



# Security Council

Eightieth year

## 9912

th meeting

Wednesday, 7 May 2025, 3 p.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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*President:* Mr. Sekeris ..... (Greece)

*Members:*

Algeria.....	Mr. Koudri
China.....	Mr. Geng Shuang
Denmark.....	Ms. Landi
France.....	Mr. Bonnafont
Guyana.....	Ms. Persaud
Pakistan.....	Mr. Jadoon
Panama.....	Mr. Alfaro de Alba
Republic of Korea.....	Mr. Hwang
Russian Federation.....	Mr. Nebenzia
Sierra Leone.....	Ms. Swallow
Slovenia.....	Mrs. Blokar Drobič
Somalia.....	Mr. Mohamed Yusuf
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ..	Mr. Kariuki
United States of America.....	Ms. Shea

## Agenda

Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea**

**The President:** In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Japan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Khaled Khiari, Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations; and Mr. James Byrne, Chief Executive Officer and Founder of Open Source Centre.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Khiari.

**Mr. Khiari:** I have been requested to brief the Security Council today on the item "Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea".

This year marks the final year of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's five-year military development plan for the period 2021 to 2025. Throughout 2024 and early 2025, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continued to conduct launches of ballistic missiles, including what it characterized as the Hwasong-19 intercontinental ballistic missile in October of last year and an intermediate range hypersonic ballistic missile in January of this year.

According to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has continued its open display of undeclared uranium enrichment facilities located in Yongbyon and Kangson. Those events have been accompanied by statements reiterating the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's intention to further develop nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities, including tactical nuclear warheads, military reconnaissance satellites and the construction of a nuclear-powered strategic missile submarine.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's persistent pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes, in violation of relevant Security Council resolutions, continues to undermine the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and the Treaty on the Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which underpins it. At this critical juncture, it remains as important as ever to continue to highlight the urgent need to reduce nuclear risk, prevent any use of a nuclear weapon and bring about their total elimination. We continue our strong calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully comply with its international obligations, including the NPT and IAEA safeguards, and to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1874 (2009) supported efforts to monitor the implementation of the resolutions established in response to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes. From 12 June 2009 until 30 April 2024, the Panel gathered and analysed information from Member States, relevant United Nations bodies and other interested parties regarding the implementation of, and non-compliance with, the relevant resolutions and made recommendations. The Panel of Experts issued two reports annually, with its last report (see S/2024/215) being released on 7 March 2024, well over one year ago.

While the Security Council did not renew the mandate of the Panel of Experts beyond 30 April 2024, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) continues to oversee the sanctions regime. We recall the obligations for all Member States to implement the relevant sanctions measures. As the Secretary-General has stated, any relationship that a country has with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must entirely abide by the relevant Security Council sanctions.

The broader security landscape on the Korean Peninsula remains tense, with heightened military activities, limited avenues for inter-Korean and regional dialogue, the presence of nuclear risks and growing concerns over the potential for miscalculation. The Secretary-General has consistently underscored that sustainable peace and the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula must be anchored in dialogue and diplomacy. We welcome any efforts in that respect.

Separately, the Council must also remain attentive to the humanitarian situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We reiterate the call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to facilitate the return of the United Nations country team to strengthen support for its people and advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Khiari for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Byrne.

**Mr. Byrne:** My name is James Byrne. I am the Chief Executive Officer of the United Kingdom-based Open Source Centre and concurrently also a Senior Associate Fellow at the Royal United Services Institute at Whitehall in London. For several years, both at the Institute and now at the Open Source Centre, my team and I have tracked and investigated North Korean United Nations sanctions-evasion and broader procurement and proliferation operations by the country's networks and its vessels. A number of our recent reports have been published on our website, focused both on North Korean movement of munitions and, in other cases, the procurement of refined petroleum, once again in violation of Security Council resolutions. Today, however, I am here to talk very briefly about a report we are releasing today — which, again, will be on our website — focused on the movement of North Korean commodities, such as coal and iron ore, in violation, we believe, of Council resolutions.

Since October 2024, we have tracked a number of foreign-flagged vessels engaged in the lifting and moving of North Korean coal and iron ore for their ports to other ports in countries abroad, including China. Those vessels, which I will show the Council pictures of very soon, are named the *ARMANI*, the *CARTIER*, the *CASIO*, the *SOPHIA*, the *YI LI I* and the *AN YU*. On our website, members will see a number of images of those vessels: this is the *ARMANI*. And this is another picture of the *ARMANI* loading coal in North Korea. Here is a picture of the *SOPHIA*, as well as a range of others. Historically, we have tracked many North Korean shipments of coal and iron ore abroad. They are loaded onto those vessels and then moved, often while they are totally “dark” and not transmitting on their Automatic Identification System (AIS) transponders. In many cases, those vessels have started engaging in sophisticated “spoofing” techniques, such that they present their transmissions as if they were in other countries — when in fact satellite imagery shows them loading in North Korea. That obfuscatory activity has become increasingly sophisticated and has allowed a number of vessels to be loaded and not be detected in moving those commodities abroad.

My team and I have developed these tracking techniques over many years. We do so by taking high-resolution images from satellites, layering them with AIS data and, in many cases, doing photogrammetric analysis and identification of the vessels, in many ways similar to how the United Nations Panel of Experts conducted its work

previously. It is noteworthy that some of those vessels are connected, through their operator and ownership networks, to other networks that have been involved in these illicit activities — and in some cases to vessels that have themselves been detained and whose operators have been sanctioned. This activity is also of significant interest in that, during the period of the coronavirus disease pandemic, we saw a very quiet period, obviously because of the global shutdown of ports and other infrastructure and borders; whereas today we are seeing increased movement of these commodities in and out of North Korea, in what we believe to be violation of Security Council resolutions. That also serves to underpin that these activities continue.

The evidence will be presented online, where members will be able to see it.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Byrne for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

**Ms. Shea** (United States of America): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari and Mr. James Byrne for their briefings.

One year ago, with China's tacit support, Russia vetoed the mandate renewal of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) (see S/PV.9591), thereby depriving all Member States of crucial, objective information that helped them implement their obligations under Democratic People's Republic of Korea-related Security Council resolutions, all of which remain in effect. The United States is grateful that independent and well-regarded experts from organizations such as the Open Source Centre continue to investigate and provide credible reporting on violations and evasions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-related Security Council resolutions. Today's briefing shows that the Council will continue to ensure that Member States are aware of sanctions violations and evasion activity that generate revenue for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's unlawful weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and ballistic missile programmes, despite Russia's veto.

