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RT Chief Simonyan's Husband Dies at 59 After Months in Coma

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Tigran Keosayan. **Anton Kardashov / Moskva News Agency**

Pro-Kremlin TV personality Tigran Keosayan has died at age 59 after more than nine months in a coma, his wife Margarita Simonyan, the head of state-funded network RT, said Friday.

A Russian actor and director of Armenian descent, Keosayan was famous for his works as a film director and the pro-Kremlin satirical comedy show he had hosted since 2016.

He directed a 2018 patriotic romantic comedy about the Russian-built bridge to the Crimean peninsula, which the Kremlin annexed from Ukraine in 2014. The movie was panned by critics and was among the lowest-rated on film review websites.

Related article: RT Chief Simonyan Says Husband in Coma After Undergoing 'Clinical Death'

He sparked controversy in 2020 for featuring an impersonation of former U.S. President Barack Obama in blackface.

The European Union and Britain imposed sanctions on Keosayan after Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

His on-air comments following the invasion drew scorn from Russia's traditional allies Kazakhstan and Armenia.

Keosayan was first hospitalized in late December in "highly critical" condition, reports said at the time. He suffered heart attacks in 2008 and 2010.

In January, Simonyan said her husband was in a coma after surviving a clinical death.

Simonyan, 45, publicly confirmed on Monday that she was undergoing cancer treatment after undergoing surgery earlier this month.

She is among the most prominent Russian state media figures and is under sanctions from the EU and the U.S.

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