



The Coronavirus in Russia:

What is the State of
Preparedness?

The Coronavirus in Russia:

What is the State of
Preparedness?

© TRT WORLD RESEARCH CENTRE

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

PUBLISHER

TRT WORLD RESEARCH CENTRE

April 2020

WRITTEN BY

Aruuke Urankyzy

PHOTO CREDIT

ANADOLU AGENCY

TRT WORLD İSTANBUL

AHMET ADNAN SAYGUN STREET NO:83 34347

ULUS, BEŞİKTAŞ

İSTANBUL / TURKEY

TRT WORLD LONDON

200 GRAYS INN ROAD, WC1X 8XZ

LONDON / UNITED KINGDOM

TRT WORLD WASHINGTON D.C.

1819 L STREET NW SUITE, 700 20036

WASHINGTON DC / UNITED STATES

www.trtworld.com

researchcentre.trtworld.com

Introduction

In December 2019, China warned the World Health Organisation (WHO) of 31 cases of an unknown virus in the city of Wuhan. By early January, Chinese officials announced they had identified a new virus belonging to the coronavirus family. As the new virus has killed more than 40,000 people in three months and continues to spread around the world, Russia has introduced measures to tackle the pandemic. As of April

6 2020, Russia has reported 6,343 infection and 47 death related to covid-19, the disease caused by the novel-Coronavirus. The purpose of this info pack is to aggregate existing research on cases, compile relevant data and early research on the Coronavirus outbreak in Russia. All data and analysis on this virus are preliminary, as we continue to rapidly learn more about this new and evolving problem.



Red Square is seen empty due to the preventive measures against the coronavirus (COVID-19) in Moscow, Russia on April 02, 2020.
(Sefa Karacan - Anadolu Agency)

State of Preparedness: How is Russia Coping with Covid-19?

On January 29, 2020, Russian President Vladimir Putin told Russians that timely measures were put into place at the onset of the outbreak helped prevent a 'massive epidemic' in the country. After the outbreak was announced, the Federal Service for Supervision of Consumer Rights Protection and Human Well-Being ([Rospotrebnadzor](#))¹ urged tourists visiting China to adopt precautionary measures and avoid any trips to Wuhan, the point of origin for the outbreak. Russian citizens travelling to China were strongly recommended not to visit local markets where animals and seafood were sold. Two months since the first cases appeared in China, the Russian State Duma (lower house) put the first reading of a government bill on Russia's biological security on the agenda. According to the Deputy Health Minister Sergei Krayevoy, Article 7 of this bill would "precisely deal with key biological threats and dangers." On the same day, Rospotrebnadzor press announced that it had developed a diagnostic test system to identify the new virus and would step up monitoring along with the country's borders. All passengers arriving to Russian airports from China, Korea, Japan would be monitored for fever and flight crews were asked whether fever or respiratory disease symptoms had been observed in any of passengers.

On January 24, the first death from the new coronavirus was reported in China's Heilongjiang province, which borders Russia. In the following two days seven cases of covid-19 were recorded in regions near the Russian border. The confirmation of these cases led Russia to carry out tighter checks of all those arriving from affected areas. All those coming from China who were diagnosed with ARI (acute respiratory infection) were either isolated for 14 days or taken to a hospital for testing. That same week, Russia's biggest travel operators suspended sales of tours to China in line with earlier recommendations made by the Federal Agency for Tourism (Rostourism). It is noteworthy that China, specifically the tropical resort island of Hainan, was the fourth most popular destination among Russian tourists in the first nine months of 2019.

