Indonesia confirms first coronavirus cases

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Indonesia on Monday reported its first confirmed cases of coronavirus, after health officials in the world's fourth-most populous country hit back at questions over its apparent lack of infected patients.

A 64-year-old woman and her daughter, 31, tested positive for the virus at a Jakarta hospital, said health minister Terawan Agus Putranto.

"This morning I received the test results and they were positive," he told reporters in the capital.

"Both are in good condition...they don't have serious breathing difficulties."

Officials said that the pair may have been in close contact with a Japanese national who has since tested positive after returning to neighbouring Malaysia.

Last month, Indonesia criticised a US study that questioned why the Southeast Asian archipelago of more than 260 million, which has strong links to China, had not recorded a case of the virus.

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

The global death toll from the new coronavirus epidemic surpassed 3,000 on Monday after dozens more died at its epicentre in China and cases soared around the world with a second fatality on US soil.

The WHO says the virus appears to particularly hit those over the age of 60 and people already weakened by other illness.

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