

Guinea uses Russian COVID-19 vaccine on some officials

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Guinea began vaccinating against COVID-19 with the Russian Sputnik V vaccine on an experimental basis, starting with government officials, authorities said Thursday.

Guinea has ordered only 55 doses of the Russian vaccine, said Dr. Sakoba Keita, the director-general of the National Health Security Agency.

"We requested a small quantity of the vaccine, 55 doses precisely. This is the beginning of an order," Keita said. "Yesterday we vaccinated in this pilot phase 25 senior officials of the state. There are 30 doses left and we will continue with the vaccination."

However, he said on state TV Wednesday that they also sent a letter to Russia requesting 2 million doses of Sputnik V to help the country's vulnerable. Guinea has a population of 13 million.

Guinea is one of the first African nations to vaccinate its officials.

The Minister of Defense, Mohamed Diane was the first to receive the vaccine. He was shown getting the inoculation on national TV followed by other Cabinet ministers receiving the shots on Wednesday.

Gen. Bourema Condé, Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization, spoke after receiving the Russian vaccine.

"This new vaccine is a strong signal. This signal shows the strong will of the president. Today is a sampling, and this sampling will be duplicated," he said. "The president wants all Guineans to be in [good health](#) in relation to this pandemic."

Amadou Damaro Camara, the [president](#) of the country's legislative body, the National Assembly, was also vaccinated.

"We are the [guinea pigs](#)," he said of receiving the first doses of the vaccine.

"It is the government's permanent concern to want to fight against this disease and we are very happy about it," he said. "We hope that this vaccination will be extended to the rest of the people and that it will be the beginning of the eradication of this disease."

Tibou Camara, Guinea's industry minister, also spoke on the [television broadcast](#) after being vaccinated.

"The Guinean population should be congratulated and rejoice at a time when the [vaccine](#) is coveted and not very accessible to many countries, and that our country is a beneficiary," he said.

Russia has businesses in the West African nation and Guinea is known for its bauxite mining.

Russian President Vladimir Putin was among the first world leaders to congratulate Guinea's President Alpha Conde after he won a controversial third term in office after a violently contested election in October.

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