to Alabuga that year. Ukrainian officials have also reported that Russia committed to an hourly wage of approximately \$2.50 for North Korean labourers, who are expected to work at least 12 hours per day. Information from an MSMT Participating State confirms that labourers have been deployed by the DPRK for these purposes, although the numbers deployed are, so far, lower than existing estimates.

The deployment of North Korean labourers to Russian UAV factories indicates that DPRK-Russia cooperation has expanded into the production phase of military arms. The produced UAVs have a military purpose and are deployed on the battlefield in Ukraine. UNSCR 2270 (2016) prohibits specialized teaching or training of DPRK nationals in disciplines which could contribute to the development of nuclear weapon delivery systems, including teaching or training in aeronautical engineering and related disciplines. UNSCR 2321 (2016) further prohibits all scientific and technical cooperation with the DPRK, subject to limited exceptions.

Russia seems to be highly interested in deploying North Korean labourers to various defence industry sectors, including armored fighting vehicles and fighter jets, significantly increasing the risk of knowledge transfer to the DPRK.¹³⁹ This could constitute a violation of the arms embargo on North Korea under UNSCRs.¹⁴⁰

In spring 2025, DPRK-based corporation *Jihyang Trading Company* (also known as *Jihyang Technology Trade Company*, *Jihyang Associated Corporation*), was invited to provide several hundred metalworkers to a Russian automotive company.¹⁴¹ Additionally, in late 2025, a *Jihyang Trading Company* representative coordinated employment in Russia for approximately 15 North Korean labourers from DPRK's *Kumrung Construction Company*.¹⁴² MSMT Participating State information indicates *Jihyang Trading Company* is involved in the recruitment of North Korean labourers to be deployed to work in Russian drone manufacturing industry.¹⁴³ Previous UN Panel of Experts reports have linked *Jihyang Trading Company* to DPRK sanctions violations.¹⁴⁴ According to the UN Panel of Experts report in 2022, *Jihyang Technology Trade Company* is believed to be an alias of the UN-designated *Green Pine Associated Corporation* (KPe.010), the DPRK's primary arms dealer and exporter of goods and equipment related to ballistic missiles and conventional weapons.¹⁴⁵

¹³⁹ MSMT Participating State information

¹⁴⁰ Specifically, UNSCR 1718 (2006), UNSCR 1874 (2009) and UNSCR 2270 (2016).

¹⁴¹ MSMT Participating State information

¹⁴² MSMT Participating State information

¹⁴³ MSMT Participating State information; Robert Stefanicki, "North Korea to send military engineers to Russian drone factories", *Gazeta Wyborcza Online*, 31 December 2025, <https://wyborcza.pl/7,75399,32500090,korea-polnocna-wysle-wojskowych-inzynierow-do-rosyjskich-fabryk.html>; Euronews, "North Korea makes progress on its first nuclear-powered submarine", Euronews, 25 December 2025, <https://www.euronews.com/2025/12/25/north-korea-makes-progress-on-its-first-nuclear-powered-submarine>

¹⁴⁴ United Nations Security Council Panel of Experts, S/2023/656, Midterm Report, 12 September 2023, <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2023/656>

¹⁴⁵ MSMT Participating State information; United Nations Security Council Panel of Experts, S/2022/668, 7 September 2022, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n22/608/53/pdf/n2260853.pdf>; United Nations Security Council Panel of Experts, S/2023/656, Midterm Report, 12 September 2023, <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2023/656>

Spotlight: Interstate Migration Center (IMC) (Межгосударственный Миграционный Центр)

Employment of North Korean labourers by Russian companies is primarily arranged by *Interstate Migration Center* (IMC), a Russian private staffing company established in 2003 that assists Russian companies in the recruitment and management of foreign labourers, including North Koreans. IMC publicly solicits Russian companies interested in hiring North Korean labourers through its official website and its social media.¹⁴⁶

According to a Russian news report, Sergei Tkachuk, the company representative, asserted that the IMC's arrangement of North Korean labourers was lawful, arguing that North Korean individuals were admitted as students engaged in "job training".¹⁴⁷

Russian educational institutions cooperating with IMC are believed to receive fees from IMC in return for providing enrollment certificates and other documents necessary for student visa issuance, as well as acting as the inviting party for North Korean visa applicants.

An IMC group chat on Telegram indicates that IMC provides information on hiring North Korean labourers. It advises interested parties that the DPRK demands a minimum hiring quota of 100 labourers per recipient company and requires that the recipient company's operation be stable with at least three years of history. An upfront payment of approximately \$1,600 (including visa issuance fees, air tickets, etc.) is required to hire one North Korean labourer, plus a brokerage fee of approximately \$257 per worker. IMC also requires the DPRK to pay, for each North Korean labourer entering Russia, a fixed contribution of \$45 and a tuition fee equivalent to 8.7 percent of the worker's salary to Russian institution *Sodeystviye Arts and Humanities College*.¹⁴⁸

Moreover, IMC and Russian educational institutions reportedly require an administration fee of approximately \$700 from organizations seeking to hire North Korean labourers.¹⁴⁹ The monthly salary per worker, which is separate from the upfront payment, is reportedly more than \$1,100.

Some North Korean companies dispatch their labourers by negotiating directly with Russian companies without using intermediary agencies such as IMC.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Website of the Interstate Migration Centre: <https://mmc-rspp.ru/>

¹⁴⁷ Kosmos Khoroshavin, Dylan Carter, "Workers of the world: Modern-day slave labor is being imported from North Korea into Russia despite a UN ban", *The Insider*, 20 June 2025, <https://theins.ru/en/inv/282300>

¹⁴⁸ Kosmos Khoroshavin, Dylan Carter, "Workers of the world: Modern-day slave labor is being imported from North Korea into Russia despite a UN ban", *The Insider*, 20 June 2025, <https://theins.ru/en/inv/282300>

¹⁴⁹ Anton Sokolin, "Inside Russia's system for disguising North Korean labourers as student 'trainees'" *NK News*, 2 December 2025, <https://www.nknews.org/pro/inside-russias-system-for-disguising-north-korean-workers-as-student-trainees/?t=1773385635>

¹⁵⁰ MSMT Participating State information

Figure 6: Description of Interstate Migration Center (IMC)

From its official website <https://www.mmc-rspp-ru:>

Original Russian: Привлечение на Российские предприятия рабочих из Северной Кореи (КНДР) является остро востребованным. Работники из Северной Кореи наиболее востребованы в строительном секторе, сельском хозяйстве и многих других отраслях Российской экономики.

English Translation: “There is a pressing need to attract labourers from North Korea (DPRK) to Russian enterprises. Labourers from North Korea are most in demand in the construction sector, agriculture and many other sectors of the Russian economy”.

Representative	 Name: Sergei Tkachuk¹⁵¹
Associated Entity	International Congress of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (ICIE)¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Sergei Tkachuk is a former government official who has served in Moscow municipal government agencies since the 2000s. He currently oversees and manages the facilitation of North Korean labourer recruitment.

¹⁵² ICIE is a pro-government entity chaired by Artyom Chaika, son of Yuri Chaika, the Presidential Envoy to the North Caucasus Federal District. Artyom Chaika is currently subject to sanctions by the U.S., UK, Canada, and EU for his alleged involvement in supporting the Russian government and state-owned enterprises.

Figure 7: IMC official website

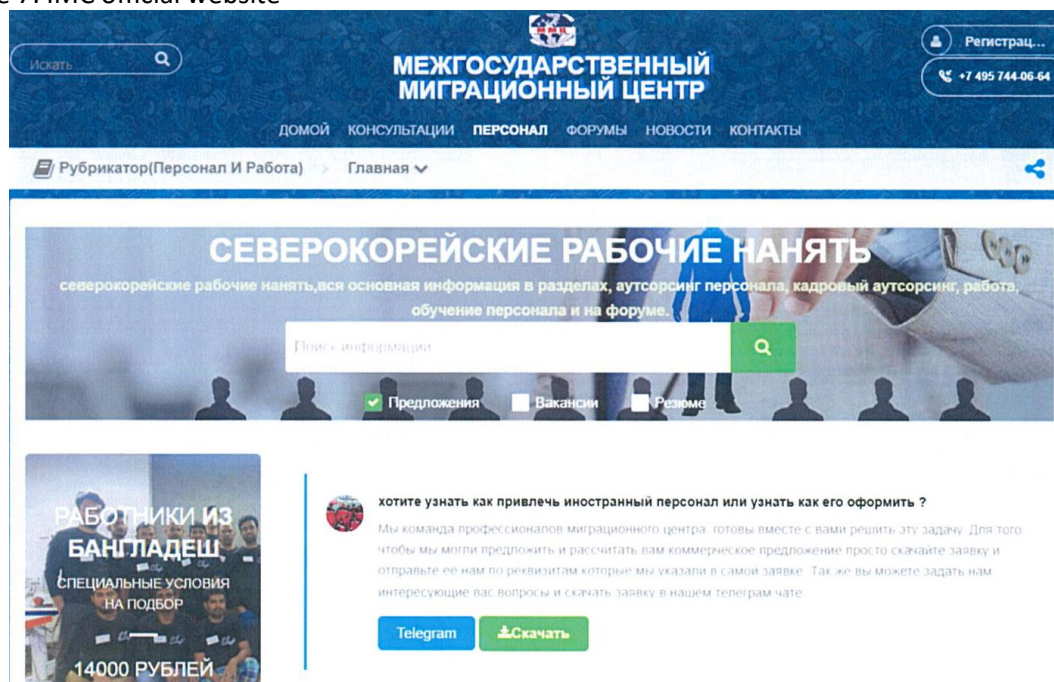


Figure 8: Information on hiring North Korean labourers posted on Telegram

Original post in Russian	English Translation
Сергей Ткачук 15:27 Добрый час! По работникам из КНДР, на сегодняшний день возможно привлечение работников из КНДР только в качестве практики выезжающих для этого в РФ, по учебной визе, которая по закону дает возможность официально принимать на работу таких работников. Учебная виза, на таких работников действует от 1 до 3 лет. Так же со стороны посольства КНДР, к работодателям планирующие привлекать таких работников, имеются особые требования: 1- Заказ не менее 100 человек, Компания должна быть не менее трех лет, должна отсутствовать задолженность по налогам и компания должна быть финансово состоятельной. 2- Ориентировочная стоимость, за подбор и документы для работы в РФ: Медицинский осмотр и справка 6\$; выдана загранпаспорта 60\$; выдана приглашения 15\$; сборы за выдану въездных виз 80\$; свидетельства о здоровье международного пассажира 3\$; страховка 25\$; оформление учебной визы 600\$; сборы за вылет, 3\$; перелет из Пхеньяна-Владивосток-Москва: 805\$. - Итого 1599\$. Оплачивается корейской стороне. - Подбор и сопровождение: 20 000 р. 3- Ежемесячный платеж: 3500 руб + 8,7% от зарплаты на руки – оплачивается в образовательный центр. - Срок подбора и согласования 5-6 месяцев. - Минимальная зарплата при режиме 6/1 – 11 часов – швей – от 70 000 рублей; Комп/предл-подбор-5у-ба.pdf 230,5 KB - Показать в Finder 15:28	Sergei Tkachuk Good day! For employees from the DPRK, today it is possible to attract workers from the DPRK only as a practice of those entering the Russian Federation for this purpose, on a study visa, which by law makes it possible to officially hire such workers. The study visa is valid for such employees from 1 to 3 years. Also, on the part of the Embassy of the DPRK, there are special requirements for employers planning to attract such workers: 1- Order of at least 100 people, the company must be at least three years old, must have no tax arrears and the company must be financially solvable. 2- Estimated cost, for selection and documents for work in the Russian Federation: Medical examination and certificate \$6; issuance of a passport \$60; issuance of an invitation \$15; Fees for issuing entry visas \$80; international passenger health certificate \$3; insurance \$25; Registration of a study visa \$600; departure fees \$3; flight from Pyongyang-Vladivostok-Moscow: \$805. Total \$1,599. Paid to the Korean side Selection and support 20,000 rubles. 3- Monthly payment: 3,500 rubles + 8.7% of the salary on hand - paid to the educational centre. The

