

Russia Escalates Clampdown on North Korean Fishermen With New Detentions

By [Reuters](#)

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Yevgeny Leonov / TASS

Russian border guards have detained 87 North Korean poachers and 11 small vessels in waters in the Sea of Japan which Moscow considers its own exclusive economic zone, the Interfax news agency said on Tuesday.

It is the third such round-up of North Korean fishermen in recent weeks amid what the Kremlin has said is a concerted clampdown on illegal poaching.

Russia last week detained three North Korean vessels and more than 200 crew, and on Sept. 17, Russia detained a North Korean vessel, prompting a second one to open fire. A North Korean man later died from his wounds.

Related article: [Russia Seizes North Korean Vessels in Poaching Clampdown](#)

The detentions have sparked a rare confrontation between North Korea and Russia, which sees itself as an important player in international talks on defusing nuclear tensions around the reclusive state's missile program and an ally to Pyongyang.

North Korea, which is reeling under sanctions over its weapons program, has for years struggled with food shortages and a dysfunctional state rationing system.

Interfax said the latest arrests were made by Russia's Federal Security Service from Sept. 28-30 and more than 4,000 squid and banned fishing equipment were also seized.

It said border guards had also saved the lives of 174 North Koreans from 26 fishing vessels that had got into distress in the same period.

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