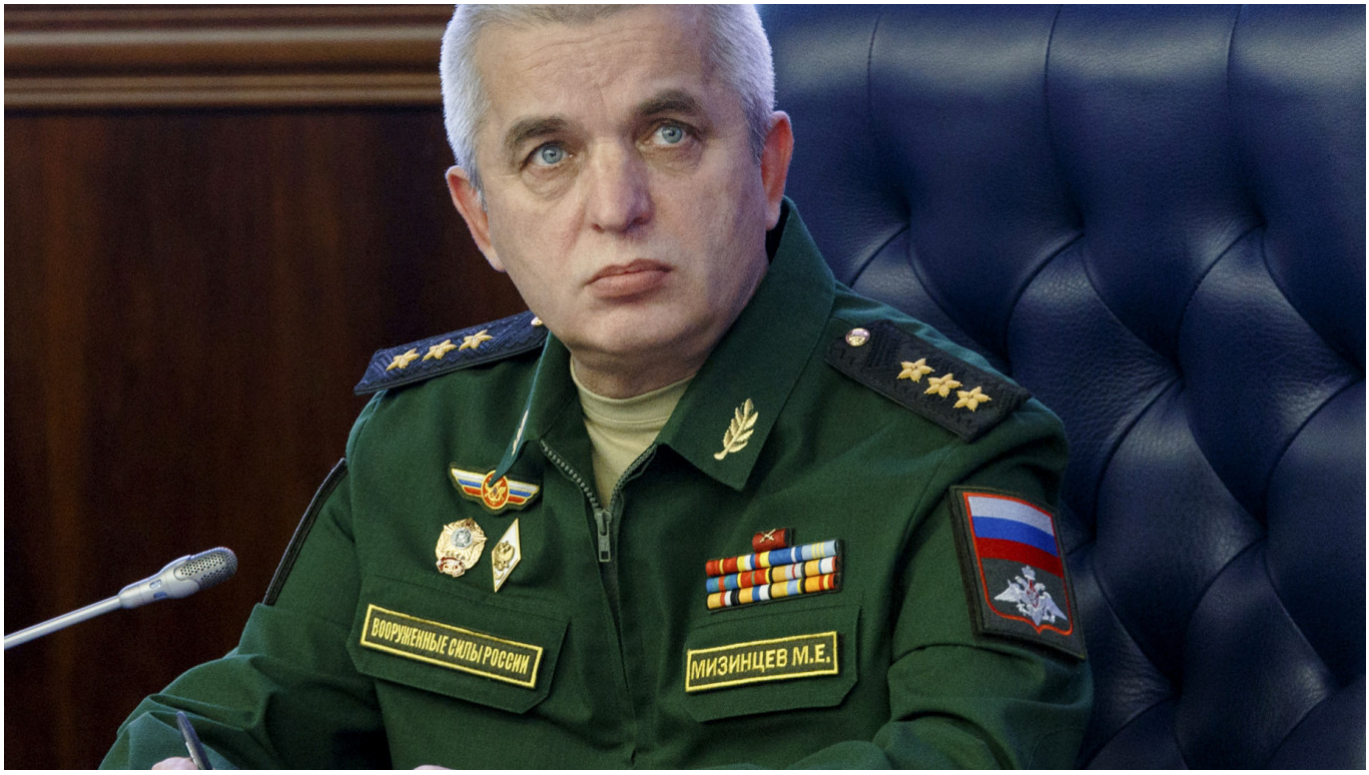
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Army Replaces Top Logistics Commander

By AFP

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Colonel General Mikhail Mizintsev. **TASS**

The Russian army on Sunday replaced its highest ranking general in charge of logistics ahead of an expected counteroffensive by Kyiv.

The announcement followed days of rumours about the sacking of Colonel General Mikhail Mizintsev, under British sanctions for his role in the siege of the Ukrainian port city of Mariupol, which Russian troops captured a year ago.

In a statement, the Russian Defense Ministry said Alexei Kuzmenkov – a former official from the National Guard – had replaced Mizintsev.

"Kuzmenkov was appointed to the position of deputy defence minister of the Russian Federation, responsible for the logistical support of the Armed Forces," the ministry said.

The statement did not say why Mizintsev was replaced after just seven months on the job.

Nicknamed "the Butcher of Mariupol" by some Western media, Mizintsev was appointed to the logistics post days after President Vladimir Putin announced a mobilisation drive last September.

Several influential Russian war correspondents had reported last week that Mizintsev would likely be removed from his post.

The Kremlin's offensive in Ukraine has revealed major logistical problems in the Russian army, which became especially visible during a chaotic mobilisation drive last year.

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