

South Korean news site says forced labor-linked imports from China at 4,000t

Chosun Daily, which has been following up the Outlaw Ocean Project's work on tracing seafood made in China using forced labor, claims to have found up to 4,000t of such imports in South Korea

By [Undercurrent News](#) | July 3, 2024 14:22 BST



📷 Photograph by Dion Gillard.

More than 4,000 metric tons of seafood products imported by South Korea from China were made using North Korean labor, reports the [Chosun Daily](#), which has been following up findings from the Outlaw Ocean Project (OOP).

The seafood was processed by North Korean workers under forced labor conditions in China and then sold to South Korea, violating United Nations (UN) sanctions and potentially supporting North Korea's nuclear development via salaries, according to the article. The UN Security Council's sanctions against North Korea prohibit third-country companies from employing North Korean workers for this reason.

OOP, an independent journalism group, reported in October 2023, as part of a two-part series appearing in [The New Yorker](#), how a Chinese program was used to enlist and transport a large number of Uyghurs over 1,000 miles from Xinjiang, in the land-locked, northwestern part of China, to seafood processing plants in Shandong, on the east coast. The investigation found also a heavy reliance on North Korean laborers.

Data from US financial sanctions and supply chain analysis firm Sayari, analyzed by the Washington DC-based nonprofit OOP and *Chosun*, found that five Chinese seafood processing companies exported approximately 4,360t of seafood processed by North Koreans to 36 South Korean companies across 158 shipments between 2021 and 2023.

These shipments were worth around KRW 30 billion to 40bn (\$21.6 million-\$28.8m). They were shipped from Dalian and Dandong in China to Incheon and Busan in South Korea and then distributed nationwide, ending up in large supermarkets and local seafood markets.

The US government has indicated possible sanctions against the Chinese companies involved and may call on allies, including South Korea, to participate.

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