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Rare Solar Storm Bathes Russia in Scarlet Northern Lights

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Bright ribbons of red and green covered skies across Russia on Sunday night. **social media**

Northern lights lit up most of Russia on Sunday after solar flares collided with Earth's magnetic field and unleashed a strong geomagnetic storm.

Known as aurora borealis, the dancing scarlet and green lights were visible from Russia's Far East and Siberia, to the Ural mountains and North Caucasus.

The rare night-time light show was also spotted in nearby Ukraine, Turkey, Kazakhstan and Georgia, as well as parts of Europe and North America.

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Sunday's geomagnetic storm was caused by significant ejections of the sun's corona over the past week, according to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Space Weather Prediction Center.

Northern lights usually appear above the Arctic Circle, but the latest burst of sun particles was large enough to make the whispy ribbons of light visible further south.

The charged particles crossed the 150-million-kilometer distance between the Sun and Earth a day earlier and "with significantly greater force" than forecasted, said the Russian Academy of Sciences' laboratory of solar astronomy.

"As it's now clear, both the speed and power of the ejection were estimated completely wrong," the RAS laboratory said.

"This still doesn't explain how such a weak cause was able to unleash a storm of this level."

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