

Rogozin Says Population Goal Should Be 500 Million

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Federal authorities have for years been pushing measures to encourage population growth, in an attempt to reverse the country's demographic downturn.

But Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin set the bar a whole lot higher Thursday, saying the country's goal should be a population of 500 million — more than triple its current size.

"140 million people—that's [too] little. The solution is either to complain that we have those Chinese people, or not to point to our neighbor but to have children. Without children Russia will not have a population of 500 million, which we absolutely need," Rogozin said in a speech to university students in Novosibirsk, RIA-Novosti reported.

Rogozin called for measures that authorities have advocated before, including cash incentives to promote large families and assistance to families in securing housing.

He also suggested creating new population centers across the country, including one that would help to develop eastern Russia.

"Incentives need to be created for developing the eastern part of the country. First, we have all the necessary resources for this, and secondly, the human 'gulf stream' washing people away from these regions needs to be stopped," Rogozin said.

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