

Seychelles to begin COVID-19 vaccination with Chinese drug

January 7 2021

The Indian Ocean archipelago of the Seychelles will on Sunday be among the first African nations to begin vaccinating its population against the coronavirus.

Health Minister Peggy Vidot said Thursday that the country had received a donation of 50,000 doses of a [vaccine](#) made by Chinese pharma giant Sinopharm, from the United Arab Emirates.

"The [vaccination campaign](#) will start on Sunday with the leaders of the country, so that the population can see them leading by example," she told a press conference.

The archipelago of 115 mostly uninhabited islands and islets, has a population of 98,000, and initially appeared to have staved off the pandemic, initiating a swift lockdown in April last year which was lifted a month later with only 11 cases recorded.

However cases have jumped since December, with a total of 420 now recorded, one of which was fatal.

"People must see this vaccination as one of the best ways to combat COVID-19," said Vidot.

After the country's leaders receive their shot, [health workers](#) will start being vaccinated on Monday, and then people aged over 65, followed by distribution to the rest of the population.

The Seychelles hopes to vaccinate 70 percent of its population within two to three months at a rate of 1,000 per day, with hopes of getting more doses of a second, as yet unnamed vaccine.

While several vaccines were trialed in African nations, most countries on the continent are lagging far behind the developed world in procuring the sought-after drugs.

South Africa announced Thursday it would receive a first batch of vaccines this month.

In West Africa, Guinea has begun administering a small batch of Russia's controversial Sputnik V vaccine on a trial basis.

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