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Russian Official Calls Siberian Flood Victims 'Bums,' Sparking Backlash – Reports

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Irina Alashkevich **Youtube / Facebook / MT**

A Russian regional official has caused controversy for allegedly comparing victims of this summer's historic Siberian floods to animals in a leaked audio file she claims was faked.

The comments allegedly made by Irina Alashkevich, the Irkutsk regional administration's spokeswoman, come a month after another regional official ignited backlash for insulting the victims of flood-hit areas. Over two dozen people have been killed in the Irkutsk and Krasnoyasrk regions in what scientists call the biggest floods in 180 years.

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"These people, these bums who came — you should have seen how they were dressed,"

Alashkevich is allegedly heard saying while discussing President Vladimir Putin's June 29 visit to flood-stricken areas.

"He went there [and] they were ready to kiss the ground. These cattle were standing there, ready to wet themselves with happiness," the woman in the audio, which appeared on social media over the past week, can be heard saying.

The amenities offered to the victims in temporary accommodation centers, Alashkevich allegedly says, are "something they didn't have in their stable[s]."

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Alashkevich has said the audio was faked, adding that Irkutsk governor Sergei Levchenko had ordered an expert analysis of the recording. On Monday, the REN TV television channel said it had commissioned an independent investigation which confirmed that the voice in the recording belongs to Alashkevich.

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