



## COVID-19 - Coronavirus disease 2019

### NORTH MACEDONIA

### FLASH UPDATE 17

7 April 2020

Data as reported by authorities by 23:00, 6 April 2020

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- Today is WHO's birthday – a day we celebrate each year as World Health Day. This year, we're paying tribute to the incredible contribution of all health workers, especially nurses and midwives. Dr. Tedros, WHO DG emphasized that nurses and midwives are the backbone of every health system – they're there from the first moments of life to the last. Quite simply, without nurses, there would be no response.
- Sadly, 3 COVID-19 fatalities are reported and 15 new cases in the last 24 hours. **The total number of registered COVID-19 cases in the country is 570.** Seven patients have recovered. **63 COVID-19 cases are among health professionals.**
- COVID-19 cases are registered in 18 cities. Skopje has the highest case count (239 cases, 42%), followed by Kumanovo (121 cases, 21%) and Debar (49 cases, 8.6%), however per population rate, Debar is the most hard hit.
- Today was held a Ceremony for launching of USAID/WHO joint support to the Ministry of Health to help contain and mitigate the COVID19 virus spread. <https://un.mk/ceremony-for-launching-of-the-usaid-who-support-to-the-country-to-help-mitigate-the-spread-of-covid19>
- New decisions restricting movement for all people on the entire territory will take effect Wednesday, 8 April 2020. Minister of Health urged the citizens to adhere to the restrictions to be able to reduce the number of cases and to maintain the stability of the health system.
- WHO issued guidance and criteria to support countries regarding the use of medical and non-medical masks for COVID-19 more widely – available [here](#).

#### SITUATION IN NUMBERS

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

##### North Macedonia

570 confirmed (15)

21 deaths

29 recovered

##### Globally

1 210 956 confirmed (77 200)

67 594 deaths (4810)

##### Western Pacific Region

112 522 confirmed (1126)

3861 deaths (23)

##### European Region

655 339 confirmed (33 932)

49 479 deaths (3063)

##### South-East Asia Region

8828 confirmed (1012)

344 deaths (42)

##### Eastern Mediterranean Region

74 347 confirmed (4054)

3976 deaths (182)

##### Regions of the Americas

352 592 confirmed (36878)

9680 deaths (1493)

##### African Region

6616 confirmed (198)

243 deaths (7)

