

# Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

## Situation Report – 20

### Timor-Leste



Data as reported by 20 March 2020

#### CURRENT SITUATION

- Currently, there are **NO** confirmed cases of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Timor-Leste.
- However, the Ministry of Health remains vigilant and ready to respond appropriately as the situation develops.
- **Suspected COVID-19 Case 2** test results came back as **NEGATIVE**. The person **DOES NOT** have COVID-19. Moreover, the foreign national has returned to his home country.
- A Timorese citizen who returned from South Korea on 19 March 2020 is under self-quarantine and under observation by the MoH. His swab sample was collected for COVID-19 test as he has returned from a high-risk country.
- Another Timorese citizen from Baucau who had returned from Portugal on 12 March 2020 and has respiratory symptoms is under self-quarantine in Dili and remains under observation by the MoH. The swab sample was collected for COVID-19 test. In addition, samples from four other individuals were collected for surveillance.
- Following the Council of Ministers meeting on 18 March 2020 the government passed a resolution interdicting entry of foreign nationals from 147 countries affected by COVID-19. This decision will be reviewed by the Council of Ministers every two weeks.

- **Coordination:** The Interministerial Coordination Committee met on 19 March 2020 comprising the various line ministries and government agencies. The committee discussed the preparedness to date, roles and responsibilities of each ministry and agency, existing gaps and ways to address them. A follow up meeting will be held in the coming days to review progress on gaps identified.

- WHO Representative met with the President of the National Parliament



#### SITUATION IN NUMBERS

Total (new) cases in last 24 hours

##### Globally

**209 839** confirmed (16 556)  
**8778** death (828)

##### Western Pacific Region

**92 333** confirmed (488)  
**3377** deaths (20)

##### European Region

**87 108** confirmed (10 221)  
**4084** deaths (591)

##### South-East Asia

**657** confirmed (119)  
**23** deaths (14)

##### Eastern Mediterranean Region

**19 518** confirmed (1430)  
**1161** deaths (150)

##### Regions of the Americas

**9144** confirmed (4166)  
**119** deaths (50)

##### African Region

**367** confirmed (132)  
**7** deaths (3)

#### WHO RISK ASSESSMENT

Global Level      Very High

#### Resources

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More information and guidance by WHO regarding the current outbreak of Coronavirus Disease – 2019 (COVID-19) can be found [here](#).

and briefed him on current COVID-19 situation globally and in the context of Timor-Leste, preparation and response measures and status.

- WHO and UNDP were invited by the Parliament to provide an independent, external review of the level of preparedness for the Coronavirus pandemic in Timor-Leste. While WHO presented on the preparedness and response aspects, UNDP highlighted the socio-economic aspect of the pandemic globally and what it can mean for Timor-Leste.
- **Surveillance & Contact Tracing:** The surveillance department, MoH recruited ten newly graduated doctors in addition to the existing surveillance team. These doctors have already undergone intensive surveillance and contact tracing training as well as using the online database. Additionally, MoH and WHO team briefed the situation for COVID-19 epidemic and response to the participants of the Municipality surveillance and Health Management Information system (HMIS) coordination meeting.
- **Isolation and Quarantine:** The MoH has identified three places that are designated as the COVID-19 facilities. However, none of the identified facilities are functional as yet; work to get the places up and running is underway.
- **Laboratory testing:** The process of verification to ensure correct results is underway; this will take 2 to 3 weeks after which the tests can be done within the country. WHO provided primers and probes to the National Health Laboratory (NHL). The 100 test kits are adequate to carry out 1,000 COVID-19 tests.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** WHO has provided PPE for health workers and emergency responders for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) preparedness and response to the Ministry of Health (MoH). This includes 20,000 gloves, 32,000 face masks/respirators, 1000 gown and 500 goggles. The PPEs are housed at Servico Autonomo de Medicamentos e Equipamentos de Saude (SAMES) in Kampong Alor in Dili. In addition to the contribution from WHO, the Australian Government has provided 6,600 face masks, 2000 isolation gowns, 1,500 gloves, 2,000 N95 masks, and 204 units of surgical scrub gel.
- **Risk Communication:** There have been continuous and consistent advocacy and sensitization session for line ministries and government agencies, international nongovernmental organizations, health development partners, faith based institutions and communities at large. There also has been large scale distribution of information education communication (IEC) materials. Encouragingly, many partners are now proactively taking initiatives to engage in awareness activities and distribution of IEC materials.

