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Russia's Natural Population Declines for 4th Straight Year – Audit Chamber

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Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

Russia's natural population decline has continued for a fourth consecutive year in 2019, the Audit Chamber said Thursday as the country continues to struggle with a demographic crisis.

Russia's total population dropped for the first time in a decade in 2018, totaling 146.8 million at the end of last year as migration numbers hit record lows. The United Nations has predicted that Russia's population could halve to fewer than 84 million people by 2100.

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"The natural population decline accelerating for the fourth year in a row creates serious risks for Russia's national goal of ensuring sustainable growth," the Audit Chamber said.

There were 1.21 million deaths versus 994,300 live births in Russia between Jan. 1-Aug. 31, according to the Audit Chamber's quarterly budget report.

That amounts to a natural population decline of 219,200 and nearly equals the decline seen in all of 2018.

Russia's overall population has declined by 52,500 people since Jan. 1 and totaled 146.7 million as of Sept. 1, according to the Audit Chamber's report.

President Vladimir Putin has prioritized Russia's migration policy, signing a 2019-2025 plan of action that the Kremlin hopes will attract more Russian-speaking migrants and offset falling birth rates. The Audit Chamber said that migration has compensated for 76% of Russia's natural population decline so far this year.

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