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Foreigners Drown in Russian Far East Under Mysterious Circumstances

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Two Palestinians and a Yemeni national drowned together while celebrating Eid al-Fitr on the banks of the Amur River in Russia's Far East, local news site Amur.info reported Tuesday.

The three victims, students at a nearby Russian military academy, had gathered with a fourth friend near the city of Blagoveshchensk on Sunday, which marked the Muslim holiday celebrating the breaking the fast of Ramadan.

According to Amur.info, eyewitnesses claimed that one student was swimming in the river as a barge approached, creating a whirlpool. The two others reportedly tried to save him, but were sucked into the whirlpool as well as the fourth waited on the shore.

But local port director Nikolai Belyayev rejected this theory, telling Amur.info it was implausible because barges in that section of the river don't get close enough to the shore.

He added that the water is only about 1.8 meters deep in the area where the men drowned, and suggested that perhaps they did not know how to swim.

The bodies will be sent for examination to determine whether there are signs of drugs or alcohol in their systems before being repatriated, the report said.

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