	term of selection and approval is 5-6 months. Minimum wage under 6/1 mode - 11 hours - seamstresses - from 70,000 rubles;
Сергей Ткачук Добрый час! Решение приняли? Юлия Веретенникова Здравствуйте. У нас возник вопрос, насколько это закононо? Не будет ли у нас проблем?? И еще по поводу языка, нужен будет обязательно переводчик для всех? И если они будут студентами, нужно ли им будет еще и учиться? Будет ли у них какое-то специальное сопровождение ответственного работника? Вот такие вопросы нас интересуют Сергей Ткачук Юлия Веретенникова Здравствуйте. У нас возник вопрос, насколько это закононо? Не будет ли у... С Работниками будет заключаться ученический договор, в рамках которого заработная плата (стипендия) не облагается налогами. Стипендия (зарплата) и все дополнительные выплаты осуществляются на расчетные счета уполномоченной учебной организации, фактически все студенты (работники) работающие по данному механизму принадлежат уполномоченной компании, возможности заказчика (работодателя) в данном случае минимальны. Так же, по законодательству РФ, все работники проходящие практику, в дальнейшем должны быть официально приняты организацией на работу, что сделать практически будет невозможно из за Санкций Совета ООН. В этом случае налоговая может задним числом доначислить все налоги по НДФЛ, ФСС и т.д.	Sergei Tkachuk Good day! Have you made a decision? Yulia Veretennikova¹⁵³ Hello. We have a question, how legal is it? Will we have any problems?? And also about the language, will you need a translator for everyone? And if they become students, will they also need to study? Will they have any special support of a responsible employee? These are the questions we are interested in Sergei Tkachuk A student contract will be concluded with the employees, under which wages (scholarship) are not taxed. The scholarship (salary) and all additional payments are made to the settlement accounts of the authorised educational organisation, in fact all students (employees) working under this mechanism belong to the authorised company, the capabilities of the customer (employer) in this case are minimal. Also, according to the legislation of the Russian Federation, all employees undergoing practice must be officially hired by the organisation in the future, which will be almost impossible to do because of the sanctions of the UN Security Council. In this case, the tax office can retroactively accrue all taxes on personal income tax, FSS, etc.
Сергей Ткачук Юлия добрый час! Какое решение приняли, просто сейчас осталось подобранных 200 швей, на них можно подать документы, если их заберут, то потом придется опять подбирать, это примерно 2-2,5 месяца плюс! Юлия Веретенникова Здравствуйте. Наверное, только один вопрос у нас остался. По поводу учебного заведения, студенты которого будут проходить у нас практику. Это порядочное заведение? Сергей Ткачук Юлия Веретенникова Здравствуйте. Наверное, только один вопрос у нас остался. По поводу уче... Это учебный центр определенный Межправительственной Комиссией по торгово экономическому сотрудничеству между КНДР и РФ! АНПОО "ХГК "СОДЕЙСТВИЕ"	Sergei Tkachuk Yulia, good hour! What a decision they made, it's just that now there are 200 seamstresses left, you can apply for them, if they are taken away, then you'll have to pick them up again, it's about 2-2.5 months plus! Yulia Veretennikova Hello. Probably, we only have one question left. Regarding the educational institution, whose students will do their internship with us? Is this a decent place? Sergei Tkachuk This is a training centre determined by the Intergovernmental Commission for Trade and Economic Cooperation between the DPRK and the Russian Federation! -NPOO "KGC "ASSISTANCE"

¹⁵³ This individual is depicted discussing North Korean overseas labourers with Sergei Tkachuk.

Spotlight: Sodeystviye Arts and Humanities College¹⁵⁴

Russian facilitators, such as non-profit educational institution *Sodeystviye Arts and Humanities College* based in Moscow, arrange the entry and stay of North Korean labourers in Russia. *Sodeystviye College* facilitates the issuance of student visas to North Korean labourers and generated approximately 75 million rubles (about \$970,000) in revenue in 2024, five times more than the previous year. Established in 2000 in Moscow, *Sodeystviye* operates branch offices in Sakhalin and Irkutsk. *Sodesystviye* and its representative, Aleksandr Fyodorovich Panfilov, were sanctioned by the Republic of Korea (ROK) in April 2024 for facilitating the dispatch of North Korean labourers to Russia.¹⁵⁵

In June 2025, a North Korean construction company dispatched approximately 10 female North Korean labourers in their twenties and thirties to a swine farm in Vladivostok operated by an affiliate of a Russian company. The labourers, all from North Korea including Kaesong City, North Hwanghae Province, and South Hwanghae Province, entered Russia on student visas and engaged in manual labour such as feeding pigs and cleaning swine houses for a monthly salary of \$700. *Sodeystviye Arts and Humanities College* was the nominal recipient of the labourers.

In another case involving *Sodeystviye Arts and Humanities College*, approximately 30 North Korean labourers were dispatched to Sakhalin in July 2024 as industrial trainees. *Sodeystviye Arts and Humanities College* is believed to be the entity that issued invitation letters for these labourers. The labourers did not appear to have attended any classes at *Sodeystviye Arts and Humanities College* or receive training following their entry into Russia.

According to a March 2026 report by the Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights (NKHR), the DPRK-Russia Intergovernmental Committee for Cooperation in Trade, Economy, Science, and Technology has designated *Sodeystviye College* as the organization that registers North Korean labourers in Russia. Financial data uncovered by NKHR showed that between October 2023 and June 2025, *Sodeystviye College* had disbursed over 2.7 billion rubles (approximately \$30 million) in "scholarships", funded by at least 76 Russian enterprises. Financial records also revealed that North Korean "students" at *Sodeystviye College* had received unusually large "scholarships", ranging from 18,000 to 250,000 rubles (approximately \$234 to \$3,250), which is up to 66 times higher than the average scholarship at Russian educational institutions in 2024.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ MSMT Participating State information

¹⁵⁵ Yi Wonju, "S.Korea slaps sanctions on Russian vessels, others linked to N.K.'s arms transfer, illegal dispatch of labourers", Yonhap News Agency, April 2024, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20240402003400315>

¹⁵⁶ Dr. Joanna Hosaniak, Ji-yoon Lee, Bitna Kim, "Financing Oppression and Weapons Program: Russia-North Korea Joint Venture Through Military and Security Forces", NKHR, 25 March 2026, https://en.nkhr.or.kr/?act=board&bbs_code=survey&bbs_mode=view&bbs_seq=3517

Spotlight: Russia Post and DPRK Intelligence Agency Collaborate to Deploy North Korean Labourers to Russia¹⁵⁷

In early 2025, a DPRK *General Reconnaissance and Intelligence Bureau (GRIB)* representative worked with an official from Russia's national postal operator, *Russia Post*, to plan the deployment of hundreds of North Korean labourers to Russia.

The pair worked with the hiring company, Russia's *ROST Management Company*, on a plan to bring nearly 500 North Korean labourers from DPRK's *Korea Suyangsan Trading Corporation* to work in greenhouses or other agriculture jobs in Russia. The labourers, who would enter Russia under student visas, would be deployed in batches with the first batch consisting of approximately 260 labourers. Due to a lack of translators and managers in the first batch, the entire group would remain together and be sent to Volgograd. The second batch of approximately 240 labourers would be split between the Russian cities of Lipetsk and Yelets.

Across all three locations, the *Russia Post* official confirmed the labourers would work 11-hour days, 6 days a week. The average monthly salary would range from \$1,425 to \$1,543 (120,000 to 130,000 Russian rubles). As part of the plan, *ROST Management Company* would work with another Russian company, *Sodeystviye LLC*, which is a nonprofit professional educational organization art and humanities college.

As part of the planning, the *Russia Post* representative noted that the three chosen locations were optimal because they were outside of the DPRK Embassy's direct control and even noted to the GRIB representative that they could both skim each labourer's wages as a "commission". The wages would be paid from *ROST Management Company* to *Sodeystviye LLC*, who would issue each labourer an ATM card connected to a bank account where the wages would be deposited monthly. The *Russia Post* representative and *GRIB* representative planned to keep all of the North Korean labourers' ATM cards, withdraw the entire amount from each account, collect their "commission", and then distribute the remaining wages to each worker. An acceptable "commission" rate would be decided upon with input from *Suyangsan*.

Spotlight: Labour Supply Arrangement between *Pyongyang Rungra Construction Company* and Russia's *ООО «Модуль-Т»*¹⁵⁸

According to testimonies from North Korean defectors, DPRK construction company *Pyongyang Rungra Construction Company* concluded a contract with Russian construction firm *ООО «Модуль-Т»* to dispatch approximately 300 labourers annually.¹⁵⁹ Following the conclusion of the contract, *Pyongyang Rungra Construction Company* selects labourers based on criteria including loyalty to the North Korean state, family background, and criminal records. The list of selected labourers is subsequently reviewed internally by the Worker's Party of Korea before receiving formal approval from the highest level of leadership.

¹⁵⁷ MSMT Participating State information

¹⁵⁸ MSMT Participating State information

¹⁵⁹ MSMT Participating State information; Exact date unknown.

Once the list is finalized, the Consular Bureau of the DPRK Ministry of Foreign Affairs submits the labourers' visa applications to the consular section of the Russian embassy in Pyongyang, which then issues the necessary invitation letters for visa issuance. While work visas are typically valid for three years and require annual renewal, student visas may be issued for up to five years without such annual renewal requirements. As a result, student visas have increasingly been utilized under the guise of training or "work experience".

Under the arrangement, Russian company *Модуль-Т* covers expenses related to accommodation, meals, medical examinations, and administrative processing fees. Upon arrival in Russia, North Korean labourers undergo medical examinations and residence registration and are then assigned to worksites. Once these labourers fulfill the agreed monthly work quota, *Модуль-Т* settles a payment of approximately 80 million rubles (approximately \$1 million) to *Pyongyang Rungra Construction Company*, either in cash or through ruble accounts held by the North Korean company.

Pyongyang Rungra Construction Company subsequently remits these funds to the DPRK through a range of sanctions-evasion methods. These include the physical transportation of cash by (1) officials of the DPRK National Intelligence Agency holding diplomatic passports; (2) diplomatic pouches via North Korean missions in Russia; and (3) company personnel traveling abroad or returning to the DPRK, as well as (4) financial transfers between Russian financial institutions and the UN-sanctioned DPRK *Foreign Trade Bank* (KPe.047). Remittances to the DPRK continue to be facilitated by evolving sanctions-evasions schemes.

