

**NORTH KOREA IN 2023-2024:
ITS INCREASING IMPACT ON
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY**

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Executive Summary

1. In 2023, Pyongyang successfully launched a reconnaissance satellite, tested solid fuel-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, fired a hypersonic intermediate-range ballistic missile and tested a submarine-launched cruise missile.
2. The nuclear advancement reflected Kim Jong-un's determination, as expressed at the Eighth Congress of the Korean Workers' Party held in January 2021.
3. Domestically, North Korea justified its nuclear weapons state status in its constitution with a one-point revision in September 2023, introducing an article that refers to the DPRK as a "responsible nuclear weapons state" and reiterating the commitment to advance nuclear weapons development.
4. Preparation for power succession seems to revolve around Kim Jong-un's 11-year-old daughter, Kim Ju-ae. Since the end of 2022, North Korean propaganda machine has called her "beloved child", "respected child" or "honourable child".
5. Externally, Pyongyang's close military ties with Russia have raised the concerns of the international community. North Korea has exported not only ammunitions but also newly developed missiles to Russia. North Korea is now the largest supplier of weapons to Russia, with Ukraine as the "testing ground" for North Korea's new weapons.
6. The ramifications of the DPRK-Russia military cooperation include first, a violation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions sanctioning North Korea's nuclear weapons development; second, strengthening of North Korea's weak air defence capability; and third, prolonging Russia's war in Ukraine.
7. On the inter-Korean relationship, Kim Jong-un declared it a state-to-state relationship and labelled South Korea as the main enemy. Accordingly, he ordered the abolition of all organisations involved in inter-Korean affairs and the revokement

of existing inter-Korean agreements, thus scrapping inter-Korean communication channels.

8. The escalating nuclear threat from North Korea, along with Kim's aggressive stance on inter-Korean relations, is likely to garner increased support among South Koreans for the development of their own autonomous nuclear weapons. If Trump were to be elected and a hasty nuclear deal entered into with Kim Jong-un, South Koreans may become more supportive of nuclear armament.