

# Dom. Republic health minister axed after 11 child deaths

October 14 2014

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The Dominican Republic's health minister has been fired after 11 children died in three days in a pediatric hospital, officials said, citing "deficiencies" in the medical team.

Eight of the children who died were under one year old.

The deaths occurred between October 3 and 5 after the children were admitted for a variety of ailments, including lung and heart trouble, [gastrointestinal problems](#) and infections.

A report from a commission of inquiry appointed after the incident said the deaths were the result of "deficiencies of the medical personnel."

The findings of the probe prompted the dismissal of Health Minister Freddy Hidalgo on Friday and the hospital's director Rosa Nieves.

A new [health minister](#), Altagracia Guzman Marcelino, was appointed Monday and the hospital was put under military control as staff staged protests.

"We oppose the militarization of this hospital," said Maritza Lopez, coordinator of the SOS Committee, which includes hospital employees.

"We are not murderers, we are doctors."

The children all died at Robert Reid Cabral Hospital, the largest medical

center for [children](#) in the Caribbean nation.

Staff have complained of deterioration of some hospital services, which have suffered under general economic malaise in the Dominican Republic.

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