Spotlight: Information on North Korean Organizations Facilitating the Dispatch of North Korean Labourers to Russia

O-il Trading Corporation

In the first half of 2025, *O-il Trading Corp.* and *Chonryong Trading General Corp.* each dispatched approximately 500 and 300 labourers to Russia.¹⁶⁰ The UN Security Council 1718 Committee Panel of Experts reports have referenced *Chonryong Trading General Corp.* as a subordinate entity of the UN-designated *Munitions Industry Department* (KPe.028).¹⁶¹

Kumbyol Trading Corporation

Kumbyol Trading Co. likely conducted recruitment activities with the intention of dispatching approximately 3,000 labourers to Vladivostok, Russia.¹⁶² *Kumbyol Trading Co.* was designated as a sanctioned entity by the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) and the government of the Republic of Korea in 2017.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ MSMT Participating State information

¹⁶¹ United Nations Security Council Panel of Experts, S/2020/840, 28 August 2020, <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2020/840> and S/2020/151, 2 March 2020, <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2020/151>

¹⁶² MSMT Participating State information

¹⁶³ US Office of Foreign Assets Control, 21 November 2017, <https://ofac.treasury.gov/recent-actions/20171121>

Mangyongbong Trading Corporation

Mangyongbong Trade Corp. dispatched approximately 500 labourers to Vladivostok by November 2025, and the company received a total of \$500,000 per month in wages (\$1,000 per worker monthly). It is likely that these earnings are sent to China-based facilitators to procure goods and materials for the DPRK.¹⁶⁴

Additional Cases of North Korean Labourers in Russia

Food Processing Industry

In January 2025, a front company for the DPRK's *53 Bureau, Korea Kyongru Trading Corporation*, was contracted to provide 150 workers to a Russian meat processing plant. The workers would be sponsored under student visas and receive an average monthly stipend of approximately \$1,200 or 100,000 Russian rubles.¹⁶⁵

North Korean overseas labourers were slated to be dispatched for work at Russia-based *LLC Gatchinskiy Meat Processing Plant*.¹⁶⁶

In August 2026, an online advertisement for a team of 40 DPRK female workers in Moscow was posted on *Avito*, a major Russian online marketplace. The advertisement highlighted the workers' cooking skills, particularly their ability to prepare kimbap, or Korean-style rolls, and indicated that they are also available for employment at production and conveyor-line facilities, textile factories, and agricultural companies, with hourly wages starting at 480 rubles (\$5.7). The advertisement also noted an important condition for hiring: the team must remain together, with no option to split the workers among different projects.¹⁶⁷

Construction and Warehouse Industry

Most DPRK construction labourers are deployed to the Russian Far East such as Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, and Sakhalin. DPRK construction labourers are also expanding into other regions, including Tomsk in Siberia. As labour shortages in Russia have intensified, demand for DPRK construction labourers is expected to increase further.¹⁶⁸

The *Uljibong Corp.* office in Vladivostok had sent approximately 30 North Korean labourers to Russia as of February 2024. These labourers were dispatched to a construction site in Vladivostok that is managed by a Russian company.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ MSMT Participating State information

¹⁶⁵ MSMT Participating State information

¹⁶⁶ MSMT Participating State information

¹⁶⁷ "40 North Korean women offered for hire as kimbap roll cooks, laborers in Russia", NK News, 12 August 2026, <https://www.nknews.org/2026/08/40-north-korean-women-offered-for-hire-as-kimbap-roll-cooks-laborers-in-russia>

¹⁶⁸ MSMT Participating State information

¹⁶⁹ MSMT Participating State information

During 2024-2025, Russia employed North Korean overseas labourers in its construction industry. Construction projects included, but are not limited to, the building of housing complexes near Russia's space station in Svobodny as well as reconstruction projects in Russia near its border with Ukraine.¹⁷⁰

Figure 9: Online advertisements for DPRK construction teams in the Russian Far East region, December 2025

9 декабря 2025

Корейцы Быстро и недорого! шпаклевк, обои, кафель во Владивостоке

★ Избранное 📌 Заметка ➦ Поделиться

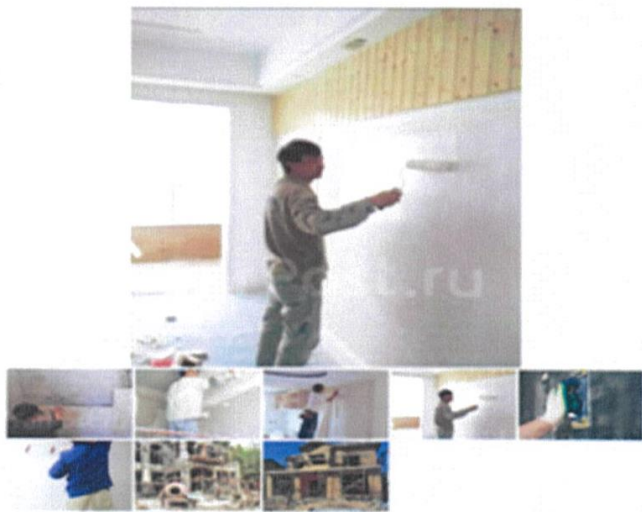
shu8
Автор объявления 2 года, 6 месяцев на сайте
Владивосток

ВСЕ ВИДЫ ОТДЕЛКИ И НЕ ТОЛЬКО ПО НОРМАЛЬНЫМ ЦЕНАМ
Мы предлагаем идеальное решение этого вопроса
Сделаем быстро и качественно!
У нас за плечами более 200 успешных работ

ВЫ МОЖЕТЕ ЗАКАЗАТЬ ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНЫЙ РЕМОНТ В ИСПОЛНЕНИИ ОПЫТНОЙ БРИГАДЫ

- Штукатурка стен
- Поклейка обоев
- Шпаклевка стен
- Покраска обоев
- Шлифовка стен
- Окраска стен и потолка сложными составами
- Побелка стен и потолков

• Удаление старого кафеля со стен или с пола
• Реставрация плиточных швов
• Выравнивание поверхности под укладку кафеля
• Укладка кафеля (работаем с любым видом плитки)



Construction and warehouse labourers in Vladivostok, Russia

Train service between Vladivostok and the North Korean port city of Rajin resumed in May 2025, and Vladivostok-Pyongyang flights by North Korean airline *Air Koryo* operate twice a week since August 2023. In addition to Vladivostok, passenger rail services connecting Khabarovsk with North Korea, as well as those connecting Moscow with North Korea, have also recently resumed. It is expected that North Korean labourers will utilise these passenger rail services.

In April 2025, Vladivostok local authorities released a video that appeared to show several North Korean labourers at a construction site operated by *Samolet*, one of Russia's largest real estate developers. In the video, a city official stated on camera that "Koreans legally work here".¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ Daily NK, "North Korea to fuel Russian space city with 500 workers", 23 August 2024, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/north-korea-fuel-russian-space-city-500-workers/>; Anton Troianovski, "North Korea Will Send 5,000 Workers to Russia, Kremlin Says", The New York Times, 17 June 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/17/world/europe/north-korea-workers-russia.html>

¹⁷¹ Anton Sokolin, "Russian officials release rare footage of North Koreans at construction site", NK News, 14 April 2025, <https://www.nknews.org/2025/04/russian-officials-release-rare-footage-of-north-koreans-at-construction->

North Korean labourers were also reportedly expected to participate in the construction of a five-star hotel at the museum, theatrical and educational complex in the Orlinaya Sopka area of Vladivostok.¹⁷²

Construction and warehouse labourers in Khabarovsk Krai, Russia

In June 2024, a representative of the Khabarovsk Branch of the North Korean Consulate General in Vladivostok met Ms. Irina Zikunova, then Speaker of the Khabarovsk Regional Parliament, and proposed the resumption of accepting North Korean labourers as one of the possible areas of cooperation.¹⁷³

Currently, a number of North Korean labourers reside in Khabarovsk Krai, where they appear to be primarily engaged in logging and construction work. While information regarding their total number or wage payments remains scarce, local Russian officials also confirm the presence of North Korean labourers in the region.¹⁷⁴

A staff member of a Russian local travel agency indicated that there are North Korean students and labourers in Khabarovsk and that North Korean labourers are primarily engaged in logging. Staff of a local trading company mentioned that several groups of North Korean labourers are working at construction sites in Khabarovsk City and they are transported by buses from their dormitory to the construction sites.

In June 2025, Russian news agency *RIA Novosti* reported that Pavel Belenets, Assistant to the Chairman of the Board of Directors of *Eskadra Group* (a Russian real estate development company based in Primorsky Krai) commented, “The number of North Korean citizens at construction sites in Russia will more than triple to 50,000 by the end of the year [2025]”. He said, “Currently, there are about 15,000 North Korean labourers in Russia. That number will increase to 50,000 by the end of 2025. To date, applications from North Korean labourers have already reached 153,000” at a real estate forum, *Dvizhenie 2025*.¹⁷⁵ North Korean construction labourers are reportedly mainly engaged in monolithic construction (concrete integrated construction), facade work, and interior work.

According to reports from several local businesspersons, many North Korean construction labourers are arriving in Khabarovsk, but they live discreetly in inconspicuous places and do not frequently appear in public.¹⁷⁶ Other individuals reported to an MSMT Participating State that they interviewed a local organisation who corroborates that North Korean labourers are present in Khabarovsk Krai.

[site/](https://deita.ru); DEITA.ru, “North Korean labourer dies at construction site in Primorye”, 3 June, 2025, <https://myseldon.com/ru/news/index/330308867>

¹⁷² MSMT Participating State information

¹⁷³ Legislative Duma of Khabarovsk Krai, meeting of Irina Zikunova with representatives of the DPRK Consulate General in Vladivostok, June 2024, <https://duma.khv.ru/Site.aspx?doc=270147164>

¹⁷⁴ MSMT Participating State information

¹⁷⁵ RIA Real Estate, “Eskadra Developer: Number of North Korean Construction Workers in Russia to Triple”, 26 June 2025, <https://realty.ria.ru/20250626/chislo-2025542009.html>

¹⁷⁶ MSMT Participating State information

Construction and warehouse labourers in Moscow and Ryazan

In April 2025, several videos were circulated on Russian Telegram channels alleging that hundreds of North Korean women were working at a warehouse near Moscow operated by Russia's largest e-commerce platform, *Wildberries*.¹⁷⁷ Earlier in February 2025, another Russian Telegram channel by the name of *Topor Novosti Ryazan* had reported that about 100 North Korean women had received three-year work contracts and were undergoing training at a *Wildberries* warehouse in Ryazan, Russia.

Figure 10: Image of suspected North Korean labourers in a *Wildberries* warehouse in Moscow (April 2025)



Construction and warehouse labourers in Primorye, Russia

In June 2025, according to the *Federation of Trade Unions of Primorye*, a North Korean student was supposedly interning at a local construction company, *Alliance Stroy Service LLC (Альянс Строй Сервис)*.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ Telegram Channels: Russian Retail and Business (Русский ритейл и бизнес), <https://t.me/retailrus/22645>, and Life Beyond the Moscow Ring Road | Moscow Region (Рай и МКАД | Подмосковье), <https://t.me/podmoskvi4/31898>.