The United States thanks the Open Source Centre for systematically examining hundreds of satellite images and building out innovative three-dimensional models of vessels, containers and munitions to calculate the billions of dollars' worth of artillery shells, rockets and other munitions that Russia continues to import from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in violation of Security Council sanctions. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues brazenly to violate the Council's resolutions by exporting coal and iron ore to China, the proceeds of which directly fund its unlawful WMD and ballistic missile programmes.

Resolutions 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009) and 2270 (2016) collectively prohibit Member States from receiving arms and related materiel, training or assistance from, or providing them to, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Russia have flagrantly violated those resolutions in both directions. Since September 2023, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has transferred over 24,000 containers of munitions and munitions-related materiel and well over 100 ballistic missiles to Russia for use against Ukraine. The Open Source Centre's independent findings corroborate what we have seen in press reporting and other open-source analysis.

It is clear from evidence presented today that Russia is cynically obstructing the Council on Democratic People's Republic of Korea sanctions implementation in order to try to escape reproach for its own violations. Meanwhile, China insists that it fully implements the Council's resolutions, but we have just seen evidence of Chinese authorities looking the other way as People's Republic of China companies

import the Democratic People's Republic of Korea coal and iron ore in violation of the Council's resolutions.

The Council needs to address these egregious violations of Security Council resolutions despite Russia's and China's efforts to obstruct the Council from updating the sanctions list under resolution 1718 (2006). The United States urges all States to ensure that their flag registries de-flag vessels for which there is evidence of involvement in sanctions-evasion activities, even if they are not formally designated on the 1718 sanctions list due to the obstruction of those two Committee members. Indeed, we recall the obligation set out in paragraph 9 of resolution 2397 (2017), which requires all Member States to seize, inspect and impound any vessel in their ports if the Member State has reasonable grounds to believe that the vessel was involved in activities or in the transport of items, such as Democratic People's Republic of Korea-origin coal and iron ore, that are prohibited by certain Democratic People's Republic of Korea-related resolutions.

We call on all Member States to fulfil their obligations to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions. In the coming days, we plan to nominate for designation in the 1718 Committee vessels clearly identified in the briefing, to which Mr. Byrne referred, for violations of United Nations sanctions restrictions. We also call on the 1718 Committee to facilitate the implementation of the Council's sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, consistent with its mandate, by updating — for the first time since 2018 — the list of vessels designated under the regime.

The United States stands ready to work with the rest of the Security Council to reinstate the 1718 Committee Panel of Experts.

**Ms. Landi** (Denmark): Let me also thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari and Mr. Byrne for their briefings.

It is clear that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains in widespread and systematic violation of United Nations sanctions.

Since the Council last convened on this issue, in late February, the ballistic missile launches of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have continued unabated. Let there be no doubt: launches such as those on 10 March represent a clear and serious threat to regional and international peace and security. They must stop immediately and without any preconditions.

These are, in fact, the very missiles — tested by countless North Korean launches — that are now raining down on Europe, bringing misery, destruction and death to civilians across Ukraine. Just as troubling are the 4–6 million artillery shells estimated to have been shipped by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the Russian Federation since September 2023. Transfers on that scale have, at the very least, prolonged Russia's illegal war against Ukraine. They clearly violate the two-way arms embargo imposed by the Council on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Furthermore — and despite months of denials — last week we finally received confirmation of what we have already known and seen for months: that Kim Jong Un sent thousands of troops to fight in Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. This represents a deeply troubling escalation, with serious consequences for European and global peace and security.

Given the willingness of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation to ignore United Nations sanctions, how long until we see North Korean weapons — or troops — in other conflicts around the world? These flagrant violations of United Nations sanctions are absolutely not just a concern for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's neighbours or for Europe.

For all those reasons, Denmark supports the continued use of sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a legitimate tool to pressure its regime to stop its destabilizing actions. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must fulfil its international obligations, including under multiple Security Council resolutions.

Let me be clear: the Security Council has already decided that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must suspend all aspects of its ballistic missile programme. Resolution 1718 (2006) also decided that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea shall abandon its nuclear weapons programme in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, and immediately return to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon State and be in full compliance.

The Council created the Panel of Experts as a vital source of information for the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) to ensure the effectiveness of the sanctions imposed against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Denmark deeply regrets that just one year ago, after a Russian veto, the mandate of the Panel was not renewed. Unfortunately, it has now only become easier for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and others to circumvent the sanctions that the Council unanimously decided to impose on it.

Denmark's strong preference remains for the Panel to be restored. The actions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea require this. Failing that, however, we must rely on other independent sources of information, including the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team and the Open Source Centre, for information that can be discussed freely and shared widely.

Finally, I want to recall that sanctions are not intended to negatively impact the lives of ordinary people, and we remain concerned by the dire humanitarian situation and human rights record in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. That is why all genuine requests under the humanitarian exemption mechanism should be reviewed and approved. The responsibility for that lies, of course, with the regime in Pyongyang, which prioritizes acquiring advanced weapons over its people's welfare.

Denmark urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to allow the return of United Nations and other humanitarian organizations, and to engage seriously with the human rights mechanisms of the United Nations.

**Mr. Bonnafont** (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I wish to thank Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari and the Chief Executive Officer of the Open Source Centre, Mr. James Byrne, for their briefings, which are more necessary than ever in the absence of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006).

The third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is being held here in New York this week. The work of this Committee reminds us of our collective responsibility to preserve the international non-proliferation regime, a regime that we believe that North Korea still has a duty to comply with.

The Security Council has a special responsibility and a duty to set an example: it must respond to proliferation crises that jeopardize international peace and security. North Korea's pursuit of illegal nuclear and ballistic programmes calls for a determined response on its part.

North Korea is violating Security Council resolutions by pursuing its nuclear programmes. It has already conducted six nuclear tests, and the risk of another cannot be ruled out. The International Atomic Energy Agency has observed activities at several undeclared uranium enrichment sites in the country. That is compounded by Pyongyang's worrisome statements and the fact that possession of nuclear weapons was enshrined in the Constitution in September 2023.



North Korea is also violating the Council's resolutions by expanding its ballistic missile programme. Since 2022, it has carried out over 100 ballistic missile launches. Those provocations threaten regional stability. We call on North Korea to cease those violations of resolutions adopted unanimously by the Council and to finally commit to complete, irreversible and verifiable denuclearization.

Due to a Russian veto (see S/PV.9591), the 1718 Committee no longer enjoys the support of the Panel of Experts, which reported professionally and objectively on the implementation of resolutions relating to North Korea. The Panel's reports were a source of impartial information for the entire international community.

None of the pretexts put forward by Russia to justify its veto stand up to scrutiny. Russia promoted the dismantling of the Panel, in parallel with North Korea's illicit military support for its war of aggression against Ukraine. There is evidence that North Korea is transferring arms and munitions to Russia, which is using them as part of its war effort against Ukraine.

