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Medvedev Urges Consolidated Fight Against Ebola

By Allison Quinn

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Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev on Thursday called for an intensified, unified fight against the Ebola epidemic sweeping West Africa and causing alarm around the rest of the world.

"It seems to me that it's time to consolidate efforts in the fight against [the disease]. I mean, in each country, naturally, [authorities] act their own way to fight it, and the most serious situation is in Africa, from where the virus has been spreading. Just about every government is seriously conducting research in this area, but in order to create effective drug therapy, in some cases it is necessary, I think, to share results [with each other]," Medvedev was cited as saying by RIA Novosti at a meeting of the East Asia Summit in Myanmar.

Medvedev's remarks came as the World Health Organization announced that the number of fatalities from the disease had surpassed 5,000 since the outbreak began late last year, the BBC reported Thursday, citing a correspondent in Sierra Leone who warned that there were not enough resources to contain the spread of the disease there.

Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone have been hit hardest by the epidemic, and infections have been recorded in both the U.S. and Spain. Numerous Western and European governments have allocated funds to help fight the disease, including Russia.

Medvedev noted on Thursday that Russia had allocated about $20 million for the battle.

"Priority measures today should be aimed at fighting the illness caused by the Ebola virus. Russia has allocated about $20 million. Specialists have been sent to the affected areas, along with medicines and supplies. A drug for the prevention and treatment of the disease is also being developed," he said in comments carried by RIA Novosti.

Despite a few scares, no infections have been recorded in Russia yet, according to Rospotrebnadzor, the government's consumer watchdog.

The head of the watchdog, Anna Popova, was cited by Interfax news agency last week as saying that "health and sanitary monitoring is at the maximum level" to detect any cases of the disease making it onto Russian territory.

"As of today, there are no ill people with suspected especially dangerous infectious diseases in Russia," Popova said.

Contact the author at a.quinn@imedia.ru

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