

More Construction Workers Strike at Russia's Beleaguered Vostochny Cosmodrome

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A rocket standing at the Baikonur cosmodrome, Russia's only spaceport until building at Vostochny finishes.

Several more construction workers at Russia's beleaguered Vostochny Cosmodrome are refusing to work until they are paid their salaries for the past four months, radio station Govorit Moskva reported Sunday.

Vostochny Cosmodrome, which is planned to be Russia's main launch site for its space industry, has been plagued by delays and corruption scandals.

Earlier this month Russian media reported that 26 workers at the site were going on hunger strike as about 200 were owed a total of some 14 million rubles (\$270,000) in wages.

Govorit Moskva quoted a striker identified only by his first name, Yury, as saying that 40 construction workers had received only 10,000 rubles (\$200) since the beginning of the year.

Deputy Prime Ministry Dmitry Rogozin, who oversees space, defense and Arctic issues, visited the facility this month to assure workers that he would improve their working conditions.

Unpaid workers at the facility, which is scheduled to be completed by December, appealed to President Vladimir Putin last week by painting a message for help on the roofs of their living quarters.

Putin said during his annually televised call-in show last week that he was taking the issue under his personal control.

Russian authorities are set to investigate the subcontractors working at the cosmodrome, including whether they are complying with labor laws, state news agency TASS reported Sunday.

Under Russian law, workers whose salaries have not been paid for more than 15 days have the right to stop working until they are compensated.

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