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Putin's Ex-Classmate Nominated to Head Russian Supreme Court

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Irina Podnosova. **council.gov.ru**

President Vladimir Putin's former university classmate has been nominated as the sole candidate to head Russia's Supreme Court after the recent death of its longtime chairman, the legal news outlet Rapsi reported Monday.

Deputy Chief Justice of Russia's Supreme Court Irina Podnosova and Putin studied law at Leningrad State University, from which they both graduated in 1975, though it was not immediately clear if they knew each other at the time.

The court's qualification board unanimously recommended Podnosova for the post of Chief Justice, the highest-ranking officer of Russia's federal judicial system, according to Rapsi.

Podnosova is expected to assume her role after Putin submits her candidacy to the upper-house Federation Council for a vote.

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Vyacheslav Lebedev, who had headed Russia's Supreme Court since 1991, died in late February at the age of 80.

The business daily Kommersant, citing legal experts, reported last month that Podnosova's nomination was "quite expected," adding that work on finding Lebedev's successor had begun several years ago.

Podnosova, who also heads the Supreme Court's judicial chamber on economic disputes, has served as Deputy Chief Justice since July 2020.

The Kremlin described her candidacy as evidence that there is no gender inequality in Russia.

Kyiv sanctioned Podnosova last month on accusations of supporting Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

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