

Featured articles licensed from **THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.**

North Korea Defector Explains Cyber Scam

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

By Dasl Yoon

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

SEOUL—On a California-based company's internal directory, he was just another face in the grid of remote workers—a prolific software developer with a polished LinkedIn profile and an IP address tracing back to the Midwest.

In reality, the man behind the coding lived in a state-run dormitory in China. His name was Anton Koh. And he wasn't Chinese.

Koh belonged to a pipeline of elite North Korean cyber operatives, identified, trained and dispatched overseas by the Kim regime.

Please turn to Page 8

Millions Face Starvation in Congo. Their New Rulers Are to Blame.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

By Nicholas Bariyo

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

KAMPALA, Uganda—Ten million people face hunger in the Democratic Republic of Congo's east, and it isn't because there is no food to be had. It is largely because people can't get what food there is.

The M23 rebel group that one year ago seized Goma, eastern Congo's largest city, has tried to establish itself as the prevailing government in the area and consolidate control. Instead, it has driven farmers from their land, left produce to rot at roadblocks and blocked food imports except those from its allies in neighboring Rwanda, according to local traders and activists.

Please turn to Page 2



An aerial image of the Lamar fish farm off the coast of Rhodes, in the south east Aegean.

LAMAR

TO BHMA International edition

Europe Wants More Fish Farms. Is Greece Ready?

By Cheryl Novak and Myrto Polymili

Nestled off the western coast of Rhodes inside a protected Natura 2000 marine zone, a cluster of floating cages marks one of Greece's smallest commercial fish farms—Lamar SA. The company

produces roughly 320 tons of fish a year from just 10 hectares of leased sea space—the smallest size of rentable space allowed by the Greek government. The farm raises four species, including sea bass and sea bream, and in a fish farm-to-fork approach, supplies hotels and restaurants on Rhodes and surrounding islands throughout Greece's long tourist season.

Talking to *TO BHMA International Edition* in his bright office on Rhodes, its CEO, Savvas Chatzinikolaou, describes the family operation as deliberately small-scale and sustainability-focused. It aims to “flip the coin” on traditional fish farming through what he calls sustainable aquaculture tourism.

In an effort to dispel

misconceptions about the compatibility of fish farms with Natura 2000 sites, Lamar opens its commercial operations to the public through a sister company called Blutopia, which enables visitors to examine water quality, fish health and local biodiversity up close. “We want people to see how this works, not just read reports.”

But Lamar's future isn't only constrained by environmental preconceptions; there are bureaucratic constraints, too. Because the company operates outside a designated aquaculture zone (known in Greece as a POAY), it cannot expand its leased area until that zoning framework is in place.

Please turn to Page 4



Don Guinnip walking on his farm in Marshall, Illinois

WHITNEY CURTIS FOR WSJ

Farmers Are Aging. The Family Business Is in Peril.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

By Patrick Thomas

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

MARSHALL, Ill.—Don Guinnip is running out of time.

The fifth-generation farmer still wakes early each morning to tend to roughly 1,000 acres of corn and soybeans and 40 cattle. But four

decades of grueling work, a bout with prostate cancer and surgery to replace both of his hips with titanium implants have taken their toll. The 74-year-old estimates he can maintain the current workload for a couple more years.

Under the gaze of generations of Guinnips in black-and-white photos, he gathers his four siblings to chart the

future of their family's farm—and contemplates a day when a Guinnip no longer cares for the land that runs along Guinnip Road.

The natural choice to take over, his son and daughter, left for college and now work in corporate fields. His siblings made the same decision years earlier.

Please turn to Page 2

**YOU HAVE THE BUSINESS
WE HAVE THE ENERGY**

Integrated energy solutions for your business.
Find the products that suit your needs, at dei.gr



One with the future

Farmers Are Aging. Their Kids Don't Want to Be in the Family Business.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Rising costs, weak prices and a trade hit are pushing more farms to the brink, and making the search for their successors harder than ever

Continued from Page One

"It's disappointing to me," Guinnip says, holding back tears. "That's the way the dice were rolled, and you have to accept what life gives you."

The number of farmers in America has been shrinking for years, but rising costs and weak commodity prices are pushing more families out at a faster rate. In 2025, 315 farms filed for bankruptcy, up 46% from 2024, U.S. court data shows.

Those left are aging; there are more farmers 75 and older than under the age of 35, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"Family agriculture is in crisis, and American farmers and ranchers are fighting for their livelihoods," says National Farmers Union President Rob Larew.

Many farmers already rely on government bailouts to stay afloat. In 2024, Congress approved \$10 billion in bailout funds and \$21 billion in natural disaster relief for growers and ranchers. The Trump administration's trade policies exacerbated the situation, pushing more families and communities to the brink. In December, the White House pledged \$12



Farmer Don Guinnip inspects his aging combine harvester.

billion in aid to farmers. Even with that money, corn growers are expected to be in the red again in 2026, industry estimates show.

Thousands across the U.S. are closing the book on farms that have been in their families for generations, either by selling to a larger en-

tity or declaring bankruptcy. Critics of farm consolidation say it's also led to less crop diversity, presenting risks for the broader food system.

The disappearance of small farms has carried steep consequences for rural America, upending the transfer of wealth—long attached

to the land—between generations. Children of farmers today have more opportunities to work beyond agriculture than they did decades ago, and families are typically smaller, shrinking the pool of possible candidates.

Seated around the living room, Guinnip and his sib-

lings dig into packets filled with appraisals and farm history as they discuss plans for land potentially worth millions of dollars.

While Guinnip has sole oversight of the acres and animals, his parents left the family farm in trusts that split ownership between him, David,

Susan, Sallie and Dan. Every year, Guinnip pays his siblings rent based on the farm's performance.

The profits aren't much these days, but it could be worse.

One thing that helps: Guinnip is frugal. He still lives in the more than century-old house his grandfather built. His truck, which recently lost power steering, is from the 1990s. Instead of buying new equipment and hiring help, he uses an aging tractor and combine.

On Guinnip Road

With calls of "sook calf," Guinnip starts the day the same way his father and grandfather did before him. He treks the gravel path behind the farmhouse to a small pasture tucked between rows of corn and soybeans. One by one, cattle fall behind him single file to consume a breakfast of ground corn and hay.

Guinnip handles just about every task around the farm. With the hip replacements, he's limber enough to climb into the large machinery needed to harvest crops, spray pesticides, plant seeds and move hay bales that weigh roughly 1,000 pounds each.

