

Putin Appoints Acting Sakha Governor to Fortify Kremlin's Regional Clout

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President Vladimir Putin has named Yegor Borisov as acting head of the Sakha republic, two days after accepting the politician's request to be dismissed from his post.

Borisov's term as head of the Sakha republic, formerly called Yakutia, was originally set to expire in June 2015 before he asked Putin during a meeting on Tuesday to be allowed to renew his mandate in earlier elections, which will be held in September.

A decree published on the Kremlin website said Borisov's request had been accepted, making it the thirteenth time a regional governor has been dismissed this year, though several have subsequently been reappointed.

Some analysts have linked the wave of dismissals — leading to the initiation of earlier-than-planned gubernatorial elections — with a desire by the Kremlin to tighten its grip on the regions ahead of the State Duma elections in 2015 and 2016.

The Sakha republic, which is the world's largest subnational entity in terms of land area,

contains 35 percent of the world's diamonds and has become the center of several projects run by the Far East Development Ministry, which seek to capitalize on a growing Asian demand for the gems.

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