

UK urges North Korea to begin process of irreversible denuclearisation

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, we gather today in the name of prevention. International peace and security is under threat, owing to the unabated development of ballistic missile and nuclear weapons technology by North Korea. Despite concerted and good faith efforts by the US to negotiate a solution, this year has seen 13 sets of illegal ballistic missile tests.

We gather today also to send a message to Pyongyang: it is not too late. You can prevent the situation worsening. You should seize this diplomatic opportunity that has already been repeated in the Council this session. The united expressed will of the Security Council is that North Korea should begin a process of complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation. The UK will continue to work with international partners to support this goal.

Madam President, it bears repeating what is at stake. As the China Permanent Representative said, this is truly and quintessentially a matter for the Security Council and only the Security Council of international bodies can really deal with such a challenge deriving from weapons of mass destruction and proliferation. It's a vital issue. It is hard to discern, Madam President, what lies behind the provocative and dangerous moves by North Korea.

Since May 2019, they have tested three different types of short range ballistic missiles, and these tests have demonstrated substantial progress for this illegal and reckless weapons programme. As other representatives have said, each test is a violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions. And the Council needs to support the rigorous enforcement of its sanctions in the face of such violations. And I just wanted at this point to endorse what the French representative said about the humanitarian angle with which we agree wholeheartedly. The sanctions regime imposed by the Council will remain in place until North Korea takes concrete steps towards denuclearisation. Further breaches of Security Council resolutions, whether they're ballistic missile launches, space launch vehicles or nuclear tests, will only harden the resolve of the Council.

There are further implications in possessions of such weapons. It's in no member state's interest to see North Korean technology and expertise proliferate across borders. As next year we face the anniversary of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, it becomes a very important moment to resolve this issue.

Madam President, we should not forget the suffering of the North Korean people. The human rights situation in North Korea is disturbing. They are the worst offender on the Global Slavery Index, and 179th out of 180 in the

Reporters without Borders World Press Freedom Index. Human rights has a critical role to play, and we urge North Korea to concentrate on improving the lives of its most vulnerable people.

Madam President, all states have an obligation to enforce this council's sanctions. We urge action to address the continued reports of fuel shipments to North Korea in violation of the mandated annual imports cap. And we urge vigilance against North Korea's illegal fundraising activity, including its use of cyber attacks. And we remind states, if I may, Madam President, that all North Korean overseas workers earning income should be repatriated by 22 December this year.

Madam President, our message as a Council must be united and it is clear. Continued development of programmes in violation of Security Council resolutions will not be tolerated. We urge North Korea to change course, to engage in meaningful negotiations with the United States and to begin a process of complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation.

Thank you.