A few days ago, Russia and North Korea themselves acknowledged the participation of North Korean soldiers in operations carried out as part of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. That support has direct consequences for European security interests. We strongly condemn this latest violation of international law by those two States. With regard to North Korea, we call on Russia to join a decision to allow the re-establishment of the Panel of Experts, in accordance with its responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations, its status as a permanent member of the Security Council and its role in the non-proliferation regime.

More broadly, the situation reminds the Council to focus its monitoring efforts in four domains.

First, the resolutions of the Council are binding and must be respected by all States, including the members of the Council. I am thinking particularly about the sanctions regimes in that regard.

Secondly, the Security Council must be able to monitor the implementation of its resolutions. In that respect, the re-establishment of the Panel of Experts continues to be necessary. In the meantime, we are determined to work on the information mission that used to be carried out by the Panel.

Thirdly, the Security Council has to provide all of its support to the International Atomic Energy Agency, which continues monitoring and verifying North Korea's nuclear programme.

Lastly, the Security Council has to continue demanding that North Korea fulfil its international obligations, including under the NPT, and that it chose dialogue for the purpose of having a lasting peace and security on the Korean Peninsula.

**Mr. Alfaro de Alba** (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Panama thanks the presidency of the Council for organizing this meeting and thanks Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari and Mr. James Byrne of the Open Source Centre for their valuable briefings.

In view of the increasing violations of Security Council resolutions by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — in addition to its blatant contravention of global non-proliferation mechanisms — Panama expresses its deep concern at the continuation of those practices, which undermine the authority of this organ and the multilateral framework as a whole. That is compounded by the perceived weakening of the Sanctions Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) following the dissolution of the Panel of Experts, a decision that has negatively affected technical capacity and independent monitoring.

In that context, Panama recognizes the value of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and as a pillar for the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as the effective implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Council. Panama has historically maintained a clear position on compliance with those resolutions to ensure the integrity of the sanctions regime. In that regard, it is pertinent to highlight the findings of the final report of the Panel of Experts, prepared pursuant to resolution 2680 (2023) (see S/2024/215), which contained information of high operational and strategic value.

The report documents worrisome developments in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's military capabilities, including the development of tactical nuclear weapons, the commissioning of ballistic-launch-capable submarines and systematic patterns of maritime evasion. Those included the use of coastal vessels without International Maritime Organization numbers, impersonation, the deliberate manipulation of satellite navigation signals, fraudulent registrations and successive changes of flag to conceal illicit activities. In view of the increasing sophistication of the techniques used by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to evade sanctions, we consider it essential to expand the international community's monitoring and technical cooperation capabilities.

As a State that administers one of the largest ship registries in the world, and as a member of Category (a) of the Council of the International Maritime Organization, Panama notes with concern the increase in illicit activities related to maritime traffic. Recent trends reveal a worrisome trend in the arsenal of criminal activities used by sanctioned States to evade obligations and achieve their illicit goals, posing challenges for monitoring, control and the implementation of corrective measures. In response to those challenges, Panama has adopted innovative initiatives to counter the impact of those practices.

As a founding member of the Registry Information-Sharing Compact — a database shared among maritime registries — our country seeks to limit strategic flagging by ships involved in sanctionable activities. Since its accession, Panama has reported more than 135 vessels linked to illicit activities. More recently, our legal framework has been strengthened by Executive Decree No. 512 of October 2024, which establishes concrete tools to protect the integrity of the Panamanian flag.

At a time when multilateralism is facing increasing pressures, Panama reaffirms the importance of the sanctions adopted by the Council and reiterates its readiness to cooperate technically and constructively in that mission, whenever there is evidence that measures will effectively contribute to the shared objective.

In the light of the above, Panama expresses deep concern over recent joint statements acknowledging the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's involvement in the supply of arms and troops to the Russian Federation in the context of the conflict in Ukraine. That active collaboration, in direct contravention of multiple Security Council resolutions, is condemnable and reprehensible, as it not only prolongs a war with devastating humanitarian consequences, but also seriously undermines the multilateral architecture designed to preserve international peace and security.

States that play at war, whether through military operations, armed invasions, extraterritorial maritime incursions, threats to the sovereignty of other States or alliances that only serve a specific objective, destabilize an international system that is already stumbling. The arms race and the alliances that fuel conflict only contribute to the expansion and worsening of that conflict.

Panama, as an essential partner in global trade and a responsible country in the field of maritime security, advocates a strengthened international system focused on prevention, deterrence, disarmament and non-proliferation. Panama offers its



cooperation to ensure that sanctions monitoring mechanisms are strengthened, while stressing the importance of promoting efforts leading to a general de-escalation of tensions, with a view to achieving disarmament based on firm political will, effective international cooperation and the participation of all actors involved.

**Ms. Persaud** (Guyana): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his briefing and listened carefully to the presentation by Mr. Byrne. I welcome the participation of the representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Japan in this meeting.

Guyana remains concerned about the continued launching of ballistic missiles and the ongoing nuclear expansion programme by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in violation of relevant Security Council resolutions. Those actions not only aggravate the already tense situation on the Korean Peninsula but also weaken the global non-proliferation regime.

Guyana condemns those ongoing violations and calls upon the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions. We also call upon the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and all other concerned parties to act in good faith, to engage in diplomacy and to resuscitate dialogue.

Guyana reiterates the need for all relevant parties to exercise restraint and avoid exacerbating the already heightened tensions and the security situation on the Korean Peninsula. We firmly believe that with strong political will, progress towards a peaceful and sustainable solution is possible.

We underscore the importance of the universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and urge the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to the Treaty and to allow the International Atomic Energy Agency to re-establish its presence in the country. That is critical for confidence-building and ensuring the credible verification of the nuclear facilities in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as strengthening the non-proliferation regime.

Guyana also underscores the need for divestment of the ballistic missile programme, while simultaneously prioritizing human development in the country. In that context, we remain concerned about the dire humanitarian situation and encourage the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to allow the return of the United Nations country team and the international community to the country. We reiterate our support for the humanitarian exemption mechanism of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) in facilitating humanitarian assistance to the population in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Guyana once again emphasizes that the 1718 Sanctions Committee must maintain its mandate of overseeing the implementation of the measures outlined in the Council resolutions related to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We urge all Member States to comply with and fully implement the relevant Council resolutions related to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In the absence of the Committee's Panel of Experts, we stress that a continuous flow of information on the implementation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea sanctions regime remains critical to the work of the Committee. We also express support for the reinstatement of the Panel of Experts and commit to engaging with fellow Council members in that regard.

