



Security Council Briefing on DPRK, 20 March 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Ms Francesca Gatt,
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Thank you President, and thank you ASG Jenca for another important and insightful briefing and I also welcome the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to this meeting.

Over the past week, we have witnessed a series of deeply concerning ballistic missile launches by DPRK. On Thursday, DPRK launched another ICBM, reportedly a Hwasong-17 with a range capable of reaching much of the globe. The ICBM launch was accompanied by an almost daily series of other ballistic missile launches. The latest of these took place only yesterday.

Malta strongly condemns these launches in open defiance of Security Council resolutions. We again recall that resolution 2397, adopted unanimously in response to a DPRK ICBM launch, decided that the Council would take action to place further restrictions on DPRK if faced with further launches.

The Council rightly considered at this time that even one ICBM launch constitutes a threat to regional and international peace and security, and it had responded accordingly.

Yet today, the Council stands frozen and forced against responding to any of the ICBM launches witnessed over the past year.



These launches are only the most recent in a deeply concerning pattern of reckless behaviour by the DPRK, posing a significant threat to international peace and security and undermining global non-proliferation efforts.

In spite of its obligations, and with total disregard to the concerns voiced by many Member States, DPRK has continued to develop its ballistic missile and nuclear programme, with a record number of ballistic missile launches in 2022. Three months into 2023, we are seeing a very similar pattern.

DPRK recently announced a new doctrine setting out conditions in which it could use nuclear weapons, including pre-emptively. It further announced that it would 'exponentially increase' its nuclear weapons arsenal, including tactical weapons, that it would also develop another ICBM system, and launch its first military satellite.

The gravity of this situation cannot be overstated. The Security Council cannot continue to stand by while its decisions, as defined in a number of its own resolutions, and credibility are consistently undermined. This Council has the duty and responsibility to discuss and act on threats to international peace and security.

Malta urges DPRK to engage in meaningful dialogue towards denuclearisation and to adhere to its obligations under Security Council resolutions. DPRK must completely, verifiably, and irreversibly abandon its



nuclear and ballistic missiles programmes and return to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and IAEA safeguards. We urge the DPRK to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty.

Malta's concern for the humanitarian situation faced by the DPRK population continues. The situation is dire and serious humanitarian needs continue to be ignored by the DPRK leadership. An estimated 10.7 million people are undernourished and require emergency relief. Instead, DPRK chooses to waste its resources on costly ballistic missile launches and its illegal weapons programme. DPRK continues to restrict access to humanitarian actors. Malta calls on DPRK to restore access to UN and other humanitarian actors so that its population can receive the aid it requires.

President

Finally, I would like to remind every member of this Council of our shared objective: peace and denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. Delay and inaction will only push this further from realisation. This Council must uphold its own decisions and responsibilities and act now. To this end, Malta supports a PRST.

I thank you.