

COVID-19 Outbreak Update

2 May

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SOLACE GLOBAL

Executive Summary

The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases globally has exceeded 3.4 million, with approximately 240,000 deaths and around 1,085,000 recoveries. Nearly all countries globally have reported at least one case and/or have implemented some form of travel restriction. The situation has stabilised somewhat in the past weeks with many travel restrictions, both internationally and domestically, in place for the foreseeable future. Some countries worldwide are beginning to ease their restrictions; however, this process will be slow, with restrictions on international travel likely to be one of the last measures to be lifted.

Solace Global continues to advise against all non-essential travel at this time due to the widespread travel restrictions. However, if conducting essential travel, it is advised that you check your relevant government’s travel advice and contact your airline or travel provider for more details. Be aware that it is likely that many destinations globally will have some form of quarantining measure in place upon arrival. At this time, Solace Global still advises that people aged 70 and over, or those with underlying health issues, should also reconsider their need to travel, even domestically, as to limit their chances of exposure.

Latest Updates

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has stated that countries looking to lift lockdowns must do so in as gradual a manner as possible to prevent a second peak of COVID-19 infections. The organisation identified care homes, prisons and migrant dormitories as facilities where the virus could spread most rapidly, warranting extra vigilance. Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has put forward a robust defence of the WHO’s initial response to the virus, indicating that statements from the organisation at the end of January gave countries enough time to respond to the emerging threat from the outbreak in China. The WHO has faced significant criticism, particularly from the US Government, over its actions at the beginning of the outbreak.

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has given emergency authorisation for the use of the antiviral drug remdesivir in the treatment of COVID-19 patients. The authorisation comes days after preliminary results of a large-scale trial indicated that the drug could substantially reduce the time it takes for patients to recover from the virus. However, the same preliminary results indicate that the drug does not significantly reduce the mortality rate associated with COVID-19. Remdesivir has only been approved for use in severely ill patients and will still require formal FDA approval at a later date should it become a candidate for wider use.

In the UK, stark figures have emerged showing the disproportionate effects that the COVID-19 outbreak is having on ethnic minority communities. A study from the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) has indicated that patients of African heritage in the UK are 3.5 times more likely to die from COVID 19 than their Caucasian counterparts. There were similar unbalanced results for those of a Caribbean and South Asian background. The IFS has indicated that it cannot provide a single explanation for the figures but has speculated that they could be a function of the disproportionately high numbers of ethnic minority staff working in the health sector and higher levels of medical conditions that have been associated with vulnerability to severe COVID-19. A government review into the issue is currently underway.

In other UK news, the Government has announced that it has exceeded its target of carrying out over 100,000 tests per day by the end of April. Health Secretary Matt Hancock, who set the target on 2 April, announced that over 122,000 tests had been carried out on 30 April, an increase of over 40,000 tests from the previous day. However, the figures included tens of thousands of tests that have been posted to people’s homes but may not yet have been returned and processed in a laboratory. Hancock has indicated that the government will now look to recruit 18,000 people to work as contact tracers for when the country eases lockdown measures. The Government intends to implement an aggressive testing regime to ensure that there is not a second spike in infections.

The number of deaths attributed to COVID-19 in Brazil has surpassed that of China, putting further pressure on embattled President Jair Bolsonaro. Bolsonaro has consistently downplayed the seriousness of the pandemic, comparing the virus to the common cold and fiercely resisting implementing measures to tackle the outbreak at a federal level. The President has also taken the unusual step of attending rallies demanding the lifting of lockdown measures imposed by various state governments. Bolsonaro’s controversial response to the pandemic, coupled with an ongoing corruption scandal, has intensified calls for his impeachment and removal from office.

In Australia, the National Rugby League looks set to recommence on 28 May. Whilst final approvals have not yet been received, the New Zealand Team Warriors have been granted permission to enter Australia ahead of the competition. The team will train in isolation in Tamworth, New South Wales, for a period of 14 days before their first game. As yet, no announcements have been made as to whether fans will be allowed to attend fixtures, but it is likely that games will be played behind closed doors for the foreseeable future.

Region Specific Updates and New Restrictions – Be aware these are fluid and subject to change, check for any updates prior to travel.

