

NORTH KOREA/POLAND/NETHERLANDS: Dutch shipbuilder in dock over North Korean's Polish slave claims

A North Korean man is suing a Dutch shipbuilder he accuses of profiting from slave labor when he was employed in a Polish shipyard. The first case of its kind, his lawyers hope it will open up more such cases.

By Jo Harper

Deutsche Welle (14.02.2019) – <https://bit.ly/2X0tW1T> – The first case in the Netherlands of worker exploitation involving a Dutch company for alleged crimes committed outside the country could be nearing an end in the coming weeks, lawyers said, and if successful may open the door to more such cases.

Barbara van Straaten, the lawyer representing a North Korean worker, said Dutch law criminalizes the act of profiting from exploitation. The name of the Dutch shipping company sued by the worker couldn't be disclosed for safety reasons, she added. Under the country's anti-trafficking law, offenders can be jailed for up to 18 years and face fines of €83,000 (\$95,000).

The plaintiff claims he was sent to Poland by the Pyongyang regime and forced to work 12-hour days for low wages in awful conditions. The lawyer did not say when this happened. Van Straaten's Amsterdam-based law firm, Prakken d'Oliveira, said the North Korean worked for the Polish company Crist. Crist received financial assistance from the European Regional Development Fund, a loan of €37 million in 2009.

Not a great precedent

The company first came under the spotlight in 2014, when a North Korean worker hired through a temporary Polish work agency called Armex died in an incident at the Crist shipyard.

The welder died when his clothes caught fire and was burned alive. Polish labor standards officials concluded he had been wearing flammable clothing provided by Armex, but were unable to prosecute as the man's documentation described him as self-employed and therefore outside Polish jurisdiction.

"We are not confident the Polish authorities would take this case as seriously as the Dutch one," van Straaten told DW. She said Polish labor authorities had failed in a previous case to prosecute a company where a North Korean worker had died in an accident at work, referring to the 2014 incident.

In 2007, Polish businesswoman Cecylia Kowalska set up Armex in Gdansk supplying electrical and welding services to local shipping and construction industries, and told reporters in November that when asked if she could manage 10 North Korean

welders, her company took on the job.

She later began supplying North Korean welders to two other shipyards, run by Crist and Nauta, both companies that make war vessels for NATO members. A Polish labor inspection in February 2016 found 19 North Koreans working in a shipyard owned by Nauta, located next to the Crist shipyard.

Poland's online court register shows that Armex went into liquidation last year.

Crist denies culpability

Crist spokesman Tomasz Wrzask told DW he was not aware of the case or if Crist was involved. He told reporters in November that the shipyard previously worked with Armex, but ended collaboration in the summer of 2016.

“Armex had all the necessary permissions to operate in the EU and Poland and was under the supervision of Poland's National Labor Inspectorate. We had no reason for suspicion,” Wrzask said then, adding it was an “outrage” that Crist's name had been made public while the Dutch shipbuilder was not identified.

Van Straaten noted that North Korea was not party to the dispute which was directed at the Dutch shipbuilder. “This opens the possibility to hold those companies accountable which are not direct perpetrators in the labor exploitation,

but which nonetheless knowingly profit from this exploitation, gaining high profits in the West at the expense of workers from developing countries,” she said.

The law firm now hopes that the Dutch authorities have requested a European Investigation Order. An admission of guilt and a fine are among the outcomes the North Korean hopes for from this case, his lawyer said.

Damning evidence

Crist’s involvement with North Korean laborers as well as conditions faced by North Korean laborers in Poland and Europe were detailed in a report published by the Leiden Asia Centre by Remco Breuker and Imke van Gardingen. Law firm Prakken d’Oliveira cited the research conducted in the “Slaves to the System” report as central to the case.

A Global Slavery Index published in July estimated that 40.3 million people globally were subjected to modern slavery in 2016. North Korea’s Kaesong industrial complex is frequently criticized for keeping workers under slave-like conditions

The researchers identified three North Korean firms as providing laborers that were assigned by two Polish companies, Alson and Armex, to pass on to firms that needed cheap labor.