¹⁷⁸ DEITA.ru, "North Korean labourer dies at construction site in Primorye", 3 June 2025, <https://myseldon.com/ru/news/index/330308867>

Figure 11: Image of suspected North Korean labourers at the construction site of a ski resort in Arsenyev, Primorye



Construction labourers in Siberia, Russia

North Korean construction labourers appear to be expanding their presence into Siberia under the guise of internships at Russian companies. In April 2026, the Prime Minister of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) announced that discussions were underway with the DPRK regarding the recruitment of up to 300 students for internships at enterprises in Yakutia, including *Yakutia Railways*.¹⁷⁹

In June 2026, during a visit to the DPRK by a delegation of Irkutsk business representatives, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Eastern Siberia and the Pyongyang Chamber of Commerce reportedly agreed that an Irkutsk-based construction company would continue negotiations on recruiting North Korean citizens for internships in road construction.¹⁸⁰

Furthermore, in August 2026, an online advertisement for a DPRK construction team was posted on *Avito*, a major Russian online marketplace. According to the advertisement, a team of 30 DPRK carpenters and concrete workers, with experience in multi-story construction, is available to undertake concrete work exclusively in the Irkutsk region, with daily wages ranging from 6,000 Russian rubles (\$72) to 10,000 Russian rubles (\$120).

¹⁷⁹ SakhaDay, “Yakutia will become closer to North Korea”, 12 April 2026, <https://sakhaday.ru/news/yakutiya-stanet-blizhe-k-severnoy-koree>

¹⁸⁰ Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Eastern Siberia, “A cooperation agreement was signed between the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Eastern Siberia and the Pyongyang Chamber of Commerce”, 26 June 2026, <https://vs.tpprf.ru/ru/news/609616/>

Figure 12: Online advertisement for a DPRK construction team posted on *Avito*, August 2026

Original post in Russian	English Translation										
Avito Поиск по объявлениям Новосибирск Главная > ... > Строительство > Фундаментные и бетонные работы Бригада Плотников Бетонщиков Добавить в избранное Реквизиты проверены Профилем владеет компания Расположение Иркутская обл., Иркутск, Байкальская ул., 69 р-н Октябрьский Скрыть карту  Подробности Чем занимается исполнитель: Бетонные работы Бетонные работы: Заливка бетона, бетонирование, Монолитные Заливка: Фундамент, Стены, Колонны, Лестница Доступно мастеров: больше 20 человек Опыт в сфере: 10 лет и больше Гарантия на работу: Есть Работа по договору: Да Шаблоны документов: договор, расписка, акт Исполнитель закупает материалы: Да График работы: пн, вт, ср, чт, пт, сб; 08:00-20:00 Прайс-лист Устройство бетонных полов 10 000 ₽	Teams of Carpenters and Concreters Location Irkutsk region, Irkutsk, Baikalskaya st. 69. Oktyabrsky district Details <table> <tr> <td>What does the contractor do: Concrete work</td><td>Work guarantee: Yes</td></tr> <tr> <td>Concrete work: concrete pouring, concreting, monolithic construction</td><td>Contract work: Yes</td></tr> <tr> <td>Scope of work: foundations, walls, columns, stairs</td><td>Document templates provided: contract, receipt, acceptance certificate</td></tr> <tr> <td>Available masters: more than 20 people</td><td>Materials purchased under the contract: Yes</td></tr> <tr> <td>Experience in the field: 10 years or more</td><td>Opening hours: Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat; 08:00-20:00</td></tr> </table> Price list Installation of concrete floors 10,000 rubles Construction of a concrete foundation 6,000 rubles Construction of concrete walls 10,000 rubles Description We work only in Irkutsk, WE DO NOT OFFER SHIFT WORK! A team of 25 carpenters and concrete workers, citizens of the Russian Federation. <u>A team of 30 carpenters and concrete workers, citizens of the DPRK.</u> Fully equipped with construction equipment and tools. Extensive experience in multi-story construction. We work only under a contract	What does the contractor do: Concrete work	Work guarantee: Yes	Concrete work: concrete pouring, concreting, monolithic construction	Contract work: Yes	Scope of work: foundations, walls, columns, stairs	Document templates provided: contract, receipt, acceptance certificate	Available masters: more than 20 people	Materials purchased under the contract: Yes	Experience in the field: 10 years or more	Opening hours: Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat; 08:00-20:00
What does the contractor do: Concrete work	Work guarantee: Yes										
Concrete work: concrete pouring, concreting, monolithic construction	Contract work: Yes										
Scope of work: foundations, walls, columns, stairs	Document templates provided: contract, receipt, acceptance certificate										
Available masters: more than 20 people	Materials purchased under the contract: Yes										
Experience in the field: 10 years or more	Opening hours: Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat; 08:00-20:00										
Устройство бетонного фундамента 6 000 ₽ Устройство бетонных стен 10 000 ₽ Описание Работаем только в Иркутске. ВАХТУ НЕ ПРЕДЛАГАЕМ! Бригада плотников бетонщиков 25 человек граждане РФ. Бригада плотников бетонщиков 30 человек граждане КНДР. Полностью укомплектованы строительным оборудованием и инструментом. Большой опыт работы в многоэтажном строительстве. Работаем только по договору (ИП с СРО).											

North Korean Restaurants in Russia

North Korean labourers operate restaurants in cities such as Moscow and Vladivostok and at least three DPRK-owned and operated restaurants opened in Russia since 2025, namely *Myohyang* in Irkutsk, and *Seungri* (Victory) and *Pyongyang Gwan* (Pyongyang Restaurant) in Moscow.¹⁸¹ Unlike

¹⁸¹ Park Sun-min, “North Korean Restaurant Opens in Moscow Amid Sanctions Concerns” Chosun Ilbo Online, 27 November 2025, <https://www.chosun.com/english/north-korea->

DPRK restaurants in China, which primarily cater to the general public, many of those in Russia operate to serve high-ranking political and business figures.

Seungri (17 Tverskaya Street), Moscow, Russia

The DPRK restaurant *Seungri* (Victory) opened in central Moscow (17 Tverskaya Street) in November 2025. High-profile figures attended the opening ceremony, including members of the State Duma (lower house of the Federal Assembly of Russia), academics with expertise in Korean studies, and prominent journalists. Notably, Leonid Slutsky, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, served as the guest of honor. Slutsky is believed to have played a key role in facilitating the restaurant's opening by resolving various regulatory hurdles.

Figure 13: Entrance of DPRK restaurant *Seungri* in Moscow



en/2025/11/27/7BCAWK5NOBADFGK3S5AGVRI7FY/; Park Sun-min, "North Korean restaurant opens in Moscow with flight attendant-styled staff", Chosun Ilbo Online, 17 September 2025, <https://www.chosun.com/english/world-en/2025/09/17/SL64VPBNVNCIPKDH5IPZ4S7YPA/>; Anton Sokolin, "Another North Korean Restaurant Opens in Moscow, Third in Last Year ", NK News, 11 February 2026, <https://www.nknews.org/2026/02/another-north-korean-restaurant-opens-in-moscow-third-in-last-year/>; Ircity.ru, "We were expecting flags and portraits of leaders. We visited a North Korean café in Irkutsk – impressions", 17 July 2025, <https://www.ircity.ru/text/food/2025/07/17/75728876>

Figure 14: The opening ceremony of restaurant *Seungri* in November 2025



Pyongyang Gwan, Moscow, Russia

The DPRK restaurant *Pyongyang Gwan* (Pyongyang Restaurant) opened in southeastern Moscow in September 2025. The restaurant features North Korean television programs playing in the dining hall and North Korean music in the background. All labourers at the restaurant are believed to be DPRK nationals.¹⁸²

Figure 15: Entrance of DPRK restaurant *Pyongyang Gwan* in Moscow



¹⁸² MSMT Participating State information

Figure 16: Interior of *Pyongyang Gwan*



Myohyang (108 Baykalskaya Street), Irkutsk, Russia

DPRK restaurant *Myohyang* opened in Irkutsk (108 Baykalskaya Street) in April 2025.¹⁸³

Figure 17: Entrance of DPRK restaurant *Myohyang*



¹⁸³ Ircity.ru, "We were expecting flags and portraits of leaders. We visited a North Korean café in Irkutsk—impressions", 17 July 2025, <https://www.ircity.ru/text/food/2025/07/17/75728876>

IT workers in Russia

As of August 2025, malicious cyber actors affiliated with the DPRK *General Reconnaissance and Intelligence Bureau* (GRIB, whose name was recently changed from *Reconnaissance General Bureau*) operate from a base in Vladivostok, Russia. Small units of 5-6 people move from Russia to third countries depending on their missions.¹⁸⁴ Open-source reports suggest that some IT workers likely operate from Moscow.¹⁸⁵

A North Korean company affiliated with the UN-designated *Second Academy of Natural Sciences* (KPi.018) disguised its IT workers as construction labourers to facilitate their deployment to Russia.¹⁸⁶ The IT workers were sent to Moscow alongside construction labourers before being relocated to Vladivostok to be given new work assignments.

Bulgunbyol Technology Exchange Company (alias: Red Star Technology Trading Company, Pulynpel Technical Foreign Trade Company) and Korea Ragwon Trading Corp.

According to a Russian news report dated October 7, 2025, *Bulgunbyol Technology Trading Company*, an entity believed to be affiliated with the North Korean operating system and development company, *Red Star Technology Exchange Company*, opened a representative office in Vladivostok on September 24, 2025. *Bulgunbyol* means “red star” in Korean.¹⁸⁷

According to the article, the representative office for *Bulgunbyol Technology Trading Company* was established with the support of the *North Korean Chamber of Commerce*.¹⁸⁸ According to *Spark-Interfax*, a data analysis company, this representative office is registered under the name of *Pulynpel Technical Foreign Trade Company*.¹⁸⁹ This office is located at 42 Bosphorus Street, Vladivostok.¹⁹⁰ A Mr. Kim Chol-Yong is its named representative and it employs five foreign nationals. Its designated business activities include marketing environment research and public opinion surveys.

