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Liquor Store in Southern Russia Explodes

July 22, 2024



The Krasnoe & Beloe liquor store after Monday's explosion. **Russian Emergencies Ministry**

A gas explosion ripped through storefronts in southern Russia's Krasnodar region, injuring at least four people, investigators said Monday.

"Building structures collapsed in the city of Apsheronsk as a result of the explosion of a gas-air mixture early this morning," Russia's Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, said in a statement.

Videos published by independent media and state news agencies showed police, medics, investigators and firefighters at the scene of the incident.

A damaged sign for the Krasnoe & Beloe ("Red & White") liquor store chain is visible next to the explosion site. Krasnodar region Governor Veniamin Kondratyev said the shopping pavilion where the liquor store was located had been "destroyed."

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At least four people were hospitalized as authorities continued their search for victims, the Investigative Committee said.

The state-run Interfax news agency, citing anonymous emergency service sources, reported that up to 15 people may have been injured at a nearby bus stop.

The Investigative Committee said it has launched a criminal probe into safety violations.

Gas explosions are common in Russia, though they often affect residential buildings built in the Soviet era.

Russia's Defense Ministry said earlier on Monday that it had destroyed eight Ukrainian drones over the Krasnodar region, though it was not clear whether the Apsheronsk explosion was connected.

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