
RUSSIA URGES US-NORTH KOREA TALKS OVER NUCLEAR CRISIS

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Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has urged the United States and North Korea to start negotiations amid growing tensions over Pyongyang's nuclear programme.

Lavrov told the state-run RIA news agency in a written interview on Monday that there is a need to develop relations with North Korea to resolve the nuclear dispute on the Korean Peninsula

"We firmly believe that not only North Korea, but also the United States, as well as their allies, should refrain from any steps that could provoke a crisis, and finally launch the negotiation process," he said.

The Russian diplomat reiterated Moscow's concern over North Korea's "dangerous" nuclear ambitions, but vowed to "maintain contacts at the highest possible level".

"We do not share the desire of some states to exert maximum pressure on North Korea, which is often interpreted by them as establishing full economic and political blockade of this country by all available means," Lavrov added.

"And in the calculation it is not taken at all that the implementation of such a plan will cause a real humanitarian catastrophe."

UN sanctions

Russia's call for dialogue comes after the 15-member UN Security Council unanimously voted on Friday to impose tough new sanctions on North Korea in response to its latest missile test on November 29.

Russia as well as China supported the new move, despite previously raising concerns that not enough was being done to promote diplomatic resolutions to tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

The measures order North Koreans working abroad to return home within two years and ban nearly 90 percent of refined petroleum exports to the country.

The latest sanctions were the third imposed on Pyongyang this year in an attempt to prevent it from furthering its nuclear and missiles programme.

Following the vote on Friday, US President Donald Trump endorsed the stricter measures, saying on Twitter "The World wants Peace, not Death!".

North Korea's foreign ministry on Sunday slammed the latest round of measures as "an act of war".

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's government has conducted several missile tests this year, which have drawn condemnation from the international community.

Kaynak/Source: