

Annex 28

List of Russian Journalists working in South Ossetia during the War

Note: Most of them arrived in South Ossetia prior to August 8

1st Channel

1. Olga Kyrii - <http://www.izvestia.ru/special/article3119348/>
2. Olga Kuznetsova - <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/126007>
3. Anton Stepanenko - <http://www.izvestia.ru/special/article3119348/>
[http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Информационная_война_вокруг_Южной_Осетии_\(2008\)](http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Информационная_война_вокруг_Южной_Осетии_(2008))
4. Kyrill Butirin - <http://www.echo.msk.ru/programs/tv/534264-echo.phtml>
[http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Информационная_война_вокруг_Южной_Осетии_\(2008\)](http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Информационная_война_вокруг_Южной_Осетии_(2008))

Rossya

5. Andrey Chistyakov - <http://m-romanoff.livejournal.com/35520.html>
[http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Информационная_война_вокруг_Южной_Осетии_\(2008\)](http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Информационная_война_вокруг_Южной_Осетии_(2008))
6. Damyr Zakirov - <http://m-romanoff.livejournal.com/35520.html>
7. Evgenii Radaev

NTV

Arrived on August 2

8. Ruslan Gusarov - <http://www.echo.msk.ru/programs/tv/534264-echo.phtml>
[http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Информационная_война_вокруг_Южной_Осетии_\(2008\)](http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Информационная_война_вокруг_Южной_Осетии_(2008))
<http://cominf.org/node/1166478708>
9. Piotr Gasseev - <http://m-romanoff.livejournal.com/35520.html>
<http://www.echo.msk.ru/programs/tv/534264-echo.phtml>
[http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Информационная_война_вокруг_Южной_Осетии_\(2008\)](http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Информационная_война_вокруг_Южной_Осетии_(2008))
10. Labazan Labazanov - <http://cominf.org/node/1166478708>
11. Ruslan Akhmedov - <http://cominf.org/node/1166478708>
12. Igor Malishev - <http://cominf.org/node/1166478708>
13. Vladimer Goncharev - <http://cominf.org/node/1166478708>

TV Center

Arrived on August 4

14. Evgenii Poddubnii - <http://ep-news.livejournal.com/45700.html>
<http://www.echo.msk.ru/programs/tv/534264-echo.phtml>
[http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Информационная_война_вокруг_Южной_Осетии_\(2008\)](http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Информационная_война_вокруг_Южной_Осетии_(2008))
15. Aleksey Komarov - <http://ep-news.livejournal.com/45700.html>
[http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Информационная_война_вокруг_Южной_Осетии_\(2008\)](http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Информационная_война_вокруг_Южной_Осетии_(2008))
16. Aleksey Stepanov-Molodov -
[http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Информационная_война_вокруг_Южной_Осетии_\(2008\)](http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Информационная_война_вокруг_Южной_Осетии_(2008))

REN-TV

17. Artiom Vasnev - <http://m-romanoff.livejournal.com/35520.html>
[http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Информационная_война_вокруг_Южной_Осетии_\(2008\)](http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Информационная_война_вокруг_Южной_Осетии_(2008))
18. Roman Simukhovskiy -
[http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Информационная_война_вокруг_Южной_Осетии_\(2008\)](http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Информационная_война_вокруг_Южной_Осетии_(2008))

Mir

19. Stanislav Khudiev
20. Cameraman

5th Channel

21. Evgenii Lukinov - <http://www.5-tv.ru/news/12627/> <http://katarina-m.livejournal.com/2008/08/08/>
22. Cameraman
23. Aleksey (soundman)

Inter (Ukraine, pro-Russian)

Arrived on August 6

24. Ruslan Yarmoliuk - http://archive.segodnya.ua/pdf/200/080908_SEG_KIE_25.pdf
http://www.ch-z.com.ua/articles/naz_sec/yarmol <http://www.ua-reporter.com/novosti/36025/>
25. Iurii Romaniuk - <http://telekritika.ua/daidzhest/2009-02-03/43541>
<http://podrobnosti.ua/podrobnosti/2008/08/07/545633.html>
<http://podrobnosti.ua/podrobnosti/2008/08/08/545916.html>

