COVID-19 Outbreak Update
29 February

Executive Summary

At this time, Solace Global advises against all travel to China due to the ongoing travel restrictions, cancelled flights, government warnings and confirmed cases of the virus. Additionally, Solace Global advises against all non-essential travel to Hong Kong, Macau, Iran; Daegu and Cheongdo in South Korea; and 11 towns in northern Italy. Further travel restrictions and disruption to business operations globally are possible in the coming days and weeks.

Latest Updates

The World Health Organization (WHO) has raised its assessment of the global coronavirus risk from "high" to "very high," the most serious assessment in its new four-stage alert system. COVID-19 cases have been reported in at least 49 countries, with the WHO predicting that the virus could reach most, if not all countries. The organisation is also looking into reports of people who have recovered from COVID-19 being re-infected with the virus.

China has reported the lowest number of new cases of COVID-19 since it began public reporting began in January. Excluding Hubei province, where the virus originated, there were just four new cases. Outside of China, cases of COVID-19 have risen sharply in Italy and South Korea, which reported its largest daily increase of 594 cases on Saturday. Elsewhere, Iran has the highest number of deaths outside of China with at least 34, though the actual figure is believed to be far greater.

The United States Government has postponed a summit of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) leaders that it was due to host in Las Vegas on 14 March due to worries about the COVID-19 outbreak. In addition, the UN has recommended ministers and diplomats avoid travelling to New York for a meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women next week. Meanwhile, the US State Department has advised citizens to "avoid non-essential" travel to Italy and Iran.

Australia has announced a travel ban to Iran, similar to the restrictions already in place for people seeking to enter Australia from China. Australian citizens returning from China and Iran will be required to self-isolate for 14 days. The measures come as authorities in Queensland are working to trace up to 40 people who may have received treatment from a beautician recently returned from Iran and tested positive for the virus. In the UK, a man from Surrey has become the first person to be infected within the country; authorities are working to identify how, having not recently travelled abroad, he caught the virus.

Current Statistics (Numbers vary between sources)					
Current Total Infected (new cases)	85,222 (+1496)	Total Confirmed Recoveries	39,559 (+2877)	Total confirmed Deaths	2,924 (+65)

Current confirmed case numbers	China (79,257), South Korea (2,931), Italy (889), *Diamond Princess* (705), Iran (388), Japan (236), Singapore (98), HK (94), USA (66), Germany (65), France (57), Kuwait (45), Thailand (41), Bahrain (38), Taiwan (34), Spain (33), Australia (25), Malaysia (25), UK (20), UAE (19), Vietnam (16), Canada (15), Switzerland (15), Sweden (11), Macau (10), Iraq (8), Israel (7), Oman (6), Norway (6), Austria (6), Croatia (5), Greece (4), Philippines (3), India (3), Finland (3), Lebanon (3) Pakistan (2), Russia (2), Mexico (3), Denmark (2), Azerbaijan (1), Afghanistan (1), Algeria (1), Belgium (1), Brazil (1), Cambodia (1), Egypt (1), Estonia (1), Georgia (1), Monaco (1), North Macedonia (1), Nepal (1), Netherlands (1), Nigeria (1), Romania (1), San Marino (1), Sri Lanka (1), Belarus (1), Lithuania (1), New Zealand (1), Monaco (1), Iceland (1).
Deaths	China (2,835), Iran (34), South Korea (17), Italy (21), *Diamond Princess* (6), Japan (5), HK (2), France (2), Taiwan (1), Philippines (1)

Travel Restrictions (these restrictions remain fluid and are subject to change at short notice, keep up to date with potential restrictions if travelling)		
China	Quarantined and lockdown cities/regions	Majority of Hubei Province, Wenzhou, Nanchang, Zhengzhou, Linyi, Harbin, Fuzhou some cities in Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces. Restrictions outside of Hubei Province are being relaxed to allow the continuation of business as usual.
	Flight Restrictions	Majority of international airlines have ceased operations to and from Chinese mainland. Flight operations to and from HK and Macau are also being impacted.
Countries that have some form of warning or ban on travel to China	Schengen Countries, Australia, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Czech R., DRC, Gabon, Georgia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Kuwait, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mauritius, Micronesia, Mozambique, New Zealand, Nigeria, Oman, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, S. Sudan, Turkey, Uganda, UK, Ukraine, US	
Italy	Current restrictions	Lombardy region (Codogno, Castiglione d'Adda, Casalpusterlengo, Fombio, Maleo, Somaglia, Bertonico, Terranova dei Passerini, Castelgerundo and San Fiorano) and one in Veneto (Euganeo)
South Korea	Current restrictions	Daegu and Cheongdo cities
Solace Global Advice	**Advise against all travel:** Mainland China	
	Advise against all but essential travel: Hong Kong, Macau, Iran, Daegu and Cheongdo (Both in SK), 11 towns in N. Italy	

- Solace Global advises clients and travellers to monitor countries experiencing outbreaks due to currently in place travel restrictions.
- Ensure your healthcare and insurance providers are aware of any essential travel to China.
- Continue to monitor the situation closely, as new travel restrictions and further outbreaks may occur with no warning.
- Do not travel if ill, as you may be subject to additional screening, delays and even quarantine, regardless of destination or country of origin.
- Monitor yourself for symptoms, should you suspect that you have contracted the virus, self-quarantine and immediately call your relevant embassy and/or consult your doctor.
- Maintain a good hygiene level, use hand sanitizer and wash hands regularly if travelling in the coming days.
- Regularly check updates via your respective government agency and the World Health Organisation for travel information and potential restrictions.