<p>Asia</p>	<p>While restrictions across the region remain extensive, some countries are now easing their internal lockdown measures after successfully managing their outbreaks, these include China, Taiwan and South Korea.</p> <p>International travel restrictions will, however, likely remain in place for the time being. China, for example, has implemented a limit on the number of flights to the country and are denying entry to foreigners with previously issued visas and residence permits.</p>
<p>Europe</p>	<p>The EU Commission has invited all Schengen Member States and Schengen Associated States to prolong the temporary restriction on non-essential travel to the EU until at least 15 May. Airlines, however, do continue to operate limited flights to and from the majority of EU countries.</p>

	<p>Austria, Denmark, Germany, Norway and some other European countries are now seeing an easing of internal restrictions after passing what they believe is the worst of the outbreak in their countries. Most recently, France, Italy, Spain and Switzerland have also announced plans to ease their containment measures. In Italy, businesses are set to star reopening gradually in May.</p>
Americas	<p>The US continues to be the worst affected country globally. The majority of states now have a “stay-at-home” order of some kind or have closed “non-essential” businesses. However, some states are now looking to ease restrictions, with protests also occurring in response to the lockdowns, some of the protesters have attended these rallies armed.</p> <p>The US has implemented a level 4: Do Not Travel global advisory. The Department of State advises US citizens to avoid all international travel due to the global impact of COVID-19 and for those who are currently abroad to return as soon as possible. The United States has also ordered a border closure for all non-essential travel from both Canada and Mexico.</p> <p>The majority of countries in the Americas have some form of restriction on both internal and international travel.</p>
Africa	<p>African countries have, thus far, not been as severely impacted by the outbreak, with the continent’s case numbers lower than all other continents except that of Oceania. However, the risk that the pandemic poses to the continent cannot be understated. As such, many countries implemented lockdown measures very early, when only a handful of cases had been recorded. Indeed, many countries announced restrictions before any confirmed cases.</p> <p>While the majority of countries have some form of restrictions in place, especially on major cities, some, including Ghana, for example, have been able to start relaxing their lockdowns. The DRC is also relaxing restrictions on the capital Kinshasa, which had been struck relatively hard before the outbreak. South Africa, also, has begun to ease restrictions since 1 May.</p> <p>International travel is likely to remain limited for the foreseeable future. For example, Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, closed its land borders and banned all international flights in late March.</p>
Middle East	<p>The Middle East has some significant lockdowns in place, most countries are also now looking to ease restrictions. Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Jordan, among others, have all eased the restrictions on people’s movements.</p> <p>Notably, Saudi Arabia has eased restrictions nationwide, with the exception of Mecca, with malls, wholesale and retail shops, also being allowed to reopen from the sixth day of Ramadan. Mecca remains under a 24-hour curfew with calls for the kingdom to postpone Hajj in July.</p>
Australia /Oceania	<p>All states in Australia appear to have contained the spread of the coronavirus. Some states and territories including Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory will start to ease their restrictions from 1 May. Variations on restriction rules apply between states.</p> <p>Additionally, New Zealand’s Prime Minister announced that the country has stopped the transmission of the virus. As such, some of the lockdown restrictions were eased from 11.59 local time on 27 April. New Zealand also lifted its level 4-lockdown that has been in effect for more than 4 weeks. The level 3 phase, which is reportedly in effect for two weeks, allows non-essential businesses such as retailers, schools and restaurants to reopen.</p>

Solace Global Advice	<p>At this time, we continue to advise that only business-critical travel is conducted. Otherwise, ensure that you can access the country you intend to travel to. Extensive travel restrictions are making even business-critical travel difficult, as such, it is important that travellers are aware of the restrictions that are in place, including any potential mandatory quarantining, and are prepared for travel to be postponed or disrupted at short notice. It is likely that restrictions will continue to be eased in the coming weeks and months; however, these will remain fluid, with spikes in new cases likely resulting in renewed lockdowns and travel restrictions.</p>
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Current Statistics (Numbers vary between sources)					
Current Total Cases	3,403,546 (+85,091)	Total Confirmed Recoveries	1,084,732 (+36,268)	Total Confirmed Deaths	239,658 (+5,405)

The list below comprises of the top 40 countries in each section, for a complete list please go to [Worldometers](#), [Johns Hopkins University](#) or the [WHO](#).

