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Russian Actor Stirs Controversy By Comparing Unvaccinated Public to Jews in WWII

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Yegor Beroyev compared the Russian capital's latest measures to the Holocaust. **Instagram / egorberoev**

A famous Russian actor sparked criticism after he took to the stage to slam Moscow's restrictions for unvaccinated people while wearing a yellow Star of David badge at an awards ceremony Tuesday night.

Yegor Beroyev compared the Russian capital's latest measures to the Holocaust at the World War II-themed TEFI TV awards on the 80th anniversary of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union.

"I woke up in a world where [the vaccine has] become an identification mark," Beroyev said, donning a gold Star of David patch on his breast pocket similar to those that Jews were forced to wear during the Holocaust.

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Earlier that day, Moscow announced that restaurants will restrict entry to either vaccinated patrons or those with documented proof that they're Covid-free starting from next Monday, June 28. More than a dozen other regions have mandated vaccinations for certain categories of workers or introduced restrictions for unvaccinated residents.

Beroyev criticized the restrictions as a form of discrimination that will determine "whether you're a citizen or you'll be sent to a reservation, whether you'll be allowed to attend places and events, and whether you'll enjoy all your rights and benefits."

"How could we, the descendants of [World War II] victors, allow that?" the actor, famous for his leading role in the 2005 blockbuster "Turkish Gambit," said to applause.

"Don't allow us to be separated from you, don't allow the segregation of society," Beroyev said, according to a video published by the Ura.ru news website.

Leaders of Russia's Jewish community criticized Beroyev's speech as "extreme" and "unethical," saying anti-coronavirus measures are incomparable to the Holocaust, during which 6 million Jews were killed.

The Kremlin warned of "inevitable discrimination" for Russians who refuse to get vaccinated as it oversaw an abrupt policy shift from promising voluntary vaccinations to mandating jabs for certain workers within the span of a week.

"The reality is such that discrimination will inevitably set in," President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters Tuesday, according to a Reuters translation.

"People without vaccination or immunity will not be able to work everywhere. It is not possible. It will pose a threat to those around them."

Peskov followed up on Wednesday with remarks that Russia does not plan to reintroduce a nationwide lockdown to curb the country's "explosive" spread of Covid-19.

Hours after his daily briefing, the Far East republic of Buryatia 6,000 kilometers from Moscow became the first of Russia's federal subjects to reintroduce its region-wide lockdown.

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