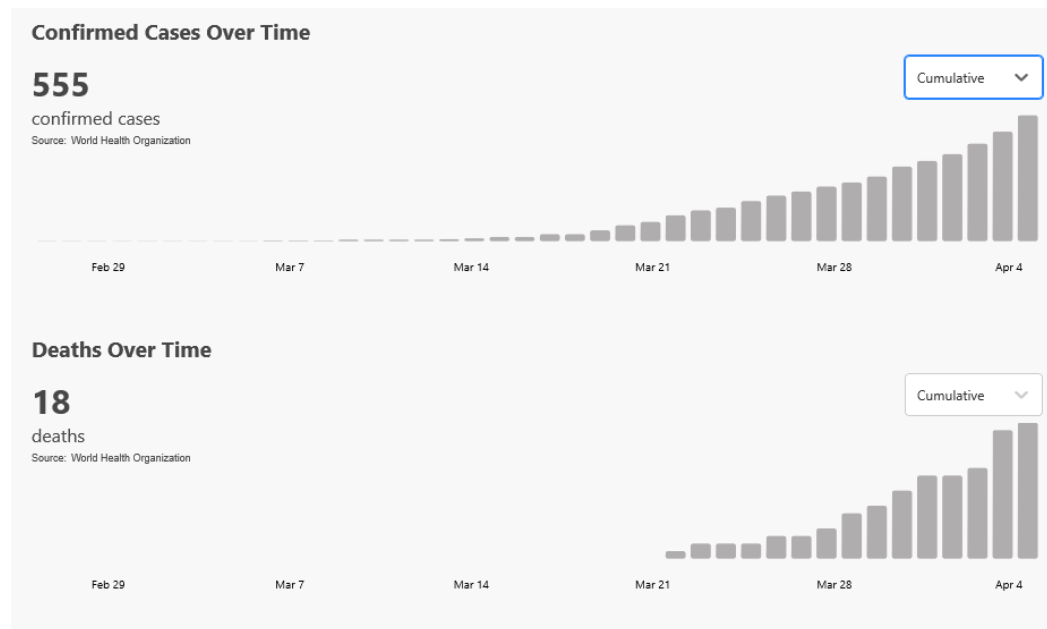
#### WHO RISK ASSESSMENT

Very high

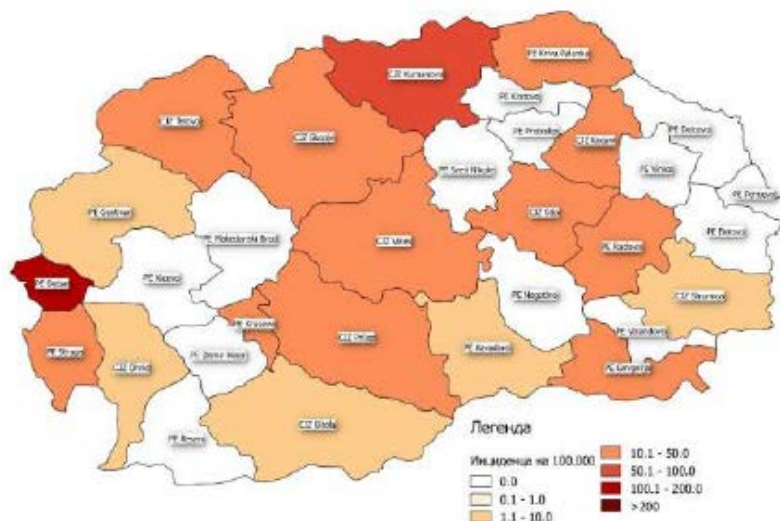
- WHO Director-General and IMF Managing Director reiterated the importance of saving lives and saving livelihoods and made it clear that the trade-off between saving lives or jobs is a false dilemma. The press conference remarks are [here](#), and the op-ed [here](#).
- Almost 90 per cent of the world’s students are now affected by nationwide school closures – that’s more than 1.5 billion children and young people. Together with UNICEF and the International Publishers Association, the WHO has launched the 'Read the World' children’s reading initiative. More information on this initiative can be found [here](#). WHO has also published advice for parenting during the COVID-19 pandemic, available [here](#).

## SURVEILLANCE

**Figure 1. North Macedonia – Cumulative confirmed COVID-19 cases (n=555) and deaths (n=18) by 6 April 2020 19:00**



**Figure 2. North Macedonia – COVID-19 incidence per 100,000 people, as of 6 April 2020**



The highest cumulative incidence is in Debar (176,5 cases per 100,000 people), followed by Kumanovo (84.8 cases per 100,000 people). Four other cities have incidence above 30.0 cases per 100,000 people (Skopje, Shtip, Prilep and Struga).

Age of patients vary from 2-91 years. However, the highest risk group is between 50-59 years old.

The disaggregated data of the confirmed COVID-19 cases through 05 April 2020 which includes the cases reported on 6 April 2020 by MoH could be accessed at the [www.iph.mk](http://www.iph.mk)

## RISK ASSESSMENT OF COVID-19 IN NORTH MACEDONIA ACCORDING TO GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD

According to the WHO risk categorization, **Debar, Skopje and Kumanovo are in Phase 4** (widespread community transmission) and **the rest of the country has stepped up to phase 3 (local transmission)** as of 5 April 2020.

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

- Based on the WHO and ECDC data as of 6 April 2020 10:00 CET, the WHO European Region number of cases is representing **over 54% of the global burden** of 1 210 956 reported globally with 655 339 cases in total to date. Globally, USA carries the heaviest case load (307 318), with **Spain and Italy concluding top-3**. Overall, five more countries from the European Region are in top-10 (Germany, France, United Kingdom, Turkey and Switzerland);
- In Europe, **Spain has the highest case count** (130 759 cases, 20%), followed by Italy (128 948 cases, 20%), Germany (95 391 cases, 14.6%), France (69 607 cases, 11%), and the United Kingdom (47 810 cases, 7.3%). Six other countries reported more than 10 000 cases (Turkey, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria and Portugal), while another 17 countries in the Region reported 1000 cases or more, listed in descending order (Israel, Sweden, Norway, Russian Federation, Ireland, Czechia, Denmark, Poland, Romania, Luxembourg, Finland, Serbia, Greece, Iceland, Ukraine, Croatia and Estonia);
- **44% of the global burden of COVID-19 deaths have been reported in the European Region**, with Italy and Spain (15 889 and 12 418 COVID-19 deaths, respectively) accounting for roughly 83% of all deaths in Europe, followed by France, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Belgium and Germany.

