

War in Ukraine

Senior Ukrainian military leader sacked by Volodymyr Zelenskyy

Yuriy Sodol ousted as commander of the joint forces of the army shortly after complaints about his conduct



Monday's announcement was the latest shake-up to Ukraine's senior military leadership. © AP

Christopher Miller in Kyiv YESTERDAY

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has sacked Lieutenant General Yuriy Sodol as commander of the joint forces of the country's army hours after complaints about his conduct in the war with Russia were made by a prominent soldier.

Zelenskyy announced on Monday evening that Brigadier General Andriy Hnatov would replace Sodol, in the latest shake-up to Ukraine's senior military leadership.

The changes came shortly after Bohdan Krotevych, chief of staff of the Azov national guard brigade, accused Sodol of incompetence on the battlefield and blamed him for the deaths of "thousands" of Ukrainian soldiers under his command.

Russia's armed forces have slowly seized the initiative in Ukraine after Kyiv's failed counteroffensive last year and a six-month delay in [US military assistance](#) that allowed Moscow to make fresh territorial gains.

In a rare display of public criticism of [Ukraine's](#) military leadership by a serving officer, Krotevych wrote on Telegram that he had appealed to the State Bureau of Investigations to conduct a probe into Sodol's conduct.

"I wrote a letter to the SBI with a call to launch an investigation against one military general who, in my opinion, has killed more Ukrainian soldiers than any Russian

general,” he said.

“I don’t care if they start an investigation against me, and I don’t care if they put me in prison. I care that combatants and brigade commanders are judged for the loss of an observation post, but the general is not judged for the loss of regions and dozens of cities and the loss of thousands of soldiers.”

The SBI did not immediately respond to a request for comment but it confirmed to the Interfax-Ukraine news agency the receipt of Krotevych’s appeal and said it had initiated an investigation.

The general staff of the Ukrainian armed forces also did not immediately respond to a request for comment about Sodol’s conduct.

Sodol was appointed commander of the joint forces of the Ukrainian army in February, having previously served as commander of the marine corps.

Zelenskyy at the time announced a big military reshuffle, selecting Colonel General [Oleksandr Syrsky](#) to replace General Valery Zaluzhny as commander-in-chief of Ukraine’s armed forces.

Hnatov, a former chief of staff and deputy commander of the Ukrainian army’s southern command, managed the defences of the cities of Mykolayiv and Bakhmut.

Mykolayiv is still under Ukrainian control, but Bakhmut was destroyed before being occupied by Russian forces in May 2023.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, who launched the full-scale [invasion of Ukraine](#) in February 2022, this month said his country would begin negotiations to end the war in exchange for control of four frontline Ukrainian regions.

Putin’s proposals were immediately rejected by Kyiv, on the basis they amounted to capitulation and would leave the country vulnerable to future attacks.

