

Ukraine Says Russia to Deploy 10K North Korean Troops

By [AFP](#)

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KCNA VIA KNS / AFP

Russia is preparing to deploy 10,000 North Korean soldiers in the fight against Kyiv, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Thursday, citing intelligence information.

Zelensky has previously accused North Korea of sending troops to Russia's army but this was the first time he gave an exact figure.

An unspecified number of North Korean soldiers were already on "occupied Ukrainian territory from the side of Russian enemies," Zelensky said, based on "information from our intelligence."

"We know [of] about 10,000 soldiers of North Korea that they are preparing to send fight against us," he added, speaking to reporters in Brussels after talks with EU leaders.

The Ukrainian leader was attending both an EU leaders' summit and a meeting of NATO defense ministers in Brussels as he presses for support for his "victory plan" to end the war against Russia.

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Zelensky said the North Korean troops included "land forces" and "other tactical personnel."

"This is the first step to a world war," he warned, noting that Iran was also backing Russia with "drones and missiles," a claim that Tehran has repeatedly denied.

He said Russian President Vladimir Putin was "counting" on the North Korean soldiers because he was "afraid of mobilization."

Zelensky conducted a whirlwind tour of Western capitals earlier this month including Washington, Paris, Berlin, Rome and London to promote his initiative.

Experts have long said North Korean missiles are being deployed in Ukraine by Russian forces, which both Moscow and Pyongyang have denied.

Putin made a rare visit to Pyongyang in June, where he signed a mutual defense agreement with leader Kim Jong Un.

Moscow and Pyongyang have been allies since North Korea's founding after World War II and have drawn closer since Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

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