Russia's consumer watchdog agency's press service stated that they had begun screening all Russian tourists

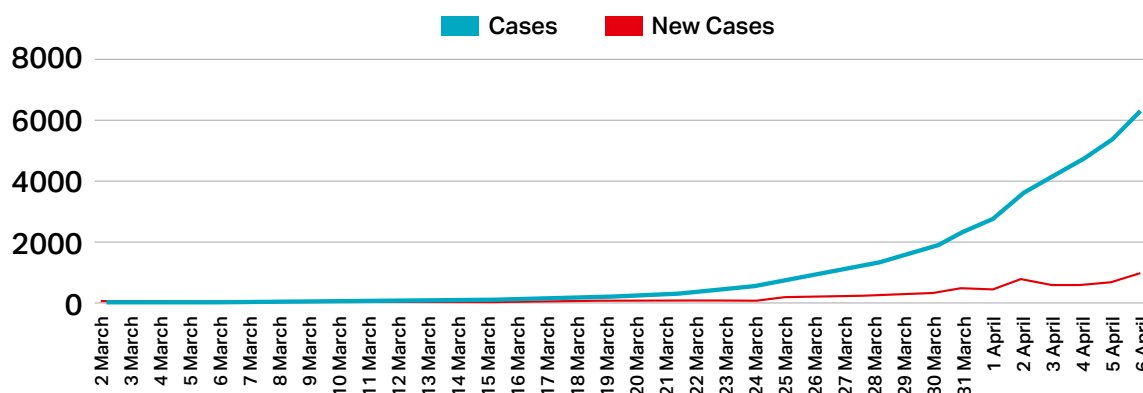
arriving from China in Russian airports for coronavirus. By January 29, Russia suspended railway service with China in a bid to stem the spread of the virus. This was announced by Russian Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova who also recommended that the university holiday period for Russian universities be extended. By the end of January, new measures were introduced by Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, including the closure of selected vehicle and railway crossings along the Russian-Chinese border. On January 31, Deputy PM Golikova announced that two Chinese citizens infected with the coronavirus had been identified in Russia's Trans-Baikal and Tyumen regions. Subsequently, several Russian citizens were hospitalised with suspected cases of covid-19. However, local media outlets did not corroborate this information, emphasising that tests were being carried out to determine the patient's diagnosis.

After the first case was confirmed, all border crossings with China in the Trans-Baikal and Russia's far east were closed. Russia put restrictions on air travel with China, limiting all flights from Moscow to China to be operated only from a single terminal at Moscow's Sheremetyevo International Airport. On February 4, a decree was published by the Russian government stating that foreign citizens travelling from China by plane would be prohibited from entering Russian territory.

Russia's foreign ministry warned Russian citizens against visiting Iran, Italy and South Korea amidst the rapid spread of covid-19 in these countries. Russian authorities began to take measures restricting travel to and from Europe including the suspension of services between Moscow and France's Nice – a popular destination for Russian tourists – on March 4. Since March 16, several flights to and from the EU, Norway and Switzerland were limited to flights between capitals. On March 23, Russian authorities suspended all international flights to and from the country except for specific flights from Moscow to major world capitals and rescue flights that had been planned to repatriate foreign citizens and bring Russian citizens back to Russia.

¹ The Federal Service for the Oversight of Consumer Protection and Welfare (Rospotrebnadzor) is the federal executive body responsible for drafting and implementing government policy and regulations in the field of consumer rights protection, and for carrying out federal state sanitary and epidemiological supervision, including on the railways, in order to protect public health and the environment, and federal state supervision of consumer rights protection.

Numbers of Corona Cases in Russia



Source: themoscowtimes.com

Tracking the Global Outbreak in Russia



Source: themoscowtimes.com

Evacuation of Russian Citizens in China

Deputy PM Golikova was appointed as the head of the special task force for the prevention of import and spread of the Coronavirus. On January 31 she announced that Russian citizens who wish to leave China's Hubei Province would be evacuated. According to official numbers, there were 341 Russians in Hubei, 300 of whom were in the province's capital city Wuhan. Following Russian President Putin's instructions, the Defence Ministry informed reporters that Russian military aircraft carrying military virologists had been tasked with evacuating Russian nationals. According to the Russian news agency TASS, more than 200 Russian citizens were evacuated via border

crossings in the Trans-Baikal, Primorsky and Amur regions.

