

Beat: Health

SARS-like virus kills 2 more in Saudi Arabia, toll now 18

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USPA News - Three more people in Saudi Arabia have been diagnosed with the new novel coronavirus (nCoV), including two people who have died of the SARS-like virus in recent days, health authorities said on Monday. It raises the overall death toll to eighteen.

The Ministry of Health in Saudi Arabia said laboratory tests confirmed three additional cases of infection with the novel coronavirus in the Ahsaa province of the kingdom's eastern region. Two of the victims died in recent days while another is being treated at an undisclosed hospital and is now in a stable condition. "The Ministry of Health announces it has registered during the past few days three new cases of the novel coronavirus in the province of Ahsaa," the ministry said in a press statement. "Two of the victims have died, may God have mercy on them, and the third victim's condition is thankfully stable." The latest deaths come just days after health authorities said five other people died of the disease in the kingdom's eastern province of Ahsaa. The World Health Organization (WHO) said the outbreak is linked to an unnamed health care facility where now thirteen victims, seven of them fatal, have been reported since the beginning of May. "The government is conducting ongoing investigation into this outbreak which is linked to one health care facility," a WHO spokesperson said on Monday. The spokesperson added that the patients, of whom ten are male and three are female, range in age from 24 to 94 years old. WHO officials have said they are urging countries to continue their surveillance for severe acute respiratory infections (SARI) and to carefully review any unusual patterns. "WHO is currently working with international experts and countries where cases have been reported to assess the situation and review recommendations for surveillance and monitoring," a statement said. Prior to the outbreak this month, it had been more than a month since the last reported cases of the novel coronavirus. There were two fatal cases in late March, including a man who died in Britain after traveling to Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and a 73-year-old man from the United Arab Emirates who died at a hospital in southern Germany after being flown from a hospital in Abu Dhabi. The new coronavirus first emerged in the Middle East last year and is part of a group of viruses that causes ailments such as the common cold and SARS. Investigators have so far found no evidence of continuous human-to-human transmission, but it remains unclear how humans are being infected. The global total of laboratory confirmed cases of human infection with the novel coronavirus now stands at 30, including 18 deaths.

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