First COVID-19 cases reported in occupied Gaza, war-stricken Syria and Afghanistan

Gaza City, March 24 (RHC)-- In Gaza, the first two coronavirus cases were announced over the weekend. Authorities have shut down restaurants and cafes and suspended Friday prayers as residents fear an outbreak will further cripple a health system already suffering from Israel's blockade, which causes constant shortages of medicine and poor sanitation services.

With a population of over 1.8 million people, the besieged Gaza Strip is also one of the most densely populated places on Earth and has often been called an "open-air prison."

Meanwhile, shelter-in-place orders were announced in the occupied West Bank, where around 60 cases have been reported. On Sunday, Syria announced its first confirmed case of COVID-19 as humanitarian groups warn of the catastrophic effects the disease will have in the war-torn country.

In Afghanistan, a health official confirmed the country's first coronavirus-related death Sunday.

Radio Habana Cuba