Russia Today

Arrived on August 5

26. Reporter

27. Aleksandr (Cameraman)

28. Mahmud (Reporter on Arabic language) - <http://m-romanoff.livejournal.com/35520.html>

RIA Novosty

29. Alan Bulkata (Alan Tsorion) – http://www.rian.ru/osetia_review/20080811/150286941.html

30. Said Tsarnaev - <http://times.ua/story/44176/> <http://times.ua/story/44205/>

Itar-Tass

31. Sergey Uzakov

Interfax

Arrived on August 5

32. Aleksey Shtokal - <http://www.interfax.ru/politics/txt.asp?id=28516>

Nezavisimaya Gazeta

Arrived on August 6

33. Marina Perevozkina - <http://echo.msk.ru/programs/svoi-glaza/534272-echo/>
http://www.ng.ru/courier/2008-07-28/11_osetia.html

Moskovskii Komsomolets

Arrived on August 6

34. Irina Sokirko (Kuksenkova) - http://mk.ru/social/4161.html?phrase_id=527509

Izvestia

35. Iurii Snegiriiov - <http://www.izvestia.ru/special/article3119348/>

New Times

Arrived on August 6

36. Mikhail Romanov - <http://m-romanoff.livejournal.com/35520.html>

TV Zvezda

Arrived on August 7

37. Algisa Mikulkisa - <http://www.kp.ru/daily/24149/366107/>

38. Georgii Lvov - <http://www.kp.ru/daily/24149/366107/>

Russian Newsweek

Arrived on August 7

39. Orkhan Jemal - <http://cominf.org/node/1166479098>

August 23, 2008

Scene At Russia-Georgia Border Hinted At Scripted Affair

by Brian Whitmore



Did Russian peacekeepers at South Ossetia's de facto border know what was coming?

Said Tsarnayev stumbled into a war.

A Chechen freelance photographer with the Reuters news agency, Tsarnayev arrived in the South Ossetian capital, Tskhinvali, during the day on August 7. Traveling together with a colleague, Tsarnayev said he planned to take photographs of the environment and natural surroundings in the area for a project he was working on.

Once in Tskhinvali, he discovered a virtual army of Russian journalists at his hotel.

Speaking to RFE/RL's North Caucasus Service, Tsarnayev, a resident of the Chechen capital, Grozny, said the Moscow-based reporters had been sent from various Russian media outlets days earlier, and were preparing to cover something big.

"At the hotel we discovered that there were already 48 Russian journalists there. Together with us, there were 50 people," Tsarnayev said. "I was the only one representing a foreign news agency. The rest were from Russian media and they arrived three days before we did, as if they knew that something was going to happen. Earlier at the border crossing, we met one man who was taking his wife and children from Tskhinvali."

Late that night, armed conflict broke out between Russia and Georgia.

'No Relationship To Reality'

Tsarnayev's account could not be independently confirmed. But it is consistent with mounting indications that Russia had been planning an attack on Georgia in advance, and was just waiting for a pretext to carry it out.

Russia's state-controlled media seemed extremely well-prepared to cover the outbreak of armed conflict in Georgia. Television networks immediately presented elaborate graphics with news anchors and commentators appearing to stick to disciplined talking points accusing Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili of aggression, and the Georgian armed forces of genocide and ethnic cleansing.

The country's best English-speaking officials were made readily available to Western media, where they relentlessly pushed Moscow's line on the conflict: Russia was simply protecting its citizens and peacekeepers in South Ossetia from atrocities at the hands of Georgia's military.

In an interview with RFE/RL in the early days of the conflict, Steven Pifer, a former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine who is now a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington, said Moscow's rhetoric and media narrative suggests they were preparing a large-scale operation.

