

Former Adjara Leader Tornike Rizhvadze Hospitalized After Alleged Suicide Attempt



BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Tornike Rizhvadze, the former head of the Adjara Autonomous Republic

government, was hospitalized on July 7 with a gunshot wound to the chest, according to the Georgian Interior Ministry.

He was admitted to a hospital in Sagarejo, in the eastern Kakheti region, where doctors treated a lung injury. The ministry said his condition is stable but

serious.

Authorities have opened an investigation under Article 115 of the Criminal Code, which concerns incitement to suicide. One person has been detained under Article 238 for the negligent storage of firearms.

Pro-government broadcaster Imedi described the incident as a suicide attempt. Citing another outlet, Prime Time, the station reported that medical staff found a note in Rizhvadze's clothing. According to the report, Rizhvadze wrote that he had been accused of "corruption and protecting drug dealers," and appealed to Georgian Dream founder Bidzina Ivanishvili and Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze to protect his family.

"My friends, employees, and family members are innocent," the note reportedly said. "They only acted on my orders."

Rizhvadze also allegedly referred to "Aleko," believed to be Aleko Akhvlediani, the director of Georgia's Maritime Transport Agency. Imedi reported that the weapon used belonged to Akhvlediani, and that Rizhvadze claimed to have taken it without his knowledge. He reportedly wrote that Akhvlediani bore no responsibility.

Rizhvadze led the government of the Black Sea region of Adjara from 2018 until his resignation on April 4. His departure was part of a series of high-level exits from the ruling Georgian Dream party.

U.S. Ambassador: Georgian Dream Sent 'Threatening' Letter to Trump Administration

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

In an interview with RFE/RL's Georgian Service, U.S. Ambassador to Georgia Robin Dunnigan revealed that the ruling Georgian Dream party sent a private letter to the Trump administration earlier this year that she described as "threatening," "insulting," and "unserious."

According to Dunnigan, the letter was delivered shortly after she met with Georgian Foreign Minister Maka Botchorishvili on March 14 to convey steps that could help reset U.S.-Georgia relations. The ambassador said she had just returned from Washington, where she met with senior officials in the new U.S. administration to discuss policy toward Georgia.

"Three days later [...] GD leadership sent a letter to me for the Trump administration," Dunnigan said. "Frankly, [it] was threatening, insulting, unserious, and was received extremely poorly in Washington." She added, "I think it took a while [to respond] because people were so surprised to get such a correspondence



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from leadership of one country to my country.”

Dunnigan said she would not have mentioned the letter publicly had Georgian Dream Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze not raised the matter himself. On May 13, Kobakhidze issued an open letter urging former President Donald Trump and U.S. Senator J.D. Vance to respond to what he described as unfair treatment of the Georgian government.

Dunnigan said that after the open letter was published, she informed the prime minister that she had been asked to deliver a message from U.S. Senator Marco Rubio directly to Georgian Dream

founder Bidzina Ivanishvili. “I was not asked to deliver it to the prime minister,” she noted.

When asked why the message was to go to Ivanishvili rather than to government officials, Dunnigan said, “I think most people in the world recognize that Bidzina Ivanishvili runs the government.”

The U.S. Embassy later confirmed that Ambassador Dunnigan requested a meeting with Ivanishvili on May 22 to deliver the message and reiterate specific steps Georgia could take to repair ties with the United States. Ivanishvili declined the meeting, citing fears of sanctions, blackmail, and political pressure from the West.

Dunnigan, who announced her retire-

ment in June, said the steps needed to reset relations “are not that hard.” She criticized Georgian Dream’s continued anti-U.S. rhetoric and false accusations.

“One of the first steps would be to stop the anti-American rhetoric. Stop saying things that aren’t true about the United States,” she said. “There is a lot that GD says that is not true about the United States: That we tried to start a second front here — not true. That my predecessor tried to foment revolution here — not true. That our strategic partnership is a partnership on paper only — not true. That I’m being recalled by my government — not true. I can go on and on.”

In response to the ambassador’s interview, Georgian Dream led Parliament Speaker Shalva Papuashvili dismissed

both the remarks and the platform on which they were published.

