# Russian President Putin's Lavish Visit to North Korea and US Soldier Sentenced in Russia



**Russian President Vladimir Putin Visits North Korea**

Russian President Vladimir Putin was welcomed with a lavish ceremony in Pyongyang’s main square for his official visit to North Korea. The event featured a red carpet, roses, waving crowds, and ceremonial gunfire at a grand military parade. This marks Putin’s first official visit to North Korea since 2000. The North Korean state news agency reported that Putin thanked Kim Jong Un for the invitation, and footage showed large crowds lining the capital’s avenues as their motorcade passed. Discussions between the leaders focused on deepening bilateral ties, amidst strengthened relations since Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

**US Soldier Sentenced in Russia**

A Russian court has sentenced US soldier Staff Sgt Gordon Black, 34, to three years and nine months in a penal colony. Sgt Black was found guilty of theft and threatening to kill his girlfriend, Alexandra Vashchuk. Arrested in May, he pleaded not guilty to the murder threat charges but admitted to "partial" guilt in stealing 10,000 roubles (£89). The incident occurred during an altercation at Ms Vashchuk’s apartment. Sgt Black claimed she was aggressive and had struck him after drinking vodka. Although prosecutors sought a four-year and eight-month sentence, the defence requested acquittal. Sgt Black plans to appeal the verdict. He met Ms Vashchuk in South Korea and travelled to Russia and China without necessary authorization, violating army rules.