Millions Face Starvation in Congo. Their New Rulers Are to Blame.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

The M23 militia has failed to assert itself as the government in and around Goma. War-pummeled residents are suffering the cost.

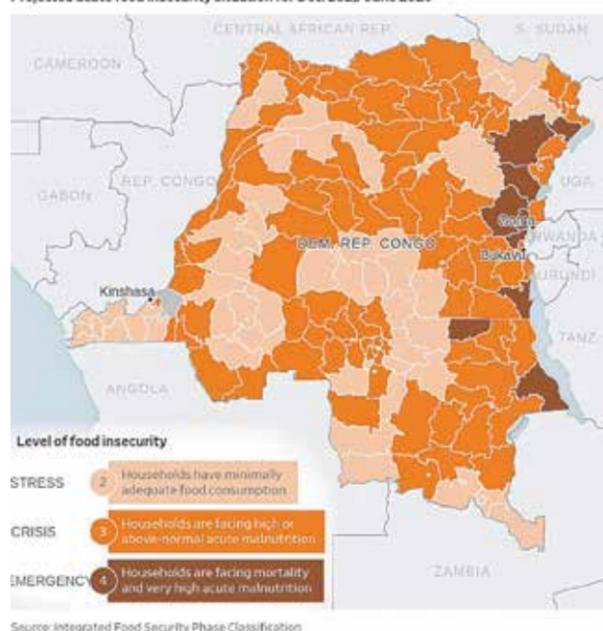
Continued from Page One

The result is empty shelves in most stores and sky-high prices for meat, milk, grain and vegetables in stores that do manage to stock up, residents and activists report.

Noella Amisi, a nurse in Goma, rushed out for baby formula, sugar and other groceries as soon as she received a \$30 mobile-money transfer from her husband in government-held Kinshasa, Congo's capital city. For hours, she crisscrossed the city looking for a stocked supermarket. She found nothing to buy.

"I am just trying my best to ensure that my children don't starve, but every day

Projected acute food insecurity situation for Dec. 2025-June 2026



the situation gets worse," said 28-year-old Amisi.

The United Nations projects three million people in eastern Congo will likely slip into a food emergency by the end of June—its term for life-threatening hunger.

After years of insurgencies, residents in eastern Congo are accustomed to food shortages, inflation and destitution. But since the Rwandan-backed M23 stormed through the mineral-rich region and seized Goma and Bukavu, the region's No. 2 city, people have had to comb looted markets for scraps of food. Some locals sell clothes and other personal items to raise cash to

buy what high-priced food they can find.

Rwanda's quest to solidify its influence in eastern Congo has prompted it to deploy its military, which fought alongside the rebels and is now helping M23 create what is de facto an autonomous region in the country's mining heartlands, according to U.N. investigators.

Rwanda's economy has become one of Africa's fastest-growing, thanks in part to smuggled Congolese minerals, according to economists.

But by choking off agricultural production, transport and markets, Rwanda's M23 allies are aggravating Congo's hunger crisis.

"The M23 rebel group is inflicting deeper suffering on civilians through brutal tax collection and tight controls over food trade and property ownership," said Richard Moncrieff, an analyst with the International Crisis Group.

Rebels block dairy and



Rebels seized Goma a year ago and have set up a de facto autonomous region in Congo's mining heartlands.

beef from entering Congo—except if it comes from Rwanda, traders and residents say. In some areas they control, rebels allow merchants to import cooking oil,

Featured articles licensed from The Wall Street Journal

Reminders of his lineage dot the land, starting with the sign in front of the farm pointing to the start: 1837.

Family patriarch Joseph Guinnip joined the throngs of people who headed west to take hold of America's Manifest Destiny, leaving Steuben County, N.Y., in the 1830s. He eventually settled 40 acres of land in southeastern Illinois, where he built a log cabin, the family's first farmhouse.

The land has passed through every generation since, including those who fought in the Civil War and survived a buzz-saw accident. Guinnip's father, Robert, and mother, Rose, eventually took their turn at the helm.

With Guinnip being the eldest child, there wasn't much question who would take over the farm. "Dad just really groomed him to take over," says Dan, a former cruise-line accounting chief who lives in California.

Before Robert Guinnip died in the 1990s, he and his wife put the farm into two trusts that would be shared equally between their five children when they died. His vision, Don Guinnip says, was that whoever stayed on the farm would buy out the others.

The land was worth about \$1,000 to \$2,000 an acre back then. It's 10 times that now, making it impossible for Guinnip to buy out all his siblings.

The farmer isn't one to complain, his daughter says, and he's never asked for help. "It's just the way it is," he'll say when asked about the structure.

When their mother died in 2024, Guinnip and his siblings agreed to keep the trust as is and figure out the rest later.

Heir not apparent

Guinnip's son, Andy, was raised to be the farm's sixth-generation operator.

"It was always assumed since I was the boy," Andy says. "I don't think we ever had conversations about it."

He learned the ropes early and spent his childhood cleaning grain bins, baling hay and feeding the livestock. But farm work was a bore. Andy was more drawn to the animals than to the crops.

After graduating from college, he spent a year helping out on the farm while his father recovered from surgery for prostate cancer. Once Don Guinnip was able to return to work, Andy headed west for a pharmaceutical job in St. Louis.

His sister, Molly Wedding, a lawyer for an insurer, lives in Indianapolis with her husband and three children. She had no interest in living her life out in a small town.

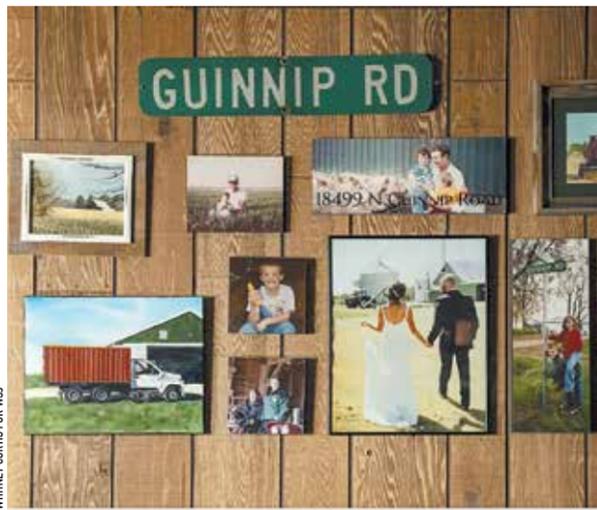
As she's grown older, she's developed a greater interest in the farm's business operations.

"Could I run it? Yes. Do I see myself doing the labor myself? No."

