

Hundreds of Unpaid Construction Workers Stranded in Remote Chukotka Town

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The town of Bilibino in Chukotka. **US Geological Survey**

At least 700 construction workers have been stranded and left unpaid for months in a remote town in Russia's Far Eastern Chukotka region, media reported Thursday.

Zemtek, a mining industry service provider, stopped paying wages to some 1,100 employees in March, labor rights activist Natalia Demenko [told](#) the exiled news outlet Govorit NeMoskva.

Some workers who refused to continue without pay were denied food for at least 36 hours, the outlet said.

Roughly 400 rotational workers were later flown from the remote town of Bilibino to Magadan, around 1,200 kilometers (750 miles) away, after Demenko contacted law enforcement officials about the situation. She said some took out loans to pay for plane tickets to Magadan.

Rotational workers are employed in remote areas and flown temporarily to work sites instead of being relocated with their families permanently.

A remaining 700 workers remain stuck in Bilibino. According to Demenko, Zemtek abruptly canceled their scheduled evacuation flights this week without explanation.

The stranded workers published a video appeal earlier this month calling on President Vladimir Putin to help [arrange](#) their return home. “We’re being forcibly held here against our will,” they said.

Zemtek, founded by CEO Sergei Andrianov in 2015, has reportedly pledged to repay the back wages by May 30.

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