

Tripoli, 2 May 2020 – WHO urges the health authorities in Libya to remain vigilant in the face of the serious health threat posed by COVID-19 in the country.

“Now is not the time to lower our guard,” says Ms Elizabeth Hoff, WHO Representative in Libya. “The low numbers being reported must not lull us into a false sense of security. Libya is in the early stages of the pandemic and has not yet reached the peak of infection. Until testing becomes more widespread, it will be impossible to ascertain the extent and geographical spread of the disease.”

So far, Libya has laboratory-tested 1802 specimens for the presence of COVID-19. Out of a total of 61 confirmed patients, 2 have died, 18 have recovered and the remainder are still under treatment. Tripoli accounts for most cases (46), followed by Misrata (10), Benghazi (4) and Surman (1).

WHO has recommended that the health authorities increase testing capacity by establishing an additional laboratory in south Libya and expanding testing to include patients with influenza-like illnesses and severe acute respiratory infections. Adequate, regular supplies of testing kits will be essential. Improved disease surveillance and investigation – including in migrant populations - and contact tracing are also important tools to inform and drive the outbreak response.

Ms Hoff said that the key public health measures to tackle COVID-19 were the same in every country: track, test and treat. Patients with confirmed COVID-19 must be isolated, contacts traced, and measures to prevent the disease must continue. While some countries in western Europe are seeing a stabilization or decline in numbers, others are beginning to see a resurgence of cases. Africa, at the beginning of the pandemic, is witnessing an upward trend.

As WHO’s Director-General recently said: “Make no mistake: we have a long way to go. This virus will be with us for a long time.”

Friday 26th of April 2024 10:46:34 AM