

Jordan detects two coronavirus variant cases: minister

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Jordan on Sunday confirmed two cases of a particularly infectious coronavirus variant in a man and his wife who had arrived from Britain.

Health Minister Nazir Obeidat said the Jordanian couple travelled to the kingdom on December 19 and were found to be infected with the new strain of the [virus](#) after being tested and isolated.

The couple were still in quarantine and being monitored by [medical experts](#) according to virus protocols, Obeidat said, adding they were both in "excellent health" condition.

The new strain of the virus emerged earlier this month in Britain and has already reached several European countries, as well as Japan and Canada.

The new strain, which experts fear is more contagious, prompted more than 50 countries to impose [travel restrictions](#) on Britain.

Jordan was among them and has barred flights from the UK since Monday, with the ban to be enforced until January 3.

The Middle Eastern country has officially recorded more than 286,356 cases of the novel coronavirus and over 3,729 deaths.

In mid-December, Jordan announced it had approved emergency use of the Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus vaccine.

Obeidat said last month that vaccines would be distributed free of charge to Jordanians as well as foreign residents.

Since the virus first emerged earlier this year, Jordan has imposed strict restrictions, with schools and universities still closed and a night-time curfew imposed nationwide.

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