

# China virus cases rise again, Trump urges calm after US death

March 1 2020, by Patrick Baert, With Sebastian Smith In Washington

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The new coronavirus has spread to more than 60 countries around the world

China reported a fresh spike in coronavirus infections on Sunday, as President Donald Trump urged calm after the first death on US soil and Australia registered its first fatality.

The virus has spread to more than 60 countries around the globe, prompting the World Health Organization to raise its risk assessment to its highest level.

Worldwide, nearly 3,000 people have been killed and about 87,000 infected since the virus was first detected late last year in the central Chinese city of Wuhan.

China on Sunday reported 573 new infections, the highest figure in a week after a dip. All but three of them were in Hubei province, of which Wuhan is the capital.

While the numbers in China are still far lower than the huge daily increases reported during the first two weeks of February, COVID-19 has spread rapidly across borders, with South Korea, Italy and Iran emerging as hotspots.

South Korea, which has the most infected people outside China, reported 376 new cases on Sunday, bringing its total to 3,526.

Australia reported the first death on its soil—a 78-year-old man who had been evacuated from the [coronavirus](#)-stricken Diamond Princess cruise ship in Japan.

There are fears the disease could hammer the global economy, and stock markets last week plunged to their lowest levels since the 2008 financial crisis.



The virus first emerged in China, where the economy has been battered by the epidemic

### **First death on US soil**

Global attention turned to the United States on Saturday after the first fatality on American soil was confirmed.—and President Donald Trump hastily called a press conference to address fears.

"We've taken the most aggressive actions to confront the coronavirus," Trump said at a hastily arranged White House press conference.

"Our country is prepared for any circumstance... There is no reason to



panic at all."

The fatality occurred in Washington state's King County, which includes Seattle, a city of more than 700,000 people, [health officials](#) said.

The victim was in his 50s and had "underlying [health conditions](#)," officials added, as they also announced a possible outbreak in a Washington state nursing home, where a health worker and a resident in her 70s were both confirmed sick with the virus.



President Donald Trump said the United States is prepared to handle the coronavirus outbreak, and that there is 'no reason to panic at all'

Other residents and staff were "ill with respiratory symptoms or hospitalised with pneumonia of unknown cause," the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said.

The death and two confirmed Washington cases all involved patients who had not travelled overseas or come in contact with anyone known to be ill, indicating the virus was spreading in the United States.

"We will see more cases," Health Secretary Alex Azar said at the White House.

"But it's important to remember, for the vast majority of individuals who contract the novel coronavirus, they will experience mild to moderate symptoms."

## **France, Italy measures**

France cancelled gatherings of 5,000 people or more after 16 new cases were confirmed there on Saturday, bringing the country's total to 73.

Sunday's Paris half-marathon and an agricultural symposium were among the events that were axed.



The coronavirus outbreak has disrupted travel across the globe



The coronavirus outbreak has impacted a number of major sports events, including top-level football matches in Europe

Italy, the hotspot of the outbreak in Europe, saw a jump in new cases on Saturday, with its number of infections exceeding 1,000 and the death toll jumping by eight to 29.

The outbreak forced the postponement of five matches in Italy's top-flight Serie A football league, including the heavyweight clash between champions Juventus and Inter Milan.

In recent days, the epidemic has spread also to sub-Saharan Africa, while Qatar, Ecuador, Luxembourg and Ireland all confirmed their first cases on Saturday.

Governments around the world have scrambled to prevent the spread of the virus, from large-scale lockdowns of millions of people in China to flight bans and travel restrictions from disease hotspots.

Beijing's drastic steps include curbing the movement of people, temporarily closing factories across China and quarantining Hubei, a key industrial province where the virus first appeared.

South Korea's epidemic is centred in its fourth-largest city, Daegu, whose streets have been largely deserted for days, apart from long queues at the few shops with masks for sale.

The total in South Korea is expected to rise further as authorities screen more than 210,000 members of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus, a secretive entity often accused of being a cult that is linked to around half of the country's cases.

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