

Russia Slams Trump's Decision to Cut WHO Funding as Coronavirus Rages

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Moscow called Trump's move to cut WHO funding a "very selfish approach" and "very disturbing." **Gage Skidmore / Flickr (CC BY-SA 2.0)**

Russian officials denounced U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to cut Washington's funding to the World Health Organization (WHO) as the coronavirus pandemic continues to spread around the world.

Trump [announced](#) Tuesday that his administration will suspend its funding to the UN health body as it reviews what it calls the "WHO's role in severely mismanaging and covering up the spread of the coronavirus." The U.S. president, who has been criticized at home for his handling of the pandemic, said the WHO unfairly attacked his decision to restrict travel from China in January.

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The U.S. is the WHO's largest single funder, having given it \$400 million last year.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres was swift to condemn Trump's move, [saying](#) the WHO "must be supported, as it is absolutely critical to the world's efforts to win the war against Covid-19."

Here's a look at how Moscow reacted to the news:

The Kremlin:

"The heads of the G20, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, support the work of the WHO and place their hopes on the WHO's future work to analyze the experience of this pandemic. We work from this position," spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters, referring to a pledge [signed](#) by G20 leaders in March.

"It says that the G20 presidents fully support the WHO's efforts and are determined to further strengthen its authority to coordinate the international fight against the pandemic," Peskov added.

Deputy Foreign Minister [Sergei Ryabkov](#):

Ryabkov called the U.S. move a "very selfish approach" and "very disturbing."

"(We) call on the U.S. to abandon further attacks on the WHO and pursue a responsible policy that will not destroy the framework of international cooperation in the biomedical field — but rather strengthen this partnership and create the basis for its further improvement," he said.

"This is a blow to this organization at a time when the international community is relying on it — and this is a step that deserves to be condemned," the state-run TASS news agency quoted Ryabkov as saying.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman [Maria Zakharova](#):

"The politicians of this country [the U.S.] always have someone to blame: They blame China and the WHO for the pandemic, Russia for the loss of [Hillary] Clinton and Putin personally for problems in American medicine," TASS quoted Zakharova as saying.

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