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Russian Parliament Chairwoman Set to Visit North Korea This Year

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Valentina Matviyenko

Valentina Matviyenko, the speaker of the Federation Council, the upper chamber of the Russian parliament, is set to pay an official visit to North Korea this year, RIA Novosti reported Friday citing her deputy.

“Speaking about inter-parliamentary connections, we are prepared to work on organizing Valentina Matviyenko's visit and it will be our top priority to make her visit happen this year,” Federation Council deputy speaker Yevgeny Bushmin was quoted as saying Friday during a meeting with the North Korean ambassador to Moscow, Kim Hyun Joon.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is due to visit the Russian capital for Victory Day celebrations on May 9 to mark the anniversary of the end of World War II. The trip to Russia will be his first visit abroad since he assumed the leadership of the reclusive nuclear power in 2011.

North Korea's envoy to Moscow said in the Friday meeting that Russia and North Korea are

currently facing the same problem of being pressured by Western countries, but said that sanctions would only make the two countries grow stronger. The ambassador also criticized the West for what he said were its attempts to blow up the recent assassination of the Russian opposition leader Boris Nemtsov into an international issue, RIA Novosti reported.

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