The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Irkutsk Police Arrest Mayor of Town Where Residents Have Gone Weeks Without Heating and Water

February 27, 2026



Bodaybo Mayor Alexei Botvin. **irkobl.ru**

Law enforcement authorities in Siberia's Irkutsk region on Friday arrested the mayor of a small town where residents have gone weeks without heating and water.

More than 1,000 people living in the town of Bodaybo have not had access to water since early January, when a major pipeline froze over, forcing central heating facilities to shut down. Heating was restored on Sunday, but repair work continues to return water supplies to homes.

Temperatures have dropped as low as minus 40 degrees Celsius (minus 40 degrees Fahrenheit) amid the outage.

Investigators launched a criminal probe into negligence and violations in the provision of critical public services shortly after the loss of heating and water. They did not name any suspects when announcing the investigation.

On Friday, Bodaybo Mayor Alexei Botvin was arrested and charged with "abuse of power resulting in grave consequences," the Investigative Committee, Russia's top investigative body, said in a statement.

Related article: Russia's Regions Post Largest-Ever Budget Deficit in 2025

According to law enforcement, on Jan. 30, four boiler houses in Bodaybo were shut down after a water pipeline froze, leaving more than 140 residential buildings and two schools without heating. Investigators accused Botvin of failing to promptly resolve the outage.

"Given the low outdoor temperatures, the loss of heating, water supply and sewage services in these residential buildings and children's public facilities posed a threat to the life and health of at least 1,321 residents of Bodaybo," the Investigative Committee said.

Russia saw a sharp rise in utility outages in January. Despite aging infrastructure and widespread breakdowns, the government's three-year budget plans for a gradual reduction in spending on housing and utilities, as military expenditures remain a top priority.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2026/02/27/irkutsk-police-arrest-mayor-of-town-where-residents-have-gone-weeks-without-heating-and-water-a92067