

Arctic Mayor Claims Coronavirus Cases 200% Higher Than Official Count

July 16, 2020



The Krasnoyarsk region in Siberia has registered a total of 11,020 coronavirus cases and 251 deaths.

Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency

The mayor of Russia's Arctic city of Norilsk has accused regional authorities of dramatically underreporting coronavirus cases and ignoring the scale of its outbreak, the Tayga.info news website [reported](#) Thursday.

Mayor Rinat Akhmetchin painted the dire picture in a letter to the governor of the Krasnoyarsk region where Norilsk is located and the chairman of the regional legislature. He claims that Norilsk has 832 coronavirus cases instead of the officially reported 293, a nearly 200% difference, as well as a fivefold increase in community-acquired pneumonia where patients don't get tested for Covid-19.

Related article: [New Figures Suggest Russia's Coronavirus Death Toll Underreported](#)

"We believe the discrepancy between regional and city data indicates an inadequate

evaluation of the scale of the infection in the region's north," Tayga.info quoted Akhmetchin as saying.

He added that the inconsistency "hides real information about the rate of infection from federal authorities and creates a favorable picture, allowing regional authorities to ignore the unfolding epidemiological situation in Norilsk."

The mayor's allegations follow Russia's state statistics agency doubling the country's Covid-19 death counts for earlier months than previously reported by health officials. Officials said the increase was explained by differing methodologies and the statistics office's use of more accurate demographic data.

Health officials in the Krasnoyarsk region [countered](#) Akhmetchin's claims, saying that Norilsk hospitals are operating at 70% of capacity and there's "currently no urgent need" to send medics from Moscow and St. Petersburg.

Boris Nemik, the region's health chief, said a total of 364 residents of Norilsk have been diagnosed with coronavirus and four people have died from it.

He acknowledged that Norilsk and other localities outside the city of Krasnoyarsk itself have seen a rise in Covid-19 infections in the past two weeks. At the same time, Nemik [said](#) that Covid-19 cases have stabilized and have decreased over the past week.

The Krasnoyarsk region has registered a total of 11,020 coronavirus cases and 251 deaths, according to Russia's Covid-19 crisis center.

Russia has gradually lifted most of its coronavirus restrictions as it began reporting fewer infections and the outbreak appeared to shift from the initial epicenter of Moscow to other regions.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/07/16/arctic-mayor-claims-coronavirus-cases-200-higher-than-official-count-a70903>