

Coronavirus-Free Countries

Vocabulary

Authoritarian. favoring or enforcing strict obedience to authority, especially that of the government, at the expense of personal freedom.

Dispute. a disagreement, argument, or debate.

Gripped. take and keep a firm hold of; grasp tightly.

Reeling. lose one's balance and stagger or lurch violently.

flare ups. a sudden outburst of something, especially violence or a medical condition.

Volatility. liability to change rapidly and unpredictably, especially for the worse.



Article

According to an article written by Data Journalist Niall McCarthy, surprisingly, there are still some countries out there that have not reported a single case of Covid-19. The two most dubious candidates are certainly Turkmenistan and North Korea, authoritarian states that still deny the pandemic has spread within their borders. Observers do dispute that, however, stating that it's almost certain both countries have experienced cases of Covid-19. In Turkmenistan, there have been reports of people experiencing suspected coronavirus symptoms and dying while the government has remained silent. In North Korea, there was a suspected case in the border city of Kaesong which prompted Kim Jong-un to impose a three-week lockdown on the region. That has now been lifted while state media has not commented on the outcome.

Back in April, a lack of public appearances by Kim Jong-un led to rumors that some form of crisis, possibly Covid-19, had indeed gripped the country. He later reappeared at the opening of a fertilizer factory, alive and well, after a 20 day absence. While experts dispute North Korea's claim that it has had no cases, it is entirely possible that its isolation from the rest of the world is now working in its favor. The country was also one of the first to close its borders in response to the threat and that early action may have proven effective in containing the spread of the disease. Excluding the censorship and secretive nature of the regimes in North Korea and Turkmenistan, 10 other countries have reliably reported no cases of Covid-19.



They are all island nations located in the South Pacific: Palau, Micronesia, The Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Samoa, Vanuatu and Tonga. Again, this is a case where isolation is the best defense against the pandemic, though the countries are still reeling from the virus despite the lack of physical cases. Tourism is hugely important in the region and hotels and beaches are lying empty. Some governments had hoped to reopen safe air corridors to Australia and New Zealand but recent flare ups in those countries have led to those plans being put on ice. There are still some hopes that an air connection can be established with Taiwan but the volatility of the virus makes that far from certain.

Article released date: August 25, 2020

<https://www.statista.com/chart/amp/21279/countries-that-have-not-reported-coronavirus-cases/>

Last updated: Sept. 14, 2020- same countries had reported no cases of corona virus.



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Discussion

1. What are your thoughts about this article?
2. What is the most observable fact about these countries which were not affected by the coronavirus?
3. What are your thoughts about the dispute that Turkmenistan and North Korea may have had coronavirus cases but were denied by the leaders?
4. How many coronavirus cases are there in your country?
5. What do you think is the best way to prevent the spread of coronavirus?
6. How are you protecting yourself from coronavirus?
7. Describe the current situation of your country amidst coronavirus.
8. When do you think this pandemic will end?
9. What are your realizations from this pandemic?
10. What are the first three things you are going to do when this pandemic ends?

