

WHO says China virus evacuations not needed: report

January 28 2020

Evacuating foreign nationals from the epicentre of China's deadly virus outbreak is unnecessary, the World Health Organisation said Tuesday according to state media.

The health body said it was still "waiting for clarification" about the comments of its chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who met with Chinese officials in Beijing, including President Xi Jinping to discuss how to contain the infection.

The United States, Japan and several other countries are drawing up plans to safely evacuate their citizens from Wuhan, the origin of the coronavirus epidemic that has claimed more than 100 lives across China.

More than 50 million people in Wuhan and surrounding cities are subject to a lockdown that has halted flights, trains and bus travel in or out of the area.

Tedros' agency "does not recommend the evacuation of nationals, and called on the [international community](#) to remain calm and not overreact," according to a report in the official Xinhua news agency.

The country's Foreign Minister Wang Yi told the WHO chief China had "full capability, confidence and resources to overcome the epidemic at an early date," the report said.

Tedros also will fly back to Geneva on Tuesday evening, said spokesman

Christian Lindmeier.

The WHO last week stopped short of declaring the outbreak a global emergency, which could have prompted a more aggressive international response such as travel restrictions.

But on Monday it admitted making an error in originally assessing the virus' worldwide threat as "moderate", issuing an update late Sunday saying the risk was actually "high at the global level."

More than 4,500 people across China have contracted the virus according to [health](#) authorities, while another 7,000 cases are suspected and awaiting confirmation.

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