

Remarks: Joint Media Stakeout on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's December 17 ICBM Launch

(The following is a joint statement delivered by Ambassador Robert Wood, U.S. Alternate Representative of the United States of America for Special Political Affairs, on behalf of Albania, Ecuador, France, Japan, Malta, the Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States.)

Good afternoon. Thank you for being here.

It's that time of year when media outlets publish their 2023 retrospectives.

What happened, and where, and why. The year by the numbers.

Today, we are gathered because of a few numbers in particular.

Five Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles launched by the DPRK.

Over 25 other ballistic missiles.

Plus three satellite launches using ballistic missile technology.

All in this year alone.

That's over 30 times the DPRK has threatened the peace and stability of its neighbors and the international community.

Over 30 times the DPRK has violated multiple Security Council resolutions, seeking to undermine the Security Council's credibility.

And over 30 times the DPRK has flouted the global non-proliferation regime.

Together, on behalf of Albania, Ecuador, France, Japan, Malta, the Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States, we condemn, in the strongest terms, the DPRK's December 17 ICBM launch -- and those before it.

Because we cannot become inured to this behavior. We cannot turn a blind eye to the DPRK's continued pursuit of nuclear weapons -- or for that matter, its malicious cyber activity and flagrant human rights violations and abuses, including those involving abductions.

Council silence sends the wrong message to Pyongyang and all proliferators.

And so, while we urge the DPRK to abandon its unlawful WMD and ballistic missile programs, and instead invest in feeding the people in North Korea --

We also urge the Security Council -- every member of the Security Council -- to exercise its responsibility and overcome its prolonged silence, without exception, to uphold the global nonproliferation regime.

We also urge Council Members to follow through on their commitments and call on all UN Member States to fully and effectively implement relevant UN Security Council Resolutions.

That is how we prevent even more launches this year and how we prevent the count from starting anew on January 1st.

That is how we encourage the DPRK to engage in diplomacy, and how we help the North Korean people suffering from food insecurity and a lack of basic humanitarian goods.

And that is how we fulfil the Council mandate of maintaining international peace and security.

Thank you.