

Sudan to receive first batch of coronavirus vaccines

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Sudan will receive its first coronavirus vaccines on Wednesday and will begin inoculation of frontline medical staff next week, health officials said.

The first consignments comprise 828,000 doses of the AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine out of a total of 3.4 million doses expected in the coming months through COVAX, a UN-led initiative that provides jabs to poor countries.

Vaccines are expected to arrive at Khartoum airport later on Wednesday, Dalia Idris, a health ministry official coordinating vaccine deployment, told AFP.

Inoculation of around 414,000 [medical staff](#) across the country will begin "next week," she said.

"The vaccine will be available for free," health minister Omar al-Naguib earlier told a press conference in Khartoum, noting that frontline medics and the elderly will be the first to be inoculated.

More batches are expected to arrive so that by the end of September there are jabs for 20 percent of Sudan's 40 million population.

The [virus](#) has so far infected more than 28,500 in Sudan and killed nearly 1,900, according to official data.

Sudan is navigating a rocky political transition and a deepening [economic crisis](#) following the April 2019 ouster of longtime autocrat Omar al-Bashir.

Wednesday's announcement came nearly a month after Sudan unveiled a new cabinet.

Galloping inflation and chronic hard currency shortages have piled pressure on a population that has long struggled to afford basic necessities.

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