The five shareholders

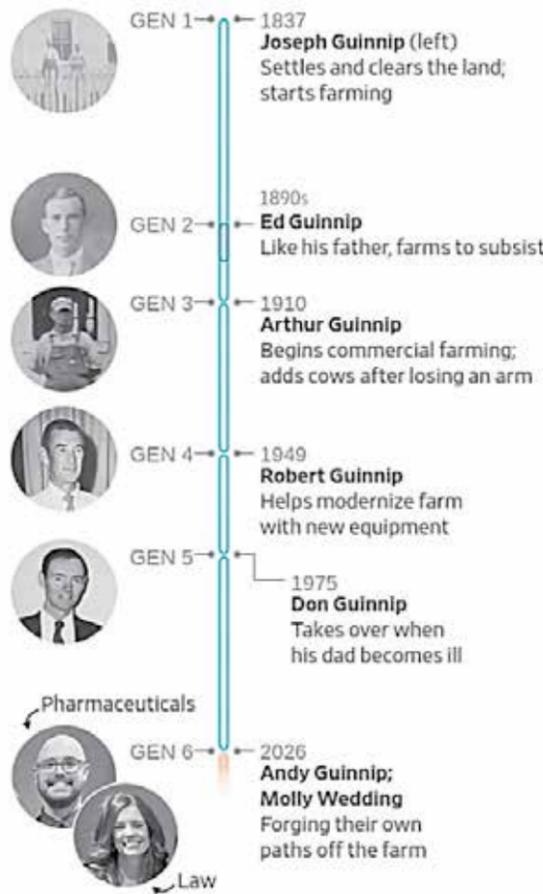
Don Guinnip convenes his siblings at the farm in mid-October. It's peak harvest season, but the only time all five of them could get together. It's the first time they've met since the blur of weeks around their mother's death.

"We've had three good years on the farm," Guinnip



The farm has been run by a Guinnip since 1837.

Guinnip farm family tree



Source: the family Stephanie Stamm/WSJ

tells his siblings, sounding like a chairman talking to his board. "Can't say that about this year. Prices are bad, and the crops are bad. So your income this year is going to be down."

Going into the meeting, everyone thought David was close to selling his stake. They had agreed that if a sibling wants to cash out, the remaining owners would buy their share to prevent the farm from being sold to outsiders.

But when Guinnip asks David if he still wants to sell his share, David shakes his head no.

Don Guinnip spends most of the back-and-forth listening. He hardly interrupts, chiming in only when his siblings are done talking. But when he does speak, his family listens. Especially when Guinnip tells them he thinks he can keep farming for about two more years.

"I'm healthy, I like doing what I'm doing," he says. "But I'm not going to live forever."

He suggests they look at putting 40 acres into a USDA program that removes it from production and provides growers with a fixed payment for the farmland. They agree.

After two hours, it's clear that will be the only decision today. They're at an impasse. No successor is named. No one sells their share. No agreement is reached on the trust structure.

The siblings acknowledge they should meet twice a year, as they break for a lunch featuring pulled-pork sandwiches.

The farm calls

At the local grain elevator, Guinnip is offered about \$10 a bushel for his soybeans. It isn't enough to make a large profit, but he knows it's better than what some growers are getting. His 600 bushels will likely end up in poultry feed in the South.

On the drive back to the farm, he reflects on the meeting. He says the family usually reaches the right decision after they've had time to think about it.

The future of American farming isn't pretty in Guinnip's view. He predicts it will resemble a contract model, in which farmers work the land for someone else, pay rent and are personally responsible for the debt incurred to keep the farm running. Fewer family farmers will exist. The pride they brought will be lost, too.

"When farmers owned the land and lived on the land, they took care of the land and they formed communities that worked together and solved problems and took care of everybody," he says. "You're not going to have that in the future."

The future preoccupying him right now, though, is the 2026 harvest.

He managed to earn a profit in 2025, but sold his soybean crop for about \$60,000 less than last year. He's applying for some of the bailout money promised by the Trump administration.

The government funds will help cover fertilizer, pesticides and seeds to help plant new crops in the spring. New equipment isn't on the list.



rice and wheat from other neighboring countries only if cleared by the Rwandans.

For several weeks, a supermarket owner in Goma hasn't been able to restock the cold-storage section, where he normally keeps perishables. The trader said he lost \$60,000 last month after a container he imported from Kenya was impounded at the

Congolese border for several weeks, rendering milk, cheese and sausages inedible.

"Eastern DRC has long been a covert economic engine for Rwanda through its illicit networks and proxies," said Zobel Behalal, senior expert at the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, a Washington-based think tank. "M23 now

functions as the armed extension of Rwanda's influence."

Early last month, Amisi, a mother of three, sold most of her clothes, her television and other personal belongings, but could still only afford a 66-pound bag of corn flour, enough to feed her family porridge once a day for three weeks. She couldn't raise enough to buy a 44-pound bucket of rice. The price for rice had doubled—to the equivalent of \$25—in just a few days at stores that had any to sell.

President Trump says he ended the war last year with a Congo-Rwanda peace agreement. The rebels, however, weren't part of that accord, and so violence continues. The war has uprooted more than three million people across Congo over the past year.

After rebels seized the region, Congo's central bank suspended banking there. The government used to collect up to \$900 million in taxes each year, according to government data.

M23 has struggled to obtain fuel and food for its own fighters because the rebels can't extract taxes from residents who can't access cash.

To plug the shortfall, M23 relies on Rwanda for operational funding, according to U.N. investigators. In exchange, Rwandan products are granted a monopoly in markets in rebel-held areas.

Rwanda denies supporting M23 and says its troops are in eastern Congo for "defensive measures" against a rebel group formed by Hutu extremists who orchestrated the 1994 genocide in Rwanda before fleeing to Congo.

Patrick Muyaya, Congo's communications minister, says Rwanda is intentionally squeezing the Congolese people by restricting aid and food flows.

"This campaign cannot be justified as self-defense," Muyaya said in an interview. "It is an effort to secure economic control through a proxy armed group."

A few miles north of Goma, M23 rebels allegedly killed 300 farmers last year, leading to an exodus from key potato- and vegetable-growing lands, according to U.N. investigators. Most victims were camping in their fields during planting season when M23 targeted people they suspected of supporting pro-government militias, torching homes, the investigators reported.

Some 70,000 residents from Rutshuru District fled to Uganda because of the September attack, according to the U.N.

"Insecurity has resulted in the loss of access to productive land and local food production," said Patrick Andrey, Congo country director at Action Against Hunger, a New York-based charity. "The high risk of violence makes it extremely challenging for humanitarian workers to reach people who need support."

