

Death Toll From Siberian Alcohol Poisoning Rises to 55

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Kirill Shipitsyn / TASS

The number of deaths from counterfeit alcohol poisoning in the Siberian city of Irkutsk has risen to 55, Russia's Interfax news agency reported Tuesday.

Ninety-four people have been poisoned so far after drinking bath tincture as surrogate alcohol in the city's Novo-Lenino area, a law enforcement source told the news outlet.

Some 28 people are still hospitalized with methanol poisoning, including 13 in critical condition.

All of the victims consumed a cosmetic bath product known as "boyaryshnik," or hawthorn berry tincture, which is often used as a cheap alternative to vodka due to its high ethanol content. The mixture consumed by the victims instead contained methanol, which was not listed on the products' label, according to the local Ministry of Health.

A state of emergency was declared for Irkutsk and the Irkutsk region on Monday, with shops

throughout the region being searched for similar substances. Irkutsk Governor Sergey Levchenko has announced that Dec. 20 will be a day of mourning throughout the region.

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