

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

April 29, 2019



[Kremlin.ru](https://kremlin.ru)

Fake news first

New legislation [criminalizing](#) the spread of “fake news” appeared to be enforced for the first time when police [served](#) an Arkhangelsk activist with an administrative protocol for online calls to attend anti-landfill protests that had not been authorized by the authorities.

Meanwhile, around 300 demonstrators [gathered](#) outside Arkhangelsk against the latest plans to build another landfill to hold trash from the region’s three largest cities.

Fast-tracked standoff

President Vladimir Putin said Moscow was considering offering all Ukrainian citizens fast-tracked Russian passports, a move likely to anger some politicians in Ukraine, which has been at war with pro-Russian separatists since 2014.

Putin should not expect many Ukrainians to take up his offer of a Russian passport, Ukraine's

President-elect Volodymyr Zelenskiy [said](#), while offering Ukrainian citizenship to Russians.

Tainted oil

Russia's pipeline monopoly Transneft is investigating a case of contaminated oil, Putin said, adding that this could lead to a wider inquiry, possibly including law enforcement agencies.

Transneft said on Friday that the contamination which led to the suspension of the oil flows to Europe could be deliberate, and that a criminal case was opened, Interfax reported.

Related article: [Moscow Residents Celebrating the Easter Vigil at Sretensky Monastery](#)

Easter mass

Putin attended an Orthodox Easter mass led by Patriarch Kirill overnight on Saturday through Sunday at Russia's main Christ the Savior Cathedral in central Moscow.

Embed:

Шедевр.

([@alexaderz](#) - AP)

Саша Земляниченко, ты крут <https://t.co/WMiDxvD1pq>
[pic.twitter.com/ZMaEbbdHbH](https://t.co/WMiDxvD1pq)

— Алексей Венедиктов (@aavst) [April 28, 2019](#)

Putin joined the believers for the [overnight vigil](#) in the company of Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and his wife Svetlana Medvedeva.

Arms control

Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov, commenting on a media report that U.S. President Donald Trump wants a new arms control deal with Moscow and Beijing, said Russia was open to the possibility of new arms control deals, but that there were no ongoing talks.

Ushakov's words were more upbeat than those of Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, who on Saturday [dismissed](#) Trump's proposals on nuclear arms disarmament as "not serious."

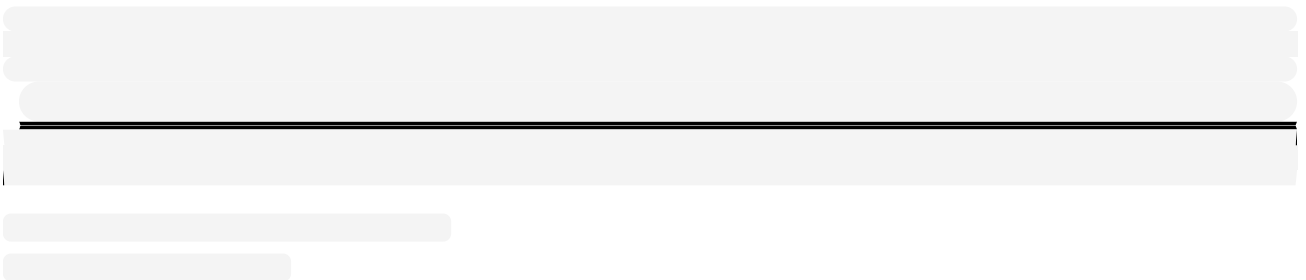
Harnessed beluga

A Norwegian fisherman has [removed](#) a harness from a beluga whale thought to have escaped from a Russian navy facility.

Embed:



[View this post on Instagram](#)



A post shared by NORWAY 🇳🇴 (@norge) on Apr 27, 2019 at 11:07am PDT

The removed harness was [reportedly](#) inscribed with the phrase “Equipment of St. Petersburg.” A Norwegian whale researcher cited a Russian colleague as saying that the Russian Navy may have used the whale in some capacity but did not provide details.

Drowned cutter

At least one passenger has died and another is still missing after a St. Petersburg motor boat [sank](#) due to getting tangled in fishing nets.

Five victims [remain](#) hospitalized, while the boat has been [found](#) and towed ashore.

Tit-for-tat

Israel released two prisoners, sending them back to Syria in what Damascus described as Russian-mediated reciprocation for the repatriation of the body of a long-missing Israeli soldier.

The Israeli military said that Ahmed Khamis and Zidan Taweel were transferred to the International Committee of the Red Cross at Quneitra crossing on the armistice line with the Syrian Golan Heights.

Includes reporting from Reuters.

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