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South Korean President Imposes Martial Law

On December 3, 2024, President Yoon Suk Yeol of South Korea [suspended](#) democratic rights of the citizens by imposing martial law in the country. President Yoon accused the opposition parties for “[anti-state activities](#)” for his decision to implement such a harsh measure. However, there had also been multiple issues of [scandals](#) against President Yoon’s wife. In view of the resolution passed in the National Assembly against martial law, President Yoon [lifted](#) martial law in the early morning of December 4, 2024. The United States [welcomed](#) the removal of the martial law and restoration of the democratic system in South Korea. On the other hand, the opposition parties in South Korea raised the demand to [impeach](#) President Yoon and remove him from his position. Even President Yoon’s own party, the People Power Party (PPP) demanded that he should be “[suspended from duty](#)”. Later, President Yoon [apologised](#) for the declaration of martial law in the country. But the main opposition party, the Democratic Party of Korea called President Yoon’s apology as “[disappointing](#)”. Notably, on December 7, most of the members of the ruling party [boycotted](#) the voting process for the impeachment of President Yoon. However, the impeachment procedure against President Yoon got [approval](#) with more than two-thirds of votes and support from some PPP members in the National Assembly on December 14.

North Korean Troops in Russia

It has been reported that North Korea has sent a large number of army men to Russia to support Moscow’s war against Ukraine. In December 2024, the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy claimed that about 3,000 North Korean troops in Russia were “[killed or wounded](#)” during combat operations against the Ukrainian army. The State Department spokesperson of the United States also remarked that the North Korean soldiers fighting against Ukraine shall be regarded as “[legitimate targets](#)”. The North Korean state media reported that the ‘Comprehensive Strategic Partnership’ treaty between Pyongyang and Moscow, which was signed in June 2024, has come into [effect](#) on December 4, 2024. Notably, this treaty has the [provision](#) for mutual military assistance if North Korea or Russia faces foreign invasion. Later, on December 10, the Russian embassy in Pyongyang [celebrated](#) the event of ratification of the mutual defence treaty by hosting a reception. In December, the head of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Mark Rutte [said](#) that Russia supplied nuclear and missile technologies to North Korea in exchange for Pyongyang providing troops to Moscow. However, some Western officials were reported to be doubtful about the suitability of North Korean soldiers in combat operations against Ukraine due to their “[poor training](#)”. Ukrainian forces have also been [developing](#) propaganda leaflets and videos to motivate North Korean soldiers to defect and surrender.

South Korea Seeks International Support against North Korea

South Korea has been developing greater alliance with foreign countries against rising North Korean threats. In December 2024, the high ranking diplomats from South Korea and Germany committed themselves for a “[united and firm](#)” action against the deepening military collaboration between North Korea and Russia. During the summit between South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Kyrgyzstan’s President Sadyr Japarov in Seoul in December, both countries [urged](#) the North Korean regime to follow international obligations and abide by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. However, both Yoon and Japarov [refrained](#) from commenting on the North Korea-Russia military cooperation in the ongoing Ukraine war. In a survey report published in the South Korean media in December regarding international [support](#) for Korean reunification, majority of the foreign respondents were doubtful about North Korea’s denuclearisation. It was also reported that South Korea sought the support of the United States, Japan and China to [counter](#) the nuclear threats by the North Korean regime, and ongoing military collaboration between Moscow and Pyongyang. In an article published in the South Korean newspaper *JoongAng Daily*, the author argued for “[geopolitical mindset](#)” to handle with the North Korean issue. However, in the backdrop of the martial law event in South Korea in December, Seoul’s unification ministry called for “[stable management](#)” of the inter-Korean relations.

Development Projects in North Korea

In December 2024, the North Korean state media reported about several development projects being undertaken in the country. In December, new houses were [inaugurated](#) for the residents in South Hamgyong province. In another report, a large number of goat farms were [modernised](#) in South Phyongan province of North Korea, which has increased the supply of dairy products. A new dairy farm, constructed on the basis of scientific technology was also inaugurated in the Kangwon province in December to [enhance](#) milk production. It was reported that the [implementation](#) of new soil improvement technology has facilitated in the increase in agricultural production in North Phyongan, South Hamgyong and Ryanggang provinces. North Hamgyong province also made significant [progress](#) in the advancement of the green house technology in the vegetable production. The [improvement](#) in chemical fertilizer production and tractors for the development of food production was encouraged by the North Korean regime. Apart from agricultural output, emphasis was also given for the [production](#) of silkworm for the textile industries. According to a news article published in the *Rodong Sinmun* in December, the textile production in North Korea had [progressed](#). The school infrastructure was reported to have been [renovated](#) in North Korea. The thermal and hydel power generation significantly [advanced](#) in the country due to the application of new techniques. Solar power generation had also [improved](#).