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**Human Rights Council****Sixty-first session**

23 February–31 March 2026

Agenda item 4

**Human rights situations that require the Council's attention****Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council  
on 30 March 2026****61/27. Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of  
Korea***The Human Rights Council,**Guided* by the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights and other human rights instruments,*Recalling* all previous resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights and the Human Rights Council on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including Assembly resolution 80/220 of 18 December 2025 and Council resolution 58/17 of 3 April 2025, and urging the implementation of those resolutions,*Bearing in mind* paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006,*Recalling* its resolutions 5/1, on institution-building of the Human Rights Council, and 5/2, on the Code of Conduct for Special Procedure Mandate Holders of the Human Rights Council, of 18 June 2007, and stressing that mandate holders shall discharge their duties in accordance with those resolutions and the annexes thereto,*Stressing* the importance of following up on the recommendations contained in the report of the commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea,<sup>1</sup> which was welcomed by both the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council and transmitted to the relevant bodies of the United Nations, including the Security Council, and in the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights submitted to the Human Rights Council at its sixtieth session,<sup>2</sup>*Expressing its deep concern* about the systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, about the pervasive culture of impunity and lack of accountability for such violations and about the conclusions of the High Commissioner, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the commission of inquiry that there are reasonable grounds to believe that crimes against humanity have been committed in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea,

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<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/25/63.<sup>2</sup> A/HRC/60/58.

*Recalling* the responsibility of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to protect its entire population from crimes against humanity and to ensure the population's full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and noting that the commission of inquiry urged the leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to prevent and suppress crimes against humanity and to ensure that perpetrators were prosecuted and brought to justice,

*Expressing concern* that the precarious humanitarian situation in the country is exacerbated by the restrictions imposed by the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on access for humanitarian agencies, including disproportionate and unnecessary measures taken following the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, emphasizing the importance of timely humanitarian assistance with free and unimpeded access to all populations in need and the need for the import of materials necessary to assist those in vulnerable situations, and recalling that any restrictions must be necessary, proportionate, non-discriminatory, time-bound, transparent and strictly in line with international law, including the obligations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea under international human rights law and relevant Security Council resolutions,

*Stressing* that the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including with respect to gender equality and the rights of all women and girls, including adolescent girls, is intrinsically linked to international peace and security, since the Government of the Democratic People's Republic continues to fund its unlawful nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes through human rights violations and abuses, such as forced labour, and that a disproportionate amount of resources is diverted to military spending instead of being allocated to the welfare of the people,

*Emphasizing* the necessity for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to respect and ensure the welfare and inherent dignity of the people in the country, as referred to by the Security Council in its resolutions 2321 (2016) of 30 November 2016, 2371 (2017) of 5 August 2017, 2375 (2017) of 11 September 2017 and 2397 (2017) of 22 December 2017,

*Emphasizing also* the need for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with its human rights obligations and to ensure regular and timely reporting to the treaty bodies, and welcoming the instances in which it has done so,

*Recalling* in this regard the concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the combined second to fourth periodic reports of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea<sup>3</sup> and the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the fifth periodic report of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea,<sup>4</sup> and recognizing that particular risk factors, such as neglect, abuse, exploitation and violence, affect all women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons, and the need to ensure their full enjoyment of all their human rights and fundamental freedoms,

*Encouraging* the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to implement all of the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities in her report on her visit to the country<sup>5</sup> and by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in its concluding observations on the initial report of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea,<sup>6</sup> adopted by the Committee following the positive participation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in its thirty-third session, in August 2025, including those recommendations related to reports of persons with disabilities being subjected to violence, abuse, physical punishment and physical or chemical restraints, discrimination and lack of access to basic services and employment opportunities,<sup>7</sup>

*Stressing again with grave concern* the ever-growing urgency and importance of the issue of international abductions, which involves a serious violation of human rights, and of the immediate return of all abductees, as they and their family members are ageing and there

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<sup>3</sup> CEDAW/C/PRK/CO/2-4.

