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Putin Likely Lets Gerasimov Stay On as Top General After Hitting Retirement Age

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President Vladimir Putin likely extended the military service of General Valery Gerasimov, chief of the General Staff of Russia's armed forces, after he turned 70, the Vedomosti business newspaper reported Monday, citing sources close to Russia's Defense Ministry.

Under normal circumstances, Gerasimov, who celebrated his 70th birthday on Monday, would have reached the mandatory retirement age.

However, in March 2021, Putin signed a law removing the mandatory retirement age for senior presidential appointees, allowing them to remain in office past age 70 if they choose.

Russia's Defense Ministry has not publicly commented on Gerasimov's reported military service extension.

If confirmed, the general would become at least the fourth known senior Russian military and

security official to keep his role despite hitting the mandatory retirement age. Russia's top police investigator, Alexander Bastrykin, for example, is 72.

Analysts told Vedomosti that the Kremlin is likely "satisfied" with Gerasimov's performance throughout the three and a half years of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

As chief of Russia's General Staff, a post which he has held since November 2012, Gerasimov directly oversees military operations. In 2023, Gerasimov was appointed as commander of Russian forces in Ukraine.

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