The Moscow Times
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13,000 Russian War Veterans Still Waiting for Housing From State

By The Moscow Times

May 11, 2015



As Russia on Friday geared up to celebrate the victory over Nazi Germany in World War II, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said that some of the veterans who served in that war are still waiting for the housing promised to them.

Not just some: 13,000 World War II veterans are waiting to receive apartments, the RIA Novosti news agency quoted Medvedev as saying.

The government plans to invest 12.5 billion rubles ($250 million) into providing these veterans with apartments, Medvedev said, adding that some 4,000 veterans have already received housing from the state this year alone.

Another 50,000 veterans are waiting for their apartments to be renovated, Medvedev said. To speed up the project, the prime minister asked businessmen in the regions to help fund repairs to veterans' houses, the TASS news agency reported.

Medvedev noted that the government didn't expect so many veterans to participate in the program. Indeed, the queue is still growing, which makes it more difficult to realize the program, he said.

"Actually, this is good, became it means the veterans are alive," Medvedev said, adding that — given the importance of the veterans' service to their country — issues of financing will certainly be resolved.

The state program to provide housing for war veterans was launched in 2008. The project is meant to assist veterans who do not own their own housing or whose living conditions are deemed unacceptable.

More than 280,000 veterans have been given new houses or apartments since the beginning of the program, Medvedev said.

During his live call-in show in April, President Vladimir Putin promised to provide apartments to all World War II veterans who are in the housing queue by the end of next year. A total of 308 billion rubles ($6.2 billion) has been invested in the program, Putin said.

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