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Putin Appoints Sacked Komi Head to Senior Defense Ministry Post

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Vladimir Uyba. **Pavel Bednyakov / POOL / TASS**

President Vladimir Putin appointed the former head of northern Russia's republic of Komi to serve as a senior Defense Ministry official, state media reported Thursday.

Vladimir Uyba announced Tuesday that he was stepping down from office in Komi, making him the third regional executive to resign this week as part of an annual reshuffle that political observers call "gubernatorpad."

"Vladimir Uyba has been appointed first deputy head of the Russian Defense Ministry's main military medical directorate," the state-run news agency TASS quoted the outgoing governor's press service as saying.

Uyba previously headed Russia's Federal Medical-Biological Agency, a national disease control and prevention body that played a key role in efforts to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

In his new post, Uyba is expected to assist the head of the main military medical directorate, Dmitry Trishkin, in ensuring the health of Russian troops and overseeing the provision of medical equipment.

Known by its Russian acronym GVMU, the directorate employs 100,000 medical specialists and 23,000 doctors in 70 military hospitals and clinics.

During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, the main military medical directorate sent medics to Italy and Serbia and took part in human trials for the development of Russia's Covid-19 vaccine "Sputnik."

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