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8 Foreigners Dead in Moscow Hostel Fire

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Security bars on windows and a blocked emergency exit are believed to have prevented the victims from evacuating to safety. **Antonina Krasnova/TASS**

Eight foreigners have been killed and four injured in a fire at a Moscow hostel, news agencies reported early Friday.

The flames broke out on the first floor of the building in southwestern Moscow due to likely equipment failure or a power grid emergency, the state-run TASS news agency cited an unnamed emergency services source as saying.

Two-hundred people reportedly evacuated from the apartment block in which the ground-floor hostel is located. Four were hospitalized after jumping from the upper floors of the several-story building.

Authorities believe the eight victims died from smoke inhalation.

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The victims are believed to have been prevented from evacuating to safety by window security bars and a blocked emergency exit, TASS reported, citing unnamed sources. Hostel owners may have also had deactivated a fire alarm.

The victims are believed to be migrants from unspecified countries, TASS quoted an unnamed source as saying.

Authorities have opened a criminal case into safety violations that led to deaths.

Accidental fires are common in Russia, where hundreds of blazes are recorded each year due to aging and dilapidated infrastructure and non-compliance with safety standards that are often lax.

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