M23 rebels have since taken over farmlands and prevented locals from har-

vesting any crops, according to Twizere Sebashitsi, who heads a Congolese activist group, Rutshuru Territory Youth Council.

Sebashitsi recalls how his 25-year-old neighbor, Samuel Mukanda, defied a rebel order to vacate his 5-acre potato and cassava farm. Mukanda, whose wife had given birth weeks earlier, ignored the rebel ultimatum and instead tried to harvest his crops. When the rebels returned the following day, they beat him and three other workers, Sebashitsi said. Mukanda lost his front teeth.

Many Goma residents previously relied on relief supplies delivered through the city's international airport, but the rebels have shut the airport down, hobbling aid groups' efforts to replenish depleted stocks.

The U.N. says it urgently needs \$350 million to keep aid efforts running in Congo over the next six months but has so far raised less than 20% of the required funds.

Europe Wants More Fish Farms. Is Greece Ready?

As the European Union pushes for the expansion of aquaculture across its waters, Greece confronts a deeper question: can industrial fish farming expand along its iconic shores without destroying the ecosystems and coastal communities that depend on them?

Continued from Page One

The regional study to establish a POAY has been pending for six years. “We can only wait,” Chatzinikolaou says. Even minor modifications to his cages require consultations with nearly 20 public authorities, he says brandishing a pile of documents and applications the company needed to complete. Despite the mountains of paperwork they have already submitted, an application submitted last spring remains unresolved.

Lamar is not an isolated case. It sits at the center of a broader national tension: The EU is pushing for more aquaculture and providing the subsidies to back it. But while Greece has the coastline and the ambition to deliver, governmental processes are long and bureaucratic, while the public country remains divided on the topic, wary of potential environmental, social and economic impacts.

The environmental fault line

Across Europe, fish farming is being promoted as a solution to food security and overfishing. With few exceptions, the productivity of the world’s wild fisheries has plateaued, while global demand for seafood continues to rise. Aquaculture now represents one of the EU’s fastest-growing food sectors.

But expansion comes with environmental trade-offs that remain fiercely debated. Scientists and environmental groups warn that dense clusters of farms can pollute enclosed waters, spread disease and place pressure on marine ecosystems—risks that are amplified in semi-enclosed Mediterranean gulfs with limited water circulation.

In Greece, where aquaculture has expanded steadily for more than three decades, the argument is no longer theoretical. Supporters describe the industry as a strategic export pillar. Critics counter that the cumulative ecological impacts are underestimated, particularly in regions hosting multiple farms. Some also question the long-term sustainability of carnivorous finfish production, which depends on fish-based feed sourced from wild stocks.

At the same time, recent marine protection experiments—including “no-take” zones such as the reserve established off Amorgos—have



Divers of the environmental group Ghost Diving work next to ghost fishing nets, off the island of Ithaca, in the Ionian sea.

shown that fish populations can rebound when pressure is reduced, strengthening the livelihoods of local fisheries.

This is not simply a question of production targets or industrial growth, it concerns coastal governance. Meaning the development model implemented will determine what hundreds of kilometers of coastline will come to look like, and what kind of waters locals and visitors will swim in, fish from, and build their lives beside in the decades ahead.

Europe’s push for expansion

The European Union is explicit about its ambitions. Aquaculture production reached nearly 1.1 million tons in 2023, generating €4.8 billion in value. Greece accounts for roughly 13% of that output, ranking among the bloc’s leading producers of Mediterranean species.

Yet Europe still imports more than 70% of the seafood it consumes. Viewing aquaculture as both an economic opportunity and a food security priority, Brussels has supported the sector with billions in EU funding earmarked for “sustainable” growth.

European Commissioner for Environment Jessika Roswall tells *TO BHMA International Edition* that “Aquaculture presents a high-growth investment opportunity driven by rising global demand for seafood,” but says expansion must remain within environmental limits.

“EU environmental laws already set clear rules to en-

sure that aquaculture develops in a responsible way. These rules protect marine ecosystems and biodiversity and make sure that aquaculture activities stay within safe environmental limits,” she adds.

Roswall informed *TO BHMA* that the Commission is now preparing additional practical guidance on fish farming, “with clear recommendations and real-life examples, including from Greece”, aimed at improving environmental performance and streamlining implementation.

On paper, the legislative and policy architecture is clear: raise production, protect biodiversity, simplify procedures. In practice, much depends on how national systems apply those rules.

Law versus implementation

Greece’s aquaculture framework dates to 2011 and for-

mally aligns with EU environmental directives. In an effort to cluster farms, reduce spatial conflict and impose coordinated oversight, the law introduced 25 large POAYs nationwide.

More than a decade later, only half or so have been approved or are partially operational. Others, like the POAY around Rhodes, remain stalled in administrative review.

“There is nothing wrong with the law,” Greece’s General Secretary for the Environment Petros Varelidis tells *TO BHMA International Edition* “The issue lies in implementation.”

As licensing shifts from individual sites to zonal planning, questions emerge about oversight capacity: who monitors the environmental thresholds, who enforces compliance, and who determines whether administrative systems can keep pace with expansion?

A growing environmental critique

Among those questioning the system is Eva Douzinas, president of the US-based Rauch Foundation, who became involved in Greek aquaculture debates after expansion plans surfaced near the island of Poros, where her family hails from.

Douzinas’s methodical, data-driven approach is almost forensic. Concentrating exclusively on open-net-pen finfish farming, she has commissioned independent technical reviews of environmental impact assessments (EIAs) to examine whether the modeling methods and biodiversity metrics used in Greece accurately capture cumulative ecological risk.

The studies, backed by expert testimony, argue that Greek EIAs routinely downplay ecological damage, obscure projections indicating that development plans will exceed safe environmental thresholds, and apply open-sea fish-farming models to semi-enclosed gulfs like Amvrakikos, to which they should not be applied.

As Douzinas puts it, talking to *TO BHMA*, an EIA is a critical step before approval is given for a fish farm or POAY, but “What’s the point of running a test if you don’t respect the results? The tests themselves are telling you there’s going to be severe damage.”

She argues that projects are approved nonetheless, because degradation is framed as occurring with-

in a “small area,” without considering or clearly communicating “the cumulative impact of all of the farms in one place.” What the EIAs she has looked at say “with absolute certainty, is that if you go ahead with this production level, it’s going to be destructive. It’s going to create so much solid waste on the sea floor that it’s going to create an anoxic environment.” Yet the “EIAs are treated like an administrative checklist,” she tells *TO BHMA*, “not a tool to really assess if there’s going to be an environmental impact.”