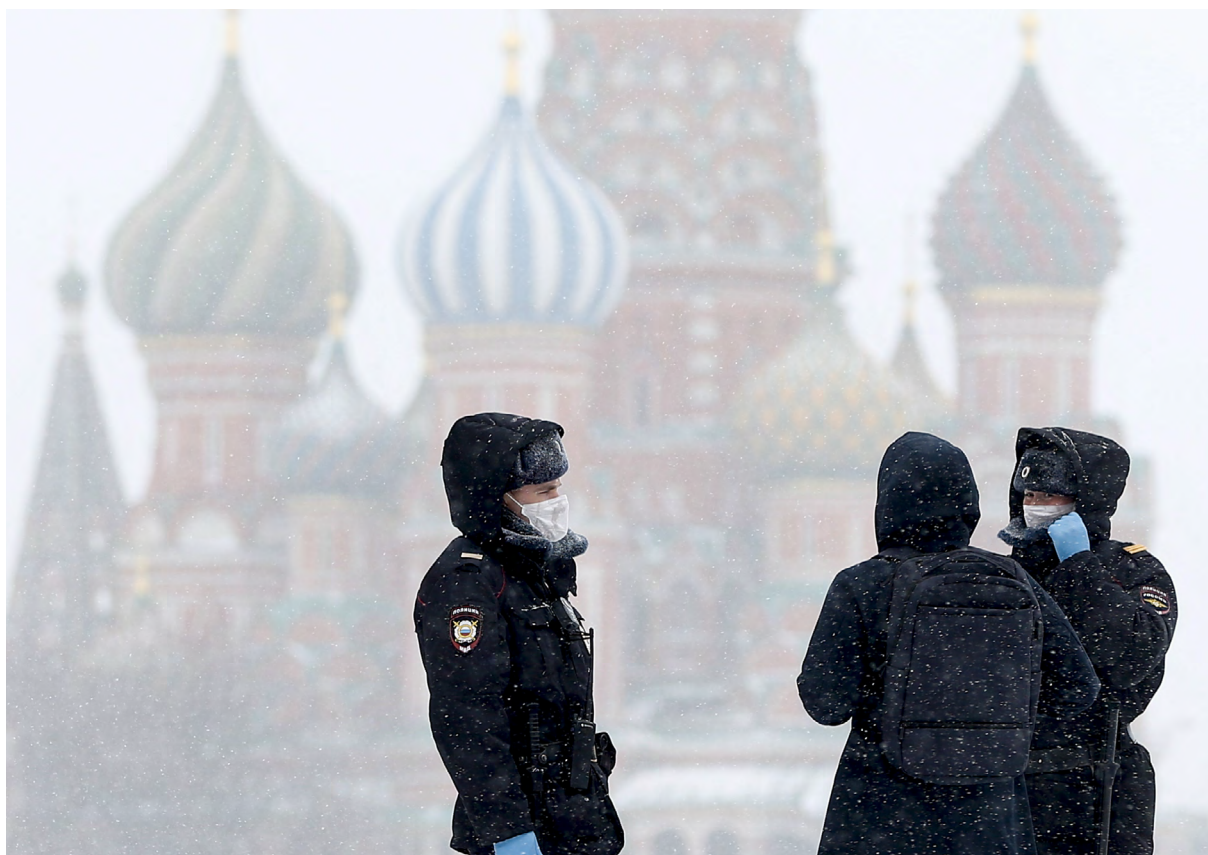
The Russian Health Ministry announced that a site had been arranged to "accommodate" evacuated Russian nationals without disclosing more details. As the first two aircraft - carrying a total of 144 Russian citizens accompanied by military doctors - arrived in Russia's Tyumen region, medics, epidemiologists and rheumatologists were dispatched to consult the doctors who were monitoring the health situations of the evacuees. According to Anna Popova, the head of the Russian consumer watchdog, none of the evacuees were displaying symptoms of covid-19.

