

Vietnam setting up field hospitals for possible virus influx

February 5 2020

Vietnam is setting up field hospitals with thousands of beds to handle a potential influx of coronavirus cases, health officials said, as it prepares to receive its nationals from China.

Vietnam shares a long porous border with China and the communist neighbours have close trade and tourism ties.

So far Vietnam has 10 confirmed cases of coronavirus—including three people with no recent travel history to China.

The virus, declared a global health emergency by the World Health Organization, has so far killed nearly 500 people and infected more than 24,000, mostly in mainland China.

Travel restrictions, flight bans and quarantines have been imposed as countries ramp up efforts to control the fast-spreading pathogen.

In Vietnam's southern business hub of Ho Chi Minh city—where three cases of coronavirus have been confirmed—two existing facilities are being converted into field hospitals with a total capacity of 500 beds.

They will "receive, monitor and treat" all suspected patients of coronavirus if the epidemic spreads further, according to the director of the city's [health](#) department, Nguyen Tan Binh.

In Hanoi, two military facilities have been turned into quarantine centres

for up to 1,500 people as the country prepares to receive 950 people from China to be isolated at the sites.

Two provinces in northern Vietnam near the China border have also set up beds for close to 3,000 patients. Central Vietnam has centres ready for as many as 3,700.

Vietnam has not announced plans to repatriate its citizens from China en masse, though 21 Vietnamese students in Wuhan—the centre of the epidemic—could be brought back on a chartered flight, the government said.

Vietnam has banned all flights to and from mainland China and suspended new tourist visas for Chinese nationals or foreigners who have been there in the past two weeks.

All passenger trains to and from China have also been halted.

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