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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

2 African Students Hospitalized in Russia Over Ebola Fears

By Allison Quinn

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Last week the consumer watchdog announced that 16 cases of suspected Ebola had been recorded in Russia, though they were all later determined to be false alarms.

Two students from the West African country of Guinea-Bissau who arrived in the Russian city of Oryol this week to study at a university there have been hospitalized with symptoms similar to those of the Ebola virus, RIA Novosti reported Thursday, citing the university's deputy head.

"I know that there are two students with high temperatures. They are being monitored [by doctors.] I have no information that they have fallen ill [with Ebola], but since they are from Africa they are under observation" in the infectious diseases ward of a hospital, Yelena Alexeyeva, a prorector at Oryol University, was cited as saying by RIA Novosti on Thursday.

Guinea-Bissau borders Guinea, one of the West African countries worst hit by the virus.

The two students underwent a medical examination before leaving their home country to travel to Oryol, located about 350 kilometers from Moscow, and at that time they were not found to have any symptoms of Ebola, she said.

Currently, the main concern is their temperatures, Alexeyeva said, noting that "symptoms of Ebola have not been discovered. I think they will be released soon."

The Oryol branch of Russia's federal consumer watchdog was quick to reassure residents that there was no reason to panic and that the students were not infected with Ebola, the TASS news agency reported Thursday.

The news of the students' hospitalization came as Russia's Foreign Ministry announced it would allocate $19 million to assist in the global effort to contain the spread of the virus, which has claimed about 4,500 lives since last December.

Part of the funds will be sent as humanitarian support for the African countries hit by the disease, and part will go toward research and treatment, a statement on the ministry's website said Thursday.

"The Russian Federation will continue to give its close attention to the current public health crisis in West Africa connected to the spread of the Ebola virus, and provide targeted financial and technical assistance for stopping [the spread of the disease] on both a bilateral and multilateral basis," the statement said.

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