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Health Ministry Says Russia Prepared for Ebola Virus

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Some of the ultrastructural morphology displayed by an Ebola virus virion is revealed in this undated handout colorized transmission electron micrograph (TEM).

Russia's Health Ministry has not ruled out the possibility of Ebola making it into the country but said its health workers are well-equipped to prevent an epidemic.

Oleg Salagai, a spokesman for the ministry, said Friday in comments to the Interfax news agency that even if Russia was confronted with isolated cases of the virus — a nightmare-turned-reality in the U.S. and Spain — sanitary workers would prevent it from spreading.

Furthermore, he said the ministry was taking all necessary measures to prevent the disease from reaching Russian soil in the first place.

Anna Popova, the head of Russia's federal consumer watchdog, said Friday that there had been 16 cases of suspected Ebola in Russia, though they all turned out to be false alarms.

She added that 101 people who have recently spent time in West Africa were under supervision

by doctors in case they showed any symptoms of the deadly disease, Interfax reported.

"There are no panicky prognoses today in Russia, nor will there be any, because the situation is under control, all necessary measures are being taken. Importation [of the disease] is certainly possible, but making predictions about it with accuracy — right now that would just be unreal," Popova was cited as saying by state-run news agency RIA Novosti.

The Ebola outbreak in West Africa, which has claimed an estimated 3,866 lives since last December, has put the entire world on edge as cases of the disease have now — for the first time — been recorded in mainland Europe and the U.S.

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