

Sudan begins vaccinating health workers against COVID-19

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Sudan began inoculating frontline healthcare workers against coronavirus on Tuesday after receiving its first batch of vaccines last week, a health official said.

The country is the first in the Middle East and North Africa to receive

vaccines through COVAX, a UN-led initiative that provides jabs to [poor countries](#), according to children's agency UNICEF.

"We started Tuesday vaccinating [health care workers](#) and other staff in isolation hospitals," said Al-Taher Abdelrahman of the isolation centres department at the health ministry.

"Those who received the first dose today will be receiving another dose after a month," he said, speaking from the Jabra hospital in the capital Khartoum.

The first batch to arrive in Sudan was comprised of 828,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine, which are planned to cover 414,000 frontline health care workers across the country, according to health officials.

Sudan has secured a total of 3.4 million doses through COVAX, which are expected to arrive in batches through to the end of September.

In a press conference last week, health minister Omar al-Naguib said the vaccine "will be available for free" with frontline medics and the elderly being priority groups.

Coronavirus has so far infected more than 28,500 in Sudan and killed over 1,900, according to official data.

Sudan is navigating a rocky political transition following the April 2019 ouster of longtime autocrat Omar al-Bashir.

The virus has piled pressure on a country already suffering deep economic woes, including a galloping inflation and chronic hard currency shortages.

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