An earlier report by the Leiden Asia Centre found that as many as 800 forced laborers are in Poland working in the

shipbuilding and construction sectors.

The 2016 report titled “North Korean Forced Labor in the EU, the Polish Case,” showed that Armex had hired workers supplied by a North Korean company called Korea Rungrado Trading Corporation, which was run by a committee of the ruling Workers’ Party of Korea. The company was sanctioned by the US in 2016 and accused of funding the department that oversees the country’s nuclear weapons program.

A global problem

The Walk Free Foundation said that one in 10 people lived under such conditions in North Korea, the highest concentration in the world.

Tens of thousands of workers worldwide send foreign currency back to Pyongyang, which is used to offset the economic impact of UN sanctions that were imposed over North Korea’s nuclear weapons program. The UN estimates that North Korea earns as much as \$2 billion a year from the workers it sends overseas.

Many North Koreans work in Polish shipyards, construction sites and farms, sending up to 90 percent of their salaries back to Pyongyang, according to the European Alliance for Human Rights in North Korea (EAHRNK).

HRWF Comment

See our statements on this issue at the OSCE/ODIHR Human Rights Implementation Meeting in Warsaw in 2018, 2017 and 2016:

- <https://www.osce.org/odihr/396293?download=true>

- <https://www.osce.org/odihr/342706>

- <https://www.osce.org/odihr/266761?download=true>

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NORTH KOREA/NETHERLANDS/POLAND: North Korean files slavery complaint in Netherlands

By Mike Corder

The Washington Post/Associated Press (08.11.2018) – <https://wapo.st/2PBEJj1> – THE HAGUE, Netherlands – A North Korean worker who claims he is a victim of modern slavery in a Polish shipyard has filed a criminal complaint against a Dutch shipbuilder that bought products from the Polish firm, an activist group said Thursday.

The Global Legal Action Network said in a statement that the man “endured 12-hour workdays in unsafe conditions and had much of his wages seized by the North Korean state.”

The network did not release the plaintiff’s name “to protect his safety.”

Dutch lawyer Barbara van Straaten, who filed the case Monday on the worker’s behalf, also is not revealing the name of the Dutch shipbuilder so as not to jeopardize a requested criminal investigation. Under Dutch law, companies can face prosecution if they profit from labor exploitation, even if it happened in another country.

The Global Legal Action Network said the North Korean worked at a shipyard in Gdynia, Poland owned by a private company, Crist. Company spokesman Tomasz Wrzask said the shipyard previously worked with a Polish firm called ARMEX that once employed North Koreans, but ended the collaboration in the summer of 2016.

ARMEX “had all the necessary permissions to operate in the European Union and in Poland, and was under the supervision of Poland’s National Labor Inspectorate. We had no reason for suspicion,” Wrzask said.

Wrzask said it was an “outrage” that Crist’s name was made public while the Dutch shipbuilder was not identified.

“The allegations were made without letting us know when the work was taking place, what was the project and what was the name of the Dutch company,” he said. “Without that, we cannot verify at this stage if it is connected with us”.

Global Legal Action Network Director Gearoid O Cuinn said the case “will send a strong message to multinational corporations that profiting from forced labor will entail serious legal risk.”

A Global Slavery Index published in July estimated that 40.3 million people worldwide were subjected to modern slavery in 2016. The Walk Free Foundation’s index reported that where one

in 10 people lived under such conditions in North Korea, the highest concentration in the world.

The North Korean government also sends tens of thousands of workers abroad under arrangements that bring in revenue estimated at between \$200 million to \$500 million a year.

Monika Scislowska contributed from Warsaw, Poland.

HRWF Footnote

Global Slavery Index:
<https://www.globallslaveryindex.org/2018/data/maps/#prevalence>

Walk Free Foundation Index:
https://downloads.globallslaveryindex.org/ephemeral/GSI-2018_FNL_180907_Digital-small-p-1542536197.pdf

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NORTH KOREA: Why do North Koreans workers choose to be exploited by their own state abroad?

