

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS 1995-1998

The main purpose of this chronology is to help the reader by reconstructing MSF's actions and public statements in regional and international news reports of the period. It is intended as a tool for this specific document, and not as an academic reference.

International	North Korea	MSF
1905 Japan takes over Korea.		
1945 Japan's defeat – Korean peninsula split in two by the 38th parallel. Soviet administration and troops to the North and the US to the South.		
1948 2 separate Korean governments are established: the pro-Soviet North (Kim Il Sung as Prime Minister) and the pro-USA South.		
1950 June Southern invasion by northern troops claiming to reunify Korea.		
1950 Korean war: North backed by USSR and China, South backed by UN forces 1953 (mostly US). 1953 27 July 1953 Ceasefire in Panmunjon: no armistice.		
1972	Kim Il Sung President of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (and Secretary General of the Labor Party).	
1990 Early 1990 End of Soviet aid to North Korea leads to energy shortages, lack of hard currency-producing industries, and mechanised farming ground to a halt. Military budget maintained.		
1992	Beginning of food shortages.	
1994 22 July USA and North Korea agree to resume talks 21 November North Korea announces a freeze on its nuclear reactor program.	7 July Death of Kim Il Sung – his son Kim Jong Il becomes the new leader.	
1995 23 April North Korea threatens to reactivate its nuclear program. 13 June USA and North Korea agree on deal for nuclear reactors. SK will provide 2 nuclear reactors to North Korea.		

International	North Korea	MSF
<p>11 December WFP director says North Korea faces danger of famine.</p>	<p>28 August Extensive floods in North Korea; government appeals for international aid.</p>	<p>4 - 9 September MSF exploratory mission in North Korea.</p> <p>3 October <i>Press release</i> by MSF Belgium, France/Holland: "MSF responds to North Korean government appeal for international aid."</p> <p>5 October MSF operational sections meeting to organise international intervention operations in North Korea.</p> <p>21 November AFP "North Korea Devastated by Floods, Humanitarians Group Reports" (MSF quote).</p> <p>Late December End of agreed MSF 3 month programme in North Korea. New programme negotiations with the government begin.</p>
<p>1996 4 January South Korean President Kim Young Sam reports concerns over a possible famine in North Korea.</p>	<p>8 February North Korea tells foreign relief agencies not to organize new appeals for flood victims.</p>	<p>January No agreement between MSF and North Korean government on a nutritional survey. MOU not extended.</p> <p>Late February - Last MSF expatriate leaves North Korea. - MSF coordinator to the press: "we can't yet talk about a famine but the situation is potentially serious and must be taken into consideration."</p> <p>April DPRK representative in Paris (M. Kim) invites MSF to visit North Korea again.</p>

International	North Korea	MSF
<p>1996 16 April Clinton's visit to South Korea – He proposes four-party talks for a permanent peace agreement replacing the 1953 armistice.</p> <p>15 May US and Japan rule out sending food aid to North Korea.</p> <p>29 May IFRC appeal on famine in North Korea</p> <p>11 June Japan and South Korea pledge aid to North Korea.</p> <p>25 August US Congressman visiting North Korea says it is in desperate need of food and asks USA for more aid.</p> <p>30 September North Korea and American-led consortium agree to the elimination of North Korean nuclear arms program and the construction of 2 new reactors.</p>	<p>Late July Storms and floods in North Korea; authorities report starvation</p> <p>In 1996 Kim Jong Il publicly declares that only 30% of the population is needed to survive in order to reconstruct a victorious society.</p>	<p>20 April - 22 May MSF International exploratory mission in North Korea.</p> <p>17 May MSF HQs declines the explo team's suggestion to implement a programme in DPRK with no expats.</p> <p>31 May MSF France Board discussion on North Korea: some members opposed to "collaboration with a totalitarian regime."</p> <p>11 September MSF named laureate of the Seoul Peace Prize.</p>

International	North Korea	MSF
<p>1997 26 January Signs of a thaw between North Korea and South Korea; preliminary talks on formal end to Korean war.</p> <p>23 February US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright visits American front-line near demilitarized zone (DMZ), which separates the two, and declares peace is dependent on North Korea.</p> <p>4 - 26 March ECHO visit to North Korea; small scale nutritional assessment reveals seriousness of nutritional situation.</p> <p>8 May Japanese officials say USA and South Korea will not give substantial food aid to North Korea unless it agrees to join peace talks.</p> <p>12 May South Korean Red Cross announces shipping of 15,000 thousand tonnes of food to North Korea.</p>	<p>3 February North Korea says floods have cut grain supply in half.</p> <p>29 March North Korea officially requests food aid from SK and USA.</p> <p>8 April North Korea makes deal to buy US wheat.</p>	<p>25 February - 8 March MSF barley seeds delivery programme.</p> <p>20 April MSF proposal to North Korean representative in France to send a medical team to assess medical and nutritional aid needs.</p> <p>14 May North Korean representative in Paris tells MSF that North Korean government doesn't want any more assessments but wants concrete aid.</p>