Monitoring and accountability

Once a POAY is established, it is overseen by a managing body composed largely of representatives from the fish-farming companies that are already operating in the zone. “The people administering the POAY are the selfsame fish farmers who operate within it,” notes Anthi Giannoulou, a lawyer who has worked on the issue since 2020, while talking to *TO BHMA*. In most cases—with Evia representing a notable exception—local authorities have no formal role in POAY management.

This same managing body is also responsible for approving expansions and modifications, as well as overseeing environmental compliance. In addition, as Giannoulou points out “This governing body has the power to approve or deny the installation of other fish-farming operators within the zone,” creating an inherent conflict of interest and raising questions about competition and accountability.

An additional layer of complexity stems from European financial incentives. Under the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) 2021–2027, Greece is set to receive approximately €519.6 million, of which €363.7 million comes directly from the EU. A significant portion of the program is earmarked for sustainable aquaculture and marine environmental protection.

Beyond formal monitoring, the long-term environmental footprint of aquaculture is visible in abandoned infrastructure and fish farm waste carried by currents to nearby beaches.

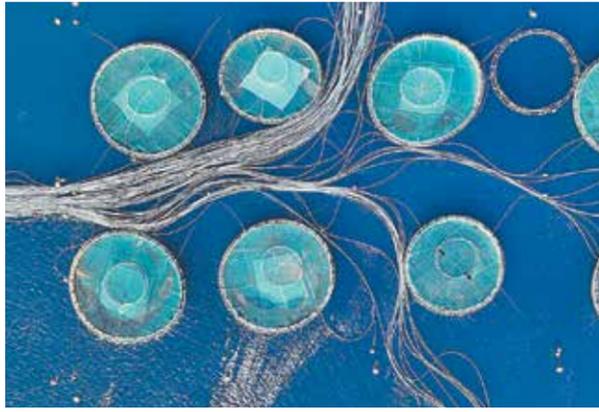
Nonprofit organizations



Swedish EU Minister Jessika Roswall is proposed as Sweden’s nomination for new EU Commissioner, during a press conference in Stockholm.



A fish farm fenced off with a round net.



An aerial drone photo of self feeding fish farming unit of sea bass and sea bream with round net cages in the Anemokambi bay area near Galaxidi, Greece.



Bluetopia enables visitors to examine water quality, fish health and local biodiversity up close.



have stepped in to remove lost cages and industrial nets left behind after farms close or relocate. In a 2024 clean-up, the international group Healthy Seas recovered more than 42.7 tons of aquaculture debris from Greek waters, including plastic cages, floats and industrial nets linked to abandoned fish farms. The Greek nonprofit Aegean Re-breath has conducted parallel cleanups of ghost gear around former farm sites.

These operations are privately funded and volunteer-driven rather than embedded into regulatory obligations, highlighting a system where scientific monitoring exists but the restoration responsibilities for failed farms remain less clearly institutionalized.

Communities under pressure

For coastal communities, aquaculture is not an abstract policy debate. In Xiromero, western Greece, fish farms have been operating for over three decades. This relatively small municipality “is the fourth largest producer of farmed fish in Europe,” Douzinas tells *TO BHMA*. “With the proposed POAY expansion, this region will be second only to the whole of Spain.”

For Elina Makri, a representative of Aktaia, the issue is personal, too, as her father was from the area. Having grown up with its coastline as a constant reference point, she has seen the changes first-hand. And what industry representatives describe

as growth has often felt like displacement for small-scale fishermen, she says.

This same imbalance gave rise to Aktaia, a national network linking local action committees from aquaculture-affected regions. “We realized that we were all running around separately,” she says, “so we united forces.” The group pools legal resources, dissects EIAs and campaigns. “We speak about the environmental damage and the social costs in ways local officials often cannot.”

Makri acknowledges the human stakes, as around 300 people in Xiromero work in aquaculture. “You can’t just say people will lose their jobs.” If the industry is not sustainable, she argues, retraining and credible alternatives must follow.

What frustrates her most is the facade of participation. Consultations take place, but EIAs often run to hundreds of highly technical pages. Res-

idents attend hearings and submit comments, yet feel sidelined. One interim solution, she suggests, would be to relocate cages further from the shore, allowing the region to pursue tourism and small-scale enterprise in place of permanent industrialization.

Industry at scale and a governance test

Greek aquaculture is not a niche coastal activity. It is one of the country’s most export-oriented food industries and a cornerstone of Mediterranean fish production. According to the Hellenic Aquaculture Producers Organization’s 2025 annual report, Greece produced roughly 114,500 tons of seabass and seabream in 2024, generating €721 million in sales despite a slight decline in overall volume. About 82% of production—more than 94,000 tons—was exported to 38 foreign markets, underscoring the sector’s outward focus and its align-

ment with the EU’s ambition to strengthen Europe’s global aquaculture footprint.

However, industry analysts warn that regulatory uncertainty threatens long-term investment planning. The sector’s own report highlights delays in completing spatial planning frameworks, including POAY zones, as a constraint that “undermines the development goals set by the Government itself.” For major companies operating export-driven supply chains, this lack of predictable zoning and environmental governance constitute core financial risks.

For the industry, seabream and seabass aquaculture is framed as a strategic asset; “products of high nutritional value and export importance,” embedded in what it describes as a “modern, sustainable, and internationally competitive model of development, one that serves the national economy, consumers, and local communities alike.” For its critics, however, the scale of the proposed expansion magnifies existing risks: ecological strain in semi-enclosed seas, governance structures they view as opaque or self-policing, consultations that feel procedural rather than participatory, and decisions made far from the communities that live with their consequences.

Yet beyond the governance complexities, technical analysis and administrative details lies a broader yet simpler question: what kind of coastline does Greece want to shape in the decades ahead?



Aerial view of aquaculture fish farms in Sithonia, Greece.

