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Deputy Governor of Russia's Primorye Region Killed in Kursk

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Sergei Yefremov. **Government of the Primorsky Krai**

The deputy governor of Far East Russia's Primorye region was killed in the southwestern Kursk region, where Ukrainian and Russian forces have clashed since Kyiv launched a surprise border incursion in August.

Primorye region Governor Oleg Kozhemyako announced Sunday that Deputy Governor Sergei Yefremov, 51, was killed "while returning from a combat mission."

Yefremov's vehicle struck a mine in the Kursk region, according to the Kommersant business daily, which cited unnamed sources.

Kozhemyako appointed Yefremov as deputy governor in February 2023. However, Yefremov had been leading the Tigr battalion — a regional volunteer unit attached to Russia's elite 155th Guards Naval Infantry Brigade — since July 2022, months after Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

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The 155th Brigade has been accused of committing war crimes in Ukraine.

Yefremov deployed with the Tigr battalion to Kursk shortly after Ukraine launched its cross-border offensive. Kozhemyako praised Yefremov and the battalion for "protecting civilians" and "evacuating wounded marines."

Yefremov is the highest-ranking Russian regional official known to have been killed in the war against Ukraine, though municipal and regional politicians have previously died in combat, according to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Russian service.

The state-run RIA Novosti news agency said it interviewed Yefremov "a few days" before his death, during which he expressed hope of returning home "soon."

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