



DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

# UPDATED ASSESSMENT OF R2P IMPLEMENTATION 2023



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# DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

A systematic perpetrator of crimes against humanity, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea) continues to perform poorly in areas relating to the protection of its population from atrocity crimes. Millions of North Koreans have died as a result of either direct killing and torture by the government or government-induced famine. This circumstance has continued in the past few years with little discernible change.

On a more positive note, the DPRK's rating has improved from 'Very Weak' to 'Weak' for one indicator for 2023: Participate in international, regional and national discussions on the further advancement of R2P. The DPRK participated in the UN General Assembly Plenary Meeting on R2P in June 2023. However, the country aligned itself with the Group of Friends of the Charter of the United Nations, which continues to challenge the meaning and proper implementation of the norm. In its statement, the DPRK delegation deplored the selective use of R2P to undermine the sovereignty of States.

In terms of international law and human rights, the DPRK ratified seven of the twelve key international legal instruments most relevant to R2P. However, it has voiced reservations about many of them and utterly failed to uphold their core principles in practice. The domestic promotion and protection of human rights is practically non-existent. Despite constitutional claims that the courts are independent, in practice the Party and the Supreme Leader create law and determine the constitution; hence, there is no independent judiciary. There remains clear evidence of the systematic commission of crimes against humanity, and the law provides little to no protection for vulnerable groups, especially in the context of sexual and gender based violence.

There is no civil society to speak of and no independent press. The DPRK has voted against all General Assembly resolutions relating to R2P and has taken no steps to build dialogue in the region on human protection matters.

Regarding peacekeeping, the DPRK has not contributed to UN peacekeeping operations and has voiced strong opposition to international action to prevent atrocity crimes.

Overall, DPRK continues to perform poorly against all of the indicators, and received the lowest score in the region.

Its index score remains unchanged from 2022.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea)  
 North Korea: Updated Assessment of R2P Implementation 2023

Thematic Area	Indicator	Assessment	Notes
Basic Compliance	Protection of populations from atrocity crimes.	Very Weak Unchanged	<p>The Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains the region's worst performer in preventing atrocity crimes. Indeed, it regularly and systematically commits them against its own population, creating the world's most repressive and violent State.</p> <p>Maintaining a social system based on a discriminatory hierarchy (the <i>songbun</i> system) and self-reliance (<i>juche</i>), the Kim dynasty under current leader Kim Jong-un continues to commit crimes against humanity against his own people. With COVID-19 restrictions still imposed by the government, people are dying of starvation and from capital punishment meted out by the authorities for the smallest of infractions. Ingrained impunity, and a lack of an independent civic space or judiciary mean people in the DPRK are at the mercy of the Kim regime.</p> <p>As it currently stands, atrocity crimes are a lived reality for the people of the DPRK.</p>
	Reduction of atrocity crime risks.	Very Weak Unchanged	<p>The DPRK's government and security services enforce the will of the Kim regime with brutal efficiency, carrying out crimes against humanity on the general populace. The continued restricting of social life under COVID-19 measures imposed by the government has meant the chances of violence occurring continue to rise.</p> <p>There is no evidence to suggest the risk of atrocity crimes occurring in the DPRK has lessened.</p>
	Dealing with past atrocities.	Very Weak Unchanged	<p>Past atrocities are remembered to continue fostering hatred and intolerance to foreigners and anyone perceived to be disloyal to the Kim regime.</p>
Policy Mechanisms	Appoint national R2P Focal Point.	Very Weak Unchanged	The DPRK continues to have no R2P Focal Point.
	Incorporate atrocity crime risks and dynamics into conflict analysis and/or development partnerships.	Very Weak Unchanged	There is no update for this Indicator.
	Establish domestic mechanisms to hold the government accountable for upholding its responsibility to protect.	Very Weak Unchanged	The DPRK remains a totalitarian State with power concentrated in the Kim dynasty under the leadership of Kim Jong-un. As such, there are no domestic mechanisms in place to check Kim's rampant power in North Korean society.
International Human Rights Obligations	Sign, ratify and implement relevant instruments of international law.	Very Weak Unchanged	There is no update for this Indicator. The DPRK has not yet signed the <i>Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court</i> , the <i>1951 Refugee Convention</i> and its <i>1967 Protocol</i> , the <i>Arms Trade Treaty</i> [ATT], the <i>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination</i> [CERD], and the <i>Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment</i> [CAT].
	Sign and ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and cooperate fully with the Court.	Very Weak Unchanged	The DPRK is still not a party to the <i>Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court</i> . There remain calls for Kim Jong-un and other high-level officials in the DPRK government to be investigated by the International Criminal Court over crimes against