Finally, Guyana reiterates its belief that the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is through their total elimination. The denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is critical to achieving that objective and promoting international peace and security. Guyana reaffirms its commitment to advancing the global non-proliferation and disarmament agenda and calls on States that have not yet done so to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

We also reaffirm our commitment to the Council's efforts to bring about compliance with its resolutions related to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

**Mr. Hwang** (Republic of Korea): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting. I would also like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari and Mr. James Byrne for their briefings.

Today's meeting recalls the deeply disappointing moment a year ago when one permanent member of the Security Council wielded its veto against the extension of the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) — an essential mechanism that had faithfully served the Council for 15 years (see S/PV.9591). Indeed, that veto deprived Member States of a vital mechanism for offering guidance and monitoring the implementation of United Nations sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

One year later, let us assess where we now stand. In the absence of the Panel, North Korea has brazenly accelerated its illegal activities to support its nuclear and missile programmes. Those include illicit exports of coal and iron, arms transfers, a recent cryptocurrency theft totalling \$1.5 billion, the overseas dispatch of workers and even the deployment of troops abroad. Most notably, the illegal military cooperation between Russia and North Korea, based on their so-called comprehensive strategic partnership, has severely undermined the Security Council sanctions regime on North Korea and threatens regional and global peace and security. North Korean arms and troops have prolonged and intensified the war in Ukraine, while, in return, Russia's potential military and technological assistance to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea poses a direct threat to security on the Korean Peninsula.

As members all know, after months of denial, the two parties now openly acknowledge the deployment of North Korean troops, with an inept attempt to justify it as being consistent with international law. However, no amount of far-fetched or strained reasoning can obscure the truth. The massive transfer of arms and other forms of military cooperation, including the deployment of 15,000 North Korean troops, constitute a flagrant violation of international norms, including the Charter of the United Nations and multiple resolutions adopted by the Council with the backing of Russia itself. In addition, Russia is promoting the false narrative that sanctions on Pyongyang have been ineffective and should therefore be revised. Yet sanctions are only effective when fully and faithfully implemented. In particular, countries with substantial trade and economic ties to North Korea must play a major role in enhancing the effectiveness of the sanctions.

Amid the absence of the Panel when it comes to monitoring and reporting on sanctions non-compliance, 11 Member States, including the Republic of Korea, came together last year to establish the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team to help all Member States to fulfil their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations. Furthermore, if any revision to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea sanctions regime is to be considered, it should aim to enhance it, in accordance with operative paragraph 28 of resolution 2397 (2017) of December 2017. The resolution authorizes the Council to strengthen, modify, suspend or lift sanctions in the light of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's compliance. As Pyongyang's actions clearly and continuously defy the Council's decisions, the Council should consider strengthening existing sanctions, not weakening them.

Emboldened by active Russian support and its first participation in a modern war, North Korea is not only pursuing the advancement of its nuclear and missile programmes but also revitalizing its relatively stagnated and obsolete conventional arms industry. Kim Jong Un has recently ordered that lessons learned from modern warfare in Ukraine be incorporated into the military. And just yesterday, during his visit to a munitions factory, Kim praised the expansion of production capacity and

modernization, highlighting the exponential increase in shell production — now four times higher than the average annual level. Pyongyang is therefore now accelerating the development of a range of conventional weapons, including reconnaissance and suicide attack drones, advanced tanks and armoured vehicles and a newly unveiled 5,000-ton multi-mission naval destroyer with a view to realizing its nuclear armament — the largest warship ever produced in North Korea. Those developments have ushered in a new and alarming phase of security risks on the Korean Peninsula, with serious implications for regional and global stability.

Even in the face of those renewed existential threats, the Republic of Korea remains steadfast in protecting its people and the country, in full compliance with international law and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). However, one permanent member of the Council appears to have chosen a different path. Particularly concerning is the reversal of its long-standing position in defence of the global non-proliferation regime. The shift in its narrative, framing North Korea's denuclearization as a closed issue, directly contradicts the decisions of the Council, which unequivocally call for North Korea to immediately abandon all nuclear and missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

It is especially alarming that it is not just an isolated remark made by its Minister for Foreign Affairs last year but a line that continues to be vocally repeated by its officials. At last week's BRICS High Representatives' meeting, scepticism towards United Nations sanctions was again voiced by its top security official. Moreover, attempts were made to justify North Korea's nuclear build-up and threats by blaming the Republic of Korea-United States extended deterrence cooperation. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the fact that Republic of Korea-United States extended deterrence cooperation, which is defensive in nature, is a legitimate response to protect the lives and safety of the Korean people in face of North Korea's growing nuclear threat. It is also fully consistent with the NPT and further promotes regional peace and stability.

Two days ago, at the third session of the NPT Preparatory Committee, held here, 81 States parties to the NPT unanimously reaffirmed in the joint statement that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea cannot have the status of a nuclear-weapon State and urged North Korea to return to the NPT. The Council must not allow further erosion of the global non-proliferation regime, which has been painstakingly built through decades of collective effort. Turning a blind eye to North Korea's persistent and blatant violations risks triggering a dangerous domino effect that could irreparably damage the NPT regime and the very integrity of the global non-proliferation framework at large. That may entail broader and deeper security ramifications for the region and beyond.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to call on all responsible members of the Council to recognize the gravity of this moment and to work collectively to restore and safeguard the non-proliferation regime. That is essential for maintaining international peace and security.

**Mrs. Blokar Drobič** (Slovenia): I would like to begin by thanking Assistant Secretary-General Khiari and Mr. Byrne for their briefings.

Well over a year has passed since Russia's veto (see S/PV.9591) prevented the mandate renewal of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006). For over a year, the Council has therefore had no tool for the independent and professional monitoring of sanctions implementation, no objective or comprehensive updates about the latest sanctions contravention techniques and no impartial assessments that could guide the Council's activities regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea sanctions regime.

Perhaps it was a mere coincidence, but the draft resolution was vetoed exactly when the Panel commenced its investigation into Russia's violations of the arms embargo against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. If that was the reason for the veto, then it is deeply disturbing.

The recent public acknowledgement of military cooperation between the two countries, including the presence of troops from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in Europe, raises serious concerns about the extent of the arms embargo violations. Publicly available information suggests arms transfers at a significant scale. That must be thoroughly investigated, and those blatant violations of Security Council resolutions must cease immediately.

Slovenia is gravely concerned about the trajectory of the nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. For years, the country has been violating Security Council resolutions through testing nuclear weapon delivery systems. Those systems are reportedly being used in attacks on Ukrainian cities, thus being field-tested for future use elsewhere. That is alarming. Equally troubling are recent statements about the presumed obsolescence and redundancy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea sanctions regime and statements on the country's nuclear status.

