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Hermits in Perm Region Given Humanitarian Aid

By The Moscow Times

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Forty religious recluses who recently took up residence in an abandoned village in the Perm region have been treated to supplies and medical check-ups by the local authorities, a spokesman for the region's government said Wednesday.

A helicopter bearing clothes, groceries and tools arrived in the remote village of Cherepanovo on Tuesday. Doctors inspected the new residents and found them to be in satisfactory condition, the spokesman told Interfax.

The hermits were very appreciative of the help and agreed to keep in touch with municipal authorities by satellite phone, he added.

The pilgrims' long trek to Cherepanovo began in Tula, where their leader Veniamin Filippov served as a Russian Orthodox cleric.

Fillipov, who is known for appearing in online videos in which he criticizes the hierarchy of the Orthodox church, was barred from serving as a priest in 2008 due to his involvement in a non-canonical religious organization. Fillipov was defrocked the following year, according to schism-tracking information portal Anti-Raskol.

Now calling himself Hieromonk Yevstratiy, Filippov continued to lead church services and assembled a group of followers who joined him in rejecting globalization and the possession of documents.

The community left Tula for the Kostroma region due to conflicts with Tula residents. Following further conflicts with Kostroma law enforcement, they moved to Cherepanovo, Ekho Perm reported.

Forty of them now remain in the village, including eight children between the ages of one and 14, Cherdynsky district officials said.

Regional officials are concerned that the community does not appreciate the difficulties they are going to face in the long winter ahead.

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