

Guatemala confirms 105 Zika cases, says more are likely

30 January 2016

Guatemalan health officials said Saturday that at least 105 people there had been infected with Zika, the virus suspected of causing grave brain damage in newborns.

It was detected for the first time in Uganda in 1947 and was named for a forest south of that nation's capital of Kampala.

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Health Ministry epidemiologist Judith Garcia told the newspaper Prensa Libre that the 105 confirmed cases emerged from a total of 200 suspected cases, 68 of them from 2015.

For each confirmed case, Garcia said, there may be three more patients who have not come forward or who are asymptomatic, meaning the ultimate numbers could be much larger.

Zika is transmitted by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, which also spreads [dengue fever](#) and the [chikungunya virus](#). It provokes flu-like symptoms including a low-grade fever, headaches, joint pain and rashes.

"Guatemala's humid climate is quite favorable" to the [virus](#), said Garcia.

The World Health Organization (WHO) warned this week that the virus is "spreading explosively" in the Americas, with three million to four million cases expected this year.

Hardest-hit so far has been Brazil, with more than 1.5 million cases since April.

Health authorities there are investigating the possible linkage between Zika and more than 3,400 suspected cases of microcephaly—abnormally small skulls and brains—in babies born to infected mothers.

Colombia announced earlier Saturday that it has 20,297 cases of Zika infection, including 2,116 in expectant mothers.

Zika is present in 21 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, according to WHO experts.

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