

Senegal announces 5 new coronavirus cases

March 12 2020

Senegal announced five new cases of novel coronavirus Thursday, bringing the West African state's total number to ten, and making it the worst affected country in the region.

The five new cases are all family members of a Senegalese national whom health authorities declared positive for the virus on Wednesday.

The man, who is normally resident in Italy, had been in Senegal's second-largest city Touba when he exhibited symptoms and visited a doctor, the [health ministry](#) said.

His five family members, like him, have now been hospitalised in the capital Dakar. Authorities are also tracking down 71 other people they think he was in contact with.

The new coronavirus cases bring Senegal's [total number](#) to ten, although the [health](#) ministry said two infected people have since recovered.

But the appearance of [coronavirus](#) in Touba has raised questions about the viability of the country's religious festivals.

The city has some 1.5 million inhabitants, but it also attracts hundreds of thousands of pilgrims every year, who come to visit holy sites built in honour of the founders of the Mouride brotherhood.

Senegal is nation of some 16 million people where over 90 percent are Muslim. Most of the faithful follow Sufi brotherhoods.

Several religious festivals are planned across the country this month, including one which commemorates the birthday of the Mouride brotherhood's second leader, in Touba on March 22.

Senegalese Health Minister Abdoulaye Diouf Sarr has said the government would call off [religious events](#) if advised to do so.

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