NK News reported that the Vladivostok branch of another North Korean company, *Korea Ragwon Trading Corp.* (aka *Korea Rakwon Trading Corp.*) was registered in Russia in 2017 with the same address as utilised for *Bulgunbyol* in 2025.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁴ MSMT Participating State information

¹⁸⁵ Oliver Smith, “GitLab Threat Intelligence Team reveals North Korean tradecraft”; GitLab, 19 February 2026, <https://about.gitlab.com/blog/gitlab-threat-intelligence-reveals-north-korean-tradecraft/>

¹⁸⁶ United Nations Security Council, “Second Academy of Natural Sciences”, <https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/1718/materials/summaries/entity/second-academy-of-natural-sciences>

¹⁸⁷ Rbc.ru, “A North Korean operating system developer has opened an office in Russia”, 7 October 2025, https://www.rbc.ru/technology_and_media/07/10/2025/68e505e49a79474d15ce6731?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop&utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fdzen.ru%2Fnews%2Fstory%2Fe9cbf727-9099-5149-9e5c-93d6885dfd8c

¹⁸⁸ Anton Sokolin, “North Korean tech company registers office for ‘market research’ in Vladivostok”, NK News, 7 October 2025, <https://www.nknews.org/2025/10/north-korean-tech-company-registers-office-for-market-research-in-vladivostok/>

¹⁸⁹ This information was found using Spark-Interfax: <https://spark-interfax.com/about/>

¹⁹⁰ Anton Sokolin, “North Korean tech company registers office for ‘market research’ in Vladivostok”, NK News, 7 October 2025, <https://www.nknews.org/2025/10/north-korean-tech-company-registers-office-for-market-research-in-vladivostok/>

¹⁹¹ Korea Ragwon Trading Corp. was added to Japan’s export control End User List by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) in 2010, which means exports from Japan to that entity may require a license under the

catch-all control regime: https://www.meti.go.jp/policy/anpo/20250929_3.pdf; Anton Sokolin, “North Korean tech company registers office for ‘market research’ in Vladivostok”, NK News, 7 October 2025, <https://www.nknews.org/2025/10/north-korean-tech-company-registers-office-for-market-research-in-vladivostok/>

6	Дата вступления в ГАБС закона, одобривший требования к заявителю	30.09.2021
Сведения о ходе исполнения требований в стране регистрации (инкорпорации)		
10	Будущее место жительства заявителя	1983105-01-7-2025
11	Дата вступления в ГАБС закона, одобривший требования к заявителю	30.09.2021
Сведения об уровне исполнения		
12	Возраст(ов) заявителя(ов)	60/60 (5% - Реп)
13	Дата вступления в ГАБС закона, одобривший требования к заявителю	30.09.2021
Сведения о фактическом предоставлении информации и предоставлении в связи с инкорпорацией Российской Федерации		
14	Тип объединения заявителем	2. Предоставление информации заявителя
Исполнение		
15	В каком направлении	ПРЕДСТАВИТЕЛЬСТВО ПОСЛАМАНСКОЙ КОМПАНИИ АРМАНОВСКОГО ПРЕДСТАВИТЕЛЬСТВО ПРЕДСТАВИТЕЛЬСТВО
16	Дата вступления в ГАБС закона, одобривший требования к заявителю	30.09.2021
Адрес (наименование) на территории Российской Федерации		
17	Сведения об адресе (наименовании)	84400, Красноярский край, г.О. ПРЕДСТАВИТЕЛЬСТВО ПРЕДСТАВИТЕЛЬСТВО, ул. ЗОЛОТАЯ, д. 47
18	Дата вступления в ГАБС закона, одобривший требования к заявителю	30.09.2021
Сведения об информации, фактически, предоставлении		
19	Исполнение об информации (ИИ)	ИИ-00001511
20	Дата предоставления (внесения) сведений об информации в ГАБС	30.09.2021
21	Исполнение (наименование) из информации, предоставляющей информацию заявителем, или	7717, Москва/Москва Федеральный налоговый орган № 47 в Москве, ИИ-00001511 в Москве, ИИ
22	Дата вступления в ГАБС закона, одобривший требования к заявителю	30.09.2021

Документ: ИИ-00001511
ИИ-00001511
Сторона: ИИ

Выписка из государственного реестра аккредитованных фирматов и представителей
интервенции, выданная мне в форме электронной анкеты, подтверждающей установленной
классификационной категорией компании, руководителем является доверенное лицо, владеющее
самостоятельной подписью должностного лица указанного органа и цифровой печатью указанного
органа (рубрики 1 и 7 статьи 6 Федерального закона от 6 апреля 2011 г. № 45-ФЗ «Об электронной
подписи»).

Spotlight: Uncovered Russia-based North Korean IT Worker Cell

When data leaked from an account believed to belong to North Korean IT workers on a code sharing software development platform, a cyber security expert was able to garner further insight into the IT worker's operations. The analysis revealed that the DPRK-owned account was accessed from an IP address in Russia. The IT workers are hierarchically organized under a clear chain of command and have been involved in foreign currency acquisition activities since at least December 2024. The data also identified more than five chat groups on *Slack*, a workplace messaging platform, associated with the account. Of these, five were identified as active: four operational groups, each consisting of approximately ten workers, and one group comprising both workers and their supervisor.¹⁹²

The leaked data included a list of contracted projects, forged passport data, and chat logs exchanged between North Korean IT workers.

In one of the *Slack* chat groups, an individual believed to be the supervisor sent a message stating, "You should work at least 14 hours or more". Worktime tracking software was installed on the devices used by the IT workers, suggesting that minimum working hours were strictly enforced.

In another *Slack* chat group, messages like "Do you have a passport?", "I have a Canadian one", and "I have a Japanese one" were exchanged. IT workers cooperate with one another to find employment and bypass identity verification.

Textile industry

In late 2025, a Russia-based recruiting agency was openly recruiting DPRK women for employment in Russia's textiles industry. The recruiting agency indicated female North Korean labourers could earn as much as 2,000 per week in an unspecified currency.¹⁹³

Mining industry

In August 2025, local media *Хабаровский край сегодня* (English translation: "Today's Khabarovsk Krai") reported that North Korean labourers were engaged in the mining industry in the mountainous region of Khabarovsk Krai. The labourers reportedly rented over 20 hectares of agricultural land and cultivated vegetables for their own consumption.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² MSMT Participating State information

¹⁹³ Anton Sokolin, "Russian recruiter openly advertises 2K North Korean female workers for hire", NK News, 23 September 2025, <https://www.nknews.org/2025/09/russian-recruiter-openly-advertises-2k-north-korean-female-workers-for-hire/>

¹⁹⁴ Todaykhv.ru, "North Korean farmers are reviving agriculture in the Verkhnebureinsky District", 19 August 2025, <https://todaykhv.ru/news/in-areas-of-the-province/86055/?ysclid=mla2wnkecm433456355>

6. North Korean Overseas Labourers in Africa¹⁹⁵

While the number of North Korean overseas labourers residing in African countries is likely far less than those residing in Russia and China, MSMT information indicates that North Korea does continue to dispatch labourers across Africa. Such labourers are most often employed in the fields of medicine, construction, IT, and manufacturing. This section describes North Korean overseas labourers in African countries where the MSMT has further specific information.

North Korean Labourers in Cameroon

As of late 2024, approximately 40 North Korean labourers were employed at a DPRK *Kumunsan Construction Project* office in Cameroon.¹⁹⁶ Cameroon has not submitted an implementation report pursuant to UNSCR 2397 paragraph 8.

Figure 19: List of North Korean Labourers in Cameroon¹⁹⁷

Name	Job Function	Date of Birth	Date of Arrival	Passport Number
Kim Ch'o'l-ku	Director	9 Aug 1966	5 Aug 2017	754142068
Ch'oe So'k-nam	Primary Party Secretary	15 Sep 1964	18 Nov 2016	481332260
Ri Tae-wo'n	Guidance Person	15 Jul 1960	5 Aug 2017	572330092
Cho'ng Myo'ng-ch'o'l	Translator	28 Jul 1974	18 Jan 2018	572332171
Kim Kwang-ch'o'l	Architect	28 Oct 1966	18 Nov 2016	481332274
Kye Chin-ho	Architect	24 Sep 1978	7 Apr 2017	481332331
Ryu Cho'ng-ch'o'l	Doctor	8 Dec 1972	18 Jan 2018	572332169
Kwak So'ng-ku'n	Labourer	19 Nov 1974	8 Jun 2018	663131437
Pak Yo'ng-kyu	Labourer	24 Jul 1967	18 Nov 2016	481332280
An T'ae-ku'n	Labourer	12 Dec 1966	7 Apr 2017	481332355
Cho'ng Hu'i-il	Labourer	18 May 1970	7 Apr 2017	481332345
O Yun-so'n	Labourer	12 Oct 1984	8 Jun 2018	108232624
Rim Ch'ang-so'ng	Labourer	7 Aug 1975	22 Dec 2016	481332308
Kim So'ng-ch'o'l	Labourer	9 Dec 1966	7 Apr 2017	481332327
T'ak Yo'ng-min	Labourer	16 Sep 1975	7 Apr 2017	481332352
Chang Ch'ang-hwan	Labourer	3 Aug 1971	22 Dec 2016	481332318
Kim Ku'm-so'ng	Labourer	25 Sep 1985	22 Dec 2016	481332294
Kim Ch'o'l-ho	Labourer	23 Apr 1975	8 Jun 2018	663131435
Kang Ch'o'l-po'm	Labourer	28 Sep 1988	22 Dec 2016	481332292
Cho'n Ch'ang-ku'n	Labourer	23 Mar 1973	22 Dec 2016	481332320
Sin Pok-so'ng	Labourer	10 Jan 1980	8 Jun 2018	663131441
Song Yo'ng-ch'o'l	Labourer	21 Aug 1982	8 Jun 2018	663131431

¹⁹⁵ MSMT Participating State information

¹⁹⁶ MSMT Participating State information

¹⁹⁷ MSMT Participating State information

Ryu Cho'ng-to'k	Labourer	25 Feb 1971	22 Dec 2016	481332304
Kim So'ng-nam	Labourer	13 Jul 1978	22 Dec 2016	481332298
Kye Chun-hyo'k	Labourer	16 May 1985	18 Nov 2016	481332278
O'm Ch'o'l-nam	Labourer	7 Jun 1979	7 Apr 2017	481332357
Kim Sang-hyo'n	Labourer	21 Sep 1978	7 Apr 2017	481332324
Ri Hyo'ng-chin	Labourer	22 Feb 1978	7 Apr 2017	481332339
Cho'n P'yong-cho'ng	Labourer	28 May 1982	8 Jun 2018	663131436
Paek To-so'ng	Labourer	18 Dec 1969	7 Apr 2017	481332341
Han Myo'ng-ch'o'l	Labourer	1 Sep 1978	7 Apr 2017	481332354
Ch'oe So'ng-kuk	Labourer	6 Nov 1978	7 Apr 2017	481332351
Kim Kwang-hyo'k	Labourer	18 Nov 1983	22 Dec 2016	481332296
Ri Yo'ng-ho	Labourer	2 Jan 1974	22 Dec 2016	481332306
Ch'a Man-ho	Labourer	3 Apr 1968	18 Nov 2016	481332284
Ch'a Kyo'ng-ch'o'l	Labourer	20 Apr 1973	7 Apr 2017	481332347
Kim P'yo'ng-nam	Labourer	3 Oct 1975	7 Apr 2017	481332329
Ri So'ng-ch'o'l	Labourer	2 Jul 1975	7 Apr 2017	481332337
Kim Il-hun	Driver	21 Feb 1975	18 Nov 2016	481332276
Kim Yo'ng-nam	Labourer	27 Sep 1979	22 Dec 2016	481332302

North Korean Labourers in Equatorial Guinea

Equatorial Guinea has historically been home to one of the largest contingents of North Korean labourers in Africa, with a reported 200-300 North Korean labourers continuing to work in the country in 2021 after the 2019 deadline to repatriate all North Koreans earning income pursuant to UNSCR 2397.¹⁹⁸

As recently as 2021, there were 48 North Korean labourers at 14 offices in Bata, Malabo, and Mongomo supporting the *Korea Moranbong Medical Cooperation Center's* operations in Equatorial Guinea.¹⁹⁹ It is currently unclear whether workers present in 2021 were repatriated to the DPRK.

As of 2025, there were 10 North Korean IT workers active in Equatorial Guinea.²⁰⁰

In August 2026, Equatorial Guinea told the MSMT that it had not identified any North Korean labourers in Equatorial Guinea, and that the presence of any such labourers could be potentially obfuscated through labourers' affiliation with Chinese companies.

North Korean Labourers in Guinea

Guinea has not submitted an implementation report pursuant to UNSCR 2397 paragraph 8.

¹⁹⁸ MSMT Participating State information

¹⁹⁹ MSMT Participating State information

²⁰⁰ Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team report, "The DPRK's Violation and Evasion of UN Sanctions through Cyber and Information Technology Worker Activities ", October 2025.

