

Finland Traces 40% of New Virus Cases to Football Fans Returning From Russia

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Finnish football fans returning from St. Petersburg have been blamed for a recent uptick in cases. **Kirill Kudryavtsev / AFP**

Over 40% of Finland's new coronavirus cases are linked to football fans returning from Euro 2020 matches in neighboring Russia, the country's health authority said Thursday.

The Scandinavian country had nearly eradicated the spread of Covid-19 with just 55 new cases recorded on June 17, days after the first Euro 2020 match in St. Petersburg. That number has risen to 355 new infections on July 1.

Related article: [St. Petersburg Euro 2020 Quarter-Final to Go Ahead Despite Covid Surge – Organizers](#)

“The recent spike in Covid-19 cases is largely due to football fans returning from Russia,” the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare [said](#) in a statement.

According to the institute, over 40% of the country's new Covid-19 infections between June 21-27 can be traced to fans returning from the Euro 2020 tournament in St. Petersburg. This represents a substantial increase from the previous week, when only about one-third of cases were of foreign origin.

Out of 4,500 Finnish fans who traveled to St. Petersburg, 386 are known to have tested positive, with another 50 directly linked cases.

The country's spike has been particularly marked among young people, with those aged 20-29 accounting for about 35% of new cases.

St. Petersburg, Russia's second-largest city and one of the country's main Covid-19 hotspots, has seen a surging outbreak due to the highly contagious Delta variant first identified in India.

Euro 2020 organizers have [vowed](#) to hold Friday's quarter-final in St. Petersburg despite the surge.

While the city has tightened some Covid-19 restrictions, including banning food sales at Euro 2020 fan zones, it also allowed thousands to gather for high school graduation celebrations over the weekend.

Finland boasts one of Europe's highest vaccination rates, with 58% of its population having received at least one shot compared to the 15.9% of Russia's population who have received at least one dose.

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