The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Chelyabinsk Prison Revolt Ends With Calls for Reform

By Jonathan Earle

November 25, 2012



A video taken on Saturday showed prisoners standing on top of the prison with long banner that read, "Free people, help us! The administration is embezzling $ [sic]. They torture and humiliate."

A revolt at a maximum security prison in the Chelyabinsk region by prisoners complaining of corruption and abuse has ended, regional prison officials said in a statement Monday.

But the fallout appears to be just beginning, as prosecutors quickly opened a check into the incident, and two senior officials appeared to confirm the prisoners' complaints.

Chelyabinsk region Governor Mikhail Yurevich admitted that the region's prison system needs reform, a matter he blamed on the system's former administrator, now deceased.

The prison system leads to an "enormous number of suicides," Yurevich told Russian News Service radio on Monday. He also said he had information about kickbacks in prisons.

National human rights ombudsman Vladimir Lukin said he had also received evidence

of abuse and corruption at Penal Colony No. 6 in the city of Kopeisk, Interfax reported on Monday.

An initial check by prosecutors failed to confirm prisoners' complaints of beatings, or reports of escapees, fatalities and evidence of bodily harm, the Prosecutor General's Office said in an online statement on Monday.

But prosecutors plan to conduct a full probe into the revolt, and Lukin said he would oversee his own.

"I'm extremely worried that a superficial investigation might cause the situation to deteriorate elsewhere, and something similar might happen at a different prison," Lukin said.

Two hundred fifty prisoners revolted on Saturday, demanding a more relaxed prison regime and the release of a prisoner from solitary confinement, prosecutors said.

A video taken on Saturday showed prisoners standing on top of the prison with long banner that read, "Free people, help us! The administration is embezzling $ [sic]. They torture and humiliate."

As of Monday, however, all prisoners at Penal Colony No. 6 in the city of Kopeisk had returned to their blocks, and administrators are in complete control of the facility, prison officials said.

The revolt was accompanied by bloody clashes outside the prison between riot police and prisoner supporters, including relatives and ex-convicts.

Thirty people outside were detained for disturbing the peace, and eight riot police officers were injured in the violence, police said.

About 30 relatives remained at the scene Monday afternoon, police said, adding that the situation had "stabilized."

Related articles:

- Hundreds of Inmates Strike at Chelyabinsk Prison
- UN Criticizes Russia Over Torture Allegations
- Pussy Riot Member Put in Solitary Confinement

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2012/11/25/chelyabinsk-prison-revolt-ends-with-calls-for-reform-a19671