

Russia Jails North Korean Poacher

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Russian guards detained hundreds of North Korean fishermen in at least four roundups last fall. **Yury Smituyk / TASS**

A Russian court has sentenced to four years in prison one of several North Korean poachers detained on charges of attacking Russian border guards last year, authorities [said](#) Friday.

In one of several flare-ups between the allies, 18 North Korean poachers were alleged to have attacked 11 Russian border guards with “improvised items” in the Sea of Japan in September 2019.

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“Three of the defendants struck the troops with sticks in various parts of the ship, using violence harmful to life and health,” the prosecutor’s office in the Primorye region 6,500 kilometers east of Moscow said in a statement.

The Nakhodka city court found one of the unnamed fishermen guilty on charges of using violence against an authority figure, the prosecution said in a statement.

The cases of the other two defendants are now awaiting trial in the same court. The state-run TASS news agency [reported](#) that the verdicts are expected on Sept. 15 and Sept. 16.

Russian guards detained hundreds of North Korean fishermen in at least four roundups last fall, one of which resulted in a North Korean man's death. The detentions mark a rare confrontation between Pyongyang and Moscow, which sees itself as an important player in defusing international tensions around the reclusive state's missile program.

Russia has previously taken a tolerant stance toward North Korean explanations that its poachers were forced into Russian waters by storms or technical malfunctions, often releasing the ships and crews it detained only after seizing their catch and fishing gear.

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

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