

Russian Military Says Busloads of Troops Near Moscow 'Routine'

March 27, 2020



Footage of a bus convoy with men in military fatigues sparked speculation that Moscow could enter a coronavirus lockdown. **Moskva News Agency**

Russian National Guard troops have been deployed in Moscow as part of a planned action that should not cause panic, the military branch said Thursday.

Footage of a Moscow-bound bus convoy with men in military fatigues circulated widely online that day. Coupled with Mayor Sergei Sobyenin's closure of public gathering places for a week starting Saturday, the sighting prompted speculation that authorities could place the Russian capital under a full lockdown.

Embed:

В Москву стягивают Росгвардию! Завтра объявят о закрытии кафе и ресторанов и других ограничительных мерах. Следующая неделя обещает

быть интересной, тестирование возможного полного закрытия города.

pic.twitter.com/vxur8tK4kn

— Timur Valeev (@Tvmoscow) [March 25, 2020](#)

“This is a scheduled transportation of manpower and there’s no cause for concern,” Ilya Krenzhel, a regional National Guard unit spokesman, [told](#) the Moskva 24 news channel.

Witnesses have [described](#) seeing an estimated 200 buses with troops on a highway entering southwestern Moscow.

National Guard troops started patrolling Moscow on Thursday to urge elderly residents to comply with the mayor’s stay-at-home advisory. Health experts say adults 65 years and older face a higher risk of severe illness from Covid-19.

President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday [introduced](#) social and economic measures to slow the spread of the coronavirus, including a nationwide paid holiday from March 28 to April 5. Sobyenin has urged residents to stay home and avoid public places during this period.

Russia saw a spike in confirmed Covid-19 cases this week, reaching 840 cases and three coronavirus-related deaths as of Thursday as health experts have [warned](#) of an “explosion” in new infections. The Kremlin [said](#) Thursday that “there’s de facto no epidemic” in Russia despite an exponential progression of coronavirus cases this week.

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