<sup>4</sup> CRC/C/PRK/CO/5.

<sup>5</sup> A/HRC/37/56/Add.1.

<sup>6</sup> CRPD/C/PRK/CO/1.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 8, 30, 53 and 55.

is no time to lose, expressing grave concern at the long years of severe suffering that they have been experiencing, the lack of any concrete or positive action by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including since the investigations on all the Japanese nationals commenced on the basis of the government-level consultations held between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Japan in May 2014, and the non-substantive replies by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the numerous communications transmitted by the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, and strongly demanding again that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea sincerely listen to the victims and their families to address all allegations of enforced disappearance, clarify the fate and whereabouts of disappeared persons, faithfully provide accurate, detailed and full information promptly to the families of victims and resolve immediately all issues relating to all abductees, including those of Japan and the Republic of Korea, in particular the realization of their immediate return,

*Noting with concern* the allegations of continued violations of the human rights of unrepatriated prisoners of war and their descendants, and the issue of nationals of other States Members of the United Nations detained in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, with no information available regarding their health or the conditions of their detention, and the non-substantive replies by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the communications transmitted by the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention,

*Recalling with appreciation* the participation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review, and emphasizing the importance of the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review<sup>8</sup> in order to address the grave human rights violations in the country,

*Noting again with regret* that independent civil society organizations cannot operate in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and that, as a result, no civil society organizations based in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were able to submit stakeholder reports for the universal periodic review process or for the reviews by the treaty bodies,

*Stressing* the importance of cooperation between the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,

*Welcoming* the readiness of the international community to engage in constructive diplomacy with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and stressing the importance of dialogue, including inter-Korean dialogue, engagement and cooperation, aimed at improving the human rights and humanitarian situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea,

*Noting* the limited reopening of the country's borders, and calling for the non-discriminatory return to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of the diplomatic community, agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, and civil society organizations,

*Stressing* the urgency and importance of the issue of separated families, including affected Koreans worldwide, in this regard encouraging the resumption of reunions of separated families and in accordance with the commitments made on this issue at the inter-Korean summit held on 19 September 2018 to strengthen humanitarian cooperation to fundamentally resolve the issue of separated families, and highlighting the importance of allowing permanent regular reunions and contact between separated families, including through meetings at an easily accessible location and regular facility, regular written correspondence, video reunions and the exchange of video messages, in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions,

*Noting with concern* the possible negative impact on the human rights situation, including that of separated families, following the announcement by the Democratic People's

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<sup>8</sup> A/HRC/58/11.

Republic of Korea in January 2024 that it would no longer pursue reunification with the Republic of Korea,

*Noting with concern also* that, according to a report published by the Office of the High Commissioner,<sup>9</sup> the use of forced labour in and by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has become institutionalized, children are vulnerable to the deployment and mobilization of forced labour, and the use of forced labour by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea may, in some instances, reach the threshold of ownership, which constitutes the crime against humanity of enslavement under international criminal law,

1. *Condemns in the strongest terms* the long-standing and ongoing systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations and other human rights abuses committed in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and expresses again its grave concern at the detailed findings of the commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including:

(a) The denial of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including the freedom to adopt a religion or belief, and of the rights to freedom of opinion, expression and association, both online and offline, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of any kind, regardless of frontiers, which is enforced through all-pervasive restrictions and severe punishment, the expanded application of the death penalty, an absolute monopoly on information, total control over organized social life, and arbitrary State surveillance that permeates the private lives of all citizens, including through expanded digital surveillance and technology-enabled repression;

(b) Discrimination based on the *songbun* system, which classifies people on the basis of State-assigned social class and birth and also includes consideration of political opinions and religion, and which intersects with disability and with gender-based discrimination against women and girls;

(c) Violations of all aspects of the right to freedom of movement, with even more severe restrictions now compared with a decade ago, including forced assignment to State-designated places of residence and employment, often based on the *songbun* system, and denial of the right to leave one's own country;

