

Kim Jong Un Honors North Korean Soldiers Killed Fighting for Russia

By [AFP](#)

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KCNA

North Korean state media on Tuesday released images of leader Kim Jong Un mourning over flag-draped coffins of North Korean soldiers killed while fighting alongside Russian forces in Ukraine, as South Korea's Defense Ministry said it has yet to see signs of additional troop deployments from the North.

The nuclear-armed North has emerged as one of Russia's key allies since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, sending thousands of troops and shipments of weapons to bolster the Kremlin's efforts to drive Ukrainian forces from the Kursk border region.

Around 600 North Korean soldiers have been killed and thousands more wounded while fighting for Russia, according to South Korean lawmaker Lee Seong-kweun, who cited intelligence from Seoul's spy agency.

Footage aired by Korean Central Television showed a solemn Kim placing a North Korean flag on a coffin during a ceremony in Pyongyang on Sunday. The event — attended by Russian Culture Minister Olga Lyubimova — marked the one-year anniversary of a military pact between Pyongyang and Moscow that includes a mutual defense clause.

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State television also showed battlefield images of North Korean soldiers, with captions reading: “Oh, our heroes, shining stars of my homeland,” and “Those who gave their lives without hesitation to defend honor shine like radiant stars.”

Attendees from both countries were seen in tears during the tribute.

A photograph of a document, purportedly signed by Kim, appeared to show him approving operational plans for the “liberation of Kursk” and issuing attack orders to North Korean special operations units in late 2024.

Kim was accompanied at the ceremony by his teenage daughter, Ju Ae, whom many analysts believe he is grooming as his successor.

North Korea officially confirmed in April that it had deployed troops to support Russia’s war effort and acknowledged casualties among its forces.

Last week, lawmaker Lee said Pyongyang could send additional troops to Ukraine as early as this month, citing intelligence from South Korea’s National Intelligence Service.

However, South Korea’s Defense Ministry said Tuesday it currently sees “no signs” of imminent deployments, noting that North Korean forces are engaged in their annual summer training period, with some frontline units participating in mid-year drills.

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