

Key Messages:

- 1 confirmed case reported by Ministry of Public Health
- 3 suspected cases reported by Ministry of Public Health
- Key concern – border crossing areas in Western province

The basic principles to reduce the general risk of transmission of acute respiratory infections include the following:

- Avoiding close contact with people suffering from acute respiratory infections.
- Frequent hand-washing, especially after direct contact with ill people or their environment.
- Avoiding unprotected contact with farm or wild animals.
- People with symptoms of acute respiratory infection should practice cough etiquette (maintain distance, cover coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues or clothing, and wash hands).
- In case of symptoms suggestive of respiratory illness either during or after travel, travelers are encouraged to seek medical attention and share their travel history with their health care provider.

Situation Overview:

On 31 December 2019, a cluster of pneumonia of unknown etiology was reported in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China. On 30 January 2020 WHO declared the outbreak of novel Coronavirus a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. Particularly, WHO raised alert of low and middle income country and the preparedness of potential outbreaks. On 24 February Afghanistan's Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) reported one of four suspected cases had been confirmed in the Western province of Hirat with recent travel history from Qom, the Islamic Republic of Iran. The clinical conditions of the confirmed and non-confirmed cases are good.

Due to the recent events in Hirat, the focus of activities is now both on preparedness and containment mitigation. The Ministry of Public Health is working closely with WHO, Health Cluster partners and other relevant stakeholders to rapidly expand the in-country preparedness and containment capacity, strengthen the detection and surveillance capacity at points-of-entry into Afghanistan, such as airports and border-crossing sites (especially in the Western Region), to continue the training of medical staff on case-management and risk communication and community engagement, in order to prevent the spread of this outbreak. The level of support and activities in all key areas will need to be expanded rapidly.

The border between Iran and Afghanistan was partially closed on 23 February leading to confusion. The border reopened to population movement February 24. Further details are expected to be shared in the coming days.

Coordination:

Regional

- The UN Development Coordination Office (UNDCO) have several activities underway, such as actions on duty of care (e.g. accurate information sharing, based on WHO reports; measures to reduce risk of contracting the virus amongst staff members), assisting countries to implement the WHO Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, as well as helping countries to deal with the development and economic effects.
- WHO Regional Director to visit Iran on 25 February.

National

- WHO has a COVID-19 Response Plan to complement the MoPH Emergency Response Plan for Coronavirus 2020. Response Plan for Coronavirus 2020.
- Additional funding is also being sought under this plan for services at border crossing points
- A daily brief will be produced and shared with both the humanitarian and donor community

- WHO/IOM to update the UNCT and HCT on Thursday

Sub-national

- OCHA and WHO Western Region (Hirat Office) are working closely with the local government, the Preparedness and Response Committee as well as partners operating in the area to contain the spread of the outbreak.

More Information

WHO

- General information: <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>
- Global surveillance for human infection with coronavirus disease: [https://www.who.int/publications-detail/global-surveillance-for-human-infection-with-novel-coronavirus-\(2019-ncov\)](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/global-surveillance-for-human-infection-with-novel-coronavirus-(2019-ncov))
- Global research on coronavirus disease: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/global-research-on-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>
- Advice for public: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>
- Infection prevention and control during health care: [https://www.who.int/publications-detail/infection-prevention-and-control-during-health-care-when-novel-coronavirus-\(ncov\)-infection-is-suspected-20200125](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/infection-prevention-and-control-during-health-care-when-novel-coronavirus-(ncov)-infection-is-suspected-20200125)
- Advice for international travel and trade: <https://www.who.int/ith/2020-24-01-outbreak-of-Pneumonia-caused-by-new-coronavirus/en/>
- Introduction to COVID-19 online course: <https://openwho.org/courses/introduction-to-ncov>

IATA

- For the latest available information on travel restrictions, please refer to this link from IATA <https://www.iatatravelcentre.com/international-travel-document-news/1580226297.htm>

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