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Putin Pays Tribute to Islam Karimov in Uzbekistan

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Kremlin Press Service

Russian President Vladimir Putin has visited the Uzbek city of Samarkand to lay a wreath at the tomb of the country's recently deceased President Islam Karimov, the Interfax news agency reported Tuesday.

Joining President Putin was Uzbekistan's Prime Minister, Shavkat Miriziyoyev, who is widely believed to succeed Karimov as President of Uzbekistan.

Karimov was buried on Sept. 3

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after being officially pronounced dead by the Uzbek government on Sept. 2 following a brain hemorrhage.

Unconfirmed reports of Karimov's death first surfaced on Aug. 29, leading to awkward condolences from prominent figures such as former Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili prior to the official announcement.

Putin announced his intention to honor Karimov when speaking to reporters at the G20 summit in the Chinese city of Hangzhou Monday.The president called Karimov's death “a great loss,” and spoke of his personal relationship with the Uzbek dictator. “I must tell you about the human side of our relationship,” Putin said. “He was very kind to me and we had good relations as he got older. He was always someone I could rely on,” he said.

The president also said that Uzbekistan would remain stable, and that Russian-Uzbek relations would continue to move forward. Ties between the two countries have suffered in recent years, with Uzbekistan withdrawing from the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization in 2010.

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