The Moscow Times
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Putin Appoints New Governors for Sverdlovsk, Orenburg Regions

March 27, 2025

Denis Pasler and Yevgeny Solntsev. **kremlin.ru**

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday appointed new acting governors for the Sverdlovsk and Orenburg regions ahead of gubernatorial elections later this year.

Orenburg's outgoing governor, Denis Pasler, replaced Yury Kuivashev as governor in Sverdlovsk, according to a Kremlin decree. During a televised meeting, Putin told Pasler that he would "like to offer and ask you to return to your native area where you've already worked."

Yevgeny Solntsev, the former prime minister of the pro-Moscow government in eastern Ukraine's occupied Donetsk region, succeeded Pasler as acting governor of Orenburg. Solntsev also previously served as Russia's deputy construction minister.

Both Pasler and Solntsev requested "a couple of months" to prepare for their new roles, according to readouts from their respective meetings with Putin.

Orenburg and Sverdlovsk are among 20 Russian regions and the annexed Crimean city of Sevastopol that will hold direct or indirect gubernatorial elections in September.

While Putin has not indicated if Kuivashev will be reassigned, the Vedomosti business newspaper reported last month that he could be appointed to a federal government position later this year.

Political analysts view Pasler's reappointment as a "promotion" despite controversies surrounding protests over his response to deadly floods in Orenburg last year, as well as his son's hockey career in the United States.

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