

Press release: Mark field statement at UN Security Council North Korea meeting

Speaking at the UN Security Council meeting on North Korea on 15 December, Foreign & Commonwealth Minister for Asia Mark Field MP said:

Thank you Mr Foreign Minister for bringing us together for this important meeting under the Japanese presidency of the Security Council.

And thank you too, for the Secretary-General Guterres for your comprehensive briefing on the clear global threats and the challenges that destabilising conduct of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea present to us all.

I should like to start by discussing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. It was, it is, a great diplomatic achievement and remains the cornerstone of our international security.

As signatories, we have all benefited from its protections. It is our collective responsibility, and it is in our collective interests, to ensure that all nations stand by their commitments and obligations under the Treaty and its associated agreements.

It is also our duty as members of this Council and as responsible international actors.

We must abide by our collective rules, we must defend our values and we must work together in this Council, to safeguard a system of international security that benefits the whole of humanity.

North Korea repeatedly and wilfully rebuffs these systems and our collective values.

Earlier this week, members of the Council heard appalling and harrowing accounts of the regime's brutal treatment of its own people. Of women forced to drown their newborn babies as the regime didn't consider them to be racially pure. They heard multiple examples of violations of foreign citizens' rights, including of course Mr President, of those of your own country, Japan.

Today, we meet yet again to condemn North Korea's illegal and dangerous nuclear weapons programme. Kim Jong-Un claims that he wants to be a responsible actor, and that he wishes to bring security and prosperity to his people. The regime's actions, exemplified by their systematic violation of human rights and their nuclear weapons programme, demonstrate precisely the opposite intent.

North Korea's pursuit of an intercontinental nuclear weapon is increasingly

destabilising for us all. North Korea has fired some 20 ballistic missiles this year. We have seen three intercontinental ballistic missile launches and two missiles launched across and over the territory of Northern Japan.

Now, in response to these actions this Council has unanimously, and appropriately, decided to impose the strictest sanctions in a generation upon North Korea.

Our community of nations has shown its deep condemnation of the regime by taking these sanctions seriously. This has of course started to have an impact. We all have the responsibility of ensuring these sanctions are fully and properly implemented so that they have the desired effect.

Now that North Korea's arms dealers are discovering that their usual routes to clients are closed, their diplomats are struggling to process bank transactions for contraband goods. Their exporters of manual labour are finding their contracts are not being renewed.

We must not just keep this pressure up, but we must increase it. We must share information and expertise to prevent North Korea from using front companies or illicit channels to evade sanctions.

We must all co-operate fully with the UN's highly competent and professional Panel of Experts on North Korea sanctions and we strongly commend their work and will continue actively to support them.

But we should be clear that the reason we enforce sanctions is to force Kim Jong-Un to see that he has the choice of two paths.

His current path will lead his country to greater poverty and isolation, and threatens not just North Korea's but the global security.

He can, he must, choose to change course. He can choose to comply with the UN Security Council resolutions and to join the community of law-abiding nations. He can choose to let his people express themselves through debate and commerce.

This is the real path to security and prosperity for the North Korean people. Only Kim can now make this choice and we must all work together here to persuade him to make the right choice.

Our message to Kim Jong-Un and his regime must be clear and united: for the wellbeing of your countrymen and the safety of your neighbours and the wider world, you must change course. I hope the North Korean representative here today conveys these strong messages back to Pyongyang.

Mr President, we must all work together and use all the diplomatic and economic tools at our disposal to deliver this uncompromising message.

Let us stand firm. Let us stand fast to our values.

The world looks to all of us here to defend our system of international security. For the sake of future generations of humankind, we must now rise

to this challenge.