

Russian Report on Boris Johnson's Coronavirus Ventilation 'Disinformation,' Britain Says

April 06, 2020



Boris Johnson, 55, is the most high-profile world leader to contract the virus. **Julian Simmonds / Daily Telegraph / PA Images / TASS**

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's spokesman dismissed as disinformation a Russian media report Monday that he was to undergo artificial lung ventilation after being hospitalized with persistent coronavirus symptoms.

Johnson [said](#) he tested positive for coronavirus on March 27 and was due to re-emerge from seven days of self-isolation Friday. Downing Street [announced](#) Sunday that Johnson had been hospitalized for further tests as a precaution.

Russia's state-run RIA Novosti news agency [quoted](#) an unnamed British healthcare system source as saying early Monday that Johnson would need ventilation 10 days after testing positive for Covid-19.

“He will be given artificial ventilation of his lungs,” the unnamed source told RIA Novosti.

“That is disinformation,” Johnson’s spokesman [said](#) Monday in response to RIA’s report, according to Business Insider.

“Our specialist government units have seen a rise in false reports since the coronavirus outbreak started. It's vital that any [such] information is knocked down quickly,” the spokesman was quoted as saying.

The dismissal comes weeks after the European Union accused Russian media in an internal document of pushing fake coronavirus news against the West, Reuters [reported](#). An EU database reportedly recorded almost 80 cases of disinformation about coronavirus between Jan. 22 and March 16.

The Kremlin denied the allegations in mid-March.

Downing Street called Johnson’s hospitalization a "precautionary step" and it is understood his admission was not an emergency and he was taken to the hospital on medical advice. Medical experts said doctors would likely be assessing Johnson's lung and heart function.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab is designated to take over if the prime minister is unable to perform his duties but government sources said Johnson was still in charge.

Johnson, 55, is the most high-profile world leader to contract the virus.

He was criticized for his initial light-touch approach to the outbreak but on March 23 ordered a three-week lockdown after scientists warned the stance risked huge numbers of deaths.

Britain currently has 47,806 confirmed hospital cases and 4,934 deaths.

AFP contributed reporting to this article.

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