

# ETMUN

**Unraveling the Domino Effect**



**Committee:** United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs

**Topic:** Disarmament and Weapons Control in North Korea

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**Letter from the President:**

Dearest delegates of the UNODA committee,

My name is Jude Al-Masri, a 12th grader at IEC Schools. It is with great enthusiasm that I take on the role of your committee president for this year's ETMUN conference. This being my first time presiding over a committee, I can't help but reminisce about my first experiences as a delegate. I remember feeling like I was the only one who didn't know what to do or say. It took me a while to get the hang of it, but by the third day, I had begun to find my footing, and ever since then, I have continued to be inspired by the boundless potential that MUN conferences offer. Whether you're setting foot in an MUN committee room for the first time or you're a seasoned delegate, my hope is that this conference serves as an opportunity to step out of your comfort zone, challenge your perspectives, and create lifelong memories.

During our time at this conference, we will be diving into important global issues, with a focus on disarmament and weapons control. These topics are more relevant than ever in today's world, and I'm excited to see your innovative ideas and solutions. I am committed to making this conference a memorable experience and I can't wait to meet each and every one of you.

Best of luck in your preparations, and get ready for an incredible conference!

Jude Al-Masri

## **Definition of Key Terms:**

### **Missile moratorium:**

This term refers to a situation where North Korea would stop testing and launching ballistic missiles. A missile moratorium would be seen as a step towards reducing tensions on the Korean Peninsula and enhancing disarmament

### **Intercontinental Ballistic missile (ICBM):**

A type of missile on which nuclear weapons are carried over long distances. North Korea is known to have developed it, giving the country the ability to launch their nuclear weapons to wherever they want to.

### **Nuclear Safeguards:**

Measures and protocols ensuring that nuclear materials are used for peaceful purposes and are not diverted towards the development of nuclear weapons.

### **Nuclear experiment:**

Experiments carried out, in most cases by a country, to test the overall effectiveness of nuclear weapons.

## **General Overview:**

North Korea has long been a focal point of global concern due to its nuclear ambitions and the potential threats these ambitions pose, not only to the Korean Peninsula but to global security. The instability stemming from North Korea's armament capabilities has the potential to escalate into conflicts that could have far-reaching consequences. North Korea's arsenal includes nuclear weapons, as evidenced by multiple nuclear tests, claiming successful development of nuclear warheads. Additionally, it poses a range of ballistic missiles, including intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) capable of covering long distances and potentially carrying nuclear payload. North Korea is estimated to have assembled 30 nuclear warheads, as of January 2023, and to have the fissile material for an estimated 50-70 nuclear weapons, as well as advanced chemical and biological weapons programs. It is also estimated to possess 25-48 kilograms of plutonium and 400-1,000 kilograms of highly enriched uranium, but there is a high degree of uncertainty

surrounding these estimates. In 2022, North Korea conducted more than 90 tests of short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs), medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBMs), land-attack cruise missiles, hypersonic glide vehicles (HGVs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), IRBMs and intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) according to SIPRI. Efforts to control North Korea's conventional weapons have been limited compared to those targeting its nuclear program. However, regional security concerns have prompted neighboring countries to enhance their own defense capabilities and cooperate with international partners to monitor and deter North Korean military activities. Proliferation concerns arise as the country's pursuit of nuclear weapons challenges global efforts to prevent the spread of such destructive capabilities. Regionally, tensions are heightened in the Korean peninsula, increasing the risk of conflict. The use of these weapons poses severe humanitarian risks, with the possibility of significant loss of life and displacement of populations.

### **Major Parties Involved:**

- North Korea: As the primary subject of the topic, positioned at the center of disarmament discussions, North Korea's leadership, particularly under Kim Jong-un, holds the key to the success or failure of disarmament initiatives. It has been a key supplier of missiles and missile technology to countries in the Middle East and South Asia including Egypt, Iran, Libya, Pakistan, Syria, and Yemen.
- South Korea: A neighboring country which is directly affected by tensions on the peninsula. Its participation is crucial for any comprehensive solution to be achieved.
- United States: An active and crucial participant in addressing the disarmament issue, the United States employs a mix of bilateral talks and engagement in multilateral frameworks with North Korea.
- China: Influential party in discussion due to its historical ties with North Korea as well its economic leverage over the country which provides it with a unique role in encouraging disarmament efforts
- Japan: a close ally of the US and within range of North Korean missiles. Has supported international sanctions.
- United Nations: UNSC imposed several rounds of sanctions in pursuit to pressure it into abandoning its nuclear weapons program.