Establish and maintain National Human Rights Institutions in accordance with the Paris Principles.	Very Weak Unchanged	humanity. <sup>1</sup> However, at the time of writing this has yet to occur. There is no applicable concept of human rights within North Korea, let alone a government body to uphold their application.
Ensure domestic promotion and protection of human rights, focusing on the elimination of discrimination.	Very Weak Unchanged	The human rights situation in North Korea remains dire and has likely increased with the enforcement of COVID-19 restrictions throughout the country. <sup>2</sup> Official information about the effects of the pandemic is limited and the effectiveness of the regime's response appears hyperbolic.  Any information coming out of North Korea paints a confronting picture of intense repression, widespread surveillance of the population, and mass starvation, <sup>3</sup> even in the relative comfort of Pyongyang. <sup>4</sup>  The formation of small, local markets during the famine of the 1990s <sup>5</sup> were used by many North Koreans to supplement the meagre food ration provided by the State. While officially banned, the markets became so critical to the survival of so many, the authorities had to turn a blind eye. With the onset of COVID-19 restrictions, these markets, which relied on trading and smuggling from across the Chinese border, were shut down. Without a means of unofficial sustenance and income, people have starved to death. <sup>6</sup>  In addition to the crisis of human rights following the pandemic, there is no evidence to suggest the widespread and intense repression of the people put in place by the DPRK government has been alleviated. Indeed, reporting and analysis from a variety of sources has determined it has continued or worsened. The system of <i>songbun</i> remains in place, discriminating against those who are

<sup>1</sup> International Bar Association, 2022. *North Korea: Hearing to determine if Kim Jong-un should be investigated by the ICC for crimes against humanity*, <https://www.ibanet.org/North-Korea-Hearing-to-determine-if-Kim-Jong-un-should-be-investigated-by-the-ICC-for-crimes-against-humanity>; Ochab, Ewelina U., 2022. 'Crimes Against Humanity Continue Unabated In North Korea – Will Kim Jong-un Face Justice?'. *Forbes*, 16 July. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ewelinaochab/2022/07/16/crimes-against-humanity-continue-unabated-in-north-koreawill-kim-jong-un-face-justice/?sh=13b7b3297adf>; Arin, Kim, 2023. 'After Putin ICC arrest warrant, will Kim Jong-un ever get his?' *Asia News Network*, 28 March. Available at: <https://asianews.network/after-putin-icc-arrest-warrant-will-kim-jong-un-ever-get-his/>.

<sup>2</sup> The last mask mandates have apparently been lifted as of July 2023, but there is no update on border closures which, at the time of writing, are still in effect. The only exception being limited official trade with China. Yim, Hyunsu, 2023. 'North Korea appears to lift mask mandates, reports say'. *Reuters*, 4 July. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/north-korea-appears-lift-covid-mask-mandate-reports-say-2023-07-04/>.

<sup>3</sup> While these characteristics can be considered a hallmark of the DPRK government, such measures are considered to be far greater than they have been in the past, according to covert sources and testimonies from the limited number of defectors.

<sup>4</sup> This information has been gathered by covert reporting from media organisations and rights groups and has been reported on by the UN. See: United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (UNOHCHR), 2023. *North Korea's unparalleled self-isolation must cease: UN expert*, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/03/north-koreas-unparalleled-self-isolation-must-cess-un-expert>; Lim, Sojin, 2023. 'North Korea: fears of a new famine after three years of COVID isolation and harsh repression'. *The Conversation*, 17 June. Available at: <https://theconversation.com/north-korea-fears-of-a-new-famine-after-three-years-of-covid-isolation-and-harsh-repression-207852>; BBC, 2023. 'Inside North Korea'. *BBC News*, 15 June. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/extra/bskbb4rmae/inside-north-korea>.