Agricultural Labourers in Guinea²⁰¹

In 2022, the Guinean Ministry of Agriculture signed a deal with the DPRK for the supply of agricultural workers to the *Kim Il Sung Agricultural Research Center* in Guinea.²⁰² In 2025, at least 14 North Korean agricultural labourers were present. These labourers departed Guinea at the DPRK's direction in late 2025.²⁰³

Construction and Warehouse Labourers in Guinea²⁰⁴

As of late 2024, approximately 150 North Korean construction labourers were located in Guinea.

Currently dozens of North Korean construction labourers work at a building construction site near the Niger Market in Kaloum District, Conakry. Guinea grants visa exemptions to North Korean entrants.

MSMT Participating State information indicated that these North Korean labourers reside together in a house in Yimbaya District near Conakry International Airport. Every morning, they travel from this house to the construction site by minibus, leave the construction site at 4:00 p.m., and return to the house in the evening. They rarely leave their dormitory except for work. Their meals are prepared daily by North Korean women.

The person who manages these North Korean labourers is also a DPRK national who lives in a more luxurious house in Lambanyi District, Conakry.

Previously, more North Korean labourers resided in Conakry, but some of them have departed and relocated to work on civil engineering projects in other African countries, including Niger.

IT Workers in Guinea

The October 2025 MSMT report on North Korea's cyber and IT worker activities lists five to ten workers estimated to be working in the country as of 2025.

North Korean Labourers in Mozambique²⁰⁵

As of late 2025, approximately 75 DPRK medical personnel may have been stationed in Mozambique, with approximately 40 located at Mozambican hospitals. Work permits are reportedly issued to North Korean nationals employed at Maputo Central Hospital and other hospitals in Nampula and Manica.

²⁰¹ MSMT Participating State information

²⁰² Ifang Bremmer, "North Korea to send 30 'technicians' to Guinea for agricultural cooperation", NK News, 19 April 2022, <https://www.nknews.org/2022/04/north-korea-to-send-30-technicians-to-guinea-for-agricultural-cooperation/>

²⁰³ MSMT Participating State information

²⁰⁴ MSMT Participating State information

²⁰⁵ MSMT Participating State information

North Korean Labourers in Niger

As of 2025, North Korean labourers worked for the *South-South Technical Corporation* in Niamey City.²⁰⁶ Niger has not submitted an implementation report pursuant to UNSCR 2397 paragraph 8.

North Korean Labourers in Nigeria

The October 2025 MSMT report on North Korea's cyber and IT worker activities lists less than ten workers estimated to be working in Nigeria as of 2025.

North Korean Labourers in Senegal

The DPRK continued to dispatch workers to Senegal until at least 2024, though in much smaller numbers than before UNSCR 2397's deadline to repatriate North Korean nationals. In 2024, the *Mansudae Art Corporation* (KPe.050) continued to deploy workers to Senegal. *Mansudae* is sanctioned by the UN for its ties to North Korea's WMD and ballistic missile programs.²⁰⁷ Senegal has not submitted an implementation report pursuant to UNSCR 2397 paragraph 8.

North Korean Labourers in Tanzania

Tanzania hosted a contingent of less than 10 IT workers subordinate to the *Junggongchon Trading Corporation*, a North Korean entity associated to *Bureau 53* of the DPRK *Ministry of National Defence*.²⁰⁸ Tanzania has not submitted an implementation report pursuant to UNSCR 2397 paragraph 8.

²⁰⁶ MSMT Participating State information

²⁰⁷ MSMT Participating State information; The KPe.050 identifier is attributed to "*Mansudae Overseas Project Group of Companies (Mansudae Art Studio)*". This is the same entity as the "*Mansudae Art Corporation*."

²⁰⁸ Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team, "The DPRK's Violation and Evasion of UN Sanctions Through Cyber and Information Technology Worker Activities", October 2025, <https://msmt.info/Publications/detail/MSMT%20Report/4221>

7. North Korean Overseas Labourers in Asia

The number of overseas North Korean labourers residing in Asia is likely much smaller relative to those in China and Russia.²⁰⁹

North Korean Labourers in Laos

As of at least 2025, the DPRK maintained a network of Laos-based overseas labourers who were primarily employed in IT industries. For more information on North Korean IT workers in Laos, please see the October 2025 MSMT report on North Korea's cyber and IT worker activities.

MSMT Participating State information indicates as of 2024, North Korean labourers may have also been employed in the fields of medicine, construction, and restaurants in Laos.²¹⁰

Information indicated that, according to a North Korean source, North Korean IT workers were based in Vang Vieng, a provincial city in Laos, until at least April 2025. Initially, these labourers resided in the capital city, Vientiane, but were frequently subjected to surveillance by the Laotian government. Consequently, the local North Korean diplomatic mission staff in Laos rented two rooms in the building that houses the North Korean *Choson Pyongyang Restaurant* in Vang Vieng. One room served as a base for IT workers of the GRIB.²¹¹

In responding to this MSMT report's findings, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic indicated that it had already established a national committee to implement UNSC resolutions. Laos reports that it continues to cross-check information on named DPRK nationals against immigration and UNSCR lists.

North Korean Labourers in Vietnam

MSMT participating states had information to indicate that between five and ten DPRK nationals continue to generate revenue in Vietnam in the IT and trade sectors. North Korean overseas labourers also maintained employment with Vietnam-based *Korea Sobaeksu United Corporation*, a subordinate company within the DPRK *Munitions Industry Department*.²¹² In response, the Ministry of Public Security of Vietnam informed an MSMT participating state in August 2026 that it has no evidence of North Korean laborers currently present in Vietnam and that no new work permits have been issued

²⁰⁹ MSMT Participating State information

²¹⁰ MSMT Participating State information; Tokyo Mainichi Shimbun, "North Korean business looms in Laos, with allegations of hacking and money laundering", 21 August 2024, <https://mainichi.jp/articles/20240820/k00/00m/030/083000c>; Anton Sokolin, "North Koreans Still Running Restaurant In Laos To Earn Cash For Regime: Report", NK News, 9 November 2023, <https://www.nknews.org/2023/11/north-koreans-still-running-restaurant-in-laos-to-earn-cash-for-regime-report/>

²¹¹ MSMT Participating State information

²¹² US Office of Foreign Assets Control, "Treasury Sanctions Clandestine IT Worker Network Funding the DPRK's Weapons Programs", 24 July 2025, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sb0205>

or renewed for North Korean labourers. Vietnam reported that it had not identified any information indicating the presence or operation of *Korea Sobaeksu United Corporation* in Vietnam.

North Korean Labourers in the Kyrgyz Republic

As of March 2026, North Korean overseas labourers were likely employed within the medical field in the Kyrgyz Republic.²¹³ The Kyrgyz Republic has not submitted an implementation report pursuant to UNSCR 2397 paragraph 8.

North Korean Labourers in Mongolia

Pekkhwa Center of Peace and Culture (alias: Democratic People's Republic of Korea Friendship and Cultural Center), Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

The North Korean embassy in Ulaanbaatar opened the *Pekkhwa Center of Peace and Culture* (*백화친선문화관*), also known as the *Democratic People's Republic of Korea Friendship and Cultural Center*, on October 9, 2024. This facility operates as both a restaurant and as a venue for diplomatic receptions.

North Korean labourers holding residence permits issued by Mongolian authorities are employed at the center, and profit-making activities are conducted there. The North Korean government very likely receives profits generated by the center.²¹⁴

The center appears to have implemented measures prohibiting visitors from taking pictures inside the restaurant or of the menu, likely with the aim to obfuscate its activities in violation of UNSCRs. In one instance, when a visitor took pictures of the menu or food, restaurant staff demanded that the pictures be deleted and did not allow the individual to leave until the deletion was confirmed.²¹⁵

²¹³ Anton Sokolin, "North Korean doctors illegally working at clinics in Russia and Kyrgyzstan", NK News, 6 March 2026, <https://www.nknews.org/2026/03/north-korean-doctors-illegally-working-at-clinics-in-russia-and-kyrgyzstan/>

²¹⁴ MSMT Participating State information

²¹⁵ MSMT Participating State information

Figure 20: Signboard with information about Pekkhwa Center of Peace and Culture



The Mongolian Ministry of Foreign Affairs told the MSMT in August 2026 that it complied with the UNSCR 2397 deadline to repatriate all North Korean labourers by December 2019, and continues to look into the status of DPRK individuals employed at the *Pekkhwa Cultural Center*.

Annex A:

Summary of Organizations Facilitating the Deployment of North Korean Labourers

DPRK Organizations

- O-il Trading Corp. (오일(5.1)무역회사)
- Korea Pusong Corp. (조선부성회사)²¹⁶
- Chonryong Trading General Corp. (천룡무역총회사)²¹⁷
 - Further information: PoE report (S/2019/691)
- Risang Trading Co. (리상무역회사)
- Korea Kangsong Trading Corp. (강성무역회사)
- Jonsung Trading Corp. (전승무역회사)
- Ponghwa General Trading Corporation (봉화무역총회사)
- Kumbyol Trading Co. (금별무역회사)²¹⁸
- Uljibong Corp (을지봉협조회사)
 - Shipping company which reportedly deployed ~30 labourers as of February 2024, including to Vladivostok.
- Sinhung Trading (신흥무역총회사)
- Mangyongdae Trading Company (조선만경대무역회사)²¹⁹
- Mangyongbong Trading Corp. (만경봉국제무역경제개발회사)
 - Operates in several industries including food products, IT technologies, medicine, seafood, and knitwear.
 - Reportedly dispatched ~500 labourers before November 2025, including to Vladivostok.

²¹⁶ Korea Pusong Corp. is known to be a front company of the UN-designated Second Academy of Natural Sciences (KPe.018). It was sanctioned by the Republic of Korea in March 2016 for procuring materials related to the DPRK's WMD programs. The Panel of Experts reported that Korea Pusong Corp. falls under the Second Economic Committee (S/2018/171, <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2018/171>) and operates under the instruction of the UN-designated Academy of National Defence Science (ANDS, KPe.021) (S/2019/691, <https://docs.un.org/en/s/2019/691>). Information suggests it dispatched labourers to Changbai, Baishan City, Jilin Province, in April 2025.

