

Governor of Russia's Samara Region Resigns

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Dmitry Azarov. **Maxim Blinov / POOL / TASS**

Updated with Putin's appointment, Kommersant report.

Dmitry Azarov [announced](#) Friday that he was stepping down as governor of southern Russia's Samara region, making him the second regional head to resign this week ahead of gubernatorial elections later this year.

"I've made a decision to complete my work in the governor's post," Azarov said in a video address to residents posted on the Russian social media website V Kontakte.

The announcement comes a day after Natalia Komarova [stepped down](#) as governor of western Siberia's Khanty-Mansi autonomous district after holding that post for 14 years. President Vladimir Putin named Tyumen mayor Ruslan Kukharuk as her replacement later on Thursday.

With Azarov's resignation, Samara will now join Khanty-Mansi and other Russian federal subjects, as well as annexed Crimea, in holding gubernatorial elections in September. Azarov

and Komarova's back-to-back resignations are seen as [regular cadre changes](#) ahead of those races.

Related article: [Governor of Russia's Oil-Rich Khanty-Mansi Region Resigns Ahead of Elections](#)

Political analysts were widely [expecting](#) Azarov's removal as governor in the near term given his conflicts with both regional and federal officials, namely with lower-house State Duma lawmaker Alexander Khinshtein, whose constituency is in the Samara region.

Like Komarova, who was [accused](#) by pro-war activists of "discrediting" the Russian military for saying "we didn't need" to invade Ukraine in 2022, Azarov's seven-year tenure as governor was plagued by local scandals.

In 2021, his Instagram account was [temporarily blocked](#) after a young woman posted a selfie with him on a private jet with the caption "I love him." The woman claimed that the photo was "made as a joke," according to the Kommersant business daily.

Following the start of his second term in office last year, authorities [charged](#) two senior members of Azarov's administration with corruption. Two more senior Samara region officials have been reportedly [arrested](#) in recent weeks.

Earlier this month, Azarov was accused of [falsely identifying](#) a local official as a "concerned resident" who was lobbying to cut down a forest and build a road.

Putin later on Friday named former Tula region Deputy Governor Vyacheslav Fedorishchev as Azarov's replacement.

Kommersant, citing anonymous officials in the Samara region, [reported](#) that the former governor has not yet received a new job offer in government, while law enforcement sources suggested Azarov may soon be targeted in a criminal investigation.

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