

87 Pensioners Win \$870,000 in Strasbourg

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The European Court of Human Rights has awarded 668,000 euros (\$873,000) to 87 military veterans from the town of Novocherkassk in the Rostov region who were denied pensions and other compensations, the Vremya Novostei daily reported Monday.

The pensioners successfully sued local authorities between 2004 and 2007, but the officials ignored the court orders and later won appeals during so-called "review trials," which allow defendants to dispute a court ruling after it was supposed to be enacted.

The Strasbourg court ruled that the pensioners were denied fair trials and awarded them a sum about 10 times higher than the average amount won in cases of people who disappeared in the North Caucasus — the most popular type of lawsuit filed with the court by Russians.

In November, the European Court of Human Rights stopped accepting Russian cases contesting review trials after being swamped with thousands of such complaints.

The court said Russian authorities must deal with this "systemic" violation, which led to the

State Duma passing a bill allowing Russian citizens to sue the state for stalling on court orders. But no court decisions have been made under the new legislation, which was enacted May 4.

Two of the 87 pensioners did not live to hear the Strasbourg ruling.

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