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# Russia Forced to Deport North Korean Migrant Workers After UN Sanctions

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**Moskva News Agency**

Russia has begun deporting North Korean migrant workers to comply with UN sanctions despite "severe" repercussions for the economy.

The latest UN Security Council sanctions imposed last December demand North Koreans working abroad to be repatriated within 24 months, over suspicions that they help Pyongyang finance its nuclear program. Last month, the head of Russia's Far East region appealed to Moscow to allow an estimated 10,000 North Koreans to remain in the country despite the sanctions.

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"This will be a blow to the Russian economy, a serious blow, especially in the Far East," Interfax cited Russia's Ambassador to North Korea, Alexander Matsegora, as telling reporters.

"But we rigorously, without fail, carry out the UN Security Council decision," Matsegora said Tuesday.

The Russian diplomat estimated that at least 12,000 work permits were issued to North Koreans every year, while as many as 37,000 laborers were in Russia at a time.

Matsegora disputed a mid-2017 U.S. State Department report that described North Koreans toiling in "slave-like conditions" in Russia for meager pay, contending that they earn around as much as an average Russian worker.

He pointed out that Russia will not "forcibly deport anyone to North Korea."

"We are in contact with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. We're addressing all of the problems of the people who choose not to return," Matsegora added.

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