

Market Fire Kills 17 Foreign Workers

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An investigator taking pictures outside the southwest Moscow warehouse where an early morning fire killed 18.

A fire killed 17 workers living in overcrowded conditions with no safe escape route at a market in the south of Moscow early Tuesday, Interfax reported.

The fire at the Kachalovsky market began just before 5 a.m. and burned for over two hours before it was extinguished, but not before consuming a building where emergency services discovered the bodies of 17 workers.

A law enforcement source told Interfax that the workers were effectively trapped in the metal structure, fitted to house the workers.

"The dead workers at the the Kachalovsky market lived in metal structures fitted with insulation materials. Inside they slept in terribly crowded conditions on double-decker bunks installed in two tiers. There was no direct exit onto the street from the structure," the law enforcement source said.

The victims, citizens of Tajikistan, were not registered at the address where the fire took

place, Federal Migration Service spokeswoman Zalina Kornilova said. She said the workers were employed as warehouse loaders.

The cause of the fire is still unknown, but law enforcement officials speculated the cause of the fire could have been a faulty heater.

A criminal case has been started to investigate violations of fire safety laws.

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