

Russia Appoints New Black Sea Fleet Commander – State Media

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Vice-Admiral Viktor Sokolov. **Mikhail Metzel / TASS**

A new commander has been appointed to the Russian Black Sea Fleet, state news agency RIA Novosti reported Wednesday citing military sources.

If confirmed, the removal of Igor Osipov and the elevation of Viktor Sokolov would be one of the most major Russian military reshuffles since the invasion of Ukraine began in late February.

The Black Sea Fleet has suffered a series of battlefield reversals during the war, including the April sinking of its flagship, the Moskva, and losses during the Russian retreat from Snake Island in the Danube delta two months later.

The Russian-occupied region of Crimea, where the Black Sea Fleet is based, has also been hit by what are believed to be a series of Ukrainian attacks in recent weeks, including [explosions](#) on the Saki air base and an apparent [drone strike](#) on the Black Sea Fleet's headquarters in the port city of Sevastopol.

Sokolov was presented to members of the Black Sea Fleet's military council in the port of Sevastopol, according to RIA Novosti.

"There was no public event, and probably won't be, due to the yellow terrorist alert level introduced in the city," sources told the news agency.

A spokesperson for the Black Sea Fleet later denied the appointment, calling information about the change of commander "gossip," RBC media outlet reported.

Sokolov, 59, has held several senior positions in the Russian navy and has been in charge of a naval academy in St. Petersburg since 2020.

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