South Africa & North Korea

−1

Distant

Relationship index, −100 to +100. Votes and security run from −100 to +100; trade and shared clubs from 0 to 100.

UN votes	−4
Trade	0
Security	0
Shared clubs	0

IN SHORT

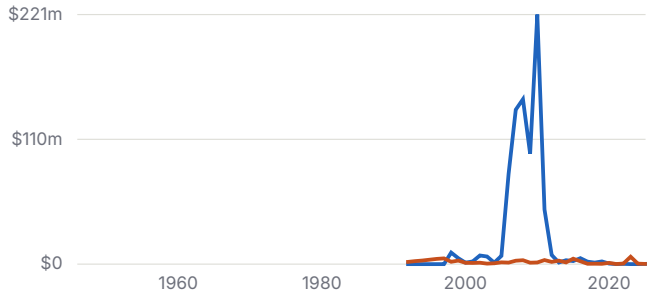
- Armed conflict: UCDP records them on opposite sides of the conflict in North Korea, South Korea, with South Africa supporting another party, most recently in 1953.
- At the UN their vote agreement is 69% (2022–2024), about average for both of them.
- Trade in goods ($2.5 million a year) is a very small part of either country's trade, under 0.5%.
- 161 people born in North Korea live in South Africa (UN DESA counts place of birth, however long ago they moved).

OVER TIME

Share of recorded UN votes cast the same way



Goods exports each way (US dollars)



South Africa sells to North Korea North Korea sells to South Africa

VOTES TOPIC BY TOPIC (SINCE 2010)

Most alike on Middle East (100% of votes the same), furthest apart on nuclear weapons (64%), against 83% on all votes since 2010.

All roll-call votes	83% (1323 votes)
Disarmament	73% (157 votes)
Middle East	100% (191 votes)
Human rights	86% (230 votes)
Colonialism	97% (98 votes)
Nuclear weapons	64% (186 votes)
Economic development	91% (86 votes)

Bar: since 2010. Mark: all years. Share of roll-call votes on whole texts cast the same way, counted vote by vote; an abstention against a yes counts as a difference. Disarmament, colonialism and economic development count votes up to 2018.

THE FACTS

UN votes	At the UN, the vote agreement of South Africa and North Korea was 69% in 2022–2024. For South Africa, North Korea is the 45th most distant voting partner out of 191; for North Korea, South Africa is the 53rd closest partner.
Trade	Trade in goods between them averaged $2.5 million a year in 2023–2025: less than 0.1% of all South Africa's trade and less than 0.1% of North Korea's.
Words	Since 1946, South Africa has named North Korea in 1 sentences of its General Debate speeches; North Korea has named South Africa in 2.
Security	The Uppsala Conflict Data Program records them on opposite sides of armed conflict, one of them supporting another party (North Korea, South Korea, 1950–1953).
People	161 born in North Korea live in South Africa (2024, UN DESA).
People	Their national football teams have met once.

HOW SURE WE ARE

UN votes	**High**	242 shared votes on whole texts in 2022–2024, the years the headline share covers. With that many, a share is good to about ±6 points.
Trade	**High**	Goods trade is reported in 3 of the 3 years 2023–2025. Goods only, from customs data (IMF); services and energy pipelines are not in it.
Security	**High**	The Uppsala Conflict Data Program covers every state up to 2025. It counts only conflicts with at least 25 battle deaths a year.
Shared clubs	**High**	The list of tracked groups is fixed; membership is checked by hand.
Index	**High**	As sure as the weaker of its two required parts, votes and trade. Security and shared clubs add to it but never make it surer.

SOURCES AND HOW TO CITE

UN votes, speeches, mentions and trade: Nations on Record (UN General Assembly voting data, UN General Debate Corpus, IMF International Trade in Goods). Armed conflict: Uppsala Conflict Data Program, version 26.1. Migration: UN DESA International Migrant Stock 2024. Refugees: UNHCR. Football: international results archive (CC0). Every score follows fixed rules written out on /method; AI never sets a score. Independent and non-commercial; not affiliated with the United Nations.

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