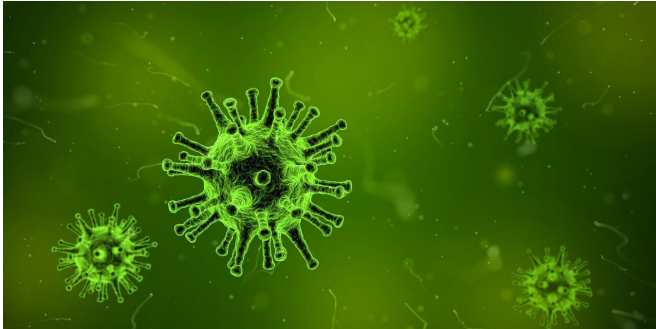


Indonesia criticises US study concerns over no coronavirus cases

12 February 2020



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Indonesia has criticised a US study questioning why the world's fourth most populous nation had not yet recorded a case of coronavirus, calling the findings an insult and insisting it was on high alert.

The virus has killed more than 1,100 people in China and spread to dozens of countries around the world—but the Southeast Asian nation of more than 260 million has not reported a confirmed case since the [outbreak](#).

A study by Harvard University public health researchers this week found Indonesia should have reported a coronavirus outbreak and could have undetected cases given its extensive air links to China and the city of Wuhan, the epicentre of the outbreak.

Indonesian health minister Terawan Agus Putranto called the Harvard report "insulting" late Tuesday and said the country had proper testing equipment.

"They can be baffled but it's a fact" there are no cases, he told reporters in Jakarta.

"I am just telling you like it is.

"Hopefully there won't be any cases and we will

keep praying, but we're being vigilant at the highest level."

The Harvard study also added that Indonesia's surveillance efforts should be "rapidly strengthened".

The country—which attracts more than two million Chinese tourists a year and hosts thousands of guest workers—has shut down all flights to and from mainland China in response to virus fears.

And the government has said it tested dozens of suspected cases, but none were positive.

"The bottom line is that we're following international standards," Putranto said.

"We're not hiding anything."

The World Health Organization said earlier this month it is particularly concerned about high-risk nations with weaker health systems, who may lack the facilities to identify cases.

More than a decade ago, Indonesia was hit hard by an avian influenza outbreak, but it avoided a more recent Zika virus outbreak unlike neighbouring Singapore, a [health](#) expert said.

"It's not the same in every country," said Chairul Anwar Nidom, a biochemistry researcher at Indonesia's Airlangga University.

"Is it possible that Indonesia has coronavirus cases? of course... But it's also possible that it doesn't."

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