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# Fact check: Remdesivir is not a COVID-19 vaccine, nor is it only distributed in Africa

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3 MIN READ



Social media users have claimed an image shows an unsafe COVID-19 vaccine that is only distributed in Africa. This is incorrect.



Reuters Fact Check. REUTERS

The drug pictured is not a vaccine, but an anti-viral drug used to treat COVID-19, which is distributed across the world.

Examples can be seen ([here](#) , [here](#) , [here](#)).

The posts show a picture of a medicine box for a drug called “Cipremi”, which is described as “Remdesivir for Injection”. It is shown to be produced by Indian pharmaceutical company Cipla.

The packaging includes a heading “For use in below countries Only” followed by a long list of African states.

On another side of the box is the even bigger message “NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION IN US, CANADA OR EU”.

This has led some social media users to say the drug is a COVID-19 vaccine that due to safety reasons is only being distributed in Africa.

“The killer vaccine designed to wipe out Africa”, wrote one user ([here](#)) while others left comments such as: “They think we are their pets that they can experiment with” and “This is depopulation at it’s (sic) best” ([here](#)).

But remdesivir is not a vaccine, it is an anti-viral drug used to manage severe COVID-19.

Developed by Gilead Sciences Inc., it is distributed inside and outside of Africa ([here](#)).

Gilead produces remdesivir in approximately 50 countries, including the United States, under the brand name Veklury.

However, to expand its supply of the treatment to other parts of the world, Gilead signed non-exclusive licensing pacts with several other drug makers - one being Cipla ([here](#)).

“Gilead Sciences Inc. licensed Cipla to manufacture and sell remdesivir in 127 countries of the emerging markets to promote equitable access and ensure affordability to patients in these countries”, Cipla told Reuters in an email.

The drug manufacturer said the label restriction shown in the social media posts simply indicates territories not licensed for Cipla to supply.

## VERDICT

False. Remdesivir not a vaccine, it is an anti-viral drug used to manage severe COVID-19. It has been distributed both inside and outside Africa.

This article was produced by the Reuters Fact Check team. Read more about our work to fact-check social media posts [here](#).

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