

South Korea says North Korea fired short-range projectile

29/03/2016 17:38 by admin

Seoul: North Korea fired a short-range projectile from an area near its eastern coast on Tuesday in what appears to be another weapons test seen as a response to ongoing military drills between Washington and Seoul, South Korean officials said.

The projectile was fired near the North Korean port city of Wonsan and flew about 200 kilometers (125 miles) toward an area in the country's northwest, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

It was unclear whether the projectile crashed on land or overflew its target and landed in the sea, said a Joint Chiefs of Staff official who didn't want to be identified, citing office rules. He said it also was unclear whether the projectile was a ballistic missile or an artillery shell.

North Korea has fired a slew of short-range missiles and artillery shells into the sea and has threatened nuclear strikes on Washington and Seoul since the start on March 7 of the annual springtime war games between the United States and South Korea.

North Korea also launched a medium-range ballistic missile into waters off its east coast for the first time since 2014 and touted a new artillery system it says could turn the South Korean capital of Seoul into a "sea of flames."

An official from Seoul's Defense Ministry, who also didn't want to be named because of department rules, said it was too early to tell whether North Korea used a land target Tuesday to test the accuracy and range of its weapons.

North Korea routinely tests short-range missiles and artillery systems but tends to do more launches in times of tension with the outside world.

It condemns the annual military drills between Washington and Seoul as a rehearsal for an invasion.

Tensions are particularly high this year because the drills are the largest ever and follow a recent North Korean nuclear test and a long-range rocket launch.

Washington and Seoul say the drills are defensive in nature and they have no plans to invade North Korea.

- AP