

Moscow Metro Accident Defendants Given Prison Sentences

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Flowers in memory of victims of an accident, in which three carriages derailed on a train during morning rush hour, are left next to a sign informing passengers that the station is closed due to technical reasons, at the entrance to a metro station in Moscow, July 16, 2014.

Four defendants have been sentenced to prison terms by a Moscow court for their part in the worst accident in the history of the Moscow metro, the TASS news agency reported Monday.

Judge Anton Tolstoy of Moscow's Dorogomilovsky court found the four defendants guilty under Article 263 of Russian Criminal Code: "violation of safety rules and operation of the subway, which caused the death of two or more persons," the Russian Legal Information Agency (RAPSI) reported Monday.

Valery Bashkatov, his deputy Yury Gordov, a senior official of the metro repair service, Alexei Trofimov, and production director of Spetstekhrekonstruktsiya reconstruction subcontractor Anatoly Kruglov have been sentenced to between 5 1/2 to six years in a standard penal colony, TASS reported.

The four men must pay jointly 15 million rubles (\$233,127) in damages to relatives of the victims.

Three metro cars skidded off the rails during morning rush hour on July 15, 2014, between the Slavyansky Bulvar and Park Pobedy metro stations on the Moscow metro's Dark Blue Line, killing 24 people and injuring 188 others.

Investigators have said that the incident was caused by improper work on a railway switch, installed recently before the crash as part of the metro's large-scale expansion program.

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