



Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

What is a coronavirus? Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans. In humans, several coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The most recently discovered coronavirus causes coronavirus disease COVID-19.

What is COVID-19? COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus. This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.

Source: [World Health Organization \(WHO\) - Q&A on coronaviruses](#)

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<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/03/1059972>

'Solidarity, hope' and coordinated global response needed to tackle COVID-19 pandemic, says UN chief (UN News, 19 March 2020):

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/03/1059752>

Guterres urges prudence not panic (13 March 2020):

<https://youtu.be/ubJaJPRdoMk>

Five things you should know now, about the COVID-19 pandemic: (UN News, 16 March 2020)

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/03/1059261>

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Further Information

- **Ask DAG: How is the United Nations responding to the Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak in China?** <http://ask.un.org/faq/281723>

- **Coronavirus global health emergency: Coverage from UN News**
<https://news.un.org/en/events/un-news-coverage-coronavirus-outbreak>

This page brings together information and guidance from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations regarding the current outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) that was first reported in Wuhan, China, on 31 December 2019. Please visit this page for daily updates. WHO is working closely with global experts, governments and partners to rapidly expand scientific knowledge on this new virus, to track the spread and virulence of the virus, and to provide advice to countries and individuals on measures to protect health and prevent the spread of this outbreak.

- **United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law**

"International Law and Infectious Disease Control", lecture by Professor Gian Luca Burci, Former Legal Counsel of the WHO: https://legal.un.org/avl/ls/Burci_HS.html