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Zelensky Dismisses Sumy Region Governor After Deadly Russian Strike

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Volodymyr Artiukh. **sm.gov.ua**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky dismissed the governor of the northeastern Sumy region following a deadly Russian missile strike in the regional capital, officials said Tuesday.

Taras Melnychuk, the Ukrainian Cabinet's representative to parliament, confirmed the dismissals of Sumy Governor Volodymyr Artiukh and Luhansk Governor Artem Lysohor in a Telegram post. No official reason was provided.

Oleh Hryhorov, the former police chief of Ukraine's Luhansk region, was appointed governor of Sumy, while Oleksii Kharchenka, the former mayor of Siverskodonetsk, will lead the Luhansk region.

Artiukh's removal comes amid criticism from local officials who say he helped organize a military awards ceremony on Sunday, the day Russia launched a ballistic missile attack on Sumy. At least 35 people were killed and 117 others wounded in that strike.

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Russia's Defense Ministry said it fired two Iskander-M missiles at a "meeting place of command staff," claiming the strike killed more than 60 Ukrainian troops. It acknowledged civilian casualties but blamed Kyiv, alleging the event was held in a densely populated area.

Under pressure from international condemnation, the Kremlin denied targeting civilians or residential infrastructure, repeating its claim that Russian forces "only hit military and military-linked targets."

Mariana Bezuhla, a Ukrainian lawmaker known for her criticism of the country's military leadership, accused Artiukh and a senior general overseeing Ukraine's eastern ground forces of endangering civilians by allowing the ceremony to proceed.

Artiukh told Ukraine's Suspilne broadcaster that he had been invited to the event but was not involved in organizing it. He declined to say who was responsible.

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