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Hundreds of Dogs Perish in Nizhny Novgorod Fire

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Russian Emergencies Ministry

Around 200 dogs, including Pomeranians, Bulldogs and Chihuahuas, are believed to have died in a fire in the city of Nizhny Novgorod, Russian media reported Wednesday.

Russia's Emergency Situations Ministry said the fire broke out in an outbuilding where the animals were presumably kept. The cause of the blaze is currently being investigated.

A video released by the ministry showed firefighters battling the flames inside the building.

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Local journalists said they spoke with the owner of the building, a dog breeder identified only as Tatiana, who said she had used it as a kennel and heated it using a wood stove to keep the animals warm in cold weather.

She claimed to have gotten up several times during the night between Tuesday and

Wednesday to check the kennel's temperature, but was later awakened by a neighbor who noticed the fire at around 5 a.m. local time.

"I woke up half-naked, thought I'd quickly lead them out. I opened the door, smoke poured over me and the animals were not showing signs of life," Tatiana told journalists.

The breeder said she believes the stove may have caused the laminate in the building to smolder and fill it with thick smoke.

Tatiana's neighbors described her as a responsible breeder and dismissed speculation on social media that the fire may have been a deliberate act of arson.

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