

Russia hits new virus death record as autumn surge persists

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Russia has recorded a new record-high daily death toll from COVID-19, continuing a persistent rise that has brought new records almost daily in October.

The national coronavirus [task force](#) reported Saturday that 968 people in Russia died of COVID-19 over the past day—about 100 more daily deaths than were recorded in late September. The task force said more than 29,000 new infections also were confirmed in the past day.

Authorities blame the steep rise on the country's low vaccination rate. Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova said Friday that 47.8 million Russians, or almost 33% of Russia's nearly 146 million people, had received at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine, and 42.4 million, or about 29%, were fully vaccinated.

The coronavirus task force reports has reported a total of about 7.8 million cases and 215,453 deaths in the pandemic.

However, the task force records only deaths directly caused by the virus. Reports by Russia's state statistical service Rosstat that tally coronavirus-linked deaths reveal significantly higher mortality numbers.

Rosstat on Friday revealed the latest data showed more than 254,000 deaths of people with COVID-19 in the first eight months of this year compared to 163,000 deaths of patients who had the coronavirus for the whole of 2020.

The coronavirus [task force](#) only counts the deaths of patients for whom COVID-19 was considered the main cause. Rosstat includes people who had COVID-19 but died of other causes, and those for whom the coronavirus was suspected but not confirmed.

The Kremlin has shrugged off the idea of imposing a new nationwide lockdown, delegating the power to tighten restrictions to regional authorities. In some areas of the country, including Moscow and St. Petersburg, life remains largely normal, with businesses operating as usual and mask mandates loosely enforced.

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