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# State Duma Speaker Thanks North Korea's Kim for 'Liberation of Kursk'

By AFP

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North Korean leader Kim Jong Un (L) and Russian State Duma speaker Vyacheslav Volodin (R).
**Screengrab / Vyacheslav Volodin / Telegram**

Russian State Duma speaker thanked North Korean leader Kim Jong Un for "the liberation of Kursk" by sending troops there to fight off Ukrainians, Russian TASS reported on Sunday.

Pyongyang has sent thousands of troops, as well as missiles and munitions, to support Russia's war in Ukraine.

They were deployed to Russia's southwestern Kursk region to fend off a months-long counter-offensive by Kyiv's troops.

In return, analysts say North Korea is receiving financial aid, military technology, food and energy from Russia, helping Pyongyang circumvent heavy international sanctions over its banned nuclear programmes.

A Russian delegation, including State Duma speaker Vyacheslav Volodin, arrived in Pyongyang on Saturday to attend the opening ceremony of a memorial complex honoring those killed while supporting Moscow's war effort against Ukraine.

"[Let me express these] words of gratitude to you, esteemed Comrade Kim Jong Un, and to the Korean people for their fraternal support in the liberation of Kursk," Volodin was quoted as saying by TASS.

"Korean soldiers fought shoulder to shoulder with our soldiers and officers, liberating Russian soil from the Ukrainian Nazis," he said.

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A short video posted on social media shows Volodin and Kim hugging, with Volodin delivering his opening remarks in a meeting.

North Korea has yet to comment on the meeting.

**Embed:**

Russia's Defense Minister Andrey Belousov also arrived in Pyongyang for a meeting with North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un and Defense Minister No Kwang Chol.

"We agreed with the DPRK Defense Ministry to place our military cooperation on a stable, long-term footing," Belousov said Sunday, using the initials of North Korea's official name.

"We are ready to sign a plan this year for Russian–Korean military cooperation for the period of 2027–2031," he added.

Belousov also presented military awards to North Korean servicemen who took part in the Kursk operation, the Russian Defense Ministry said.

In 2024, the two countries signed a military treaty, obligating both states to provide military assistance "without delay" in the event of an attack on the other.

Seoul estimates that about 2,000 North Koreans have been killed in Moscow's war with Ukraine.

North Korean soldiers are said to have been instructed to kill themselves rather than be captured in battle.

Only two North Korean troops have been captured alive and are currently in the custody of Ukrainian authorities.

The two soldiers have expressed their desire to come to South Korea.

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