Russia's Coronavirus Vaccine 'Ready,' Military Says

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The Defense Ministry on Monday discharged the last group of volunteer soldiers testing the experimental vaccine. **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

The Russian military has said its experimental coronavirus vaccine which has not yet completed Phase II trials and is yet to begin Phase III is "ready."

The Defense Ministry, which says it has worked with government researchers to develop the vector vaccine, on Monday released the last group of volunteer soldiers testing the experimental shot in its Phase I trials. First Deputy Defense Minister Ruslan Tsalikov told the *Argumenty i Fakty* newspaper that military experts and the Gamaleya Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology scientists have made "final assessments."

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"At the time of discharge, all volunteers without exception received immunity from the coronavirus," he was quoted as saying Tuesday.

"Thus, the first domestic vaccine against the novel coronavirus infection is ready," Tsalikov said.

Russia's Health Ministry disputed the deputy defense minister's characterization, [saying](#) the vaccine's trials have not yet ended.

Alexei Kuznetsov, assistant to the health minister, [said](#) the ministry plans to work on the candidate vaccine's state registration process after Phase II of the trials.

Kirill Dmitriyev, whose Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) funds the trials, has said he expects the 100-person Phase II trial to end Aug. 3.

Dmitriyev said he hopes to produce 200 million doses of coronavirus vaccine with foreign partners by the end of 2020. He said Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and other countries would be involved in Phase III trials.

"Immediately after that we are planning to begin mass production," Dmitriyev said in a statement on Russia's state anti-coronavirus portal.

The vaccine is based on human adenovirus, a common cold. Dmitriyev said the adenoviral vector-based vaccines had been developed since the 1980s and are generally safe.

Russia has the world's fourth-highest number of coronavirus infections after the United States, Brazil and India. The Kremlin has said the nation's scientists were working on almost 50 different vaccine projects.

Last week Britain, the United States and Canada said a hacking group "almost certainly" linked to Russian intelligence had carried out attacks aimed at stealing vaccine research, a claim denied by Moscow.

AFP contributed reporting to this article.

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