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Kremlin Rejects Research Showing Falling Incomes

Russians' wallets have not been hit harder by the pandemic than those in other countries, the Kremlin claims.

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More than half of all Russians reported a financial hit from the coronavirus. **Kirill Kukhmar / TASS**

The Kremlin has dismissed research findings which showed Russians were more likely to be financially suffering as a result of the coronavirus than households in other countries.

A Nielsen survey, published Monday, found 53% of Russian respondents said they were worse off as a result of the crisis — that was twice the level recorded by the same survey in September and above the global average of 46%.

But Presidential spokesperson Dmitry Peskov rejected the results as "incorrect," in a briefing with reporters, the Kommersant business site reported.

"We have different data. We consider the conclusions reached by this publication's authors to

be incorrect," Kommersant cited him as saying.

Peskov acknowledged the economic hardship inflicted by the pandemic, but asserted Russians had been no worse affected than those in other countries.

Official government statistics show real disposable incomes — a closely-watched indicator of overall living standards — dropped 3.5% in 2020, hitting their lowest level in a decade.

The Kremlin is also considering the introduction of U.S.-style food stamps, Peskov said Monday. Food prices have accelerated rapidly in recent months, forcing President Vladimir Putin to introduce a cap on retail prices for some products and urge supermarkets not to raise prices.

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