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# Far East Island Residents Refuse to Evacuate

By The Moscow Times

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A man wades through water outside a home in the Far East. **Igor Churackoff / AP**

About 100 residents of a flooded island in the Far East were refusing to leave their homes Wednesday morning despite surging floodwaters and increasing damage to infrastructure as water levels continued to rise in far eastern regions.

Centralized power was shut off on the island of Bolshoi Ussuriisky, which is located in the Khabarovsk region at the juncture of the Amur and Ussuri rivers, forcing a switch to diesel generators.

Local authorities said evacuation centers were ready to accommodate the residents if they left the island, while in the meantime emergency workers are keeping watch over it, RIA Novosti reported.

The Amur river rose 15 centimeters in 24 hours to a depth of almost 7 meters by Wednesday

morning and is expected to rise between 40 and 90 centimeters over the coming week.

Officials in Khabarovsk said that if the river height reached 780 centimeters, they would begin mass evacuations from the city.

But an Emergency Situations Ministry spokeswoman said evacuations would be limited to certain areas of the city.

“There is no talk of a mass evacuation. Only a few individual neighborhoods in low-lying areas could end up under water as a result of the flooding,” Irina Rossius told Interfax.

Emergency workers, with the help of soldiers and a growing number of volunteers, have erected over 14 kilometers of dams in the region, although the water has already overflowed some of the makeshift structures, Kommersant reported.

Damage from flooding in the Khabarovsk region will cost in excess of 1 billion rubles ($30 million) according to preliminary estimates. The authorities in a swath of territory between the Amur and Uda rivers known as Priamurye, the worst-hit area, have estimated damages at 3.2 billion rubles.

An estimated 23,000 people have already been evacuated from the Amur and Khabarovsk regions and from the Jewish autonomous region following weeks of record rainfall.

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