

Zika Forces Restrictions on Blood Transfusions in France



Paris, February 8 (RHC)-- France has restricted blood donations for travelers who recently came from places affected by the Zika virus, the French health minister says.

"We are taking measures to ensure that the blood donations are not contaminated by the virus. It means that anyone arriving from zones affected by the virus must not donate blood before a 28-day period expires," French Health Minister Marisol Touraine told Europe-1 radio on Sunday. She also advised pregnant women to inform the authorities if they had traveled to any Zika-hit areas.

According to Touraine, 18 cases of the Zika virus have been reported in travelers from France's overseas territories including Martinique and Guadeloupe located in the Caribbean.

Among other European countries, the Netherlands has newly confirmed 10 Zika cases, Britain five, Italy and Portugal four, and Spain two. All of the patients had traveled to South America.

Zika virus was first isolated from a monkey in Zika Forest, Uganda, in 1947. Brazil has been the country hardest hit by the outbreak, where three people were reported dead due to the Zika virus in November 2015.



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