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Cyprus president urges for calm after bird flu detected in north

February 01, 2006

Cypriot President Tassos Papadopoulos on Tuesday urged for calm on the island after the deadly H5N1 strain of [bird flu](#) was detected in the Turkish Cypriot north.

Papadopoulos said that the Greek Cypriot government was taking all necessary measures to fight the disease and that there was no reason to panic.

"Although bird flu has been detected, for 20 days till now there has been no other incident either in the occupied [Cyprus](#) or in the government-controlled areas," he said.

He also said that the government did not intend to close the checkpoints to and from the Turkish-controlled north.

The European Commission announced on Sunday that the highly pathogenic avian influenza virus H5N1 has been confirmed in one of two samples taken from northern Cyprus and has sent two bird flu experts to northern Cyprus to help and pin-down the deficiencies in preventing the spread of the virus.

Meanwhile, the British Bases in Cyprus have also taken a series of measures and established a surveillance zone to prevent the spread of bird flu on the island, British Bases Spokesman Captain Crispin Coates said here Tuesday.

He said measures have been taken in cooperation with the authorities of the Republic of Cyprus.

Coates told reporters that all vehicles are now disinfected and searched upon arriving at the crossing points manned by British soldiers along the dividing line between the Greek Cypriot south and the Turkish Cypriot north and that individuals are also checked and if necessary are also disinfected at the crossing points.

The H5N1 strain of bird flu has killed so far about 80 people worldwide since its breakout in late 2003.

Experts fear that the deadly disease, currently jumping from birds to humans, might mutate into a human form that would become a global pandemic, killing millions.

Flu Found Near Turkish Border 12 suspected bird flu in Kurdistan

Iraq: Wednesday, February 01 - 2006 at 06:50

Twelve people suspected of having the H5N1 strain of bird flu are being treated in Kurdistan in northern Iraq, according to officials. Iraqi authorities have begun culling poultry in the region and the World Health Organisation is sending a team of experts to the region. Iraqi officials say a teenage girl died of the strain two weeks ago.

The infected individuals lived in Raniya, Iraq, a village in that country's Kurdish north some 60 miles (97 kilometers) from the Turkish border.

In recent weeks the virus has spread westward into Turkey from its East Asian source, killing several Turkish children who contracted the disease from infected poultry.

The Turkish Ministry of Health has now identified 21 cases of the H5N1 strain, including four fatalities, in that country.

Qader's mother insisted to AP reporters that her daughter did not die of bird flu, though she reported that several of the family's chickens had died, as had other birds in the area.

"My daughter did not die from bird flu," Fatima Abdullah, 50, told AP. "She did not like chickens nor had anything to do with them. She did not take care of these birds." So far, human victims of the H5N1 virus appear to have acquired the disease from close contact with infected poultry rather than by transmission from person to person.

Experts warn that if the H5N1 virus, or another strain, mutates into a form that can be easily transferred between people, a global pandemic could be imminent.

Such an outbreak could rival the notorious 1918 "Spanish flu," which may have killed as many as 50 million people around the globe.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that H5N1 has so far infected about 160 people in seven countries, killing at least 85 worldwide since the first bird-human transmission in 2003.

WHO is dispatching a team of experts to northern Iraq to test poultry and about a dozen people who have been hospitalized with bird -flu-like symptoms.

But Iraq's disease -monitoring infrastructure is sorely lacking, and violence and civil unrest could well complicate efforts to monitor and check the spread of disease.

The confirmed cases have so far been limited to Iraq's Kurdish north, which has long enjoyed a measure of autonomy and has been least impacted by the turmoil that grips much of the country.

Iraqi Kurdistan health officials said that domestic officials had begun culling hundreds of thousands of domestic birds in Raniya and other nearby villages in an effort to check the disease.

UN experts warn, however, that widespread culls may be difficult. If the cash-strapped nation is unable to compensate poultry farmers, it seems unlikely that they will consent to the destruction of their cash crop.

First Iraqi Bird Flu Death Confirmed

January 31, 2006

War-torn Iraq has a deadly new enemy to contend with—bird flu. Iraqi and United Nations health officials confirmed yesterday that a teenage girl who died two weeks ago was a victim of the deadly [H5N1 strain of avian influenza](#). Fifteen-year-old Shangen Abdul Qader, who died on Jan 17, was the outbreak's first Iraqi victim.

"We regretfully announce that the first case of bird flu has appeared in Iraq," Iraqi Health Minister Abdel Mutalib Mohammed told the Associated Press (AP) in the Kurdistan city of Suleimaniya (also spelled "As Sulaymaniyah") ([map of Iraq](#)).

A U.S. Navy medical research unit based in Cairo, Egypt, provided the preliminary laboratory confirmation of the lethal bird-flu strain.

"The results show the infection with the deadly H5N1," Abdel Mutalib Mohammed said. "We appeal to the World Health Organization to help us."

The girl's uncle, Hamasour Mustapha, died ten days after his niece and may have been the nation's second bird-flu victim.

Tests have not yet revealed if avian influenza caused Mustapha's death. The pair lived in the same house and exhibited the same flulike symptoms before their deaths.

Britain ready to deploy CO2 to combat bird flu

LONDON, Jan 31 (Reuters)

Britain will allow poultry to be poisoned with carbon dioxide as a measure to combat any bird flu outbreak, the farm ministry said on Tuesday.

Carbon dioxide has been used to cull large numbers of poultry in countries hit by the deadly H5N1 bird flu virus.

The virus has killed at least 85 people since late 2003, mainly in Southeast Asia, although recently it has spread to parts of eastern Europe and the Middle East.

National summit to address business readiness for flu pandemic

Feb 1, 2006 (CIDRAP News)

A national conference scheduled Feb 14 and 15 in Minneapolis will give business leaders an opportunity to learn from experts about the risk of pandemic influenza and help figure out how their industries can prepare for it.

The meeting, called "Business Planning for Pandemic Influenza: A National Summit," is being organized by the University of Minnesota Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP), publisher of this Web site. The United States and Minnesota Chambers of Commerce are cosponsoring the event, to be held at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

The premise of the conference is that pandemic flu is a major global threat and that traditional business security and disaster-response plans will not be adequate for dealing with it, according to CIDRAP officials.

The conference will include expert speakers and panel discussions on topics affecting all industries, such as legal issues, healthcare, infrastructure, human resources, government support, and risk communication. After the general presentations, participants will gather with others from their own industry to discuss continuity planning. Sessions are planned for 11 different sectors, such as healthcare, manufacturing, agriculture and food, energy, transportation and warehousing, and construction and real estate.

Summit site with information on speakers, agenda, registration, accommodations, etc

<https://programs.regweb.com/metro/cidrap/1/>