

Chelyabinsk Homeless People 'Used as Slaves'

By [The Moscow Times](#)

March 20, 2013

The  Moscow Times

Three businessmen in the Chelyabinsk region are suspected of forcing more than 300 homeless people to work in a local landfill without wages since 2007, the Investigative Committee said in a statement Wednesday.

Pavel Derkho, a senior officer in the Investigative Committee's regional office, said the suspects had been making about 200,000 rubles (\$6,660) per month for six years by using forced labor to handle sorting, compacting and recycling at a local landfill and a farm in the town of Karabash, Interfax reported.

The laborers were allegedly forced to work, regularly threatened with violence, beaten and starved.

Despite degrading conditions and 14 to 16 hour daily shifts, many workers could not leave because their captors had seized their documents, Derkho said.

Most of the workers were homeless, he said, making their identification difficult.

Police were able to identify only seven of them from more than 300 suspected of working there since 2007.

The suspects face charges of using forced labor by coercion, threat of violence, and confiscation of the victim's personal identification, punishable by up to 15 years in prison.

No charges have been filed yet. An investigation is under way.

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