

Body of Man Eyed in Building Blast Recovered

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Officials on Wednesday found the body of a man whose apparent suicide may have caused the explosion that leveled an apartment block in Astrakhan, Interfax reported.

Investigative Committee spokeswoman Anna Kanyayeva refused to speculate on whether Vyacheslav Chlenov was behind the explosion but confirmed that his body had been found, raising the death toll to 10.

An unidentified security official quoted by Interfax, however, said Chlenov had on more than one previous occasion, threatened to blow up the building's staircase by leaving his gas oven on.

The arrest on Tuesday of four men — the director and two senior engineers with the region's gas provider, Astrakhangazservis, as well as the director of the managing company of the apartment building — implied that faulty equipment or maintenance may also have been a reason for the explosion.

Alexander Zhilkin, the region's governor, has announced that the entire building will be knocked down and a park left in its place.

"The building itself will be demolished. I have taken the decision that in its place we will not build anything, but in the we spring will plant a park for the whole city," he wrote on his LiveJournal blog on Wednesday.

Overall, new homes will have to be found for 60 families, with 30 already having received keys to new apartments, said a spokesperson for Astrakhan's defense ministry.

All those now homeless will also be compensated with around 1 million rubles (\$34,000) as well as a new apartment, Interfax reported Tuesday.

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