<sup>5</sup> This famine was termed the 'Arduous March' by the DPRK government. Local markets, called *jangmadang*, were utilised by the population, including the youth, to develop limited capitalist tendencies along with a strong distrust of the regime, in sharp contrast to previous generations. See: Liberty in North Korea, 2019. *The Millennials of North Korea: The Jangmadang Generation documentary*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvsqpwI>IfU>.

<sup>6</sup> BBC, 2023. 'Inside North Korea'; United Nations, General Assembly, Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea: Report of the Secretary-General, 29 July 2022, A/77/247, para. 29.

perceived to lack loyalty to the regime and the Workers' Party of Korea. Those possessing a higher *songbun* class have "...access to higher education, housing, food, employment, participation in public affairs, married and family life and place of residence".<sup>7</sup> Those with lower *songbun* are relegated to more isolated parts of the country and more menial jobs.<sup>8</sup>

As such, basic human rights such as freedom of expression, thought, religion, assembly, association, movement, and health are all heavily curtailed by the State. Those who are found guilty of one of the myriad crimes against the regime are detained in one of many detention camps and forced to work hard labour in dreadful conditions.<sup>9</sup>

The system of *songbun* coupled with harsh State repression ensures the regime and the Kim dynasty retains a loyal following, which in turn ensures their continued survival. As such, lack of human rights and the enforcement of discriminatory practices is encouraged and seen as part of normal life, both by State authorities and DPRK citizens.<sup>10</sup>

Participate in international peer review processes, including the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the UN Human Rights Council.	Weak Unchanged	The DPRK's next UPR is scheduled for 2024. <sup>11</sup> As such, there is no substantive update for this Indicator.
Cooperate fully with UN Human Rights mandate holders and those of relevant regional organisations.	Very Weak Unchanged	The DPRK does not cooperate with UN Special Procedures and only begrudgingly with the wider UN. While the DPRK government requested the extension of the strategic framework for cooperation with the UN to continue until 2023, no substantive input by DPRK authorities has been forthcoming. <sup>12</sup>
Ensure equal access to justice.	Very Weak Unchanged	The concepts of equality before the law, trial by jury and fair process do not exist in the DPRK. The courts are an enforcement arm of the State, and arbitrary detention and punishment, as well as execution, are the norm. <sup>13</sup> There is evidence that since the pandemic, the <i>Reactionary Thought and Culture Denunciation Law</i> has been used to imprison or execute those watching or distributing foreign media. <sup>14</sup> Those falling victim to this law are given no legal recourse. The law has had the intended effect, and fewer people are willing to be caught watching smuggled foreign media. <sup>15</sup>

<sup>7</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, A/77/247, paras. 15 – 16.

<sup>8</sup> Confirmed *songbun* categories include 'loyal', 'wavering' and 'hostile', with a recorded 51 sub-classifications amongst these three main categories.

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Unification, 2023. *2023 Report on North Korean Human Rights Summary*, [https://www.unikorea.go.kr/cms/getFile.do?file=2023042617462058449.pdf&orgname=2023%20Summary%20of%20the%20Report%20on%20North%20Korean%20Human%20Rights\(Ministry%20of%20Unification\).pdf&mgmtId=MGMT\\_0000004142&siteId=SITE\\_00003&filePath=eng\\_unikorea/common/file/&count=Y](https://www.unikorea.go.kr/cms/getFile.do?file=2023042617462058449.pdf&orgname=2023%20Summary%20of%20the%20Report%20on%20North%20Korean%20Human%20Rights(Ministry%20of%20Unification).pdf&mgmtId=MGMT_0000004142&siteId=SITE_00003&filePath=eng_unikorea/common/file/&count=Y).

<sup>10</sup> Further elements of the human rights situation can be found here: Human Rights Watch (HRW), 2023. *North Korea: Events of 2022*, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/north-korea>; Amnesty International, 2023. *North Korea 2022*, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/east-asia/north-korea-report-korea-democratic-peoples-republic-of/>.

<sup>11</sup> UPR Info, 2022. *Korea (DPR)*, <https://www.upr-info.org/en/review/korea-dpr>.

