

Kim Jong Un appears to import luxury Maybach, Lexus SUVs despite sanctions

Analysis of state media shows vehicle priced at upwards of \$175K in North Korean leader's entourage during recent event

Colin Zwirko November 28, 2023



Kim Jong Un waving to a crowd from inside his Maybach limousine after an April 2022 military parade | Image: KCTV (April 30, 2022)

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un appeared to be using new luxury Maybach and Lexus SUVs during a visit to the east coast over the weekend, according to *NK News* analysis of state media, pointing to a likely violation of international sanctions on the import of such vehicles.

Kim arrived at the [Ryongsong Machine Complex](#) in Hamhung with a motorcade that included what looks like a Mercedes-Benz Maybach GLS 600 and Lexus LX SUV built in the last few years, though *Korean Central Television* (KCTV) footage of the visit attempted to avoid showing the vehicles directly.

NK News has identified the vehicles in the background and in window reflections in some shots.

Details of one vehicle match the Maybach GLS 600 model that was released in 2019, with shared features including the wheel design, side window shape and a likely Maybach badge on the rear quarter panel.

Another SUV featured a front grill matching the fourth-generation Lexus LX SUV released in 2022.





This comparison shows matching cosmetic aspects of the newest generation Lexus LX SUV and a vehicle seen in KCTV footage of Kim at the Ryongsong factory / Images: KCTV (Nov. 27, 2023); Mercedes; edited by NK News

The Maybach retails at around US\$175,000 for the base model and the Lexus at over \$85,000.

However, the Maybach likely received custom armor for the protection of the leader as with his other vehicles, while the Lexus could be for other top officials.

Their apparent import comes as state media continues to urge citizens to endure economic hardships in the underdeveloped state.

It is unclear when or how North Korea imported the vehicles, but if confirmed to be genuine models, the trade would likely constitute a violation of U.N. Security Council sanctions that ban the transfer of both luxury goods and transportation vehicles of any kind to the DPRK.

Kim has appeared in new luxury Lexus LX SUVs of the previous generation and a new Mercedes sedan in recent years, and state media once showed him using a Rolls Royce Phantom.

The country has frequently [demonstrated](#) its ability to maintain specialized trade networks to import other banned vehicles in [recent years](#), while North Korea has continued to push forward its nuclear missile development despite sanctions.

Edited by Bryan Betts

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