



## COVID-19 - Coronavirus disease 2019

### NORTH MACEDONIA

### FLASH UPDATE 12

31 March 2020

Data as reported by authorities by 21:00, 31 March 2020

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- North Macedonia announced two COVID-19 fatalities today – a 45-years-old man from Kumanovo and 78-years-old man from Debar. 44 new cases have been reported and the total number of registered COVID-19 patients in the country is 329. 54 patients are currently hospitalized at CID and 4 are in critical condition.
- The total number of affected medical staff is 35 or about 11% of all cases.
- The Government adopted a second set of economic measures to mitigate the effects of COVID-19.
- The Government has decided to repurpose available IPA funds to deal with the emergency caused by the COVID-19.
- The Government called upon all public institutions and bodies and recommended to the private sector to exempt from work all people who may need assistance – completely blind people, people with wheelchairs and people with moderate and severe intellectual disability due to the higher risk of COVID-19 complications.
- The Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation in Skopje is closed in relation to the confirmed COVID-19 cases among health professionals and patients.
- The MoH mobile teams will be designated primarily for older people and will be collecting lab samples/ swabs in their homes to prevent them from leaving their homes.
- WHO's training module on Emerging respiratory viruses, including COVID-19: Methods for detection, prevention, response and control in Macedonian language is available and can be accessed [here](#).

#### SITUATION IN NUMBERS

**total (new) cases in the last 24 hours**

##### North Macedonia

329 confirmed (44)

9 deaths

12 recovered

##### Globally

750 890 confirmed (57 610)

36 405 deaths (3301)

##### Western Pacific Region

104 868 confirmed (1093)

3671 deaths (22)

##### European Region

423 946 confirmed (31 131)

26 694 deaths (2733)

##### South-East Asia Region

4215 confirmed (131)

166 deaths (8)

##### Eastern Mediterranean Region

50 349 confirmed (4020)

2954 deaths (142)

##### Regions of the Americas

163 014 confirmed (20 935)

2836 deaths (379)

##### African Region

3786 confirmed (300)

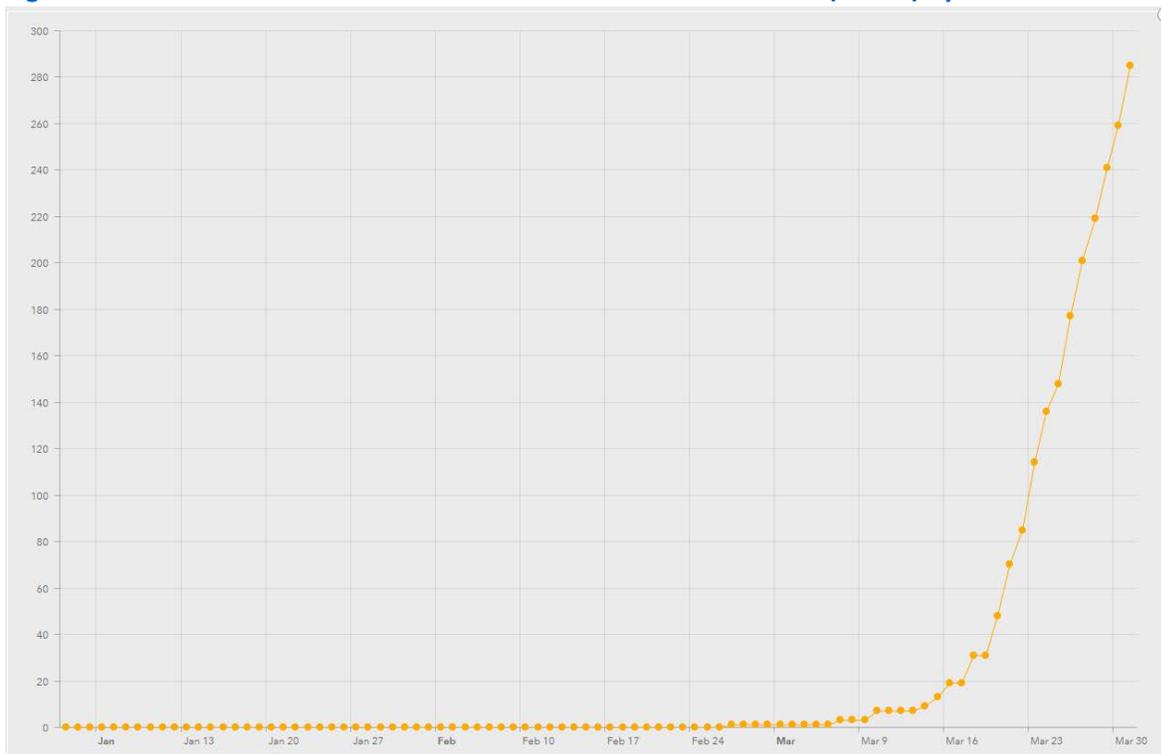
77 deaths (17)