<sup>12</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, A/77/247, paras. 41 – 48.

<sup>13</sup> Freedom House, 2023. *Freedom in the World 2023: North Korea*, 'F. Rule of Law', <https://freedomhouse.org/country/north-korea/freedom-world/2023>.

<sup>14</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, A/77/247, para. 19.

<sup>15</sup> BBC, 2023. 'Inside North Korea'.

		The DPRK retains a system of prison camps where inmates are subjected to forced labour in incredibly harsh conditions. While there has reportedly been an improvement in the conditions at some camps, defectors report widespread and ongoing abuse, torture, and executions of prisoners. <sup>16</sup>
Criminalise incitement to commit genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.	Very Weak Unchanged	There is no update for this Indicator. The widespread repression and deaths meted out by DPRK authorities onto its own people are likely to fulfil the criteria for crimes against humanity.
Take measures to counter and prevent violent extremism.	Very Weak Unchanged	There appears to be no update for this Indicator. With most of the DPRK's borders still closed, there is no evidence to recently link the DPRK to either counter-extremism activities or support for extremist and terrorist causes, as they have done so in the past. The U.S Department of State still considers the DPRK as a State sponsor of terrorism. <sup>17</sup>
Enact and implement laws protecting vulnerable groups, particularly in relation to sexual and gender-based violence.	Very Weak Unchanged	<p>The UN has highlighted the lack of reconciliation between the DPRK and other countries whose citizens have been abducted by the DPRK in the past.<sup>18</sup> The families of the abductees have yet to hear about the current whereabouts and wellbeing of their relatives, despite these abductions taking place decades ago.</p> <p>Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) remains a widespread and chronic problem with the DPRK. Given the current border closures, accurate information on rates of SGBV and any preventive measures in place to stop is almost impossible to come by. However, research on defectors has shown conceptions of SGBV are quite narrow, with patriarchal norms and a lack of sex education entrenching ideas such as victim blaming. Along with this is a general ignorance on what acts may be considered SGBV.<sup>19</sup></p> <p>Despite a dearth of data, the UN and other organisations have drawn attention to the dire SGBV situation in the country, especially in places of detention,<sup>20</sup> along with related issues of gender inequality and discrimination against the LGBTIQ+ community.<sup>21</sup></p>

<sup>16</sup> Amnesty International, 2023. *North Korea 2022*, 'Inhumane detention conditions'.

<sup>17</sup> U.S Department of State, n.d. *State Sponsors of Terrorism*, <https://www.state.gov/state-sponsors-of-terrorism/>. The DPRK has held this latest designation since 2017. In that same year, a DPRK delegation to the UN made a statement supporting efforts to eliminate international terrorism. It also used the statement to launch a vitriolic criticism of the US and South Korea in their support of terrorist activities against the DPRK. Democratic People's Republic of Korea Permanent Mission to the United Nations, 2017. *Statement by H.E. Mr. Kim In Ryong Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations*, [https://www.un.org/en/ga/sixth/72/pdfs/statements/int\\_terrorism/dprk.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/ga/sixth/72/pdfs/statements/int_terrorism/dprk.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> UNOHCHR, 2023. *North Korea: Truth, justice and reparations needed for victims of enforced disappearance and abduction – UN report*, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/03/north-korea-truth-justice-and-reparations-needed-victims-enforced>.

<sup>19</sup> Korea Future, 2023. *Preliminary Findings on the North Korean Exiled Community's Perceptions of Sexual and Gender-based Violence and Understandings of Relevant Accountability*, p. 12 – 18, <https://www.koreafuture.org/news/report-sexual-and-gender-based-violence-and-accountability>.

<sup>20</sup> Bremer, Ifang, 2023. 'UN envoy calls for North Korea to protect women from gender-based violence'. *NK News*, 9 March. Available at: <https://www.nknews.org/2023/03/un-envoy-calls-for-north-korea-to-protect-women-from-gender-based-violence/>.

<sup>21</sup> According to official communications and the perceptions of defectors, same-sex relations, and people with alternative sexual orientations or gender identities beyond heteronormative ideas, simply do not exist within North Korea. Freedom House, 2023. *Freedom in the World 2023: North Korea*, 'F. Rule of Law'; U.S Department of State, 2023. *2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: North Korea*, 'Section 6. Discrimination and Societal Abuses', <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/north-korea/>.