- ❖ IAEA: promotes peaceful use of nuclear energy while preventing proliferation. Involvement is essential for ensuring transparency and monitoring potential disarmament efforts.

### **Timeline of Events:**

- ❖ December 12, 1985: North Korea joins the international Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, barring the country from producing nuclear weapons.
- ❖ October 21, 1994: North Korea and the US sign an agreed framework under which Pyongyang commits to freezing its nuclear programme in return for heavy fuel oil and two light-water nuclear reactors.
- ❖ October 20, 2002: US, Japan, and South Korea halt oil shipments following North Korea's reported admission that it has secretly been developing a uranium-based nuclear programme.
- ❖ December 12, 2002: North Korea announces it is reactivating nuclear facilities at Yongbyon and expels UN inspectors.
- ❖ January 10, 2003 - North Korea withdraws from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, marking the beginning of a series of six-party talks involving China, the Koreas, the US, Japan and Russia to try to resolve the nuclear issue.
- ❖ October 16, 2003: Pyongyang declares it has completed the reprocessing of 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods. Experts say this would give the North enough weapons-grade plutonium to develop up to six nuclear bombs within months.
- ❖ July 5, 2006: North Korea test fires seven missiles including a long-range Taepodong-2 missile.
- ❖ October 9, 2006: North Korea conducts its first nuclear weapons test at an underground facility. The UN imposed economic and commercial sanctions on North Korea.
- ❖ April 5, 2009: North Korea launches a long-range rocket, carrying what it says is a communications satellite; its neighbors accuse it of testing long-range missile technology. Condemnation from the UN Security Council prompts North Korea to walk out of six-party talks and restart its nuclear facilities.
- ❖ May 25, 2009: North Korea carries out its second underground nuclear test. The UN Security Council condemned the move.

- ❖ November 21, 2009: North Korea's state-run news agency reports the reprocessing of 8,000 spent fuel rods is complete, garnering enough weapons-grade plutonium for one to two nuclear bombs.
- ❖ November 30, 2010: North Korea reportedly shows an eminent visiting American nuclear scientist a new secretly-built facility for enriching uranium at its Yongbyon complex.
- ❖ April 13, 2012: Rocket launch, viewed internationally as a banned test of long-range Taepodong-2 missile technology, fails. Increased sanctions imposed.
- ❖ February 12, 2013: UN approves fresh sanctions after North Korea stages its third nuclear test, said to be more powerful than the 2009 test.
- ❖ September 11, 2013: Sole ally China bans export to North Korea of items that could be used to make missiles or nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.
- ❖ December 2, 2015: US imposes new sanctions on North Korea over weapons proliferation, targeting the army's Strategic Rocket Force, banks and shipping companies.
- ❖ November 30, 2016: UNSC further tightens sanctions due to nuclear test
- ❖ July 4, 2017: North Korea test-fires the Hwasong-14 ICBM
- ❖ August 29, 2017: North Korea fires Hwasong-12 IRBM
- ❖ September 3, 2017: North Korea carries out its sixth nuclear test, setting off a magnitude 6.3 earthquake at a depth of 23 kilometers near its nuclear test site. The North says it has mastered hydrogen bomb technology.
- ❖ November 29, 2017: North Korea test-fires a Hwasong-15 ICBM, and declares it has become a nuclear power.
- ❖ June 12, 2018: Kim Jong-un and US President Donald Trump's historic meeting in Singapore seeks to end a tense decades-old nuclear stand-off. A follow-up meeting in Hanoi in February 2019 breaks down after North Korea refuses nuclear disarmament in return for lifting economic sanctions.
- ❖ January 14, 2021: North Korea unveils new strategic weapon SLBM labeled Pukguksong-5.
- ❖ April 2021: Reports suggest that North Korea may be restarting its Yongbyon nuclear reactor, which could produce plutonium for nuclear weapons.
- ❖ March 2022: Satellite imagery suggests that North Korea is expanding its uranium enrichment facility at Yongbyon.

- ❖ January 2023: North Korea announces that it has successfully tested a hydrogen bomb, claiming it as a major advancement in its nuclear capabilities.
- ❖ September 2023: North Korea conducts its first-ever test of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) from a mobile launcher.