#### WHO RISK ASSESSMENT

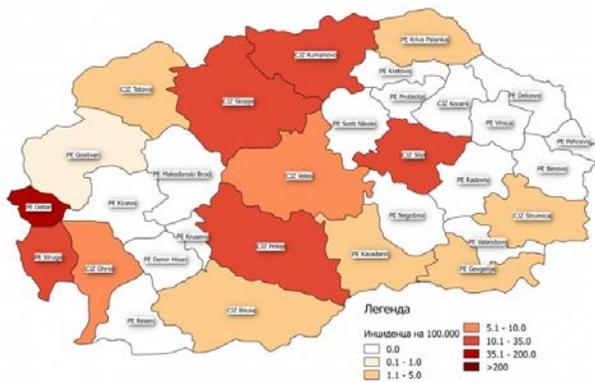
Very high

## SURVEILLANCE

**Figure 1. North Macedonia – Cumulative confirmed COVID-19 cases (n=285) by 30 March 2020 10:00**



**Figure 2. North Macedonia –COVID-19 incidence per 100,000 people, as of 31 March 2020**



The highest cumulative incidence is in Debar 169,3 cases per 100,000 people, followed by 32,9 cases per 100,000 people in Kumanovo and 28,5 cases per 100,000 people in Skopje and Shtip.

Age of patients vary from 2-91 years. However, the highest risk group is between 30-39 years old.

The disaggregated data of the confirmed COVID-19 cases through 30 March 2020 which includes the cases reported on 31 March 2020 by MoH could be accessed at the [Institute of Public Health](#).

## [Risk Assessment of COVID-19 in North Macedonia according to geographical spread as of 31 March 2020](#)

According to the WHO risk categorization, Debar, Skopje and Kumanovo are in Phase 4 (widespread community transmission) and the rest of the Republic of Northern Macedonia is in phase 2 (sporadic cases).

### Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-2019), Europe

- Based on the WHO and ECDC data as of 31 March 2020 10:00 CET, there have been 424 515 cases reported in the WHO European Region, representing **over 56% of the global burden** of 754 948 cases reported to date by 202 countries/areas/territories worldwide. **Globally, USA carries the heaviest case load (140 640), with Italy and Spain concluding top-3.** Overall, five more countries from the European Region are in top-10 (Germany, France, United Kingdom, Switzerland, and Belgium);
- In Europe, **Italy has the highest case count** (101 739 cases, 24%), followed by Spain (85 195 cases, 20%), Germany (61 913 cases, 15%), France (44 550 cases, 11%), and the United Kingdom (22 141 cases, 6%). Four other countries reported more than 10 000 cases (Switzerland, Belgium, Netherlands, and Turkey), while another 15 countries in the Region reported 1000 cases or more, listed in descending order (Austria, Portugal, Israel, Norway, Sweden, Czechia, Ireland, Denmark, Poland, Luxembourg, Romania, Russian Federation, Finland, Greece, and Iceland);
- **73% of the global burden of COVID-19 deaths** (36 571 deaths) **have been reported in the European Region** (26 701 deaths), with Italy and Spain accounting for roughly 71% of all deaths in Europe (11 591 and 7340 deaths respectively), followed by France (3024 deaths), United Kingdom (1408 deaths), Netherlands (864 deaths), Germany (583 deaths), and Belgium (513 deaths).

### WHO ROLE AND ACTION in NORTH MACEDONIA

In line with the strategic shift of the Government's strategy in fighting COVID19 whereby efforts are put on increasing testing, maintaining quality COVID19 care and essential care and protecting health care workers, WHO's support in the coming phase will focus on:

- Infection control and prevention in all health settings.
- Procurement of ventilators and protective personal equipment.
- Strengthening surveillance capacity, identification, testing and quarantine with special focus on vulnerable groups: elderly and migrants.

North Macedonia has joined the WHO SOLIDARITY Trial which is a large, international study designed to generate robust data needed to show which treatments are the most effective. The online WHO training course for COVID-19 for health care and infection control and protection (IPC) is now available in

WHO action in COVID-19 outbreak in North Macedonia aims at limiting the virus spread, protecting health and the health workers at the frontline, preserving the health care system capacity and its sustainability to respond and provide essential services to the population.

