

# *Jamaica Declares National Emergency over Chikungunya Virus*

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Kingston, October 18 (RHC-PL), -- Jamaica's Prime Minister, Portia Simpson Miller, says the country is in a "national emergency" over the outbreak of Chikungunya virus in the country.

The mosquito-borne disease which is similar in symptoms to Dengue fever, often leads to fever and severe joint pain that can last from a few days to, in some cases, years, though it is rarely fatal.

"I want to stress that we are in a national emergency," Simpson Miller said, "I have therefore, assumed a lead role in mobilizing the nation and national resources."

Simpson-Miller commended members of parliaments, mayors and councilors who have actively participated in the campaign to control and reduce the epidemic, as well as destroying and reducing mosquito breeding sites.

Earlier this month the government activated an Emergency Response Team aimed at coordinating and supporting the campaign against the Chikungunya virus.

The disease has spread across the Caribbean region after initially appearing in St Martin in late 2013, but has hit Jamaica particularly hard.

There have been almost 800,000 suspected cases in the Caribbean region, with the majority in the Dominican Republic.

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