
Yellow Fever Kills 7 in Brazil. Mosquitoes Found at Carnaval Parade's Area

Contributed by José Wilson Miranda
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The number of people killed in Brazil from yellow fever in the first two weeks of January has already passed the number of those who died from that tropical disease in the whole of 2007. While five people died last year from the illness, the Brazilian Health Ministry has confirmed the death of seven people this year alone.

According to Brazil's health authorities, from 29 suspect cases, seven were ruled out as being yellow fever while 10 have been confirmed. The amount of fatalities is the biggest one since 2003 when there were 64 cases of yellow fever in Brazil with 23 deaths.

Pastor Antônio Rates dos Santos, 44, the last victim to be announced, died Tuesday, January 15, in the Anchieta hospital, in Taguatinga, a town 30 kilometers (19 miles) from Brazilian capital Brasília.

The hospital released a note saying that Santos's heart had stopped three times before he finally died. The identity of a second victim was not revealed. All we know is that it was someone from Luziânia, in the state of Goiás.

The pastor had been admitted to the hospital on January 8 complaining about fever and pains. The situation deteriorated soon to kidney and liver insufficiency and he was taken to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) on January 12 where he died after three days.

According to the doctors who treated him, Santos had not been vaccinated against yellow fever and had spent New Year's eve at a farm in the municipality of Abadiânia, in the state of Goiás.

Among those who recovered there is a woman from São Paulo who is already back home after being admitted on January 6 to the São Luiz hospital in the capital and being diagnosed with yellow fever. She had travelled to Paraná (in the South) and Mato Grosso do Sul (Midwest) just before returning to São Paulo on January 4.

All over the country there's been a rush to vaccination posts. On Tuesday, January 15, 40 municipal health agents from Rio de Janeiro inspected the Sambódromo, the open-air area where Rio's Escolas de Samba (Samba Clubs) parade during Carnaval and they found and destroyed five mosquito focuses, two of which were from the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, which transmits both yellow and dengue fever.

All the confirmed cases of yellow fever this year have been of the wild kind, meaning that they have been caught in wooded, rural areas. Brazil's Health Ministry has ruled out an epidemic of the disease and guaranteed that the country hasn't seen an urban case of the disease since 1942.

The embassies of the United States, Philippines, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, have become the first ones to warn their citizens to get their yellow fever shots before traveling to Brazil.

The US Warning:

The U.S. Embassy in Brasilia is issuing this Warden Message to alert U.S. citizens residing or traveling in Brazil to recent fatal cases of possible Yellow Fever in Goiás and Brazil's Federal District (including Brasília).

While it will be weeks to months before test results can confirm if these deaths were actually caused by yellow fever, the Government of Brazil has begun a yellow fever vaccine campaign in the affected regions.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind the U.S. citizen community of the Embassy's standing advice regarding yellow fever vaccinations for U.S. Citizens traveling to Brazil:

Yellow fever vaccine is recommended for persons over 9 months of age for travel to all rural areas of all states, including Iguassu Falls tourist resorts, and for travel to Brasília and Belo Horizonte. Cities in jungle areas are considered rural, not urban, in nature.

Yellow fever is not a risk for travel to major coastal cities from Fortaleza to the Uruguay border, including the major tourist/business destinations of São Paulo, Salvador, Rio, Recife, and Fortaleza.

Further information on yellow fever treatment and prevention can be found at the Centers for Disease Control's website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/>. For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad consult the World Health Organization's (WHO) web site at <http://www.who.int/en>. Further health information for travelers is available at <http://www.who.int/ith>.

In case of an emergency, please contact the Consular Section of the Consulate in Rio de Janeiro at Avenida Presidente Wilson 147, Centro, Rio de Janeiro, telephone 21-2823-2000, after-hours telephone 21-3823-2029.

For the latest security information, Americans traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's Internet web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> where the current Worldwide Caution Public Announcement, Travel Warnings and Public Announcements can be found.

American citizens traveling or residing overseas are encouraged to register with the appropriate U.S. Embassy or Consulate on the State Department's travel registration website at <https://travelregistration.state.gov>.