

Russia's coronavirus deaths still hover near all-time highs

November 22 2021, by Vladimir Isachenkov



Medics wearing special suits to protect against coronavirus treat patients with coronavirus at an ICU of a hospital in Volgograd, Russia, Sunday, Nov. 21, 2021. The latest surge in deaths comes amid low vaccination rates and lax public attitudes in Russia toward taking precautions. About 40% of Russia's nearly 146 million people have been fully vaccinated, even though the country approved a domestically developed COVID-19 vaccine—Sputnik V—months before most of the world. Credit: AP Photo/Alexandr Kulikov

Russia's coronavirus death toll was still hovering near all-time highs Monday, but the number of new infections continued to decline.

The state coronavirus task force reported 1,241 COVID-19 deaths, down from the pandemic's record of 1,254 recorded last week.

The task force also reported 35,681 new confirmed cases, reflecting a steady downward trend since early November when the daily numbers topped 41,000, the highest level since the start of the pandemic.

The surge in deaths comes amid low vaccination rates and lax public attitudes in Russia toward taking precautions. About 40% of Russia's nearly 146 million people have been fully vaccinated, even though the country approved a domestically developed COVID-19 vaccine—Sputnik V—months before most of the world.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said that on Sunday he got a booster shot of Sputnik Light, a single-dose version of Sputnik V that he received in the spring. Putin said he was feeling fine and felt no side effects.

The Kremlin has delegated the power to introduce restrictions to regional authorities depending on the local situation, and many provinces across Russia have tightened restrictions, allowing access to public places only to those who are immunized or test negative for the virus.



A medic wearing a special suit to protect against coronavirus fills documents as a body of a COVID-19 victim lies on a stretcher at an ICU of a hospital in Volgograd, Russia, Sunday, Nov. 21, 2021. The latest surge in deaths comes amid low vaccination rates and lax public attitudes in Russia toward taking precautions. About 40% of Russia's nearly 146 million people have been fully vaccinated, even though the country approved a domestically developed COVID-19 vaccine—Sputnik V—months before most of the world. Credit: AP Photo/Alexandr Kulikov

Kazan, the central city of the Russian province of Tatarstan, on Monday became the first in Russia to start demanding QR codes proving vaccination, past illness or a negative coronavirus test on public transport.

About 500 people were denied access to [public transport](#) in the city of 1.2 million, and a conflict between a passenger and controllers led to a brief suspension of service on one of the city's tram lines.

The Russian Cabinet has submitted new legislation that would restrict access to many [public places](#), as well as domestic and international trains and flights, to those who have been fully vaccinated, have recovered from COVID-19 or are medically exempt from vaccination. The legislation, which is set to take effect early next year, has already triggered protests across the country.

In total, Russia's coronavirus task force has reported over 9.3 million confirmed infections and 265,336 COVID-19 deaths, by far the highest death toll in Europe.



An employee of the Control and Auditing Service of the Transport Committee of the Kazan Mayor's Office, right, checks a passenger's QR code proving the absence of the coronavirus infection on a smart phone screen in a bus in Kazan, Russia, Monday, Nov. 22, 2021. Kazan, the central city of the Russian province of Tatarstan, became the first in Russia to start requiring proof of vaccination or past illness for access to public transport. Credit: AP Photo

Some experts believe the true figure is even higher. Reports by Russia's statistical service, Rosstat, that tally coronavirus-linked deaths retroactively reveal much higher mortality. They say about 462,000 people with COVID-19 died between April 2020 and September of this year.

Russian officials have said the task force only includes deaths for which COVID-19 was the main cause, and uses data from medical facilities. Rosstat uses wider criteria for counting virus-related deaths and takes its numbers from civil registry offices where registering a [death](#) is finalized.

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Citation: Russia's coronavirus deaths still hover near all-time highs (2021, November 22)
retrieved 25 April 2024 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-11-russia-coronavirus-deaths-all-time-highs.html>

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