



Islamabad, 1 March 2019 – Pakistani Health Authorities confirmed two cases of COVID-19. Both confirmed cases are from citizens who travelled to Islamic Republic of Iran for pilgrimage and subsequently returned to their hometowns of Karachi and Rawalpindi with initial respiratory symptoms of the virus.

After a series of rigorous tests and investigations, the Government of Pakistan is now treating the two patients as per standardized clinical protocols. Meanwhile, agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO) are stepping-up provision of immediate support to the Government so that preparedness and response measures are in place to handle the situation as it develops.

The Representative of the WHO in Pakistan, Dr Palitha Mahipala expressed concern over the current situation. “I am impressed by the swift and diligent way the Government has handled the crisis so far, and WHO is committed to support them every step of the way. The COVID-19 outbreak is a public health emergency of international concern; all countries neighbouring Pakistan – Islamic Republic of Iran, Afghanistan, China and India – have registered at least one confirmed case of the virus. It’s critically important that countries and international organizations work hand in hand to minimize the spread of the virus,” he said.

To date, WHO has assisted Pakistan’s preparedness and response to COVID-19 in various ways. As a priority, screenings of travellers at all points of entry to the country have been set-up. For example, screenings are currently being carried out for international travelers who are arriving at airports in Islamabad, Lahore, Sialkot, Peshawar, Quetta and Karachi. Screenings at Gwadar, Taftan and Chaman ground-crossing points have also been established for those entering from neighbouring Afghanistan or Islamic Republic of Iran. Moreover, WHO is supporting to bolster the surveillance system to ensure suspected cases are investigated in a timely manner and confirmed as per the set international standards.

WHO has been supporting health care providers and facilities to build their capacity for the preparedness and response. These measures include training health care providers on contact tracing and case definition for suspected and confirmed cases; case management and the infection, prevention and control measures; distributing personal protective equipment to health facilities, including at points of entry, for managing suspected and confirmed cases; activating/alerting rapid response teams; and distributing Information Education and Communications materials to raise public awareness and counter rumours and misinformation. To assist the response, WHO has provided eight kits of medical equipment to the relevant Provincial Disaster Management Authorities and Departments of Health.

WHO urges the public to obtain the latest information on COVID-19 from key sources such as health authorities and WHO, and follow and promote the recommended basic preventive and protective measures available on the WHO official websites:

[Find more information and guidance from WHO regarding the current outbreak of novel coronavirus \(2019-nCoV\)](#)

Saturday 17th of May 2025 01:31:27 PM