

Medvedev Makes More Police Staff Changes

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President Dmitry Medvedev on Monday appointed Major General Mikhail Velichko, currently deputy head of the Interior Ministry's administrative department, to the post of adviser to Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev.

Velichko will also serve as the Interior Ministry's chief of staff, according to the order.

The Interior Ministry has been undergoing a serious personnel shakeup in recent months, and the ministry itself is on the threshold of a major reform.

Last month alone, the president sacked the Interior Ministry's chief for the Northwest Federal District as well as three police generals from the Southern Federal District. He also named a new police chief for the Samara region and reduced the status of the central office of the transportation police.

In the same order, published Monday on the Kremlin web site, Colonel Valery Zhernov was named first deputy head of the main office for the North Caucasus Federal District.

Medvedev also appointed Major General Alexander Obukhov as head of the ministry's main office for the Irkutsk region, and Major General Nikolai Simakov as deputy head of the ministry's main office for the North Caucasus Federal District.

The order also relieved Colonel Yefim Finkelshtein, a senior police official in the Stavropol region.

Under the planned reform of the Interior Ministry, the police force is expected to be cut 20 percent to 25 percent, with those remaining getting a significantly higher salary. Last week, Medvedev proposed renaming the police force and kicked off a public discussion on the new law that will regulate its work.

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