

ECHR Awards \$3.2M to Beslan Terror Attack Victims

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A woman, whose 10-year-old son died in the siege, cries at the school's gymnasium where the hostages were held during, in Beslan, Russia. **Dmitry Lovetsky / AP**

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has awarded 2.9 million euros (\$3.2 million) to the victims of Russia's 2004 Beslan terrorist attack.

The decision comes 13 years after the attack, which claimed more than 300 lives in the Russian republic of North Ossetia.

Judges ruled that Russian authorities had contributed to the attack's "tragic outcome" by failing to carry out a coordinated rescue operation. They also found that police had "amazingly accurate information about the terrorist attack being prepared," but did nothing to prevent it.

The payout will now be split between the 409 people who applied as plaintiffs in seven lawsuits filed to the ECHR between 2007 and 2011.

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Thirty-two terrorists seized a school in the North Ossetian town of Beslan on Sept. 1 2004. They held more than 1,110 school children, parents and teachers hostage in the school's gymnasium for two days before Russian special forces stormed the building. Two explosions took place moments before the operation began. The explosives, along with the ensuing fires, killed more than half of the 300 people who ultimately perished in the rescue attempt.

Officials maintain that the explosives were bombs wired to the school building by the terrorists. Some hostages claimed that a missile fired Russia's special forces from a nearby building hit the gymnasium instead.

Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said on Thursday that the Kremlin disagreed with the ECHR ruling and was ready to take on “necessary legal action.” Russia's Justice Ministry also promised to appeal the ruling.

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