

Sheremetyevo Airport Runway Riles Locals

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A new runway planned for Sheremetyevo Airport will displace 2,500 to 3,000 people in seven towns, and some homeowners are furious because the only land that they have been offered as compensation is flooded by river waters regularly, a local official said Thursday.

The plans for the new runway, which would be Sheremetyevo's third, have drawn crowds of angry residents to the public reception office for the leader of the Moscow region's Solnechnogorsky district since spring 2010, said the official, Emma Novodvorskaya, who heads the office.

But their ire is growing after the local administration in one of the towns, Lunyovo, offered to resettle people in areas regularly flooded by the Klyazma River but nevertheless listed as construction land, Novodvorskaya said by telephone.

Locals collected 400 signatures against their resettlement there, causing the idea to be

mothballed, she said, adding that no alternative offer had been made.

The runway construction, to be handled jointly by the Transportation Ministry and the state-owned company Administration of Civil Airports, will start next year and wrap up by 2015, airport spokesman Roman Genis said by telephone.

"The construction of the runway is directly linked to the plans of airlines, including Aeroflot, to carry more passengers," Genis said.

Aeroflot, the country's biggest air carrier, plans to increase its passenger traffic to about 70 million people a year by 2025, according to Roman Gusarov, editor-in-chief of the Avia.ru aviation industry web site. Current annual traffic through Sheremetyevo, which is Aeroflot's main hub, is 20 million people.

No transportation official would comment Thursday on the resettlement plans. A spokesman for the Moscow region branch of the Transportation Ministry said it was a task for federal authorities; the Transportation Ministry redirected an inquiry to its subordinate, the Federal Air Transportation Agency, which in turn redirected it to its own subordinate, the Administration of Civil Airports company, which did not reply to an inquiry and did not return repeated calls during the day.

Kommersant, which first [reported](#) the story Thursday, said a group of local activists planned street protests, a boycott of the upcoming State Duma elections and possibly even a blockade of nearby Leningradskoye Shosse, if they did not receive adequate compensation.

Residents include businessmen, lawyers and even local officials, and the value of some of the houses in the area run up to \$800,000, the newspaper said. The cost of untouched houses could plummet to a third of their original value because of the runway, business news agency Prime-Tass [reported](#).

Last fall, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin earmarked almost 13 billion rubles (\$405 million) for the construction of the runway and another 4 billion rubles for resettlement, Kommersant said.

In total, 59 houses will be demolished, and unspecified measures will be taken toward "reducing the negative impact on the residential area," an unidentified official at the Transportation Ministry told Kommersant.

But there are several hundred houses in villages that the runway will pass through, and the earmarked money is not enough to resettle them all, residents said.

Sheremetyevo head Mikhail Vasilenko told Kommersant that a round of talks with the residents will take place next month — when construction may already start. He gave no details.

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