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EU Sanctions Russian Governor for 'Arming' North Korea's Kim

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Kim Jong Un and Primorye region Governor Oleg Kozhemyako. **Korean Central News Agency / AP / TASS**

The European Union on Friday imposed sanctions against Primorye region Governor Oleg Kozhemyako in Russia's Far East over what it said were arms supplies to North Korea in violation of UN sanctions.

Kozhemyako was seen gifting kamikaze and reconnaissance drones, as well as a bulletproof vest, to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un during his closely followed visit to Russia in September, his first foreign trip since the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Mr. Kozhemyako presented weaponry and uniforms to Kim Jong Un as gifts for him to take back to the DPRK, in violation of UN Security Council resolutions," the Council of the EU said in a statement, referring to North Korea by its abbreviated name.

"Such material will then be used by the DPRK armed forces and re-engineered, constituting an indirect transfer of technology to the DPRK. [Kozhemyako] is thus assisting in the evasion

of UN sanctions," the Council claimed.

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Besides Kozhemyako, the EU sanctioned five North Koreans, two North Korean firms and one Russian company linked to arms or money transfers for Pyongyang.

The sanctioned Russian firm, a port operator called Eastern Stevedoring Company, was accused of facilitating the transfer of "thousands of containers of DPRK weapons and ammunition" to Russian forces to be used in Ukraine.

A U.S. Defense Department report this week said Russia was using North Korean ballistic missiles in Ukraine, citing an analysis of debris found in Ukraine's Kharkiv region in January.

South Korea has accused North Korea of sending thousands of containers of munitions to Russia. Kim's sister Kim Yo Jong dismissed the accusations this month as "absurd."

The EU sanctions came as the G7 expressed concern about deepening military cooperation between Russia and North Korea. The bloc says it has now sanctioned 77 individuals and 20 entities over North Korea's weapons programs, on top of UN-mandated sanctions.

AFP contributed reporting.

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