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S. Ossetian Opposition Leader May Seek Political Asylum

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South Ossetia opposition leader Alla Dzhioyeva said Tuesday that she might apply for political asylum, days after her headquarters were stormed by riot police seeking her detainment.

Dzhioyeva was hospitalized Feb. 9 with a suspected microstroke, or transient ischemic attack, after an investigator attempted to hand her a summons to the Prosecutor General's Office for questioning in a case brought in September 2011 in connection with an attempted coup.

"My first thought was that I had to leave South Ossetia. I was not broken by Georgian aggression or criminal prosecution, but now I am seriously thinking it over, and I will probably ask for political asylum," she said.

Her supporters contend that riot police stormed the opposition leader's headquarters and struck her on the head with the butt of a gun.

The head of South Ossetia's Interior Ministry Valery Valiyev denied any physical altercation took place, saying that such allegations are a "blatant, irresponsible lie," Interfax reported.

Dzhioyeva said she will make a decision shortly about whether to remain active in what she called the "dirty" world of politics.

"When I first started doing this, I didn't think it would be so dirty and that people here are ready to do anything to advance their personal goals, not shrinking from anything," Dzhioyeva told Interfax.

"I of course hope that somewhere in this world there is honest politics, but unfortunately here things are not that way. Therefore, in the course of the next three days I will make a decision [to stay in politics or not] and make an announcement to the people," she said, Interfax reported.

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