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How is the Russian Military Fighting the Coronavirus?

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President Vladimir Putin has ordered an inspection on March 25-28 into the troops' readiness for a mass infection. **Olga Smolskaya / TASS**

Russia's Armed Forces have announced steps to combat the spread of the deadly coronavirus pandemic as cases continue to rise and medics warn of the disease's potentially "explosive" spread.

President Vladimir Putin has ordered an inspection on March 25-28 into the troops' readiness for a mass infection. The number of Covid-19 cases in Russia has quadrupled over the past week, surpassing 1,000 as of Friday.

Here's a look at the measures the Russian military has taken or plans to take in order to prepare for the epidemic:

— The military plans to build 16 small medical centers spread across the country from the western exclave of Kaliningrad to the Pacific port of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky by May 15, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said. The government this week pledged 8.8 billion rubles

($140.5 million) for their construction.

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— The military has created four specialized units comprising medical, engineer, military police, aerospace, air defense, tank, combined arms and support troops, as well as nuclear, biological and chemical protection troops. The units total 1,000 servicemen and 200 pieces of advanced equipment overall.

— The units carried out anti-epidemic drills in seven regions. In Russia's western military district, the military police used drones to rehearse quarantine measures, protection units identified epicenters of simulated infections and engineers practiced water treatment and soil removal. In Russia's central military district, the units practiced isolating four training grounds designated as infected areas as part of the drills scenario.

— Top brass urged police officers, security agents, federal guards, investigators, prosecutors and emergency personnel to avoid traveling abroad, Russian media reported last week. The police force suspended visiting hours starting Friday, while police and the FSB security agency were reportedly advised to avoid detaining petty criminals.

— National Guard troops were filmed patrolling the streets of Moscow to enforce stay-home orders for the city's elderly residents.

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