The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Putin Appoints Former Separatist Commander to Security Council

October 25, 2024



Artyom Zhoga. **kremlin.ru**

President Vladimir Putin on Friday appointed Lieutenant Colonel Artyom Zhoga, currently the Kremlin's envoy to the Urals Federal District, to Russia's National Security Council.

Zhoga, a former military officer from the Russian-occupied Donetsk region in eastern Ukraine, gained prominence last year after publicly urging Putin to seek re-election in the 2025 presidential race.

Earlier this month, Putin tapped Zhoga, a Ukraine war veteran, as his envoy to the Urals Federal District, a region critical to Russia's vast military-industrial sector.

Zhoga's appointment makes him one of 21 non-permanent members of Russia's Security Council, a key executive body overseeing national security and strategic policy. The council consists of 13 permanent members, including leaders of major security agencies and high-ranking legislative and executive officials.

Putin chairs the Security Council, with former Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu as secretary and former President Dmitry Medvedev serving as deputy secretary. Experts describe the Security Council as an influential body that both signals major policy shifts and mediates inter-agency disputes.

Zhoga is the highest-profile Kremlin appointee to emerge from the "Time of Heroes" professional training program, launched following Putin's pledge to elevate Ukraine war veterans as Russia's "new elite."

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