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Russia Slams U.S. Over Brazil Coronavirus Vaccine Pressure

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Brazil's health ministry has signed a contract for 10 million Sputnik V doses to be delivered between April and June. **Joedson Alves / EPA / TASS**

Moscow has accused the United States of targeting its Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine by pressuring Brazil to reject it, Russia's sovereign wealth fund that markets the jab worldwide said Monday.

An annual U.S. Department of Health and Human Services report published in January said officials had worked to dissuade Latin American countries from accepting aid from "ill-intentioned states" including Russia, Cuba and Venezuela.

Embed:

> US Dep. of Health publicly confirmed that it pressured Brazil against Sputnik V. We believe countries should work together to save lives. Efforts to undermine the

> vaccines are unethical and are costing lives.
> ⊠https://t.co/Ga5i4zvbCt P.48 pic.twitter.com/A6wyKOkc8t
>
> — Sputnik V (@sputnikvaccine) March 15, 2021

"Examples include using OGA's [HHS Office of Global Affairs] Health Attaché office to persuade Brazil to reject the Russian Covid-19 vaccine," the report said.

Brazil, with a population of 212 million, has counted nearly 280,000 coronavirus fatalities, the world's second-highest death toll behind the U.S. The country's second wave fueled by a new strain that is at least twice as contagious as the original is claiming an average of over 1,800 deaths per day.

The Russian Direct Investment Fund took to Twitter to single out the HHS excerpt and accuse the U.S. of waging an anti-Sputnik V campaign.

"We believe countries should work together to save lives. Efforts to undermine the vaccines are unethical and are costing lives," it said via Sputnik V's official account.

An HHS spokesperson denied the report, telling Russia's RBC news website that it's "not in the position" to talk Brazil or any other country out of accepting approved vaccines.

The Kremlin on Tuesday called foreign pressure against the use of Russian-made Covid-19 vaccines "egotistical" and said it favors "as many as possible" vaccines on the market. It didn't address the U.S. report specifically, however.

RDIF made the remarks two days after Brazil's health ministry signed a contract to buy 10 million Sputnik V doses to be delivered sometime between April and June.

A Brazilian pharmaceutical company is also expected to manufacture Sputnik V through an earlier agreement later in 2021.

On Monday, Brazil's health minister Eduardo Pazuello said the country has ordered 100 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine and another 38 million of the single-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Pazuello said Brazil had secured more than half a billion vaccine doses by the end of 2021.

The latest controversy over U.S. efforts to talk Brazil out of buying Sputnik V comes amid accusations from both Russia and the U.S. of disinformation campaigns against coronavirus vaccines. The Kremlin alleged Friday that western media outlets are preparing reports on Sputnik V's inefficacy with "staged mass deaths."

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