

Putin Calls To Protect Flood-Hit Areas From Looting

By [AFP](#)

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Andrei Borodulin / AFP

Russian President Vladimir Putin called Wednesday on local leaders in Siberia and the Urals to make sure flood-hit homes are safe from looting, as authorities in the Kurgan region evacuated 14,000 people from the rising Tobol River.

Russia and neighboring Kazakhstan have fought devastating floods for almost two weeks.

Putin — who unlike his Kazakh counterpart has not visited the flood zones — held a government meeting, saying he was receiving frequent updates.

"There are delicate [restoration] issues and we will definitely come back to them," Putin said, after the issue of how victims would be compensated caused some tensions in flood-hit areas.

"A bit later, when the water will go down, we will meet in an even wider format with the head

of municipalities and we will discuss the issues of restoring infrastructure and homes," he said.

Thousands of homes in swathes of Russia have been affected by the floods.

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Putin also scolded the governor of the flood-hit Tyumen region for calling people who resisted evacuation orders "stubborn."

"You should not say that about people," said the Russian leader, who often reprimands officials in public.

"I know you are tired and that you are trying, you do not sleep enough. But why do people not want to go? They worry about their property, their homes," Putin said.

Several people in the flood-hit city of Orenburg told AFP that they feared looting.

The western Siberian region of Kurgan — where floods have peaked this week — evacuated 14,300 people from the rising Tobol, local Governor Vadim Shumkov told Putin at the meeting.

He said there were some 20 temporary accommodation centers in the region, where 25 villages had been flooded.

Shumkov said that over 2,500 people in the region had filed for compensation.

Earlier this month, rare protests broke out over the handling of the floods and compensation in the worst-hit city of Orsk.

Russia's emergency minister Alexander Kurenkov told Putin that the water has reached the main city of the Kurgan region of the same name.

"In the nearest days we expect the maximum level of water, which is expected to reach 10 meters," Kurenkov said.

Kurenkov said that around 600 homes had been flooded in the Kurgan region.

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