### WHAT WHO IS DOING FOR COVID19 IN NORTH MACEDONIA?

In line with the strategic shift of the Government's approach in fighting COVID19 whereby efforts are put on increasing testing, maintaining quality COVID19 care and essential care and protecting health care workers, WHO works closely with the government and national and global health partners to enable the response.

In North Macedonia:

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.

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

- Today a Ceremony for launching of the USAID / WHO joint support to the country to help contain and mitigate the COVID19 virus spread <https://un.mk/ceremony-for-launching-of-the-usaid-who-support-to-the-country-to-help-mitigate-the-spread-of-covid19/>. This act of solidarity is directed mainly to support the health staff at the frontline of this fight against the virus: to ensure they have the means and the skills to protect themselves and control the infection all health care settings not only in treatment centers. A large part of the grant will also help the Institute of Public Health to continue its remarkable work in tracing and testing and early identification of the cases.
- WHO also held on Friday 3 April 2020, a **Zoom training session in Macedonian language** open for **all Health Care workers dealing with COVID19** for the proper practices in Infection control and prevention of virus transmission in hospitals.
- WHO developed a **risk assessment tool to be used by health care facilities with COVID-19 patients**. The tool is to be completed for all health workers who have been exposed to a confirmed COVID-19 patient in a health care facility. The tool will help determine the risk of COVID-19 virus infection of all HCWs who have been exposed to a COVID-19 patient and then provides recommendations for appropriate management of these HCWs, according to their infection risk.
- WHO continuing the roll out of the **Partners Platform for the Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP)**: Onboarding has taken place supporting North Macedonia to link with international support; the Country Preparedness and Response Plan has been uploaded for increasing capacity for 2000 COVID19 cases.
- The country is active on the platform <https://covid-19-response.org>
- SPRP includes health systems continuity, the Platform will have a **9th Pillar** for assessment of priority actions to maintain essential health services.
- COVID-19 Health System Response Monitor (HSRM) has been formally launched by WHO EURO and the European Observatory for Health systems. North Macedonia is participating. <https://www.covid19healthsystem.org/mainpage.aspx>

WHO continues to be actively engaged in:

- In risk communication targeted messages and developed many messages and infographics in national languages for display at MOH media channels and other. *WHO [Facebook](#)/[Twitter](#) ; MoH [Facebook](#)/[Twitter](#); [WHO Europe website for COVID-19](#)*
- Providing technical advice and support to many national and international partners for stepping up everyone's engagement in halting the virus spread and its impact on North Macedonia.
- Ensuring lab and testing tools are available for COVID19 related testing kits and PPE.
- Assisting the MOH in gaps and needs assessment and bridging those gaps for better health system coping and response.
- Establishing bilateral partnerships, resource mobilization, and joint plans to address gaps and needs of the MOH.
- Sustaining professional and technical knowledge of all health care workers in the country through the online WHO training course for COVID-19 for health care and infection control and protection (IPC) is now available in Macedonian Language on the WHO learning platform for Health workers. <https://openwho.org/>
- Generating Robust data needed to show which treatments are the most effective, by North Macedonia joining the WHO SOLIDARITY Trial which is a large, international therapeutic study that will allow also receiving free of charge medicines for COVID19 and latest evidence-based indications for changing treatment protocols when needed to reduce mortality, length of stay under mechanical respiration and reducing complications.

