The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Sends Military Coronavirus Aid to Serbia

April 03, 2020



Russia pledged to send 11 flights with 87 army medics to Serbia after President Vladimir Putin spoke with Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic by phone Thursday. **Marina Lystseva / TASS**

Russia has sent military medics and equipment to Serbia, the latest country Moscow is helping to fight the global coronavirus pandemic as it also flexes its soft power muscles.

Russia's Defense Ministry pledged to send 11 flights with 87 army medics to Serbia after President Vladimir Putin spoke with Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic by phone Thursday. The first three transport planes with army medics and equipment departed an airfield outside Moscow earlier Friday.

Related article: Where Has Russia Sent Coronavirus Aid Around the World?

"The aircraft will deliver a forward team of military doctors, virology and epidemiology specialists with modern diagnosis and disinfection equipment" to Belgrade, the Defense Ministry in Moscow said.

The eight medical teams also consist of chemical, biological and nuclear defense troops for disinfection, as well as 16 pieces of military equipment, it said.

Serbia, which declared a state of emergency to slow the spread of the deadly virus, reported a total of 1,171 coronavirus cases and 31 fatalities Friday. Russia's official tally stands at 4,149 coronavirus cases and 34 deaths.

Both countries have strong political, military and economic ties due to their shared Slavic and Orthodox Christian heritage. Russia also backs Serbia's refusal to recognize its former province of Kosovo as an independent country.

Russia previously sent similar coronavirus shipments to the United States and Italy, both epicenters of the pandemic.

The deliveries drew criticism that the countries handed Moscow, which has been under Western sanctions for six years, a public relations coup.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/04/03/russia-sends-military-coronavirus-aid-to-serbia-a69864