

Better Armed, but No Helmets: How North Koreans Fought Ukraine

After months of rapt attention focusing on the thousands of North Koreans battling alongside Moscow's troops close to Russia's border with Ukraine, Pyongyang's fighters appear to have vanished.

It has been roughly three weeks since Ukraine detected North Korean soldiers being involved in Russia's attempts to push Kyiv's forces from Kursk, said Colonel Oleksandr Kindratenko, a spokesperson for the Ukrainian Special Operations Forces.

Russia has been trying to end Ukrainian control of a chunk of territory in its Kursk region after Kyiv launched a surprise incursion in the late summer. Moscow has managed to peel back some of Ukraine's grip, but Kyiv has retained its hold over a chunk of territory, including the town of Sudzha.

North Korea's leader, Kim Jong Un — a staunch ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin—sent an estimated 12,000 North Korean soldiers to Russia that were quickly directed toward Kursk, intelligence reports suggested in the fall. Estimates from Ukraine have put roughly half this number as having been killed or injured, although this is not possible to independently verify.

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