WHO is the lead UN agency for Health and main technical and health policy advisor to the government on COVID-19 containment and mitigation.

WHO works in coordination closely with other UN agencies as per the UN reform.

Western Balkan including North Macedonia is one of the priority countries for the WHO European Region.

Technical support, guidance and assistance are provided through the WHO Country Office from all levels of the Organization.

There is abundance of technical guidance WHO has developed in all areas of work: we are supporting the country to develop technical plans and implement priority interventions in the framework of a strong nation-wide strategic response.

Macedonian Language on the WHO learning platform for Health workers. <https://openwho.org/> . UNFPA and WHO are working now on producing the Albanian Language version.

WHO contributes to the efforts the UN in the country to make sure that timely procurement takes place and also supports newly set UN coordination mechanism for the COVID19, where UN RC takes the lead in order to streamline joint response efforts to the COVID-19 and provide support to the people and government of North Macedonia as effectively as possible.

## NORTH MACEDONIA STRATEGIC RESPONSE AND ACTION

North Macedonia mobilized an all-of-government action to fight this new coronavirus, including scaling up emergency response mechanisms in all sectors. Actions and readjustments of measures are continuous and monitoring of the situation is ongoing on daily basis. The country is in declared national emergency Announced by the President of the Republic on 18 March 2020 for one month.

On the health front, the country is working hard now to ensure its COVID19 hospitalization surge capacity with the necessary personnel are in place with the influx of additional cases in recent days.

Several measures are taken to interrupt human-to-human transmission including reducing secondary infections among close contacts and health care workers, preventing transmission amplification events, and preventing further spread.

The Ministry of Health increased public health measures, such as rapid identification, diagnosis and management of the cases, identification and follow up of the contacts, infection prevention and control in health care settings, implementation of health measures for travelers, awareness-raising in the population and risk communication and counter misinformation as well as minimizing social and economic impact through multisectoral partnerships.

Today:

- The Government adopted a second set of economic measures to mitigate the effects of COVID-19. It includes financial support to private companies enabling them to pay salaries in the amount of minimum wage (14,500 denars – EUR 250) to their employees in next two months, April and May. Also, all elected and appointed office holders, including the President, the PM, ministers and lawmakers, will see their salaries reduced to the amount of the country's minimum wage. Its estimated amount stands at nearly EUR 200 million. Under the new measures, there will be no pay cuts for employees in North Macedonia's public sector. Furthermore, athletes, artists and media workers will get paid minimum wage in April and May. Workers who will be laid off as a result of the crisis will get paid 50% of average salary. The set also offers subsidies to cover 50 per cent of salary contributions and no-interest loans for the companies, provided by the Development Bank. Also, auto mechanics, hair salon owners, barbers, bakers, etc, can apply for the government support envisaged in the second set of measures. The government has decided to establish a solidarity fund for donations from individuals and legal entities to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus.
- The State Sanitary and Health Inspectorate completed the investigation in the Hospital in Ohrid and identified gaps in the treatment of the patient as it was discussed in the previous days and will take appropriate measures against everyone involved in the process.

- Part of the mobile teams will be dedicated to collect swabs from the 8th of September Hospital to accelerate the test results as large number of patients come at this facility for other health services as well.
- Additional 22 catering establishments have been closed in Skopje, Kumanovo, Gostivar and Tetovo, and 60 traders have unjustifiably raised product prices, mostly on lemons, is the conclusion of the inspectors from the State Market Inspectorate from the 5,155 inspections they conducted between 22-27 March.

## COVID-19 UN AND PARTNER COORDINATION

To provide a comprehensive and coordinated approach in identifying and repurposing the available bilateral assistance to the COVID-19 response, all public administration bodies receiving bilateral donor assistance will report promptly to the Secretariat for European Affairs (SEA) the amount of funds available for each project. The SEA will then submit a formal request to the bilateral donors for the reuse of funds in accordance with the identified priority needs for COVID19.

## GAPS/NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

**The most important priority at this point and in the next 3 months is to ensure that the health system can cope with increasing numbers of cases needing intensive management and also protecting the health care workers.**

- **Critical needs:** Laboratory Kits and reagents; Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); Mechanical Ventilators/Respirators (respirators from operating rooms are not adapted to need of respiratory diseases and cannot be used for the ICU) ; intensifying risk communication;
- **Challenges:**
  - Protecting health care workers whether those working in the COVID-19 designated facilities or elsewhere countrywide because of the community transmission.
  - Procurement : Access to local or international supplies and mainly respirators for the critical needs identified because of international shortages.
  - Shortage in health workforce if the situation progresses
  - Ensuring sustainability of the health facilities and health care during and after the crisis.
  - Community support and outreach activities for the vulnerable
  - Ensuring continuity of treatment and access to regular health care for all citizens including the vulnerable groups with other diseases and pathologies.
  - Isolation and mental health support to the elderly and disabled.
  - Compliance of the citizens to instructions of the government and self-isolation.

