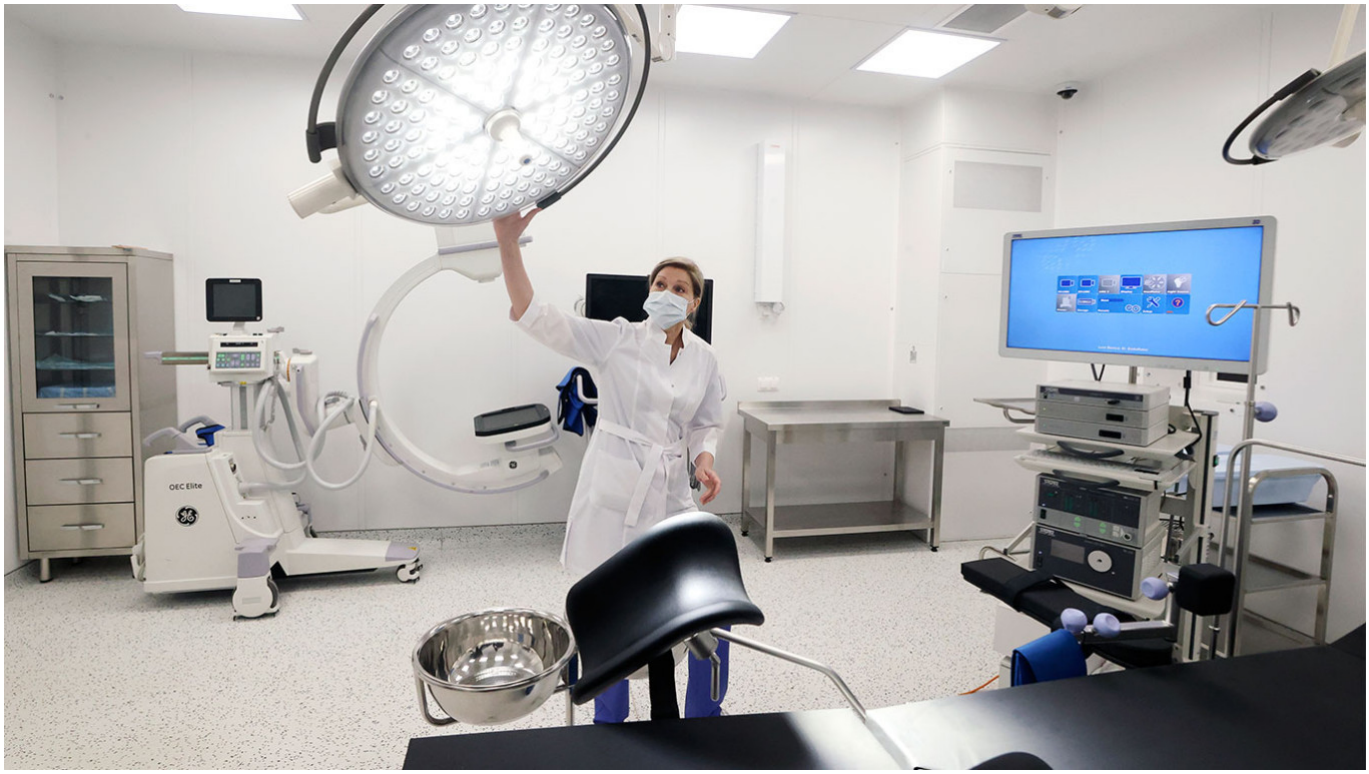
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Head of Altai Republic Demands Last Abortion Clinic Give Up License

December 09, 2025



Alexander Demianchuk / TASS

The last private hospital that offers abortions in Siberia's republic of Altai must give up its license by the end of 2025, regional head Andrei Turchak said Tuesday, amid state efforts to reverse a dramatic decline in birth rates across Russia.

"Eight out of nine private clinics in the Altai Republic have voluntarily ceased performing abortions," Turchak wrote on Telegram.

"The owners of Evromedtsentr still have enough time to follow their colleagues' example and give up their abortion license by the end of the year," he said.

Turchak did not indicate which, if any, consequences the clinic would face for defying his orders.

Abortion is not officially banned in Russia, but Altai is among more than two dozen Russian regions where new laws ban the "coercion" of pregnant women into terminating a pregnancy.

State-run hospitals in Altai have a mandatory pre-abortion counseling system, the regional acting health minister told Turchak during Tuesday's regional government session.

Related article: Russia Expands Bans on 'Coercing' Women Into Abortions to 27th Region

President Vladimir Putin on Monday highlighted Altai among the Russian regions where the population has expressed a higher willingness to have children.

Russia is currently facing a falling birth rate, natural population decline and rising male mortality. In 2024, 1.22 million people were born in Russia, only slightly more than the record low of 1.21 million in 1999.

Authorities have implemented various measures to address the demographic crisis, including boosting state financial support for child-rearing, introducing restrictions on abortion and promoting so-called "traditional values" among young people. Despite these policies, the trend of decline has shown no sign of reversing.

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