

Turkey reports five more coronavirus deaths

March 20 2020

Turkey on Friday recorded five more deaths from the novel coronavirus, bringing the overall total to nine, as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan urged people not to go out for "non-essential reasons".

"We have lost five patients who are elderly and with a weak resistance," Health Minister Fahrettin Koca said on Twitter.

Koca also said the number of cases has reached 670 after 311 out of 3,656 [patients](#) tested positive over the last 24 hours.

In a voice message published on his official Twitter account, Erdogan urged Turks to follow [hygiene rules](#) and implement [social distancing](#), while urging the faithful to pray at home.

"You certainly should not go out for non-essential reasons," he said.

Turkey, which has a population of 83 million, has announced a raft of measures to limit the spread of the virus, including the closure of schools and universities, and shutting mosques to mass gatherings.

On Friday, police deployed at the entrance of several mosques in Istanbul so as not to allow worshippers to perform mass prayers.

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