



## Putin's New Ukraine Commander Dubbed "General Armageddon" For Ruthless Track Record

### Description

**RUSSIA:** "Russia and Russia's commanders are worried about the state of their military machine," the head of British intelligence agency GCHQ Jeremy Fleming, told BBC Radio on Tuesday. "We can see that desperation at many levels inside Russian society and inside the Russian military machine," he described in an assessment which comes days after a big Russian military command shake-up.

Following the past weeks of a rapid roll-back of Russian positions in Ukraine's east, President Vladimir Putin sacked two of his senior military commanders and **appointed General Sergey Surovikin to lead the next the next phase of the war effort in Ukraine**, which began with Monday's major escalation in airstrikes on over a dozen cities, which was a response to the Kerch Bridge bombing.



*Russian General Sergey Surovikin*

Pundits and journalist in the West are widely casting Gen. Surovikin's appointment as part of a new "gloves off", more brutal offensive to come on the heels of last month's partial mobilization order which has involved calling up some 300,000 reservists to support the "special operation". He was previously head of the air force.

Mainstream press reports have already labeled him "General Armageddon" for his reputation as being "absolutely ruthless" – particularly in the prior command role which saw him gain most battlefield experience: Syria.

Within Russian establishment media circles which lean hawkish, Surovikin has been hailed as a "legendary" commander and as the **country's "most competent" general**. According to a brief review of his rise through top echelon ranks in *Al Jazeera*:

*The general, born in 1966 in the Siberian city of Novosibirsk, was announced as the head of Russia's southern military grouping in its war on Ukraine in June.*

*Surovikin received the title of **Hero of Russia** and was awarded a medal for his service in Syria in 2017, where he led the Russian military expedition as commander of the Aerospace Forces.*

*He is known for being totally "ruthless" in the Russian military, according to a report ([PDF](#)) by the Jamestown Foundation, a US defence policy think-tank.*

*“Surovikin made a stellar career in the top echelons of the General Staff and defence ministry after 2008, during the radical military reform that required ruthlessness,” read the report, adding that his **“readiness to vigorously execute any orders trounced any potential questions about his checkered curriculum vitae”**.*

Now in succeeding Gen. Aleksandr Dvornikov in the role of top commander over the Ukraine operation, Surovikin faces the immense pressure of seeking to deliver Putin’s key objectives, even as NATO backers of Kiev ramp up their own intelligence-sharing and arms resupply efforts.

This week UK intelligence put out an assessment [saying](#) Surovikin “will likely have to contend with an **increasingly factional Russian defense ministry which is poorly resourced to achieve the Kremlin’s objectives in Ukraine.**”



*Kremlin image/EPA-EFE*

According to more on his checkered past reaching back to the political discord of 1990’s post-Soviet struggles, he spent “two stints in jail for allegedly selling weapons and for leading a military column against protesters during the 1991 coup,” The Guardian reviews. “He has also previously served in Tajikistan and Chechnya.” And [more](#):

*“For over 30 years, Surovikin’s career has been **dogged with allegations of corruption and brutality**,” wrote British intelligence officials in a recent report on Surovikin’s likely promotion to lead the southern military group.*

*During the 1991 coup d’état attempt launched by Soviet hardliners, Surovikin, then a captain, led a rifle division that drove through barricades erected by pro-democracy protesters. Three men were killed in the clash, including one who was crushed.*

The report further speculates that “With the appointment, the Kremlin may also be **seeking to combat criticism from nationalists who have accused the army of mismanaging the war** in Ukraine and of failing to use harsh tactics to try to force the Kyiv government to submit.” Some of those ‘harsher tactics’ have been on display with Monday into Tuesday’s large-scale bombing waves of major Ukrainian cities, particularly focused on energy infrastructure.

2 days after appointing butcher of Aleppo (Syria) Sergei Surovikin its head of forces in Ukraine, [#Russia](#) drops missiles on downtown Kyiv during morning rush hour...:  
[pic.twitter.com/tNHjSFJwzG](https://pic.twitter.com/tNHjSFJwzG)

— Joyce Karam (@Joyce\_Karam) [October 10, 2022](#)

FT in a new profile playing up his brutality in Syria, writes of the top general that the 56-year old “is notorious for his campaigns in Syria, where he served two stints as commander of Russian forces supporting Bashar al-Assad’s regime.” The report further underscored:

*Human Rights Watch named him among officials who “may bear command responsibility” for attacks on civilians, alleging in a 2020 report that he had ordered attacks on homes, schools and hospitals. In line with those tactics, Russian missiles on Monday and Tuesday hit civilian infrastructure, including a playground in Kyiv, despite continuing claims by Moscow that only military sites were targeted.*

**As for those already calling Surovikin the “butcher of Aleppo”** who they say destroyed Syria’s largest city and ultimately enabled Bashar al-Assad’s survival, some are pointing out that the Russian military entered the conflict in 2015, significantly after fierce fighting had long been raging.

Back again with the Aleppo lie... Aleppo was well beyond destroyed of three years of fighting between SAA and rebels before Russia began its operations in Syria... Find another lie for God sake... <https://t.co/NVpC8Nfabt>

— Within Syria (@WithinSyriaBlog) [October 10, 2022](#)

Ukraine’s ambassador to the UK Vadym Prystaiko also emphasized the purpose of intimidation in Putin’s appointing Surovikin: “Every escalation, they bring in more dangerous people. This guy was known as the Butcher of Syria. **They brought in a bad guy to scare us. But we won’t be scared.**” Prystaiko added: “They finally understood they can’t do anything on the ground... So they brought in an air forces guy to try. To me, this means Putin is really frustrated, really desperate.”

by Tyler Durden

## Category

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