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Russia's First and Only Black Politician Dies at 65

January 22, 2025



Jean Gregoire Sagbo. **Alexander Solodkov / TASS**

Jean Gregoire Sagbo, Russia's first and only Black politician, has died at the age of 65, his colleague said on social media Tuesday.

Originally from Benin, Sagbo came to the Soviet Union in the early 1980s to study economics. He later settled in the village of Zavidovo in the Tver region, around 100 kilometers (62 miles) north of Moscow, after marrying a local woman.

Despite encountering racial harassment during trips to Moscow, Sagbo became a successful businessman and a well-regarded community organizer in his village.

In 2010, villagers encouraged Sagbo to run for office, leading to his election to the local council in the nearby town of Novozavidovo. Five years later, in 2015, he was elected to the legislative assembly of the Konakovsky district in Tver.

Sergei Tamarin, a fellow assemblyman who served alongside Sagbo, announced his death on

the Russian social network VKontakte. Tamarin did not disclose the cause of Sagbo's death or whether he passed away in Russia or Benin.

According to Tamarin, Sagbo was buried on Tuesday in his home country of Benin. He also shared an image of Sagbo's Russian-language obituary.

Sagbo is survived by his wife, Svetlana and two sons, Jean-Maxim and Serzh.

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