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Putin Met North Korean Foreign Minister, Kremlin Says

By AFP

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Mikhail Tereshchenko / POOL / kremlin.ru

Russian President Vladimir Putin met with North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui in the Kremlin on Monday, Moscow announced.

The meeting took place amid western claims that Russia plans to deploy thousands of Pyongyang's troops to the Ukraine conflict.

Choe has been in Russia for a week and has pledged that North Korea would stand by Russia until its "victory" in Ukraine.

"President Putin received the foreign minister of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Choe Son Hui," the Kremlin said in a statement, publishing a video of the pair shaking hands ahead of talks.

Putin — who signed a military assistance deal with Pyongyang this summer — did not deny

the North Korean troop deployment when asked about it publicly last month.

The Kremlin published a video of the Russian leader greeting the North Korean minister in a Kremlin hall.

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According to a Russian translation, Choe thanked Putin for meeting her and passed on well wishes from North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Choe last week held talks with her Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov and said that Pyongyang aimed to be by Russia's side in what she called a "sacred struggle" in Ukraine.

The West has claimed that some 10,000 North Korean troops are in Russia and could be sent into combat imminently.

The meeting came as Germany's foreign minister Annalena Baerbock visited Kyiv.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has criticized the muted Western response to the alleged North Korean troop deployment.

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