

Restive NW Nigeria tests medical deliveries by drone

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An American tech company that delivers medical products by drone said it completed its first flights in Nigeria on Friday, in the violence-affected northwestern state of Kaduna.

Access to healthcare in parts of Africa's most populous nation is limited by the presence of jihadist groups and criminal gangs, restricting many people from getting the care they need.

"Today's flights are an important step toward ensuring people across Kaduna state have access to the care they need, precisely when and where they need it," said Amina Mohammed Baloni, the state's top health official.

The flights will deliver more than 200 different medical products across the state, according to a statement from the company Zipline, in a test run ahead of final approval by the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority.

Zipline said it was aiming by the end of the month to "operate three distribution centers across the state, covering an area of 46,000 square kilometers (17,760 square miles) and delivering to approximately 500 health facilities serving millions of people".

Operations in other Nigerian states are scheduled for later this year, it added, without giving further details.

Founded in 2014 in California, the company designs, manufactures and

operates a system of automated delivery of [medical products](#).

Fuelled by growing needs during the coronavirus pandemic, Zipline raised \$250 million in June last year to expand operations.

Deliveries by Zipline, including of Covid-19 vaccines, have taken place in Ghana, Rwanda, the US and Japan.

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