Slovenia remains convinced that sanctions must remain focused on their core objective: creating conditions conducive to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea abandoning its illegal weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes. It is our responsibility to ensure that the existing measures achieve that goal. We are ready to support readjustments of the sanctions regime in order to ensure that it remains relevant and fit for purpose. However, we are not ready to endorse any broader revisions or reforms of it. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has demonstrated far too little willingness to engage on nuclear disarmament to justify such measures.

North Korea needs to be denuclearized. That can follow only if the Council can find unity and employ all diplomatic means to make the Democratic People's Republic of Korea cease its provocations and bring it back to dialogue. For Slovenia, that remains the only legitimate option.

**Mr. Kariuki** (United Kingdom): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari and Mr. James Byrne for briefing us today. Analysis from organizations such as Open Source Centre has become even more vital in the wake of the expertise gap left by the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006).

One year on, the United Kingdom deeply regrets Russia's decision to veto (see S/PV.9591) the mandate renewal of the 1718 Panel of Experts. That was a deliberate act used to obfuscate and embolden the unlawful pursuit of weapons of mass destruction by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and to conceal Russia's own erosion of the United Nations sanctions architecture, which it has a responsibility to uphold as a permanent member of the Council.

The Panel's credible, objective and independent reporting enabled the Council and the international community to effectively monitor the implementation of United Nations sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Most importantly, the Panel helped to prevent the country's unlawful and dangerous development of nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.

Since Russia's veto last year, there have been over 40 missile tests, including one intercontinental ballistic missile test and one intermediate-range ballistic missile test. That escalation represents multiple breaches of Security Council resolution, on which we have been deprived of further analysis.

It is obvious that Russia's objective was to clear the path for the expansion of its military relationship with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which is believed to have supplied 20,000 containers of munitions to Russia. Moreover, its artillery and mortar shells account for 60 per cent of those used in Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine. And as we heard today, in the past week, Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea publicly flaunted their decision to use troops from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as mere cannon fodder in that war.

Let me be clear: we cannot allow this brazen disregard towards United Nations sanctions to become normalized. The United Kingdom will continue to work closely with partners to monitor sanctions evasion, to hold both Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to account and to call out those complicit in the latter's violations of Security Council resolutions.

As we have heard over the course of the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Council should stand firm in its defence of the global non-proliferation regime.

The United Kingdom remains steadfast, alongside its partners, in affirming our shared goal: for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon all nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

**Mr. Jadoon (Pakistan):** I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari for his valuable briefing and take note of the remarks by Mr. Byrne.

Escalating tensions in the Korean Peninsula remain a huge source of concern for us. Regrettably, the situation has further deteriorated in the recent past, with a negative impact on regional and international peace and security.

Pakistan seeks peace and stability in our region and other regions of the world. We support the global non-proliferation norms and the objective of the denuclearization of Korean Peninsula within the framework of Security Council resolutions. We oppose the resumption of nuclear testing anywhere in the world. Pakistan views with concern violations of Security Council resolutions by any Member State, without exception.

It is our firm belief that challenges confronting the Korean Peninsula could be resolved through diplomatic engagement, dialogue and mutual respect. We therefore call on all concerned to take measures conducive to the revival of talks among the relevant parties.

It is also incumbent on all concerned to exercise restraint and not escalate existing tensions or take any action that is detrimental to peace and security. The Security Council must take the lead in finding ways to lower tensions in the region and encourage confidence- and security-building measures.

There is an urgent need for collective action to realize common objectives of the non-proliferation and denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. At the same time, we oppose any actions or interventions that could further destabilize the Korean Peninsula and compound existing tensions in the region.

Pakistan remains committed to working within the framework established by the relevant United Nations resolutions to promote peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula. We hope that the Security Council will demonstrate unity in reviving the dialogue and playing its due role in reducing tensions and threats to peace and security in the region.



**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the participation in this meeting of Mr. Song Kim, Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Today the Council is involved in yet another discussion, at the initiative of a number of Western countries, on the situation in the Korean Peninsula. However, this does not bring us any closer to the long-awaited stabilization in the region. Instead, it takes us further away from it. But there is a difference between today and previous requests for such meetings, which used to be convened whenever the Democratic People's Republic of Korea took adequate measures to respond to military provocations by the United States and its allies. Today what we have on the agenda is the issue of the one-year mark since the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) stopped working. The Panel had discredited itself completely, because the experts were involved in collecting biased information from Western media and were seeking to purchase expensive handbags from boutiques.

In other words, what we have on the agenda is an issue related to purely organizational aspects of the work of a subsidiary body, rather than a matter related to the maintenance of peace and security. We do not recall the organizers of today's meeting having arranged such a memorial service for similar panels of experts dealing with other countries — they did not even propose discussing their work. Therefore, the Council's resources are being blatantly abused in order to divert its attention from the real root causes of the escalation on the Korean Peninsula.

Instead of listening to more speculation from pseudo-independent experts — the briefer explicitly states on his website that his activities are aimed at promoting the security interests of the United Kingdom — the Council should turn to the immediate factors destabilizing the situation in the region. The main factor there is the growing military presence of NATO countries in the Asia-Pacific region, which is consistently disrupting the prospects for building a non-aligned collective security architecture there.

On 24 February, the United States and the Republic of Korea concluded a three-week full-scale combined arms live-fire exercise, involving approximately 2,000 troops and 150 pieces of military materiel, including a nuclear submarine. Some manoeuvres took place 25 kilometres from the demilitarized zone, which could well have been regarded by Pyongyang as an armed provocation.

In recent months, Washington's appetite for military build-up in the region has been increasingly growing. According to leaks in the media, the United States Department of Defense is considering the option of permanently deploying 20 nuclear-capable F-35A Lightning II fighter jets to South Korea's Kunsan air base. Let me remind the Council that, previously, those jets were used only on a temporary basis in the course of joint exercises. If that decision is made, those allies would have far greater operational capabilities, given that Seoul already has 40 F-35A aircraft. At the same time, there are plans to increase the number of F-16 Fighting Falcons, which are used for deterrence and potentially may ensure critical air superiority in the first hours of a hypothetical conflict by striking well-defended targets deep inside the opponent's territory.

I would like to stress that the three countries I am referring to — the United States, Japan and the Republic of Korea — are among the top 10 countries with the world's largest military budgets, with the most modern and destructive military equipment ready for action. That very well-armed and well-coordinated alliance is trying to literally corner one independent sovereign State, which as a result has to find solutions to ensure its own security.



