

Georgia Concerned Over Construction on Royal's Grave in Moscow

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An undated portrait of Georgian Prince Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani, by an unknown artist.

The Georgian Foreign Ministry has demanded information from Russia regarding reports of construction work being done on top of the Moscow grave of a 17th-century Georgian prince.

Georgia sent a communique on the issue to Russia via the Swiss embassy, which has acted as a go-between for the two countries since they cut off diplomatic relations following an eight-day conflict in August 2008.

Georgia wants to find out whether construction is being done in Vsekhsvyatsky Cemetery in the Sokol neighborhood, where Prince Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani and members of the Bagrationi dynasty are buried, Georgian Deputy Foreign Minister Nino Kalandadze told Interfax. He cited media reports that said illegal construction was underway in the cemetery.

Kalandadze said that if construction is taking place that could threaten the graves, Georgia will ask Russia to intervene to halt it. He said Georgia would then raise the issue of moving

Orbeliani's remains.

Prince Orbeliani, who lived from 1658 to 1725, was a writer, scientist and politician. His works included philosophical and religious texts as well as a Georgian dictionary.

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