²¹⁷ United Nations Security Council Panel of Experts, S/2019/691, <https://docs.un.org/en/s/2019/691>

²¹⁸ United Nations Security Council Panel of Experts, S/2014/147, <https://docs.un.org/ar/S/2014/147>; Open Sanctions, "Korea Kumbyol Trading Company", <https://www.opensanctions.org/entities/NK-HtJexreCuefJn5kpiah4M/>

²¹⁹ Lee Sang-yong, "China steps in as US pulls back from North Korea", DailyNK, 3 July 2025, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/china-steps-in-as-us-pulls-back-from-north-korea/>

- Jihyang Technology Trade Company (지향기술무역회사) / Green Pine Associated Corporation (KPe.010, 청송연합회사)
- Amnokgang Technology Development Corporation (압록강기술개발회사)²²⁰
- Korea Sobaeksu United Corporation (조선소백수연합무역회사)²²¹
- Kumrung Construction Company (금릉건설회사)
- Korea Suyangsan Trading Corporation (조선수양산무역회사)
- Foreign Trade Bank (KPe.047, 조선무역은행)
- Korea Kwangson Banking Corporation (KPe.025, 조선광선은행)
- Pyongyang Rungra Construction Company (릉라대외건설회사)
- Korea Kyongru Trading Corporation (조선경루회사)
- Korea Ragwon Trading Corp. (aka Korea Rakwon Trading Corp., 조선락원무역총회사)
- Korea Moranbong Medical Cooperation Center (조선모란봉의료협조사)
- Mansudae Art Corporation (KPe.050, 만수대창작사)
- Junggongchon Trading Corporation (중공천무역회사)
- Pekkhwa Center of Peace and Culture (alias: Democratic People's Republic of Korea Friendship and Cultural Center), Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia (백화친선문화관)

Chinese Organizations

- “Norihsoft”²²²

Russian Organizations

- Interstate Migration Center (IMC) aka Межгосударственный Миграционный Центр
- Joint Stock Company Alabuga Special Economic Zone for Manufacturing and Industries²²³
- Sodeystviye LLC²²⁴ / Sodeystviye Arts and Humanities College
- Russia Post

²²⁰ MSMT Participating State information; this is a Russia-based DPRK entity involved in facilitating cryptocurrency and hard currency exchanges related to trade.

²²¹ MSMT Participating State information; North Korean overseas labourers maintained employment with Vietnam-based Korea Sobaeksu United Corporation, a subordinate company within the DPRK Munitions Industry.

²²² “Norihsoft” (variant “Norisoft Beilun Labor”) is a China based company involved in the recruitment and dispatch of North Korean overseas labourers to China. As of mid-2025, the company website indicated the company’s clients included several major Chinese banks, tech companies, and universities: Dave Yin, “Chinese recruiter flaunts dispatch of North Korean labourers despite UN sanctions”, NK News, 15 July 2025, <https://www.nknews.org/2025/07/chinese-recruiter-flaunts-dispatch-of-north-korean-workers-despite-un-sanctions/>

²²³ MSMT Participating State information indicates Russia-based Joint Stock Company Alabuga Special Economic Zone for Manufacturing and Industries (AO OEZ PPT Alabuga) employs DPRK overseas labourers.

²²⁴ Russia based Sodeystviye LLC is a Russia-based autonomous non-profit professional education organization art and humanities college that assists in the hiring of North Korean labourers.

- ROST Management Company
- Joint-Stock Company United Aircraft Corporation²²⁵
- LLC Gatchinskiy Meat Processing Plant
- Startaff Firm²²⁶
- *ООО «Модуль-Т»*
- *Novy Mir fishing collective farm*
- Faktor Bezopasnosti LLC (OGRN number 1167746096902)
- Samolet
- Wildberries
- *Alliance Stroy Service LLC (Альянсе Строй Сервис)*
- “Myohyang” Restaurant in Irkutsk, Russia
- “Seungrī” Restaurant
- “Pyongyang Gwan” Restaurant
- Bulgunbyol Technology Exchange Company (alias: Red Star Technology Trading Company, Pulynpel Technical Foreign Trade Company)

Other Organizations

- Kim Il Sung Agricultural Research Center (Guinea)
- Maputo Central Hospital (Mozambique)
- Choson Pyongyang Restaurant (Laos)

²²⁵ The U.S.-designated, Russia-based Joint Stock Company United Aircraft Corporation may be involved in recruiting DPRK citizens for training and employment as lathe operators, milling machine operators, and master mechanics.

²²⁶ Anton Sokolin, “Russian recruiter openly advertises 2K North Korean female labourers for hire”, NK News, 17 September 2025, <https://www.nknews.org/2025/09/russian-recruiter-openly-advertises-2k-north-korean-female-workers-for-hire/>

Annex B:

Historical Records of North Korean Labourers

Countries Which Historically Hosted North Korean labourers

The below table lists countries that previously hosted North Korean labourers post-2019 repatriation deadline. Many of these labourers are assumed to have been repatriated by host countries. However, some of the below countries did not submit implementation reports to the UN 1718 Committee on the status of their implementation of UNSCR 2397, paragraph 8.²²⁷ Those implementation reports were due in March 2020. MSMT Participating States found evidence of several countries that did submit implementation reports but continued to host North Korean labourers after the 2019 deadline to repatriate workers.

Africa		
Country	Historical Number	Field
Angola	10-90 ²²⁸	Medical, IT
Burkina Faso	10-15 ²²⁹	Medical
Burundi	1-5 ²³⁰	Medical
Chad	1-5 ²³¹	Medical
Democratic Republic of the Congo	10-30 ²³²	Medical, construction, Restaurants
Republic of the Congo	100-200 ²³³	Medical, construction, Restaurants
Ethiopia	5-20 ²³⁴	Medical
Ghana	1-10 ²³⁵	Medical
Kenya	1-5 ²³⁶	Medical
Mali	1-20 ²³⁷	Medical
Sierra Leone	5-10 ²³⁸	Construction
South Africa	1-10 ²³⁹	Medical, construction
South Sudan	10-15 ²⁴⁰	Medical
Zambia	60-100 ²⁴¹	Construction
Middle East and North Africa		
Algeria	Few, if any ²⁴²	Construction
Oman	5-25 ²⁴³	Construction
Europe		
Belarus	Unknown number ²⁴⁴	Unknown
Russia occupied regions of Georgia	160-400 ²⁴⁵	Construction
Asia		
Thailand	0-25 ²⁴⁶	Unknown, restaurants
Bangladesh	1-5 ²⁴⁷	Medical
Latin America		
Ecuador	1-5 ²⁴⁸	Medical

²²⁷ For all relevant implementation reports for UNSCR 2397, paragraph 8, please see: <https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/1718/implementation-reports>

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- ²²⁸ MSMT Participating State information
- ²²⁹ MSMT Participating State information
- ²³⁰ MSMT Participating State information
- ²³¹ MSMT Participating State information
- ²³² MSMT Participating State information
- ²³³ MSMT Participating State information
- ²³⁴ MSMT Participating State information
- ²³⁵ MSMT Participating State information
- ²³⁶ MSMT Participating State information
- ²³⁷ MSMT Participating State information
- ²³⁸ MSMT Participating State information; Sierra Leone has not submitted an implementation report pursuant to UNSCR 2397 paragraph 8.
- ²³⁹ MSMT Participating State information; South Africa has not submitted an implementation report pursuant to UNSCR 2397 paragraph 8.
- ²⁴⁰ MSMT Participating State information; South Sudan has not submitted an implementation report pursuant to UNSCR 2397 paragraph 8.
- ²⁴¹ MSMT Participating State information; Zambia has not submitted an implementation report pursuant to UNSCR 2397 paragraph 8.
- ²⁴² MSMT Participating State information
- ²⁴³ MSMT Participating State information
- ²⁴⁴ Kim Han-joo, "North Korea-Belarus Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Pyongyang... 'Exchange of Opinions on Region and Situation'", Yonhap News, 24 July 2024, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20240725001600315>; Telegram Belaruskaya Vyvedka, "Lukashenka Is Preparing Massive 'Landing' From North Korea To Belarus" 17 April 2024; Reformation, "Dallas investigators revealed how a MAZ engineer helps evade sanctions", 11 February 2026 <https://reform.news/rassledovateli-dallas-rasskazali-kak-inzhener-maza-pomogaet-obhodit-sankcii>
- ²⁴⁵ MSMT Participating State information; Ji-Sun Choi, "South Korean Daily: N. Korea Exploits A Loophole In Abkhazia To Make Foreign Cash", 17 Oct 2019, Dong-A Ilbo <https://www.donga.com/en/article/all/20191015/1874642/1>
- ²⁴⁶ MSMT Participating State information
- ²⁴⁷ MSMT Participating State information
- ²⁴⁸ MSMT Participating State information

Records of North Korean Labourers in Africa

Records of North Korean Labourers in Angola (historical)

The Angolan Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed to MSMT in July 2026 that it closed North Korea's embassy in Angola in 2023 and has issued no work permits for North Korean labourers since, with no such workers remaining in the country past 2020.

The DPRK previously deployed hundreds of workers to Angola. Between November 2019 and February 2020, Angola reportedly repatriated 296 DPRK nationals and severed bilateral healthcare cooperation with the DPRK.²⁴⁹

The DPRK's 313 *General Bureau*, subordinate to the UN-designated *Munitions Industry Department* (MID), historically deployed IT workers to Angola. However, MSMT Participating States found no evidence that North Korean IT workers have been deployed to Angola since 2022.²⁵⁰

Records of North Korean Labourers in Burkina Faso (historical)

In 2021, the DPRK's *Mali Medical Cooperation Company*—a military trade company subordinate to the DPRK military—deployed a small number of workers to Burkina Faso.²⁵¹ Burkina Faso has not submitted an implementation report pursuant to UNSCR 2397 paragraph 8.

Records of North Korean Labourers in Burundi (historical)

In 2020, the DPRK deployed medical workers to Burundi through the North Korean *Medical Cooperation Company*.²⁵² Burundi has not submitted an implementation report pursuant to UNSCR 2397 paragraph 8.

Records of North Korean Labourers in Chad (historical)²⁵³

In 2024, there were at least two DPRK medical workers stationed in Chad. These individuals likely returned to North Korea as of 2026. The DPRK military trade company *Korea Moranbong Medical Cooperation Center* has deployed medical workers to Chad since at least 2020. Doctors at the *Korea Moranbong Medical Cooperation Center* likely earned between \$4,000 and \$4,500 per month. *Korea Moranbong Medical Cooperation Center* is subordinate to the UN-designated DPRK *Ministry of National Defence*. Chad has not submitted an implementation report pursuant to UNSCR 2397 paragraph 8.

²⁴⁹ United Nations Security Council Panel of Experts, S/2020/840, 28 August 2020, <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2020/840>

²⁵⁰ MSMT Participating State information

²⁵¹ MSMT Participating State information

²⁵² MSMT Participating State information

²⁵³ MSMT Participating State information

Records of North Korean Labourers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (historical)

10-30 North Korean overseas labourers were likely previously employed in the medical and construction industries within the Democratic Republic of the Congo.²⁵⁴ The Democratic Republic of the Congo has not submitted an implementation report pursuant to UNSCR 2397 paragraph 8.

Records of North Korean Labourers in the Republic of the Congo (historical)

100-200 North Korean overseas labourers were likely previously employed in the medical and construction industries within the Republic of the Congo.²⁵⁵ The Republic of the Congo has not submitted an implementation report pursuant to UNSCR 2397 paragraph 8.

Records of North Korean Labourers in Ethiopia (historical)

In 2023, there were at least 10 North Korean doctors employed at hospitals in Ethiopia, including Adama General Hospital, Aklesia Memorial Hospital, Hallelujah General Hospital, Nordic Medical Center, and Yordanos Orthopedic Specialty Hospital.²⁵⁶ A small contingent of construction workers was also deployed to Ethiopia in 2021.²⁵⁷ Ethiopia has not submitted an implementation report pursuant to UNSCR 2397 paragraph 8.

Records of North Korean Labourers in Ghana (historical)

In 2020, the Ghanaian Immigration Service issued work permits for at least three North Korean doctors associated with the DPRK military-subordinate *Moranbong Medical Center* in Ghana.²⁵⁸ Ghana has not submitted an implementation report pursuant to UNSCR 2397 paragraph 8.