## MEASURES TAKEN

Steps being taken by the government with WHO and partners' supports, to respond to the situation include:

### Friday 20 March 2020

- The Health Cluster met to assess the preparedness and response plan and discuss the further course of action in light of the continually developing situation.
- WHO team of doctors held multiple sensitization session. The institutions that were covered on 20 March included, Faculty of Medicine, Universidade Nacional Timor-Leste (UNTL), a second session was organised for the Xanana Gusmao Reading Room (XGRR) and its patrons, and Dili Institute of Technology (DIT) where more than 100 students attended the session.
- Another session on COVID-19 was organized for the military personnel and their families at the Baucau Army Base, where more than 300 people attended the session.



### Thursday 19 March 2020

- Doctors, nurses and midwives associated with the national NGO Saude Ba Ema Hotu (SABEH) underwent training on COVID-19 basic management and community engagement.

### Wednesday 18 March 2020

- More and more organizations continue to reach out to WHO for conducting briefing and sensitization session on COVID-19 for them and their staff/members. The latest was Xanana Gusmao Reading Room (XGRR). A team of WHO doctors conducted a briefing for XGRR staff and members on COVID-19 and prevention measures.
- In addition to XGRR, the team also conducted another session for the state owned news wire agency, Ajenica Noticias de Timor-Leste, Tatoli. More than 50 employees including journalists attended the session.

### Tuesday 17 March 2020

- Doctors, nurses, and paramedics from Policia Nacional Timor-Leste and the Falintil Forca Defesa Timor-Leste (FDTL) underwent an intensive training on use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in addition to briefing on COVID-19.
- The MoH with support from WHO and other UN agencies like WFP and UNICEF launched the Health Emergency Operation Centre



(HEOC). The HEOC is now being used as the coordination, logistic coordination centre for COVID-19 response.

- A WHO team travelled to Baucau to meet the Municipality Authority and the municipal administration staff to conduct a sensitization session on COVID-19.
- Director of Policy, Planning and Cooperation of MoH conducted coordination meeting as well as sensitization session on coronavirus prevention measures for Aileu Municipality local authorities. More than 50 people participated in the coordination meeting.



#### **Monday 16 March 2020**

- Viqueque District Health Services along with MOH Health Promotion Department conducted a sensitization session for high school students in Viqueque on COVID-19 prevention measures.

#### **Saturday 14 March 2020**

- A team of doctors from WHO conducted a sensitization for the American volunteer programme Peace Corps. More than 50 Peace Corps volunteers from all over the country attended the session.

#### **Thursday 12 March 2020**

- A WHO, UNICEF, and MoH team met with the Catholic Archdiocese of Dili to seek support of the church to raise awareness on how to protect and prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Discussions also focused on actions already taken by the church: as well as how these measures, awareness and safe greeting could be expanded to further safeguard communities.
- With the MOH, UNICEF conducted an assessment of sanitation and handwashing facilities at 14 large public sites across Dili Municipality, including bus terminals in Tasi Tolu and Becora, large public markets like Taibesi, public parks and other areas of high concentration of people. The assessment helped identify available facilities and issues that need to be resolved to ensure safe sanitation and handwashing facilities in these places. UNICEF is presently working with the Ministry of Health to improve these facilities.
- UNDP in close collaboration with Ministry of State Administration and other UN agencies like WHO and UNICEF launched a country wide awareness campaign for COVID-19. All the municipal directors from 12 municipalities and district health directors were handed out printed IEC material for distribution in their respective municipalities.
- A WHO doctor appeared on national television channel GMN's morning talk show Dader Kmanek to talk about COVID-19 and the latest developments.
- A team of WHO doctors conducted a sensitization session for Instituto Nacional de Formação de Docentes e Profissionais da Educação de Timor-Leste under the Ministry of education, Malaria focal points from all 13 municipalities, and Navy Personnel on COVID-19.