Criticisms of the Russian Response

The Russian government has faced [criticism](#) for its [evacuation](#) of the Russian nationals from Wuhan and for [not taking](#) effective measures inside Russia. Some [experts criticised](#) Russia for evacuating with military planes, while others made unfavourable [comparisons](#) with countries like Germany, France, the US and Turkey. At the beginning of February, more than 4,000 people who had contact with people suspected of being infected with covid-19 were put under medical supervision. By February 10, [TASS](#) reported that more than 20,000 people, including over 6,000 Chinese citizens were under medical supervision because of having come in contact with covid-19 infected individuals.

Despite these measures, the Russian health sector has received criticism from both [Western](#) and the [local](#) media over its covid-19 preparedness. The New York Times [described](#) the state of Russia's health care system as "ramshackle and underfunded", while [experts](#) have expressed worry that Russia is ill-prepared to deal with

the pandemic due to the neglect of health system reform. Squalid conditions in Russian hospitals have been exposed by patients and their visitors. As the country implemented strict protocols in the wake of the pandemic, in February three patients [fled](#) from quarantine due to the poor conditions. Thirty-four-year-old Guzel Neder told [The Moscow Times](#) that she fled a hospital with her young son in Russia's southern city of Samara due to poor conditions: "The conditions there were awful. Doctors were very unprofessional and not wearing any protective gear," she said. "We had no choice but to jump out of [the] window." Alla Ilyina, another patient, who had returned from China in early February, left the hospital without permission, short-circuiting the electric lock on the door to her ward. [Experts](#) at the Centre for Economic and Political Reforms (CEP) further highlighted poor health facilities in Russia's hospitals which run the risk being overwhelmed by an influx of covid-19 patients.



Police officers wearing medical masks during a snowfall after preventive measures against the coronavirus (Covid-19) are taken in Moscow, Russia on March 31, 2020. (Sefa Karacan - Anadolu Agency)



Police stand next to the train which returned with Ukrainian citizens from Moscow (Russia), at the Kiev central railway station in Kiev, Ukraine, on March 29, 2020. (Vladimir Shtanko - Anadolu Agency)

State of High Alert

On March 5, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin signed an order placing Moscow on high alert due to the threat of an outbreak in the Russian capital. Russia's task force for combating the spread of the coronavirus told reporters that Russia would temporarily restrict air service with Italy, Germany, Spain and France beginning March 13. This was followed by a decree signed by Putin that established a working group under the Russian State Council to address the covid-19 pandemic. With the rapid rise of cases, Russia imposed a temporary entry ban for foreign nationals for a period from March 18 until May 1.

All Russian regions declared a state of high alert following the declaration in Moscow. According to the TASS, a state of high alert would entail that all public events would be postponed and the number of people participating in authorised activities would be reduced. People were urged to refrain from travelling abroad while employers were obliged to prevent personnel with covid-19 symptoms from coming to work. Meanwhile, Russian Minister of Science and Higher Education Valery Falkov said that more than 80 per cent of higher education institutions in Russia had shifted to distance learning in the wake of the pandemic. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova stated that foreign citizens that violate quarantine might be deported from Russia per existing procedure. According to the Prime Minister, the Russian government would allocate

\$124.3 million from its reserve fund for diagnostic equipment, protective gear and treatment options. This followed the opening of two laboratories designed specifically to test for covid-19, Moscow Region's Health Ministry confirmed.

In spite of these measures, scepticism remains. Valery Solovei, a well-known Russian political commentator and history professor, has accused the government of mismanaging the crisis and issuing false statistics. The atmosphere of doubt is deepening in several Russian cities. The Russian government and the healthcare system are now facing profound criticism that public health information is being hijacked for political considerations.

