

Mayor of Largest Kazakh City Dismissed After Bloody Unrest

By [AFP](#)

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Bakytzhan Sagintayev. **Dmitry Astakhov / Russian Government Press Office / TASS**

Kazakhstan's president dismissed the mayor of the country's largest city Almaty, the presidential website said Monday, after the financial hub became the epicenter of bloody unrest earlier this month.

Former prime minister and political heavyweight Bakytzhan Sagintayev served as Almaty's mayor from 2019. He was in charge of the city as a nationwide political protest gave way to armed clashes and looting on Jan. 5.

An order on the website of the Kazakh presidency said President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev had dismissed Sagintayev "in connection with his transfer to another (job)" without mentioning his new post.

A separate order on the website stated that Yerbolat Dosayev, who was serving as the

chairman of the national bank, had been appointed in this place.

Over 200 people were killed and thousands injured earlier this month in violence that began with demonstrations against a car fuel price hike in the west of the ex-Soviet country and prompted Tokayev to call in Russia-led troops.

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The Almaty mayor switch comes as Tokayev cements control at the expense of the loyalists of his long-ruling predecessor Nursultan Nazarbayev, 81, who still wielded significant power prior to the crisis but has since ceded key posts to the president.

An online petition for Sagintayev's resignation had attracted more than 26,000 signatures as of Monday.

Tokayev and other Kazakh officials have blamed the clashes on bandits and terrorists with foreign connections, while observers have suggested that the violence was rooted instead in a political power struggle.

A contingent of over 2,000 troops from the Moscow-led Collective Security Treaty Organisation began arriving in the country on January 6 and completed its withdrawal some two weeks later after the situation stabilized.

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