International	North Korea	MSF
<p>1997</p> <p>18 June North Korean Ministry of Armed Forces spokesperson says that Pyong Yang is ready for the final battle against the USA and South Korea.</p> <p>1 July North Korea agrees to hold talks with SK, USA, and China to negotiate peace.</p> <p>15 July USA agrees to donate \$27 million worth of surplus grain to help North Korea cope with food shortages.</p> <p>6 August North Korea joins talks with South Korea, USA, and China to formally end war and ease tensions in Korean peninsula.</p> <p>8 August NYT Editorial says USA should take lead in famine relief efforts for North Korea.</p> <p>9 August UN says 80,000 children are dying in North Korea.</p>	<p>5 August Relief teams say North Korea faces vast drought emergency.</p>	<p>24 May - 4 June MSF exploratory mission in Ichon, Unpa, Pakchon, Huichon and Pyongyang maternities.</p> <p>5 June Start of a one month programme: Unpa, Pakchon and Huichon counties with MSFF as the lead programme manager.</p> <p>June MSF France food unit visits NK to assess the barley crops.</p> <p>3 July MSF signs an MOU with the government of North Korea valid for 1 year: large-scale nutritional rehabilitation, drug and medical equipment distribution, and training in South Pyongyang, North Hwangae, Kangwon.</p>

International	North Korea	MSF
<p>1997 14 August US congressmen visit to North Korea: - say some food aid diverted to military, - will seek measures to ensure future US food aid goes to hungry people, - agree on more food aid.</p> <p>20 August Western nations give North Korea two nuclear reactors. North Korea gives up older reactors that could be used to make nuclear arms.</p> <p>15 September World Vision reports North Korean famine may be killing 15% in towns.</p>	<p>9 October Kim Jong Il new Secretary of Peoples' Labour Party.</p>	<p>3 October - 11 November William Claus (programme manager MSFB) visit to DPRK.</p> <p>Late October-Early November Intersectional debates on geographical extension and possible external communication.</p> <p>22 October Decision of explo mission in North Hamyong to extend the programme under MSF B (with FDRC agreement) but MSF F/H disagree.</p> <p>24 November Extension officially authorised: 59 counties, 12 expatriates.</p> <p>November MSF team discovers socially disabled children.</p> <p>Late November Early December Eric Goemaere, MSF B Executive Director, visits North Korea.</p> <p>7 December <i>Press conference</i> with Eric Goemaere in Hong Kong – <i>press release</i> : "The Health System in North Korea has Collapsed - Help is Needed Urgently but Needs Careful Distribution and Training of Staff."</p>

International	North Korea	MSF
<p>1997</p>		<p>9 December <i>Press conference</i> with Eric Goemaere in Brussels.</p> <p>December MSFF China team starts receiving information on the North Korean refugees on China-North Korea border.</p>
<p>1998</p> <p>7 January WFP appeals for \$378 million to feed nearly a third of North Korea's people.</p> <p>5 February USA announces \$75 million food aid to 1/3 of North Korean population.</p> <p>February First massive arrivals of North Korean refugees on the North Korea/China border.</p> <p><i>Korean Buddhist Sharing Movement</i> publishes North Korean refugees accounts reporting a large-scale famine in North Korea.</p>	<p>3 March North Korean officials say food stocks will run out by mid-March and risks of famine.</p>	<p>January Argument within MSF about an article on North Korea in MSF France internal newspaper.</p> <p>31 January MSF France Board advises an evaluation of programmes in North Korea.</p> <p>February Letter from Tony Hall, US Congressman to MSF asking for support of his campaign to increase US food aid to North Korea.</p> <p>February MSF programme starts in North Hamyong province.</p> <p>11 February MSF Hong Kong suggests an assessment on the China/North Korea border and in North Korean hospitals where MSF is working.</p> <p>8 March Start of MSF/DPRK negotiations on possible activities after end of current MOU.</p> <p>10 - 20 March MSFF's Pierre Salignon, programme manager and Philippe Biberson, President visit North Korea. They announce to DPRK that MSF will not continue working under the current conditions.</p>

