

Siberian Teachers Strike Over Pay Delays

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Outraged after more than three months of salary delays, some 60 teachers in several schools across the Siberian region of Zabaikalsk have declared a strike, refusing to teach classes and calling for early vacations, the Kommersant business daily reported Thursday.

Many of the region's teachers left for the winter holidays in December without having received their full wages for the month, according to the report. While the teachers were paid in January, they have since endured a spate of delays.

Anatoly Chumilin, regional Minister of Education, Science and Youth Policy, vowed Tuesday that the teachers would immediately receive their February wages, and that they could expect to receive the full amount they are owed for the past three months of work by the end of next week.

"We have to understand that the whole country has found itself in dire socio-economic and geopolitical straits. Society, professional community and government of all levels have to coordinate their efforts to live through this difficult time with dignity," Chumilin said in a statement, published on the local government's website.

According to Kommersant, local representatives of the Communist Party plan to appeal to President Vladimir Putin for emergency assistance to the region, whose budget is "in a pre-default state."

Regional Governor Konstantin Ilkovsky is reportedly set to meet with Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev next week to request that the government's anti-crisis commission help resolve the regional economic crisis.

This is the first large-scale teachers strike in Russia in more than a decade, Kommersant reported.

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