

UN: Zika virus will be 'way down' before Rio hosts Olympics

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Soldiers conduct inspection in a school during a national day of awareness to eradicate the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, in Brasilia, Brazil, Friday, Feb. 19, 2016. The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is a vector for the spread of the Zika virus, it lives largely inside homes and can lay eggs in even a bottle-cap's worth of stagnant water. (AP Photo/Eraldo Peres)

The head of the World Health Organization's Zika response team is predicting that Brazil will host a "fantastic Olympics" and that the

mosquito-borne virus will be "way down" by the time the Summer Games begin in Rio de Janeiro on Aug. 5.

Dr. Bruce Aylward, WHO's executive director for outbreaks and [health emergencies](#), says the mosquito population is expected to drop off in the area around Rio since it will be the [southern hemisphere](#)'s winter by then. He said Olympic venues are also in a relatively confined area, making it easier for authorities to control the local mosquito population.

Brazil has recorded hundreds of thousands of cases of suspected Zika infection in recent months amid strong concerns that the virus could be linked to a spike in the number of abnormally small heads in newborn babies.

The Summer Olympics run from Aug.5-21.



U.S. Ambassador to Brazil Liliana Ayalde attends a meeting on measures taken

to combat the mosquito that carries the Zika virus, at the Pan American Health Organization headquarters in Brasilia, Brazil, Thursday, Feb. 18, 2016. Brazil has signed an agreement with a Texas research hospital to develop a vaccine against the Zika virus, Castro said Thursday, adding the goal is for the vaccine to be ready for clinical testing within 12 months. (AP Photo/Eraldo Peres)



Army soldiers conduct an inspection in a school during a national day of awareness to eradicate the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, in Brasilia, Brazil, Friday, Feb. 19, 2016. The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is a vector for the spread of the Zika virus, it lives largely inside homes and can lay eggs in even a bottle-cap's worth of stagnant water. (AP Photo/Eraldo Peres)

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