

Russia Gives Kyrgyzstan \$30M Grant as Putin Visits Key Regional Ally

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Kremlin.ru

Russia has announced a \$30 million gift to Kyrgyzstan ahead of President Vladimir Putin's visit to the Central Asian country, one of Moscow's key military and economic allies in the region.

As a member of the Eurasian Economic Union, Kyrgyzstan enjoys close relations with Moscow. Russia, which has maintained a military airbase near Kyrgyzstan's capital of Bishkek since 2003, has [written off](#) more than \$700 million of the country's debt over the past 14 years.

Kremlin aide Yury Ushakov confirmed the multimillion-dollar grant to Kyrgyzstan on the eve of Putin's visit to the former Soviet republic, Interfax [reported](#) Wednesday.

"The Russian government decided in March to provide \$30 million of non-repayable assistance to support the state budget at the request of the Kyrgyz [government]," he was quoted as saying.

A video posted to social media shows Putin being offered a Kyrgyz snack upon his Thursday morning arrival in Bishkek.

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«Это надо макать?»: Путин и боорсоки pic.twitter.com/T4pW3AaNG9

— Дмитрий Смирнов (@dimsmirnov175) [March 28, 2019](#)

Bishkek will be required to regularly [account](#) for how it spends the money on military salaries and social benefits.

Russia and Kyrgyzstan signed a \$1.2 billion deal to invest in mineral resource exploration ahead of Putin's visit, and 30 additional bilateral deals are expected to be signed in total, the [eurasianet.org](#) news website reported. The two countries also signed a \$1.5 billion hydropower cooperation agreement, the Kyrgyz economy ministry [told](#) the state-run TASS news agency.

Russia also [announced](#) an extension of amnesty for Kyrgyz migrants who had violated immigration laws, Ushakov said.

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