Records of North Korean Labourers in Kenya (historical)

In 2021, the DPRK's *Moranbong Medical Cooperation Center* deployed three doctors to Kenya. The contingent of doctors was led by North Korean national Ri Ryong-hwa.²⁵⁹ Kenya has not submitted an implementation report pursuant to UNSCR 2397 paragraph 8.

Records of North Korean Labourers in Mali (historical)

Mali hosted North Korean labourers in 2024.²⁶⁰ The *Mali Medical Cooperation Company* likely deployed medical workers in Mali several years past the 1718 Committee deadline to repatriate DPRK

²⁵⁴ MSMT Participating State information

²⁵⁵ MSMT Participating State information

²⁵⁶ MSMT Participating State information

²⁵⁷ MSMT Participating State information

²⁵⁸ MSMT Participating State information

²⁵⁹ MSMT Participating State information

²⁶⁰ MSMT Participating State information

nationals earning income overseas.²⁶¹ Mali has not submitted an implementation report pursuant to UNSCR 2397 paragraph 8.

Records of North Korean Labourers in the Middle East and North Africa

Records of North Korean Labourers in Algeria (historical)

In 2022, a small number of North Korean overseas labourers were likely conducting construction work in Algeria. Algeria has not submitted an implementation report pursuant to UNSCR 2397 paragraph 8.

Records of North Korean Labourers in Oman (historical)

In 2024, a small number of North Korean overseas labourers were likely conducting construction work in Oman.²⁶² However, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman confirmed to the MSMT in August 2026 that 25 DPRK construction workers departed Oman in 2025 and reiterated awareness of and compliance with UNSCR 2397. Oman has not submitted an implementation report pursuant to UNSCR 2397 paragraph 8.

Records of North Korean Labourers in Europe

Records of North Korean Labourers in Belarus (historical)

In 2024, Belarus had previously accepted North Korean overseas labourers in its country and may be open to accepting further North Korean labourers.²⁶³

Records of North Korean Labourers in Asia

Records of North Korean Labourers in Bangladesh (historical)

In 2022, DPRK officials were in discussions with Bangladeshi private companies as well as possibly the Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce, to discuss a desire to increase trade and economic cooperation between the two countries. These discussions included potential plans to issue visas for DPRK medical

²⁶¹ Ifang Bremer, "North Korea pursues medical cooperation with African countries during pandemic", NK News, 31 March 2022, <https://www.nknews.org/2022/03/north-korea-pursues-medical-cooperation-with-african-countries-during-pandemic/>

²⁶² MSMT Participating State information

²⁶³ MSMT Participating State information; Kim Han-joo, "North Korea-Belarus Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Pyongyang... "Exchange of Opinions on Region and Situation", Yonhap News, 24 July 2024, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20240725001600315>; Telegram Belaruskaya Vyvedka, "Lukashenka Is Preparing Massive 'Landing' From North Korea To Belarus" 17 April 2024

personnel to work in Bangladesh.²⁶⁴ Bangladesh has not submitted an implementation report pursuant to UNSCR 2397 paragraph 8.

Records of North Korean Labourers in Latin America

Records of North Korean Labourers in Ecuador (historical)

In 2021, a small number of North Korean overseas labourers may have been residing in Ecuador working in the medical field.²⁶⁵ Ecuador has not submitted an implementation report pursuant to UNSCR 2397 paragraph 8.

²⁶⁴ MSMT Participating State information

²⁶⁵ MSMT Participating State information

Annex C:

Notes on Sectoral Trends

Simple Processing Work²⁶⁶

North Korean labourers engaged in simple processing work, including clothing production and food processing, constitute the largest share of DPRK nationals working overseas. Most of these labourers are dispatched to China, particularly to Liaoning and Jilin Provinces along the DPRK border. A growing number are dispatched to Russia.

Restaurants

North Korean labourers operate restaurants in China, Russia, and across Asia (Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia), with significant concentrations in Shenyang City, Hunchun City, and Dandong City in China. While overseas North Korean restaurants are mostly operated and managed by North Korean individuals and entities, ownership structures may range from wholly DPRK-owned establishments to joint ventures with local partners. UNSCRs 2371 (2017) and 2375 (2017) stipulate that UN Member States shall prohibit, by their nationals or in their territories, the opening, maintenance, and operation of all joint ventures or cooperative entities, new and existing, with DPRK entities or individuals.

Some restaurants have diversified their business activities by selling other North Korean packaged food products and medicine on site to increase revenue.²⁶⁷ UNSCR 2397 prohibits the DPRK from the supply, sale, or transfer of food and agricultural products (HS codes 12, 08, 07), and all UN Member States from procuring these commodities and products from the DPRK.

Medical Services

Most North Korean labourers in the medical sector are primarily located in Africa, including Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe with a smaller number in Russia and the Kyrgyz Republic.²⁶⁸ These labourers are either employed by local hospitals or operate medical facilities to generate foreign currency.²⁶⁹ Monthly income varies by host country.

North Korean IT Workers

The October 2025 MSMT report uncovered the DPRK's illicit cyber schemes including cryptocurrency thefts and IT workers (<https://msmt.info/Publications/Reports>).

North Korean IT workers are currently capable of earning the highest revenue per person compared to other North Korean labourers, earning foreign currency through fraudulent employment and contracting schemes targeting companies in the United States and, increasingly, Europe, with Russia

²⁶⁶ MSMT Participating State information

²⁶⁷ MSMT Participating State information

²⁶⁸ MSMT Participating State information

²⁶⁹ Albert Hong, "North Korean Medical Team Openly Provides Treatment in Africa Despite UN Sanctions", RFA, 31 March 2022, https://rfa.org/korean/in_focus/nk_nuclear_talks-03312022153153.html

being the primary destination. The expansion to Europe is driven by falling developer rates elsewhere, including on online freelancing platforms. North Korean IT workers receive assistance from local facilitators in host countries to evade sanctions and establish residency. Such support ranges from securing housing and daily necessities to establishing local companies to facilitate employment.

North Korean IT workers' recruitment activities rely on highly sophisticated identity fraud, using identity documents that are genuine but stolen, manufactured using commercial generative AI services to craft fake identities, or willingly provided by facilitators in return for financial compensation.²⁷⁰ As companies implement stricter countermeasures such as conducting thorough pre-employment background checks via online interviews, North Korean IT workers have adopted new recruitment strategies, including approaching engineers in other countries to ask them to take interviews on their behalf. An alternative strategy used by IT workers is to recruit non-specialists to participate in interviews while being remotely supervised and provided with convincing answers to technical questions.

The DPRK is increasingly prioritizing the cultivation and overseas deployment of IT workers to undertake high-profit IT projects, with multiple affiliated organizations competing to deploy IT workers overseas.

DPRK overseas IT workers are primarily concentrated in China and Russia, but also operate across Southeast Asia (including Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam) and Africa (including Equatorial Guinea, Nigeria, and Tanzania).

DPRK authorities have increasingly disguised IT workers as trade officials or labourers in other sectors during the deployment process, allowing them to conduct IT work while officially registered under different occupational categories. In this process, DPRK entities responsible for IT workers coordinate with entities more generally responsible for labour deployments to evade host country oversight.

More recently, after securing employment with Western companies, some North Korean IT workers have outsourced their tasks to developers in lower-cost labour markets to maximize profit margins.²⁷¹

²⁷⁰ Mauro and Heiner, "Smile, You're on Camera: A Live Stream from Inside Lazarus Group's IT Workers Scheme" AnyRun Blog, 4 December 2025, <https://any.run/cybersecurity-blog/lazarus-group-it-workers-investigation/>

²⁷¹ MSMT Participating State information

Annex D:

Actions Resulting from MSMT Reporting

The MSMT continues to track the impact of its reports. The MSMT provides the below information on sanctions enforcement actions taken as of July 2026 based on information in the October 2025 MSMT report on North Korea's cyber and IT worker activities.

Argentina-based facilitator: The October 2025 MSMT report highlighted North Korean IT workers' use of an Argentina-based collaborator by the name of Antonia Doroganova to launder their earnings through payment accounts identified in the MSMT report.

Argentina took measures based on the information provided by the MSMT and opened a case that led to the freezing of assets, a measure that has recently been extended.

In addition, Argentina continues strengthening the national legal and operative mechanisms for the effective implementation of the international obligations undertaken by the Argentine Republic in the areas of targeted financial sanctions.

Pakistan-based facilitators: The October 2025 MSMT report identified a Pakistan-based forger, Syeda Aliya Batool Zaidi (Zaidi), as a long-time facilitator who provided North Korean IT workers fraudulent identification documents. In April 2026, the Pakistani Federal Investigation Agency opened a case against Zaidi and two additional suspected facilitators of DPRK IT work, Syed Sohail Mehdi and Syed Kazim, and legal action is ongoing.

Vietnam-based facilitators: The October 2025 MSMT report provided insight on the DPRK *Amnokgang Technology Corporation's* use of a Vietnam-based facilitator for currency conversion services and money laundering. On March 12, 2026, the United States Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control sanctioned six individuals and two entities for their roles in DPRK government-orchestrated IT worker schemes. The targets included *Amnokgang Technology Development Company* and Vietnam-based facilitators Nguyen Quang Viet (Nguyen), Do Phi Khanh, and Hoang Van Nguyen, and Nguyen's company Quangvietdnbg International Services Company Limited.

Laos-based North Korean IT workers: The October 2025 MSMT report identified 10 Laos-based IT workers of *Chonsurim Trading Corporation*, which is a front company of the *Department 53* of the DPRK *Ministry of National Defence*, and described North Korean IT workers operating in Vientiane under the front company Pioneer Bencont Star Real Estate. The report also listed 19 individuals associated with the Laos-based *Sangsin Trading Corporation*, which is a front company subordinate to the UN-designated DPRK *Second Academy of Natural Sciences Foreign Affairs Bureau* (SANS FAB), and provided payment account emails and aliases associated with SANS FAB. In July 2026, the Lao government informed the MSMT that out of the 29 individuals listed in the October 2025 MSMT report, it identified matching names for 19. Based on Lao official border and immigration logs, those 19 individuals entered Laos between 2018 and 2019 and departed between 2018 and 2025, per the table below. The Lao government confirmed that no corporate entities operating under the names *Chonsurim* or *Sangsin* are registered in Laos.

Name	Date of arrival in Laos	Date of departure from Laos
Choe Song Won	02/07/2019	23/11/2024
Ko Un Hak	Unknown	25/04/2025
Ri Un Song	Unknown	25/04/2025
Ri Chol Hak	17/07/2019	25/04/2025
Ryu Song Il	03/11/2019	25/04/2025
An Chung Yol	02/07/2019	23/11/2024
Choe Kum Song	02/07/2019	23/11/2024
Han Kwang Hyok	12/07/2019	23/11/2024
Ho Kwang Myong	02/07/2019	23/11/2024
Kang Hyok	21/04/2019	25/04/2019
Kim Kum Hyok	12/07/2019	23/11/2024
Pak Won Il	02/07/2019	23/11/2024
Ri Hak Rim	02/07/2019	23/11/2024
Ri Sam Song	02/07/2019	23/11/2024
Ri Yu Song	02/07/2019	23/11/2024
Song Hyok	03/10/2018	08/10/2018
Pae Kwang Guk	12/07/2019	23/11/2024
Kim Kyong Min	12/07/2019	23/11/2024
Song Chol Ung	02/07/2019	23/11/2024