According to the Vedomosti news outlet, the demand for the extended shelf-life products, household chemicals and personal hygiene items has skyrocketed in Russia. Infoline Analytics agency Director General Mikhail Burmistrov stated that, as a result of covid-19 related fear, there is growing demands for essential goods. There have also been an increasing feeling of uncertainty among people due to the lack of information about covid-19 and clarity regarding the unprecedented pre-emptive measures that the government has been taking. According to some political commentators, the Russian government is trying to create an impression that they have the situation under control regardless of the reality on the ground.

Economic Impact

According to [Oleg Cherednichenko](#), an associate professor at the Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, Russia's economy could suffer severe consequences as the number of tourists from China, who constitute a significant source of revenues, will severely decline. Besides, he added that trade-in food commodities would also drop.

Immediately following the first confirmed case of covid-19 in Russia, the Russian Ruble weakened against the US Dollar and the Euro. After the Organising Committee of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum decided not to hold the forum in 2020, the US Dollar and Euro accelerated their growths against the Ruble on the Moscow Exchange. On February 10, 2020 the head of the [Accounts](#) Chamber, Alexei Kudrin, told reporters that covid-19 would affect Russia's GDP by 0.1-0.2 percentage points. Analysts from Russia's major banks and analytical agencies reported that the pandemic would likely slow the growth rate of Russia's GDP by 0.11 percentage points. MTS Bank analyst Roman Dmitriev handed down [forecasts](#) of a loss of 0.2-0.3 percentage points from the annual GDP while the [Promsvyazbank](#) foresaw a decline in the GDP by 0.2 percentage points by the end of 2020. According to its chief analyst Denis Popov, the pandemic situation could affect transportation, tourism and machine-building industries focusing on China-made components.

Alfa-Bank Chief Economist Natalia Orlova stated that [inflationary](#) effect will be noticeable if official long-term restrictions on purchasing Chinese goods are imposed. At the beginning of February, Deputy Transport Minister Alexander Yurchik announced that losses of national airlines because of the suspensions of the flights to China had cost [\\$25.2 million](#). However, according to Yurchik, this figure was not final. He also added that if the situation did not improve by the end of the year, Russian airlines could stand to incur losses of more than \$1.3 billion. The Head of the Federal Air Transport Agency Alexander Neradko said that the losses of Russian airlines could exceed \$1.35 billion, adding that the situation could lead to bankruptcy for certain carriers.

The Association of Tour Operators of Russia (ATOR) reported that the Russian tourism industry stands to lose nearly \$47 million in February and March alone. According to the association, in 2019, 1.5 million Chinese tourists visited Russia, with approximately 75% of tourist flow from China taking place between May and September. ATOR reports estimate that if Chinese tourists do not visit Russia during the summer season, the Russian tourism industry could lose out on \$490 million in revenues over the summer season.

The pandemic has also affected Russian businesses. Finance Minister Anton Siluanov stated that "the situation in the Russian economy is currently not developing in the best way." He also added that Russia's budget in 2020 would be a deficit, emphasising the impact of lower oil prices will exacerbate the effects of the covid-19 crisis in Russia. According to MOEX trading data, shares of Russian energy blue chips have plunged by 12-15% (Rosneft, Lukoil, Surgutneftegaz) and consumer sector firms by 28% (M.Video, Magnit, X5 Retail Group). Also, shares of Sberbank lost 13%, VTB Bank dropped by 12%, while Yandex by 7%, Rostelecom - by 9%, Sistema - by 12%.

Since the outbreak, two questions have dominated the evaluation about the state of the Russian — and global — economy. How well prepared is the Russian government, and what will the damage be? According to Larisa Popovich, Director of the Institute for Health Economics at Moscow's Higher School of Economics, Russia is better prepared in comparison to other countries. She explained that historically, Russia has experience fighting complicated forms of pneumonia and drug-resistant forms of pulmonary disease and they are not expecting an Italian scenario to develop in the country. Dmitri Trenin added that Russia is now better prepared to deal with an economic crisis than it was in 2008 or 2014. In essence, it has more substantial currency [reserves](#), more moderate external [debt](#), and a lesser [reliance](#) on the import of goods. According to [Moscow-based investment bank Renaissance Capital's](#) provisional scenario for 2020, Russia is potentially looking only at an 0.8% in GDP.

