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Russia Will Be One-Third Muslim in 15 Years, Chief Mufti Predicts

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Ravil Gainutdin, chairman of the Council of Muftis **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

Around 30 percent of the Russian population will practice Islam within the next 15 years, Russia's grand mufti has predicted, citing demographic trends.

Russia's Muslim-majority regions, including republics in the North Caucasus and the republic of Tatarstan, are known to have the highest birth rates in the country, reflecting similar trends worldwide. Various estimates place the current Muslim population in Russia at between 14 million and 20 million people, or between 10 to 14 percent of Russia's total population of 146.8 million in 2018.

"According to experts, Russia's [Muslim] population will increase to 30 percent in a decade and a half," said Ravil Gainutdin, the chairman of the Council of Muftis, a religious group representing Russia's Muslim community.

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The changing demographics mean that “dozens” of new mosques will need to be built in Russia’s largest cities, Gainutdin said at a forum hosted by the State Duma on Monday.

Archpriest Dmitry Smirnov, an official in Russia’s Orthodox Church, agreed with Gainutdin’s forecast and predicted that “there won't be any Russians left in 2050.”

“It’s too late,” he told the Govorit Moskva radio station when asked if the demographic trend could be reversed.

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