

Russians Face up to 5 Years in Jail for Spreading False Coronavirus News

By [AFP](#)

March 31, 2020



The new law foresees punishments for inadvertently causing a person's death or other grave consequences by spreading "intentionally false" information about life-threatening circumstances.
Aleksander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

Russian lawmakers on Tuesday swiftly passed legislation imposing severe punishment — including up to five years in prison — for people convicted of spreading false information about the coronavirus.

If a person were found guilty of inadvertently causing a person's death or other grave consequences by spreading "intentionally false" information about life-threatening circumstances, he would face a fine of up to 2 million rubles (\$25,000) or up to five years in prison.

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The proposals also foresee punishment — including a fine of up to 1.5 million rubles and up to three years in prison — for harming a person's health through spreading false information.

The proposals are part of a package of draft legislation that also aims to impose tough punishment — including up to seven years in prison — for people breaking coronavirus quarantine rules.

The Duma voted in favor of the amendments in three readings Tuesday morning. The upper-house Federation Council approved the amendments in a single vote later that day, sending them to President Vladimir Putin to sign into law.

The amendments to Russia's Criminal Code were proposed by Vyacheslav Volodin, the speaker of the lower house State Duma, and another senior lawmaker of the governing United Russia party, Pavel Krasheninnikov, so were expected to pass swiftly.

Russia, which has a population of 144 million people, has so far reported 1,836 coronavirus cases and nine fatalities but the real number of the infected is believed to be higher.

Moscow, with its more than 12 million people, went into lockdown on Monday and more than a dozen regions moved to introduce similar steps to curb the coronavirus outbreak.

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