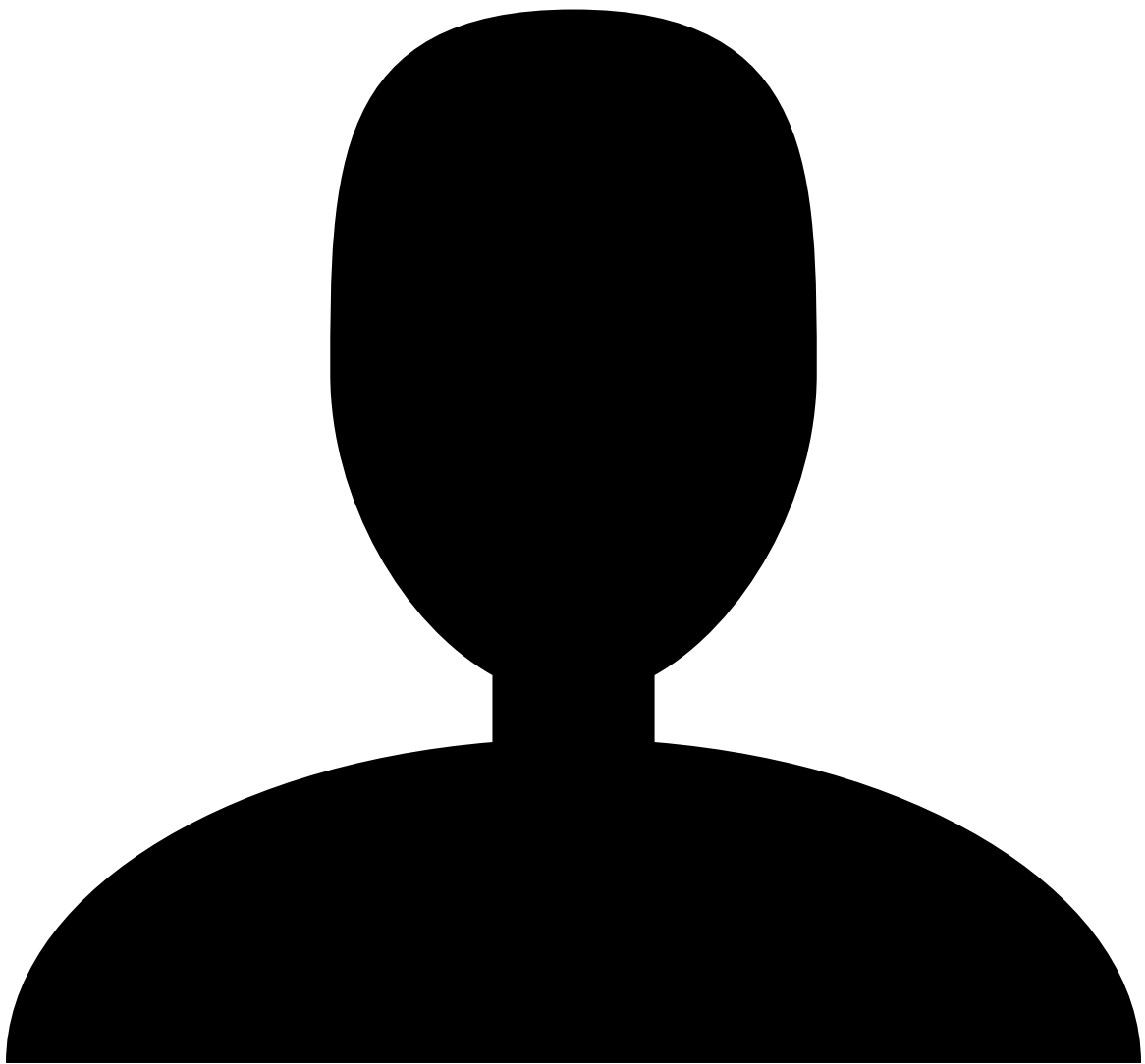


# **Russian tourist and pregnant wife die of suspected bubonic plague, sparking 'indefinite quarantine' in western Mongolia**



(File photo) Officials with the emergency management department in Bayan Ulgii province confirmed to the Siberian Times preliminary testing revealed the couple died Wednesday. (Getty Images/iStockphoto)

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A portion of the border between Mongolia and Russia remained closed Saturday morning after the deaths of a tourist and his pregnant wife from suspected bubonic plague sparked an “indefinite quarantine” across the region.

Officials with the emergency management department in Bayan-Ulgii province confirmed to the Siberian Times that preliminary testing revealed the couple died Wednesday from a direct descendant of the same highly contagious disease that claimed the lives of 50 million people during the 14th century.

The couple, who leave behind four children, seemingly contracted the plague after the 38-year-old male victim hunted and ate marmot found in the area, “despite the fact that eating marmots is banned,” according Mongolia’s animal disease center head Dr. N. Tsogbadrakh.

“He ate the meat, gave it to his wife, and they died because the plague affected his stomach,” he told the Times. “Four children are orphaned.”

Their deaths sparked concern about the spread of the highly contagious illness, which prompted Mongolian carrier Hunnu Air to ground all flights in and out of the region until Saturday.

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Dramatic photographs from earlier this week show responders in Hazmat suits boarding a plane grounded at an airport in the Mongolian capital of Ulaanbaatar. They were deployed out of fear that passengers on the airliner, which had come from the cities Bayan, Uglui and Kohvd, had been in direct or indirect contact with the ill couple.

More than 150 people were examined at the airport for signs of infection and another 11 were sent immediately for hospital checks.

According to the World Health Organization, the bubonic plague will kill an average adult in less than 24 hours if it is not treated properly — usually with medication and antibiotics. It’s caused by the bacteria *Yersinia pestis*, typically found in small mammals, like the marmot, and their fleas.

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Symptoms of the illness include fever, chills, headaches and sometimes swollen lymph nodes under the armpits and neck.

Between 2010 and 2015, there were nearly 3,300 cases reported worldwide, 584 of them resulting in death. According to WHO, it typically affects around seven Americans a year.

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Source:

<https://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/ny-russian-tourist-pregnant-wife-die-bubonic-plague-20190504-sn6tq363yjaj7exzr56wnjsvx4-story.html>

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