Paper presented on the occasion of the screening of "Dollar Heroes" at the European Parliament on 9 October()*

By Eun Kyoung Kwon, Director of Open North Korea and Secretary General of ICNK

HRWF (29.10.2018) – Over 100,000 citizens of the DPRK work in about 40 countries around the world including: Mongolia, Russia, Poland, Kuwait as well as China. Cumulatively, these workers earn approximately 900 million dollars a year.

North Korean overseas workers have to submit 70% to 95% of their earnings to the authorities in the form of 'state-assigned earnings' or a 'state fee.' They work over 8 hours a day, sometimes up to 20 hours according to former North Korean overseas workers.

Why do such many North Koreans come to work in foreign countries despite the fact that around 90% of their salaries will be confiscated by the state? In order to find this answer, we must investigate the system of forced labor in the

DPRK.

There is a law in North Korea which punishes the unemployed. Article 90 of the Administrative Punishment Law states that “those who do not take a job at a company where they have been dispatched to within 6 months, without fair reason, or those who do not report for duty at a company for over a month, will be sentenced to up to three months of forced labor in a labor-training camp (rodong dallyeondae). In serious cases, culprits may be sentenced to longer than three months.”

The North Korean economic system is, as everybody knows, a state-planned economy where enterprises, factories, and other workplaces must operate in accordance with the state economic plan, regardless of their realistic capacity. The salary system is also included in the state plan.

In fact, the state-designated monthly wage for most employees is around 2,000 North Korean won, only enough to purchase 500 grams of rice. Therefore, many North Korean people go to their workplaces not to earn a living but to avoid punishment for the crime of unemployment. No North Korean expects to receive a living wage from their company. Perversely, North Korean companies extort money and resources from their employees. It is how and why the companies exist.

Let's imagine how the North Korean people survive with 2,000 won of monthly wage, which is equivalent to 500 grams of rice. The solution used to be the food distribution system, but now it is markets. Through producing, selling, and circulating goods privately in markets, a North Korean can earn a living

wage. However, to work in markets, one must escape from duties at their assigned workplace. In order to avoid the punishment for unemployment, market operators pay monthly bribes to their employers. The amount of bribe is at over score times their monthly wage. About 30% of company employees pay bribes in order to attend to their private businesses.

These days, markets are home to thriving private businesses such as transportation, distribution, manufacturing and various other companies. But, working for these private businesses is not fully authorized as an official occupation in North Korea.

Many state-run enterprises and factories don't operate efficiently enough to make a profit, however, their role is to supervise and control employees' political beliefs. This is conducted through weekly self-criticism meetings and more than three times of political lectures for a month organized by the Workers Party committee. If an employee wants to skip such political activities, they must offer over 100,000 won per month in bribes to the company.

In addition, all workplaces are required to provide labor and resources for national construction projects. When a state-planned construction project is undertaken, employees of factories and enterprises across the country will be mobilized to provide labor for the project.

Laborers are mobilized for constructions through a systemized rotation process in a company. However, if you offer over 400,000 North Korean won a year, you can avoid the

mobilization. The monthly salary is around 2,000 won.

Therefore, it is poorer employees who are most likely to be mobilized for national construction projects. For the duration of the project, they will continue to receive insignificant remuneration from their companies but, more damagingly, be deprived of the opportunity to earn money through market activities for the entire duration of the construction project. There is no additional compensation.

In terms of resources for the construction, enterprises have to provide most of the construction materials, with the authorities only supplying cement, sand, and gasoline. The remaining necessary materials are the responsibility of the local employees to provide.

Since Chairman Kim Jong Un took office, the state has been actively pursuing construction projects. In Pyongyang, they built Scientists Street, Changkwang Street, and Ryeomyung Street and, in the northern city of Hyesan and Chongjin, new apartment complexes, and a few tourist resorts in a coastal city. For these projects, authorities do not appropriate a budget for labor and most construction materials, as they are the responsibility of enterprises and their employees.