(d) Systematic, widespread and grave violations of the right to an adequate standard of living, including the right to adequate food and related aspects of the right to life, exacerbated by widespread hunger and malnutrition;

(e) Violations of the right to life and acts of extermination, murder, enslavement, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, imprisonment, rape and other grave forms of sexual and gender-based violence and persecution on any grounds, including on the grounds of political opinion, religion or belief and sexual orientation and gender identity, throughout the entire penal system and in all places of detention, including prison camps, re-education camps, labour training camps, labour training centres, detention centres, holding centres and waiting rooms, and the widespread practice of collective punishment, with harsh sentences imposed on innocent individuals;

(f) Persistent violations and abuses of all rights of all women and girls, including unequal access to employment and vulnerability to trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation or domestic servitude and to child, early and forced marriage and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence;

(g) Violations of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of children, including the continued lack of access to basic economic, social and cultural rights for many children and reports of harsh punishment inflicted upon children;

(h) The enforced and involuntary disappearance of persons, including those from other States Members of the United Nations, on a large scale and as a matter of State policy,

<sup>9</sup> *Forced Labour by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea* (Geneva and Seoul, 2024). See also A/HRC/60/58.

by arrest, detention or abduction against their will, refusal to disclose the fate and whereabouts of the persons concerned, denial of repatriation and refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of their liberty, which places persons subjected thereto outside the protection of the law and which has had the effect of inflicting severe suffering on them and their families;

2. Urges the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to initiate comprehensive institutional, legal and policy reforms to improve the human rights situation, to acknowledge its crimes, abuses and human rights violations, in and outside of the country, and to take immediately all steps necessary to end all such crimes, abuses and violations through, inter alia, the implementation of relevant recommendations contained in the report of the commission of inquiry, General Assembly resolution 80/220 and the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights submitted to the Human Rights Council at its sixtieth session, including but not limited to the following:

(a) Ensuring the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief and the rights to freedom of opinion, expression and association, both online and offline, including by permitting the establishment of independent newspapers and other media and repealing or reforming all practices and laws suppressing the aforementioned rights, including the Law on Rejecting Reactionary Thought and Culture, the Youth Education Guarantee Law and the Law on Protecting the Pyongyang Cultural Language, and to distribute information to its population about human rights;

(b) Ending discrimination against citizens, including State-sponsored discrimination based on the *songbun* system, and taking immediate steps to ensure gender equality and the full enjoyment by all women and girls of their human rights and the protection of women and girls from all forms of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence;

(c) Promoting equal access to food, including by allowing humanitarian organizations and personnel to carry out their activities and by ensuring full transparency so that humanitarian assistance is provided to persons in vulnerable situations, including persons with disabilities, older persons, individuals in detention, children, and women and girls, especially those who are pregnant or lactating;

(d) Cooperating with the international community to respond constructively to all offers of assistance to ensure the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including access to vaccines and medicine, and the entry of international staff;

(e) Halting immediately all human rights violations in the entire penal system and in all places of detention, including prison camps, re-education camps, labour training camps, labour training centres, detention centres, psychiatric recovery centres, holding centres and waiting rooms, including the practice of forced labour and the use of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and sexual and gender-based violence, dismantling all political prison camps and releasing all political prisoners, immediately ceasing the practice of arbitrary and summary execution, including public executions, ensuring that justice sector reforms provide for protections for fair trials and due process and accepting technical assistance from the Office of the High Commissioner on upholding rights in detention;

(f) Urgently resolving the issue of all persons who have been abducted or otherwise forcibly disappeared and their descendants by clarifying their fate and whereabouts, in good faith and with credibility and transparency, including by providing accurate, detailed and full information promptly to their families, taking concrete measures towards the realization of their immediate return and engaging in constructive dialogue with the parties concerned;

(g) Ensuring the immediate resumption of the reunions of separated families across the border, considering the advanced age of the family members concerned;

(h) Abolishing immediately the system of guilt by association;

(i) Ensuring the right to freedom of movement, including the freedom to choose, without coercion, one's place of residence and employment and to leave the country,

including for the purpose of seeking asylum outside the Democratic People's Republic of Korea;

