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Lenin's Mausoleum Reopens to Public

By Aliide Naylor

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A police officer looking on as two visitors enter the mausoleum of Vladimir Lenin on Red Square on Wednesday, when the mausoleum reopened after undergoing planned repairs and renovation for more than four months. **Maxim Shemetov**

After nine months of closure during the cold season, spending some time masked under a large white dome, Lenin's mausoleum on Moscow's Red Square has finally reopened to the general public, just in time for tourist season.

Lenin's tomb shut in September for renovations, amid concern over its leaking roof and unstable foundations. However, the action spawned some speculation over what the real purpose was in concealing the red marble resting-place from the public.

All problems regarding the building's foundations are now fully fixed and the lighting restored, according to news agency RIA Novosti.

Next year will mark the 90th anniversary of the former communist leader's death, and he has been embalmed and on display throughout.

The site of his burial is one of Moscow's top tourist attractions, with Russians and foreigners alike flocking to catch a glimpse of his embalmed body, or however much of it remains after all these years.

Lines in summer are usually very lengthy, with frequently-stationed guards overseeing a strict procedure for visiting him, ensuring visitors' silence and swift exits.

The debate over what should be done with his body has hung over Moscow since the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. Many Russians have since expressed the desire to see him laid to rest for good, in accordance with his own wishes.

Some believe he should be buried to rest alongside his mother and sisters in Volkov Cemetery, situated in St. Petersburg.

The most recent opinion polls have displayed an increase in public desire to see him consigned to the earth, with the figure in favor standing at 48 percent, according to a 2012 Superjob.ru poll.

However, state news channel RT reported that by the end of April, the figure stood at more than 60 percent.

"People from the Soviet Union — we of course can't imagine Red Square without the mausoleum," one Moscow school teacher told the Reuters news agency.

"But from the point of view of Christianity, the man should have been buried, and indeed there are many questions on this subject, and, of course, it's difficult to answer how this should be done exactly."

No procedures are currently underway that may preempt his removal from his tomb.

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