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Ex-Governor Who Resigned Over Deadly Russian Mall Fire Appointed Regional Speaker

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Aman Tuleyev **Danil Aikin / TASS**

The embattled governor of Russia's Siberian region of Kemerovo, who stepped down last week after a deadly shopping mall fire, has now been voted in as a speaker of the region's parliament.

Aman Tuleyev, 73, resigned one week after the March 25 Winter Cherry mall fire that killed more than 60 people trapped inside the building. "With such a heavy burden, it's impossible to work as governor," Tuleyev said before leaving his post, which he had held for over two decades.

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The Kemerovo regional council, dominated by the ruling United Russia party, voted 38-1 to appoint Tuleyev as its speaker on Tuesday, the RIA Novosti news agency reported.

"My conscience is clear before God, and that's the most important thing," the new speaker told the deputies.

The previous speaker, Aleksei Sinitsyn, stepped down from the post on Monday to make way for Tuleyev.

“I think it is absolutely fair and proper for the team to be led by its leader,” Sinitsyn said, referring to the region’s ex-governor.

At least one United Russia member in the State Duma, Sergei Neverov, opposed the move.

“I think the people will simply not understand this decision,” he told Interfax.

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