The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Former Ukrainian Lawmaker Shot, Wounded in Annexed Crimea

October 27, 2023

Oleg Tsaryov. **Council.gov.ru**

Updated with criminal investigation.

Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) has launched a criminal investigation into the attempted assassination of Oleg Tsaryov, a former Ukrainian lawmaker who was reportedly slated to lead a pro-Russian puppet government in Kyiv.

Oleg Tsaryov was shot and badly wounded at his home in annexed Crimea, his associates said earlier on Friday.

"[Tsaryov] was shot twice at around midnight on the grounds of the sanatorium where he lives," read a message on the former lawmaker's personal Telegram channel.

"Oleg was unconscious with heavy blood loss by the time the ambulance arrived," the message continued.

No information was provided as to who the shooter might have been, but law enforcement

authorities were said to be investigating the scene of the shooting.

Vladimir Rogov, a pro-Russian politician in occupied Ukraine, said Tsaryov was in intensive care and that his condition was life-threatening.

The Kremlin said Friday it was unaware of an assassination attempt against Tsaryov.

Related article: FSB Says Killed 'Ukrainian Agent,' Arrests 2 Others in Occupied Zaporizhzhia

Tsaryov had served as a people's deputy of Ukraine's parliament in Kyiv between 2002 and 2014.

After Russia annexed Crimea and separatists formed a pro-Moscow government in parts of eastern Ukraine, Tsaryov headed the parliament of a short-lived confederation called Novorossiya between 2014 and 2015.

He has since abandoned his political career to run three Soviet-style wellness clinics on the Black Sea in Crimea.

The FSB's criminal case referred to Tsaryov as a "state figure," however, he is not known to hold any government position.

Russia's Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, said its chairman Alexander Bastrykin has ordered his subordinates in Crimea to establish the circumstances of Friday's assassination attempt and to find the shooter.

Ukrainian police have been seeking Tsaryov's arrest since 2014 on charges of separatism.

U.S. intelligence said on the eve of Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year that the Kremlin was eyeing Tsaryov to lead regime change in Kyiv, according to the Financial Times.

Reuters, citing anonymous sources, also reported that Russia had been setting up Tsaryov to head a puppet government in Kyiv after the invasion.

Tsaryov dismissed the reporting at the time, telling the Financial Times in mid-February 2022 that he was "not important enough."

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/10/27/former-ukrainian-lawmaker-shot-wounded-in-annexed-crimea-a82914