

North Korea's Kim Hails 'Dearest Friend' Putin in New Year Message

By [AFP](#)

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North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at a joint press conference with President Vladimir Putin in June.

[Kremlin.ru](#)

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un hailed Vladimir Putin as his "dearest friend" in a New Year's letter to the Russian leader praising close bilateral ties, state media said on Tuesday.

The two countries have deepened political, military and cultural ties since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, with Putin and Kim repeatedly professing their personal closeness.

Moscow and Pyongyang signed a landmark defense pact during Putin's visit to the isolated North in June. The pact obligates them to provide immediate military assistance if the other is invaded and came into effect this month.

Kim's latest message described Putin as his "dearest friend and comrade," the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said.

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The North's leader sent "warm greetings of best wishes to the fraternal Russian people and all the service personnel of the brave Russian army on behalf of himself, the Korean people and all the service personnel of the armed forces of the DPRK," it said, using an acronym of the North's formal name.

Kim also expressed "his willingness to design and push ahead with new projects" after their "meaningful journey in 2024."

In a possible reference to the war in Ukraine, Kim also hoped that 2025 would be the year "when the Russian army and people defeat neo-Nazism and achieve a great victory."

The United States and South Korea have accused the nuclear-armed North of sending more than 10,000 soldiers to help Russia fight Ukraine.

Experts say Kim is keen to acquire advanced technology from Moscow and battle experience for his troops in return.

North Korean state media said on Friday Putin had sent a similar message to Kim praising bilateral ties.

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