Committee: Security Council 1
Topic: Addressing reports of authoritarian rule and human rights violations under the government of Kim Jong in North Korea.
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Overview of the Problem

Many people in North Korea live under a strict dictatorship, governed by hierarchy of the Kim Family having maximum control, utilizing a method of patriotism to ensure support from the army and elites. This dictatorship violates many human rights, such as forced labour, no freedom of expression, mass surveillance, and restrictions on movement. The Kim Dynasty is directly responsible for the government, as three generations of supreme leaders have ruled North Korea. Kim Il Sung, the founding leader of North Korea, established the Juche Ideology, which emphasizes independence, creativity, and self-reliance as a force (Britannica, n.d.). He was often referred to as “Eternal President.” It was a way to assert independence from Soviet and Chinese influence during the Cold War. This let the Kim family rule for generations. The issue with these violations is that the Workers’ Party of North Korea has complete control of the state, and there is a lack of expression for citizens, as well as physical and digital surveillance. According to Human Rights Watch, Massive prison camps also include forced labor up to 18 hours each day and regular beatings. Many testimonies told Human Rights Watch that sexual violence against women is normalized in camps, mainly because interrogators often determined the woman's future and the steps that are taken during the criminal report. (Human Rights Watch, 2017) Delegates will debate how to push for change without harming any ordinary people, as well as humanitarian access for the citizens of North Korea, and the sanctions that can be implemented.

Introduction

Kim Jong Un is head of the highly centralised government of the DPRK (North Korea). After his father, Kim Jong Il, passed away in December 2011, he eventually became the authority figure. Since then, the government has continued to have significant control over public information, political participation, transportation, and many other aspects of

social and economic life in society. The main concern of international issues is whether the government's policies and practices violate fundamental human rights and how the international community should react to such violations. Human rights are the basic freedoms that all individuals should be entitled to have simply because they are human beings, including the freedom of speech, the right to obtain knowledge, follow a religion, and live without the fear of any kind of mistreatment. They also include having access to fundamental essentials such as food, medical care, and education. In North Korea, foreign observers raised concerns about many limitations in both areas, particularly regarding the government's control over information, reports about forced labor, and the treatment of people held in any kind of detention. The UN Human Rights Council created a commission of inquiry in 2013 to inquire into human rights abuses in North Korea. The commission concluded that substantial grounds remained to establish that crimes against humanity had been committed (UN Human Rights Council, 2014). This was the outcome of an investigation rather than a decision made by the court. In 2025, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published an updated evaluation (Situation of Human Rights in Democratic People´s Republic of Korea) that monitored several circumstances from 2014 to 2025. This evaluation indicates that there has been no improvement in the overall situation of human rights during the last ten years. However, the government of North Korea rejects almost every transnational criticism, disputing that the external investigations interfere with its sovereignty. The UN and human rights organizations take disparate positions, arguing that human rights issues deserve global attention. This is a debate about how far the international organizations should go when a government is accused of abusing the rights of its own people. As part of the Security Council, delegates must find a realistic and effective response considering evidence, the legal authority of the UN, the concerns of several countries, and the possible effects that this issue can have on international action on ordinary North Koreans. The objective of the Security Council is to analyze constructive, multilateral measures that address human rights concerns while considering regional security.

Historical Background

North Korea’s human rights violations began around 1948, under Kim Il Sung. This was when the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) was officially founded, and immediately began removing independent thought and political opposition to consolidate state control. At the end of World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union divided Korea, with the Soviets occupying the North; Joseph Stalin backed Kim Il Sung to lead the provisional government. Kim systematically nationalized land, as well as many industries and banks. This led to the creation of the DPRK in 1948. After this came the Korean War, which started on June 25, 1950, when North Korean troops crossed the border, invading South Korea. North Korean leader Kim Il Sung led his attack after he had received a promise from the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin; however, he made it clear that his forces would not engage in open combat in order to prevent a war with the United States. The Soviets supplied them with MiG-15 jets, as well as T-34 tanks. This conflict caused an estimated 1 million military deaths and around 3 million civilian deaths. (*The Korean War | American Experience | Official Site*, n.d.) North Korea was left in physical ruin. Following the war, Kim Il Sung crushed any challenges to his authority during the August 1956 purge of pro-Soviet and pro-Chinese factions. For many years, he prepared his son, Kim Jong-il, placing loyalists into key positions such as the Organization and Guidance Control Department, thereby institutionalizing hereditary totalitarian rule. On July 8, 1994, Kim Il Sung died at eighty-two years of age due to a heart attack. Immediately after his death, Kim Jong-il took over; he expanded the Songun policy, also known as the “military-first” policy, while continuing to enforce the Songbun social classification system. This gave priority to the military and nuclear weapons development; it tightened internal surveillance to stop any regional collapse. Following this, many factors like the fall of the Soviet Union and agricultural factors led to the collapse of North Korea's command economy. The necessity for food drove Korean people away from the government's control. When the State denied food, citizens had to find ways to eat and survive. Many sold whatever they could find, and some fled to China, creating a wave of refugees from North Korea. By the 2000s, North Korean people began to recover; markets began to grow and include goods and services and became more established. The United Nations and several other countries already impose sanctions, those being to target North Korea's weapons programme and

financial ability to function abroad. In 2011, Kim Jong Un was declared as North Korea's leader, after the passing of his father, Kim Jong-il. In his first years, he implemented a style that directly represented him as a new version of his grandfather, promoting and demoting the region's officials in order to stay in control of the nation.

