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Police Arrest 3 After Deadly Gas Explosion at Sverdlovsk Region Apartment Block

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The aftermath of the gas explosion in Nizhny Tagil. **Donat Sorokin / TASS**

Three utility company employees were arrested for safety violations related to a deadly gas explosion at an apartment block in the Sverdlovsk region, law enforcement authorities said Tuesday.

At least 10 people including children were killed after a gas explosion ripped through a five-story panel building in the industrial city of Nizhny Tagil on Thursday. Eight people remain hospitalized, including three in serious condition.

"A gas service master and two fitters were detained," police investigators said. The three utility company employees face up to 10 years in prison if found guilty of safety violations charges.

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Gazeks, a company that supplies gas to dozens of municipalities throughout the Sverdlovsk region, said its employees were the target of the investigation.

“Gazeks is fully cooperating so that an objective investigation can be carried out and the true causes of the tragedy can be established,” the company said in a statement.

Gas explosions in residential buildings are not uncommon in Russia. Many apartment blocks built during the Soviet era are poorly maintained and repair work is sometimes delayed for years or never done at all.

State media has reported that the partially collapsed apartment block in Nizhny Tagil was built in 1974 and was scheduled to undergo major remodeling in 2032.

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