

Kremlin Says Migrants Essential to Counter Russia's Labor Shortage

By [AFP](#)

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Migrant workers at a construction site in Moscow. **Moskva News Agency**

Russia needs migrants to address its declining domestic workforce, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said in an interview published by state media on Friday.

“Migrants are a necessity,” Peskov told the state-run news agency RIA Novosti, citing Russia’s “tense demographic situation.”

“We live in the largest country in the world, but there aren’t that many of us,” he said, adding that labor migration is vital for economic development.

Anti-migrant sentiment is widespread in Russia, particularly against laborers from Central Asia, who fill crucial roles in sectors like construction and agriculture.

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Russian authorities have long struggled to increase birth rates, introducing incentives like financial payouts and mortgage subsidies for families with multiple children.

The population decline has been exacerbated by large numbers of Covid-19 deaths, casualties among soldiers fighting in Ukraine and the mass exodus of hundreds of thousands of men fleeing military mobilization.

In 2023, Russia's fertility rate was estimated at 1.41 births per woman, far below the 2.0 replacement level, according to the state statistics agency Rosstat. Between January and September, 920,200 babies were born, a 3.4% drop from the same period last year and the lowest figure since the 1990s, according to Russian media.

In July, the Kremlin described the Russia's shrinking population as "disastrous for the future of the nation."

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