Pyongyang's opponents can make lengthy speeches, asserting that their actions are not prohibited by Security Council resolutions. However, such cynical assertions are inconsistent with the Security Council's requirement to resolve the problems of the Korean Peninsula exclusively through dialogue and diplomacy. In fact, we are witnessing direct and consistent violations by a group of countries of their international obligations.

On a separate note, I would like to mention the decision by 11 countries to establish the so-called Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team — supposedly a replacement for the Panel of Experts of the 1718 Sanctions Committee — which directly contradicts the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, we would like to underscore that the establishment of that mechanism circumvented the Council, and therefore it has no legitimate international mandate. Everybody knows that those who pay the piper call the tune. Therefore, any outputs of that format will have no legitimacy whatsoever and, undoubtedly, will be a falsification of facts and disinformation.

Russia, for its part, has repeatedly proposed initiatives geared towards de-escalating tension and strengthening mutual trust, with due regard for the legitimate security interests of all parties involved. Furthermore, in April 2024, the Security Council had on the table a Russian draft resolution to extend the mandate of the Panel of Experts, which Western countries are now shedding crocodile tears over. In addition to that draft resolution, we proposed launching a frank dialogue that would imply a regular review of the restrictions and the search for political solutions, which is an inherent component of the Council's resolutions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The United States and its allies rejected that initiative and essentially aborted the mandate of the sanctions experts themselves. But what is done is done, and they only have themselves to blame.

As for Russia's cooperation with Pyongyang, we have voiced our position on many previous occasions. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is our close neighbour and partner, and we are developing relations in all areas. That is our sovereign right. Russian interaction with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is in line with international law and not against third parties, nor does it pose any threat to States in the region or the international community. Russia will certainly continue developing such cooperation.

Units of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea played an active part in the liberation of Russian — let me emphasize once again, Russian — territory, with Moscow and Pyongyang acting fully in line with international law and, specifically, with article 4 of the comprehensive strategic partnership treaty of 19 June 2024, which provides for immediate military assistance in the event of an armed attack on either party to the treaty. We are extremely grateful to our Korean brothers — their heroism and bravery will be etched in the memory of our people.

The Security Council should drastically reconsider its approach so that we can break the dangerous stalemate, rather than exacerbate it further. We have indicated many times in which areas we could start moving towards normalization. But for that to happen, Western capitals must fundamentally change their mindset, which is still framed by the Cold War paradigm. The sooner the West abandons that outdated world view, the sooner the Council will be able to exert a positive influence on the situation in the region.

**Ms. Swallow** (Sierra Leone): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari for his briefing. I also take note of the contribution of Mr. James Byrne of the Open-Source Centre.

One year has passed since the non-renewal of the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. That has created a noticeable gap in

the Security Council's sanctions regime, with potential implications for broader international efforts aimed at addressing the enduring challenges posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. The Panel of Experts played an indispensable role as a mechanism for monitoring, analysing and supporting the implementation of the Council's sanctions. Its reports, recommendations and tracking of violations contributed to upholding the global non-proliferation framework.

At a time of growing global insecurity, particularly in the North-East Asian region, it is important that the Security Council, and where appropriate, the General Assembly, consider options to ensure continuity in the oversight and analytical functions previously carried out by the Panel of Experts. Restoring such capacities remains essential to strengthening international non-proliferation efforts and to preserving the credibility of the Council's sanctions regime.

In that regard, Sierra Leone notes the steps taken by the 1718 Sanctions Committee to ensure continued implementation of its mandate. We further note its engagement with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Financial Action Task Force and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. That collaboration has been seen to enhance the Committee's understanding and work, and we look forward to further engagements from other relevant institutions.

We also take note of the establishment of the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team for the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Its stated objective — to assist in the comprehensive implementation of sanctions through rigorous inquiry into violations and evasion tactics — is well noted.

Sierra Leone reiterates its long-standing support for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), underscoring its importance in curbing further nuclear development and proliferation, both vertically and horizontally. The CTBT remains a critical pillar in the pursuit of nuclear disarmament.

In conclusion, we reaffirm the need for a comprehensive and objective assessment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear programme. Such an assessment should be firmly anchored in the broader international non-proliferation framework and contribute meaningfully to peace and security in the region and beyond. Sierra Leone remains steadfast in its commitment to the principles of disarmament, non-proliferation and international peace and security. We reiterate our full support for diplomatic dialogue and engagement aimed at achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Korean Peninsula.

**Mr. Geng Shuang** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his briefing and welcome the presence of the Permanent Representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Japan.

The current situation on the Korean Peninsula remains complex and tense, ridden with uncertainties and destabilizing factors. I wish to make four points.

First, all efforts should be made to maintain stability and prevent turmoil. A peaceful and stable Peninsula is in the common interests of the countries of the region and meets the general expectations of the international community. We call on all parties concerned to take a long-term view, see the bigger picture, exercise calm and restraint, avoid any actions or words that might exacerbate tensions or aggravate contention, work hard to prevent deterioration and de-escalate the situation. For some time now, certain countries have continued to conduct military exercises on the Peninsula featuring new and innovative manoeuvres and an array of strategic weapons. That has heightened animosity between the parties and the risk

of accidental clashes to the extent that the slightest imprudence may lead to mishaps. China strongly calls for an early end to such dangerous actions.

Secondly, dialogue and engagement should be promoted. Past experience has shown that if all parties intend to pursue dialogue and stay engaged, the situation on the Peninsula will remain largely stable and the political process will make positive headway without much difficulty. Otherwise, the situation will tense up, and antagonism and confrontation will intensify. We have noted some positive signals from the relevant parties about dialogue and engagement. China calls on all parties concerned to seize the opportunity to move towards each other, engage actively, build mutual trust and work together to bring the issue back to the track of dialogue. In that regard, the United States should take the lead to show goodwill and translate its purported commitment to dialogue into action.

Thirdly, enabling conditions should be created. Given the current situation, the international community, including the Security Council, should strive to create an atmosphere conducive to the resumption of dialogue, rather than unduly focusing on sanctions and pressure. China has always maintained that sanctions are a means, not an end, and should always serve the political process. Security Council resolutions related to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are not only about sanctions but also about political settlement and minimizing the negative humanitarian impact. Those provisions should be implemented even-handedly, not selectively. We support the international community in using humanitarian issues as an entry point to take active steps to create conditions and build momentum for the parties concerned to enhance mutual trust and resume contacts.

