

Brazil leader vows to win war against Zika-carrying mosquito

January 30 2016



Boys ride a scooter at a slum in Recife, Pernambuco state, Brazil, Friday, Jan. 29, 2016. Brazilian officials still say they believe there's a sharp increase in cases of microcephaly and strongly suspect the Zika virus, which first appeared in the country last year, is to blame. The concern is strong enough that the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention this month warned pregnant women to reconsider visits to areas where Zika is present. (AP Photo/Felipe Dana)

Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff on Friday announced a nationwide

attack on the mosquito that spreads the Zika virus, vowing to "win this war" against the insect that researchers in have linked to a rare birth defect.

Rousseff said an operation to eliminate breeding areas for the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito has begun at all installations run by the armed forces and at all federal educational, health and other facilities.

She called on the rest of society to join in eliminating areas of standing water, which can include things as small as a discarded [food container](#).

"The government, churches, football teams, labor unions ... everyone must do their part to eliminate the breeding grounds," she said. "We will win this war."

Later Friday, the White House said Rousseff and President Barack Obama discussed their concerns about the spread of the Zika virus in a telephone conversation.

It said the leaders agreed on the importance of working together to spearhead research and speed development of vaccines and other technologies to control the mosquito-borne virus. They also agreed to prioritize building national, regional and global networks to fight the threat from infectious diseases more broadly.

Rousseff announced the offensive against the mosquito following a videoconference with five Brazilian state governors and six Cabinet members. Brazilian researchers have linked Zika to a seemingly sudden upsurge in cases of microcephaly, in which children are born with abnormally small heads.



A boy climbs a stilt house after going under it to collect recyclable items at a slum in Recife, Pernambuco state, Brazil, Friday, Jan. 29, 2016. Brazilian officials still say they believe there's a sharp increase in cases of microcephaly and strongly suspect the Zika virus, which first appeared in the country last year, is to blame. The concern is strong enough that the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention this month warned pregnant women to reconsider visits to areas where Zika is present. (AP Photo/Felipe Dana)

Afterward, Health Minister Marcelo Castro echoed her words, telling reporters "the mosquito is not stronger than the entire country. We will win this war."

Castro said, "We have asked the people to clean their homes and now the government is cleaning its home," referring to the federal operation.

Brazil has won the war against the mosquito before. Following major eradication efforts, it was declared free of the mosquito in 1958. But the

effort faded and the insect returned from neighboring countries.



People walk on a street flooded with sewage at a slum in Recife, Pernambuco state, Brazil, Friday, Jan. 29, 2016. Brazilian officials still say they believe there's a sharp increase in cases of microcephaly and strongly suspect the Zika virus, which first appeared in the country last year, is to blame. The concern is strong enough that the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention this month warned pregnant women to reconsider visits to areas where Zika is present. (AP Photo/Felipe Dana)

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Citation: Brazil leader vows to win war against Zika-carrying mosquito (2016, January 30)
retrieved 20 April 2024 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-01-brazil-leader-vows-war-zika-carrying.html>

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