

ANCYL flirts with North Korea

Written by Sapa- Fin24

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Johannesburg - The African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) has been stepping up its support for North Korea, Pyongyang's media said, ahead of President Jacob Zuma's visit to the Group of 20 (G20) meeting in South Korea.

In the past few months, the youth league sent a delegation to a conference in Pyongyang and was quoted by the north's official media as calling North Korean leader Kim Jong-il the "great guardian" of peace.

Zuma will be seeking investment from South Korea and support for a call to limit the harm to emerging market currencies, such as the rand and South Korean won, that have soared in value as investors faced with minimal interest rates in crisis-hit developed economies seek higher returns elsewhere.

South Korea has tried to ensure a smooth G20 this week and will not want to spoil its hosting of a major diplomatic event by pressing Zuma on the actions of a faction in his party.

But Seoul is also apprehensive of any support given to the north's leaders.

A spokesperson for the ANCYL confirmed it sent the delegation to the World Festival of Youth and Students in June, but denied the contents of the reports on the KCNA news agency.

"We support North Korea, unapologetically," ANCYL spokesperson Floyd Shivambu told Reuters. "We have never said anything except declaring support for North Korea."

A report on KCNA news agency in August said: "The secretary of the ANC Youth League of South Africa praised Kim Jong-il as the great guardian who firmly guarantees peace and security of not only the Korean Peninsula but the world with his songun (military-first) politics."

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Shivambu denied the youth league made the comments. ANC officials responsible for international affairs declined to comment on the KCNA reports.

Nuclear pursuit

The Democratic Alliance said cosyng up to the north could undermine trust in the ruling party, and called on the ANC to enforce discipline.

"The ANC secretary general Gwede Mantashe should take action against his youth league, if it turns out that they have indeed provided vocal support for the North Korean dictator Kim Jong-il," said the party's youth chair Mbali Ntuli.

Shivambu also denied North Korea was pursuing nuclear weapons, despite repeated statements by the north's government officials and its state-sanctioned media that it was building a nuclear arms deterrent to counter what it sees as hostile US intents.

"Who says that North Korea is pursuing nuclear weapons? It is not true. It is sensationalism of the American media. They are pursuing nuclear energy, not nuclear weapons," Shivambu said.

The UN Security Council has condemned and sanctioned North Korea for its two nuclear tests and a separate long range rocket launch for undermining security in North Asia, a region responsible for one-sixth of the global economy.

South Africa, like many G20 countries, has diplomatic ties with North Korea and has joined many of those states in criticising Pyongyang for its nuclear tests.

The presidency on Monday said the Seoul summit would focus on global growth, the strengthening of the international financial regulatory system, global financial safety nets and how to modernise international financial institutions.

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A business summit would also be held and executives from G20 countries would meet to discuss how to bolster the recovery and help the global economy attain greater growth.

South Africa is keen that a global response be pursued in mitigating the effects of the economic and financial crisis, and to "prevent its contagion to emerging and developing countries, in particular in Africa", the presidency said.

Source: [Reuters & Fin24](#)

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