Amidst the crisis caused by the pandemic outbreak, the demand for oil in China fell by three million barrels per day or 20 per cent of total consumption. China is the largest importer of oil in the world and consumes approximately 14 million barrels per day. This amount equals the total consumption of France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Britain, Japan, and South Korea combined. In the first week of March, crude oil prices fell to \$34 per barrel compared with \$70 at the beginning of the year. This was followed by the crash of the Russian stock market due to the oil price drop. Oil prices have fallen amid news that OPEC+ countries failed to agree on an additional reduction in production amid sliding demand due to the Coronavirus pandemic. As the tension between Russia and Saudi Arabia escalated, on March 8 the price of oil plunged 24 per cent, marking its worst decline since 1991.

Important Events Postponed in Russia

1- Investment Forum in Sochi

The Russian government has tasked the organising committee of the Russian Investment Forum in Sochi to reschedule. According to a decree, which was published on the government's website, the organising committee was to "submit proposals on the timeframe for holding the Russian Investment Forum." The Russian Investment Forum has been gathering investors in Sochi annually since 2002.

2- Kazan Summit 2020

The summit is an annual international economic event that brings together representatives of international organisations and financial institutions, lawmakers, investors and businesspeople, as well as top officials from Russian and foreign companies.

3- St. Petersburg International Economic Forum

The next St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) will take place in 2021, skipping 2020, the Ros-congress Foundation announced on Tuesday.

4- The Krasnoyarsk Economic Forum

The forum was supposed to be held from March 19-21

but has been postponed indefinitely.

5- The 17th Krasnoyarsk Economic Forum

The Forum was to be held from 19 March to 21. A draft investment strategy of the regions of Siberia near the Yenisei River (Krasnoyarsk region, Khakassia, Tuva) was expected to be presented at the event.

6- Public Events

Moscow mayor bans all public events attended by over 50 people until April 10.

7- Cosmonautics Day

Russia to postpone Cosmonautics Day celebrations until October.

8- Football Matches

8- UEFA delays Euro 2020 to 2021 over coronavirus. Three group matches and one quarter-final were planned to take place in St. Petersburg.

9- Volleyball Tournaments

The Russian Volleyball Federation (RVF) has decided to suspend all national tournaments indefinitely.

Political Impacts of Covid-19 - Chinese-Russian Relations

The Kremlin has walked a tightrope in managing relations with Beijing, particularly following the closing their 4,300-kilometre-long (2,700-mile) shared border. During the [Credentials Presentation Ceremony](#) for foreign ambassadors, Putin emphasised that Russia was ready to "provide all required assistance to the friendly Chinese people," adding that relations between Russia and China were on a unprecedented high. Putin reminded the audience about the steady growth of bilateral trade, the launch of 'Sila Sibiri' gas pipeline and the successful development of ties in defence and military-technical fields. Putin further added, "Our nations coordinate their positions on key issues of global and regional agenda, cooperate in the international organ-

isations and unions, including the UN, BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation," the president concluded.

On February 9, an Il-76 plane of the Russian Emergency Situations Ministry landed in China to deliver humanitarian cargo including medicine and personal protective equipment. The Russian Ambassador to China, Andrei Denisov, repeatedly emphasised that the Coronavirus outbreak has not affected political ties between Moscow and Beijing. Amid the rising wave of criticisms of Chinese authorities on their handling of the outbreak, the Russian ambassador defended Beijing stating that the attacks were "absolutely unjustified and unfounded."

