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Bolivia reports first death from COVID-19, 81 confirmed cases - Xinhua

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LA PAZ, March 29 (Xinhua) -- Some 19 days after the detection of its first case of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), Bolivia on Sunday reported its first fatality from the disease and a total of 81 people who have tested positive.

The fatal victim was a resident of eastern Santa Cruz department, which has become the national epicenter of the epidemic, with more than half of the cases, 44.

The victim was an elderly woman, 78, diagnosed with "coronavirus respiratory distress," top officials of the interim government told reporters at a press conference, including Health Minister Anibal Cruz.

Cruz urged the public to comply with a blanket quarantine to avoid a rise in infections.

The woman "was stable in mandatory isolation" through Saturday, but her condition worsened at night, requiring intubation and intensive care.

Her recovery was complicated by age and she passed away on Sunday morning, said Cruz, stressing that the elderly in particular should stay home.

Bolivia first urged that citizens quarantine on March 22. It declared a state of emergency four days later to strengthen the quarantine and extend it through April 15.