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Russia's Ambassador in North Korea Dies at 70

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The late Russian Ambassador Alexander Matsegora. **Russian Embassy in the DPRK / Facebook**

Russia's ambassador to North Korea has passed away at the age of 70, the Foreign Ministry said Monday, without disclosing the cause of his death.

Ambassador Alexander Matsegora was seen in public as recently as last Tuesday, when he met with Russian university students taking Korean language courses in Moscow. Photos released by the Foreign Ministry showed him giving a lecture and talking with instructors.

In announcing Matsegora's death, Russia's Foreign Ministry praised the late diplomat as having made "significant contributions to the establishment and deepening of the comprehensive strategic partnership between Russia and North Korea."

President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un signed an agreement last year that pledges mutual aid if either country faces "aggression," a strategic pact that came as both countries had grown closer amid their standoff with the West.

Following the signing of that partnership deal, Pyongyang sent thousands of its troops to Russia's Kursk region to fend off a Ukrainian offensive there.

Matsegora was appointed ambassador to North Korea in 2014. Before that, he served as Deputy Director of the Foreign Ministry's First Asian Department, a post he took up after a five-year stint as counsellor-envoy at the Russian Embassy in Pyongyang.

Putin awarded the late diplomat the prestigious Order of Alexander Nevsky in February 2024.

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