

# Russian deaths in October up nearly 50,000 on last year

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The number of deaths from all causes recorded in Russia in October rose by nearly 50,000 on the previous year, the country's statistics agency said on Thursday.

According to the Rosstat agency, 205,500 people died in Russia in October, a rise of 47,800 on October 2019.

It did not give any explanation for the [excess mortality](#) in its latest monthly report, but said 22,761 people died in October who were either among confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases.

These included 11,630 cases where the primary cause of [death](#) was COVID-19.

The numbers are higher than AFP's own count of 7,274 [coronavirus](#) deaths in October, based on official figures.

Between April and the end of October 2020, excess mortality in Russia now stands at almost 165,000 deaths compared to last year.

Since the start of the pandemic, only 45,280 deaths from COVID-19 have been officially recorded.

Russia has been criticised for its methodology in calculating coronavirus deaths with authorities only listing deaths which after post-mortem are considered to have had coronavirus as the primary cause.

The last time Russia recorded such a high monthly figure was in August 2010, a period that saw huge fires and the subsequent air pollution affect Moscow.

In many countries, especially in Western Europe, almost all deaths of patients with a positive coronavirus test are included in the national COVID-19 death toll.

Russia was one of the first countries to announce the development of a vaccine which it named Sputnik V after a Soviet-era satellite.

It launched a mass vaccination programme last week with developers saying the vaccine is 95 percent effective based on interim trial results.

Despite the start of Russia's vaccination campaign, however, Sputnik V is yet to complete its third and final phase of trials involving some 40,000 volunteers.

Since the emergence of the virus in China late last year Russia has registered over 2.5 million infections, over 44,000 of them fatal.

Russia's second city Saint Petersburg on Tuesday logged a record number of virus deaths as authorities warned of an imminent lockdown and shuttered restaurants for the New Year's holidays.

Saint Petersburg—one of Russia's most [popular tourist destinations](#)—is struggling with a major health

crisis, with hospitals overwhelmed with coronavirus patients but residents flouting social distancing and other measures.

By comparison, Moscow, the outbreak's epicentre, registered 5,232 new cases and 71 new fatalities.

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