"The rhetoric that is coming out of Moscow, ethnic cleansing and genocide, is just way over the top," Pifer said. "It's almost approaching the point where there is just no relationship to reality. But again, certainly the rhetoric is appropriate to a larger operation against Georgia to just stop and reverse whatever military gains the Georgians made in South Ossetia on [August 7]."

The apparently well-prepared media narrative is only part of the picture.

On August 3, authorities in Georgia's Moscow-backed separatist province of South Ossetia began evacuating hundreds of children to Russia. At the time, Georgian officials said the move could be a signal that separatist authorities, and their patrons in Russia, were preparing an offensive.

South Ossetian authorities said at the time that the evacuations were a precaution in case Georgia attempted to retake the province by force -- something Moscow and Tskhinvali had been accusing Tbilisi of plotting to do.

Speaking at a news conference in Moscow on August 21, the deputy head of Russia's General Staff, Colonel General Anatoly Nogovitsyn, reiterated Moscow's claims that the Georgian side was preparing to use force.

"We have complaints against the OSCE regarding the initial stage of the conflict -- they were informed by the Georgian side that there would be an invasion, but they didn't warn the Russian peacekeepers," Nogovitsyn said.

In remarks reported by "The Washington Post," Georgian Defense Minister Davit Kezerashvili said he gave the order for Georgian forces to "go out from their bases" at 6 p.m. local time on August 7, just one hour before Saakashvili announced a unilateral cease-fire.

Months In The Works

Kezerashvili said the Georgian troop movement was designed to deter South Ossetian separatists, who were firing across the de facto border into Georgian-controlled villages.

But observers say the march toward war on Moscow's side began months earlier.

In fact, hostilities began escalating soon after NATO delayed granting Membership Action Plans -- a key phase before full membership -- to Georgia and Ukraine at its summit in early April.

Less than two weeks later, Vladimir Putin, who was in the last month of his presidency, signed a decree authorizing direct relations with and assistance for Georgia's two pro-Moscow separatist provinces, Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Later in April, Russia deployed 1,500 additional troops, some of them heavily armed, to its "peacekeeping" contingent in Abkhazia without Georgia's consent -- an express violation of the 1994 cease-fire agreement.

Russia also began shooting down Georgia's unmanned drone aircraft that were conducting reconnaissance over Abkhazia. Russian military aircraft also began regularly violating Georgian airspace near the separatist territory.

In June, Russia deployed unarmed troops to Abkhazia to rebuild a rail link between Sukhumi and Ochamchira. At the time, Moscow presented the move as a humanitarian gesture to improve Abkhazia's transportation infrastructure. But U.S. and Georgian officials later pointed out that the railway was used to transport military equipment and munitions into Georgia during the conflict.

Then, with everybody watching Abkhazia, the focus abruptly shifted to South Ossetia.

In July, Russia's armed forces began massive military training exercises in the North Caucasus involving 8,000 servicemen and 700 pieces of military hardware. Russia's 58th Army, which would later spearhead the incursion into Georgia on August 8, was the key unit in those maneuvers.

The 58th Army remained in the North Caucasus after the exercises. Shortly thereafter, Georgian and South Ossetian separatist forces began exchanging artillery, mortar, and sniper fire across the de facto border. Georgian officials accuse the separatists of instigating the exchanges, but South Ossetian authorities deny the allegation.

Pifer said it appears that Russia laid a well-prepared trap for the Georgians, and Tbilisi took the bait. "The Georgian leadership made a mistake on [August 7]. They should have understood from what they have seen from the Russians that the Russians were looking for a pretext. They [the Georgians] gave them that pretext when they decided to go in a fairly large way into South Ossetia," Pifer said. "The speed of the Russian response suggests that the Russians were ready, they were just waiting for the reason and they took that as the reason."

http://www.rferl.org/content/Russia_Georgian_Scripted_Affair/1193319.html