(j) Providing nationals of other States Members of the United Nations detained in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with protections, including freedom of communication with and access to consular officers, in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, and any other arrangements necessary to confirm their status and to communicate with their families, and immediately releasing those who are arbitrarily detained;

(k) Ensuring that citizens of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea who have been expelled or repatriated to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are able to return in safety and dignity, are treated humanely and are not subjected to any kind of human rights violation, including arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, arbitrary execution, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and sexual and gender-based violence, and providing information on their status and treatment;

3. *Recalls* that the General Assembly, in its resolution 80/220, expressed its very serious concern about the widespread use of forced labour and violations of workers' rights, including the right to freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the right to strike and the prohibition of the economic exploitation of children and of any harmful or hazardous work of children, and about the exploitation of workers sent abroad from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to work under conditions that amounted to forced labour, often for the purpose of generating income for the Government;

4. *Encourages* in that respect all relevant actors and entities, including business enterprises, to fully implement the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights;

5. *Recalls* that all States must comply with relevant Security Council resolutions, including provisions regarding repatriation and prohibition of work authorization in Council resolutions 2371 (2017), 2375 (2017) and 2397 (2017), and provisions in Council resolutions prohibiting arms transfers by and to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea;

6. *Also recalls* that the General Assembly, in its resolution 80/220, underscored its very serious concern regarding reports of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, summary executions, arbitrary detention, abductions and other forms of human rights violations and abuses that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea committed against citizens of other States Members of the United Nations within and outside of its territory, and urged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to disclose all relevant information to bereaved families and relevant entities;

7. *Reiterates its deep concern* at the findings of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights concerning the situation of citizens of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea forcibly returned to the country and subjected to sanctions, including internment, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, sexual and gender-based violence, enforced disappearance or the death penalty, and in this regard strongly urges all States to respect the fundamental principle of non-refoulement, to take action to counter acts of transnational repression by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to treat humanely and protect the human rights of those who seek refuge, to ensure unhindered access to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and to comply with their obligations under international human rights law, including the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, as well as the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Protocol thereto;

8. *Expresses its concern* at the failure of the authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to hold accountable those responsible for human rights violations, including those which, according to conclusions of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Rapporteur and the commission of inquiry, may amount to crimes against humanity, and encourages the international community to cooperate with accountability efforts regarding such crimes;

9. *Recalls* that the General Assembly, in its resolution 80/220, welcomed the resumption of the Security Council discussion on the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, encouraged the Council to take appropriate action to ensure accountability, including through consideration of referral of the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the International Criminal Court and consideration of further targeted sanctions against those responsible for human rights violations that the commission of inquiry had said may constitute crimes against humanity, and reiterated its appreciation to the High Commissioner and the Special Rapporteur for briefing the Council on the country's human rights situation;

10. *Welcomes* the latest report of the Special Rapporteur,<sup>10</sup> and commends the Special Rapporteur for her continued efforts in the conduct of her mandate despite the lack of access to the country;

11. *Recalls* the importance of maintaining the grave situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea high on the international agenda, including through sustained communications, advocacy and outreach initiatives, and requests the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to strengthen those activities;

12. *Welcomes* the report of the High Commissioner submitted to the Human Rights Council at its sixtieth session,<sup>11</sup> in which the High Commissioner provided an update on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea since 2014, took stock of the implementation of the recommendations of the commission of inquiry and found that the human rights situation had not improved overall since 2014 and, in many instances, had degraded, and urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Member States to fulfil the recommendations contained therein;

13. *Commends* the Office of the High Commissioner, including its field-based structure in Seoul, for its efforts to promote accountability in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and welcomes the steps taken to strengthen the Office's capacity to allow the implementation of relevant recommendations made by the group of independent experts on accountability for human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in its report,<sup>12</sup> aimed at strengthening monitoring and documentation efforts with a view to continuing to develop strategies to be used in any future accountability process;

