

Central Asian republics must join together to prepare for future outbreaks of infectious diseases

The whole world, and the Central Asian region in particular, continues to struggle with the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, May 14, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Such consequences have had a serious impact on the health and socio-economic sphere of the countries of the region. We have just begun to fully recover from the legacy of the global epidemic, and experts are already warning that the frequency of new infectious diseases has increased dramatically.

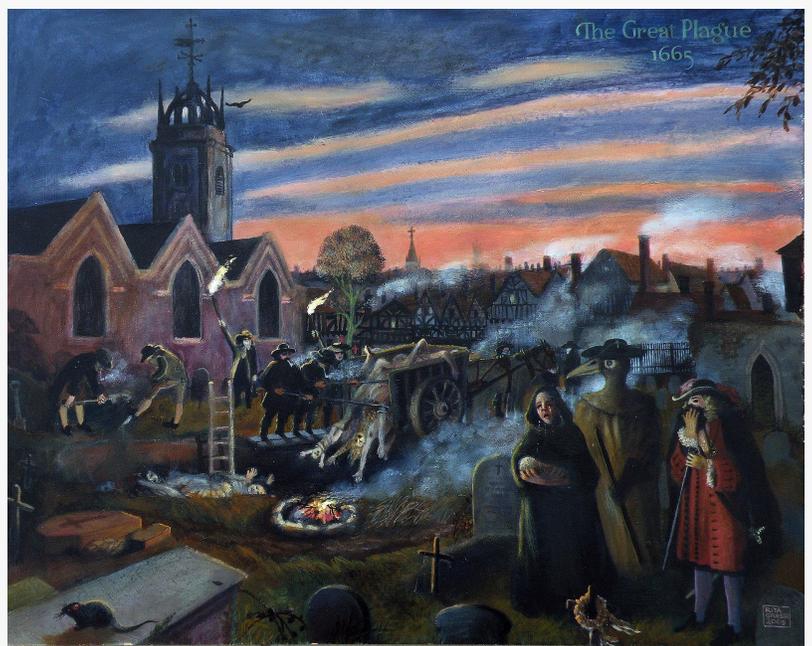
This means that the next pandemic may come sooner than we expect.

At the same time, [Central Asia](#) is particularly vulnerable to new outbreaks of infectious diseases due to its geographical location at the crossroads of world production and trade routes, as well as many migration routes of wild animals, carriers of plague and other infections. A complicating factor is the lack of preparedness of the health systems of individual countries in the region to combat these diseases due to lack of resources, insufficient training of personnel and weak infrastructure. In this context, the cooperation of the Central Asian countries in matters of sanitary and epidemiological control is becoming more important than ever.

“

Now the plague is abated almost to nothing... to our great joy, the town fills apace, and shops begin to be open again. Pray God continue the plague's decrease.”

English diarist, Samuel Pepys.



Great Plague, London

One of the most dangerous infections that can threaten the region, despite its apparent “Middle Ages” image is Bubonic plague, known in medieval Europe as “The Black Death”.

“The plague” is still one of the most dangerous diseases that man has ever encountered. The emergence of effective vaccinations, the latest antibiotics, a decrease in the activity of most of the natural foci of the plague and a general decrease in the incidence of the disease in the world have led to relative calm among populations, medical specialists, and workers of epidemiological services in relation to this dangerous infection. But until now we do not have reliable information about what could have caused three terrible plague pandemics, which claimed a huge number of lives and paralyzed the economy of many countries for a long time.



Many scientists assume that the beginning of these pandemics was related to Central Asia, and that it was in this region that the plague microbe first appeared. At least this conclusion was reached last year by researchers from the Scottish University of Stirling and the German University of Tübingen and the Max Planck Institute of Physics. They analyzed teeth from burials near Lake Issyk-Kul and found out that the first outbreak of plague occurred [on the territory of modern Kyrgyzstan](#) in the 1330's.

The authorities of the republic questioned the results of the research, and the BBC article that talked about this study was called “custom-made” by the Kyrgyz Ministry of Health. They don't like to talk about “plague” risks in Kyrgyzstan. It is not often remembered there, but the most recent case of infection with this infection in the region was in 2013, when a 15-year-old teenager from the Issyk-Kul region of Kyrgyzstan died of bubonic plague.

The reluctance to talk about it is understandable. The situation with sanitary and epidemiological protection in Kyrgyzstan is not easy. There are problems with the financing of the sphere, equipment and personnel. This threatens the collective health not only of the population of the country, but also of the entire region due to the reasons described above.

In this regard, it is important to establish bridges of cooperation in terms of biological safety with other States. This will allow us to adopt practices, conduct joint scientific research, train staff, organize joint work on tracking possible foci of infection and create common protocols and procedures for responding to epidemics.

For example, in neighbouring Kazakhstan, where more than 40% of the territory is naturally focal

for plague, in contrast, significant efforts have been made in the last decade to prevent infection, thanks to which no cases of infection have been recorded there. A separate anti-plague service and the national scientific center for particularly dangerous infections are actively working in this country. And in the south of the country, just closer to the borders with neighbours, it is planned to build a new laboratory according to advanced international standards.

A special approach to biosafety issues and sufficient funding in this direction allowed Kazakhstan to become the only country in Central Asia that was able to develop its own vaccine against coronavirus. The vaccine, called QazVac, was developed by the Kazakhstan Scientific Institute and successfully passed clinical trials. QazVac allowed Kazakhstan to become more independent from the import of vaccines, whilst also contributing to the development of the innovation base.

Such an example of cooperation can be useful to other Central Asian countries. If the republics of the region join efforts in this direction, they will be able to be more prepared for possible outbreaks of infectious diseases and, thus, reduce the risks to public health and to the socio-economic stability of the region.

It is important to remember that diseases know no borders, the coronavirus pandemic has clearly shown this. In our time of globalization, the spread of viruses and infections can occur at an incredible rate.

Therefore, in health issues, cooperation and cooperation are not just desirable, they are absolutely necessary.

Main Image: By Rita Greer – The original is an oil painting on board by Rita Greer, history painter, 2009. This was digitized by Rita and sent via email to the Department of Engineering Science, Oxford University, where it was subsequently uploaded to Wikimedia., FAL, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=7667357>

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