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# Unpaid Russian Miners Declare Hunger Strike

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**Dmitry Groshkin / Vedomosti**

Over 100 miners in southern Russia's Rostov region are staging a hunger strike over unpaid wages, the TASS news agency reported Tuesday.

The miners, who work for the bankrupt Kingcoal mining group, began their hunger strike after going several months without pay, TASS reported.

"We have started our hunger strike today in order to receive 100 percent of the wages we are owed, which has grown over a year and a half," a representative for the hunger strike initiative group told TASS.

More than 2,200 workers are owed over 300 million rubles ($4.6 million), according to the initiative group representative. There are 120 workers signed up to hunger strike, with 64 of them having notified the local prosecutor's office.

Four mines under Kingcoal's jurisdiction are bankrupt, with some miners working in

extremely dangerous conditions, TASS reported.

“The mines need to be closed down but that requires billions of rubles. The Almanznya mine holds equipment and administrative buildings worth almost 200 million rubles ($3 million) but that’s not enough to plug the shortfall in wages,” the workers' representative said.

A criminal case was opened this month against Vladimir Pozhidaev, the general director of the Kingcoal group, on charges of abuse of authority and non-payment of salaries, TASS reported.

According to law enforcement, under his management
the group’s debt rose to
1 billion
rubles ($15 million) while he has taken money from company accounts for personal use, the Kommersant newspaper
reported.

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