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# Coronavirus as it happened: global cases top quarter of a million, as Italy sees biggest daily rise in deaths

*Dominic Phillips*

8-10 minutes

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[21 Mar 2020 20:41](#)

## UAE announces first deaths

Two people have died in the United Arab Emirates, its health ministry has said. The country's official news agency, WAM, reports that the two deaths are cases that suffered from previous health conditions.

[21 Mar 2020 20:34](#)

The death toll in Turkey due to the coronavirus has risen to nine, the country's health minister, **Fahrettin Koca**, has said. He added that there was a total of 670 confirmed cases in the country; a 24-hour increase of 311.

[21 Mar 2020 20:34](#)

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[21 Mar 2020 20:28](#)

## Israel reports first death

An 88-year-old man who was suffering from previous illnesses has died in Israel, the country's health ministry has said. It said the man had been brought to the hospital about a week ago in serious condition.

Israel has reported 705 cases of coronavirus, the large majority with mild symptoms. About 10 patients are in serious condition and 15 have recovered completely.

[21 Mar 2020 20:20](#)

The UK's prime minister, **Boris Johnson**, has spoken to the UN's secretary general, **António Guterres**, about the need for global cooperation, Downing Street has said.



They agreed on the need for a global response to this global challenge, and for countries to coordinate in order to stop the spread of the virus and limit the economic impact on our citizens.

They underlined the importance of continued funding for the development of a vaccine and to support the resilience of healthcare systems in developing countries.

The prime minister said that the UK had already committed £241m to the international response and would continue to look at what further support was necessary.

[21 Mar 2020 20:07](#)

Patrick Greenfield

The number of confirmed cases in Costa Rica has reached 113; an increase of 26 on Thursday, the government has said. It is the country's largest single day rise so far.

Two people have died so far in the Central American country and the health minister, **Daniel Salas**, has said the next 15 days will determine how badly the global pandemic will affect Costa Rica.

Beaches have been closed across the country in an effort to stop the advance of the virus, with citizens asked to stay home throughout the crisis if possible.

Ministerio de Salud (@msaludcr)

Este es el detalle de los casos de COVID19 en Costa Rica. Datos actualizados al medio día de hoy. Esta es información oficial. [#EstaEnTusManos](#) [pic.twitter.com/YAx8EcPbCT](https://pic.twitter.com/YAx8EcPbCT)

[March 20, 2020](#)

Updated at 8.16pm GMT

[21 Mar 2020 20:05](#)

In Zimbabwe, the health minister **Obadiah Moyo** said a man who lives in Victoria Falls, a popular tourist destination, has been infected.

Moyo said the 38-year-old had travelled to Britain on 7 March, returning home via neighbouring South Africa on 15 March. He put himself in self-quarantine upon arrival and later called his doctor after realising he was not feeling too well,” the Associated Press quoted the minister as saying.

Zimbabwe declared a national disaster days ago and some citizens have openly dreaded the pandemic’s arrival. Already public hospitals lack basic items such as gloves. Relatives of patients are expected in some cases to even provide buckets of water.

But Zimbabwe’s government has insisted it is well prepared to deal with the outbreak.

- *This post originally and incorrectly said the infected man had died. It has been updated.*

Updated at 9.11pm GMT

[21 Mar 2020 19:53](#)

In America, several areas are putting in place new restrictions. The District of Columbia’s mayor, **Muriel Bowser**, says social distancing directives for schools, local government and mass gatherings will be extended to 27 April.

And New Jersey’s governor, **Phil Murphy**, says he’s planning to order the shutting down of all non-essential businesses and that he “almost certainly” will tighten rules on gatherings to restrict

them to no more than 10 people – or possibly even ban them altogether.

[21 Mar 2020 19:45](#)

Here's a little more detail on those [Italian park closures we reported earlier](#).

From Saturday, parks and public gardens will be shut down and people will be allowed to take exercise only around their homes, Reuters reported, citing a government directive it has obtained.

Games and recreational activities in the open air will also be prohibited.

"We must do even more to contain the contagion," the health minister, **Roberto Speranza**, said.

The death toll from the outbreak in Italy leapt by 627 to 4,032 on Friday, with 47,021 confirmed cases.

[21 Mar 2020 19:37](#)

Sam Cowie

Brazil's universal health system will soon be overloaded by Covid-19 pressure, the country's health minister, **Luiz Henrique Mandetta**, has warned.

"Clearly by the end of April our health system will begin to collapse," he said during a teleconference with members of Brazil's business elite, wearing a mask and sitting next to President **Jair Bolsonaro**. "Collapse is when there is money, health plans, but no room in the hospitals," he added, making comparisons with Italy; which recently overtook China's Covid-19 deaths.

Brazil so far has so far recorded 612 cases and eight deaths.

According to the minister, the number of cases will begin to climb rapidly in April and continue through May, June and July before levelling out in August and falling in September.

Updated at 7.43pm GMT

[21 Mar 2020 19:35](#)



Patrick Wintour

In his letter Rouhani warns:



The coronavirus outbreak has endangered the health of – and even presented a considerable threat to – humanity with no distinction as to nationality, or gender or religious backgrounds. This presents an opportune moment to further contemplate our common pains and our human principles.

Today, all of humankind feels apprehensive toward the future; a future threatened in every aspect; be it health, business, and even social relationships and the way of life. The level of unpredictability and uncertainty is simply unprecedented.

In language Tehran has rarely directed towards the US since the 1979 Islamic revolution, Rouhani urged the American people to form an alliance with Iran to fight a common enemy.



It is self-evident that our success in what is likely to be a long fight depends on the spiritual and heartfelt affinity of all human beings. The international defence that we have to mount will not be successful without camaraderie on the part of the whole of humankind.

Today, instead of soldiers belonging to different armies, human soldiers, donning similar colour uniforms belonging to no particular country are selflessly and altruistically at war against the enemy of humans across the globe. In this common fight, we all belong to one front.

The US has so far not shown any willingness to relax sanctions, arguing instead that humanitarian exemptions mean the sanctions have not damaged Iran's ability to combat the virus. The US has largely accused Iran of failing to take the necessary steps to stem the spread of the virus, saying lack of resources has not been an issue.