



WHO Warns 'Billions Will Die' in Upcoming Bird Flu Pandemic

Description

The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned that a large percentage of the Earth's population could die in an imminent bird flu pandemic.

Speaking to reporters at a virtual briefing on Friday, Dr Sylvie Briand, the WHO's director of epidemic and pandemic preparedness and prevention, described the latest trends in the spread of the virus as "*worrying*."

"WHO takes the risk from this virus seriously and urges heightened vigilance from all countries," Dr Briand said.

Infowars.com reports: According to Briand, apart from a growing number of cases in birds, a similar situation is being witnessed in mammals, including humans.

On Thursday, Cambodian authorities reported that an 11-year-old girl had died of bird flu, with her father also testing positive. Their contacts are currently being checked.

Commenting on the case, Briand pointed out that it is not yet clear whether there had actually been any human-to-human transmission or if the two individuals had contracted the virus simply due to their "*exposure to the same environmental conditions*," that is, close contact with infected birds or other animals.

The WHO representative told journalists that the organization is in close contact with the Cambodian authorities for any updates.

While H5N1 has been around for more than two decades now, a new strain named clade 2.3.4.4b emerged in 2020, leading to record numbers of deaths among wild birds and domestic poultry alike in recent months.

The data gathered so far indicates that the novel subtype does not typically cause significant illness in

humans. To date, the WHO knows of a mere half dozen cases, most of them mild.

Earlier this month, the organization ranked the risk posed to humans by H5N1 as low.

Nevertheless, the global health watchdog is ramping up its preparedness efforts already, noting that there are several antivirals available, as well as 20 licensed vaccines, should the situation deteriorate.

According to the WHO, a total of 868 cases of human infection involving various strains of avian flu were reported between January 2003 and January 2023, with 457 of those proving fatal.

by Sean Adl-Tabatabai

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