



Information sharing on novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

With a focus on MRCS & IFRC response



What is a novel coronavirus and how dangerous is it?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses found in both animals and humans. Some infect people and are known to cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

The new, or “novel” coronavirus, now called 2019-nCoV, had not been previously detected before the outbreak was reported in Wuhan, China in December 2019. The WHO International Health Regulations Emergency Committee has declared this as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). Infection with 2019-nCoV can cause mild symptoms including a runny nose, sore throat, cough, and fever. It can be more severe for some persons and can lead to pneumonia or breathing difficulties. More rarely, the disease can be fatal.

Source: [WHO](#)



MRCS & IFRC responding locally and globally

The Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) has been sharing Myanmar language information materials ([infographic](#) and [video](#)) on novel coronavirus on social media, based on the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and Ministry of Health and Sports (MoHS) instructions. IFRC has released its maximum amount of one million Swiss francs from its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) for an initial surge of specialists to be deployed and prepositioned for National Societies in countries which are most vulnerable to the virus’ spread, with a current focus in Asia Pacific. For Myanmar, funds will be allocated contingent upon income against the Global Emergency Appeal and the emerging needs in Myanmar. IFRC is launching a global emergency appeal for three million Swiss francs to support National Societies in novel coronavirus responses.

"Time to act: Tackling epidemics and pandemics together"

Resolution 3 of 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

MRCS's priority areas in tackling novel coronavirus in Myanmar

In collaboration with the IFRC Myanmar Country Office, MRCS's health department is planning to intensify its activities on prevention of novel coronavirus outbreak in the country. MRCS will be part of the IFRC's regional DREF proposal for the prevention and control of the virus outbreak. It has also discussed with Central Epidemic Unit, Health Literacy Promotion Unit of MoHS regarding MRCS's proposal to DREF.

Below are three priority areas of the MRCS's intervention to tackle novel coronavirus:

- 1. Provision of equipment:** MRCS will procure personal protective equipment to contribute to MoHS and red cross volunteers, as well as portable infrared thermometers, thermal scanners for MoHS.
- 2. Information sharing:** MRCS will reprint and distribute the information, education and communication (IEC) materials on health-related emergencies, including pamphlets developed by MoHS on preventive measures on novel coronavirus.
- 3. Capacity building:** MRCS will conduct health education sessions among red cross volunteers in at least in 10 townships bordering China and Yangon region as well.

IFRC will engage with MRCS's health department and work together to develop a Plan of Action (PoA) based upon the above priority areas. The PoA will help these areas to be reflected in the Global Emergency Appeal and support MRCS to work with other partners.

Suspected case of novel coronavirus in Myanmar

According to MoSH, a 56-year-old Chinese man was quarantined in Yangon on 31 January 2020 due to suspicion of carrying the coronavirus after arriving in Yangon on a flight from Guangzhou. He has been released from the hospital on 3 February after his symptoms cleared up and test results showed him to be virus-free. Myanmar nationals on the same flight as the Chinese man who had also been quarantined were also released, as they were in good health. As of 2 February 2020, Myanmar had eight suspected cases of coronavirus, yet to report any confirmed coronavirus infections inside the country. Currently there is no medical facility equipped for testing novel coronavirus results therefore, samples have been sent to a pathology laboratory in Thailand. 12 airlines which have suspended flights between Yangon and China as of 1 February 2020 are: China Eastern Airline, 9 Air, JC (Cambodia), Qingdao Airlines, Xiamen Airlines, Hainan Air, Spring Air, Myanmar National Airlines (MNA) and the Myanmar Airways International (MAI), China Southern Airlines, Sichuan Airlines and Air China.

Community Engagement and Accountability

The National Societies worldwide and IFRC have learned in similar responses (SARS, MERS, Ebola) that community engagement and accountability (CEA) is key to facilitate safe access for the red cross volunteers, build trust, be transparent and answerable to communities, give relevant information to support decisions on healthy behaviours and monitor and address rumours. IFRC will support National Societies to deliver assistance and provide risk communication, community engagement and services provision to affected communities through its global emergency appeal soon to be launched. IFRC has also developed a [guidance note](#) on risk communication and CEA to support a consistent CEA approach.

Resources and contact information

[Daily MoHS update on 2019-nCoV](#)

[WHO Myanmar – Novel Coronavirus special](#)

[WHO Health Emergency Dashboard](#)

[WHO advice for public](#)

[2019-nCoV Global Cases by Johns Hopkins CSSE](#)

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