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North Korea to Send More Troops to Russia, South Korean Intelligence Says

By AFP

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North Korean soldiers being trained in Russia. **TASS**

North Korea plans to send additional troops to Russia to assist in its war against Ukraine as early as July, a South Korean lawmaker said Thursday, citing the country's spy agency.

The announcement comes a week after Russian Security Council head Sergei Shoigu said during a visit to Pyongyang that North Korea would send military engineers and construction troops to help rebuild the Kursk region.

"North Korea is continuing to send troops and supply weapons to Russia, and we see its support has played a significant role in Moscow's efforts to retake Kursk," lawmaker Lee Seong-kweun told reporters following a briefing from South Korea's National Intelligence Service (NIS).

"After dispatching 11,000 personnel in October last year, Russia has already announced a

second deployment of 4,000 troops, and a further 6,000 construction troops to assist in rebuilding Kursk," Lee added.

NIS believes the additional deployment could take place as early as July or August, pointing to precedents such as Shoigu's visit about a month prior to the previous deployment, as well as recent reports that North Korea has begun selecting personnel for dispatch.

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Lee said Pyongyang is believed to have provided Russia with several million artillery shells, along with missiles and long-range rocket systems delivered by ship and military aircraft since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Russia and North Korea signed a military cooperation agreement last year that included a mutual defense clause during a rare visit by Russian President Vladimir Putin to the nuclear-armed country.

Roughly 600 North Korean soldiers have been killed and thousands more wounded while fighting for Russia, according to South Korean intelligence.

In April, Pyongyang confirmed for the first time that it had deployed troops to support Russia's war in Ukraine and acknowledged some of its soldiers had been killed in combat.

North Korean state media said leader Kim Jong Un had confirmed plans for further cooperation but did not provide details.

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