

Russia's Birth Rate Plunges to 200-Year Low

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Охана Korol/Бизнес Online/TASS

Russia's attempts to boost its flagging birth rate — through policies promoting “traditional values,” tighter abortion restrictions and officials' encouragement of larger families — appear to be falling short, as the number of births has fallen to its lowest level in centuries.

According to data [released](#) by the state statistics agency Rosstat, 195,400 children were born in Russia during January and February 2025 — a 3% drop compared to the same period in 2024.

The decline was even steeper in February alone, with births falling 7.6% year-over-year to 90,500 — 7,400 fewer than in the same month last year.

Some regions saw even sharper drops. Births fell by 18.7% in Arkhangelsk, 19.4% in the republic of Karelia, 18.6% in the Oryol region, 21.6% in Kostroma and 26.6% in Smolensk.

According to demographer Alexei Raksha, the first quarter of 2025 likely [saw](#) the lowest

number of births since the early 1800s, with February marking the lowest monthly figure in over 200 years. Based on preliminary registry office data, he estimated that 95,000 to 96,000 children were born in March, bringing the total for the first quarter to around 293,000-294,000.

Related article: [In Russia, International Safe Abortion Day Is a Reminder of Reproductive Rights Backsliding](#)

Rosstat has not yet released official numbers for March.

While deaths in January and February also declined — down 5.2% to 331,100 — the drop was not enough to offset the falling birth rate. In the first two months of 2025 alone, Russia experienced a natural population decline of nearly 119,000 people.

Nationwide, deaths outnumbered births by an average of 1.6 to 1. In some regions, the gap was even wider: in Kaluga and Ivanovo, twice as many people died as were born; in Vladimir and Belgorod, the ratio was three to one.

Russia recorded 1.222 million births in 2024, the lowest annual total since 1999. Compared to 2014, the birth rate has fallen by a third. Between 2016 and 2024, natural population decline exceeded 3 million people.

According to Rosstat's [forecast](#) based on the 2020 census, births are expected to keep falling. The annual number could drop to just 1.14 million by 2027.

A slow recovery might begin in the late 2020s, but even by 2045, the number of births is projected to remain 25% lower than in the years before Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea — reaching around 1.426 million per year.

Even if the annual number of deaths stabilizes around 1.8 million, Russia's population is still expected to shrink by roughly 500,000 people per year.

By 2046, the country's population could fall to 138.8 million under Rosstat's baseline forecast — or to just 130 million in a more pessimistic scenario, roughly equal to the size of the Russian Empire in 1897.

This sharp decrease could significantly reshape Russia's demographics. By the early 2040s, the number of children and teenagers is projected to fall by 26%, to just 20 million. Their share of the population would drop from 18.5% today to 14.2%. Meanwhile, the proportion of elderly Russians is expected to grow from 24.5% today to nearly 27% by 2046.

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