	Protect individuals and groups fleeing atrocity crimes and their risk, in accordance with International Refugee Law.	Very Weak Unchanged	Due to the current border closures, rates of people either entering or leaving the DPRK are small. There continues to be no information suggesting the regime possesses a policy regarding asylum seekers or migration. <sup>22</sup> Escapees who flee North Korea into China and are detained by Chinese authorities are returned to the DPRK as a matter of course, <sup>23</sup> where they face persecution by the regime. However, due to the border closures, these detainees have been held in China indefinitely. <sup>24</sup>
Domestic Implementation	Conduct a national assessment of risk and resilience.	Very Weak Unchanged	There is no recent information to suggest the DPRK has conducted a national assessment.
	Cultivate and protect an active, diverse and robust civil society.	Very Weak Unchanged	There remains no evidence that civil society organisations or NGOs independent of the State exist. <sup>25</sup> With the onset of COVID-19 restrictions throughout the DPRK, stronger repression on individual freedoms has been reported by defectors, who are powerless to stop or appeal such measures. Foreign media smuggled into the country, usually from South Korea, is widespread enough for many people to watch it, albeit clandestinely. Penalties for watching, possessing or distributing such media have recently been increased to crack down on anti-socialist behaviour. These penalties range from years of hard labour to death by firing squad. <sup>26</sup>
			The only permitted new agency within the DPRK is the Korean Central News Agency, which controls the production and dissemination of information throughout the country. While some foreign media does have an official, although limited, presence, their reporting is strictly controlled by the authorities. The DPRK currently holds the bottom spot in Reporters Without Borders' World Press Freedom Index. <sup>27</sup>
	Ensure a legitimate, effective and civilian controlled security sector.	Very Weak Unchanged	There is no update for this Indicator. Strictly speaking, Kim Jong-un's regime maintains effective control of the security forces. Yet they are used to repress the people and maintain the survival of the Kim dynasty. Abuses were widespread, with no chance of appeal for victims. As such, impunity reigns. <sup>28</sup>
	Ensure the education system reflects the ethnic, national and cultural diversity of society, and sets examples of inclusiveness.	Very Weak Unchanged	From what can be gleaned from the limited data on the DPRK's education system, the concepts of <i>songbun</i> and <i>juche</i> are central to its operations. While laws provide for 12 years of free compulsory schooling, a student's <i>songbun</i> rating can affect the opportunities available to them. <sup>29</sup>

<sup>22</sup> U.S Department of State, 2023. *2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: North Korea*, 'Section 2. Respect for Civil Liberties e. Protection of Refugees'.

<sup>23</sup> Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2023. *North Korean Refugees and the Imminent Danger of Forced Repatriation from China*, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/north-korean-refugees-and-imminent-danger-forced-repatriation-china>.

<sup>24</sup> Kuhn, Anthony, 2023. 'North Korean defectors may face deportation by China as COVID border controls ease'. *npr*, 25 April. Available at: <https://www.npr.org/2023/04/25/1169464713/north-korea-defectors-deportation-china>.

<sup>25</sup> Freedom House, 2023. *Freedom in the World 2022: North Korea*, 'E. Associational and Organizational Rights'.

<sup>26</sup> U.S Department of State, 2023. *2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: North Korea*, 'Section 2. Respect for Civil Liberties a. Freedom of Expression, Including for Members of the Press and Other Media'; HRW, 2023. *North Korea: Events of 2022*, 'Freedom of Expression and Information'.

<sup>27</sup> They are ranked 180 out of 180. Reporters Without Borders, 2023. *North Korea*, <https://rsf.org/en/country/north-korea>.

<sup>28</sup> U.S Department of State, 2023. *2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: North Korea*, 'Executive Summary'; Freedom House, 2023. *Freedom in the World 2022: North Korea*, 'F. Rule of Law'.

<sup>29</sup> U.S Department of State, 2023. *2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: North Korea*, 'Section 6. Discrimination and Societal Abuses: Children'; Freedom House, 2023. *Freedom in the World 2022: North Korea*, 'G. Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights'.

