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Uzbek Independence Celebrations Partially Canceled Amid Karimov Death Rumors

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Municipal workers clean the area at Independence Square preparing to celebrate the Independence Day of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, Aug. 29, 2016. **AP**

Uzbekistan's Independence Day celebrations will go ahead with a reduced program despite the rumored death of Uzbek President Islam Karimov, the Interfax news agency reported Tuesday.

Earlier ⊠reports had claimed the events had been cancelled amid widespread claims that the ⊠long-serving president had died of a brain hemorrhage.

A state spokesperson confirmed that the concert traditionally attended by the head of state in a central ⊠Tashkent had been canceled, but that all other scheduled events ⊠would take place, including Thursday's ⊠national awards ceremony honoring prize workers and military veterans.

Uzbekistan's Independence Day takes place on Sept. 1. This year will mark the 25th anniversary of the country's independence from the Soviet Union.

The Fergana news agency reported on Monday that Karimov had died at the age of 79 following a brain hemorrhage. Uzbek authorities have denied the reports, describing the president's condition as "stable."

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