

Radiation Spike Detected Near Moscow Highway Construction Site

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Equipment installed alongside the highway registered at least five spikes in background radiation over a 48-hour period, a finding that the authorities later said "does not correspond to reality." **Dmitry Sarayev / Facebook**

A controversial highway construction site in Moscow has revealed radiation levels 60 times above normal, a local assemblyman [said](#) Sunday in a finding that the authorities later disputed.

Authorities plan to start building a 28-kilometer southeastern highway this year that activists [warn](#) will release cancer-causing radioactive dust into the air and water.

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Equipment installed alongside the highway registered at least five spikes in background radiation over a 48-hour period, municipal deputy Dmitry Sarayev wrote on Facebook.

Emergency and radioactive-waste management officials who arrived at the site late Sunday said that the equipment malfunctioned, Sarayev wrote.

The Moscow branch of Russia's Emergency Situations Ministry [said](#) the report of high radiation "does not correspond to reality." Background radiation levels detected by state equipment do not exceed the normal range, it said in an online statement.

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Greenpeace Russia has demanded that the highway construction be halted. State-run safety tests last year [revealed](#) radiation levels 200 times higher than the norm near the planned highway.

The NGO and hired experts found five locations on the highway route between the Moscow Polymetals Plant and the Moskvorechye commuter rail station where topsoil emitted up to eight times the normal level of radiation.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin last month [admitted](#) the existence of "radioactive spots" along the Moscow River and promised to move some of the contaminated soil outside city limits. Greenpeace [accused](#) Sobyanin of not doing enough to prevent what they see as a radioactive incident waiting to happen.

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