		<p>The classes themselves revolve around revolutionary thoughts and ideals, as well as the activities of members of the Kim dynasty. Idolisation of the Kim's is taught from a young age, as is hatred of imperialist and capitalist aggressors, chief among them being the U.S, South Korea and Japan. Many children grow up hating foreigners and anyone who is perceived as being disloyal to the regime.<sup>30</sup></p> <p>No new information could be found for this Indicator. There is no evidence to suggest the DPRK prevents its nationals from committing atrocities overseas.</p>
Bilateral and Multilateral Relations	<p>Participate in international, regional, and national discussions on the further advancement of R2P.</p>	<p>Weak <b>Increase</b></p> <p>The DPRK did participate in the UN General Assembly Plenary Meeting on R2P in June 2023. The country aligned themselves with the Group of Friends of the Charter of the United Nations,<sup>31</sup> which continues to challenge the meaning and proper implementation of the norm.</p> <p>In its statement, the DPRK delegation deplored the selective use of R2P to undermine the sovereignty of States. Instances of violence and mass atrocities were "...not attributable to a State's inadequate ability to protect its people, but to flagrant infringement upon their sovereignty."<sup>32</sup></p> <p>Such a statement reflects the DPRK's continued view of an almost complete rejection of the three pillars of R2P in favour of continued non-interference with its internal affairs.</p>
	<p>Leverage existing mechanisms and institutions (including regional and sub-regional organisations) to encourage States to fulfil their responsibility to protect.</p>	<p>Very Weak <b>Unchanged</b></p> <p>Unsurprisingly, the DPRK has continued to vote against resolutions referencing R2P.</p> <p><b>UN General Assembly Resolutions:</b><sup>33</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2021: Terrorism and human rights A/RES/76/169: <b>adopted without vote.</b></li> <li>• 2021: Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea A/RES/76/177: <b>adopted without vote.</b></li> <li>• 2021: Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic A/RES/76/228: <b>no.</b></li> <li>• 2022: Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions A/RES/77/218: <b>abstained.</b></li> <li>• 2022: Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea A/RES/77/226: <b>adopted without vote.</b></li> <li>• 2022: Situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar A/RES/77/227: <b>adopted without vote.</b></li> <li>• 2022: Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic A/RES/77/230: <b>no.</b></li> </ul>
	<p>Encourage and assist States to fulfil their R2P in situations of emerging and ongoing crisis,</p>	<p>Very Weak <b>Unchanged</b></p> <p>The DPRK remains broadly against the norm of R2P, and there is no evidence to suggest it has assisted countries to fulfil it in situations of crisis and instability.</p>

<sup>30</sup> PSCORE, n.d. *Forced to Hate*, <https://pscore.org/life-north-korea/forced-to-hate/>.

<sup>31</sup> Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (GCR2P), 2023. *Summary of the 2023 UN General Assembly Plenary Meeting on the Responsibility to Protect*, <https://www.globalr2p.org/publications/summary-2023-r2p-debate/>.

<sup>32</sup> United Nations, 2023. *Report on Responsibility to Protect Spotlights Development as Prevention, Special Adviser Says, Stressing Millions of Lives Depend on Giving Principle Meaning*, <https://press.un.org/en/2023/ga12513.doc.htm>.

<sup>33</sup> GCR2P, 2022. *UN General Assembly Resolutions Referencing R2P*, <https://www.globalr2p.org/resources/un-general-assembly-resolutions-referencing-r2p-2/>. (Voting records for UN resolutions can be found here: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/?ln=en>.)



