

Georgian President Saakashvili: “we started the war”

By [Global Research](#)

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For the first time ever, Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili has admitted that his country started the military conflict in South Ossetia in August. But the Georgian leader is adamant the action was justified. He was testifying before a parliamentary commission investigating the five-day war.

According to Saakashvili, the attack on the South Ossetian capital, which involved night shelling of residential areas with multiple rocket launcher systems, was aimed at protecting Georgian citizens. He said it was a response to Russia’s “intervention” in the region.

“We did start military action to take control of Tskhinvali and other unruly areas. But we took this difficult decision to fend off our territory from intervention and save the people who were dying. It was inevitable,” Saakashvili said.

The Georgian President claims Russia moved tanks into South Ossetian territory before Georgia launched its attack.

He said: “The issue is not about why Georgia started military action – we admit we started it. The issue is about whether there was another chance when our citizens were being killed? We tried to prevent the intervention and fought on our own territory.”

“I used to like Putin”

Mikhail Saakashvili said the deterioration of relations between Tbilisi and Moscow had nothing to do with his personal relations with Vladimir Putin. There was some speculation in the media that Putin bore a personal grudge against Saakashvili after he allegedly insulted Putin when he was president several years earlier.

The Georgian President said: “I never insulted him [Vladimir Putin] before anyone, that’s a lie.”

“All the gossip that the differences between our countries are based on personal hostility is an invented thing,” he said.

Ex-ambassador’s allegations ‘groundless’

Mikhail Saakashvili dismissed as nonsense the allegations voiced earlier this week by the former Georgian ambassador to Moscow, Erossi Kitsmarishvili. The diplomat said Tbilisi had been preparing the military campaign against South Ossetia for several years and put the

blame for the bloodshed on Mikhail Saakashvili.

“Kitsmarishvili’s allegations are groundless; his status was not high enough to attend the Security Council meetings where the country’s foreign policy was decided. He could not know our plans, and those certainly have nothing to do with his version,” the Georgian leader said on Friday.

Opposition: EU should treat Saakashvili like Zimbabwe’s Mugabe

The opposition Labour Party in Georgia has called on the EU to freeze the bank accounts of Mikhail Saakashvili and several other top officials. According to party secretary, Giorgi Gugava, such a move would stop them from fleeing the country.

“The Saakashvili administration have packed their suitcases and hope to flee and live a quiet and prosperous life abroad on what they’ve stolen and looted,” he said.

The proposed sanctions would be similar to those imposed against more than 100 Zimbabwe officials, who had their bank accounts frozen by the EU in June.

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