

Novel coronavirus case numbers 'stabilising': WHO

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The number of cases of the deadly novel coronavirus being reported on a daily basis in China is "stabilising", the World Health Organization said on Saturday.

The UN health agency said this was "good news" but cautioned that it was too early to make any predictions about whether the virus might have peaked.

"There has been a stabilisation in the number of cases reported from Hubei," Michael Ryan, head of WHO's Health Emergencies Programme, said at a briefing in Geneva.

The central Chinese province of Hubei has been at the epicentre of the virus outbreak and has been placed under lockdown by the authorities in an effort to contain the virus.

"We're in a four-day stable period where the number of reported cases hasn't advanced. That's good news and may reflect the impact of the control measures that have been put in place," Ryan said.

But he added that it was "very early to make any predictions".

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the trend was "not really accelerating" but also called for "caution".

The coronavirus has infected more than 34,500 people and killed more than 700.

Tedros warned against misinformation about the virus, saying it made the work of healthcare staff harder.

"We're not just battling the virus, we're also battling the trolls and conspiracy theorists that push misinformation and undermine the outbreak response," he said.

Asked about a planned WHO-led international mission to China, he also said a list of names had been submitted to Chinese authorities and the team leader would be travelling there on Monday or Tuesday.

"The rest of the experts will also follow after that," he said.

Asked if the mission would include members of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), he said: "I hope so".

China has been critical of measures taken by the United States in response to the [virus](#) and has so far rejected an offer of assistance from the CDC.

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