### **Attempts to solve the issue:**

- The Agreed Framework: while this framework managed to convince North Korea back into the NPT temporarily, it was unilaterally revoked as North Korea began nuclear experiments eight years later, primarily because the rewards offered were marginally attractive for the regime.
- UNSC resolution 1695: the first resolution to call for sanction against North Korea for its nuclear development, urged the implementation of a trade ban that would prevent the regime from purchasing any material that would be used for the development of its ballistic missiles.
- UNSC resolution 1718 (2006), UNSC resolutions 1874 (2009), 2087 (2013), and 2094 (2013) were passed as well: banned countries from trading military vehicles, weapons and luxury goods with North Korea. Furthermore, overseas assets of the individuals and organizations to do with the country's nuclear programme were frozen
- UNSC resolution 2270 (2016) prohibited all weapons trade with North Korea and furthered the previous sanctions on luxury goods.
- UNSC resolution 2375 (2017) unanimously furthered the existing oil sanction of the international community on North Korea, from four barrels annually to two.
- The Six-Party Talks: in which delegates of six stakeholding nations (North Korea, South Korea, Japan, Russia, China, and the United States) sought a diplomatic solution to the issue

Despite these efforts, the problem continues with different elements contributing to this continuing global concern. North Korea perceives its nuclear weapon program as an important factor for its security and survival of the regime. This is because leadership considers nuclear capability as a deterrent against external threats and interventions that might occur. Therefore, persuading North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons has been difficult. Furthermore, changes in leadership within North Korea especially during the transition from Kim Jong-il to Kim Jong-

un have made it unclear about the regime's intentions and willingness in engaging diplomatic processes.

### **Possible Solutions:**

1. Calling the international community to significantly improve the effectiveness of the current intermittent and negotiations towards denuclearization in North Korea by:
  - a. Reviving the Six Party Talks or establishing a similar multilateral negotiation framework
    - i. Engaging key stakeholders, including China, Russia, South Korea, Japan, and the United States, in renewed diplomatic efforts to restart the Six Party
    - ii. Talks or establish a new multilateral negotiation framework
  - b. Applying successful historical precedents such as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran in 2015
  - c. Offering technical and financial support to North Korea as an incentive for denuclearization including technology transfer, economic assistance, and energy cooperation
2. Consider the use of preemptive strikes on North Korean nuclear facilities as a last resort, only when all other diplomatic efforts have been exhausted and the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear program is deemed imminent and unacceptable.
  - a. The use of preemptive strikes should be subject to strict conditions, including:
    - i. A thorough assessment of the likelihood of success and the potential consequences of such strikes, including the risk of escalation and the impact on regional stability.
    - ii. A clear and compelling justification for the use of force, based on the principles of international law and the United Nations Charter.
    - iii. A commitment to minimize civilian casualties and damage to infrastructure, and to prioritize the safety and well-being of the North Korean people.

- b. The United Nations would work closely with relevant international organizations and member states to explore all possible avenues for resolving the crisis peacefully, including:
- i. Diplomatic efforts to persuade North Korea to abandon its nuclear program and engage in constructive dialogue.
  - ii. Economic sanctions and other measures aimed at pressuring North Korea to comply with international standards.
  - iii. Humanitarian assistance to address the needs of the North Korean people and promote stability in the region.

### **Guiding Questions:**

- How can the international community ensure the verification of North Korea's nuclear disarmament in a transparent and irreversible manner?
- What are the potential consequences of a failed diplomatic solution to North Korea's nuclear issue, and how can they be mitigated?
- What role should sanctions play in pressuring North Korea to denuclearize, and how can they be applied effectively without causing humanitarian suffering for the North Korean citizens?
- How can the issue of conventional weapons and military deployments in North Korea be addressed alongside nuclear disarmament to promote overall stability?
- What lessons can be learned from previous failed negotiations with North Korea, and how can they inform future diplomatic efforts for disarmament?
- How can civil society and non-governmental organizations contribute to the disarmament process in North Korea and raise awareness about the issue on a global scale?
- How can economic incentives and development assistance be leveraged to encourage North Korea's compliance with disarmament objectives and promote regional stability?
- Is negotiation or sanction more effective at forcing North Korea to denuclearize?
- Which approach has seen more progress until this point?
- Are there any other approaches that the international community could take?

- What can be done to make the current sanctions more effective? Is there a way for a strong, extensive sanction plan to gain support from all stake holding countries, including those that are close to North Korea?
- With what provisions and offers could the international community convince North Korea to denuclearize? Can some historical precedents, such as the denuclearization negotiations with Iran in 2014, be applied to this situation as successful models?
- Can preemptive strikes of North Korea, either by a specific country or by the UN, be at any time considered as a possible solution?

**Beneficial Sources:**

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