

North Korean Troops Pulled From Kursk Front Line Amid Heavy Losses – NYT

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Ukrainian servicemen. **General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine**

North Korean soldiers in Russia were pulled from the front lines in the partially occupied Kursk region after facing heavy losses, the New York Times [reported](#) Thursday, citing anonymous Ukrainian and U.S. officials.

The report comes a week after some Western officials [estimated](#) that around 4,000 of the 11,000 North Korean soldiers believed to have been sent to Russia late last year may have been killed, wounded, captured or gone missing.

U.S. officials believe the North Korean soldiers could now be undergoing additional training or that Russia may be exploring ways to deploy them to avoid heavy casualties, NYT reported.

Despite being Pyongyang's "best-trained special operations troops," the North Koreans have reportedly been used as foot soldiers, leaving them vulnerable to Ukrainian fire and land mines in the Kursk region.

Neither Moscow nor Pyongyang has officially acknowledged the presence of North Korean forces, which were believed to be assisting Russia in pushing Ukrainian troops out of the Kursk region. Since Ukraine's surprise cross-border incursion in August, Russia has managed to reclaim about half of the territory initially lost to Kyiv.

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Russia expects North Korea to send additional reinforcements "within the next two months," NYT reported last week, quoting a senior U.S. defense official.

U.S. intelligence agencies claim North Korean leader Kim Jong Un proposed deploying troops to support Russia in Kursk, an idea that Russian President Vladimir Putin reportedly "quickly embraced," according to the newspaper.

North Korea has also reportedly been supplying Russia with rockets, missiles and millions of artillery shells, which are believed to account for half of the munitions Russia fires daily.

Kim likely hopes that, in return, Putin will assist North Korea's missile programs and provide diplomatic backing at the UN, U.S. officials said.

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