

Russia breaks record again for COVID-19 deaths, infections

October 15 2021, by Vladimir Isachenkov



Crows sit on grave crosses in the section of a cemetery reserved for coronavirus victims in Kolpino, outside St. Petersburg, Russia, Tuesday, Oct. 12, 2021. Russia hit another record of daily coronavirus deaths Tuesday as the country struggled with a rapid surge of infections and lagging vaccination rates, but authorities have been adamant that there would be no new national lockdown. Credit: AP Photo/Dmitri Lovetsky

Russia's daily tolls of coronavirus infections and deaths surged to another record on Friday, a quickly mounting figure that has put a severe strain on the country's health care system.

The government's coronavirus task force reported 32,196 new confirmed coronavirus cases and 999 deaths in the past 24 hours.

The record for daily COVID-19 deaths in Russia has been broken repeatedly over the past few weeks, as fatalities steadily approach 1,000 in a single day. It comes amid increasing infections and a reluctance by authorities to toughen restrictions that would further cripple the economy.

The government said this week that about 43 million Russians, or just about 29% of the country's nearly 146 million people, are fully vaccinated. Authorities have tried to speed up the pace of vaccination with lotteries, bonuses and other incentives, but widespread vaccine skepticism and conflicting signals from officials stymied the efforts.

Despite the mounting toll, the Kremlin has also ruled out a new nationwide lockdown like the one early on in the pandemic that badly hurt the economy, eroding President Vladimir Putin's popularity. Instead, it has delegated the power to enforce coronavirus restrictions to regional authorities.



Medical workers carry a patient suspected of having coronavirus on a stretcher at a hospital in Kommunarka, outside Moscow, Russia, Tuesday, Oct. 12, 2021. Russia hit another record of daily coronavirus deaths Tuesday as the country struggled with a rapid surge of infections and lagging vaccination rates, but authorities have been adamant that there would be no new national lockdown. Credit: AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko



Medical workers carry a patient suspected of having coronavirus on a stretcher at a hospital in Kommunarka, outside Moscow, Russia, Tuesday, Oct. 12, 2021. Russia hit another record of daily coronavirus deaths Tuesday as the country struggled with a rapid surge of infections and lagging vaccination rates, but authorities have been adamant that there would be no new national lockdown. Credit: AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko



A medical worker helps a patient suspected of having coronavirus to leave an ambulance at a hospital in Kommunarka, outside Moscow, Russia, Tuesday, Oct. 12, 2021. Russia hit another record of daily coronavirus deaths Tuesday as the country struggled with a rapid surge of infections and lagging vaccination rates, but authorities have been adamant that there would be no new national lockdown. Credit: AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko



Ambulances stand in line to deliver patients suspected of having coronavirus to a hospital in Kommunarika, outside Moscow, Russia, Tuesday, Oct. 12, 2021. Russia hit another record of daily coronavirus deaths Tuesday as the country struggled with a rapid surge of infections and lagging vaccination rates, but authorities have been adamant that there would be no new national lockdown. Credit: AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko



Medical workers stand near their ambulance as they deliver a patient suspected of having coronavirus to a hospital in Kommunarka, outside Moscow, Russia, Tuesday, Oct. 12, 2021. Russia hit another record of daily coronavirus deaths Tuesday as the country struggled with a rapid surge of infections and lagging vaccination rates, but authorities have been adamant that there would be no new national lockdown. Credit: AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Thursday that local officials could toughen restrictions if a region's health care system gets close to being overwhelmed with patients.

Some of Russia's 85 regions already have restricted attendance at large public events and limited access to theaters, restaurants and other places. However, life remains largely normal in Moscow, St. Petersburg and many other Russian cities, with businesses operating as usual and mask

mandates loosely enforced.

Health Minister Mikhail Murashko acknowledged Thursday that Russia's [medical facilities](#) have come under growing strain and said that authorities have offered retired medics who were vaccinated to return to work.

Overall, Russia's coronavirus task force has registered over 7.9 million confirmed cases and 221,313 deaths—Europe's highest [death](#) toll. The official record ranks Russia as the fifth-hardest-hit nation in the world following the United States, Brazil, India and Mexico.

However, the state statistics agency Rosstat, which also counts deaths where the virus wasn't considered the main cause, has reported a much higher toll of pandemic deaths—about 418,000 deaths of people with COVID-19 as of August. If that higher number is used, Russia would be the fourth hardest-hit nation in the world, ahead of Mexico.

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