

Experts at the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST-PNRI) stressed that there is no reason for the public to be alarmed in the event the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) or North Korea launches to orbit its earth observation satellite "Kwangmyongsong-3" on April 12 and 16 which many analysts say is a ballistic missile test.

The United States and its allies described the planned rocket launch of the DPRK as a ballistic missile test in disguise of a satellite launch.

According to PNRI Director Alumanda De la Rosa, the information gathered by the Institute states that the tests will not involve any nuclear material.

However, she said that PNRI will activate the Radiation Monitoring team under the Radiological Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan in case the debris from these tests will fall into the country's territory. PNRI will make some measurements to ensure that these are not radioactive debris.

"According to information that we have, DPRK will only launch its satellite, but we will send our

team to check if there may have been radioactive components present in the debris,” explained Director De la Rosa.

She also advised the people not to touch the debris and cordon off the site until experts arrive.

Moreover, Director De la Rosa said that PNRI will continue air measurements for radioactivity in Metro Manila before and after the DPRK rocket launches but maintains that it is the agency’s routine job to monitor daily the ambient gamma radiation in the air.

“As part of our program, DOST-PNRI will continue to monitor the radiation levels present in the environment, “ said Director dela Rosa.

The Philippine government has expressed concern over the purported missile test launches in the Korean peninsula. Information gathered by the Department of Foreign Affairs states that the rocket’s first stage will reportedly separate and fall in a zone -140 kilometers west of Republic of Korea’s Byeonsan Peninsula, while the second stage is expected to fall in an area 190 kilometers east of Luzon.(Joy M. Lazcano)