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# Dozens of Russian Cadets Involved With WWII Parade Rehearsals Infected With Coronavirus: Reports

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Preparations for Russia's landmark military parade to mark the 75th anniversary of Soviet victory in World War II had been underway since February. **Andrei Nikerichev / Moskva News Agency**

Nearly 50 cadets and instructors involved in rehearsals for Russia's now-postponed Victory Day parade have been infected with the coronavirus, the Baza Telegram channel reported Friday.

Rear Adm. Anatoly Minakov, the head of St. Petersburg's elite Nakhimov Naval School, confirmed to local media that he's been hospitalized in Moscow with a fever awaiting test results.

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Baza, which is believed to have sources in Russia's security forces, reported that 49 Nakhimov

cadets and instructors tested positive for Covid-19. Thirty-one of them are between the ages of 15 and 17, while the others are "much older and are in part high-risk."

Another 106 who have arrived in Moscow for the parade as early as March 20, including Minakov, are reportedly waiting for test results.

The Defense Ministry confirmed Thursday that 14 cadets and one civilian in Siberia have been diagnosed with Covid-19 and the school placed under quarantine. To date, the military has maintained that its coronavirus situation is under control.

The Kommersant business daily reported this week, citing unnamed sources, that the Defense Ministry assessed the military's coronavirus situation as "unstable" with three allegedly confirmed cases and 133 soldiers under observation.

Preparations for Russia's landmark military parade to mark the 75th anniversary of Soviet victory in World War II had been underway since February. Unconfirmed social media footage of recent parade rehearsals outside Moscow showed crowds of troops in an apparent violation of social distancing guidelines to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

President Vladimir Putin postponed the parade Thursday as Russia struggles to contain the rapid spread of the coronavirus. He said the event would be held later in 2020.

Russia commemorates the Soviet victory over the Nazis each year on May 9 with a massive military display that sees thousands of troops and tanks parade through Red Square and military jets fly in formation over the capital.

This year's parade was meant to be a major showcase for Putin, with world leaders and veterans from all over Russia invited to watch and take part in events over four days.

The number of Russian coronavirus cases has accelerated in the past week, with a new record increase of 4,070 infections reported Thursday. There have been 32,008 cases of infections and 273 deaths, according to official figures, but the real number is believed to be higher.

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