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European Rights Court Orders Russia to Pay Georgia Nearly $300M Over Violations After 2008 War

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An apartment building in the Georgian city of Gori damaged by a Russian attack in August 2008. **Lorenz King (CC BY-SA 4.0)**

The European Court of Human Rights on Tuesday ordered Russia to pay Georgia more than 250 million euros ($289,000) for violations committed after the brief war between the two countries in August 2008.

ECHR accused Russia of preventing people from freely entering Abkhazia and South Ossetia, breakaway Georgian territories that Moscow recognized as independent following the Russo-Georgian War.

The court found Russia to have committed a series of violations, including excessive use of force, ill-treatment, unlawful detention and unlawful restrictions on day-to-day movement across the administrative boundary line between Georgian-controlled territory and the breakaway regions. It ordered Russia to pay compensation to nearly 30,000 victims.

ECHR is a part of the Council of Europe, the continent's foremost human rights body, which Russia was expelled from shortly after its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Nevertheless, the court insists Moscow remains liable for the violations it committed while it was still a member.

ECHR said it would be up to the Georgian government to establish an "effective mechanism" to distribute compensation to the individual victims within 18 months of payment by Russia. However, Moscow is unlikely to agree to pay compensation as it has repeatedly defied ECHR rulings, even while it was still a member.

Georgian authorities say that people have been killed while trying to enter or leave Abkhazia and South Ossetia, while others have been detained for "illegally crossing" the administrative boundary line.

AFP contributed reporting.

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