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Russian State Duma Goes Partially Remote After 18 Deputies Hospitalized With Virus

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Overall, 60 State Duma deputies have been infected and recovered from the coronavirus since the start of the pandemic. **Russian State Duma Photo Service / TASS**

Russia's lower house of parliament, the State Duma, will partially return to remote work to limit the spread of the coronavirus, its speaker Vyacheslav Volodin announced Tuesday.

The decision was made after eight deputies were hospitalized with coronavirus in the past week, bringing the total number of hospitalized deputies to 18, Interfax quoted Volodin as saying at Tuesday's State Duma meeting.

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All committee meetings and roundtables will now be held via videoconference, Volodin said. He also called on faction and committee heads to limit the number of visitors they bring into

the Duma building.

Earlier this month, Volodin asked deputies at higher risk of a severe coronavirus infection to work remotely from their offices.

"[European] parliaments don't have the first woman in space or explorers of the Arctic wilderness and ocean depths among their members. That's why they are all quietly locked away in their villas, and you are rushing to the frontlines," Volodin said at a Sept. 15 plenary session. "Please, fulfill the instructions of the State Duma ... [return] to your office, and take part in discussions from there," he said.

Overall, 60 State Duma deputies have been infected and recovered from the coronavirus since the start of the pandemic.

Last week, Vakha Agayev, a 67-year-old Communist Party deputy from the republic of Chechnya, died from complications caused by Covid-19, marking the first coronavirus-related death in the State Duma.

Most Russian officials returned to work as usual after the number of new coronavirus infections began to decrease in June, though President Vladimir Putin continues to work from his Novo-Ogaryovo residence outside Moscow with limited public appearances.

Russia confirmed 8,232 new coronavirus cases on Tuesday, the highest one-day increase since mid-June.

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