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North Korea Will Send Thousands of Military Personnel to Help Rebuild Kursk Region, Shoigu Says

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TASS

North Korea will send military builders and sappers to help restore parts of Russia's southwestern Kursk region following Ukraine's incursion there, state media reported on Tuesday as Russian Security Council chief Sergei Shoigu met with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Pyongyang.

Shoigu said North Korea will "send 1,000 sappers to Russia to clear mines on Russian territory, as well as 5,000 military construction workers to help restore infrastructure facilities destroyed by the occupiers," referring to Ukrainian forces.

He added that officials in both countries would also create war memorials "in memory of the Korean soldiers who died in the battles for the liberation of Russian territory."

"In this regard, during the visit, there were discussions about establishing a memorial

complex with a museum in Pyongyang, with the participation of the Russian side," Shoigu was quoted as saying by the state-run TASS news agency.

North Korea has emerged as one of Russia's key allies since President Vladimir Putin ordered the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. It has reportedly sent arms to Russia, and late last year, North Korea sent thousands of troops to help Moscow fight off Ukraine's incursion in the Kursk region.

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Shoigu, who previously served as Russia's Defense Minister, "arrived in Pyongyang on a special assignment" from Putin, according to the Security Council's press service. He will "hold talks with North Korean leadership as part of implementing the agreements reached during the previous visit on June 4."

State media released footage of the Security Council chief arriving in the North Korean capital, where he was greeted with an embrace from Kim before the two sat down for talks.

Earlier this month, Shoigu met with Kim and senior military officials. Both sides pledged to develop what North Korean state media described as "powerful and comprehensive relations of strategic partnership."

Shoigu also visited North Korea in March. He told state media that his recent visits to the isolated country are connected to the "rapid implementation" of a strategic partnership agreement that Moscow and Pyongyang signed last year, which includes a mutual defense clause.

"The speed with which the comprehensive strategic partnership agreement is being implemented clearly demands constant attention, ongoing adjustments, and decision-making at all levels," the Security Council chief was quoted as saying.

AFP contributed reporting.

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