

**WORLD, AFRICA, LATEST ON CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK**

# Burundi confirms first 2 COVID-19 cases

Burundians who arrived from Rwanda, Dubai test positive

James Tasamba | 31.03.2020

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## KIGALI, Rwanda

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Health officials in Burundi announced Tuesday the first two diagnosed cases there of the COVID-19 virus.

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Health Minister Thadee Ndikumana said the two patients are Burundians, 56 and 42, who had arrived from Rwanda and the United Arab Emirates via Rwanda.

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The patients were under quarantine at an isolation hotel in Bujumbura, he said, urging the public to embrace hygiene and social distancing measures to prevent the spread of the virus.

Neighboring countries, including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Tanzania have reported a growing number of cases.

In mid-March, Burundi started to quarantine all travelers for 14 days arriving from the EU and countries most affected by the coronavirus including China, Iran, the United States, Britain, and Australia.

Human Right Watch warned Tuesday that Burundian authorities risked placing its citizenry in grave danger without the free flow of fact-based information on the pandemic after President Pierre Nkurunziza's spokesperson said: "Burundi is an exception because it is a country that has put God first."

It said such national exceptionalism claims should not be used to prevent raising concerns about suspected cases and the potential spread of the virus.

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