Fourthly, the cold war mentality should be abandoned. The current situation on the Peninsula derives from the vestiges of the cold war. To advance the political settlement on the Peninsula, we must rise above the perversity of zero-sum games and forge the right security philosophy. In recent years, the United States, under the pretext of the Korean Peninsula issue, has pursued its Indo-Pacific strategy, cobbled together military alliances, strengthened extended deterrence and scaled up the deployment of strategic forces on the Peninsula and in its vicinity, with the intention of bringing about bloc confrontation and a new cold war. That does not help with the political settlement of the issue. Instead, it seriously jeopardizes the security interests of the countries of the region, including China, and will only lead to an even more serious security conundrum. We urge the United States to immediately stop such dangerous acts and to stop using the Korean Peninsula issue as a pretext and a tool for advancing its own geostrategies.

As a permanent member of the Security Council and a responsible major country, China has always strived for the political settlement of the Korean Peninsula issue and the maintenance of peace and stability on the Peninsula. China has always underscored that the Korean Peninsula issue is in essence a security issue rooted in the absence of a peace mechanism and the lack of mutual trust among the parties concerned. We hope that the relevant parties will commit to the general direction of a political solution, respond positively to China's efforts to maintain stability and prevent chaos, facilitate peace talks, build mutual trust through dialogue and strive for an early conversion from armistice to a peace mechanism. We are ready to maintain close communication with the parties concerned and to work with the international community to play a constructive role in seeking a political solution and an early realization of lasting peace and stability on the Peninsula.

Before concluding, I wish to express our categorical rejection of the accusations and smearing by the representative of the United States. I wish to underscore that China has always strictly implemented Democratic People's Republic of Korea-related Council resolutions. Having shouldered more than 90 per cent of international obligations and the associated costs, we have overcome many difficulties, made

tremendous sacrifices and sustained immense losses. We hope that the representative of the United States can get their facts straight before speaking. We hope that the United States will stop its accusation diplomacy in the Council, which undermines international cooperation on the Korean Peninsula issue.

**Mr. Koudri** (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank the Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Khaled Khiari, for his valuable briefing. We listened carefully to the representative of civil society.

Our delegation adopts a balanced and careful perspective regarding the delicate situation on the Korean Peninsula based on respect for the provisions of international law and giving the concerns of States regarding their sovereignty their deserved importance. It is no secret that the recent developments warrant our full attention and great care. From that perspective, our positions are guided by four fundamental principles, which can be summarized as follows.

First, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are two important international commitments, and no one is exempt from them.

Secondly, security concerns are actually profoundly intertwined. It must be stressed that the military escalation by various parties only fuels tension and creates a destructive vicious circle.

Thirdly, the complete, irreversible and verifiable nuclear disarmament on the Korean Peninsula remains an integral part of our common goal — a safe and peaceful world free of nuclear weapons. That noble goal can only be achieved through peaceful means and constructive dialogue.

Fourthly, sanctions must never be an obstacle to the delivery of essential humanitarian assistance or the basic needs of civilians.

Based on those principles, we call for immediate and effective action, including military de-escalation by all parties concerned and effective mutual confidence-building measures; initiating unconditional dialogue and diplomatic engagement, including the activation of inclusive regional dialogue mechanisms without exception or exclusion; and strengthening and intensifying humanitarian assistance for those in need.

In that regard, it would be remiss not to emphasize the human dimension, which cannot be disregarded or overlooked. The sad reality is that civilians in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea face enormous challenges and severe hardships.

While we oppose any actions that would undermine the resolutions of the Security Council, we also stress the need to address the root causes of this crisis. The desired peace can only be achieved through constructive dialogue and mutual respect. We must comprehensively address the security concerns of all parties on an equal footing, rather than relying solely on sanctions or the threat of military force.

The Security Council must therefore speak with one unified voice, despite occasional divergent views. Reaching common ground is an imperative necessity for maintaining international peace and security.

In conclusion, we call upon all parties to prioritize dialogue over confrontation and diplomacy over force, and to place the interests of the people in the region above all other considerations, in order to achieve stability and prosperity for all.

**Mr. Mohamed Yusuf** (Somalia): At the outset, I wish to thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his comprehensive briefing. We also take note of the contribution of the civil society briefer.

The Security Council convenes at a time when we continue to closely observe developments affecting the Korean Peninsula. Those developments, which have

drawn considerable international attention, underscore again the importance of preserving stability and fostering conditions that are conducive to peace in the region.

In that context, I wish to stress the enduring role of the global non-proliferation architecture. Built upon the foundations of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, this framework remains central to our collective efforts to maintain international peace and security. Respect for these instruments is not just a matter of legal obligation, but a cornerstone of trust, helping to reduce the risks associated with the spread of nuclear weapons and fostering an environment where dialogue and cooperation can flourish. The credibility and effectiveness of the non-proliferation regime depend on the steadfast commitment of all States to uphold these agreements in both letter and spirit.

Time and again, the Council has highlighted the value of dialogue and the importance of implementing the relevant Security Council resolutions. We believe that a climate of constructive engagement and clear communication among all concerned parties is essential — not only for managing tensions, but for building mutual confidence and trust.

Given the complexities before us, my delegation supports a balanced approach — one that addresses legitimate security concerns while creating space for cooperation and dialogue. We urge all relevant parties to exercise restraint and to avoid actions that could further heighten tensions, while focusing instead on measures that promote stability and peace.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our commitment to supporting denuclearization, cooperation and practical steps that encourage peace, stability and the well-being of all people in Korean Peninsula.

**The President:** I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Greece.

I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari for his briefing. I also thank Mr. James Byrne for his presentation.

On several occasions, including previous Council meetings, Greece has already expressed its firm condemnation of the weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, especially its numerous ballistic missiles launches and six nuclear tests, which constitute a flagrant violation of multiple Security Council resolutions.

Moreover, I would like to reaffirm Greece's commitment to the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), mandated to implement the sanctions regime on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The implementation of the sanctions regime is a vital instrument in order to peacefully convince the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon its nuclear activities, cease missile launches and resume dialogue, with a view to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Allow me to highlight three points on the subject matter of our meeting.

First, Greece regrets that last year the Security Council failed to adopt a resolution on the annual renewal of the mandate of the 1718 Committee Panel of Experts. In an era when our collective security mechanisms are under strain, the failure of the Council to renew the mandate of the Panel of Experts was another step further undermining the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture.

As we have reached the one-year anniversary of the Panel's dismantling, we have to remember that for 15 years it provided fact-based, objective, independent

assessments, analysis and recommendations on the implementation of United Nations sanctions to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Throughout those 15 years, the Panel examined evidence, exchanged views, found consensus and delivered objective and independent reports. The Panel's reporting was a critical source of information for all United Nations Member States and the greater public looking to better understand the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's sanctions evasion and violation activities in order for them to help prevent proliferation and implement Security Council resolutions.

