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China slams UN call for North Korea referral to ICC

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China has objected to a UN measure that calls for referring North Korea to the International Criminal Court (ICC) over its records of human rights violation.

On Thursday, the UN General Assembly's non-binding measure was approved by a vote of 116 to 20 with 53 abstentions.

China was not the only country that was against the measure. Russia, Belarus, Cuba, Iran, Syria and Venezuela have also expressed objection.

It calls on the UN Security Council to refer North Korea to the ICC and to mull targeted sanctions against its capital and the largest city, Pyongyang, for violation of its citizens' rights.

China's strong objection is supported by an argument that the matter should be dealt with in the UN Human Rights Council and not the Security Council.

China's Foreign Ministry spokesman, Qin Gang, said Friday, "It is our long-standing position that countries should engage in constructive dialogue and negotiations to deal with differences on human rights, and we oppose politicizing or using the issue of human rights to put pressure on other countries."

He added, "The (UN) Security Council is not the right place to discuss human rights issues and to refer human rights issues to the International Criminal Court will by no means solve the problems."

North Korea's deputy ambassador to the UN, An Myong-hun, said the General Assembly's decision was "the product of a political plot and confrontation" based on a "fabricated" report by the commission of inquiry.

The Security Council will discuss the human rights situation of North Korea on December 22 in its first-ever meeting on such an issue, but no decision is expected on ICC referral during that meeting.