There is another forced labor system, which is used also for major national construction projects and can be considered a contemporary form of a slavery. It is the permanent *dolgyeokdae*, a shock brigade or a military-style construction youth brigade. It is set up as a supplementary military service, but designed for meeting the labor needs of national

construction projects.

The structure and management of this dolgyeokdae brigade are almost the same as that of the People's Army. The dolgyeokdae is a formal alternative to military service, with a service period of seven years, as opposed to 10 year service period for the army.

Technically, members of dolgyeokdae receive a salary, though it is around one third of normal workers' salaries. However, of the 30 former dolgyeokdae members I have met in South Korea, none received salaries during their service, for almost ten years.

Due to the dire working situation and high intensity labor requirement, only the most vulnerable class of people are dispatched to dolgyeokdae after their graduation from high school.

To summarize, a workplace of North Korean workers exists not to provide for the economic lives of employees but to extort money, resources and labor from employees and control their political lives and ideological beliefs. These are ordinary practices for North Korean workers, including those who work in foreign countries.

North Korean workers in foreign countries can pick up construction contracts as a second job after work and during the weekends. Experienced engineers can even leave their own workplace to work contract jobs. Like in North Korea, however,

they must pay massive bribes to managers in order to leave their workplace during the daytime.

This system puts double or triple burden of labor on shoulders of N. Korean workers both in the country and foreign countries. To bring an end to forced labor, the North Korean government must decriminalize unemployment, recognize private businesses as a legally valid profession to allow citizens to earn a living privately, and importantly dismantle the *dolgyeokdae* system in the long run.

There is one additional point that I'd like to speak on.

While the money that North Koreans earn overseas makes its way into state coffers, the little money that they earn through contract jobs functions as a driving force for vitalization of markets and has a stabilizing effect on people lives.

I don't expect North Koreans to return to the dire situation while operating a strict state-planned economy as they suffered until the early 1990s. We expect people's economic activities in markets to become more vitalized and to bring comparative stability to their lives. (It is one of a few solutions for human rights improvement in the DPRK.) (As the human rights situation improves, the path for normalization of the country will become clearer.)

If North Korea follows through on promises of complete denuclearization, Kim Jong Un will expect economic development with much international support in near future. This support

should be given for the sake of the people's betterment and the international community must make it clear that forced labor cannot be involved in any way and that all laborers must be compensated with a fair salary and work in enhanced working conditions.

The 3rd cycle of the Universal Periodic Review is coming in May next year. I hope the stakeholders and relevant officials at the EU accept my suggestions for your recommendations to the DPRK, so that North Korea can implement practical solutions to end the forced labor.

() The conference and screening of the movie "Dollar Heroes" had been organized at the European Parliament by MEP Laszlo Tokes with Human Rights Without Frontiers.*

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POLAND/NORTH KOREA: The exploitation of North Korean Workers in Poland raised at the European Parliament and at the OSCE

By Willy Fautré, Human Rights Without Frontiers

HRWF (09.10.2018) – Today, MEP Laszlo Tökes and *Human Rights Without Frontiers* organized the screening of a film dealing with the exploitation of North Korean workers in Poland despite the UN and EU sanctions forbidding the hiring of workforce from North Korea. With the complicity of private companies and Polish state agencies, North Korean workers continue to work in Poland and to be exploited by Pyongyang, left only with an income of less than USD 150 per month.

On 19 September last, *Human Rights Without Frontiers* made a public statement at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) of the OSCE/ODIHR in Warsaw asking the Polish delegation to the OSCE “How many North Korean Workers are currently working in Poland, and how many work visas have been issued since the last HDIM?” (1)

Poland exercised his right of reply and gave again conflicting statistics.

Last official statistics revealed by Poland

In its oral right of reply limited to one minute, the

delegation answered there were still “circa 350 DPRK citizens with the purpose of stay in Poland whilst to perform work. This number is constantly decreasing. And moreover it is important to reiterate that in 2016 and 2017 Poland did not issue any work visas to North Korean citizens – as visas on the one hand and permits of stay and work on the other are different titles of stay.”

