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Global fund chief pledges 'zero tolerance' for corruption

GENEVA: The head of the Global Fund Against AIDS, TB and Malaria on Monday pledged "zero tolerance" for corruption following reports that it was dealing with cases that had prompted donor nation Sweden's concern.

"The global fund has zero tolerance for corruption and actively seeks to uncover any evidence of misuse of its funds," said Michel Kazatchkine, Executive Director of the Global Fund, underlining its "most rigorous" antifraud controls.

Kazatchkine said the cases of corruption reported in the media over the weekend were not new and had already been revealed by the organisation last year on its website and acted on. They involved "grave misuse" of about US\$34 million for projects in Djibouti, Mali, Mauritania and Zambia that had gone missing in the four African countries, he explained.

Kazatchkine said his organisation had recovered US\$19 million so far.

The Fund revealed last

June that it had suspended aid to Zambia awaiting action by local authorities on fraud.

Kazatchkine said Monday that criminal proceedings were underway there as well as in Mali and Mauritania, but he did not mention Djibouti. A Swedish newspaper reported on Saturday that Sweden had told Kazatchkine that it would not commit to its 167 million euro contribution to the fund unless more was done to ensure that cash is not siphoned off. — AFP