

North Korea fires ballistic missile after making nuclear threats

The launch is just the latest in a series of weapons tests from the nuclear-armed country

North Korea fired a ballistic missile into the Sea of Japan Wednesday, according to reports.

Japan's Defense Ministry and South Korea's military confirmed the launches, South Korea's Yonhap news agency and the Japan Times reported Wednesday afternoon local time.

"Our military is tracking and monitoring related movements and maintaining a readiness posture," South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff told reporters, according to Yonhap. The launch reportedly came from the Pyongyang area minutes after 12 noon.

NORTH KOREA PREPARING NUCLEAR TEST FOR FIRST TIME IN YEARS, INTELLIGENCE OFFICIALS SAY

The launch is just the latest in a series of weapons tests from the nuclear-armed country, which likes to flex its strength, and days after leader Kim Jong Un warned that North Korea could preemptively use its nuclear arsenal if threatened. The Japanese Coast Guard urged vessels traveling off Japanese coasts to stay away from any possible fragments.

The launch also comes days before newly-elected President-elect Yoon Suk Yeol takes office in South Korea.

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North Korea has a history of raising animosities with weapons tests when Seoul and Washington inaugurate new governments.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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