

Iraq reports a noticeable increase in COVID-19 cases since February

Baghdad, Iraq, 30 March 2020: Iraq today reported over 630 cases with 46 deaths since the start of the COVID19 outbreak in the country on 24 February 2020. This makes Iraq the country with the second highest number of COVID19 related deaths across the Eastern Mediterranean region after Iran.

The World Health Organization (WHO) expects a spike in tallies of infected cases within the coming 10 days due to the increase in lab testing capacity. Three laboratories became operational for COVID-19 testing in Najaf, Basrah, and Baghdad Medical City in Baghdad. This has increased the numbers of tested cases to more than 4500 tests a day compared to a maximum of 100 per day a few weeks ago.

The Federal and Kurdistan Regional ministries of health, WHO Iraq, and other partners are working together to disseminate facts and preventive measures against the disease, as recommended by WHO.

“WHO is in constant communication with the FMoH and regularly shares all information, guidelines, recommendations, protocols and risk communication materials as provided by WHO Regional and HQ offices,” said Dr. Adham Ismail, WHO Representative in Iraq. “WHO technical teams are putting every effort to support health authorities in their respective efforts,” he added.

As of 30 March, more than 630 confirmed cases, 46 deaths, and 152 recoveries were reported all over Iraq. The first confirmed case was reported in Najaf Governorate on 24 Feb followed by four confirmed cases for one family in Kirkuk Governorate one day later. Initially, cases in Iraq were traced to recent travel to one of the pandemic affected countries like Iran and some parts of Europe.

WHO continues monitoring the situation very closely and intensifying its communication and coordination with the Central and Federal ministries of health to maintain a provision of technical and logistic support as possible.

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To access and disseminate reliable information on COVID-19, please consult:

- WHO RO (EMRO): <http://www.emro.who.int/index.html>
- WHO HQ: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

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