

People 'starving' in North Korea, 10 million need humanitarian aid, says UN Expert

09/06/2020 20:48 by admin

Tomas Ojea Quintana, UN special rapporteur on human rights in the DPRK, said an increasing number of families eat only twice a day, or eat only corn, and some are starving.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un (C) speaks during the 13th Political Bureau meeting of the 7th Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) in an undisclosed location in North Korea.(AFP)

Geneva: A United Nations human rights expert voiced alarm on Tuesday at what he called “widespread food shortages and malnutrition” in North Korea, which have been exacerbated by a nearly five-month border closure with China and measures against COVID-19.

Tomas Ojea Quintana, U.N. special rapporteur on human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), urged the U.N. Security Council to “reconsider sanctions” on the isolated country so as to ensure the flow of food supplies.

“There have been reports of an increase of homeless people in large cities” including kotjebi (street children), and medicine prices have reportedly skyrocketed. An increasing number of families eat only twice a day, or eat only corn, and some are starving,” he said in a statement.

Elisabeth Byrs, spokeswoman of the U.N.’s World Food Programme (WFP), told a Geneva news briefing that the humanitarian situation in North Korea “remains bleak”, with some 10 million, or 40% of the population, needing humanitarian aid.

- Reuters