14. *Recalls* its request in its resolution 58/17 to the High Commissioner to submit a full report on the implementation of the recommendations to the Human Rights Council at its sixty-fourth session, exploring options for strengthening, institutionalizing and further advancing work on accountability in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea;

15. *Decides* to extend the mandate of Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 37/28, for a period of one year;

16. *Requests* the Office of the High Commissioner to continue to organize consultations and outreach activities with victims, affected communities and other relevant stakeholders with a view to ensuring a victim-centred approach to accountability;

17. *Encourages* all parties concerned and stakeholders, including United Nations bodies, to implement the recommendations made by the commission of inquiry, the group of independent experts on accountability, the Special Rapporteur, the Secretary-General and the Office of the High Commissioner, and to support efforts aimed at improving dialogue on and engagement with regard to the humanitarian and human rights situation, including international abductions, in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and inter-Korean dialogue;

18. *Encourages* the field-based structure of the Office of the High Commissioner in Seoul to continue its endeavours, welcomes its regular reports to the Human Rights

<sup>10</sup> A/HRC/61/55.

<sup>11</sup> A/HRC/60/58.

<sup>12</sup> A/HRC/34/66/Add.1.

Council, and invites the High Commissioner to provide the Council with regular updates on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea;

19. *Calls upon* all States to undertake to ensure that the field-based structure of the Office of the High Commissioner can function with independence, that it has sufficient resources to fulfil its mandate, that it enjoys full cooperation with relevant States and that it is not subjected to any reprisals or threats;

20. *Requests* the Office of the High Commissioner to report on its follow-up efforts in the regular annual report of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea;

21. *Requests* the Special Rapporteur to submit regular reports to the Human Rights Council and to the General Assembly on the implementation of the mandate, including on the follow-up efforts made in the implementation of the recommendations of the commission of inquiry;

22. *Urges* the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, through continuous dialogue, to invite and to cooperate fully with all special procedure mandate holders, especially the Special Rapporteur, to give the Special Rapporteur and supporting staff unrestricted access to visit the country, and to provide them with all information necessary for fulfilling the mandate;

23. *Encourages* the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to extend an invitation to the Office of the High Commissioner and other human rights mechanisms to visit the country, and to benefit from technical cooperation;

24. *Also encourages* the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fulfil its stated commitment to implementing the accepted recommendations contained in the outcome reports of the universal periodic review, to provide comprehensive information detailing the implementation of those recommendations, including with regard to the ratification of or accession to core international human rights instruments to which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is still not a Party, to expand cooperation with United Nations human rights mechanisms and to take all measures necessary to fully fulfil the obligations under international instruments to which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a Party;

25. *Encourages* all stakeholders to develop constructive dialogue and cooperation with special procedure mandate holders, including the Special Rapporteur, and the field-based structure of the Office of the High Commissioner;

26. *Urges* the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from the use of deadly and other excessive force at its borders and elsewhere, particularly where it would exacerbate civilian suffering, fuel human rights violations and destabilize international security, to work with the international community, including the United Nations system, and to facilitate conditions to alleviate the suffering of the citizens of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and to allow international staff to operate in the country so that the international community can provide assistance based on independent needs assessments and monitoring capacity, consistent with international standards and humanitarian principles and in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions;

27. *Encourages* the United Nations system as a whole to continue to address the grave situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in a coordinated and unified manner, including through consideration by the Security Council;

28. *Encourages* all States that have relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to use their influence to encourage it to take immediate steps to end all human rights violations and abuses, including by closing political prison camps, undertaking profound institutional reforms and ending forced labour in and by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea;

29. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide the Special Rapporteur and the Office of the High Commissioner with regard to the field-based structure with sufficient resources and support to carry out the mandate effectively, including to support the

information and evidence repository, and to ensure that the mandate holder receives the support of the Office of the High Commissioner;

30. *Decides* to transmit all reports of the Special Rapporteur to all relevant bodies of the United Nations and to the Secretary-General for appropriate action.

*53rd meeting  
30 March 2026*

[Adopted without a vote.]

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