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Putin Hails North Korean Troops as ‘Heroic’ in Letter to Kim

By AFP

August 15, 2025



Training of North Korean soldiers. **KCNA**

Russian President Vladimir Putin hailed North Korean troops sent to fight in Ukraine as “heroic” in a letter to Kim Jong Un, North Korean state media reported Friday.

In a letter marking the anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japanese rule, Putin recalled how Soviet Red Army troops and North Korean forces fought together to end Japan's colonial occupation.

“The bonds of military friendship, goodwill and mutual aid, which were consolidated in the days of the war long ago, remain solid and reliable even today,” Putin said in a letter revealed by North Korean state media.

“This was demonstrated by the heroic participation of the DPRK soldiers in liberating the territory of the Kursk region from the Ukrainian occupiers,” he said, according to state news

agency KCNA.

“The Russian people will keep forever the memories of their bravery and self-sacrifice.”

Putin added that the two countries would continue to “act jointly and effectively defend their sovereignty and make a significant contribution to establishing a just and multi-polar world order.”

Putin’s letter came alongside a visit by a Russian delegation to Pyongyang, where the State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin thanked Kim for sending “excellent soldiers” to Ukraine, KCNA reported.

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Kim, meanwhile, said the delegation's visit would promote “a new level of development of the DPRK-Russia relationship.”

He also mentioned that he had a phone call with Putin on Wednesday, agreeing to expanded bilateral cooperation and “closer contact and communication between the two countries.”

Russia and North Korea have been forging increasingly closer ties, with the two countries signing a mutual defence pact last year, when Putin visited the reclusive state.

In April, North Korea confirmed for the first time that it had deployed a contingent of its soldiers to the front line in Ukraine, alongside Russian troops.

South Korean and Western intelligence agencies have said Pyongyang sent more than 10,000 soldiers to Russia's Kursk region in 2024, along with artillery shells, missiles and long-range rocket systems.

Around 600 North Korean soldiers have been killed and thousands more wounded fighting for Russia, Seoul has said.

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