The Situation Today

The situation concerning human rights in North Korea has now become more severe over the past 10 years, as a result of the decisions taken by the present leadership, including the Law on Rejecting Reactionary Thought and Culture, constituted in December 2020, which augmented restrictions on foreign information and because of that, it resulted in challenging punishments for the ones who accessed prohibited content. Independent monitoring bodies estimate that between 80,000 and 120,000 political prisoners were held in state prison camps, based on estimates by the UN Commission of Inquiry in 2014. Nevertheless, right now the exact number cannot be verified because the North Korean government denies access to this information (OHCHR, 2021). State security trials continue to increase concerns regarding any independent legal defense or due process. This is a troubling trend. Consuming or distributing foreign media, such as South Korean music or movies, could result in a public execution or long-term prison sentences accompanied by abusive forced labor; these strict laws criminalize behaviors that are generally typical among North Koreans. These policies keep citizens completely isolated from the outside world, and the government uses its sophisticated digital networks to control their private communications. The internal limitations transcend borders, energizing geographical and regional conflicts in Northeast Asia. The regime has intensified its militarism along its northern borders, using aggressive “shoot-to-kill” orders against desperate citizens attempting to cross rivers to leave the country for neighboring territories. Those who manage to escape face the threat of transnational human trafficking or forced repatriation by the authorities of neighboring countries, who classify them as economic migrants rather than refugees. Once returned, these individuals face immediate torture and punishment. Frequently, entire families are subjected to collective punishment; this means that a child can be sent to a forced labor camp for life, simply because a relative was accused of political disloyalty. Meanwhile, as the regime directs its national wealth

toward testing long-range missiles, millions of citizens suffer from chronic malnutrition and food crisis- effectively turning the fundamental human right to food into a political tool used to reward loyalty and punish opposition.

Key Stakeholders and Their Positions

North Korea's dictatorship affects many nations around the world; many countries are concerned about peace, nuclear threats, and regional security. For example, China prioritizes border stability that prevents regime collapse. South Korea looks to reduce military tensions between the two countries to establish a lasting peace regime (Korea Times, 2026), rather than demanding immediate denuclearization upfront like the United States (UN Security Council, 2022). Russia has strengthened bilateral military and economic ties with Pyongyang, using its diplomatic status to block sanctions. International organizations such as the United Nations and UNICEF work to protect human rights and improve people's living conditions. Programs like the DPRK nutrition program , that is run by UNICEF, whose main function is to make sure that access to modern, working actions and that functional and active suggestions are in place to help raise child survival opportunities (UNICEF , 2017). Japan maintains a firm stance against the DPRK, demanding the immediate return of abducted Japanese citizens and stronger regional missile defenses. Some nonprofit organizations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch report human rights violations, as well as censorship, such as the brutal labor camps and political imprisonment. North Korea also has several sanctions by international organizations that severely limit trade opportunities; this also includes transport access, as many European airports prevent access from cargo coming from North Korea (UN Security Council, 2006) . Regular citizens face restrictions on basic human rights like freedom of speech, liberty, and accountability. Each group has different plans; however they are all connected to North Korea's political system and its effect on society and the world.

Past Attempts and Existing Frameworks

For decades, the United Nations has sought to alter state behavior by combining diplomatic isolation with economic pressure. Furthermore, the Security Council has adopted resolutions that have placed multiple restrictions, banned luxury goods, and required member states to repatriate North Korean workers abroad. This involves Resolution 2397, which restricts pure petroleum imports into the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (United Nations Security Council, 2017). Significantly, the climax of the 2014 report by the UN Commission of Inquiry marked a watershed by recording data on these abuses and establishing an open record of crimes against humanity. Furthermore, to the objective of providing society unrestricted access to worldwide news, governmental initiatives and international civil society organizations have worked to break the authorities' information control, particularly through shortwave radio broadcasts and cross-border transfer of electronic storage devices. Regional and local levels have varied responses to keep pace with the changing political environment. While Japan and the United States have maintained strong, extended economic sanctions, South Korea has alternated between a rigorous defense and an open diplomatic posture. To prevent a chaotic conflict across its border, China has been prioritizing its stability and economic relations, focusing on its border security, and returning border-crossers who manage to get out of the country. It has become clear that while sanctions have worked in restricting North Korea's access to the usual foreign currency, they have been failing to improve North Koreans' daily lives. In order to preserve its own supremacy, the government has simply exploited the gaps in the application of these restrictions by resorting to state-sponsored cyberwarfare, crypto theft, and illegal ship-to-ship transfers at sea. In March 2024, Russia vetoed the renewal of the UN Panel of Experts on sanctions enforcement, preventing the panel from continuing its work after its authorization vanished on April 30, 2024 (Security Council Report, 2024). The fact that the P5 have veto power has meant that recent proposals to update the sanctions or to strengthen the international monitoring capacity have faced major political obstacles; there is a political impasse which has resulted in a gap between the work that has been done to document the crimes and the political will to actually do anything about it. The North Korean leadership is thus largely shielded from international legal accountability.

