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Honduras confirms first 2 cases of new coronavirus

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TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (AP) — Honduras has confirmed its first two cases of the new coronavirus, authorities reported Wednesday.

Health Minister Alba Consuelo Flores said one involves a 42-year-old woman who traveled from Spain to Tegucigalpa, the Honduran capital. The woman, who is pregnant, was asymptomatic when she arrived March 4 and is hospitalized in stable condition.

The other case was confirmed in a 37-year-old woman who traveled from Switzerland to San Pedro Sula on March 5. Flores said she had a light illness and has been in self-isolation at home since arriving in Honduras.

Both women are Hondurans.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

The vast majority of people recover from the new virus. According to the World Health Organization, people with mild illness recover in about two weeks, while those with more severe illness may take

three to six weeks to recover. In mainland China, where the virus first exploded, more than 80,000 people have been diagnosed and more than 66,000 have so far recovered.

The Honduras cases are also the first detected in the Northern Triangle region of Central America, consisting of Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala.

On Tuesday, Honduras' deputy foreign minister said the country had suspended flights of deported Hondurans from Mexico due to concerns over the coronavirus.

Meanwhile El Salvador reversed its Tuesday announcement that Guatemalans, Hondurans and Nicaraguans would no longer be able to enter the country without a passport over similar concerns, despite an agreement by four Central American nations allowing their citizens free transit.