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Nikolai Svanidze, Russian Journalist and Ukraine War Critic, Dies Aged 69

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Nikolai Svanidze. **Valery Sharifulin / TASS**

Russian journalist Nikolai Svanidze, a veteran television and radio host, died in Moscow at age 69 on Wednesday following a prolonged illness.

Svanidze passed away at his northeast Moscow apartment in the evening, according to the tabloid Moskovsky Komsomolets tabloid, which did not cite specific sources. Baza, a Telegram news channel with ties to Russian security services, claimed pneumonia was the preliminary cause of death.

In recent years, Svanidze, who previously served as a member of Russia's council on civil society and human rights, had been living with brain ischemia. At one point, he underwent medical treatment in Israel.

Svanidze remained one of the few domestic critics of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine who stayed in the country while avoiding criminal charges under wartime censorship laws.

In November 2022, President Vladimir Putin replaced Svanidze and other members of Russia's civil society and human rights council with pro-war figures. The council's former members were expected to raise concerns about the criminalization of war criticism and other sensitive topics during the council's annual end-of-year meeting with Putin.

Svanidze was dismissed as head of the institute of mass media and advertising at the Russian State University for the Humanities that same year. He was known for hosting political and historical talk shows on state-run television in the mid-1990s and early to mid-2000s.

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