# Ukraine Says Questioning 2 Captured North Korean Soldiers

By [AFP](#)

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North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un visiting the command of the 2nd Corps of the Korean People's Army, at an undisclosed location in North Korea. **Photo by KCNA VIA KNS/AFP**

Ukraine said Saturday that investigators were questioning two wounded North Korean soldiers after they were captured in Russia's Kursk region, saying they provided "indisputable evidence" that North Koreans were fighting for Moscow.

It is not the first time that Kyiv has claimed the capture of North Korean soldiers during its Kursk incursion but it has not reported being able to question any before.

In December it said it took several captive but they died from serious wounds.

"Our soldiers captured North Korean soldiers in the Kursk region. These are two soldiers who, although wounded, survived and were brought to Kyiv, and are talking to SBU investigators," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky wrote on social media.

The SBU security service gave some details of the men's interrogation, saying both described themselves as experienced soldiers and one said he had been sent to Russia for training, not to fight.

But Ukraine has not provided any evidence that the men are North Korean.

In video released by the SBU, two men with Asian features are shown in hospital bunks, one with bandaged hands and the other with a bandaged jaw. A doctor at the detention center says the second man also has a broken leg.

## 'World needs to know'

Pyongyang has deployed thousands of troops to reinforce Russia's military, including in the Kursk border region where Ukraine mounted a shock incursion in August last year.

Zelensky had said in late December that Ukraine had captured several seriously wounded North Korean soldiers who later died.

He said Saturday that it was difficult to capture North Koreans fighting because "Russians and other North Korean soldiers finish off their wounded and do everything to prevent evidence of the participation of another state, North Korea, in the war against Ukraine."

He said he would provide media access to the prisoners of war because "the world needs to know what is happening."

Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga wrote on X that the "first North Korean prisoners of war are now in Kyiv", calling them "regular DPRK troops, not mercenaries."

"We need maximum pressure against regimes in Moscow and Pyongyang," he wrote.

The men do not speak Russian or Ukrainian and communication is through Korean interpreters, the SBU said, adding that this was "in cooperation" with South Korea's National Intelligence Service.

The SBU video does not show the men speaking Korean. AFP reporters in Seoul have contacted the NIS for comment.

Embed:

> Our soldiers have captured North Korean military personnel in the Kursk region. Two soldiers, though wounded, survived and were transported to Kyiv, where they are now communicating with the Security Service of Ukraine.
>
> This was not an easy task: Russian forces and other North... pic.twitter.com/5J0hqbarP6
>
> — Volodymyr Zelenskyy / Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) January 11,

## 'Undisputable evidence'

The SBU said the men's capture provided "indisputable evidence of the DPRK's participation in Russia's war against our country."

It showed a Russian army ID card issued to a 26-year-old man from Russia's Tyva region bordering Mongolia.

The SBU said that one POW carried this military ID card "issued in the name of another person" while the other had no documents at all.

Some reports have said Russia is hiding North Korean fighters by giving them fake IDs.

The SBU said the man with the Tyvan ID had told them he was given it in Russia in fall 2024 when some North Korean combat units had "one-week interoperability training" with Russian units.

The man said he believed he was "going for training, not to fight a war against Ukraine," the SBU said.

The man said he was a rifleman born in 2005 and had been in the North Korean army since 2021.

The other man wrote answers because of an injured jaw, saying he was born in 1999, joined the army in 2016 and was a scout sniper, the SBU said.

The SBU said the men were captured separately — one on Thursday — by special forces and paratroopers.

They are being provided with medical care and "held in appropriate conditions that meet the requirements of international law," the SBU said.

Russia's army said Saturday that it had gained territory in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region northwest of the logistics hub of Kurakhove, which it claimed to have captured Monday.

The defense ministry said troops had "liberated" Shevchenko, a rural settlement about 10 kilometers northwest of Kurakhove.

Shevchenko, a large village, is located west of the reservoir near Kurakhove and "is necessary to take under control, to protect the town from shelling," the RIA Novosti state news agency reported.

"Now Russian troops can move further towards the western border of the Donetsk People's Republic," it said.

**Related article**: [North Korean Soldiers Suffer 1,100 Casualties in Ukraine War, South Korean Military Says](#)

Russia claims to have annexed the Donetsk region, which it refers to as the Donetsk People's Republic, though it does not control the whole region.

Ukraine has not confirmed the loss of Kurakhove, which had around 18,000 inhabitants before Russia launched its 2022 offensive.

The Ukrainian military's General Staff said Saturday that troops had stopped Russia's offensive actions in the area, including around Kurakhove.

Russia is also moving close to taking the vital frontline city of Pokrovsk north of Kurakhove.

Donetsk's regional governor Vadym Filashkin said Saturday that one person had been killed and another wounded in Pokrovsk over the last day.

In the southern Zaporizhzhia region, a Russian drone attacked a car in a village near the front line, killing a 47-year-old woman on the spot, its governor Ivan Fedorov wrote on Telegram.