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Emergency Authorities Acknowledge 15 Deaths Nearly a Year After Devastating Orenburg Floods

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Orenburg during floods in 2024. **Olga Maltseva / AFP**

Russian emergency authorities have acknowledged that 15 people were killed in last spring's catastrophic flooding in the Orenburg region despite previously insisting there were no casualties, the investigative outlet Vyorstka reported Tuesday, citing a government report.

The flooding, among the worst in nearly a century, struck the cities of Orenburg and Orsk in April 2024 after the Ural River overflowed due to heavy rains and melting ice.

At the time, Emergency Situations Minister Alexander Kurenkov and Orenburg Governor Denis Pasler denied anyone had died. However, an Emergency Situations Ministry report published sometime this year contradicts those claims, listing 15 fatalities attributed to the flooding.

Independent media reported last year that at least seven bodies were recovered amid flood

response efforts. Health officials had said that two bodies were found but denied the cause of death was linked to flooding.

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The Emergency Situations Ministry's report states that 311,500 people were impacted by the disaster, with 17,800 rescued from evacuated areas. More than 32,500 homes and nearly 52,500 household plots were flooded across 286 towns and villages, it added.

Orenburg region Governor Pasler estimated the flood damage to be more than 40 billion rubles ($472.7 million).

During the flooding, Orsk residents staged protests, accusing local authorities of failing to prevent or properly respond to the disaster.

Despite ordering a government commission to oversee relief efforts, President Vladimir Putin has not visited the region in the 11 months since the floods struck the region.

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