

Prominent Russians Urge Government to Take Swift Action Against Coronavirus

March 20, 2020



The vote on Putin's constitutional amendments is scheduled for April 22. [Kremlin.ru](https://kremlin.ru)

Russian public figures, doctors and citizens have [launched](#) a petition urging the government to take urgent action against the coronavirus as the country's number of confirmed cases continues to climb.

The petition's authors include acclaimed novelist Lyudmila Ulitskaya, economist Sergei Guriev, publisher Irina Prokhorova, musician Alexei Kortnev and journalists Leonid Parfyonov, Katerina Gordeeva and Ilya Azar.

More than 12,500 people have signed the petition, which calls for universal free testing and measures to support people quarantined at home.

Related article: [Russia Confirms 54 New Coronavirus Cases, Reaching 253](#)

The petition's authors argue that the government should grant a three-month moratorium

on rent, utility bills, loans, leases and mortgages for people in home quarantine. They also proposed a three-month tax break for small businesses and individual entrepreneurs as well as interest-free loans for small enterprises to protect the economy.

“If we don’t want a similar scenario to Italy’s, urgent measures are needed,” the petition reads. “We support some of the actions taken by the government, but we are convinced that they are not enough. And you need to act urgently.”

The authors also called on the government to postpone the April 22 public vote on President Vladimir Putin’s [constitutional amendments](#) until the threat of coronavirus is gone.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov [said](#) Friday that the government’s coronavirus response headquarters had seen the appeal and said it would be taken into account.

Russia [confirmed](#) 54 new coronavirus infections on Friday, bringing the country’s official number of cases up to 253 and marking the largest one-day increase since recording began.

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