# Russia’s covert scheme to distribute expired vaccines in Africa to counter US influence



A covert initiative led by Kirill Dmitriev, head of Russia’s sovereign wealth fund, aimed to undermine US influence in Africa through the distribution of expired COVID-19 vaccines across the continent. According to Africa.com, Dmitriev sought to extend the shelf life of six million doses of the Sputnik Light vaccine to facilitate their donation as “humanitarian aid” during a Russia-Africa summit.

This strategic move formed part of Russia’s wider campaign to enhance its sway in the global south, particularly after the country faced increasing international isolation following its invasion of Ukraine. Dmitriev, who serves as President Vladimir Putin’s envoy in negotiations with the United States concerning the conflict in Ukraine, appears to have leveraged his diplomatic ties to orchestrate this complex operation.

The decision to extend the vaccines’ expiration date was made without clear scientific justification, sparking significant ethical concerns regarding the safety and efficacy of the doses being distributed. The attempt to use potentially ineffective or unsafe vaccines as diplomatic tools highlights the tensions surrounding global health equity amid geopolitical rivalry.

The Telegraph is reporting on this development, underscoring the contentious nature of Russia's approach to securing influence in Africa through vaccine diplomacy and raising questions about the implications for public health on the continent.

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

## References

* <https://africa.com/putins-top-negotiator-pushed-plan-to-ship-expired-vaccines-to-africa/> - This article corroborates the claim that Kirill Dmitriev led a secret plot to send expired COVID-19 vaccines to Africa as part of Russia's strategy to counter US influence. It highlights the use of expired Sputnik Light vaccines as humanitarian aid during a Russia-Africa summit.
* <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2025/04/27/vladimir-putin-ukraine-negotiator-expired-vaccines-africa/> - This Telegraph article supports the assertion that Dmitriev urged the Russian health ministry to extend the shelf life of over six million Sputnik Light vaccine doses. It also notes the lack of scientific rationale for this decision.
* <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/vaccines/> - Although this page generally discusses vaccine-related news, it indirectly supports the context of vaccine diplomacy and its controversies, as seen in Russia's strategies.
* [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) - This article details how Kirill Dmitriev is involved in a secret plan to send expired vaccines to Africa, aligning with Russia's broader geopolitical objectives.
* <https://ground.news/article/putins-top-ukraine-negotiator-plotted-to-send-expired-covid-vaccines-to-africa> - This article provides additional validation of Dmitriev's role in planning to distribute expired vaccines to Africa, emphasizing the geopolitical context and implications for public health.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - Though not specifically mentioned in the provided search results, this URL is a general news source that might cover geopolitical events, including vaccine diplomacy. However, it does not specifically support the claims about Dmitriev without access to its content.
* <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