

# [***Putin Has a Dam Problem***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BT7-S0N1-JBR6-90M3-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Length:** 696 words

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**Highlight:** Tomsk in Siberia is the latest Russian region to be hit by flooding, which has caused widespread evacuations.

**Body**

Widespread flooding in Russia exacerbated by dams not holding up have raised questions about the the disaster response of President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/vladimir-putin?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)'s officials and the infrastructure of the country he leads.

Flooding in the southern Urals region and neighboring Kazakhstan has been caused by melting ice swelling rivers and heavy rainfall. Spring flooding is common but this year it is much more severe than usual and is spread over several Russian regions.

On April 5, the Orsk Dam collapsed due to flooding along the Ural River near the Kazakhstan border, prompting the evacuation of thousands of people and a state of emergency in the Orenburg region.

On April 12, the Orenburg regional government warned of a threat of a breakthrough on the embankment dam village of Gazodobytchikov, RIA Novosti reported.

Meanwhile, more than 1,200 miles further east, an embankment dam was washed away in the Siberian city of Tomsk causing water levels to rise by nearly a meter (3 feet), with [*video on social media*](https://twitter.com/nexta_tv/status/1779758777396322736) showing the raging waters.

People in parts of the Urals city of Kurgan have been told to evacuate their homes as the Tobol River swelled with water from melted snow, rising to over 20 feet. Flooding is expected to peak there on Monday, Reuters reported with Kurgan regional governor Vadim Shumkov saying that almost a "sea" of water is approaching.

In addition, a state of emergency was introduced in advance in the Tyumen region, where the water level in the Tobol and Ishim rivers could reach record highs.

Kremlin spokesman [*Dmitry Peskov*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/dmitry-peskov?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) said on Monday that "a lot of work has already been done" in the region, but there is still a danger of flooding large areas, state news agency TASS reported.

Adding to potential woes for Russian authorities was a report of an explosion of the dam by the Karlovsky reservoir in the Donetsk region, which Putin has claimed to have annexed.

The pro-Ukrainian Telegram channel ***Politics*** of the Country reported on Saturday that this had flooded neighboring villages southwest of Avdiivka, and posted video showing the high waters.

**Orenburg flooding**

The consequences of flooding in Orenburg continue to be felt with Russia's Emergency Situations Ministry, saying that nearly 4,000 houses and apartments in the regional capital of the same name had been flooded.

Agence France-Presse reported how locals had lamented the lack of a government response. "No one is helping us," one resident said, according to the agency. "No Emergency Situations Ministry, no one has ever come."

In other parts of western Siberia, such as in the Kemerovo region, the [*Mrassu River*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mrassu) overflowed its banks. Residents of villages in the area told U.S-funded Radio Free Europe that household equipment and animals have been washed away and that no officials have come to help.

Further east in the republic of Buryatia, houses were also flooded and residents evacuated due to waters swelling caused from an ice blockage on the Selenga River.

The Russian edition of *The Moscow Times* reported that the ministry did not act on information it had on March 5 that Orenburg was at risk of flooding.

Citing a document by Russia's Ministry of Natural Resources and the Prosecutor General's Office, the publication said that officials had warned of the possibility of high waters and did not prepare the region's reservoirs to handle the flooding.

*Newsweek* has contacted Russia's Emergency Situations Ministry for comment.

Social media users sharing images of the waters and residents trying to deal with the high waters commented on what the flooding signaled about Russia's infrastructure.

Poslannik Mira posted on X, that the disaster had been "caused by Putin's reckless policies," because "corruption in Russia has reached its peak."

In reporting on the Russian floods, Ukrainian media also noted how Moscow had flooded Ukraine's Kherson region in June 2023 when it blew up the Kakhovka dam.

The Ukrainian internal affairs adviser, Anton Gerashchenko, [*wrote*](https://twitter.com/Gerashchenko_en/status/1777053106351583570) on X, "the dam in Orsk was built 10 years ago and cost almost a billion rubles. Already during construction, there have been issues with increasing the amount of work to be paid for. It means that budget money was wasted."

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2378035/flooding-orenburg.jpg)

**Graphic**

Flooding in Orenburg

ANDREY BORODULIN/Getty Images

An aerial view shows the flood-hit city of Orenburg on April 13, 2024. Russian emergency services said they had evacuated thousands of people from the Orenburg region in the south of the Urals as flood water continued to rise.

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