

UN: Risk of Zika outbreak across Europe is "low to moderate"

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In this Feb. 11, 2016 file photo of aedes aegypti mosquitoes are seen in a mosquito cage at a laboratory in Cucuta, Colombia. Congress is ready to act on President Barack Obama's long-stalled request for emergency funds to combat the Zika virus, which has been linked to serious birth defects and other major health problems. Obama requested \$1.9 billion three months ago for several purposes, including creating a vaccine for the disease, taking steps to control the mosquitoes that spread Zika and helping other countries battle the virus. (AP Photo/Ricardo Mazalan, File)

The World Health Organization says the risk of a Zika outbreak across Europe is "low to moderate," in a new risk assessment.

The U.N. health agency said Wednesday there is a "high likelihood" the mosquito-borne virus could spread in three European regions with the mosquitoes that carry Zika: Madeira Island in the Atlantic and the Black Sea coastal areas of Georgia and Russia.

WHO declared the spread of Zika to be a global emergency in February and the virus has since been proven to cause severe birth defects, including babies born with abnormally small heads. In adults, it can cause a rare neurological condition that is sometimes fatal or causes temporary paralysis.

There have been more than 400 imported Zika cases in Europe although no local spread has been detected.

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