

France sets up military field hospital to relieve virus-hit east

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A military field hospital set up by the French army began operations on Tuesday seeking to take the pressure off intensive care units in an eastern region badly hit by the coronavirus.

The [field hospital](#), a temporary structure of tents usually employed to assist the wounded in a war zone, has been erected in the eastern French city of Mulhouse where the [intensive care unit](#) of the main hospital has been overwhelmed by coronavirus cases.

Armed Forces Minister Florence Parly told parliament that the field hospital could admit up to 30 patients in intensive care and had now already admitted its first patient.

Construction of the hospital began on Saturday in a [parking lot](#) next to the main [hospital](#) in Mulhouse. It will be reserved for severe coronavirus cases that need respiratory help.

The construction of such a facility, usually used in war, in mainland France during peacetime is unprecedented.

The Haut-Rhin region in eastern France where Mulhouse is located has been one of the worst hit in the country by the coronavirus, after an evangelical church meeting in the city in February where many people were infected.

In another hugely unusual move, France will on Wednesday use a

specially set-up TGV [high speed train](#) to evacuate 30 coronavirus patients from the east to other parts of France, Health Minister Olivier Veran announced.

Smaller numbers have already been evacuated from the overwhelmed hospitals of the east by air to other locations in France and also over the border into Germany or Switzerland.

According to official figures, 335 people have died of the coronavirus in eastern France, accounting for over one third of the national death toll of 860.

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