



## RUSSIA

# Russia Confirms First Two Cases Of Coronavirus, Two Chinese Nationals Quarantined

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By RFE/RL's Russian Service Current Time

MOSCOW -- Russia has reported its first two cases of coronavirus, as governments scrambled to control the spread of a new coronavirus that has already killed more than 200 people in China.

The two cases were registered in the Zabaikalye region, which borders China, and in the Tyumen region bordering Kazakhstan, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova told journalists on January 31.

Both patients have been quarantined, Golikova said, adding that Russia was halting most flights to China.

At least 213 people in China have died from the coronavirus, which emerged in the country in December, with nearly 10,000 cases registered.

The World Health Organization (WHO) on January 30 declared a global health emergency over the outbreak, saying there had been 98 cases outside China -- but no deaths.

There have been more than 100 cases reported in about 20 other countries.

WHO's decision to declare a global emergency allows it to support lower- and middle-income countries to strengthen their disease surveillance systems and prepare them for cases.

## **Infographic:** Confirmed Cases Of COVID-19 Around The World

Chinese authorities have effectively sealed off Wuhan, the sprawling city of 11 million at the center of the outbreak, and put numerous transport restrictions in place to curb the spread of the virus.

## **Canceled Flights, Closed Borders**

As the outbreak continues to spread in and outside of China, various countries have taken steps to close borders with China, cancel flights, suspend the issuance of visas to Chinese citizens, or evacuate citizens.

Golikova announced that all direct flights from Russia to China would be halted starting January 31, with the exception of national airline Aeroflot.

She said Russia would suspend the issuance of work visas to Chinese citizens and evacuate citizens from China's Hubei Province because of the virus.

The moves come a day after the Russian government said the country had closed its border with China, the fifth-longest land border in the world.

Also on January 31, Kazakhstan announced it was planning to evacuate all of its citizens from China before the end of the week. There are 98 Kazakh students currently in Wuhan, according to Kazakh officials.

Earlier on January 31, Pakistan announced it was halting all flights to and from China until February 2.

Pakistan has yet to register a case, but top health official Zafar Mirza said four Pakistani students in China had been diagnosed with the new virus.

Around 500 students were in Wuhan when it surfaced earlier this month, officials said.

Islamabad had no immediate plan to evacuate the almost 30,000 Pakistani nationals living in the country even though parents in the northwestern city of Kohat staged protests demanding the government to bring their children back.

The United States has warned its citizens against all travel to China and said any American currently in the country "should consider departing using commercial means."

"Do not travel to China due to novel coronavirus first identified in Wuhan," the U.S. State Department said in a new travel advisory on its website, raising the warning for China to the same level as Afghanistan and Iraq.

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