Media Coverage

With at least 6,343 confirmed cases of covid-19 cases as of April 6, Russia is beginning to face the political and economic effects of its rapid spread. However, there is a shifting belief in the West over whether official numbers can be trusted and whether the Russian authorities might be making use of the pandemic to further its political ends. Some have accused the Kremlin of manipulating statistics to downplay the threat to prevent panic. On March 17, the EU [warned](#) of a pro-Kremlin disinformation campaign related to the pandemic. According to the internal EU report, almost [80](#) cases in its database of covid-19-related disinformation efforts since January 22 have been recorded in Russia. The disinformation campaign promotes ungrounded conspiracy theories and disinformation about the origin of the virus, with one theory, that has been circulating online in several languages, alleging that the virus is an attempt to wage “economic war on China”. This includes state TV, proxy websites and thousands of false social media personas all pushing the same narrative.

For their part, Russian authorities have moved promptly to refute what they see as misinformation. On March 4, Russia’s media watchdog Roskomnadzor decided to restrict access to online resources allegedly spreading Coronavirus-related misinformation. Roskomnadzor stated that it had received a request from the Prosecutor General’s Office in regard to several links to Coronavirus posts on social media, including social media networks such as VKontakte and Facebook. Putin has emphasised that bogus stories about the scope of the Coronavirus in the country were mostly coming from overseas.

The Kremlin has faced criticism from international media outlets regarding the coverage in Russia and the spread of disinformation about the pandemic. In response, journalists accredited with foreign media outlets were barred from the Russian State Duma over the pandemic situation. The [Guardian](#) stated that “Russian media was spreading Covid-19 disinformation”, while [Euronews](#) reported that suspicions were rife that the “official figures could be false” because the data coming out of Russia seemed to be contradictory. The Rosstat statistical agency stated that pneumonia cases in Moscow had increased by 37% in January compared to the previous year. However, the capital’s health service declared that the number of out-of-hospital pneumonia cases lowered by 8% and 7% in the first two months of 2020.



Paramedics, wearing protective suits and carrying suspected coronavirus patients, are seen near an ambulance as they arrived at the Kommunarka Hospital in Moscow, Russia on Marc 25, 2020. (Sefa Karacan- Anadolu Agency)

Researchers from [Cardiff University’s Crime and Security Research Institute](#) released an analysis of the tactics employed by pro-Kremlin media. According to the report, Russian sources were amplifying theories that had originated from countries such as China, Iran or the US rather than authoring disinformation themselves. “This tactic allows them to avoid the accusation of creating disinformation themselves, claiming instead that they are merely reporting what others are saying,” the report stated. The European External Action Service [claimed](#) in a recent [report](#) that Russian media outlets had launched a large-scale disinformation campaign designed to exacerbate the covid-19 crisis in Western countries. According to the report, since January 22 the EU has registered 80 cases of misinformation about the coronavirus outbreak. The report alleges that “people and accounts, connected to the Russian government,” have switched to spreading misinformation about the virus in English, Spanish, Italian, German and French. According to Reuters, which obtained the nine-page document, Russia aims to cause public confusion and anxiety over what’s happening with the virus. On March 17, the Financial Times, citing the European External Action Service document, reported Moscow’s alleged misinformation campaign. Dmitry Peskov commented on this as ‘Russophobic obsession.’ The Russian Embassy in London denied the UK newspapers’ reports on the so-called ‘state media campaign’ of misinformation regarding the covid-19 pandemic.

Timeline of Confirmed Covid-19 Cases in Russia

January 31

Two cases of covid-19 were confirmed. One of them was in Tyumen, another was in Chita, Zabaykalsky Krai.

February 23

Eight Russians from the cruise ship Diamond Princess were evacuated to Russia's Kazan city in Tatarstan where they were hospitalised.

March 2

The first covid-19 case in Moscow was confirmed.

March 5

The first case covid-19 case in Saint Petersburg was confirmed.

March 6

Six new covid-19 cases are documented in Russia. Five new cases have been reported in Moscow and one in Nizhny Novgorod. Moscow's first confirmed covid-19 patient recovers.

