

Sputnik V developer calls for mandatory vaccines in Russia

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The developer of Russia's coronavirus vaccine Sputnik V has said Moscow should make jabs mandatory as inoculation rates remain low despite record deaths and campaigning by authorities.

His call came as Russia reported a record 1,239 COVID deaths in a

single day Wednesday.

Only 34 percent of the country is fully vaccinated, even though Sputnik V—the world's first COVID [vaccine](#)—has been widely available since December last year.

"Vaccinations should be mandatory," Alexander Gintsburg, the director of the state-run Gamaleya research centre that developed Sputnik V, said in an interview with government paper Rossiyskaya Gazeta.

Gintsburg said the pandemic will only come under control in Russia when "70-75 percent" of the country is fully vaccinated.

"For this, of course, the given vaccine should be included in the national vaccination calendar," he said.

He also called for children to be taught that they should be vaccinated.

"There should be posters that tell people to do this just as you have to wash your hands, brush your teeth, say 'hello' and 'goodbye,'" he was quoted as saying.

Gintsburg said Russia was currently working on developing a nasal vaccine that would "complement" Sputnik V.

He said Moscow was also carrying out tests of a version of the Sputnik vaccine for minors.

Compulsory vaccinations would not "contradict the constitution", senator Andrei Klishas who chairs a constitutional committee in the upper house of Russia's parliament, said Wednesday.

He said that such an initiative would have to be approved by parliament

first, according to the RIA Novosti news agency.

Russia's health minister Mikhail Murashko said doctors who discourage patients from vaccination could face legal consequences, amid widespread reports that medics across the country have taken an anti-vaccine stance.

"In my opinion, it is very inappropriate behaviour" for doctors to be against vaccinations, Murashko said, according to the Interfax news agency.

On Monday, authorities in Russia's second city Saint Petersburg expanded the list of people subject to compulsory vaccination. It included people over 60, those with [chronic diseases](#) and transport employees to its list.

Russia's statistics agency Rosstat said 44,265 people died in Russia of coronavirus in September—nearly double the official government figure—bringing the agency's total virus toll to nearly 450,000, the highest in Europe.

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