

Investigators Launch 2 Criminal Cases Over Far East Floods

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Two criminal cases have been opened over the alleged negligence of unidentified officials during the ongoing record floods in Russia's Far East, investigators said Thursday.

One of the cases was launched in connection with a dam that was destroyed by flood waters on Aug. 10 in the Amur region. According to a statement by the Investigative Committee, the dam had not been properly maintained, and as a result, the water was not contained and flooded 69 residential buildings in a nearby town. The damages totaled 27 million rubles (\$853,000), the statement said.

The second negligence case was opened in the neighboring Jewish autonomous region over the alleged failure of officials from the land irrigation and water supply department to carry out their duties. The resulting damages cost the federal budget more than 1.5 million rubles (\$47,200), the statement said, without mentioning any suspects. The charges carry a maximum punishment of up to three months in detention.

The current flooding in the Far East, which according to Russian meteorologists is the worst in the region in 120 years, has been going on for weeks and has affected thousands of homes, prompting evacuation from at least four regions.

The Emergency Situations Ministry said in a statement Thursday that close to 100 towns and villages remained under water in the Amur and Khabarovsk regions and in the Jewish autonomous region, with more than 10,000 people evacuated from their homes. Remarkably, more than four times that number of people, or just less than 46,000, are currently employed in rescue and related work across the Far East Federal District, according to the ministry statement.

Late last month, after traveling to flooded areas, President Vladimir Putin asked investigators to check the actions of regional officials in responding to the high water. The Investigative Committee said it would examine actions by the management of the Zeiskaya and Bureiskaya hydroelectric plants, both of which are located in the Amur region. No results of those inquiries have been announced.

Prosecutor General Yuri Chaika traveled this week to the Jewish autonomous region, where he met with local residents and officials, news agency Vostok Media reported Thursday. He said many residents "justifiably" asked whether the state would provide any compensation for damages from the floods but were "on the whole" positive about government rescue efforts.

The situation could worsen over the weekend in the Jewish autonomous region, where heavy rains and gale-force winds are forecast for Friday evening, Interfax reported. On Sunday, nighttime temperatures are expected to dip below freezing. The stormy weather could precipitate power outages and damage to infrastructure, emergency officials warned.

Material from The Moscow Times is included in this report.

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