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Executive Summary

Repatriation of North Korean Workers Under the UN Security Council Resolution 2397: Status and Evaluation



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*This article is written based on the author's personal opinions
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Executive Summary

- This paper aims to analyze the status of repatriation of North Korean workers based on Article 8 of the UN Security Council Resolution 2397, and discuss future prospects and implications.
- Among of the ten UN sanctions resolutions against North Korea, which the 15 members of the Security Council unanimously adopted, the most recent resolution is Resolution 2397, adopted on December 22, 2017. Article 8 mandates every member states to initiate the repatriation of North Korean workers in their country within 24 months of the date of the adoption. This article is based on the statistical evidence that North Korean workers' revenue overseas amount to approximately \$500 million, which could be misused for conducting nuclear and missile programs. UN estimates there are around 100,000 North Korean workers working abroad, and about 80% of them work in China (50,000) and Russia (30,000) respectively.
- According to Article 8 of the UN Security Council Resolution 2397 (2017), 100,000 North Korean workers known to be residing in 29 countries including China and Russia must be repatriated no later than December 22, 2019. It's about two weeks ahead. According to an interim report submitted by 42 countries as of November 19, 2019, 23,200 North Korean workers have already been repatriated.
- Currently, North Korea seems to be returning to its earlier days of 2017. In this situation, the repatriation of North Korean workers by the end of December will surely impact the regime economically, politically, psychologically and even symbolically. Moreover, Resolution 2397 (2017) stipulates that in case of further provocation with nuclear weapons or ICBM, additional sanctions, such as limiting the amount of oil exports to North Korea, could be implemented.

- Implications regarding this paper can be twofold: (1) effect of UN sanctions from the perspective of global governance in the 21st century (2) implication of repatriation of North Korean Workers on the state's regime and its contribution to the process of denuclearization of North Korea.♣

※ Translator's note: This is a summarized unofficial translation of the original paper which was written in Korean. All references should be made to the original paper.