Secondly, we are ready to engage with all relevant partners and promote a diplomatic solution providing for the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. To that end, we call on Democratic People's Republic of Korea to de-escalate and engage sincerely in dialogue with the Council and the United Nations system, with a view to finding a diplomatic solution — the only path to sustainable peace and security on the Korean Peninsula.

Thirdly, we also remain concerned about the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We wish to repeat our call upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to ease all restrictions on the delivery of humanitarian aid and to open its borders to international humanitarian personnel.

In conclusion, the sanctions remain in place and must continue to be fully implemented by all Member States, in the interest of regional and global peace and security. Greece reiterates the crucial importance of the unity of the Council on this matter.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

**Mr. Song Kim** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): This year marks the eightieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the founding of the United Nations. In this meaningful year, voices are growing louder in calling for United Nations reform into a genuine centre of multilateralism, in line with the original ideals of its founders.

However, the Security Council, a principal organ of the United Nations, is witnessing illegal actions being openly perpetrated against the universal aspirations of the international community. Those actions run counter to the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations — sovereign equality, respect for sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs.

This meeting proves once again that the Security Council will never be able to remain committed to its intrinsic mission as long as the United States and its followers, who continue to resort to high-handedness and arbitrariness while sowing the seeds of war and discord worldwide, retain permanent seats on the Council.

I express my strong disapproval and denounce and reject yet another unlawful and unreasonable Security Council meeting, convened today at the outrageous demand of certain Member States seeking to make an issue of my country's exercise of its sovereign rights.

Over the past year, ceaseless military build-up by the United States and its allies, targeting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, has progressed far beyond mere demonstrations. It has entered a phase of practical implementation, pushing the security environment in and around the Korean Peninsula towards an increasingly dangerous phase of conflict.



Last year, the United States developed its alliance into a nuclear-based military bloc and a war alliance. All year round it staged all sorts of aggressive joint military drills, on the largest-ever scale, including Ulchi Freedom Shield, Freedom Edge, Iron Mace and Freedom Flag.

The current United States Administration, which came into office this year, is keeping up its predecessor's hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, escalating risky political and military provocations against us. In the past three months since 20 January, United States strategic assets, including the nuclear submarine *Alexandria*, B-1B strategic bombers and the nuclear aircraft carrier *Carl Vinson*, made their appearance on the Korean Peninsula. Worse still, a launch test of a Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile was conducted. In March, the United States conducted Freedom Shield 2025, a large-scale joint military drill for the integrated operation of American nuclear weapons and the Republic of Korea's conventional weapons, under the new operational plan. By doing so, it has made a pre-emptive nuclear strike against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea a fait accompli.

Against that backdrop, it has revived and restructured the United Nations Command, an illegal ghost body, into an actual war command, similar to NATO. That means that moves to mount an Asian version of NATO in the Asia-Pacific region are already in full swing. Those facts clearly prove that military confrontation by the United States and its vassal forces to ignite a nuclear war on the Korean Peninsula and in the region are reaching the most perilous active stage.

In such a grave situation, it is the indispensable sovereign right of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to maintain and improve a strong deterrent in order to safeguard national dignity and security interests and guarantee its peaceful development. There is no reason for this issue to be on the table of the Council.

As for the military cooperation between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Russia, it entirely conforms to the treaty on comprehensive strategic partnership signed by the two countries and to international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. It is not for anyone to meddle in. The United States and the West clamour that their alliance of an aggressive nature is legitimate and maintains peace, whereas normal relations of friendship and cooperation between sovereign States are illegitimate and disturb peace. They should stop insisting on such extreme double-dealing and brazen claims and get accustomed to the new reality of cooperative relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Russia.

No matter what others may say, in the future the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will also continuously exercise its sovereign right to defend its right to existence and development and its security interests from all kinds of threats posed by hostile forces, and reliably safeguard the peace and security of the region and the rest of the world.

The United States and the West are attempting to enforce a one-sided and hegemonic order while hindering the legitimate and normal exercise of sovereign rights by sovereign States and their development of friendly relations.

The international community should never tolerate such high-handedness and arbitrary practices of the United States and its followers, aimed at interfering in the internal affairs of others, and make strenuous efforts to ensure genuine international justice.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

**Mr. Yamazaki** (Japan): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this critical meeting. I also thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari and Mr. Byrne for their informative briefings.

First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to once again express my deepest regret that the Panel of Experts, which had been playing a critical role to monitor the implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions, was forced to terminate its vital activities owing to Russia's veto one year ago. The intention behind Russia's use of the veto — and North Korea's clear alignment with it — was obvious. It was to paralyze the work of the Security Council and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006). That intention is now even clearer.

Last month, Pyongyang confirmed that its troops deployed to Russia have engaged in combat against Ukraine, and Russia did the same, even though they had previously denied that in this Chamber. That constitutes a clear violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, and now they publicly admit the fact unabashedly. Their bilateral treaty can never justify that violation of the Charter. An invader can never justify its aggression with Article 51 of the Charter. The Security Council has been rigged by a permanent Council member in its hope to conceal its unlawful military cooperation with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. That is totally unacceptable behaviour for a responsible permanent Council member and should never be tolerated.

Even so, vigilant monitoring of violations of Security Council resolutions continues. Like-minded countries, including Japan, established the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team in 2024, with a view to filling the significant gap that the Panel of Experts has left behind and assisting with the effective implementation of relevant Council resolutions.

Together with those efforts, we truly appreciate the efforts by civil society to complement the work of the United Nations and its Member States. Much information detailing unlawful transfers of arms and materials from North Korea and other instances of sanctions violations and evasions has been given to us at the Security Council, including through today's briefing by the Open Source Centre. We will continue to engage in that endeavour to fully implement the sanctions measures. Japan, as a responsible State Member of the United Nations, strongly opposes any attempts to undermine the effective work of the Security Council and the esteemed principles of the United Nations Charter.

No country has the right to criticize the legitimate activities of Member States and civil society, especially when that country itself breaches its obligations under relevant Council resolutions. We will continue to demand accountability under the United Nations Charter. Those who engage in violations of Security Council resolutions must and will bear the consequences of their actions. As the saying goes, sunlight is the best disinfectant. And our message is clear — malicious deeds will be exposed.

The advancement of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear and missile activities is an imminent threat to the entire globe. I call on all United Nations Member States to uphold the nuclear non-proliferation regime — the very foundation of peace and security for the international community.

I also would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our consistent and steadfast commitment to nuclear non-proliferation, as the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is under way here at the United Nations. Japan once again reiterates the strong voice of the international community, urging Pyongyang to reverse course and to take concrete steps towards dismantling all its nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles and related programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, as has been expressed throughout the session of the Preparatory Committee.

*The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.*