	such as good offices and preventive diplomacy.		Indeed, there is circumstantial evidence to suggest the DPRK is providing a variety of weapon systems to Russia for use in its ongoing invasion of Ukraine. <sup>34</sup> Russia has been using up its stockpiles of ammunition, modern vehicles and weapons in the invasion and has resorted to older Soviet-era equipment to continue fighting. The DPRK has a large stockpile of the same or similar weapons and can – and some sources suggest they have – provide Russia with replacements. <sup>35</sup> If true, given Russia’s predilection for war crimes in Ukraine, it could be argued the DPRK is facilitating the commission of atrocity crimes vis-à-vis Russian actions in Ukraine.
	Strengthen regional and international networks for atrocity crime prevention.	Very Weak Unchanged	Du to its ongoing isolation, there is no evidence to suggest the DPRK is a part of any networks for preventing atrocities.
	Strengthen the role and capacity of regional organisations.	Very Weak Unchanged	There is no update for this Indicator.
	Support the development and work of regional human rights and other preventive capacities.	Very Weak Unchanged	The DPRK continues to commit human rights abuses and atrocity crimes on its own population. As such, it is highly unlikely they would support the furtherance of human rights at a regional level, and there is no corresponding evidence to show that they do.
	Support atrocity prevention through development and assistance partnerships.	Very Weak Unchanged	With its isolation from the international community due to COVID-19 restrictions, aid to North Korea dropped dramatically and continues to be much lower relative to pre-pandemic levels.  The speculated weapons deal with Russia suggests the DPRK will receive food aid in return for provided Russia with munitions. While this could be considered development assistance, it is assistance that in no way supports atrocity prevention.
United Nations, prevention, Peacekeeping, and assistance	Support the early warning and capacity building efforts of the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and R2P.	Very Weak Unchanged	There is no update for this Indicator.
	Support the strengthening of the UN’s capacity for atrocity prevention, including through the UN Human Rights system.	Very Weak Unchanged	The DPRK continues to be hostile to the international community’s discussions on human rights and its scrutiny of its domestic affairs. As such, there is no evidence to support any DPRK efforts for this Indicator.
	Support preventive actions on atrocity crimes.	Very Weak Unchanged	The DPRK regularly commits atrocity crimes, rather than preventing them.
	Contribute to United Nations peacekeeping operations (especially those with a protection of civilians mandate).	Very Weak Unchanged	The DPRK has still not participated in UN peacekeeping operations.
	Develop the capacities needed to support civilian protection, including through the training of military and civilian personnel for peacekeeping.	Very Weak Unchanged	As it does not participate in peacekeeping operations, the DPRK has not trained foreign peacekeepers for operations or civilian protection. The country continues to sell arms and equipment to various entities around the world, particularly in

<sup>34</sup> Jewell, Ethan, 2023. ‘New photos show North Korea sent weapons to Russian paramilitary group: US’. *NK News*, 21 January. Available at: <https://www.nknews.org/2023/01/new-photos-show-north-korea-sent-weapons-to-russian-paramilitary-group-pentagon/>; Radford, Antoinette, 2023. ‘Russia to offer food for North Korean weapons – US’. *BBC News*, 30 March. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-65131117>.

<sup>35</sup> Bremer, Ifang, 2023. ‘“Top salesman” Kim Jong Un used arms expo to hawk weapons to Russia: Experts’. *NK News*, 27 July. Available at: <https://www.nknews.org/2023/07/top-salesman-kim-jong-un-used-arms-expo-to-hawk-weapons-to-russia-experts/>; Herskovitz, Jon, Sangmi Cha, 2023. ‘A Russian Jet Was Spotted in North Korea, Raising Concerns Over Possible Arms Deal’. *Time*, 7 August. Available at: <https://time.com/6302471/russia-military-jet-north-korea-arms-deal/>.



Africa. It does this not to support civilian protection, but to generate hard currency on which the regime survives.<sup>36</sup> There is evidence to suggest African militants have been supplied with North Korean weapons to further violence and atrocities. These militants include al-Shabaab in Somalia and the revitalised M23 movement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Support the Kigali Principles.	Very Weak Unchanged	There is no update for this Indicator.
Support UN Security Council veto restraint on issues relating to atrocity prevention.	Very Weak Unchanged	There is no update for this Indicator.

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<sup>36</sup> Mallory, King, 2021. *North Korean Sanctions Evasions Techniques*, p. 5 – 7, [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RR1500/RR1537-1/RAND\\_RRA1537-1.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1500/RR1537-1/RAND_RRA1537-1.pdf). While much of this publication is not relevant to R2P and the DPRK, it gives a detailed overview of the techniques used by the regime to survive UN sanctions, including the sale of equipment used by violent groups to commit atrocities.