


THE IMPACT OF UN SANCTIONS ON NORTH KOREA'S CHILDREN: THE RE-EMERGENCE OF FAMINE CONDITIONS IN 2021

The UN sanctions regime on North Korea was expanded in 2017 to ban natural gas exports and severely restricted oil exports to North Korea. In the wake of the 2017 UN energy sanctions, North Korea's domestic food production has sharply fallen to levels that can only feed about two-thirds of its 25 million population. The proximate cause of the North Korean famine of the 1990s that killed around half a million people was the cut-off of oil exports from China and Russia because oil provides essential, non-substitutable inputs into agricultural production, for fertilizers, pesticides, transport, agricultural equipment, and irrigation facilities and North Korea has no indigenous oil resources. As in every famine, those who suffered most had the fewest means of helping themselves, including children, the sick, and the frail elderly. The 2017 UN sanctions reproduced the proximate conditions that in the past precipitated famine in North Korea.

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