

# [***Who Is Oleksandr Syrsky? Zelensky Names New Commander of Ukraine's Forces***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B90-P8P1-DY68-10KX-00000-00&context=1516831)

Newsweek.com

February 8, 2024 Thursday 2:19 PM EST

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**Length:** 506 words

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**Highlight:** Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky named Syrsky to the position after firing General Valerii Zaluzhny on Thursday.

**Body**

Ukrainian President [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/volodymyr-zelensky?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) has appointed Colonel General Oleksandr Syrsky as the commander-in-chief of Ukraine's Armed Forces after firing General Valerii Zaluzhny.

Zelensky removed Zaluzhny from his position on Thursday following months of [*speculation*](https://www.newsweek.com/zelensky-fire-ukraine-armed-forces-commander-zaluzhny-1865193?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) about a possible change in Kyiv's military leadership. The Ukrainian president said that Syrsky, who had been serving as commander of Ukraine's ground forces, would lead the military through a time of "renewal."

During a televised [*address*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1755648756920242243) on Thursday evening, Zelensky called Syrsky "Ukraine's most experienced commander." He insisted that the change was not "about ***politics***" and said that Syrsky would lead "a new management team" assembled after "dozens of conversations with commanders at various levels."

"This is not about surnames, and surely not about ***politics***," Zelensky said. "This is about our army system, about the management of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, and about involving the experience of this war's combat-hardened commanders."

Syrsky, 58, was born in Soviet Russia's Vladimir region but has lived in Ukraine since the 1980s, according to Reuters. He has been known by the call sign "snow leopard" since leading Ukrainian troops in battle during the 2014 pro-Russia uprising in Donetsk in Luhansk.

More recently, Syrsky served as commander during the successful defense of Kyiv shortly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The new commander-in-chief was also in charge of the successful counteroffensive that began later that year.

Additionally, Syrsky led the Ukrainian defense of Bakhmut, which was eventually captured by Russia in May 2023, following an extended period of intense fighting that destroyed most of the city.

Syrsky said in a December post to Telegram that Moscow had achieved military "[*superiority*](https://www.newsweek.com/ukraines-confidence-russia-war-shaking-1853844?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)," due in part to Russia's willingness to sacrifice large numbers of troops in a war of attrition.

"We have to fight in conditions of superiority of the enemy both in weapons and in the number of personnel," Syrsky said at the time. "The enemy suffers heavy losses, which he replenishes with the reserves of assault battalions formed from former prisoners."

"Despite daily losses in personnel and equipment, the Russian occupiers continue to carry out offensive actions," he added. "The greatest value for us is the life of our soldiers."

Zelensky indicated in a statement shared to X, formerly [*Twitter*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/twitter?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), that he had asked Zaluzhny "to remain part of the team," although his potential new role was unclear.

*Newsweek* reached out for comment to the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense via email on Thursday.

"I met with General Valerii Zaluzhny," Zelensky said. "I thanked him for the two years of defending Ukraine. We discussed the renewal that the Armed Forces of Ukraine require. We also discussed who could be part of the renewed leadership of the Armed Forces of Ukraine."

"The time for such a renewal is now," he added. "I proposed to General Zaluzhny to remain part of the team. We will definitely win! Glory to Ukraine!"

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2346633/oleksandr-syrsky-pictured-donetsk-oblast.jpg)

**Graphic**

Oleksandr Syrsky pictured in Donetsk Oblast

Photo by Yuriy Mate/Global Images Ukraine via Getty Images

Colonel General Oleksandr Syrsky is seen during an awards presentation in the Soledar direction on July 2, 2023 in Donetsk Oblast, Ukraine. On Thursday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky named Syrsky Ukraine’s new military chief.

**Load-Date:** February 8, 2024

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