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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Firefighter Killed in Massive Blaze at Historic St. Petersburg Factory

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The Nevskaya Manufaktura building, listed as a site of historic value, is now on the brink of collapse.
Emergency Situations Ministry

A historic St. Petersburg factory building has caught fire and is on the brink of collapse, with at least one firefighter dead and two others gravely injured, state media reported Monday.

The six-story Nevskaya Manufaktura building, located on the right bank of the Neva River in Russia's second city, was engulfed in flames around 12:30 p.m. local time, with the fire spreading across all six stories.

Interfax reported that a missing rescue worker has been found dead.

Embed:

Пожар на «Невской мануфактуре» в Петербурге. pic.twitter.com/CBD4XMtdqA

— РБК (@ru_rbc) April 12, 2021

RIA Novosti identified him as a firefighting unit commander and added that two others have been hospitalized with third-degree burns on up to 50% of their bodies.

The St. Petersburg-based 78.ru news site reported, citing emergency sources, that a local worker has also died in the blaze.

At least 40 people were evacuated from the building and emergency crews have been bolstered to 300 people and 70 pieces of equipment, including one Kamov Ka-32 helicopter.

RIA Novosti reported that firefighters have been evacuated from the building due to risk of collapse.

The cause of the fire remains unknown. The Investigative Committee that probes major crimes said it has launched a criminal case into causing death by negligence.

On Tuesday, the Investigative Committee said it has detained the general director of the company that owns the factory building as well as his deputy. Investigators say that the general director didn't take proper action to fix fire safety violations that were found during a recent inspection by the Emergency Situations Ministry.

The Nevskaya Manufaktura fabrics manufacturer was founded by English merchant James Thornton in 1841, then nationalized by Soviet Russia and renamed in 1922.

St. Petersburg authorities in 2001 added the building to its list of newly identified sites of historic, scientific, artistic and other cultural value.

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