

# Russians Start 2-Week Coronavirus Quarantine After Return From Wuhan

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No infection was detected among the 144 returnees who landed at Tyumen airport on Wednesday.

## **Russian Embassy in China**

Scores of Russians began two weeks of quarantine and coronavirus tests in a camp in Siberia on Wednesday after being flown home from China's Wuhan, the city at the epicenter of an outbreak of the fast-spreading disease.

Russia, which has restricted crossings along its 4,300 km (2,670-mile) land border with China, last week reported its first two cases of coronavirus, both in Siberia and both involving Chinese nationals.

No infection was detected among the two groups of 144 returnees — including 16 nationals of ex-Soviet countries — who were brought back to Tyumen airport on Wednesday in two military planes, the Defense Ministry said.

The global death toll from the outbreak has risen to nearly 500, all but two in mainland China, and infections to close to 25,000.

Medical staff in white safety gear met the first Russian plane, an Il-76 military transporter, early on Wednesday, footage posted by the country's coronavirus crisis center showed.

All arrivals were being quarantined for two weeks in a camp some 30km (19 miles) outside Tyumen, said Russia's chief medical officer, Anna Popova. The camp is fenced, equipped with CCTV cameras and guarded by military patrols, the crisis center said.

A city of 800,000 people, Tyumen is a focal point of Russia's huge oil industry - and for speculation on what impact the virus might have on the country's economy.

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With a Central Bank rate meeting due on Friday, Citibank said it expected growth to rise to 2% this year thanks to a stimulus plan announced by President Vladimir Putin.

However, that package "may just serve as a countercyclical support to economic activity should the virus outbreak take full effect," Citi analysts said in a note this week.

On Tuesday, a health ministry official said that Russia was preparing for the possible spread of the virus, with some schools closed and public events cancelled, though other officials attributed that simply to flu.

Russia has suspended direct passenger trains and commercial flights from China, except for some being routed through a separate terminal in Moscow to make screening passengers easier.

Deputy Prime Minister Tatiana Golikova estimated last week there were more than 600 Russians in Hubei province, where Wuhan is located.

Georgy Yegorov, spokesman for the Russian Embassy in Beijing, said on Wednesday all Russian citizens who had expressed a wish to return home had done so, and no further repatriation flights were planned.

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