

Russia's Population Declines in 2018 for First Time in a Decade

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Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

The Russian population is on track to decrease for the first time in a decade, unable to cope with a demographic slump the government has tried to reverse in recent years.

Russia is in the midst of a second demographic crisis as those who were born after the collapse of the Soviet Union reach their prime childbearing age. In his 2018 election campaign, President Vladimir Putin pledged to spend \$8.6 billion over the next three years on programs including mortgage subsidies and payouts to families to encourage procreation.

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Russia's overall population between January and October declined by 78,700 to total 146.8 million, the Rosstat statistics agency said in a report [published](#) on Wednesday.

An immigrant inflow of almost 101,800 people was unable to shore up population numbers as in previous years, only covering 56.4 percent of the natural decline of 180,500 people — as deaths continued to outstrip births in 2018.

“This situation is emerging for the first time this decade,” the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration’s (RANEPA) [said](#) Wednesday in its analysis of the third-quarter data.

The last time Russia’s population decreased and migration was unable to reverse that trend was in 2008, according to RANEPA’s lead demographics researcher Nikita Mkrtchyan.

“The two months [remaining in 2018] won’t be able to close the discrepancy between natural loss and migration growth,” the RBC news website quoted Mkrtchyan as [saying](#) Thursday.

Rosstat said a total of 1.3 million babies were born between January and October, down by 66,000 over the same period in 2017, as birth rates declined in 83 of 85 Russian regions. Meanwhile, 1.5 million deaths were recorded in Russia in the first ten months of 2018.

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