

Around 300 North Korean Soldiers Killed Fighting for Russia, South Korean Lawmaker Says

By [AFP](#)

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North Korean soldiers. **KCNA**

Around 300 North Korean soldiers have been killed and 2,700 wounded while fighting in Russia's war against Ukraine, a South Korean lawmaker said Monday, citing information from Seoul's spy agency.

Seoul has previously claimed North Korean leader Kim Jong Un sent more than 10,000 soldiers to help Moscow fight Kyiv in return for Russian technical assistance for Pyongyang's heavily sanctioned weapons and satellite programs.

Over the weekend, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Kyiv captured two North Korean soldiers, releasing a video of the injured combatants being interrogated and raising the possibility of a prisoner swap for captured Ukrainian troops.

"The deployment of North Korean troops to Russia has reportedly expanded to include the Kursk region, with estimates suggesting that casualties among North Korean forces have surpassed 3,000," lawmaker Lee Seong-kweun told reporters after a briefing from the spy agency.

That includes "approximately 300 deaths and 2,700 injuries," Lee said, after a briefing from Seoul's National Intelligence Service. The soldiers, reportedly from North Korea's elite Storm Corps, were ordered to kill themselves rather than be taken prisoner, the lawmaker added.

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"Notably, memos found on deceased soldiers indicate that the North Korean authorities pressured them to commit suicide or self-detonate before capture," Lee said. According to him, some of the soldiers were granted "amnesty" or wanted to join North Korea's ruling Workers' Party, hoping to improve their position in society by fighting.

One North Korean soldier who was about to be captured shouted "General Kim Jong Un" and attempted to detonate a grenade, Lee said, adding that he was shot and killed.

South Korean intelligence also revealed that the North Korean soldiers have "a lack of understanding of modern warfare," and are being used by Russia in a manner leading to "the high number of casualties," the lawmaker said.

Ukraine, the United States and South Korea have accused nuclear-armed North Korea of sending more than 10,000 soldiers to help bolster Russian forces. Neither Moscow nor Pyongyang has acknowledged that North Koreans have been deployed to fight against Ukraine.

The two countries have boosted their military cooperation since Russia launched its 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

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