

# RIO OLYMPICS WILL NOT BE CANCELED DESPITE THE SPREAD OF ZIKA



Brazil's Chief of Staff, Jaques Wagner, said that there is no way that the Rio Olympic Games to be held this August will be cancelled due to the outbreak of the Zika virus. The virus is spreading rapidly throughout the South American country.

"We have to explain to those who are coming to Brazil, the athletes, that the risk is zero if you are not a pregnant woman," Wagner told reporters last Monday. The official added that the government is concerned about the impact of the virus on the Rio Olympics, but he said that **there will be information campaigns on the virus, which the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a global health emergency.**

Transmitted by mosquitoes, the virus, has spread rapidly across America. Pregnant women are the ones most at risk if they contract it, because it has been linked to cases of microcephaly, a condition in which the baby is born with a smaller than usual head and brain.

Brazil's Health Minister, Marcelo Castro, admitted that the Zika outbreak in the South American giant is worse than previously thought, while confirming the link between the virus and microcephaly in fetuses.

In an interview with Reuters Castro explained that the reason that the government has not assessed the scale of the problem is that **in 80% of cases patients show no symptoms, so their cases are not reported as a Zika illness.**

He announced that starting next week Brazil will begin to require mandatory reporting of Zika cases by local and regional governments in order to get an accurate record of those affected.

He has also indicated that Brazilian researchers are convinced that Zika is the cause of microcephaly in 3,700 babies born to infected mothers, although the WHO has not yet established this connection.

Rio Olympics are the biggest highlight of this year for Brazil hoping to boost its ailing economy through the Games.

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