“The interview of the resigned ambassador is being disseminated by ‘Radio Free Europe,’ which was exposed as a propaganda outlet by President Trump — neither one nor the other is of interest to us,” Papuashvili said. He claimed that Radio Free Europe was originally created and secretly funded by the CIA, adding that “its funding has been cut off” and that “Trump’s desire is to shut down Radio Free Europe entirely.”

“Commenting on the statements of a resigned ambassador is not in our interest,” he said, adding, “It’s clear to everyone who resigned prematurely between the two of us — as they say, everything is clear.”

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER
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Zourabichvili Warns of ‘Final Stage of Finalising Dictatorship’ After Suspected Suicide Attempt by Former Adjara Leader



სალომე ზურაბიშვილი / Salome Zourabichvili
197K followers • 8 following

Georgia’s fifth president, Salome Zourabichvili, issued a stark warning on July 7, saying the country is facing total lawlessness after the suspected suicide attempt of former Adjara government head Tornike Rizhvadze.

“Today, everyone in this country is in danger! No one is protected!” Zourabichvili wrote in a statement. “The detention of former high-ranking officials,

threats of violence or allegedly driving someone to suicide, and the demonstrative racketeering of well-known businessmen mean one thing: the state is destroyed!”

Her comments came hours after the Ministry of Internal Affairs reported that Rizhvadze had been hospitalized with a

gunshot wound to the chest. He was first taken to a hospital in Sagarejo and later transferred to the First University Clinic in Tbilisi. Doctors say he suffered a lung injury and remains in stable but serious condition.

The Interior Ministry announced an investigation under Article 115 of the Criminal Code, which deals with incitement to suicide.

Zourabichvili described the current political climate as “the classic final stage of a dictatorship” and accused the ruling Georgian Dream party of ruling through fear and repression.

“There is complete lawlessness in the country,” she wrote. “Those who call themselves the

‘ruling party’ have taken everything into their own hands. They think they can deceive the people with scripted scenarios and fabricated tales. Meanwhile, behind the curtain of this illusory reality, the country has been dragged back into a mafia-criminal space.”

She also claimed that the government’s methods resembled those used by the Kremlin. “The Russian trace is evident in all of this. These methods, this lawlessness, this false reality, and a regime devoid of human dignity... Rejecting democracy and a European future logically leads to this mafia-like ‘governance.’”

Here is a clear, structured half-page news article based on the statements by Parliament Speaker Shalva Papuashvili. The tone remains factual, with quotes properly attributed and context added where needed:

Papuashvili Accuses EU-Funded Groups of Plotting to Sabotage Local Elections

Speaker of Georgian Dream led Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili accused EU-funded civil society organizations of planning to disrupt Georgia’s upcoming local self-government elections, claiming their actions amount to a violation of international law and pose a threat to the country’s sovereignty.

“Organizations funded by the EU Embassy are preparing to

disrupt the local self-government elections — this is a fact,” Papuashvili told journalists. “We must speak out about this loudly.”

According to him, the groups in question are allegedly operating with the approval of the European Union’s ambassador to Georgia and are already working to interfere in the election process.

“EU budget funds are being spent in Georgia toward sabotaging these elections,” Papuashvili claimed. “Last year, before the elections, we tried to be considerate — to somehow be lenient or spare some of our foreign ambassadors or politicians — and we now see what that resulted in. Afterward, they interfered even more blatantly in our elections.”

He added that this time, Georgian Dream would speak out “loudly” and name both the organizations and their foreign sponsors if such interference con-

tinues.

“Full responsibility will lie with the donors,” he said. “In every case, we will speak out loudly and expose both the organizations and the donors — because this constitutes a violation of international law.”

Papuashvili framed the remarks as part of a broader effort by Georgian Dream to “protect the European Union’s reputation,” which he claimed is being damaged by “Brussels bureaucracy” and inconsistent actions from EU-linked donors.

“Our mission is to ensure that the EU does not violate international law. This is also the will of our people — to preserve the reputation of the European Union, which Brussels bureaucracy is damaging,” he said. “We must not allow Brussels bureaucrats or certain donors to undermine the EU’s reputation and the European values they so often talk about in words but violate in practice.”



Weather

Tuesday, July 8

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 30°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 20°C

Wednesday, July 9

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 30°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 22°C

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