- Tracking the epidemiological spread of the virus, supports early warning system and keep communities and frontline responders informed with the latest technical guidance.
- Contributing to the UN in the country to make sure that timely procurement takes place and supporting the newly set UN coordination mechanism for the COVID19.  
[1UN MK@facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/1UNMK)

#### VISIT OUR PARTNERS WEBSITES

- USAID [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov)
- EU [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/republic-north-macedonia\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/republic-north-macedonia_en)
- Macedonian Red Cross: [www.ckrm.org.mk](http://www.ckrm.org.mk)
- Helvetas North Macedonia [www.helvetas.org/en/eastern-europe/north-macedonia](http://www.helvetas.org/en/eastern-europe/north-macedonia)
- OSCE in North Macedonia [www.osce.org/mission-to-skopje](http://www.osce.org/mission-to-skopje)

#### HEADS UP on WHO FRONT

- WHO is preparing the **2nd Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan**: The plan will build on the first SPRP to incorporate what we know now and the evolving global context. The strategies for preparedness and response remain the same.
- WHO is preparing to **scale up laboratory diagnostic capacity: GeneXpert**: A test for the COVID-19 coronavirus developed by Cepheid for their GeneXpert instrument has received an Emergency Use Authorization by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on 22 March 2020. WHO is currently working to negotiate access to this test.
- Rapid communication on the **role of the GeneXpert® platform** for rapid molecular testing for SARS-CoV-2 in the WHO European Region [link](#)

#### 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.

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:

- Starting on Wednesday, 8 April 2020 at 16:00, the movement of people on the entire territory of the country is prohibited **between 16:00 and 05:00 from Monday to Friday**. Only people in need of emergency medical care / with life-threatening condition / dialysis patients, exclusively accompanied by up to two persons will be excluded.

- During the weekends, movement is prohibited **from Friday 16:00 until Monday 05:00 for all citizens.**
  - Citizens above 67 years of age can move only **between 10:00 and 12:00 from Monday to Friday.**
  - Young persons under 18 years old can move only **between 13:00 and 15:00 from Monday to Friday.**
  - Citizens are not allowed to **move in public places in groups of more than two people** – a parent can be in a greater group with his/her children who are under the age of 14.
  - Farmers can move **only within the territory of the village**, exclusively for working purposes, e.g. agriculture activities.
  - Police, army, health workers, and markets and restaurants that deliver products are excluded from the ban.
- Government's Call Center (02/324-8040) for support of the businesses and citizens and provision of information related to the economic measures in response to COVID-19 is operational.

### 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.

- The Hungarian government donated 100,000 face masks and 5,000 pieces of protective clothing to North Macedonia to help that country fight against the novel coronavirus epidemic.
- Turkey will supply health care equipment to North Macedonia, awaited soon.
- **MOH Solidarity fund is established:** Domestic companies have donated around EUR 500.000 on the account of the Ministry of Health including donations of medical devices, protective equipment and other materials.
- North Macedonia to receive urgent medical equipment with 4 million euros from EU for procurement through UNOPS.
- USAID supported both WHO and UNICEF with 1.1. million USD in their efforts to fight the epidemic in North Macedonia
- Germany offered support to the Ministry of Health with an amount of USD 2 million in PPE
- OSCE is proposing donation of essential PPE for the COVID19 Center of Infectious Diseases for 30,000 Euros.
- Packages with food and hygiene assets in the amount of 100.000 USD will be allocated to most jeopardized Roma families in Macedonia that are socially and economically hit by the health crisis, announced the Foundation Open Society – Macedonia which donated the funds.
- Macedonian Red Cross supports the elderly and the disabled in shopping and basic needs for hygiene, protection and their livelihood.

The above is not a comprehensive list.

### 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, protecting the health care workers and ensuring essential social and medical care to the vulnerable.**



➤ **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;
- socioeconomic relief for vulnerable groups and employment protection.
- Maintaining Essential health and social services
- Protecting health care workers whether those working in the COVID-19 designated facilities or elsewhere countrywide because of the community transmission.
- Mental Health Support to health workers and the public especially the vulnerable ones.

➤ **Challenges:**

- Procurement : Access to local or international supplies and mainly respirators for the critical needs identified because of international shortages.
- Shortage in health workforce as the situation progresses
- Ensuring sustainability of the health facilities and health care during and after the crisis.
- Outreach and social support to the vulnerable
- Ensuring continuity of treatment and access to regular health care for all citizens including the vulnerable groups with other diseases and pathologies.
- Fighting Isolation and scaling up community engagement in the regions
- Compliance of the citizens to instructions of the government and self-isolation.

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

