

Russia's Excess Death Toll Hits 930K

December 30, 2021



By many counts, Russia has now recorded more excess deaths since the start of the pandemic than any other country. **Yevgeny Sofiychuk / TASS**

Russia recorded more than 115,000 excess deaths during November 2021 according to official statistics published Thursday — a new record high since the start of the pandemic.

The number takes Russia's overall excess death [count](#) since the start of the pandemic to 929,000, according to The Moscow Times' analysis.

The record figure for November — equivalent to around 4,000 more fatalities a day than was recorded in the same month before the coronavirus outbreak — comes as the country faced a punishing fourth wave of the virus and nationwide vaccination rates remained low.

The Kremlin had attempted to stem the rise of cases and hospitalizations with a week-long partial [lockdown](#) at the start of the month, but infections remained high, and measures to introduce health passes across the country have since been softened in the wake of a public backlash.

Only around 46% of Russians have received a full course of vaccination in a campaign which

has relied on the country's flagship two-dose Sputnik V jab as well as a handful of other home-made vaccines.

Embed:

The Rosstat statistics service recorded a total of 257,242 fatalities during November 2021. That was 115,961 — or 82% — more than during November 2019, [surpassing](#) October as the most deadly month since the start of the pandemic and becoming the latest in a stream of fatality records which have been broken in the past 18 months.

Some 80,126 deaths were officially due to Covid-19, Rosstat said — more than double the number first reported by Russia's nationwide coronavirus task force, which publishes a daily tally of virus cases and deaths.

The numbers were published late Thursday evening, the last working day of the year before Russia goes on an extended New Year vacation until Jan. 10. Critics [say](#) the statistics agency typically publishes numbers which paint a negative picture of the country at inconvenient times to minimize the attention they receive.

Russia has been [accused](#) of downplaying the severity of the pandemic and undercounting the number of deaths from Covid-19, and demographers say excess death counts — a comparison of the number of fatalities from all causes with pre-pandemic levels — are the most accurate estimate of lives lost due to the virus.

Many demographers including former Rosstat analyst Alexei Raksha and Tubingen University statistician Dmitry Kobak, say Russia's true excess death toll could be higher, based on recent declining mortality trends.

By most estimates, including the University of Oxford's Our World in Data project, Russia has now [surpassed](#) the U.S. as the country with the world's second highest number of excess deaths since the start of the pandemic, behind India.

Original url: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/12/30/russias-excess-death-toll-hits-930k-a75964>