

# News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

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Russians celebrated Easter under lockdown. **Vladimir Smirnov / TASS**

## **Pandemic Easter**

Millions of Russians celebrated Orthodox Easter amid the coronavirus pandemic that has infected almost 43,000 people, making Russia the world's 10th most-affected country.

In and around Moscow, where most Russian virus cases are concentrated, churches held services behind closed doors, while they remained open in many other regions of Russia.

Russian Patriarch Kirill, who leads 150 million believers, held a service in Moscow's Christ the Savior Church without worshippers. Russian President Vladimir Putin did not go to a service as usual but visited a chapel at his country residence.

## **Visa grace**

Russia has [extended](#) visas and other temporary residence permits for foreigners from March 15 to June 15 during the coronavirus pandemic that has shut national borders around the

world.

Putin's act [bans](#) authorities from canceling visas and work permits, as well as from deporting and denying people refugee and temporary asylum status until June 15.

### **HIV epidemic**

HIV infections and deaths from HIV-related causes fell by 7% and 8% between 2019 and 2018, according to preliminary data collected by experts and [shared](#) with the RBC news website.

The decline, including in regions most affected by the epidemic, marks the first time since 2015 that HIV infection rates have declined in Russia.

### **BARS case**

Three members of the Baltic Avantgarde of Russian Resistance (BARS) group that advocates secession from Russia and membership of the EU for the western enclave of Kaliningrad have been [sentenced](#) to between six and eight years in jail on extremism charges.

The fourth member of the self-described "nationalist" and "monarchist" organization was released after receiving a three-year sentence on weapons charges.

### **Homeless lockdown**

Police in Moscow have reportedly [fined](#) a homeless man for violating coronavirus quarantine rules despite him not having a permanent residence.

"They told me that it's not their problem and that I should rent a place, after which they put me in a police van and took me to the station," said the man, identified by the first name Eduard.

*Includes reporting from AFP.*

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