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# Russia's Population Decreases for First Time in a Decade

September 20, 2018



**Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

The Russian population has decreased in 2018 for the first time in almost a decade as the country battles a demographic crisis that threatens its economy, according to new data.

Declining birth rates after the collapse of the Soviet Union have resulted in a second demographic slump as the generation born in the 1990s reaches its prime childbearing years. A UN report predicted that by 2050, Russia's population will shrink by 11 million and will increasingly be concentrated in urban areas.

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A new mid-year report from Russia's Rosstat statistics agency said the population had decreased by 91,900 people between January and July this year.

This half-year, migration failed to prop up the decrease as it it did in the past, Rosstat said in the report published Wednesday.

Year-on-year population declines were recorded in 83 of 85 Russian regions and increases in mortality rates in 54 regions.

Russia had 10.9 births per 1,000 people in January-July in a consistent decline since at least 2011.

The 1.69 million babies born in 2017 marked the lowest birth rate since 2007.

In his 2018 election campaign, President Vladimir Putin pledged to spend $8.6 billion over three years on programs including mortgage subsidies and payouts to families to encourage Russians to have more babies.

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