

Alcohol Poisoning Kills 17 Russians

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Police detained three suspects accused of large-scale counterfeit alcohol production and trade. sledcom.ru

At least 17 people died from counterfeit alcohol poisoning in central Russia, authorities [said](#) Friday, a problem that has plagued the country for years despite the Kremlin's campaign against so-called surrogate alcohol.

The victims included residents of neighboring towns in central Russia's Orenburg region aged 36 to 79, according to the Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes.

The toll stood at 17 dead and 33 injured by noon local time Friday, the orisk.ru news website quoted Orenburg health minister Tatiana Savinova as saying at a crisis center meeting. Savinova added that tests showed "pure methanol, a deadly poison" in the victims' biological fluids.

Police detained three suspects, including a 29-year-old man, accused of large-scale counterfeit alcohol production and trade.

A 60-year-old man and 47-year-old woman were also taken into custody on suspicion of

selling the illicit alcohol.

Authorities discovered a bottling and storage facility and seized 1,279 bottles of bootleg alcohol in a warehouse in the city of Orsk.

Regional officials advised residents to avoid buying bootleg alcohol and pledged to “defend Orenburg residents from new tragic events.”

“I urge all residents to refrain from buying and consuming unlicensed drinks. The price of this is your life,” local media [quoted](#) Orenburg governor Denis Pasler as saying.

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