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# Moscow Calls Off Christmas, New Year Celebrations Due to Coronavirus – Mayor

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The New Year is one of the most widely celebrated holidays in Russia. **Igor Ivanko / Moskva News Agency**

Moscow will not hold its traditional Christmas and New Year's Eve celebrations, Mayor Sergei Sobyanin announced Wednesday amid record coronavirus infections and deaths in recent weeks.

Earlier that day, Sobyanin suspended mass events and ordered late-night establishments to close starting from Friday and ending in mid-January 2021 as part of the latest restrictions to try to stop the spread of Covid-19.

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"We have decided to ban mass cultural events, including major Christmas and New Year events," Sobyanin said in an interview with the state-run Channel One broadcaster.

“The New Year is still far away, but it’s nevertheless obvious that mass events will not be held,” the mayor said, reiterating comments that the decision was made in advance to avoid extra spending on late cancellations.

The RBC news website, which first reported on the canceled holiday festivities and markets, said agencies that organize corporate events have already lost half of their usual New Year’s Eve customer base.

Russia’s coronavirus information center previously announced that the capital will not hold its monthlong “Journey to Christmas” festival, though municipal authorities will still put up New Year decorations and lights for the holidays.

Moscow remains the epicenter of Russia’s coronavirus outbreak with over a quarter of Russia’s 1.83 million confirmed infections.

In separate comments, Sobyanin predicted that the pandemic will continue to impact the Russian capital’s economy until May 2021.

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