Organized Aquaculture Zones (POAYs) in Greece: Location, Status and Planned Growth

#	Area Name	Proposed Increase (Area)	Status
1	Thermaikos Gulf	X 30	Pending
2	Pieria	X 8	APPROVED Presidential Decree
3	North & South Euboean Gulf	X 23	APPROVED Presidential Decree
4	Oxia, Ithaca	X 16	APPROVED Presidential Decree
5	Kefalonia	X 8	APPROVED Presidential Decree
6	Thesprotia	X 41	Pending
7	Echinades – Aetoloakarnania	X 21	APPROVED Presidential Decree
8	Corinthia, Argolis, Western Saronic Gulf, Korfos-Epidaurus	X 33	Pending
9	Salamina Diaporria	X 25	Pending
10	Poros	X 28	CANCELLED
11	Leros	X 17	Pending
12	Arcadia (Kynouria) Argolis (Vourlia, Korakia, Plateia), Methana	X 35	Pending
13	Chios	X 30	Pending
14	Larymna - Atalanti	X 23	Pending
15	Oreoi of Maliakos Canal	X 41	Pending
16	Boeotia	X 61	Pending
17	Chalkidiki	X 7	APPROVED Presidential Decree
18	Megara	X 41	APPROVED Presidential Decree
19	Galaxidi, Agios Nikolaos Eratini, Antikyra	X 48	Pending
20	Lesbos	X 47	Pending
21	Rhodes - Chalki	X 24	Pending
22	Pserimos	-	Pending
23	Kalymnos	X 9	Pending
24	Agathonisi	X 44	Pending
25	Ambracian Gulf	X 12	Pending

Source: Data from a document provided by YPEN to Mayor of Poros in 2021 and AKTALA
 Note: The majority of the POAYs focus on fish-farming, rather than bivalve farming. Only Thermaikos Gulf, Pieria, North & South Euboean Gulf, Kefalonia, Thesprotia and Amvrakikos POAYs have bivalve farms.

Greece-Cyprus-Israel Strategic Ties: It's Not all About Turkey

Whether the trilateral strategic military, economic partnership can affect geopolitical balances in the Mediterranean is unclear

By George Gilson

When the most recent (10th) trilateral summit between Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Cyprus's President Nikos Christodoulides was held in Jerusalem in late December, the three leaders stressed the multi-faceted nature of their 3+1 partnership (the US is the +1) and their determination to further deepen and expand a relationship which has clearly remained entirely unaffected by the bloodshed of the Gaza war.

The strategic partnership, which developed under the auspices of the United States, is clearly intended in part to curb Turkey's hegemonic aspirations in the Mediterranean, though the parties are careful to underline that is not directed against any third country.

Its expansive strategic ties include close defense cooperation—Hellenic Air Force pilot training, joint military exercises annually, and major Greek procurement of advanced Israeli weaponry (in December, parliament approved the purchase of 36 Elbit Systems PULS (Precise & Universal Launching System) multiple rocket launchers with a 650mn euro price tag)—, rapidly growing trade and commercial ties, critical energy sector cooperation, massive purchases of Greek real estate by Israeli investors, and cooperation in the technology and R&D sectors.

Strategic defense partnership front-and-center

For most observers, the defense aspect of the Greece-Israel-Cyprus strategic collaboration is the most critical, and its potential impact on geostrategic balances in the Mediterranean, where Ankara is forcefully disputing the rights of Greece and Cyprus under international law, is an area of particular focus.

"I believe that this military cooperation seeks to raise the level of two partner countries in a specific area, and cooperative projects can be upgraded. Most importantly, the two militaries [Greek and Israeli] become



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (center), Cyprus President Nikos Christodoulides (left) and Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis hold a joint press conference after a trilateral meeting at the Citadel of David Hotel in Jerusalem, December 22, 2025.

acquainted with one another, so that when they want to serve common interests, there will be no barriers to mutual military understanding," retired Hellenic Air Force Major General Evangelos Georgousis tells *TO BHMA International Edition*.

"It leads to sharing knowledge of particular military dogmas in various operations, and especially in the area of naval and air force operations, in which the two countries are particularly interested."

Kalamata air force training center

a crucial element of the strategic partnership has been the creation of an Air Force training school in Kalamata. Established with the core participation of the Is-

raeli defense contractor Elbit Systems, the school utilizes the M-346 Leonardo aircraft to bridge the gap for Greek pilots transitioning to advanced fighters like the

'The tighter the Israel-Cyprus-Greece relationship is, not only in defense, but also in the areas of commerce and energy, the more difficult it will be for Ankara to implement its revisionist plans'

Evangelos Georgousis, Air Force Major General

F-16, Mirage 2000-5, and the French Rafale.

Moreover, the training center is already being used by military pilots from Italy, Germany and elsewhere, which pay by flight training hours. Other countries have also shown an interest.

"This is an advanced course, the final stage in our pilots' training. The aim of this training school is in the first instance commercial. Israel's Elbit must recoup the money that it invests."

"From the standpoint of operational performance, the [Leonardo] aircraft is very good. In the past I had cooperated with the company and am familiar with it. Within the framework of its capabilities, Greek pilots and others who may receive training can only gain from

the experience," Georgousis says.

Critically, they will require less training time in fighter jets, because they will have gained a good knowledge of switch technology and other areas from the M-346s. "The pilots can carry out many exercises with this plane, and it is the initial stage for starting flights in fighters with better performance and efficiency," he adds.

Trilateral partnership as an obstacle to Turkish revisionism

Turkey expressed consternation over the last trilateral Greece-Israel-Cyprus summit, which the pro-government Turkish press viewed as evidence of an Israeli military threat to Ankara.

"Let's not kid ourselves. Turkey has convinced itself that it is a regional power. It does not want other countries to impede its revisionist [geopolitical] plans in any way," Georgousis notes.

"The tighter the Israel-Cyprus-Greece relationship is, not only in defense, but also in the areas of commerce and energy, the more difficult it will be for Ankara to implement its revisionist plans. Turkey has clearly stated that it wants to craft its own Law of the Sea based on its [expansionist] vision of a "Blue Homeland" (Mavi Vatan)," he underlines, referring to Turkey's claims in the Aegean, Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea.

"Neither Greece, nor Cyprus, nor Israel by extension are willing to tolerate such designs."

Greece defends its own interests in the Mediterranean

Greece does not expect direct assistance from Israel in the event of a Turkish-Greek clash in the Mediterranean, as their partnership is not that sort of alliance, and Greece is fully prepared to defend its own interests.

"There could conceivably be ancillary assistance, however, what we call 'indirect strategy,'" Georgousis notes, which includes sharing intelligence, know-how, and various other systems in which Israel has expertise.

What's in it for Israel?

Participation in bilateral and multilateral military exercises on terrain different from its own, and including mountain ranges, are a key benefit for Israel.

In particular, the annual multi-national "Iniochos" (Charioteer) exercises centered on the Andravida Hellenic Air Force base stress complex air operations and interoperability. Fighter jets, transport planes and helicopters participate in the maneuvers in a coordinated manner.

