

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

January 24, 2022



A field hospital for Covid-19 patients at the LenExpo Exhibition Centre in St. Petersburg. **Valentin Yegorshin / TASS**

Omicron spread

Russia reported a [record number](#) of 57,212 new coronavirus infections Saturday, then beat that record with 63,205 new infections Sunday as the Omicron variant continued its rapid spread across the country.

Moscow, the epicenter of Russia's outbreak, posted a new record for the fourth day in a row with 17,528 Covid-19 cases.

A total of 681 and 679 deaths were recorded over the weekend.

"Terrorist" activists

Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov [threatened](#) the "terrorist" family of lawyer and anti-torture activist Abubakar Yangulbaev — whose mother was brought to Chechnya after being violently

detained in western Russia last week — with “jail or burial.”

Yangulbaev’s father, a retired judge, and sister fled Russia on Sunday after his mother Zarema Musaeva’s detention on orders to appear as a witness in a fraud case.

In another social media post, Kadyrov also characterized independent journalist Yelena Milashina and head of Russia’s Committee Against Torture NGO Igor Kalyapin as “[terrorists](#).”

"Pro-Russian leader"

Russia on Saturday dismissed as “disinformation” Britain’s claims that Moscow is “looking to install a [pro-Russian leader](#) in Kyiv” amid continuing fears of a Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Ukraine said Sunday it would continue countering pro-Russian individuals and entities aiming to destabilize Ukraine after Britain’s allegations.

Despite the competing accusations, British defense and foreign secretaries are reportedly preparing to meet with their Russian counterparts over the Ukraine crisis.

Germany under fire

Germany's new government found itself [scrambling](#) at the weekend to reassure Ukraine of its support, after a German navy chief's pro-Moscow remarks angered Kyiv and exasperation grew with Berlin's fence-sitting in the Ukraine crisis.

German navy chief Kay-Achim Schoenbach resigned late Saturday after saying it was "nonsense" to think Russia was about to march on Ukraine and that President Vladimir Putin deserves respect.

In Kyiv, Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba summoned the German ambassador and accused Germany of "encouraging" Putin to attack Ukraine.

"Ceremonial" presidency

Armenian President Armen Sarkisian on Sunday announced that he was resigning his largely ceremonial position, citing the inability of his office to influence policy during times of national crisis.

The announcement comes on the back of a period of instability in the small and economically struggling ex-Soviet Caucasus nation in the wake of a war with its long-standing rival Azerbaijan.

AFP contributed reporting.

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