

Breakaway Georgian Region's Leader Resigns Amid Election Protests

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"I'm resigning the presidency in the name of maintaining stability in the country," Raul Khadzhimba said.
Alexei Nikolsky / TASS

The leader of Georgia's breakaway province of Abkhazia has resigned following days of protests contesting his victory in an election held last fall.

After protesters stormed the government headquarters Thursday, Abkhazia's lawmakers voted for President Raul Khadzhimba's ouster and its supreme court reversed its earlier decision that upheld his re-election in September. Khadzhimba had led the region since 2014.

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"I'm resigning the presidency in the name of maintaining stability in the country," the president's office said Sunday in a statement on its website.

Abkhazia broke away from Georgia after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Most countries still

consider it a part of Georgia, but Russia recognized its independence after winning a short war against Georgia in 2008.

Russia deploys troops in Abkhazia and another breakaway Georgian region, South Ossetia.

Khadzhimba resigned hours after influential Russian presidential adviser Vladislav Surkov was reported to have [arrived](#) in Abkhazia to mediate the conflict.

Abkhazia's parliament is expected to vote on Khadzhimba's resignation letter Monday.

Election officials [set](#) the next presidential vote to take place March 22. Khadzhimba does not plan to run in the upcoming election, Abkhazia's Vice President Aslan Bartsits [told](#) the state-run TASS news agency Monday.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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