

Vietnam asks for Russian help to help preserve Ho Chi Minh corpse

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The embalmed body of Vietnam's founding leader lies in a mausoleum in Hanoi, attracting thousands of visitors each year.

Vietnam has formed a special team of experts - including four Russian scientists - to help preserve the embalmed body of the Communist-ruled state's founding leader, [Ho Chi Minh](#), according to a written copy of the official decision seen by Reuters news agency.

The special council has been created to assess the condition of Ho's corpse, which was first embalmed nearly 50 years ago and work is due to start next month.

"The council is tasked with proposing plans and scientific measures to preserve and protect the absolute safety of Chairman Ho Chi Minh's body for the long term," Reuters reported the decision as saying.

Several countries have benefitted from the expertise of the Soviet Union's "Lenin Lab", which put the embalmed body of former leader Vladimir Lenin on display in Moscow shortly after his death in 1924.

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[China](#), North Korea and [Vietnam](#) have all embalmed their founding leaders with assistance from the Soviet Union.

The bodies require regular and expensive upkeep and occasional re-embalming to maintain

their condition.

The late Vietnamese leader, affectionately known as "Uncle Ho" in Vietnam, is preserved in a large Soviet-built mausoleum in the capital, Hanoi, where he is displayed in a glass coffin in the dark interior.

The site attracts thousands of visitors each year.

Unique chemical mixture

North Korean leader [Kim Jong Un](#) placed a wreath outside the mausoleum in March after the conclusion of his shortened summit with United States President [Donald Trump](#).

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, [Russia](#) started to charge Vietnam for its supply of a unique chemical mixture required to embalm Ho, according to the mausoleum's website.

In 2003, Vietnam asked Russia to move the production of the chemical cocktail to the Southeast Asian country and dispatched scientists to Moscow to learn the secrets of the Lenin Lab.

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"In the early days, Russian experts produced the chemicals secretly, without letting us know," Cao Dinh Kiem, a museum official, told Vietnamese state media in April.

"When they finished, Vietnamese workers were assigned to clean up the site and we got the chance to study the gauze and fluids that remained."

Vietnamese scientists have now mastered the art of mummification, but Russian scientists are still regularly called on to help with the annual maintenance of Ho's body.

Ho led the Viet Minh independence movement from 1941, defeating the French Union in 1945 and going on to establish the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. He died in 1969.