### **Wednesday 11 March 2020**

- Following the Council of Minister's meeting on Wednesday 11 March 2020, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation announced that the Government has decided to restrict entry of travellers from four high risk countries; Italy, South Korea, Iran and China.
- UNICEF, the Ministry of Education and the Embassy of New Zealand organized a briefing and launched a campaign to raise awareness across 500 pre-schools across the country on the coronavirus and how to prevent its spread. UNICEF will support pre-schools in Dili, Ermera and VQQ Municipalities, while a range of other child rights based organizations such as World vision, Care International, Child Fund and Alola Foundation would conduct similar activities in other municipalities. The awareness campaign is funded by the Embassy of New Zealand, while UNICEF will provide water buckets for hand washing and printed awareness material for distribution in schools and communities.
- UNICEF, with the MOH, conducted a series of engagements for over 1,000 Suco Chiefs, community leaders, students and teachers in the two municipalities of Bobonaro and Dili (including Atauro Island) on hand washing and precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus and improving sanitation and hygiene. In Atauro, community mobilization was integrated with community triggering on CLTS programming supported by the European Union.



### **Tuesday 10 March 2020**

- WHO conducted a sensitization session for the French transportation company Bollore. As many as 20 employees of the company participated in the session.
- Another session was conducted for the Asia Foundation to share information on COVID-19 and prevention measure. A similar session was also organized for Cruz Vermelha Timor-Leste (CVTL).
- Another team of WHO doctors travelled to Atauro island across Dili to hold several community sensitisation session in collaboration with the Dili Municipal Administration and Dili District Health Director.



### **Monday 09 March 2020**

- WHO conducted a briefing and question and answer session for Partnership for Human Development (PHD).
- The Health Cluster met to review preparedness and response. The security issue at the identified quarantine facilities was discussed and the DG, Ministry of Interior shared the steps being taken to address the same. There was also a discussion about immigration guidelines for travellers coming to Timor-Leste from high-risk countries. National Directorates and partners provided information on the

contributions being made to support Covid-19 response and address gaps in the system.

#### **Saturday 7 March 2020**

- MoH and WHO conducted another sensitisation session for the maritime police, border police and immigration officers on COVID-19.



#### **Friday 6 March 2020**

- WHO team conducted sensitization session for Serviço Nacional de Inteligência (SNI) at Caicoli, Dili. The Director General of SNI and staff participated in the session. The team also disseminated IEC materials during the session.
- The Inter-ministerial Coordination Committee for COVID-19 met on the second consecutive day to draft a National Contingency Plan. Director-Generals and senior officials of various ministries were present in the meeting. The MoH with technical support from WHO will put together a report before a second deliberation is held.

#### **Thursday 5 March 2020**

- The Inter-ministerial Coordination Committee for COVID-19 held its first meeting on Thursday, 05 March 2020. The Ministry of Health presided the meeting. In addition to the members of the committee, H.E Former President Dr Jose Ramos Horta also participated. While H.E Minister of Health outlined the roles and responsibilities of different line ministries and government agencies for a coordinated and concerted response, H.E Former President stressed on the need to act urgently.
- The MoH in partnership with UNICEF Timor-Leste and President Authority of Dili Municipality conducted a briefing on preventive measures for COVID-19 for all of Dili community leaders — Chief of Sucos, Aldeias, and village leaders. H.E Former President José Ramos Horta who was present for the event also addressed the gathering.
- WHO team conducted a briefing session for FFDTL Military Police personnel at Military Police Headquarters at Kintal Boot, Dili.
- Oxfam through its programme network in Oecusse conducted sensitization sessions for as many as five civil society organizations and helped distribute printed IEC materials to different partners in Dili.



#### **Wednesday 4 March 2020**

- H.E Acting Minister of Health held a meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, and representative from the Ministry of Defense to discuss the preparedness and response for COVID-19. Furthermore, the Acting Minister of Health also assured



that MoH Surveillance team continues to monitor all Points of Entries (airports, ports and land borders).