In its full official right of reply publicized on the website of the OSCE/ ODIHR, the answer of the Polish delegation was however different (2):

I would like to exercise my right of reply in regard to the statement delivered by the Human Rights Without Frontiers.

The Polish government does not take an active part in the process of hiring North Korean workers nor does it promote such practices. The existing cooperation is based on private companies' independent agreements.

The government institutions, such as the National Labour Inspectorate and the Border Guard, oversee the DPRK nationals' employment conditions and ensure the Polish laws are respected in their workplace. To that end, these institutions regularly inspect the companies where DPRK nationals are employed. Inspections performed by the above-mentioned institutions did not confirm any cases of forced labour related to North-Korean workers in Poland.

Poland, similarly to other EU countries, did not have systemic solutions prohibiting North Korean citizens (or citizens from any other country) to take up work in Poland before the adoption of UN resolutions 2371 and 2375. In this view a general ban on entering Poland and

taking up work for specific nationalities would be discriminating.

We welcomed the UN resolutions 2371 and 2375 adopted in this regard as providing the international community with adequate tools related to issue of the DPRK workers. In order to exercise these resolutions we stopped the issuance of new work permits to DPRK workers since August 2017. The related laws regulating access to labour market have been amended in order to find a solution to the problem. The necessary amendments have entered into force on February 2018.

Poland also strives to implement the provisions of the UN resolution No. 2397 that will enable return of DPRK workers to their country.

We estimate that as of September 2018 there were 225 DPRK citizens, whose purpose of stay in Poland was to perform work. This number is constantly decreasing. To actively implement the resolution's provisions, we have begun to withdraw residence permits granted in previous years to DPRK nationals. By mid-September 2018, decisions revoking 250 DPRK citizens' work authorizations had been taken. We can say that we are ahead of schedule – more than half of the DPRK citizens present in Poland at the time of the adoption of the UNSCR 2397 have already returned to the DPRK.

Moreover, it is important to reiterate that in 2017 and 2016 Poland did not issue any work visas to North Korean citizens – as was stressed by our delegation previously. It is important to underline that according to the Polish law, the visas issued by consuls of the Republic of Poland on the one hand, and residence permits issued by regional governor's offices on the other are different titles of stay.

We are also pleased to inform that the Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Poland in Vienna remains in contact with the representatives of the Human Rights Without Frontiers in regard to this topic.

A brief analysis of the official position of the Polish delegation suffices to highlight the incoherence and contradictions of the reply:

- Poland does take an active part in the process of hiring North Korean workers as for decades, including in the last few years and despite the UN and EU sanctions, it has granted North Korean citizens visas allowing them to work on its territory.
- The assertion that since 2016 Poland has not delivered new visas allowing North Korean citizens to work is vigorously contested by journalists of Vice (3) and of The New York Times (4). Moreover, the Polish delegation contradicts itself in its right of reply as it says “we stopped the issuance of new work permits to DPRK workers since August 2017” but says afterwards “in 2017 and 2016 Poland did not issue any work visas to North Korean citizens – as was stressed by our delegation previously.”
- Poland, as a state, denies hiring North Korean laborers but tolerates Pyongyang’s exploitation system of its citizens and makes itself an accomplice of it.
- Poland states that the National Labor Inspection did not detect any case of forced labor but we never said in our statement that North Korean workers were victims of forced labor. The issue is that Poland turns a blind eye to the sophisticated system of exploitation of North Korean workers put in place on the Polish territory by Pyongyang. Moreover, Vice journalists have highlighted the complicity of some labor inspection actors in the exploitation system.

- Before the UN and EU ban on hiring North Korean workers, some other EU member states such as the Czech Republic or The Netherlands immediately felt morally obliged to stop granting them working visas and to put an end to their activities when they were informed about the exploitation system. Poland did not feel morally obliged to do so and still does not. When Poland uses the argument that “a general ban on entering Poland and taking up work for specific nationalities would be discriminating”, its answer is biased and suggests that UN and EU sanctions would be discriminatory...
- Last but not least, the Polish delegation says in its official written reply this year that “as of September 2018 there were 225 DPRK citizens, whose purpose of stay in Poland was to perform work” while in its official oral answer as video-recorded by the OSCE, it says that “there were circa 350 DPRK citizens with the purpose of stay in Poland whilst to perform work.”

