



Prepared by the Security & Hazardous Materials Safety Organization (ASH)

DPRK: Continued Unannounced Missile Tests Pose Risks to Civil Aviation

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) continues to test launch ballistic missiles into the Sea of Japan without issuing warning notices, posing a risk to civil aviation. While the majority of the test launches have impacted within the Pyongyang Flight Information Region (FIR) (ICAO Code: ZKKP), some of the tested missiles have flown into adjoining FIR airspace.

On 4 October 2022, the DPRK launched a Hwasong-12 Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM) from Mupyong located near the border of DPRK and the People's Republic of China. According to open source reporting, the missile flew for over 20 minutes and traveled over 4,500km (2800 miles), reaching a peak altitude of around 1,000km; it flew over Japan before impacting in the Pacific Ocean. The unannounced missile launch prompted Japanese authorities to issue a warning for residents in some regions to take cover. Japanese trains and subways were briefly suspended and multiple flights from Tokyo Haneda Airport (ICAO Code: RJTT) were canceled that day as a precautionary measure.

The DPRK's continued failure to provide advance warning of missile test launches presents an enduring safety hazard to civil aviation and maritime operations in the region. Continued, unannounced DPRK missile tests over the near term are likely.

The 4 October missile test launch marks the longest-range missile test the DPRK has conducted to date. It was the sixth missile event, and tenth missile launch, conducted by the DPRK in the past 12 days. Prior to the 4 October IRBM launch, the DPRK conducted a series of short-range ballistic missile launches, which impacted within the Pyongyang FIR (ZKKP). On 6 October, the DPRK followed the 4 October IRBM launch with two short-range ballistic missile launches, one traveling up to 800km, and impacting in the Sea of Japan within the Pyongyang FIR. An additional launch occurred on 9 October, with two short-range ballistic missiles originating from Munchon, traveling approximately 350km and impacting in the Sea of Japan within the Pyongyang FIR. The recent testing comes amid combined military drills involving the United States (U.S.), the Republic of Korea (ROK), and Japan, and the U.S. Vice President's visit to the region. ***Historically, the DPRK has conducted unannounced ballistic missile tests to coincide with combined exercises and high-level visits to the region.***

Separately, the ROK National Intelligence Service reported construction of North Korea's Tunnel 3, at Punggye-ri Nuclear Test Site, has been completed. This increases the possibility of a nuclear test in the near-term.

Outlook:

The DPRK increased weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and ballistic missile development in 2022, along with associated missile testing activities. They tested more than 40 ballistic

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missiles, including its first intercontinental ballistic missile launch since 2017, as they continues to expand their military capabilities amid a prolonged stalemate in nuclear diplomacy. The missile tests have included a variety of missile systems including short-range, intercontinental, sea-launched, and purported ballistic missiles with hypersonic capabilities. Several of these missiles have impacted beyond the boundaries of the Pyongyang FIR. **Further DPRK missile test launches are likely, some of which could travel beyond the boundaries of the Pyongyang FIR and into adjacent airspace. U.S. civil air operators should maintain close communication with appropriate air traffic control (ATC) authorities and follow ATC instructions.**

The Federal Aviation Administration's Special Federal Aviation Regulation (SFAR) No. 79, 14 C.F.R. § 91.1615, prohibits U.S. civil aviation from operating in the entirety of the Pyongyang (ZKPP) FIR due to the risk to U.S. civil flight operations posed by the DPRK's military capabilities and activities, including, but not limited to, unannounced missile launches. Weapons tests and effects confined within the Pyongyang FIR should not affect U.S. operators, but foreign civil aircraft operating in the Pyongyang FIR may be exposed to risks from DPRK weapons test activity.

Copies of all FAA-issued flight prohibition SFARs, flight prohibition Notices-to-Air-Missions (NOTAMs), and advisory NOTAMs are available on FAA's Prohibitions, Restrictions, and Notices website at: http://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/publications/us_restrictions/.



Graphic representation of open source reporting of the 04 OCT 2022 DPRK missile launch. Graphic is not for navigational purposes.

If there are any questions, please contact the FAA Threat Analysis Division at 202-267-3203 or FAA-Watch@faa.gov.

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