Russia's Nizhny Novgorod Unveils Digital Passes to Enforce Virus Lockdown

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The QR code pass system has drawn criticism for requiring citizens to enter their personal data on government servers. **Anton Novoderezhkin / TASS**

Russia's Nizhny Novgorod region has rolled out a QR code pass system to allow its 3.2 million residents to leave their homes during its coronavirus lockdown.

The region, some 400 kilometers east of Moscow, introduced an indefinite quarantine similar to that of the Russian capital and the majority of other regions this week. Residents are only allowed to leave their homes for groceries or medicine, to walk their pets or to throw out the trash.

Embed:

> Wow so this is what Nizhny Novgorod's QR-code request interface looks like. You can ask for work permits (undefined), shopping (3 hours), walking the dog (1

hour), throwing out the trash (30 min), or seeing a doctor (3 hours). pic.twitter.com/0hV0IWATn7

— Kevin Rothrock (@KevinRothrock) April 2, 2020

Residents can request QR codes as needed after registering on a special government website, Nizhny Novgorod governor Gleb Nikitin said on his website.

An iOS and Android app to obtain the scannable bar codes allowing residents to venture outside will become available by Saturday, he added.

"A law enforcement officer may still request proof that you're near your home and ask to see your passport," Nikitin said in a statement.

Related article: Are QR Coronavirus Quarantine Passes for Muscovites Workable? Experts Doubt It

Moscow authorities confirmed this week that they also plan to introduce the QR system for its 12.7 million residents during the city's lockdown. The capital's chief of IT has also said that an app to monitor homebound coronavirus patients would become available Thursday.

Opponents of the coronavirus control measures have criticized what they say are violations of privacy, warning that authorities could keep the restrictions after the global pandemic ends.

The Nizhny Novgorod region has reported 25 coronavirus cases out of 3,548 across Russia so far. Nearly half the region's cases were confirmed in the past 24 hours.

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