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Orenburg Mayor Resigns to Continue Military Service in Ukraine

July 03, 2025



Sergei Salmin. **ural56.ru**

The mayor of Orenburg announced on Thursday that he was stepping down from office to continue serving in the Russian military in Ukraine.

Sergei Salmin, who became mayor in March 2022, took a leave of absence in February after requesting permission from then-Orenburg region Governor Denis Pasler to join the military as a volunteer. He said this week he had formally submitted his resignation.

"My volunteer contract with the Russian Defense Ministry ends very soon, and I've decided to extend it. I can't leave my commander, the unit entrusted to me and my comrades-in-arms," Salmin said in a video posted on Telegram.

"At the same time, I understand the city can't remain without a mayor for such a long time," Salmin told municipal deputies who gathered for an emergency session to vote on his dismissal.

Orenburg's municipal council voted 31-3, with one abstention, to approve his early departure. He will be replaced by Albert Yumadilov, the former first deputy head of Moscow's Southeastern Administrative District.

Salmin had faced widespread criticism during his tenure, especially over his response to the devastating floods that hit Orenburg in the spring of 2024. Acting regional governor Yevgeny Solntsev accused him of "abandoning" the city.

Salmin, who goes by the nom de guerre "Sambist," serves in a drone unit that reportedly recruits from Russia's political elite. He regularly posts videos of himself in military fatigues and armed with an automatic rifle, addressing Orenburg residents from the front lines.

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