

Georgian Restaurant Chain Doesn't Expect to Reopen Raided Location

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The location of the restaurant along Shlyuzovaya embankment, which is at the center of a rental dispute.

Georgian restaurant chain Khachapuri seems to have admitted defeat in a battle with its landlords, with the owners announcing that they do not expect to reopen their location near Paveletsky Station.

The chain announced on its Facebook page Monday that the third of its four restaurants has ceased operating, although the company still holds the lease for the space.

It added that the company expects a protracted legal battle with the building owners over increased rents and is looking for a new location in the area with up to 500 square meters and a place for a veranda.

The dispute between Khachapuri and Avtokombinat No. 4, which is owned by the family of former Natural Resources and Environment Minister Vitaly Artyukhov, entered

the spotlight on Aug. 9 when a YouTube video showed a large group of men forcing their way into and taking over the building.

The raiders beat up security guards and took the restaurant's mascot, a sheep named Tolik, hostage. Tolik was returned to his owners four days later.

In an interview with Ekho Moskvyy radio, Khachapuri co-owner Tatyana Melnikova said that the cafe, which opened its first outlet in refurbished a run-down garage last year, was operating without interference until January, when the building owners wanted to raise rents substantially and began turning off utilities.

After months of negotiations Khachapuri eventually agreed to new terms, but Melnikova said she refused to pay higher rates when the landlords said they would raise the rent from the current 300,000 rubles per month to 500,000 rubles per month next year.

After the early August raid the restaurant's management appealed to various government officials, including President Vladimir Putin, for help but now sees little hope of staying in the building.

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