

Russia Decries 'Inadequate' Vaccination Rates as Virus Infections, Deaths Soar

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A reserve hospital for Covid-19 patients in Moscow. **Sofia Sandurskaya / Moskva News Agency**

Russia's top cabinet official on Monday [criticized](#) the country's stalling vaccination rates for failing to slow the spread of Covid-19 as Russians die in numbers not seen since the start of the pandemic.

Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin said health officials have made it easy for people across the country's 11 time zones to get the Covid jab and medication.

"But the vaccination level is insufficient to stop the spread of infection," Mishustin said during a Covid task force meeting.

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He added that the government is "seriously concerned" about the spike in infections.

“Morbidity is increasing in most Russian regions. There are twice as many patients in hospitals as there were at the same time last year,” Mishustin said.

Russia has approved at least five Covid-19 vaccines, all of which were developed domestically. But its vaccination drive has stalled at 29% of the population, according to the independent Gogov monitor that gathers regional data.

Russia has reported record high numbers of coronavirus deaths for five out of the past six days, with its all-time record of 890 Covid-19 fatalities reported Sunday. On Monday, the government tally reported the third-highest number of daily Covid cases since the start of 2021.

In Moscow, the epicenter of the pandemic within Russia, Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said infections have risen by 30% and hospitalizations by 20% in the past week alone.

Anxiety over the resurgent virus was on display when news agencies covering Monday’s task force meeting initially reported that officials canceled all mass events in Russia.

Rospotrebnadzor, the consumer-protection watchdog that oversees the national coronavirus response effort, said later that the ban on gatherings of more than 3,000 people was already in place across all 85 Russian regions.

The Kremlin has urged regional leaders to take steps to slow the spread, stopping short of indicating that it was planning to reimpose national-level restrictions.

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