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Russian Weather Forecasters Warn: 'Winter Is Coming'

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After a relatively mild winter last year, this year's cold season in Russia is expected to be much harsher, possibly heralding the start of a 60-year cold spell, Russian weather forecasters said.

Winter has already started in Russia's Yamal peninsula, where night temperatures dropped to minus 18 degrees Celsius halfway through October, Vladimir Melnikov, a member of the Tyumen branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, told the TASS news agency Wednesday.

Melnikov said evidence showed the Earth was not only gradually warming up but was also experiencing shorter cycles of cooling, saying the forecast for the upcoming winter heralded the beginning of a 60-year cold cycle.

The head of the Federal Meteorological Service, Alexander Frolov, said Tuesday that this year's winter would be colder than last winter, TASS reported.

Last year, forecasters warned of a particularly harsh winter, with temperatures 5 to 10 degrees Celsius lower than the previous year, the report said. But some regions experienced much warmer weather than usual. Temperatures in the Sverdlovsk region, for example, were up to

10 degrees warmer than average in mid-December, TASS reported.

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