



In Memoriam: Dr. David Chikovani (1961–2026)

The Georgian and global neurosurgical communities mourn the loss of Dr. David Chikovani, a masterful clinician, a pioneer of microneurosurgery in Western Georgia, and a profound humanitarian. Passing away on March 15, 2026, Dr. Chikovani left behind a monumental legacy defined by extraordinary resilience, unwavering medical ethics, and over 40 years of dedicated clinical practice.

Born in Sokhumi, Georgia, Dr. Chikovani's path to medicine was marked by early brilliance. He earned his Medical Doctor degree from the Stavropol State Medical Institute in 1984. Recognizing his exceptional aptitude, he subsequently completed advanced clinical training at the prestigious N. N. Burdenko National Medical Research Center of Neurosurgery in Moscow (1986–1988), acquiring top-tier expertise in complex neurosurgical procedures.

Returning to his hometown, he served at the Abkhazia Republican Neurosurgical Center. However, his life and career were violently disrupted by the devastating Abkhazian War (1992–1993). Upholding the absolute highest principles of medical neutrality, Dr. Chikovani courageously remained in the besieged city of Sokhumi. Operating under unimaginable frontline conditions, he performed critical, life-saving surgeries on wounded individuals from both sides of the conflict. He remained at his post until the city fell, eventually crossing the treacherous mountains on foot to reach safety.

Becoming an Internally Displaced Person (IDP), Dr. Chikovani refused to let tragedy define him. Relocating to Kutaisi in Western Georgia, he rebuilt his life and his neurosurgical practice entirely from scratch. Over the next three decades, he became a pillar of regional medicine. He established modern microneurosurgical practices where none previously existed, serving as the leading neurosurgeon at the National Center of Interventional Medicine and later heading the Neurosurgery Department at Clinic "LJ". Throughout his remarkable career, he performed over 30,000 surgical interventions, routinely executing highly complex operations involving brain and spinal tumors, cerebral aneurysms, and severe neurotrauma.

Beyond his surgical brilliance, Dr. Chikovani was the embodiment of a true healer. He actively collaborated with the COBERM initiative - a joint project by the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme. Through this humanitarian initiative, he provided highly qualified neurosurgical care to patients arriving directly from the conflict zones that had once displaced him. His ability to heal across divided communities was recognized internationally as a vital contribution to regional peace-building.

In 2012, in recognition of his tireless service to society, his outstanding personal contribution to the development of medicine, and his high professionalism, the President of Georgia awarded Dr. Chikovani the Order of Honor - the nation's highest civilian award.

Dr. Chikovani was also a devoted educator. As Head of the Neurosurgery Course at the Medical Institute "Kutaisi," he mentored a new generation of neurosurgeons, passing down not only his technical surgical mastery but his uncompromising ethical standards.

His passing is a profound loss for his family, his countless patients, and his colleagues within the Georgian Association of Neurological Surgeons and beyond. Dr. David Chikovani will be remembered not only for the tens of thousands of lives he saved with his hands, but for the boundless compassion, courage, and resilience that guided his heart.