

Jordan says SARS-like virus deaths isolated cases

December 2 2012

Jordan's health minister has said that two deaths in the kingdom from a SARS-like virus earlier this year which were confirmed by the World Health Organisation last week were isolated cases.

"Since April, the health ministry has not recorded any case of the [coronavirus](#) in Jordan," Abdullatif Wreikat said in comments carried by the official Petra news agency on Sunday.

The WHO reported that as of Friday two deaths in Jordan were among five confirmed deaths from the [new virus](#) in the Middle East this year.

"These cases were discovered through testing of stored samples from a cluster of pneumonia cases that occurred in April 2012," the UN agency said.

Wreikat said that Jordan carried out its own tests at the time when two doctors and nine nurses at a state hospital in the city of Zarqa east of Amman all came down with pneumonia, and a nurse and a university student died.

But the lab results conducted came back negative for [bird flu](#), [swine flu](#), [Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome](#) (SARS) and other tested strains of the coronavirus.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, that can cause illnesses in humans ranging from the common cold to SARS.

SARS is the epidemic which swept out of China in 2003, killing more than 800 people worldwide and causing a major international health scare.

The WHO says the coronavirus detected in the Middle East this year is unrelated to SARS and is a novel form of the germ.

The UN agency said it had confirmed nine cases of the virus—five in Saudi and two each in Jordan and Qatar. Two people died in Qatar and one in Saudi as well as the two in Jordan.

The Saudi cases prompted Riyadh to announce in October that it had taken steps to prevent any spread of the infection during the annual hajj that draws millions of pilgrims to the Muslim holy places.

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