

Russian Diplomat Shot Dead in Abkhazia

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A Russian diplomat in the Abkhaz capital was killed Monday by unknown assailants on the fifth anniversary of Abkhazia and Russia establishing diplomatic relations.

Dmitry Vishernev, 36, the first secretary at the Russian Embassy in Sukhumi, was shot in the head at close range while driving out of a garage at around 8:30 a.m, RIA Novosti reported.

Vishernev's wife was injured while sitting next to him in the government car and underwent surgery at a local hospital. The head doctor at the hospital told Interfax that she did not regain consciousness following the operation and was in critical condition.

The Russian ambassador to Abkhazia, Semyon Grigoriyev, said he was waiting for a report from investigators.

"Talking about any versions of what happened is premature," he said, according to Interfax. "An investigation is being carried out."

The motives behind the attack were unclear. Russia's Investigative Committee said in a statement that it had begun a “procedural check” in connection with the shooting and that Russian investigators from the North Caucasus Federal District would travel to Abkhazia to assist in an inquiry.

Russia was the first country to recognize Abkhazia's independence when it broke away from Georgia in 2008 and helps subsidize its government. Most of the world, however, continues to see the region as a part of Georgia.

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