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Prosecutors Blame Weather Forecasters for Deadly Moscow Storm

August 29, 2017



Vedyashkin Sergey / Moskva News Agency

Russia's Prosecutor General's Office says weather forecasters are partly responsible for the deaths of 16 people during a storm in Moscow this summer.

Around 200 people were injured and more than 30,000 trees and 2,000 cars were damaged after gale force winds swept across Moscow on May 29, according to the prosecutors' estimates, cited by the Kommersant business daily.

"One of the causes of the disaster's catastrophic consequences was an inaccurate forecast" by the Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring, or Rosgidromet, a spokesperson for the Prosecutor General's Office was cited as saying.

The department falls under the Environment Ministry, and prosecutors have asked Environment Minister Sergei Donskoi to work towards the "higher accuracy of forecasts on dangerous weather phenomena," the prosecutors' spokesman, Alexander Kurennoi, said.

Related article: In Pictures: Fatal Thunderstorms Sweep Moscow

Moscow suffered several unexpected storms this summer, leading some officials to call for harsher measures against forecasters for inaccurate predictions.

After being "soaked to the bone," Vladimir Zhirinovsky, the head of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR), called for Russia's Hydrometeorological Center to be disbanded.

"Even I saw the black cloud coming," he said. "While we all look at the sky through our windows, they are probably having lunch."

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