Greece-Israel air force exercises south of Crete

There are also more frequent bilateral air-to-air refueling exercises in the Mediterranean, south of Crete. Crucial for long-distance operations, they help build interoperability for prospective future missions, while also underlining the two countries' presence in the area.

"There is a benefit, because their [Israeli Air Force]



A PULS rocket launcher.

extensive experience in air operations mainly involves bombing missions. Their opponents to date have not had great experience in air battles and their performance reflects this. Greece, on the other hand, has faced a strong Turkish Air Force which has staged provocations in the Aegean over the last 50 years, and developed considerable sophistication in confronting such situations," Georgousis says.

Israeli experts say it is of substantial benefit to the Israeli Air Force to become acquainted with, and to adopt elements from, the experience of the Greek Air Force.

Cooperation between defense industries

The bilateral cooperation that has developed between the Hellenic defense industry and its Israeli counterpart alongside the collaboration between the respective defense ministries is also considered positive.

"Defense industry research in Israel is at a very high level, and the Greek defense industry needs that. Many Greek firms collaborate in joint programs in modern technologies in various sectors. The Israeli defense industry has made investments in Greece. Intracom Defense (IDE) was bought out by Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI)," Georgousis notes.

IDE continues to operate as a Greek defense company specializing in missile launchers, missile subsystems, tactical land and sea communications, and hybrid power systems.

The objective now is to develop more joint defense programs.

Trilateral cooperation not hostile toward Turkey

"One should note here that the trilateral strategic defense collaboration, as well as the related cooperation with Egypt, does not aim to diminish the power of any other regional country. These democracies seek to defend their interests in the framework of their rights under international law and the Law of the Sea [UNCLOS]. For example, both Israel and Cyprus reached an agreement with Lebanon through joint acceptance of the principles of international law. The country that is projecting a different stance is Turkey, which must adjust so that we can have good neighborly relations, which all three countries are seeking in energy and other sectors," Georgousis says.

Mutual geostrategic benefits for Greece, Israel

The Greece-Israel strategic partnership entails geopolitical benefits for both countries, but also requires caution, according to Ioannis



Soldiers stand in line at the Ministry of National Defense in Athens, Greece, January 20, 2026.

Grigoriadis, Associate Professor of Political Science at Ankara's Bilkent University.

"Following the sharp deterioration of Israeli-Turkish relations, Israel has found in Greece a strategic alternative offering substantial security and economic benefits. For its part, Greece has managed to reassert itself in the Middle East and strengthen its position in the Eastern Mediterranean through deepening its relations with Israel," he told *TO BHMA International Edition* in a statement.

'We seek good relations with the US, and Israel is related to that framework. By maintaining good relations with Israel, we improve our ties with the US'

Pavlos Apostolidis, former Greek ambassador to Turkey

Ankara's concerns over 'anti-Turkish' parameter

As for Turkey's reaction to the December meeting of the Israeli, Greek and Cypriot leaders in Jerusalem, Grigoriadis notes that Ankara has longstanding concerns, which he considers grounded at times.

"Encirclement concerns have been a recurrent theme in Turkish foreign and security policy. Some trilateral initiatives over the last decade have made such normally exaggerated interpretations look plausible, as an "anti-Turkish" element could be traced," he says.

"Trilateral or multilateral partnerships could be opened, as long as they serve the regional interests of all littoral states and promote regional dialogue and conflict resolution," he asserts.

Grigoriadis discerns that the Greece-Cyprus-Israel strategic partnership is already affecting balances in the Eastern Mediterranean, but notes that the duration of any shift is unclear.

"While this partnership has already helped shift the strategic balance in the

Mediterranean, its medium- and long-term prospects will hinge upon Turkey's position in the Western security architecture as well as on whether Israeli-Turkish rapprochement is possible in a post-Erdogan and post-Netanyahu era," he says.

US Factor in Greece-Israel ties: relations with Turkey paramount

Pavlos Apostolidis, a prominent retired ambassador who has served as Minister Counselor at the Greek

'Trade relations between Greece and Israel today cover a wide range of sectors, reflecting the overall deepening of bilateral economic ties'

Konstantinos Kostopoulos, legal counsel of the Greek-Israeli Chamber of Commerce and Technology

embassy in Ankara, General Secretary of the Hellenic Foreign Ministry, and later Director-General of Greece's National Intelligence Service (1999-2004), views the Greece-Israel strategic partnership as relating to Greece's relations with both the United States and Turkey.

"We seek good relations with the US, and Israel is related to that framework. By maintaining good relations with Israel, we improve our ties with the US. Beyond that, good relations with Israel help us handle the difficulties we have with Turkey, especially at sea, in the Aegean and the Mediterranean," Apostolidis tells *TO BHMA International Edition*.

Caution over impact on Greek-Turkish relations

"I'm not certain that until now this has helped us vis a vis Turkey in particular. If it regards Greece-Cyprus-Israel mutual assistance, that automatically creates a greater opposition with Turkey. It indicates that we are taking

a clear stance against them," he asserts.

Apostolidis says that Turkey's annoyance over last December's Greece-Cyprus-Israel summit was because "it was obvious that an alliance against them was being exhibited."

"It's quite simple. I understand why they reacted. Having worked for many years either in Turkey or in foreign ministry directorates related to Cyprus, I believe firstly we should be pursuing a good relationship with Turkey."

Growth of Greece-Israel trade, economic ties

one area of Greece-Israel relations that is undoubtedly a win-win situation is the expansion and deepening of trade ties, as Konstantinos Kostopoulos, the legal counsel of the Greek-Israeli Chamber of Commerce and Technology, explains.

"Trade relations between Greece and Israel today cover a wide range of sectors, reflecting the overall deepening of bilateral economic ties. Trade in goods continues to play a central role, with particular emphasis on energy products and petroleum derivatives, industrial and chemical products, as well as food and beverages," says Kostopoulos.

There has also been a notable increase in Israeli investments in Greece, mainly in tourism real estate, infrastructure, and technology.

Over the past five years, the overall volume of bilateral trade has increased, with steady growth in both Greek exports and imports from Israel.

"Cooperation has gradually shifted from traditional sectors of lower added value toward more complex and specialized goods and services," Kostopoulos notes, adding that ties in the defense sector have developed at all levels through mutual agreements, positively affecting growth through companies operating in both states.

Future vistas for economic ties

he also sees many future opportunities for collaboration with Israel's strong research and startup ecosystem, dovetailing with Greece's position within the European Union and its highly skilled human capital.

"This creates conditions for cooperation in areas such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, digital health, financial technologies, and agrotechnology. At the same time, there is strong growth potential in energy, the green transition, and sustainable agriculture," the Greek-Israeli Chamber counsel concludes.



