

Putin acknowledges North Korean Troops' role in Ukraine war



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September 3, 2025 — Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday publicly acknowledged that North Korean troops have joined the war in Ukraine, crediting their involvement to the initiative of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. The remarks, made during bilateral talks at Beijing's Diaoyutai State Guesthouse following China's Victory Day parade, marked the first time Putin directly confirmed Pyongyang's military role in the conflict.

Putin praised the North Korean forces as "courageous and heroic," noting their participation in battles for Russia's Kursk region. "On your initiative, as is well known, your special forces took part in the liberation of the Kursk region, in full accordance with our new agreement," he told Kim, while extending gratitude to the North Korean people.

For his part, Kim stressed his intent to deepen ties with Moscow, saying he was pleased to discuss the "prospects for developing relations" and future cooperation. Both leaders highlighted the "special, trusting and allied" character of their relationship.

Their meeting, lasting two and a half hours, was their fourth since 2019. Past encounters included Kim's visits to Vladivostok and Russia's Far East, as well as Putin's trip to Pyongyang last year, when both sides signed a comprehensive strategic partnership. That agreement pledged mutual military support in the event of external attack.

Following the meeting, Putin personally escorted Kim to his car, inviting him to visit Russia again. According to South Korea, thousands of North Korean troops have already been deployed to Russia, with an estimated 2,000 reported killed in action.

The latest talks underscore the growing military and political alignment between Moscow and Pyongyang, set against the backdrop of the ongoing Ukraine conflict and heightened global scrutiny.