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Muscovites Offered Cash Compensation in Housing Demolition Scheme

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Muscovites forced from their homes under a controversial demolition scheme will be able to decide between cash compensation or a replacement apartment, City Hall has announced.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin announced Friday that residents could choose to be reimbursed for the value of their previous property. Muscovites had previously only been given the option of relocating to a newly-built apartment elsewhere in the capital.

The move is the latest compromise from City Hall in the face of a government-approved street protest taking place on Sunday.

Muscovites are set to rally against the demolition scheme on Moscow's Academic Sakharov Prospect.

Officials also delayed a second reading of the bill approving the project in the Russian parliament on May 3, reportedly in a bid to allay the fears of ordinary Russians

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Some 4,500 four and five-story buildings in 85 districts across Moscow are currently affected by the plans, many of which are post-war, pre-fabricated apartments referred to as *Khrushchevki.*

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin announced in late February that 1.6 million Muscovites were still living in the buildings, which he described the buildings as "uncomfortable, largely dilapidated housing."

Not all Muscovites agree with City Hall's plans, with many concerned that replacement apartments could be worth less then their original property.

A vote on the decision for those living in the affected buildings will take place between May 15 and June 15.

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