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12 Killed in Textile Factory Fire in Moscow

By The Moscow Times

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A huge fire at a textile factory in northeastern Moscow killed 12 people, including one baby, the TASS news agency reported Sunday, citing the Investigative Committee.

The blaze originated at the factory on Moscow's Ulitsa Stromynka, near the Sokolniki metro station, on Saturday night, and spread over 3,000 square meters of the building, causing a 500-square-meter section of the roof to collapse, Investigative Committee spokeswoman Yulia Ivanova was quoted as saying.

The 12 casualties are believed to have been "migrant" laborers from Central Asia — and their family members — who were living and working in the building, TASS reported.

Children's rights ombudsman Pavel Astakhov said via Twitter Sunday that the fire killed three children, including one infant. Ivanova confirmed the number of casualties, but only mentioned one small child among the victims, TASS reported.

One person was injured in the fire but survived, a spokeswoman for the Moscow prosecutor's office, Yelena Rossokhina, was quoted as saying by the RIA Novosti news agency. After receiving medical treatment, the man would be taken to the Investigative Committee for questioning, Ivanova said, according to the report.

Investigators inspected the scorched site on Sunday, trying to determine the cause of the blaze — arson among the hypotheses, Ivanova said, TASS reported.

The factory building was privately owned, Emergency Situations Ministry spokeswoman Oksana Zolotova said, without specifying the owner, TASS reported.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin asked the Emergency Situations Ministry and Russia's migration service to inspect the city's industrial compounds to see whether they house "illegal migrants" and to ensure compliance with fire safety regulations, the mayor said via Twitter on Sunday.

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