The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
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Algeria, Palestine Greenlight Russia's Coronavirus Vaccine

January 12, 2021



Russia announced Monday that 1.5 million people around the world had received Sputnik V. **Sergei Karpukhin / TASS**

Algeria and the State of Palestine have approved Russia's Sputnik V vaccine against the coronavirus, Russia's sovereign wealth fund marketing the jab announced this week.

Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) CEO Kirill Dmitriyev said that the countries are the first African and Middle Eastern nations to issue emergency-use authorization approvals.

Related article: Russia Says 1.5M Vaccinated Globally With Sputnik

Dmitriyev said deliveries to Palestine, via Russia's production partners in India, China and South Korea, will begin sometime before April. He also said Algeria will receive Sputnik V under the same international partnership mechanism but did not provide a timetable for deliveries.

Russia announced Monday that 1.5 million people around the world had received Sputnik as part of an initiative Kremlin critics have described as a geopolitical push.

Health Minister Mikhail Murashko said this month that more than 800,000 Russians had received Sputnik V.

Russia became the first country last August to register a vaccine, months ahead of Western competitors. Moscow has since boasted of more than 1 billion orders for the jab abroad.

An adviser to Russia's health minister said over the weekend that consultations with the World Health Organization for the use of Sputnik V in emergency situations would begin Jan. 20.

RDIF's Dmitriyev also announced Monday that it is financing clinical trials of a "light," one-dose version of the two-dose jab as a stopgap for countries facing high numbers of Covid-19 infections.

The vaccine's developers have said both doses confer an efficacy of more than 90%.

AFP contributed reporting.

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