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Lebanon records its first coronavirus death

2 minutes

A Lebanese man died Tuesday from the novel coronavirus, a health ministry official said, marking the country's first recorded death from an epidemic that has infected 41 people nationwide.

The 56-year-old had been receiving treatment at Beirut's Rafic Hariri state hospital, the ministry official told AFP, adding that he had recently returned from Egypt, where coronavirus infections have also been detected.

[For more coronavirus coverage, visit our dedicated page.](#)

Lebanon, already hit by economic collapse and anti-government protests, is now grappling with an outbreak of the deadly COVID-19 virus – its latest in a long list of crises.

Health Minister Hamad Hassan said last week that the country has moved beyond the phase of "containment" and was bracing for a more serious outbreak.

Schools, universities, cafes, pubs and other public places have since been ordered shut over fears of the virus.

Sport tournaments have been postponed and cultural events cancelled.

According to the health minister, the origins of Lebanon's cases have mostly been traced to other countries.

Lebanon has said it would deny entry to non-resident foreigners arriving from China, South Korea, Iran and Italy, which are among the hardest hit by the epidemic.

But domestic concern is still high amid fears that Lebanon is not equipped to face a mass outbreak.

With a grinding liquidity crunch and dwindling foreign reserves, Lebanon has struggled to secure the dollars needed for medical imports even before coronavirus arrived.

Prime Minister Hassan Diab announced on Saturday that the country would suspend payment on eurobonds.

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