

Live Rounds Line Samara Road After Depot Blasts

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Samara region residents evacuated during recent explosions at an ammunition depot were allowed to return home on Thursday, even as forest fires in the area triggered more blasts.

The explosions began Tuesday evening at the Volga Federal Ammunition Testing Site, prompting more than 6,000 residents to be evacuated from the town of Chapayevsk. One person was killed in the initial blasts, 12 sought medical help and 43 were hospitalized, Interfax reported Thursday.

By midday Thursday, more than 21,000 shells had been collected, with special attention given during the clean-up operation at the Samara-Volgograd highway where many of the weapons wound up, said Mikhail Metelkin, spokesman for the regional branch of the Emergency Situations Ministry.

But around 1 p.m., there were more explosions as several shells that had been scattered in the

forest area close to the initial blast went off. Police told journalists and people near the scene on the Samara-Volgograd highway to stay clear of the area.

Andrei Tretyakov, deputy head of the regional branch of the emergencies ministry, warned that "ammunitions are scattered all along the road like peas, three to four layers deep, so naming a timeframe for their liquidation right now is impossible," RIA Novosti reported.

Treyatkov said the shells were located a safe distance from the nearby village of Nagorny, however, and that residents should not be concerned.

Five buildings that stored ammunition were destroyed by the initial fire, the cause of which was likely forest fires caused by summer heat, Tretyakov said.

President Vladimir Putin ordered that victims of the blasts be given 10,000 rubles (\$305) each in compensation. Those who were seriously injured will reportedly receive 200,000 rubles, and those with less severe injuries 100,000 rubles.

An effort is also under way to repair all the windows broken during the blasts, partly to prevent looting, said Yury Ivanov, head of the Samara region's public safety department, Moskovsky Komsomolets reported.

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