

North Korea Supplying Up to 100% of Russian Artillery Shells Used in Ukraine – Reuters

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Russian artillery in Ukraine's Kherson region. **Alexei Konovalov / TASS**

Russian artillery units are relying almost entirely on ammunition supplied by North Korea to sustain their bombardments along the Ukrainian front, Reuters [reported](#) Tuesday, citing Russian military documents and open-source research.

Between September 2023 and March 2025, four Russian-flagged vessels made 64 trips transporting nearly 16,000 containers from North Korea to Russian ports, according to satellite data analyzed by the U.K.-based Open Source Center (OSC). The organization estimates the shipments included between 4 million and 6 million artillery shells.

By comparison, Russia is believed to have produced no more than 2.3 million artillery shells domestically in 2024, according to Ukrainian and Western officials.

The Kremlin [denied](#) weapons transfers from North Korea in October 2023, claiming there was

“no proof” of such activity.

However, at least six Russian artillery unit reports reviewed by Reuters documented using between 50% and 100% North Korean munitions in Ukraine as recently as this year. Three other unit reports made no reference to North Korean ammunition.

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Defense analyst Konrad Muzyka of Poland-based Rochan Consulting said North Korea’s supplies enabled Russia to maintain the pace of its military operations starting in late 2023.

“Without help from the DPRK, the Russian army shelling of Ukrainian defensive positions would have been cut in half,” Ukraine’s military intelligence agency GUR told Reuters.

“Without Chairman Kim Jong Un’s support, President Vladimir Putin wouldn’t really be able to prosecute his war in Ukraine,” added Hugh Griffiths, the former coordinator of the UN panel monitoring North Korea sanctions.

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