

# Russia hits new record for COVID-19 deaths, resists lockdown

October 12 2021, by Vladimir Isachenkov

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Medical workers carry a patient suspected of having coronavirus on a stretcher at a hospital in Kommunarka, outside Moscow, Russia, Monday, Oct. 11, 2021. Russia's daily coronavirus infections and deaths are hovering near all-time highs amid a laggard vaccination rate and the Kremlin's reluctance to toughen restrictions. Russia's state coronavirus task force reported 29,409 new confirmed cases Monday. That's the highest number since the start of the year and just slightly lower than the pandemic record reached in December. Credit: AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko

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.

The government coronavirus task force reported 973 coronavirus deaths, the highest daily toll since the start of the pandemic. Russia has repeatedly hit record daily death tolls this month, and daily infections also have been hovering near all-time highs, with 28,190 new cases reported Tuesday.

Despite the rapidly mounting toll, the Kremlin has ruled out a nationwide lockdown, delegating the power to make decisions on toughening coronavirus restrictions to regional authorities.

The soaring infections has raised the pressure on Russia's health care system, with hospitals filling up quickly. Speaking at a Cabinet meeting Tuesday, Health Minister Mikhail Murashko said 11% of Russia's 235,000 hospitalized COVID-19 patients are in serious or critical condition.

Overall, Russia's coronavirus task force has registered over 7.8 million confirmed cases and 218,345 deaths—the highest death toll in Europe. Yet the state statistics agency Rosstat, which also counts deaths where the virus wasn't considered the main cause, has reported a much higher total—about 418,000 deaths of people with COVID-19.



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If that higher number is used, Russia would be the fourth hardest-hit nation in the world during the pandemic, after the United States, Brazil and India. Even the lower mortality figure only shifts Russia down to fifth place, after Mexico.

The Russian government has blamed the sharp rise in infections and deaths that began last month on a slow vaccination rate. Only 47.8 million Russians, or almost 33% of its nearly 146 million people, have received at least one shot of a coronavirus vaccine, and 42.4 million, about 29%, were fully vaccinated, the government said Friday.

Speaking at a meeting with newly-elected Russian lawmakers, Russian President Vladimir Putin emphasized on Tuesday the importance of broad vaccination and urged lawmakers to help encourage the population to get the shots.

"We must patiently and persistently work with people and explain all the advantages of prophylactics against that dangerous disease," Putin said, noting that the population must be persuaded to get the shots without resorting to administrative pressure.



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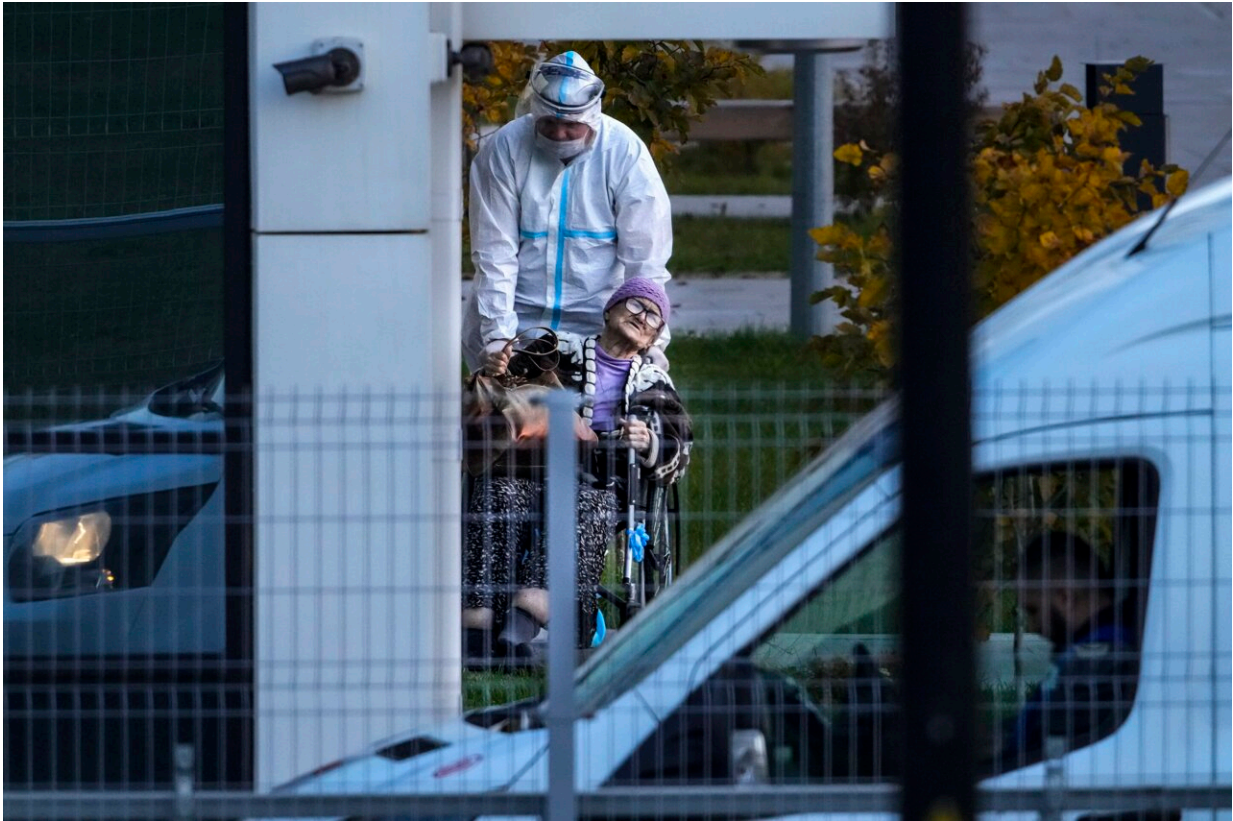


Ambulances with patients suspected of having coronavirus stand near a hospital in Kommunarka, outside Moscow, Russia, Monday, Oct. 11, 2021. Russia's daily coronavirus infections and deaths are hovering near all-time highs amid a laggard vaccination rate and the Kremlin's reluctance to toughen restrictions. Russia's

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A medical worker pushes a wheelchair with a patient suspected of having coronavirus on a stretcher at a hospital in Kommunarka, outside Moscow, Russia, Monday, Oct. 11, 2021. Russia's daily coronavirus infections and deaths are hovering near all-time highs amid a laggard vaccination rate and the Kremlin's reluctance to toughen restrictions. Russia's state coronavirus task force reported 29,409 new confirmed cases Monday. That's the highest number since the start of the year and just slightly lower than the pandemic record reached in December. Credit: AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko

Amid a quick tide of infections, some Russian regions have restricted attendance at large public events and limited access to theaters, restaurants and other places to people who have been vaccinated, recently recovered from COVID-19 or tested negative in the previous 72

hours.

But life remains largely normal in Moscow, St. Petersburg and many other Russian cities, with businesses operating as usual and mask mandates loosely enforced. In Moscow, the authorities expanded free coronavirus tests in shopping malls, hoping it would help stem contagion.

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