

N. Korea declares political & military victory over US while UN targets its human rights record



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North Korea has declared a political and military victory over the US as it accused Washington of trying to deflect attention from its Pyongyang failures by peddling “non-existent” human rights abuses at the UN.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) discussed the human rights situation in the reclusive country Monday at the request of the US, UK and France along with six other non-permanent member states. The session was convened despite objections from Russia and China. Beijing argued that the timing of the meeting will further inflame tensions in the region.

The meeting came days after after Pyongyang fired a Hwasong-15 intercontinental ballistic missile late November, allegedly able to strike the large parts of the US mainland, following a more than two months respite.

Russia, which condemned the launch, blamed Washington for provoking North Korea to act recklessly with its saber-rattling and large-scale military maneuvers.



S. Korea allocates budget for 'decapitation unit' targeting Kim Jong-un's government

Despite the warning by China's UN deputy ambassador, Wu Haitao, that the meeting would be "*counterproductive*" at this time, it went ahead, after ten UNSC members voted "yes" in the procedural vote, with nine required.

Russia, which along with China calls for a de-escalation of the situation as outlined in its so-called double-freeze initiative, opposed the session as well. The double-freeze plan, if implemented, would see the US and South Korea pausing their large-scale military drills, with Pyongyang suspending its nuclear and missile program. The idea, however, has firmly been rejected by Washington.

North Korea's permanent mission to the UN was furious, arguing in a statement that the West uses the issue of human rights as a pretext to ease its military and political defeats. "*It's a desperate act of the hostile forces which lost the political and military confrontation with the DPRK that has openly risen to the position of nuclear weapon state,*" the mission said, adding, that North Korea would not cave in to pressure.



Pyongyang seeks direct dialogue with Washington, Moscow ready to help - Lavrov

"If the U.S. and other hostile forces think of browbeating the DPRK by the discussion of 'human rights issues' in the Security Council, it is nothing else than a daydream that will not be realized ever," it said, referring to the "human rights issues" as *"non-existent."*

Speaking at the meeting, UN human rights chief, Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein, urged the UNSC to take into account the adverse effect that international sanctions have had on ordinary North Koreans. Al-Hussein pointed out that the financial sanctions imposed by the UN, ironically impede its own [UN] aid deliveries. He called on the Council to assess and minimize its impact.

He said the sharp spike in tensions *"seem to have deepened the extremely serious human rights violations endured by the DPRK's 25 million people,"* noting that humanitarian aid provided by UN and other agencies is *"literally a lifeline for some 13 million"* people in the country. Al-Hussein also touched on alleged human rights abuse in detention facilities, labor camps and reported clandestine prison facilities.

North Korea has long endured a raft of economic sanctions. After a series of intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) tests this summer, that were answered with fresh UNSC sanctions, Pyongyang said the measures were a *"heinous US plot to isolate and stifle."*

In September, Pyongyang said the punitive measures have inflicted a *"colossal amount of damage"* to the people and the country's development which is *"beyond calculation."*

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