

Mexico confirms first two cases of coronavirus, linked to Italy

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Mexico's Health Ministry confirmed the country's first cases of coronavirus on Friday, saying two men who recently returned from Italy tested positive for the virus.

Two other men who were part of the same group visiting Bergamo in

northern Italy are under observation, a health ministry official said.

Italy is Europe's epicentre with 650 cases and 17 deaths centred around cities in the north.

One of Mexico's confirmed cases, a 35-year-old resident of the capital, "has a mild, mild illness," with symptoms "similar to that of a cold," said Hugo Lopez-Gatell, a senior health ministry official.

"He is a young individual and so he is at very low risk."

The man and five members of his family have been isolated in the National Institute of Respiratory Diseases, Lopez-Gatell said.

The second positive case, a 41-year-old man who also returned from Bergamo, is in isolation at a hotel in the northwestern state of Sinaloa after being tested by regional authorities, the official said.

"We have two other men who are asymptomatic, one in the State of Mexico, the other in Mexico City, who will be under observation under contact protocol," he said.

"All this seems to be related to a case, a person also of Mexican nationality, who is in Bergamo, Italy, where the four individuals were in the third week of February and is most likely where the contagions occurred," he said.

Brazil confirmed Latin America's first coronavirus case on Wednesday.

The new coronavirus has infected 83,670 people and killed 2,865 around the world, according to an AFP toll based on official sources as of 1000 GMT on Friday.

Mainland China, where the epidemic started in late December, has 78,824 infected and 2,788 deaths.

Elsewhere in the world, 55 countries—including Mexico—and territories are affected with 4,846 cases and 77 deaths.

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