

Mariupol Siege Commander Appointed as New Head of Russia's Ground Forces

May 22, 2025



General Andrei Mordvichev. **Russian Defense Ministry**

Defense Minister Andrei Belousov on Thursday [confirmed](#) the appointment of Colonel General Andrei Mordvichev as the new head of Russia's ground forces, coming a week after President Vladimir Putin dismissed his predecessor.

Belousov described Mordvichev as an "experienced combat officer" who has "fully showcased his talent" during the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which the Kremlin officially refers to as a "special military operation."

Mordvichev, 49, is one of Russia's youngest colonel generals. He previously led the Central Military District in Ukraine and commanded the 8th Guards Combined Arms Army in 2021.

He is best known for overseeing the devastating siege of the southern Ukrainian port city of Mariupol in early 2022, as well as Russia's capture of the eastern Ukrainian town of Avdiivka in 2023.

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Some pro-Kremlin military bloggers have [criticized](#) what they describe as Mordvichev's high-casualty tactics. Military analyst Yan Matveyev has [called](#) him a leading figure behind so-called "meat assaults" — the repeated use of poorly equipped troops to storm heavily fortified positions.

In 2023, Ukrainian prosecutors [indicted](#) Mordvichev on charges of waging a war of aggression and attempting to change the country's borders by force.

Russia's state-run Rossiiskaya Gazeta [reported](#) on Mordvichev's appointment last week, but Thursday's announcement from the Defense Ministry is the first confirmation of his new position in the military.

Mordvichev replaces General Oleg Salyukov, whom President Vladimir Putin on Thursday [named](#) deputy secretary of Russia's Security Council, where former Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu now serves as secretary.

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