

Russia Predicts Highest Population Decline Since 2006 Amid Pandemic

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Alexander Ryumin / TASS

Russia's population could see its biggest decline in 14 years in 2020 as the coronavirus pandemic has raised the country's death rate amid falling birth rates, according to government forecasts [reported](#) by the RBC news website Tuesday.

The Covid-19 outbreak will also push Russia's poverty rate up from 12.3% in 2019 to 13.3% this year, according to the same preliminary forecasts. The predictions upset Russia's ambitious [National Projects](#) that aim to slash poverty by half and reverse the demographic crisis by the end of President Vladimir Putin's fourth term in 2024.

Russia's government believes that the population will decrease by 158,000 people, RBC reported, totaling 146.6 million by the end of 2020. It's the highest loss since 2006, when the decline totaled almost 374,000 with an overall population of 142.2 million.

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Questioned

Official statistics say that Russia's natural population decline has already topped a quarter of a million, while only 48,000 people [migrated](#) to Russia from January-June 2020.

In absolute numbers, nearly 950,000 people have died and 681,000 were born during that period, representing a 3.1% increase in the death rate and a 5.4% decline in the birth rate compared with 2019.

The coronavirus claimed the lives of at least 27,411 people between April and June, RBC reported, citing the State Statistics Service Rosstat. The outlet calculated that Russia's 4.2% mortality rate for that period was higher than the global rate of about 3.5%.

Two Russian government sources who confirmed the authenticity of the document told RBC that the forecasts were still being revised.

Rosstat's annual forecast [showed](#) a natural population decline of 350,000 and migration of 265,000 under a baseline scenario for 2020.

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