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Telegram Founder Durov Says He Survived 2018 Poisoning Attempt

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Tucker Carlson Network

Telegram founder Pavel Durov has claimed that he survived a poisoning attempt in the spring of 2018, but chose not to reveal the incident until now to focus on business priorities.

In a new interview, Durov said he experienced severe pain all over his body after returning to his rented townhouse and noticing a "strange neighbor" leaving something by his door.

"That was the only instant in my life when I think I was dying," Durov told podcaster Lex Fridman in the video interview published Monday. "One thing I was certain about is, yeah, this is it."

The Russian-born entrepreneur said he woke up the next day on the floor, unable to stand, with burst blood vessels and unable to walk for two weeks afterward.

"This is something I never talked about publicly because I didn't want people to freak out," Durov said.

At that time, Durov said Telegram was seeking funds for its TON blockchain project and several countries, including Russia, were trying to ban the messenger app. Moscow abandoned its efforts in 2020.

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Durov did not say where the alleged poisoning attempt took place, but he is known to have moved in 2017 to Dubai, where he resided in various rental properties.

Christo Grozev, an investigative journalist who investigated the 2018 poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skripal in Britain and the 2020 poisoning of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny for the Bellingcat open-source investigative outlet, said the symptoms described by Durov are consistent with nerve-agent poisoning.

In his interview, Durov said he experienced intense pain, progressive loss of vision and hearing, extreme difficulty breathing and overwhelming weakness.

Grozev called on Durov to reveal more details about his poisoning attempt "to allow us to look into what happened to you — and who was behind it."

Durov, who holds citizenship in France and the United Arab Emirates, was arrested in Paris last year after being accused of failing to curb illegal content on Telegram.

The 40-year-old billionaire was later released on bail but prohibited from leaving France.

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