

# China contains infections but virus outbreaks continue from global pandemic

**Jerry Zhang**  
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In recent months, multiple outbreaks of the epidemic have occurred in various southern provinces of China, caused by the worldwide spread of the Delta variant.

According to a report from the National Health Commission of China, on October 3 there were 27 new confirmed cases in China, including 26 imported cases and one local case in Harbin. At the same time, there were 15 new asymptomatic infections, of which 13 were imported from abroad and two were local residents in Yili, Xinjiang.

Although the scale of the repeated outbreaks is small, the continuous eruption of cases has highlighted the danger of the Delta mutation. At present, there are still three high-risk areas and 28 medium-risk areas in China, located in Heilongjiang and Fujian provinces.

At the end of July, an epidemic erupted, centred on Nanjing. The Delta variant entered from Moscow by Air China flight CA910, which quickly infected the crew members. The epidemic was discovered on July 20. At the outbreak's peak, there were cases in more than 10 provinces, and over 140 people were infected each day, before finally being suppressed.

Then, on September 10, an outbreak was discovered in Fujian in an elementary school at Putian, after it had already spread for more than 10 days. The source was believed to be a parent of a student who returned from Singapore.

By September 14, the outbreak had affected eight schools, with 52 students and children infected—the youngest being only three years old. Subsequently, infections spread to factories.

At the same time, Delta spread to Xiamen, the capital of Fujian province, on September 12. According to reports, the Xiamen infections also occurred in factories and workshops that lacked protection. At the peak of the outbreak, more than 200 confirmed cases occurred

within six days. The Fujian event has caused more than 400 people to be infected and has not yet fully subsided.

Then a worrying mass transmission event broke out in Heilongjiang. The epicentre was Bayan County under the jurisdiction of Harbin City. The epidemic first appeared in an entertainment venue, but its earliest source remains unclear. On September 25, the epidemic began to appear in other areas of Heilongjiang province, spreading at multiple points. According to reports, there are more than 70 infected people in Heilongjiang province.

The increasing frequency of international and domestic flights has made the spread of the virus more common and rapid. At noon on October 1, a close contact of a confirmed case was found on a flight from Harbin to Guangdong. As a result, 184 people on the flight were quarantined. On October 3, the third day of the National Day holiday, two cases of asymptomatic infections occurred in Yili, Xinjiang. Local tourists in Yili were asked not to leave Yili temporarily.

These developments underscore the dangerous transmission capacity and speed of the Delta variant. Because of the global pandemic, China remains exposed to the risk of a severe epidemic. According to incomplete statistics from the official *Health Times* newspaper, foreign epidemics triggered more than ten outbreaks in China in 2021 alone.

The main victims of the epidemic have been working-class people, with most of the few large-scale mass transmissions occurring in factories, airports and docks where protection measures were not in place.

Zhang Boli, an academician of the Faculty of Medicine and Hygiene of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, has warned that the risks will rise this fall and winter. While outbreaks would be “strictly

prevented and controlled ... the risk of multiple outbreaks and local outbreaks cannot be completely avoided. We need to be more vigilant.”

Although the outbreaks in China are worrying, the government has not given up on strict prevention policies. The government’s response demonstrates the potential for scientific policies to eradicate the virus, but only if it is implemented at a global, not just a national level.

The government’s measures include large-scale testing of affected areas, intensive contact-tracing, timely lockdowns and continuous mobilisations for vaccination. This week, the health authorities have reported double vaccinating almost 75 percent of the population. China’s public health system has become increasingly proficient in applying these methods, enabling the effective control and calming down of dangerous infection events.

Although the epidemic in Fujian province is continuing, according to the report at a Xiamen epidemic prevention and control press conference on September 27, Xiamen has basically blocked the path of community transmission.

Before last week’s Mid-Autumn Festival holiday, Xiamen’s lockdown policy and travel ban prevented the further spread of the virus and effectively controlled the local outbreak. Heilongjiang province also implemented effective isolation and lockdown measures before the National Day holiday.

This response is in contrast to those of the imperialist countries and most of the rest of the world, where governments have rejected lockdown measures and other scientific responses, sacrificing working class health and lives for the sake of corporate profit.

However, China’s ruling capitalist class, with its own nationalist outlook and calculations, is incapable of solving the broader problems arising globally from the pandemic. It can only continuously strengthen its domestic mobilisation, leaving the working class still facing the grave risks of a serious epidemic.



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