

Investigation Launched Into Building Collapse That Killed 23 Russian Conscripts

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A general view of a military barracks with a collapsed wall in Omsk, Russia, July 13, 2015.

At least 23 Russian conscript soldiers were killed and 19 taken to a hospital when a military barracks collapsed near the Siberian city of Omsk, the Defense Ministry said Monday.

Television footage showed rescue workers hauling large chunks of rubble out of the long, four-story barracks, a training facility for paratroopers, where part of the roof caved in at around 11 p.m. on Sunday.

Whole floors had given way in the middle of the blue and white building, leaving twisted pieces of metal and concrete jutting out.

A local Defense Ministry spokesman said a plane with medical equipment had been sent from Moscow and some of the injured were flown to the capital for treatment.

The Investigative Committee branch responsible for the Omsk military garrison has opened a criminal case into negligence, the violation of safety standards and abuse of power, the Interfax news agency quoted Vladimir Markin, spokesman for the central committee that has since taken over the investigation, as saying.

Markin said that one line of inquiry was the standard of reconstruction work carried out in 2013 on the 1970s building just outside Omsk, 2,250 kilometers east of Moscow.

"All the people responsible in varying degrees for this tragedy, regardless of their position or duty, will be prosecuted and will be punished," said Markin, adding that the crimes being investigated carry sentences of up to 10 years in prison.

Russia has a poor safety record and a history of building collapses and transport accidents.

The Kremlin said President Vladimir Putin had sent his condolences to the families of the victims and ordered the Defense Ministry to do everything it could to assist those who were injured.

Tuesday has been declared a day of mourning in the Omsk region in honor of the victims. Flags will be lowered to half-mast and local television channels have been urged to cancel any entertainment programs, Interfax reported, citing a regional government press release.

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