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Russia Reports Record Virus Deaths For Second Day

By AFP

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Under 30% of Russians are fully vaccinated against the coronavirus. **EPA / TASS**

Russia on Wednesday recorded its highest coronavirus death toll for a second day running, as infections are on the rise driven by the Delta variant and slow vaccination rates.

A government tally reported 857 fatalities over the past 24 hours and 22,430 new cases.

The new figure brings the country's total deaths from Covid-19 to 206,388 — the highest in Europe.

Authorities have been accused of downplaying the severity of the outbreak.

Under a broader definition for deaths linked to the coronavirus, statistics agency Rosstat reported in late August that Russia had seen more than 350,000 fatalities.

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The world's fifth worst-hit country with more than seven million infections, Russia has seen cases climb since last month as vaccinations stall.

Moscow, the epicentrer of the outbreak, has experienced a spike over the past week with authorities warning of rising hospital admissions.

"The situation is a serious reason not only for concern but also for mobilization," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Wednesday.

Moscow and a host of other regions introduced mandatory jabs in the summer, but the vaccination drive has since stalled.

Several Russian vaccines have been available for months, but authorities have struggled to inoculate a vaccine-sceptic population.

As of Wednesday, just under 30% of the population had been fully vaccinated, according to the Gogov website, which tallies Covid data from the regions.

President Vladimir Putin said earlier this month that he was self-isolating after dozens of cases were detected in his inner circle

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