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Russia Sees Record 200K Covid-19 Cases

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Sergei Malgavko / TASS

Russia reported more than 200,000 new Covid-19 infections Friday for the first time since the start of the pandemic.

The country has been gripped by a surge in cases since the start of the year, fueled by the highly transmissible Omicron variant.

The country reported 203,949 new infections over the last 24 hours, Russia's nationwide coronavirus task force said Friday. It also said 722 Covid-19 patients died — the highest number in four weeks.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin has said the latest wave is in decline in the Russian capital, which has been the epicenter of the country's coronavirus outbreak and was the first place to see a rise — and fall — in case numbers during previous waves.

The number of patients admitted to hospital with Covid-19 has also risen fast over the last

month. Some 19,281 people were hospitalized Friday, the task force said — around double the level of daily admissions being recorded in mid-January.

Russia has been one of the world's hardest-hit countries by the coronavirus, as the government has largely shunned strict lockdowns and the vaccination campaign has stuttered, with 48% of the country fully vaccinated.

The country has seen almost 1 million excess deaths since the start of the pandemic, according to The Moscow Times' analysis, and Russia's population recorded its largest-ever peacetime decline in 2021 — largely as a result of Covid-19 fatalities.

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