March 7

2020- Four new coronavirus cases confirmed. Three of the infected are in Lipetsk, and one is in St. Petersburg. All of them had recently visited Italy.

March 8

Three new coronavirus cases registered in Russia. The infected individuals were quarantined in the Kaliningrad, Moscow and Belgorod Regions.

March 11

The number of confirmed coronavirus cases in Russia grew to twenty-eight in a 24-hour span.

March 12

Six new coronavirus cases registered in Russia.

March 13

The total amount of covid-19 cases in Russia rises from 34 to 45 in 24 hours.

March 14

Two coronavirus cases confirmed in Russia's Kemerovo region. Coronavirus cases in Russia rise to 59.

March 15

Sixth covid-19 case confirmed in St Petersburg. The number of confirmed cases rises from 59 to 63.

March 16

Number of confirmed covid-19 cases rises to 93.

March 17

Over 116,000 covid-19 tests conducted in Russia. The number of coronavirus cases in Russia reaches 114.

March 18

31 new covid-19 cases registered in Moscow. The number of new coronavirus cases in Russia has grown from 114 to 147. 30 new covid-19 cases have been identified in Moscow.

March 19

The number of confirmed cases in Russia rises by 52, reaching 199. Four more patients recover in Moscow.

March 20

Nine people recover from covid-19. The number of confirmed cases rises from 199 to 253. Two more covid-19 cases are confirmed in the city Kirov.

March 21

The number of confirmed cases in the Moscow Region nearly doubles, reaching a total of 35.

March 22

Over 163,000 coronavirus tests have been carried out in Russia. 54 more cases have been confirmed in Moscow.

March 23

covid-19 cases in Russia rise to 438.

March 24

The first two cases of covid-19 are confirmed in Russia's Far Eastern Primorsky region. Overall cases rise to 495.

March 25

Confirmed covid-19 cases in Russia rise to 658. Vladimir Putin declares a week-long paid national holiday from March 30 to encourage people to remain at home.

March 26

Russia confirmed 182 new covid-19 cases, bringing the country's official number up to 840. Putin stated that Russia's coronavirus situation could be resolved in less than three months. Putin called for sanctions relief during the pandemic situation, telling G20 leaders it was a matter 'of life and death.' PM Mishustin ordered that all federal government employees switch to remote work as of March 27.

March 27

196 new covid-19 cases are confirmed, bringing the total number to 1036. Russia suspends all regular foreign and charter flights. Putin has declared that the week from March 28 to April 5 will be a nationwide paid holiday.

March 28

Russia confirmed 228 new covid-19 cases, bringing the official number of cases up to 1,264.

March 29

270 new covid-19 cases are confirmed, bringing the official total to 1,534.

March 30

302 new covid-19 cases are confirmed, bringing the official total to 1,836. The number of confirmed cases in Moscow surpasses 1,000. In response, Moscow mayor Sergei Sobyanin

March 31

500 new covid-19 cases confirmed, bringing the official total to 2,337. Local media reported that Denis Protsenko, the head doctor at the infectious diseases hospital treating Moscow's coronavirus patients, has tested positive for the virus. He was photographed shaking hands with President Vladimir Putin a week prior.

April 1

440 new covid-19 cases confirmed, bringing the official total to 2,777. Russian lawmakers swiftly pass legislation imposing severe punishment — including up to five years in prison - for spreading false information about the pandemic.

April 2

771 new covid-19 cases confirmed, bringing the country's official number of cases up to 3,548. Sobyanin signed a law imposing fines on Muscovites found to be violating the city's self-isolation orders.

April 3

601 new covid-19 infections, bringing the country's official number of cases up to 4,149.

April 5

658 new covid-19 confirmed cases, bringing the official number of cases to 5,389.

April 6

954 new covid-19 cases were confirmed, bringing the official number of cases to 6,343 and marking a new record for increases in a single day.

