

# North Koreans blame China for their viral woes

Pyongyang bans ethnic slurs against Chinese people as Kim Jong Un's regime looks to Beijing for Covid-19 relief.



Keep the virus out! This undated picture released from North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency on April 10, 2020, shows North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspecting a drill of mortar sub-units of corps of the Korean People's Army at an undisclosed location. Photo: AFP/KCNA via KNS

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In the United States, an upsurge in anti-Asian violence and hate speech has been blamed on loose talk emphasizing the apparent Wuhan, China, origin of Covid-19. Now stories from a pair of specialty news organizations point to the rise of a similar phenomenon in North Korea.

People are suffering from the dire economic effects of Kim Jong Un's border closure, intended to keep the coronavirus out – and there's a tendency to blame the Chinese.

The Korean service of Radio Free Asia reports that the North Korean regime has seen fit to outlaw the use of ethnic slurs against residents who hold Chinese nationality. And Seoul-based DailyNK reports on a couple of incidents of fatal official violence against the Chinese.

In these accounts, zealous pursuit of Kim Jong Un's goal of keeping the coronavirus out of the country gets much of the blame. As Kim's big new thing seems to be getting himself back in the good graces of Beijing, obviously such behavior needs to be stopped.

"Though the border remains closed, North Korea has received Chinese aid by both rail and ship," explains Radio Free Asia, a US government-sponsored outlet whose mission statement calls for showcasing real news about un-free countries.

"Sources said that Pyongyang could be concerned that the people are acting hostile to China and Chinese people at a time when the government is looking to Beijing with its hand out," the RFA story continues.

It quotes a resident of Sinuiju as saying the border city's neighborhood watch units held meetings to pass along the new guidance from above, including warnings of punishment, not only for slandering Chinese residents but even for uttering "slandorous criticism of China."

"The authorities banned any form of demeaning of Chinese people, saying they would put North Koreans on the stage of the ideological review sessions and make examples out of them if they were found to be using racial slurs," said the source.

"Soon a lot of Chinese aid will come in, which is said to have been made possible on the direct orders of Chinese President Xi Jinping. The [ruling Workers' Party] Central Committee banned the criticism of China and the Chinese as it became apparent that there is no way for North Korea to solve her own problems, such as shortages of food, construction materials, and agricultural resources."

"The people are spreading rumors that the Highest Dignity has formed a brotherhood with Chinese President Xi Jinping," a second source is quoted as saying. "Highest Dignity" is one of the honorific terms used to refer to Kim.

The RFA story suggests that payback is involved in the language censorship. The

Chinese authorities in 2016 banned the use of the nickname “Jin San Pang” to refer to the rotund third-generation hereditary North Korean ruler. The nickname translates as “Kim Fatty III.”



A view of the Yalu River on the border of China and North Korea from Dandong city, northeast China's Liaoning province, on May 11, 2018. Photo: AFP/Yang yang/Imaginechina

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### **Sticks and stones**

Daily NK reported it had “learned that a Chinese national was recently shot to death by North Korea's border patrol and a group of Chinese fishermen died when North Korean authorities failed to rescue them while their ship sank.”

The shooting death occurred when the Chinese was wading across a shallow stretch of the Yalu River to deliver goods to a North Korean. DailyNK quoted a source on the Chinese side as saying the border guards started by firing warning shots, then “fired directly on the man when he continued his attempt to cross the river.”

The same source told DailyNK that, much farther south, a Chinese fishing boat

“tried to flee after a North Korean patrol boat went from firing warning shots with rubber bullets to live fire. While trying to flee, the boat hit a submerged rock and sank.”

Seven sailors died, the source said. “The North Korean patrol boat didn’t even try to save them.”

The news outlet judged that “these two incidents are examples of the excessive responses spawning from the country’s disproportionate levels of vigilance focused on preventing the spread of Covid-19.”

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Source:

<https://asiatimes.com/2021/04/north-koreans-blame-china-for-their-viral-woes/>

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