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Fireworks Firm's Technical Director Detained After Deadly Blast Outside Moscow

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People search for their relatives at the plant's gatehouse in Sergiyev Posad after the explosion **Moskva News Agency**

The chief technical officer of a Russian fireworks company with storage facilities at an optical plant outside Moscow was detained in connection with a criminal probe into a deadly explosion on its territory, authorities said Thursday.

A woman died from severe burns, 60 others were wounded and 12 remain missing after a powerful explosion Wednesday morning ripped through the plant in the town of Sergiyev Posad, some 70 kilometers northeast of Moscow.

Russia's Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, opened a criminal case on charges of "violating industrial safety requirements for hazardous production facilities," which carry a maximum penalty of three to seven years in prison.

The investigative body's Moscow region branch said the explosion occurred at the Piro-Ross fireworks company. It did not name the technical director who was detained.

Video released by the Investigative Committee showed the Piro-Ross chief technical officer with a blurred face, saying the company manufactures and sells fireworks.

Related article: 1 Killed, Dozens Injured in Blast at Optical Plant Near Moscow

Media outlets, citing Russia's corporate database, said Piro-Ross was a regular recipient of state orders, including the organization of a 2020 fireworks display for the 75th anniversary of Soviet victory over Nazi Germany.

At the same time, Piro-Ross was reportedly cited over safety violations in recent years and has been undergoing a bankruptcy procedure this year over unpaid tax debt.

Unverified reports by Telegram channels with purported links to Russia's security services claimed the detained person is Piro-Ross CEO Sergei Chankayev.

Chankayev disputed the authorities' claim earlier Wednesday that his warehouse was at the epicenter of the explosion, saying the blast occurred at a neighboring metal pipe warehouse.

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The site of the explosion was initially identified as the Zagorsk Optical-Mechanical Plant, referred to as "ZOMZ," which produces night vision devices and binoculars for the Russian military as part of Russia's defense conglomerate Rostec.

Russian authorities have not established the relationship between Piro-Ross and ZOMZ, with media reports indicating that the optical plant rents storage facilities to the fireworks company.

ZOMZ is also involved in the development of Russia's next-generation stealth bomber "Poslannik," which authorities promise to build by 2027, according to state contracts cited by the independent investigative outlet Agentstvo.

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