

WHO declares global emergency as Wuhan coronavirus spreads

The World Health Organization declared Thursday that the Wuhan coronavirus outbreak was a global health emergency, acknowledging that the disease now represents a risk beyond China, where it emerged last month.

The move reversed the organization's decision just a week ago to hold off such a declaration.

Since then, WHO officials said, thousands of new cases in China and clear human-to-human transmission in several other countries — now including the United States — warranted a reconsideration of that decision by the agency's expert committee.

The WHO's declaration — officially called a “public health emergency of international concern” — does not have the force of law. But it serves notice to all United Nations member states that the world's top health advisory body thinks the situation is grave.

Declaring emergencies also adds urgency to any WHO appeal for money. Thus far, that is hardly relevant: The countries most affected — China, Japan, Germany, South Korea, the U.S. and Vietnam — can afford to wage their own battles against the virus.

The agency has *lavishly* praised China's aggressive response to the virus. China effectively isolated Hubei province, stranding more than 30 million people, at the height of the New Year holidays — an act *tantamount* to quarantining the U.S. Midwest at Christmastime.

lavishly 丰富地; 浪费地

tantamount 同等的

quarantine 检疫; 隔离

China said Thursday that another 38 people had died from the disease, bringing the total to 170. Nearly 8,000 cases have been reported worldwide, almost all of them in mainland China.