

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 <u>killed</u> 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 <u>cited</u> unnamed sources.

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

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The 155th Brigade has been <u>accused</u> of committing war crimes in Ukraine.

Yefremov <u>deployed</u> with the Tigr battalion to Kursk shortly after Ukraine launched its cross-border offensive. Kozhemyako <u>praised</u> 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 <u>said</u> it interviewed Yefremov "a few days" before his death, during which he expressed hope of returning home "soon."

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