Our ‘dialogue’ with the Polish authorities on this issue will continue so that UN and EU sanctions become a full reality in Poland as soon as possible but in fact Poland does not seem to know how many North Korean workers are really employed on its territory. In the last three years, many contradictions and counter-arguments concerning their statistics have been highlighted by various researchers and investigators.

Poland’s past official statistics rejected by various researchers and investigators

In September 2016, *Human Rights Without Frontiers* asked the Polish delegation to the OSCE how many North Koreans were working in Poland (5). The official answer was “about 550”. In September 2017, we again asked the same question (6). The answer this time was approximately 400. The Polish authorities claimed that they did not issue new work visas in the last two

years (2016 and 2017), yet this was contested by Prof. Remco Breuker from the University of Leiden who published a 115-page report entitled “North Korean Forced Labour in the EU: the Polish Case.” (7)

These questions were raised again on 31 December 2017 by *The New York Times* in an article by Peter S. Goodman, Choe Sang-Hun and Joanna Berendt entitled “Even in Poland, workers’ wages flow to North Korea” (8). As the article recounts:

At an isolated shipyard on Poland’s Baltic coast, men in coveralls used welding torches under a cold drizzle, forging an oil tanker for a customer in the Netherlands. The scene was unremarkable, save for the provenance of a dozen of the workers

“Yes, we are from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea,” one of them said. “We have been here quite a while. Then he hurried away, alarm seizing his face.”

The New York Times found North Korean workers at a shipyard near the German border and at Remprodex, a manufacturer of shipping containers in the nearby town of Człuchow, 100 miles southwest of Gdansk; The workers said they had arrived in Poland in early 2017.

According to the American newspaper, the State Labor Inspectorate, which regulates working conditions at Polish companies, said that, as of mid-2017, some 450 North Koreans remained in the country, employed by at least 19 companies, including a complex of greenhouses growing tomatoes south of Warsaw.

In Poland, provincial governments issue work permits to foreign laborers, and there is little coordination with national agencies. As a result, no one appears to know precisely how many North Koreans are in Poland or what they are doing,*The New York Times* reported.

The New York Times furthermore requested information on work permits issued to North Koreans from Poland's 16 provincial governments. There were nine responses that disclosed, in total, 124 new permits issued in 2017 and 253 granted in 2016. These numbers clearly contradict the official responses from the Polish authorities.

The statistics provided by various Polish authorities are therefore confusing and unreliable.

According to the official website of the Polish ministry in charge of the issuance of work permits, 299 North Korean citizens applied for a work permit in 2016 and Poland granted it to 187 of them. These figures contradict the answer of Poland's Delegation to the OSCE who said among other things at the HDIM in 2017 that

"[...]there are no more than 550 North Korean workers in Poland. Under the existing laws, all visa applications continue to be reviewed on a case by case basis. We would like to stress that in 2016 Poland has not issued any work visas for DPRK's nationals. In 2015 we issued only 129 such visas."

Moreover, in an email dated 19 May 2017, the Polish delegation to the OSCE told *Human Rights Without Frontiers* that the number of North Korean workers in Poland as of 1 January 2017

was estimated at around 400 persons and no visas were issued in 2016.

Recommendations

Considering that the UN Security Council voted unanimously to impose strict sanctions on North Korea in order to prevent Pyongyang from acquiring hard currencies, including through its overseas workers,

***Human Rights Without Frontiers* calls again this year upon the Polish state;**

- to publicize accurate and reliable statistics concerning the number of North Korean workers still employed in Poland;
- to abide by the UN and EU sanctions;
- to abide by International Labour Organization standards;
- to stop granting new work visas to North Korean workers;
- to give a date by which the employment of North Korean workers in Poland will end.

