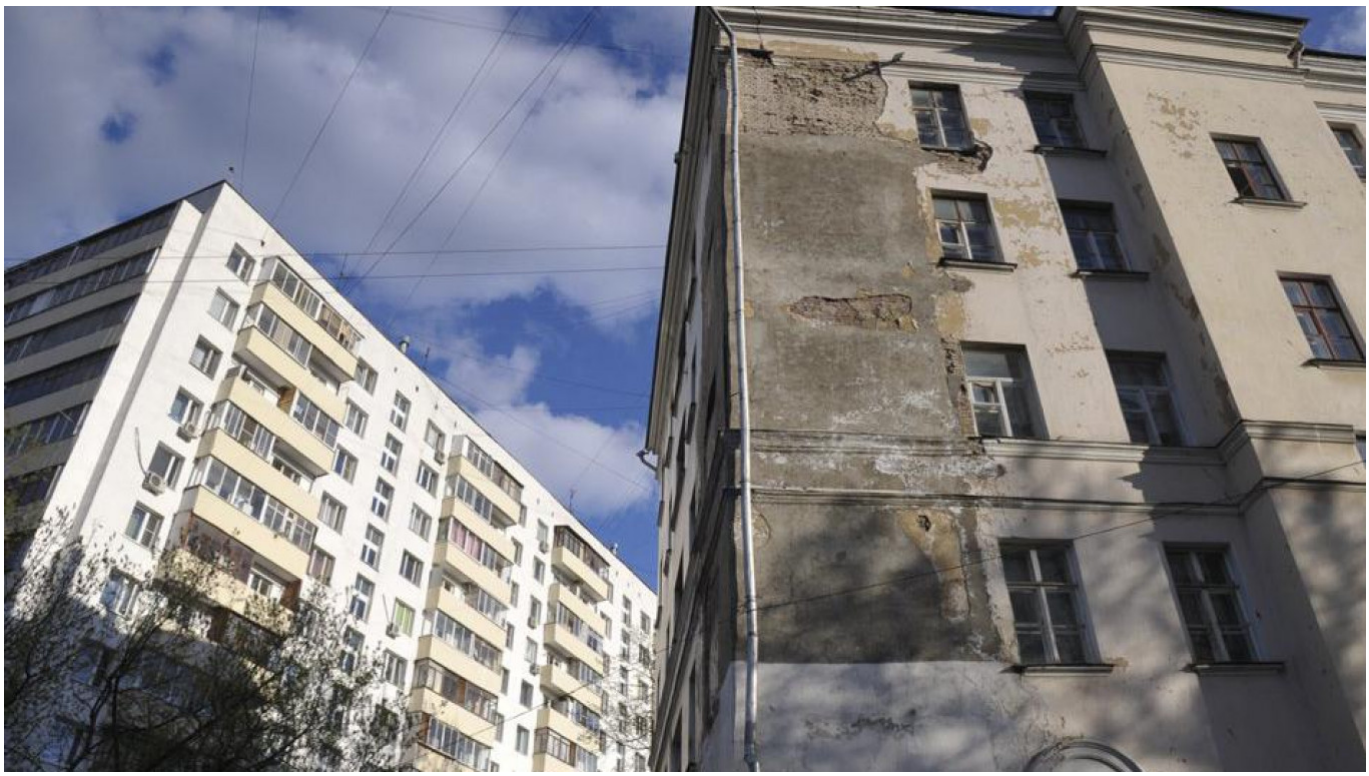
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1,500 More Apartment Blocks May Be Razed in Moscow Demolitions

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Moskva News Agency

An additional 1,500 apartment blocks in Moscow may be slated for demolition under a city-wide renovation program that is drawing ire from Muscovites, the Vedomosti newspaper reported, citing an anonymous city official.

If City Hall approves residents' last-minute applications, the total number of mostly five-story apartment buildings to be demolished in the capital would reach 5,500.

The buildings are home to 1.12 million people, about one-tenth of Moscow's entire population.

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Under the renovation program, which is scheduled to last 20 years and projected to cost 3 trillion rubles ($50 billion), residents will be relocated to new apartments.

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

Not all Muscovites, however, agree with the City Hall's renovation plans, and many have participated in public protests to voice their concerns that replacement apartments could be worth less than their original property or in neighborhoods on the city's outskirts.

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