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Serbian Defense Chief Tests Positive for Virus After Moscow Visit

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Serbian Defense Minister Aleksandar Vulin **mod.gov.rs**

Serbia's defense chief who was scheduled to attend Russia's massive World War II parade in Moscow last week has been diagnosed with coronavirus, the Serbian government has said.

Defense Minister Aleksandar Vulin went into self-isolation after testing positive for Covid-19, Serbia's defense ministry said in a statement Saturday. He visited Serbian troops in Moscow last Tuesday and was scheduled to attend the Victory Day parade on Red Square at the invitation of his Russian counterpart the next day.

Related article: Kyrgyz President Sits Out Moscow WWII Parade After Staffers Test Positive for Virus

Russian President Vladimir Putin oversaw the June 24 parade of tanks, warplanes and troops to mark the 75th anniversary of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany. The traditional May 9 commemoration had been postponed due to the coronavirus.

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic met Putin in the Kremlin the day before the celebrations and also attended the Red Square parade, where he was seated next to veterans and leaders of post-Soviet states invited as guests. He was not reported to be among the Serbian officials who were infected with coronavirus.

The president of Kyrgyzstan, Sooronbay Jeenbekov, sat out the Red Square parade after two members of his delegation tested positive for Covid-19 upon arrival in Moscow. More members of his administration became infected days later.

Serbia reined in its first Covid-19 outbreak in early May, shedding its lockdown measures to allow sporting events and national elections to go ahead in June. Reported infections have risen markedly since the June 21 election, with several officials recently testing positive and the daily caseload exceeding 200 cases compared to around 50 in May.

Russia has the world's third-highest coronavirus caseload with 641,156 infections. Serbia has confirmed 14,288 cases.

AFP contributed reporting to this article.

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