

Russian Senators Ratify Defense Treaty With North Korea

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Vladimir Putin in Pyongyang in June 2024. kremlin.ru

Lawmakers from Russia's upper-house Federation Council voted unanimously on Wednesday to ratify a mutual defense treaty with North Korea, as Western news outlets [report](#) that Ukrainian forces have engaged in clashes with North Korean soldiers sent to fight in the Kursk region.

President Vladimir Putin [signed](#) the agreement with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un during a visit to the isolated East Asian country in June, but many details remain unclear, including whether Moscow's nuclear umbrella would cover Pyongyang.

Ahead of Wednesday's vote, Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Rudenko addressed lawmakers, saying that Moscow's relations with Pyongyang have reached new heights.

Rudenko praised North Korea for being the "only country in the world to publicly support" Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea and 2022 annexation of regions in eastern and southern Ukraine following the full-scale invasion.

"I believe this treaty is very timely," he told lawmakers.

Russia and North Korea have been allies since the latter's founding after World War II, and the two countries have drawn even closer since the February 2022 invasion.

The West has long accused Pyongyang of supplying artillery shells and missiles to Moscow to fire on Ukraine. Last month, Washington and its allies said North Korea deployed around 10,000 troops to Russia.

AFP contributed reporting.

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