Countries with the most confirmed cases		Countries with the greatest increase in case numbers yesterday		Countries with the most confirmed deaths		Countries with the most confirmed recoveries	
USA	1,131,492	USA	36,007	USA	65,776	USA	161,563
Spain	242,988	Russia	7,933	Italy	28,236	Spain	142,450
Italy	207,428	Brazil	6,729	UK	27,510	Germany	129,000
UK	177,454	UK	6,201	Spain	24,824	Italy	78,249
France	167,346	Spain	3,648	France	24,594	China	77,685
Germany	164,077	Peru	3,483	Belgium	7,703	Iran	76,318
Turkey	122,392	India	2,394	Germany	6,736	Turkey	53,808
Russia	114,431	Turkey	2,188	Brazil	6,412	France	50,212
Iran	95,646	Italy	1,965	Iran	6,091	Brazil	38,039
Brazil	92,202	Canada	1,825	Netherlands	4,893	Switzerland	23,900

China	82,875	Pakistan	1,619	China	4,633	Canada	22,751
Canada	55,061	Mexico	1,425	Canada	3,391	Ireland	13,386
Belgium	49,032	Ecuador	1,402	Turkey	3,258	Russia	13,220
Peru	40,459	Saudi Arabia	1,344	Sweden	2,653	Austria	13,110
Netherlands	39,791	Germany	1,068	Mexico	1,972	Mexico	12,377
India	37,336	Iran	1,006	Switzerland	1,754	Belgium	11,892
Switzerland	29,705	Chile	985	Ireland	1,265	Peru	11,129
Ecuador	26,336	Singapore	932	India	1,223	India	10,007
Portugal	25,351	Belarus	890	Russia	1,169	Israel	9,400
Saudi Arabia	24,097	Qatar	687	Peru	1,124	S. Korea	9,123
Sweden	21,520	Bangladesh	571	Ecuador	1,063	Chile	9,018
Ireland	20,833	UAE	557	Portugal	1,007	Denmark	6,729
Mexico	20,739	Belgium	513	Indonesia	800	Australia	5,782
Pakistan	18,114	Colombia	499	Romania	744	Pakistan	4,715
Singapore	17,548	Netherlands	475	Poland	651	Romania	4,328
Chile	17,008	Ukraine	455	Philippines	603	Malaysia	4,210
Israel	16,152	Indonesia	433	Austria	589	Saudi Arabia	3,555
Austria	15,531	Sweden	428	Denmark	460	Poland	3,491
Belarus	14,917	Egypt	358	Japan	455	Czechia	3,378
Japan	14,305	Kuwait	353	Algeria	453	Luxembourg	3,213
Qatar	14,096	Romania	327	Pakistan	417	Finland	3,000
Poland	13,105	Dominican Republic	316	Egypt	406	Japan	2,975
UAE	13,038	Portugal	306	Hungary	335	Belarus	2,918
Romania	12,567	South Africa	304	Colombia	314	Thailand	2,732
Ukraine	11,411	Philippines	284	Dominican Republic	313	UAE	2,543
S. Korea	10,780	Nigeria	238	Ukraine	279	South Africa	2,382
Indonesia	10,551	Poland	228	S. Korea	250	Ecuador	1,913
Denmark	9,311	Ireland	221	Czechia	241	Algeria	1,821
Serbia	9,205	Japan	217	Chile	234	Iceland	1,689
Philippines	8,928	Serbia	196	Israel	227	Portugal	1,647



Solace Global remain available to our clients, organisations and individuals throughout this time and are able to provide our full range of Travel Risk Management services. We understand that during such unprecedented times, remaining BAU can be complex. Whether you require customised reports, training, comprehensive crisis management, in-country journey management, tracking, response, evacuation or a service more specific, we are able to tailor our services to your exact requirements enabling you to make appropriate decisions going forward.

For further details, please email risk@solaceglobal.com or give us a call on +44 (0) 1202 308 810.