

Spain defends repatriation of missionaries infected with Ebola

October 13 2014

The Spanish government defended Monday its decision to repatriate two elderly missionaries who contracted Ebola in west Africa, creating the conditions for a Madrid nurse to catch the deadly virus.

"The government did what it had to do. The duty of a state is to protect its citizens, especially when they are in difficult circumstances, far from Spain," Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Garcia-Margallo said in an interview published in daily El Pais.

"All developed nations which faced the same problem did the same," he added.

Teresa Romero, a nurse at Madrid's Carlos III hospital where the two missionaries were cared for, on October 6 became the first person diagnosed as having become infected with the virus outside of Africa.

The 44-year-old had volunteered to help the two missionaries who were flown home from west Africa in August and September and later died of the disease. She is listed as in stable but serious condition.

Fifteen people considered as having had "high risk contact" with Romero, including her husband, are being monitored at the hospital, none of whom have shown any symptoms.

"How could we leave two compatriots who gave their life to help others?" Interior Minister Jorge Fernandez Diaz said during an interview

with public television TVE.

"We acted with dignity. Two compatriots who found themselves in a situation of extreme need, who are going to die, who want to be repatriated... and Spain would say no?" he added.

Spanish priest Miguel Pajares, 75, who was infected with Ebola in Liberia, was flown to Madrid on a specially equipped Airbus military plane on August 7. He died on August 12.

Pajares was the first Ebola patient of the current outbreak to be brought to Europe for treatment.

The second missionary, Manuel Garcia Viejo, 69, was repatriated from Sierra Leone and died on September 25.

Both were members of the Hospital Order of San Juan de Dios, a Roman Catholic group that runs a charity working with Ebola victims in Africa.

Deputy Prime Minister Soraya Saenz de Santamaria is heading a committee created on Friday to manage the crisis and address concerns over the circumstances of Romero's infection.

Hospital staff complain they had little training on protocols and how to put on protective clothing before dealing with Ebola patients.

© 2014 AFP

Citation: Spain defends repatriation of missionaries infected with Ebola (2014, October 13) retrieved 17 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-10-spain-defends-repatriation-missionaries-infected.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private

study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.