Challenges and Complications

In follow-up reports, the OHCHR revealed that the North Korean government has intensified surveillance. Fewer reports and investigations mean that the government can continue to maintain control over the population. This report grew out of the 2014 UN Commission of Inquiry (COI, 2014) findings that documented abuses reaching crimes against humanity. Under Kim Jong Un's government, North Korea enforces fear and control through inhumane treatment, public executions, arrests, cumulative punishment, and obligatory labor. Freedom of expression, liberty, and access to government accountability remain completely banned. Over recent years, the DPRK has worked on its weapons and artillery programs. This development has increased the threat to the United States and its allies in East Asia, as well as to national interests. However, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has repeatedly denied these allegations, especially since talks in 2019 with United States President Donald J. Trump. However, Kim Jong Un sees weapons as a “guarantor of the region's security ” and has no intention of stopping the production of these weapons. Despite having pressure from other countries, North Korea continues to increase its nuclear capabilities and improve its weapons design. The country has focused on enhancing ballistic missile defense systems. It is also working to improve the accuracy of its strikes and to raise the risk to the U.S. and allied military forces. Religion is completely prohibited in North Korea; the Government can sentence individuals to arrest, torture, physical abuse, or even execution for practicing or even possessing any religious materials. Officials primarily target Christians and followers of Shamanism. According to the NGO Open Doors USA (ODUSA), authorities are estimated to hold between 50,000 and 70,000 people in prison for their beliefs. A small number of institutions, including churches, exist in the country mainly in Pyongyang; however, many indicate these institutions are operated under state supervision and serve mostly as symbolic displays for foreign visitors. The government encourages citizens to report anyone involved in religious activity or found in possession of religious items.

The Committee's Role and Powers

The Security Council operates with a defined legal authority, but its ability to use this power is constrained by the geopolitical interests of its five permanent members, which are China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. While this committee can, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, determine when an situation threatens international peace and security and implement measures to handle it, including economic sanctions and non-military measures under Article 41 and Article 42, it cannot interfere in local law enforcement or force a government to modify it without having the risk of a major regional conflict. Delegates must be apprised of these boundaries, ensuring that any proposed solution connects human rights directly to global security concerns. The goal for the final document should not merely be to contain general political promises, but rather to establish an enforceable Security Council Resolution, with measures such as establishing controls to prevent maritime smuggling, investigating illicit funds obtained through cybercrime, and setting up secure routes to ensure humanitarian aid reaches those in need. For the effectiveness of these resolution, the Security Council must collaborate with other international bodies, including the International Criminal Court (ICC), the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), and the UN Treaty Bodies, which can provide monitoring of human rights, accountability efforts, and assessment of obedience with international duties, with their different mandates. Furthermore, UN Member States, such as South Korea, should contribute to implementing sanctions and facilitating assistance, while NGOs should contribute through their own monitoring, such as the documentation of human rights violations and the delivery of humanitarian aid. The Security Council relies on the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for verified, current information, while maintaining the alternative of referring cases directly to the International Criminal Court. At the scene, the Council must partner with Interpol (International Criminal Police Organization) and International maritime forces to intercept unauthorized shipments and discontinue the flow of funds generated through forced labor. The adoption of any considerable resolution requires nine affirmative votes and the absence of any vetoes from the five permanent members of the Security Council.

Guiding Questions for Debate

1. How can the Security Council balance humanitarian intervention with national sovereignty when addressing human rights violations?

2. What legal obstacles prevent member states from delivering humanitarian assistance directly to North Korean civilians?

3. How can the Security Council establish enforceable humanitarian corridors when permanent members disagree on sanctions enforcement?

4. What services/ programs can your country offer in order to support the people in North Korea?

5. How can security concerns and safety affect a country's proposals?

6. What type of negotiations should be made to make nations agree with each other and find a solution?

7. What role should international organizations play in addressing human rights violations in North Korea?

8. What are the biggest challenges that nations face when trying to negotiate with North Korea?

Conclusion and Call to Action

International reports indicate that domestic human rights abuses are deeply intertwined with broader regional security risks. The prison networks, the total censorship, and the state-sponsored starvation under Kim Jong- un are a matter of the collective conscience. The Security Council cannot afford to engage in diplomatic delay, as every month of inaction allows the regime to extend its grip on the population and to expand

its illicit weapons programmes. This Council must be able to set aside its own political differences and be able to come up with real and workable solutions which will protect the lives of innocent people and hold to account those who commit these abuses. You are there as delegates to work together to reach agreement and to represent the millions of people whose voices are not being heard. This is the very essence of the world's commitment to human rights and to the maintenance of global peace.

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