International	North Korea	MSF
<p>1998</p>		<p>Last two weeks March MSF China team collects testimonies from refugees on the China/North Korean border – report transmitted to press correspondent in Beijing.</p> <p>Late March Pim de Graaf, MSF Holland Director of Operations visits North Korea.</p> <p>Late March Draft of external communication plan on North Korea by MSF B and MSF International - finally abandoned.</p> <p>1 April 'North Korea, a Manipulated Famine' in <i>Libération</i> quotes Philippe Biberson, MSF F President.</p> <p>8 April Refugees' accounts transmitted to MSF F programme manager, then to MSF B&H programme managers.</p> <p>9 April Programme managers decision to stop distribution and to renegotiate programmes and freezing of refugee accounts circulation.</p> <p>9 April MSF Belgium Executive Director's letter to DPRK: "this news is not produced by any official MSF press release."</p> <p>11 April Refugee's accounts published with MSF quote in <i>South China Morning Post</i> (Beijing), <i>Le Figaro</i> (Paris), cannibalism mentioned.</p> <p>13 April <i>New York Times</i> MSF statement on North Korea is more dire than WFP.</p> <p>23 April US NGOs ask MSF for more coordination on North Korea and blame its statements.</p> <p>24 April FDRC letter to MSF disagrees with MSF statements.</p>

International	North Korea	MSF
<p>1998</p> <p>Late April North Korea principle agreement on WFP, UNICEF, and ECHO nutritional assessment.</p> <p>19 May WFP director announces aid to North Korea will stop if there is no access to the entire country.</p> <p>14 June WFP and FAO say that food situation in North Korea remains precarious and that authorities don't distribute food aid. Mid-June: Médecins du Monde MOU not renewed – MDM leaves North Korea.</p> <p>23 June Seoul seizes suspected submarine from North Korea.</p>		<p>24 April MSF China coordinator report to MSF F Board. Decision "MSF stays and speaks out."</p> <p>29 April Programme managers decision that MSF must stay, support the team, and follow up the issues raised by refugee accounts.</p> <p>May - MSF B&F directors visit donors (EU) - François Jean (MSF France Foundation) starts research on food aid to North Korea</p> <p>16 May MSF F President gives detailed annual report to the annual general meeting on North Korea.</p> <p>29 May MSF F Board discusses North Korean strategy to be applied.</p> <p>9 June MSFF Foundation conference on North Korea.</p> <p>Early July William Claus drafts proposal to DPRK for working in a smaller area with closer cooperation.</p>

International	North Korea	MSF
<p>1998</p> <p>19 August After a 4 days' visit in PY, US congressional delegations state that since 1995, 300,000 to 800,000 people died from hunger every year.</p> <p>31 August</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - North Korea fires a missile over Japan. - Japan suspends all food aid to North Korea (lifted in Dec 1999). 	<p>26 August Stormy weather ruins north Korean crops.</p>	<p>In July MSF team discovers "27/9" status earmarking people "rejected by society."</p> <p>20-21 July MSF North Korea team discusses achievements and prospects of the programmes.</p> <p>24 July MSF receives a one-month extension on the MOU and proposal from DPRK to deliver raw materials to rehabilitate North Korean pharmaceutical industry.</p> <p>29 July MSF Holland group recommends that MSF continue to try and gain access to the most vulnerable and create a threshold for departure.</p> <p>10 August MSF North Korea coordinator's plan to close the mission.</p> <p>13 August Programme manager decision to close the mission at the end of the current MOU.</p> <p>19 August Programme managers and Comms departments reflect on an external communication strategy regarding MSF withdrawal from North Korea.</p> <p>18 - 25 August MSF F China team collects refugee accounts on China /North Korean border.</p> <p>24 August DPRK letter asking MSF to consider the proposal to help rehabilitation of pharmaceutical industry.</p>