Turkish marines on board the TCG Bayraktar (L-402) take part in a landing drill during the "Blue Homeland" naval exercise off the Aegean coastal town of Foca in Izmir Bay, Turkey, March 5, 2019.

A Defector Explains the Remote-Work Scam Helping North Korea Pay for Nukes

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Kim Jong Un's cyber operatives have faked their way into IT jobs at American firms and elsewhere, pocketing big revenue for regime

Continued from Page One

Their mission: generate hard currency for Pyongyang by stealing foreigners' identities to land remote IT jobs—with no gig more coveted than those from the U.S.

"I'm a software engineer and I have a great opportunity for you," Koh said he messaged dozens of Americans daily, when remote working peaked during the pandemic. "It could be a lot of money for you too."

Koh, who defected to South Korea in recent years, provides a rare window into Kim Jong Un's digital warriors, who have managed to infiltrate hundreds of Fortune 500 companies, according to estimates from Google's Mandiant division.

More than 40 countries have been targeted or involved in North Korea's cyber work, according to a U.S.-led consortium of 11 nations documenting Pyongyang's sanctions violations. The cyber agents are largely based in China and Russia, where the internet connection is stronger and won't trace back to North Korea. They generated up to \$800 million for the Kim regime in 2024, the group said.

American companies sit atop the list of targets because of the high pay and intelligence-gathering value. But the North Koreans don't just work alone.

They seek to appear more credible to employers by paying Americans to host so-called "laptop farms," where company-issued computers can be shipped and then used remotely by the North Koreans to appear online as if they were U.S.-based personnel. In November, the Justice Department said four Americans pleaded guilty to helping North Korean IT workers hold work at more than 136 American firms.

These overseas IT workers are the cash cows among North Korea's illicit overseas labor, which helps funnel resources to Pyongyang's nuclear program. The Kim regime is known to seize up to 90% of a given worker's earnings, said Nam Bada, who interviewed defectors including Koh and other former IT workers for a report



on Pyongyang's cyber operations.

"A few IT workers can easily fund a missile," said Nam, head of a Seoul-based North Korean human-rights group called People for Successful Korean Reunification, or PSCORE.

Due to their elevated roles in society, only a handful of North Korea's hackers or cyber operatives are known to have defected over the decades. Just a few have ever spoken to the media. Koh's account has been verified by South Korean officials and mirrors broader findings outlined in reports from the United Nations and third-party cybersecurity researchers.

Koh said his overseas posting afforded him luxuries nearly impossible to find at home: steady electricity, nutritious meals and internet access.

"It was like watching color TV for the first time after a lifetime of black-and-white," Koh said of his first days in China.

Paralyzing pressure

Koh was seen as a child prodigy by North Korean authorities. They placed him on a track for software development after he aced the exams to get into an elite middle school that fed to a top university. He went overseas shortly after graduating college.

Upon arriving in China,



Koh worked up to 16 hours a day. About 10 North Koreans crowded into a two-bedroom dormitory space containing little more than bunk beds and computers. Portraits of the ruling Kim leaders hung on the wall.

The revenue Koh and each of his colleagues generated was tracked in detail. At a monthly review session, the manager would hand out envelopes containing the workers' 10% cut. Koh felt humiliated if his envelope was thinner than the others.

"The pressure and embarrassment could be paralyzing," he said.

Koh admits he lived a life unattainable to most North Koreans. On Sundays, a day off for IT workers who met their monthly

revenue quota of at least \$5,000, Koh and his co-workers went shopping for American brands like Nike and the North Face. They dined on famed North Korean cold noodles or grilled lamb skewers washed down with cold beers.

Hitting the quotas got harder over the years, though, as North Korea's operations became more well-known. Some clients started demanding live-camera interviews to land a job.

Koh found a workaround by enlisting willing Western software developers to apply for jobs in their own names and even show up for video meetings. Without having to do any actual work, the Westerners typically received a lump payout of \$500 or ongoing commis-

sions of 30% or more. Koh handled all the coding or debugging work.

Some were so enticed by Koh they forked over copies of their ID cards, which then got used by other North Korean IT workers to grab more work.

The Covid-19 pandemic, coupled with better AI tools, turned into a breakthrough for workers like Koh. Remote working became common. Résumés could be written with native-level English proficiency. In recent years, video-filtering software has allowed IT workers to mask their identity.

The Kim regime recognized that remote job opportunities were plentiful abroad, and raised the quota for IT workers to \$8,000 during the pandemic, Koh said. The IT workers took on more jobs, translating messages into English and managing collaborators.

Koh's account echoes those heard by Mun Chong-hyun, a South Korean cybersecurity expert who has engaged with former North Korean IT workers online and tracked their behavior for more than two decades. Most hail from elite institutions, speak foreign languages and want U.S.-based work.

"They are online on weekends and at night, generating significant cash that helps maintain the regime," said Mun, director of

cybersecurity firm Genians Security Center.

Internet freedom

The North Korean IT workers face constant surveillance, a lack of sleep and pressure to perform, according to defector testimonies published in a 2025 PSCORE report on North Korea's cyber threats. During their workweek they are only allowed outdoors for short daily walks.

Yet handing over 90% or more of their earnings to the regime was considered an act of "patriotic duty," the report said. IT workers, including Koh, were generally sent back to Pyongyang every two or three years for roughly a month of "re-education," to reinstate loyalty after being exposed to foreign information.

"In that environment we were being abused," Koh said, "but we were also the perpetrators."

Koh's manager installed monitoring software to track the IT workers' browsing histories. But to a group of software experts, workarounds were easily found. Koh said he surfed the web when the others slept.

His loyalty to the Kim regime faded not long after his first Google searches. He searched for "Kim Jong Il," who was North Korea's leader at the time and died in 2011.

He read news articles about the "Dear Leader" drinking expensive whisky during North Korea's massive famine in the late 1990s. "At first I thought, 'This is a fabricated lie,'" Koh said.

But he kept seeing news articles in which portrayals of North Korea differed greatly from those in Pyongyang's state-run media. He learned tens of thousands of North Koreans had escaped to the South. He later came to see all of the Kim regime's promises as deceptions.

Following his escape, Koh's life in South Korea is also demanding. His IT job limits his free time, but he finds happiness in the quiet of his own home. Sometimes he finds himself staring at his computer screen wondering how his old friends are doing. And how they feel about him.

"Maybe they think of me as a dirty traitor," Koh said. "But maybe there's a chance they understand me on a human level."