# Russia’s covert operation sends expired Covid vaccines to Africa



A covert operation led by Kirill Dmitriev, the head of Russia’s sovereign wealth fund, sought to undermine US influence in Africa by dispatching expired COVID-19 vaccines across the continent. Dmitriev reportedly pushed for the extension of the shelf life of six million doses of the Sputnik Light vaccine, aiming to distribute them as “humanitarian aid” coinciding with a Russia-Africa summit.

This initiative fits within Russia’s broader strategy to bolster its influence in the global south amid heightened international isolation following its invasion of Ukraine. Dmitriev, who also serves as President Vladimir Putin’s envoy in negotiations with the United States over the war in Ukraine, played a central role in orchestrating this scheme.

The plan to extend the expiration date of the vaccines lacked clear scientific justification, raising significant ethical questions about their safety and efficacy. The distribution of expired vaccines as part of a diplomatic effort highlights the complex intersection of public health and geopolitics, with potential implications for the recipient countries across Africa.

The Africa.com publication reports that the push to donate these extended-life vaccines was part of Russia’s broader efforts to gain goodwill and counter Western influence on the continent. However, the absence of transparent scientific data on the safety of the vaccines past their original expiry dates has led to concerns among health experts and observers.

This development sheds light on the evolving tactics employed by states in their international relationships, particularly in regions like Africa where influence is highly contested during periods of geopolitical tension.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://africa.com/putins-top-negotiator-pushed-plan-to-ship-expired-vaccines-to-africa/> - This URL corroborates the covert operation led by Kirill Dmitriev to send expired COVID-19 vaccines to Africa as part of a broader strategy to bolster Russia's influence in the global south. It highlights the ethical concerns surrounding the safety and efficacy of these vaccines.
2. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2025/04/27/vladimir-putin-ukraine-negotiator-expired-vaccines-africa/> - This Telegraph article reports on Kirill Dmitriev urging the Russian health ministry to extend the shelf life of over six million doses of the Sputnik Light vaccine, reinforcing the claim about the plan to distribute expired vaccines to Africa.
3. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/vaccines/> - Although this URL primarily discusses vaccines in general, it indirectly supports the context of vaccine-related geopolitical strategies by mentioning global vaccine dynamics.
4. <https://ground.news/article/putins-top-ukraine-negotiator-plotted-to-send-expired-covid-vaccines-to-africa> - This article from Ground News provides additional confirmation of Kirill Dmitriev's involvement in a plot to send expired vaccines to Africa, aligning with the broader geopolitical strategy of Russia.
5. [https://kosovapress.com/en/Putin's-peace-negotiator-wanted-to-send-expired-vaccines-to-Africa](https://kosovapress.com/en/Putin%27s-peace-negotiator-wanted-to-send-expired-vaccines-to-Africa) - KosovaPress reports on Kirill Dmitriev’s role in the secret plan to send expired vaccines to Africa, underscoring his position as a key negotiator for Putin.
6. <https://www.noahwire.com> - This source was mentioned in the initial prompt but lacks direct information on the specific claims about Kirill Dmitriev and expired vaccines. However, it might contain related geopolitical analysis or news.
7. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMikgFBVV95cUxOTm9nQ3dzU2RrSlgxZHlBQ3hVUlVMSG1NX2R4NFFCdVBrNDhMLWxPRVFpYm53WWwwQ0s0S3I1cHNiNWluejNOTEpRRElLc09fV3g3QmpvOHRmQjZUZEtCbHMxdWp3U2JmaHU5c3liX3R3QmlDak81b3VpLWtiM1RVZUtQTGxjMl9yamJmSUxQY3VvUQ?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data