

Press release

Days of Night, Nights of Day

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Press Release

Norilsk, in northern Russia, is (after Murmansk) the second-largest city within the Arctic Circle, with a population of over 175,300. It is also one of the ten most polluted cities in the world. Rich metal and mineral make the region a primary global source of such commodities as nickel, cobalt, platinum and palladium, and Norilsk maintains the biggest metallurgical and mining complex in the world. Norilsk was founded in the 1930s as a factory-city, and until 1953 operated as a Soviet Gulag. During its years as a prison camp, some 17,000 people died in conditions of intense cold, starvation, and forced labor, on the mines and during the construction of the city itself. Norilsk endures an extremely harsh climate, with temperatures dropping below -50°C in the winter, and rising into the high 20s or 30s in the brief summer months. The city is covered in snow for 250-270 days a year, and experiences polar night from December to mid-January, when the sun does not rise above the horizon.