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Kremlin Says Georgian Government Trying to 'Stabilize' Situation

By AFP

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Protesters in front of the Parliament building in Tbilisi. **Alexander Patrin / TASS**

The Kremlin said Monday that Georgia's government was seeking to stabilize the situation and restore calm after mass pro-EU protests.

"The Georgian authorities are taking measures to stabilize, return the situation to calm," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists after Georgian police fired water cannons and tear gas at tens of thousands of demonstrators in Tbilisi on Sunday.

Russia "has not interfered and does not intend to interfere" in events in Georgia, Peskov said, calling the protests "an internal matter."

But he said that Russia views the protests over the ruling party's victory in October — in parliamentary elections condemned by the opposition as rigged — as an "attempt to stir up the situation."

“We have seen such events in a whole number of countries. The most direct parallel you can draw is the Maidan,” Peskov said, referring to the 2014 mass protests in Kyiv that overthrew pro-Russian president Viktor Yanukovych.

Peskov added that Russia sees “all the signs of carrying out an Orange Revolution,” in the Georgia protests.

The Orange Revolution comments refer to Ukraine's 2004 pro-democracy protests over Kremlin-backed Yanukovych's victory in fraud-tainted polls, which led to the election's cancellation. His opponent Viktor Yushchenko then won a fresh vote.

On Thursday, the EU Parliament called for new elections in Georgia, criticizing them over “numerous and serious electoral violations, including documented cases of intimidation of voters, vote manipulation, interference with election observers and media and reported manipulation involving electronic voting machines.”

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