- The President of Red Cross Timor-Leste and team met with H.E Acting Minister of Health to discuss how Red Cross Timor-Leste can support the MoH on COVID-19 surveillance activities as well as with quarantine facility and other resources that may be needed.

### **Tuesday 3 March 2020**

- The Embassy of People's Republic of China in Timor-Leste provided infrared thermal scanner and hand held thermal scanners to Timor-Leste. The scanner was installed at Dili airport to replace the old one, which has helped improve the efficiency and accuracy of passenger temperature scanning.
- WHO team met the Bishop of Diocese of Maliana to brief him on COVID-19 and requested the Bishop to capitalize on the influence and reach of the Church to educate and sensitize communities about COVID-19. In addition, the team also met with the President Authority of Bobonaro Municipality and health staff of Bobonaro District Health Office. The goal of these briefing sessions is to provide them with accurate information on COVID-19, which will enable them to pass on the information to the communities to prevent panic, spread of misinformation and rumors.

### **Tuesday 03 March 2020**

- A meeting on Covid-19 response was convened by H.E Vice Minister for Health and Interim Minister for Health. National Directors of MoH, and District Health Directors from municipalities were present in the meeting. WHO provided the technical support. It was confirmed that Vera Cruz CHC would be designated as the Isolation facility and FDTL Metinaro as the Quarantine facility. A joint MoH-WHO team will conduct a site assessment of Vera Cruz tomorrow so that this facility can be upgraded quickly to serve as a treatment centre for suspected and confirmed cases of Covid-19.

### **Monday 02 March 2020**

- Health Cluster coordination meeting: An updated WHO risk assessment of country preparedness (as on 01 March 2020) was discussed in detail and areas with significant gaps (e.g. lack of a functional Isolation Ward and a separate Quarantine Facility) were identified. Partners agreed to contribute to specific areas (e.g. setting up temporary 'holding facilities' at land borders and the airport).
- Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) meeting: The checklist for country preparedness for Covid-19 was discussed and partners were requested to extend support in areas with gaps.



## RECOMMENDATIONS AND ADVICE FOR THE PUBLIC

During previous outbreak due to other coronavirus (Middle-East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), human-to-human transmission occurred through droplets, contact and fomites, suggesting that the transmission mode of the 2019-nCoV can be similar. The basic principles to reduce the general risk of transmission of acute respiratory include the following:

- Avoiding close contact with people suffering from acute respiratory infections.
- Frequent hand-washing, especially after direct contact with ill people or their environment.
- Avoiding unprotected contact with farm or wild animals.
- People with symptoms of acute respiratory infection should practice cough etiquette (maintain distance, cover coughs, and sneezes with disposable tissues or clothing, and wash hands).
- Within healthcare facilities, enhance standard infection prevention and control practices in hospitals, especially in emergency departments.

WHO does not recommend any specific health measures for travellers. In case of symptoms suggestive of respiratory illness either during or after travel, travellers are encouraged to seek medical attention and share their travel history with their healthcare provider.





## Should you wear a mask?

**YES**, if you are experiencing uneasiness in breathing, cough

**YES**, while caring for persons with respiratory (breathing) symptoms

**YES**, all health workers should while attending to persons with respiratory symptoms

**NOT** required for general public without respiratory symptoms



## Protect others from getting sick

Cover mouth and nose with tissue, sleeve or elbow when coughing or sneezing



Throw tissue into closed bin after use

Clean hands after coughing or sneezing and when caring for the sick



## Protect yourself from getting sick

Avoid unprotected contact with sick people (including touching one's eyes, nose or mouth) and with live farm or wild animals



## Protect others from getting sick



Avoid close contact when you are experiencing cough and fever

Avoid spitting in public



If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing seek medical care early and share previous travel history with your health care provider



## Wash your hands

Wash your hands with soap and running water when hands are visibly dirty



If your hands are not visibly dirty, wash them with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand cleanser

