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Putin Removes Filmmaker Alexander Sokurov From Presidential Human Rights Council

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Alexander Sokurov. **Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency**

President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday removed acclaimed Russian film director Alexander Sokurov from the Kremlin's Council for Civil Society and Human Rights as part of an annual reshuffle of the advisory body.

Sokurov, the director of "Russian Ark" and the Golden Lion-winning "Faust," remains a rare yet cautiously critical voice within Russia. He had been among the few remaining members of the Kremlin's Council for Civil Society and Human Rights to openly challenge government policy during the ongoing crackdown on dissent

The director has famously sparred with Putin during televised government meetings. Last year, Sokurov expressed dismay to the president over mounting government censorship in the arts, including restrictions placed on his own films.

Valery Fadeyev, who heads the Council for Civil Society and Human Rights, told state media that Sokurov had not recently participated in meetings.

Sokurov was removed from the council alongside lawyer Vladimir Ryakhovsky, neurologist Yan Vlasov and writer Maxim Zamshev, according to a decree.

To replace the four outgoing members, Putin appointed a senior psychotherapist association member Anna Danilova, chief Russian Orthodox Church hospital physician Alexei Zarov, chief geneticist Sergei Kutsev and television presenter Tatiana Romanenko.

In January, Sokurov was also removed from the Russian government's council on the development of cinematography.

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