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Nearly 90k Sign Petition to Not Return to Magnitogorsk Apartment Block

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Emergency Situations Ministry

Almost 90,000 people have signed a petition to resettle the surviving residents of a partially collapsed apartment block in the industrial city of Magnitogorsk.

Thirty-nine people were killed after a Soviet-era building in the Urals city 1,700 kilometers east of Moscow fell on Dec. 31 following an explosion attributed to a gas leak. Local authorities have said they were considering dividing the damaged building into two separate apartment blocks after inspectors said they had determined it "safe" to live in.

"Everyone is afraid of returning to the affected house," Magnitogorsk resident Alexei Sokolov wrote in his change.org petition. "Perhaps no one will ever be able to sleep peacefully in the remaining apartments."

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Sokolov's appeal to resettle the residents into "apartments of equal value" gathered more than 87,000 signatures by Wednesday afternoon.

Sokolov wrote that residents without the means to resettle on their own "will have to relive those terrible moments of the morning of Dec. 31 over and over again."

On Wednesday, Chelyabinsk region governor Boris Dubrovsky reacted to the petition on his Telegram messaging app channel, writing that he will take into account the residents' "emotions" in his decision-making.

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