WHO issued new guidance to support operations:

Operational considerations for surveillance of COVID-19 using GISRS <b>[New]</b>	<a href="https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/surveillance-and-case-definitions">https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/surveillance-and-case-definitions</a>
COVID-19: Operational guidance for maintaining essential health services during an outbreak <b>[New]</b>	<a href="https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/maintaining-essential-health-services-and-systems">https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/maintaining-essential-health-services-and-systems</a>
Guiding principles for immunization activities during the COVID-19 pandemic <b>[New]</b>	<a href="https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331590/WHO-2019-nCoV-immunization_services-2020.1-eng.pdf">https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331590/WHO-2019-nCoV-immunization_services-2020.1-eng.pdf</a>

Dead Body Management <b>[New]</b>	<a href="https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331538/WHO-COVID-19-IPC_DBMgmt-2020.1-eng.pdf">https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331538/WHO-COVID-19-IPC_DBMgmt-2020.1-eng.pdf</a>
Laboratory testing recommendations for COVID-19 <b>[New]</b>	<a href="https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331509/WHO-COVID-19-lab_testing-2020.1-eng.pdf">https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331509/WHO-COVID-19-lab_testing-2020.1-eng.pdf</a>
COVID-19 IPC in prisons & other places of detection <b>[New]</b>	<a href="http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-determinants/prisons-and-health/publications/2020/preparedness,-prevention-and-control-of-covid-19-in-prisons-and-other-places-of-detention-2020">http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-determinants/prisons-and-health/publications/2020/preparedness,-prevention-and-control-of-covid-19-in-prisons-and-other-places-of-detention-2020</a>
Severe Acute Respiratory Infections Treatment Centre <b>[New]</b>	<a href="https://www.who.int/publications-detail/severe-acute-respiratory-infections-treatment-centre">https://www.who.int/publications-detail/severe-acute-respiratory-infections-treatment-centre</a>
<b>Scientific Brief:</b> Modes of transmission of virus causing COVID-19: implications for IPC precaution recommendations <b>[New]</b>	<a href="https://www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/modes-of-transmission-of-virus-causing-covid-19-implications-for-ipc-precaution-recommendations">https://www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/modes-of-transmission-of-virus-causing-covid-19-implications-for-ipc-precaution-recommendations</a>

**IMPORTANT CONTACTS NORTH MACEDONIA:** Call Center 0800 002 03; “Alo Doctor” 02 15 123

*Useful Links*

WHO [Facebook](#)/[Twitter](#)  
 MoH [Facebook](#)/[Twitter](#)  
[WHO Europe website for COVID-19](#)  
[All Government information and measures / ENG](#)  
[MoH COVID-19 information](#)  
 NATO’s Next-Generation Incidence Command System ([NICS](#))  
[How to stay physically active during COVID-19 self-quarantine](#)  
  
[Q&A on COVID-19, pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding](#)

*For symptoms related to COVID-19*

CPH Bitola 071 261 330  
 CPH Veles 071 219 278  
 CPH Gevgelija 071 219 278  
 CPH Kochani 071 373 913  
 CPH Kumanovo 070 215 851  
 CPH Ohrid 070 723 029  
 CPH Prilep 076 475 747  
 CPH Skopje 071 289 614  
 CPH Strumica 072 235 543  
 CPH Tetovo 075 240 464  
 RU Gostivar 076 365 161  
 CPH Shtip 078 365 613  
 IPH Skopje 078 387 194

*Red Cross mobile teams for elderly support*

Red Cross Center 070 297 166  
 Red Cross Kisela Voda 071 349 225  
 Red Cross Chair 070 208 383  
 Red Cross Karpos 071 349 230  
 Red Cross Gazi Baba

*Foreign Affairs*

Regular line 075 446 647  
 Regular line, Viber and WhatsApp: 070 282 078

New WHO Global Campaign – “[Pass the message: Five steps to kicking out coronavirus](#)” with FIFA

*Psychological support*

-Self-isolated adults  
 072 919 009  
 -Citizens of municipalities Debar and Center Zhupa  
 070 241 807  
 -adolescents and their parents  
 078 378 728  
 -parents of children with disabilities  
 070291574  
 -Parents of preschool and school children 072 912 676

*For general info, Text hi to*

+41 79 412 32 36 on WhatsApp