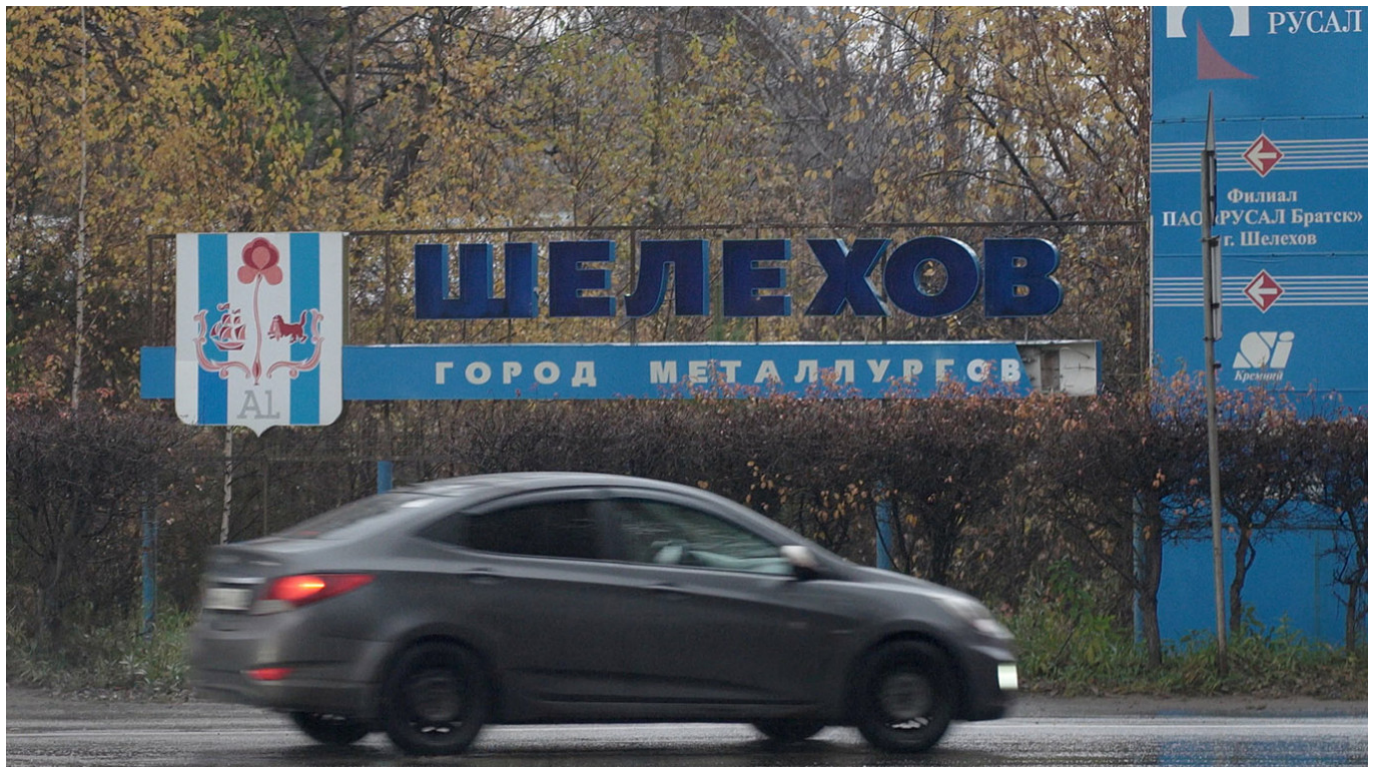


U.S. Embassy Urges Citizens to Leave Russia Over Siberian Plague Suspicions

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A car drives past a sign in Shelekhov in Russia's Irkutsk region. **REUTERS / Stringer**

The U.S. Embassy in Moscow [issued](#) a health alert on Tuesday over the death of a plague lab worker in the Irkutsk region, urging Americans to leave Russia and those in the affected area to follow local health guidance.

The death of an Irkutsk anti-plague institute employee last week has fueled fears of a possible outbreak, though authorities have not publicly confirmed that she had the disease.

U.S. State Secretary Marco Rubio urged Russia to share more information, while President Donald Trump said he planned to address the matter in a call with President Vladimir Putin.

“U.S. citizens in the area should follow the guidance of local health authorities, avoid affected facilities, and seek medical care promptly if they develop fever or respiratory symptoms,” the U.S. Embassy in Moscow said in a statement.

It emphasized that the U.S. government has “limited ability to help U.S. citizens in Russia,

especially outside of Moscow,” citing reports of hospital quarantines following the death.

The embassy reiterated that U.S. citizens are advised to depart Russia and not travel due to security concerns. The U.S. State Department’s Level 4 “Do Not Travel” advisory for Russia has been in place since January 2022, on the eve of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Related article: [Irkutsk Maternity Hospital Screens Patients for Plague After Lab Worker’s Death](#)

The State Department has sent a formal diplomatic demarche to the Russian government requesting clarification, a source close to the matter told AFP.

The World Health Organization said no cases have been recorded within Irkutsk, but Director-General Adhanom Ghebreyesus called for “timely, complete and transparent information sharing.”

Russian authorities have denied any active public health crisis, insisting the situation is under control. The Kremlin urged the public to ignore online rumors and rely only on updates from Russia’s consumer health watchdog Rospotrebnadzor.

Speaking to the press on Wednesday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov accused the media of disseminating false information about the case, saying Russia informed the WHO about the death of a laboratory worker at a Siberian plague research institute last week in line with established procedures.

Peskov was commenting on an ABC News report that the United States had lodged a formal diplomatic complaint over Russia’s handling of the reported death, urging Moscow to provide greater transparency about the incident.

Peskov said much of the reporting surrounding the incident was false and that people should rely on information released by state health watchdog Rospotrebnadzor.

In response to Trump’s offers of assistance, Rospotrebnadzor offered to aid the U.S. with its own domestic health challenges, citing rising measles cases and a “fatal case of plague” recorded in New Mexico in June.

AFP and Reuters contributed reporting.

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