International	North Korea	MSF
<p>1998</p> <p>15 September US calls North Korean rocket a failed satellite.</p> <p>21 September Start of a nutritional survey by UNICEF and WFP; they will not be able to enter 1/3 of North Korea.</p> <p>30 September The USA : - Promise to provide more oil to DPRK. - Ask The NK authorities to solve the issue of access in order that MSF can resume its activities.</p> <p>2 October UNICEF/WFP statement: there is no evidence that aid is mishandled.</p>	<p>September Kim Jong Il gets full power.</p>	<p>9 September - refugee accounts with allegations of cannibalism published in <i>South China Morning Post</i>, MSF quoted. - MSF USA challenged by UN agency and US NGOs.</p> <p>11 September Circulation to authorities and aid agencies of the Report on "socially deprived children".</p> <p>20 September Programme managers put an embargo until 30 September on MSF message regarding withdrawal from North Korea.</p> <p>28 September Letter of MSF B/F/H executive directors to FDRC informing that MSF will issue a press release to explain its retreat from NK.</p> <p>30 September - Last MSF expatriates leave North Korea. - Leak in <i>Liberation</i> (France) and <i>The International Herald Tribune</i> (USA) of refugee accounts collected by MSF.</p> <p>1 October MSF press conference in Hong Kong and MSF press release: "MSF Calls on Donors to Review their Policy in DPRK - Urgent Needs in North Korea but MSF Forced to Pull Out".</p> <p>5 October DPRK statement: "MSF statement is not consistent".</p>

International	North Korea	MSF
<p>1998 13 October WFP Deputy Executive Director says North Korea denies UN workers access to many counties.</p> <p>20 - 25 October Peace negotiations between North Korea and South Korea in Geneva.</p>		<p>14 October "Humanitarian Aid Frozen" by Philippe Biberson, MSF F president in <i>Le Figaro</i> (France).</p> <p>21 October MSF round table on North Korea in Amsterdam.</p>
<p>1999</p>	<p>12 May DPRK acknowledges 220,000 deaths due to famine.</p>	<p>February "North Korea a Famine Regime" by François Jean, MSF F Foundation in <i>Esprit</i> (France).</p> <p>April MSF F China team 'business' assessment trip from Beijing to Hamhung province (North Korea).</p> <p>3 - 6 May South Korean NGO meeting in Beijing asks MSF to resume aid to North Korea.</p>
<p>2000</p>		<p>24 April "The mystery children" by Marie-Rose Pecchio, ex-MSF coordinator in North Korea in <i>Newsweek International</i> (USA).</p> <p>29 September MSF F Board meeting update on North Korean refugee programme.</p>
<p>2001</p> <p>June The Chinese authorities organised a major crackdown on refugees on the North Korean border.</p>		<p>10 March Interview of Fiona Terry, MSF Fondation, on North Korea in the <i>Japan Times</i> (Tokyo).</p>

International	North Korea	MSF
		<p>23 July <i>The Guardian</i> (UK) and <i>The Washington Post</i> (USA) articles on MSF appeal to Chinese government to stop crackdown and forced repatriation of North Korean refugees.</p> <p>25 July <i>South China Morning Post</i> (China) article on MSF appeal to Chinese government to stop crackdown and forced repatriation of North Korean refugees</p> <p>30 July <i>Libération</i> (France) - Interview with Fiona Terry (MSF F Foundation) on the manipulation of the famine in North Korea. - Interview with Catherine Bertini (WFP).</p> <p>6 August <i>The Guardian</i> (UK): Interview with Fiona Terry (MSF F Foundation) on the manipulation of the famine in North Korea.</p>
<p>2002</p> <p>December The Chinese authorities launched a surge of repression against NK refugees.</p>		<p>February Opening of MSF F office in Seoul, South Korea and gradual extension of the programme toward North Korean refugees in Asia.</p> <p>2 May MSF F co-coordinator in South Korea (Sophie Delaunay) testimony to the US House Sub-Committee on International Relations for East Asia and the Pacific, regarding the plight of North Koreans inside DPRK and on the fate of North Korean refugees in China.</p> <p>30 August MSF F Board decision to support the refugee activities (including the sensitive human rights aspects) of MSF South Korean team (in China).</p>
<p>2003</p>		<p>19 January MSF South Korea <i>press release</i> "Urgent Appeal for the Protection of North Korean Refugees in China."</p>

International	North Korea	MSF
2003		<p>24 January MSF F Co-coordinator in South Korea (Marine Buissonnière) testimony to the Japanese Parliament <i>"MSF Pushes for Rights of Fleeing North Koreans."</i></p> <p>27 February - 27 March MSF F in South Korean campaign of humanitarian diplomacy toward western politicians and international agencies.</p> <p>June-July MSF H <i>"North Korea research Explo"</i> document.</p> <p>October Chapter on North Korea by Fiona Terry in MSF F book: <i>"In the Shadow of Just Wars."</i></p>
2004		<p>18 - 22 May MSF H's Dick van der Tak and Michiel Hofman visit North Korea.</p>
2006		<p>January Closure of MSF F programme in South Korea.</p>
2007		<p>March - April 2007 MSF CH exploratory mission on China/North Korea border and Far Eastern Asia: decision to open a programme for North Korean refugees.</p>