***Human Rights Without Frontiers* calls upon the OSCE** to collect data from its Participating States regarding the issuance of work visas to North Korean citizens and the status of their workplace conditions; Russia is still hiring North Korean workers at an alarming rate, according to a recent report of the South Korean NGO, North Korea Database (NKDB).

***Human Rights Without Frontiers* calls upon the European Commission** to start a full investigation on the situation in Poland and then, if necessary, to move on to the next level and start an infringement procedure against Poland in line with the legal avenues at its disposal.

Footnotes

(1) Oral statement (Video)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/13e4AECu6Ejb0djJ_BRierLJNqhsUpMuB/view

Written statement

<https://www.osce.org/odihr/396293?download=true>

(2) <https://www.osce.org/odihr/397718?download=true>

(3) An exceptional 32-minute investigation video report made by Polish journalists about the exploitation of North Korean workers in Poland is available online at the following web addresses: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNVCdL908ko> (Subtitles in English and French) <http://www.vice.com/nl/video/cash-for-kim-de-noord-koreaanse-dwangarbeiders-diezich-doodwerken-in-polen-293> (German) More reports about North Korea's involvement can be found at the following web address: <http://www.vice.com/nl/tag/Noord-Korea> (Dutch)

(4) <http://nyti.ms/2lJiJ3H>

(5) <https://www.osce.org/odihr/266761?download=true>

(6) <https://www.osce.org/odihr/342706?download=true>

(7)

Report: <http://leidenasiacentre.nl/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/rapport-slaves.pdf>

Statistics from the official Polish website

<https://www.mpips.gov.pl/analizy-i-raporty/cudzoziemcy-pracujacy-w-polsce-statystyki/>

(8) See footnote 4.

Additional reading

Also see the HRWF Report presented at the European Parliament in 2014: North Korean Overseas Workers – Human Rights Challenges and Opportunities

<http://hrwf.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/2014-North-Korea-Overseas-Workers.pdf>

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NORTH KOREA: Sri Lanka, Poland say no to North Korean

workers

By Elizabeth Shim

UPI (28.09.2017) – <http://bit.ly/2yje2Wu> – Countries that once welcomed North Korean forced laborers to farms and construction sites are banning workers or asking existing workers to leave.

Sri Lanka and Poland are applying new restrictions on North Korean labor mobility in abidance with United Nations Security Council sanctions resolutions, Voice of America reported Thursday.

The measures are being taken as Malaysia, a country that enjoyed friendly ties with Pyongyang since 1973, is executing a North Korea travel ban, citing tensions on the peninsula.

According to VOA, the Sri Lankan government is no longer allowing North Koreans to use its online system to apply for a work visa, and banning them from applying for the visas at diplomatic missions overseas.

North Koreans are also not allowed to apply for visitor or tourist visas, according to the report.

In a statement on its policies, Sri Lanka said the regulations allow the country to “fulfill our obligations” and implement Resolution 2321, while supporting nuclear non-proliferation.

In Poland, North Koreans will no longer be issued temporary residence permits or work permits, according to VOA.

Poland is complying with a European Union request to suspend the issuance of permits, and abiding by U.N. Resolutions 2371 and 2375.

Poland still hosts 400 North Korean workers who earn foreign currency for the Kim Jong Un regime.

Malaysia previously hosted North Korean “guest workers” but they may have all voluntarily left the country, or were expelled, following the assassination of Kim Jong Nam, the North Korean leader’s half-brother, in an airport in Kuala Lumpur.

Malaysia may be further distancing itself from Pyongyang following weapons provocations.

In a statement released Thursday, the Malaysian government stated all citizens are banned from visiting North Korea until further notice, Yonhap reported.

Malaysia’s foreign ministry cited “tensions on the Korean peninsula” as one of the reasons for the travel ban, although a similar ban was not announced for South Korea, a popular tourist destination.

The announcement comes after Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak said he would review diplomatic ties with North Korea, following a summit with U.S. President Donald Trump.

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