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Accused War Criminal Appointed to Ministerial Post in Dagestan

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Temirlan Abutalimov. **foundation-vsemeste.rf**

A Russian military officer accused of committing war crimes in Ukraine has been appointed to a cabinet post in the North Caucasus republic of Dagestan.

Temirlan Abutalimov, 28, was named Dagestan's acting minister for national policy and religious affairs on Tuesday, according to an announcement by the regional government. The appointment was made by the region's head, Sergei Melikov, who had personally mentored Mr. Abutalimov through a presidential program for veterans.

Called "Time of Heroes," the professional training program fast-tracks Ukraine war veterans into government roles.

"For more than a year, Abutalimov studied public administration, gaining experience in government by participating in meetings with the relatives of military personnel, working with civil organizations and engaging in outreach to local communities," the Dagestan government said in a statement on Telegram.

The promotion comes despite allegations from Ukraine's defense intelligence agency (HUR) that Abutalimov served as a senior lieutenant in an assault company involved in the execution of four surrendered Ukrainian soldiers in the Zaporizhzhia region in May 2024.

The HUR said it had video evidence of the execution and intercepted radio communications where one of the assault company's commanders allegedly orders his subordinates to shoot Ukrainian captives.

In December 2023, Melikov said President Vladimir Putin awarded Abutalimov the title Hero of Russia for continuing to fight after being wounded in Zaporizhzhia.

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